“The Lord God Will Proceed”: Nephi’s Wordplay in 1 Nephi 22:8–12 and the Abrahamic Covenant

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Abstract: Nephi quotes or alludes to four distinct Old Testament passages — Genesis 22:18; Isaiah 29:14; Isaiah 49:22–23; and Isaiah 52:10 — twice each in 1 Nephi 22:6, 8–12. These four texts form the basis of his description of how the Lord would bring to pass the complete fulfillment of the promises in the Abrahamic covenant for the salvation of the human family. These texts’ shared use of the Hebrew word gôyim (“nations” [> kindreds], “Gentiles”) provides the lexical basis for Nephi’s quotation and interpretation of these texts in light of each other. Nephi uses these texts to prophesy that the Lord would act in the latter-days for the salvation of the human family. However, Nephi uses Isaiah 29:14 with its key-word yôsîp (yôsip) to assert that iterative divine action to fulfill the Abrahamic covenant — taking the form of “a marvelous work and a wonder” — would be accomplished through a “Joseph.” Onomastic wordplay involving the names Abram/Abraham and Joseph constitute key elements in 1 Nephi 22:8–12.

Some of Nephi’s most sophisticated and significant prophetic uses of Isaiah’s writings involve appropriations of Isaiah 11:11–12 and Isaiah 29:14. For example, in 2 Nephi 25:17 he merges these two prophecies to create his own prophecy of the latter-day gathering of Judah and Israel: “And the Lord will set his hand again [yôsîp] the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state [Isaiah 11:11]. Wherefore, he will proceed [yôsîp (or yôsip)] to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men [Isaiah 29:14].” As has been argued elsewhere,1 Nephi interprets these two Isaianic prophecies in light of

each other on the basis of their mutual use of the Hebrew verb *yāsap*, “to add”; “continue to do, carry on doing”; “increase, have more”;3 Hiphil (causative), “increase,” “to do again, more.”4 Nephi’s evident juxtaposition of the homophonous and morphologically-similar forms *yōsīp* (Hiphil, third-person masculine singular jussive) and *yōsīp/yōsīp* (Qal masculine singular participle)5 evokes the name “Joseph” (*yōsēp*, “may he [God] add”).6 In light of the patriarch Joseph’s, his father Lehi’s, and his own knowledge that a future “Joseph” (see 2 Nephi 3:15) would be the “instrument” of divine “restoration,”7 Nephi’s exegetical juxtaposition of Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14 appears to create a deliberate onomastic wordplay on the name Joseph. Nephi’s subsequent statement mere verses later that this divine restoration would be orchestrated “that the promise may be fulfilled unto Joseph [yōsēp], that his seed should never perish as long as the earth should stand” (2 Nephi 25:21) confirms as much.

In 2 Nephi 25:17, Nephi further equates Judah and Israel’s “lost and fallen state”8 with its scattering among the seven listed nations


4. HALOT, 418.

5. Commenting on Isaiah’s use of *hinēni* + *yōsīp/yōsīp* in Isaiah 29:14 and 38:5, J.J.M. Roberts writes, “Since *yōsīp* differs in vocalization from the third masculine singular qal participle only in having ĭ for ē in the second syllable, one has the overpowering suspicion that the form in both passages is just a mispointed qal participle.” *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 293.


8. In Mosiah 16:4, Abinadi uses the collocation “lost and fallen state” to refer to humanity’s general fallen condition. Alma does something similar when addressing the people of Ammonihah: “[W]e see, that by his fall, all mankind became a lost and fallen people” (Alma 12:22). Alma had earlier designated the
— a number of fullness and perfection — and “the islands of the sea” from which the Lord would “add” his hand to gather his people: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again [yôsîp] the second time to recover the remnant of his people, 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” (Isaiah 11:11). Isaiah had elsewhere given prophetic expression to the Lord’s intent to “add” to “do a marvellous work”: “Therefore, behold, I will proceed [add, yôsîp/yôsip] 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). In 2 Nephi 25:17, Nephi interprets this “marvellous work and a wonder among this people” as a wider “marvellous work and a wonder among the children of men.” In other words, Nephi offers an expansive interpretation of Isaiah 29:14 beyond the narrow delimitations of the house of Israel seemingly implied in the phrase “this people” (Hebrew hāʾām hazzeh). 9

