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THE

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(2 Nephi 4:16)

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## THE LANGUAGE OF JOSEPH, LEHI AND NEPHI

by Frank Evan Frye

Lehi was commanded of God to send his sons back to Jerusalem to get the records Laban possessed. In 1 Nephi 1:158–168, we learn Lehi was very literate in the language on the plates of brass. What language was that? In the first chapter of Mosiah, King Benjamin informs us that he taught his three sons:

In all the language of his fathers ... and taught them concerning the records which were engraven on the **plates of brass. Having been taught in the language of the Egyptians, therefore he could read these engravings**, and teach them to his children. (Mosiah 1:3, 4, 6)

Joseph, son of Jacob (Israel) was sold into Egypt as a young boy. Joseph would have been educated by his new **owner**, Potifer, in the language of the Egyptians. Potifer eventually gave Joseph charge of his entire household, save himself, until his wife falsely accused Joseph and caused him to be thrown in prison. However, Joseph's skills and integrity became known to the jailer, and Joseph was given responsibility—even in prison. Later, Joseph, after interpreting the dreams of the Pharaoh, was given authority in Egypt second only to the Pharaoh. Nephi mentioned that the prophecies of Joseph were upon the plates of brass. Could it be possible Joseph was the one who first created and wrote upon those plates of brass? One other possibility is that Joseph's prophecies were quoted from another record separate from the plates of brass.

It is evident, though, that Joseph's family maintained literacy in **the language of the Egyptians** from his day until Lehi's day. We must not forget that hundreds of years after Joseph, Moses was born in the land of Egypt and was raised in the Pharaoh's court. Obviously, he would have been educated in the same language.

With these things in mind, it would be very unlikely that, as Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, he would have been left ignorant that the family of Joseph had those prophecies, either on **plates of brass** or in some other form. Would Moses have used their talents to perhaps make a permanent backup of his writings?

And Laban also was a descendant of Joseph, **wherefore** he and his fathers had kept the records (1 Nephi 1:168)

It seems that Lehi, here, deems it important for us to understand the descendants of Joseph were the keepers of those records. Surely, Moses was not ignorant of a thing of such importance.

Douglas Petrovich has recently published two books about the Hebrews in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> He gives credible evidence that Joseph's family (especially through Manasseh) was also responsible for the world's first phonetic alphabet. He calls it **proto-consonantal script**.

These things make it evident that Joseph's family was not only the record keepers for the Israelites, but also were the linguistic experts. They knew the original language of the Hebrews, as well as how to read and write the several variations of the Egyptian language—hieroglyphic, hieratic and demotic, as each developed. Alma 8:3 shows Lehi was a descendant of Joseph through Manasseh.<sup>2</sup>

It is evident that Nephi was the family member chosen to be the next scribe. He had learned how to make the plates, and knew how to read and engrave the Egyptian characters—all that it took to make the records.

I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and **the language of the Egyptians**. (1 Nephi 1:1)

Nephi knew how to read and write the **language of the Egyptians**.

We should not ignore the strong probability that Zoram was also literate in Egyptian, and he was knowledgeable about how to make the plates because of his intimate relationship with Laban (holding the keys to the treasury). It may also be the reason that a small portion of the tribe of Manasseh (1 Chronicles 9:3) lived in and around Jerusalem—because they were the keepers of the most permanent and important copy of the Holy Scriptures at that time. We are told in Alma 17:32–51 that the plates of brass have been preserved for a wise purpose ... and he will also still show forth his power in them, unto future generations.

Could this be the way the Lord will make bare His arm in the eyes of all the nations?<sup>3</sup> Imagine the impact this will have upon the nations of the world. The first impact would be upon Israel, who will immediately recognize the text as the earliest text of their Holy Scriptures, which end at 600 B.C., with the writings of Jeremiah! The Dead Sea Scrolls begin around 200 B.C.

How will the following things impact the world: the five books of Moses, the creation of the world, Adam and Eve, the flood of Noah, the history of the Jews from their beginning down to King Zedekiah, and many other prophets from the beginning? All were written in Egyptian, inscribed on metal plates and found in the New World. How will this affect the relationship between Israel and the Native Americans of Mesoamerica and North America?

