

2 Nephi

Chapter 2

2 Nephi 2:1 **[Jacob] Thou Art My First-born in the Days of My Tribulation in the Wilderness:**

According to John Tvedtnes, Lehi apparently named his sons Jacob and Joseph after their distant ancestors Jacob and Joseph. Lehi called Jacob "my first-born in the days of my tribulation in the wilderness" (2 Nephi 2:1-1). These tribulations were brought on principally by the disobedience of Laman and Lemuel. The use of the term *firstborn* implies that Lehi may have considered Jacob to be a replacement for these sons. We have a parallel to this situation in Genesis 48:5,16, where Jacob adopted Joseph's sons Manasseh and Ephraim in place of Reuben and Simeon, who had sinned (see Genesis 34:30; 35:22; 49:3-5).

The name Jacob is explained as "supplanter" in the King James Bible of Genesis 27:36 (compare Genesis 25:23-26), but could just as easily be read "successor" or "replacement," since Jacob replaced Esau as firstborn and received the birthright and the blessing (see Genesis 25:29-34; 27:22-40). Esau was unfit to serve as firstborn. In Hebrews 12:16, Esau is called a "fornicator" and a "profane person." He sought Jacob's life, waiting only for the death of his father to proceed with his plan (see Genesis 27:41). Similarly, after the death of Lehi, Laman and Lemuel sought the life of their brother Nephi [and possibly the life of Jacob and Joseph]. Nephi, Jacob, and Joseph, along with others were forced to flee to the land of Nephi.

While Lehi may have considered Jacob and Joseph to be replacements for the fallen Laman and Lemuel, he did not give the right of the firstborn to Jacob. That blessing fell to Nephi, to whom Jacob and Joseph were to look for leadership (see 1 Nephi 2:21-22; 3:29; 2 Nephi 2:3; 3:25; 5:19-20).

(John A. Tvedtnes, "Firstborn in the Wilderness," in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, F.A.R.M.S., 1999, p. 63-65; see also *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3/1 (1994): 207-209.) [See the commentary on 2 Nephi 3:2]

[Note* One of the most striking voids in Nephi's account is the absence of his patriarchal blessing. Perhaps we find pieces of it in the blessings to Jacob and Joseph (as well as the others), where the historical parallels could be better illustrated. (Alan C. Miner, "Personal Notes")]

2 Nephi 2:1 In Thy Childhood Thou (Jacob) Has Suffered Afflictions and Much Sorrow, Because of the Rudeness of Thy Brethren:

When Lehi blessed Jacob, he mentioned that, "in thy childhood thou [Jacob] hast suffered afflictions and much sorrow, because of the rudeness of thy brethren" (2 Nephi 2:1). Robert Matthews writes that the tone of these verses suggests that certainly Jacob and possibly Joseph were old enough to remember their parents' suffering, the rebellion of Laman and Lemuel, and the goodness of Nephi while they were in the wilderness. Hence they would not have been mere infants at the time all of this was happening. Such evidence argues for Jacob's having been born during the early part of the wilderness journey, and therefore being at least seven and possibly as many as ten years old when they arrived in the promised land.

(Robert Matthews, "Jacob: Prophet, Theologian, Historian," in *The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy*, p. 35.)

2 Nephi 2:1 The Rudeness of Thy Brethren:

John Tvedtnes indicates that though the word "rude" has come to mean "impolite" in twentieth-century English, at the time Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon it meant "wild" or "savage." Lehi made a point of mentioning the effect of "the rudeness" of Laman and Lemuel on Jacob (2 Nephi 2:1). (John A. Tvedtnes, "My First-Born in the Wilderness," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Spring 1994, F.A.R.M.S., p. 208.)

2 Nephi 2:2 He Shall Consecrate Thine Afflictions For Thy Gain:

The word "consecrate" is associated with covenants. The concept that the accompanying afflictions that were to be suffered might add to the character of the covenant faithful is testified to by many covenant record keepers. A few examples are the following:

Deuteronomy 4:29-31 [MOSES to covenant Israel]

29 But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

30 When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;

31 (For the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.

Psalms 34:19 [DAVID]

19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

Isaiah 48:10 [The LORD to covenant Israel through ISAIAH]

10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

John 16:33 [CHRIST to his TWELVE DISCIPLES]

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

2 Corinthians 4:17 [PAUL to the Corinthians]

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

D&C 122:5-7 [The LORD to JOSEPH SMITH]

If thou art called to pass through tribulation...if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

2 Nephi 2:3 Thy Days Shall Be Spent in the Service of Thy God:

According to John Welch, when Lehi dedicated his son Jacob to spend all his days "in the service of thy God" (2 Nephi 2:3), it seems likely that he was prophesying of Jacob's consecration as a priest (see 2 Nephi 5:26) and of his future temple service, for the Hebrew words for service (*avodah, sharat*) often appear in phrases such as "the service of the tabernacle" (Exodus 30:16), "service in the holy place" (Exodus 39:1), and the "work of the service of the house of God" (1 Chronicles 9:13). In addition, by calling Jacob his "firstborn" in the wilderness (2 Nephi 2:1-2,11), Lehi appears to allude to another aspect of the law of Moses: "The firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me" (Exodus 22:29). (John W. Welch, "The Temple in the Book of Mormon," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, p. 321-322.)

2 Nephi 2:4 The Way Is Prepared from the Fall of Man:

Gerald Lund writes that one of the most misunderstood and misinterpreted doctrines in all of Christianity is the doctrine of the fall of Adam. Elder James E. Talmage said,

It has become a common practice with mankind to heap reproaches upon the progenitors of the family, and to picture the supposedly blessed state in which we would be living but for the fall; whereas our first parents are entitled to our deepest gratitude for their legacy

to posterity--the means of winning title to glory, exaltation and eternal lives. (*Articles of Faith*, p. 70)

Lehi's great blessing to his son Jacob is so full of doctrine and profound meaning on the "fall of man" (2 Nephi 2:4) that virtually every sentence and, in some cases, every word takes on great significance. In this regard, Lehi's speech, although doctrinal, takes on the added effect of being a literary proof of the Book of Mormon. An explanation is in order not only because of this speech's succinctness, but because it's ordered reasoning explains the fall in a manner even many Latter-day Saints fail to comprehend.

According to Lund, Lehi first outlines 5 important points that must be understood before he can discuss the Fall and the redemption of man.

Fundamental 1: "The Spirit is the same, yesterday, today, and forever" (2 Nephi 2:4). This is a significant point, especially for the so-called Christian world. It means the Atonement is retroactive, or omni-directional, that it doesn't matter when one is born, the redemptive power works in one's behalf.

Fundamental 2: "The way is prepared from the fall of man" (2 Nephi 2:4). Lehi reminds his son that the plan to redeem men from the Fall was laid from the very beginning (see D&C 124:33, 41; 128:5; 130:20). It implies a pre-existence. When Adam fell there was not a mad scramble in heaven to determine what to do.

Fundamental 3: "Salvation is free" (2 Nephi 2:4). Such a profound statement in three simple words.

Fundamental 4: "Men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil" (2 Nephi 2:5) Moroni, citing the words of his father, Mormon, said,

For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God (Moroni 7:16).

Fundamental 5: "By the law no flesh is justified" (2 Nephi 2:5). In this simple statement lies the primary reason that there must be a redeemer. According to the law of justice, for every obedience to the law there is a blessing; however for every violation of the law there is a punishment. Because all men sin, they must be "cut off" temporally and must "perish" spiritually.

Principle of Redemption: "Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah" (2 Nephi 2:6) The five principles lead the reader to a principle, which stands apart. Very simply put, Lehi states that men are condemned by the law but redeemed by the Messiah. Lehi's

qualifying statement about the Messiah is interesting in and of itself; he adds "for he is full of grace and truth." In the LDS Bible Dictionary we find the following definition for "grace":

The main idea of the word is *divine means of help or strength*, given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ. . . . This grace is an *enabling power* that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts. (p. 697)

Lehi's point is that if Christ were not full of this grace or "enabling power," he could not possibly redeem man.

Lehi's next statement is that the Holy Messiah offers himself as "a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law" (2 Nephi 2:7). Going back to the law of justice, one could say that there are only two ways to satisfy the demands of that law. The first is to keep the law perfectly, the second would be to pay the penalty for any violations of it. Christ kept the law perfectly. Not once in his entire mortal life did Jesus violate the law in any way. But Christ did more than this. Adding to what his father taught, Jacob declares in 2 Nephi 9:21: "Behold, he suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children, who belong to the family of Adam." Thus Christ satisfied the law of justice in both dimensions.

Lehi also indicates in verse 7 that the sacrifice answered the ends of the law only for those who have "a broken heart and a contrite spirit." Then he added, "unto *none else*" will that be done. To better understand why Lehi makes this statement and what it fully means for us, let us examine the doctrine of grace and works.

Protestants, especially Evangelical Christians, cite several references from the writings of Paul to indicate that a man is saved by grace (see Acts 16:31; Romans 3:28; 10:13; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9). In order to counter this argument, many Mormons have reasoned as follows. On the cross, the Savior gave up his life and overcame physical death through the resurrection, which gift he gives freely to all, an unconditional blessing which explains how we are "saved by grace" without any works on our part. But there is a second spiritual part of the redemption which was done in the Garden of Gethsemane. Here the Savior took upon himself the sins of the world and suffered for all mankind. This suffering redeems the soul from hell, but this gift is *not* unconditional. Here men must do certain things to have this redemption operate in their behalf-- thus exaltation by our works. Thus, one is saved (resurrected) by grace but we are exalted (redeemed) by our works.

According to Lund, the only problem with the above Protestant argument is that it contains four major doctrinal errors:

(1) The first error lies in the assumption that somehow salvation is different from exaltation. With very few exceptions, the scriptures almost always use the word salvation as synonymous with exaltation (see D&C 6:13 for example). To imply that salvation means only resurrection cannot be supported by scripture.

(2) The second doctrinal error lies in the idea that the suffering and death on the cross covered only the effects of physical death, and that the suffering in the Garden covered only the effects of spiritual death. Such an explanation is not justified by scripture either, nowhere do we find even any indications. The agony in the Garden and the suffering on the cross were both integral parts of the atoning sacrifice.

(3) The third error is that our works exalt us. One of Lehi's fundamental points is that no man can be justified, or saved, on the basis of works alone. It is by the merits, mercy and grace of the Holy Messiah (see 2 Nephi 2:8) that we are saved. We are exalted by righteous works, but they are the Savior's works, not our own. This is what Nephi meant when he said "for we know that it is by grace [which quality the Messiah is filled with--see 2 Nephi 2:6] we are saved, after all we can do" (2 Nephi 25:23).

(4) The fourth error is the idea that coming back into the presence of God (overcoming spiritual death) is conditional upon how we live. If men are to be "punished for their own sins and not for Adam's transgression" (2nd Article of Faith), and if our separation from God was originally caused by the fall of Adam, then we can't be punished (or separated from God) according to how we live.

The fall of Adam did bring two deaths into the world--physical death and spiritual death. But as far as it applies to Adam's fall, Christ's redemption is unconditional and applies to all. In other words, since we did nothing to be under the effects of the Fall, except come through the lineage of Adam, it is not just that we should have to meet any condition to have those effects taken away from us. Accordingly, in verse 10, Lehi says, "And because of [Christ's] intercession for all, all men come unto God; wherefore, they stand in the presence of him, to be judged of him according to the truth and holiness which is in him"

So now we must reconsider Lehi's fourth fundamental point, that all men "are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil" (v. 5). If we know good from evil and then sin, then we must talk about a second fall. This is not the fall of Adam. This is one's own personal fall. Once a person reaches the age of accountability and sins, unless something happens to change him, when he is brought back into God's presence at the judgment, he will not be allowed to stay. This is what Lehi meant when he said that the sacrifice which the Messiah offered to satisfy the ends of the law is viable only for those with "a broken heart and a contrite spirit" (v. 7). This condition comes through faith and godly sorrow (see 2 Corinthians 7:9-10) and is called repentance. It brings one to participate in the redemptive covenant ordinances--baptism, confirmation, receiving the priesthood and the temple ordinances. Those who refuse to make this "new sacrifice" (3 Nephi 9:20) are characterized in the scriptures as having hard hearts and proud spirits. These are conditions that lead some to reject the workings of the covenant ordinances, even though, in some cases, the outward ordinances may have been performed.

According to the illustration (see chart below) those who do meet the conditions of a broken heart and a contrite spirit are eligible for the "mediation" and "intercession" (2 Nephi 2:9-10, 27) of the Messiah. In Lehi's words, Christ's life and death serve as a "sacrifice for sin" (see v. 7). Thus the demands of the law are met and justice is paid--not robbed (see Alma 42:25). For those who do not meet the basic requirement of having broken hearts and contrite spirits, Christ's redemption becomes inoperative. They must pay the price themselves (see D&C 19:4, 15-17).

Principle of the Fall: So why the Fall? Lehi proceeds to answer this question with a marvelous chain of logical reasoning. His linchpin argument is summarized in 2 Nephi 2:11: "For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. The rest of verse 11 and all of verses 12-15 explain the reason there must needs be opposition (see illustration below). In summary, God could not bring about his purposes with mankind (their immortality and eternal life) without opposition or opposing alternatives, for without them, there would be no accountability. So opposition is necessary to man's progression, but God could not create it. Lehi explains how this was resolved:

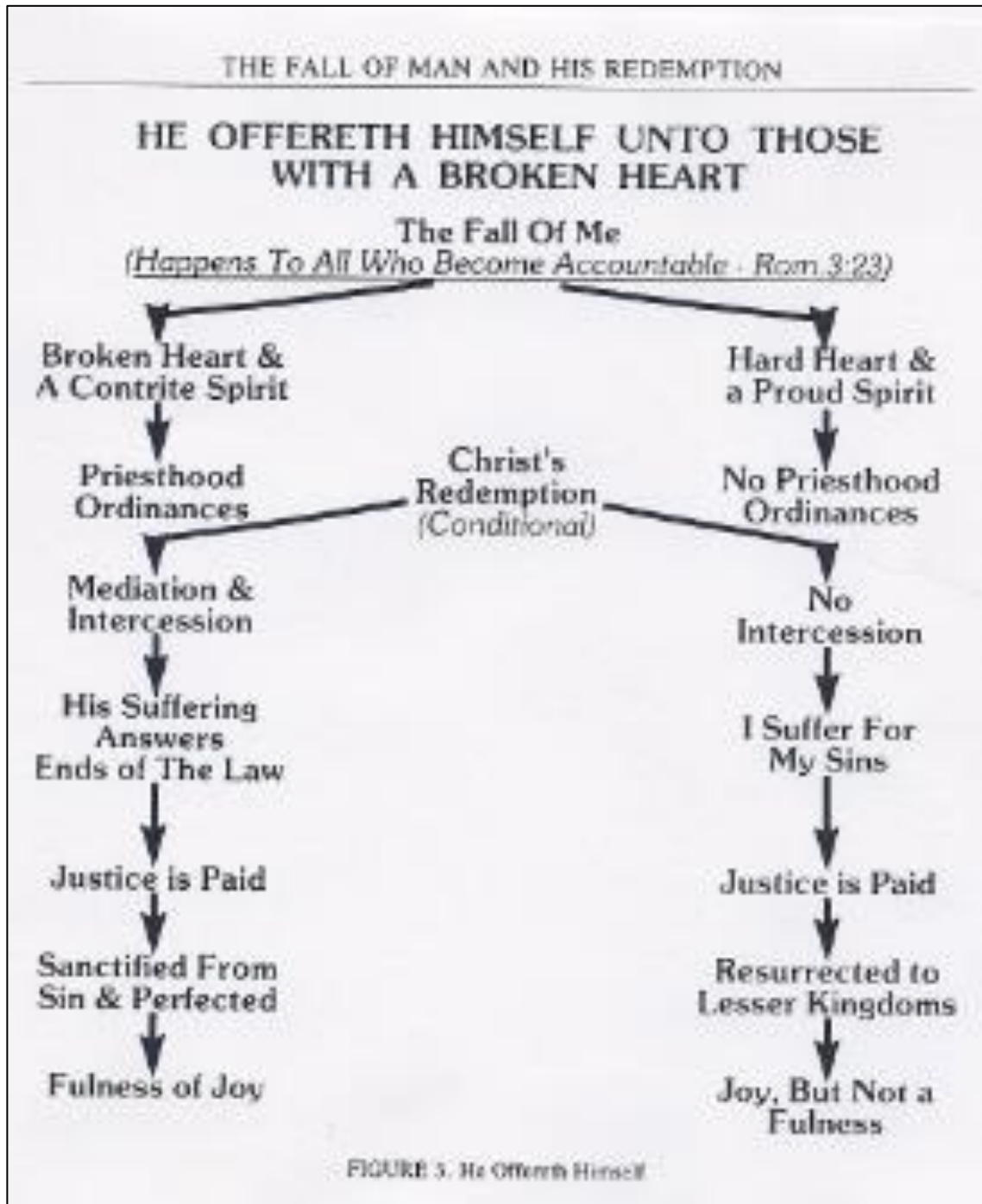
1. Opposition is necessary for man's progression (v. 11).
2. The Lord set up opposing choices (v. 15).
3. He gave man his agency (v. 16).
4. In order to make that agency operative, both choices had to be enticing (v. 16; see also D&C 29:39).
5. God allowed Satan to operate in the Garden and in this world to allow the negative option to be enticing in opposition to the positive one (vv. 17-18).

When Lehi had established the reason for the Fall, he discussed the results of it for us. He pointed out that once the Fall had taken place and men were born into the world under its effects, this life became a state of probation or a time for man to prove themselves. He indicated that the days of the children of men were prolonged so they might repent and thus begin to bring into operation the plan of redemption (12 Nephi 2:21). As he did this, Lehi further emphasized the importance of the Fall by pointing out what would have happened had the Fall never taken place (see vv. 22-23). When one examines the conditions that resulted from the Fall, it becomes evident that all of them are necessary for the progression of mankind toward Godhood, for them to prove themselves and to become accountable before God.

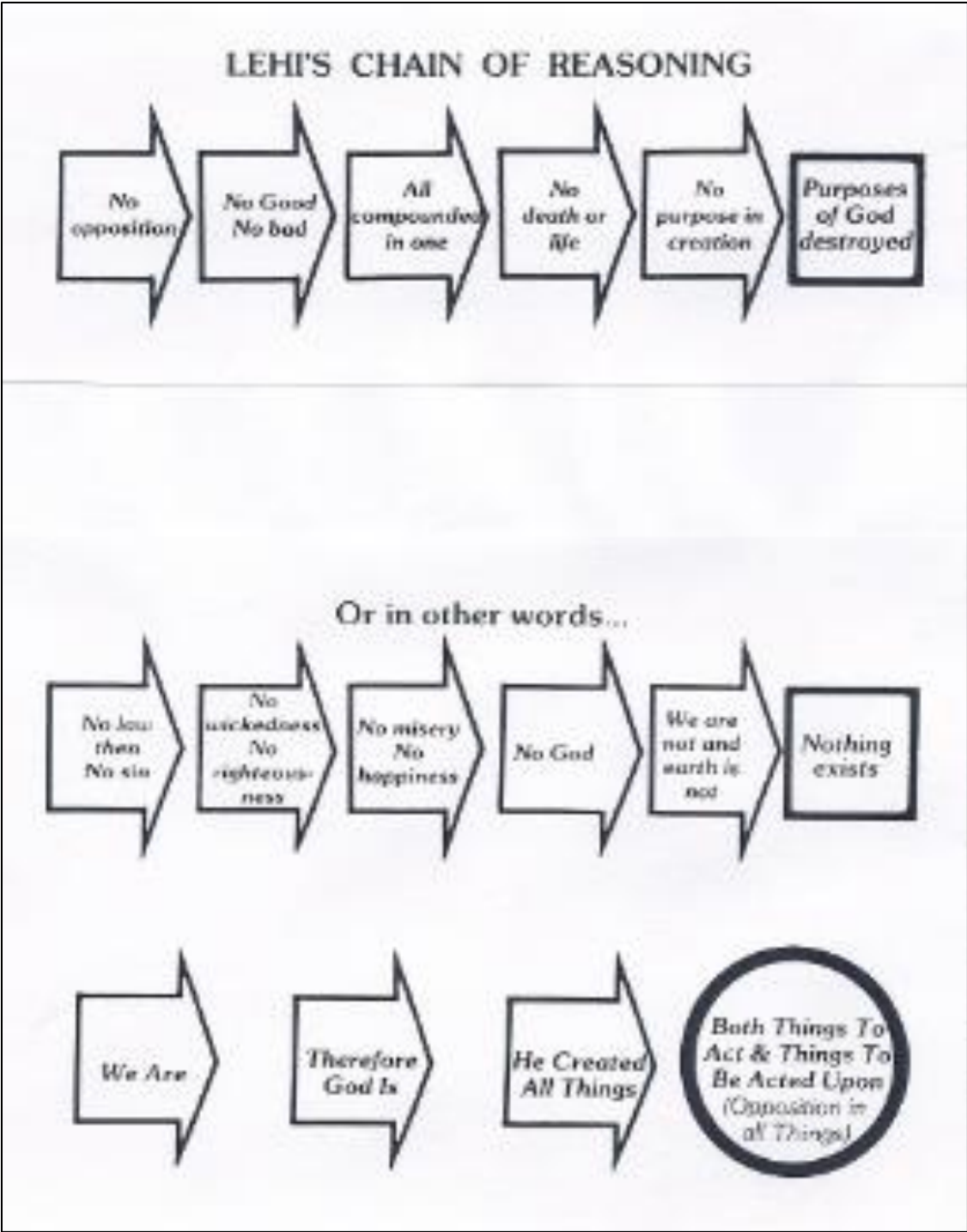
Lehi ends by noting that all alternatives for man boil down to one simple ultimate choice:

Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil (2 Nephi 2:27). Lehi witnesses that he has "chosen the good part" (v. 30).

(Gerald N. Lund, "The Fall of Man and His Redemption," in *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi*,



2 Nephi 2:4 **The way is prepared from the fall of man (Illustration #1):** He Offereth Himself unto Those with a Broken Heart. (Gerald N. Lund, "The Fall of Man and His Redemption," in *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, The Doctrinal Structure*, p. 98.)



2 Nephi 2:4 **The way is prepared from the fall of man (Illustration #2):** Lehi's Chain of Reasoning. (Gerald N. Lund, "The Fall of Man and His Redemption," in *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, The Doctrinal Structure*, p. 100-101.)

2 Nephi 2:8 How Great the Importance to Make These Things Known unto the Inhabitants of the Earth:

According to Robert Matthews, it is interesting that of the blessings Lehi gave to his sons, that which he gave to Jacob is the most philosophical in content (2 Nephi 2). The blessing fits the mind and disposition of Jacob. Jacob is the outstanding doctrinal teacher of the Book of Mormon. He well follows the admonition given to him by his father Lehi, "how great the importance to make these things known unto the children of the earth" (2 Nephi 2:8).

(Robert J. Matthews, *Who's Who in the Book of Mormon*, p. 63.)

2 Nephi 2:9 Wherefore, He Is the Firstfruits unto God:

In Lehi's sermon to Jacob on the Atonement and the Plan of Salvation, he declares that Christ is "the firstfruits unto God" (2 Nephi 2:9). According to Hugh Nibley, the image of "the firstfruits" is an image that the Jews all understood. It means the best you have--the best and most beloved. It is the prize. It couldn't be anything less, you see. Nothing less than the supreme sacrifice could be made.

(Hugh W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, p. 266.)

2 Nephi 2:10 The Law Which the Holy One Hath Given:

The Book of Mormon makes it very clear that the God of the Old Testament is Jesus Christ. This underscores the irony of many events in the Savior's life in which he is accused of violating the law of Moses. How absurd to accuse Him of breaking the law when He was the one who gave the law in the first place! He explains, I am he that gave the law, and I am he who covenanted with my people Israel (3 Ne 15:5). (josephsmith.com.2Nephi)

It is apparent that the Old Testament record keepers knew who the Holy One of Israel was also:

Psalm 89:18 [DAVID]

18 For the Lord is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.

Isaiah 43:15 [The LORD to Israel through ISAIAH]

15 I am the Lord, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.

Isaiah 47:4 [ISAIAH]

4 As for our redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.

2 Nephi 2:10 **The “Atonement”:**

Russell M. Nelson remarks:

In the English language, the components are at-one-meant, suggesting that a person is at one with another. Other languages employ words that connote either expiation or reconciliation. Expiation means ‘to atone for.’ Reconciliation comes from Latin roots *re*, meaning ‘again’; *con*, meaning ‘with’; and *sella*, meaning ‘seat.’ Reconciliation, therefore, literally means ‘to sit again with.’

In Hebrew, the basic word for atonement is *kaphar*, a verb that means ‘to cover’ or ‘to forgive.’ Closely related is the Aramaic and Arabic word *kafat*, meaning ‘a close embrace’—no doubt related to the Egyptian ritual embrace. . . .

While the words atone or atonement, in any of their forms, appear only once in the King James translation of the New Testament [Romans 5:11], they appear 35 times in the Book of Mormon. As another testament of Jesus Christ, it sheds precious light on His Atonement.” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1996, p. 34-35)

(K. Douglas Bassett, *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, p. 85.)

[Note* The word “atonement” appears sixty-nine times in the Old Testament relative to the Law of Moses. According to Paul, “Wherefore the law [of Moses] was our schoolmaster to bring us unto [an understanding of] Christ” (Galatians 3:24). (Alan Miner, “Personal Notes”)]

2 Nephi 2:11 **For It Must Needs Be, That There Is An Opposition in All Things:**

Dan Neville writes:

The Book of Mormon prophet Lehi describes the law of opposition as given to us by God. While the law focuses mainly on spiritual opposition, at least part of that opposition has to do with physical or temporal things as well as that which is spiritual. One might ask: Does physical opposition of “all things” have anything to do with spiritual opposition? And can understanding physical opposition to “all things” help us understand the spiritual law of opposition?

Before Neville attempts to answer those questions, he first reviews the pertinent scriptural verses here in 2 Nephi 2:11-13:

11 For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, my firstborn in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad.

Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one;

wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility.

12 Wherefore, it must needs have been created for a thing of naught;

wherefore there would have been no purpose in the end of its creation.

Wherefore, this thing must needs destroy the wisdom of God and his eternal purposes, and also the power, and the mercy, and the justice of God.

13 And if ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is no sin. If ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness. And if there be no righteousness there be no happiness. And if there be no righteousness nor happiness there be no punishment nor misery. And if these things are not there is no God. And if there is no God we are not, neither the earth; for there could have been no creation of things, neither to act nor to be acted upon; wherefore, all things must have vanished away.

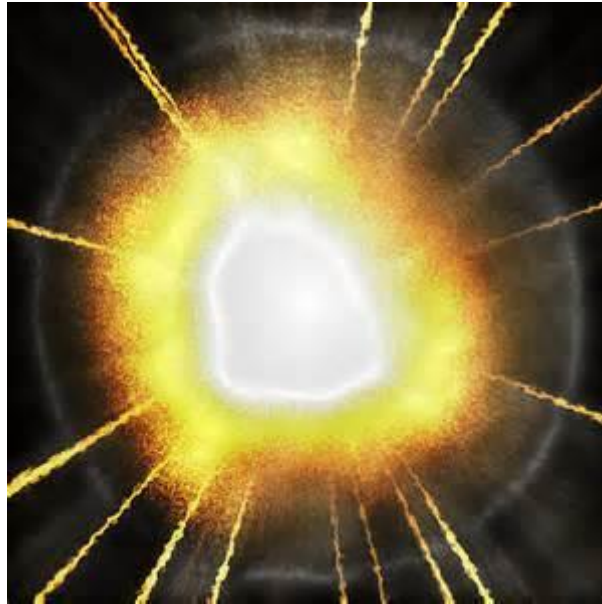
Despite the almost entire focus on opposition to spiritual things, at the beginning of these verses, Lehi indicates how important opposition is to our bodies. He says that without opposition there would have been no reason for God to create for us a physical body (or in other words, it would have needed to remain dead having no life. Anyone who has ever worked hard physically undergoes a combination of misery and joy.

Work, by definition requires resistance—moving a mass and changing the position of that mass—like lifting 50lb sacks of potatoes onto elevated cargo trucks. Your body temperature rises as you expend the energy needed, you start to sweat, your muscles start to be depleted of their energy sources, you start to get tired and your muscles start to get sore. When you physically tire and sweat it is not pleasant, and your spirit wanes. But joy comes when you finish the work and realize that you are helping to transport those potatoes to needy children.

In the science of physics, a force is said to do work if, when acting on a body, there is a displacement of the point of application in the direction of the force. Resistance or opposition in this definition is assumed. But why? And does this opposition concern “all things” as Lehi said? According to Neville, in order to understand the profundity and veracity of Lehi’s statement, we must go back to what some scientists term “The Big Bang.”

Neville writes that in the beginning, prior to the Big Bang, there was no matter. Everything in the universe was energy. This energy was compacted into a space a trillionth the size of an atom. The onset of the Big Bang sent temperatures in the early cosmos soaring. In less than a millionth of a trillionth of a trillionth of a trillionth of a second after the Big Bang, the

temperature in the universe was 100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 degrees Kelvin. If we had calculated the heat in Fahrenheit terms, the number would have been far larger. Either way, it was 100,000 times hotter than the sun's core. Energy was exploded outward in an ever-expanding manner into an "ever-stretching" space. But in this state this energy was not "useful."



The Big Bang

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However, at approximately the same time as this Big Bang, there were some resistance forces that were also created. Neville lists and describes four basic forces of attraction in the universe:

- Strong Nuclear forces of attraction
- Weak Nuclear forces of attraction.
- Gravitational forces of attraction
- Electromagnetic forces

Strong Nuclear force: Just ten thousandths of a second after the Big Bang, a portion of the energy started forming into matter. That is, as the cosmos began its expansion after the Big Bang, space began to be "stretched" outward, and thus temperatures began to plummet with this expansion or "stretching" of space. This is easy to understand by imagining a fire of heaped up hot coals. If people started dragging coals away from the central fire, soon the heat would become dispersed and the relative temperature would become lower, and the coals would cool as they were moved farther and farther away from the main fire.

As temperatures lowered, soon sub-atomic particles with names like “quarks” and “gluons” started sticking together and soon became “bound” by “nuclear” forces between them. Quarks and gluons soon became locked together permanently within protons, neutrons, electrons and other atomic particles to form atoms.

Weak Nuclear forces of attraction: As the energy of the universe expanded and cooled, gravitational forces and electromagnetic forces were created. However, these forces became ever-decreasing in their ability to slow this expansion because the amount of space between particles was ever-increasing. Nevertheless, scientists strongly believe that amid these decreasing forces of attraction, an elementary force field—an ocean of weak resistance of sorts that permeated the universe-- was born. It's force of resistance remained somewhat constant and thus helped to provide some order to this expansion. This force has been named the Higgs field. Some of the resistance is caused by the interaction of the Higgs field with quarks and other atomic particles. Thus the more the mass the higher the interaction and resistance.

Gravitational forces of attraction: Atoms came together to form molecules. And in time, masses of particulate matter began to increase in size and disperse outward. The universe began to develop into what we see today. Gravity is the force that attracts a body toward any other physical body having mass. The larger the mass, the larger the attraction. Thus whenever we jump up, we know that gravity will pull us back to earth. For astronauts on the much smaller Moon, however, they had the ability to jump easier and higher than normal. These gravitational forces also helped bring order to the universe as speeding smaller masses soon became captured into orbits around larger masses.

Electromagnetic forces: This is the force resulting from the interaction of charged particles and their electric and magnetic fields. The atom is held together because of the attractive forces between the positively charged nucleus (protons and neutrons) and the negatively charged electrons. “Magnets” attract or repel one another depending on how the electrons are aligned—whether it is a positively charged alignment or a negatively charged alignment. Electromagnetic forces also include “waves” that are classified as different forms of light or electricity.

In summary, the physical forces of attraction that opposed the “unbridled” expansion of energy in our universe can be seen as a temporal opposition. They are not what we normally refer to as opposing forces to wickedness and sin (like righteousness and spirituality) or opposing forces to misery (like joy), but in some ways these physical forces are just as important to the person lifting the 50lb sacks of potatoes into the cargo truck.

In much the same way as this temporal opposition works to make the universe more orderly and functional for man, we find in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 93, that our own bodies are considered to be what Lehi terms “a compound in one.” Similar to the universe, we

have physical bodies ever-expanding in appetites and passions. We also have divine God-given forces inside our body termed a "spirit" that tends to oppose those unbridled energies. In the long run, this "opposition" brings about greater joy for both entities and greater joy for man. D&C 93:33-345 reads:

"For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fullness of joy; and when separated, man cannot receive a fullness of joy."

According to Neville, the element refers to the physical body that one's spirit inhabits. What good is a body that doesn't feel any opposition to its muscles? What is the limit to which a spirit can appreciate joy when there is no opposition?

Again in the words of Lehi:

14 And now, my sons, I speak unto you these things for your profit and learning; for there is a God, and he hath created all things, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are, both things to act and things to be acted upon.

15 And to bring about his eternal purposes in the end of man, after he had created . . . , all things . . . it must needs be that there was an opposition . . . (2 Nephi 2:14, 15)

(Dan Neville, *Scientific Discoveries That Build Testimonies and Strengthen Faith*, p. 37-40, 80-85.)

2 Nephi 2:11 **For It Must Needs Be, That There Is an Opposition in All Things:**

In the middle of Lehi's blessing upon his son Jacob, we find the words "for it must needs be that there is an opposition in all things" (2 Nephi 2:11). Concerning this statement, Marilyn Arnold makes the following commentary:

Unlike the scientist of faith, who studies the work of the Creator every time he or she enters the laboratory or the field, the English teacher studies the product of the human mind, relentlessly pursuing meaning and delight in the written word. To the onlooker there may seem to be little connection between literary studies and religious faith; but to me there is an almost inseparable bond. In fact, it was not until I began to read sacred texts with the skills I had acquired in studying nonsacred texts that the eyes of my understanding truly began to open. . . .

Perhaps I can illustrate briefly how my academic preparation translates into "seeing." . . .

readers might not notice the aptness in the positioning of Lehi's discourse [on opposition and the plan of salvation]; it is delivered in the patriarchal blessing pronounced upon Jacob, a younger son who has painfully witnessed firsthand the opposition between Nephi and his older brothers. Indeed, Jacob's whole existence has been marked by opposition; I think Lehi wants him to understand that, despite its concomitant pain, opposition makes possible the exercise of agency and is therefore a vital aspect of the plan of salvation.

(Marilyn Arnold, "Unlocking the Sacred Text," in Susan E. Black ed. *Expressions of Faith: Testimonies of Latter-Day Scholars*, p. 193, 196-197.)

2 Nephi 2:11 **Neither Wickedness, Neither Holiness nor Misery:**

According to Donald Parry, the prevalent poetic form of the canon of scripture is not the ode, the lamentation, nor the psalm, but parallelism. . . . "Parallelism is universally recognized as the characteristic feature of biblical Hebrew poetry."

Repetition may be classified as a subcategory of the poetic forms called "parallelism." Repetitive forms are considered a parallelism because, by their unusual repetition of identical words within a short span, it creates a series of thoughts being parallel or connected one to another.

One type of parallelism, the repetition of the disjunctives "either" and "or" or "neither" and "nor" at the beginning of successive sentences is called *paradiastole*. . . . Ironically, by using disjunctions, the inspired writers caused a junction (rather than a disjunction) or linkage between each succeeding phrase, thus creating parallel lines. . . . Note the use of the disjunctives "neither" and "nor" in 2 Nephi 2:11:

If not so, my first-born in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass,
neither wickedness
neither holiness
nor misery,
neither good
nor bad

Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life

neither death
nor corruption
nor incorruption, happiness
nor misery,
neither sense
nor insensibility

(Donald W. Parry, *The Book of Mormon Text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns*, F.A.R.M.S., p. i, xxxv, xxxix.)

2 Nephi 2:14 For There Is a God, and He Hath Created All Things:

“The heavens declare the Glory of God. And the firmament showeth his handywork.”
(Psalm 19:1) “The fool has said in his heart, There is no God” (Psalm 14:1).

Alma testified to Korihor: “The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator” (Alma 30:44).

Albert Einstein said, “The harmony of natural law reveals an intelligence of such superiority that compared with it all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection” (“Search for Truth”).

Similarly, the great space scientist Wernher von Braun has written,

“Anything as well ordered
And perfectly created as is our earth
And universe must have a Maker
A Master Designer
Anything so orderly, so perfect,
So precisely balanced, so majestic as
This creation can only be the product of a Divine Idea...
‘There must be a Maker; there can be no other way’ (“Creation” 21)”

(*Book of Mormon Symposium Series*, edited by P.R. Cheesman, M.S. Nyman, and C.D. Tate, Jr., 1988, p. 348.)

[Adapted from josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

2 Nephi 2:14 There Is a God, and He Hath Created All Things, Both the Heavens and the Earth, and All Things That in Them Are:

According to George Stuart, on Stela 1 at the ruins of Coba in Quintana Roo appears the rare expanded date for the Mayan creation, which is so phenomenally large that 40,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 years--that is 40 octillion years--would have to pass away before the cycle would come around again. This interval is approximately equal to the

fifteen-billion-year span that separates us from the cosmic "big bang" multiplied almost 3,000,000,000,000,000 times! (George E. Stuart, "The Calendar," in Gene S. Stuart and George E. Stuart, *Lost Kingdoms of the Maya*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1993), p. 177.)ⁱ



God is the Great Creator

ubdavid.org

2 Nephi 2:15 After He Had Created Our First Parents, and the Beasts of the Field and the Fowls of the Air:

According to David Bokovoy, when the Book of Mormon appeared in 1830, the Western world had only a limited knowledge of the literary techniques utilized by Semitic authors. One such discovery came to light in 1955 when a scholar named Seidel published a study on parallel statements in Psalms and Isaiah.ⁱⁱ His work prepared the way for further analysis of what has come to be called "inverted quotations" in the Bibleⁱⁱⁱ, and today scholars refer to such inverted quotations of earlier sources as an example of Seidel's law.

The Bible contains many examples of inverted quotations.^{iv} For example, in Leviticus 26:4 the Lord declared, "and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruits." When Ezekiel later referred to this promise, he intentionally reversed its original sequence: "and the trees of the field shall yield their fruits, and the land shall yield her increase" (Ezekiel 34:27).^v

Another example is found in Deuteronomy 4:15-19:

Take good heed lest ye make the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female,

the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth: and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, should be driven to worship them."

Here *Moses essentially reverses* the sequence of the Creation as described in Genesis 1:14-27.

In a sermon to his son Jacob, *Lehi also reversed* the elements of creation: "And to bring about his eternal purposes in the end of man, after he had created our first parents, and the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and in fine, all things which are created, it must needs be there was an opposition" (2 Nephi 2:15). But after listing the final three elements in the creation, Lehi, unlike Moses, summarized the earlier components with the inclusive statement "and in fine, all things which are created." One possible explanation for this synopsis is that while Moses apparently felt the need to thoroughly categorize every example of graven images whose worship would lead Israel into apostasy, Lehi's citation served a different purpose. His pivotal statement concerning the existence of and need for opposition is strengthened because opposition itself is presented as a divinely ordained aspect of creation.

Since Bible scholars in Joseph Smith's day had not yet recognized the existence of Seidel's law, its attestation in 2 Nephi 2:15 and elsewhere in the Book of Mormon (e.g., Alma 5:19; compare Psalm 24:4) provides additional evidence that the Book of Mormon is an authentic record of ancient origin.

(David Bokovoy, "Inverted Quotations in the Book of Mormon" in *FARMS Update*, Number 139, in *Insights*, October 2000, p. 2.) [See the commentary on Alma 5:19]

2 Nephi 2:17 I, Lehi, according to the Things Which I Have Read:

In 2 Nephi 2:17, Lehi clearly states:

according to the things which I have read, I must need suppose that an angel of God, according to that which is written, had fallen from heaven; wherefore, he became a devil, having sought that which was evil before God. And because he had fallen from heaven, and had become miserable forever, he sought also the misery of all mankind. Wherefore, he said unto Eve, yea, even that old serpent, who is the devil, who is the father of all lies . . .
."

Lehi's scriptural quotes or information most probably came from the brass plates but from whose writings? In our present book of Isaiah we find the following:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down

to the ground . . . For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . I will be like the most High. . . thou art cast out (Isaiah 14:12-14, 19--see 2 Nephi 24:12-14, 19)

It is not clear from our present Old Testament record what Lehi might have been reading. The specifics of an angel referred to as a "fallen angel," "that old serpent," and "the devil" do not appear in our present Bible until the New Testament book of Revelation:

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him (Revelation 12:7-9)

However, nowhere in the Bible do we find the title "father of all lies." Yet in John 8:44 we find the following: "Ye are of your father the devil . . . When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." What is interesting is that Jacob uses the title "father of lies" in speaking about the Atonement and how it overcomes the effects of the Fall (see 2 Nephi 9:9). This comes in the text just after Jacob has quoted Isaiah extensively. But more to the point, Jacob states that the Lord has spoken of these things "by the mouth of his holy prophets, even from the beginning down" (2 Nephi 9:2).

So perhaps part of Lehi's information came from Isaiah, and perhaps part from Zenos, or Zenock, or the writings of other prophets recorded on the brass plates "even from the beginning." Or perhaps Lehi gained his knowledge from his own visions wherein he was asked by the Lord to "read a book" (1 Nephi 1:11) (Alan C. Miner, "Personal Notes")

2 Nephi 2:17 An Angel of God . . . Had Fallen from Heaven:

The Book of Moses reveals the following about this "fallen angel":

AND I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying: That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning, and he came before me, saying--Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.

But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me--Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.

Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down;

And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice. (Moses 4:1-4)

In the Book of Abraham we find the following:

And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first.

And the second was angry, and kept not his first estate; and, at that day, many followed after him. (Abraham 3:27-28)

Isaiah declared: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God." (Isaiah 14:12-13)

Luke records Jesus stating: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." (Luke 10:18)



Fallen Angel

relicdefender.wordpress.com

In the Book of Revelation John writes:

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Rev 12:7-9)

And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth (Rev 12:4)

2 Nephi 2:17 **An Angel . . . Had Fallen from Heaven; Wherefore, He Became a Devil:**

Richardson, Richardson and Bentley note that another evidence for the authenticity of the Book of Mormon is the fact that the equivalent of the biblical Satan is found therein (1 Nephi 12:17-19; 22:15; 2 Nephi 2:17-19) as well as in Mesoamerican belief.

Dee F. Green says the following:

Among the pantheon of gods credited to the Toltecs is found one called Tezcatlipoca. He was the god of war, pestilence, darkness, and the underworld. Numerous references by early native and Spanish authors such as Ixtlilxochitl, Sahagun, and Torquemada describe him as ferocious, wicked, and the author of wars and destruction among the people. One of his titles was "Sower of Discord."

Originally, he was the twin brother of Quetzalcoatl, but opposes him in all things. They are eternal enemies, and several interesting legends are told about the history of their feud.

An early account says that ". . . one day Quetzalcoatl hit him on the head with a club and Tezcatlipoca was knocked down from his throne up in the sky. As he fell down to the earth, he was transformed into a vicious jaguar that haunted the world, devouring people, nearly wiping out an entire generation. . ." Later, Quetzalcoatl was defeated and killed in battle by Tezcatlipoca. Quetzalcoatl, however, regained his life and then taught the Toltecs their religion, art, and culture.

Sometime thereafter, a great religious war occurred in which Tezcatlipoca defeated the

Toltec followers of the god Quetzalcoatl. It is said that Tezcatlipoca used magic and tricks to defeat and kill them and that he will reign on the earth until the return of Quetzalcoatl.

The resemblances of both these gods to Christian concepts of Christ and Satan are curious indeed.

(Allen H. Richardson, David E. Richardson and Anthony E. Bentley, *1000 Evidences for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Part Two-A Voice from the Dust: 500 Evidences in Support of the Book of Mormon*, p. 82.)

2 Nephi 2:17 An Angel of God, according to That Which is Written, Had Fallen from Heaven (Prophetic Parallelism):

According to Donald Parry, parallelism is universally recognized as the characteristic feature of biblical Hebrew poetry. (p. i)

Apparently, **the prophets and writers of the scriptures employed the repetition of alternating parallel lines for the purpose of reinforcing their teachings and doctrines.** (p. x)

An "extended alternate" type of parallelism takes the form A-B-C-D/A-B-C-D. (p. xiii)

A fine example of this Extended Alternate Parallelism is found in 2 Nephi 2:17-18 which speaks of an angel of God who had fallen from heaven:

17 And I, Lehi, according to the things which I have read, must needs suppose that an angel of God, according to that which is written,

A had fallen from heaven;
B wherefore, he became a devil,
C having sought that which was evil before God.

18 A And because he had fallen from heaven,
B and had become miserable forever,
C he sought also the misery of all mankind.

(Donald W. Parry, *The Book of Mormon text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns*, F.A.R.M.S., p. 54.)

2 Nephi 2:17 An Angel . . . Became a Devil, Having Sought That Which Was Evil Before God:

Brant Gardner writes the story of an angel who "sought that which was evil before God" appears in the ancient beliefs of the Canaanites (Phoenicians). Ugarit was an ancient Canaanite city located in the territory that is now Syria. According to the Bible, this area was settled by

people migrating from the Mesopotamian area after the Flood. Abraham later visited this area.

Gardner notes that a large number of tablets from the city or culture of Ugarit were discovered in 1929. These tablets are important to the [archaeological] reconstruction of Semitic religion from 1350 to 1150 B.C. While they are not Israelite, they show a more complete picture of aspects of Semitic religion for which the Bible gives only glimpses. Those texts depict a heavenly council, which provides the backdrop for Lehi's fallen angel.

In the Ugaritic, or Canaanite texts, the deity Ba'l is a parallel to Yahweh in Israelite religion. The two share so much imagery that scholars assume that the extant stories of Ba'l may represent lost stories of Yahweh. Frank Moore Cross, Hancock Professor of Hebrew and Other Oriental Languages, emeritus of Harvard University, summarizes this Phoenician myth of contested leadership in the divine council:

Yamm [a parallel to Lucifer] . . . claimed kingship among the gods. The council of the gods assembled and, told of Yamm's intentions to seize the kingship and take Ba'l [a parallel to Yahweh?] captive, made no protest. They were cowed and despairing, sitting with heads bowed to their knees. Ba'l rises, rebukes the divine assembly, and goes forth to war. In the (cosmogonic)_ battle he is victorious, and he returns to take up kingship. Presumably he returned to the assembled gods and appeared in glory, and the divine assembly rejoiced. (Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1973, p. 93)

Daniel C. Peterson has summarized important information about this heavenly council:

The council is known by various names in the Ugaritic materials, including "the assembly of the gods" and "the assembly of the sons of 'El." According to Canaanite belief . . . 'El was the creator-god. Evidence strongly suggests that he was the original chief god of the Semites generally. As creator, however, he also stood at the head of the pantheon as the "father of the gods" or the "father of the sons of god" and was called the "ancient one," the "patriarch," and the "eternal one." Consequently, the gods as his sons, were designated collectively as "the sons of 'El . . ."

The Canaanite terminology of "the assembly of the gods" and "the assembly of the sons of 'El" finds its parallels in the Hebrew Bible. In Psalm 29:1, which has long been recognized by scholars as an Israelite adaptation of an older Canaanite hymn, members of the council are referred to as *bene 'elim*. The King James translation renders this phrase as "the mighty."

[Psalm 29

- 1 Give unto the Lord, O ye **mighty**, give unto the Lord glory and strength.
2. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness..

3. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters . . .
4. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. . . .
11. The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.]

The same Hebrew phrase occurs at Psalm 89:6, where the King James Version has “the sons of the mighty.”