In 2 Nephi 29:1, Nephi records a revelation from the Lord, again in the language of Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14. This oracle, however, reverses the order of quotation found in 2 Nephi 25:17, with Isaiah 29:14 preceding Isaiah 11:11: “But behold, there shall be many — at that day when I shall proceed [yôsîp or yôsip] 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 [Isaiah 11:11], which are of the house of Israel” (2 Nephi 29:1). Here, as previously, Nephi’s revelation expands the concept of “this people” from Isaiah 29:14 to include all “the children of men.” But note too the use of “children of men” in a broad purpose clause: “that I [the Lord] may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men.” Given that the language of the Lord’s “remembering” covenants in the Book of Mormon is connected people of Ammonihah as “a lost and a fallen people” in Alma 9:30 and 32, which they understood as an anti-Nehor religious polemic that Alma was directing against them. In the broadest sense, however, the description was true of all humankind. In a narrower sense, “lost and fallen” describes any individual or people estranged from God. As Nephi’s use of “lost and fallen state” in 2 Nephi 25:17 makes clear, it also specifically designates an individual or a people who are in a “scattered” condition, from which they need to be gathered.

9. Cf. Isaiah 28:11, 14: “For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people [hāʾām hazzeh]. … Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people [hāʾām hazzeh] which is in Jerusalem.”
to the Abrahamic covenant (e.g., 1 Nephi 15:13–18; 22:9; 2 Nephi 29:14; 3 Nephi 20:25, 27), these “covenants” appear to constitute those aspects of the Abrahamic covenant that specifically pertain to the entirety of the human family. In other words, these covenants pertain to the Lord’s promise to Abraham that “in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 22:18). In fact, 2 Nephi 29:14 frames the whole 2 Nephi 29 oracle on the coming forth of “more” of the Lord’s word in terms of the Abrahamic covenant:

And it shall come to pass that my people, which are of the house of Israel, shall be gathered home [cf. Hebrew יָאָסֵפ] unto the lands of their possessions; and my word also shall be gathered [cf. Hebrew יָאָסֵפ] in one. And I will show unto them that fight against my word and against my people, who are of the house of Israel, that I am God, and that I covenanted with Abraham that I would remember his seed forever.

Noel B. Reynolds correctly observes that “the Abrahamic covenant is the key thread of the salvation history presented in the Book of Mormon.”

In this article, I wish to examine 1 Nephi 22:8–12, which constitutes a part of one of Nephi’s prominent expositions of Isaiah’s writings, in which the former twice uses Isaiah 29:14 and also expands that text’s notion of “this people” in order to detail the Lord’s future fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. When Nephi combined the prophesies of Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14 on the basis of their common use of forms of יָאָסֵפ, he did so as a wordplay on the name of Joseph: first, as a reminder that it was the seed of Joseph that the Lord would gather in fulfillment of Abrahamic covenant promises, and second, to foretell the instrumentality of a future Joseph in this gathering and the coming forth of additional scripture. In a similar way, Nephi twice uses Isaiah 29:14 with its participial יָוסֵיפ/יָוסֵיַפ-idiom (“he will proceed”) in 1 Nephi 22:8–12. He does so in tandem with an exegetical, Gezera Shawa-type juxtaposition of Isaiah 49:22–23, Genesis 22:18, and Isaiah 52:10 — texts that he joins together and interprets on the basis of the noun גֹּywִים (“nations”). Using Isaiah’s יָוסֵיפ/יָוסֵיַפ-idiom, Nephi emphasizes that the “marvelous work,” which would result in Israel’s complete restoration and redemption, would also bring about the Lord’s promise to Abraham that “all the kindreds [nations, גֹּywִים] of the earth

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11. Ibid., 55.
would be “blessed.” Here too, Nephi’s yôsîp/yôsip wordplay calls attention to the fact that the miracle would be accomplished through a “Joseph.” Accompanying wordplay on the name Abraham reinforces the connection to the Abrahamic covenant.


According to his own record, in 1 Nephi 22 Nephí interprets and explains to his brothers Isaiah 48–49, a text that he read aloud to them to “more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer” (1 Nephi 19:23). Broadly speaking, Isaiah 48 (1 Nephi 20) describes Israel in its “lost and fallen state” — i.e., its “scattered” condition — a process of which the Lehite-Ishmaelite party was a part. Isaiah 49 (1 Nephi 21) details the steps to gather Israel from its scattered condition. For example, Isaiah 49 (1 Nephi 21) details the calling and commissioning of a servant-prophet to gather Israel from its scattered condition. The specific mission of that servant-prophet pertains to the “gathering” of Israel: “And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered

12. The Book of Mormon translation of Nephi’s quotations of Genesis 18:22 in 1 Nephi 15:18 and 1 Nephi 22:9–10 matches the KJV translation of Acts 3:25 (“And in thy seed shall all the kindreds [Greek pasai hai patriai] of the earth be blessed”), which is itself a quotation of Genesis 22:18. The quotation in Acts 3:25 does not follow the LXX (Septuagint) which has panta ta ethna for (“all the nations”). Although the Book of Mormon translated text of 1 Nephi 22:9–10 reflects the wording of Acts 3:25, I propose that the underlying text — Nephi’s text from the brass plates — represents a form of Genesis 22:18 similar to what we have preserved in the Masoretic Text. Nephi’s use of Genesis 22:18 on the basis of gôyim with other gôyim-texts — Isaiah 49:22–23, Isaiah 52:10 — reflects that likelihood.