How will this affect Egypt and the rest of the Muslim world? How will these things affect liberal Christianity? Atheism? Communism? Imagine clear prophecies showing Jesus is the Messiah and support both the Bible and the Book of Mormon. Would these things **make bare the arm of the Lord in the eyes of all nations** in confirming God’s plans from ages past for His people—Israel, and speak about our immediate future?



<sup>1</sup> *The World’s Oldest Alphabet*, 2015; *Origins of the Hebrews*, 2021.

<sup>2</sup>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, who was sold into Egypt by the hands of his brethren (Alma 8:3).

<sup>3</sup> Mosiah 7:80; Mosiah 8:69; 1 Nephi 7:21-22; 3 Nephi 7:45 and 3 Nephi 9:73

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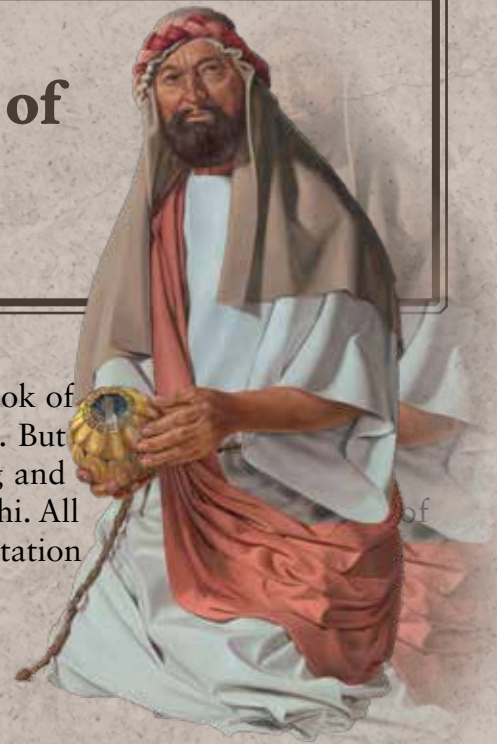
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# Nephi's Prophetic Interpretation of Lehi's Vision



by Jon Tandy

The Tree of Life vision is one of the most picturesque scenes in the Book of Mormon and a very well-known story to all Book of Mormon believers. But as I studied this passage a few years ago, I noticed some very interesting and surprising correlations between the related visions of Lehi and his son Nephi. All the visual elements within Lehi's vision are given both a symbolic interpretation and a prophetic fulfillment in Nephi's vision.



While Lehi tarried in the wilderness with his family, the Lord gave him a visionary dream. Lehi related his experience using rich pictorial language. He saw himself walking through a large and spacious field toward an unusual tree. He observed a rod of iron running alongside a strait and narrow path, leading to the tree. A great river ran alongside the path, and on the other side of the river, he saw a great and spacious building.

The visual scenery described by Lehi is what I will term the **geography** of the vision—the places and things that he actually saw. Lehi witnessed members of his own immediate family and other nameless multitudes of people also participating in the scene and interacting with the geography. Some people walked along the path toward the tree, while others were drowned in the river or entered the great and spacious building. All of these geographic and human elements are representative or symbolic of concepts and events that are outside the visionary scene itself.

Nephi desired to see, hear, and know for himself the things that his father saw. As he pondered and prayed, he was caught away in his own visionary experience, seeing the same visual items that Lehi saw. But in response to Nephi's desire to understand the vision, the Lord also gave him two other things:

- (1) a symbolic interpretation of the visionary scene, and
- (2) an expanded prophetic vision of actual future events that were to occur in the real world of Nephi's descendants and of all humanity.

In the sections that follow, each element of Lehi's vision is compared with both the symbolic interpretation given to Nephi and its real-world prophetic fulfillment.



