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Abstract: *The Book of Mormon contains several quotations from the Hebrew Bible that have been juxtaposed on the basis of shared words or phrases, this for the purpose of interpreting the cited scriptural passages in light of one another. This exegetical technique — one that Jesus himself used — came to be known in later rabbinic times as* Gezera Shawa *("equal statute"). In several additional instances, the use of* Gezera Shawa *converges with onomastic wordplay. Nephi uses a* Gezera Shawa *involving Isaiah 11:11 and Isaiah 29:14 twice on the basis of the* yāsap *verb-forms* yôsîp/yôsīp *(2 Nephi 25:17 and quoting the Lord in 2 Nephi 29:1) to create a stunning wordplay on the name "Joseph." In another instance, King Benjamin uses* Gezera Shawa *involving Psalm 2:7, 2 Samuel 7:14, and Deuteronomy 14:1 (1–2) on the basis of the Hebrew noun* bēn *("son"; plural* bānîm, bānôt, *"sons" and "daughters") on which to build a rhetorical wordplay on his own name. This second wordplay, which further alludes to Psalm 110:1 on account of the noun* yāmin *("right hand"), was ready-made for his temple audience who, on the occasion of Mosiah's coronation, were receiving their own "endowment" to become "sons" and "daughters" at God's "right hand." The use of* Gezera Shawa *was often christological — e.g., Jacob's* Gezera Shawa *on ("stone") in Jacob 4:15–17 and Alma's* Gezera Shawa *on Zenos's and Zenock's phrase "because of thy Son" in Alma 33:11–16 (see Alma 33:4-17). Taken together, these examples suggest that we should pay more attention to scripture's use of scripture and, in particular, the use of this exegetical practice. In doing so, we will better discern the messages intended by ancient prophets whose words the Book of Mormon preserves.*

The names of Rachel's two sons, Joseph and Benjamin, constituted two of the most important proper names in ancient Israel — Joseph as the patriarchal ancestor of the dominant northern half-tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, and Benjamin as the ancestor of the tribe of King Saul and thus of the first "royal" tribe in Israel. Joseph and Benjamin also became important names in their own right in the Book of Mormon.

Lehi names his youngest son after his ancestor, Joseph the patriarch. King Mosiah I names his heir Benjamin, who, according to the textual evidence, emerged as one of the most righteous and influential of the Nephite kings.

As I hope to show in this essay, these two names are to be appreciated within the Nephite literary onomasticon not only for the wordplay on their names evident in the Book of Mormon text but also for the distinctive exegetical way in which we see that wordplay evident. The wordplay on the name Joseph ("may he [God] add") and Benjamin ("son of the right hand," often understood to mean "son of the [directional] right hand [i.e., the south]," but also "son of the right hand [of power]," see explanation below) takes the form of *Gezera Shawa* juxtaposing significant texts — prophetic and liturgical — from the Hebrew Bible. In addition to these, I will offer additional examples of *Gezera Shawa* that illuminate its importance as an exegetical technique used by ancient prophet-writers whose words and messages the Book of Mormon preserves.

The Etymologies of Joseph and Benjamin

The text of Genesis provides a double-etiology for the name *Joseph*. The narrative reports that Rachel, the mother of the patriarch Joseph, explains the giving of this name to her son thus: "And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God **hath taken away** [ʾāsap, or "gathered in"] my reproach: And she called his name **Joseph** [yôsēp]; and said, The Lord **shall add** [yōsēp] to me another son [bēn]" (Genesis 30:22–24). The first etiology, the importance of which will be treated in depth elsewhere,[1] is based on the phonological similarity of *Joseph* to the Semitic/Hebrew verb ʾāsap "gather" (or "assemble"); "bring in"; to "withdraw"; "take away."[2] The second etiology, which explains *Joseph* in terms of the verb yāsap (to "add"; "continue to do, carry on doing" — i.e., "proceed" to do something; "to do again"; "do something yet more")[3] conforms more strictly to what some would call "scientific" etymology, since this is the verb from which *Joseph* derives, historically speaking.

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1 Study forthcoming.

2 See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 74–75. Hereafter cited as HALOT.

3 Ibid., 418.

Moshe Garsiel writes: "These homiletic interpretations express two separate emotions – the immense relief experienced by the hitherto barren Rachel when she bears her first child, and her hope of another child to come."[4] In addition to the juxtaposition of the name Joseph (*yôsēp*) with *yōsēp* — both apparently formed from the third person masculine singular jussive conjugation of the Hiphil stem of *yāsap* (or *hôsîp*)[5] — the narrator's inclusion of the term *bēn* ("son") anticipates and foreshadows the birth and naming of "Benjamin."

Of course, the Lord *did* "add" another son to Rachel. Where the text provides almost all the birth reports and etiological explanations for the names of Jacob's sons as in Genesis 29:31–30:24, the narrative withholds Benjamin's birth and naming until Genesis 35:17–18: "And it came to pass, when [Rachel] was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this **son** [*bēn*] also. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name **Ben-oni** [*ben-ʾônî*]: but his father called him **Benjamin** [*binyāmîn*]."

The name Benjamin is usually taken to mean "son of the right hand" in "son of the [directional] right"[6] — i.e., "son of the south" (as one faces east).[7] The medieval rabbinic interpreter and commentator Rashi[8] and the author of the putative medieval Book of Jasher[9] understand the name "Benjamin" in this sense. However, there is evidence that the lexical element *yāmîn* ("right hand") was also understood in terms of "right hand [of power]." For example, Judges 3:15-21; 20:16; and 1 Chronicles 12:2 play on the idea of Benjaminites ("sons of Benjamin") as *ʾiṭṭēr*

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4 Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns*, trans. Phyllis Hackett (Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991), 173.