[Hebrew Ketiv: lō’ yēʾāsēp]" (Isaiah 49:5, KJV), or better, “And now the Lord says, who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him [Hebrew Qere: lō yēʾāsēp]” (Isaiah 49:5, NRSV). The latter reading is particularly significant in that the prophet’s explicit mission is the “gathering” (yēʾāsep) of Israel to the Lord. The verb and its form here are both significant in the broader prophetic context of 1 Nephi 19–22 in that the verb ʾāsap, “to gather,” “to bring in, gather in”, “withdraw, take away”14 is one of the verbs — along with the verb yāsap (“add”) — used to etiologize the name Joseph in Genesis 30:23–24. The form yēʾāsep (“that he might gather”) constitutes a close homonym of yōsēp (Joseph). As Russell M. Nelson has pointed out, the yāsap verb-form wayyōsep (“and he added,” i.e., “and he added together”) takes on precisely this meaning in 2 Samuel 6:1: “Again, David gathered together [wayyōsep] all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.”15

These observations have relevance for Nephi’s use of Isaiah 29:14 in 1 Nephi 22:8–12 as a part of his explanation and interpretation of Isaiah 48–49 and the future steps the Lord would take to gather Israel through a “gathering” prophet. After briefly restating the content of Isaiah 48–49 in 1 Nephi 22:1–7, including the function of the Gentiles/nations as described in Isaiah 49:22–23, Nephi uses the language of Isaiah 29:14 to give a more specific description of how the Lord would gather Israel:

And after our seed is scattered the Lord God will proceed [yōsēp] to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles [gōyim, nations], which shall be of great worth unto our seed; wherefore, it is likened unto their being nursed [vs. nourished]16 by the Gentiles and being carried in their arms and upon their shoulders. And it shall also be of worth unto the Gentiles; and not only unto the Gentiles but unto all the house of Israel, unto the making known of the covenants

14. HALOT, 74.
16. See Royal Skousen, Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part One: Title Page, Witness Statements, 1 Nephi 1–2 Nephi 10 (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004), 461–62. Skousen writes, “As he was copying from [the original manuscript] into [the printer’s manuscript], Oliver Cowdery accidentally misread nursed as the visually similar nourished. Of course, the semantic possibility of nourished prevented its discovery as an error, except by reference to the original manuscript.”
of the **Father of heaven** unto **Abraham**, saying: In thy seed shall all the kindreds [gôyîm, nations] of the earth be blessed.

(1 Nephi 22:8–9)

Nephi appropriates Isaiah’s use of the verbal idiom yôsîp/yôsip + infinitive (lêhaplî, “to do a marvelous work”) in Isaiah 29:14 to detail how the Lord and his prophet-servant will “gather” (yē’āgpsîp) Israel to the Lord (Isaiah 49:5; 1 Nephi 21:5). The “marvelous work” that the Lord would “proceed” (yôsîp) to do would be a written record as suggested by the phrase “making known of … covenants” (1 Nephi 22:9). Just as Nephi’s use of Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14 intimates the role of a “Joseph” in the gathering foretold in 2 Nephi 25:17, 21 and 29:1, so too Nephi’s use of Isaiah 29:14 and Isaiah 49 (including Isaiah 49:5) in 1 Nephi 21–22 suggests the identity of this prophet-servant, a “Joseph.”

Moreover, where Nephi expansively interprets “this people” in Isaiah 29:14 as “the children of men” in 2 Nephi 25:17 and 29:1, he had previously gone even further in that direction in his explanation and interpretation of Isaiah 48–49 (1 Nephi 20–21) in 1 Nephi 22. Nephi interprets “a marvelous work among this people” as “a marvelous work among the Gentiles.” This appears to have been influenced or prompted by Isaiah 49:22–23, the very text Nephi subsequently quotes:

> Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles [gôyîm, nations] and set up my standard to the people[s]: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me. (Isaiah 49:22–23)

Isaiah 49:22 matches “Gentiles” (gôyîm, nations) with “the people[s]” (ʿammîm) as a poetic pair (i.e., in parallelism). Isaiah’s semantic pairing — which also prominently occurs with the ensign/standard (Hebrew nêś) in Isaiah 11:10\(^{17}\) — seems to have prompted or justified Nephi’s substitution of “Gentiles” for “this people” in his quotation of Isaiah 29:14 in 1 Nephi 22:8.

