

LESSON 7
“I Know In Whom I Have Trusted”
2 Nephi 3-5

OVERVIEW:

Lehi teaches that his descendants will be blessed through the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. Nephi laments his sinfulness but glories in the goodness of God. The anger of Laman and Lemuel increases against Nephi and the Lord commands the followers of Nephi to separate from the followers of Laman.

SCRIPTURES:

CHAPTER 3

Joseph in Egypt saw the Nephites in vision—He prophesied of Joseph Smith, the latter-day seer; of Moses, who would deliver Israel; and of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. [Between 588 and 570 B.C.] (Joseph Smith, Sr., gave his son Joseph the following Patriarchal blessing: I bless thee with the blessings of thy fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and even the blessings of thy father Joseph, the son of Jacob. Behold he looked after his posterity in the last days, when they should be scattered and driven by the Gentiles, and wept before the Lord; he sought diligently to know from whence the son should come who should bring forth the word of the Lord, by which they might be enlightened and brought back to the true fold, and his eyes beheld thee, my son; his heart rejoiced and his soul was satisfied and he said; As my blessings are to extend to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills; as my father’s blessing prevailed over the blessings of his progenitors; and as my branches are to run over the wall, and my seed are to inherit the choice land whereon the Zion of God shall stand in the last days; from among my seed, scattered from the Gentiles, shall a choice Seer arise...whose heart shall meditate great wisdom, and whose intelligence shall circumscribe and comprehend the deep things of God, and whose mouth shall utter the law of the just...and he shall feed upon the heritage of Jacob his father. Thou [Joseph Smith, Jr.] shall hold the keys of this ministry, even the Presidency of this Church, both in time and in eternity, and thou shalt stand on Mount Zion when the tribes of Jacob come shouting from the north, and with thy brethren, the Sons of Ephraim, crown them in the name of Jesus Christ. Archibald F. Bennett, Saviors on Mount Zion, p. 68)

1 AND now I speak unto you, Joseph, my ^alast-born. Thou wast born in the wilderness of mine afflictions; yea, in the days of my greatest sorrow did thy mother bear thee.

2 And may the Lord consecrate also unto thee this ^aland, which is a most precious land, for thine inheritance and the inheritance of thy seed with thy brethren, for thy security forever, if it so be that ye shall keep the commandments of the Holy One of Israel.

3 And now, Joseph, my last-born, whom I have brought out of the wilderness of mine afflictions, may the Lord bless thee forever, for thy ^aseed shall not utterly be ^bdestroyed. (If the Nephites were destroyed in 385 AD, how could the descendents of Joseph, presumably numbered with the Nephites, have survived this great battle? 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. D & C 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. 16 Nevertheless, my ^awork shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the ^btestimony of the Jews, even so shall the ^cknowledge of a ^dSavior come unto my people— 17 And to the ^aNephites, and the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, through the testimony of their fathers—)

4 For behold, thou art the fruit of my loins; and I am a descendant of ^aJoseph (It is not until Alma 10:3 that we learn that Lehi was a descendant of Manasseh, Joseph's son. 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.) who was carried ^bcaptive into Egypt. And great were the ^ccovenants of the Lord which he made unto Joseph. (Lehi is drawing from the plates of brass.)

5 Wherefore, Joseph truly ^asaw our day (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).) And he obtained a ^bpromise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of his loins the Lord God would raise up a ^crighteous ^dbranch (Lehi's family) unto the house of Israel; not the Messiah, but a branch which was to be broken off, (South America, Central America, South Pacific – these are descendants of Lehi and Ephraim and Manasseh.) nevertheless, to be remembered in the covenants of the Lord that the Messiah should be made ^emanifest unto them in the latter days, in the spirit of power, unto the bringing of them out of ^fdarkness unto light—yea, out of hidden darkness and out of captivity unto freedom.

6 For Joseph truly testified, saying: A ^aseer (Joseph Smith the head of this last dispensation who still presides.) shall the Lord my God raise up, (Brigham Young said: "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 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p.94)) who shall be a ^bchoice seer (The Prophet Joseph Smith brought us the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and many other writings. As far as our records show, he has given us more revealed truth than any prophet who has ever lived upon the face of the earth. LeGrand Richards, CR, Apr. 1981, p. 43) unto the fruit of my ^cloins. (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. Because they have forsaken the true way, the older brothers (that is, the Christian churches) have lost the spiritual birthright. The great evidence of this is that the Lord no longer speaks to them. 2. The birthright is then given to the youthful Joseph (Joseph Smith and the tribe of Joseph). Evidencing this, the Lord speaks freely to both. The world has never known a more prolific prophet, one who has recorded more revelation, than the prophet Joseph Smith. The tribe of Joseph, as identified by revelation and found within the restored church, are a people familiar with the spirit of revelation. 3. Joseph (both Prophet and tribe) have been clothed in the same coat or robes of authority

