

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



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ZENOCK

Zenock was a preexilic Israelite prophet whose words were found on the PLATES of brass, a record carried from Jerusalem to the new promised land in the Western Hemisphere by the Book of Mormon prophet LEHI c. 600 B.C. Zenock is not known from the Hebrew Bible or other sources and is noted in only five passages in the Book of Mormon. It is possible that he was of the lineage of JOSEPH OF EGYPT and an ancestor of the NEPHITES (3 Ne. 10:16).

Each reference to Zenock refers to his teaching of either the coming or redemptive mission of Jesus Christ. NEPHI₁, son of Lehi, in teaching from the words of previous prophets, stated that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Jesus Christ) would be “lifted up, according to the words of Zenock” (1 Ne. 19:10), referring to his crucifixion. Alma 33:16 contains the only direct quotation of Zenock’s words, citing him as one of many Israelite prophets who foretold the mission of the Son of God (Alma 33:14–17; cf. 34:7) and quoting him on the mercies that God grants because of his Son. ALMA₂ noted, however, that because the people “would not understand” Zenock’s words, they “stoned him to death” (Alma 33:17). NEPHI₂ cited Zenock and others who testified of the coming of the Son of God (Hel. 8:20). In the last reference to his work, MORMON wrote that ZENOS and Zenock

foretold the destruction that preceded the coming of Christ to the remnant of their posterity (3 Ne. 10:16).

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ZENOS

Zenos is one of four Israelite prophets of Old Testament times cited in the BOOK OF MORMON whose writings appeared on the PLATES of brass but who are not mentioned in the Old Testament (*see also* ZENOCK; NEUM; and EZIAS). Zenos is quoted or mentioned by NEPHI₁ (1 Ne. 19:10–17), JACOB (Jacob 5:1–77; 6:1), ALMA₂ (Alma 33:3–11, 13, 15), Amulek (Alma 34:7), NEPHI₂ (Hel. 8:19–20), and MORMON (3 Ne. 10:14–17).

Although specific dates and details of Zenos’ life and ministry are not known, the Book of Mormon provides considerable information about him from his teachings and related facts. Evidently he lived sometime between 1600 and 600 B.C. because he was apparently a descendant of JOSEPH OF EGYPT and his writings were on the plates of brass taken from JERUSALEM to the Americas by Nephi₁ about 600 B.C. He may also have been a progenitor of the Book of Mormon prophet LEHI (cf. 3 Ne. 10:16). Zenos spent time “in the wilderness” (Alma 33:4), but also preached “in the midst”

of the “congregations” of God (Alma 33:9). Some of his enemies became reconciled to him through the power of God, but others were visited “with speedy destruction” (Alma 33:4, 10). Finally, he was slain because of his bold testimony of the coming of the “Son of God” (Hel. 8:13–19).

A major theme in the teachings of Zenos was the destiny of the house of Israel. His allegory or parable comparing the house of Israel to a tame olive tree and the Gentiles to a wild olive tree constitutes the longest single chapter in the Book of Mormon, Jacob chapter 5 (see BOOK OF MORMON: BOOK OF JACOB). The allegory refers to major events in the scattering and gathering of the house of Israel (see ALLEGORY OF ZENOS; ISRAEL: GATHERING OF ISRAEL; ISRAEL: SCATTERING OF ISRAEL).

The second-longest quotation from Zenos in the Book of Mormon is his hymn of thanksgiving and praise recorded in Alma 33:3–11, which emphasizes prayer, worship, and the mercies of God. A careful comparison of the style and contents of this hymn with *Hymn H* (or 8) and *Hymn J* (or 10) of the *Thanksgiving Hymns* of the DEAD SEA SCROLLS, noting certain striking similarities, suggests that the three may have been written by the same person. Further, the life situations of the author (or authors) are very similar (CWHN 7:276–83). Some LDS scholars anticipate that other evidences of Zenos’ writings may appear as additional ancient manuscripts come to light.

Book of Mormon prophets frequently quoted Zenos because of his plain and powerful testimony of the future life, mission, atonement, death, and resurrection of the Son of God. Alma₂ recorded part of Zenos’ prayer to God, recounting that “it is because of thy Son that thou hast been thus merciful unto me, therefore I will cry unto thee in all mine afflictions, for in thee is my joy; for thou hast turned thy judgments away from me, because of thy Son” (Alma 33:11). Nephi₁ recalled Zenos’ knowledge that after the Son of God was crucified, he would “be buried in a sepulchre” for three days, and a sign of darkness should be “given of his death unto those who should inhabit the isles of the sea, more especially given unto those who are of the house of Israel” (1 Ne. 19:10). AMULEK quoted Zenos’ words to show “that redemption cometh through the Son of God” (Alma 34:7). Mormon included Zenos as one of the prophets who spoke of events associated with “the coming of Christ” (3 Ne. 10:15), as did Nephi₂, who stated, “Yea, be-

hold, the prophet Zenos did testify boldly; for the which he was slain” (Hel. 8:19).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES summarized some of the teachings of Zenos and evaluated his contributions as follows:

It was Zenos who wrote of the visit of the Lord God to Israel after his resurrection; of the joy and salvation that would come to the righteous among them; of the desolations and destructions that awaited the wicked among them; of the fires, and tempests, and earthquakes that would occur in the Americas; of the scourging and crucifying of the God of Israel by those in Jerusalem; of the scattering of the Jews among all nations; and of their gathering again in the last days “from the four quarters of the earth” (1 Ne. 19:11–17). I do not think I overstate the matter when I say that next to Isaiah himself—who is the prototype, pattern, and model for all the prophets—there was not a greater prophet in all Israel than Zenos [p. 17].

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ZION

Latter-day Saints use the name Zion to signify a group of God’s followers or a place where such a group lives. Latter-day scriptures define Zion as the “pure in heart” (D&C 97:21). Other uses of the name in scripture reflect this one. For example, Zion refers to the place or land appointed by the Lord for the gathering of those who accept his gospel (D&C 101:16–22; 3 Ne. 20–22). The purpose of this gathering is to raise up a committed society of “pure people” who will “serve [God] in righteousness” (D&C 100:13, 16). Hence, the lands of Zion are places where the pure in heart live together in RIGHTEOUSNESS. Geographical Church units are called “stakes . . . of Zion” (D&C 101:21–22). The Church and its STAKES are called Zion because they are for gathering and purifying a people of God (D&C 43:8–11; Eph. 4:11–13). Scripture also refers to Zion as a “City of Holiness” (Moses 7:19), because the “sanctified” or “pure”