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\(^{17}\) Isaiah 11:10: “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.”
This has implications for Nephi’s quotation of Genesis 22:18 as part of his invocation of the Abrahamic covenant in 1 Nephi 22:9, where gôyîm constitutes the key lexical basis for quoting the former text: “In thy seed shall all the kindreds [gôyîm, nations, Gentiles] of the earth be blessed.” Nephi’s quotation of Genesis 22:18 appears to have in view the “covenants” that the Lord made with Abraham, beginning in Genesis 12:2–3 and concluding in Genesis 22:16–18, texts that form a kind of inclusio or bracketing around the Abrahamic covenant narratives.

The Abrahamic narratives begin in earnest with the Lord’s promise to make of Abram a “great nation”: “And I will make of thee a great nation [gôy gādōl], and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families [mišpēhōt] of the earth be blessed [or, bless themselves]” (Genesis 12:2–3). In addition to anticipating Abraham’s future “paternal” relationship to the nations/Gentiles, this promise looks back to Genesis 10:5, where gôyîm occurs for the first time: “By these [sons] were the isles of the Gentiles [haggôyîm, nations] divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations [bĕgôyēhem].” The “isles of the Gentiles” or “islands of the nations” will be the locus of the future gathering of Israel, especially in the Isaianic corpus (see, e.g., Isaiah 11:11–12; 49:1, 22–23).

Abram’s change of name to Abraham constitutes one of several climactic covenant moments in the Abrahamic covenant cycle.18 Yahweh’s promise to make Abram (’ābrām = ’āb, “father” + rām, “exalted,” “high”; i.e., “the Father is exalted” or “exalted father”)19 “a father of many nations” and its imminent fulfillment necessitates a change of name that concords with Abraham’s desire as expressed in his autobiography: “desiring … to be a father of many nations” (Abraham 1:2). The Lord thus declared to Abram,

As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be [become] a father of many nations [’āb hāmōn gôyîm].
Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram [’ābrām], but thy name shall be Abraham [’ābrāhām]; for a father of many nations [’āb hāmōn gôyîm] have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful [wēhiprētî], and I will

make nations [gôyim] of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.” (Genesis 17:4–6)

Robert Alter writes, “The meaning of both versions of the name is something like ‘exalted father.’ The longer form is evidently no more than a dialectical variant of the shorter one. The real point is that Abraham should undergo a name change — like a king assuming the throne, it has been proposed — as he undertakes the full burden of the covenant.”

Notably, the nations-kings sequence of Isaiah 49:22–23 (“Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles [nations, gôyim], and set up my standard to the people … And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers”) parallels the nations-kings sequence of the Genesis 17 iteration of the Abrahamic covenant: “I will make nations [Gentiles, gôyim] of thee, and kings shall come out of thee” (Genesis 17:6). Just as the covenantal giving of the new name in Genesis 17 revolves around the nations-kings theme, Nephi’s description of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant in terms of Isaiah 29:14, including his use of names and divine titles, also revolves around the nations-kings theme.

As virtually every exegete of the Hebrew Bible is aware, the etymology of the name ʾabraham, whether a dialectic variation of Abram or otherwise, does not strictly correspond to its explanation ʾab hâmôn gôyim, “father of many nations.” Regarding the relationship of Abraham to ʾab hâmôn gôyim, Nahum Sarna writes:

“I will make your name great,” that is, your name Abram will be enlarged by the addition of a syllable. The anomalous grammatical formulation supports the midrashic nature of the interpretation. It is possible that, by means of word play, the consonants ABRHM were interpreted as shorthand (called notarikon in postbiblical Hebrew) for ABiR (“mighty one”) and Hamon (“multitude”) + goyiM (“nations”), as Ibn Ezra suggests.

Sarna’s observations have potential implications for at least two aspects of Nephi’s text here. First, Nephi clearly plays on the typological aspects of Abram/Abraham’s theophoric name: “the making known of the covenants of the Father of heaven [cf. Hebrew ʾab šâmayim] unto

