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## “That They Might Come Again unto the Remnant of the House of Jacob”: Onomastic Allusions to Joseph in 3 Nephi 26:8–10 and 4 Nephi 1:49

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The basic meaning of the verb *yāsap* is to “add” or “increase,”<sup>1</sup> with the more developed idiomatic senses of “to do [something] again, more”<sup>2</sup> (literally, to “add to do”).<sup>3</sup> The name *Joseph* (*yôsēp*) is a third-person masculine singular form of this verb in its causative stem,

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1. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, NL: Brill, 2001), 418. Hereafter cited as *HALOT*. See also *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 414–15. Hereafter cited as *BDB*.

2. *HALOT*, 418.

3. *BDB*, 415.

meaning “may Yahweh add” (see Genesis 30:23–24).<sup>4</sup> In previous studies, I have treated wordplays related to the name *Joseph*. For example, Nephi’s autobiographical adaptation of wordplay on Joseph in Genesis 37:5, 8 (“**and** they [Joseph’s brothers] hated him **yet the more**,” *wayyôsipû ‘ôd*) in 2 Nephi 5:2 (“their [Nephi’s brothers’] anger **did increase** against me”) demonstrates Nephi’s consciousness of biblical wordplay on *Joseph* and its narratological and rhetorical potential.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, building on previous findings, I endeavor to present new insights that are brought out in the passages explored here that have not been heretofore recognized.

As has been noted previously,<sup>6</sup> a comparison of Nephi’s quotations of Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14 in 2 Nephi 25:17 (in connection with the Lord’s “promise ... unto Joseph,” v. 21)<sup>7</sup> and 29:1–2 (in connection with the Lord’s promises to Nephi himself) reveals how central the Hebrew *yāsap* (*yôsîp*) idiom is to Nephi’s juxtaposition and exegesis of two of Isaiah’s prophecies. Nephi twice issues his own prophecies that juxtapose Isaiah’s promise of the Lord’s universal gathering of scattered Israel from Isaiah 11:11 with Isaiah’s separate prophecy of the coming forth of a sealed book as part of a “marvellous work and a wonder” (Isaiah 29:14) in order to create a single eschatological prophecy. The two prophecies’ shared use of the verb *yāsap* appears to be the lexical basis for Nephi’s joining them together, as shown in Table 1.

The divine promise to Nephi “that **these things which I write** shall be kept and preserved and handed down unto my seed from generation to generation, **that the promise may be fulfilled unto Joseph** [*yôsēp*] that his seed should never perish as long as the earth should stand” helps

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4. Ephraim A. Speiser, *Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, Vol. 1, *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 230–33; Cf. Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (Stuttgart, DEU: W. Kolhammer, 1928), 212.

5. Matthew L. Bowen, “‘Their Anger Did Increase Against Me’: Nephi’s Autobiographical Permutation of a Biblical Wordplay on the Name Joseph,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 23 (2017): 115–36, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/their-anger-did-increase-against-me-nephis-autobiographical-permutation-of-a-biblical-wordplay-on-the-name-joseph/>

6. See Matthew L. Bowen, “‘He Shall Add’: Wordplay on the Name Joseph and an Early Instance of Gezera Shawa in the Book of Mormon,” *Insights* 30/2 (2010): 2–4; Matthew L. 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, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/onomastic-wordplay-on-joseph-and-benjamin-and-gezera-shawa-in-the-book-of-mormon/>.

7. Book of Mormon citations will generally follow Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

us appreciate the “Joseph”-centric nature of Nephi’s “Gezera Shawa”-type<sup>8</sup> quotations of Isaiah in 2 Nephi 25:17 and 29:1 as evincing direct and deliberate wordplay on the name *Joseph*.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 1.** Nephi’s Prophetic Interpretation of Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14.

Isaiah 11:11–12 and 29:14	2 Nephi 25:17, 21; 29:1–2
<p>And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall <b>set</b> his hand <b>again</b> [<i>yôšîp</i>] the second time to recover <b>the remnant of his people</b>, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, <b>and shall assemble</b> the outcasts of Israel, <b>and gather together</b> the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. (Isaiah 11:11–12; emphasis in all scriptural citations is mine.)</p> <p>Therefore, behold, I <b>will proceed</b> [<i>yôšîp/yôšîp</i>] to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. (Isaiah 29:14)</p>	<p>[T]he Lord <b>will set</b> his hand <b>again</b> [<i>yôšîp</i>] the second time to restore <b>his people</b> from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore he <b>will proceed</b> [<i>yôšîp/yôšîp</i>] to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men. (2 Nephi 25:17)</p> <p>Wherefore for this cause hath the Lord God promised unto me that these things which I write shall be kept and preserved and handed down unto my seed from generation to generation, <b>that the promise may be fulfilled unto Joseph</b> [<i>yôšêp</i>] that his seed should never perish as long as the earth should stand. (2 Nephi 25:21)</p> <p>But behold, there shall be many at that day when I <b>shall proceed</b> [<i>yôšîp</i> or <i>yôšîp</i>] to do a marvelous work among them, that I may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men, <b>that I may set my hand again</b> [<i>*wê’ôšîp</i>] the second time to recover <b>my people</b> which are of the house of Israel — and also that I may remember the promises which I have made unto thee Nephi and also unto thy father, that I would remember your seed, and that <b>the words of your seed should proceed forth out of my mouth unto your seed</b>, and my words shall hiss forth unto the ends of the earth <b>for a standard</b> [<i>nês</i>] <b>unto my people</b> which are of the house of Israel. (2 Nephi 29:1–2)</p>