that Jacob gave his "most loved" son. Thus they go forth seeking others of the family of Israel to clothe in "robes of righteousness" (D&C 109:76) and to endow with "power from on high" (D&C 38:32). 4. The name *Joseph* is itself a prophecy of events of the last days. The etymology of the name is usually given as "the Lord addeth" or "increaser." Though appropriate, such renderings have veiled a richer meaning. 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). No more appropriate name could be given to the prophet of the restoration or to the tribe destined to do the work of the gathering than the name of their ancient father who gathered his family in Egypt. 5. Like their ancient father, Joseph Smith and the tribe of Joseph have had their 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 of the latter days wherein the Lord has 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). Joseph'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. 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. The promise of the continuation of the family and eternal dominions are granted alike to the faithful of all ages. 6. Joseph Smith in his youthful innocence also shared his visionary promises with his "Christian" brothers, only to be severely rebuked. He recounts: "Some few days after I had this vision, I happened to be in company with one of the Methodist preachers, who was very active in the before mentioned religious excitement; and, conversing with him on the subject of religion, I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there would never be any more of them." (JS-H 1:21.) The Joseph Smith story itself appears to be a type or pattern, the individual experiences of Joseph Smith being but representative of the composite experience of the body of the Church. The rejection in this instance of Joseph's vision typifies the greater rejection by the churches of the world of the testimony of Joseph Smith and the principle of revelation. 7. The thought that Joseph had some promised destiny that was not theirs caused Joseph's brothers anciently to "hate him yet the more." 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, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me" (JS-H 1:22). The popular Jewish author Elie Wiesel in writing of the life of Joseph of Egypt observed: "He aroused hate or love, fear or admiration. Never indifference. Some sought him out, while others avoided him, but nobody failed to notice him. Nobody failed to take a stand for or against him." (Wiesel, Elie. *Messengers of God, Biblical Portraits and Legends*. New York: Random House, 1976., p. 129.) How striking it is that the testimony of both Josephs evoked such reaction! Surely such announcements from obscure boys should have been passed off as youthful prattle, resulting in amusement or perhaps sympathy, but not a murderous hatred. It is truth that kindles the wrath of hell today as it did anciently. Had the Spirit of the Lord found place in the hearts of Joseph's brothers either anciently or in modern times it would have caused rejoicing at the prospect of a divinely appointed leader. Had the brothers

disbelieved the prophecies, they certainly had no cause for concern. Their very bitterness in both instances evidenced the truth of the testimony borne. Joseph's brothers were often quarrelsome, envious, and resentful. One matter alone seems to have united them: that of persecuting their younger brother. Such is the type, and so we find Joseph Smith declaring of his "Christian" brothers, "all united to persecute me," this being but the pattern of a quarrelsome world of churches that can agree upon nothing but to oppose Mormonism. 8. 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). 9. As Joseph's brothers anciently found it impossible to speak "peaceably unto him," so we of the last days can anticipate an endless parade of anti- Mormon literature. 10. Such emotions as noted above constituted the setting in which Joseph of old was sent as a special messenger of his father to his brothers, and such is the setting in which Joseph Smith and his followers are sent as messengers to all the world in the name of the Father. 11. Joseph Smith, like his ancient prototype, obediently responded to the call, knowing full well of his brothers' bitterness toward him. 12. Joseph's brothers, seeing him coming, plotted to betray him. So we find Joseph Smith martyred by those in whom he should have been able to trust, a mob that had in its number leaders of the Christian churches and some who had once been his brothers in the faith of the restored gospel. 13. As Potiphar's wife accused Joseph of her own sins that she might have him cast into prison, so Joseph Smith was accused of the crimes of his enemies who had him cast into prison. 14. "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 he stands at the head of this dispensation of the gospel on earth, so he stands at its head in the spirit prison. 15. As Joseph was sold into Egypt, so Joseph (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. 16. 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. Anciently Joseph was granted the title or name Zaphnath- paaneah, "revealer of that which is hidden," as today Joseph Smith is testified of in all the world as a prophet, seer, and revelator. And as Joseph of Egypt prophesied good to one and evil to another, so Joseph Smith has promised blessings to the obedient and sorrow to those rejecting the message of the restored gospel. 17. 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. 18. 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 and granted the power to again restore Israel. 19. Joseph's brothers, the ten tribes, will yet come to him (the Church) seeking the bread of everlasting life (D&C 133:26-32). As Joseph of old was a temporal savior to Israel, Joseph (the Church or the tribes of Joseph) will now be recognized as the source of salvation by gathering Israel, who will bow the knee and acknowledge their younger brother. 20. As Joseph opened his arms and granted his wealth to his family anciently, so will Joseph of the last days receive his brothers as once again the family of Israel will be united. 21. As the whole nation of Egypt was blessed anciently because of Joseph, so the United States and all nations of the earth will be blessed because of the labors of the latter-day Joseph. 22. As Joseph saved his family anciently, so Joseph of the last days will be a savior to Israel (D&C 86:11). 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 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.) (This chapter was excerpted from Joseph Fielding

McConkie, *Gospel Symbolism* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1999], 37-39.)

7 Yea, Joseph truly said: Thus saith the Lord unto me: A choice ^aseer will I ^braise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins. And unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren, which shall be of great worth unto them, even to the bringing of them to the ^cknowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers. (According to the Talmud, the Messiah will be a descendant of the House of David and will be preceded by a secondary Messiah, from the House of Joseph. *Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.* When the Chief Rabbi, Avraham HaKohen Kook was appointed in Palestine in the 1920's, he was asked if the Jews could now build the Temple (destroyed since year 70AD). His response was that the priestly rights were gone and referred to the great 12th century rabbi Moses Maimonides. Maimonides said in effect, "We are waiting for a Messiah Ben-Joseph, to him will be given the keys of the gathering of Israel, he will restore Temple worship." There is an abundant amount of imagery still existing in Judaism that can be interpreted as referring to a personal shield or protector. Jews wear garments that have four markings, the knotted strings, on each corner of the *Tallith*. One of the fascinating things in Judaism is the repetitive keeping of customs even long after their meanings have faded. For example, when visiting the Western (Wailing) Wall, you will see reminders of ancient temple worship. Men are on one side, women on the other. Head covering is used and robes (Talith) are placed on one shoulder and then another while certain words are recited. There is a sash (or "girdle") tied with a bow on one side. Levites wear aprons. Some Jews still remove their shoes when approaching the Wall. Small pieces of paper are placed between the cracks of the old temple wall stones with names written on them, names of people who require special prayers and blessings. There is a minimum of ten who form a prayer circle (Minyan) so that prayers, readings of the scriptures and instructions can be done. Someone is always at hand to assist the person reading or reciting to use correct intonations and to follow proper clothing and recitation procedures. Daniel Rona, *Book of Mormon Supplemental Study Material*, 23)

8 And I will give unto him a commandment that he shall do ^anone other work, save the work which I shall command him. And I will make him great in mine eyes; for he shall do my work. (Establishing the kingdom of God on earth, the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, etc.)

