



Type: Journal Article

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## “That They May Once Again Be a Delightful People”: The Concept of Again Becoming the Seed of Joseph (Words of Mormon 1:8 and Mormon 7:4–5)

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Source: *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship*,  
Volume 61 (2024)

Published by: The Interpreter Foundation

Page(s): 165–190

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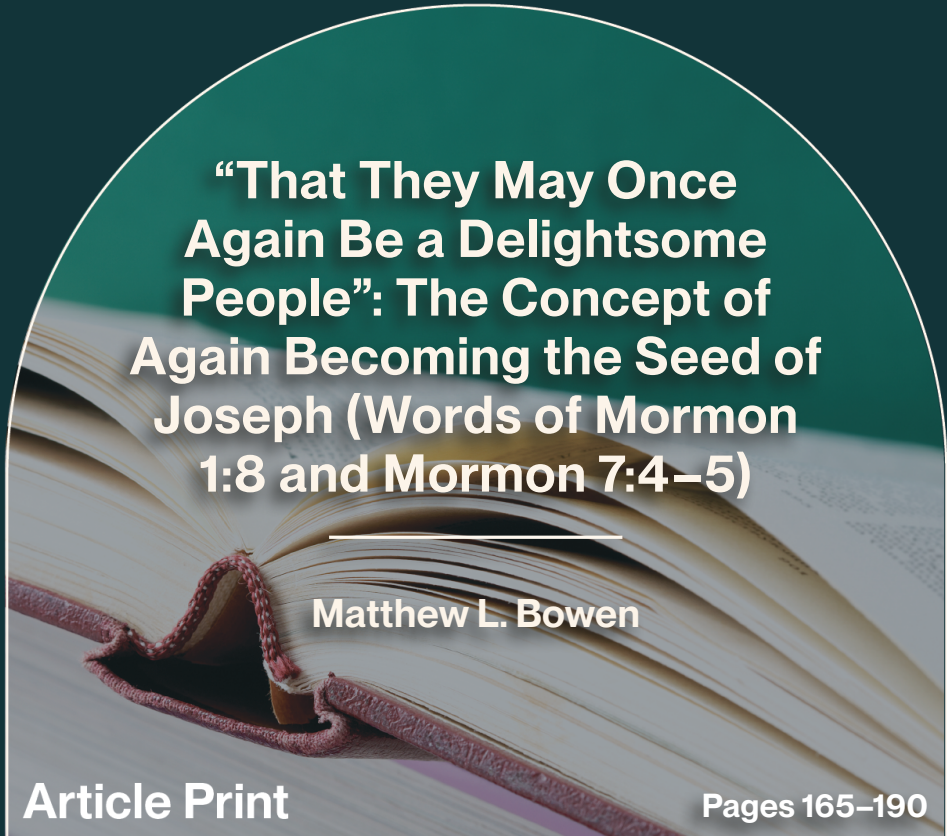


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# Interpreter

**A Journal of Latter-day Saint  
Faith and Scholarship**



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**Matthew L. Bowen**

**Article Print**

**Pages 165–190**

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ISSN 2372-1227 (print)  
ISSN 2372-126X (online)

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# “That They May Once Again Be a Delightful People”: The Concept of *Again* Becoming the Seed of Joseph (Words of Mormon 1:8 and Mormon 7:4–5)

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Matthew L. Bowen

**Abstract:** *In Words of Mormon 1:8, Mormon declares, “And my prayer to God is concerning my brethren, that they may once again come to the knowledge of God, yea, the redemption of Christ; that they may once again be a delightful people.” The expression “that they may once again” plausibly reflects the Hebrew idiom wayyôsipû or wayyô-sipû ‘ôd. Mormon’s apparent double-use of the wayyôsipû (‘ôd) idiom in Words of Mormon 1:8 (or some Nephite scribal equivalent), like 2 Nephi 5:2–3, recalls language in the Joseph story (Genesis 37:5, 8). The original Lamanite covenant, as an extension of the Abrahamic covenant, involved the complete abandonment of fraternal hatred and the violent means through which they had given expression to it (see Alma 24:12–13; 15–18); Mormon declared that a similar commitment would again be necessary when the descendants of Lehi (“the remnant of this people who are spared,” Mormon 7:1) were restored to the covenant in the future (Mormon 7:4–5). Thus, Mormon’s prayer—in the tradition of the prayers of Nephi, Enos, and others—is that the descendants of the Lamanites (and Nephite dissenters) would, through iterative divine action, regain their covenant identity as the seed of Joseph and partakers of the Abrahamic covenant.*

**A** previous study<sup>1</sup> proposes that Nephi permuted biblical wordplay on the name Joseph from Genesis 37:5, 8 (“*and they* hated him *yet the more* [wayyôsipû ‘ôd]”) as a means of drawing autobiographical parallels between himself and his ancestor Joseph (the patriarch)

throughout his small plates record.<sup>2</sup> Nephi’s use of this biblical word-play culminates in the statement that marked a tipping point in his relationship with his brothers, paving the way for a final separation in mortality from them: “Behold, it came to pass that I, Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord my God, because of the anger of my brethren. But behold, their anger did increase [*yāsap*] against me, insomuch that they did seek to take away my life” (2 Nephi 5:2).

The name Joseph (“may he [God] add”) derives from the verb *yāsap*, which means “to add” or “increase,”<sup>3</sup> but can also have the more nuanced senses “to continue to do, carry on doing” something or “to do [something] again, more.”<sup>4</sup> I have further proposed that Nephi used a wordplay on the name of Joseph in terms of *yāsap* when he juxtaposed quotations from Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14 in 2 Nephi 25:17, 21 (“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 [*yôsîp*] to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men . . . that the promise may be fulfilled unto *Joseph*”) and 2 Nephi 29:1 (“But behold, there shall be many — at that day when I shall proceed [*yôsîp*] to do a marvelous work among them, that I may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men, that I may set my hand again [*\*wě’ôsîp yādî*] the second time to recover my people”).<sup>5</sup> Nephi states, in connection with his averred purpose in making the small plates (see 1 Nephi 6:4), “It sufficeth me to say that we are descendants of *Joseph* [*yōsēp*” (1 Nephi 6:2). Mormon records his “prayer” in connection with his affixion of these same small plates to his abridged record (the plates of Mormon, see Words of Mormon 1:7).

In this brief study, I will argue that Mormon’s “prayer” on behalf of his “brethren” in Words of Mormon 1:8 has several interrelated texts in view. In particular, Mormon draws on Joseph’s twofold wordplay on Joseph/*wayyôsîpû* in Genesis 37:5 and 8, Nephi’s permutation of that wordplay in 2 Nephi 5:2, Nephi’s later Isaiah-based wordplay on Joseph/*yôsîp/yôsîp*, and the *yôsîp*-motif in Zenos’s allegory (as preserved in Jacob 5). All of these influence Mormon’s language when he states, “And my prayer to God is concerning my brethren, that they may once again [cf. *wayyôsîpû*] come to the knowledge of God, yea, the redemption of Christ; that they may once again [cf. *wayyôsîpû*] be [become] a delightsome people” (Words of Mormon 1:8). Mormon hoped that the descendants of the Lamanites and the Nephite dissenters who became Lamanites would *once again* assume the

Abrahamic covenant burden of brotherhood, as Joseph in Egypt had done toward the brothers who hated him and as the Nephites long had done. A significant precedent suggested to him that such was possible: the people of king Anti-Nephi-Lehi had assumed Joseph-like brotherhood by covenant: "Let us stain our swords *no more* with the blood of our brethren . . . or perhaps, *if we should* stain our swords *again* they can *no more* be washed bright through the blood of the Son of our great God" (Alma 24:12–13); "and this they did, vouching and covenanting with God, that rather than shed the blood of their brethren they would give up their own lives; and rather than take away from a brother they would give unto him" (Alma 24:18).