## LEHI'S VISION

I beheld a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make one happy ... Yea, and I beheld that the fruit thereof was **white**, to exceed all the whiteness that I had ever seen; And as I partook of the fruit thereof, it filled my soul with exceeding great joy. Multitudes of people came forth, and **fell down**, and partook of the fruit of the tree. (1 Nephi 2:49-52, 78)



### NEPHI'S SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION

The angel asked Nephi:

Knowest thou the **meaning** of the tree which thy father saw? And I answered him, saying, Yea, it is the **love of God**, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things ... And I also beheld that the tree of life was a **representation** of the love of God. (1 Nephi 3:63-64, 69)

### NEPHI'S PROPHETIC VISION

When Nephi asked the Spirit of the Lord for the **interpretation** of the tree, the Spirit didn't immediately tell him the answer. Instead, the Spirit disappeared from Nephi's view, and he beheld Jerusalem, Nazareth, and a virgin (Mary) **who was exceedingly fair and white ... [and] most beautiful and fair.** (1 Nephi 3:47-55)

Note the similarity between the **whiteness** of the tree of life and the virgin, who was described as **fair and white**. But Mary is not the interpretation of the tree of life! Lest we should make too much of this similarity in language, Mary quickly disappeared from the scene. Instead, Nephi was shown her child, Jesus Christ.

And I looked, and I beheld the Son of God going forth among the children of men; and I saw many **fall down at His feet** and worship Him. (1 Nephi 3:61-67)

Nephi was told the **meaning** of the tree of life (the love of God) and was also shown its prophetic interpretation—Christ! Lehi's vision pictured the faithful falling down at the tree, but Nephi's vision revealed **real people** falling down at the feet of a **real person**, the Son of God, and worshipping **Him!** Later, Nephi's own descendants **did fall down at the feet of Jesus and did worship Him** after His resurrection. (3 Nephi 5:17) The countenance of Jesus that shone upon them **did exceed all the whiteness** of anything upon earth. (3 Nephi 9:25-26)

This identity of Jesus as the tree of life has deep significance. Nephi explained that the fruit of the tree is **most precious and most desirable above all other fruits; yea, and it is the greatest of all the gifts of God.** (1 Nephi 4:62-63) The tree of life and the love of God are not just abstract concepts – they are a person. God Himself is love, life, and light (1 John 4:8, 16; 3 Nephi 4:48; 5:12). Jesus IS the greatest of all the gifts of God (John 3:16). Let us always maintain clarity in our minds and hearts that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not just an abstract concept or theological truth. The gospel is ultimately and deeply personal, centered in the very being of God.



### LEHI'S VISION

Lehi saw:

A river of water; and it ran along, and it was near the tree of which I was partaking the fruit. And I looked to behold from whence it came; and I saw the head thereof a little way off. (1 Nephi 2:54-55)

He also beheld that the path toward the tree **led by the head of the fountain unto a large and spacious field, as if it had been a world.** Lehi equated this fountain with the river, in which many people were drowned. (1 Nephi 2:64, 80)

In the geography of Lehi's vision, the fountain (spring) of water originated in the field (the world). The water from that fountain ran alongside the path that led to the tree of life and eventually became a great gulf, a raging river of filthy water that separated the tree of life from the great and spacious building. Nephi's vision added that **the fountain of filthy water (the river) is the depths of hell.** (1 Nephi 3:124)

But in Nephi's vision, he mentioned another fountain. Recently, while pondering the geographic scenery of the vision, I wondered whether this second fountain had any association with a river or body of water, like the first fountain. But Nephi didn't give any other visually descriptive details about the second fountain, and Lehi didn't even mention it. All Nephi said is that the rod of iron **led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life, which waters are a representation of the love of God.** (1 Nephi 3:68) In other words, the fountain of living waters is clarified to be the same as the tree of life, which we above noted is symbolic of the love of God and a prophetic representation of Jesus Christ.

Throughout Nephi's prophetic vision, life and death are contrasted. The fountain of filthy waters had its spring in the world and ended in death and hell. But the fountain of living water is Jesus Himself, who brings eternal life. We recall Jesus at the well in Samaria, telling the woman about the gift of God and that He would give her **living water.** (John 4:12-13) God spoke to the prophet Jeremiah using this same imagery: **They have forsaken ME, the fountain of living waters.** (Jeremiah 2:13) Years later, Moroni picked up this theme again, as he hoped **that they may be persuaded to do good continually, that they may come unto the fountain of all righteousness and be saved.** (Ether 3:102) Jesus said to Moroni, **I will show unto them that faith, hope, and charity bringeth unto ME the fountain of all righteousness.** (Ether 5:29)