9 And he shall be great like unto ^aMoses, whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to ^bdeliver my ^cpeople, O house of Israel. (Joseph delivers men from spiritual darkness by giving new scriptures and restoring the fullness of the gospel.)

10 And ^aMoses will I raise up, to deliver thy people out of the land of Egypt.

11 But a ^aseer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give ^bpower to ^cbring 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. (The Book of Mormon has been given as tangible proof that the Bible is true, and that Joseph Smith is a prophet. When we use the Book of Mormon in preference to the Bible in teaching the gospel to those not of our faith, it has the effect of removing us from the arena of argument over the meaning of Bible texts. To center attention on the Book of Mormon is to pursue a path which leads to the Sacred Grove – that place where the heavens are opened and sure answers given to the honest truth seeker. It is only when the Bible and Book of Mormon are used as one that we gain the power to confound false doctrines, bring an end to contentions, and establish the pure peace of the gospel. DCBM, 1:207)

12 Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins shall (notice that this is not a conditional prophecy, this will happen) ^awrite; (The Book of Mormon) and the fruit of the loins of ^bJudah shall ^cwrite; (The Bible) and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, unto the ^dconfounding of ^efalse doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing ^fpeace among the fruit of thy loins, and ^gbringing them to the ^hknowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord. (The stick or record of Judah – The Old Testament and the New Testament – and the stick or record of Ephraim – the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ – are now woven together in such a

way that as you pore over one you are drawn to the other; as you learn from one you are enlightened by the other. They are indeed one in our hands. Ezekiel's prophecy now stands fulfilled. Boyd K. Packer, CR, Oct 1982, p. 75)

13 And out of weakness he shall be made strong, in that day when my work shall commence among all my people, unto the restoring thee, O house of Israel, saith the Lord. (Emma Smith said: "Joseph Smith (as a young man)...could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter, let alone dictate a book like the Book of Mormon, and though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, was present during the translation of the plates, and had cognizance of things as they transpired, it is marvelous to me—a marvel and a wonder—as much as to anyone else....My belief is that the Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity—I have not the slightest doubt of it...when acting as his scribe, your father (she was being interrogated by her son) would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or interruptions, he would at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him. This was an unusual thing for him to do. It would have been improbable that a learned man could do this and for one so ignorant and unlearned as he was, it was simply impossible." (*The Witnesses of the Book of Mormon*, Preston Nibley, pp. 28-9 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 96))

14 And thus prophesied Joseph, saying: Behold, that seer will the Lord bless; and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded; (Moroni told Joseph: They will circulate falsehoods to destroy your reputation; and also will seek to take your life. But remember this, if you are faithful, and shall hereafter continue to keep the commandments of the Lord, you shall be preserved to bring these things forth. Messenger and Advocate, 2:199) for this promise, which I have obtained of the Lord, of the fruit of my loins, shall be fulfilled. Behold, I am sure of the fulfilling of this promise; (Here is where Joseph is saying that prophecy will come to pass.)

15 And his ^aname (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." Thus the great prophet of the Restoration was given the name that most appropriately describes his divine calling. DCBM, 1:209) shall be called after me (Joseph that was sold into Egypt); and it shall be after the ^bname of his father. (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! DCBM, 1:210.) And he shall be ^clike unto me; (a savior to the house of Israel) for the thing, which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring ^dmy people (Ephraim and Manasseh) unto ^esalvation. (D&C 135:3 - Joseph Smith, the ^aProphet and ^bSeer of the Lord, has done more, ^csave Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it. In the short space of twenty years, he has brought forth the Book of Mormon, which he translated by the gift and power of God, and has been the means of publishing it on two continents; has sent the ^dfulness of the everlasting gospel, which it contained, to the four quarters of the earth; has brought forth the revelations and commandments which compose this book of Doctrine and Covenants, and many other wise documents and instructions for the benefit of the children of men; gathered many thousands of the Latter-day Saints, founded a great city, and left a fame and name that cannot be slain. He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own ^eblood; and so has his brother Hyrum. In life they were not divided, and in death they were not ^fseparated!)

16 Yea, thus prophesied Joseph: I am sure of this thing, even as I am sure of the promise of Moses; for the Lord hath said unto me, I will ^apreserve thy seed forever.

17 And the Lord hath said: I will raise up ^aa Moses; and I will give power unto him in a rod; and I will give judgment unto him in writing. Yet I will not loose his tongue, that he shall speak much, for I will not make him mighty in speaking. But I will ^awrite unto him my law, by the finger of mine own hand; and I will make a ^bspokesman for him.