Thus, I further propose that the iterative language recalling the name Joseph in Words of Mormon 1:8 finds support at the conclusion of Mormon's own personal record (on the plates of Mormon), possibly written near the same time: "Know ye that ye must lay down your weapons of war, and *delight no more* in the shedding of blood, and *take them not again*. . . . *Know ye that ye must come to the knowledge of your fathers*, and repent of all your sins and iniquities, and *believe in Jesus Christ*, that he is the Son of God" (Mormon 7:4–5; cf. Alma 24:12–13; 15–18). King Anti-Nephi-Lehi's and Mormon's use of iterative language comparable to forms of Hebrew *yôsîp* and *lô' yôsîp* in Alma 24:12–13 and Words of Mormon 1:8 and Mormon 7:4–5 hints at the descendants of Joseph (Manasseh and Ephraim), who have lost their identity as such, but have the capacity of regaining their identity as "Joseph" (*yôsêp*) and belonging to the house of Israel as the people of king Anti-Nephi-Lehi had done, through the restored (Abrahamic) covenant knowledge of Jesus Christ. Moreover, this language offers hints at the "Joseph" (*yôsêp*) through whom this latter-day restoration will come.

### **Genesis 27:41 and 37:5, 8 and the Fraternal Hatred Motif in Genesis and Nephi's Small Plates**

In the Abrahamic patriarchal narratives, sibling rivalry characterized the relationships of Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, and the sons of Jacob vis-à-vis Joseph. In the case of Esau and Jacob, and Joseph and his brothers, the rivalry turned to hatred and planned violence: "And Esau *hated* Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob" (Genesis 27:41). The blessing that Jacob obtained from Isaac for which Esau hated



him included, “Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother’s sons bow down to thee” (Genesis 27:29). In other words, the right to rule constituted a key aspect of the birthright blessing at the heart of the sibling rivalry in the Esau-Jacob story.

The hatred that Joseph’s brothers held for him revolved around the very same issue. The brothers did not simply begrudge Joseph their father’s favoritism or his spiritual gifts, though they certainly did begrudge him both. Even more, they resented the fact that Joseph’s spiritual gifts forecast a future in which they “did obeisance” or “bowed down” to him (Genesis 37:7; on the fulfillment of this prophetic dream, see Genesis 42:6; 44:14; 47:31; 50:18; Genesis 48:10 JST; Doctrine and Covenants 133:30–34). Hence the narrator’s double emphasis on their “added” hatred: “And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more”; “And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words” (Genesis 37:5, 8).

An important dimension in these patriarchal narratives was the resolution of that fraternal hatred. The arc of Jacob’s biography includes reconciliation with Esau in a divine embrace (“And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept,” Genesis 33:4), after his wrestle with a divine “man” at Peniel. This occasion was also marked by Jacob’s exclamation, “I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me” (Genesis 33:10). The arc of Joseph’s biography is only complete with his brothers supplicating Joseph for forgiveness in what certainly qualifies as one of the most moving scenes in scripture:

And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father. And when Joseph’s brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, *Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.* And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, *Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.* And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, *Behold, we be thy servants.* And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for

you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them. (Genesis 50:14–21; cf. 1 Nephi 7:20–21; 17:55)

Nephi, unlike Joseph, remained unreconciled to his brothers during his lifetime. Nevertheless, we can see something of a plaintive parallel to the forgiveness scene in Genesis 50:14–21, a scene that he had explicitly invoked previously in his autobiography (see 1 Nephi 7:20–21; 17:55), when he mentions his prayers on behalf of his people: "For I pray continually for them by day, and *mine eyes water my pillow by night*, because of them; and I cry unto my God in faith, and I know that he will hear my cry." That "my people" here — *am* = "people, kin" — ultimately includes the descendants of his brothers (cf. "my beloved brethren," 2 Nephi 33:10, 13) may reasonably be inferred from elsewhere (see especially 1 Nephi 13:30; cf. Alma 45:10–14). Nephi's assumption of the responsibilities of brotherhood meant to "labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, *and also our brethren*, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God" (2 Nephi 25:23), in spite of fraternal hatred, so that they might "know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins" (2 Nephi 25:26).

Nephi's successors were also deeply concerned about the issue of generational fraternal hatred. Jacob "concludes" his personal record

by saying that the time passed away with us, and also our lives passed away like as it were unto us a dream, we being a lonesome and a solemn people, wanderers, cast out from Jerusalem, born in tribulation, in a wilderness, and *hated of our brethren*, which caused wars and contentions; wherefore, we did mourn out our days. (Jacob 7:26)

When Enos, the son of Jacob, appeals to the story of the patriarch Jacob at Peniel and his subsequent reconciliation with Esau (Genesis 32–33) with its wordplay on Jacob (his father's name, *ya'äqōb*) in terms of "wrestling" (*wayyē'ābēq/bēhē'ābēqō < 'bq*), "struggling" (*šārītā < śry/śrr*, Israel), and "embracing" (*wayḥabbēqēhû < ḥbq*),<sup>6</sup> he clearly does so in the hope that the Nephites can similarly be reconciled to their "brethren," the Lamanites.<sup>7</sup> (The association of Enos with the patriarch Jacob in terms of the issue of fraternal hatred and reconciliation will be discussed later in this paper.)

The motivation for Nephi's appeal to the Joseph narrative appears



to stem from the Lord's promise to Nephi when he first "visited" him: "And inasmuch as thou shalt keep my commandments, thou shalt be made a ruler and a teacher over thy brethren" (1 Nephi 2:22). Laman and Lemuel first become angry with Nephi over the loss of their father's property (property they had once stood to inherit) and Nephi's refusal to give up on obtaining the brass plates:

And it came to pass that *Laman was angry with me*, and also with my father; *and also was Lemuel*, for he hearkened unto the words of Laman. Wherefore Laman and Lemuel did speak many hard words unto us, their younger brothers, and they did smite us even with a rod. (1 Nephi 3:28)

An angel necessarily intervenes at this point and, as Nephi reports it, reiterates the Lord's earlier promise to him regarding the right to rule:

And it came to pass as they smote us with a rod, behold, an angel of the Lord came and stood before them, and he spake unto them, saying: Why do ye smite your younger brother with a rod? *Know ye not that the Lord hath chosen him* to be a ruler over you, and this because of your iniquities? Behold *ye shall* go up to Jerusalem *again* [tōsipû/tōsipû], and the Lord will deliver Laban into your hands. (1 Nephi 3:29)

Like Joseph, Nephi had been chosen to "rule" or "have dominion" (both from *māšal*) over his brothers (see especially Genesis 37:8, "shalt thou have dominion [tišmōl]?").

In immediate juxtaposition to an apparent use of the *yôsîp* (+ verbal component) idiom, Nephi first echoes or alludes to the biblical word-play on Joseph: "And after the angel had departed, Laman and Lemuel *again began* to murmur" (1 Nephi 3:30). Nephi begins to "rule" or exercise leadership over his brothers by "sp[eaking] unto [his] brethren" (1 Nephi 4:1) and exhorting them to action (1 Nephi 4:1–3). As much as it reflects their unbelief, their reaction betrays an utter reluctance to yield to his leadership: "Now when I had spoken these words, they were *yet wroth*, and *did still continue* to murmur" (1 Nephi 4:4).

Their tendency to be angry at Nephi's leadership amplifies over time. When a rift emerges between Laman's and Nephi's respective leadership on the return trip with Ishmael's family to the basecamp in the valley of Lemuel, Nephi recalls that "they were exceedingly wroth, and they did bind me with cords, for they sought to take away my life, that they might leave me in the wilderness *to be devoured by wild beasts*" (1 Nephi 7:16). This statement is almost certainly intended to

recall Joseph's brothers' conspiracy in Genesis 37:20: "Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, *Some evil beast hath devoured him*: and we shall see what will become of his dreams." There follows an amplified wordplay on *yôsîp* (+ verbal component): "I stood before my brethren, and *I spake* unto them *again*. And it came to pass that *they* were angry with me *again* [*wayyôsîpû*] (1 Nephi 7:18–19). Nephi's recollection here particularly recalls Genesis 37:8: "And they hated him *yet the more* for his dreams, and *for his words*" (see table 1).