In this study, I propose that we see similar allusions to the name *Joseph* much later on in the Book of Mormon when the author-editor

8. *Gezerah shawah* (*gêzêrâ šâwâ*) means “‘equal ordinance’ or ‘statute.’” H. L. Strack and Günter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. Markus Bockmuehl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 18. Arland J. Hultgren states, “According to that principle, two texts using the same word can be brought together, and what is taught in the one can be applied to the other as well.” *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 182.

9. Bowen, “He Shall Add,” 2–4; Bowen, “Onomastic Wordplay on Joseph and Benjamin and *Gezera Shawa* in the Book of Mormon,” 261–64.

Mormon, following abridgment and arrangement of Jesus's post-resurrectional sermons at the temple in Bountiful, states his intent for their inclusion: "And **these things have I written** which are a lesser part of the things which he taught the people. And I have wrote them to the intent that **they may** be brought **again** [cf. *yôsiû*] unto this people from the Gentiles, **according to the words which Jesus hath spoken**" (3 Nephi 26:8). Mormon's statement not only reflects the language of 2 Nephi 25:17, 21 and 29:1–2, including the divine promises regarding the writings of Nephi and his successors (especially that "the words of your seed should proceed forth out of my mouth unto your seed"), but it also reflects the onomastic wordplay found in those passages. Mormon repeats the same technique when he articulates Ammaron's purpose in hiding up all the previously kept prophetic Nephite records. Again, the language of 2 Nephi 25:17, 21; 29:1 is evident: "And he [Ammaron] did hide them up unto the Lord, **that they might** come **again** unto the remnant of the house of Jacob, **according to the prophecies and the promises of the Lord**" (4 Nephi 1:49).

In this article, I will attempt to demonstrate that 3 Nephi 26:8–10 and 4 Nephi 1:49 are third-generation members of the same family as 2 Nephi 25:17, 21 and 29:1–2, derived from Isaiah 11:11–12 and Isaiah 29:4, all of which rely on *yâsap* (*yôsiû* or *yôsip*) idioms to describe the gathering of Israel and the concomitant coming forth of additional scripture. I will further attempt to show that Mormon, following Nephi, engages in a specific kind of wordplay on the name Joseph in 3 Nephi 26:8–10 and 4 Nephi 1:49 that ultimately harks back to the divine promises made to Joseph in Egypt (2 Nephi 3:4–16; 25:21; Genesis 50:24–34 JST) and his descendants and looks forward to the prophetic translator through whom additional scripture "[would] be brought again" and "[would] come again." This coming forth of this additional scripture, written by Nephi and his descendants, constitutes an essential element in the fulfillment of the prophetic promise that the Lord "shall ... again [cf. *yôsiû*] bring a remnant of the seed of Joseph to the knowledge of the Lord their God" (3 Nephi 5:23) and the final gathering that would follow (see especially 3 Nephi 5:24–26). The fulfillment of the divine promises to Joseph, Nephi, and their descendants is ultimately necessary to the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.

## Truths "Brought Again unto This People": A Statement of Purpose by Mormon

In 3 Nephi 26:8–9, Mormon crafts a statement of purpose for recording his abridgment of the account of Christ's post-resurrectional appearance at the temple in Bountiful and the things that he taught the people at that time (3 Nephi 11–26). This statement of purpose draws on Nephi's earlier language in 2 Nephi 25:17; 29:1, language that is itself directly dependent on Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14:

And these things have I written which are a **lesser part** of the things which he taught the people. And **I have wrote them to the intent that they may be brought again** [cf. *yôšîpû*] **unto this people from the Gentiles, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken.**

And when they shall have received this — which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith — and **if it should so be that they shall believe these things, then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.** (3 Nephi 26:8–9)