18 And the Lord said unto me also: I will raise up unto the fruit of thy loins; and I will make for him a spokesman (Oliver Cowdery). 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. (Oliver is one of the Three Witnesses. When Oliver fell, Sidney Rigdon became the spokesman. God afterwards revealed that this man, [Sidney Rigdon] was to be a spokesman, and he became the spokesman to this people and to the world for the prophet Joseph. Those who knew Sidney Rigdon, know how wonderfully God inspired him, and with what wonderful eloquence he declared the word of God to the people. He was a mighty man in the hands of God, as a spokesman, as long as the prophet lived, or up to a short time before his death. Thus you see that even this... was predicted about 1,700 years before the birth of the Savior, and was quoted by Lehi 600 years before the same event, and about 2,400 years before its fulfillment, and was translated by the power of God through his servant Joseph, as was predicted. George Q. Cannon, Journal of Discourses, 25:126)

19 And the words which he shall write shall be the words which are expedient in my wisdom should go forth unto the ^afruit of thy loins. And it shall be as if the fruit of thy loins had cried unto them ^bfrom the dust; for I know their faith. (The Book of Mormon)

20 And they shall ^acry from the ^bdust; yea, even repentance unto their brethren, even after many generations have gone by them. And it shall come to pass that their cry shall go, even according to the simpleness of their words. (From 421 AD to 1827 = 1406 years passed from the time Moroni buried the plates until Joseph received them)

21 Because of their faith their ^awords shall proceed forth out of my mouth unto their brethren who are the fruit of thy loins; and the weakness of their words will I make strong in their faith, unto the remembering of my covenant which I made unto thy fathers.

22 And now, behold, my son Joseph, after this manner did my father of old ^aprophesy.

23 Wherefore, because of this covenant thou art ^ablessed; for thy seed shall not be destroyed, The seed of Lehi is among us today) for they shall ^bhearken unto the words of the book.

24 And there shall rise up ^aone 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 ^brestoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren. (Joseph Smith – who may be one of the seven Archangels spoken of in the Book of Revelation. A dispensation head.)

25 And now, blessed art thou, Joseph. Behold, thou art little; wherefore hearken unto the words of thy brother, Nephi, and it shall be done unto thee even according to the words which I have spoken.

Remember the words of thy dying father. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Lehi counsels and blesses his posterity—He dies and is buried—Nephi glories in the goodness of God to him—Nephi puts his trust in the Lord forever. [Between 588 and 570 B.C.]

1 AND now, I, Nephi, speak concerning the prophecies of which my father hath spoken, concerning ^aJoseph, who was carried into Egypt.

2 For behold, he (Joseph of old) truly prophesied concerning all his seed. And the ^aprophecies which he wrote, there are not many greater. (The stature of Joseph of Egypt as a prophet remains little known even to the 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. In this prophecy, quoted in part by Lehi to his son Joseph in the preceding chapter, we learn that he knew of the destiny of Lehi and his family and 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 Oct 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 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. 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. DCBM, 1:213.) And he prophesied concerning us, and our future generations; and they are written upon the ^bplates of brass. (Nephi mentions the prophecies of Joseph that were written on the brass plates of Laban, and, he concludes, there are not many greater. But where are these great prophecies of Joseph? Why do they not appear in the Old Testament? We do not know the answers to these questions, but the following observations might give some clues as to possible answers. In the first place, Joseph’s prophecies would logically be written most completely on the stick or record of Joseph; thus, they were probably included in detail on the brass plates of Laban. However, Joseph’s prophecies are not found presently in the stick or record of Judah – the Bible. Again, this would indicate that the records on the brass plates of Laban were more comprehensive and complete than the records from which we get our Old Testament. In the second place, evidently some of the writings of Joseph are still in existence but have not been published to the world. 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 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. (Ibid, 2:350-51) 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 his day. (Daniel H. Ludlow, A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon, p. 130-31) It should be remembered that some of Joseph’s prophecies were restored to the Bible when Joseph Smith translated or revised it. That we have today as JST Genesis 50:24-26)

3 Wherefore, after my father had made an end of speaking concerning the prophecies of Joseph, he called the children of Laman, his sons, and his daughters, and said unto them: Behold, my sons, and my daughters, who are the sons and the daughters of my ^afirst-born, I would that ye should give ear unto my words.

4 For the Lord God hath said that: ^aInasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in

the land; and inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from my presence. (This is the promise and curse upon all who live in the Americas)

5 But behold, my sons and my daughters, I cannot go down to my grave save I should leave a^a blessing upon you; for behold, I know that if ye are^b brought up in the^c way ye should go ye will not depart from it.

6 Wherefore, if ye are^a cursed, behold, I leave my blessing upon you, that the^b cursing may be taken from you and be answered upon the^c heads of your parents. (Joseph Fielding Smith said: “The scripture in question is as follows: ‘... visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.’ “The second Article of Faith reads: ‘We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression.’ “... What your question means, as I interpret it, is this: You have an idea that the commandment means that when a man sins his children will be held responsible for his folly and be punished for it, for three or four generations. The commandment does not mean anything of this kind. 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. Recent research on the development of a child’s brain has revealed new insights into how and when a child learns. I quote from a recent study: “From birth, a baby’s brain cells proliferate wildly, making connections that may shape a lifetime of experience. The first three years are critical.” J. Madeleine Nash, *Time*, Feb. 3, 1997, 49. ... The years from birth to age 10 are the peak years for acquiring the language that will become the foundation for understanding future knowledge and truth... It is an ideal time for parents to read to their children from the scriptures. They will begin to learn the language of the scriptures... One Primary leader shared... that she and her husband read the scriptures to their children – ages 2, 3, and 4 – every night before they go to bed... I must admit I questioned that children so young could understand the language of the scriptures... She said after the first week the language was not an issue. The children love reading together and feeling the Spirit, and it’s amazing how much they understand. A very young child’s potential for learning and understanding is far greater than we tend to believe. The exciting possibility is that while children are learning new words daily, they can learn the language of the scriptures. In time, through the guidance of parents and teachers, they will grow in their understanding that Heavenly Father is speaking to them through the scriptures, that the scriptures can help them find answers to their problems. Anne G. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, May 1998, 9-10.)