**Table 1.** Nephi's adaptation of biblical wordplay on Joseph.

Genesis 37:5, 8	2 Nephi 5:1–3
<p>And <i>Joseph</i> [<i>yôsêp</i>] dreamed a dream, and he told it <i>his brethren</i>: <i>and they</i> hated him <i>yet the more</i> [<i>wayyôsîpû 'ôd</i>],</p> <p>And his brethren said to him, <i>Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion [rule] over us? And they</i> hated him <i>yet the more</i> [<i>wayyôsîpû 'ôd</i>] for his dreams, and <i>for his words</i>.</p>	<p>Behold, it came to pass that I, Nephi, did cry <i>much</i> unto the Lord my God, because of the anger of <i>my brethren</i>. But behold, their anger <i>did increase</i> [<i>yâsap/hôsîp</i>] against me, insomuch that they did seek to take away my life. Yea, they did murmur against me, saying: <i>Our younger brother thinks to rule over us</i>; and we have had much trial because of him; wherefore, <i>now let us slay him, that we may not be afflicted more</i> because of his words. For behold, <i>we will not have him to be our ruler; for it belongs unto us, who are the elder brethren, to rule over this people</i>.</p>

Mormon includes the arguments of later Nephite dissidents invoking forms of this same Lamanite claim to the right to rule centuries later (e.g., Ammoron in Alma 54:17–18, 24 ["the right to the government"] and Giddianhi in 3 Nephi 3:10 ["their rights of government"]). Zeniff reports that the issue regarding the right to rule constituted one of the Lamanites' primary grievances against the Nephites that motivated the formers' unceasing efforts to subjugate the latter: "And again, they were wroth with him when they had arrived in the promised land, because they said that he had taken the ruling of the people out of their hands; and they sought to kill him. . . . And thus they have taught their children that they should hate them, and that they should murder them, and that they should rob and plunder them, and do all they could to destroy them; therefore they have an eternal hatred towards the children of Nephi" (Mosiah 10:15, 17).

Long before the final fracturing of their relationship, Nephi foresaw that once his brothers' hardheartedness had evolved into multigenerational hatred, it would have devastating long-term consequences.

Nephi states, “I beheld and saw that the seed of my brethren did contend against my seed” (1 Nephi 12:19), a scenario repeated throughout Lamanite and Nephite history. Nephi then relates, “And the angel [i.e., the angelic guide in the vision] said unto me: Behold *these shall dwindle in unbelief*. And it came to pass that I beheld, after they had dwindled in unbelief they became a dark, and loathsome, and a filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations.” As noted elsewhere,<sup>8</sup> the Hebrew collocation that would underlie the English word “unbelief” would most plausibly, if not likely, be *lō’-’ēmūn*, as found in Deuteronomy 32:20, a text that describes the apostasy of the children Israel. They are described there as *bānîm lō’-’ēmūn bam*, “children in whom is no faith” — i.e., “children in whom there is no faithfulness” or “children in whom there is unbelief.”

Nephi’s description of his brothers’ descendants as “a dark, and loathsome, and a filthy” people provides the backdrop for his later prophecies such as “many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be [become] a white<sup>9</sup> and a delightsome people” (2 Nephi 30:6). Mormon directly appeals to the language of 1 Nephi 12:12–13 when he foretells that “this people shall be scattered, and shall become a dark, a filthy, and a loathsome people, beyond the description of that which ever hath been amongst us, yea, even that which hath been among the *Lamanites*, and this because of their *unbelief* and idolatry” (Mormon 5:15), again playing on Lamanites in terms of the *lō’-’ēmūn* idea. Note that Nephi’s and Mormon’s respective use of “white” and “dark” need not be understood as racial designations.<sup>10</sup> Mormon continues,

*They were once a delightsome people, and they had Christ for their shepherd; yea, they were led even by God the Father. But now, behold, they are led about by Satan, even as chaff is driven before the wind, or as a vessel is tossed about upon the waves, without sail or anchor, or without anything wherewith to steer her; and even as she is, so are they. (Mormon 5:17–18)*

Mormon knew that Lamanite-Nephite cultural degeneracy and covenantal delinquency would get far worse before it would get better, but he had faith that there could and would be a great reversal. Hence his prayer “that they *may once again* be a delightsome people” (Words of Mormon 1:8), using the language of Nephi (via Isaiah and Zenos) and wordplay originating in Genesis.

## Enos's Prayer: "I Cried unto Him Continually"/ "They Were Continually Seeking to Destroy Us"

Nephi mentions armed conflict with his brothers and their families during his lifetime (2 Nephi 5:34). Near the end of his life Jacob, the brother of Nephi, described how far the relations between those who had supported Laman's claims to leadership and those who followed Nephi had deteriorated: "And it came to pass that many means were devised to reclaim and restore the Lamanites to the knowledge of the truth; but it all was vain, for they delighted in wars and bloodshed, and they had an eternal hatred against us, their brethren. And they sought by the power of their arms to destroy us *continually*" (Jacob 7:24).

Decades later, Enos uses the language of his father, Jacob, to describe relations with the Lamanites (see Enos 1:2). He also uses language that evokes the language of his uncle, Nephi (see table 2).

**Table 2.** Enos's adaptation of Nephi's adaptation of Genesis 37.

2 Nephi 5:2; 33:4; Genesis 37:5, 8, 20	Enos 1:15–17, 20
<p>Behold, it came to pass that <i>I, Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord my God, because of the anger of my brethren. But behold, their anger did increase</i> [cf. <i>yāsap/hōsîp</i>] against me, insomuch that they did seek to take away my life. Yea, they did murmur against me, saying: Our younger brother thinks to rule over us; and we have had much trial because of him; wherefore, now let us slay him, <i>that we may not be afflicted more</i> [cf. <i>wělo' nōsîp</i>] because of his words.</p> <p>For <i>I pray continually for them</i> [my people] by day, and mine eyes water my pillow by night, because of them; and <i>I cry unto my God in faith, and I know that he will hear my cry.</i></p> <p>And Joseph [<i>yōsēp</i>] dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: <i>and they hated him yet the more</i> [<i>wayyōsipū 'ôd</i>]. . . . And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. "Come now therefore, and let us slay him . . ."</p>	<p><i>I cried unto him continually, for he had said unto me: Whatsoever thing ye shall ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive in the name of Christ, ye shall receive it. And I had faith, and I did cry unto God that he would preserve the records; and he covenanted with me that he would bring them forth unto the Lamanites in his own due time. And I, Enos, knew it would be according to the covenant which he had made; wherefore my soul did rest.</i></p> <p>And I bear record that the people of Nephi did seek diligently to restore the Lamanites unto the true faith in God, but our labors were vain; <i>their hatred was fixed . . . and they were continually seeking to destroy us.</i></p>

Enos's use of Nephi's language from 2 Nephi 33:4 in the context of the Lord bringing the Nephite records (especially the small plates) forth to the Lamanites perhaps suggests that Enos interpreted Nephi's prayers on behalf of his people as prayers that included the

descendants of his brothers. Enos's prayer, which begins as a Jacob-like "wrestle" (cf. *wayyē'ābēq*) before God (*lipnē 'ēlōhîm*, Peniel), expands into a "struggle" on behalf of his fellow Nephites ("I was thus struggling in the spirit") and a transformative struggle on behalf of the Lamanites ("I prayed unto [the Lord] with many long strugglings for my brethren, the Lamanites"). Just as Jacob "struggled" or "prevailed" with God to become "Israel" ("Let El Struggle, Let El Prevail in Struggle," "Let him prevail with God, [etc.]," or as President Russell M. Nelson has emphasized, "Let God Prevail"<sup>11</sup>), in the face of fraternal hatred, Enos, like Joseph his ancestor, took the responsibilities of brotherhood within the Abrahamic covenant very seriously. Like Joseph, he becomes a brother who brings salvation to the larger family of Israel. Enos "struggled" or "prevailed" with God to obtain a covenant that he would ultimately help transform the Lamanites to again become "Israel" and "Joseph"—namely, that the Nephite records might be "preserved" and "brought forth" to the Lamanites. Although "at the present [the] strugglings [of Enos and his Nephite brethren] were vain in restoring them to the true faith" (Enos 1:14), those same "strugglings" would ultimately help effect that transformation. And Enos let God prevail: "And I, Enos, knew it would be according to the covenant which [God] had made; wherefore my soul did rest" (Enos 1:17). Just as the Lord of the vineyard would ultimately prevail in struggle with the trees of his vineyard to bring forth the natural fruit (the tame olive tree = Israel, Jacob 5), the prayers of Enos and his "fathers" would prevail according to their faith. God's will would ultimately prevail (see Jacob 5:75).