5 The form *yōsēp* is ambiguous. In addition to reading *yōsēp*, as a Hiphil jussive form, one could potentially read it as a masculine singular participial form of the Qal stem *yāsap*. Context dictates the former in Genesis 30:24. Rachel makes an express wish: "May the Lord add to me another son," rather than, "the Lord is adding to me another son."

6 See discussion in Matthew L. Bowen, "Becoming Sons and Daughters at God's Right Hand: King Benjamin's Rhetorical Wordplay on His Own Name," *Journal of Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 21/2 (2012): 2, 5.

7 Cf. the idea of "orienting" oneself. "South" is the direction of the right hand as one faces the rising sun in the east (Latin *oriens, orientis*).

8 Rashi on Genesis 35:18.

9 Book of Jasher 36:12: "And Jacob called the name of his son that was born to him, which Rachel bare unto him, Benjamin, for he was born to him in the land on the right hand" (emphasis added). Translated text as it appears in The Book of Jasher (Salt Lake City: Parry, 1887), 100.

yad-yĕmînô: "bound as to the right hand [of power]." In other words, they were trained to be left-handed by having their "right hand[s] of power" bound.[10] Benjamin connoted "son of the right hand [of power]"[11] or "son" in the position of (divine) favor.[12]

The wordplay on *Benjamin*, then, in Genesis 35:17–18 is twofold: there is the very straightforward polyptoton[13] on *bēn* ("son") and *ben-* (in *ben-ʾônî*) and *bin-*[14] (in *binyāmîn*). More importantly, there is also the synonymic and antonymic ambiguity between *ʾônî* and *yāmîn* rather than the typical transparent etiological pun.

The meaning of the first given name, Ben-oni, is ambiguous and perhaps intentionally so. It can be understood as meaning both "son of my vigor" and "son of my sorrow."[15] As Robert Alter observes, however, "given the freedom with which biblical characters play with names and their meanings, there is no reason to exclude the possibility that Rachel is … invoking both meanings, though the former is more likely: in her death agony, she envisages the continuation of 'vigor' after her in the son she has born."[16] The tribe of Benjamin, he further notes, "will become famous for its martial prowess."[17] Thus Ben-oni ("son of my vigor") and Benjamin ("son of the right hand," i.e., the "hand of power") could be understood as nearly synonymous[18] but also antonymous ("son of my sorrow" versus "son of the

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10   Similarly, Lord's *yāmîn* represented his martial prowess (e.g., Psalm 118:15-16; Isaiah 41:10; Habakkuk 2:16; 3 Nephi 29:9). The right hand was symbolically the hand of saving strength (cf. Acts 3:7).

11   Cf. Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69; Moroni 9:26.

12   Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; 7:55–56; Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22; Mosiah 5:9 (see below); Alma 28:12; Helaman 3:30; Ether 12:4; Moroni 7:27; D&C 20:24; 49:6; 66:12; 76:20, 23; 133:56; Moses 7:56–57; Joseph Smith–Matthew 1:1.

13   Polyptoton is a form of wordplay that utilizes a repetition of different forms (cognates) from the same root. Cf. Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1991), 117.

14   *Bin* is a biform of *ben* ("son") found thirty-one times in the Hebrew Bible. E.g., Joshua is denominated "Joshua bin Nun" (Joshua the son of Nun) in numerous passages (29 x; Exodus 33:11, etc.). Proverbs 30:1 mentions "Agur bin Jakeh" ("Agur the son of Jakeh") and in Deuteronomy 25:2 as an idiom for "worthy."

15   Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: Norton, 2004), 197. See also Ron Pirson, *The Lord of the Dreams: A Semantic and Literary Analysis of Genesis 37–50* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 26–27.

16   Alter, *Five Books of* Moses, 197.

17   Ibid.

18   Regarding additional arguments for synonymy, see, e.g., Stefanie Schäfer-Bossert, "Den Männern die Macht und der Frau die Trauer?: Ein kritischer Blick auf die Deutung

right hand"). In either case, the narrator implies that the name Benjamin is to be understood in this birth narrative as a positive name in the sense of "son of the right hand [of power or strength]."

It is interesting here, however, to consider Lehi's statement to his son Joseph in the context of the Benjamin etiology: "And now I speak unto you, Joseph, my last-born. Thou wast born in the wilderness of mine afflictions; yea, **in the days of my greatest sorrow did thy mother bear thee** [cf. Ben-oni]" (2 Nephi 3:1). Rachel bestowed the name "Joseph" upon her firstborn with the hope of "adding" another son (Genesis 30:24). Perhaps Lehi and Sariah bestowed this name upon their son Joseph — at least in part — with similar hopes. Instead he was their "last-born," and he was their "Ben-oni" in the sense of "son of my sorrow" in the "days of [their] greatest sorrow."

Gezera Shawa

The joining together of biblical texts from isolated passages on the basis of shared terminology and interpreting them in light of each other constituted an exegetical technique that came to be known in later rabbinic times as *Gezera Shawa* ("equal statute"),[19] although the practice is older. Jesus employs one of the clearest examples of *Gezera Shawa* as recorded in Matthew 22:36–40,[20] when he combines what he calls the first commandment "**And thou shalt love** [*wĕʾāhabtâ*] the Lord thy God with all thy heart" (Deuteronomy 6:5)[21] with the second lesser-quoted commandment "**but thou shalt love** [*wĕʾāhabtâ*] thy neighbour as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18), declaring that "on these two commandments

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von ôn — oder: Wie nennt Rahel ihren Sohn?" in *Feministische Hermeneutik und Erstes Testament: Analysen und Interpretationen*, ed. Hedwig Jahnow (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994), 106–25.

19 Also spelled *Gezerah Shawah, Gezerah Shavah*, or *Gezera Shava*, which literally means "equal ordinance" or "equal statute." See H. L. Strack and Günter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. Markus Bockmuehl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 18.