#### LEHI'S VISION

I beheld a rod of iron; and it extended along the bank of the river and led to the tree by which I stood. And I also beheld a **straight and narrow path** which came along by the rod of iron, even to the tree by which I stood. (1 Nephi 2:62-63)

WORD OF GOD

#### NEPHI'S SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION

Nephi explained the rod of iron was:

The **word of God**; and whoso would hearken unto the word of God and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction. (1 Nephi 4:38-40)

#### NEPHI'S PROPHETIC VISION

The angel showed him Jesus (the tree of life) coming in the flesh, being baptized by John and receiving the Spirit. Jesus went forth and ministered to the people in power, and multitudes gathered to **hear Him** (i.e., to hear the **word of God**). Nephi also saw Jesus lifted up and crucified for the sins of the world. Jesus Christ is the rod of iron, the word of God (John 1:1). Jesus is the straight and narrow path. All those who would partake of the fruit of eternal life must walk in His ways and come unto Him to obtain salvation through His death and resurrection.

Later, Nephi would write,

And after Christ shall have risen from the dead, He shall show Himself unto you, my children and my beloved brethren; and the **words** which He shall speak unto you shall be **the law** which ye shall do. (2 Nephi 11:58-59) And again, it showeth unto the children of men the **straightness**

of the path and the narrowness of the gate by which they should enter, He having set the example before them. And He said unto the children of men, **Follow thou Me.**  
(2 Nephi 13:11-12)

Interestingly, the tree of life vision is analogous to the words of Jesus in the gospel of John:

I am the way [the straight and narrow path], the **truth** [the rod of iron, the word of God], and the **life** [the tree of life]. (John 14:6)

The entire vision account, both the symbolic and the prophetic aspects, are ALL about Jesus.



#### LEHI'S VISION

The straight and narrow path:

Led by the head of the fountain unto a **large and spacious field**, as if it had been a world; and I saw numberless concourses of people, many of whom were pressing forward, that they might obtain the path which led unto the tree by which I stood.  
(1 Nephi 2:64-65)

#### NEPHI'S PROPHETIC VISION

And I looked, and I beheld the Lamb of God going forth among the children of men. And I beheld **multitudes of people** who were sick and who were afflicted with all manner of diseases, and with devils, and unclean spirits ... And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that He was taken by the **people**; yea, the Son of the everlasting God was **judged of the world**; and I saw and bear record. And I, Nephi, saw that He was lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world. And after He was slain, I saw the **multitudes of the earth**, that they were gathered together to fight against the apostles of the Lamb; for thus were the twelve called by the angel of the Lord. (1 Nephi 3:82-88)

In Nephi's prophecy, we see several different groups of people who could correspond to the various multitudes in Lehi's vision. But as an initial observation, the same **multitudes** of Jews who sought Jesus (the tree of life) during His earthly ministry became the very crowds of people who had Him nailed to a tree by a Gentile ruler and afterward persecuted the fledgling Christian church.



#### LEHI'S VISION

In addition to many nameless multitudes, Lehi saw his family (Sariah, Sam, Nephi) at the head of the river, and they came to him and partook of the fruit of the tree. He also saw his sons Laman and Lemuel, who refused to come. (1 Nephi 2:56-61)