In stating that he "cried unto [the] Lord continually" and that "I did cry unto God that he would preserve [our] records" (Enos 1:16), Enos consciously alludes to Nephi's "cry[ing] much unto the Lord [his] God" in 2 Nephi 5 as well as Nephi's "praying continually" for his people and "cry[ing] unto God in faith" (2 Nephi 33:3).<sup>12</sup> The thematic links between Enos's prayer here and Nephi's prayer in 2 Nephi 5:1–2 become even stronger when we consider that the verb *yāsap/hôsiṣ* cannot only have the sense to "increase" but to "continue to do, carry on doing something"<sup>13</sup> (cf. also *tāmîd*). Nephi "pray[ing] continually" and Enos's "cry[ing] to God continually" on behalf of the Lamanites during his own lifetime is reciprocated by their "fixed" hatred and their "continually seeking to destroy" the Nephites. Nevertheless, the Lord's covenant to Enos that he would "bring" the Nephite (Josephite) records "forth unto the Lamanites in his own due time" left Enos with the sure knowledge that the Lamanites could again become "Joseph" as part of the



house of Israel. Therefore, his soul could “rest” (Enos 1:17). Notably, the Lord initially fulfilled this covenant with the conversion of the Lamanites through the efforts of Ammon and the other sons of Mosiah and their companions (see Alma 17–27), who — like Joseph, Nephi, and Enos — brought salvation to their larger family of “brothers,” the family of Lehi (and more broadly of Israel). Mormon clearly saw as a precedent for another latter-day fulfillment among the descendants of the Lamanites and Nephite dissenters (see further below). He earnestly prayed for this fulfillment, as expressed in Words of Mormon 1:8.

### **“That They May Once Again Come to the Knowledge of God”: Mormon’s Prayer and the Inversion of the Fraternal Hatred Motif**

A comparison of the twofold wordplay in Mormon’s prayer in Words of Mormon 1:8 with the Genesis 37:5, 8 wordplay, Nephi’s permutation of that wordplay in describing his own prayer in the face of his brothers’ anger 2 Nephi 5:1–3, and Enos’s prayer in the face of the continual hatred of his Lamanite brethren yields several useful insights (see table 3). First, this comparison confirms the care with which Mormon composed the concise description of his prayer. Mormon consciously uses and adjusts the language of his predecessors as he does elsewhere in Words of Mormon 1:1–11.<sup>14</sup> Second, Mormon’s use of two stacked or linked purpose clauses conceivably reflect the verb form *wayyôsipû*, “that they may once again [do X].” If that is the case, Mormon’s verbal echo harks all the way back to the Genesis narrator’s double use of *wayyôsipû* ‘ôd in his description of Joseph’s brothers’ hatred of him. Only, in this instance, Mormon has inverted the motif of fraternal hatred to describe the utter reversal of the effects of the Lamanites’ fraternal hatred across time.

Mormon’s prayer in Words of Mormon 1:8 explicitly defines “com[ing] to the knowledge of God” as a knowledge of “the redemption of Christ.” This has express reference to Abrahamic *covenantal* knowledge.<sup>15</sup> In other words, one does not fully possess a covenantal knowledge of God apart from a knowledge of “the redemption of Christ” as mediator<sup>16</sup> and guarantor of the Abrahamic covenant (see Moroni 10:33–34, esp. the phrase “the blood of Christ which is in the covenant of the Father”).<sup>17</sup> Given the foregoing, Mormon’s declaration — “my prayer to God is concerning my brethren, *that they may once again* [cf. *wayyôsipû*] *come to the knowledge of God, yea, the redemption of Christ;*



**Table 3.** Fraternal hatred of Joseph and the prayers of Nephi, Enos, and Mormon compared.

Genesis 37:5, 8, 20	2 Nephi 5:1–3	Enos 1:15–17, 20	Words of Mormon 1:8, 20
<p>And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren <i>and they hated him yet the more</i> [wayyôsipû ‘ôd].</p> <p>And his brethren said to him, <i>Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion [rule] over us? And they hated him yet the more</i> [wayyôsipû ‘ôd] for his dreams, and for his words.</p> <p>“Come now therefore, and let us slay him . . .”</p>	<p>Behold, it came to pass that <i>I, Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord my God, because of the anger of my brethren.</i></p> <p>But behold, their <i>anger did increase</i> [yāsap] against me, insomuch that they did seek to take away my life. Yea, they did murmur against me, saying: <i>Our younger brother thinks to rule over us; and we have had much trial because of him; wherefore, now let us slay him, that we may not be afflicted more</i> [cf. wēlō’ nôsîp] 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 rule over this people.</p>	<p><i>I cried unto him continually</i> [cf. tāmîd] for he had said unto me: Whatsoever thing ye shall ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive in the name of Christ, ye shall receive it. And I had faith, <i>and I did cry unto God</i> that he would preserve the records; and he covenanted with me that he would bring them forth unto the Lamanites in his own due time. And I, Enos, knew it would be according to the covenant which he had made; wherefore my soul did rest.</p> <p><i>“their hatred was fixed . . . and they were continually seeking to destroy us.”</i></p>	<p><i>And my prayer to God is concerning my brethren, that they may once again</i> [wayyôsipû] come to the knowledge of God, yea, the redemption of Christ; <i>that they may once again</i> [wayyôsipû] be a delightsome people.</p> <p>And I, Mormon, <i>pray to God</i> that they [the small plates] may be preserved from this time henceforth. And I know that they will be preserved; for there are great things written upon them, out of which my people and their brethren shall be judged at the great and last day, according to the word of God which is written.</p>

*that they may once again* [cf. wayyôsipû] be a delightsome people” — prepares us more than any other text to appreciate another instance of Mormon playing on the name Joseph in strikingly similar terms: “Yea, and surely *shall he again* [cf. yôsîp] *bring* [i.e., cause to come] a remnant of the seed of *Joseph* [yôsēp] *to the knowledge of the Lord their God*” (3 Nephi 5:23). Only the covenantal “knowledge of God” or “the knowledge of the Lord their God” could “again” make Lehi’s seed truly “the seed of Joseph.”

## Mormon's "Prayer" and Final Exhortation Compared and King Anti-Nephi-Lehi's "Joseph" Covenant

Years ago, Sidney B. Sperry suggested that Words of Mormon 1:3–8 constitutes "Mormon's account of his early work of abridgment."<sup>18</sup> John Tvedtnes notes several terminological and thematic parallels between Words of Mormon 1:1–11 and Mormon 6–7, including Mormon's final exhortation (Mormon 7).<sup>19</sup> For example, Words of Mormon 1:11 finds parallels with Mormon 7:1, 6, 10; Words of Mormon 1:5, 9 with Mormon 6:1; and Words of Mormon 1:8 with Mormon 7:5, 10.<sup>20</sup> Tvedtnes further suggests that "the similarity of words found in Mormon 6–7 and in Words of Mormon 1:1–11 may indicate a temporal proximity of the writing of those two records."<sup>21</sup> In light of these observations, the terminological parallels, including wordplay on Joseph in terms of the *yôsîp* (+ verbal component) idiom, become particularly significant (see table 4).