20 Luke, writing to a Gentile audience, tells this story differently (see Luke 10:27), attributing the joining of the two Torah passages to the "lawyer" testing Jesus. Still, Luke's account suggest that this *Gezera Shawa* was a commonplace in the discourse of the religious leaders in Jesus's time. Matthew's account, written to a Jewish audience, attributes the genius of this *Gezera Shawa* to Jesus himself.

21 The commandment "thou shalt love the Lord thy God" in Deuteronomy 6:5 is considered a part of the *Shema*, Deuteronomy 6:4 ("Hear [*šĕmaʿ*], O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one"), which still constitutes one of Judaism's most important texts.

hang all the law and the prophets."[22] Jesus's *Gezera Shawa* makes one commandment of two.

Mark and Matthew both record that Jesus used *Gezera Shawa* in an earlier exchange with some of the Pharisees in criticizing the practice of Corban: "For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death" (Matthew 15:4; cf. Mark 7:10).[23] Jesus joins the apodictic commandment "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16) to the casuistic penalty for cursing one's parents "he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death" (Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9) on the basis of the words "father" and "mother" and perhaps secondarily on the antonymy of "honor" and "curse." He does so to emphasize the fact that through the tradition of Corban (i.e., declaring the service that might be rendered to parents to be a temple gift), the Pharisees were both failing to honor their parents (a sin of omission) and actively cursing their parents (a sin of commission). Other such examples might be cited.[24]

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22   Jesus's citation of Leviticus 19:18 here — as a commandment summarizing the whole law (Torah) — may originate with Hillel the Elder, a noted rabbi who lived during the time of Jesus's adolescence [ca. AD 10]. Hillel is reported to have said, "Whatsoever is distasteful to you, do not do to your neighbor: this is the whole Law [*dʿlk sny lḥbrk lʾ tʿbyd zw hyʾ kl htwrh kwlh*]," Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 31a (translation mine). This statement may also be the basis of the Savior's Golden Rule: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law [Torah] and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12; cf. Luke 6:31). Jesus's use of *Gezera Shawa* adds a vertical dimension ("Love the Lord thy God") to the horizontal obligation ("Love thy neighbor") stipulated by Hillel.

23   Mark 7:10: "For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death."

24   The Gospel of Mark begins with a *Gezera Shawa* ("Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," Mark 1:2-3) that juxtaposes Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 on the basis of words translated "prepare" and "way." In Romans 4, Paul juxtaposes elements of Genesis 15:6 ("And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness …") cited in Romans 4:3, and Psalm 31:1–2 in Romans 4:7–8 on the basis of "ac[count]"/"reckon" (Hebrew *ḥāšab*; Greek *logizō*). See, e.g., Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, MA: Eerdmans, 2011), 182. The author of Hebrews, too, uses *Gezera Shawa* christologically in several instances. For example, he creates a *Gezera Shawa* on Hebrews 1:5 similar to Mosiah 5:7 (see below), quoting LXX Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14/1 Chronicles 17:13. Hebrews 1:6–7, quoting LXX Deuteronomy 32:43 and LXX Psalm 96:7 on the basis of "angels" (Greek, *angeloi*) is another example.

Gezera Shawa existed well before rabbinic times. The evidence of the Book of Mormon suggests that it existed even before the time of the exile (see below). Hillel the Elder is sometimes wrongly said to be the originator of *Gezera Shawa*. Strack and Stemberger note that *Gezera Shawa* was "not invented by Hillel" but instead constituted one of "the main types of argument in use at that time."[25] Jesus was employing a technique used before his own time and before Hillel the Elder's (traditionally ca. 110 BCE-10 CE).

Nephi's "Joseph" *Gezera Shawas*

To explain the eventual fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah — prophecies in which his soul delighted[26] — Nephi combines wordplay on the name *Joseph* and *Gezera Shawa* in at least two instances. Nephi juxtaposes the prophecies of Isaiah 11:11 and Isaiah 29:14 to foretell the gathering and restoration of Israel at the time of the coming forth of additional scripture — the "sealed" book of Isaiah 29.

I have proposed elsewhere[27] that the unifying principle upon which Nephi bases his exegetical juxtapositions of these two prophesies, and his interpreting them in light of one another is their shared use of the Hebrew verb *yāsap*, the most basic sense of which is "to add." *Yāsap* also has the more developed senses to "continue" or "proceed to do" something and "to do again."[28] This verb is also the source of the name *Joseph*, which means "may He [the Lord] add," "He shall add," or "He has added."[29]

Thus when Nephi conjoined these two prophecies on the basis of a common use of *yāsap*, he was also forming a wordplay on the name

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Critics of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon will be tempted to suggest a textual dependency of Mosiah 5:7 on Hebrews 1:5. However, the manner and context of their respective uses of Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14 are radically different (I will discuss King Benjamin's democratized exegetical use of these texts at length). If anything, the *Gezera Shawa* in Hebrews 1:5 suggests a longstanding association between the two texts in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

25   Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 17.

26   2 Nephi 4:15–16; 11:4–6; 25:4–5, 13; 31:3.

27   See Matthew L. Bowen, "He Shall Add": Wordplay on the Name Joseph and an Early Instance of *Gezera Shawa* in the Book of Mormon," *Insights*, 30/2 (2010): 2–4.

28   HALOT, 418.

29   Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der Gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (BWANT 3/10; Stuttgart: W. Kolhammer, 1928), 212. See also HALOT, 403.

Joseph both to remind us that it was the seed of Joseph — in addition to the seed of Judah[30] and the other tribes — that would be gathered and to foretell the involvement of another "Joseph," the prophet Joseph Smith, in the gathering in the latter days and in the coming forth of additional scripture.