#### NEPHI'S PROPHETIC VISION

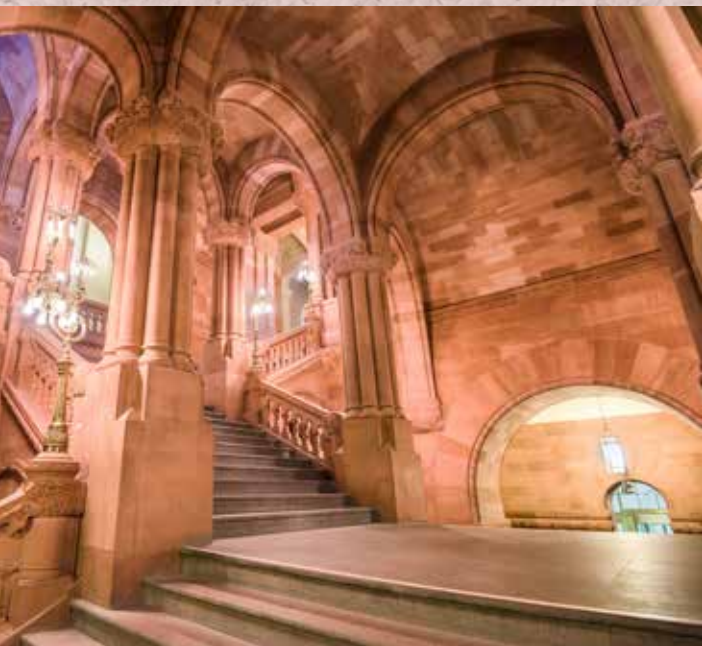
Lehi's vision of his own family is representative of their response to Christ in the real world. Laman and Lemuel rebelled against God and His commandments, while Sariah, Sam, and Nephi remained faithful. Perhaps a bit less obvious is how the symbolism of the faithfulness (or unfaithfulness) of Lehi's immediate family in the Tree of Life vision connects with Nephi's prophetic vision of his descendants through their generations. Nephi beheld the fate of Lehi's family until the coming of Christ as a scene of continual warfare between his seed and the seed of his brethren. (1 Nephi 3:96-100)







## Great & Spacious Building



### LEHI'S VISION

And I also cast my eyes round about and beheld on the other side of the river of water a **great and spacious building**; and it stood as it were in the air, high above the earth. And it was filled with people—both old and young, both male and female; and their manner of dress was exceeding fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who had come up and were partaking of the fruit. (1 Nephi 2:71-75)

### NEPHI'S SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION

And the angel of the Lord spake unto me again, saying, Behold the **world** and the **wisdom thereof** ... And the large and spacious building which thy father saw is **vain imaginations** and the **pride** of the children of men. (1 Nephi 3:91, 126)

### NEPHI'S PROPHETIC VISION

And after He was slain, I saw the multitudes of the earth, that they were gathered together to fight against the apostles of the Lamb ... And the multitude of the earth was gathered together; and I beheld that **they were in a large and spacious building**, like unto the building which my father saw. (1 Nephi 3:88-90)

This **multitude of the earth** here is specifically **the house of Israel ... gathered together to fight against the twelve apostles of the Lamb**. (1 Nephi 3:92) However, Nephi later saw the formation of a **great and abominable church** which would fight against the true saints and could also be characterized as the great and spacious building.



## Mists of Darkness

### LEHI'S VISION

And it came to pass that they did come forth and commence in the path which led to the tree. And it came to pass that there arose a **mist of darkness**, yea, even an exceeding great mist of darkness, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did **lose their way**, that they wandered off and were lost. (1 Nephi 2:66-67)

### NEPHI'S SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION

And the mists of darkness are the **temptations of the devil**, which blindeth the eyes, and hardeneth the hearts of the children of men, and leadeth them away into **broad roads**, that they may perish and are lost. (1 Nephi 3:125)

### NEPHI'S PROPHETIC VISION

The mists of darkness are manifest in many subtle ways, as Nephi witnessed the dreadful consequences of the sins of his people throughout the centuries. But the **mists of darkness** also featured prominently in his vision in a very specific way. At the time of Christ's crucifixion:

It came to pass that I saw a **mist of darkness** on the face of the land of promise. And I saw lightnings, and I heard thunderings, and earthquakes, and all manner of tumultuous noises ... I saw the **vapor of darkness**, that it passed from off the face of the earth. (1 Nephi 3:102-103, 110)

This is a somewhat surprising observation, in terms of symbolic interpretation. Lehi's vision pictured a mist of darkness, in which multitudes of people were lost. The mist represents a timeless principle of the darkness of sin. But Nephi witnessed an actual **mist of darkness** fall over his people, in which literal multitudes of the wicked perished as a result of their sin and rebellion against God. Later Nephite history describes the three days of darkness using the same words. (3 Nephi 4:20-21)



### LEHI'S VISION

After the mists of darkness, Lehi beheld other multitudes:

Clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree ... And after they had tasted of the fruit, they were **ashamed** because of those that were scoffing at them; and they **fell away** into forbidden paths and were lost. (1 Nephi 2:68-69, 76) Lehi saw other multitudes who made their way to the tree of life, **until they came forth, and fell down, and partook of the [exceedingly white] fruit of the tree.** (1 Nephi 2:78) Those who fell down did not fall away.