**Table 4.** *Again* becoming Joseph's seed.

Words of Mormon 1:8	Mormon 7:4–5
<p><i>And my prayer to God is concerning my brethren, that they may once again [wayyôsîpû] come to the knowledge of God, yea, the redemption of Christ; that they may once again [wayyôsîpû] be a delightful people.</i></p>	<p>Know ye that ye must lay down your weapons of war, and <i>delight no more</i> [cf. <i>wělo' tōsipû/tōsîpû</i>] in the shedding of blood, <i>and take them not again</i> [cf. <i>wělo' tōsipû/tōsîpû</i>], save it be that God shall command you. <i>Know ye that ye must come to the knowledge of your fathers, and repent of all your sins and iniquities, and believe in Jesus Christ, that he is the Son of God, and that he was slain by the Jews, and by the power of the Father he hath risen again</i> [cf. <i>yôsîp</i>], whereby he hath gained the victory over the grave; and also in him is the sting of death swallowed up.</p>

Coming to an Abrahamic covenantal knowledge of God and becoming Joseph's seed "once again" would involve a total transformation of past traditions and actions. The repetition of "once again" in Words of Mormon 1:8 is thus matched by the repetition of the *yôsîp*-idiom as a negation of past "Lamanite" conduct: "Ye must lay down your weapons of war, *and delight no more* [cf. *wělo' tōsipû/tōsîpû*] in the shedding of blood, *and take them not again* [cf. *wělo' tōsipû/tōsîpû*]."

Mormon's exhortation is deeply rooted in the covenantal speech that king Anti-Nephi-Lehi, the brother of Lamoni, gives to his people as recorded in Alma 24: "Now, my best beloved brethren, since God *hath taken away* [cf. *'āsap*<sup>22</sup>] our stains, and our swords have become bright, then let us stain our swords *no more* with the blood of our

brethren . . . or perhaps, *if we should* stain our swords *again* [cf. *nôšîp*] they can *no more* [cf. *lō' yôšîpû*] be washed bright through the blood of the Son of our great God, which shall be shed for the atonement of our sins” (Alma 24:12–13); “since it has been as much as we could do to get our stains *taken away* from us, and our swords are made bright, let us hide them away that they may be kept bright, as a testimony to our God at the last day” (Alma 24:15). At the conclusion of king Anti-Nephi-Lehi’s speech, Mormon records:

And now it came to pass that when the king had made an end of these sayings, and all the people were assembled together, they took their swords, and all the weapons which were used for the shedding of man’s blood, and they did bury them up deep in the earth. And this they did, it being in their view a testimony to God, and also to men, that *they never would* use weapons *again* [cf. *wēlō' yôšîpû 'ôd*] for the shedding of man’s blood; and this they did, vouching and covenanting with God, that rather than shed the blood of their brethren they would give up their own lives; and rather than *take away* from a brother they would give unto him; and rather than spend their days in idleness they would labor abundantly with their hands. (Alma 24:17–18)

King Anti-Nephi-Lehi and his people assumed the Abrahamic covenant burden of brotherhood in a “Joseph”-like — and Christlike — way to an even greater degree than the Nephites had ever done (see especially Alma 26:33). The example of these converted Lamanites over generations (e.g., the stripling warriors in the next generation, the faithful Lamanites during the time of Samuel the Lamanite and during the time of Nephi the son of Nephi) gave Mormon a firm basis for hope that the descendants of the Lamanites and Nephite dissenters — the Lamanites and Nephites who had completely apostatized during his own time — could “once again” identify as “Joseph.”

Moreover, it is tempting in Alma 24:12–13, 15, 17–18 to see an additional, reinforcing lexical connection between “take[n] away” in these verses and the biblical etiology for the name Joseph in Genesis 30:23–24: “And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God *hath taken away* [*’āsap*] my reproach: And she called his name Joseph [*yôšēp*]; and said, The Lord *shall add* [*yôšēp*] to me another son.” However, the idea of “take away” could also be expressed in Hebrew writing with other idioms. In any case, Mormon believed that if such a drastic

covenant was required to enable the converted Lamanites to become *again* and remain the seed of Joseph according to the Abrahamic covenant, a similar commitment would be required of their Latter-day descendants for them to become *again* and remain "Joseph."

Like Samuel the Lamanite, Mormon viewed earlier prophecy by Zenos, Isaiah, and others as having multiple fulfillments (see especially Helaman 15:11, 13, 15–16). Samuel the Lamanite pointedly declared to his recalcitrant Nephite contemporaries in Zarahemla that the Abrahamic covenantal promises of the Lord would always be extended to the Lamanites: "And this is according to the prophecy, that *they shall again* [cf. *wayyôsipû*] be brought to the true knowledge, which is the knowledge of their Redeemer, and their great and true shepherd, and be numbered among his sheep. Therefore I say unto you, it shall be better for them than for you except ye repent. For behold, had the mighty works been shown unto them which have been shown unto you, yea, unto them who have dwindled in unbelief because of the traditions of their fathers, ye can see of yourselves *that they never would again* [cf. *(wě)lō' yôsipû ('ôd)*] have dwindled in unbelief" (Helaman 15:13–15).<sup>23</sup>

### Mormon's Prayer and Zenos's Allegory

Mormon's hoped-for outcome was, as he says, "that [his brethren, the Lamanites and Nephite dissenters] may once again come to the knowledge of God, yea, the redemption of Christ; that they may once again be a delightful people" (Words of Mormon 1:8). Zenos's allegory describes in symbolic terms how that outcome would eventuate.

Following the entire corruption of "the vineyard" (Jacob 5:30–50) — conditions that would certainly include what Latter-day Saints have often termed "the Great Apostasy" as well as the apostasy of the Lamanites and Nephites (see especially 4 Nephi 1:38–39; Mormon 5:15; Ether 4:3) — the Lord of the Vineyard initiates a final attempt to save the vineyard. This effort is described, in part, in the proposal of the Lord of the Vineyard to nourish the entire vineyard: "And *we will nourish again* the trees of the vineyard" (Jacob 5:58). As I have noted elsewhere, Zenos may have employed the idiom *yôsip* (+ verbal component).<sup>24</sup>

In fact, the auxiliary verb *yôsip* seems to have functioned as a *Leitwort* ("lead word") in Zenos's allegory, especially toward the end. Zenos employs the *yôsip* idiom again as the Lord of the Vineyard delineates the purpose of his "saving" or "preserving" acts in the vineyard: "I have grafted in the natural branches again into their mother

tree, and have preserved the roots of their mother tree *that*, perhaps, *the trees of my vineyard may bring forth again good fruit*; and *that I may have joy again* in the fruit of my vineyard” (Jacob 5:60). We note here, as in Mormon’s prayer in Words of Mormon 1:8, the stacked or linked purpose clauses “that . . . [they] . . . may bring forth again” and “that I may have joy again.” Conceivably, the former text even inspired stacking of *yôsiṗ* purpose clauses in the latter.

The Lord of the vineyard then instructs his servant to call additional servants. He does so again, this time using the *yôsiṗ*-idiom in the final purpose clause: “Wherefore, go to, and call servants, that we may labor diligently with our might in the vineyard, *that we may prepare the way, that I may bring forth again the natural fruit*, which *natural fruit is good* and the most precious above all other fruit” (Jacob 5:61).