Isaiah 11:11 states: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall **set** his hand **again** (*yôsîp)* the second time to recover the remnant of his people," while Isaiah 29:14 declares: "Therefore, behold, I will **proceed** (*yôsīp)* to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder."[31] Nephi's joining of these two passages is most noticeable in 2 Nephi 25:17, where he foretells the latter-day gathering of Judah: "And the Lord will **set** his hand **again** (*yôsîp)* the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore, he will **proceed** (*yôsīp)* to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men." Here Nephi states that the Lord "shall bring forth his words unto (his people)" words they have not previously had, "for the purpose of convincing them of the true Messiah" (25:18) and "that the promise may be fulfilled unto **Joseph** (*yôsēp)*" (25:21).

Recalling Lehi's prophecy earlier in the same book of 2 Nephi regarding the "promise" made to Joseph regarding the raising up of a choice seer (see especially 2 Nephi 3:5–14) helps us see the connection Nephi makes between the Lord setting his hand *again* [*yôsîp*] and *proceeding* [*yôsīp*] to do a marvelous work and the name *Joseph* [*yôsēp*], both Joseph of old and his descendant Joseph Smith.

In 2 Nephi 3, Lehi quotes prophecies made by the patriarch Joseph in Egypt to his youngest son Joseph in which the patriarch foretells that a "Joseph" would bring about the latter-day gathering and restoration of Israel (see 2 Nephi 3:13–16). This "Joseph" would be raised up "in that day when my work shall commence among all my people unto the restoring thee, O house of Israel" (2 Nephi 3:13). Joseph said he was "sure of the fulfilling of this promise" (3:14), the "promise" that Nephi said would "be fulfilled unto **Joseph** [*yôsēp*]" (2 Nephi 25:21) when the Lord would "**set** his hand **again** [*yôsîp*] the second time" and "**proceed** [*yôsīp*] to do a marvelous work and a wonder" (2 Nephi 25:17).

Toward the end of his personal writings, Nephi prefaces another prophecy on the coming forth of additional scripture with a revelation

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30 Cf. 2 Nephi 25:14–19.

31 The morphological difference between the Hiphil (causative) imperfect (*yôsîp*) and the Qal participle (*yôsīp*) is slight (vowel quantity *î* vs. *ī*). The difference in pronunciation would also have been slight.

from the Lord that juxtaposes the same two Isaiah passages but reverses the order of their quotation: "But behold, there shall be many — at that day when I shall **proceed** [*yôsīp*] to do a marvelous work among them [Isaiah 29:14], that I may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men, **that I may set my hand again**[*wĕʾōsîp yādî*] the second time to recover my people, which are of the house of Israel [Isaiah 11:11]" (2 Nephi 29:1).[32] Hence, on two separate occasions we see *Gezera Shawa* applied as an exegetical technique in order to make one prophecy from two separate prophecies of Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14. For Nephi, as for the Lord himself,[33] the coming forth of the sealed book (Isaiah 29) and the restoration that would follow *meant* the gathering of Israel (Isaiah 11).

It should be noted here that Nephi explains in 1 Nephi 22 additional prophecies of Isaiah to his brothers in terms of the verb *yāsap* from Isaiah 29:14. He begins there by citing Isaiah 29:14: "And after our seed is scattered the Lord God **will proceed** [*yôsīp*] to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles" (1 Nephi 22:8). To this he adds, "wherefore, the Lord God **will proceed** [*yôsīp*] to make bare his arm in the eyes of all nations" (1 Nephi 22:11; citing Isaiah 29:14 and 52:10); "Wherefore, **he will** bring them **again** [*yôsîp*] out of captivity, **and they shall be gathered together** [*wayyēʾāsĕpû*][34] to the lands of their inheritance" (1 Nephi 22:12; compare Isaiah 11:11–12). Nephi's joining Isaiah 52:10 to Isaiah 29:14 is particularly noteworthy here, because he has apparently supplied the verb *yāsap* to Isaiah 52:10, where Isaiah did not previously use that verb. Nephi thus uses the verb form *yôsīp* to draw an equivalence between the Lord's "do[ing] a marvelous work [and a wonder] among the Gentiles" and his "mak[ing] bare his arm in the eyes of the nations." In fact, Nephi saw the Lord's "adding" to do a marvelous work as an apt summation of Isaiah's prophecies regarding the gathering and restoration of Israel, including — and perhaps especially — his brothers' and his own posterity as descendants of Joseph.

Mormon, drawing on the words of Lehi, Nephi, and Isaiah, creates his own clear play on *Joseph* in this vein: "Yea, and surely **shall he**

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32   In addition to the wordplay on Joseph in *Gezera Shawa* in 2 Nephi 29:1, 2 Nephi 29:4 exhibits a wordplay on the name Judah/Jews. See Matthew L. Bowen, "'What Thank They the Jews'? (2 Nephi 29:4): A Note on the Name 'Judah' and Antisemitism," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 12 (2014): 111–125.

33   See further 3 Nephi 21:1–10.

34   "And they shall be gathered": possibly a Niphal form of *ʾāsap*. See HALOT, 1:74.

again [Hebrew *yôsîp*] bring a remnant of the seed of **Joseph** [*yôsēp*] to the knowledge of the Lord their God" (3 Nephi 5:23). 3 Nephi 5:24 continues: "And as surely as the Lord liveth, will he **gather in** [cf. *(wĕ-) ʾāsap*, 'assemble,' Isaiah 11:12] from the four quarters of the earth all the remnant of the seed of Jacob, who are scattered abroad upon all the face of the earth" (3 Nephi 5:23–24). If the underlying verb is *ʾāsap/yēʾāsēp* (rather than *qibbēṣ/yĕqabbēṣ*, the name play on *Joseph* is even richer.