[Psalm 89

- 6 For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among **the sons of the mighty** can be likened unto the Lord?]

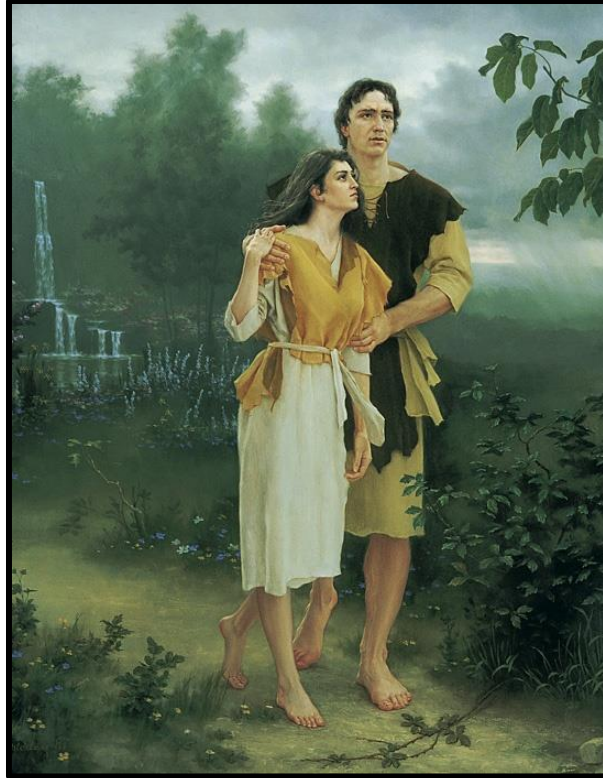
Neither rendition is adequate. In both passages, the New Jerusalem Bible, to choose one of the best of the modern translations, gets things precisely right by translating *bene 'elim* as “**sons of God.**”

(Daniel C. Peterson, “‘Ye Are Gods’: Psalm 82 and John 10 as Witnesses to the Divine Nature of Humankind,” in *The Disciple as Scholar: Essays on Scripture and the Ancient World in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, edited by Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges. Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2000, p. 487,490.)

(Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical & Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Volume Two: Second Nephi through Jacob*, p. 46-47.)

2 Nephi 2:19 **Adam:**

In Lehi's discussion of the Fall to his son Jacob, "Adam" is mentioned (2 Nephi 2:19). According to Arthur Bailey, in Hebrew, *Adam*, means "man" or "mankind"; the scriptures provide the following meanings of the name--"first man" (D&C 84:16), "man" (Moses 1:34), and "first father" (Abraham 1:3), all denoting his historical role as the grand progenitor of the entire human family. *Michael*, meaning "who is like God" (Bible Dictionary, s.v. "Michael"), is also identified as the archangel (see D&C 29:"26). (Arthur A. Bailey, "What Modern Revelation Teaches About Adam," in *The Ensign*, January 1998, p. 27.)



2 Nephi 2:19 **Adam and Eve . . . were driven out of the Garden of Eden (Illustration):**
 Leaving the Garden of Eden. Artist: Joseph Brickey. [LDS Church, *The Ensign*, January 1998, p. 17.]

2 Nephi 2:19 **(Adam and Eve):**

A Latter-day Saint View of Adam

The left column lists the Bible’s teachings about Adam; the right column lists additional information restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

What the Bible Teaches

Pre-Eden

[no items]

What Latter-day Revelation Adds

Pre-Eden

- Adam dwelt with God as a spirit (see Teachings, 158).
- He was chosen to be the mortal head of the human family (see Teachings, 158).
- He is Michael, the Ancient of Days, the archangel, the leader of the heavenly forces who cast Lucifer from heaven (see D&C 27:11; Rev. 12:7–9).

- He received the priesthood keys of the First Presidency before the world was formed (see Teachings, 157).

Eden

Eden

- Adam was created and was placed in the garden (see Gen. 2:7–8).
- He was the first man (see 1 Cor. 15:45).
- He gave names to all living creatures (see Gen. 2:19–20).
- Eve was created (see Gen. 2:21–22).
 - Adam and Eve were married in the Garden of Eden (see History of the Church, 2:320).
- Adam and Eve transgressed (see Gen. 3:1–6).
 - They fell “that men might be” (2 Ne. 2:25; see also Teachings, 12).
- They made aprons and hid from the Lord (see Gen. 3:7–8).
- God instructed Adam and Eve (see Gen. 3:16–17).
- The Lord gave them coats of skins (see Gen. 3:21).
- They were driven from Eden (see Gen. 3:23–24).

Mortality

Mortality

- Their transgression brought death into the world (see 1 Cor. 15:22).
 - They suffered spiritual death (see D&C 29:41).
- They kept records (see Gen. 5:1).
 - They had a pure and undefiled language (see Moses 6:6).
 - They were commanded to worship and offer sacrifice (see Moses 5:5).
 - Adam was taught by angels (see Moses 5:6–8; D&C 29:42).
 - He received the Holy Ghost (see Moses 5:9).
 - They comprehended reasons for the Fall and rejoiced (see Moses 5:10–11).
- They had children (see Gen. 4:1–2, 25).
 - They taught the gospel to their children (see Moses 5:12).
 - They experienced sorrow because of their children’s transgressions (see Moses 5:27).

- They were forgiven of their transgression in Eden (see Moses 6:53).
 - Adam was baptized and born of the Spirit (see Moses 6:64–65).
 - He was given the priesthood in mortality (see Teachings, 157).
 - He ordained righteous brethren to important callings in the priesthood (see D&C 107:39–53).
- Adam lived 930 years in mortality (see Gen. 5:5).
 - He dwelt at Adam-ondi-Ahman (see D&C 117:8).
 - As a prophet he was a type, or foreshadowing, of Christ (see Rom. 5:14).
 - Three years before his death, he gathered and blessed his posterity (see D&C 107:53–57).

Postmortality

[no items]

Postmortality

- He stands next to Jesus Christ in priesthood authority (see Teachings, 158).
- Under Jesus Christ, Adam holds the keys of all dispensations (see History of the Church, 4:207–8).
- Adam directs the restoration of ordinances even in our time (see History of the Church, 4:207).
- He was seen in the celestial kingdom by the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 137:5).

(Arthur A. Bailey, "What Modern Revelation Teaches About Adam," in *The Ensign*, January 1998, p. 20-27.)

2 Nephi 2:24 All Things Have Been Done in the Wisdom of Him Who Knoweth All Things. Adam Fell:

The Book of Mormon teaches that the fall of Adam was no surprise to the Lord, but was actually expected according to the fore-knowledge of God, and was part of his original plan (see 2 Nephi 2:22-25). In 2 Nephi 2:24-26 we find that, "all things have been done in the wisdom of Him who knoweth all things. Adam fell that men might be; and men are that they might have joy. And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall."

Richardson, Richardson and Bentley write that many churches teach that the fall of Adam was a surprise to God--a terrible blunder that disrupted his plans and sent him searching for a solution of redemption for all mankind. Some of these churches are critical of the LDS Church for its stand on the Fall. It is ironic that Bible-believing Christians would believe notions which are contrary to the Bible. The Bible teaches that as the fall was anticipated, likewise, the atonement of Christ was planned from the beginning. In Revelation 13:8, the apostle John speaks of the "Lamb slain before the foundation of the world." This means that the atonement was anticipated even before the world was created. Clearly, if the atonement was anticipated, the reason for the atonement or the fall was also anticipated.

It is interesting that according to ancient texts, the early Christians in the Old World looked upon the fall of Adam as a great blessing. If it was to be considered by some to be iniquity, they preferred to call it "blessed iniquity." (Seach, *Ancient Texts and Mormonism*, p. 41.)^{vi}

(Allen H. Richardson, David E. Richardson and Anthony E. Bentley, *1000 Evidences for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Part Two-A Voice from the Dust: 500 Evidences in Support of the Book of Mormon*, p. 40).

2 Nephi 2:25 **Adam Fell:**

John Tvedtnes has some interesting commentary regarding the fall of Adam (2 Nephi 2:25). He writes that according to Jewish tradition, after the fall of Adam the Lord provided garments of skin to Adam and Eve: "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21). However, according to the *Midrash Rabbah*, Rabbi Meir's copy of the Torah or Law of Moses indicated that Adam and Eve received garments of light, not of skin.^{vii} Just why some traditions have the garments of the first couple made of light, while others of skin might be related to the fact that the two Hebrew words for "light" and "skin" differ in but the initial letters, and are pronounced alike in modern Hebrew.

Tradition usually indicates that Adam and Eve were given garments of light before the fall.^{viii} When they sinned, God stripped them of the garment of light.^{ix} Abkir commented, "God made the high-priestly garments for Adam which were like those of the angels; but when he sinned, God took them away from him."^x . . . The garment of light, according to some accounts, was replaced by its earthly symbol, a garment of skin, after the fall.^{xi} By this reckoning, the garment of skin given to the first human couple was their own skin, not that of animals.

The *Book of the Rolls* informs us that when Adam was created, "his body was bright and brilliant like the well-known stars in the crystal."^{xii} When Adam and Eve were placed on earth, "God clothed them with glory and splendour. They outvied one another in the glory with which they were clothed."^{xiii} At the time of the fall, "they were bereft of their glory, and their splendour was taken from them, and they were stripped of the light with which they had been clothed . . .

They were naked of the grace which they had worn . . . they made to themselves aprons of fig-leaves, and covered themselves therewith."^{xiv}

If one follows the reasoning of these stories, the serpent was the cause of Adam and Eve's becoming naked,^{xv} and their "nakedness" was the loss of their premortal glory. For example, in one account, Eve says: "And at that very moment my eyes were opened and I knew that I was naked of the righteousness with which I had been clothed. And I wept saying, "Why have you done this to me, that I have been estranged from my glory with which I was clothed?"^{xvi} From this account, the "nakedness" of Adam and Eve was spiritual in nature, that is, they lost their special covering of light (also termed "glory" and "righteousness"), which was subsequently replaced by the garments of skin. . . . This makes sense when one considers that the Hebrew root for "nakedness" ('*rh*) may be related to the word for "skin" ('*or*). . . .

This connection of "nakedness" with the absence of glory is reflected in the story of Zosimus. Arriving in a distant land to which he had been miraculously conveyed, Zosimus encounters a Rechabite [see the commentary on 1 Nephi 2:5] and asks him, "Why are you naked?"^{xvii} The man replies, "You are he [who is] naked, and you do not discern that your garment is corrupt, but my own garment is not corrupted."^{xviii}

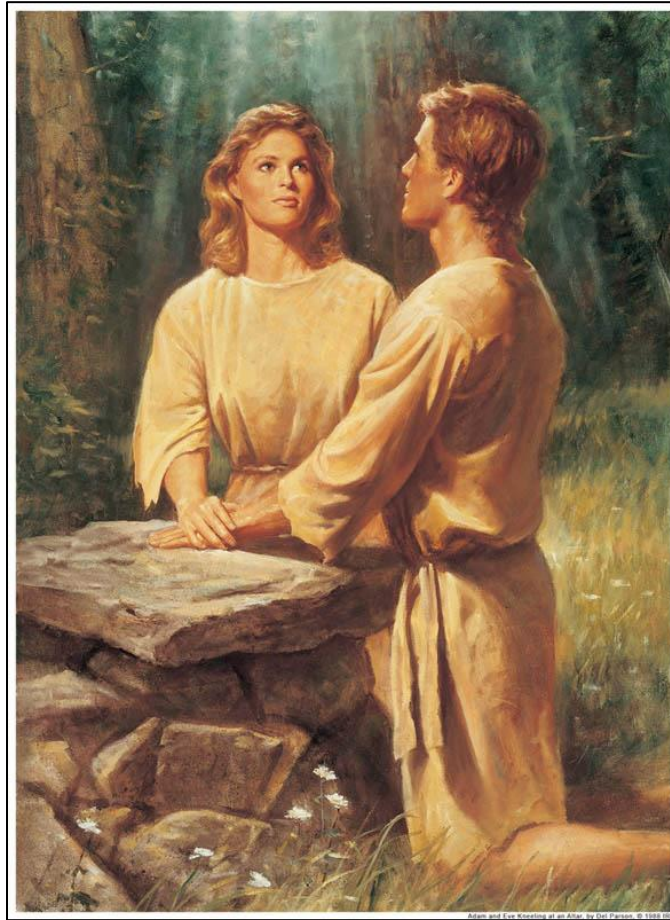
But we are naked not as you suppose, for we are covered with a covering of glory; and we do not show each other the private parts of our bodies. But we are covered with a stole of glory [similar to that] which clothed Adam and Eve before they sinned.^{xix}

(John A. Tvedtnes, "Priestly Clothing in Bible Times," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, p. 649-654.)
[See the commentary on "skin of blackness" in 2 Nephi 5:21; see also the commentary on Rechabites in 1 Nephi 2:5]

2 Nephi 2:25: **Adam Fell:**

According to an article by Bruce Pritchett, though the Old Testament never refers to Adam's sin by using the word *fall*, it does teach or reflect the following basic elements of this doctrine in various scriptures: (1) that Adam's sin resulted in a metamorphosis from immortality to mortality; (2) that mankind inherited its mortal state from Adam; (3) that all mankind has fallen into sin; and (4) that evil and suffering in the world could be for man's benefit as well as his punishment. These doctrines were brought together by the Prophet Lehi in one of the most complete discourses on the fall recorded. Some authors have claimed that Lehi's teachings on the fall of Adam are so similar to teachings prevalent in nineteenth-century America that they must be the source for 2 Nephi 2. However, evidence can be established that the bulk of well-recognized scholarly authority attributes teachings very similar to those in 2 Nephi 2 to preexilic and exilic biblical writers such as Hosea and Ezekiel. Thus, Lehi's teachings are more consistent with a preexilic/exilic Israelite context than a nineteenth-century American context. [Bruce M. Pritchett,

Jr., "Lehi's Theology of the Fall in Its Preexilic/Exilic Context," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Fall 1994, F.A.R.M.S., p. 49, 77.)



2 Nephi 2:25 **Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy (Illustration):** Adam and Eve Kneeling at an Altar. Adam and Eve carried out an important part of God's plan. If they had remained in the Garden of Eden they would not have progressed and Heavenly Father would not have been able to send His spirit children to the earth. That is why Lehi said, "Adam fell that men might be." Artist: Del Parson. (Thomas R. Valletta ed., *The Book of Mormon for Latter-day Saint Families*, 1999, p. 76.)

2 Nephi 2:26 **The Messiah Cometh in the Fulness of Time:**

Robert Millett and Joseph McConkie write:

"The expression used here has reference to the day of Christ's mortal ministry, usually designated as the meridian of time. Using the same expression as Nephi, Paul wrote, 'When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons' (Galatians 4:4-5). Paul also spoke of 'the dispensation of the fulness of times' as the day in which we live- the day in which all things are to be restored (see

Ephesians 1:10). Those living before Christ's earthly ministry would properly see his coming as a time of fulness or a time of completion not only of the law of Moses but also of thousands of messianic prophecies. In the revelations of the Restoration the phrase is used to identify our dispensation as the fulness of all past dispensations (see D&C 27:13; D&C 121:31; D&C 124:41; D&C 128:18, 20)."

(McConkie and Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, vol. 1, p. 191.)

2 Nephi 2:27 They Are Free to Choose Liberty and Eternal Life . . . Or Captivity and Death (Prophetic Parallelism):

According to Donald Parry, parallelism is universally recognized as the characteristic feature of biblical Hebrew poetry. (p. i)

Apparently, **the prophets and writers of the scriptures employed the repetition of alternating parallel lines for the purpose of reinforcing their teachings and doctrines.** (p. x)

One type of alternate parallelism is called "antime." It takes a simple alternating form A-B/A-B. , but cites opposite alternatives.)

A fine example of this Antime Alternating Parallelism is found in 2 Nephi 2:27-29 which speaks of how Christ has made men to choose liberty and eternal life or captivity and death:

27 Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man.

- A And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life,
- B through the great Mediator of all men,
- A or to choose captivity and death,
- B according to the captivity and power of the devil;

for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.

28 And now, my sons, I would that ye should look to the great Mediator, and hearken unto his great commandments; and be faithful unto his words,

- A and choose eternal life,
- B according to the will of his Holy Spirit;
- 29 A And not choose eternal death,
- B according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein,

which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate, to bring you down to hell, that he may reign over you in his own kingdom.

(Donald W. Parry, The Book of Mormon text Reformatted according to Parallelistic Patterns, F.A.R.M.S., p. 55.)

Chapter 3

2 Nephi chapter 3-- chapter 5 (**Preservation and Deliverance**)

According to Catherine Thomas, three main ideas appear in 2 Nephi chapter 3→ chapter 5: Joseph in Egypt, Nephi's psalm, and the mark of the dark skin. At first glance they seem disparate subjects, but on deeper inspection the reader may see that a major thread of the entire Book of Mormon laces these chapters together, namely, the promise of deliverance, national and personal.

In Chapter 3 Joseph of Egypt looked down through millennia with his seer's eye and saw the hand of God at work in the preservation and deliverance of his seed.

In chapter 4 Nephi received a personal deliverance from the Lord.

In chapter 5 the Lamanites rejected the Lord's deliverance and waded through centuries of suffering.

Insight into the redeemer's power, love, and commitment to his children abounds in these chapters.

[Catherine Thomas, "A Great Deliverance," in Studies in Scripture: Book of Mormon, Part 1, p. 103]

2 Nephi 3:1-25 (**Blessing of Joseph--Chiasm**):

Shirley Heater has discovered that Lehi's blessing to his son Joseph (2 Nephi 3) is a beautiful chiastic structure.

Lehi is probably reading this prophecy to his son Joseph directly from the brass plates. Hebrew children were often given a name of significance and then reminded by their parents to live up to the name. In this case, Joseph was undoubtedly named for Joseph of Egypt after Lehi discovered his lineage was through Manasseh, the son of Joseph of Egypt (see 1 Nephi 5:14; Alma 10:3).

In his final blessing to his son Joseph, Lehi thought it appropriate to remind him of his namesake and of the prophecies connected with the tribe of Joseph which were to be fulfilled at a future time. By reading this prophecy which was originally given to Joseph of Egypt directly by the Lord, Lehi is transmitting the promises given to the first Joseph to his son Joseph. It is exciting to realize that Lehi designed the center point of his last message to his son Joseph to be a

restatement of the covenant made by the Lord to Joseph of Egypt: his seed would be restored to a knowledge of the covenants of the Lord as well as their heritage as part of the house of Israel. . . .

Lehi's careful chiasmic structuring of his son's blessing confirms to us once again that understanding the Hebrew nature of the Book of Mormon is indeed a key to understanding the message of the book!

Verse #

1 A speak
2 B thy brethren
3 C Joseph
3 D may the Lord bless thee
3 E thy seed shall not be utterly destroyed
4 F **covenants**
4 G Joseph
5 H Joseph
5 I remembered in the **covenants**
5 J unto them
5 K in the latter days
6 L a seer shall the Lord my God raise up which shall be a choice seer unto
 the fruit of my loins
7 M Thus saith the Lord unto me
9 N Moses
9 O I have said I would raise up
10 P Moses
11 Q power
11 R bring forth my word
12 S fruit of thy loins
12 T confounding
12 U **bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers**
12 U' **and also to the knowledge of my covenants**
14 T' confounded
14 S' fruit of my loins
15 R' the thing which the Lord shall bring forth
15 Q' power
16 P' Moses
17 O' the Lord hath said I will raise up
17 N' Moses
18 M' the Lord said unto me also
18 L' I will raise up unto the fruit of thy loins and I will make or him a
 spokesman
20 K' after many generations have gone

20 J' by them
 21 I' remembering of my **covenant**
 22 H' Joseph
 22 G' my father
 23 **F' covenant**
 23 E' thy seed shall not be destroyed
 25 D' blessed art thou
 25 C' Joseph
 25 B' thy brother
 25 A' spoken

The chiastic center point (U and U') emphasizes the covenant made to the seed of Joseph of Egypt. [Shirley R. Heater, "Lehi's Blessing to His Son Joseph," in Recent Book of Mormon Developments, Vol. 2, p. 55]

2 Nephi 3:1-25 Joseph (the Four Joseph's):

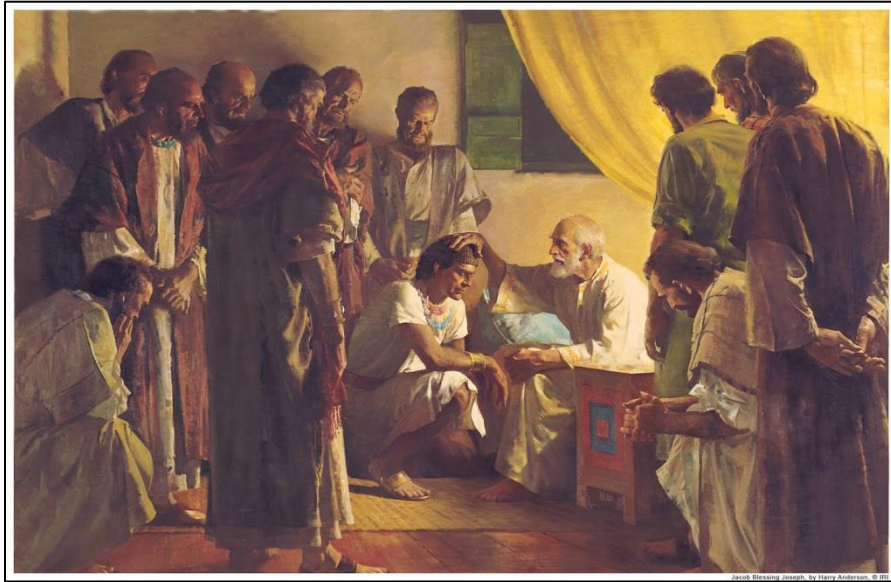
According to Daniel Ludlow, four different men named Joseph are referred to in 2 Nephi chapter 3 as follows:

- (1) Joseph who was sold into Egypt; he is also known as Joseph the son of Jacob (Israel) -- verses 4-22.
- (2) Joseph the son of Lehi -- verses 1-3, 22-25.
- (3) Joseph Smith, Sr., the father of the prophet -- verse 15.
- (4) Joseph Smith, Jr., the prophet -- verses 7-9,11,14-15,18-19.

[Daniel H. Ludlow, A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon, p. 128]

The Four Josephs

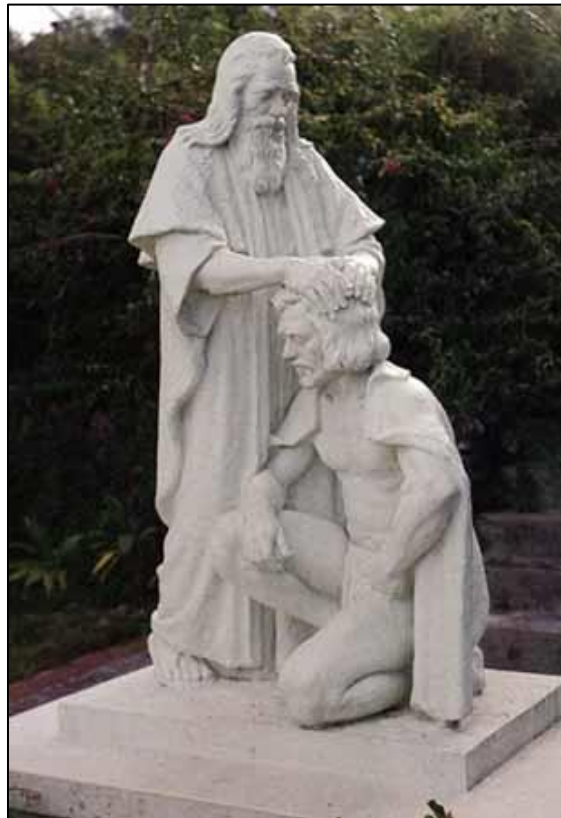
Joseph son of Jacob



Jacob (Israel) Blessing Joseph by Harry Anderson

mormonible.org

Joseph son of Lehi



The Avard Fairbanks statue: Lehi blesses his son Joseph. This statue stands in a secluded courtyard behind the Hawaiian Temple. Oluf Christian Larsen was the model for Lehi. Photo: www.avardfairbanks.com.

Joseph Smith, Sr.



Joseph Smith, Sr. answerparty.com

Joseph Smith, Jr.



Joseph Smith, Jr. being blessed by Peter James & John

2 Nephi 3:1 **My Last-born . . . in the Wilderness:**

According to John Tvedtnes, Lehi apparently named his sons Jacob and Joseph after their distant ancestors Jacob and Joseph. Lehi termed Joseph "my last-born . . . born in the wilderness of mine afflictions" and spoke to him of his inheritance in the New World, calling it "a most precious land" (2 Nephi 3:1-2). He then went on to speak of their common ancestor, Joseph, who had been sold into Egypt (see 2 Nephi 3:4). The original Joseph was the last-born son of the patriarch Jacob (Israel) before he returned to the land promised to him (see Genesis 28:13-15). It is significant, therefore that Lehi's son Joseph was born in the wilderness, then went, as his ancestor Joseph, with his father to a land of promise. [John A. Tvedtnes, "Firstborn in the Wilderness," in Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., 1999, pp. 63-65; see also Journal of Book of Mormon Studies 3/1 (1994): 207-209] [See the commentary on 2 Nephi 2:1]

2 Nephi 3:3 **Thy Seed Shall Not Utterly Be Destroyed:**

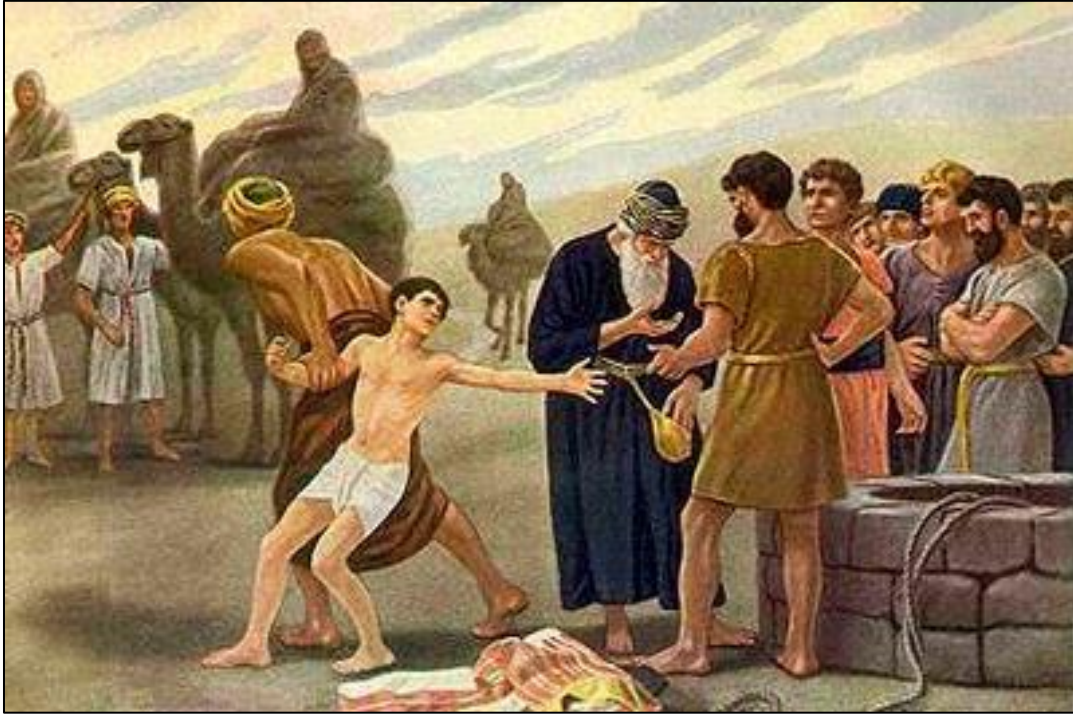
Question: If the Nephites were destroyed in 385 AD, how could the descendants of Joseph, presumably numbered with the Nephites, have survived this great battle?

Answer: It should be remembered that the division of the people into these two camps, the Nephites and the Lamanites, is a vast oversimplification. Jacob records, Now the people which were not Lamanites were Nephites; nevertheless, they were called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites. 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 (Jacob 1:12-13). The Book of Mormon record states that there were Lamanites among the Nephites and Nephites among the Lamanites. These had chosen their allegiance based on religious and political lines and not racial lines. Therefore, it should not be surprising that the promise was given to Joseph that some of his seed would be preserved even after the final destruction of the Nephites. This means that some Josephites who had defected to the Lamanite side would merge with Lamanite society (see Alma 45:13) and the blood of Joseph would be preserved. Doctrine & Covenants 3:16-17 explains that the blood of Joseph, Jacob, Nephi and Zoram was preserved and that the testimony of the Book of Mormon was to come to their descendants in the last days.

[josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

2 Nephi 3:4 **I Am A Descendant of Joseph Who Was Carried Captive into Egypt:**

The Life of Joseph son of Jacob (Israel)



Joseph sold into slavery

biblestudyresources.org

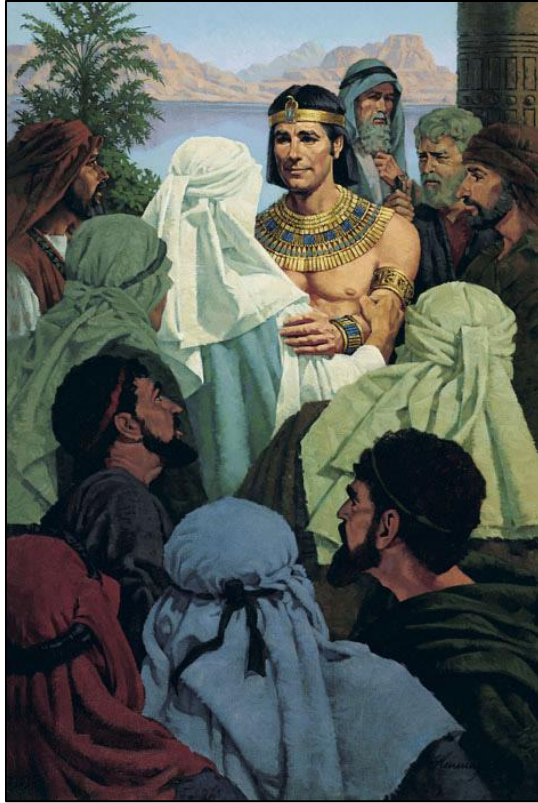
2 Nephi 3:4 I am a descendant of Joseph who was carried captive into Egypt (Illustration):

Joseph sold into slavery. Biblestudyresources.org.



Joseph Provided Grain (Bread) in a Famine From the Tomb of Joseph in Egypt biblearchaeology.org

2 Nephi 3:4 I am a descendant of Joseph who was carried captive into Egypt. And great were the covenants of the Lord which he made unto Joseph (Illustration): Joseph of Egypt Making Grain Available during Famine. Artist: Robert T. Barrett. [L.D.S. Church, The Ensign, March 1990, inside front cover]

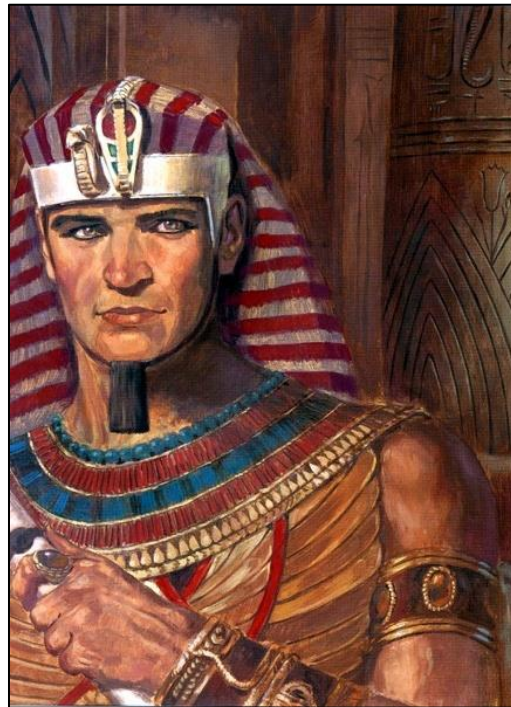


2 Nephi 3:4 I am a descendant of Joseph who was carried captive into Egypt. And great were the covenants of the Lord which he made unto Joseph (Illustration): Joseph Making Himself Known to His Brothers. Artist: Ted Henninger. [L.D.S. Church, The Ensign, October 1987, inside back cover]



Joseph and His Brothers in Egypt

hookedonthebook.com



Joseph of Egypt

2 Nephi 3:4 **I am a descendant of Joseph who was carried captive into Egypt (Illustration):** Joseph of Egypt. Joseph who was sold into Egypt saw the latter days. He spoke of Joseph Smith when he testified, "A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins." Artist: Robert T. Barrett. [Thomas R. Valletta ed., The Book of Mormon for Latter-day Saint Families, 1999, p. 78]



Joseph, Our Patriarchal Ancestor – Prime Minister of Egypt for 80 Years

2 Nephi 3:4 **I am a descendant of Joseph who was carried captive into Egypt (Illustration):** "Joseph, our patriarchal ancestor, was prime minister of Egypt for 80 years. He lived approximately 1,771 to 1,661 B.C.," by A&OR. [W. Cleon Skousen, Treasures from the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, p. 1200]

2 Nephi 3:4 **And Great Were the Covenants of the Lord Which He Made unto Joseph:**

As patriarch of the house of Israel, just before his death Moses blessed the various tribes of Israel (Deuteronomy 33:1). Richardson, Richardson and Bentley note that in the blessing to the tribe of Joseph (Deuteronomy 33) we find an interesting prophecy about the descendants of Joseph:

And of Joseph he [Moses] said, *Blessed of the Lord be his land*, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, And for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren.

His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: And they are the ten thousands of Ephraim and they are the thousands of Manasseh. (Deuteronomy 33:13-17)

Concerning this scripture, Elder LeGrand Richards wrote the following:

When this blessing was given by Moses, the patriarch, it is clear that he first had in mind the new land that would be given to Joseph which would be abundantly blessed of the Lord to produce precious fruits of the land and the precious things of the lasting hills and of the ancient mountains.

When the descendants of Joseph were led to this land of America about 600 B.C., they were told that it would be a land choice above all other lands [see 2 Nephi 1:5]. The reading of Moses' blessing to Joseph indicates that Moses was impressed with this fact and attempted to so describe it. He further indicated that it would be in the "ancient mountains" and the "everlasting hills." The land to which they were led was in the western part of South, Central, and North America, in the Rocky Mountains, which accurately answers Moses' description.

Then Moses further indicated that the good will of him who dwelt in the bush (referring to the God of Israel who dwelt in the burning bush--see Exodus 3:2) would be upon Joseph who was separated from his brethren. Then he refers to his glory as like "the firstling of his Bullock," or the firstborn or heir of his father, and we have already pointed out how Joseph became heir to the birthright. Moses looked beyond to the power and authority that should be given to Joseph's seed and added: "he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh" (see Deuteronomy 33:17). This seems to look forward to the establishment of the kingdom of God in the earth in the latter-days, which we have previously outlined, and the gathering of Israel. (Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* [1950], pp. 64-66)

In a time previous to Moses' blessing, Isaac's son Jacob had called his children to him and blessed them just prior to his death: "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you *in the last days*. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob: and hearken unto Israel your father" (Genesis 49:1-2).

Of these verses, Elder LeGrand Richards commented:

It is suggested the reader study the entire chapter [of Genesis 49] noting the great difference in the respective blessing. Now let us give careful consideration to the special blessing Joseph received from his father:

Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty,

who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb; The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren (Genesis 49:22-26).

This blessing is very similar to that given by Moses, and begins with references to the land to which Joseph's seed would go: "A fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall." This seems consistent to assume that the ocean was regarded as the wall over which Joseph's branches were to run "unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills." Then Jacob indicated that Joseph would be blessed "with the blessings of heaven above . . . blessings of the breasts, and of the womb," indicating that his posterity would be great, and that his blessings would prevail above the blessings of his progenitors. (Richards, *A Marvelous Work*, pp. 64-66)

[Allen H. Richardson, David E. Richardson and Anthony E. Bentley, [1000 Evidences for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Part Two-A Voice from the Dust: 500 Evidences in Support of the Book of Mormon](#), pp. 84-85]

Note* By what "patriarchal" authority did Moses give his blessing to Joseph's posterity? Joseph's line held the birthright. Did Moses have some of the blood of Joseph in him? [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See Richard Anthony's commentary on 2 Nephi 7; see also the commentary on 2 Nephi 1]

2 Nephi 3:4 I Am a Descendant of Joseph:

It is not until Alma 10:3 that we learn that Lehi was a descendant of Manasseh, the son of Joseph of Egypt, who was the son of Jacob (Israel). Lehi's descent through Joseph is crucial to understanding the prophecies of Joseph regarding the family of Lehi. It is also crucial to the "stick of Joseph" doctrine found in Ezekiel 37:16.

[josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

2 Nephi 3:4 And Great Were the Covenants of the Lord Which He Made unto Joseph:

Kristian Heal presented a paper at a FARMS "brown-bag" forum in which he reviewed a number of comparisons made between the life of Joseph recorded in ancient Syriac Literature and the life of Jesus. The origins of Christianity in Edessa (modern Urfa in southeast Turkey) are shrouded in mystery. The traditional story, known to Eusebius and related at the end of Book 1 of *Ecclesiastical History*, tells of how Abgar, King of Edessa, upon hearing of the miracles of Jesus sent

a letter requesting that Jesus come to Edessa to heal him. Jesus replies by letter promising that one of his disciples will be sent in due course. After the resurrection, Thaddeus is sent to preach in Edessa by Thomas. Eusebius reports to have made a copy of the original correspondence between Abgar and Jesus when he visited the city archives in Edessa, a translation of which he quotes in full in the text of his history.

The Old Testament Patriarch Joseph was a favorite theme of Syriac authors during the Golden age. Several extensive retellings of the Joseph story survive. Joseph's life is seen as typifying that of the Lord. For the benefit of the reader, Heal provides a detailed chart of comparisons in Syriac Literature between the life of Joseph and the life of Jesus.

Table of Comparisons between the Life of Joseph and the Life of Jesus

Abbreviations:

Ps.N.	Bedjian, Paulus, ed. <i>Homilae Mar Narsetis in Joseph</i> . Paris/Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1902.
(PN)	Quoted by page and line number.
Aphrahat (Aph.)	Parisot, D. Joannes, ed. <i>Aphraatis Sapientis Persae Demonstrationes</i> , Patrologia Syriaca, 1 & 2. Paris: Firmin-Didot et socii, 1894, 1907. Reprint, Brepols, 1903. Quoted by chapter and section number.
E.Gen.Com (EGC)	Toancau, R. M., ed. <i>Sancti Ephrem Syri in Genesim Et in Exodunt Commentarii, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium; V 152- 153</i> . Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1955.

Life of Joseph

Life of Jesus

Joseph is described as the Lamb (PN 6:14; 9:3; 17:13)

Jesus is referred to as the Lamb (John 1:29, 36)

Joseph clothed with a long sleeved coat by his father (Aph. 21:9)

The Father clothed Jesus in a body from a virgin

Joseph's father loved him more than his brothers (Aph. 21:9)

Jesus was the friend and beloved of the Father

Joseph saw visions and dreamed dreams (Aph. 21:9)

Jesus fulfilled visions and the prophets

Joseph dreamed dreams of his brothers but they did not believe him, rather they hated him (PN 43:22-44:3)

Jesus spoke with the crucifiers in Parables; the more He spoke the more they envied Him

Joseph was a shepherd with his brothers (Aph. 21:9)

Jesus was the chief of the shepherds

When Joseph was sent by his father to his brothers, they saw him coming and planned to kill him (Aph. 21:9)

When the Father sent Jesus to visit his brothers they said, "This Is the heir, come, let us kill him." (Matt. 21:38)

Reuben petitions for the life of Joseph (PN 8:11-20)

Pilate petitions for the life of Jesus (Cf. Matt. 27:2-2; 27:58-66;
Mark 15:1-15, 42-47; Luke 23:1-25, 50-53;
John 18:28-19:22, 31,38)

Joseph mocked prior to being cast into the pit (PN 8:21-9:3)

Jesus mocked prior to being crucified (Luke 23:36-38)

Life of Joseph

Life of Jesus

Joseph's brothers cast him into a pit (Aph. 21:9)

Jesus' brothers cast him in the grave

Joseph came up from the pit (Aph. 21:9)

Jesus came up from the grave

After he came from the pit, Joseph ruled over his brothers (Aph. 21:9)

After Jesus came up from the grave, His Father gave him an excellent and grand title so that his brothers were subject to him and his enemies were laid beneath his feet.

Joseph was sold into Egypt at the advice of Judah (Aph 21:9)

Jesus was delivered to the Jews by Judas Iscariot

Joseph to be sold to save his people (PN 14:1-10)

Jesus sold to save all mankind (Matt 27:3-5)

When his brothers sold Joseph he did not speak a word (Aph. 21:9)

Jesus did not speak a word to the Judges who judged him (Acts 8:32-35)

Joseph calls out to his lord and his mother when he is led off to Egypt (PN 13:15)

Jesus calls out to His lord and his Mother when he is crucified (John 19:25-27; Matt 27:46)

Joseph's master delivered him unjustly to prison (Aph 21:9)

The sons of His people condemned Jesus unjustly

Potiphar's wife offers to make him Lord of all the house instead of Potiphar if he will lie with her (PN 19:1-3; 20:4)

Satan offers to give Jesus the whole world if He will worship him (Matt 4:8-9)

Potiphar petitions for the life of Jesus (PN 24:1-9)

Pilate petitions for the life of Jesus

Joseph's mistress confined him in Prison (Aph 21:9)

Zion confined our savior in the tomb

Joseph gave up his garments twice; once by means of his brothers, and once by the hand of his master's wife (Aph 21:9)

Jesus yielded up his garments and the soldiers divided them

among themselves

Joseph is thrown into the pit and into prison naked (PN 21:7-11)

Jesus is hung upon the cross naked (Matt 27:28)

Joseph has the keys to the Prison (PN 25:20)

Jesus had the keys to release the dead (Rev. 1:18)

Life of Joseph

Life of Jesus

Joseph in Prison for three years after he interprets the dreams (PN 28:16)

Jesus in the tomb for 3 days and then is resurrected

Joseph went out from prison and took off his garments (PN 44:10-11)

Our lord went out from the tomb and put on glory

**Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh
and became a lord for Egypt (Aph 21:9)**

*Jesus came, as a thirty-year-old, to the Jordan to be baptized;
and he received the spirit and went out to preach*

**Joseph interpreted dreams for the Egyptians
and they believed him (PN 44:4-5)**

The Gentiles believed the Lord and his parables

**Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams correctly and
he sat upon the throne and was king over all Egypt (PN 44;11-15)**

*The Lord revealed himself to the disciples and ascended and sat
on the right hand side of His Father who sent Him*

Pharaoh clothed Joseph in Glorious robes (PN 32:11)

*Jesus will be seen in his robes of glory at the second coming
(Matt 24:30; 25:31)*

Joseph meets and forgives Potiphar (PN 32:2-37:5; EGC XXXV, 7-9)

*Jesus will stand to judge all those who persecuted and crucified
him (cf. Matt 25:32)*

Joseph took the daughter of a wicked and foul priest [to wife] (Aph 21:9)

Jesus took to Himself the church from the unclean nations

Joseph provided for the Egyptians with bread (Aph 21:9)

Jesus provided for the whole world with the bread of life

Joseph purchased the whole of Egypt with ordinary bread (PN 44:16-17)

*The Lord of Joseph purchased the whole of creation with his
body and his blood*

**When Joseph saw his brothers they were ashamed and
afraid and marveled at his majesty (Aph 21:9)**

*When Jesus comes in the latter time, when he is revealed in his
majesty, His brothers will be ashamed and afraid and
greatly alarmed, for the crucified him aforetime.*

All the sons of Israel bow down and worship before Joseph (PN 43:9-16)

*When Jesus comes again, Israel will bow down and worship
Him*

Joseph revealed himself to his brothers in the chamber (PN 44:6-7)

*The Lord of Joseph revealed Himself to his disciples in the upper
room*

Joseph died and was buried in Egypt (Aph 21:9)

Jesus died and was buried in Jerusalem

Life of Joseph

Life of Jesus

Joseph's brothers took his bones up from Egypt (Aph 21:9)

*The Father raised Jesus up from the grave and took his
incorruptible body with him to Heaven*

Joseph was dishonored by men and honored by God (PN 37:22-38-1)

Jesus was dishonored by men and honored by God (John 5:44)

[Kristian Heal, "Jesus in the Syriac Retelling of the Joseph Story," presented at a FARMS brown-bag lecture, October 11, 2000]

2 Nephi 3:5 Joseph Truly Saw Our Day:

The conclusion that "Joseph truly saw our day" cannot be drawn from reading the Old Testament alone. All that is clear from reading Genesis is that Joseph knew the Lord would deliver the Israelites from Egypt, God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob (Gen 50:24). Lehi was apparently reading from a version of the Old Testament in which the plain and precious prophecies of Joseph had not been removed. Joseph Smith restored these prophecies in the Joseph Smith Translation for Gen 50:24-48. In fact, Lehi's discussion of what Joseph saw as contained in 2 Ne 3:5-18 is very similar to the JST for Gen 50. Lehi was basically repeating the prophecies which had been previously recorded.

A conclusion which can be drawn from our version of the Old Testament is that Joseph's father, Jacob had seen Lehi's day. This is evident in the patriarchal blessings which Jacob gave to his 12 sons. When speaking to Joseph he said, Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well whose branches run over the wall (Gen 49:22). Lehi's family was this branch which ran over the wall. LeGrand Richards taught that "the wall," or great barrier in those ancient days was the ocean which separated the continental masses. Elder Richards also makes it clear that the phrase, "utmost boundaries of the everlasting hills" spoken of in Gen 49:26 has reference to the Rocky Mountains of North and South America (see *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, p. 64).

2 Nephi 3:5 Joseph . . . Obtained a Promise . . . That . . . the Lord God Would Raise Up a Righteous Branch:

Lehi declared that Joseph of Egypt obtained a promise that “the Lord God would raise up a righteous branch” from his descendants. (2 Nephi 3:5). This righteous branch was Lehi’s family. The Joseph Smith Translation for Genesis 50:25 reads, “a branch shall be broken off, and shall be carried into a far country.”

Lehi continues to explain that the Messiah should be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the spirit of power, unto the bringing of them out of darkness unto light. One might be tempted to interpret this as having reference to the appearance of Christ to the Nephites and Lamanites. However, the Messiah is manifested “in the spirit of power,” or by the Holy Ghost. In other words, the Lord would be manifested to the descendants of the branch of Lehi when the Gentiles of the last dispensation would take the gospel to the American Indians. The Lord can be made manifest to a people without physically appearing to them. The Gentiles of the early Christian era learned of the Messiah in this way, they understood me not that the Gentiles should not at any time hear my voice—that I should not manifest myself unto them save it were by the Holy Ghost (3 Ne 15:23). This interpretation is more consistent with the context of the next verse which speaks of the mission of Joseph Smith.

[josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

2 Nephi 3:5 Joseph . . . Obtained a Promise . . . That . . . the Lord God Would Raise Up a Righteous Branch:

In 2 Nephi 3:5 Lehi declares:

Wherefore, Joseph [of Egypt---son of Jacob (Israel)] truly saw our day. And he obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of his loins the Lord God would raise up a righteous branch unto the house of Israel; not the Messiah, but a branch which was to be broken off, nevertheless, to be **remembered in the covenants of the Lord** that the Messiah should be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the spirit of power, unto the bringing of them out of darkness unto light—yea, out of hidden darkness and out of captivity unto freedom.