Another purpose clause in this context demands our attention. The Lord of the vineyard gives his servant and his fellow servants instructions regarding the order of the final restorative effort on behalf of his vineyard:

Graft in the branches; begin at the last that they may be first, and that the first may be last, and dig about the trees, both old and young, the first and the last; and the last and the first, *that all may be nourished once again for the last time*. Wherefore, dig about them, and prune them, and dung them *once more, for the last time*, for the end draweth nigh. And if it be so that these last grafts shall grow, *and bring forth the natural fruit, then shall ye prepare the way for them, that they may grow*. (Jacob 5:63–64)

The purpose clause “that all may be nourished once again for the last time” indicates that that the Lord intended every tree within the precincts of his vineyard to have one last opportunity to become — or to *again* become — what he intended each to become from the beginning. This nourishment would include the servants’ “once more” digging around, pruning, and dunging the trees. Together with their verbal components, the expressions “once again” and “once more” appear to again echo the name Joseph. Moreover, the expression “natural fruit” evokes the name Ephraim (“doubly fruitful”).

Auspiciously, these final iterative efforts produce the results that the Lord of the vineyard had intended:

*And there began to be the natural fruit again in the vineyard*; and the natural branches began to grow and thrive



exceedingly; and the wild branches began to be plucked off and to be cast away; and they did keep the root and the top thereof equal, according to the strength thereof. And thus they labored, with all diligence, according to the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard, even until the bad had been cast away out of the vineyard, and the Lord had preserved unto himself that *the trees had become again the natural fruit*; and they became like unto one body; and the fruits were equal; and the Lord of the vineyard had preserved unto himself the natural fruit, which was most precious unto him from the beginning. And it came to pass that when *the Lord of the vineyard saw that his fruit was good*, and that *his vineyard was no more corrupt*, he called up his servants, and said unto them: Behold, for this last time have we nourished my vineyard; and thou beholdest that I have done according to my will; *and I have preserved the natural fruit, that it is good*, even like as it was in the beginning. And blessed art thou; for because ye have been diligent in laboring with me in my vineyard, and have kept my commandments, *and have brought unto me again* the natural fruit, that my vineyard is *no more* corrupted, and the bad is cast away, behold ye shall have joy with me because of the fruit of my vineyard. (Jacob 5:73–75)

The statements “And there began to be the natural fruit again in the vineyard” (v. 73), “the trees had become again the natural fruit” (v. 74), “his vineyard was no more corrupt” (v. 75), “and [ye] have brought unto me again the natural fruit that my vineyard is no more corrupt” (v. 75) all appear to use the *yôsiṗ* (+ verbal component) idiom to describe the wholesale transformation of the trees of the vineyard: they had become “again” the natural fruit. In other words, the trees had become — or become again — “Israel.” The interrelated wordplay here revolving around *yôsiṗ* (“do again, more,” Joseph) and *pěri* (“fruit,” Ephraim = “doubly fruitful”) perhaps augurs that the descendants — fruit, seed — of Joseph generally and the descendants of Ephraim in particular would be the instrumentality for this transformation (see Doctrine and Covenants 133:30–34).

Moreover, one is here reminded of two other Isaianic prophecies from the small plates regarding Jerusalem, Zion, and, by extension, the house of Israel that forecast the great reversal of divine judgments: “*thou shalt no more drink again [lō’ tōsiṗi . . . ôd]*” (Isaiah 51:22);



“for henceforth *there shall no more* [*lō’ yōsîp . . . ‘ôd*] come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean” (Isaiah 52:1; cf. Isaiah 54:2). First Nephi (1 Nephi 14:2; 15:20) and later Moroni resort to similar language to describe the same reversal (Ether 13:8; Moroni 10:31) employing the verbal collocation “[subject + modal auxiliary verb] *no more* be confounded”<sup>25</sup> with apparent underlying forms of *lō’ yōsîp/yōsipûl/tōsîp*. Moroni uses this idiom in direct connection with the name Joseph in Ether 13, while Nephi’s apparent use of this language is more nuanced and subtle.

After quoting Zenos’s allegory *in toto*, Jacob himself offers a controlling textual confirmation that Zenos’s allegory does, in fact, employ and eventually revolve around the *yōsîp* (“do again, more,” Joseph) idiom by immediately quoting Isaiah 11:11 as the hermeneutic lens through which the entire allegory (Jacob 5) should be viewed: “And the day that *he shall* set his hand *again* [*yōsîp*] the second time *to recover* his people [quoting Isaiah 11:11], 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 final framing statement answers the initial framing question Jacob set forth in Jacob 4:17: “And now, my beloved, how is it possible that these, after having rejected the sure foundation, can *ever build* upon it, that it may *become* the head of their corner?” Jacob’s initial question helps us see how the entire allegory and the efforts of the Lord of the vineyard to save his vineyard relate to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ,<sup>26</sup> and to the function of temples, especially latter-day temples.<sup>27</sup>

Lastly, if language of the biblical creation account was heretofore somewhat latent in Zenos’s allegory,<sup>28</sup> it explicitly emerges at this point: “And it came to pass that when the Lord of the vineyard saw *that his fruit was good*.” What the Lord created “in the beginning” is also now redeemed—or, “created” in the fullest sense. When the Lord of the vineyard tells his servants he has “preserved the natural fruit” such that “*it is good*, even like as it was *in the beginning*” (Jacob 5:75), he may have used the Hebrew *rēšîṭ* which denotes “beginning” or “what comes first”<sup>29</sup> “first and best,”<sup>30</sup> and thus “first-fruits,”<sup>31</sup> or “first fruit, choicest portion.”<sup>32</sup> This statement then seemingly echoes and plays on “the first fruit” mentioned verses earlier in Jacob 5:60.<sup>33</sup> We are also reminded here of Lehi’s *Joseph*-related prophecy to his own son Joseph regarding the fulfillment of the Lord’s covenantal promises of restoration to Joseph in Egypt: “And there shall rise up one mighty among them, who shall *do much good*, both in word and in

deed, being an instrument in the hands of God, with exceeding faith, to work mighty wonders, and do that thing which is great in the sight of God, unto the *bringing to pass much restoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren*" (2 Nephi 3:24). Joseph Smith would be the Lord's "instrument" in bringing to pass the "restoration" that has enabled and continues to enable the Manassite remnant of Lehi's descendants to "once again" become *Joseph and Israel* and, with the Ephraimite remnant,<sup>34</sup> to assume the burdens of brotherhood and sisterhood to the entire house of Israel.

In the Book of Mormon in general, and in Zenos's allegory and Mormon's prayer in particular, the concept of "Paradise Regain'd" — i.e., "that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory" (Articles of Faith 1:10) — inseparably relates to Israel's regaining its identity and proper character. Latter-day Saints, many of whom have patriarchal blessings declaring their lineage to be from Ephraim or Manasseh are often surprised to learn that the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh are two of the "lost" ten tribes. As the primary constituency of the preexilic southern kingdom of Judah, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin became the preservers of Judaism during the Babylonian exile and beyond. They thus never lost their identity as Israel for over two and a half millennia "under all the oppression of the whole Gentile world."<sup>35</sup>

### Conclusion: Becoming Joseph Again

For Mormon's prayer regarding his Lamanite and formerly Nephite "brethren" that "they may *once again* [cf. *wayyôsipû*] come to the knowledge of God, yea, the redemption of Christ; that they may *once again* [cf. *wayyôsipû*] be a delightful people" (Words of Mormon 1:8), Zenos the prophet and Enos the son of Jacob had answers. Zenos's allegory forecasted that "the trees [would] *become again* [cf. *yôsîpû*] the natural fruit" and Enos, who had himself prayed "that [the Lord] would preserve the [Nephite prophetic] records," knew "it would be according to the covenant which [the Lord] had made" with him (Enos 1:16–17). Mormon had such assurances that his prayers would be answered and that the Lamanites would regain their lost identity as "Joseph."