### NEPHI'S PROPHETIC VISION

And behold, I saw **multitudes** who had not fallen<sup>1</sup> because of the great and terrible judgments of the Lord. And I saw the heavens open and the Lamb of God descending out of heaven; and He came down and showed Himself unto them. ... And behold, they are **righteous forever**; for because of their faith in the Lamb of God, their garments are made **white** in His blood. And the angel said unto me, Look! And I looked and beheld three generations pass away in righteousness, and their garments were white, even like unto the Lamb of God. (1 Nephi 3:111-112, 117-118) And I, Nephi, also saw many of the fourth generation, who passed away in righteousness ... [but] because of the **pride of my seed** and the **temptations of the devil**, I beheld that the seed of my brethren did overpower the people of my seed. (1 Nephi 3:120, 129)

This is another interesting observation. Lehi's vision pictures multitudes pursuing various paths of righteousness or unrighteousness, which is a timeless reality. But Nephi prophetically describes multitudes of his own descendants who, after passing through a literal mist of darkness, **fell down** at the feet of the Savior (the Tree of Life) and became white in righteousness. Yet, in the fourth generation, they took their eyes off the Savior and turned again toward the world. The entire nation of Nephites and Lamanites fell away from the truth into apostasy. They became a **filthy people** [recalling the river



of filthy water], **full of idleness and all manner of abominations.** (1 Nephi 3:134) Lehi's vision becomes, for Nephi, a prophecy of the future of his own people.



## Other Multitudes & the River of Filthy Water

### LEHI'S VISION

And he also saw other multitudes feeling their way **towards that great and spacious building.** And it came to pass that many were **drowned in the depths of the fountain** [river]; and many were lost from his view, **wandering in strange roads.** And great was the multitude that did enter into that strange building. (1 Nephi 2:79-82)

The **multitudes** discussed previously were striving to reach the tree of life, including those who eventually fell away. These next multitudes were, instead, endeavoring to enter into the great and spacious building.

### NEPHI'S SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION

And I said unto them that the **water** which my father saw was **filthiness**; ... it was an awful **gulf**, which separateth the wicked from the tree of life and also from the saints of God ... [and] a representation of that awful hell ... Our father also saw that the **justice of God** did also **divide the wicked from the righteous.** (1 Nephi 4:44-48)

The **fountain**, as noted earlier originated in the world, became not only a filthy river, but also a great gulf of misery and destruction. Some of the wicked were drowned in the river, and others walked in many strange roads of sin. By God's justice, the wicked (represented by the multitudes in the great and spacious building) are separated from the righteous and the tree of life.

### NEPHI'S PROPHETIC VISION

And I looked and beheld many nations and kingdoms ... of the Gentiles. And it came to pass that I saw among the nations of the Gentiles ... the **foundation of a church, which is most abominable** above all other churches, which slayeth the saints of God, yea, and tortureth them, and bindeth them down, and yoketh them with a yoke of iron, and bringeth them down into captivity. ... And I saw the **devil**, that he was the foundation of it ... And also for the praise of the world do they **destroy the saints of God** and bring them down into captivity. (1 Nephi 3:135-144) I looked and beheld the whore of all the earth, and she sat upon **many waters**; and she had dominion over all the earth, among **all nations**, kindreds, tongues, and people. (1 Nephi 3:224-225)



The wicked, who sought after the world rather than the righteousness of God, could arguably be represented in Nephi's vision as some of his own posterity who fell into wickedness. But it seems to me, more specifically, that the prophetic imagery in his vision connects the **great and spacious building** here with the **great and abominable church.** There is also a connection between the river of filthy water (that awful hell) and the **whore of all the earth** that sat upon **many waters**, under the control of the devil. As the nations of the Gentiles tend to walk in many strange and perverse sins and abominations, so their multitudes (in the vision) were lost in many **strange roads.**



## Remainder of Nephi's Vision

In the last half of Nephi's prophetic vision, he was shown many other events of the future beyond the fall of the Nephite civilization (1 Nephi 3:145-254):

- Gentiles are brought to the land of America.
- They war against their **mother Gentiles** and prevail.
- They bring the book of the Jews (Bible) with them to the new land.
- The fullness of the gospel had been taken away from them.
- The Gentiles destroy many of the seed of the Lamanites.
- God manifests Himself to the Gentiles through the Book of Mormon and the gospel.
- Christ fulfills His covenants to Israel, manifesting Himself in power to all nations.
- Believing Gentiles are numbered with Israel.
- Nephi sees the end of the world, as John did, but does not write further.