Either way, Mormon's words unmistakably constitute a citation of Isaiah 11:11–12 (cf. 1 Nephi 22:12). For Mormon and his Josephite ancestors, the *nomen* (name) *Joseph* was truly the *omen* of the Lord's "**proceed**[ing] to do a marvelous work," which was to "**set** his hand **again**" to gather Israel — a sure sign of "additional" good things in the latter days.

Benjamin's *Gezera Shawa* Involving His Own Name

As the name of Israel's first royal tribe (as the tribe of King Saul, see 1 Samuel 8–12), the name Benjamin, "son of the right hand" (understanding *-yāmîn* as "right hand" as the place of divine favor, rather than simply "south") also seems appropriate as a Nephite royal name. King Benjamin, in the final climactic movement (Mosiah 5:6–15) of his majestic sermon to the Nephites and Mulekites at the temple in Zarahemla, cites several important texts in a remarkable wordplay on his own name.[35] Like Nephi's wordplays on Joseph in 2 Nephi 25:17 and 29:1, King Benjamin's rhetorical wordplay on his own name employs *Gezera Shawa*:

> And now, these are the words which king **Benjamin** [*Binyāmîn*] desired of them; and therefore he said unto them: Ye have spoken the words that I desired. . . . And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called **the children** [Hebrew *bĕnê*] of Christ, **his sons** [*bānâw*], and **his daughters** [*ûbĕnôtâw*]; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; . . . therefore, ye are born of him and **have become his sons** [*bānâw*] and **his daughters** [*ûbĕnôtâw*]. And under this head ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives. And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this shall be found at

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35   Bowen, "Sons and Daughters at God's Right Hand," 2–13.

the right hand [*yāmîn*] of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for behold, he shall be called by the name of Christ. (Mosiah 5:6–9)

King Benjamin's declaration to his people that they would be "called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you" (Mosiah 5:7) constitutes an unmistakable citation of the royal rebirth formula (sometimes called an adoption formula) of Psalm 2:7: "Thou art my Son [*běnî ʾattâ*]; this day have I begotten thee."

Earlier in the same Psalm, the royal (Davidic) addressee is called the Lord's "anointed" (*měšîḥô*, i.e., his "messiah" or "Christ"; LXX *christos*; Psalm 2:2). The newly enthroned Judahite king thus "took upon himself" the name-title "anointed" (*māšîaḥ*). In other words, he took upon himself the name of "Christ" — which Latter-day Saints covenant their "willingness" to do at baptism[36] and re-covenant their willingness to do in partaking of the sacrament.[37] King Benjamin "likened" this psalm to his audience at the temple in Zarahemla so they too might take upon themselves or "bear" this name (see Mosiah 26:18).[38]

When Benjamin subsequently stated, "And [ye] have become his sons and his daughters" (Mosiah 5:7), he was invoking the covenant rebirth language of 2 Samuel 7:14,[39] where the Lord makes a covenant regarding David's son Solomon, "I will be ['become,' *ʾehyeh*] his father, and he shall be my ['become to me a' *yihyeh-lî*] son [*lěbēn*, literally 'for a son']." A democratized form of the same formula to which Benjamin also seems to allude occurs in Deuteronomy 14:1–2: Ye are children [*bānîm*] of the Lord. … Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee **to be** [*lihěyôt*, 'become'] **a peculiar people**[40] [*ʿam sěgullâ*] unto himself [*lô*, 'his'], **above all the nations** that are upon the

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36   2 Nephi 31:13; D&C 20:37.

37   Moroni 4:3; D&C 20:77.

38   Mosiah 26:18: "Yea, blessed is this people who are willing to bear my name; for in my name shall they be called; and they are mine."

39   Even if this text was part of a pro-Davidic tradition incorporated into a later "Deuteronomistic History" compiled during the exile, as Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, trans. David J. A. Clines, Jane Doull, et al. (1981; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004) and subsequently many other scholars have suggested, a form of this text could have been among the many writings on the brass plates that Lehi brought with him from Jerusalem.

40   The King James translators adopted the reading "*populum peculiarem*" from the Latin Vulgate. Our English word peculiar originally denoted marked or personal "property" and derives from Latin *pecus* ("cattle"). Note that animal ownership is

earth." We recall that King Benjamin had explained to his son Mosiah the purpose of his speech beforehand as follows: "I shall give this people **a name**, that thereby **they may be distinguished** <u>above all the people</u> which the Lord God hath brought out of the land of Jerusalem; and this I do because they have been a diligent people in keeping the commandments of the Lord" (Mosiah 1:11). King Benjamin's citation of Deuteronomy 14:1–2 in Mosiah 1:11 suggests his deliberate use of it in Mosiah 5:7. The "distinguishing" name is the foundation for the "sealing" King Benjamin promises his people in Mosiah 5:15.[41]

The key terms that Benjamin cites from Psalm 2:7, 2 Samuel 7:14, and Deuteronomy 14:1–2 are "son" (Hebrew *bēn*) or "children" (*bānîm*) — the latter term includes both sons and daughters (compare how Paul expands the royal covenant formula of 2 Samuel 7:14 in 2 Corinthians 6:18)[42] — and the verb *hayâ* (a verb that, as Graham S. Ogden has noted, "indicates transition from one sphere of existence to another" and with the formulaic preposition *lĕ*-) "conveys the idea of 'becoming.'"[43] More recently, Seock-Tae Sohn has argued that *hayâ* used in the covenant rebirth (or adoption) context "is both connecting and transitional in describing the concept of covenant."[44]

This is what John later describes as Christ giving "power [*exousia* = authority] to become[45] the sons of God [*tekna theou* = "children of God,"

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one of the metaphors King Benjamin uses here at the end of his sermon (see Mosiah 5:14).

