

February 12-18, 2024

2 Nephi 3–5

“WE LIVED AFTER THE MANNER OF HAPPINESS”

Summary: *2 Nephi 3. Joseph in Egypt saw the Nephites in vision—He prophesied of Joseph Smith, the latter-day seer; of Moses, who would deliver Israel; and of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. About 588–570 B.C.*

2 Nephi 4 Lehi counsels and blesses his posterity—He dies and is buried—Nephi glories in the goodness of God—Nephi puts his trust in the Lord forever. About 588–570 B.C.

2 Nephi 5 The Nephites separate themselves from the Lamanites, keep the law of Moses, and build a temple—Because of their unbelief, the Lamanites are cut off from the presence of the Lord, are cursed, and become a scourge unto the Nephites. About 588–559 B.C.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How does an ancient Joseph prefigure a latter- day Joseph?

The account of

ancient Joseph is truly a chiasma paralleled by the modern story of Joseph. It is also a prefiguring of the Savior’s mission. The lesson comes from Joseph’s life as he is chosen by his father and then rejected by his brothers. In slavery, his identity is unknown, yet he serves and saves those around him. Later, he serves and saves his brothers before identifying himself. The Book of Mormon connects the symbolism of the ancient Joseph with a latter-day Joseph.

What is a biblical way of giving blessings?

Ancient Joseph was blessed and was authorized by his father Jacob when Jacob laid his hands on Joseph’s head. “In the same way that priests lift their hands in blessing, so parents place their hands on the heads of their children when they bless them. (For example, in the Bible, Jacob blessed his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, by placing his hands on their heads.) Placing the hands on another person is symbolic not only of

transferring blessing but also of passing on authority. In *Talmudic* times, scholars received their rabbinic ordination through the symbolic act of placing of the hands (known as *semikhah*.)” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

Who are forerunners of the “I Am” Messiah?

In modern Judaism, there is a powerful traditional and legendary history of Joseph and his future role. Some of these excerpts can give “modern Joseph” a little insight into what the Jews are still anticipating. “Based on the famous story of Joseph and his brothers, the Talmud warns against favoring one child over another . . . Jealousy is considered such a serious evil that it is mentioned in the Ten Commandments where the tenth commandment is an outright prohibition of envy: . . . the rabbis of the Talmud developed the philosophy that a truly rich man is one who is happy with his portion in life and does not envy others.”

(**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) “Continuing with Jewish tradition; “According to the *Talmud*, the Messiah will be a descendant of the House of David and will be preceded by a secondary Messiah, from the House of Joseph . . .” (**Encyclopedia**

Judaica Jr.) That may be the explanation of when the Chief Rabbi, Avraham HaKohen Kook was appointed in Palestine in the 1920's. Kook was asked if the Jews could now build the Temple (destroyed since year 70 A.D.). His response was that the priestly rights were gone and then he referred to the great 12th century rabbi Moses Maimonides who said, in effect, "We are waiting for a Messiah Ben-Joseph, to him will be given the keys of the gathering of Israel, he will restore Temple worship." "Maimonides does a great job in condensing Jewish belief and expectation in the Messiah. The Jewish beliefs and expectations of the Messiah is wide and varied. Through the Talmud, and other writing we see the expectation of two Messiahs. One called *Messiah Son of David*, and the other *Messiah Son of Joseph* actually precedes the Messiah son of David and is killed in the battle of Gog and Magog. Messiah Son of David then asks the Lord to resurrect the slain Messiah Son of Joseph. The *Babylonian Talmud* refers to the relationship between these two Messiah's." ([https://www.truthnet.org/The Messiah/4_Messiah_of_Judaism](https://www.truthnet.org/The_Messiah/4_Messiah_of_Judaism)) "Abarbanel and Malbim, in their commentaries to the Prophets, treat the existence of Mashiach ben Yosef as a "kabbala" (tradition) known to Chazal from the prophets themselves. (See . . . **Ezekiel 37:19.**) In their opinion, he will be (as indicated by his name) from the tribe of Yosef, or at least from one of the ten "lost tribes", who were exiled by Sancheriv. He will be instrumental in uniting the ten tribes with the rest of the Jews in exile, as well as uniting the Jews in exile themselves, and leading them in the final war leading to the Redemption, thereupon dying in battle." (<https://judaism.stackexchange.com/questions/13359/who-is-moshiach-ben-joseph-and-what-does-did-he-do>)

How do the accounts of Joseph connect to the Savior?

The chiasma connects the ancient Joseph who saved his family, and they did not know who he was. A Latter-day Joseph is saving his brothers again, (more foreign aid goes to Israel from the U.S.A., the land of Joseph, than from all other countries combined) and they still don't know that it is "Joseph." In the meridian of times there was "One" who saved us all - and still most people don't know it.

How can covenants become a shield to me?

There is an abundant amount of imagery still existing in Judaism that can be interpreted as referring to a personal shield or protector. Jews wear religious garments that have four markings, the knotted strings, on each corner of the Tallith. One of the fascinating things in Judaism is the repetitive keeping of customs even long after their meanings have faded. For example, when visiting the Western (Wailing) Wall, a remnant of the Jerusalem temple, you will see reminders of ancient temple worship. Men are on one side, women on the other. Head coverings are used and robes (*Talith*) often are placed on one shoulder and then another while certain words are recited. There is a sash (or "girdle") tied with the bow on one side. Levites wear aprons. Some Jews still remove their shoes when approaching the Wall. Small pieces of paper are placed between the cracks of the old temple wall stones with names written on them, names of people who require special prayers and blessings. There is a minimum of ten who form a prayer circle (*Minyan*) so that prayers, readings of the scriptures and instructions can be done. Someone is always at hand to assist the person reading or reciting to use correct intonations and to follow proper clothing and recitation procedures.

What echoes still exist of true worship and anticipation of the Messiah?

Some practices have ceased, even though they were still in use just over a hundred years ago. One of those practices is reflected in the thousands of old nails protruding slightly out of the cracks in the wall. I asked an older religious man what they were. He said, "We don't do that anymore, so I prodded, "What is it that we used to do and don't do anymore!" He described them as the "sure nails" pounded into the wall to fasten sins in a sure place, people could leave their burdens and get on with life. Isaiah speaks clearly about this in five powerful verses in his twenty-second chapter. The term "house of David" honors him who purchased "Temple Square" and gathered the materials to build the "House of the Lord." The sealing powers of the Lord are referred to as "he shall open" and "he shall shut." The Romans nailed the hands and in the wrists to make the crucifixion stronger, nailed surely (that may be one of the unique things about Jesus' crucifixion). The "Glorious throne of His Father's House" means the Lord was willing to take the sins of all mankind upon Himself. We are blessed in that we can "fasten our sins" upon him. Apparently, in ancient times the congregants sins were symbolically collected, small sins were put in cups, larger sins in flagons (a larger metal or ceramic container for holding wine), so that they could be disposed of. Annually, at *Yom Kippur* (Day of

Atonement), this was done by placing them on goat that was tied with a red ribbon and letting it escape out the Gate of Mercy, also known as the Gate of Forgiveness and the Gate Beautiful, to die on its own. Another goat would be sacrificed. That echoes the description of two cherubim on the(*Rahamim*) Ark of the Covenant who were called Mercy and Justice (*Zedek*) – mercy being a feminine word and justice being a masculine word.

How is the Savior pre-described in the Old Testament?

"And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it." (**Isaiah 22:21-25**)