

“I Know in Whom I Have Trusted”

Lesson
7
Summary

2 Nephi 3–5

Scripture Summary: *Joseph in Egypt saw the Nephites in vision—He prophesied of Joseph Smith, the latter-day seer; of Moses, who would deliver Israel; and of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.*

Lehi counsels and blesses his posterity—He dies and is buried—Nephi glories in the goodness of God to him—Nephi puts his trust in the Lord forever. [Between 588 and 570 B.C.]

The Nephites separate themselves from the Lamanites, keep the law of Moses, and build a temple—Because of their unbelief, the Lamanites are cursed, receive a skin of blackness, and become a scourge unto the Nephites. [Between 588 and 559 B.C.]

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights: **Connecting an Ancient and a Modern Joseph:** The account of ancient Joseph is truly a chiasm paralleled by the modern story of Joseph. It is a prefiguring of the Savior’s mission. The lesson comes from Joseph’s life as he is chosen by his father and then rejected by his brothers. In slavery, his identity is really unknown, yet he serves and saves those around him. Later, he serves and saves his brothers before identifying himself. The Book of Mormon connects the symbolism of the ancient Joseph with a latter-day Joseph.

How Blessings are Given: “In the same way that priests lift their hands in blessing, so parents place their hands on the heads of their children when they bless them. (For example, in the Bible, Jacob blessed his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, by placing his hands on their heads.) Placing the hands on another person is symbolic not only of transferring blessing but also of passing on authority.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

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

Jews Await a Latter-day Joseph and David: “According to the Talmud, the Messiah will be a descendant of the House of David and will be preceded by a secondary Messiah, from the House of Joseph . . .” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) When the Chief Rabbi, Avraham HaKohen Kook was appointed in Palestine in the 1920's, he was asked if the Jews could now build the Temple (destroyed since year 70 A.D.). His response was that the priestly rights were gone and referred to the great 12th century rabbi Moses Maimonides, who said, in effect, “We are waiting for a Messiah Ben-Joseph, to him will be given the keys of the gathering of Israel, he will restore Temple worship.”

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

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

“Nail in a Sure Place:” Some practices have ceased, even though they were still in use just a hundred years ago. One of those is reflected in the thousands of old nails protruding slightly out of the cracks in the wall. An old Rabbi described

them as the “sure nails” pounded into the wall to fasten their sins so that people could leave their burdens and get on with life. Isaiah speaks clearly about this in five powerful verses in his twenty-second chapter. The term “house of David” honors him who purchased “Temple Square” and gathered the materials to build the “House of the Lord.” The sealing powers of the Lord are referred to as “he shall open” and “he shall shut.” The Lord will be nailed surely (there is written and archaeological evidence that the Romans nailed in the hands and in the wrists to make the crucifixion stronger). The “Glorious throne of His Father’s House” means the Lord was willing to take the sins of all mankind upon Himself.

Fasten Our Sins upon Him: We are blessed in that we can “fasten our sins” upon him. Apparently, in ancient times these sins were symbolically collected, small sins in cups, larger ones in flagons, so that they could be disposed of. Sometimes this was done by placing them on a goat (scapegoat) and letting it escape out the Gate of Mercy, also known as the Gate of Forgiveness and the Gate Beautiful, to die on its own. “And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it.” (Isaiah 22:21-25)

Daniel Rona, born in Israel and living in Jerusalem has authored Old & New Testament and Book of Mormon Supplement Study Materials to be used in conjunction with the weekly LDS Gospel Doctrine Lesson study. NOTE: Three versions of the supplemental study materials are available *FREE* at www.HolyLandsRevealed.com. (Just click “LDS SUPPLEMENTS”)

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