41   See Bowen, "Becoming Sons and Daughters at God's Right Hand," 8–10; on the "sealing" idiom used in Mosiah 5:15 and Alma 34:35, see John Gee, "Book of Mormon Word Usage: 'Seal You His,'" *Insights* 22/1 (2002): 4.

42   In 2 Corinthians 6:18, Paul democratizes the royal covenant formula of 2 Samuel 7:14 to include the early saints, both male and female. King Benjamin similarly adapts the royal covenant on the occasion of his son's (Mosiah's) enthronement to expand "son" to "his sons and his daughters." This terminological expansion is not only emphatically gender inclusive but a remarkable "likening" or application of a key — perhaps *the* key — Davidic christological text in the corpus of the Hebrew bible.

43   Graham S. Ogden, "Time, and the Verb היה in O.T. Prose," *Vetus Testamentum* 21/4 (1971): 45.

44   Seock-Tae Sohn, "'I Will Be Your God and You Will Be My People': The Origin and Background of the Covenant Formula," in *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine*, ed. Robert Chazan, William W. Hallo, and Lawrence H. Schiffman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns: 1999), 364.

45   Greek *genesthai* = Hebrew *lihĕyôt*; the verb *gi(g)nomai (gi[g]nomai)* is used in a majority of instances in the LXX to render the Hebrew verb היה into Greek.

rendering Hebrew *bĕnê ʾĕlōhîm*],[46] even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12–13; cf. Mosiah 5:7). Benjamin's use of the covenant rebirth language in his speech is most striking because it merges the royal (2 Samuel 7:14) and democratized (Deuteronomy 14:1–2) forms in a royal context.[47] In other words, he makes his own son's divine rebirth, coronation, and enthronement the occasion of the conditional divine rebirth and coronation, and enthronement of his people — predicated on their "retain[ing] the name written always in [their] hearts."[48] It constituted something of a temple endowment: they were all becoming sons and daughters who were ascending to the true throne — the throne of the divine Son, the "throne of grace" (Hebrew 4:16), of which the "mercy-seat" (*kappōret*, atonement covering-piece) was a type.

To his *Gezera Shawa* of Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14/Deuteronomy 14:1–2, King Benjamin then adds another promise: "Whosoever doeth this shall be found at **the right hand** [*yāmîn*] of God" (Mosiah 5:9). The phrase "at the right hand [of God]" in the Hebrew Bible occurs in Psalms 16:11 and 110:1 as a reference to the place of divine favor. The coronation/enthronement context of King Benjamin's speech suggests that he is specifically alluding to Psalm 110:1: "The Lord [Yahweh] said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand [*lîmînî* (*lĕ + *yĕmînî*)], until I make thine enemies thy footstool." One way of interpreting this verse is that the Israelite king sat (was enthroned) at Yahweh's right hand. However, a first-century Jewish (and a Latter-day Saint) interpretation

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See Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (Including the Apocryphal Books)*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 256–67. Deuteronomy 4:19 LXX [KJV Deuteronomy 4:20] also uses the form *genesthai*, and it may be to this text — in addition to 2 Samuel 14:7 — that John specifically alludes.

46   The Greek term *tekna*, plural of *teknon* ("child"), is gender neutral. This use of this term, rather than plural *huioi* ("sons"), perhaps represents John's efforts to include both genders, as both King Benjamin (Mosiah 5:7) and Paul (2 Corinthians 6:18) do.

47   On the occasion of his son's royal coronation, Benjamin's democratization of the enthronement ceremony and his citation of Deuteronomic language elsewhere in his speech and in his paranesis to his sons suggests that he specifically had some version of 2 Samuel 7:14 and Deuteronomy 14:1–2 in mind. On King Benjamin's use of democratizing language, see John W. Welch, "Democratizing Forces in King Benjamin's Speech," in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), 110–26.

48   Mosiah 15:11–12.

of this verse would read it thus: "Jehovah[49] said to David's Lord (= the Messiah), sit thou at my right hand [*lîmînî* (**lĕ* + *yĕmînî*)], until I make thine enemies thy footstool."[50] Within either interpretive scenario, Psalm 110:1 is describing a divine enthronement following a divine birth (or rebirth) like the divine birth described in Psalm 2:7. Divine birth is also mentioned in Psalm 110:3, further suggesting that King Benjamin had Psalm 110 in mind.

Benjamin joins Psalm 110:1 to his previous *Gezera Shawa* on Psalm 2:7, Deuteronomy 14:1–2, and 2 Samuel 7:14, not on the basis of the first element, *bēn* ("son") but instead on the second element in his name, *yāmîn* ("right hand"), in a clever wordplay: the royal covenant entailed not merely becoming a son or daughter of God, but also enthronement at the "right hand" of God — becoming a "Benjamin."

Thus, the philological elements of King Benjamin's name apparently guided his selection and ordering of the royal/covenant texts quoted. Although a covenant speech might be expected to contain covenant filiation language similar to Deuteronomy 14:1–2, and a coronation ceremony might be expected to allude to texts like Psalm 2:7, 2 Samuel 7:14, and even Psalm 110, it is the application of royal coronation/enthronement texts to his temple audience — texts that grant the possibility, contingent upon individual faithfulness, that they might all become kings and queens, sons and daughters at the right hand — that makes Benjamin's speech revolutionary.

From an ancient Israelite perspective, Benjamin was already a royal "son" (*bēn*) who was already at the right hand of God just as Mosiah was becoming a "son" at "the right hand — a "Benjamin" through his coronation on that very day. Benjamin instead deemphasizes this idea, teaching the people about the truly royal and divine Son, Jesus Christ, and how this Son's atonement made it possible for all of them, through covenant obedience, to become the Son's sons and daughters and to be enthroned with the Son at God the Father's right hand. Benjamin's people did not likely miss the point of King Benjamin's jarring application of these royal texts to them or the unifying principle behind the texts' quotation: "son(s)" (and "daughters") and the allusion to God's "right hand" (Psalm 110:1) — the elements of their king's name. Reflecting on

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49   In a Latter-day Saint reading of Psalm 110:1, Jehovah (Yahweh) represents God the Father, who addresses the Messiah (himself) by divine investiture of authority: the Father enthrones his Son as divine vice-regent.

