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Matthew L. Bowen

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Early Book of Mormon Writings Now Online

The most extensive collection of writings about the Book of Mormon published between 1829 and 1844 has been made available as an online database. The collection, 19th-Century Publications about the Book of Mormon (1829–1844), includes nearly 600 publications and close to one million words of text. It is intended to comprise, insofar as possible, everything published during Joseph Smith’s lifetime relating to the Book of Mormon. Under the auspices of Digital Collections at Brigham Young University’s Harold B. Lee Library, this ambitious project can be accessed at lib.byu.edu/dlib/bompublications.

For more than 10 years Matthew Roper, research scholar at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship and head of the project, has been collecting this literature. The collection builds upon the early efforts of Francis W. Kirkham, an educator for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. According to Roper, during the 1930s Kirkham began

collecting rare newspapers relating to early Latter-day Saint history. Subsequent researchers and historians have discovered many additional items, all of which are included in this new collection.

This valuable resource includes works by detractors as well as defenders and contains references to the Book of Mormon published in newspapers, books, pamphlets, hymns, broadsides, and early reference works, much of it formerly inaccessible to the public.

“We’ve done several things to make this collection valuable and easy to use,” says Roper. “First, we gathered all of the publications relating specifically to the Book of Mormon into one collection, saving researchers the considerable time involved in identifying articles, tracking them down, and obtaining microfilm of rare books. Second, the database includes transcripts as well as images of these publications. The collection is also fully searchable, allowing scholars to more easily identify and access those publications relating to their area of interest.” The electronic database will also be updated as more sources come to light. ♦

“He Shall Add”: Wordplay on the Name *Joseph* and an Early Instance of *Gezera Shawa* in the Book of Mormon

In explaining the prophecies of Isaiah in which his soul delighted, Nephi sets up an intriguing wordplay on the name *Joseph*.¹ On several occasions he combines segments of Isaiah 11:11 and Isaiah 29:14 to foretell the gathering and restoration of Israel at the time of the coming forth of additional scripture. The most discernible reason for Nephi’s interpretation of these two specific texts in the light of each other is their shared use of the Hebrew verb *yāsap*, which literally means “to add” but can have the more developed senses to “continue” or “proceed to do” something and “to do again.”² This verb is also the source of the name *Joseph*, which means “may He [the Lord] add,” “He shall add,” or “He has added.”³ Rachel, the mother of the patriarch Joseph, is said to have explained the giving of this name to her son with that basic sense in mind: “And she called his name *Joseph* [*yōsēp*], and said, The Lord shall *add* [*yōsēp*] to me another son” (Genesis 30:24; emphasis in all

scriptural citations is mine).⁴ Thus when Nephi combined these two prophecies together through their common use of *yāsap*, he was also using a wordplay on the name *Joseph* both to remind us that it was the seed of Joseph that would be gathered and to foretell the involvement of another Joseph, Joseph Smith, in the gathering and in the coming forth of scripture.

Isaiah 11:11 states: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand *again* [*yōsēp*] the second time to recover the remnant of his people,” while Isaiah 29:14 declares: “Therefore, behold, I will *proceed* [*yōsēp*] to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder.”⁵ Nephi’s joining of these two passages is most noticeable in 2 Nephi 25:17, where he foretells the latter-day gathering of Judah: “And the Lord will *set* his hand *again* [*yōsēp*] the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore, he will *proceed* [*yōsēp*] to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men.” Here Nephi states that the Lord “shall bring forth his words unto [his people]” words they have not previously had, “for the purpose of convincing them of the true Messiah” (25:18) and “that the promise may be fulfilled unto *Joseph* [*yōsēp*]” (25:21).

Those who remember Lehi's prophecy earlier in the same book of 2 Nephi will see the subtle connection Nephi may have been making between the Lord setting his hand again [*yôšîp*] and proceeding [*yôšîp*] to do a marvelous work and the name *Joseph* [*yôšêp*], both Joseph of old and his descendant Joseph Smith.

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

Nephi prefaces another treatise on the coming forth of additional scripture with an oracle that joins the same two Isaiah passages together but reverses the order of their quotation: "But behold, there shall be many—at that day when I shall *proceed* [*yôšîp*] to do a marvelous work among them [Isaiah 29:14], that I may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men, *that I may set my hand again* [**w^ošîp yādî*] the second time to recover my people, which are of the house of Israel [Isaiah 11:11]" (2 Nephi 29:1). This joining together of biblical texts from isolated passages on the basis of a shared word was an interpretive technique known in later rabbinic times as *Gezera Shawa*.⁶

Jesus uses *Gezera Shawa* in Matthew 22:36–40,⁷ joining the commandment "And thou shalt love [*w^eāhabtâ*] the Lord thy God with all thy heart" (Deuteronomy 6:5)⁸ to the lesser-quoted commandment "but thou shalt love [*w^eāhabtâ*] thy neighbour as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18), declaring that "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."⁹ Jesus's *Gezera Shawa* makes one commandment

of two. Nephi's technique similarly makes one prophecy from two separate prophecies. For Nephi, the coming forth of the sealed book (Isaiah 29) *meant* the gathering of Israel (Isaiah 11).

Nephi explains additional prophecies of Isaiah to his brothers using the verb *yāsap* in 1 Nephi 22: "And after our seed is scattered the Lord God *will proceed* [*yôšîp*] to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles" (22:8); "Wherefore, the Lord God *will proceed* [*yôšîp*] to make bare his arm in the eyes of all nations" (22:11; citing Isaiah 29:14 and 52:10); "Wherefore, he will bring them *again* [*yôšîp*] out of captivity, *and they shall be gathered together* [**wayyē'ās'pû*] to the lands of their inheritance"¹⁰ (1 Nephi 22:12; compare Isaiah 11:11–12). Nephi envisaged the Lord's "adding" to do a marvelous work as a summation of Isaiah's prophecies regarding the gathering and restoration of Israel, including his brothers' and his own posterity as descendants of Joseph.