As Lehi understands, his family’s journey to America fulfills a covenant promise made to their ancestor Joseph, the son of Jacob (Israel).

Joseph Fielding Smith writes:

There is a strong presumptive evidence in the blessings given by Israel to his son Joseph and his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh, as recorded in Genesis, that they were

to inherit a land far from Jerusalem and become a multitude of nations. Joseph was promised that his inheritance should be to the “utmost bounds of the everlasting hills” (Genesis 49:26), that he was “a fruitful bough by a well whose branches run over the wall” (Genesis 49:22). Moreover, he was to receive a greater inheritance than his progenitors, who were given the land of Palestine.

The Book of Mormon is the record of the descendants of Joseph who were led across the “great waters” to inherit this western land, which is designated as being choice above all other lands. Surely these blessings could not be realized in Palestine. Joseph and his sons did not become a multitude of nations there; the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh did not receive more wonderful inheritance in Palestine than any other of the tribes of Israel. There the chief honors were conferred first on Benjamin and then on Judah. Here in America all these promises were fulfilled when the descendants of Joseph possessed the land given as their inheritance.

[Joseph Fielding Smith, “Predictions in the Bible Concerning the Book of Mormon,” in A Book of Mormon Treasury: Selections from the Pages of the Improvement Era, pp. 191-192]

2 Nephi 3:6 For Joseph [the Ancient Patriarch of Egypt] Truly Testified:

According to Douglas and Robert Clark, the occasion of Joseph's prophecies (referred to in 2 Nephi 3:6) was, according to the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis, to his brethren just before he died (see JST Genesis 50:24). This was the same context in which the dying Lehi repeated those very prophecies to his son. But the pattern was far older than Joseph. Adam himself, according to both latter-day revelation (see D&C 107:53-56) and pseudepigraphical sources,^{xx} called together his righteous posterity shortly before his death to leave his final testimony, counsel, prophecies, and blessings. As reported in the pseudepigrapha, the pattern was followed in turn by all the antediluvian patriarchs,^{xxi} and later by Abraham,^{xxii} Jacob^{xxiii} (also reported in Genesis 48-49), and each of Jacob's twelve sons.^{xxiv} The brass plates would have contained at least the accounts of Joseph and Jacob, and probably of others as well.

[E. Douglas Clark and Robert S. Clark, Fathers and Sons in the Book of Mormon, pp. 26-27]

2 Nephi 3:6 For Joseph [the Ancient Patriarch] Truly Testified:

Walter Kaiser notes that the British Egyptologist Kenneth A. Kitchen has pointed to a number of social comparisons that are quite convincing in verifying the world and circumstances of the ancient patriarch Joseph as they are portrayed in Genesis.^{xxv} For example, Kitchen has detailed the escalating price of slaves from ancient Near Eastern sources to demonstrate that the price paid for Joseph (twenty shekels of silver according to Genesis 37:28) is most properly slotted for the Middle Bronze Age, the traditional age for the Patriarch. During the earlier Akkad Dynasty (2371-2191 B.C.), a slave brought between ten and fifteen shekels of silver, but the price dropped

to ten shekels during the Third Dynasty of Ur (2113-2006 B.C.) But in the second millennium, the first part of which was the time of the patriarchs, the price of slaves rose to twenty shekels, as seen in the Hammurabi Code, the Mari Tablets and elsewhere. By the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries, the price had crept up to thirty shekels at Nuzi and Ugarit, a price that matched exactly the identical period of biblical history in the Mosaic Law (Exodus 21:32).

The Egyptological background for the Joseph narrative found in Genesis 37-50 is becoming more fully documented as more discoveries come in. The Hebrew name Joseph seems to be one of the Amorite second millennium perfective names of the i/y class. Joseph was also given an Egyptian name, *Zaphenath-Paneah* (Genesis 41:45). This Egyptian name is a real Egyptian type that means "(the god) has said: he will live."

Joseph's entire life is connected with the significance of dreams. In this regard, the Egyptians seem to have surpassed their neighbors in the presence and interpretation of dreams. Egyptian literature records from the Middle Kingdom (about 2000 B.C.) onward an extraordinary number of dreams. Particularly noteworthy is Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream. The fact that a seven-year drought could occur has been attested at several points in Egypt's history due to the repeated low height of the Nile flood each year. It must crest at twenty-eight feet above zero datum level each year at Elephantine. However, should it only come up to twenty or twenty-one feet, crops would be off by 20 percent that year. Alternatively, should the water crest at thirty feet, it would sweep away the dikes and canal banks and there would be a loss of life as a result. Not only was precipitation low at the source of the Nile, but this condition appeared to have spread throughout large sections of Canaan and its neighboring lands. [Water C. Kaiser Jr., The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable & Relevant?, pp. 86-87, 94-96]

2 Nephi 3:6 **A Choice Seer unto the Fruit of My Loins:**

This choice seer is obviously Joseph Smith. The fact that he was raised up as a prophet for "the fruit of my loins" means that through his work the gospel would be preached to the Lamanites and that many of the early members of the church were actually part of scattered Israel, particularly of the tribe of Joseph.

That Joseph Smith was a descendant of Joseph of Egypt is clear from verse 7 as well as the teachings of the prophet himself. Joseph Smith taught that the patriarchal authority belonged to the blood of Joseph and he established his father, Joseph Smith, Sr. as the patriarch of the church. In a prophecy about his father, Joseph pronounced the same blessings on his father that Jacob had on Joseph, "he shall be as a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well whose branches run over the wall, and his seed shall abide in strength" [Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 39, 151].

Brigham Young declared:

“It was decreed in the counsels of eternity, long before the foundations of the earth were laid, that he, Joseph Smith, should be the man, in the last dispensation of this world, to bring forth the word of God to the people, and receive the fullness of the keys and power of the Priesthood of the Son of God. The Lord had his eyes upon him, and upon his father, and upon his father’s father, and upon their progenitors clear back to Abraham, and from Abraham to the flood, from the flood to Enoch, and from Enoch to Adam. He has watched that family and that blood as it has circulated from its fountain to the birth of that man. He was fore-ordained in eternity to preside over this last dispensation.” (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 108)

[K. Douglas Bassett, Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon, p.94]



2 Nephi 3:7 **Joseph truly said: Thus saith the Lord unto me: A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins (Illustration):** Joseph Sees Joseph [Paul Mann, Verse Markers, Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, p. 4]

2 Nephi 3:7 **He Shall Do a Work . . . Which Shall Be of Great Worth unto Them:**

LeGrand Richards writes concerning the work of Joseph Smith:

“Josiah Quincy, former mayor of Boston, had met the prophet Joseph Smith and was impressed with the fact that the world would yet have to account for his claims that he was a prophet sent of God:

“It is by no means improbable that some future textbook, for the use of generations yet unborn, will contain a question something like this: What historical American of the

nineteenth century has exerted the most powerful influence upon the destinies of his countrymen? And it is my no means impossible that the answer to that interrogatory may be thus written: Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet...’ (Josiah Quincy, Figure of the Past, Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1883, p. 376)

“...To provide a brief summation, we will mention some of the great truths upon which the Lord has shed his divine light through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith:

1. The true personality of God
2. Man’s true relationship to God
3. The proper foundation of the gospel
 - a. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
 - b. Repentance
 - c. Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins
 - d. Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost
4. An understanding of the difference between the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods (Hebrews 7:11-12)
5. An understanding of the different offices in these two priesthoods; the duties of each, the number required to form a quorum, etc.
6. The proper organization of the Church and its purpose
7. The correct name that the Church of Jesus Christ should bear
8. That the followers of Christ’s church were and should be called ‘saints’
9. Where we came from and that we lived before we were born
10. Why we are here upon the earth
11. The three degrees of Glory and what one must do to prepare for celestial glory
12. Who are to come forth in the first resurrection, and that the rest of the dead are not to come forth until the end of the thousand years, which will be the great judgment day
13. That obedience to the ordinances of the gospel is so necessary that the perfect plan of God provides for a vicarious work of the living for the dead, for the benefit of those to whom the gospel has not been preached or who have not accepted it in this life

14. That the gospel is being preached to the dead, and for what purpose
15. That the millennium of one thousand years has been provided to complete this work, without which the final judgment day should come at the beginning and not the end thereof
16. That the condition and time of one's life here upon the earth is as much the result of a life previously lived as the life to come will be the result of how we live and what we do in this life
17. That the church established by Christ in the meridian of time should fall into an apostate condition, of which fact both the ancient prophets and the apostles of the Master freely bore witness
18. That the prophets of the Old testament and the apostles of the New Testament predicted a complete restoration of 'all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began' (Acts 3:21), rather than a reformation to correct the false teachings of the churches
19. The meaning and fulfillment of the following prophecies:
- a. 'And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

'Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.' (Revelation 14:6-7.)
 - b. 'And he shall send Jesus Christ,...Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.' (Acts 3:20-21.)
 - c. 'Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.' (Malachi 3:1.)
 - d. 'Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

'Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall

perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.’ (Isaiah 29:13-14.)

e. ‘And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break into pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand for ever.’ (Daniel 2:44.)

20. That Elijah has been sent back to this earth, and for what purpose (Malachi 4:5-6)

21. Why there has been such a marvelous change in the world with respect to genealogical record keeping, genealogical organizations, societies, libraries, and research work

22. That marriage, according to the scriptures, was intended to be eternal

23. That the family unit is to endure beyond the grave

24. Why temples are erected unto the Most High, and for what purpose they are used

25. Where the temple is that Isaiah saw that should be built in the tops of the mountains in the last days (Isaiah 2:2-3)

26. That in case of sickness, we should call the elders of the Church to anoint the sick with oil (James 5:14-16)

27. The command of God to Ezekiel that two sticks (or records) should be kept, one of Judah and his companions and one of Joseph and his companions, and [what] these two records are (Ezekiel 37:15-19)

28. What people should speak out of the ground with a voice that hath a familiar spirit (Isaiah 29:1-4; 2 Nephi 25:7-8; 2Nephi 26:15-170)

29. What the ‘sealed book’ is to which Isaiah refers (Isaiah 29:11-12; 2Nephi 27:5-26)

30. To what people Jesus referred when he said, ‘Other sheep I have which are not of this fold’ (John 10:16; 3 Nephi 15:11-12)

31. The promises made to Joseph by his father Jacob, and by Moses, when he was promised a new land in ‘the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills’ (Genesis 49:22-26; Deuteronomy 33:13-18), and where that new land and the everlasting hills are to which they referred.” (A Marvelous Work and a Wonder, pp. 406-411)

Elder Richards continues to list another 11 items restored through the instrumentality of the prophet, Joseph Smith. He concludes, “Joseph Smith, or any other man, could not have obtained all this information by reading the Bible or from studying all the books that have ever been written. It came from God.”

[LeGrand Richards, A Marvelous Work and a Wonder, p. 411]

2 Nephi 3:8 He Shall Do None Other Work, Save the Work Which I shall Command Him:

Joseph Smith only lived 38 years. He accomplished the translation of the Book of Mormon, the establishment of the Lord's kingdom, the establishment of cities and an army, and the foundation of a way of life for thousands of followers. He did all this in the span of only 15 years. He was able to accomplish this much because this was to be his sole endeavor, and because it was the work of the Lord. The Lord explained, in temporal labors thou shalt not have strength, for this is not thy calling (DC 24:9).

[josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

2 Nephi 3:9 And He [Joseph] Shall Be Great Like unto Moses:

If Joseph Smith had written the Book of Mormon, one of the more preposterous claims that he would have had to propose to the world would be found in 2 Nephi 3. Here we find a prophecy directly linking and comparing a latter-day "Joseph" [Smith] with Moses:

And he [the modern-day Joseph] shall be great like unto Moses, whom I have said I would raise up unto you [the ancient Joseph of Egypt], to deliver my people, O house of Israel.

Not only would this comparison with Moses be a very tough hurdle for anyone, but it becomes doubly tough when taken together with another prophecy wherein a Prophet (Jesus Christ) was also "like unto" Moses (see 1 Nephi 22:20-21).

Thus, according to Almon Fackrell, if Joseph Smith really is who he says he is, and the Book of Mormon is true, then Joseph Smith should not only be "like unto" Moses, but "like unto" Jesus Christ. Towards this end, Fackrell lists 51 parallels relating to all three persons (see illustration). The following is a list of 22 out of the total of 51 parallels made by Almon Fackrell relating to Moses, Jesus, and Joseph Smith:

1. Moses, Jesus, and Joseph Smith are known all over the world; and millions believe they are prophets of God. (See *World Almanac* p. 718.)
2. For hundreds of years before their lives, the people of Moses, Jesus and Joseph Smith experienced a period of spiritual darkness. There were no prophets to receive revelation; direct communication from God had ceased. (Moses* See Genesis 15:13; Acts 7:6-7 and Exodus 12:40. Jesus* See Mark 7:6-9. Joseph Smith* See Mark 3:24; 2 Corinthians 14:33; J.S. History 1:18-19)

3. Moses, Jesus, and Joseph each ended the period of spiritual darkness. They ordained other prophets so that direct communication from God would continue again. (M* Numbers 27:18-23; Amos 3:7. J* Ephesians 4:11-14. JS* D&C preface; Article of Faith #6, #9)

4. An angel of God appeared when the first announcement was made of each of their missions. (M* Exodus 3:1-10. J* Luke 1:26-33. JS* JSH 1:30-35.)

5. God spoke to each of them face to face as a man speaks to a friend. (M* Exodus 33:11; Numbers 12:6-8; Deuteronomy 34:10. J* John 6:46; 10:15; Matthew 11:27. JS* Joseph Smith History 1:17-19)

6. They were all considered as unlearned and inadequate to perform any special mission. (M* Exodus 4:10. J* Matthew 13:54-58. 1 Corinthians 1:26-27. JS* In 1834 Isaac Hale, Joseph's father in law, is reported as saying this about Joseph: "His appearance at this time, was that of a careless young man - not very well educated . . ." -- Howe, p. 263)

7. Each had a spokesman to help prepare the way before them. (M* Exodus 3:10-11; 4:10-16. J* Luke 1:76-79. JS* 2 Nephi 3:16,18.)

8. They were all Israelites, being descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (M* Exodus 2:1-10. J* Matthew 1:1. JS* 2 Nephi 3:7-12.)

9. They each had a brother who became a high official among the people of God. (M* Exodus 4:14-30. J* Matthew 13:55-56; Galatians 1:18-19; Acts 1:15-26. JS* D&C 124:1,91-95.)

10. Each were criticized by members of their own family because of unbelief. (M* Numbers 12:1-9) J* John 7:3-8. JS* History of the Church 2:296-297, 338.)

11. Each went to their highest governing official for hearings, but to no avail. (M* Exodus 5:1-4. J* Luke 23:1,6-12. JS* History of the Church 4:40.)

12. They each performed more miracles than any other prophet in their era. (M* There are sixty-two incidents listed in the Old Testament which are classified as miracles. Twenty-two are attributed to Moses. The next highest number of miracles attributed to an Old Testament Prophet is twelve by Elisha. Joshua performed nine miracles and Elijah performed seven. . . . (see Regency Publishing House, pp. 661-662). J* There are seventy-one incidents listed in the New Testament which are classified as miracles. Thirty-eight of them are attributed to Jesus. The next highest number of miracles attributed to a New Testament personality is ten by Paul. Peter performed five . . . (see Regency Publishing House, pp. 663-664). JS* It is an accepted fact among the Latter-day Saints that Joseph performed more miracles than any other person since the restoration of the gospel.)

13. They each took three special witnesses and experienced a divine manifestation from God. (M* Exodus 24:1-10. J* Matthew 17:1-5. JS* The Book of Mormon, Testimony of Three Witnesses.)

14. In addition to the three special witnesses, they each had another group of witnesses who had a similar experience with them. (M* Exodus 24:1-2, 9-10. J* Acts 1:2-3. JS* The Book of Mormon, Testimony of Eight Witnesses.)

15. Witnesses testified that each of them were transfigured and their faces shone brightly. (M* Exodus 34:30-35. J* Matthew 17:1-2; Mark 9:2-3. JS* Shortly before his

martyrdom, Joseph saw in vision the mountainous valleys in the west to which his people would be driven. Anson Call, who was present at the time, recorded the event. 'I had before seen him in vision, and now saw while he was talking his countenance change to white; not the deadly white of a bloodless face, but a living brilliant white . . . It is impossible to represent in words this scene which is still vivid in my mind, of the grandeur of Joseph's appearance, his beautiful descriptions of this land, and his wonderful prophetic utterances as they emanated from the glorious inspiration that overshadowed him.' (Gibbons, pp. 40-41)

16. They were each mediators of the covenants of the saints in their dispensations. (M* Hebrews 8:4-7; 9:19-22. J* Hebrews 8:6; 9:15-16; 1 Timothy 2:5-6. JS* D&C 22:1-3; 28:2; 35:17; 112:15; 115:19.)

17. All three started a new dispensation of the gospel.

18. As major prophets, they were considered "as a god" to their people. (M* Exodus 4:16; 7:1; 18:19-20. J* Matthew 1:23; John 14:9-11. JS* History of the Church 6:319-320; Psalm 82:6; John 10:34-35).

19. Each organized a quorum of twelve men to stand with them as leaders to their people. (M* Numbers 1:4-16. J* Matthew 10:1-6. JS* History of the Church 2:181-187.)

20. Each organized seventy elders among the people. (M* Numbers 11:16-25. J* Luke 10:1, 17-20. JS* D&C 107:25-26; History of the Church 2:201-202.)

21. Each foretold their "deaths." They knew approximately when and where they would "die." (M* Deuteronomy 32:48-52. J* Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19. JS* History of the Church 6:555.)

22. Each freely offered to give their lives for their people. (M* Exodus 32:31-32. J* John 6:51; 10:15-18. JS* History of the Church 6:547-560.)

[Almon Fackrell, Parallels of Moses, Jesus and Joseph Smith, pp. 49-152] [See 2 Nephi 25:20]

2 Nephi 3:9 **And He [Joseph] Shall Be Great Like unto Moses:**

Reynolds and Sjodahl list the following similarities between Moses and Joseph Smith:

“(1) Both saw and spoke with Jehovah.

(2) Both were liberators who led multitudes in exodus for the sake of liberty from oppression.

(3) Both were law-givers by divine inspiration.

(4) Both were prophets and seers.

(5) Both performed mighty miracles.

(6) Both encountered opposition, from "friends" and enemies.

(7) Both depended largely on a brother for success: Moses on Aaron; Joseph on Hyrum.”

[Reynolds and Sjodahl, Commentary on the Book of Mormon, vol. 1, p. 253]

2 Nephi 3:9 (Similarities between Moses and Joseph Smith):

The following are similarities between Moses and Joseph Smith:

- (1) Moses delivered the children of Israel from spiritual bondage—Joseph delivered the people from spiritual bondage.
- (2) Moses gathered the children of Israel in a literal sense—Joseph gathered the children of Israel in a figurative, or spiritual sense.
- (3) Satan tried to destroy Moses by having the Hebrew firstborn killed (Ex 1:16)—Satan tried to destroy Joseph Smith at the first vision and on many other occasions.
- (4) Moses fought against the political forces of his day—Joseph fought the religious elements and bigotry of his day
- (5) Moses gave a new law with its associated covenants, priesthood, and temple ordinances—Joseph restored the greater law with its covenants, priesthood, and temple ordinances
- (6) Moses was given an assistant named Aaron—Joseph was given assistants who acted with the gift of Aaron (DC 8:6)

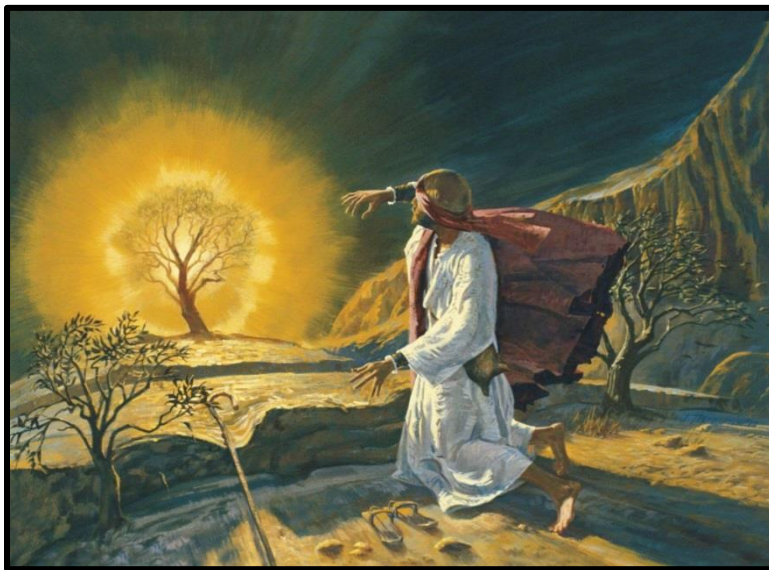
[josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

2 Nephi 3:10 **And Moses Will I Raise Up, to Deliver Thy People out of the Land of Egypt:**

Although in 2 Nephi 3:10 it is the Lord that is speaking about "Moses" who he would raise up to deliver the people of Joseph out of Egypt, we should keep in mind that it was Joseph of Egypt who apparently wrote this prophecy down. Whether he personally inscribed these prophecies on the brass plates or whether someone transcribed them at a later time is not mentioned. Nevertheless, if they were written down by Joseph one might ask, Why was the name "Moses" and the details of what Moses would do not known to the people of Joseph and possibly to Pharaoh at the time of Moses' birth? Perhaps they were.

Although the king over Egypt "knew not Joseph" (Exodus 12:8), the Pharaoh was ordering all sons born to the Israelites to be killed (Genesis 1:15-22). Could these actions have been partly based on the fact that Moses' name and mission were made known to Pharaoh? Was Pharaoh

reacting to prophecy in the same way Herod would order slaying of all children under the age of two in order to prevent Jesus from becoming King of the Jews? The Hebrew scriptures say that it was Pharaoh's daughter who "called his name Moses: and she said [that] because [she] drew him out of the water" (Exodus 2:10). Interestingly, the footnote for this verse in our present edition notes that the meaning of "Moses" in Egyptian was "To beget a child" and in Hebrew it was "To draw out." One might ask, did the Pharaoh's daughter intend to give her child an Egyptian name or a Hebrew name? And if it was an Egyptian name, why would the scriptures cite a Hebrew derivation? And if it was meant to be an Egyptian name, would the Pharaoh have recognized the double meaning of the name as it related to Joseph's prophecy? Interestingly, the idea of Moses' name being known well beforehand just as the idea of Jesus' name being known well beforehand has apparently been eliminated from the Hebrew scriptures.



2 Nephi 3:10 **Moses I will raise up to deliver my people (Illustration):** Moses and the Burning Bush. [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, [Gospel Art](#), #107]

Note* Moses and the Burning Bush:

George Peacock writes:

The text reads , "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and beheld the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed" (Exodus 3:2). We know the message of the fire (the glory of the Lord), but what is the message of a bush?

Idioms are words and phrases that express more than the actual words themselves. They are as real to the messages of holy scripture as are prophecies and parables. They paint mental or emotional images that bring events or feelings to the present quickly and with intensity. They describe the way things are without using lengthy explanations. . . . Idioms are meaningless if the reader or hearer has no experience with the message being conveyed. The words “Take time to smell the roses” says nothing about slowing down and appreciating what is around you. Furthermore, if you have never smelled roses or do not care for their aroma, this simple idiom will mean little to you.

[George M. Peacock, *Unlocking the Idioms: An LDS Perspective on Understanding Scriptural Idioms*, pp. ix, 81-82]



Moses and the Burning Bush

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2 Nephi 3:10 **Moses will raise up, to deliver my people (Illustration):** Moses and the Burning Bush

2 Nephi 3:11 **Convincing Them of My Word, Which Shall Have Already Gone Forth:**

According to McConkie and Millet, a primary purpose of the Book of Mormon is to convince the world that the testimony and teachings of the Bible are true. In 2 Nephi 3:11 we find the following:

But a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give power to bring

forth my word unto the seed of thy loins--and not to the bringing forth my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them.

Will Durant in his volume *Caesar and Christ* makes the following comment as his introduction to a consideration of the historicity of Christ and the Gospels:

One of the most far-reaching activities of the modern mind has been the "Higher Criticism" of the Bible--the mountainous attack upon its authenticity and veracity, countered by the heroic attempt to save the historical foundations of Christian faith; the results may in time prove as revolutionary as Christianity itself. The first engagement in this two-hundred-year war was fought in silence by Hermann Reimarus, professor of Oriental languages at Hamburg: on his death in 1768 he left, cautiously unpublished, a 1400-page manuscript on the life of Christ. Six years later Gotthold Lessing, over the protests of his friends, published portions of it as the *Wolfenbuttel Fragments*. Reimarus argued that Jesus can only be regarded and understood not as the founder of Christianity, but as the final and dominant figure in the mystical eschatology of the Jews--i.e., Christ thought not of establishing a new religion, but of preparing men for the imminent destruction of the world, and God's Last Judgment of all souls. In 1796 Herder pointed out the apparently irreconcilable difference between the Christ of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the Christ of the Gospel of St. John. In 1828 Heinrich Paulus, summarizing the life of Christ in 1192 pages, proposed a rationalistic interpretation of the miracles--i.e., accepted their occurrence but ascribed them to natural causes and powers. In an epoch-marking *Life of Jesus* (1835-36) David Strauss rejected this compromise; the supernatural elements in the Gospels, he thought, should be classed as myths, and the actual career of Christ must be reconstructed without using these elements in any form. Strauss's massive volumes made Biblical criticism the storm center of German thought for a generation. In the same year Ferdinand Christian Baur attacked the Epistles of Paul, rejecting as unauthentic all but those to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans. In 1840 Bruno Bauer began a series of passionately controversial works aiming to show that Jesus was a myth, the personified form of a cult that evolved in the second century from a fusion of Jewish, Greek, and Roman theology. In 1863 Ernest Renan's *Life of Jesus*, alarming millions with its rationalism and charming millions with its prose, gathered together the results of German criticism, and brought the problem of the Gospels before the entire educated world. The French school reached its climax at the end of the century in the Abbe Loisy, who subjected the New Testament to such rigorous textual analysis that the Catholic church felt compelled to excommunicate him and other "Modernists." Meanwhile the Dutch school of Pierson, Naber, and Matthas carried the movement to its farthest point by laboriously denying the historical reality of Jesus. In Germany Arthur Drews gave this negative conclusion its definitive exposition (1906); and in England W. B. Smith and J. M. Robertson argued to a like denial. The result of two centuries of discussion seemed to be the annihilation of Christ. (Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ* [New York; Simon and Schuster,

1944], pp. 553-54)

The story of Bible scholarship for the past two or more centuries surely evidences the wisdom of God in bringing forth the Book of Mormon in defense of the testimony of Christ and the message of the Bible.

It is also of some considerable significance that the prophecy explicitly stated that we are to use the Book of Mormon to prove the Bible rather than the Bible to prove the Book of Mormon. [Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol I, pp. 206-207]. [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 13:40]

2 Nephi 3:12 **The Fruit of Thy Loins Shall Write:**

According to Joy Osborn, the importance of the Book of Mormon is not fully appreciated until it is recognized as the Stick, or Book, of Joseph. Since Joseph was given the birthright blessing over the Twelve Tribes of Israel, and this birthright blessing was continued with Joseph's son, Ephraim, and it was to be through Joseph that the house of Israel would be scattered and the people "pushed to the ends of the earth," it would be more surprising if a record was not kept by the tribes of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, than it would be to find that a record was kept. Israel's prophets were always instructed and required to keep a record of the Lord's dealings with their people. Why should it be different for the descendants of Joseph? Especially, when we remember that when Jacob, before his death, blessed the sons of Joseph, he declared: "In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim, and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh " (Genesis 49:20).

Jacob had declared that Manasseh would become a great people, but Ephraim, who received Joseph's birthright blessing over Israel, would become "greater" and "his seed shall become a multitude of nations" (Genesis 49:19). This blessing helps us understand why the Lord told the prophet Ezekiel that the stick of Joseph, or, the book of scriptures of Joseph, would be "*in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows*" (Ezekiel 37:19). [Joy M. Osborn, The Book of Mormon -- The Stick of Joseph, p. 7]

2 Nephi 3:12 **The Fruit of Thy Loins Shall Write; and the Fruit of the Loins of Judah Shall Write:**

The Bible was written primarily by those of the tribe of Judah. The Book of Mormon was written primarily by those of the tribe of Joseph. This doctrine is also taught in Ezekiel 37:16-17, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions; And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. Both Joseph and Ezekiel speak of these two great records, then speak of the gathering of the house of Israel. The coming forth of the

Book of Mormon was a necessary prerequisite for the gathering of Israel. It is the primary tool through which the convert learns of the promises made to the house of Israel and begins to understand the ways in which they are currently being fulfilled. Ezekiel goes on in chapter 38 to talk about Gog of Magog and the destructions which will precede the Second Coming. This shows how closely related, both temporally and doctrinally, these events are.

[josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

2 Nephi 3:12 **That Which Shall Be Written . . . Shall Grow Together:**

In 2 Nephi 3:12 we find the prophetic phrase, "that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins [the loins of Joseph], and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together." A footnote in 2 Nephi 3:12 refers the reader to Ezekiel 37:15-20, which corroborates this prophecy:

"The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. (Ezekiel 37:15-17)

According to an article by Keith Meservy, many critics have long frowned upon the Latter-day Saint interpretation of *sticks* in Ezekiel's prophecy. They insist that sticks, either scrolls or tallies, do not make scriptures, and that, even if they do, Latter-day Saints are taking the prophecy out of context: chapter 37 as a whole discusses the gathering of Israel, not books of scripture. They suggest that *stick* really represents a *scepter*, a tribe, or one of the divided kingdoms of Judah or Israel.

However, in 1948, as he read two ancient Babylonian texts, San Nicolo discovered that scribes were filling their tablets with wax. He remembered that Greeks and Romans filled writing boards with wax and then wrote on their surfaces. Since Babylonians were filling boards with wax, he theorized that they must also have been using wax writing boards.

Five years later, archaeologist Max Mallowan discovered a set of sixteen hinged wax writing boards in Assyria that looked strikingly like Greek and Roman writing boards. The cuneiform inscription on the cover board identified it as an *is leu (wooden tablet)*.

Having this as a tangible example, scholars recognized many examples of writing boards in use on the bas-relief sculpture of Assyrian palaces. It became abundantly clear that a previously unknown method of making records was commonly used in ancient Mesopotamia. From this it is also clear that Ezekiel and his fellow Jewish captives lived in a world where scribes typically wrote on wax writing boards. . . . In Ezekiel 37:17, it tells us that, having written on his boards, Ezekiel joined "them one to another into one stick [board]" and they became one in his hand. This joining action was typical of scribes who wrote on boards. . . . Ezekiel identified the owner of each board

by writing a cover inscription on it. Once again, he was doing what scribes normally did to their boards. Sargon, for example, put an inscription on the cover of his sixteen-board set to show that it belonged to him, what its contents were, and that it was placed in his palace at Dur-Sharrukin. Ezekiel's inscriptions identified Judah and Joseph as the owners of each of the two boards. The Hebrew preposition *le* [to/for] in front of the names *Judah* and *Joseph* shows to whom each of these boards belonged.

Thus we might better translate the inscriptions to show this possession by putting the words "(belonging) to" before each name: "(Belonging) to Judah, and (belonging) to the children of Israel his companions," and "(Belonging) to Joseph, the [board of Ephraim], and (belonging) to all the house of Israel his companions" (v. 16). [Keith Meservy, "Ezekiel's Sticks and the Gathering of Israel," in The Ensign, February 1987, pp. 4-23] [See the commentary on 3 Nephi 15:16-17; 15:21]

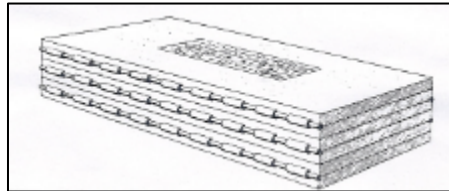


2 Nephi 3:12 **That which shall be written . . . shall grow together (Illustration):** Wooden tablets, called sticks [Old Testament Student Manual Religion 302, p. 283]

2 Nephi 3:12 **That which shall be written . . . shall grow together (Illustration):** The discovery in 1953 of these writing boards from biblical Calah in Mesopotamia altered the thinking of scholars about how Middle Eastern cultures made records. Wooden tablets filled with wax represent the "earliest known form of ancient books" and help us understand an important prophecy of Ezekiel foretelling the uniting of the Bible and Book of Mormon. [Keith Meservy, "Ezekiel's Sticks and the Gathering of Israel," in The Ensign, February 1987, p. 4]

2 Nephi 3:12 (Ezekiel 37:17) **Join them one to another into one stick (Illustration):** Reconstructed Mesopotamian Writing Tablets. Photo: Keith Meservy from British Museum, London. These writings

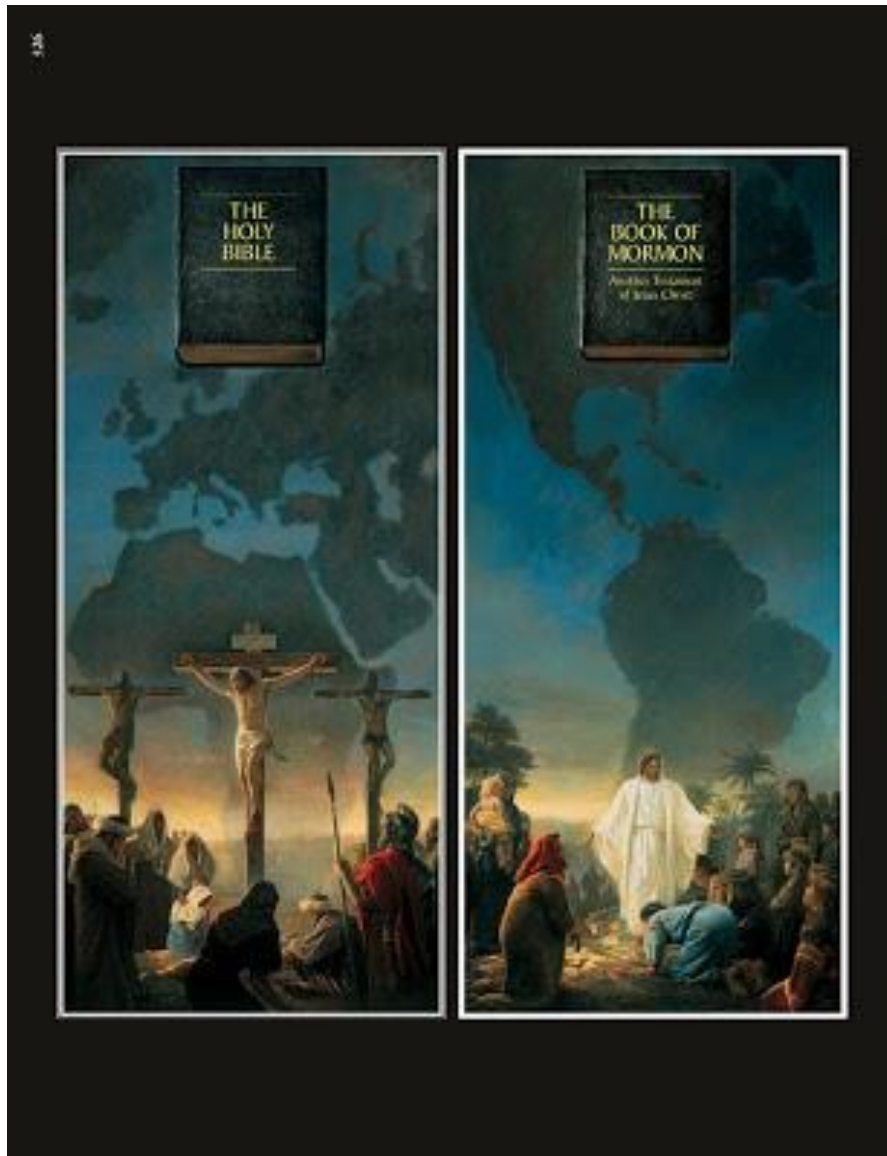
tablets--"sticks"--still contain some of their beeswax and arsenic sulphide filling. The arsenic kept the wax pliable, and gave it a bright yellow color; and the writing is so small and careful that the thirty writing surfaces on the whole combined set of tablets could have contained 7,500 lines of text. [Keith H. Meservy, "Ezekiel's 'Sticks'," The Ensign, September 1977, p. 27]



2 Nephi 3:12 **That which shall be written . . . shall grow together (Illustration):** A diagram of the hinged writing boards, showing their appearance when closed. [Keith H. Meservy, "Ezekiel's 'Sticks'," in The Ensign, September 1977, p. 25]



2 Nephi 3:12 (Ezekiel 37:17) **Join them one to another into one stick [Ezekiel] (Illustration):** Ezekiel. Artist: Robert Barrett. It now seems clear that the prophet Ezekiel was referring to wax writing boards in his prophecy about the "sticks" of Judah and Joseph. Wooden or ivory boards were filled with wax, inscribed with a stylus, then bound together to protect the writing surfaces, making them "one in the hand" of the scribe. The most recent discovery, as well as the oldest known example of wax writing boards, dating from the 14th century B.C. was found in a shipwreck off the southwestern coast of modern Turkey. This discovery was reported at the November 1986 annual meeting of the American School of Oriental Research. [Keith Meservy, "Ezekiel's Sticks and the Gathering of Israel," The Ensign, February 1987, p. 5]



2 Nephi 3:12 **That which shall be written . . . shall grow together (Illustration):** The Bible and the Book of Mormon Testify of Christ. The writings of Judah and the writings of Joseph would "grow together." Artist: Greg K. Olsen. [Thomas R. Valletta ed., *The Book of Mormon for Latter-day Saint Families*, 1999, p. 80]

2 Nephi 3:13 And out of Weakness He [Joseph] Shall Be Made Strong:

In the Book of Mormon, the Lord declared that "out of weakness," Joseph Smith "shall be made strong" (2 Nephi 3:13). Richardson, Richardson and Bentley note that Joseph Quincy, mayor of Boston, said of Joseph: "Born in the lowest ranks of poverty, without book learning and with the homeliest of all human names, he made himself at the age of thirty-nine a power upon earth."^{xxvi}

Dr. Harold Bloom, a Jewish religious scholar, and distinguished professor at both New York

and Yale Universities, extols Joseph Smith as "an authentic religious genius, unique in our . . . history," and praises "the sureness of his instincts, his uncanny *knowing* precisely what [was] needful for the inauguration of a new faith." Joseph Smith and Mormonism, he further expounds, have contributed to the world "a more human God and a more divine man. . . . I also do not . . . doubt that Joseph Smith was an authentic prophet. Where in all of American history can we find his match? . . . Nothing else in all of American history strikes me as . . . equal to the early Mormons, to Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, Parley and Orson Pratt, and the men and women who were their followers and friends."^{xvii}

[Allen H. Richardson, David E. Richardson and Anthony E. Bentley, 1000 Evidences for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Part Two-A Voice from the Dust: 500 Evidences in Support of the Book of Mormon, pp. 95-96]

Note* In my view one of the greatest factors that testify that Joseph Smith was "the man for the moment"—the prophet that the Lord would work and speak through—was the fact that he had that singular focus and faith that after being knocked down time and time again by adversity and by his weaknesses, he would get back up again and go forward. The anti-Mormon perspective focuses on his flaws. I would rather focus on his ability to rise above those flaws—to see not what he did that was less-than-perfect, but to see the grand things that came forth and were accomplished by the Lord through this young man (to some "this joke of a young man") in just a few short years. THAT to me IS TRULY AMAZING. THAT to me is a TESTIMONY of what the Lord can do for the "weak." THAT gives me HOPE.

Alan Miner Personal Notes]

The words of Brigham Young about Joseph Smith are worth pondering:

"I can truly say, that I invariably found him to be all that any people could require a true prophet to be, and that a better man could not be, though he had his weaknesses; and what man has ever lived upon this earth who had none?"

"I never saw any one, until I met Joseph Smith, who could tell me anything about the character, personality and dwelling-place of God, or anything satisfactory about angels, or the relationship of man to his Maker. Yet I was as diligent as any man need to be to try and find out these things."

"He took heaven, figuratively speaking, and brought it down to earth; and he took the earth, brought it up, and opened up, in plainness and simplicity, the things of God; and that is the beauty of his mission. . . . I honor and revere the name of Joseph Smith." (DBY, 458). ("Chapter 47: President Brigham Young's Witness of the Prophet Joseph Smith," Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young, 343)

2 Nephi 3:14 **And Thus Prophesied Joseph, Saying:**

The prophecies of Joseph (see 2 Nephi 3:6-13; 14-22) are not found in the Bible. How they were lost or when it occurred, we do not know. Cleon Skousen reports that in 1955, Macmillan Company of New York published the English translation of a book (*The Messianic Idea in Israel*) by Dr. Joseph Klausner, professor of Hebrew literature and Jewish history at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In this volume Dr. Klausner devoted one full chapter (Part III, chapter 9) to the coming of a future "Joseph." Dr. Klausner pointed out that one of the most ancient and respected traditions among the Jewish scholars is the prophecy that a "Joseph" should be raised up in the latter days for the specific purpose of preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah. He cited sources to show that this future Joseph is not only mentioned in the Talmud and other Jewish classics, but Christian scholars have also taken note of this tradition.

According to the Jewish scholars this future Joseph . . . would be a descendant of Joseph who was sold into Egypt and would come through the line of Ephraim (Joseph's heir). It said that his mission would commence about the time Elijah made his appearance to fulfill the promise made in Malachi 4:5-6. It also said that this future Joseph was to be killed (Klausner, pp. 496, 498).

But the thing which puzzled Dr. Klausner most was why this tradition of a latter-day Joseph should be so thoroughly established among Jewish scholars when there was no reference to it in the Hebrew scriptures. The Talmud, the Midrash, and the Targum all refer to it, but these, of course, are merely commentaries rather than the scripture itself. Furthermore, the Jews are not the only ones who have this tradition. Dr. Klausner states that the Samaritans are even more zealous than the Jews in keeping alive the tradition of the latter-day Joseph. Some of them claim to be of the tribe of Joseph and therefore this prophecy is extremely important to them (It will be recalled that the ancestors of the Samaritans were the tiny remnant which was successful in escaping the siege of the Assyrians in 721 B.C., and therefore they were not carried off to Mesopotamia with the rest of Israel). Their tradition concerning the latter-day Joseph goes back to the period which was long before the Talmud (p. 484). The Samaritans had this to say about the future Joseph:

1. They said he would be a descendant of Joseph through Ephraim. They sometimes referred to him as a "son of Ephraim."
2. They called him *Teal*, meaning "the restorer," "he who returns," or "he who causes to return."
3. They said he would call the people of the world to repentance and bring back better days for Israel.
4. They said this Joseph of the latter days would "restore everywhere the true Law to its former validity and convert all peoples, especially the Jews, to the Samaritan (Ephraimite) religion."

[W. Cleon Skousen, Treasures from the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, pp. ii-iii]

2 Nephi 3:15 His Name Shall Be Called after Me [Joseph]:

Matthew Brown writes of ancient Hebrew traditions which speak of two separate *messiahs*^{xxxviii} that were foreordained to arise among the covenant people of the Lord--one from the tribe of Judah (the *Messiah ben David* or "son of" David) and one from the tribe of Joseph (the *Messiah ben Joseph/Ephraim*). According to Jewish lore the *Messiah ben Joseph* concept first arose when Rachel, the mother of Joseph of Egypt, prophesied that Joseph would be the ancestor of a *messiah* who would "arise at the end of days."^{xxxix} Scholars who have studied this legend have determined that it was "a standard article of faith, early and firmly established and universally accepted."^{xxx}

The *Messiah ben Joseph* legends hold special interest for Latter-day Saints for two main reasons. First, these Jewish legends claim that Joseph of Egypt uttered prophecies about the *Messiah ben Joseph*,^{xxxi} while prophecies by Joseph of Egypt found in the Book of Mormon and JST speak of a latter-day seer who would be named "Joseph" (see 2 Nephi 3:6-15; JST Genesis 50:26-33). Second, there are several elements found in the *Messiah ben Joseph* legends that closely correspond to the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The following are ten points of correspondence:

1. The *Messiah ben Joseph* is to be held in reserve to live on the earth in the "last days."^{xxxii}

In D&C 132:7 the Lord states that He had appointed Joseph Smith to hold the keys of the sealing power of the Priesthood "in the last days."

2. The *Messiah ben Joseph* is to be born through the lineage of Joseph of Egypt's birthright son Ephraim.^{xxxiii}

In a meeting held in Nauvoo, Illinois, on 8 January 1845, President Brigham Young stated that Joseph Smith's "descent from Joseph that was sold into Egypt was direct, and the blood was pure in him. That is why the Lord chose him."^{xxxiv} On a later occasion President Young stated that "Joseph Smith was a pure Ephraimite."^{xxxv}

3. The *Messiah ben Joseph* is to live upon the earth prior to "when Messiah ben David [i.e., Jesus Christ] appears in all his glory"^{xxxvi} and is to act as His "forerunner."^{xxxvii}

"President [Lorenzo] Snow reported that on one occasion Joseph Smith was . . . asked who he was. The Prophet smiled kindly upon his interlocutor and replied, 'Noah came before the flood. I have come before the fire'^{xxxviii}--meaning the fire that will accompany the Second Coming of Christ (see D&C 29:12; 133:40-41).

The Prophet taught the following about the "Elias" principle. "The spirit of Elias is to prepare the way for a greater revelation of God. . . . When God sends a man into the world to prepare for a greater work, holding the keys of the power of Elias, it [is] called the doctrine of Elias. . . . That person who holds the keys of Elias [has] a preparatory work."^{xxxix} According to Parley P. Pratt, "Joseph Smith was the Elias, the Restorer, the presiding Messenger, holding the keys of the

Dispensation of the fullness of times . . . to prepare the way of the Lord."^{xi}

4. The *Messiah ben Joseph* is to be "the revealer of the true faith" of Jehovah.^{xlii} In one Jewish legend Joseph of Egypt prophesies that the *Messiah ben Joseph* will cause some erroneous elements of religious worship that have crept in among the Israelite tribes to "vanish."^{xliii} Thus, he will perform his work after a period of apostasy.

The Lord Jesus Christ has declared: "I have sent forth the fullness of my gospel by the hand of my servant Joseph" (D&C 35:17). The Lord has also indicated in a modern revelation that the religious system He revealed through Joseph Smith constitutes "the only true and living Church upon the face of the whole earth" (D&C 1:30).

5. The prophet Elijah is to return to the earth, as foretold in Malachi 4:5-6, during the days of the *Messiah ben Joseph*.^{xliii}

D&C 110:13-16 records the fulfillment of this expectation. In verses 14-15 of this passage, Elijah is represented as saying that his arrival in the Kirtland Temple fulfilled the prophecy of Malachi 4:5-6.

6. The *Messiah ben Joseph* is to "rebuild the temple" of Israel and restore its "true worship."^{xliiv}

Just as the Lord revealed the pattern for the Tabernacle to Moses (see Exodus 25:9) and the pattern of the Jerusalem Temple to David and Solomon (see 1 Chronicles 28:11-19), He also revealed the patterns for the Kirtland Temple (see D&C 94:5-6) and the Nauvoo Temple (see D&C 124:42) to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

7. The *Messiah ben Joseph* is to gather the children of Israel around him, including a portion of the lost ten tribes.^{xliv}

Joseph Smith's father spoke the following words while administering a patriarchal blessing to his son. "A marvelous work and a wonder has the Lord wrought by thy hand, even that which shall prepare the way for the remnants of His people to come in among the Gentiles, with their fullness, as the tribes of Israel are restored."^{xlvi} In the Kirtland Temple on 3 April 1836, Joseph Smith received the keys for the gathering of the twelve tribes of Israel. "The heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north" (D&C 110:11).