The designation "this people" in 3 Nephi 26:8, like the designation "this people" (*hā'ām-hazzeh*)<sup>10</sup> in Isaiah 29:14 from which it was probably originally taken, has reference to the people's covenant status as belonging to the house of Israel. "This people" constitutes the same referent as "his people" in 2 Nephi 25:17 and "my people which are of the house of Israel" in 2 Nephi 29:1. The longer purpose clause, "to the intent that **they may** be brought **again** [*yôšîpû/yôsîpû*] unto this people," functionally echoes the *yôšîp/yôsîp* language of 2 Nephi 25:17 (+21) and 29:1, as well as Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14 from whence it all originates. Mormon's use of this language adopts and adapts the concept of divine

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10. The expression "this people" (*hā'ām hazzeh/hā'ām-hazzeh*) occurs twice in Isaiah 29:13–14 as part of an established ballast between these two verses, which describe the nature of Israel's (and the world's) apostasy and the Lord's intent to remedy that apostasy: "Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as **this people** [*hā'ām hazzeh*] draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men; therefore, behold, I will proceed [*yôšîp*] to do a marvellous work among **this people** [*hā'ām-hazzeh*], even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." Notably, the Lord quoted from Isaiah 29:13 during Joseph Smith's First Vision (see Joseph Smith—History 1:19).



adding to give his latter-day audience more detailed insight into *how* his record would come forth as additional scripture in fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy of the coming forth of the sealed book.

The phrase “from the Gentiles” in 3 Nephi 26:8 reveals an additional source of second-generational influence. Nephi’s prophetic interpretation in 1 Nephi 22:8–12, a text apparently derived from Isaiah 29:14; 49:22–23, Genesis 22:18 (and, to a lesser degree, from Isaiah 11:11), clearly lays out the role of the Gentiles in the gathering and restoration of Israel in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. Mormon’s statement of authorial intent in 3 Nephi 26:8–9 describes the role of the Gentiles in very similar terms, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Second- and Third-generation Prophetic Interpretations of Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14

1 Nephi 22:8–12	3 Nephi 26:8–9; 5:23–24
<p>And after that our seed is scattered, the Lord God <b>will proceed</b> [<i>yôšîp</i> or <i>yôšîp</i>] to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles [Isaiah 29:14] which shall be of great worth unto our seed. Wherefore it is likened unto the being nursed <b>by the Gentiles</b> and being carried in their arms and upon their shoulders. And it shall also <b>be of worth unto the Gentiles — and not only unto the Gentiles</b> but unto all the house of Israel — unto the making known of the covenants of the Father of heaven unto Abraham, saying: In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. And I would, my brethren, that ye should know that all the kindreds of the earth cannot be blessed unless he shall make bare his arm in the eyes of the <b>nations</b>. Wherefore the Lord God <b>will proceed</b> [<i>yôšîp</i> or <i>yôšîp</i>] to make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations, in bringing about his covenants and his gospel unto they which are of the house of Israel. Wherefore <b>he will</b> bring them <b>again</b> [cf. <i>yôšîp</i>] out of captivity, and <b>they shall be gathered together</b> to the lands of their first inheritance [cf. Isaiah 11:11–12]. And they shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness [Isaiah 29:18], and they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel [Isaiah 49:26].</p>	<p>And these things have I written which are a <b>lesser part</b> of the things which he taught the people. And <b>I have wrote them to the intent that they may be brought again</b> [cf. <i>yôšîpû</i>] <b>unto this people from the Gentiles</b>, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken. And when they shall have received this — which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith — and <b>if it should so be that they shall believe these things, then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them</b>. (3 Nephi 26:8–9)</p> <p>Yea, and surely <b>shall he again</b> [<i>yôšîp</i>] bring a remnant of the seed of <b>Joseph</b> [<i>yôšêp</i>] to the knowledge of the Lord their God. And as surely as the Lord liveth <b>will he gather in</b> from the four quarters of the earth <b>all the remnant of the seed of Jacob</b>, which are scattered abroad upon all the face of the earth. (3 Nephi 5:23–24)</p>

Nephi’s explanation of Isaiah 48–49 to his brothers in 1 Nephi 22 is the text that most clearly describes the relationship between Isaiah’s prophecy of the coming forth of the sealed book (Isaiah 29) and the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.<sup>11</sup> Previously in his vision of the tree of life, Nephi had seen that the “the book of the Lamb of God which had proceeded forth from the mouth of the Jew” (i.e., the biblical record) would “c[o]me forth **from the Gentiles** unto the remnant of the seed of my brethren” (1 Nephi 13:38). The coming forth of “other books,” including the Nephite records, would follow the same pattern: “by the power of the Lamb **from the Gentiles** unto them” (1 Nephi 13:39). Thus, as Nephi later told his brothers, “then shall the fulness of the gospel of the Messiah come unto the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles unto the remnant of our seed” (1 Nephi 15:13). Shon Hopkin suggests that “the Gentiles” in the preceding verses

are associated with those who were led by God to the Americas (see 2 Nephi 13:12–19), those who persecuted the descendants of the Jews and the Lamanites (1 Nephi 13; 2 Nephi 29:5; 3 Nephi 29:8), those who would live in a day of wickedness and apostasy (see 2 Nephi 27:1, 28), those who would receive the fullness of the gospel and carry the Book of Mormon to others (see 1 Nephi 13:38; 15:13–16; 2 Nephi 30:3) and those who would be identified today as Christians (see 1 Nephi 13:19–23; 2 Nephi 26:20).<sup>12</sup>

