
1 Nephi 7 — Daughters of Ishmael, the Bound Brother, and the First Female Intercession

Second return to Jerusalem — for the brides; first intercessory voice in the household, c. 600 BC.

The Lord sends the sons back for brides. The marriage commandment is in *lo tov* grammar (Gen. 2:18) — the chapter that began with the first Edenic *not good* closes with full thanksgiving liturgy. Ishmael's heart is divinely softened. Half his household rebels on the road home (the Lamanite-Nephite schism in seed). The brothers bind Nephi; his bands fall; the miracle does not soften them. What softens them is the woman's voice. The first formal intercession (*paga*) in the BoM is by a woman who is not yet a covenant member.

Ten Insights

1. **Lo tov echo (v. 1).** Gen. 2:18's first divine *not good* — the verse that creates Eve. The marriage commandment is the Edenic charter for the covenant household.
2. **L'haqim zera — registry idiom.** Deut. 25:5–10's levirate language. Marriage as covenant *registry-keeping* — the lineage that will reach Mormon and Moroni.
3. **Manasseh meets Ephraim.** Lehi's Manasseh + Ishmael's Ephraim = Joseph's two birthrights reunited (Gen. 48). Joseph being put back together in the wilderness.
4. **Conversion as divine surgery.** *The Lord did soften the heart* (v. 5). Ezek. 36:26 enacted six centuries early. Conversion is the Lord's surgery, not human persuasion.
5. **Schism begins on the road (v. 6).** Half Ishmael's household rebels before merging with Lehi's. The Lamanite-Nephite division is older than 2 Ne. 5.
6. **Shakhach as apostasy verb.** vv. 10–12. Apostasy in scripture is *forgetting* (Deut. 6:12; 8:11). Sacrament's binding word — *remembrance* — is its opposite.
7. **Prayer mission-oriented, not ego (v. 17).** Nephi prays for *strength to burst the bands*, not vindication. The disciple wants to be freed for the mission, not the win.
8. **Patar — archetypal salvation grammar.** v. 18. Isa. 61:1, Lk. 4:18, Acts 12:7, 16:26, Alma 14:26. Loosing of bonds = salvation itself.
9. **Miracle did not soften — the woman did.** vv. 19–20. *Paga* = priestly intercessory verb (Isa. 53:12). First formal BoM intercession is by a woman not yet a covenant member.
10. **Charizomai — frankly forgive (v. 21).** Greek grace-forgiveness; Eph. 4:32. Nephi enacts in 600 BC what the Lord reveals to Alma at Mosiah 26:30.

Cross-References

Gen. 2:18 (*lo tov*); Gen. 48 (crossed hands); Deut. 6:12; 8:11; 25:5–10; 32:18; Ruth 4:5; Ps. 146:7; Isa. 53:12 (*paga*); Isa. 61:1; Jer. 9:24; Ezek. 36:26; Mt. 18:22; Lk. 4:18; Acts 12:7; 16:26; Eph. 4:32; 1 Ne. 2:16 (*lev rakh*); Alma 14:26; Mosiah 26:30; D&C 86.

Apocryphal Correlations

Joseph and Aseneth 1–8. Bridal-conversion narrative — Aseneth's heart divinely softened, household incorporation through marriage. Closest cousin to chapter 7's marriages.

Tobit 6–8. Wilderness journey, marriage-by-divine-arrangement, levirate concerns. The *raise up seed* economy in wisdom-novella form.

Jubilees 25–27. Rebekah's repeated intercessory speech to Isaac and Jacob — the female voice that *changes outcomes*. The type 7:19 enacts.

4 Maccabees 16–17. The mother of the seven martyrs as priestly intercessor before God — *paga* as a female covenant office.

Sirach 26:1–4, 13–18. Encomium for the godly wife who *raises up seed* in the household — the daughters of Ishmael's quiet office.

Didache 4:9–11. Household covenant ethic — children, hospitality. The shape of the household Zoram and the daughters of Ishmael have entered.

Hebrew Word Studies

lo tov (לוֹטוֹב, "not good") — v. 1. The first divine *lo tov* of Gen. 2:18 — the verse that creates Eve. The marriage commandment is the Edenic charter.

l'haqim zera (לְהַקִּים זֵרָא, "to raise up seed") — v. 2. The technical levirate idiom (Deut. 25:5–10; Ruth 4:5). Marriage as registry-keeping.

lev rakh (לֵב רַךְ, "soft heart") — v. 5. The Ezek. 36:26 promise enacted before it is articulated. Conversion = divine surgery.

shakhach (שָׁחַח, "forget") — vv. 10–12. Deuteronomic indictment verb. Apostasy is *unremembering*. Sacrament's *remembrance* is its antidote.

patar (פָּטַר, "loose / release") — v. 18. Isa. 61:1's freedom-verb. Salvation's archetypal grammar — Peter, Paul, Alma, Nephi all the same verb.

paga (פָּגַע, "intercede / fall in the gap") — v. 19. Isaiah's priestly intercession-verb (Isa. 53:12). First formal BoM intercession is by a woman, performing a priestly function.

Personal Application

Two takeaways. First, when miracles do not soften the people you love, listen for the woman who pleads. Verse 19 is one of the great hidden encouragements in scripture. Heaven uses unexpected intercessors — a friend, an in-law, a stranger, someone not yet officially in the covenant. If you are sometimes that voice in someone else's life, recognize what you are doing: you are paga-ing, falling in the gap. That is priestly work. Second, when you are bound — pray for the right thing. Not vindication. Pray to be loosed for the mission. That is the prayer that gets answered.