8. The *Messiah ben Joseph* is to be a warrior.^{xlvii}

On 10 March 1841 Thomas Carlin, Governor of the state of Illinois, commissioned Joseph Smith to the rank of Lieutenant General over the Nauvoo Legion.^{xlviii} By 1844 the Nauvoo Legion is estimated to have been about 5,000 men strong. The Legion was not only the largest military unit in the state of Illinois but it was second only in size to the United States Army.

9. The *Messiah ben Joseph* is to be a king.^{xlix}

William Clayton relates that during a Council of Fifty meeting held on 11 April 1844 in Nauvoo, Illinois, "President Joseph [Smith was] chosen [as] our Prophet, Priest and King by hosannas."ⁱ George A. Smith likewise recorded in his diary, under the date of 9 May 1844, that Joseph Smith had been installed as "King over the immediate House of Israel" by the Council of Fifty.ⁱⁱ A revelation from the Lord to the Council of Fifty on 27 June 1882 verified that Joseph Smith had been called "to be a Prophet, Seer and Revelator to my Church and Kingdom; and to be a King and Ruler over Israel."ⁱⁱⁱ Once when the Prophet was "preaching from Daniel 2nd chapter, 44th verse, [he] said that the kingdom referred to was already set up, and that he was the king over it."ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Joseph Smith served in the capacity of a substitute sovereign over God's earthly kingdom, just as the kings of ancient Israel did (see 1 Chronicles 29:23).^{liv}

10. The *Messiah ben Joseph* is to die as a martyr.^{lv}

John Taylor informs us that "when Joseph [Smith] went to Carthage to deliver himself up to the pretended requirements of the law, two or three days previous to his assassination, he said: 'I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men. I shall die innocent, and it shall be said of me-- he was murdered in cold blood'" (D&C 135:4).

In summary, Brown states that while it cannot be stated with certainty that Joseph Smith and the *Messiah ben Joseph* are one and the same person, it cannot be denied that the parallels between them are striking. It is also of great interest that some of the *Messiah ben Joseph* legendary elements are present in revealed scriptural texts that clearly *do* refer to the Prophet (see 2 Nephi 3:6-15; JST Genesis 50:26-33). [Matthew B. Brown, All Things Restored: Confirming the Authenticity of LDS Beliefs, pp. 34-39]

2 Nephi 3:15 His Name Shall Be Called after Me [Joseph]:

In the prophecies of Joseph of Egypt, quoted by Lehi to his son Joseph, the ancient Joseph prophesied concerning the choice seer who the Lord would raise up from the fruit of the ancient Joseph's loins: "his name shall be called after me" (2 Nephi 3:15). McConkie and Millet comment that in patriarchal times personal names were considered to be of great importance. Conscious effort was made to assure identity between the name and its bearer. Often names would constitute a miniature biography of the bearer. Names were also used as reminders of significant events, to connote character traits, to identify position, and in some instances to foreshadow the bearer's destiny or that of his posterity. Thus names were used as memorials, as symbols, and as prophecies. Among righteous people, names were used to identify and testify of great truths or great events, thus keeping such things constantly in the consciousness of the people.

The etymology of the name *Joseph* is usually given as "the Lord addeth," "may [God] add," or "increaser." Though appropriate, such renderings have veiled a richer meaning associated with the name. In Genesis 30:24, where Rachel names her infant son Joseph, the Hebrew text reads

Asaph, which means "he who gathers," "he who causes to return," or perhaps most appropriately, "God gathereth." (See O. Odelain and R. Segueineau, *Dictionary of Proper Names and Places in the Bible*, p. 40.) Thus the great prophet of the Restoration was given the name that most appropriately describes his divine calling. [Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, p. 209]

2 Nephi 3:15 **His Name Shall be Called after Me [Joseph]:**

Joseph McConkie makes this sidenote:

Having learned of the special meaning associated with the Prophet's name, I was especially interested when I discovered the following in the patriarchal blessing of the Prophet's older brother Hyrum. "Behold thou art Hyrum, the Lord hath called thee by that name, and by that name He has blessed thee."^{vi} It then dawned on me that Hyrum is also a Hebrew name which means "my brother is exalted." What more appropriate name could have been given to the man who was destined to go with Joseph to Carthage and seal his testimony with his blood? So the testimony of the Restoration has been sealed on this dispensation with the blood of two prophets who, according to the ancient tradition, bore the right names. [Joseph Fielding McConkie, "Joseph Smith as Found in Ancient Manuscripts," in Isaiah and the Prophets, p. 17]

2 Nephi 3:15 **[His Name] Shall Be after the Name of His Father:**

According to McConkie and Millet, the prophecy "And it (the name Joseph) shall be after the name of his father" (2 Nephi 3:15) has reference to Joseph Smith, Sr. The Prophet's father was the first to hold the office of patriarch in this dispensation. Such was his right by birth, he being "the oldest man of the blood of Joseph" (*HC* 3:381), meaning that he was the oldest direct lineal descendant of Joseph of Egypt on earth at the time. How appropriate that the first patriarch ("head" or "prince of the tribe") should bear the name of his ancient forefather, who saw and prophesied of him! [Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, pp. 209-210]

2 Nephi 3:15 **His Name Shall Be Called After Me, and It Shall Be After the Name of His Father:**

Joseph of Egypt prophecies that the choice seer will be named Joseph and that his father will also. If this isn't referring to Joseph Smith, Jr. and Joseph Smith, Sr., who else could it be? Joseph of Egypt even says, he shall be like unto me. In this section Joseph Smith has already been compared to Moses. Now he is compared to Joseph of Egypt.

Joseph of Egypt was a savior to his brethren and father's house who were about to perish in a famine. Joseph Smith was a savior to the scattered of Israel and his family by restoring truths that saved them from spiritual famine. As Amos prophesied, the days come, saith the Lord God that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord (Amos 8:11).

[josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

2 Nephi 3:15 **He Shall Be Like unto Me:**

According to Joseph McConkie, we know that Joseph of Egypt knew the Prophet Joseph Smith by the spirit of prophecy and revelation, that he described the work that Joseph Smith would do, that he named him by name, and declared that "he shall be like unto me" (2 Nephi 3:15).

In viewing the life of Joseph of Egypt as a type foretelling the destiny of his tribe in the last days as it centers in the experiences of Joseph Smith, the following parallels are suggested:

1. The older brothers of Joseph of Egypt lost their spiritual birthright and it was given to Joseph. The older brothers of Joseph Smith (the Christian churches) had lost their spiritual birthright and it was given to Joseph Smith and the tribe of Joseph.

2. Joseph of Egypt had a "coat" given to him that represented the authority of the priesthood. Joseph Smith was clothed in the "robes of righteousness" (D&C 109:76), and both the Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthood were restored through him (D&C 13).

3. The name "Joseph" is itself a prophecy of events of the last days. In the Bible account wherein Rachel names her infant son Joseph the Hebrew text reads *Asaph*, which means "he who gathers," "he who causes to return," or perhaps most appropriately "God gathereth" (Genesis 30:24; see also the footnote to the LDS edition).

4. Both Joseph of Egypt and Joseph Smith had their earthly destiny revealed to them. The dream of the "sheaves in the field" or Joseph's dream of earthly dominion is matched by the promise given to Joseph Smith wherein the Lord said, "I hold forth and deign to give unto you greater riches, even a land of promise, a land flowing with milk and honey, upon which there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh; And I will give it unto you for the land of your inheritance, if you seek it with all your hearts" (D&C 38:18-19).

5. Both Joseph of Egypt and Joseph Smith had their heavenly dominion revealed to them. Joseph of Egypt's dream of heavenly dominion, that of the sun, the moon, and the stars, finds fulfillment only in the sealing powers of the priesthood. Jacob interpreted Joseph's dream as

having reference to himself (the sun), Rachel (the moon), and Joseph's brothers (the stars) bowing down to Joseph (Genesis 37:10). The unanswerable difficulty that this presented to Bible interpreters is that Rachel had died many years before, while giving birth to Benjamin. The context of promises associated with the sealing power and the assurance given Joseph Smith that the keys and authority he held would never be taken from him in this life or "in the world to come" (D&C 90:3) give meaning to Jacob's interpretation.

6. The thought that Joseph of Egypt had some promised destiny that was not theirs caused Joseph's brothers anciently to "hate him yet the more" (Genesis 37:5). Again our story contains the type or pattern: "I soon found," Joseph Smith said, "that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution" (JS-H 1:22).

7. It is of interest that the promise of future destiny was given to Joseph of Egypt when he was seventeen years of age (Genesis 37:2). Similarly, it was when Joseph Smith was seventeen that Moroni appeared to him and unfolded the great destiny that was his and many passages of scripture promising the restoration of Israel in the last days (JS-H 1:33-41).

8. As Potiphar's wife accused Joseph of her own sins that she might have him cast into prison (Genesis 39:14-18), so Joseph Smith was accused of the crimes of his enemies who had him cast into prison.

9. "The keeper of the prison" anciently "committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison" (Genesis 39:22). And so were "committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners" in the spirit world. As Joseph Smith stands at the head of this dispensation of the gospel on earth, so he stands at its head in the spirit prison.

10. As Joseph was sold into Egypt, so Joseph Smith (or the Church in the last days) was forced into the bondage of a desert, where it was assumed that it would perish. As this happened to Joseph when he was seventeen, so it happened to the Church in 1847, or in its seventeenth year.

11. As Joseph interpreted the dreams of those in prison anciently, so Joseph Smith by the power of that same spirit has been able to interpret revelations given to others (the Bible, the papyrus of Abraham, and so on) in our day.

12. To the hungry, Pharaoh, lord of Egypt, said, "Go unto Joseph" (Genesis 41:55). As Joseph was the only source of bread to a starving world, so Joseph Smith, to whom the truths and authority of salvation have been revealed, becomes the only source of the bread of life to a world perishing for want of the truth.

13. As Joseph of Egypt was lifted up and sustained by a foreign power, thus enabling him to restore his family, so Joseph of the last days has been lifted up by a great Gentile nation (1

Nephi 22:6) and granted the power to again restore Israel.

14. Joseph of Egypt's brothers came to him for salvation. The ten tribes will yet come to Joseph Smith (the Church) seeking the bread of everlasting life (D&C 133:26-32). As Joseph saved his family anciently, so Joseph of the last days will be a savior to Israel (D&C 86:11).

15. As the Lord said to Jacob who was nearly blind, "Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes" (Genesis 46:4), so he has said to Israel of the last days: "For his (Joseph Smith's) word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith. For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory" (D&C 21:5-6).

[Joseph Fielding McConkie, Gospel Symbolism, pp. 38-43]

2 Nephi 3:15 **He Shall Be Like unto Me:**

According to Lenet Read, the great work of Joseph of Egypt was to bring salvation to a starving world during a time of famine--but particularly to his own people, the house of Israel. This ancient work testified of the greater saving work to be done in the last days, which was undertaken under the leadership of the Prophet Joseph Smith, his Heir and his namesake.

Joseph of Egypt prophesied, "And he shall be like unto me; for the thing, which the Lord shall bring by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto Salvation" (2 Nephi 3:15).

Elder B. H. Roberts wrote: "The Book of Mormon throughout is true to this Josephic idea; it is impregnated with it. Joseph is the central figure throughout. His spirit runs through the whole scheme of the book. We learn in the Book of Mormon of a great Seer that is to arise from the descendants of this Patriarch Joseph, to bring forth the word of God to them, a thing quite in keeping with the important part to be taken by Joseph and his seed in the affairs of the western world in the last days."^{vii}

The Apostle Paul also testified of the saving work of Joseph Smith. In Romans 11, he wrote of the twisting of fortunes that would occur to Israel. He explained that the original heirs of Israel were blinded so that the blessing of the gospel might go to the Gentiles. After warning that sin would cut off the inheritance for the Gentiles, as it had for the original Israelites, he prophesied that "all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion [Zion] the Deliverer, and he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Roman 11:26). He testified that a prophet would be raised up out of Israel's line who would bring righteousness back to the original descendants of Israel. It is clear that "the Deliverer" in this scripture is Christ, but as in many other cases the prophecy in context here may well have a dual fulfillment, pointing to Joseph as "the rod . . . that

should come of the Stem of Jesse" (D&C 113:3; see also History of the Church, 1:313).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that "many of [the ancient prophets] lived in special situation or did particular things that singled them out as types and patterns and shadows of that which was to be in the life of him who is our Lord."^{viii}

Perhaps no prophet has had more parallels drawn between himself and Christ than Joseph of Egypt. His life was a pattern that looked up and forward to Christ in his suffering, in his exaltation. Jesus Christ fulfilled these witnesses through greater sufferings and through a far greater work of salvation.

Similarly, the work of the Prophet Joseph Smith and of us as descendants of Joseph follow after Christ, again in His pattern.

A final climax of this saving work will occur when Jesus Christ, like Joseph of Egypt, unveils His face to His brethren, and they and the world will come to know He is their slain brother and their Redeemer.

The ancient Joseph set the pattern for Jesus Christ (and for all future Josephs and descendants of Joseph) when he said:

"I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold . . . Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life" (Genesis 45:4-5). [Lenet Hadley Read, "Why All These Josephs?," Book of Mormon Conference, 14-16 August 2001: The Twenty-Fifth Annual Church Education System Religious Educators Conference at Brigham Young University, pp. 103-104]

Note* It is interesting that a prophecy alluding to Joseph's role in the restoration might be found in Romans 11. This is the chapter that mentions olive trees and which is often tied to the allegory of Zenos in Jacob 5. It is no small thing that both the allegory of Zenos and Romans 11 would be linked to the tribe of Joseph. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 3:15 And He [Joseph] Shall Be Like unto Me [Joseph], For the Thing Which the Lord Shall Bring Forth by His Hand . . . Shall Bring My People unto Salvation:

In 2 Nephi 3:15 we find a prophecy concerning the latter-day Joseph by the ancient patriarch Joseph:

And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father. And he shall be like unto me; for the thing which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord, shall bring my people unto salvation. . . . for the Lord hath said unto me, I will preserve thy seed forever.

According to Matthew Brown, the scriptures inform us that the birthright in Israel belonged to Joseph (see 1 Chronicles 5:1-2) and his son Ephraim (see Jeremiah 31:9). The symbol assigned to the birthright tribe was the ox and one of the responsibilities laid upon that tribe was the gathering of the Lord's people by symbolically pushing them together, from the four quarters of the earth, with oxen horns (see Deuteronomy 33:13-17; see especially nt. 17b). . . . In this light it is interesting to note that the twelve oxen underneath the Brazen Sea in King Solomon's Temple (and also those underneath many LDS temple baptismal fonts) were arranged in four groups of three with the horns of each group pointing to one of the cardinal directions of the earth (see 1 Kings 7:23-25; compare 1 Nephi 22:25; 2 Nephi 21:12; 3 Nephi 16:5; D&C 33:6; 45:46; JS-Matthew 1:37). This could be seen as a visual representation of Joseph's responsibility to push together, or gather together, the tribes of Israel from the four quarters of the earth. According to Wilford Woodruff, the tribe of Joseph/Ephraim is "the first fruits of the kingdom of God in this dispensation," and the other tribes of Israel will get their "endowments, and be crowned under the hands of the children of Ephraim" (Journal of Discourses, 4:232) [Matthew B. Brown, The Gate of Heaven, pp. 146-147]

2 Nephi 3:15 The Thing Which the Lord Shall Bring Forth by His Hand . . . Shall Bring My People unto Salvation:

Catherine Thomas notes that while Joseph was in Egypt, Canaan languished in famine. Having been driven to Egypt by hunger, ten penitent sons of Israel listened to the remarkable account of their younger brother's survival and rise to prominence. Joseph graciously said to them as he revealed his true identity: "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves . . . for God did send me before you to preserve life . . . to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance." (Genesis 45:5, 7) This Joseph was the prototype of the chief gatherers in Israel; this was he who would gather souls, like the corn he gathered into storage, numberless as the sand of the sea; he would "push the people together to the ends of the earth, . . . the ten thousands of Ephraim, and . . . the thousands of Manasseh" (Deuteronomy 33:17); he would also, foreshadowing the Redeemer's deliverance, magnanimously offer life to his own brethren who had rejected him.

The covenant prophecies which Joseph of Egypt uttered appear in 2 Nephi 3:5-21 and in outline are as follows: Joseph of Egypt's seed would not be completely destroyed, but would be delivered through another of his descendants, Joseph Smith (verse 7-15) by means of the Book of Mormon, which would manifest the Messiah and his covenants with their forefathers, as well as this Israelite branches's true identity. They would be converted and drawn back into the Lord's fold.

It is interesting that Pharaoh had named Joseph of Egypt *Zaphnath-paaneah*, "he who reveals that which is hidden." (Genesis 41:45) Joseph Smith would disclose many godly mysteries

to ancient Joseph's seed, which "by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation." (2 Nephi 3:15) The *hidden* darkness may refer to the fact that the true identity of the remnant of Joseph of Egypt in America was unknown for many centuries until the Lord revealed it through Joseph Smith.

[Catherine Thomas, "A Great Deliverance," in Studies in Scripture: Book of Mormon, Part 1, pp. 104-105]

2 Nephi 3:15 The Thing Which the Lord Shall Bring Forth By His Hand . . . Shall Bring My People unto Salvation:

In 2 Nephi 3:15 we find in a prophecy concerning the latter-day restoration of all things by the hand of Joseph that "the thing which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation."

Richardson, Richardson and Bentley note that in the Book of Acts we discover an ancient prophecy (that has apparently been deleted from the Old Testament) which speaks of a "period of restoration of all things" (Acts 3:21--New American Standard Bible). Part of the "restoration of all things" is the return of the *Urim and Thummim*--or *interpreters* used anciently by the Hebrew prophets (Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8; Deuteronomy 33:8; Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65).

Ancient Jewish tradition has proclaimed that a great servant of God from the House of Joseph would come in the latter days to prepare the way for the coming of Shilo, the Great Messiah. They began calling him, "Messiah ben Joseph," and called their Shilo, "Messiah ben David." Literally translated, these appellations mean, "The anointed One, son of Joseph," and "The anointed One, son of David."^{lix}

In Joseph Klausner's doctoral dissertation on the Messiah ben Joseph at the Heidelberg University in 1904, he estimated that the Urim and Thummim, which had been lost since the destruction of the first temple, would be returned during the time of the Messiah ben Joseph.^{lx} [Allen H. Richardson, David E. Richardson and Anthony E. Bentley, 1000 Evidences for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Part Two-A Voice from the Dust: 500 Evidences in Support of the Book of Mormon, pp. 27-28]

2 Nephi 3:17 I Will Make a Spokesman for Him:

According to John Tvedtnes, when Lehi was admonishing his son Joseph, he told him of a prophecy uttered by their ancestor Joseph of Egypt, who had foreseen that the Egyptians would bring the Israelites into bondage. Part of that prophecy spoke of Moses: "And Moses will I [the Lord] raise up, to deliver thy people out of the land of Egypt" (2 Nephi 3:9-10). Joseph further declared: "and I will make a spokesman for him" (2 Nephi 3:17). This prophecy is also found in

Genesis 50:29, 34-35 of the Joseph Smith Translation, which adds that the name of the spokesman would be Aaron.

In *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* of Genesis 50:24, Joseph tells his family, "Behold you will be enslaved in Egypt, but do not make plans to go up out of Egypt until the time that TWO deliverers come and say to you, "The Lord surely remembers you." (emphasis added) This suggests that Joseph knew about the coming of Moses and Aaron to liberate Israel and confirms Joseph Smith's addition to that very place in the Genesis account.

Though the Jewish tradition regarding Joseph of Egypt's prophecy about Moses and Aaron can be traced to the second century A.D., the relevant texts were not available to Joseph Smith. The existence of that prophecy in both the Book of Mormon and the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis provides evidence for the historicity of the account. [John Tvedtnes, "Joseph's Prophecy of Moses and Aaron" in *Insights*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 2001]

2 Nephi 3:18 I Will Make For Him a Spokesman:

The Lord provided Joseph Smith with the assistance of Oliver Cowdery. As soon as the prophet and Oliver became acquainted, the Prophet knew that Oliver had been sent to him by the Lord. If Joseph was compared unto Moses, Oliver was compared to Aaron. He was given to Joseph as a spokesman that would minister with the gift of Aaron. The Lord said to Oliver, you have another gift, which is the gift of Aaron; behold, it has told you many things; Behold, there is no other power, save the power of God, that can cause this gift of Aaron to be with you. Therefore, doubt not, for it is the gift of God (DC 8:6-8). See also DC 28:3.a

[Note* Originally, the phrase "gift of Aaron" was "rod of Aaron."

Later on, the role of Joseph's spokesman was filled by Sidney Rigdon. Sidney was a great orator and preacher in another church before he was converted to Mormonism. Records of early church meetings show that Sidney spoke regularly and at great length. The Lord said, it is expedient in me that you, my servant Sidney, should be a spokesman unto this people; yea, verily, I will ordain you unto this calling, even to be a spokesman unto my servant Joseph (DC 110:9).

[josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

2 Nephi 3:18-19 I Will Make for Him a Spokesman:

In 2 Nephi 3:18-19 we find the following:

And the Lord said unto [Joseph of Egypt] also: I will raise up unto the fruit of thy loins; and I will make for him a spokesman. And I, behold, I will give unto him that he shall write the writing of the fruit of thy loins, unto the fruit of thy loins; and the spokesman of thy loins shall declare it.

And the words which he shall write shall be the words which are expedient in my wisdom should go forth unto the fruit of thy loins. And it shall be as if the fruit of thy loins had cried unto them from the dust; for I know their faith.

According to Robert Millet, traditionally this passage (2 Nephi 3:18-19) has been interpreted in terms of Joseph Smith being given a spokesman, either Oliver Cowdery (D&C 28:3) or Sidney Rigdon (D&C 100:9-11; 124:104). More recently, however, Elder Bruce R. McConkie has provided an alternative explanation: the person of the lineage of Joseph who would be raised up to write the record of Joseph (the Book of Mormon) is Mormon; the spokesman of the word is Joseph Smith (see McConkie, *New Witness* 426). [Robert L. Millet, "The Influence of the Brass Plates," in Nyman and Tate eds. *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, The Doctrinal Structure*, p. 220]

2 Nephi 3:24 **One Mighty among Them:**

In 2 Nephi 3 we find the blessing which Lehi gave to his son Joseph. Contained within that blessing are the prophecies made by Joseph of Egypt concerning "a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins" (2 Nephi 3:6). Some have incorrectly supposed that this "choice seer" was to be a direct descendant of Lehi's son Joseph. However, Nephi states that Joseph of Egypt "truly prophesied concerning all his seed" (2 Nephi 4:2). In 2 Nephi 3:23-25 we find an explanation concerning this "choice seer."

Wherefore, because of this covenant thou art blessed; for thy seed shall not be destroyed, for they shall hearken unto the words of the book. And there shall rise up *one mighty among them*, who shall do much good, both in word and in deed, being an instrument in the hands of God, with exceeding faith, to work mighty wonders, and do that thing which is great in the sight of God, unto the bringing to pass much restoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren.

Thus, first and foremost, this was a covenant promise, predicated on obedience to covenants. Secondly, we understand from the facts of the latter-day Restoration that Joseph Smith was the "one mighty among them" (or among the seed of Joseph of Egypt who would restore the gospel or "book" to the seed of Lehi's son Joseph). Thirdly, we realize that in spite of the final destruction of the Nephite nation, some of the seed of Joseph (although mixed and apostate to the covenant at the time of the destruction--see Moroni 9:24) would eventually be brought back to the knowledge and blessings of the covenant. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 3:25 Blessed Art Thou, Joseph . . . Hearken unto the Words of Thy Brother, Nephi, and It Shall Be Done unto Thee Even According to the Words Which I Have Spoken:

Noel Reynolds notes that in Lehi's final words to his youngest son Joseph, he depends heavily on the writings of two ancient prophets in Egypt--Joseph and Moses (see 2 Nephi 3:4-25). It is interesting that in Nephi's collection of Lehi's patriarchal blessings to his posterity, he omits his own blessing, however we find allusions to it in the blessings of the other brothers. In the first blessing, Lehi speaks to Laman, Lemuel, Sam and the sons of Ishmael, and tells them: "Rebel no more against your brother." He strongly endorses Nephi by summarizing Nephi's qualifications: (1) "[Nephi's] views have been glorious"; (2) he has "kept the commandments from the time that we left Jerusalem"; and (3) "were it not for him, we must have perished with hunger in the wilderness." (2 Nephi 1:24). . . .

In refuting Laman and Lemuel's claims that Nephi "sought power and authority" over them (2 Nephi 1:24-26), Lehi explains that Nephi was only seeking "the glory of God, and [their own eternal welfare]." (2 Nephi 1:25-27). . . . The blessings given to Zoram, Sam, Jacob, and Joseph corroborate the fact that Lehi intended Nephi to be the leader. Because Zoram has been a faithful and "a true friend" to Nephi, Lehi promises that his posterity will be blessed with Nephi's (2 Nephi 1:30-31). Jacob, too, will be blessed and "dwell safely with . . . Nephi" (2 Nephi 2:1-3). Joseph is told that if he follows Nephi, he will receive similar blessings (2 Nephi 3:25). Finally, Sam is blessed to inherit land with Nephi. His descendants shall be numbered with Nephi's, and he will be blessed all his days (2 Nephi 4:11). In all the blessings, whether negative or positive, Nephi is explicitly endorsed as the authorized successor to Lehi.

[Noel B. Reynolds, "The Political Dimension in Nephi's Small Plates," FARMS, 1987, pp. 31-32]

2 Nephi 3:25 Blessed Art Thou, Joseph . . . Hearken unto the Words of Thy Brother, Nephi, and It Shall Be Done unto Thee Even According to the Words Which I Have Spoken:

According to Noel Reynolds, in Lehi's final words to his youngest son Joseph, he depends heavily on the writings of two ancient prophets in Egypt--Joseph and Moses (see 2 Nephi 3:4-25). The text invites us to see Nephi also as a parallel figure to these two great leaders and deliverers of Israel. They both shared Nephi's problem--having to justify their unexpected callings to authority over their brethren. Concerning the parallels, we find that Nephi, like Joseph, is resented by his older brothers, for he also was his father's favorite. As Joseph has his visions of sheaves and stars, God tells Nephi that he will teach and rule over his brothers. While bringing Ishmael's family out of Jerusalem, Nephi's brothers become possessed of the same murderous rage that caused Joseph's brothers to throw him into a pit in the wilderness to die or be eaten by wild beasts (Genesis 37:18-214) Like Joseph, Nephi ascribes his escape to the power of God (Genesis 45:5, 7-8 and 1 Nephi 7:17-18). Nephi mentions that Joseph is their ancestor, in spite of his resolve not to take precious space on the small plates with genealogical information. In parallel to Joseph (see

Genesis 49:23-4) Nephi, by the strength of his bow provides food and saves his father's family from starvation (1 Nephi 16: 18-32). Jacob of old accuses his older sons of bringing "down [his] gray hairs with sorrow to the grave" (Genesis 42:38). . . . Nephi chooses this exact phrase to describe the effects of family rebellion on his own father (1 Nephi 18:18). And when Lehi, like Jacob, gathers his people together to receive his final blessings, he rebukes the older sons for their faithlessness, and he promises their birthright to the younger son, who has already become the family's de facto leader as they reside in a strange land (compare Genesis 49, especially v. 26, and 2 Nephi 1, especially vv. 28-29). [Noel B. Reynolds, "The Political Dimension in Nephi's Small Plates," FARMS, 1987, pp. 32-33]

Chapter 4

2 Nephi 4:1 **I Nephi Speak Concerning the Prophecies of . . . Joseph, Who Was Carried into Egypt:**

Nephi notes that he speaks:

concerning the prophecies of which my father hath spoken, concerning Joseph, who was carried into Egypt. For behold, he truly prophesied concerning all his seed. And the prophecies which he wrote, there are not many greater. And he prophesied concerning us, and our future generations; and they are written upon the plates of brass. (2 Nephi 4:1-2)

Apparently both Nephi and Lehi were familiar enough with the plates of brass, and in particular the prophecies of Joseph, so that they could recite the words from memory.

According to Daniel Ludlow, some of the writings of Joseph are still in existence but have not been published to the world in our present Bible. Joseph Smith said that he received some papyri scrolls that contained the record of Abraham and Joseph at the same time he obtained the Egyptian mummies from Michael Chandler. Concerning this record, Joseph Smith has written: "The record of Abraham and Joseph, found with the mummies, is beautifully written on papyrus, with black, and a small part red, ink or paint, in perfect preservation." (*History of the Church*, 2:348) The Prophet next describes how the mummies and the record came into his possession and then concludes: "Thus I have given a brief history of the manner in which the writings of the fathers, Abraham and Joseph, have been preserved, and how I came in possession of the same--a correct translation of which I shall give in its proper place." (*History of the Church*, 2:350-351).

The record of Abraham translated by the Prophet was subsequently printed, and it is now known as the book of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price. However, the translation of the book of Joseph has not yet been published. Evidently the record of Joseph was translated by the Prophet, but perhaps the reason it was not published was because the great prophecies therein were "too great" for the people of this day. [Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, pp. 130-131]

Note* It should be remembered that some of Joseph's prophecies were restored to the Bible when Joseph Smith translated or revised it (see JST, Genesis 50:24-36). [Church Educational System, *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122*, 1989, p. 25]

2 Nephi 4:2 **And the Prophecies Which [Joseph] Wrote, There Are Not Many Greater:**

According to McConkie and Millet, the stature of Joseph of Egypt as a prophet remains little known even to Latter-day Saints. From the text restored by Joseph Smith to the book of Genesis we learn that Joseph enjoyed the personal presence of the Lord Jehovah, who covenanted with him relative to his posterity by way of an immutable oath (see JST, Genesis 50:24,34,36). In this prophecy, quoted in part by Lehi to his son Joseph in 2 Nephi 3, we learn that he knew of the destiny of Joseph Smith. The detail of the knowledge had by the ancient Joseph is remarkable. As an illustration, Joseph Smith, in blessing Oliver Cowdery, said that Oliver would be blessed "according to the blessings of the prophecy of Joseph in ancient days, which he said should come upon the seer of the last days and the scribe that should sit with him, and that should be ordained with him, by the hands of the angel in the bush, unto the lesser priesthood, and after [he should] receive the holy priesthood under the hands of those who had been held in reserve for a long season, even those who received it under the hands of the Messiah while he should dwell in the flesh upon the earth, and should receive the blessings with him, even the seer of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saith he, even Joseph of old." (Joseph Fielding Smith, "Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood," *Improvement Era*, October 1904, p. 943.)

Thus we see that Joseph of Egypt knew not only of Joseph Smith and his role as the great prophet of the Restoration but also of Oliver Cowdery's role as Joseph's scribe to bring forth the Book of Mormon, and that Oliver would be Joseph's companion when the Aaronic and the Melchizedek priesthoods were restored. It may well be that the ancient Joseph knew more of our day than we do. Further, we are aware that Joseph of Egypt was the author of a scriptural record which will some day be restored to those of the house of faith (see *Messenger and Advocate*, Winter 1835, p. 236). We anticipate that the prophecies of Joseph contained therein will have much to say about the roles of Ephraim and Manasseh in the gathering of Israel in the last days. [Joseph F. McConkie and Robert L. Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, p. 213]

2 Nephi 4:5 If Ye Are Brought Up in the Way Ye Should Go Ye Will Not Depart From It:

Lehi is apparently quoting from a passage in the Brass Plates, perhaps related to Proverbs: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6). Lehi's words are interesting because his two sons, Laman and Lemuel, seem to be an exception to what Lehi is saying. Indeed, there is nothing from the record of Nephi which would indicate that Lehi had done a poor job as a father. On the contrary, on many occasions he plead with them, with all the feeling of a tender parent and with the entreaty, hear the words of a trembling parent (1 Nephi 8:37, 2 Ne 1:14). So what did Lehi mean?

In my view, a key to understanding this verse in a better manner comes from the word "way" or should I say "covenant way." In reviewing the manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith struck the word "right" from the phrase "I know that if ye are brought up in the

right way ye should go ye will not depart from it.” In my view he did this because the ambiguity of Lehi’s message. Although Joseph, to some extent let the ambiguity remain in the text, he made this correction because in covenant terms there is only one way—the way of the Lord: Lehi is NOT necessarily talking about his parenting ways (from which Laman and Lemuel rebelled), nor is Lehi laying complete blame (for the moment) at the feet of Laman and Lemuel); for despite our intentions as parents, we all come up short. Nevertheless, if our actions as parents are egregious, we can be held accountable to some degree.

In my view what Lehi is talking about is the Lord’s covenant way---something that can only be entered into by an individual of his own free will, and obeyed in the same manner. Although parents can be helpful in cultivating this spirit of obedience or harmful in influencing a child against such things, ultimately in the “life of man” before he is resurrected, the responsibility lies with the individual. It is by the hand of the Lord that this covenant way has been established, and it is by the hand of the Lord that one is “brought up” in this “way.” The scriptures testify of this covenant way:

1 Nephi 10:18

18 For he is the same yesterday, today, and forever; and the way is prepared for all men from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come unto him.

1 Nephi 14:17

17 . . . at that day, the work of the Father shall commence, in preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants, which he hath made to his people who are of the house of Israel.

2 Nephi 2:4

4 . . . for the Spirit is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. And the way is prepared from the fall of man, and salvation is free.

Alma 41:8

8 Now, the decrees of God are unalterable; therefore, the way is prepared that whosoever will may walk therein and be saved.

Ether 12:8

8 [Christ] has shown himself unto the world, and glorified the name of the Father, and prepared a way that thereby others might be partakers of the heavenly gift, that they might hope for those things which they have not seen.

[Alan Miner Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 4:6 The Cursing May Be Taken From You and Be Answered Upon the Heads of Your Parents:

Lehi was concerned for the salvation of his grandchildren and great grandchildren. Doubtless, he was familiar with the scriptures like Exodus 20:5-6: "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments

This scripture needs some explanation. A careful review of the scriptures reveals that parents can be held responsible for some of the sins of their children but children cannot be held responsible for the sins of their parents. Parents can only be held responsible for the sins of the children if they were negligent in teaching them of their duties. This is similar to the responsibility of prophets—if they don't call the people to repentance they can be held responsible for the sins of the people (Ezekiel 33:4-6, Jacob 1:19). Speaking of parents who do not teach their children the basic principles and ordinances of the gospel, the Lord has said, the sin be upon the heads of the parents (D&C 68:25). See also D&C 29:47-8. This is an exception to the general rule as taught by Ezekiel: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son" (Ezekiel 18:20). Therefore, although it is just for God to hold Laman and Lemuel responsible to some degree for the sins of their children because they were negligent parents, the responsibility lies with the individual.

Joseph Fielding Smith writes:

The Lord never punishes a child for its parents' transgressions. He is just and merciful. The real meaning of this visiting of the iniquity is that when a man transgresses he teaches his children to transgress, and they follow his teachings. It is natural for children to follow in the practices of their fathers and by doing so suffer for the parents' iniquity which they have voluntarily brought upon themselves.

[Note* There can be a difference between responsibility for sin, and the consequences of sin, for those people living "in the moment." From a covenant perspective, for those people "living in the moment" this difference might become lost or at least blurred. Let me explain. In general, the blessings or cursings of previous covenants made by the "Fathers" are carried over to some extent onto subsequent generations—as Moses implies in Exodus: "unto the third and fourth generation." Yet the ultimate responsibility lies with those who are directly dealing with the terms of the covenant. For example, the present people who occupy the Americas, more especially those living in the United States, live with some abundant blessings because of the faith of their forefathers. The faith of these forefathers was consistent with the majority of the population. The "fathers" triumphed in the war for Independence, the First World War, and the Second World War. Prosperity followed.

But the blessings to the whole of society because of the faithful majority should not be taken for granted. Prosperity does not mean "continued prosperity." The rising consequences of individual sin are often "masked" by the goodness of the majority. Mounting individual actions that are disobedient to the ORIGINAL COVENANT terms can erode that majority faith

and lead to a majority of the people lacking faith. These individual actions might be considered okay “in the moment” when judged by recently revised social mores; nevertheless, these actions are subject to judgment according to the ORIGINAL COVENANT terms, which deem the actions to be “rebellious” and “in error” despite the approving current mores of the people. The peaceful and blessed state upheld for many years by a righteous majority can quickly yield to cursings and destruction because of an unrighteous majority who think “in the moment” that they are “okay.” The Book of Mormon is a testament to this scenario. What Lehi points out to his grandchildren and great grandchildren is that the Lord is always open to their repentance and change of heart—the promised blessings for obedience to the original covenant are always in place.

The reader might ponder the following recent newspaper article:

May 12, 2015 David Lauter and Hailey Branson-Potts contact the reporters : Tribune Washington Bureau (TNS)

US has become notably less Christian, major study finds

The U.S. has become significantly less Christian in recent years as the share of American adults who espouse no systematic religious belief increased sharply, a major new study found.

For what is probably the first time in U.S. history, the number of American Christians has declined. Christianity, however, remains by far the nation’s dominant religious tradition, according to the new report by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center.

The erosion in traditional religious ranks seems likely to continue. Among Americans aged 18 to 33, slightly more than half identify as Christian, compared with roughly 8 in 10 in the baby boom generation and older age groups, the new data show.

Moreover, in a reverse of previous patterns, younger Americans do not appear to be adhering more to traditional faiths as they become parents. Just the opposite seems to be happening — members of the millennial generation have grown less religious as they age.

The rapid increase in the number of adults without ties to traditional religious institutions has strong implications for other social institutions and for politics.

Whether a person attends religious services regularly is among the strongest predictors of how he or she will vote, with traditional religion strongly tied to the Republican Party, at least among white Americans.

The decline in traditional religious belief adds to the demographic challenges facing the GOP, which already faces difficulties because of its reliance on white voters in a country that has grown more racially diverse.

The interaction between religion and politics may work both ways. Some scholars believe that close ties between traditional religion and conservatism, particularly on issues such as same-sex marriage, have led many younger Americans to cut ties with organized religion.

Opposition to same-sex marriage on the part of religious conservatives “is turning off so many people from Christianity,” said Phil Zuckerman, a sociology professor at Pitzer College who specializes in studying secularism. “We’re seeing a backlash” against the linking of religion and politics.

Almost 1 in 5 American adults was raised in a religious tradition but is now unaffiliated, the study found. By contrast, only 4% have moved in the other direction.

A leading conservative religious figure, however, said the survey results could be a positive development. People who once would have been “pretend Christian” are being more honest about their beliefs, said Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Churches should not try to water down their beliefs on issues such as marriage to appeal to a broader audience, he said. “Almost-Christianity not only isn’t authentic; it’s dangerous to people’s souls.”

“I think this gives us a great opportunity for the church to free itself from its American civic religion captivity and to be the church again,” Moore said. “The worst thing we can do is respond to the changing culture with pandering.”

Because the U.S. Census does not ask questions about religion, the Pew Research Center’s massive religion surveys have become a chief source of information on the religious landscape.

The current survey questioned 35,071 U.S. adults last summer. Its huge size allows detailed analysis of even fairly small religious groups. The margin of error for the full sample is plus or minus six-tenths of a percentage point.

The study found the U.S. still far more religious than most other economically advanced countries. But the significant increase in the share of Americans who do not follow traditional religious belief mirrors trends in Europe and elsewhere.

“It’s becoming much more possible, much more viable, to identify as secular” in the U.S. today, Zuckerman said. In previous generations, a lack of religious affiliation was widely viewed as un-American, he said.

Nationwide, just short of a quarter of Americans describe themselves as agnostic, atheist or simply “nothing in particular,” up from roughly 1 in 6 in 2007, according to the

new study. The ranks of the “nones,” as the study labels them, have grown in large part from people abandoning the religions in which they were raised.

That trend toward more secularism is particularly strong in the West, where “unaffiliated” is now the single largest religious grouping, at 28%, compared with 23% who identify as Catholic, 22% evangelical Protestant and 11% as mainline Protestant, the Pew data show. The South remains the most heavily Christian part of the nation.

In the Los Angeles metropolitan region, roughly one-quarter of adults are unaffiliated and about one-third are Catholic, the data show. Two other large Western metropolitan regions, Seattle and San Francisco, rank as the most secular of the country’s largest urban areas, with more than one-third of adults having no religious affiliation.

Although younger Americans are much more likely to have no religion than older generations, the decline in organized religious belief has affected nearly all population groups — native-born and immigrant; whites, blacks and Latinos; and those with and without college educations, the Pew data found.

The decline has been sharpest among Americans born since the mid-1960s. And in those groups, organized religion does not appear to be gaining adherents as people age. In 2007, for example, about one-quarter of Americans aged 18 to 26 said they had no religion. Today, in that same cohort — who are now 25 to 33 — just over one-third say they have no religion.

“If you work in the church, you see it happening. We have growing numbers of congregations that are having a hard time retaining their membership numbers,” said Bishop R. Guy Erwin of the Southwest California Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, based in Glendale.

“The people who are churchgoers are an aging generation, and they’re not being replaced by younger people,” he said. “We can’t just assume that we can do the same old stuff and still be successful.”

Married people are more likely to have a religious affiliation than the unmarried, but both groups have grown less attached to organized religion in recent years, the Pew data show. Among married adults, 18% describe themselves as religious “nones,” while among the unmarried, 28% do. Those who are unmarried but living with a partner are particularly likely to be unaffiliated.

With the growth of the religiously unaffiliated, Christian ranks have eroded. Roughly 173 million adult Americans identified as Christian when asked last year. That’s just under 71% of the U.S. population, down from 178 million, or 78% of the U.S., in 2007. The total U.S. adult population grew by about 8% during that seven-year period.

Protestants once dominated the U.S. population, but no longer hold a majority, the study found. About 47% of the U.S. population identifies with some Protestant denomination, down from slightly more than half in 2007.

The decline has been uneven, with mainline denominations, such as Methodists and Presbyterians, shrinking more quickly than evangelical churches.

Slightly fewer than 1 in 6 adult Americans identifies with a mainline Protestant church, according to the survey. Evangelicals, by contrast, make up about one-quarter of the adult U.S. population. They now constitute a majority among those who identify as Protestant.

[Alan Miner Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 4:10 **It Came to Pass That . . . It Came to Pass That:**

Royal Skousen reports that the original text of the Book of Mormon contains expressions which seem inappropriate or improper in some of their uses. For example, in the original text a good many occurrences of the phrase "and it came to pass" are found in inappropriate contexts. In his editing for the 1837 edition, Joseph Smith removed at least 47 of these apparently extraneous uses of this well-worked phrase. In most cases, there were two or more examples of "it came to pass" in close proximity; in some cases, nothing new had "come to pass." Now the King James phrase "and it came to pass" corresponds to a Hebrew word meaning "and it happened." When translating the Hebrew Bible, the King James translators avoided translating this Hebrew word whenever it wouldn't make sense in English, especially when too many events were "coming to pass" or when nothing had really "come to pass"--in other words, in those very places that the original text of the Book of Mormon "inappropriately" allows "and it came to pass" to occur. Consider the following example (where the deleted phrase "it came to pass that" is in brackets) with a corresponding example from Genesis, given in the original before the King James translators took it out:

2 Nephi 4:10--and *it came to pass that* when my father had made an end of speaking unto them behold [*it came to pass that*] he spake unto the sons of Ishmael yea and even all his household (1837).

Genesis 27:30--and *it came to pass* as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob and [*it came to pass that*] Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

Other Book of Mormon examples of multiple occurrences of "it came to pass" which were edited by Joseph Smith in 1837 are found in Alma 8:18-19 and Alma 14:4-5.

What is important here is to realize that the original text of the Book of Mormon

apparently contains expressions that are not characteristic of English at any place or time, in particular neither Joseph Smith's upstate New York dialect nor the King James Bible. Subsequent editing of the text into standard English has systematically removed these non-English expressions from the text--the very expressions that provide the strongest support for the hypothesis that the Book of Mormon is a literal translation of a non-English text. [Royal Skousen, "The Original Language of the Book of Mormon: Upstate New York Dialect, King James English, or Hebrew?," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Spring 1994, F.A.R.M.S., pp. 35-38]

2 Nephi 4:11 Thy Seed Shall Be Numbered With His Seed:

The idea that Sam's seed shall be numbered with Nephi's seed is consistent with other scriptures in the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine & Covenants. The term "Samites" is never found. This is because they were numbered with the "Nephites." In Jacob's list of the "ites" of the Book of Mormon, "Samites" are notably absent: "Now the people which were not Lamanites were Nephites; nevertheless, they were called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites." (Jacob 1:13). D&C 3:17-18 lists the "Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites." Again "Samites" are notably absent.

This is remarkable doctrinal consistency for the machinations of an unschooled farm boy from Vermont. Unless, of course, he was a prophet of God. [josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

2 Nephi 4:11 Thy [Sam's] Seed Shall Be Numbered with His [Nephi's] Seed:

Some people might wonder why, in blessing his son Sam, Lehi said that Sam's seed would be numbered with Nephi's seed (see 2 Nephi 4:11). Put another way, Why was Sam's portion of inheritance linked with that of Nephi? There were "Nephites," "Jacobites" and "Josephites" (see Jacob 1:13; 4 Nephi 1:38; Mormon 1:8), so, Why were there no "Samites"?

According to John Welch, interwoven with the ancient Near Eastern principles of family law were fairly specific laws of inheritance and succession (de Vaux 1:53-55; Elon 434-35, 446-64; Falk 165-70). Preserving and transmitting the family estate from one generation to the next was a fundamental and essential aspect of ancient society and economy. Typically, upon the death of the father, the eldest son of the father's first wife was entitled to occupy the father's house and estate, and legal provisions were established in the early law codes to prevent the father from wrongfully favoring younger sons or the sons of wives with lesser status (Falk 165-70)

In early Israel several cases of succession ran contrary to the common custom. There, "a father was free to choose a younger son as his successor, if he found the eldest unworthy of the office" (Falk 165). In that community, more than property was at stake. The tribal structure of

early Israelite society required that a leader be chosen to take the father's place as both the secular and spiritual leader of the clan. This power "did not pass automatically, but had to be conferred by the father in a special blessing" (Falk 165). This was accomplished by a formal public "acknowledgement" of that son by his father (Deuteronomy 21:17), usually in the form of an oral blessing (*EJ* 6:1306-11).

The accounts in Genesis are remarkable in that younger sons are frequently preferred over their elder brothers (see the stories of Abel, Seth, Jacob, Ephraim, David and Solomon), and in that fathers sometimes separated the privileges of property inheritance from those of political and priestly rights (somewhat as Lehi also does in giving priestly duties to Jacob). Thus, Jacob of old blessed Judah with the rights of governance (Genesis 49:10), and Joseph with a double portion of the birthright through Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48:22), and Levi eventually became entitled to certain inherited rights of the priesthood.

As time progressed, the laws in Israel changed, particularly to clarify and protect the property rights of the firstborn son. For example, he was virtually guaranteed a double share as compared with his brothers. . . . So how was Lehi to deal with these expectations of the firstborn Laman and at the same time leave Nephi in a secure position as the "ruler and teacher" (1 Nephi 2:22; 3:29) he was chosen by God to become?

Concerning the rights of primogeniture and leadership, Lehi said to Laman, Lemuel, Sam and the sons of Ishmael, "If ye will hearken unto the voice of Nephi . . . I leave unto you a blessing," including "my first blessing." But if they would not hearken unto Nephi, Lehi provided that their disobedience would revoke the "first blessing" and also the general blessing, and all this should then rest upon Nephi (2 Nephi 1:28-29). In other words, Lehi was willing to give Laman the titular blessing so long as the group in substance followed Nephi.