Nephi, too, had answers for Mormon — answers derived from Isaiah: "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* [*yôsîp/yôsîp*] to do a marvelous work and a wonder among

the children of men” (2 Nephi 25:17; cf. Jacob 6:2). All this “that the promises may be fulfilled unto *Joseph* [yôsēp] that his seed should never perish as long as the earth should stand” (2 Nephi 25:21; see especially 2 Nephi 3:14–16). Mormon knew that the words that he had “written . . . to the intent that *they may* be brought *again* unto this people, from the Gentiles, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken” (3 Nephi 26:8) would be brought again. He knew that they “*they* [would] come *again* unto the remnant of the house of Jacob, according to the prophecies and the promises of the Lord” (4 Nephi 1:49). As Mormon himself testified, “Surely shall *he* [the Lord] *again* [yôsîp] bring a remnant of the seed of *Joseph* [yôsēp] to the knowledge of the Lord their God” (3 Nephi 5:23). The descendants of the Lamanites and Nephite dissenters would *again* identify as Joseph and would *again* know Jesus Christ, for whom *Joseph* Smith was a forerunner with respect to his Second Coming.



**[Author’s Note:** *I would like to thank Suzy Bowen, Godfrey Ellis, Jeff Lindsay, Allen Wyatt, Tanya Spackman, Victor Worth, and Alan Sikes.*]

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## Notes

1. Matthew L. Bowen, “Their Anger Did Increase Against Me’: Nephi’s Auto-biographical Permutation of a Biblical Wordplay on the Name Joseph,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 23 (2017): 115–36, [journal.interpreterfoundation.org/their-anger-did-increase-against-me-nephis-autobiographical-permutation-of-a-biblical-wordplay-on-the-name-joseph/](http://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/their-anger-did-increase-against-me-nephis-autobiographical-permutation-of-a-biblical-wordplay-on-the-name-joseph/). On a broader range of parallels between Joseph’s biography and Nephi’s autobiography, see Alan Goff, “A Hermeneutic of Sacred Texts: Historicism, Revisionism, Positivism, and the Bible and Book of Mormon” (MA dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1989), 104–32.
2. Bowen, “Their Anger Did Increase Against Me.” See, e.g., 1 Nephi 3:28–31; 4:4; 7:16–19; 16:36–39; 17:48–55; 18:4, 16–22; 2 Nephi 1:24–25; 4:13, 27–28.
3. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 418. Hereafter cited as *HALOT*.
4. *HALOT*, 418.
5. Matthew Bowen, “He Shall Add’: Wordplay on the Name Joseph and an Early Instance of Gezera Shawa in the Book of Mormon,” *Insights* 30, no.2 (2010): 2–4; Bowen, “Onomastic Wordplay on Joseph and Benjamin and Gezera Shawa in the Book of Mormon,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 18 (2016): 255–73, [journal.interpreterfoundation.org/onomastic-wordplay-on-joseph-and-benjamin-and-gezera-shawa-in-the-book-of-mormon/](http://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/onomastic-wordplay-on-joseph-and-benjamin-and-gezera-shawa-in-the-book-of-mormon/); Bowen, “‘And the Meek Also Shall Increase’: The Verb *YĀSAP* in Isaiah 29 and Nephi’s Prophetic Allusions to the Name Joseph in 2 Nephi 25–30,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 30 (2018): 5–42, [journal.interpreterfoundation.org/and-the-meek-also-shall-increase-the-verb-yasap-in-isaiah-29-and-nephis-prophetic-allusions-to-the-name-joseph-in-2-nephi-25-30/](http://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/and-the-meek-also-shall-increase-the-verb-yasap-in-isaiah-29-and-nephis-prophetic-allusions-to-the-name-joseph-in-2-nephi-25-30/).
6. Matthew L. Bowen “‘And There Wrestled a Man with Him’ (Genesis 32:24): Enos’s Adaptations of the Onomastic Wordplay of Genesis,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 10 (2014): 153, [journal.interpreterfoundation.org/and-there-wrestled-a-man-with-him-genesis-3224-enos-adaptations-of-the-onomastic-wordplay-of-genesis/](http://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/and-there-wrestled-a-man-with-him-genesis-3224-enos-adaptations-of-the-onomastic-wordplay-of-genesis/).
7. See John A. Tvedtnes and Matthew Roper, “Jacob and Enos: Wrestling before God,” *Insights* 21, no. 5 (2001): 2, [archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/sites/default/files/archive-files/pdf/farms-staff/2019-10-07/insights\\_21-5\\_may\\_2001.pdf](http://archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/sites/default/files/archive-files/pdf/farms-staff/2019-10-07/insights_21-5_may_2001.pdf).
8. Matthew L. Bowen, “Not Partaking of the Fruit: Its Generational Consequences and Its Remedy,” in *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi’s Dream and Nephi’s Vision: The 40th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium*, eds. Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson (Salt Lake City; Provo, UT: Deseret Book and the Religious Studies Center, 2011), 240–63, [rsc.byu.edu/things-which-my-father-saw/not-partaking-fruit-its-generational-consequences-its-remedy](http://rsc.byu.edu/things-which-my-father-saw/not-partaking-fruit-its-generational-consequences-its-remedy); Bowen, “The Faithfulness of Ammon,” *Religious Educator* 15, no. 2 (2014): 65–89, [rsc.byu.edu/vol-15-no-2-2014/faithfulness-ammon](http://rsc.byu.edu/vol-15-no-2-2014/faithfulness-ammon); Bowen, “Abish, Theophanies, and

the First Lamanite Restoration,” *Religious Educator* 19, no. 1 (2018): 59–81, [rsc.byu.edu/vol-19-no-1-2018/abish-theophanies-first-lamanite-restoration](http://rsc.byu.edu/vol-19-no-1-2018/abish-theophanies-first-lamanite-restoration).

9. Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon: Part Two, 2 Nephi 11–Mosiah 16* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2005), 895–99.
10. See, especially, John A. Tvedtnes, “The Charge of ‘Racism’ in the Book of Mormon,” *FARMS Review* 15, no. 2 (2003), [scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr/vol15/iss2/11/](http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/msr/vol15/iss2/11/). Regarding the Joseph Smith’s editorial change of “white” to “pure” in 2 Nephi 30:6, Tvedtnes writes: “This change seems to reflect the Prophet’s concern that modern readers might misinterpret this passage as a reference to racial changes rather than to changes in righteousness. Possibly his sojourns in Ohio and Missouri had altered his perspective of the racial connotations of the term white in the contemporary United States, particularly among slaves and slaveholders. He may not have gained much understanding of this matter during his upbringing in New England and New York State, where slavery was not as common” (p. 194). See further Ethan Sproat, “Skins as Garments in the Book of Mormon: A Textual Exegesis,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 24, no. 1 (2015): 138–65, [scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jbms/vol24/iss1/7/](http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jbms/vol24/iss1/7/); David M. Belnap, “The Inclusive, Anti-Discrimination Message of the Book of Mormon,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 42 (2021): 195–370, [journal.interpreterfoundation.org/the-inclusive-anti-discrimination-message-of-the-book-of-mormon/](http://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/the-inclusive-anti-discrimination-message-of-the-book-of-mormon/); Scripture Central Staff, “What Does it Mean to Be a White and Delightful People?” *KnoWhy* 57, 18 March 2016, [knowwhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowwhy/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-white-and-delightful-people](http://knowwhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowwhy/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-white-and-delightful-people).
11. Russell M. Nelson, “Let God Prevail,” *Ensign* (November 2020), 92–95, [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2020/11/46nelson](http://churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2020/11/46nelson).
12. Compare Nephi’s statement, “I pray continually for them by day . . . I cry unto my God in faith, and I know that he will hear my cry” in 2 Nephi 33:3 with Enos’s statement, “And I had faith, and I did cry unto God that he would preserve the records” in Enos 1:16.
13. *HALOT*, 418.
14. Several notable examples of this include the following: when Mormon states regarding his record, “And now I, Mormon, proceed to finish out my record, which I take from the plates of Nephi; and I make it according to the knowledge and the understanding which God has given me” (Words of Mormon 1:9), he quotes and adjusts the language of Nephi: “And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge” (1 Nephi 1:3). Similarly, when Mormon states, “And the things which are upon these plates pleasing me, because of the prophecies of the coming of Christ; and my fathers knowing that many of them have been fulfilled” (Words of Mormon 1:4), he alludes directly to Nephi’s words on the small plates: “Wherefore, the things which are pleasing unto the world I do not write, but the things which are pleasing unto God and unto those who are not of the world” (1 Nephi 6:5). Moreover, Mormon’s mention of the “wise purpose” for which he was including the small plates with his abridged record has reference to at least two statements by Nephi (see 1 Nephi 9:5; 19:3; cf. Alma 37:12, 14, 18–19). In his prayer for the preservation of the small plates (see Words of Mormon 1:11),



Mormon directly employs the language of Enos (see Enos 1:13–16). Mormon's description of Nephi's small plates as a "small account" derives from Jacob 1:1, 7:27 ("the small plates upon which these things are engraven," "And I make an end of my writing upon these plates, which writing has been small"), and Jarom 1:2, 14b ("these plates are small," "the plates are small").