7 Wherefore, because of my blessing the Lord God will^a not suffer that ye shall perish; wherefore, he will be^b merciful unto you and unto your seed forever. (The seed of Laman will continue to our day)

8 And it came to pass that after my father had made an end of speaking to the sons and daughters of Laman, he caused the sons and daughters of Lemuel to be brought before him.

9 And he spake unto them, saying: Behold, my sons and my daughters, who are the sons and the daughters of my second son; behold I leave unto you the same blessing which I left unto the sons and daughters of Laman; wherefore, thou shalt not utterly be destroyed; but in the end thy seed shall be blessed. (The seed of Lemuel will continue to our day)

10 And it came to pass that when my father had made an end of speaking unto them, behold, he spake unto the sons of^a Ishmael, yea, and even all his household.

11 And after he had made an end of speaking unto them, he spake unto Sam, saying: Blessed art thou, and thy^a seed; for thou shalt inherit the land like unto thy brother Nephi. And thy seed shall be numbered with his seed; and thou shalt be even like unto thy brother, and thy seed like unto his seed; and thou shalt be blessed in all thy days.

12 And it came to pass after my father, Lehi, had^a spoken unto all his household, according to the feelings of his heart and the Spirit of the Lord which was in him, he waxed^b old. And it came to pass that he died, and was buried.

13 And it came to pass that not many days after his death, Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael were ^aangry with me because of the admonitions of the Lord. (Now that their father was dead, they did not have to have respect for him as their patriarch by being nice to Nephi. Now they are free to do what they want.)

14 For I, Nephi, was constrained to speak unto them, according to his word; for I had spoken many things unto them, and also my father, before his death; many of which sayings are written upon mine ^aother plates (large plates of Nephi); for a more history part are written upon mine other plates.

15 And upon ^athese (the small plates) I ^bwrite the things of my soul, and many of the scriptures which are engraven upon the plates of brass. For my soul ^cdelighteth in the scriptures, and my heart ^dpondereth them, and writeth them for the ^elearning and the profit of my children.

16 Behold, my ^asoul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and my ^bheart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard.

17 Nevertheless, notwithstanding the great ^agoodness of the Lord, in showing me his great and marvelous works, my heart exclaimeth: O ^bwretched man that I am! Yea, my heart ^csorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities. (The Psalm of Nephi. This psalm contains some of the same elements as those found in the Old Testament.)

18 I am encompassed about, because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily ^abeset me.

19 And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins; nevertheless, I know in whom I have ^atrusted.

20 My God hath been my ^asupport; he hath led me through mine ^bafflictions in the wilderness; and he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep.

21 He hath filled me with his ^alove, even unto the ^bconsuming of my flesh.

22 He hath confounded mine ^aenemies, unto the causing of them to quake before me.

23 Behold, he hath heard my cry by day, and he hath given me ^aknowledge by ^bvisions in the night-time.

24 And by day have I waxed bold in mighty ^aprayer before him; yea, my voice have I sent up on high; and angels came down and ministered unto me.

25 And upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been ^acarried away upon exceedingly high mountains. And mine eyes have beheld great things, yea, even too great for man; therefore I was bidden that I should not write them. (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 76:115-116, DCBM, 1:218)

26 O then, if I have seen so great things, if the Lord in his condescension unto the children of men hath ^avisited men in so much ^bmercy, ^cwhy should my ^dheart weep and my soul linger in the valley of sorrow, and my flesh waste away, and my strength slacken, because of mine afflictions?

27 And why should I ^ayield to sin, because of my flesh? Yea, why should I give way to ^btemptations, that the evil one have place in my heart to destroy my ^cpeace and afflict my soul? Why am I ^dangry because of mine enemy?

28 Awake, my soul! No longer ^adroop in sin. Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the ^benemy of my soul.

29 Do not ^aanger again because of mine enemies. Do not slacken my strength because of mine afflictions. ("What is he tempted to do? We soon find out here. To play a rough game is what he is tempted to do. He wants to hit back at Laman and Lemuel. He has a short temper; remember he really lets fly at times. The dispatching of Laban wasn't his idea, but he impulsively grabbed Zoram, held his mouth and told him there was nothing to fear, instead of arguing with him properly. He said that he was large and strong. He could handle Zoram easily enough, and so he did... Sin is waste, the

scriptures tell us. You are wasting time and energy with anger because it is not going to get you anywhere. Maybe righteous anger, but this is a brooding anger against his brothers that has been going on and on. Hugh Nibley, TBM, 1:281-82)

30 Rejoice, O my ^aheart, and cry unto the Lord, and say: O Lord, I will praise thee forever; yea, my soul will rejoice in thee, my God, and the ^brock of my salvation.

31 O Lord, wilt thou ^aredeem my soul? Wilt thou deliver me out of the hands of mine enemies? Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of ^bsin? (Men may fall from grace.)

32 May the gates of hell be shut continually before me, because that my ^aheart is broken and my spirit is contrite! (godly sorrow) O Lord, wilt thou not shut the gates of thy righteousness before me, that I may ^bwalk in the path of the low valley, that I may be strict in the plain road!

33 O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy ^arighteousness! O Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine escape before mine ^benemies! Wilt thou make my path straight before me! Wilt thou not place a stumbling block in my way—but that thou wouldst clear my way before me, and hedge not up my way, but the ways of mine enemy.

34 O Lord, I have ^atrusted in thee, and I will ^btrust in thee forever. I will not put my ^ctrust in the arm of flesh; for I know that cursed is he that putteth his ^dtrust in the arm of flesh. (Don't trust in your native abilities) Yea, cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm.