22. Theophoric names are names that “bear” (Greek -phoros) (i.e., include) the name of deity in some way.
Abraham [‘abrāhām], saying: In thy seed shall all the kindreds [nations, gōyim; cf. ‘ab hāmōn gōyim] of the earth be blessed” (1 Nephi 22:9). One hears in the Hebrew words ‘ab šāmayim — “Father of heaven” — an echo of “exalted Father”/“Father is exalted” and “Father of a Multitude”/“Father of many nations” as titles of the one cutting covenants with Abraham, which covenants will enable Abraham to become like the “Father of heaven.” One also hears echoes of the Abraham-Melchizedek tradition, including the words of Melchizedek in his blessing of Abram/Abraham: “And Melchizedek [malki-ṣedeq] king of Salem [melek šālēm] brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven [qōnē šāmayim, i.e., procreator or father of heaven] and earth” (Genesis 14:18–20). Melchizedek himself received the name-title “king of heaven,” as restoration scripture makes clear: “And this Melchizedek [malki-ṣedeq], having thus established righteousness [ṣēdaqā], was called the king of heaven [melek šāmayim] by his people, or, in other words, the King of peace [melek šālôm or melek šālēm]” (Genesis 14:36 JST). Alma 13:18 appears to cite the same tradition: “And Melchizedek did establish peace [šālôm] in the land in his days; therefore he was called the prince of peace [ṣar-šālôm; cf. Isaiah 9:6], for he was the king of Salem [melek šālēm; cf. Genesis 14:18]; and he did reign under his father [‘ābīw].” We note that Abraham had the express desire “to be a greater follower of righteousness [Eg. mš’t; Hebrew ṣēdaqā], and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations [cf. Hebrew ‘ab hāmōn gōyim], a prince of peace [cf. Hebrew šar-šālôm]” (Abraham 1:1).

Second, in 1 Nephi 22:12 Nephi alters the Isaianic divine title “mighty one of Jacob [‘ābir ya’āqōb] to a form attested only one other time within the Isaianic corpus, “mighty one of Israel [‘ābir yišrā’ēl]” (Isaiah 1:24).23 The alteration, however, perhaps suggests Nephi’s consciousness of the significance of ‘ābir ya’āqōb and ‘ābir yišrā’ēl from Isaiah in the context of the Abrahamic covenant and the name Abraham as a notarikon of ‘ābir hāmōn gōyim (“mighty one of many nations”; cf. ‘ab hāmōn gōyim “father of many nations”; Genesis 17:4–5).24 We should also note here

23. In Isaiah 30:29, the KJV renders the divine title šûr yišrā’ēl as “mighty one of Israel.” However, it would be better translated “Rock of Israel.”

24. One further wonders in light of Nephi’s wordplay on Joseph in 1 Nephi 22:8–12 and elsewhere whether Jacob’s blessing upon Joseph (Genesis 49:22–26) constitutes part of Nephi’s conceptual framework in 1 Nephi 22. The first part of Jacob’s blessing upon Joseph invokes the divine title ‘ābir ya’āqōb: “Joseph [yōsēp] is a fruitful bough [bēn pōrāt, or a “fruitful son”], even a fruitful bough [fruitful son] by a well; whose branches [bānōt] run over the wall: the archers have sorely
that ʾābîr constituted an “epithet of the father-god”25 whom Abraham worshiped and what Abraham was becoming (compare D&C 93:19 with D&C 132:29).

Near the end of Abraham’s biography and following Abraham’s arrested sacrifice of his son Isaac (sometimes called the Akedah, “the binding”), the Lord reiterates to Abraham his initial covenant promise from Genesis 12:3 (“in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”). The Genesis 22:16–18 text forms the closing bracket of the biblical inclusio and ultimately represents the text from which Nephi twice quotes:

And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations [gôyim] of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

“The Lord God Will Proceed to Make Bare His Arm”: Nephi’s Exegetical Blending of Genesis 22:18, Isaiah 29:14, and Isaiah 52:10 in 1 Nephi 22:10–11

Nephi’s second iteration of Genesis 22:18 becomes the basis of an additional Gezera Shawa-type quotation of Isaiah 52:10 (in the second iteration, blended with Isaiah 29:14), the passages being joined together on the basis of the noun gôyim, “nations”:

And I would, my brethren, that ye should know that all the kindreds [gôyim, nations] of the earth cannot be blessed unless he shall make bare his arm in the eyes of the nations [gôyim]. Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed [yôsip/yôsîp] to make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations [gôyim], or

grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty [One] of Jacob [ʾābîr yaʿaqōb]; (from thence is [or, “by the name of”] the shepherd, the stone of Israel):” Jacob’s “patriarchal blessings” upon his twelve sons provide one of the major antetypes for Lehi’s “patriarchal blessings” upon his sons in 2 Nephi 1–4, which further develops the Abrahamic covenant theme as pertaining to Lehi’s family.

25. HALOT, 6.
Gentiles] in bringing about his covenants and his gospel unto those who are of the house of Israel. (1 Nephi 22:10, 11)

Thus Nephi rephrases the key phrase from Genesis 22:18 (“in thy seed shall all the nations [gôyim] of the earth be blessed”), “all the kindreds of the earth cannot be blessed unless,” and then adds another biblical text — another Isaianic text — in which gôyim constitutes a key term: “The Lord hath made bare [hâsâp] his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations [haggôyim]; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Isaiah 52:10).