It seems to me that, whereas every element of Lehi's vision finds symbolic and prophetic fulfillment in Nephi's vision, the latter half of Nephi's prophecy isn't mapped to Lehi's vision in the same way as is the first half. (The last half of his prophecy does contain some of the same elements, such as the **great and abominable church**, but these references seem more indirect and less explicit than the other symbols discussed above.)

I am not certain how to explain the choice of language in the first half of Nephi's prophecy being so closely aligned with the imagery of Lehi's vision, but not in the second half. However, I propose the following suggestion: the latter half of Nephi's vision dealt largely with the Gentiles, whereas the first half focused on the house of Israel (including Nephites and Lamanites). Lehi's vision may, therefore, be thematically intended to highlight God's covenantal promises to faithful Israel. It is also possible that Lehi saw more in his vision that Nephi didn't record in this brief summary, and one day if we receive a more complete account of Lehi's vision, we might discover more interpretive connections with the last half of Nephi's prophecy.



## Summary

Lehi's visionary experience of the tree of life was related using highly symbolic imagery. It tells a timeless truth that is applicable to all time and all people. Yet, as Nephi sought for greater understanding of his father's vision, the Lord revealed to him a prophetic view of future events spanning 2,500 years of Israelite/Nephite and Gentile history that was intertwined with the symbolic interpretation of the vision.

This narrative, told from two different but interconnected perspectives (Lehi's and Nephi's), includes many subtle, intricately woven symbolic connections that have not been widely recognized, as far as I am aware. The complexity and depth of this account is a testament to the literary genius of the Book of Mormon and a witness to its divine authorship. It is unlikely Joseph Smith could have written such a complex work, given his limited literary skills.

Most importantly, the Tree of Life visions provide a rich testimony of Jesus Christ, who is the Tree of Life, the Fountain of Living Waters, and the personification of the Love of God. He is the Path (the Way), the Rod of Iron (the Truth), and the Life!

1 The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon through the 1908 edition say "had fallen," referring to those who died. But the RCE and the Original Manuscript say "had not fallen," which clarifies that Jesus showed Himself to the survivors who did not perish in the destruction.

# Book of Mormon OVERVIEW

— THIRD EDITION —

The **Book of Mormon** is a collection of ancient sacred writings written between about 3000 BC and AD 420. It tells about God's dealings with three groups of people who He led out of the Old World to a new Promised Land in the New World.

In addition, it foretells the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, predating His coming by nearly 3,000 years; records His personal visitation; presents His great plan of salvation and prophecies concerning the restoration of all the house of Israel.

## Two groups kept records



The earliest group, the **Jaredites**, came from the Great Tower at the time of the confounding of the language sometime between 3100 BC and 2700 BC. Their civilization in the New World lasted more than 2,500 years. Their highly condensed story is told in the book of Ether.



The **Nephites**, who were a branch of the house of Israel, came from Jerusalem about 600 BC. Shortly after their arrival in the New World, they split into two groups—the Nephites, who were the more righteous, and the Lamanites. The account of the Nephites

is contained in the remaining fourteen books making up The Book of Mormon.

The Nephite record tells of Christ's visit to them after His resurrection, followed by two hundred years of spiritual harmony as "the children of Christ." However, by AD 385 they had fallen into wickedness and willful disobedience and were destroyed as a people by the Lamanites.

## One group did not keep records

A third group, the people of Zarahemla (called **Mulekites**), were also of the house of Israel and are mentioned briefly in the Nephite writings. They came to the New World about 586 BC, just after the Nephites. Mulek was the son of King Zedekiah of Judah. As a people, the Mulekites merged with the Nephites about 200 BC.