Jesus uses the designation “Gentiles” in his teachings at the temple in Bountiful (as preserved by Mormon), and Mormon uses “Gentiles” in 3 Nephi 26:8 in precisely this same sense. In fact, Mormon anchors his prophetic statement of purpose in the teachings of Jesus at the temple in Bountiful with the phrase “according to the words which Jesus hath spoken.”

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11. Matthew L. Bowen, “‘The Lord God Will Proceed’: Nephi’s Wordplay in 1 Nephi 22:8–12 and the Abrahamic Covenant,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 50 (2022): 51–70, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/the-lord-god-will-proceed-nephis-wordplay-in-1-nephi-228-12-and-the-abrahamic-covenant/>.

12. Shon D. Hopkin, “To the Convincing of the Jew and Gentile That Jesus Is the Christ,” in *The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon: A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, eds. Dennis L. Largey, Andrew H. Hedges, John Hilton III, and Kerry Hull (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015), 284.

Jesus had taught the Lamanites and Nephites, using Isaiah-derived *yôsîp* language, regarding the eschatological gathering and restoration of Israel (“my people”): “And verily I say unto you: I give unto you a sign that ye may know the time when these things shall be about to take place, that I shall gather in from their long dispersion my people, O house of Israel, and **shall** establish **again** [cf. *’ôsîp*] among them my Zion” (3 Nephi 21:1; cf. Isaiah 11:11). The “sign” of this future gathering and restoration would be his words (and the words of the Nephite prophets), as a scriptural record, being “made known unto the Gentiles, that they may know concerning this people which are a remnant of the house of Jacob and concerning this my people which shall be scattered by them” (3 Nephi 21:2). Jesus declared that this divinely added scriptural record would “come forth from the Gentiles”:

Therefore when these works, and the works which shall be wrought among you hereafter, shall come forth **from the Gentiles** unto your seed, which shall dwindle in unbelief because of iniquity — for thus it behooveth the Father that it should come forth **from the Gentiles**, that he may shew forth his power unto the Gentiles, for this cause that the Gentiles — if they will not harden their hearts — that they may repent and come unto me and be baptized in my name and know of the true points of my doctrine, that they may be numbered among my people, O house of Israel. (3 Nephi 21:5–6)

### **Clarifying the Prophecy of the Coming Forth of the Sealed Book**

When we examine Mormon’s “Joseph” wordplay in 3 Nephi 26:8 in the broader context of his larger editorial statement in 3 Nephi 26:8–10, some additional key details emerge. The Lord’s words in 3 Nephi 26:10 appear to reflect an additional wordplay on the name Joseph in terms of canon-formula terminology:

And these things have I written which are **a lesser part** of the things which he taught the people. And **I have wrote them to the intent that they may be brought again unto this people from the Gentiles**, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken.

And when they shall have received this — which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith — and **if it should**

**so be that they shall believe these things, then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.**

**And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them,** unto their condemnation.

Behold, I were about to write them all which were engraven upon the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbid it, saying: I will try the faith of my people. (3 Nephi 26:8–11)

As noted previously, Mormon's purpose clause "to the intent that they may be brought again unto this people from the Gentiles" suggests the eventual divine addition of things (words) that will become scripture, as promised by the resurrected Lord himself. However, this divine scriptural addition will be limited and probationary — i.e., the Lord would use this scriptural addition (the "lesser part") to test or try the faith of the believing Gentiles through whom it would come forth. Cheryl Brown notes that "The Lord was ... cautious about what *was* contained in the record, withholding even some very good things in order to test the faithful."<sup>13</sup> Regarding the divine withholding described in these verses, Tad R. Callister remarked, "God withholds certain truths because their release would be premature in His divine timetable. The Savior made this observation to His disciples: 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now' (John 16:12). Our lack of spiritual maturity and readiness may delay the timetable for our receipt of certain answers."<sup>14</sup>

Belief in and faithfulness to this "lesser" addition would result in even greater scriptural additions. Regarding this possibility, Moroni later wrote: "And whoso receiveth this record and shall not condemn it because of the imperfections which are in it, the same shall know of greater things than these" (Mormon 8:12).<sup>15</sup>

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13. Cheryl Brown, "I Speak Somewhat Concerning That Which I Have Written," in *The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy*, eds. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr., (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1990), 55–72.

