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A New Insight: Why Joseph?

by Raymond C. Treat

For years there has been a debate among our people as to the role of Ephraim versus Manasseh regarding the establishment of Zion. A closer look at the Book of Mormon brings new insight to this issue.

When Amulek gives his own genealogy in Alma 8, we learn that Lehi is of the tribe of Manasseh:

And Aminadi was a descendant of
Nephi
Who was the son of *Lehi*
Who came out of the land of Jerusalem
Who was a *descendant of Manasseh*
Who was the son of Joseph which was
sold into Egypt by the hands of his
brethren. Alma 8:3
(emphasis added here and in all
following examples)

However, except for this verse, all other references to Lehi's lineage emphasize Joseph. Nephi wrote:

And it came to pass that my father
Lehi also found upon the plates of
brass a genealogy of his fathers;
Wherefore, he knew that he was a
descendant of Joseph,
Yea, even that Joseph which was the
son of Jacob, which was sold into
Egypt,
And which was preserved by the
hand of the Lord,

That he might preserve his father
Jacob and all his household from
perishing with famine.
1 Nephi 1:164-165

Why Joseph? Why is Joseph emphasized when Lehi knew he was of the tribe of Manasseh? Because of Amulek's reference, we know that Lehi and the writers of the Book of Mormon knew Lehi's exact lineage, but in spite of this they all chose to emphasize Joseph. Why? Nephi emphasized Joseph:

For it sufficeth me to say
That we are a *descendant of Joseph*.
1 Nephi 2:2

Lehi is quoted directly as he speaks to his son Joseph:

For behold thou art the fruit of my
loins
And I am a *descendant of Joseph*
Which was carried captive into Egypt.
2 Nephi 2:5

Chief Captain Moroni continued the emphasis on Joseph:

Moroni saith unto them:
"Behold we are a remnant of the seed
of Jacob,
Yea, we are a *remnant of the seed of Joseph*

Whose coat was rent by his brethren
into many pieces . . .
Yea, let us preserve our liberty as a
remnant of Joseph." Alma 21:54-55

Mormon, the chief editor of the Book of Mormon, emphasized Joseph:

Behold, our father Jacob also testified concerning a remnant of the seed of Joseph,
And behold, are not we a *remnant of the seed of Joseph*? 3 Nephi 4:72

Jesus Christ, the Holy One of Israel, who is the light and the life of the world emphasized Joseph:

And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words,
He said unto those twelve whom he had chosen:
"Ye are my disciples,
And ye are a light unto this people which are a *remnant of the house of Joseph*." 3 Nephi 7:13

All of these references emphasized Joseph. If it were not for Amulek we would simply say the plates of brass did not mention Manasseh as Lehi's tribe. But they do; therefore, why the unanimous emphasis on Joseph?

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. . . that they (the remnant of the house of Israel) may know the covenants of the Lord . . .

Double Negatives in the Book of Mormon?

Yes! Yes!

by Barbara Fowler

To most English-speaking people, the use of a double negative, such as, "You cannot have no candy," grates against the ears and conjures up images of a stern English teacher reproaching students with the axiom, "Two negatives equal a positive!"

In the process of restoring words from the Original and Printer's manuscripts of the Book of Mormon we found several instances where a negative word had been deleted or changed to a positive word. Its restoration would result in the offensive grammatical occurrence we call the double negative.

Have you ever wondered why the mathematical equation of two negatives equaling a positive was applied to grammar? While I was doing manuscript research and restoration, the occurrence of these double negatives triggered in my memory a statement made by a professor many years ago.

As an undergraduate English major, I had an excellent professor who enjoyed the English language immensely. He poked fun at the arbitrary rules of grammar and told us about the background of many of these rules. He told us that the use of double negatives should be permissible, because the man who established that rule merely forced a mathematical principle upon a grammatical structure.