The image features a dark blue book cover on the left side, with gold text. The background is a warm, golden-yellow illustration of a man standing in a landscape with a tree and a large rock. The overall style is artistic and religious.

## *The Purposes of the* **Book of Mormon**

- To persuade all men to come unto Christ and enter into a covenant relationship with Him for eternal salvation.
- To restore the present-day Lamanites, a remnant of the scattered house of Israel, to a knowledge of the covenants with the Lord.
- To declare that God is working to restore all of the house of Israel to their ancient lands and covenants with Him, that is, to re-establish their original relationship with Him.
- To be a second witness of the Bible as an historical and true record, both divinely inspired by God.
- To grow together with the Bible to confound false doctrines and lay down contentions (settle disagreements and arguments).

J. ROBERT FARLEY

## The Significance of The Book of Mormon

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- The book contains prophecies about the restoration of the house of Israel that are not found elsewhere.
- It records the words of Christ to the Nephites, called His “other sheep,” after His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. It confirms His identity as the foretold Messiah and the Eternal God.
- It offers firsthand accounts of the ministry of the resurrected Jesus and gives additional insights into the principles of the gospel.
- It provides “many plain and precious” truths that are not found elsewhere, including some which have been removed from the Bible during its many translations.
- It furnishes firsthand testimonies of God’s vast love and compassion for us, His children.

# The Coming Forth of The Book of Mormon

- A thousand years of Nephite history were abridged by Mormon from the large plates of Nephi. In AD 385, Mormon gave this condensed record to his son Moroni to finish.
- Moroni then hid up all the original records in Hill Cumorah, except the completed abridgment and the small plates of Nephi.
- Sometime after AD 420, Moroni hid up the abridged record and the small plates of Nephi in a small hill near Manchester, New York, as directed by the Lord.
- Moroni, as an angelic messenger, gave the plates and “interpreters” to Joseph Smith, Jr., in 1827. Joseph translated the record by the “gift and power” of God, using the interpreters, which are instruments prepared by God specifically for translating languages.
- As Joseph dictated, a scribe wrote the Original Manuscript. The plates and interpreters were then returned to Moroni.
- A copy of the Original handwritten manuscript was made and is called the Printer’s Manuscript. About one-sixth of the Original was used to set the type of the First Edition. It was first published in March, 1830.

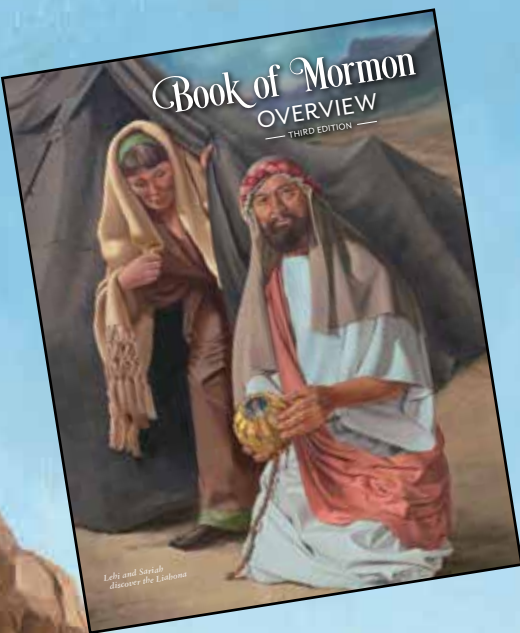


*“Caractors” is the only known document that was copied from the original golden plates of The Book of Mormon. The yellowed paper measures 3¼" x 8" and is owned by the Community of Christ, headquartered in Independence, Missouri.*

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I would exhort you that ye would come unto Christ and lay hold upon every good gift...  
Yea, come unto Christ and be perfected in Him and deny yourselves of all ungodliness,  
And if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness and love God with all your might, mind and strength,  
Then His grace is sufficient for you, that by His grace ye may be perfect in Christ;  
And if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in no wise deny the power of God.

And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ and deny not His power,  
Then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God through the shedding of the blood of Christ,  
Which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy without spot.

*Moroni*

*Book of Mormon Overview* is suitable for personal study, classes, home schooling, Sunday school, vacation church school, retreats and missionary outreach.

**\$6.00**

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