50   Reading "my Lord" in Psalm 110:1 as the Messiah, rather than David, is required to make sense of Jesus's question to the Pharisees. See Matthew 22:41–46 and Luke 20:41–44. On this interpretation, see also Acts 2:33–36.

the themes of Mosiah 1–6, we as Mormon's implied literary audience can also appreciate them.

The occasion for Benjamin's speech was his own son's enthronement as Benjamin himself declares: "The Lord God … hath commanded me that I should declare unto you this day [cf. Psalm 2:7], that my son Mosiah is a king and a ruler over you" (Mosiah 2:30). However, from the outset King Benjamin had made an unprecedented effort to put himself on equal grounds with his people (see Mosiah 2:26), as stipulated by Deuteronomy 17:20.[51] By democratizing the language of the royal covenant and enthronement texts on the occasion of his own son's "adoption"/"rebirth" and enthronement, including the juxtaposition of texts, the key covenant terms ("son," "right hand") which constitute the elements of his own name, King Benjamin taught his temple audience — his Nephite and Mulekite subjects — a masterful typological lesson on the necessity of their own rebirth into Christ's heavenly family so they might receive, as heirs with him, every blessing "in the covenant of the Father."[52] After all, they were not just receiving the name of their king, "Benjamin," but were taking upon them, as royal sons and daughters, the name-title of the true "Son of the right hand" — i.e., "Christ." In so doing, they all were becoming *Benjamins* ("son[s and daughters] of the right hand"); *Mosiahs*[53] ("saviors")[54] and *messiahs/christs* ("anointed ones").[55]

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51 Deuteronomy 17:14–20 constitutes the so-called Deuteronomic Law of the King. Amaleki infers that Mosiah I and Benjamin were outstanding representatives of the Deuteronomic king. Similarly, between the positive examples of King Benjamin and King Mosiah II, Mormon juxtaposes the negative example of King Noah.

52 3 Nephi 21:4; Moroni 10:33.

53 John W. Welch, "What Was a 'Mosiah'?" in *Re-exploring the Book of Mormon: A Decade of New Research* (ed. John W. Welch; Provo, UT: FARMS; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 105–107.

54 In Mosiah 3:20, Benjamin states in the context of his son Mosiah's ascension to the throne: "I say unto you, that the time shall come when the knowledge of a Savior [*môšîaʿ*] shall spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" — a wordplay on his son's name. King Benjamin's point is that Christ is the Savior [capital "S"]. His people, by taking upon them the name of Christ, were becoming saviors [small "s"], as we do today. For Latter-day Saints this idea is particularly relevant. In Obadiah 1:21 it is prophesied that "saviours [*môšiʿîm*, or, 'Mosiahs'] shall come up on mount Zion [cf. the Latter-day temple] to judge the mount of Esau [i.e., perhaps, help the dead who died outside the covenant for prepare for the final judgment through the extension of sacred ordinances that offer them the opportunity to come into the covenant]; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (cf. D&C 103:9–10 and the English language wordplay on "saviors" and "savor" there).

55 There is evidently an additional subtle wordplay running throughout King Benjamin's sermon on Mosiah [*môšîaʿ*, "savior"] and Messiah/Christ [*māšîaḥ*]

"Because of Thy Son": *Gezera Shawas* of Zenos, Zenock [Zenoch], Isaiah, and Psalms

"Son" is the terminological basis of another *Gezera Shawa* by Alma the Younger. Two of the dominant issues that confronted Alma during the Zoramite apostasy was their rejection of a Messiah or Christ and their failure to pray and worship apart from weekly rote prayers given atop the Rameumptom. In teaching the Zoramites a better praxis of prayer, Alma uses *Gezera Shawa* when he draws together two now otherwise unattested passages of scripture from the brass plates: the prayer of Zenos and a statement from Zenoch. The lexical basis for the juxtaposition of these two passages of scripture are forms of the word mercy/merciful and the phrase "because of thy Son":

> And thou didst hear me because of mine afflictions and my sincerity; and 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)

Alma here emphasizes the phrase "because of thy Son" as key to his whole argument: "And now Alma said unto them: Do ye believe those scriptures which have been written by them of old? Behold, if ye do, ye must believe what Zenos said; for, behold he said: Thou hast turned away thy judgments **because of thy Son**" (Alma 33:12). He again appeals to the authority of Zenos's words which some Zoramites still must have accepted as scripture: "Now behold, my brethren, I would ask if ye have read the scriptures? If ye have, how can ye disbelieve on the Son of God?" Then he invokes Zenock [or Zenoch] as his second witness: "For it is not written that Zenos alone spake of these things, but Zenock also spake of these things — for behold, he said: Thou art angry, O Lord, with this people, because they will not understand thy **mercies** which thou hast bestowed upon them **because of thy Son**" (Alma 33:15–16). Alma cites Zenock [Zenoch] precisely because the latter's use of the expression "because of thy Son" matches Zenos's use of the same phrase in his prayer. Their shared use of "merciful"/"mercy"/"mercies" provides a further lexical basis for Alma's exegesis. Alma concludes that the law of witnesses has been met: "And now, my brethren, ye see that a second prophet of old has testified of the Son of God, and because the people would not understand his words they stoned him to death" (Alma 33:17).

Compare Nephi (or Lehi's) wordplay (paronomasia) in 1 Nephi 10:4: "… even a Messiah [*māšîaḥ*], or, in other words, a Savior [*môšîaʿ*] of the world."