Nephi then quotes Isaiah 52:10 again, blending or hybridizing it with Isaiah 29:14: “the Lord God will proceed [yôsîp/yôsip] to make bare [cf. Hebrew laḥšôp] his arm in the eyes of all the nations [haggôyim].” In using the yôsîp/yôsip idiom from Isaiah 29:14 a second time, Nephi draws together and functionally equates the divine action there characterized as a “marvelous work” or “marvelous work and a wonder” with the divine action characterized here as hâsâp (Hebrew strip off, bare) — the Lord “mak[ing] bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations” from Isaiah 52:10.

**Excursus: The Name Joseph as Symbolic Extension of Abrahamic Covenant Promises**

The growth of Jacob’s family represents a further development of the Pentateuchal theme of the Abrahamic covenant and its fulfillment. The divine bequest of children to the heretofore barren Rachel in Genesis 30:22 employs language that recalls the Lord’s fulfillment of the promise to multiply Abraham’s posterity: “And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.” The statement that “God remembered Rachel” (wayyizkôr ʾĕlōhîm ʾet-râḥêl) directly recalls the statement that “God remembered Abraham” (wayyizkôr ʾĕlōhîm ʾet-ʾabrâhām, Genesis 19:29) in his preservation of Lot from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Moreover, the statement “and God hearkened to her” (wayyišmâʾ ʾĕlêhâ ʾĕlōhîm) harks back to the etiological wordplay on Ishmael (yišmâʾēl “may God hearken”) in terms of šāmaʾ (“hear,” “hearken”); see Genesis 16:11–12; 17:17–20; 21:5–6,


28. In addition to Genesis 19:29; 30:22, see also Genesis 8:1: “And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark.”
9–12, 17; 28:8–9; 37:27), and the beginning of the fulfillment of divine promises to Abraham regarding a numberless posterity.

At this point in the text the Genesis narrator includes a chiastic double-etiology for the name Joseph, voiced through Rachel his mother:

A And she conceived, and bare a son

B and said, God hath taken away [ʾāsap] my reproach:

C And she called his name Joseph [yōsēp];

B' And said, The Lord shall add [yōsēp] to me

A' another son. (Genesis 30:23–24)

The bracketing inclusio A-A', with its key term bēn ("son") anticipates not one, but two sons for Rachel: the firstborn Joseph and his younger brother Benjamin (binyāmin, "son of the right hand"), to whose name also bēn alludes. Within this inclusio a clever double alliteration ʾāsap ʾēlōhîm ("God hath taken away" or "God hath gathered up") and yōsēp yhwh ("may the Lord add") in B-B' pivots around the naming of Joseph in C: "And she called his name Joseph." The double-etiology and the desire for alliteration appear to drive the alternation of divine name-titles: ʾēlōhîm in B and yhwh in B'.

The structure of the double-etiology, then, highlights the importance of the name Joseph in C and his role as "birthright" son above those of his brothers. The double-etiology with its ʾāsap/yāsap dyad represents a "double portion" for Joseph, as it were. But it also represents a doubling for Rachel. Robert Alter writes, "Rachel’s double etymology refers to birth and, prospectively, to a future son. She remains true to the character of her initial speech to Jacob, where she demanded of him not a son but


sons.”32 Sarah bears Abraham one son, Rachel bears Jacob two. In other words, the double-etymology represents the Lord “multiplying” Rachel33 and Jacob in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.

The name יֹשֵׁפ, as the third-person masculine singular causative (Hiphil) form of the Hebrew verb יָּשָׁפ, is not merely the predictive “the Lord shall add” (KJV) but an expressed hope or even a prayer: “may the Lord add,” “may the Lord increase [him],” or “may the Lord cause [him to] continue.” “The Lord shall increase [יֹשֵׁפ יְהֹוָה] you more and more, you and your children” (Psalms 115:14, KJV), or better “May the Lord give you increase [יֹשֵׁפ יְהֹוָה], both you and your children” (Psalms 115:14, NRSV). The language of Psalms 115:41 seems to deliberately echo Rachel’s words in Genesis 30:24 and gives expression to the Abrahamic covenant notion of multiplying in terms of the causative jussive form of יָּשָׁפ as a near homonym of Joseph, יֹשֵׁפ.

Just as the name Joseph in the senses “may he cause [him] to continue” and “may he increase” — and in the context of Rachel’s double etymology — expresses the Abrahamic covenant notion of “a continuation of the seeds”34 and “increase”35 in mortality and beyond, the name of Joseph’s “birthright” son Ephraim (“doubly fruitful”) also extends the hope and promise in Abraham’s renaming as “father of many nations”: “But thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful [וְהִפְרֵטִי], and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee” (Genesis 17:5–6). Joseph explains the giving of the name Ephraim (“doubly fruitful”) thus: “And the name of the second [son] called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful [הִפָּרָן] in the land of my affliction” (Genesis 41:52). The etiology in Genesis 41:52 intentionally recalls the foregoing promise made to Abraham in Genesis 17:5–6.