14. Tad R. Callister, "Not Always Knowing Is Part of God's Plan," *Church News*, 18 May 2020, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/church/news/not-always-knowing-is-part-of-gods-plan?lang=eng>.

15. Some of these "greater" things would include the revelations given to the brother of Jared, to whom Christ personally ministered face-to-face, just as he had among the Lamanites and Nephites at the temple in Bountiful (see Ether 3:18). Regarding these revelations, Moroni writes, "Behold, I have written upon

Along with the promise of the divine “adding” of scripture that he gives in 3 Nephi 26:8, Mormon raises the possibility of a divine “withholding” of scripture. In the Pentateuch, Moses stands as the central figure in the giving of divine law. Deuteronomy preserves strict injunctions against human adding to or human diminution of this law: “**Ye shall not add** [*lō’ tōsipû*] unto the word which I command you, **neither shall ye diminish** [*wēlō’ tigrē’û*] ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you” (Deuteronomy 4:2); “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: **thou shalt not add** [*lō’ tōsēp*] thereto, **nor diminish** [*wēlō’ tigrā’*] from it” (Deuteronomy 12:32 [MT 13:1]; cf. Deuteronomy 5:22 [MT 18]; Proverbs 30:5).

Injunctions such as these, sometimes called canon-formulae or *Textsicherungsformel* (“text securing formula”), have certainly influenced the development of modern notions of scriptural “canon.” G. André notes that in these canon formulae, “the hiphil of *ysp* with ‘*al* [i.e., add] is used as the opposite of *gāra’ min* [i.e., diminish from].”<sup>16</sup> The broader view of the Deuteronomic legislation is not that divine law and aspects of it will never be added to or “done away”<sup>17</sup> [*\*tiggāra’*]<sup>18</sup> André continues, “The warning against apostasy indicates that in its present literary context the formula defends the substance of Yahwism and is not intended to define a canon.”<sup>19</sup>

Moses, as recorded in Deuteronomy, declared that the Lord would raise up a prophet with the same authority of Moses to give divine law and scripture: “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall

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these plates the very things which the brother of Jared saw. And there never was greater things made manifest than that which was made manifest unto the brother of Jared” (Ether 4:4). He further records that the Lord stated, “And he that will contend against the word of the Lord, let him be accursed. And he that shall deny these things, let him be accursed. For unto them will I show no greater things, saith Jesus Christ, for I am he who speaketh” (Ether 4:8). The Lord also extended an invitation, “Come unto me, O ye Gentiles, and I will shew unto you the greater things, the knowledge which is hid up because of unbelief” (Ether 4:13).

16. G. André, “יָסַפ, *yāsap*,” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 6:122.

17. See, e.g., 2 Nephi 25:27; 3 Nephi 9:19; 12:47; Moroni 8:8; D&C 22:1.

18. Cf. Numbers 27:4: “Why should the name of our father be done away [*yiggāra’*] from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father.”

19. André, “יָסַפ, *yāsap*,” 122.

hearken ... I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him” (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18). On another occasion, when the Lord gave Moses the commandment to write scripture (“thou shalt write the things which I shall speak,” Moses 1:40) he also foretold: “And in a day when the children of men shall esteem my words as naught and **take** many of them from the book which thou shalt write, behold, **I will raise up another like unto thee; and they shall be had again** [cf. *yôšîpû/\*wěhôsîpû*] among the children of men — among as many as shall believe” (Moses 1:41).<sup>20</sup> Even in foretelling the unauthorized human diminution of the divine words that Moses would write, the Lord foretold the divinely authorized restoration of the those words in language that also seems to have anticipated the name and role of the raised-up “another like unto” Moses — a *Joseph*.<sup>21</sup>

Deuteronomy 18:15–19 also has a Christological interpretation (and perhaps, as David Calabro has recently argued, so does Moses 1:41),<sup>22</sup> in which the Lord himself is the raised-up prophet “like unto Moses,” and a lawgiver. In 3 Nephi, Mormon’s inclusion of Jesus’s “Sermon at the Temple”<sup>23</sup> and other teachings at the temple in Bountiful highlights Jesus’s role as lawgiver in the same mode as Moses (i.e., as the lawgiver of whom Moses was a type) in Deuteronomy and the raised-up prophet of Deuteronomy 18:15–19 to whom Israel was under obligation to “hear:” “Behold, I am **the law** [*hattôrâ*] and the light. Look unto me and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life” (3 Nephi 15:9).