Mormon, perhaps drawing on the words of Lehi, Nephi, and Isaiah, creates the clearest name play on *Joseph* in this vein: "Yea, and surely shall he *again* [*yôšîp*] bring a remnant of the seed of *Joseph* [*yôšêp*] to the knowledge of the Lord their God" (3 Nephi 5:23).¹¹ For Mormon and his Josephite ancestors the *nomen* (name) *Joseph* was truly the *omen* of the Lord's *proceeding* to do a marvelous work, which was to *set his hand again* to gather Israel—a sign of "additional" good things in the latter days.

A recognition of Nephi's repeated combination of Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14 as *Gezera Shawa* helps us to appreciate how "after the manner of the things of the Jews" (2 Nephi 25:5) two disparate prophecies can be seen as fulfilled in a single divine act, or rather, in a single person—a "Joseph." It also helps us to appreciate how Jacob—Nephi's brother and protégé—applied this technique to two other prophecies of Isaiah (Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16) together with Psalm 118:22, based on shared words like *'eben* (Heb. "stone"), to create a single prophecy about Jesus Christ (see Jacob 4:15–17). All of this suggests that



From Elder Neal A. Maxwell

For the faithful, what finally emerges is an understanding of "things as they really are" (Jacob

4:13), such as the reassuring realization that we are in the Lord's hands! But, brothers and sisters, we were never really anywhere else!

—*Ensign*, May 1985, 72, as quoted in *The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book*, ed. Cory H. Maxwell (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997), 351

we too can increase our understanding and appreciation of the words of Isaiah and other scriptures by adding to our scripture study tools the juxtaposing of different passages sharing the same word(s) and integrating them for our “profit and learning” (see 1 Nephi 13:23; 2 Nephi 4:15). ♦

By Matthew L. Bowen

Nibley Fellow and PhD student in Biblical Studies at the Catholic University of America

Notes

1. For the purposes of my thesis I assume that the small plates of Nephi, when not quoting from the Old Testament, were written in the Hebrew language, whatever script may have been used. I also assume that the quoted and paraphrased Old Testament passages would have retained their Hebrew character.

2. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 2:418. Hereafter cited as *HALOT*.

3. *HALOT*, 403.

4. Another explanation offered for the origin of the name *Joseph* a verse earlier associates the name *Joseph* with “gathering” (Genesis 30:23), where Rachel says, “God hath taken away [*ʔāsap*, lit., gathered up] my reproach.” Cf. Isaiah 11:12, “[He] shall assemble [*weʔāsap*, gather up] the outcasts of Israel.”

5. The morphological difference between the Hiphil (causative) imperfect (*yōsīp*) and the Qal participle (*yōsīp*) is slight (vowel quantity *i* vs. *ī*). The difference in pronunciation would also have been slight.

6. Or, *Gezerah Shawah*, literally “equal ordinance” or “equal statute.” See H. L. Strack and Günter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. Markus Bockmuehl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 18.

7. Luke 10:27 tells this story differently, attributing the joining of the two Torah passages to the “lawyer” testing Jesus. Luke’s account would suggest that this *Gezera Shawa* was a commonplace in the discourse of the religious leaders in Jesus’s time. Matthew’s account, on the other hand, seems to attribute the genius of this *Gezera Shawa* to Jesus himself.

8. This commandment is attached directly to the so-called *Shema*, Deuteronomy 6:4 (“Hear [*šema*], O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one”), which constitutes Judaism’s most important creedal formulation (translation mine).

9. Jesus’s citation of Leviticus 19:18 here—as a commandment summarizing the whole law (Torah)—may originate with Hillel the Elder, a noted rabbi who lived

during the time of Jesus’s adolescence [ca. AD 10]. Hillel is reported to have said, “Whatsoever is distasteful to you, do not do to your neighbor: this is the whole Law [*dʿlk sny lḥbrk lʔ tʿbyd zw hyʔ kl htwrh kwlh*],” Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 31a (translation mine). This statement may also be the basis of the Savior’s Golden Rule: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law [Torah] and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12; cf. Luke 6:31). Jesus’s use of *Gezera Shawa* adds a vertical dimension (“Love the Lord thy God”) to the horizontal obligation (“Love thy neighbor”) stipulated by Hillel. Notably, Hillel is sometimes wrongly said to be the originator of *Gezera Shawa*. Strack and Hemberger note that *Gezera Shawa* was “not invented by Hillel” but constituted one of “the main types of argument in use at that time.” See *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 17. Jesus was employing a technique used before his (and Hillel’s) time.

10. “And they shall be gathered”: possibly a Niphal form of *ʔāsap*. See *HALOT*, 1:74.

11. 3 Nephi 5:24 continues: “And as surely as the Lord liveth, will he *gather in* [cf. (*wʿ-ʔāsap*, “assemble,” Isaiah 11:12)] from the four quarters of the earth all the remnant of the seed of Jacob, who are scattered abroad upon all the face of the earth.” If the underlying verb is *ʔāsap/yēʔāsēp* (rather than *qibbēs/yʿqabbēs*, the name play on *Joseph* is even richer. Either way, Mormon alludes to Isaiah 11:11–12 (cf. 1 Nephi 22:12).

INSIGHTS

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