Therefore, just as Joseph (“may he [God] add”) extends the meaning of Abraham (“Father is exalted” > “Father of many nations”), Ephraim’s naming, voiced through the patriarch Joseph, extends the meaning of the name Joseph. Joseph — “May he [God] add” — becomes “fruitful son”/“bough” (בֵּן פֹּרָט) with “daughters”/“branches” (בָּנֹת, 32. Alter, Five Books of Moses, 109.
34. D&C 132:19.

Within the double-etiology for Joseph, the verb ʾāsap serves a nearly antonymic function to yāsap on one level — “hath taken away” vs. “may he add” — though both verbs express Abrahamic covenant concepts. The broader range of meaning for ʾāsap is to “gather”37 — i.e., “to bring in,” “gather in.”38 Moses’s gathering of Israel for the first time begins with the “gathering” of Israel’s elders. The key term in this initial gathering is ʾāsap. The Lord commanded Moses, “Go, and gather [wēʾāsaptâ] the elders of Israel together” (Exodus 3:16). The narrator subsequently notes, “And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together [wayyaʾaspû] all the elders of the children of Israel” (Exodus 4:29). Thus, the ʾāsap/yāsap pairing is not merely antonymic — “taking away” vs. “adding” — but also on another level complementary: “gathering” and “adding” or “gathering” and “increasing.”

“Wherefore He Will Bring Them Again out of Captivity”:
Nephi’s Use of Adding and Gathering as an Explanation of Isaiah 29:22–24 and 49:25–26

The complementary dimension of ʾāsap and yāsap — of gathering and adding — emerges in 1 Nephi 22:12. Nephi prophesies that the Lord will act in his covenant role as kinsman redeemer (gōʾēl) to “add” or bring Israel out of Egypt-like bondage and to “gather” Israel and bring them to their lands of promise as at the beginning:

Wherefore, he will bring them again out [cf. Hebrew ʾyōṣīp lēḥōṣi ām] of captivity, and they shall be gathered together [cf. wēʾussēpû39] to the lands of their inheritance; and they shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness; and they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel. (1 Nephi 22:12)

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37. HALOT, 74.
38. Ibid.
The context of exodus-like deliverance suggests the underlying presence — conceptual or written — of the verb *yāṣāʾ* which is abundantly used throughout the Hebrew Bible to describe Yahweh’s “bringing” Israel “out” or “forth” from the captivity and bondage of Egypt.40 Jeremiah 31:32 provides a useful example, contemporary to Lehi’s time, in the phrase “the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out [lēhōṣīʾām] of the land of Egypt.” If so, the expressions “he will bring them again out” and “they shall be brought out” would constitute a polyptoton41 involving active and passive forms of the Hebrew verb *yāṣāʾ*. Donald W. Parry notes42 the anaphoric43 grammar evident in the successive third-person plural verbal constructions “and they shall be gathered together,” “and they shall be brought out,” “and they shall know.”

If the “bring them … out” represents an infinitival construction like *lēhōṣīʾām*, then the phrase “he will … again” becomes additionally significant. One of the most common idiomatic ways of expressing “he will [do something] again” in biblical Hebrew is by means of the Hiphil third masculine singular verbal form *yōṣīp*. The presence of *yōṣīp* here would not only reverberate Nephi’s uses of it in the previous verses (“the Lord God will proceed to do a marvelous work,” 1 Nephi 22:8) and 1 Nephi 22:11 (“the Lord God will proceed to make bare”), but also, together with the verb “and they shall be gathered together” (cf. *wēʾussēpū*), would evoke the name Joseph and the double-etiology of Genesis 30:23–24. Here too Nephi appears to follow a precedent set by Isaiah.

40. See, e.g., Exodus 6:6: “Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out [wēhōṣēʾī] from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments”; Exodus 20:2: “I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out [hōṣēʾtiḵā] of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”


43. Lanham defines *anaphora* as “repetition of the same word at the beginning of successive clauses or verses” (*Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 11). In this case, the text certainly represents different underlying verbs, but the conjunction “and” itself and the third-person, plural, and (probably) imperfect grammatical markers would have been present in the verbs — especially if written in Hebrew — creating the anaphoric effect.
Nephi’s words in 1 Nephi 22:12 draw on several Isaianic texts beginning with Isaiah 11:11–12, which, as noted earlier, prophesies of the gathering of Israel from seven (symbolic) nations and “the four corners of the earth,” i.e., a complete gathering of Israel, as in the beginning, but on a much grander scale. Isaiah’s prophecy also uses ʾāsap and yāsap in a complementary, rather than antithetical, way:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, 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, and shall assemble [wĕʾāsap, and shall gather in] the outcasts of Israel, and gather together [yĕqabbēṣ] the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. (Isaiah 11:11–12)