15. On "know" and "knowledge" as covenant terms in the Book of Mormon, see RoseAnn Benson and Stephen D. Ricks, "Treaties and Covenants: Ancient Near Eastern Legal Terminology in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 14, no. 1 (2005): 48–61, 128–29, [scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1389&context=jbms](http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1389&context=jbms).
16. Galatians 3:20 JST: "Now this mediator was not a mediator of the new covenant; but there is one Mediator of the new covenant, who is Christ, as it is written in the law concerning the promises made to Abraham and his seed. Now Christ is the Mediator of life; for this is the promise which God made unto Abraham." 1 Timothy 2:3–6 JST: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who is willing to have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth which is in Christ Jesus, who is the Only Begotten Son of God and ordained to be a mediator between God and man, who is one God and hath power over all men. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Hebrews 8:6: "But now hath he [Jesus] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." Hebrews 9:15: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Hebrews 12:24: "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." 2 Nephi 2:27–28: "Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself. And now, my sons, I would that ye should look to the great Mediator, and hearken unto his great commandments; and be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life, according to the will of his Holy Spirit." See also Doctrine and Covenants 76:69 and 107:19.
17. See further Alma 21:9.
18. Sidney B. Sperry, "What the Book of Mormon Is (Continued)," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4, no. 1 (1995): 19, [scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jbms/vol4/iss1/7/](http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jbms/vol4/iss1/7/).
19. John Tvedtnes, "Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Covering Up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 3, no. 1 (1991): 202–3, [scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1057&context=msr](http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1057&context=msr).
20. Tvedtnes, "Jerald and Sandra Tanner," 202–3.
21. Tvedtnes, "Jerald and Sandra Tanner," 203.
22. Cf. the use of *'āsap* in the "taking away" of shame in Genesis 30:23 and Isaiah 4:1.



23. On the additional wordplay on Nephi/Nephites in terms of “better” and Laman/Lamanites in terms of “unbelief” in Samuel’s speech, see Matthew L. Bowen, “Laman and Nephi as Key Words: An Etymological, Narratological, and Rhetorical Approach to Understanding Lamanites and Nephites as Religious, Political, and Cultural Descriptors” (lecture, FairMormon Conference, Utah Valley Convention Center, Provo, UT, 5–7 August 2019), [fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2020/03/17/fairmormon-conference-podcast-53-matthew-bowen-laman-and-nephi-as-key-words-an-etymological-narratological-and-rhetorical-approach-to-understanding-lamanites-and-nephites-as-religious](http://fairlatterdaysaints.org/blog/2020/03/17/fairmormon-conference-podcast-53-matthew-bowen-laman-and-nephi-as-key-words-an-etymological-narratological-and-rhetorical-approach-to-understanding-lamanites-and-nephites-as-religious).
24. Matthew L. Bowen, “I Have Done According to My Will: Reading Jacob 5 as a Temple Text,” in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation; Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2016), 235–72; Matthew L. Bowen and Loren Blake Spendlove, “Thou Art the Fruit of My Loins: The Interrelated Symbolism and Meanings of the Names Joseph and Ephraim in Ancient Scripture,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 28 (2018): 294–96, [journal.interpreterfoundation.org/thou-art-the-fruit-of-my-loins-the-interrelated-symbolism-and-meanings-of-the-names-joseph-and-ephraim-in-ancient-scripture/](http://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/thou-art-the-fruit-of-my-loins-the-interrelated-symbolism-and-meanings-of-the-names-joseph-and-ephraim-in-ancient-scripture/).
25. Matthew L. Bowen, “They Shall No More Be Confounded”: Moroni’s Wordplay on Joseph in Ether 13:1–13 and Moroni 10:31,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 30 (2018): 91–104, [journal.interpreterfoundation.org/they-shall-no-more-be-confounded-moronis-wordplay-on-joseph-in-ether-13-13-and-moroni-1031/](http://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/they-shall-no-more-be-confounded-moronis-wordplay-on-joseph-in-ether-13-13-and-moroni-1031/).
26. See Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 165–66. Elder Holland writes, “Clearly this at-one-ment is hard, demanding, and, at times, deeply painful work, as the work of redemption always is. There is digging and dunging. There is watering and nourishing and pruning. And there is always the endless approaches to grafting—all to one saving end, that the trees of the vineyard would ‘thrive exceedingly’ and become ‘one body; . . . the fruits [being] equal,’ with the Lord of the vineyard having ‘preserved unto himself the . . . fruit.’ From all the distant places of sin and alienation in which the children of the Father find themselves, it has always been the work of Christ (and his disciples) in every dispensation to gather them, heal them, and unite them with their Master.”
27. Bowen, “I Have Done According to My Will,” 235–72.
28. On the creation/divine council language used in Zenos’s allegory, echoing Genesis, see Bowen, “I Have Done According to My Will,” 241–46.
29. HALOT, 1169–70; cf. Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 912. Hereafter cited as *BDB*.
30. HALOT, 1170.
31. *BDB*, 912. See, e.g., Exodus 23:19; 34:26; Leviticus 2:12 [the offering of first-fruits]; 23:10; Numbers 15:20; 18:12; Deuteronomy 18:4; 26:2, 10; 1 Samuel 2:29; 15:21; Ezekiel 20:40; 44:30; Hosea 9:10; Nehemiah 10:38.

32. *HALOT*, 1170.

33. See discussion in Bowen, "I Have Done According to My Will," 252–53.

34. See, e.g., Doctrine and Covenants 133:30–35.

35. Wilford Woodruff stated:

Gather together your Brethren the Jews from all the Gentile Nations, for the fullness of the Gentiles has come in And the Lord has decreed that the Jews shall be gathered from all the Gentile Nations whether they have been driven into their own land in fulfillment of the words of Moses your Law-Giver And this the will of your Great Eloheem And whenever you turn your hand to this work the God of Israel will help you. You have a great future and destiny before you and you cannot avoid fulfilling it You are the royal chosen seed and the God of your fathers have kept you distinct as a Nation for Eighteen hundred years under all the oppression of the whole Gentile world. Therefore Arise O Judah and return home we ask you not to wait until you believe in Jesus of Nazareth, but when you meet with Shilo your King you will know him. Your Destiny is marked is marked out, you cannot avoid it. It is true that after you return and gather your Nation home and rebuild your city and Temple that the Gentiles may gather together their armies to go against you to Battle for to take a prey and to take a spoil which they will do for the words of your Prophets must be fulfilled. But when this affliction comes the same God that Led Moses through the wilderness will deliver you and your Shilo will come and s<sup>^</sup>t<sup>^</sup>and in your midst and will fight your Battles and you will know him. And the affliction of the Jews will have an End while the destruction of the Gentiles will be so great that it will take the whole house of Israel who are gathered about Jerusalem seven months to bury the Dead of their Enemies And the weapons of war will last them seven years for fuel so they need not go to any forest for wood.

"Journal (January 1, 1873 – February 7, 1880)," February 26, 1879, The Wilford Woodruff Papers, 377–78, [wilfordwoodruffpapers.org/p/APXP](http://wilfordwoodruffpapers.org/p/APXP).











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