To whatever extent Lehi acknowledged Laman's right to the double portion of the firstborn, he simultaneously did three things that appear to have been calculated to detract from Laman's firstborn double portion rights.

First, he combined Sam's inheritance and seed with Nephi's (2 Nephi 4:11). As Jacob in the patriarchal period had effectively doubled the blessing of Joseph by granting equal blessings to Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48:22), so Lehi effectively doubled Nephi's position by granting a share of the land to Sam and then merging it with Nephi's

Second, he blessed his firstborn's children to the effect that their sins and cursings would be answered upon the heads of their parents (2 Nephi 4:5-9). This could not have been flattering to Laman.

Third, Lehi referred to Jacob three times as his "firstborn . . . in the wilderness" (2 Nephi 2:1,2,11), and singled him out to spend his life "in the service of thy God" (2 Nephi 2:3)--a role often associated with the position of a firstborn son. These steps diminished the uniqueness and

importance of Laman as the eldest son. [John W. Welch, "Lehi's Last Will and Testament: A Legal Approach," in The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, the Doctrinal Structure, pp. 74-78]

Thus, John Welch has provided a plausible cultural background and answer as to why there were no "Samites." His words also give testimony to the fact that the ancient world of which Lehi and Nephi were proposed to be a part of in the pages of the Book of Mormon was a very real world.

2 Nephi 4:12 Lehi Had Spoken unto All His Household:

When Nephi mentions that "Lehi had spoken unto all his household" (2 Nephi 4:12), perhaps he is implying that his sisters (mentioned in 2 Nephi 5:6) also received a blessing (see 2 Nephi 4:10, "all of the household of Ishmael").

2 Nephi 4:12 [Lehi] Died, and Was Buried:

As in other covenant writings, while mention is made of the patriarch Lehi's death, nothing is said of the death of his wife Sariah. When Nephi is forced to flee from his brothers (see 2 Nephi chapter 5), there is no mention of her. Perhaps this is an indication of the "one-ness" of a husband and wife (in this case Lehi and Sariah) that is projected by covenant writings. [Alan Miner Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 4:12 [Lehi] Died, and Was Buried:

According to Clate Mask, it is well known that ancient Semitic people revered sacred occurrences and sometimes built commemorative shrines. Father Abraham made his near-sacrifice of his son Isaac on Mt. Moriah located in what is now the Holy City of Jerusalem. The descendants of Isaac built the Temple of Solomon on that sacrificial spot and many centuries later the descendants of Isaac's brother Ishmael erected the Dome of the Rock which still stands today on that same Temple Mount. Another significant location to both Arab and Jew is found in Hebron. The Tomb of the Patriarchs is built over the traditional burial spot of their common ancestor Father Abraham, venerated patriarch of both nations.

Mask then makes an interesting query: "How would a people from Jerusalem (and now in the New World) with their Near Eastern Semitic customs, feel about Lehi's death? Having such honor, respect and reverence for their venerable patriarch, Father Lehi, what would they have probably built at the site where Lehi 'died and was buried'" (2 Nephi 4:12)? [Clate Mask, "And They Called the Place Bountiful," pp. 2, 5]

Note* What Mask seems to be alluding to here is the idea that in Mesoamerica, when rival civilizations took over the territory and temple sites of their competitors, they defaced and destroyed many of their temple monuments. At the archaeological site of Izapa, located on the Pacific coastal route between Mexico and Guatemala, for the most part most of the monuments remained intact. If both Lamanites and Nephites venerated Lehi, if "their fathers' first inheritance" bordered "on the west" by "the seashore" (Alma 22:28), then Izapa might be a candidate for the land of first inheritance and Lehi's burial place. Although such a proposal might seem extremely tentative, Garth Norman has made some remarkable correlations at this site with the Book of Mormon. (See Norman's commentary on Lehi's dream and the Stela 5 "Tree of Life Stone" at Izapa--1 Nephi 8; 11; 18:23.) [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 4:15 Upon These [Small Plates] I Write . . . Many of the Scriptures Which are Engraven upon the Plates of Brass:

Readers of the Book of Mormon should note here in 2 Nephi 4:15 that Nephi lets the reader know of his intention to inscribe on the small plates "many of the scriptures which are engraven upon the plates of brass. From the multitude of Isaiah chapters which follow, we see some obvious examples of Nephi's intentions. Are there "many" non-obvious scriptures? The reader is referred to Volume 6, Appendix C for a listing. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 4:15 My Soul Delighteth:

The phrase "my soul delighteth in" is an interesting one. That is because the only place it occurs in the whole Book of Mormon is in the writings of Nephi on the Small Plates. Moreover, Nephi uses it eleven times at various locations within his writings. The following is a summary of those verses:

- 2 Nephi 4:15 "my soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children."
- 2 Nephi 4:16 "my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard."
- 2 Nephi 11:2 "my soul delighteth in his [Isaiah's] words."
- 2 Nephi 11:4 "my soul delighteth in proving unto my people the truth of the coming of Christ ."
- 2 Nephi 11:5 "my soul delighteth in the covenants of the Lord which he hath made to our fathers"
- 2 Nephi 11:5 "my soul delighteth in his grace, and in his justice, and power, and mercy in the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death."
- 2 Nephi 11:6 "my soul delighteth in proving unto my people that save Christ should come all men must perish.
- 2 Nephi 25:4 "my soul delighteth in plainness unto my people, that they may learn."

- 2 Nephi 25:5 "my soul delighteth in the words of Isaiah . . ."
- 2 Nephi 25:13 "my soul delighteth to prophesy concerning [Christ]"
- 2 Nephi 31:3 "my soul delighteth in plainness; for after this manner doth the Lord God work among the children of men."

[Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 4:15-16 For My Soul Delighteth in the Scriptures [the Word of God]:

Nephi's favorite prophet, Isaiah, is famous for a pattern of Hebrew poetry called parallelism. Nephi emulates this in many of his passages including these verses. Of Hebrew poetry, Victor Ludlow writes:

"Parallelism is the most distinctive quality of Hebrew poetry, and it is found in most of the famous biblical passages. In parallelism, a thought, idea, grammar pattern, or key word of the first line is repeated or continued in the second line. There are two basic types of parallelism, grammatical and semantic. Grammatical or 'form' parallelism is often difficult to identify, especially in non-Hebrew translations, because the rhyme schemes, grammar forms, conjugation patterns, prefix or suffix parallelisms, and so on may not carry over into the new translation. However, semantic parallelism is more easily recognized in English and other non-Semitic language translations since it is a 'theme rhyme' or 'idea pattern' in which the thought or meaning in one line is related to an idea of another line in a variety of parallel patterns." (Isaiah: Prophet, Seer, and Poet, p. 32)

Victor Ludlow goes on to describe seven different types of semantic parallelism. The passage in question exhibits two of these types:

- 15 a) For my soul delighteth in the scriptures,
 b) and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children.
- 16 a) Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord;
 b) and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard.

These passages exhibit synthetic parallelism and synonymous parallelism.

In synthetic parallelism, “the second line completes or complements the thought of the first in a variety of possible combinations...An idea is introduced in the first line, which is incomplete or generates questions about that idea. The second line then completes the idea, or answers a question raised by the first line.” (Isaiah: Prophet, Seer, and Poet, pp. 33-4) In verse 15, the first thought, my soul delighteth in the scriptures, is completed in the second line, and my heart pondereth them and writeth them for the learning and profit of my children.

In synonymous parallelism, “a theme of the first line repeats itself in the second line, but in slightly different words.” (Isaiah: Prophet, Seer, and Poet, pp. 32) The ideas in verse 15 are repeated in verse 16 with slightly different concepts. The phrase, ‘For my soul delighteth in the scriptures’ is repeated in verse 16 as ‘my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord.’

2 Nephi 4:15 **My Heart Pondereth [the Word of God]:**

The word “ponder” is interesting because of (1) the very few times it is used in the Bible and the Book of Mormon; (2) the special places and people that use it; and (3) it is always used in regard to personal revelation.

The word “ponder” is used in the Old Testament only in the book of Proverbs: “Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not **know** them.” (Proverbs 5:6)

In the New Testament the only time “ponder” is found is when it is used to describe the actions of Mary, the mother of Jesus, after she was told by the Lord about her role as the mother of Christ: “But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.” (Luke 2:19)

In the Book of Mormon the word “ponder” appears 9 times. It appears twice in the book of Helaman. Nephi was pondering as he walked home when he heard a voice telling him, “Blessed art thou, Nephi, for those things which thou hast done” (Helaman 10:2-4).

The rest of times the word is either associated with the first writer (Nephi), or the last writer (Moroni) of the Book of Mormon.

Nephi uses the term four times:

1 Nephi 11:1

1 For it came to pass after I had desired to **know** the things that my father had seen, and believing that the Lord was able to make them known unto me, as I sat pondering in mine heart I was caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceedingly high mountain, which I never had before seen, and upon which I never had before set my foot.

2 Nephi 4:15

15 And upon these I write the things of my soul, and many of the scriptures which are engraven upon the plates of brass. For my soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children.

2 Nephi 32:1

1 And now, behold, my beloved brethren, I suppose that ye ponder somewhat in your hearts concerning that which ye should do after ye have entered in by the way. But, behold, why do ye ponder these things in your hearts?

2 Nephi 32:8

8 And now, my beloved brethren, I perceive that ye ponder still in your hearts; and it grieveth me that I must speak concerning this thing. For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray, ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray.

Moroni uses the term once:

Moroni 10:3

3 Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

[Alan Miner Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 4:16-35 Behold, My Soul Delighteth in the Things of the Lord (the Psalm of Nephi):

Sidney Sperry writes that one of the intimate glimpses we get of Nephi's soul is found in 2 Nephi 4:16-35, which passage we may call "The Psalm of Nephi." [Sidney Sperry, Book of Mormon Compendium, p. 152] [SEE THE ABOVE PARALLELISTIC ARRANGEMENT FOR THESE VERSES]

According to an article by Steven Sondrup, rhythm, meter, alliteration, assonance, and rhyme are some of the ways most familiar to modern readers in which the poet can pattern his language; however, they are by no means the only possibilities at his disposal. In the "Psalm of Nephi," just as in Hebrew poetry, an intricately patterned system of ideational parallels is the essence of lyricism. Logical, formal, or conceptual units are set parallel to one another rather than acoustic properties as in the case with rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, and assonance. This use of ideational parallelism in Hebrew poetry was first noticed by medieval Jewish biblical scholars during the eighteenth century.

The basic characteristics of the parallelism of the "Psalm of Nephi" can easily be seen in

what may well serve as the first of four stanzas of the psalm:

Behold, *my soul* delighteth in the things of the Lord: and
My heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard.
Nevertheless, notwithstanding the great goodness of the Lord
in showing me his great and marvelous work
My heart exclaimeth: O wretched man that I am!
Yea *my heart* sorroweth because of my flesh;
My soul grieveth because of mine iniquities.

By reading these words as they were intended to be read (in a chiasmic manner) the reader is able to come to a most profound understanding of the meaning of the text and the richest appreciation of its significance. [Steven P. Sondrup, "The Psalm of Nephi: A Lyric Reading," in BYU Studies, Summer 1981, pp. 359, 362, 372]

2 Nephi 4:16-35 (**Nephi's Psalm**):

Richardson, Richardson and Bentley note that Nephi's Psalm, as recorded in 2 Nephi 4:16-35, provides an example of a Hebrew literary pattern called the *individual lament* and thus provides evidence of the Hebrew roots of the Book of Mormon prophets. (Matthew Nickerson, "Nephi's Psalm: 2 Nephi 4:16-35 in the light of Form-Critical Analysis," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 26-42)^{xi} The individual lament consists of five parts, all of which are contained in Nephi's Psalm as shown below along with a biblical example from the book of Psalms:

<u>Feature</u>	<u>2 Nephi</u>	<u>Psalms</u>
1. Invocation	4:16-17	54:1-2
2. Complaint	4:17-19	54:3
3. Confession of Trust	4:20-30	54:4
4. Petition	4:31-33	54:5
5. Vow of Praise	4:34-35	54:6-7

[Allen H. Richardson, David E. Richardson and Anthony E. Bentley, 1000 Evidences for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Part Two-A Voice from the Dust: 500 Evidences in Support of the Book of Mormon, p. 275]

2 Nephi 4:16-35 (**Psalm of Nephi**):

Matthew Nickerson, a librarian at Southern Utah University, studied Nephi's psalm to discover whether it fits the structural form of the biblical psalm. He found the following:

Invocation (2 Nephi 4:16-17)

The individual lament begins with a call to God and is often followed by a short introductory petition. . . . The invocation is not as explicit in Nephi's psalm as it is in some of the psalms of the Old Testament, but this is not unusual. In the case of Nephi's psalm, while the introduction speaks of the "things of the Lord" and the "goodness of the Lord" but not a direct petition, the subsequent sections contain numerous calls to God using the same phrase ---"O Lord . . . "

Complaint (2 Nephi 4:17-19)

The complaint portion of an individual lament generally follows the invocation and it is where the supplicant describes his woes to the Lord. Typically the poet laments some tragedy or malady and describes its ill effects. Suffering described in laments can include many types of physical and emotional distress. Nephi writes in his complaint: "my heart sorroweth . . . " and "my soul grieveth . . . " He writes: "I am encompassed about because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me . . . my heart groaneth because of my sins."

Confession of Trust (2 Nephi 4:20-30)

The lament is usually followed by a brief declaration of trust in the Lord and his abilities to relieve and reward the sufferer. Though sometimes found at the end or repeated near the end of the psalm, the confession of trust is a classic element and is rarely absent from the lament. In Nephi's psalm Nephi writes: "My God hath been my support" followed by multiple phrases that begin with "He hath . . . "

Petition (2 Nephi 4:31-33)

In the petition the supplicant seeks the Lord's help in alleviating the sorrows or sufferings described in the complaint. The first verse of Nephi's petition contains referents and language common to the Near Eastern lament tradition. Nephi writes: "O Lord, wilt thou redeem my soul? [O Lord], wilt thou deliver me out of the hands of mine enemies? [O Lord] wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin? . . . O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness? O Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine escape before mine enemies! Westermann identifies defense against and freedom from enemies as the "dominant subject" and most elaborately developed part of the psalms of lament.

Vow of Praise (2 Nephi 4:34-35)

In the oldest laments the concluding portion is a vow to sing a song of praise or thanksgiving. In many psalms of lamentation the change from petition to praise is very abrupt, and this sudden change of tone and content has been noted by many psalm scholars. Gunkel believes that this abrupt change in the psalm's closing verses is evidence of the supplicant's great faith in the Lord's imminent help and he referred to this specific element as the certainty of a hearing. This certainty is demonstrated when the supplicant

actually includes this gratitude and praise for the Lord in the closing verses. In the Psalm of Nephi, Nephi writes: "O Lord . . . I will trust in thee forever . . . I will lift up; my voice unto thee" . . . "I will cry unto thee my God, the rock of my righteousness" . . . Behold, my voice shall forever ascend up unto thee."

In conclusion, Nickerson determined that Nephi's psalm plainly follows the format and substance of the individual lament and is indeed a true psalm and not merely a passage of scripture bearing similarities in tone and feeling to the Old Testament Psalter:

It is a classic example of an ancient poetic form: the psalm of individual lament. Not only does Nephi; exhibit a talent for literary parallelism, but he has also written a beautiful "psalm in the biblical sense of the term." Clearly Nephi; was participating in an ancient literary tradition when he wrote his psalm recorded in chapter four of 2 Nephi.

[Matthew Nickerson, "Nephi's Psalm: 2 Nephi 4:16-35 in the light of Form-Critical Analysis," Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 26-42]

2 Nephi 4:16-35 (**Psalm of Nephi**):

Concerning the "Psalm of Nephi" (2 Nephi 4:16-35), Noel Reynolds notes that Nephi apparently owes some of the structure and content to a prayer of Zenos recorded on the brass plates and used by Alma to teach the people of Antionum about true worship of the Lord (see Alma 33:4-11). While Alma quotes Zenos's prayer as proof that Zenos knew of the Son of God, Nephi appears to have applied the sentiments and language of the prayer to his own trying circumstances, finding in Zenos's words a source of encouragement and faith in the face of hostility and affliction.

Nephi ends his psalm with a prayer of approximately the same length and in a style similar to Zenos's prayer text. Comparing the two we find the following:

(Psalm of Nephi)

Nephi uses the invocation "O God" or "O Lord" six times (2 Nephi 4:30,31,32,33,34)

Nephi begins his psalm by recognizing the Lord's great goodness in showing him "his great and marvelous works" (2 Nephi 4:17)

Nephi lists many occasions when he received blessings from God in response to his cry and

(Prayer of Zenos)

Zenos uses the invocation "O God" or "O Lord" five times (Alma 33:4,5,6,7,9)

Zenos also begins by acknowledging God's mercy in hearing his prayers (Alma 33:4)

Zenos lists the many places in which the Lord heard his prayers, citing first an occasion when he was in

"mighty prayer," citing first how God supported him and led him through his "affliction in the wilderness" (2 Nephi 4:20)

Nephi knows that "God will give liberally to him that asketh" (2 Nephi 4:35)

Nephi expects to be blessed "because that my heart is broken and my spirit is contrite" (2 Nephi 4:32)

Nephi seeks help in dealing with "[his] enemies." He prays for help against the "enemy of [his] soul," who tempts him and destroys his peace, the "evil one" who seeks a place in his heart (2 Nephi 4:27-28), referring to this "enemy" three times. We get a clear picture that Nephi's enemies included his own brothers who "did seek to take away [his] life" (2 Nephi 5:1-2), and Nephi reports that the Lord "confounded [his] enemies" (2 Nephi 4:22).

Nephi makes direct reference to the Atonement of Christ and the joy he can find through it. Nephi asks himself why he should be depressed or feel such sorrow when "the Lord in his condescension unto the children of men hath visited men in so much mercy" (2 Nephi 4:26; cf. 1 Nephi 11:16-25).

Nephi ends by saying: "My soul will rejoice in thee, my God, and the rock of my salvation" (2 Nephi 4:30)

the wilderness. (Alma 33:4,5,6,7,9,10)

Zenos emphasizes that because the Lord did hear him in his afflictions, he will continue to cry to him "in all mine afflictions" (Alma 33:11)

Zenos asserts generally that God is "merciful unto [his] children when they cry unto [him], to be heard of [him] and not of men." (Alma 33:8)

Zenos also seeks help in dealing with "[his] enemies." The Lord answered Zenos's prayer by turning his enemies to him (Alma 33:4). Zenos states that he had been "cast out" and "despised" by his enemies, and that upon hearing his cries the Lord was angry with them and did "visit them in [his] anger with speedy destruction" (Alma 33:10)

Zenos also makes direct reference to the Atonement and its joy. Zenos explains God's mercy in terms of the Son and recognizes that it is "because of [God's] Son" that "[God has] turned [his] judgements away from [him]" (Alma 33:11)

Zenos ends by saying: "In thee is my joy" (Alma 33:11)

[Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephite Uses and Interpretations of Zenos," in The Allegory of the Olive Tree, pp. 34-36] [See the commentary on Alma 33:3-11]

2 Nephi 4:16-35 (**Psalm of Nephi**):

According to John Welch, Nephi's masterful meditation in 2 Nephi 4:16-35, known today as the Psalm of Nephi, stands in 2 Nephi immediately after the death and burial of Lehi. Nephi's words have universal import, but they become even more poignant and vivid if we recognize that

this psalm was written while Nephi was feeling painfully vulnerable after losing his father. [John W. Welch, "The Psalm of Nephi as a Post-Lehi Document," in Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., 1999, p. 72]

Note* One of the most striking voids in Nephi's account is the absence of his patriarchal blessing. Perhaps we find pieces of it in the blessings to Jacob and Joseph (as well as the others), where the historical parallels could be better illustrated. If this scenario is true, and in view of the grand blessings promised to Nephi, it is also most striking that he chooses to share with the reader his feelings of inadequacy. He truly becomes one of us (the covenant children of the Father) in his sufferings, yet he shows us the way to overcome, to conquer temptation and depression and to claim his covenant blessings: "Awake, my soul! No longer droop in sin . . ." (2 Nephi 28-35).

One would also do well to compare the feelings of inadequacy of the Savior upon the withdrawal of the Spirit of His Father. He also showed the way to overcome. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 4:16-35 (**Nephi's Psalm**):

Catherine Thomas notes that a psalm is a poem, a song of praise; not a sermon or doctrinal treatise, but an expression of personal religious experience. (See the *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J. D. Douglas, 2nd ed., Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1982, p. 992.) Nephi's psalm (2 Nephi 4:16-35) employs some of the features characteristic of his Hebrew literary heritage. [Catherine Thomas, "A Great Deliverance," in Studies in Scripture: Book of Mormon, Part 1, p. 108]

2 Nephi 4:17-35 (**The Psalm of Nephi**):

These verses have been called "the Psalm of Nephi." The tone and content of these verses is similar to the style seen in the book of Psalms. A psalm is a poetic prayer set to music. The Bible Dictionary explains, "The Psalms collectively are called in Hebrew Tehillim or 'Praises,' but the word mizmor, which denotes a composition set to music, is found in the titles of many of them." Some themes common to Nephi's psalm and to the psalms of David are:

- a) Reliance on God, my God hath been my support (2 Nephi 2:20)
- b) The suffering and afflictions of life, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23:4)
- c) The importance of trusting in the Lord, O Lord...I will trust in thee forever (2 Ne 4:34)
- d) The relationship to one's enemies, let not mine enemies triumph over me (Psalm

25:1)

- e) Supplications to the Lord for divine help, O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness! (2 Nephi 4:33)
- f) A broken heart and a contrite spirit, The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. (Psalm 51:17)
- g) Rejoice and praise, Rejoice, O my heart, and cry unto the Lord, and say: O Lord, I will praise thee forever (2 Nephi 4:30)
- h) The redemption of the soul, he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities (Psalm 130:8)

[josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

2 Nephi 4:17 **O Wretched Man That I Am! . .**

“O wretched man that I am!” In view of the visions that Nephi was blessed to receive, and in view of the blessings that came his way, why would Nephi make such a statement? In my view Nephi is not necessarily comparing himself to other men. He is comparing himself to the Lord. Such a statement is not foreign to a psalm. In Psalm 22:6 we find: “But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.” Compared to the Lord’s greatness, any man might be considered “a worm,” or as Nephi says, “wretched.” According to Brant Gardner, this type of reverence for the Lord is part of what makes up a true psalm.

[Brant A. Gardner, Second Witness: Analytical & Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Volume Two: Second Nephi through Jacob, p. 71]

2 Nephi 4:17 **O Wretched Man That I Am! . . . My Soul Grieveth Because of Mine Iniquities:**

What iniquity is Nephi talking about? If there is a prophet in history who could be characterized as faultless and faithful, it would be Nephi. He has faithfully returned to Jerusalem twice, traveled in the wilderness, he was the only member of his family who did not murmur when the family was suffering with hunger, he built a ship, and remarkably didn’t complain when bound on the ship for three days. What is bothering him?

The record makes it clear that not long after the glue of the family, Lehi, had died, the conflict between Nephi and his older brothers sharpened (v. 13). In the past, it had seemed as if Nephi was not bothered by his brothers’ attitude and anger. At this point, the family is in a crisis. Nephi is angry with his brothers for being angry with him. This anger is what he is referring to in these verses, why should I give way to temptations, that the evil one have place in my heart to destroy my peace and afflict my soul? Why am I angry because of mine enemy? Awake, my

soul? No longer droop in sin. Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul, Do not anger again because of mine enemies (v. 27-28).

[josephsmith.com/2Nephi]

2 Nephi 4:23 **He Hath Given Me Knowledge by Visions in the Nighttime:**

Nephi mentions “visions” as answers to his covenant-obedient prayers. Yet the only vision that Nephi has recorded is his tree-of-life vision. According to Brant Gardner, this statement suggests that Nephi had many other visions which he did not record. What angelic visitors ministered to him? What “knowledge” did he acquire? Was it similar to that of the brother of Jared? Was it similar to that of Joseph of Egypt? Was it similar to that of Moses? Was it similar to that of Paul? Was it similar to that of Joseph Smith? While we can only ponder on the answer, the Bible confirms that visions in the nighttime were a mode of divine communication:

Genesis 46:2

“And God spake unto Israael in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.”

Job 4:12-15

“Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up.”

Daniel 2:19, 7:13

“Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.”

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.”

Acts 18:9

“Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace”

[Adapted from Brant A. Gardner, Second Witness: Analytical & Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Volume Two: Second Nephi through Jacob, p. 73]

2 Nephi 4:25 **Mine Eyes Have Beheld Great Things, Yea, Even Too Great For Man:**

Nephi has truly seen great things. As a part of his vision of the tree of life, he saw the entire history of the earth including the ministry of the Savior, the history of his people on the Americas, the Apostasy, the Reformation, the Explorers, the Pilgrims, the Revolutionary War, the Restoration of the Gospel, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the gathering of Israel in the last days, and finally, the end of the world as described by John the Revelator. See 1 Ne 11-15. He saw things that were so great that the Lord commanded that they be withheld from the record.

“All who have been entrusted with a ‘high mountain’ or temple experience have been given knowledge that they are not at liberty to share. There are many sacred truths revealed to those worthy and ready to receive them that are ‘not lawful for man to utter; neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him’ (D&C 76:115-16).” (McConkie and Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, vol. 1, p. 218)

[josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

2 Nephi 4:26 **The Lord in His Condescension unto the Children of Men Hath Visited Men in So Much Mercy:**

Gerald Lund notes that after Lehi recounted to his family his marvelous vision in which he had seen the tree of life, Nephi reported that he was "desirous also that [he] might *see*, and *hear*, and *know* of these things, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (1 Nephi 10:17; emphasis added). Nephi was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain where a grand vision was unfolded before him, and he saw not only what his father had seen but also much more. . . . As Nephi obeyed the angel and looked, he saw the Redeemer of the world. He saw his earthly ministry and its culmination in the death of the Savior (see 1 Nephi 11:26-32).

In the early part of that vision, on two different occasions, the angelic messenger used an unusual phrase--"the condescension of God" (1 Nephi 11:15-16; 11:26). . . . Later in his writings, Nephi used a phrase similar to that used by the angel. In what is often called the psalm of Nephi, he said: "O then, if I have seen so great things, if the Lord *in his condescension unto the children of men* hath visited men in so much mercy, why should my heart weep and my soul linger in the

valley of sorrow, and my flesh waste away, and my strength slacken, because of mine afflictions?" (2 Nephi 4:26; emphasis added). . . . Consider this context of the word *condescension* as it differs from the context of his coming into this mortal world and the various ways in which he condescended during his mortal ministry.

In the Book of Mormon two great aspects of God's character are described as *mercy* and *justice*. The perfect justice of God requires that every sin and every transgression be recompensed or punished (see Alma 42:16-26). Otherwise, those who have been wronged could cry out that there is no justice. But by the same token, because all men sin and come short of the glory of God (see Romans 3:23), justice would require that all of us be banned from the presence of God forever because no unclean thing can dwell in his presence (see Moses 6:57). Fortunately God is also a perfectly merciful being and has devised a plan of redemption whereby justice can be paid through the suffering of the Savior and we can be redeemed and brought back into his presence (see 2 Nephi 2:5-7). . . .

Let us consider the quality of mercy. Mercy is an attribute whose very nature requires condescension, because nothing that man could do merits that mercy. In other words, once we have sinned, we have put ourselves beyond the holy nature of God. For him to then extend mercy and love and grace to us, in spite of what we have done, is another great act of condescension. . . .

Related to that is the idea of the condescension of God's mercy in our repentance. In the classic story of the prodigal son is a reference after the young man came to himself and realized the foolishness of what he had done. He determined that he would return to his father and ask for his forgiveness. "And he arose, and came to his father. *But when he was yet a great way off*, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke 15:20; emphasis added). It was not required that the son come all the way back. The father was watching and went out to meet him while he was yet a long way off.

[Gerald N. Lund, "'Knowest Thou the Condescension of God?'," in Doctrines of the Book of Mormon: The 1991 Sperry Symposium, pp. 80, 88-89] [See the commentary on 1 Nephi 11:16]

2 Nephi 4: 28 **Awake My Soul! No Longer Droop in Sin:**

In The Encyclopedia of Mormonism, another poetic style is discussed—that of chiasmus, or the repeating of concepts in the reverse order in which they were presented. This pattern is described as following the general patterns (a-b-b-a), (a-b-c-c-b-a), etc:

“In the Psalm of Nephi (2 Ne. 4:15-35), the initial appeals to the soul and heart are accompanied by negations, while the subsequent mirror uses the heart and soul are conjoined with strong affirmations, making the contrasts literarily effective and climactic:

A) Awake, my soul! No longer droop in sin.

B) Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul.

C) Do not anger again because of mine enemies.

C) Do not slacken my strength because of mine afflictions.

B) Rejoice, O my heart, and cry unto the Lord, and say:

A) O Lord, I will praise thee forever; yea, my soul will rejoice in thee, my God, and the rock of my salvation. [2 Ne. 4:28- 30.]” (The Encyclopedia of Mormonism, edited by D. Ludlow, p. 182)

2 Nephi 4:32 **A Broken Heart and a Contrite Spirit:**

The doctrine of a “broken heart and a contrite spirit” begins with the law of sacrifice as contained in the Law of Moses in the Old Testament. Under that law, the firstborn lambs were sacrificed in similitude of the Only-Begotten Son.

The law of animal sacrifice was fulfilled in the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We are sometimes slow to realize that there was a replacement “law of sacrifice.” The new law as taught by the Savior requires just as regular and frequent a sacrifice. The difference is that we are to sacrifice a broken heart and a contrite spirit upon the altar of discipleship. 3 Ne 9:19-20 reads as follows:

And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings.

And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost.

Covenant believers in Jesus Christ offer up a broken heart and contrite spirit. It is through this faith and sacrifice that we can obtain forgiveness of sins, “Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.” (2 Nephi 2:7).

This doctrine is even contained in the Old Testament: “For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart (Psalm 51:16-17).

[josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

[Note* Does the fact that this doctrine("a broken heart and a contrite spirit" appears in the Old Testament give some added testimony to the Book of Mormon that Christ and His Atonement were known by various faithful people from the earliest of times? Alan Miner Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 4:32 That I May Walk in the Path of the Low Valley, That I May Be Strict in the Plain Road:

According to Hugh Nibley, when Nephi says, "that I may be strict in the plain road" (2 Nephi 4:32) he means "that I may stick to the right path." At the end of the first Psalm it says, "The way of the wicked shall be lost in the sand." That is, Nephi doesn't want to get lost in sin. The "path of the low valley" is the easiest path to take and the surest, not having to run up and down any hills or anything like that. [Hugh W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, p. 251]

2 Nephi 4:35 I Know That God Will Give Liberally to Him That Asketh:

Nephi writes: "I KNOW that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss" (2 Nephi 4:35). In my view, the inclusion of the word "know" here tells me that Nephi's statement is related to the covenants with the Lord that he has made and kept.

As recorded in James, "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering (James 1:5-6). Later in his writings, James also warned against asking for things for the wrong reasons:, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." (James 4:3).

[Alan Miner Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 4:35 Mine Everlasting God Amen:

John Tvedtnes notes that Joseph Smith is said to have indicated that the name *Ahman* was the title of God the Father (see 2 Nephi 4:35), while Jesus is called "Son Ahman." Old Testament prayers end simply with the word *Amen* (= confirmed, true), and hence in the name (title) of Jesus Christ. [John Tvedtnes, "Faith and Truth," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Vol. 3, No. 2, Fall 1994 Fall, pp. 115] [See the commentary on Alma 32:21]

Chapter 5

2 Nephi 5:1 I Nephi Did Cry Much unto the Lord My God . . . the Lord Did Warn Me:

In 2 Nephi 5:1-5 we find that Nephi “cried” or prayed much to the Lord, and that the Lord answered his prayers:

1 Behold, it came to pass that I, Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord my God, because of the anger of my brethren. . . .

5 And it came to pass that the Lord did warn me, that I, Nephi, should depart from them and flee into the wilderness, and all those who would go with me.

The scriptures are replete with the concept and commandment that one should “pray always” and that the Lord will “hear your cries” and “give thee answers to thy prayers.”

Dan Neville writes that the closest star to us is four light years away. If God lived there, it would take four years traveling at the speed of light for our prayers to get to him, and another four for him to deliver a response. If he resided as close as the center of our galaxy, it would take hundreds of light years for prayers to be answered. Or God might live in yet another galaxy millions or billions of light years away. Einstein postulated that nothing travels faster than the speed of light. So even if prayers could travel at the speed of light, how is it possible for God to hear and answer prayers?

The scriptures testify, as well as countless people who have lived on the earth, that the Lord does indeed answer prayers. Unbelievers might doubt prayer as impossibly unscientific. It is hard, almost impossible to prove anything to an unbeliever, but to the believer there might be a plausible scientific explanation.

Neville first discusses the computer. The computer was invented around the concept that rapid electronic language communication was possible by just turning on and off electrical switches connected to transistors. A computer “bit” is a set of four transistor switches. A “byte” is a set of eight switches that can be turned on or off. In the early years of personal computers, people talked about “kilo” (thousand) bytes. Now we are routinely talking about “Giga” (billion) bytes.

Neville then turns back to God and the “science” of prayer and the fact that physicists have come across a rather remarkable phenomenon, one described by Bill Bryson in his *A Short History of Everything*. Bryson writes:

“Perhaps the most arresting of quantum improbabilities is the idea, arising from Wolfgang Pauli’s *Exclusion Principle* of 1925, that sub-atomic particles in certain pairs, even when separated by the most considerable distances, can each instantly ‘know’ what the other is doing. Particles have a quality known as spin and, according to quantum theory, the moment you determine the spin of one particle, its sister particle, no matter how distant away, will immediately begin spinning in the opposite direction and at the same rate.” (*A Short History of Nearly Everything*, pp. 145-146)

Neville notes that experiments performed over the past twenty years show that something we do to a particle over here will likewise cause an effect on a particle over there, without any sort of obvious communication being sent between the particles. Einstein called this phenomenon “spooky.”

Physicists have proven that there is something they call “entanglement” which affects all atoms. This word is highly descriptive in that it references the fact that every atom here on earth and every atom located on other worlds light years away, are united or knitted together in some fashion. Physicist Michio Kaku’s book *Parallel Worlds* describes this curiosity in a very straightforward fashion:

Since all matter came from a single explosion, the Big Bang, in some sense the atoms of our body are linked with some atoms on the other side of the universe in some kind of cosmic quantum web. Entangled particles are somewhat like twins still joined by an umbilical cord (their wave function) which can be light years across. What happens to one member automatically affects the other, and hence knowledge concerning one particle can instantly reveal knowledge about its pair. Entangled pairs act as if they were a single object, although they may be separated by large distance. (*Parallel Worlds*, p. 177)

Quantum connections between particles can persist even if they are on opposite sides of the universe with trillions of miles of space between them. This despite the theory of relativity stating that nothing is faster than the speed of light.

we can use physics to envision a way to instantly communicate across large distances with computers and satellites, it is even more likely that God has created as communication method—a language of prayer—capable of transferring information between beings billions upon trillions of light years apart.

Furthermore, we might postulate that God is capable of viewing particles that are entangled with ours to see exactly what is going on with us. It would be like watching a real-time video of what we are doing and experiencing. From this we can reasonably deduce that God could communicate with us through our entangled particles so that we would instantly sense, feel, hear, or see what God communicating to us through our linked particles.

[Dan Neville, Scientific Discoveries That Build Testimonies and Strengthen Faith, pp. 95-99]

Note* It is easy for me to envision the consternation that God has with the constant stream of “intellectuals” here on earth that continually cry that religion is a “farce” and can’t possibly be true because of what they “the intellectuals” have learned at that moment in time. At the same time, I marvel at the advancements of scientific knowledge and how far man has come. Yet the thought comes to me: Who am I to have the audacity, no matter how reasonable it seems to me, to say what is not possible about the earth and the universe when God was the One that created all things? Like Einstein said, new understanding can be “spooky.” I should be grateful that at times I am allowed to even see what might be the simple plausibility of God’s plan. Whether these plausible ideas prove totally true or not I should take comfort in the idea that the “proof” of God’s word, that is the “truth” about God’s plan for me is all around me and has been there from the beginning, and not only does God hear my prayers, but that He wants the best for me. [Alan Miner Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 5:6 **I, Nephi, Did Take . . . Zoram . . . Sam . . . Jacob and Joseph . . . My Sisters:**

In 2 Nephi 5:6 we find Nephi specifically noting the makeup of his group: "I, Nephi, did take my family, and also Zoram and his family, and Sam, mine elder brother and his family, and Jacob and Joseph, my younger brethren, and also my sisters, and all those who would go with me." This left Laman and Lemuel and their families as well as the families associated with Ishmael not represented by those who went with Nephi. This creates an interesting demographic problem. About half the family seems to leave with Nephi, yet as the future text implies, the Lamanites seem to be much more numerous than the Nephites. According to John Sorenson, the best interpretation seems to be that the Book of Mormon peoples intermingled with other populations known to have been in their areas at the time.

[John L. Sorenson, "When Lehi's Party Arrived in the Land, Did They Find Others There?" in Nephite Culture and Society, pp. 65-104]

2 Nephi 5:6 **Jacob and Joseph:**

According to Robert Matthews, we know from an earlier passage (1 Nephi 16:7) that Laman, Lemuel, Sam, Nephi, and Zoram had each married daughters of Ishmael. It is interesting that now, a decade or so later, each of them is said to have "his family" (2 Nephi 5:6), but Jacob and Joseph are referred to only in the singular, with no mention of a family. [Robert Matthews, "Jacob: Prophet, Theologian, Historian," in The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy, p. 36]

2 Nephi 5:6 **My Sisters:**

When Nephi fled from Laman and Lemuel into the wilderness, he mentions that among the people he took with him were "my sisters" (2 Nephi 5:6). How many sisters did Nephi have?

Option #1:

According to Sidney Sperry, the fact that "sisters" is mentioned means that at least two sisters went with Nephi into the wilderness. Were these sisters the elder daughters of Lehi who had married Ishmael's sons? It would seem highly improbable. For we remember that Lehi's married daughters were among those who had rebelled against the faithful members of Nephi's party when they were bringing Ishmael's family from Jerusalem (1 Nephi 7:6). It would be hard to believe that these rebellious daughters of Lehi would leave their husbands and children and desert to Nephi's camp without his mentioning the fact. [Sidney Sperry, Answers to Book of Mormon Questions, p. 11]

According to Daniel Ludlow, the reference to "my sisters" here in 2 Nephi 5:6 is the only specific reference in the Book of Mormon that Nephi had sisters as well as brothers. How many sisters there were, whether they were older or younger than Nephi, or what their names may have been are questions not answered in our present Book of Mormon.

However, the following statement by Erastus Snow may provide information on some of the sisters of Nephi:

"The prophet Joseph informed us that the record of Lehi was contained on the 116 pages that were first translated and subsequently stolen, and of which an abridgment is given us in the first Book of Nephi, which is the record of Nephi individually, he himself being of the lineage of Manasseh; but that Ishmael was of the lineage of Ephraim, and that his sons married into Lehi's family, and Lehi's sons married Ishmael's daughters" (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 23, p. 184).

The words that Ishmael's sons "married into Lehi's family" would seem to indicate that the two sons of Ishmael (see 1 Nephi 7:6) were married to Lehi's daughters (and thus to two of the sisters of Nephi).

However, the sisters referred to in 2 Nephi 5:6 are evidently still other sisters, because the sisters mentioned here follow Nephi when the schism with Laman occurs, whereas the sisters of Nephi who were married to the sons of Ishmael evidently stayed with their husbands and joined with Laman (see Alma 3:7 and 47:35). [Daniel Ludlow, A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon, p. 131]

Option #2:

According to John Sorenson, the two (or more) daughters of Lehi and Sariah are presumed, on the basis of Erastus Snow's statement, to have become wives of Ishmael's sons.

These sisters of Nephi were apparently (unmarried) minors at the beginning of the account, otherwise there would be no way to place them in Sariah's birth history. [John Welch's assumption that Nephi was Lehi's sixth child (two sisters older than he) is highly unlikely, for that would stretch out Sariah's fertility history to an unbelievable and unnecessary length.] I suppose that one was around twelve and the other around nine (when Lehi left Jerusalem). When they arrived in Bountiful they would have been twenty and seventeen.

It is logical that in the intimate circumstances of the camp, youths approaching sexual maturity would be in a socially awkward position. Likely, the adult role of wife would be arranged for the two daughters as soon as feasible, say around age sixteen for each in turn, but whom would they marry? The sons of Ishmael alone seem of an age to be possible husbands. Lehi's first daughter may then have become the second wife of Ishmael's first son at about the time they were in Nahom. The second daughter could have become the second wife to Ishmael's second son no later than the time the party reached Bountiful. [John Sorenson, "The Composition of Lehi's Family", in By Study and Also by Faith, Vol 2, p. 190]

2 Nephi 5:6 **And All Those Who Would Go with Me:**

Nephi's mention of "all those who would go with me" (2 Nephi 5:6) seems to be the first time he explicitly refers to others who might have accompanied or joined the family group of Lehi. It also gives us the first definition of the term "Nephites" ("all those who believed in the warnings and revelations of God"). If we were to go strictly by the text, Nephi's party might have had only three adult males: Nephi, Sam, and Zoram. (Jacob and Joseph might have grown old enough to be considered adults, but the text does not say they had married. Nephi's sisters might have been old enough to be married; however, nothing is mentioned in the text.) The group left behind might have had only four adult males: Laman, Lemuel, and the two sons of Ishmael (1 Nephi 7:6) (although Laman's sons (2 Nephi 4:3), and Lemuel's sons (2 Nephi 4:8), and the sons of the two sons of Ishmael might have been old enough to be considered adults). Whatever the case, for a small group to find a safe place we would hardly need to define their travel distance in terms of "many days" (2 Nephi 5:7). On the other hand, by including others ("all those who would go with me") in Nephi's group (whether they came from Jerusalem or were native to the lands that Lehi had traveled to), it would give more significance to the "many days" which Nephi's group would have had to travel in order to avoid discovery by Laman's group. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 5:6 **And All Those Who Would Go with Me:**

According to Brant Gardner, in order to more fully appreciate the Book of Mormon as an ancient text, we need to find multiple interconnected complex sets of connection points between it and a proposed cultural context. Towards that end, one of the first phrases in the Book of Mormon text that invites comparison to the culture in Mesoamerica at the time of the Book of

Mormon is found in 2 Nephi 5:6, "and all those who would go with me."

Nephi names those who leave. Using mentioned people and their logical progeny, the only ones clearly unaccounted for in the division are the sons of Ishmael. It would certainly seem that if "all those who would go" were only one or two people, we would expect that Nephi might make mention of them, at least by their head of household, as he does for the families of Zoram, Sam, Jacob, and Joseph.

Since at this time there were a number of settlement areas along the Pacific coast of Guatemala,^{lxii} the best hypothesis to explain Nephi's inclusion of "all those who would go" is that it referred to those of the hamlet (or perhaps hamlets?) that had joined with the Lehites. [Brant Gardner, "A Social History of the Early Nephites," delivered at the FAIR Conference, August 17, 2001, pp. 2-3]

2 Nephi 5:7 **And We Did Take Our Tents and Whatsoever Things Were Possible For Us:**

Nephi records that when they landed in the Promised Land that they went forth upon the land and "did pitch our tents" (1 Nephi 18:23). Later as Nephi is fleeing from their landing area, mention is also made of tents: "we did take our tents and whatsoever things were possible for us" (2 Nephi 5:7). If the "tents" referred to here were the Arabian tents which went with them from Jerusalem to Bountiful (and might have presumably been loaded on their ship), then these tents would have weighed a few hundred pounds (see the commentary on 1 Nephi 2:4). Transporting them would have required beasts of burden. Apparently these kinds of animals were implied by Nephi when he recorded that in the land of promise "there were beasts in the forests of every kind, both the cow and the ox, and the ass and the horse" (1 Nephi 18:25). [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

John Sorenson, however, offers some other perspectives on the meaning of "tents":

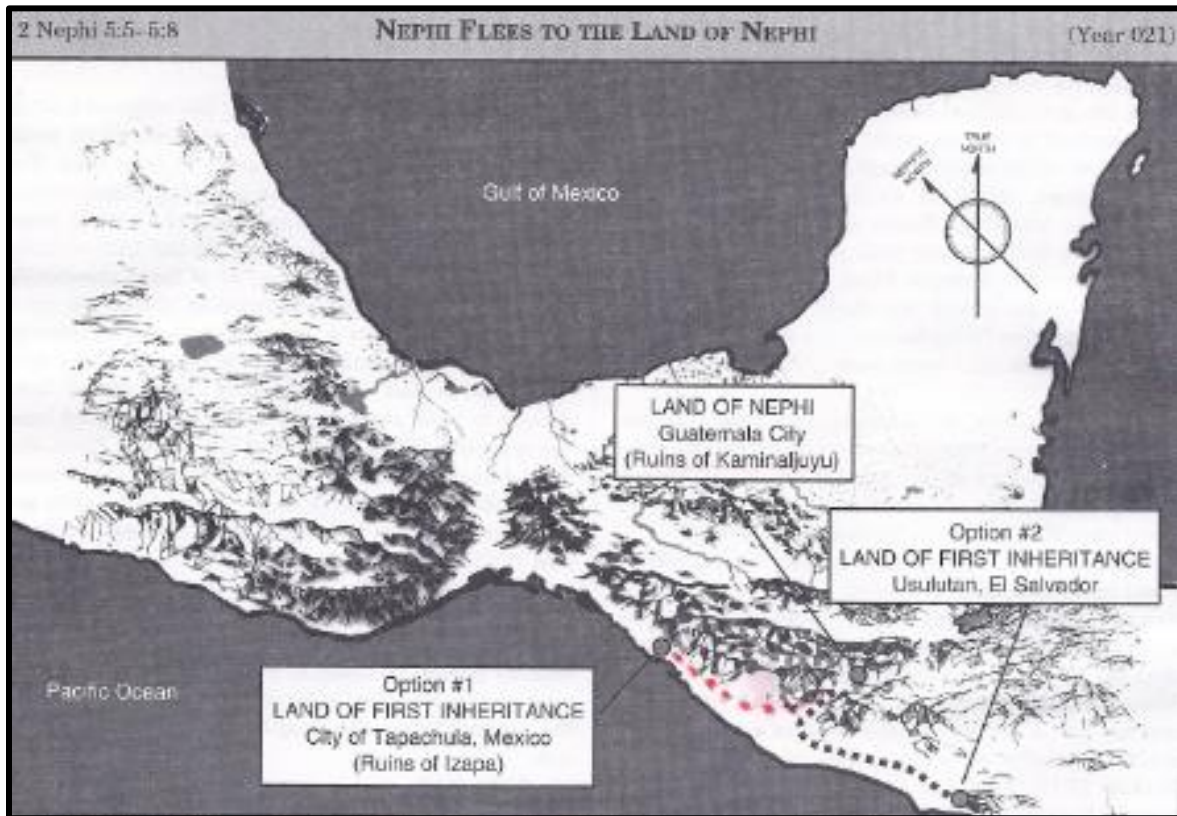
What was a Nephite "tent"? . . . The term tent is used some 64 times in the Book of Mormon, so the question may deserve attention.