35 Yea, I know that God will give ^aliberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me, if I ^bask ^cnot amiss; therefore I will lift up my voice unto thee; yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, the ^drock of my ^erighteousness. Behold, my voice shall forever ascend up unto thee, my rock and mine everlasting God. Amen. (The nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker and is caught up to dwell with Him. TPJS, p. 51)

CHAPTER 5

The Nephites separate themselves from the Lamanites, keep the law of Moses, and build a temple—Because of their unbelief, the Lamanites are cursed, receive a skin of blackness, and become a scourge unto the Nephites. [Between 588 and 559 B.C.] (The only historical chapter in 2 Nephi)

1 BEHOLD, it came to pass that I, Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord my God, because of the ^aanger of my brethren.

2 But behold, their ^aanger did increase against me, insomuch that they did seek to take away my life. (The brothers won't change, so it's time to leave.)

3 Yea, they did murmur against me, saying: Our younger brother thinks to ^arule over us; and we have had much trial because of him (They are now assuming their place as the heirs of their father, and will not have Nephi to take over as the heir); wherefore, now let us slay him, (If Nephi is dead, then he can't be the heir) that we may not be afflicted more because of his words. For behold, we will not have him to be our ruler; for it belongs unto us, who are the elder brethren, to ^brule over this people.

4 Now I do not write upon these plates all the words which they murmured against me. But it sufficeth me to say, that they did seek to take away my life. (This is the same problem that exists between Jacob and Esau, which is still going on today.)

5 And it came to pass that the Lord did ^awarn me, that I, ^bNephi, should depart from them and flee into the wilderness, and all those who would go with me.

6 Wherefore, it came to pass that I, Nephi, did take my family, and also ^aZoram and his family, and Sam, mine elder brother and his family, and Jacob and Joseph, my younger brethren, and **also my sisters**, (“This 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, 23:184.) “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*, pp. 131-2.) and all those who would go with me. And all those who would go with me were those who believed in the ^bwarnings and the revelations of God; wherefore, they did hearken unto my words. (This is a physical separation between believers and non believers.)

7 And we did take our tents and whatsoever things were possible for us, (see verse 12) and did journey in the wilderness for the space of many days. And after we had journeyed for the space of many days we did pitch our tents.

8 And my people would that we should call the name of the place ^aNephi; wherefore, we did call it Nephi.

9 And all those who were with me did take upon them to call themselves the ^apeople of Nephi.

10 And we did observe to keep the judgments, and the ^astatutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things, according to the ^blaw of Moses. (They had the Melchizedek priesthood and officiated in the ordinances of the law of sacrifice under the Mosaic laws.)

11 And the Lord was with us; and we did ^aprosper exceedingly; for we did sow seed, and we did reap again in abundance. And we began to raise flocks, and herds, and animals of every kind.

12 And I, Nephi, had also brought the records which were engraven upon the ^aplates of brass; and also the ^bball, or ^ccompass, which was prepared for my father by the hand of the Lord, according to that which is written. (Laman and Lemuel will accuse Nephi of stealing these items.)

13 And it came to pass that we began to prosper exceedingly, and to multiply in the land.

14 And I, Nephi, did take the ^asword of Laban, and after the manner of it did make many ^bswords, lest by any means the people who were now called Lamanites should come upon us and destroy us; for I knew their ^chatred towards me and my children and those who were called my people.

15 And I did teach my people to ^abuild buildings, and to ^bwork in all ^cmanner of wood, and of ^diron, and of copper, and of ^ebrass, and of steel, and of ^fgold, and of silver, and of precious ores, which were in great abundance.

16 And I, Nephi, did ^abuild a ^btemple; and I did construct it after the manner of the temple of ^cSolomon save it were not built of so many ^dprecious things; for they were not to be found upon the land, wherefore, it could not be built like unto Solomon's ^etemple. But the manner of the construction was like unto the temple of ^fSolomon; and the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine. (Solomon's temple was only a small building measuring about 90 feet in length and 30 feet in width and height. Hence, it was not larger than many of our meetinghouses. But the children of Israel were proud of their temple because of the very costly ornaments with which it was embellished. Andrew Jensen, CR, Oct 1923, p. 126. The original dimensions of the tabernacle were 45 feet long, 15 feet wide and 15 feet high. Exodus 26. The temple of Solomon was twice as large as the tabernacle. The temple to which Christ made his appearance as recorded in 3 Nephi would, like the temple in our present text, have been fashioned after the temple of Solomon. DCBM 1:223. The Nephites built temples and worshiped in them until around 200AD when they too fell into apostasy, and there remained on the earth no sanctuary recognized by the Lord to which he could come. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 236.)

17 And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did cause my people to be ^aindustrious, and to ^blabor with their ^chands.

18 And it came to pass that they would that I should be their ^aking. But I, Nephi, was desirous that they should have no king; nevertheless, I did for them according to that which was in my power.

19 And behold, the words of the Lord had been fulfilled unto my brethren, which he spake concerning them, that I should be their ^aruler and their teacher. Wherefore, I had been their ruler and **their ^bteacher**, **(all priesthood leaders are teachers)** according to the commandments of the Lord, until the time they sought to take away my life.

20 Wherefore, the word of the Lord was fulfilled which he spake unto me, saying that: Inasmuch as they will ^anot hearken unto thy words they shall be ^bcut off from the presence of the Lord. And behold, they were ^ccut off from his presence.

21 And he had caused the ^acursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity. For behold, they had hardened their hearts against him, that they had become like unto a flint; wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and ^bdelightful, that they might not be ^centicing unto my people the Lord God did cause a ^dskin of ^eblackness **(dark, unpleasant)** to come upon them.