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20. See Matthew L. Bowen “And They Shall Be Had Again?: Onomastic Allusions to Joseph in Moses 1:41 in View of the So-called Canon Formula,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 32 (2019): 297–304, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/and-they-shall-be-had-again-onomastic-allusions-to-joseph-in-moses-141-in-view-of-the-so-called-canon-formula/>.

21. Ibid.

22. David M. Calabro, “An Early Christian Context for the Book of Moses,” *Tracing Ancient Threads in the Book of Moses: Inspired Origins, Temple Contexts, and Literary Qualities, Vol. 1*, eds. Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, David R. Seely, John W. Welch and Scott Gordon (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2021), 505–90. Reprinted in *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 47 (2021): 181–262, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/an-early-christian-context-for-the-book-of-moses/>.

23. See John W. Welch, *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount: A Latter-day Saint Approach* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990); John W. Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple and Sermon on the Mount* (Provo, UT: Maxwell Institute; FARMS, 1999).

This post-resurrectional theophany and teaching fulfilled a prophecy from Nephi: “And after that Christ shall have risen from the dead, he shall shew himself unto you, my children and my beloved brethren, and **the words which he shall speak unto you shall be the law** [cf. *hattôrâ*] which ye shall do” (2 Nephi 26:1). Nephi anticipated the time when the “law [would] be done away [*\*tiggāra*]” (2 Nephi 25:27; *gāra*‘, “diminish,” “restrain,” “withdraw,” “remove”<sup>24</sup> is a synonym of *’āsap* [“gather”] in the sense of “withdraw,” or “take away”).<sup>25</sup> Christ would authoritatively “do away with” or “diminish” (*yigra*‘) “old” applications of divine law and “add” the “new.” In the Sermon at the Temple he declared, “Therefore those things which were of old time which were under the law [*hattôrâ*], in me are all fulfilled. Old things are done away [*\*yiggārē’û*], and all things have become new” (3 Nephi 12:46–47).

Nephi’s prophecy coheres with his Christological interpretation of Deuteronomy 18:15–19. Nephi records:

And the Lord will surely prepare a way for his people unto the fulfilling of the words of Moses, which he spake, saying: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that all they which will not hear that prophet shall be cut off from among the people. And now I Nephi declare unto you that this prophet of whom Moses spake was the Holy One of Israel. Wherefore he shall execute judgment in righteousness. (1 Nephi 22:20–21)

While Nephi’s Christological interpretation — with its ultimate latter-day and millennial fulfillment — is assuredly valid, the criteria for discerning true prophets in Deuteronomy 18:20–22 suggests that ancient Israel also understood Deuteronomy 18:15–19 as constituting an etiology for prophets as an institution and authoritative prophecy more generally. In other words, “raised-up” prophets could authoritatively add to previously given divine instruction (cf., e.g., Jeremiah 36:32).<sup>26</sup>

One portion of Nephi’s vision of the tree of life (recorded in 1 Nephi 13) emphasizes the unauthorized human diminution (“taking away”) of divine words and law in the sense denoted in Deuteronomy 4:2 and 12:31

24. HALOT, 203–204.

25. HALOT, 74.

26. Jeremiah 36:32: “Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and **there were added** [*nôsap*] besides unto them many like words.”

[MT 13:1]. Nephi’s angelic guide informed him that “the Gentiles” of “the great and abominable church” would “take away,” “keep back,” and “diminish” (*gāra*’ or *’āsap*) divine law, covenants, and scripture:

For behold, they **have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb** many parts which are plain and most precious; and also **many covenants of the Lord have they taken away**; ...

**There are many plain and most precious things taken away from the book**, which is the book of the Lamb of God. And after that these plain and precious things were **taken away**, it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles ... because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book ... and because of these things which are **taken away** out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceeding great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them. (1 Nephi 13:26, 28–29)

The text of 1 Nephi 13 also details the divine response to the human diminution of the divine word in the latter days: the Lord would not allow this diminution to permanently prevail: “Neither will the Lord God suffer that the Gentiles shall forever remain in that state of awful wickedness which thou beholdest that they are in because of the plain and most precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which **hath been kept back** by that abominable church, whose formation thou hast seen” (1 Nephi 13:32). Like the term “diminish” in Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:31 [MT 13:1] and perhaps “take away” (if it does not reflect *’āsap*), the expression “kept back” may also reflect the Hebrew verb *gāra*’ (see especially Numbers 9:7).<sup>27</sup> What is “kept back” through unauthorized, human diminution of divine law, covenant, and scripture, God promises to bring forth in all its plainness and preciousness:

And it came to pass that the angel of the Lord spake unto me, saying: Behold, saith the Lamb of God, after that I have visited the remnant of the house of Israel — and this remnant of which I speak is the seed of thy father — wherefore after that I have visited them in judgment and smitten them by the hand of the Gentiles, and after that the Gentiles do stumble exceedingly because of the most plain and precious parts of