Biblical translators have usually rendered the Hebrew root 'hl to English as "tent"; however, it has a rather wide range of possible meanings. Sometimes it referred to full-fledged tents on the pattern of those used by desert nomads of southwestern Asia; but to semi-nomads like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the term could also mean "hut" as well as "tent." In later usage, as the Israelites became sedentary village or city dwellers, its meanings were extended further. For example, in Psalms 132:3 and Proverbs 7:17 the related word 'ohel means "canopy (over a bed)," while in the New Testament, John 1:14 says literally "he pitched his tent among us" to communicate the thought "he lived among us." A Hittite account has the god Elkunirsha living in a "tent" made of wood. In writings from South Arabia in Lehi's day and also in classical Arabic, languages closely related to

Hebrew, the root stood for "family" or "tribe" as well as tent. In the related Semitic language of the Babylonians, a word from the same root meant "city," "village," "estate," or "social unit," and even formed part of the word for bed. . . . Furthermore, Dr. Hugh Nibley reminds us that "throughout the ancient world . . . the people must spend the time of the great national festival of the New Year living in tents." But for this occasion Israelites came to use makeshift booths made of branches, as fewer and fewer of their town-dwelling numbers owned genuine tents. [John L. Sorenson, An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon, p. 160] [See the commentary on Mosiah 2:6, 18:34; Alma 2:20, 46:31; Mormon 6:4]

2 Nephi 5:7 We . . . Did Journey (Using a Geographic Model):

Before one goes any further into the story of Lehi's group in the New World, it might be wise to establish a geographical model. But how does one go about setting up a standard for interpreting the geographical phrases in the Book of Mormon? Which is more important, internal textual clues or external historical, geographical, and cultural findings? For an expanded discussion on this subject, the reader is referred to Appendix B.



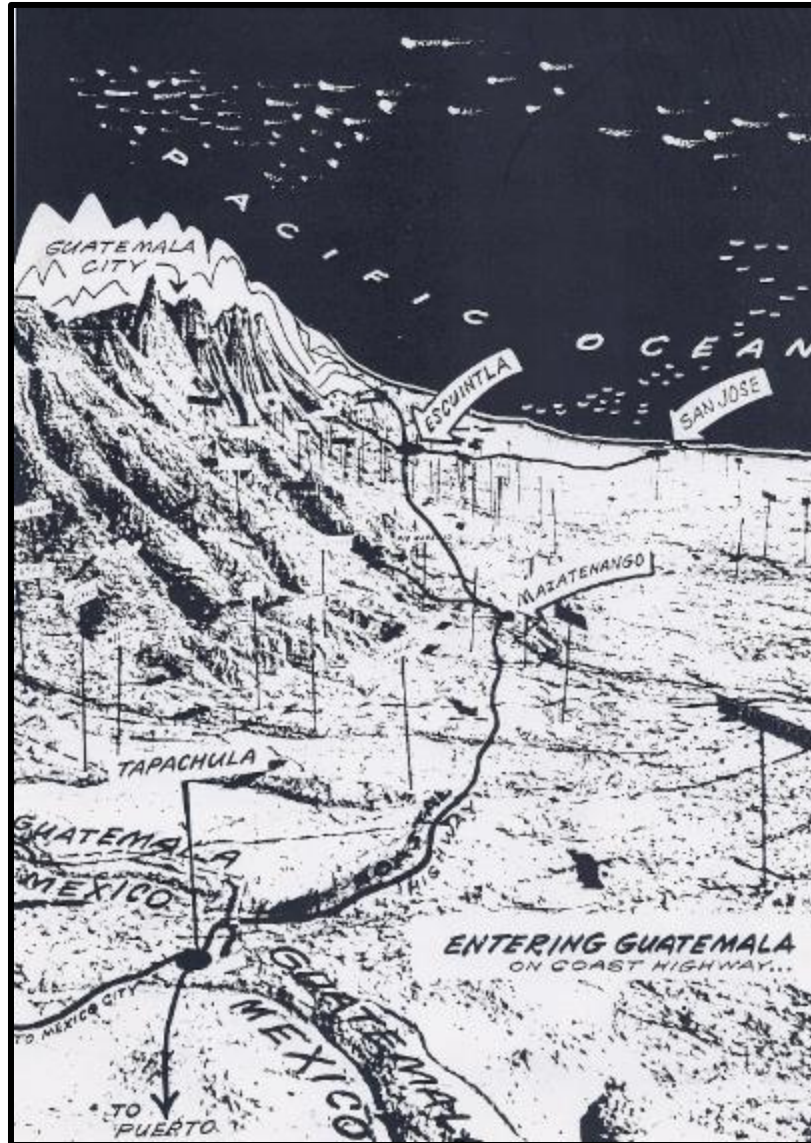
Geographical Theory Map: 2 Nephi 5:5-8 Nephi Flees to the Land of Nephi (Year 021)

2 Nephi 5:7 **We . . . Did Journey in the Wilderness:**

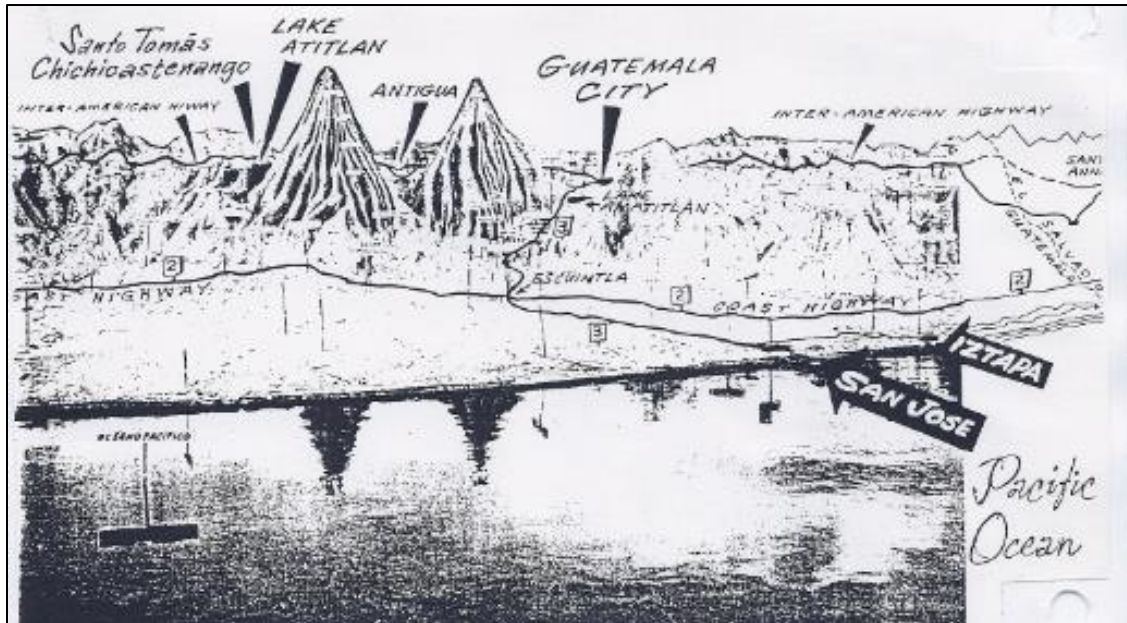
When Nephi's group of followers fled into the wilderness to escape the danger imposed by Laman and Lemuel, their ultimate destination would be the land of Nephi (2 Nephi 5:8). In the subsequent text, the "land of Nephi" is always referred to as being "up." Assuming a Mesoamerican setting, there are mountains which border the entire Pacific coast. At multiple points, the coastal route can climb *up* into the mountain wilderness. Most all the coastal routes and mountain routes eventually connect with the capital city of Guatemala, a location many scholars believe correlates with the Book of Mormon "city of Nephi." [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]



2 Nephi 5:7 **We did journey in the wilderness for the space of many days (Illustration):** A giant relief model of Guatemala in Guatemala City. This view is from the Pacific Ocean --from a southwestern point. From any part of the strip of wilderness near the Pacific coast . . . in southern Guatemala, the mountains are visible, beckoning with a promise of cooler climate. [See John L. Sorenson, Images of Ancient America, p. 194]



2 Nephi 5:7 **We . . . did journey in the wilderness (Illustration):** The western or Pacific coast of Guatemala viewed from the northwest southward. Illustrated here is the main route from Tapachula Mexico (near the ruins of Izapa--a proposed location for the landing area of Lehi) southward to Escuintla, and then eastward up to Guatemala City (the site of the ruins of Kaminaljuyu--a proposed location for the city of Nephi). This is an enhanced drawing of the giant Relief Map of Guatemala located in Guatemala City. [Cliff Cross, [Central America Travel Guide](#), p. 15]



2 Nephi 5:7 **We . . . did journey in the wilderness (Illustration):** A western perspective of the main route from Tapachula (NOT SHOWN and to the left out of the picture) near the ruins of Izapa--a proposed location for the landing area of Lehi) to Esquintla, and then eastward up to Guatemala City (the site of the ruins of Kaminaljuyu--a proposed location for the city of Nephi). As shown, the coastal route proceeds from Izapa (NOT SHOWN and to the left out of the picture) along the coast to Esquintla, then upwards past Lake Amatitlan to Guatemala City. (Note* The reader should not confuse "Izapa" which is not shown, with "Iztapa.") The other connecting routes ascend to join the route of the Inter-American Highway) and come from beyond Quetzaltenango (NOT SHOWN and to the left out of the picture) and pass by Lake Atitlan. This is an enhanced drawing of the giant Relief Map of Guatemala located in Guatemala City. [Cliff Cross, Central America Travel Guide, p. 27]

2 Nephi 5:7 **Many Days:**

It is hard to know, at this point in the narrative, what the phrase "many days" (2 Nephi 5:7) means. Nephi has used the phrase "many days" to describe trips of only a few hundred miles or trips as long as an ocean voyage (1 Nephi 16:15, 16:33, 18:23). A key to the answer, according to John Sorenson, might be the fact that on this occasion Nephi traveled "many days," ending up at a site where they named their settlement for their leader, Nephi. If we combine this information in 2 Nephi 5:7-8 and the information concerning the Lamanite "land of first inheritance" mentioned in Alma 22:27-34 as "on the west in the land if Nephi," we might presume that the original place of Nephi which the group first fled to was not very far from the coast. We can reason in this manner because if Nephi's group would have traveled "many days" directly inland, they would have ended up far from the sea. And thus, in Alma 22 the Lamanite "land of first inheritance" would probably not be listed within the land of Nephi. [John Sorenson, An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon, p. 139]

2 Nephi 5:8 **We Did Call It Nephi:**

According to Joseph Allen, the ruins of Kaminaljuyu, located where Guatemala City now stands, have been proposed as the location for the City of Nephi and the Land of Nephi. Some of the reasons are as follows:

1. The Late Formative Period of Kaminaljuyu (when a significant amount of building occurred) is listed at 500 B.C. to 20 B.C. with an estimated error of + or - 100 years. This dating (of the Late Formative Period) coincides with the time period from the arrival of Nephi and his followers on the scene until the end of Nephite influence.

2. Kaminaljuyu had a trade and travel relationship such that the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (a proposed location for the "narrow neck of land") was of importance to them.

3. The climate, agriculture base, and mountainous regions all parallel nicely with the statements in the Book of Mormon.

4. Temple mounds showing a high degree of workmanship with an apparent function of ceremonial and ritual use, including burned areas reminiscent of animal sacrifice, remind us of Nephi and his temple.

5. Dr. John Sorenson, who proposed that Kaminaljuyu was anciently the City of Nephi, notes that the site of Kaminaljuyu was for many centuries the dominant culture center for all highland Guatemala, the most important spot for several hundred miles around. The great size (at least a mile square) and impressive constructions of Kaminaljuyu underline its key importance and that of the valley. The land of Nephi is portrayed in the Book of Mormon as dominant among its neighbors to the same degree. (Sorenson 85:141)

6. As Michael Coe states, and as referred to above, the elite of the Valley of Kaminaljuyu were very literate during this time period. The elite were probably the Nephite record keepers. In all of the Americas, Kaminaljuyu was the most prominent city center that had an appropriate written language base during Middle Preclassic times, 600 B.C. to 300 B.C.

7. The term "Land of Nephi" not only fits the role of a city, but also a state, and also a country. Although this might seem confusing, this is the same structure that exists today. Guatemala is a major city located in Guatemala (the Department or State) which is located in Guatemala (the country).

8. The stone monument called "Stela 10" located in the archaeological ruins of Kaminaljuyu might be a representation of the events of the story concerning Abinadi, Noah, and Limhi. Stela 10 could become as familiar to Latter-day Saints as Izapa Stela 5 (Tree of Life stone).

9. Kaminaljuyu has an elevation of 4,800 feet above sea level and sits on a plateau surrounded by mountains. Thus it is *up* from the proposed land of Zarahemla in Chiapas, Mexico. One can also come *down* into the valley from the hills to the "north."
[Joseph Allen, Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon, p. 359]



2 Nephi 5:8 **Wherefore we did call it Nephi (Illustration):** The area of Guatemala City suggested as the immediate land of Nephi. John L. Sorenson, An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., p. 144]



Kaminaljuyu

[Ajourneythrough Guatemala.blogspot.com](http://AjourneythroughGuatemala.blogspot.com)

2 Nephi 5:8 **Wherefore we did call it Nephi (Illustration):** This is an aerial view of the site of Kaminaljuyu (green) that has been preserved in the midst of development in Zone 7, Guatemala City.



2 Nephi 5:8 **My people would that we should call the name of the place Nephi (Illustration):** The great city at Kaminaljuyu was once at least a mile square and contained hundreds of major buildings. This photograph only hints at the former extent and the density of public structures. Encroaching suburban growth has by now destroyed all but a small portion of the site, which is preserved as a park. [John L. Sorenson, Images of Ancient America, p. 199]



Grand Metropolis of Kaminaljuyu

nepohualtzintzin.blogspot.com

2 Nephi 5:8 **Wherefore we did call it Nephi (Illustration):** This is an illustration of what Kaminaljuyu could have eventually looked like.

2 Nephi 5:8 **Wherefore We Did Call It Nephi:**

According to Glenn Scott, archaeologist Joseph Michels of Penn State University wrote:

Within the onset of the Middle-Formative [600-300 B.C.] Kaminaljuyu emerges as an incipient regional center . . . the emergence of ranked [specialized] households at Kaminaljuyu was *not an in situ evolutionary manifestation but . . . an intrusive organizational feature that evolved in some other region.* (Sanders & Michels 1979, *Settlement Patterns at Kaminaljuyu*, vol. 4) [Glenn A. Scott, [Voices from the Dust](#), p. 98]

2 Nephi 5:8 **We Did Call It Nephi:**

According to Richard Hauck, the archaeological site of Mixco Viejo is a viable candidate for ancient Nephi for a variety of reasons.

First, topographical maps demonstrate that along with Kaminaljuyu [19 miles to the

southeast], Mixco Viejo is the one other location in this highland region where the soils, moderate slopes, and water resources could support a large pre-Columbian population. Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzman, a seventeenth-century Spanish chronicler writing about Mixco Viejo, suggests that the Mixco locality may have contained from eight to nine thousand people prior to Spanish domination.

Second, Mixco Viejo has defensive capabilities, an important characteristic of ancient Nephi. The scriptural references associated with Nephi leave no doubt about the defensive nature of that location (see 2 Nephi 5:34; Enos 1:24; Jarom 1:13; Omni 1:3; Mosiah 7-22). Evidence does not suggest that ancient Nephi was ever captured or overrun by an attacking force. As noted in Mosiah 11:12, the tower at Nephi overlooked the surrounding countryside. These factors suggest that the city of Nephi was in an elevated and easily defended position.

Mixco Viejo has similar characteristics. It was a formidable Mayan fortress prior to the arrival of the Spanish. The site is positioned on the top of the plateau overlooking the Motagua River valley to the north and the Llano Grande plateau to the southeast. Access into the site is very limited, due to the steep ravines or *barrancos* that surround the plateau in every direction. The deep soils that compose this plateau are volcanic ash or welded tuff. When these soils are exposed to the air, their surface stabilizes, resisting further erosion. Thus, the defensive potential of the site was amplified by men digging away the lower portions of the cliffs to eliminate any attempt by an enemy to scale the ravines in an assault.

Henri Lehmann, a French archaeologist, excavated and reconstructed the historic Mayan structures at Mixco Viejo between 1954 and 1967 . . . Lehmann's excavations were aimed at exploring the architectural structures that were contemporaneous with the Spanish invasion when the Mayan Pokomam people had their capital there. He was not interested in establishing the earliest period of occupation on the site. To do so he would have had to dig deeply below the historic structures, thus further weakening and destroying the standing architecture that he was struggling to preserve. Lehmann does note, however, the recovery of preclassic pottery sherds in the excavations, indicating that the occupation of this site extends back into the past perhaps several thousand years previous to the thirteenth century A.D. occupation prominent on the surface. . . .

A third factor that enhances Mixco Viejo as a possible candidate for ancient Nephi is its situation within seven miles of the ancient, historic trail system at Granados. That trail is identical with the orientation of the Nephi/Manti/Zarahemla route in the Book of Mormon because it links the southern highlands with the northern highlands and the lush jungles of the Peten far to the north (see Alma 17:1; 22:29). Further, the Motagua River ford near here is the main river crossing near the southern end of that ancient north-south trail. The trail's immediate proximity to Mixco Viejo enhances the potential that the marvelous archaeological site gradually opening to our view may be the location of the city of Nephi. [F. Richard Hauck, "In Search of the Land of Nephi," in This People, Fall 1994, pp. 52-63]



Mixco Viejo

[Wikimedia.org](https://www.wikimedia.org)



2 Nephi 5:8 **We did call it Nephi (Illustration-not shown):** Looking nearly west across restored Mayan walls of Mixco Viejo. Fifty-four verses in the Book of Mormon give some detail of the land or the city of Nephi. Though the restored city shown dates to the 11th and 12th century A.D., artifacts and excavations reveal the original city to be contemporaneous with the Book of Mormon. [F. Richard Hauck, "In Search of the Land of Nephi," in [This People](#), Fall 1994, p. 53. (Photography by Scot Facer Proctor)]

2 Nephi 5:8 **We did call it Nephi (Illustration-not shown):** Afternoon light touches hillsides and the archeological site of Mixco (pronounced meesh-ko) Viejo, formidable ancient city located on the south side of the Motagua River. We may surmise that Nephi used the Liahona to guide the faithful to a place like this where they could build a city and use natural protection to defend themselves from their enemies. . . . [Scot F. Proctor and Maurine J. Proctor, [Light from the Dust](#), p. 71]

2 Nephi 5:8 **Wherefore We Did Call It Nephi:**

Some people might wonder why it is that if archaeologists have found Jerusalem in the Old World, we have yet to definitely locate a major city from the Book of Mormon in the Americas, such as the city of "Nephi" (2 Nephi 5:8). According to William Hamblin, comparing the current state of geographical knowledge of the Book of Mormon and the Bible is a false analogy. . . . Without the continuity of place names (toponyms) between biblical and modern times, only about 36 of the 475 biblical place names could be identified with certainty. But in fact those 36 are identifiable largely because it is possible to triangulate their relationship to known sites, moving from the known to the unknown.

Over time, people can easily forget linguistically where even a major city like Jerusalem might be located. For example, from the Canaanite *u-ru-sa-lim* derived the Hebrew Yerushalem or Yerushalayim. The city was also frequently called the City of David, and Zion, giving four common names for Jerusalem in the Old Testament alone. The Greeks called the city both Ierousalem and Hierosolyma; the Latins retained Hierosolyma. However, following the Roman conquest in A.D. 135, the emperor Hadrian changed the name to Aelia Capitolina. It retained its identity as Jerusalem only because Christians eventually came to dominate the Roman Empire and changed the name back. Following the Muslim conquests, however, the city was called Aliya, Bayt al-Maqedis, or al-Quds, as it still is by Palestinians today. If Christianity had been exterminated rather than becoming the dominant religion of the Roman empire, what linguistic evidence would we have that al-Quds of today was the ancient Jerusalem?

Thus, discontinuity of toponyms (place names) is a common historical occurrence, especially in periods of major cultural, linguistic, and political transformations, similar to those described in the Book of Mormon itself. We can see just this phenomenon in the Book of Mormon, where the Jaredite hill Ramah is later called the hill Cumorah by the Nephites (Ether 15:11; Mormon 6:6).

A serious problem facing Book of Mormon geography is the severe discontinuity of Mesoamerican toponyms between the Pre-Classic (before c. A.D. 300), the Post-Classic (after A.D. 900), and the Colonial Age (after A.D. 1520). For example, what were the original Pre-Classic Mesoamerican names for sites currently bearing Spanish colonial names such as Monte Alban, San Lorenzo, La Venta, or El Mirador? These and many other Mesoamerican sites bear only Spanish names, dating from no earlier than the sixteenth century. . . . For most indigenous Mesoamerican dialects, the vast majority of toponyms were recorded only in the sixteenth century, over a thousand years after the Book of Mormon period. . . .

Furthermore, Pre-Classic (Book of Mormon times) Mesoamerican inscriptions are relatively rare. Whereas several thousand inscriptions exist from Classic Mesoamerica (A.D. 300-900), Pre-Classic inscriptions are limited to a few dozen. In addition, the earliest "simple phonetic spelling developed about A.D. 400" in Mesoamerica. This means that all Mesoamerican inscriptions from Book of Mormon times are logograms. Therefore, all surviving inscriptional toponyms from Book of Mormon times are basically symbolic rather than phonetic, making it very difficult, if not impossible, to know how they were pronounced. [William J. Hamblin, "Basic Methodological Problems with the Anti-Mormon Approach to the Geography and Archaeology of the Book of Mormon," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Spring 1993, F.A.R.M.S., pp. 164-168]

2 Nephi 5:10 We Did Observe to Keep the *Judgments . . . Statutes . . . and the Commandments according to the Law of Moses:*

According to John Welch, [Nephi] was a real person, who lived in a real world. It is a testimony to [him] to see how aptly his words fit into the ancient legal setting as we understand it. . . .

It is important to realize that the law of Moses did more than regulate the priestly ordinances or ritual aspects of ancient Israel. It embraced both religious and secular, cultic and civil law. For example, Jethro said to Moses, "Thou shalt teach them ordinances [*hopim*] and laws [*torot*]" (Exodus 18:20), and accordingly Moses issued laws and judgments, and established rulers and judges--not only for their religious purification, but also for the government of his people. Some of Moses' "ordinances" are ordinances in the sense of city ordinances; others are ordinances in the sense of priesthood ordinances. His judgments (the *mishpatim*) and his commandments (usually the *mitzvot*), found largely in Exodus and Deuteronomy, establish what we could consider to be the criminal, civil, family and administrative laws, as well as the constitutional fabric of ancient Israelite society. . . .

This seems to be the clear meaning of 2 Nephi 5:10, affirming that the earliest Nephites kept "the judgments [*mishpatim*], and the statutes [*hopim?*], and the commandments [*mitzvot?*] of the Lord in all things according to the law of Moses." [John W. Welch, "Lehi's Last Will and

Testament: A Legal Approach," in The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, the Doctrinal Structure, pp. 62-64]

2 Nephi 5:10 We Did Observe to Keep the Judgments . . . and the Commandments . . . according to the Law of Moses:

THE LAW OF MOSES

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

1. The Law: the 10 Commandments, etc. focusing on one's actions & the outward ordinances

1. The Law: the higher law, focusing on one's actions, thoughts, and desires and requiring the exercise of faith.

2. The Covenant: If the Israelites keep the commandments, they are promised, I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people (Lev 26:12).

2. The Covenant: the new and everlasting covenant. See also Heb 10:16-20

3. Blessings: see Deut 28:1-14

3. Blessings: all the blessings of the covenant of Abraham and eternal life (DC 132)

4. Cursings: see Deut 28:15-68

4. Cursings: to be turned over to the buffetings of Satan (D&C 104:9). See also D&C 84:41-42.

5. Priesthood: Aaronic

5. Priesthood: Melchizedek

6. Temple: Tabernacle of Moses, and The Temple of Solomon

6. Temple: Latter-day Temples with saving ordinances for the living and the dead

7. Sacrifice: animal sacrifice of the Firstborn shall make an atonement For his sin, and it shall be forgiven him (Lev 4:26)

7. Sacrifice: The offering of Christ's perfect sacrifice requires of us a broken heart and a contrite spirit (3 Ne 9:19-20)

The Nephites lived according to the Law of Moses even to the point of building their own temples (v. 16 and 3 Ne 11:1). However, they had the benefit of understanding the symbolism of the Law as Nephi explained, we keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled. For, for this end was the law given; wherefore the law hath become dead unto us, and were are made alive in Christ because of our faith; yet we keep the law because of the commandments (2 Ne 25:24-5).
[\[josephsmith.com.2Nephi\]](http://josephsmith.com.2Nephi)

2 Nephi 5:11 **Flocks and Herds:**

According to Brant Gardner, in the Book of Mormon, "flocks and herds" are a paired set. Although the term "flocks" does appear singly at times, the term "herds" is not mentioned except as in conjunction with "flocks." This usage of the paired terms "flocks and herds" matches well with Old Testament usage, where the vast majority of cases have "flocks and herds" paired. This consistent pairing indicates that there was a linguistically tied phrase common in the Old World that was perpetuated in the New World. In instances of Old Testament "flocks" used alone, the term "flocks" refers to sheep, as in Genesis 29:2. Similarly, herds were typically associated with cattle. However, the KJV translation will at times use the word "cattle" as a translation for *miqneh* "a possession, thing purchased" (*Strong's Analytical Concordance*). (See for example Genesis 30:39-40.)

The Book of Mormon linking of "flocks and herds" suggests that "flocks and herds" was a linked linguistic pair that had meaning together, but not necessarily separately. "Herds" may not have existed except when generically linked to "flocks." While there is no direct evidence for the usage, there is the possibility that the Old Testament usage of *miqneh* "possessions" could have become the transferred meaning of the paired "flocks/herds." The usage of flocks and herds could easily fit into this meaning, where the singly used "flocks" might not (such as Mosiah 2:3)

John Sorenson suggests that flocks and herds may have been categories for smaller and larger animals respectively. He includes fowl in the flocks, which is completely expected in the English usage of the term,; but not supported in the Biblical usage (Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, p. 293). His discussion of the possible animals under semi-domestication is worthwhile, but the meaning of "flocks and herds" may have been much different than his more conventional analysis suggests. [Brant Gardner, "Brant Gardner's Page," <http://www.highfiber.com/~nahualli/LDStopics/2Nephi/2Nephi5.htm>, pp. 10-12]

2 Nephi 5:11 **Flocks and Herds:**

Because of Nephi's reference to "flocks and herds" (2 Nephi 5:11), the local land of Nephi probably included a variety of animal life (the text does not mention any animals which were brought over from the Old World). 1 Nephi 18:25 lists many animals which were found "in the wilderness." Among them were "beasts in the forest of every kind, both the cow and the ox, and the ass and the horse, and the goat and the wild goat, and all manner of wild animals, which were for the use of men." The land of Nephi might have been located in or near this wilderness and thus many of the animals found there could have been the same as listed in 1 Nephi 18:25. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]



2 Nephi 5:11 **We began to raise flocks (Illustration):** American gobblers had been kept in flocks for many centuries before the Spaniards came, as shown by this ceramic effigy (dated before 500 B.C.) Their flesh, eggs, and feathers served obvious ends, but the whole fowl was also often sacrificed. [John L. Sorenson, Images of Ancient America, p. 48]

2 Nephi 5:12, 15 **I, Nephi, Had Also Brought the Records . . . and I Did Teach My People to Work [Metals]:**

According to Ammon O'Brien, we find in the works of Pedro Carrasco, a widely published archaeologist-ethnologist and general expert on Mexican antiquities, a native tradition regarding not only lost records, but the lost art of working metals. Chapter 19 of *Archaeology of Northern Mesoamerica* contains an essay entitled: "The Peoples of Central Mexico and Their Historical Traditions," in which Carrasco comments thus:

There is a native tradition however, which reaches farther into the past. It is one recorded by Sahagun (Bk. 10, Chpt. 29, part 12) as part of his account of the Mexica and is here summarized:

In the distant past the people who first arrived in this land came over the water in boats; they landed in Panotla or Pantla and moved along the coast as far as Quauhtemallan (Guatemala). They were led by their priests, who counselled with their god. Their wise men (tlamatinime) were called amoxoaque (keepers of the books); *they soon left and took with them the old books and the art of casting metals.* (Carrasco, c. 1966--italics added)

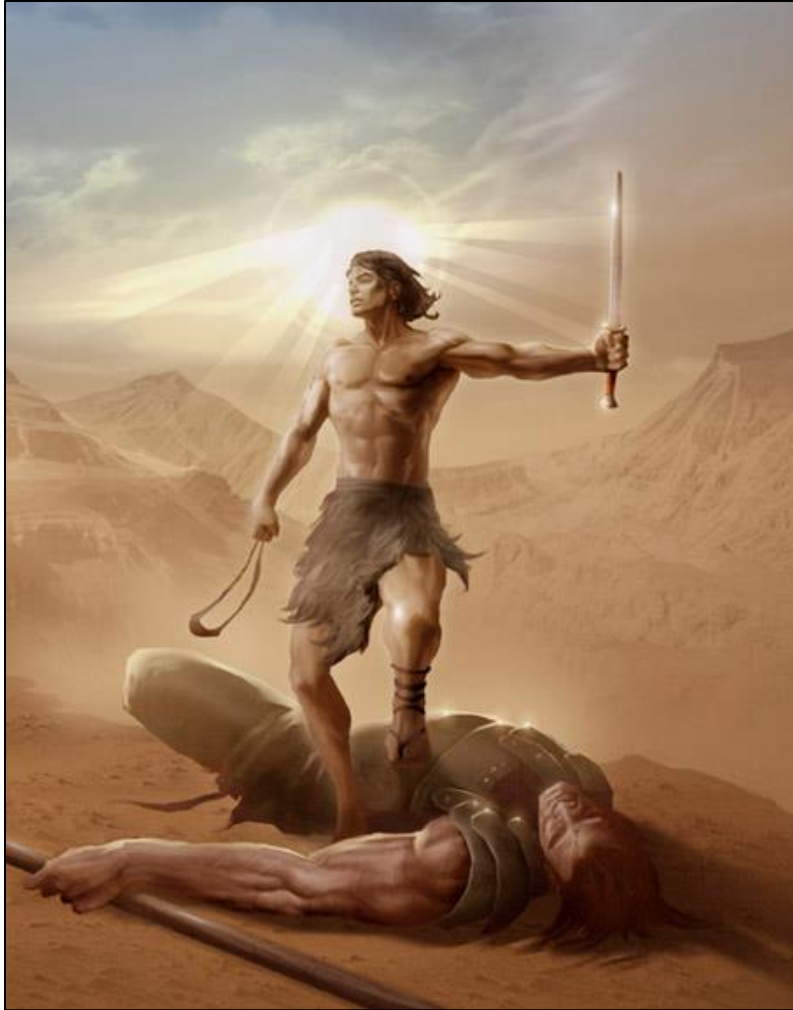
The words in Carrasco's observation: "they soon left and took with them the old books and the art of casting metals," refers to a specific detail in the Mexica legend which recounts that there was a split within the company, whereupon the people were divided into two factions. One of these factions, according to the legend, departed from the other, "taking with them the books," and other precious "metal" items of religious significance. This legend provides interesting similarities to the account in 2 Nephi 5:5-15, which describes the flight of Nephi, with the records and the knowledge of metalworking, from the land of first inheritance to the land of Nephi. [Ammon O'Brien, Seeing beyond Today with Ancient America, pp. 141-142]

2 Nephi 5:13 **Multiply in the Land:**

If we are to go strictly by the text, when it says that the Nephites did "multiply in the land" (2 Nephi 5:13), how much population growth would there have been? According to John Sorenson, the three original couples in Nephi's party, plus possibly four unmarried singles (all brothers and sisters--2 Nephi 5:6), could not have done more than, say, quadruple the adult population by the time of Nephi's death--hardly dramatic enough to be described in this way. On the other hand, the Lamanite party, if unmixed with "natives," could not have numbered more than twice as many as the Nephites. With a combined adult male population of probably no more than 60, the groups could probably only have been some limited miles apart in order for "wars" even to be feasible. Therefore, we might assume that many "others" (natives) were involved. [John Sorenson, The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book, F.A.R.M.S., p. 218]

2 Nephi 5:14 **And I, Nephi, Did Take the Sword of Laban:**

Just a few verses before Nephi records that his people desired that he should be their king (2 Nephi 5:18), he notes that the sword of Laban was in his possession: "I Nephi did take the sword of Laban . . . lest by any means the people who were now called Lamanites should come upon us and destroy us" (2 Nephi 5:14). According to Brett Holbrook, in a survey of historical and mythical literature, two patterns of swords appeared: the kingly and the heroic. Both types function as symbols of divine authority. The sword of Laban can be included among them as a combination of the two patterns. Indeed, it is comparable with an ancient Near East prototype: the biblical sword of Goliath (which became the prize of the victorious David). . . .



David and Goliath

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As a symbol of power in war, the sword came to be part of the regalia (royal objects) owned by kings that justified their transfer of authority, and the giving of a sword to the new king defined kingship in various ways, but the sword's symbolism in the royal regalia was the temporal representation of divine power in the sovereign. Yahweh himself is known to have a sword that he used in the cosmogonic battle before creation, and his word was frequently equated with a sword. As the Messiah of Christianity, Jesus Christ was to come a second time wielding a sword in the last days of judgment (Revelations 14:14-16).

The following is a comparison of the Swords of Goliath and Laban [and, to a certain degree, David and Nephi]:

1. Each sword was originally wielded by a man of might. (See 1 Samuel 17:4-7, 11; 1 Nephi 3:14, 31).
2. The sword's owner had his head cut off with his own sword by a faithful youth. (See 1

Samuel 17:51; 1 Nephi 4:18.)

3. The sword was unusual in appearance. (See 1 Samuel 21:9; 13:19, 22; 1 Nephi 4:9.)

4. Both of the swords were finely crafted for their time and were unique. (See 1 Samuel 21:9; 13:19, 22; 1 Nephi 4:9.)

5. The swords were revered by the people. (1 Samuel 21:9; 2 Nephi 5:14; Mosiah 1:16; Alma 37:14; Words of Mormon 1:13.)

Josephus recorded that after David slew Goliath he "carried the head of Goliath into his own tent, but dedicated his sword to God, [at the tabernacle]." The sword was then later kept with the ephod and priestly garments in Nob, where the tabernacle most likely was at the time (1 Samuel 21:9). The sword of Goliath was highly revered and kept with the implements of spiritual authority. When Saul found out specifically that David had obtained the "sword of Goliath" (mentioned by name), he was afraid and slew all the priests in Nob that helped David. Apparently Saul also respected the weapon and what it stood for, and feared when David possessed it.

6. The sword was used to lead people. (1 Samuel 23:1-5; 25:13; Jacob 1:10)

Although there is no direct mention of the name of Goliath's sword again, it is assumed that David retained and used it. Right after David acquired the sword of Goliath from Nob, the Lord instructed him to battle against the Philistines. In that battle David and his men were victorious.

7. The swords were symbols of authority and kingship. (1 Samuel 16:13; 18:6-7; 22:1-2; 22:20; 23:6, 9; 30:7(1 Samuel 24:20; 2 Samuel 5:3) (2 Nephi 5:18-19; 6:2; Jacob 1:9, 11, 15; Mosiah 1:15-16; Words of Mormon 1:13).

It was directly after David slew Goliath that the women sang, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Samuel 18:6-7). It was directly after David acquired the sword of Goliath from Nob again that he gained a following of four hundred men (1 Samuel 16:13; 22:1-2). And once he had the sword the priest Abiathar joined David, bringing with him the ephod that gave David added legitimacy (1 Samuel 22:20; 23:6, 9; 30:7). After David had the sword, Saul admitted to him, "I know well that thou shalt surely be king," and David was finally anointed king of Israel in Hebron (1 Samuel 24:20; 2 Samuel 5:3).

With the sword of Laban, Nephi led his people. As Nephi became king, and in fulfillment of the word of the Lord that he should be the ruler, he was divinely appointed (2 Nephi 5:18-19; 6:2; Jacob 1:9, 11, 15) The sword became part of the regalia, and was passed down among rulers as a sacred relic (Mosiah 1:15-16; Words of Mormon 1:13).

[Brett L. Holbrook, "The Sword of Laban as a Symbol of Divine Authority and Kingship," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Spring 1993, pp. 41-53]

Table 2. The Transfer of Regalia in Nephite History			
Transfer	Reference	Regalia Mentioned	Other **
Nephi ₁ » Others	Jacob 1:9 Jacob 1:7	No (Omni 1:14)	km (p)
Others » Mosiah ₁	Omni 1:12	No (Omni 1:14)	kpm
Mosiah ₁ » Benjamin	Omni 1:12	No (Words of Mormon 1:10)	kpm
Benjamin » Mosiah ₂	Mosiah 1:15–16	Yes*	kp
Mosiah ₂ » Alma ₂	Mosiah 28:11, 20	Yes*	jpm
Alma ₂ » Helaman ₂	Alma 37:1–2, 14; 50:38	Yes*	pm
Helaman ₂ » Shiblon	Alma 63:1–2	Yes	jp
Shiblon » Helaman ₃	Alma 63:10–13	Yes	jp
Helaman ₃ » Nephi ₂	Helaman 3:37	No	jp
Nephi ₂ » Nephi ₃	3 Nephi 1:1–2	Yes*	p
Nephi ₃ » Nephi ₄	4 Nephi (heading)	No (4 Nephi 1:19)	-
Nephi ₄ » Amos ₁	4 Nephi 1:19	Yes	-
Amos ₁ » Amos ₂	4 Nephi 1:21	Yes	-
Amos ₂ » Ammaron	4 Nephi 1:47	Yes	p
Ammaron » Mormon	Mormon 2:17	Yes	pm
Mormon » Moroni	Mormon 6:6	Yes	p

* definite reference to regalia other than the plates
**Other known positions held by recipient of the regalia
k = king
j = judge
p = priest/prophet
m = military leader

2 Nephi 5:14 | **Nephi took the sword of Laban (Similarities of Nephi and Laban to David and Goliath)**
[Illustration]: "The Transfer of Regalia in Nephite History" [Brett L. Holbrook, "The Sword of Laban as a Symbol of Divine Authority and Kingship," in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Spring 1993, p. 57]

2 Nephi 5:14 **After the Manner of:**

Nephi notes that he "did take the sword of Laban, and *after the manner of it* did make many swords" (2 Nephi 5:14). According to John Sorenson, in this verse "after the manner of it" does not refer to the material used but to the "manner of construction. That is, Laban's weapon was replicated in function and general pattern, but different material could have been used for the new weapons. The copies might have been metal, but need not have been. The reader should

note that the phrase "after the manner of it" is also used in a parallel fashion two verses later to describe the manner of construction of the temple--it was like unto the temple of Solomon "save it were not built of so many precious things" (2 Nephi 5:16).

It is worthy of note that the Hebrew language meanings of the word translated "sword" in the King James version of the Bible include the idea that a "sword" does not have to be of metal.^{lxiii} [John L. Sorenson, "Viva Zapato! Hurray for the Shoe! in Review of Books on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 6, Num. 1, pp. 324-325]

2 Nephi 5:14 **After the Manner of [Laban's Sword] Did I Make Many Swords:**

Nephi records that after fleeing his wicked brethren in the land of first inheritance, he settled his group in the land of Nephi. There he makes an interesting statement. He says: "And I, Nephi, did take the sword of Laban, and after the manner of it did made many swords, lest by any means the people who were now called Lamanites should come upon us and destroy us" (2 Nephi 5:14). One might ask, Did Nephi have metallurgical skills that Laman and Lemuel lacked? He had already crafted plates on which he kept a record of his people (see 2 Nephi 5:29-31) in addition to making out of ore the tools necessary to construct a ship according to the Lord's specifications (see 1 Nephi 17:9-10, 16). Could Nephi produce blades not only shaped like the sword of Laban, but metalically crafted to certain superior specifications? And by his statement was he saying that he personally made all these swords or was he teaching others these special metallurgical skills?

A recent article in Scientific American Magazine sheds some interesting perspective on the possible importance not only of Nephi's metallurgical skills, but his teaching of those skills to his people. John Verhoeven, an emeritus Distinguished Professor of Materials Science and Engineering at Iowa State University writes:

From the Bronze Age up to the 19th century, warriors relied on the sword as a weapon. Armies possessing better versions enjoyed a distinct tactical advantage. And those with Damascus swords--which Westerners first encountered during the Crusades against the Muslim nations--had what some consider to be the best sword of all.

Those blades, originally thought to have been fashioned in Damascus (which is now in Syria), featured two qualities not found in European varieties. A wavy pattern known today as damask, or damascene, decorated their surface. And more important, the edge could be incredibly sharp. Legend tells how Damascus swords could slice through a silk handkerchief floating in the air, a feat no European weapon could emulate.

Despite the fame and utility of these blades, Westerners have never been able to figure out how the steel--also used for daggers, axes and spearheads--was made. The most accomplished European metallurgists and bladesmiths could not replicate it, even after bringing specimens home and analyzing them in detail. The art of production has been

lost even in the land of origin; experts generally agree that the last high-quality Damascus swords were crafted no later than the early 1800's. Recently, however, an ingenious blacksmith [Alfred H. Pendray] and I [John D. Verhoeven] have, we believe, unlocked the secret. (John D. Verhoeven, "The Mystery of Damascus Blades," in *Scientific American*, vol. 284, num. 1, January 2001, pp. 74-79)

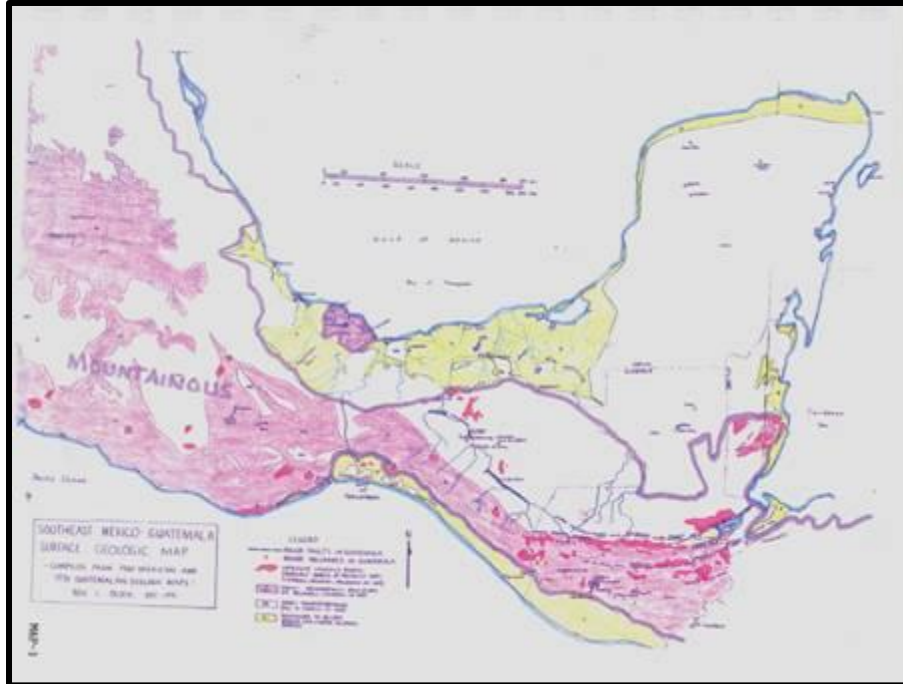
[Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 5:14 Swords . . . Lamanites:

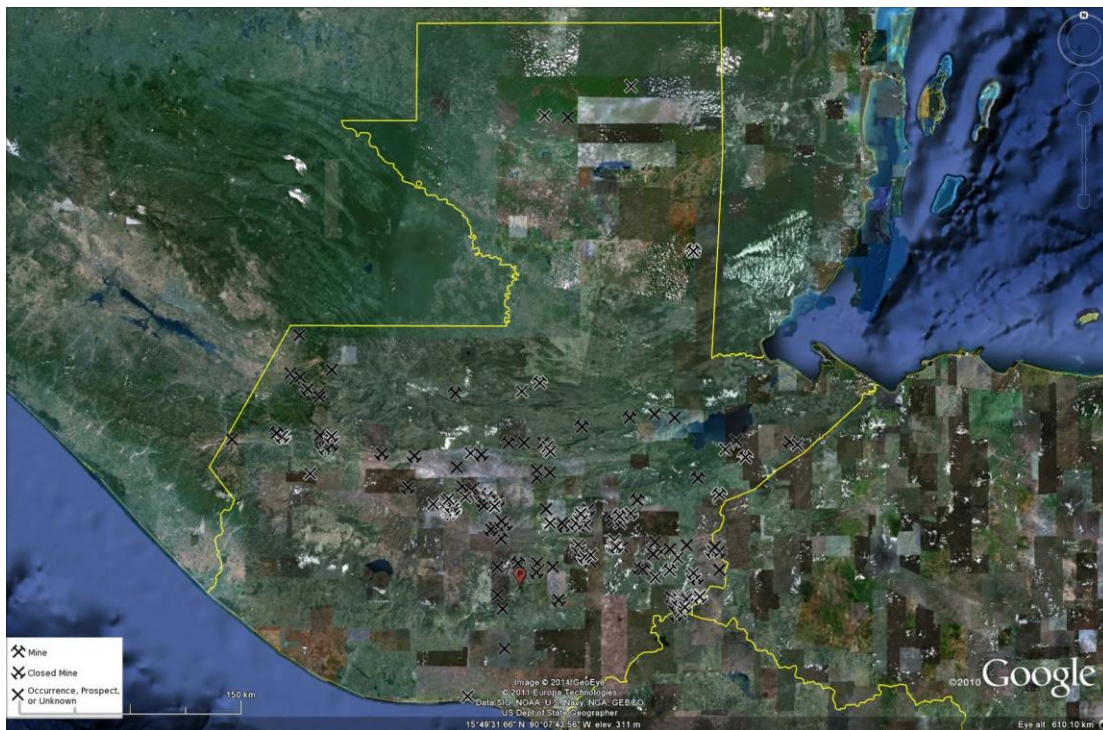
By making "swords" (2 Nephi 5:14), Nephi apparently expected action from the "Lamanites." If this word "Lamanites" strictly refers to Nephi's brothers and their immediate posterity, then Nephi's trip of "many days" had not separated the groups by any great distance. [See the commentary on 2 Nephi 5:34]

2 Nephi 5:15 Iron . . . Copper . . . Brass . . . Gold . . . Silver . . . Precious Ores . . . in Great Abundance:

Nephi mentions the fact that in the land of Nephi, they worked with "iron . . . copper . . . brass . . . steel . . . gold . . . silver" and "precious ores, which were in great abundance" (2 Nephi 5:15). According to Ben Olsen, who has some geological experience in Mexico, Guatemala and Belize, ores are associated with slowly cooling magmas, or intrusive rocks, which are common in Guatemala and Mexico. The metal-laden fluids move up cracks, fissures and faults to impregnate overlying and adjacent sedimentary or metamorphic rocks. Such is the case along the Polochic-Motagua fault system (see illustration) where many metallic mines occur, as well as in various areas of Mexico. [Ben L. Olsen, Some Earthly Treasures of the Book of Mormon, p 52, Unpublished]



2 Nephi 5:15 **Iron . . . copper . . . brass . . . gold . . . silver . . . precious ores . . . in great abundance** (Illustration): Southeast Mexico -- Guatemala Surface Geologic Map: Compiled from 1960 Mexican and 1970 Guatemalan geologic maps. The darker pink areas inside the light pink areas represent intrusive igneous rocks—probable sources of metallic ores. [Ben L. Olsen, Some Earthly Treasures of the Book of Mormon, Map 5, Unpublished]



2 Nephi 5:15 **Iron . . . copper . . . brass . . . gold . . . silver . . . precious ores . . . in great abundance**

(Illustration): This is a Mining Map of Guatemala. The "X"s represent mines.