Nephi further develops Isaiah’s prophecy in terms of the Abrahamic covenant beyond 1 Nephi 22:8–12 in 2 Nephi 29:14, where he makes clear that the complete gathering of Israel will be concomitant with the gathering of the Lord’s word “in one”: “And it shall come to pass that my people, which are of the house of Israel, shall be gathered home unto the lands of their possessions; and my word also shall be gathered in one. And I will show unto them that fight against my word and against my people, who are of the house of Israel, that I am God, and that I covenanted with Abraham that I would remember his seed forever” (2 Nephi 29:14).

In prophesying that “they [of the house of Israel] shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness” (1 Nephi 22:12), Nephi appeals to Isaiah 29:18–19: “And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also shall increase [wĕyospû] their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.” Nephi equates blind and deaf Israel with “hear[ing] the words of the [sealed] book” and “see[ing] out of obscurity and out of darkness” with being “brought out of obscurity and out of darkness” by the Lord as Divine Warrior. In other words, the Lord would act to gather Israel from its scattered state and the book would be the instrument of gathering — a gathering

See also Isaiah 42:18–19; Isaiah 42:19–23 JST.
“servant.”\textsuperscript{45} In invoking Isaiah 29:18–19, Nephi also invokes the stated results of the gathering, “the meek also shall increase [wēyospû] their joy in the Lord”—or, as he later phrases it, “\textbf{And the meek also shall increase} [wēyospû], and their joy shall be in the Lord” (2 Nephi 27:30).\textsuperscript{46} The Lord’s “proceeding” (yōṣip, Isaiah 29:14; 1 Nephi 22:8, 11) to do this marvelous work would result in this marvelous “increase” (wēyospû, Isaiah 29:19)—all brought to pass through a “Joseph.”

Only verses later does Isaiah situate the entire prophecy within the context of Abrahamic history and thus implicitly in the context of the Abrahamic covenant:

Therefore thus saith the \textbf{Lord, who redeemed Abraham}, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. (Isaiah 29:22–24)

The Hebrew text rendered “the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob”—\textit{yhwh el-bêt yaʾaqōb ʿāšer pādāʿ et-ʼabrāhām}—would be better rendered as “the Lord, God of the House of Jacob, who redeemed Abraham.” In other words, the word \textit{el} taken here as a preposition should have been pointed as the word \textit{ēl}, “God.” Jennifer C. Lane has insightfully noted that the phrase ʿāšer pādāʿ et-ʼabrāhām (“who redeemed Abraham”) could constitute a brief allusion to the Lord’s rescue of Abraham from the Egyptian altar in Ur of the Chaldees, as mentioned in the Book of Abraham but otherwise unmentioned in the biblical corpus.\textsuperscript{47} The redemption of Abraham,


Jacob, and their posterity by the kinsman redeemer across time — salvation history — reflects the atonement of Jesus Christ having its intended effect and the Lord’s eventual triumph over evil (see Jacob 5).  

1 Nephi 22:12 concludes with the prophetic declaration, “And they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel.” As noted above, Nephi’s words constitute a direct quotation of Isaiah 49:26. The immediate context of that text as deliverance by the Divine Warrior:

But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. (Isaiah 49:25–26)

Conclusion

In 1 Nephi 22:6, 8–12, Nephi quotes or alludes to four Old Testament passages twice in his description of how the Lord would bring to pass his promises in the Abrahamic covenant for the salvation of the human family: Genesis 22:18, Isaiah 29:14, Isaiah 49:22–23, and Isaiah 52:10. On the basis of their shared use of the Hebrew word ḡôyim (“nations” [kindreds], “Gentiles”), Nephi prophesies that the Lord would act in the latter-days for the salvation of the entire human family. As he does elsewhere, in 2 Nephi 25:17 when he combined Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14 on the basis of their shared use of yāṣap, Nephi uses Isaiah 29:14 with its key-word yôṣīp (yôsîp) to suggest that the iterative divine action to fulfill the Abrahamic covenant would take the form of “a marvelous work and a wonder” and would be accomplished through a “Joseph.” Sophisticated wordplay involving the names Abram/Abraham and Joseph, evident in 1 Nephi 22:8–12, also reinforces the close connection between the gathering of the seed of Joseph the patriarch and the “marvelous


work” — including the coming forth of additional scripture from the Gentiles — that would help bring the Abrahamic covenant to complete fulfillment.

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