In 1762 Robert Lowth, an Oxford professor of Hebrew and classical languages, and later the Bishop of London, wrote a book, *Short Introduction to English Grammar*, in which he declared that English was neglected and needed to have rules established concerning its usage. Therefore, he made rules which were mostly based on his own personal determination and which did not adhere to the rules of universal grammar, of which Latin was generally used as a basis. One such rule he devised was "Two negatives in English destroy one another, or are equivalent to an affirmative" (Meyers 1966:227).

L. M. Meyers, in *The Roots of Modern English*, disagrees with Lowth's arbitrary rule and states: "... the negatives obviously reinforce rather than cancel each other. Yet Lowth's statement was quite generally accepted as revelation, and most educated people have been carefully avoiding double negatives from this time on" (Meyers 1966:227).

In another publication, *Guide to American English*, Meyers states that "a speaker who applies two negatives to different words usually means to strengthen the negative idea rather than to reverse it" (1968:383). This concept is seen in other languages as well.

In *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* it is stated that "Two negatives in the same sentence do not neutralize each other but make the negation the more emphatic" (Kautzch 1909:483). Lowth's background in Hebrew should have steered him to this more logical conclusion rather than to his personal one.

Now that we know that double negatives in Hebrew show emphasis of a statement rather than canceling it, we are able to look at restored examples in the Book of Mormon in a new light. The restored examples are Hebraisms that point to the Hebrew authorship of the book, as well as enrich the meaning of these passages.

With this new understanding concerning double negatives, we can understand why "educated men" deleted or changed double negatives on the manuscript. However, by restoring the deleted or changed words we have a much clearer understanding of the strength of statements written by the authors of the Book of Mormon.

There also seem to be some clusters of negative words which further intensify the message of a passage. One such instance is found in 2 Nephi 11:110 where a list of eight things is given that the Lord commanded men not to do. In the concluding statement, a ninth "not" has been restored to add emphasis that men are definitely not to do these things. The restored "not" with the "none" is the double negative in this example. This "not" was removed prior to the 1830 printing of the Book of Mormon and therefore has never been in print (restored words appear in italics):

the Lord God hath commanded
that men should **not** murder
that they should **not** lie
that they should **not** steal
that they should **not** take the name of the Lord their
God in vain
that they should **not** envy
that they should **not** have malice
that they should **not** contend one with another
that they should **not** commit whoredoms
And that they should *not* do **none** of these things.

Where negative words have been removed there was at least one other negative in the same sentence. For example, "no" was often used with "not" and with "never" in the same sentence, which served to emphasize that negative thought. Listed below are several examples of negatives associated with a second negative that were removed and have never been in print:

2 N 11:110 should *not* do none
 Hel 5:39 not find *no* fault
 3 N 8:18 no tongue can *not* speak
 Eth 3:31 should *not* constrain no man
 Eth 5:7 no witnesses, *not* until

Negative words were also changed to positive words in an effort to make the sentences more grammatically acceptable. One such change from the negative to the positive is the change of "never" to "ever" so that the phrase becomes proper English. Restoration of the negative results in the double negative phrase "nor never." Chapter five of Jacob contains many negative words which would be expected as Sherem denies Christ. In verse 15, with the restoration of *never*, Sherem emphatically denies Christ three times:

If there should be a Christ, I would **not** deny him;
 But I know that there is **no** Christ, **neither** hath been **nor**
never will be.

Sherem makes the initial statement that he knows that there is no Christ, but he furthers that statement by denying Christ in the present ("there is **no** Christ"), the past ("**neither** hath been"), and the future ("**nor never** will be").

In another example of a double negative for emphasis, the Book of Fourth Nephi paints a glorious picture of what life was like when people all lived together with the love of God and each other in their hearts:

And it came to pass that there was **no** contention in the land
 because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts
 of the people.
 And there were **no** envyings
nor stifes
nor tumults
nor whoredoms
nor lyings
nor murders
nor no manner of lasciviousness;

And surely there could **not** be a happier people among all
 the people which had been created by the hand of God.
 There were
no robbers
nor no murderers
Neither were there Lamanites
nor no manner of ites

4 Nephi 1:17-20

Here the first and third "nor no" were changed to "nor any" and the second "no" was omitted. The restoration of the double negatives emphasizes the condition of the people.