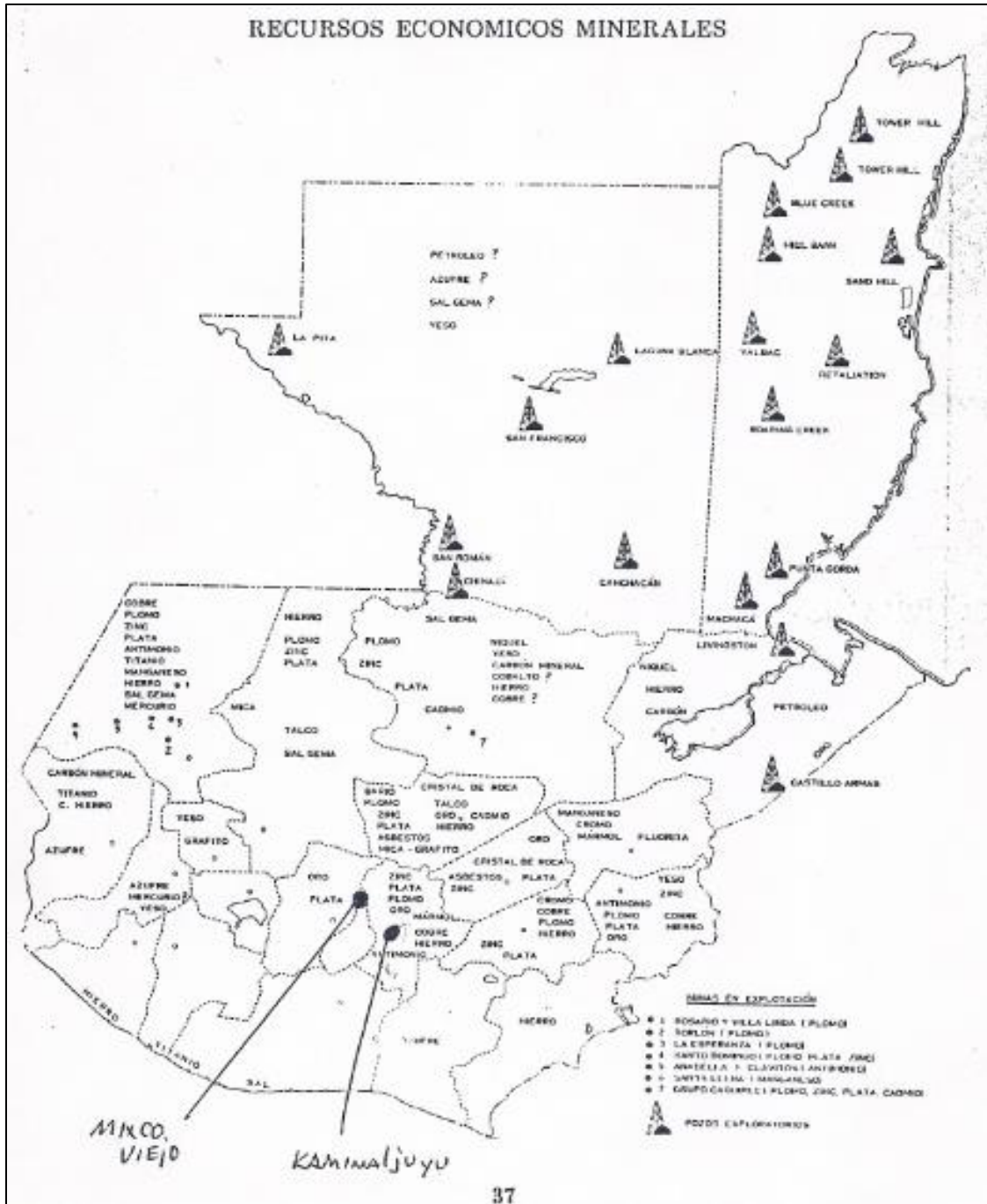
bookofmormonresources.blogspot.com

2 Nephi 5:15 **Precious Ores . . . in Great Abundance:**

The presence of ores "in great abundance" (2 Nephi 5:15) might imply that Nephi was located in mountainous terrain. There is also the consideration of trade. During this time period there was active trade from the lands northward, which would have been considered Olmec or Jaredite cultures. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]



2 Nephi 5:15 **Precious ores . . . in great abundance (Illustration):** Olmec Sites and Trade Routes, 1200 BCE-300 CE [Latinamericanstudies.org]



2 Nephi 5:15 **Precious ores . . . in great abundance (Illustration):** “Recursos Economicos Minerales” (Economic Mineral Resources). Among the various ores listed for each department of Guatemala are “plata” (silver) “oro” (gold) “cobre” (copper), “plomo” (lead) “hierro” (iron) “zinc” (zinc), etc. The location of two candidates for “Nephi” (Mixco Viejo and Kaminaljuyu) are shown. [Clate Mask, "And They Called the Place Nephi," unpublished]

2 Nephi 5:15 And of Iron, and of Copper, and of Brass, and of Steel:

According to John A. Tvedtnes, the Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon help persuade us that it is authentic. . . . Hebrew uses conjunctions much more frequently than English does. One clear example of this can be found in lists of items. In English, the conjunction *and* is normally used only before the last item in a list, such as *wood, iron, copper, and brass*. But Hebrew usually uses a conjunction before each item. The Book of Mormon contains many examples of this Hebrew-like usage, such as this one found in 2 Nephi 5:15: "And I did teach my people to build buildings, and to work in all manner of wood, *and of iron, and of copper, and of brass, and of steel, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious ores*, which were in great abundance."

This kind of repetition is so prominent in the Book of Mormon that Professor Haim Rabin, President of the Hebrew Language Academy and a specialist in the history of the Hebrew language, once used a passage from the Book of Mormon in a lecture in English to illustrate this principle, because he explained, it was a better illustration than passages from the English Bible. [John Tvedtnes, "The Hebrew Background of the Book of Mormon" in Rediscovering the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., p. 82]

2 Nephi 5:15 And I Did Teach My People . . . to Work in All Manner of Wood, and of Iron, and of Copper, and of Brass, and of Steel, and of Gold, and of Silver, and of Precious Ores:

According to John Tvedtnes, "there is evidence to show that Lehi and his family were craftsmen and artisans--probably metalworkers. . . . Evidence for Nephi's metal-working skills came after the group's arrival in the New World. It was he who prepared the plates of ore from which the Book of Mormon ultimately developed (1 Nephi 19:1), smelting the ore and forming the plates themselves. He also manufactured "many swords" based on the pattern of the weapon he had taken from Laban in Jerusalem (2 Nephi 5:14). But the full range of his talents is explained in the verses of 2 Nephi 5:15-17: "And I did teach my people . . . to work in all manner . . . of iron, and of copper, and of brass, and of steel, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious ores. . . ." If Lehi and his family were metal-workers (living on a plot of land sufficiently large to grow crops as well), then the source of their wealth is readily explained. From biblical passages (2 Kings 24:11-15; Jeremiah 24:1; 29:2) as well as the Assyrian and Babylonian documents of that era, we learn that craftsmen and smiths were considered in Lehi's day to belong to the upper class. [John Tvedtnes, "Was Lehi a Caravaneer?," F.A.R.M.S., p. 13]

2 Nephi 5:15 I Did Teach My People . . . to Work in All Manner . . . of Gold:

According to Glenn Scott, in 1881, Jose Gay related that the ancestors of the Mixtec engraved ancient hieroglyphics on very thin gold plates (Jose Antonio Gay 1881, *Historia de Oaxaca, Mexico*, 1:4,62.). [Glenn A. Scott, Voices from the Dust, p. 91] [See the commentary on 2

Nephi 5:28-30]

2 Nephi 5:15 I Did Teach My People to . . . Work in All Manner of . . . Precious Ores, Which Were in Great Abundance:

According to John Sorenson, the word "abundant" is what anthropologists call an "emic" concept, a word whose meaning has to be construed in the culture's own terms. The statement in 1 Nephi 18:25 on discovering ores refers to a point in time when Lehi's party had just landed, and the men available to explore were very limited (perhaps ten in number).^{lxiv} Consequently their search for and discoveries of ores would only have been cursory and local. The same caution applies to interpreting "great abundance" in 2 Nephi 5:15:

And I did teach my people to build buildings, and to work in all manner of wood, and of iron, and of copper, and of brass, and of steel and of gold, and of silver, and of precious ores, which were *in great abundance*. (see also "abound" in Jacob 2:12 and Jarom 1:8)

Expressions such as these reflect the viewpoint of small communities, perhaps a single village. We must not distort the record by transforming the "emic" sense of "abundance" in the minds of the first few Lehiters and Nephites into "etic" (i.e., objective, geological) abundance on a scale of hundreds of miles throughout Mesoamerica. [John L. Sorenson, "Viva Zapato! Hurray for the Shoe!" in Review of Books on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 6, Num. 1, pp. 322-323]

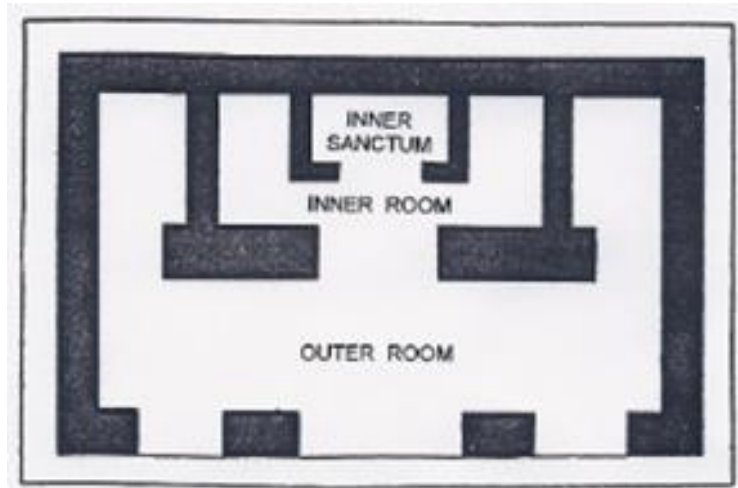
2 Nephi 5:16 And I, Nephi, Did Build a Temple:

The word *temple* comes from the Latin *templum*, which signifies an extended open space that has been marked out for the observation of the sky.^{lxv} In what manner is such a space marked out? According to Dr. Hugh W. Nibley, the word *templum* "designates a building specially designed for interpreting signs in the heavens--a sort of observatory where one gets one's bearings on the universe. The root *tem-* in Greek and Latin denotes a 'cutting' or intersection of two lines at right angles, 'the point where the *cardo* and *decumanus* cross,' hence where the four regions come together."^{lxvi} A temple is thus a central point from which one can determine the relationship between the motions of the heavens and the four quarters of the earth. [Matthew B. Brown, The Gate of Heaven, p. 1]

2 Nephi 5:16 I Nephi Did Build a Temple . . . after the Manner of the Temple of Solomon:

Nephi wrote, "I, Nephi, did build a temple . . . after the manner of the temple of Solomon" (2 Nephi 5:16). According to Glenn Scott, some critics cite this reference to a temple outside of Jerusalem as an error, assuming it was never done. However, the discovery of Hebrew temples at

Arad, near Beer Sheba (Herzog 1987, "Ancient Israelite Fortress," *Biblical Archaeological Review*, 13:2) and at Elephantine, Egypt (Nibley 1989, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, 388) disproved that claim. A significant parallel between Mesoamerican temples and Solomon's is that they shared a common floor plan: an outer court, an inner court, and an inner sanctum corresponding to the Holy of Holies. Torquemada, a sixteenth century Spanish priest, noted the same three-part floor plan (Laurette Sejourne 1966, "Prehispanic Temples," *Cuadernos Americanos*, 143). [Glenn A. Scott, *Voices from the Dust*, p. 99]



2 Nephi 5:16 **I, Nephi, did build a temple . . . after the manner of the temple of Solomon:** Temple of the Cross At Palenque, Mexico. Fray Torquemada noted the three-part floor plan of many Mesoamerican temples. [Glenn A. Scott, *Voices from the Dust*, p. 100]

2 Nephi 5:16 I, Nephi, Did Build a Temple:

According to John Welch, temples were important throughout the ancient world, more so than most people realize. When wandering through the archaeological remains and perusing written records of those often spectacular sacred buildings, modern secular people are disadvantaged in trying to comprehend the devotion and awe that ancient people must have felt towards their temples, whether in Mesopotamia, the Mediterranean, or Mesoamerica. Ancient civilizations dedicated their scarcest public resources to the extensive tasks of building, furnishing, and operating the beautiful temples that dominated the central precincts of so many of their lands and cities. Those buildings were not only viewed as "the one point on earth at which men and women could establish contact with higher spheres,"^{lxvii} but they also "represented stability and cohesiveness in the community, and their rites and ceremonies were viewed as essential to the proper functioning of the society."^{lxviii} Public veneration at every holy place was freely offered by the faithful, who gathered often at the temple for religious instruction, coronations, sacrifices, and other sacred rites and crucial functions. . . .

Ancient temples also combined the realms of God and man, the immortal and the mortal, the eternal and the temporal, the reign of God and the rules of society. Modern observers should remember that the separation of church and state is largely an artificial boundary that is predominantly a modern construct. In the ancient Near East, the concepts of king and prophet, palace and temple, secular law and divine commandment were close companions, if not synonymous concepts,^{lxix} . . .

Evidence in the Book of Mormon indicates that temples were equally important among the Nephites, both in their religion and in their society. Prominent on the landscape of each of the three successive Nephite capital cities of Nephi, Zarahemla, and Bountiful was a temple, probably one of the most important structures in town. These temples functioned as meeting places; there the domain of the king met the sphere of the priest, and worshipers assembled, made contact with divine powers, and learned the mysteries of God. Although we have little direct information about the design of temples in the Book of Mormon or the rituals performed in them, the scriptures give strong clues about those teachings and ordinances, leaving little doubt that temples were the site of many key events in Nephite civilization and in their worship of the Lord Jesus Christ. In or at the temple, Nephite kings were crowned, religious teachings were dispensed, and the plan of salvation was taught; there the people were exhorted to proper behavior, sacrifices symbolizing the atonement of Christ were performed, and religious and legal covenants were made and renewed. . . .

The sacred activities performed at the temple preserved, embodied, and perpetuated the historical roots of Nephite beliefs and practices in ancient Israel's past. At the same time, they symbolized and looked forward to the presence of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Thus the temple unified past, present, and future. [John W. Welch, "The Temple in the Book of Mormon," in Temples of the Ancient World, pp. 297-299]

2 Nephi 5:16 **Nephi, Did Build a Temple . . . Like unto the Temple of Solomon:**

According to Daniel Peterson, Nephi's construction of a temple, recorded in 2 Nephi 5, has drawn a great deal of attention from critics of the Book of Mormon. Nephi states:

And I, Nephi, did build a temple; and I did construct it after the manner of the temple of Solomon save it were not built of so many precious things; for they were not to be found upon the land, wherefore, it could not be built like unto Solomon's temple. But the manner of the construction was like unto the temple of Solomon; and the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine. (2 Nephi 5:16)

But how, the skeptics demand, could a small family of refugees possibly build such a structure when Solomon's own temple required years of construction and the efforts of many

thousands of workers?^{lxx}

Seeming problems in the Book of Mormon often dissolve when we attempt to find out what the text actually says, which is not always what we initially imagine it to say. What does it mean to be built "after the manner of the temple of Solomon"? I submit that it means to be patterned after, to have the same general layout as Solomon's temple, without necessarily being on the same scale. And since we know that smaller temples did in fact exist in ancient Israel, there seems no real reason to assume, without evidence, that one could not have existed among the Nephites. "Biblical evidence," notes the Israeli archaeologist Avraham Negev, "points to the existence of numerous other cult places all over Palestine, in addition to the main Temple of Jerusalem, and such shrines have now been found at Arad and Lachish, both of a very similar plan."^{lxxi} Indeed, says Negev, "No actual remains of the First Temple [Solomon's] have come to light, and it is therefore only by the study of the Bible Scriptures and by comparison with other contemporary temples that we can reconstruct the plan."^{lxxii} [In correspondence, one critic of the Book of Mormon demanded to know why, if Nephites really once existed, we have not found any ruins of Nephi's temple. I would suggest that it is for the same reason that we have found "no actual remains" of Solomon's temple.--n. 38, pp. 170-171]

Negev tells of one such temple, built "after the manner of the temple of Solomon," as follows:

The most remarkable discovery at Arad is the temple which occupied the north-western corner of the citadel. . . . Its orientation, general plan and contents, especially the tabernacle, are *similar to the Temple of Solomon*. . . . Flanking the entrance to the *hekal* were two stone slabs, probably bases of pillars, similar to the pillars of Jachin and Boaz in the temple at Jerusalem (1 Kings 7:21; 2 Chronicles 4:17).^{lxxiii}

Yet the Arad temple was only a fraction of the size of Solomon's temple. Significantly, it survived, in use, until approximately the time of Lehi. [Daniel C. Peterson, "Is the Book of Mormon True? Notes on the Debate," in Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited, pp. 153-154]



Temple at Arad

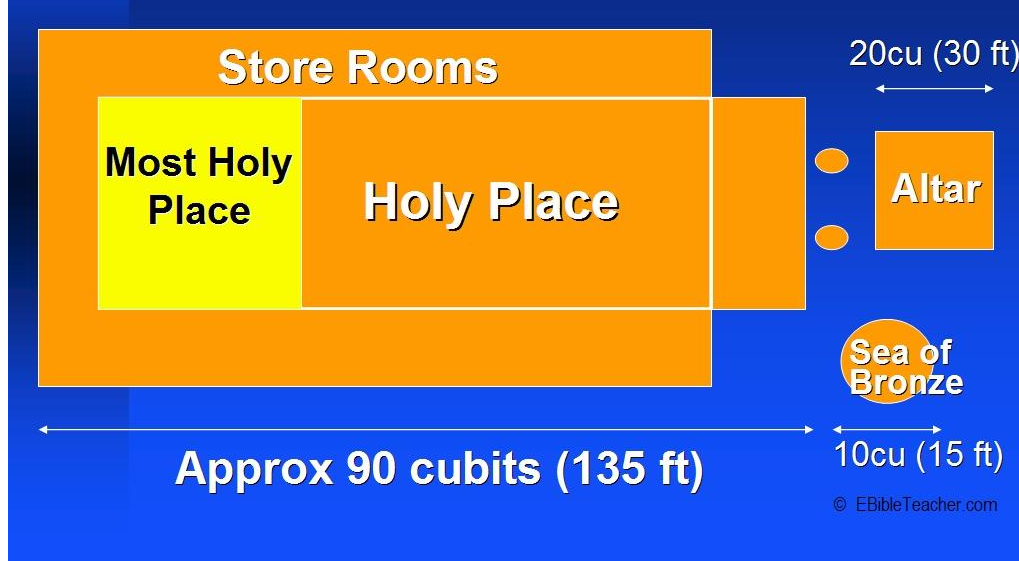
ferrelljenkins.wordpress.com



Solomon's Temple

Biblestudyoutlines.org

Solomon's Temple



Solomon's Temple Design

Ebibleteacher.com

2 Nephi 5:16 **Nephi, Did Build a Temple . . . Like unto the Temple of Solomon:**

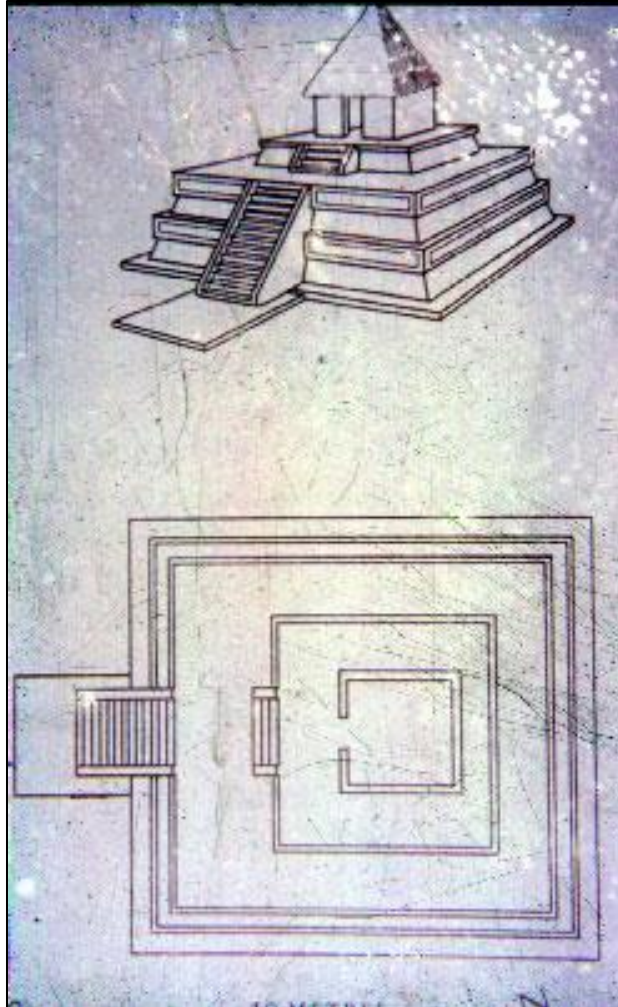
Of his temple's design and structure Nephi states, "The manner of the construction was like unto the temple of Solomon" (2 Nephi 5:16). According to John Welch, in saying this, Nephi "could only have meant that the general pattern was similar."^{lxxiv} From this, one may understand that the basic physical conception of the temple of Nephi was essentially comparable to that of the distinctive temple of Solomon, which divided its sacred space into three areas on a straight-line axis with the innermost being the most holy. In the opinion of some scholars, Solomon's temple was distinctive in that it "consisted of three rooms one behind the other, with a narrow front. . . . What is characteristic of the Jerusalem Temple is rather that the three rooms stand one behind the other in a straight line, and that the building is the same width all along its length" with the middle room being the largest."^{lxxv} Apparently, Nephi built his temple in this same fashion so that it could be used for functions similar to those performed in the temple of Solomon.

While it may be completely coincidental, and while there are obvious differences between all varieties of temples, it is interesting to observe that sanctuaries at the center of the top of certain Mayan temples (for example, at Tikal) are divided into three small areas arranged in a straight row, each one being a step higher than the other. Although little is known about Mesoamerican temples, ethnohistorians have surmised that, in cases of two- and three-roomed temples in Mesoamerica, "worshippers could enter only the outer room of the temple, while the

slightly raised, more sacred, inner chamber was restricted to priests," with altars along the back wall.^{lxxvi} Expanding on similar ideas, John Sorenson has drawn the following further comparisons between the prototypical Israelite temple and Mesoamerican temple structures:

The temple of Solomon was built on a platform, so people literally went "up" to it. Inside were distinct rooms of differing sacredness. Outside the building itself was a courtyard or plaza surrounded by a wall. Sacrifices were made in that space, atop altars of stepped or terraced form. The levels of the altar structure represented the layered universe as Israelites and other Near Eastern people conceived of it. The temple building was oriented so that the rising of the sun on equinoctial day (either March 21 or September 21) sent the earliest rays--considered "the glory of the Lord"--to shine through the temple doors, which were opened for the occasion directly into the holiest part. The same features generally characterized Mesoamerican temple complexes. The holy building that was the temple proper was of modest size, while the courtyard area received greater attention. Torquemada, an early Spanish priest in the New World, compared the plan of Mexican temples with that of the temple of Solomon, and a modern scholar [Laurette Sejourne] agrees.^{lxxvii}

[John W. Welch, "The Temple in the Book of Mormon," in Temples of the Ancient World, pp. 323-325]



2 Nephi 5:16 **Nephi, did build a temple . . . like unto the temple of Solomon (Illustration):**
 Reconstruction of a temple at Kaminaljuyu. itdc.ibcc.edu

2 Nephi 5:16 **I Nephi Did Build a Temple, and I Did Construct It after the Manner of the Temple of Solomon:**

Like Israel's only temple, the American ones face east and had fine work in stone. Spaniards found that Peruvian and Toltec temples had similar gold plating. Fine woods adorn the Mayan temples (e.g., Tikal). Both Israelite and American temples were supported by columns (e.g., Sayil, Chichen, Tula), and both sported horns on each of the four altar corners (Monte Alban urn).^{lxxviii} Both had perpetually burning fires and the pervading fragrance of incense (still observable at Chichicastenango, Guatemala), and both had trumpets and bells to announce religious ceremonies (depicted on the Bonampak walls). Temples in both places were presided over by priests, wearing long robes and turbans, who made blood sacrifices at the altars, gave communion, and took confession. Only high priests were allowed into the holy of holies. American priests, like the Levites, were entitled to their offices by tribal inheritance--families

marked for that purpose. . .

Both the Toltecs under Quetzalcoatl, and the Israelites, prohibited human sacrifice, but submitted to it on occasion.^{lxxxix} Later Aztecs instigated the sacrifice of children, and by conquest times they had allowed human sacrifice to reach unbelievable proportions. More often in earlier times animals were sacrificed--but only unblemished ones. Like the Israelites, American natives were forbidden to eat the flesh of certain animals (like the peccary, or South American swine). Purification rituals for birth were similar, and in both areas boys of eight-days of age were circumcised. According to Sahagun, both cultures brought their first-born young men to the temple to serve.^{lxxx}

The most revered possession of the Palestine Jews was their Ark of the Covenant, a symbolic resting place for God. It was an elaborately decorated box kept in the temple and touched only on certain occasions by designated priests. Instances are rare, but Duran reports that the Mexicas had a similar Ark at Huexotzingo, "held in as much reverence as that of the Jews."^{lxxxix} Kingsborough states that only specific persons could touch the sacred object. James Adair, an eighteenth-century writer who lived for forty years among the North American Indians and thoroughly believed they were of Jewish origins, notes a similar Ark among the Cherokee and tribes along the Mississippi.^{lxxxii} [T.J. O'Brien, *Fair Gods and Feathered Serpents*, pp. 196-197]

2 Nephi 5:16 **[The Temple Was] Not Built of So Many *Precious Things*:**

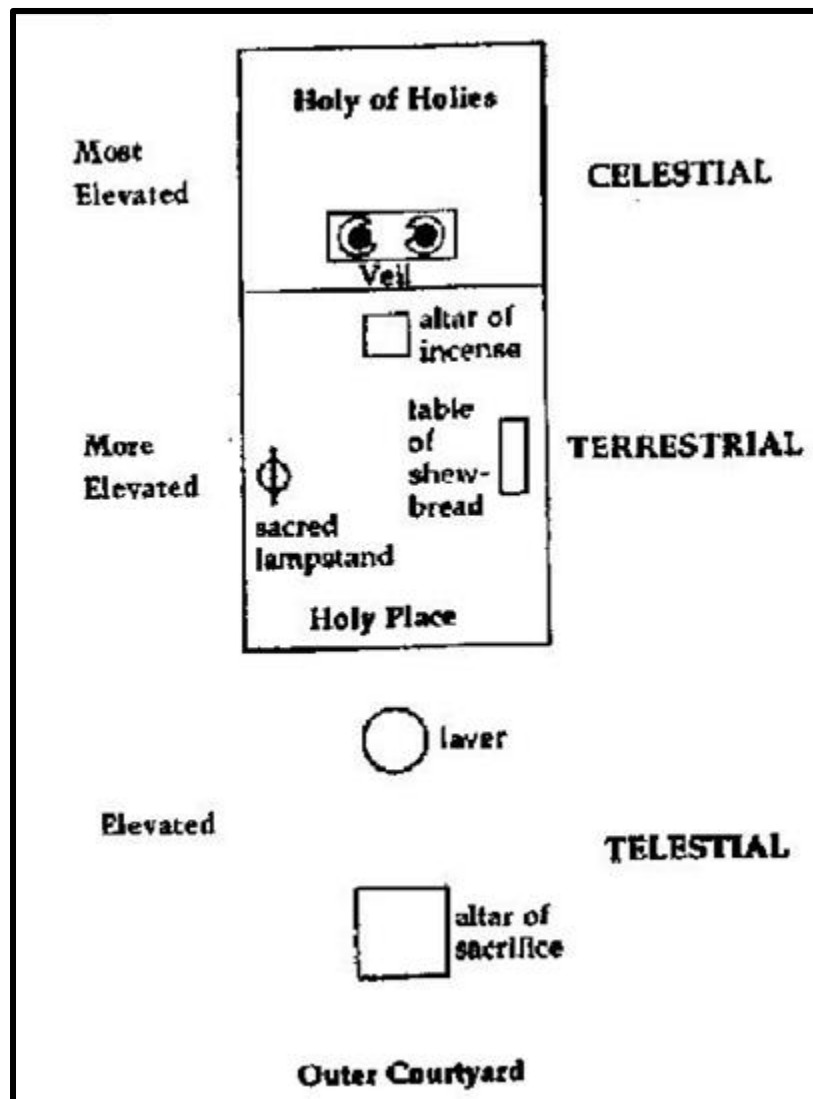
According to John Welch, when Nephi says his temple was "not built of so many *precious things*" (2 Nephi 5:16), he probably is not speaking of gold or silver, which were found in the land of Nephi. The common Book of Mormon phrase "gold, silver, and precious things" appears to parallel the Near Eastern formulaic expression in which "precious things" commonly referred to precious *gems*. Thus, while Nephi mentions an abundance of metallic ores (gold, silver, and copper) in his description of the new promised land (see 1 Nephi 18:25), he conspicuously fails to mention gems or "precious things," such as carbuncle, emerald, sapphire, and diamond, which Solomon used extensively in constructing his temple (see 2 Chronicles 3:6; also Exodus 39:10-13).^{lxxxiii} Accordingly, the Book of Mormon is consistent; Nephi could not decorate his temple with the same kinds of precious things as were used in Solomon's temple. [John W. Welch, "The Temple in the Book of Mormon," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, p. 325]

2 Nephi 5:16 **A Temple . . . after the Manner of the Temple of Solomon:**

According to John Sorenson, the Nephites' first temple was constructed "after the manner of the temple of Solomon" (2 Nephi 5:16), a structure Nephi himself had seen many times in Jerusalem, for the old building was still standing when Lehi and his family left the land of Judah. . . . The Nephites used different materials, so the techniques of construction could not be the same as

in the Palestinian model. So when Nephi said that the "manner of construction" was the same as in Jerusalem, he could only have meant that the general pattern was similar. . . . Torquemada, an early Spanish priest in the New World, compared the plan of Mexican temples with that of the temple of Solomon, and a modern scholar agrees. [John Sorenson, An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., pp. 143-45]

Note* What was that pattern, and what was its function? For a thorough review of temple symbolism from ancient times, see Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World*. F.A.R.M.S., and Hugh W. Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*, F.A.R.M.S. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]



2 Nephi 5:16 **The temple of Solomon (Illustration):** The basic floor plan of both the Tabernacle and the Temple of Solomon. (Notice the elevations both inside and outside the building.) [Clate Mask, "And They Called the Place Bountiful," p. 19]

2 Nephi 5:18 **They Would That I Should Be Their King:**

According to Brant Gardner, a phrase in the Book of Mormon text that invites the existing culture of Mesoamerica into the Book of Mormon story is found in 2 Nephi 5:18: "they would that I should be their king." Small hamlets do not have kings. To name one of a dozen men "king" is an insult, not a compliment. The only situation that sufficiently explains our text is the presence of non-Old World peoples at this early date. Nephi has just described having not only built dwellings, but also a temple (see 2 Nephi 5:15-16). Public building projects require excess labor. Even on a modest scale, a public building takes time and resources away from daily life. The very existence of a public building suggests a larger population than the pure Old World immigrants and their natural increase. Furthermore, Nephi will consecrate Jacob and Joseph to preside over the temple as "priests and teachers" (2 Nephi 5:26). If we were to assume only Old World peoples at this point, we would have a king and two priests servicing perhaps ten households at the outside. Once again, the only situation that seems to fit is the presence of non-Old World people. [Brant Gardner, "A Social History of the Early Nephites," delivered at the FAIR Conference, August 17, 2001, pp. 3-4]

2 Nephi 5:18 **I, Nephi, Was Desirous That They Should Have No King:**

In 2 Nephi 5:18 Nephi records that the people "would that I should be their king. But I, Nephi, was desirous that they should have no king. In Mosiah 29, Mosiah₂ makes an argument against kingship by stating that "because all men are not just, it is not expedient that ye should have a king" (Mosiah 29:16). What was so bad about a king?

According to John Sorenson, a summary of several principles which scholars on the Bible have established to be central to the institution of Israelite kingship^{lxxxiv} will help ground our understanding of what the Book of Mormon means when it talks of monarchy.

1. The king was the owner of the institutions of the state and as such held ownership, in a formal sense, of all agricultural land.
2. In practice, lands specifically owned and controlled by the king were granted to various royal functionaries, or to non-royal officials, as hereditary estates; in return they paid taxes to him and they were obliged to muster military and labor forces from their local subjects as the king required.
3. These elite landlords extracted from the commoners who cultivated the land a substantial portion of their produce (perhaps as much as 50 percent) as tax and rent.
4. This system of land tenure, taxation and furnishing of manpower reinforced

the class structure of the society by ensuring that wealth, power and privilege were monopolized by the king and his supporters.

5. A central bureaucracy was the king's mechanism for controlling the various levels of government responsible for the military, economic, legal, and ritual activities of the network of cities and villages within the state. . . . While "the will of the people" had a certain ultimate role to play in this scheme, it would be misleading to think of the arrangement as approaching "democracy."

6. Widespread belief that the king's rule was legitimate, just, and effective was of paramount importance if the system was to keep running. Images, attitudes, and ideals associated with kingship were insistently communicated. . . . Ultimately, a king could be overthrown . . . however the only institutions by which the powers of the public could be decisively exercised were violent ones . . .

7. An organized system of religion--expressed particularly as a set of rituals--was crucial in legitimizing the king. The official priests were "his" priests, in theory; they were associated closely with the royal elite class, being supported by tax money or at least by those patrons who controlled major wealth.

It should be apparent that this form of kingly society was an integral whole, not divisible in practice among conceptual categories such as our terms "economics," "politics," or "religion" suggest. [John L. Sorenson, "The Political Economy of the Nephites," Nephite Culture and Society, pp. 200-202] [See the commentary on 2 Nephi 6:2; 5:30]

The Major Leaders During Nephite History—600 B.C. to A.D. 421

Year-Reign of Judges	Christian Year	King, Chief Judge, or Governor	Historian and/or Church Leader	Military Leader
	600 B.C.	Nephi (2 Nephi 5:18–19)	Nephi (1 Nephi 1:1–3; 19:1–4)	Nephi (2 Nephi 3:14; Jacob 1:10)
	544 B.C.	Others designated (Jacob 1:9)	Jacob (2 Nephi 5:26; Jacob 1:1–4; 17–18)	
	Between 544 and 420 B.C.		Enos and many prophets (Enos 1:22, 26)	
	399 B.C.	"Mighty men in the faith of the Lord" (Jarom 1:7)	Jarom and the prophets of the Lord (Jarom 1:1, 10–11)	"Mighty men in the faith of the Lord" (Jarom 1:7)
	361 B.C.		Omni (Omni 1:1–3)	
	317 B.C.		Amaron (Omni 1:4–8)	
			Chemish (Omni 1:9)	
	Between 279 and 180 B.C.	Mosiah I (Omni 1:12–23) Benjamin (Omni 1:23–25; Words of Mormon)	Abinadom (Omni 1:10–11) Amaleki (Omni 1:12) Benjamin with the holy prophets (Words of Mormon 1:16–18; Mosiah 1–6)	Mosiah I (Omni 1:12–23) Benjamin (Omni 1:23–25)
	124 B.C.	Mosiah II (Mosiah 1:15)	Mosiah II (Mosiah 6:5)	
	122 B.C.		Alma I (Mosiah 25:19; 26:28)	
1	91 B.C.	Alma II (Mosiah 29:44)	Alma II (Mosiah 29:42)	Alma II (Alma 2:15)
9	83 B.C.	Nephihah (Alma 4:17, 20)		
18	74 B.C.			Moroní (Alma 43:17)
19	73 B.C.		Helaman II (Alma 37:1; 45:20–23)	
24	65–67 B.C.	Pahoran (Alma 50:39–40)		
32	60 B.C.			Moronihah (Alma 62:43)
36	56 B.C.		Shiblon (Alma 63:1)	
39	53 B.C.		Helaman III (Alma 63:11)	
40	52 B.C.	Pahoran II (Helaman 1:1, 5) and Facumeni (Helaman 1:13)		
42	50 B.C.	Helaman III (Helaman 2:1–2)		
53	39 B.C.	Nephi I (Helaman 3:37)	Nephi I (Helaman 3:37)	Last reference to Moronihah (Helaman 4:18)
62	30 B.C.	Cezoram (Helaman 4:18; 5:1)		
66	26 B.C.	Cezoram's son (Helaman 6:15)		
?	?	Seezoram (Helaman 6:39; 9:23)		
92	A.D. 1	Lachoneus I (3 Nephi 1:1)	Nephi II (3 Nephi 1:1–2)	
	A.D. 16			Gidgiddoni (3 Nephi 3:18)
	A.D. 30	Lachoneus II (3 Nephi 6:19)		
	?		Nephi III (?) (Superscription to 4 Nephi)	
	A.D. 110		Amos I (4 Nephi 1:19–20)	
	A.D. 194		Amos II (4 Nephi 1:21)	
	A.D. 305		Ammaron (4 Nephi 1:47)	
	A.D. 321 to 335		Mormon (Mormon 1:1–3)	
	A.D. 326			Mormon (Mormon 2:2)
	A.D. 385		Moroní (Mormon 6:6)	

2 Nephi 5:18-19 **They would that I [Nephi] should be their king. . . . Nevertheless, I did for them according to that which was in my power (Major Nephite Leaders)** [Illustration]: The Major Leaders During Nephite History. [Church Educational System, Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122, 1989, p. 160]

2 Nephi 5:21 He Caused the Cursing to Come Upon Them . . . That They Might Not Be Enticing Unto My People:

The purpose of the curse was to separate the two peoples. This was done so that the righteous would not intermarry with the wicked and thereby adopt their wicked ways. In order to understand the purposes of the Lord in this regard, it is useful to examine a similar situation as found in the Old Testament. The Lord commanded the children of Israel not to intermarry with the non-Israelites in Canaan:

If ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you:

Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. (Josh 23:12-3)

The peoples which inhabited the land of Canaan while the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness were very wicked (see Lev 18:22-28). The people were so wicked that the Lord brought judgment upon them via the armies of the children of Israel. The children of Israel were instructed to kill everyone, even women and children. This was the only way to cleanse the land of iniquity and keep the Israelites from learning of their wickedness:

But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth:

But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee:

That they teach you not to do after all their abominations (Deut 20:16-8).

The Canaanites were to be a scourge to the Israelites just as the Lamanites were to be a scourge to the Nephites (see 5:25). The Lord understands the great influence a wicked and idolatrous spouse can have on a righteous individual. With all the wisdom Solomon had, he was not wise enough to stay faithful to the Lord when his many idolatrous wives began to influence him, when Solomon was old...his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God (1 Kings 11:4).

The other reason to separate the Lamanites and Nephites was that the Lord had promised that all those who were living on the land of promise that would not keep the commandments would be cut off from his presence. This is what happened when the prophets

of Nephi, Jacob, and Joseph left with their families to start a new life. The Lamanites then had no one to teach them the things of the Lord. (See 5:20). [josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

2 Nephi 5:21 **God Did Cause a Skin of *Blackness* to Come upon Them:**

However one defines "blackness" (2 Nephi 5:21), the question that is raised here is this: In our search for Book of Mormon lands, should we look for a location with a history of only "black" and "white" people who lived there during the years of the Book of Mormon?

Hugh Nibley explains that with the Arabs, to be white of countenance is to be blessed and to be black of countenance is to be cursed; there are parallel expressions in Hebrew and Egyptian. . . . Note that the dark skin is never mentioned alone [in the Book of Mormon] but always as attending a generally depraved way of life, which also is described as the direct result of the curse. . . . There is nowhere any mention of red skin, incidentally, but only of black (or dark) and white, the terms being used as the Arabs use them. [Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, F.A.R.M.S., pp. 73-74]

Note* Perhaps it might be profitable to review what the Book of Mormon has to say relative to "white" or "whiteness," and "dark" or "blackness."

1. In Nephi's vision, an angel makes the following statement regarding the twelve ministers that would judge Nephi's seed: "For because of their faith in the Lamb of God their garments are *made white* in his *blood*" (1 Nephi 12:10). It is hard to imagine how garments could literally be made white by washing them in red blood. Perhaps the angel is using the term *white* symbolically.

2. In Lehi's dream, the "fruit thereof was white, *to exceed all the whiteness* that I had ever seen" (1 Nephi 8:11). Are Lehi's words about the "white" inside of an apple, or is the term *white* symbolic?

3. In Nephi's dream, the angel says to him, "Behold these shall dwindle in unbelief. And it came to pass that I beheld, after they had dwindled in unbelief they became a *dark*, and *loathsome*, and a *filthy* people, *full of idleness* and all manner of *abominations*" (1 Nephi 12:22-23). If we take into account Hebrew parallelism, then darkness parallels "loathsome, . . . filthy, . . . full of idleness and all manner of abominations." Nothing is said about skin color. Could it be that the term *dark* is symbolic?

4. Before Nephi ever made his return trip to Jerusalem for the plates of brass, the Lord spoke to him saying, "inasmuch as thy brethren shall rebel against thee, *they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord*. . . . For behold, in that day that they shall rebel against me, I will curse them even with a *sore curse* . . . And if it so be that they rebel against me, they shall be a scourge

unto thy seed, to stir them up in the ways of remembrance" (1 Nephi 2:21-24). What was the promised "sore curse"? It was that Nephi's rebellious brethren would be "cut off from the presence of the Lord." By combining the curse with the terms discussed in #3 (1 Nephi 12:22-23), we find that being "cut off from the presence of the Lord" is associated with darkness and with being "filthy, full of idleness and all manner of abominations" (1 Nephi 12:22-23). Was this what made the Lamanites "loathsome" to the Nephites?

5. In 2 Nephi 5:21 the following phrase describes Lehi's party before anyone rebelled against Nephi: "they were *white*, and exceedingly *fair* and *delightsome*." In 2 Nephi 30:6 the following phrase refers to the future of the Lamanites in the last days: "not many generations shall pass and they (the Lamanites) shall become a *pure and delightsome* people." Prior to the 1840 edition of the Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 30:6 read "white and delightsome." In 1840, under the editorial supervision of the prophet Joseph Smith, this verse was changed to "pure and delightsome." Nevertheless, for some unknown reason, subsequent editions failed to include this change and reverted to the wording of previous editions. Not until the 1981 edition was this situation corrected. What is important here is the sense of Hebrew parallelism. Does "white" parallel "pure"? Are all of these words--"white," "pure," "fair," "delightsome"--parallels of one another? Could we substitute "pure" for "white" in 2 Nephi 5:21?

6. In Nephi's vision, he sees the future mother of Christ, and says the following about her: "in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was *exceedingly fair and white*" (1 Nephi 11:13). Was Nephi trying to say that Mary had a milky-white complexion? That she was pretty? Perhaps Nephi was trying to say that she was "pure."

7. In Alma 13:11-12, Alma speaks on the character of faithful high priests: "Therefore, they were called after this holy order, and were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb. Now they, after being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, having their garments made *white*, being pure and spotless before God, *could not look upon sin save it were with abhorrence*." Now let us compare this description with what is said in 2 Nephi 5:21 about the curse. Nephi says, "*that they (the Lamanites) might not be enticing unto my people* the Lord God did cause a skin of *blackness* to come upon them." If "white" means "pure," then does "black" mean "impure" or "full of sin"? And was it because the Lamanites were impure or full of sin (or "black") that those who were pure and sanctified ("white") would not find them enticing?

8. In Jacob 1:13-14, Jacob makes the following statement: "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. In other words, according to Jacob, the Nephites could have had people among them who descended from every man in the original group. The reader should notice that this is *after* the curse of a "skin of blackness" spoken of in 2 Nephi 5:21. Thus, we might ask, "how much did heredity have to do

with the curse of a "skin of blackness"?

9. In 3 Nephi 2:15, Mormon is talking about the Lamanites who have come to live with the Nephites. He says the following: "And their curse was taken from them, and *their skin became white* like unto the Nephites." Only three verses previous to this statement, however, we find the following statement: "therefore, *all the Lamanites who had become converted unto the Lord* did unite with their brethren, the Nephites, and were compelled, for the safety of their lives and their women and their children, to take up arms against those Gadianton robbers." Whether these Lamanites were newly converted or whether they belonged to the people of Ammon, who had been converted some years previously (Alma 23-28), hereditary factors could not be at the heart of their becoming "white" in such a short time.

10a. After the coming of Christ, Mormon records that "it came to pass in the thirty and sixth year, *the people were all converted unto the Lord*, upon all the face of the land, *both Nephites and Lamanites*. . . . And even fifty and nine years had passed away. . . . And now, behold, it came to pass that the people of Nephi . . . became an exceedingly *fair and delightsome* people" (4 Nephi 2, 6, 10). And it came to pass . . . an hundred years had passed away . . . And there were no envyings, nor strifes, . . . *neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God* (4 Nephi 1:14, 16, 17). The point that should be addressed here is the length of time required to lift the "curse." Was the "curse" lifted when someone's sins were washed away at baptism (or when they were converted), or were there other requirements? And regardless of exactly how long it took to lift the "curse," we must ask again whether or not it had anything to do with genetic characteristics.

10b. The book of Daniel uses the term *white*: "Many shall *be purified*, and *made white*, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand (Daniel 12:10). Thus, to be *purified* is to be *made white*.

10c. The Hebrew word for atonement, *Kaphar*, has a variety of meanings, each of which seem to focus on different aspects of atonement with God. Among these is "to *wipe clean* the face blackened by displeasure," as the Arabs say, "whiten the face" (Brown, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 497).

11. In Alma chapter 3, Mormon speaks about a dissident Nephite group called the Amlicites: "And the Amlicites were distinguished from the Nephites, for *they had marked themselves with red in their foreheads after the manner of the Lamanites*; . . . Thus the word of God is fulfilled, for these are the words which he said to Nephi: Behold, the Lamanites have I cursed, and I will set a mark on them that they and their seed may be separated from thee and thy seed, from this time henceforth and forever, except they repent of their wickedness and turn to me that I may have mercy upon them. And again: I will set a mark upon him that mingleth his seed with thy brethren, that they may be cursed also. And again: I will set a mark upon him that fighteth against thee and thy seed. And again, I say he that departeth from thee shall no more be called thy seed; and I will

bless thee, and whomsoever shall be called thy seed, henceforth and forever" (Alma 3: 4, 14-17).

In summary, according to the verses just cited, black is a symbolic term meaning impure, filthy and loathsome. Black (or darkness) is also symbolic of being cut off from the presence of the Lord (or from light). When one becomes converted to the Lord, through the atonement of Christ he becomes pure, white and delightsome. Impure people mark themselves to distinguish themselves from the righteous. [Alan C. Miner and Clate Mask, Personal Notes]

Note* According to Hugh Nibley), we are told (Alma 3:13, 14, 18) that while the fallen people "set the mark upon *themselves*," it was none the less God who was making them: "I will set a mark upon them" etc. So natural and human was the process that it suggested nothing miraculous to the ordinary observer. (Lehi in the Desert, F.A.R.M.S., pp. 73-74)

2 Nephi 5:21 **God Did Cause a *Skin* of Blackness to Come upon Them:**

When Adam and Eve were sent forth into the wilderness from the Garden of Eden, we know that the Lord made "coats of skins, and clothed them" (Moses 4:27). Alma refers to the clothing of the Lamanites in a similar manner: "and they (the Lamanites) were naked, save it were a skin which was girded about their loins" (Alma 43:20). Perhaps an examination of some references to "a skin" or "skins" in the Book of Mormon will add to our insight:

1. Alma the Elder poses the following question, "And now I ask of you, my brethren, how will any of you feel, if ye shall stand before the bar of God, having your *garments stained* with blood and all manner of filthiness? Behold, what will these things testify against you? . . . Behold, my brethren, do ye suppose that such an one can have a place to sit down in the kingdom of God, with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and also all the holy prophets, whose *garments* are cleansed and are spotless, *pure and white*?" (Alma 5:22, 24) When "garments" are "stained," does it mean that the person is impure and unholy as opposed to pure and holy?