Zenock had, moreover, sealed his testimony with his own blood. For good measure, Alma will also "appeal"[56] to Moses's testimony in the form of the brazen serpent as a typological third witness (see Alma 33:19–22).

Jacob's Use of *Gezera Shawa* as an Interpretive Lens for Zenos's Allegory

Significantly, this is not the first time that the words of Zenos are associated with the use of *Gezera Shawa*. In creating an introduction for, and a lens through which to interpret, his full length quotation of Zenos's allegory of the olive trees (Jacob 5), Jacob creates a *Gezera Shawa* which joins together portions of two prophecies of Isaiah (Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16) together with Psalm 118:22 based on shared words like *ʾeben* (Hebrew "stone" a homonym of *bēn*, "son"), to create a single prophecy about Jesus Christ (see Jacob 4:15–17).

When we also consider Jacob's mention of Abraham's offering of his "son" Isaac in the likeness of God and his "Only Begotten Son" (Jacob 4:5, 11) — which, as I have suggested elsewhere, is the etiological foundation of the ancient Israelite temple[57] — and in the threefold repetition of the verb "build" (Hebrew *bānâ < *bny*, Jacob 4:15–17) juxtaposed with this *Gezera Shawa,* we can see Jacob unfolding an elaborate wordplay. Jacob's wordplay emphasizes Christ as the royal "son" and stone (*ʾeben*), or corner stone, on which a dynasty, emblemized by a temple made of "stones" — Israel's "sons" and "daughters" — is built. Zenos's allegory is an extended parable of how fallen men and women are made divine sons and daughters (i.e., the "natural fruit" or posterity made "good, even like as it was in the beginning")[58] through the Atonement of the Son, Jesus Christ.[59]

Finally, it should be noted that Jacob deploys *Gezera Shawa* again at the conclusion of Zenos's allegory, juxtaposing Isaiah 11:11 and a passage that he has just quoted from Zenos (Jacob 5:61–71): "And <u>*the day*</u> that he shall **<u>set</u>** his hand **<u>again</u>** [*yôsîp*] the second time to recover

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56   Cf. Amulek's language in Alma 34:7–8, where Amulek describes the fulfilment of the Law of Witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:5) and then adds his own testimony as a fourth witness.

57   Matthew L. Bowen, "'In the Mount of the Lord It Shall Be Seen' and 'Provided': Theophany and Sacrifice as the Etiological Foundation of the Temple in Israelite and Latter-day Saint Tradition," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture 5* (2015): 201–228.

58   Jacob 5:75.

59   Matthew L. Bowen, "'I Have Done According to My Will': Reading Jacob 5 as a Temple Text" (forthcoming).

his people, *is the day*, yea, even *the last time*, that the servants of the Lord shall go forth in his power, to nourish and prune his vineyard; and after that the end soon cometh" (Jacob 6:2). This citation begins a string of scriptural citations based on the word(s) "day"/"time" (possibly both Hebrew *yôm*): Isaiah 65:2 and Zenos's similar image (Jacob 5:47), cited in Jacob 6:4; Psalm 95:7, cited in Jacob 6:5–6; and then Isaiah 65:2/Jacob 5:47 again in Jacob 6:7. Although the primary lexical basis for the *Gezera Shawa* of Isaiah 11:11 and Zenos's description of the last "time"/"day" (Jacob 5:62-71) is the term "day"/"time," a secondary lexical basis for the *Gezera Shawa* may be the verb *yāsap — yôsîp* in Isaiah 11:11 and the possible idiomatic use of *yāsap*, "do something again," used repeatedly in Jacob 5:62–71 (3 x in v. 63, 67–68) and throughout Zenos's allegory (see also Jacob 5:29, 33, 58, 60–61 [4 x], 73–75 [3 x], 77). If so, Jacob's *Gezera Shawa* in Jacob 6:2 would also constitute a deliberate wordplay on the name "Joseph" like those employed by his brother Nephi.[60]

Conclusion and Pragmatics

Recognizing Nephi's repeated exegetical juxtaposition of Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14 as *Gezera Shawa* (2 Nephi 25:17; 29:1) on the basis of the verb *yāsap* (in the forms *yôsîp* and *yôsīp*) helps us to appreciate how "after the manner of the things of the Jews" (2 Nephi 25:5) two or more disparate prophecies can be seen as fulfilled in a single divine act of restoration — or rather, in a single person — a "Joseph" (*yôsēp*). Similarly, recognizing King Benjamin's wordplay on his own name as a *Gezera Shawa* in the royal context of his temple sermon helps us appreciate how disparate royal covenant texts like Psalm 2:7, Psalm 110:1–3, and 2 Samuel 7:14 can be drawn together on the basis of shared words and onomastic elements. Moreover, it helps us appreciate how these texts can then be reinterpreted — even democratized — through the lens of Deuteronomy 14:1–2 and "likened" to a temple audience in order to help that audience, as a kind of endowment, prepare to become "sons and daughters" at God's "right hand" — i.e., "Benjamins." As Jacob, the Nephite high priest and brother of Nephi, recognized, this is precisely what Zenos's allegory of the olive trees is all about.

Like Nephi, Jacob, Alma, Mark, Paul, and the Savior himself, we can increase our understanding and appreciation of the words of Isaiah, Zenos, the Psalms, and other scriptures by adding *Gezera Shawa* to our scripture study repertoire — the juxtaposing of different passages

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60   Isaiah's and Zenos's idiomatic use of *yāsap* may also constitute wordplay on the name "Joseph." That possibility will be explored in a forthcoming study.

sharing the same word(s) and phraseology and integrating them for our "profit and learning" (see 1 Nephi 13:23; 2 Nephi 4:15).

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