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27. Numbers 9:7: “And those men said unto him, We are defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back [*niggāra*’], that we may not offer an offering of the Lord in his appointed season among the children of Israel?”



the gospel of the Lamb **which hath been kept back by that abominable church**, which is the mother of harlots, saith the Lamb, wherefore I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, saith the Lamb, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them in mine own power much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious, saith the Lamb. (1 Nephi 13:34)

The Lord would meet the human diminution of scripture with the bringing forth — or re-adding — of the same “plain and precious things [words]” that had been “taken away.” These restored words would constitute scriptural records: “These last records which thou hast seen among the Gentiles ... shall make known the plain and precious things [words] **which have been taken away** from them [i.e., the records “of the twelve apostles of the Lamb”]” (1 Nephi 13:40).

Just as apostasy and recalcitrance has resulted in the human diminution of scripture, they have also, in some cases, prompted God to “take away” from scripture — or at least withhold access to and the understanding of it. Nephi’s brother Jacob cited the pre-exilic Judahites as an example of those from whom God has “taken away” the understanding of prophecy and scripture:

But behold, the Jews [the ancient Judahites] were a stiffnecked people, and they despised the words of plainness and killed the prophets and sought for things that they could not understand. Wherefore because of their blindness, which blindness came by looking beyond the mark, they must needs fall; for **God hath taken away his plainness** from them and delivered unto them many things which they cannot understand because they desired it. And because they desired it, God hath done it that they may stumble. (Jacob 4:14)

Jacob, using Zenos’s allegory and Isaiah 11:11, prophesied that the Lord would remedy the apostasy and scattering that inevitably resulted from this diminished understanding: “And in the day that **he shall** set his hand **again** [cf. *yôsiṗ*, i.e., add his hand] the second time to recover his people 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).<sup>28</sup>

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28. See Matthew L. Bowen, “‘God Hath Taken Away His Plainness’: Some Notes on Jacob 4:14, Revelation, Canon, Covenant, and Law,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 39 (2020): 81–102, <https://journal>.

The divine withholding of scripture envisioned in 3 Nephi 26:10 ("And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation") is less akin to the example in Jacob 4:14 and more akin to what the Lord describes in 2 Nephi 28:30: "For unto him that receiveth **I will give more**; and them that shall say we have enough, from them **shall be taken away** even that which they have." Obtaining "the greater things" or "more" is predicated on reception of — i.e., belief in and obedience to — the "lesser things."

Mormon hews to the divine principle taught by Alma the Younger to the apostate Nephites of Ammonihah<sup>29</sup> in language that helps us appreciate the connection between "the greater things" that Jesus taught at the temple in Bountiful and the type of esoteric teachings that we closely associate with the holy temple today:

It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart, only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

And therefore he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word. And he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God, until they know them in full.

And he that will harden his heart, to him is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell. (Alma 12:9–11)

Thus, in the end, Mormon strictly limits his record to "the things [words] which have been commanded me of the Lord," a point which he gives double emphasis: "Therefore I Mormon do write the things which have been commanded me of the Lord. And now I Mormon make an end of my sayings and proceed to write the things which have been commanded me" (3 Nephi 26:12). It is perhaps worth noting that

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[interpreterfoundation.org/god-hath-taken-away-his-plainness-some-notes-on-jacob-414-revelation-canon-covenant-and-law/](http://interpreterfoundation.org/god-hath-taken-away-his-plainness-some-notes-on-jacob-414-revelation-canon-covenant-and-law/).

29. Cf. footnote b to 3 Nephi 26:10 in the 1981 and 2013 editions of the Book of Mormon.

Mormon’s “proceed[ing] to write” these things will ultimately constitute an important part of the Lord’s “proceed[ing] [*yôšîp*] to do a marvelous work” in the coming forth of the sealed book (Isaiah 29:14).

### “That They Might Come Again unto the Remnant of the House of Jacob”

Mormon makes another important third-generational statement based on Isaiah 11:11–12 and 29:4 (via 2 Nephi 25:17, 21; 29:1) at the conclusion of 4 Nephi in his laconic abridgment of the record of Ammaron:

And it came to pass that after three hundred and five years had passed away — and the people did still remain in wickedness — and Amos died, and his brother Ammaron did keep the record in his stead.

And it came to pass that when three hundred and twenty years had passed away, Ammaron being constrained by the Holy Ghost did hide up the records which were sacred, yea, even all the sacred records which had been handed down from generation to generation, which were sacred, even until the three hundred and twentieth year from the coming of Christ.