2. How do garments become white? We get the answer in Alma 13:11, "therefore they [high priests] were called after this holy order [the high priesthood], and were sanctified, and their *garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb*." Thus, *blood* is associated with *garments*.

3. Jacob says the following: "Behold, the Lamanites your brethren, whom ye hate because of their *filthiness* and the cursing which hath come upon their *skins*" (Jacob 3:5). Could "skins" of "filthiness" be associated with "stained garments"?

4. Jacob continues, "O my brethren, I fear that unless ye shall repent of your sins that their [the Lamanites'] *skins* will be whiter than yours, when ye shall be brought with them before *the throne of God*." (Jacob 3:8) Are the "skins" talked about here related to the "garments" mentioned in #1

(see Alma 5:22) in that both are associated with *judgement* at the "*throne of God*" or at the "*bar of God*"?

5. Mormon refers to garments in relationship to protection in battle: "Now the leaders of the Lamanites had supposed . . . to come upon them [the Nephites] as they had hitherto done; . . . and they had *also* prepared themselves *with garments of skins*, yea, very thick garments" (Alma 49:6). Were the Lamanites hoping to get added protection from garments? Were they copying Nephite principles of protection?

6. Mormon says this about the people who had associated themselves with the Gadianton Robbers: "And it came to pass that they did come up to battle; . . . and *they were girded about after the manner of robbers*; and they had a *lamb-skin* about their loins, and they were *dyed in blood*" . . . Here we have "robbers" who dress themselves in the "skin" of the "lamb" which is "died" or washed in "blood." Is this a counterfeit for "garments which are washed clean in the blood of the Lamb"?

In summary, a skin and a garment have the same purpose, they illustrate (or illuminate) the character of a person. Wickedness is represented by skins (or garments) of blackness (or darkness). Garments (or skins) can be washed clean (or white) through the blood of the Lamb. Wicked people not only mock this idea, but fight against it.

We would like to finish by quoting from the words of Alma in hopes of instilling a deeper appreciation for the *purpose* of the "skin of blackness" which God saw fit to bestow:

"And their brethren sought to destroy them, therefore they were cursed; and the Lord God set a mark upon them, yea, upon Laman and Lemuel, and also the sons of Ishmael, and Ishmaelitish women. And this was done that their seed might be distinguished from the seed of their brethren, that thereby the Lord God might preserve his people, *that they might not mix and believe in incorrect traditions which would prove their destruction*. And it came to pass that whosoever did mingle his seed with that of the Lamanites did bring the same curse upon his seed. Therefore, whosoever suffered himself to be led away by the Lamanites was called under that head, and there was a mark set upon him" (Alma 3:7-10).

Thus the ability to recognize and avoid the curse of false teachings and impure character traits is a far greater blessing than to view the obvious darkness or lightness of a person's skin color. [Alan C. Miner and Clate Mask, Personal Notes] [See also the commentary on "Adam fell" in 2 Nephi 2:25]



2 Nephi 5:21 **A skin of blackness (Illustration):** Mural of the walls of Temple of Warriors depicting white and dark people at Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico. Photographs [The Book of Mormon, 1962 Seminary Edition, pp. 408-409]

2 Nephi 5:26 I, Nephi, Did Consecrate Jacob and Joseph, That They Should Be Priests and Teachers:

Robert Millet and Joseph McConkie write:

While some have argued that the term “priests and teachers” referred not to offices of the priesthood but rather to callings in the church, the scriptural evidence in the Book of Mormon does not support this contention (see Jarom 1:11, Mosiah 23:17; 25:19, Alma 4:7; 6:1; 15:13; 23:4; 45:23, Moro 3:1). Can a priest be a priest without priesthood? Of course not. Among the Nephites, the offices of priest and teacher were ordained offices of the Melchizedek Priesthood. This is what Alma taught, ‘I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people’ (Alma 13:1, italics added, see also DC 76:57, and commentary for Moroni 3:1)

Jacob reminds us that he and his brother Joseph had been appointed priests and teachers among the people under the hands of Nephi (see 2 Nephi 5:26). These callings are descriptive of their labors in the Melchizedek Priesthood, rather than offices in the Aaronic Priesthood as we know them. So far as we know, there was no Aaronic Priesthood among the Nephites, until, possibly, the coming of Christ to America. (See *Promised Messiah*, p. 412; *New Witness*, P. 348.)”

[Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, vol. 2, p. 9]

2 Nephi 5:23 Cursed Shall Be the Seed of Him That Mixeth with Their [the Lamanite] Seed:

Brant Gardner notes that in 2 Nephi 5:23 the Lamanite curse extends to those Nephites who might marry any of the Lamanites. Thus there is not only a geographic division between the brothers and their families, but a moral and religious chasm as well. The question of marriage has become an important one because the Lord has now excluded a significant number of the potential marriage partners. While the preferred mode of marriage would be to marry someone within the same tribe (see Numbers 36:6), that option has been limited.

Marriage in the ancient world dictated the flow of rights and properties. In the case of Israel, it was not only physical property, but a religious inheritance that was passed on. Thus the injunction to marry within the tribe. This preference for marriage inside the tribe was coupled with other prohibitions against marriage outside the tribe:

In the Hebrew commonwealth these prohibitions were of two kinds, according as they regulated marriage (i) between an Israelite and a non-Israelite, and (ii) between an Israelite and one of his own community. - (i) The prohibitions relating to foreigners were based on that instinctive feeling of exclusiveness, which forms one of the bonds of every social body, and which prevails with peculiar strength in a rude state of society. The only distinct prohibition in the Mosaic law refers to Canaanites, with whom the Israelites were not to marry, on the ground that it would lead them into idolatry (Exodus 34:16; Deuteronomy 7:3-4). But beyond this, the legal disabilities to which the Ammonites and Moabites were subjected (Deuteronomy 23:3) acted as a virtual bar to intermarriage with them, totally preventing the marriage of Israelitish women with Moabites, but permitting that of Israelites with Moabite women, such as that of Mahlon with Ruth. The prohibition against marriages with the Edomites or Egyptians was less stringent, as a male of those nations received the right of marriage on his admission to the full citizenship in the third generation of proselytism (Deuteronomy 23:7-8) (William Smith, "Marriage" in *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, 1970, pp. 376-377)

The prohibition against marriage with the Lamanites comes very early, and at this point is apparently directed at the specific tribal affiliation of Lamanites/Lemuelites, etc. In the future text of the Book of Mormon when the term "Lamanites" appears to become a more generic term, akin to "gentile" it is likely that the specific prohibition was lessened, although it might have remained in place with the lineal descendants of these original Lamanites.

The inevitable intermarriage with other natives of the land, while not the preferred

method when the larger population of Israel was available, was nevertheless allowed, and preferable to the more direct violation of the prohibition of marrying within ones immediate and near family (which certainly would have described the original Nephite and Lamanite bands at this point in time). [Brant Gardner, "Brant Gardner's Page," <http://www.highfiber.com/~nahualli/LDStopics/2Nephi/2Nephi5.htm>, pp. 25-28]

2 Nephi 5:23 **Cursed Shall Be the Seed of Him That Mixeth with Their [the Lamanite] Seed:**

According to Rodney Turner, it should be recalled that the Lord's edict concerning the imposition of the Lamanite mark was not limited as to duration and extent: "And cursed shall be the seed of him that mixeth with their seed, for they shall be cursed even with the same cursing. And the Lord spake it, and it was done." (2 Nephi 5:23)

In all likelihood most pre-Columbian inhabitants of the Americas--of whatever original race or culture--eventually came under the edict: "I will set a mark upon him that mingleth his seed with thy brethren, that they may be cursed also" (Alma 3:14-15). If so, then through assimilation and intermarriage, other peoples like the surviving Nephites became Lamanites (Helaman 3:16). In this way the blood of Joseph was scattered among the diverse Indian peoples of the Western Hemisphere (Kimball, ". . . who is my Neighbor?" 277).

That such was the case is supported by many statements by latter-day prophets. Regardless of current theories to the contrary, every prophet from Joseph Smith to the present has declared that, in the main, the Indian peoples of the western Hemisphere, as well as certain Pacific islanders, are of Israel through Joseph (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* 17, 92-93, 232, 266-67; *Jessee* 324; *Journal of discourses* 2:200, 7:336; Kimball, ". . . who is my Neighbor" 277; "The Evil of Intolerance" 423). [Rodney Turner, "The Lamanite Mark," in The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, the Doctrinal Structure, p. 153]

2 Nephi 5:24 **They Did Become an Idle People:**

In 2 Nephi 5:24, Nephi makes a cultural comment concerning the Lamanites that "they did become an idle people . . ." The Lamanite land of first inheritance was "bordering along by the seashore" (Alma 22:28). Also, people always journeyed "up" to the land of Nephi (see Mosiah 7:1, 9:3; Alma 17:8; etc.). This information apparently correlates with the culture and topography of Mesoamerica. According to John Sorenson, in the late seventeenth century Catholic priest Fuentes y Guzman contrasted the "lassitude and laziness" of the lowlanders (of Guatemala) with the energy of the highland inhabitants. [John Sorenson, An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., p. 140] [See also the commentary on 2 Nephi 5:7, 5:8; Enos 1:20]

2 Nephi 5:26 **Nepi Did Consecrate Jacob and Joseph . . . Priests and Teachers:**

In 2 Nephi 5:26 we find that "Nephi did consecrate Jacob and Joseph . . . priests and teachers." According to Reynolds and Sjodahl, under the Mosaic law, the priests were appointed to offer up sacrifices for the people as well as for themselves. (Leviticus 4:5,6) Under the law, priests were also teachers of the people, as appears from the following:

Do not drink wine or strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die; it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean; and that ye may *teach* the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken to them by the hand of Moses. (Leviticus 10:9-11)

[George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, p. 279]

2 Nephi 5:26 **Priests and Teachers:**

According to McConkie and Millet, reference to "priests and teachers" in the Book of Mormon should not be confused with the office of priest or the office of teacher as known to us in the Aaronic Priesthood today. It is believed that the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood did not exist among the Nephites unless it was brought during Christ's visit among them. [Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1, p. 225]

While some have argued that the term "priests and teachers" referred not to offices of the priesthood but rather to callings in the church, the scriptural evidence in the Book of Mormon does not support this contention (see Jarom 1:11, Mosiah 23:17; 25:19, Alma 4:7; 6:1; 15:13; 23:4; 45:23, Moro 3:1). Can a priest be a priest without priesthood? Of course not. Among the Nephites, the offices of priest and teacher were ordained offices of the Melchizedek Priesthood. This is what Alma taught, 'I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people' (Alma 13:1, italics added, see also DC 76:57, and commentary for Moroni 3:1)

Jacob reminds us that he and his brother Joseph had been appointed priests and teachers among the people under the hands of Nephi (see 2 Nephi 5:26). These callings are descriptive of their labors in the Melchizedek Priesthood, rather than offices in the Aaronic Priesthood as we know them. So far as we know, there was no Aaronic Priesthood among the Nephites, until, possibly, the coming of Christ to America. (See *Promised Messiah*, p. 412; *New Witness*, P. 348.)"

[Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, vol. 2, p. 9]

2 Nephi 5:26 I, Nephi, Did Consecrate Jacob and Joseph That They Should Be Priests and Teachers:

According to Daniel Ludlow, many references in the Book of Mormon indicate that the Nephites held priesthood--that is, they had the power and authority to act in the name of God. However, the Book of Mormon does not refer specifically to the two major divisions in the priesthood, the "Aaronic Priesthood" and the "Melchizedek Priesthood." Thus the question has frequently arisen as to exactly what priesthood was held by the Nephites. Joseph Fielding Smith gives his answer in the following comprehensive statement:

The Nephites were descendants of Joseph. Lehi discovered this when reading the brass plates. He was a descendant of Manasseh; and Ishmael, who accompanied him with his family, was of the tribe of Ephraim. (Alma 10:3; *The Improvement Era*, Vol. 8, p. 781; *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 23, p. 184.) Therefore, there were no Levites who accompanied Lehi to the Western Hemisphere. Under these conditions the Nephites officiated by virtue of the Melchizedek Priesthood from the days of Lehi to the days of the appearance of our Savior among them. It is true that Nephi "consecrated Jacob and Joseph, that they should be priests and teachers over the land" of the Nephites (2 Nephi 5:26), but the fact that plural terms "priests" and "teachers" were used indicates that this was not a reference to the definite office in the priesthood in either case, but it was a general assignment to teach, direct, and admonish the people. Otherwise, the terms *priest* and *teacher* would have been given, in the singular. Additional light is thrown on this appointment showing that these two brothers of Nephi held the Melchizedek Priesthood, in the sixth chapter, second verse of 2 Nephi, where Jacob makes this explanation regarding the priesthood which he and Joseph held: "Behold, my beloved brethren, I, Jacob having been called of God, and ordained *after the manner of his holy order*, and having been consecrated by my brother Nephi, unto whom ye look as a king or a protector, and on whom ye depend for safety, behold ye know that I have spoken unto you exceeding many things" (2 Nephi 6:2). . . . (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, Vol. 1, pp. 124-126)

This seems to be a confirmation of the ordinations that Jacob and his brother Joseph received in the Melchizedek Priesthood. [Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, pp. 132-133]

2 Nephi 5:26 Priests:

The Book of Mormon states that Lehi and his family were descendants of Joseph who had been sold into Egypt (2 Nephi 3:4). Yet, the children of Lehi were ordained priests (2 Nephi 5:26). Richardson, Richardson and Bentley write that when the faultfinders discovered these verses, they immediately referred to Bible passages that designate the Levites as those who were to perform

priestly duties. (For example see Deuteronomy 21:5) In fact the Mosaic Law specified that death was the penalty for any "stranger" who would attempt to perform priestly duties (Numbers 3:10). More specifically, only Aaron and his sons, who were descendants of Levi, could hold the office of priest. Their duties included offering sacrifices, burning incense, teaching the law, transporting the Ark of the Covenant, etc.

However, the Bible tells of other men, not of the tribe of Levi, who offered sacrifices in place of a priest. Gideon, who was not a Levite but an Abi-ezrite, lived in the territory of Manasseh. He was not a priest but a warrior--"a mighty man of valour" (Judges 6:11-15). Yet, he was commanded by the Lord to offer a sacrifice upon an altar (Judges 6:26) just as a Levitical priest would do. An angel of God instructed Manoah, who was of the tribe of Dan to sacrifice burnt offerings to the Lord (Judges 13:2, 15:21). David, another non-Levite (of the tribe of Judah) offered sacrifices and blessed the people (2 Samuel 6:18; 1 Chronicles 16:2-3) as if he were a Levitical priest. (See also Mark 2:25-28, where Jesus recognized and accepted David's priestly acts.) The Bible also mentions that king David's sons, were priests (2 Samuel 8:17). In fact, the Bible specifically differentiates between priests and Levites (1 Kings 8:4; Ezra 2:70; John 1:19). Isaiah records the word of the Lord saying that He would make gentiles priests and Levites (Isaiah 66:19-21).

Therefore, those who criticize the Book of Mormon for allowing non-Levites to perform priestly functions are indirectly criticizing their own Bible for doing the same. [Allen H. Richardson, David E. Richardson and Anthony E. Bentley, 1000 Evidences for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Part Two-A Voice from the Dust: 500 Evidences in Support of the Book of Mormon, pp. 129-130]

2 Nephi 5:26 **I, Nephi, Did Consecrate . . . Priests and Teachers:**

According to John Welch, an essential part of the temple ascension of new potentates in the ancient world was to install temple priests and administrators who would rule under the new king. We see that Nephi consecrated Jacob and Joseph to "be priests and teachers" (2 Nephi 5:26). This consecration repeated later in the Book of Mormon when King Mosiah₂ became king and when priests were appointed as the first official act of the new coregency (see Mosiah 6:3).

Of course, these Nephite priests were not priests or Levites by birth. They were ordained "after the manner of [God's] holy order" (2 Nephi 6:2). The persistence of that phrase in the Nephite record (Alma 6:8; 13:1,8,10-11) shows that the Nephites consciously based their priesthood authority on principles lodged in God's holy order, rather than in tribal rights or inheritances.^{lxxxv} Indeed, they looked to Melchizedek as the paragon of priesthood (see Alma 13:14-19), probably in large part because Melchizedek was the most conspicuous priest in the Pentateuch who was not a Levite.^{lxxxvi}

But Melchizedek lived before the time of Moses, and so one might well wonder how Lehi could

rightly purport to live the law of Moses without having Levites to officiate in the sanctuary. If Lehi or Nephi ever struggled with this issue, they gave no indication to that effect; and we can easily imagine several reasons why they did not:

1. Revelation guided Nephi. . . .
2. The Nephites may have viewed the priestly inheritance of the Levites as belonging only to the temple in Jerusalem; . . .
3. By returning to the typology of the exodus from Egypt, Lehi's colony assumed a posture that had previously recognized all of Israel as "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6). . . .
4. Although the history of the priesthood in ancient Israel is complicated and obscure, it is clear that certain priests, such as Zadokites and Gibeonites, officiated in the temple of Solomon in addition to Levites. Aelred Cody notes that "if Ezekiel 44:6-10 condemns the practice of having uncircumcised foreigners serving in the temple, it is because the practice existed."^{lxxxvii}
5. Nephi may simply have viewed the appointment of priests as a rightful prerogative of the king.^{lxxxviii} (King David appointed priests, including his sons--see 2 Samuel 8:15-18; 20:25-26). . . .
6. The term "Levite" may well have been a functional title in addition to a genealogical one. . . . Bright explains: "'Levite' was also a functional designation meaning 'one pledged by vow'; men of any clan thus dedicated to Yahweh could become Levites. In the course of time, many priestly families and individuals not of Levitic lineage were so reckoned because of their function--as was Samuel (1 Chronicles 6:28)."^{lxxxix}

[John W. Welch, "The Temple in the Book of Mormon," in Temples of the Ancient World, pp. 331-333]

2 Nephi 5:26 I, Nephi, Did Consecrate Jacob and Joseph, That They Should Be Priests and Teachers:

Lynn Hilton notes that he is indebted to John A. Tvedtnes for pointing out that the Hebrew original of the word "consecrate," referring to the ordination of priests in Old Testament times, literally means "to fill the hand." Mr. Tvedtnes offers the following list of Old Testament references, with the literal translation followed by the familiar King James version (KJV) rendered in parentheses:

Exodus 28:41 *fill their hand* (KJV: "consecrate them")

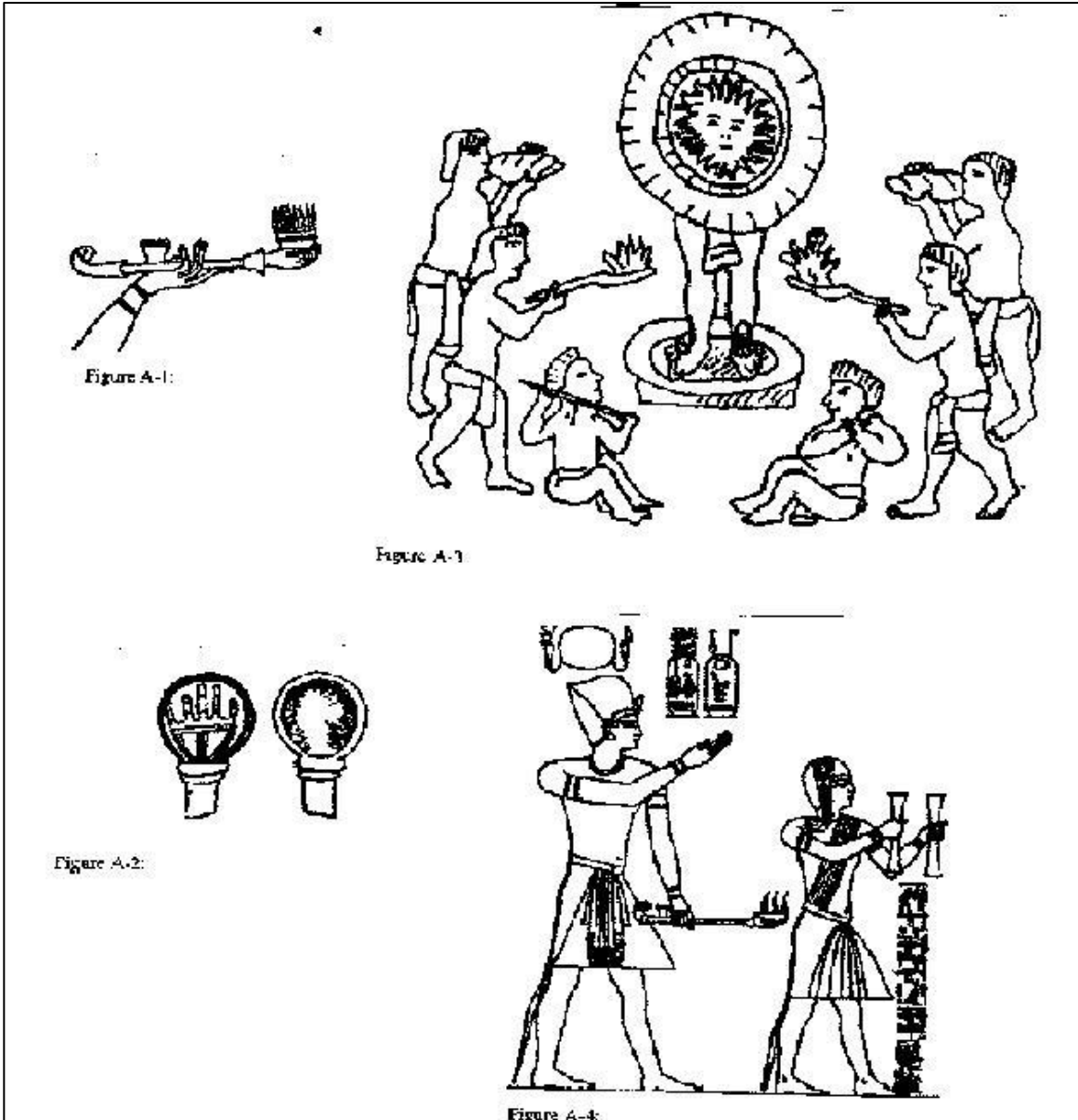
Exodus 28:9 *thou shalt fill the hand of Aaron and the hand of his sons* (KJV: "thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons")
Exodus 29:33 *to fill their hand to sanctify them* (KJV: "to consecrate and to sanctify them:")
Exodus 32:29 *fill your hand* (KJV: "consecrate yourselves")

(See also Leviticus 8:33, 16:32,21:10; Numbers 3:3; Judges 17:5,17:12; 1 Kings 13:33; 2 Chronicles 29:5; 2 Chronicles 29:31; Jeremiah 44:25; Ezekiel 43:26)

In this private communication, Mr. Tvedtnes notes that "there are some hints that the open hand is to be filled with sacrificial items (meat, etc.). See Leviticus 8:26-28 and Exodus 29:24. . . . He further draws this enlightening conclusion:

In the Temple, the priest evidently stood with hand in cupping shape, ready to receive something which was given to him. It was probably incense, though in the last days (see Revelation 2:17; D&C. 130:11), it will evidently be the white stone or urim and thummim, with the new name written in it."

Incense spoons, or hands in cupping shape, are seen not only in the ancient art of Palestine and Syria, but also in Yemen and Mexico. [Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, Discovering Lehi, pp. 177-180]



2 Nephi 5:26 **I, Nephi, did consecrate Jacob and Joseph that they should be priests and teachers**
(Illustration): Figure A-1: Egyptian spoon, dated about 1300 BC. Figure A-2: Spoon found at Megiddo, dating to the Iron II (Israelites) Period. Figure A-3: Ancient Mexican worship of the sun. Two men offer burning incense in spoon-like censers. From Father Bernardino de Sahagun's work, preserved in Florence, Italy. (Zelia Nuttall, "A Penitential Rite of the Ancient Mexicans," *Papers, Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology*, Harvard University, Vol. 1, No. 7, 1940). Figure A-4: Pharaoh Seti I and his son Ramses II offer incense in a spoon to honor the 76 pharaohs who preceded them on the throne of Egypt. Drawing is from a carving found on a wall of the Osiris temple at Abydos, dating to the 19th Dynasty, ca. 1300 B.C., thus preceding the Exodus by only one generation, by some accounts. (After Richard Lepsius, in *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, Vol. 2, Oct.-Nov., 1864, p. 96). [Lynn M. Hilton and Hope A. Hilton, *Discovering Lehi*, pp. 175-178]

2 Nephi 5:27 **We Lived after the Manner of Happiness:**

According to Brant Gardner, Nephi does not say that they were happy. He says that they "lived after the *manner* of happiness" (2 Nephi 5:27). In Nephi's terminology, this would mean following the path of the Gospel as Nephi understood it. Nephi's use of the word is probably a result of Lehi's understanding and use of that concept:

And because of the intercession for all, all men come unto God; wherefore, they stand in the presence of him, to be judged of him according to the truth and holiness which is in him. Wherefore, the ends of the law which the Holy One hath given, unto the inflicting of the punishment which is affixed, which punishment that is affixed is in opposition to that of the happiness which is affixed, to answer the ends of the atonement. (2 Nephi 2:10)

Lehi considers happiness one of the eternal results that is affixed to eternal law. The obedience to Law produces happiness as a result. [Brant Gardner, "Brant Gardner's Page," [http://www.highfiber.com/~nahualli/LDStopics/2 Nephi/2Nephi5.htm](http://www.highfiber.com/~nahualli/LDStopics/2%20Nephi/2Nephi5.htm), p. 30]

Note* Thus "the manner of happiness" relates to covenant obedience, a major theme of the Book of Mormon. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 5:27, 28, 34 **We Lived after the Manner of Happiness (Peace?):**

Just before Nephi notes that "thirty years had passed away from the time we left Jerusalem," he mentions that "we lived after the manner of happiness" (2 Nephi 5:27-28). A few verses later, he notes that "forty years had passed away, and we had already had wars and contentions with our brethren" (2 Nephi 5:34). If Lehi's group arrived in the promised land after approximately 14 years of travel (see Appendix A), and if, according to the same chronology, Nephi fled from the land of first inheritance after seven years, then the Nephites in the land of Nephi might have had a period of peace of around 9 to 19 years before the Lamanites began to bother them. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

2 Nephi 5:30 **Other Plates:**

Sometime after "thirty years had passed away from the time [Lehi] left Jerusalem," (2 Nephi 5:28), Nephi mentions that "he had kept the records upon plates, which I had made, of my people thus far." (2 Nephi 5:29). These plates are commonly referred to as the large plates of Nephi (see 1 Nephi 9:2). Nephi then goes on to mention that, "the Lord God said unto me: Make other plates; and thou shalt engraven many things upon them which are good in my sight, for the profit of thy people" (2 Nephi 5:30). These plates are commonly referred to as the small plates of Nephi (see 1 Nephi 9:2).

According to John Welch, the sequence of events in 2 Nephi 5 suggests that the small plates of Nephi were made in connection with the coronation of Nephi. Accordingly, they served as the "tablets of the law," or the pillar or stele that were traditionally set up as a monument to the creation of the new king's order. Nephi wrote on these plates things that were "good in [God's] sight, for the profit of [his] people" (2 Nephi 5:30). In addition to the religious purposes that these plates primarily served, they also acted as a founding constitutional and political document, as has been discussed by Noel Reynolds in his article "*The Political Dimension in Nephi's Small Plates*." [John M. Lundquist and John W. Welch, "Kingship and Temple in 2 Nephi 5-10," in Reexploring the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., p. 67]

Noel Reynolds says that the writings of Nephi can be read in part as a political tract or a "lineage history," written to document the legitimacy of Nephi's rule. [Noel Reynolds, "The Political Dimension in Nephi's Small Plates, F.A.R.M.S., p. 1]

According to John Sorenson, such histories were common among the Guatemala highland Indians when the first Spanish explorers arrived. They were used for many purposes including conferring "legitimacy and sanctity on the rulers." [John L. Sorenson, An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., p. 51]

Note* It is important to understand that Nephi does not begin the record we have been reading until 30 years after his family left Jerusalem (v. 28). Therefore, Nephi is writing his history more as his memoirs than as his daily journal. This is useful because it allows him to leave out the unnecessary details of the journey through the wilderness and focus, as he does, on the plain and precious truths of the Spirit. [josephsmith.com.2Nephi]

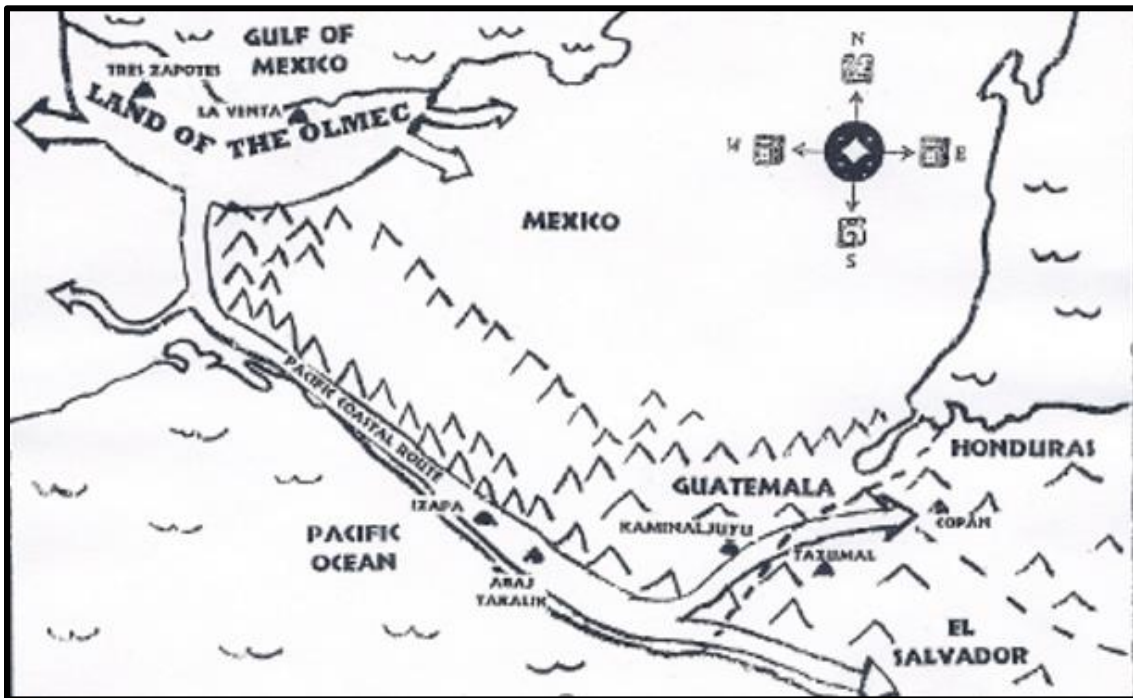
2 Nephi 5:34 **We Had Already Had Wars and Contentions:**

We find evidence within the text of the Book of Mormon itself that Lehi's group interacted early on with an existing culture. Within a few years' time from Lehi's landing in the New World, Nephi reports that his people "began to prosper exceedingly, and to multiply in the land" (2 Nephi 5:13). After about fifteen years had passed, he says that Jacob and Joseph had been made priests and teachers "over the land of my people" (2 Nephi 5:26, 28). After another ten years, they "had already had wars and contentions" with the Lamanites (2 Nephi 5:34). In 2 Nephi 5:14, Nephi describes his making of swords to defend his people, "lest by any means the people who were *now* called *Lamanites* should come upon us and destroy us."

According to Nephi's reports, his group found animals and minerals as they "journeyed in the wilderness" from their first landing site (1 Nephi 18:25). These resources are valuable items which lead to trade and/or conflict. If the land of Nephi was in the pathway of native populations

that might have already established trade and travel networks, then the Nephites might have somehow blocked the Lamanites in their travel and trade with these other native groups, which would have been sufficient reason for the Lamanites to start a war. If we assume a Mesoamerican setting, we find that the land of Nephi (area of Kaminaljuyu) was a main point on the Olmec (Jaredite?) trade route which swept down from Veracruz, Mexico past Izapa (a proposed landing site for Lehi and an area which falls within the description of the Lamanite land of first inheritance-see Alma 22:28), and along the Pacific coast of Guatemala until it climbed up into the mountain valley setting of Kaminaljuyu (see illustration).

[Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes] [See 1 Nephi 18:23; 2 Nephi 4:12]



2 Nephi 5:34 **We Had Already Had Wars and Contentions (Illustration):** This is a crude sketch of a well-illustrated chart at the archaeological museum at the site of La Venta in the state of Tabasco, Mexico. La Venta was an important Olmec center. This chart illustrates how Olmec influence spread from their Gulf Coast heartland to other areas via trade routes and migrations. The Olmecs (Jaredites) were considered the "mother" culture of Mesoamerica and extended along the Pacific coast of Mesoamerica during the time period when Lehi would have landed. [Clate Mask, "And They Called the Place Bountiful," p. 28]

Notes

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- i. This information is quoted in an anti-Mormon book by LaMar Petersen entitled *The Creation of the Book of Mormon: A Historical Inquiry*, (Salt Lake City: Freethinker Press, 2000) p. 214.
- ii. M. Seidel, "Parallels between Isaiah and Psalms,," *Sinai* 38 (1955-56): 149-72, 272-80, 335-55 (in Hebrew).
- iii. See especially P. Beentjes, "Inverted Quotations in the Bible: A Neglected Stylistic Pattern," *Biblica* 63 (1982): 506-23.
- iv. In the New Testament see Mark 12:1, which reverses the Greek translation of Isaiah 5:2, and 2 Corinthians 6:17, which quotes the Septuagint version of Isaiah 52:11.
- v. The words in both passages are identical in Hebrew but are translated differently in the KJV, whose translators opted for example, for the term *land* in Leviticus 26:4 but *earth* in Ezekiel 34:27.
- vi. See Borsch, *Son of Man*, p. 405, cited in Seach, *Ancient Texts and Mormonism*, [1983], p. 41.
- vii. See *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah*, 20:12.
- viii. E.g., *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah* 18:56; 20:12. According to this view, God and the angels are also clothed in light. In a Kabbalistic text on the creation of the world, we read that the heavens were made from the light of God's garment (*Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer* 3). For being clothed in light, see D&C 85:7. According to the *Book of the Rolls* f.93a, Adam's body, at the creation, was brighter than the sun.
- ix. See *Avot de Rabbi Nathan* 42:116-17; according to *3 Baruch* 4:16 (Greek), Adam and Eve lost the glory of God; cf. *3 Baruch* 13:4 (Slavonic).
- x. *Yalkut Reubeni* I, 34, cited in *LJ*, 5:104, n. 93.
- xi. See *Zohar* I, 36b.
- xii. *Book of the Rolls* f.93a, in Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica*, 6.
- xiii. *Book of the Rolls* f.93a, in Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica*, 7.
- xiv. *Book of the Rolls* f.93a, in Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica*, 9.
- xv. When Satan rebelled, "God . . . deprived the Devil of the robe of praise and dignity" (*Book of the Rolls* f.93a, in Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica*, 7). In view of the Book of Mormon teaching that Satan wants mankind to become like him (2 Nephi 2:18, 27), this may explain why he was so anxious that Adam and Eve be stripped of their heavenly clothing.
- xvi. *Apocalypse of Moses* 20:1-2, in James H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:452. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983, 2 vols.)
- xvii. *History of the Rechabites* 5:2 in James H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:452. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983, 2 vols.)

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- xviii. *History of the Rechabites* 5:3 in James H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:452. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983, 2 vols.)
- xix. *History of the Rechabites* 12:2-3a, in James H. Charlesworth, ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:456-57. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983, 2 vols.)
- xx. See *Combat of Adam II:VIII*, in Malan 1882:114-16; *Cave of Treasures*, in Budge 1927:72-73.
- xxi. See *Combat of Adam II:fXII-XXII; III:l-V*, in Malan 1882:119-50.
- xxii. See *Jubilees 20-22*, in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* 2:93-99.
- xxiii. See *Testament of Jacob 4-5*, in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* 1:915-16.
- xxiv. See *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* 1:775-828.
- xxv. Kenneth A. Kitchen, "The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 21 (March/ April 1995): 48-55.
- xxvi. Joseph Quincy, *Figures of the Past*, 5th edition, (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883), p. 376.
- xxvii. Harold Bloom, *The American Religion*, [New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992] pp. 79, 82-83, 95, 100.
- xxviii. "'Messiah' (*mashi'ah*) means 'anointed' and in the Bible can refer either to a king or a priest" (Cecil Roth, ed., *Encyclopaedia Judaica* [New York: Macmillan, 1972], 11:1411).
- xxix. Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948), 5:299, n. 201; Raphael Patai, *The Messiah Texts* (New York: Avon Books, 1979), 165.
- xxx. Charles C. Torrey, "The Messiah Son of Ephraim," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 66, 1947, 253.
- xxxi. See Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 2:7.
- xxxii. Torrey, "The Messiah Son of Ephraim," 259. *The Messiah ben Joseph* will "arise at the end of days" (Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 5:299, n. 201). *The Messiah ben Joseph* will live "in the latter days" (Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel* [London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1956], 496). In the Hebrew Book of Enoch (*3 Enoch* 45:5), rabbi Ishmael, who looked upon the veil that was placed before the Holy of Holies of God's heavenly temple, saw "the events of the last times. The end of the course of the present world [was] marked by the appearance of Messiah ben Joseph and Messiah ben David" (Hugo Odeberg, ed., *3 Epoch or The Hebrew Book of Epoch* [New York: Ktav Publishing, 1973], 144).
- xxxiii. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 5:299, n. 201; Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, 483; Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, 165; Solomon Zeitlin, "The Essenes and Messianic Expectations," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 45, no. 2, October 1954, 107; Torrey, "The

Messiah Son of Ephraim," 253; Aharon (Ronald E.) Agus, *The Binding of Isaac and Messiah* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1988), 208.

xxxiv. *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, vol. 11, July 1920, 107. President Young makes the same claim that Joseph Smith descended from Joseph of Egypt in *JD*, 7:290. The Prophet's descent through Joseph of Egypt is explicitly stated in his patriarchal blessing. The text of this blessing can be found in Archibald F. Bennett, *Saviors on Mount Zion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1950), 68.

xxxv. *JD*, 2:269.

xxxvi. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, 497. "Messiah ben Joseph must precede Messiah ben David" (Agus, *The Binding of Isaac and Messiah*, 220). See also Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *The Jewish Messiah* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 47.

xxxvii. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, 486; Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 290; Cohn-Sherbok, *The Jewish Messiah*, xvii.

xxxviii. Abraham H. Cannon Journal, 1 January 1892, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah; see also D&C 133:63-64.

xxxix. *TPJS*, 335-36.

xl. Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1874), 78; see also D&C 77:9, 14.

xli. Cohn-Sherbok, *The Jewish Messiah*, 139.

xlii. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 2:7.

xliii. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, 498.

xliv. Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, 170; Julius H. Greenstone, *The Messiah Idea in Jewish History* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1906), 124; *The Messiah ben Joseph* "restores . . . the worship of the temple" (Torrey, "The Messiah, Son of Ephraim," 269). *The Messiah ben Joseph* will "reintroduce the worship of the temple" (Isidore Singer, ed., *The Jewish Encyclopedia* [New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901], 1:683).

xlv. *The Messiah ben Joseph* "will gather Israelites around him, among whom . . . a part of the ten tribes will be found" (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1:683). "A part of the ten tribes will be found among those who will gather about his standard" (*ibid.*, 8:512). *The Messiah ben Joseph* will "gather the remnants of the ten tribes" (Greenstone, *The Messiah idea in Jewish History*, 211).

xlvi. *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, vol. 23, October 1932, 175.

xlvii. Torrey, "The Messiah Son of Ephraim," 267, 269. *The Messiah ben Joseph* is envisioned as "the first commander of the army of Israel" (Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, 165).

xlviii. See *HC*, 4:309-10.

xlix. *The Messiah ben Joseph* will "establish his own dominion" (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1:683); he will "set up his own dominion" (*ibid.*, 8:511).

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- i. William Clayton Journal, 1 January 1845, cited in *BYUS*, vol. 20, no. 3, Spring 1980, 268; cf. Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; John 12:12-15.
- ii. Diary of George A. Smith, 9 May 1844, cited in *BYUS*, vol. 8, no. 2, Winter 1968, 213.
- iii. Annie Taylor Hyde Notebook, 64, cited in *BYUS*, vol. 20, no. 2, Winter 1980, 186.
- iiii. *HC*, 6:568-69. Compare this statement with Joseph Smith's own words: "I calculate to be one of the instruments of setting up the kingdom of Daniel by the word of the Lord" (*TPJS*, 366).
- lv. There is some evidence that Joseph Smith had a legitimate right to rule as a king over Israel. According to Elder Heber C. Kimball, the Prophet was "near kindred to . . . Jesus Christ" because he shared the same "lineage" (*JD*, 4:248). This would mean that Joseph Smith descended partly through the royal line of Jesse in the tribe of Judah. Several LDS authors have stated their belief that Joseph Smith is the "descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph," that is mentioned in D&C 113:5-6 (see George A. Horton, Jr., "Prophecies in the Bible about Joseph Smith," *Ensign*, January 1989, 22; Hoyt W. Brewster, Jr., *Doctrine and Covenants Encyclopedia* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 477, 479-80; Kent P. Jackson, "Revelations Concerning Isaiah," in Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, eds., *Studies in Scripture: Volume One, The Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Randall Book, 1984], 330-33; Victor L. Ludlow, *Isaiah: Prophet, Seer, and Poet* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982], 170-74).
- lvi. The *Messiah ben Joseph* "stands heroically in 'battle' where it is *clear beforehand* that death *must* be the result. In other words, his death is a martyrdom" (Agus, *The Binding of Isaac and Messiah*, 209, emphasis in original).
- lvii. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Origins of the "Reorganized" Church*, 4th ed. (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1945), p. 60. For additional commentary on names and their ancient significance see Joseph Fielding McConkie, *His Name Shall Be Joseph* (Salt Lake City: Hawkes Publications, 1980), pp. 154-58
- lviii. *New Witnesses for God*, 3 Vol. [1909], 3:106.
- lix. *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* [1978], 448.
- lx. See Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, [New York: the Macmillan Co., 1955], chapter 9 is devoted exclusively to this subject.
- lxi. See Klausner, *Die Messianische Vorstellungen Vokes im Zeitalter der Tannaiten*, Berlin: Verlag M. Poppelhauer, 1904], pp. 61, 115-119, cited in Vestal and Wallace, *The Firm Foundation of Mormonism*, [1981], p. 208.
- lxii. See Herman Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, translated by Thomas M. Horner (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), pp. 10, 30-39; cited in Matthew Nickerson, "Nephi's Psalm: 2 Nephi 4:16-35 in the light of Form-Critical Analysis," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, (Provo, Utah: FARMS 1997), vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 26-42.
- lxiii. Weaver, Muriel Porter. *The Aztecs, Maya, and their Predecessors*. Seminar Press, 1972, p. 44.
- lxiiii. John L. Sorenson, "Metals and Metallurgy," 81-83, provides such information (thanks to Robert F. Smith).

lxiv. See John L. Sorenson, "The Composition of Lehi's Family," in John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1990), 2:194-95.

lxv. Ernest Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Elsevier Publishing, 1967), 2:1584-85.

lxvi. *JD*, 17:143. According to John Taylor, the earth "was first organized, near the planet Kolob" (*The Mormon*, vol. 3, no. 28, 29 August 1857, 2). Brigham Young also taught that the earth will eventually "go back into the presence of God, where it was first framed" (*JD*, 9:317; see also *ibid.*, 7:163; 8:8).

lxvii. Hugh W. Nibley, "Temples: Meaning and Functions of Temples," in *EM*, 4:1459.

lxviii. Stephen D. Ricks, "Temples through the Ages," in *EM*, 4:1463.

lxix. In ancient Israel, and in the ancient Near East generally, "religion and state could not be separated" (G.W. Ahstrom, *Royal Administration and National Religion in Ancient Palestine* [Leiden: Brill, 1982], 18).

lxx. For examples of this kind of attack, see Ankerberg and Weldon, *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Mormonism*, 322, and Scott, *The Mormon Mirage*, 83.

lxxi. Avraham Negev, ed., *Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1972), 311. See also Amihay Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 492-502. Negev says that Solomon's temple followed a general "Canaanite plan," common to both Hebrew and pagan shrines of the Bronze Age.

lxxii. Negev, *Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land*, 312. In correspondence, one critic of the Book of Mormon demanded to know why, if Nephites really once existed, we have not found any ruins of Nephi's temple. I would suggest that it is for the same reason that we have found "no actual remains of Solomon's temple.

lxxiii. *Ibid.*, 28 (emphasis added)

lxxiv. See John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1985), 143.

lxxv. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2 vols. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965), 2:317; for a general description of the temple of Solomon, see pages 312-30. For a discussion of the architectural uniqueness of the temple of Solomon as compared with other temples in Palestine, Syria, and Egypt, see Ahlstrom, *Royal Administration*, 34-36. He concludes that no exact parallel for the temple of Solomon has been found. Thus, the idea of building a temple "after the manner of the temple of Solomon" probably had specific reference to its distinctive layout and design, not its splendor or some other feature. After all, the Nephite temple was built by a small group that included only a few men at that time.

lxxvi. Gary M. Feinman, "Mesoamerican Temples," in *Temple in Society*, ed. Michael V. Fox (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1988), 69; see also Laurette Sejourné, "El Templo Prehispanico," *Cuadernos Americanos*, 149, no. 6 (November-December 1966): 129-67

lxxvii. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 143 (fn. omitted). Sorenson has noted similarities between their temple typologies in "The Significance of an Apparent Relationship between the Ancient Near East and Mesoamerica," in *Man across the Sea*, ed. Carroll Riley, Charles

Kelley, Campbell Pennington, and Robert Rands (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 227, and between blood sacrifice in the Semitic world and in Mesoamerica (unpublished paper [1951]. He noted also that Padre Torquemada compared the Aztec temple plan to the Temple of Solomon (see Sejourne, "El Templo Prehispanico," 143). See also Gregory M. Taylor, "Temple Ritual and Tradition in Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon," unpublished paper, F.A.R.M.S. Archive, 1986. But adequate treatment of Mesoamerican temples, their similarities to, and differences from Israelite and other ancient temples must await further exploration and research.

lxxviii. Four-cornered altar: Ferguson 1958, 87.

lxxix. Psalms 106:37-38.

lxxx. Boys in the temple: Sahagun (in Burland 1968). 152,153.

lxxxi. Native Ark: Duran 1977, 23-4.

lxxxii. Ark among Cherokees: Adair (in Williams 1930), 229.

lxxxiii. See B.H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1909), 3:522-23; Welch, "Finding Answers to B.H. Roberts' Questions and 'An Unparallel'" (Provo: F.A.R.M.S., 1985), 13-14.

lxxxiv. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, "King and Kingship," IV:40-48.

lxxxv. For further details, see Robert L. Millet, "The Holy Order of God," in *Book of Mormon: Alma, the Testimony of the Word*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. (Provo: Religious Studies Center, 1992), 61-88.

lxxxvi. See John W. Welch, "The Melchizedek Material in Alma 13:13-19," in *BSAF*, 2:259.

lxxxvii. Aelred Cody, *A History of Old Testament Priesthood* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 12; see also *TTS*, 72, 80; de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2:372-86.

lxxxviii. See de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2:376.

lxxxix. John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 163.