The majority of the editorial changes below are from the double negative "nor no" to the positive "nor any." "Nor no" seems to be a common Hebrew idiom. Other changes were "never" to "ever" and "neither" to "either."

2 N 15:10	none of these I <i>cannot</i> hope	can I
Jac 5:15	nor <i>never</i> will be	ever
Mos 1:43	nor <i>no</i> manner	any
Mos 1:116	nor <i>no</i> other way	any
Mos 13:19	nor <i>no</i> manner	any
A 14:12	against God <i>no</i> more	any
Hel 1:33	not retreat <i>neither</i> way	either
4 N 1:18	nor <i>no</i> manner	any
4 N 1:20	nor <i>no</i> manner of	any

In the example in Helaman, the restoration of *neither* is consistent with its use in the next phrase:

And now behold, the Lamanites could **not** retreat
neither way;
neither on the north,
nor on the south,
nor on the east,
nor on the west,

For they were surrounded . . .

Helaman 1:33

The use of double negatives in the Book of Mormon is also noted by Roy Weldon in volume 3 of *Book of Mormon Deeps* (1979:264). Weldon quotes Franklin S. Harris, Jr. who states that "the double negative is permissible in Hebrew." E. Cecil McGavin discusses the changes which were made in his book *Cumorah's Gold Bible*. The majority of changes which eliminated the double negatives were made in the 1830 and 1837 editions. McGavin states:

In like manner, the first edition was changed in another respect in order to make the perfect Hebrew idiom conform more to English. In Hebrew the use of the double negative is permissible, and when used the double negative does not make a positive. . . . This is certainly strong evidence that the Book of Mormon is an inspired translation from an ancient text based upon Hebrew. In many cases the Prophet made such a literal translation that the construction seemed grammatically imperfect in English, yet every example of that kind was in perfect harmony with the literary standards of ancient Hebrew (1940:273).

Once more we have another strong testimony that the Book of Mormon is just what it claims to be: a Hebrew book written by believers with Hebrew knowledge. After reading these passages, it should be clear to the

The answer is found in Ether 6:6-7. Moroni is describing what Ether saw:

And that a New Jerusalem should be built up upon this land unto the *remnant of the seed of Joseph*,
For which things there has been a type;
For as Joseph brought his father down into the land of Egypt, even so he died there;
Wherefore, the Lord brought a *remnant of the seed of Joseph* out of the land of Jerusalem,
That he might be merciful unto the seed of Joseph that they should perish not,
Even as he was merciful unto the father of Joseph, that he should perish not.

Joseph of Egypt was responsible for the physical salvation of the entire house of Israel. Joseph was also a type for Jesus Christ. The writers of the Book of Mormon undoubtedly emphasized Joseph because they knew that it would be the tribe of Joseph in the last days that would again save the rest of the house of Israel. They knew that it would not be Ephraim or Manasseh but the two working together as a latter-day tribe of Joseph.

We are told in 2 Nephi 2:20-23 that when the Bible and the Book of Mormon grow together (see *Zarahemla Record* #53) then peace will be established between Ephraim and Manasseh. When peace was established in the New World by the appearance of Jesus Christ, there were no more "ites" (4 Nephi 1:20), because the various tribes thought of themselves primarily as followers of Jesus Christ rather than as members of a tribe.

Can our calling be any less? The message to us is to look to the tribe of Joseph and not to Ephraim or to Manasseh. Much of our past discussion over Ephraim versus Manasseh appears to have been rendered obsolete by this clear message from the Book of Mormon.

One way we can look to Joseph (as a type for Jesus Christ) is to feast upon the words of Christ (2 Nephi 14:4). In that way, we will receive the direction we need to assist in this work and be numbered among the tribe of Joseph that we might be part of the New Jerusalem. ZRF

Book of Mormon believer that double negatives are a means to point out important concepts to which the Lord would have us pay close attention. Perhaps we would do well to heed the warnings. ZRF

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