And he did hide them up unto the Lord, **that they might come again unto the remnant of the house of Jacob, according to the prophecies and the promises of the Lord.** And thus is the end of the record of Ammaron. (4 Nephi 1:47–49)

Mormon’s inclusion of the purpose clause “that **they might come again** [cf. *\*lěma’an yôšîpû*] unto **the remnant** [*šě’ār*] of the house of Jacob according to the prophecies of the Lord” possibly derives from Ammaron’s own account, and it expresses the core idea of Mormon’s prophecy in 3 Nephi 5:23: “Yea, and surely **shall he again** [cf. *yôšîp*] bring a **remnant** [*šě’ār/šě’ērît*] of the seed of **Joseph** [*yôšēp*] to the knowledge of the Lord their God.” Both 3 Nephi 5:23 and 4 Nephi 1:49 share a genetic origin in the *yôšîp*- and remnant-language of Isaiah 11:11 (“the Lord **shall set his hand again** [*yôšîp*] the second time to recover **the remnant** [*šě’ār*] **of his people** [*‘ammô*]”) and the prophecy of the coming forth of the sealed book of Isaiah 29:14 (“behold, I **will proceed** [*yôšîp/yôšîp*] to do a marvellous work among **this people** [*hā’ām hazzeh*], even a marvellous work and a wonder”).

A comparison of 4 Nephi 1:49 and the previously discussed second-generation *yāsap/yôšîp* texts in 2 Nephi 25:17, 21 and 29:1–2, with a focus

on the additional key term “promises,” helps us to better see the genetic relationship between these texts:

And he [Ammaron] did hide them up unto the Lord, **that they might come again** [cf. *lěma’an yôšîpû*] **unto the remnant of the house of Jacob, according to the prophecies and the promises of the Lord.** And thus is the end of the record of Ammaron. (4 Nephi 1:49)

The *yôšîp* wordplay recalls Joseph in Egypt as the one to whom special divine promises of preservation, gathering, and restoration were made. It also looks forward to the name and role of the one who would serve as the human instrumentality — a Joseph (“may He [God] add,” “may He do [something] again”) — through whom ancient scripture could “come ... again” in fulfillment of the divine promises to Joseph (and Lehi and Nephi, his descendants).

### Conclusion

Like 3 Nephi 5:23, 3 Nephi 26:8–10 and 4 Nephi 1:49 reflect the use of the Hebrew *yāsap/yôšîp* idiom in the tradition of Nephi’s use of Isaiah. Comparisons of these three texts with 2 Nephi 25:17, 21 and 29:1–2 reveals that the former are third-generation members of the same family of prophetic texts stemming from Isaiah 11:11–12 and Isaiah 29:4, all of which ultimately rely on *yāsap/yôšîp* idioms to describe the gathering of Israel and the concomitant coming forth of additional scripture.

Mormon, following Nephi’s masterful use of Isaiah, engages in a specific kind of wordplay on the name Joseph in 3 Nephi 26:8–10 and 4 Nephi 1:49 that ultimately harks back to the divine promises made to Joseph in Egypt (2 Nephi 25:21; see also especially 2 Nephi 3:4–16; Genesis 50:24–34 JST) and to his descendants. This wordplay emphasizes the fulfillment of the promises to Joseph the patriarch and looks forward to the name and role of the prophetic translator through whom additional scripture “[would] be brought again” and “[would] come again” in the last days in fulfillment of those promises — a *Joseph*. Related to this wordplay — and against the conceptual backdrop of the Deuteronomic canon formulae — 3 Nephi 26:10 details the divine, probationary withholding of the “the greater things” that Jesus taught at the temple in Bountiful from this additional scripture, contingent upon the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the recipients of the “lesser part.”

The Joseph wordplays in 3 Nephi 26:8–10 and 4 Nephi 1:49 are innovative in that they bring the onomastic theme forward to the work

that Mormon himself was specifically called to do, during his life and times, in terms of preparing the record to be “brought again” or to “come again” to Lehi’s descendants — descendants of the patriarch Joseph — through the agency of the prophet Joseph Smith. In other words, they more directly link Mormon’s life and work with the prophet Joseph Smith’s life and work.

Additionally, the Joseph wordplay in 3 Nephi 26:8–10 accentuates not only the Lord’s initial limiting of what would be “brought again” as “the lesser part” of what Jesus taught at the temple in Bountiful, but also that “the greater things” would be divinely included or *withheld*, contingent upon the faithfulness of the Lord’s people. Thus, 3 Nephi 26:8–10 serves as an extension of the concept of the divine addition and diminution (taking away or withholding) of scripture articulated by Nephi (see 2 Nephi 28:27–30; cf. 29:1–10) and the principle of divine addition and withholding of the word described by Alma in Alma 12:8–9. All of this helps readers appreciate additional senses in which the name Joseph denotes divine increase and suggests the concept of eternal increase.

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