(This is the only reference in the entire Book of Mormon where a definite color adjective is used to refer to this mark. All other references call it a “skin of darkness” or a “dark skin.” It is of interest to note that the terms “blackness” and “darkness” are interchangeable in the Hebrew. Even in modern Hebrew it is not unusual for some skilled translator to render a word black whereas other equally skilled translators select *dark* as the best translation. Daniel H. Ludlow, *Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, 132.)

22 And thus saith the Lord God: I will cause that they shall be ^aloathsome unto thy people, save they shall repent of their iniquities.

23 And cursed shall be the seed of him that ^amixeth with their seed; for they shall be cursed even with the same cursing. And the Lord spake it, and it was done.

24 And because of their ^acursing which was upon them they did become an ^bidle people, full of mischief and subtlety, and did seek in the wilderness for beasts of prey. (Apparently they killed for sport, a practice strongly condemned in the scriptures. DCMB, 1:225. See JST Genesis 9:10-11: But, the blood of all flesh which I have given you for meat, shall be shed upon the ground, which taketh life thereof, and the blood ye shall not eat. And surely, blood shall not be shed, only for meat, to save your lives; and the blood of every beast will I require at your hands. There is no statement in the scriptures indicating that the flesh of animals and birds and other living creatures was used as food before the days of Noah. It was after the landing of the ark that the Lord gave his commandment concerning the eating of flesh. There is no inference in the scriptures that it is the privilege of men to slay birds or beasts or to catch fish wantonly... It was intended that all creatures should be happy in their several elements. Therefore to take the life of these creatures wantonly is a sin before the Lord... Man should be more the friend and never an enemy to any living creature. The Lord placed them here. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Improvement Era*, Aug. 1961, 568. The Lord will not judge a single animal for its treatment of man, but He will adjudge the souls of men toward their beasts in this world, for men have a special place. Familiar early Jewish and Christian teaching was that the animals will appear at the bar of God’s judgment to accuse those humans who have wronged them... Animals do possess real rights, “for all things have an equal right to live” as President Joseph F. Smith would say (*Gospel Doctrine* 1:372) Hugh Nibley, *Brother Brigham Challenges the Saints*, 10,12)

25 And the Lord God said unto me: They shall be a scourge unto thy seed, to ^astir them up in remembrance of me; and inasmuch as they will not remember me, and hearken unto my words, they shall scourge them even unto destruction. (Hugh Nibley said: “One thing the reader of the Book of Mormon is never allowed to forget is that the Nephites lived in a polarized world, in which they were perpetually engaged either in hot or cold wars with the Lamanites. Their basic problem was one of survival; security was an obsession with them...the Nephites had by all human standards ample cause

for alarm. Yet from the beginning they received full assurance that God had purposely arranged things that way, and that they had absolutely nothing to fear as long as they behaved themselves. God intended that the Nephites should have hostile Lamanites breathing down their necks: 'I will curse them even with a sore curse, and they shall have *no power* over thy seed except they shall rebel against me also. And if it so be that they rebel against me, they shall be as a scourge unto thy seed, to stir them up in the ways of remembrance' (1 Nephi 2:23-24). So it was a blessing to the Nephites after all to have the Lamanites on their doorstep to 'stir them up to remembrance'—'Happy is the man whom God correcteth' (Job 5:17). No matter how wicked and ferocious and depraved the Lamanites might be (and they were that!), no matter by how much they outnumbered the Nephites, darkly closing in on all sides, no matter how insidiously they spied and intrigued and infiltrated and hatched their diabolical plots and breathed their bloody threats and pushed their formidable preparations for all-out war, *they were not the Nephite problem*. They were merely kept there to remind the Nephites of their real problem, which was to walk uprightly before the Lord." (*Since Cumorah*, 2nd ed., pp. 338-9.) 1 Nephi 2:20-24 is the theme of the Book of Mormon. This is the rule for the promised land. Obey God or be swept off. Teachings of the Book of Mormon, 1:126.)

26 And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did ^aconsecrate Jacob and Joseph, that they should be ^bpriests and ^cteachers over the land of my people. (The subject of Priesthood among the Nephites is an interesting one. At first glance, it would appear that Jacob and Joseph were ordained to be priests and teachers in the Aaronic Priesthood. However, there was no Aaronic Priesthood prior to Christ among the Nephites. During Mosaic times, only descendants of the tribe of Levi held the Levitical or Aaronic Priesthood. Since the Nephites and Ishmaelites were descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim, respectively, they were not heirs to the Levitical Priesthood. Therefore, Nephi, Jacob and Joseph held the Melchizedek Priesthood. Joseph Fielding Smith said: "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. 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." (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957-1966], 1: 124.) 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 D&C 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*, 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987-1992], 2: 9.))

27 And it came to pass that we lived after the manner of ^ahappiness. (A state of mind. They are pleased with the things of God.)

28 *And thirty years had passed away from the time we left Jerusalem.

29 And I, Nephi, had kept the ^arecords upon my plates (the large plates), which I had made, of my people thus far.

30 And it came to pass that the Lord God said unto me: ^aMake other plates (small plates of Nephi); and thou shalt engraven many things upon them which are good in my sight, for the profit of thy people.

(First Nephi through at least to King Benjamin in Mosiah were on the small plates of Nephi)

31 Wherefore, I, Nephi, to be obedient to the commandments of the Lord, went and made ^athese plates upon which I have engraven these things.

32 And I engraved that which is pleasing unto God. And if my people are pleased with the things of God they will be pleased with mine engravings which are upon these plates.

33 And if my people desire to know the more particular part of the history of my people they must search mine ^aother ^bplates. (The large plates, from which the 116 pages of manuscript were stolen.)

34 And it sufficeth me to say that *forty years had passed away, and we had already had wars and contentions with our brethren. (They didn't move far enough away from Laman and Lemuel.)

* Verse 28 [569 B.C.]; Verse 34 [559 B.C.].

Additional Reading:

JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION GENESIS 50: 24-38

Moses, Aaron, and Joseph Smith were all named in this prophecy of Joseph in Egypt. Also, Joseph prophesied that the Book of Mormon would become a companion to the record of Judah. (compare Genesis 50: 24-26; see also 2 Nephi 3)

24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die, *and go unto my fathers; and I go down to my grave with joy. The God of my father Jacob be with you, to deliver you out of affliction in the days of your bondage; for the Lord hath visited me, and I have obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of my loins, the Lord God will raise up a righteous branch out of my loins; and unto thee, whom my father Jacob hath named Israel, a prophet; (not the Messiah who is called Shilo;) and this prophet shall deliver my people out of Egypt in the days of thy bondage.* (Moses)

25 *And it shall come to pass that they shall be scattered again; and a branch shall be broken off (Lehi's family), and shall be carried into a far country (The Americas); nevertheless they shall be remembered in the covenants of the Lord, when the Messiah cometh; for he shall be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the Spirit of power; and shall bring them out of darkness into light; out of hidden darkness, and out of captivity unto freedom.*

26 *A seer (Joseph Smith) shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins.*

27 *Thus saith the Lord God of my fathers unto me, A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins, and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren.*

28 *And he shall bring them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers; and he shall do whatsoever work I shall command him.*

29 *And I will make him great in mine eyes, for he shall do my work; and he shall be great like unto him who I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel, out of the land of Egypt; for a seer will I raise up to deliver my people out of the land of Egypt; and he shall be called Moses. And by this name he shall know that he is of thy house; for he shall be nursed by the king's daughter, and shall be called her son.*

30 *And again, 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 of my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them in the last days;*

31 *Wherefore the fruit of thy loins shall write (The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of*

Great Price and other writings.), and the fruit of the loins of Judah (Bible) shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines (The Book of Mormon will prove the truth of the Bible), and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to a knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.

32 And out of weakness shall he be made strong, in that day when my work shall go forth among all my people, which shall restore them, who are of the house of Israel, in the last days.

33 And that seer will I bless, and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded; for this promise I give unto you; for I will remember you from generation to generation; and his name shall be called Joseph, and it shall be after the name of his father; and he shall be like unto you; for the thing which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand shall bring my people unto salvation.

34 And the Lord sware unto Joseph that he would preserve his seed forever, saying, I will raise up Moses, and a rod shall be in his hand, and he shall gather together my people, and he shall lead them as a flock, and he shall smite the waters of the Red Sea with his rod.

35 And he shall have judgment, and shall write the word of the Lord. And he shall not speak many words, for I will write unto him my law by the finger of mine own hand. And I will make a spokesman for him, and his name shall be called Aaron.

36 And it shall be done unto thee in the last days also, even as I have sworn. Therefore, Joseph said unto his brethren, God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and to Jacob.

37 And Joseph confirmed many other things unto his brethren, and took an oath of the children of Israel, saying unto them, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

38 So Joseph died when he was an hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and they put him in a coffin in Egypt; and he was kept from burial by the children of Israel, that he might be carried up and laid in the sepulchre with his father. And thus they remembered the oath which they sware unto him.

BIBLE DICTIONARY

JOSEPH (1)

Son of Rachel, Jacob's second wife (Gen. 30: 22-24; Gen. 37: 3). An extensive account of his life is given in Gen. 37 - 50. The story is especially instructive in showing the discipline of misfortune and also that the Lord rewards his obedient children according to their faithfulness. The story of Joseph is also an illustration of the way in which God works in history, preserving his people. Joseph's valor in resisting the allurements of Potiphar's wife is an unequalled example of faith, chastity, and personal purity. His protection was his faith, as illustrated by his words: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God" (Gen. 39: 9). In the N.T. Joseph is mentioned only once (Heb. 11: 21-22), as an example of faith.

Joseph obtained the birthright in Israel because he was worthy and because it was his natural right. When Reuben, the actual firstborn, lost the privilege by transgression (1 Chr. 5: 1-2), Joseph, as the firstborn son of Jacob's second wife, was next in line for the blessing. Joseph was a visionary man, a dreamer and interpreter of dreams, "a man in whom the Spirit of God is" (Gen. 41: 38).

Special blessings and prophecies on the head of Joseph and his posterity are found in Gen. 48: 1-22; Gen. 49: 1, 22-26; and Deut. 33: 13-17. When Joseph died in Egypt at age 110, he was embalmed; but, in keeping with his own previous request, he was kept from burial until Moses and the children of Israel took his bones to Canaan, to be buried near his father and other ancestors (Gen. 50: 22-26; Ex. 13: 19; Josh. 24: 32).

Latter-day revelation confirms many of the biblical details about Joseph and adds other important facts (see 2 Ne. 3: 4-22; 2 Ne. 4: 2; Alma 10: 3; Alma 46: 23-27; JST Gen. 50). It is through latter-day revelation that the larger mission of the family of Joseph in the last days is illustrated.

The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's children, were among the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and thus among the "lost tribes." Also, one portion of Joseph's descendants came to America about 600 B.C. and established two great peoples. The record of their doings is called the Book of Mormon. It has also been primarily Joseph's descendants whom the Lord has called upon first in these last days to carry the gospel to the nations of the earth, in compliance with the covenant God made with Abraham.