

2 Nephi 3 — Joseph of Egypt’s Prophecy, the Choice Seer, and the Joining of Two Records

Lehi blesses Joseph, his youngest son, quoting the Brass-Plates prophecy of Joseph in Egypt, c. 588 BC.

Lehi quotes an otherwise unknown prophecy of Joseph of Egypt — a prophecy preserved on the Brass Plates but absent from the modern Hebrew Bible. In it, Joseph foretells two seers: *Moses* and a latter-day seer whose name *shall be called after me, and after the name of his father*. Joseph Smith Jr., son of Joseph Smith Sr., is named by name 3,505 years in advance. The chapter also prophesies that the writings of Judah (Bible) and Joseph (BoM) shall *grow together* in the last days.

Ten Insights

- 1. Born in affliction (v. 1).** Joseph the boy and Joseph the seer both born to mothers of *greatest sorrow*. Hebrew narrative pattern: birth-context foreshadows calling.
- 2. Josephite descent (v. 4).** The Lehite household is descended through Manasseh; *the fruit of Joseph who was carried into Egypt* — inheritors of Gen. 49:22’s fruitful bough.
- 3. Ro’eh — choice seer (v. 6).** The Hebrew technical office of *seer* (1 Sam. 9:9). Vision-prophet, not just speech-prophet.
- 4. The two seers — Moses + Joseph.** Joseph of Egypt prophesies a near-future seer (Moses) and a far-future seer (latter-day) in parallel.
- 5. Seer + spokesman pattern.** Like Moses + Aaron. The latter-day seer would have a spokesman — historically read in Restoration as Sidney Rigdon’s role early on.
- 6. The name prophesied (v. 15).** *His name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father*. Joseph Smith Jr., son of Joseph Smith Sr., named in c. 1700 BC.
- 7. Power in a rod, judgment in writing (v. 17).** The Mosaic-type prophet works through tangible instruments. Joseph Smith works through tangible plates and revelations.
- 8. Two records grow together (v. 12).** Bible (Judah) + BoM (Joseph) *grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines*. Ezek. 37:15–17 in different grammar.
- 9. Mighty in writing, not in speaking (v. 17).** Joseph Smith’s gift is the written translation; he was famously a poor public speaker. Joseph of Egypt foresaw this characteristic specifically.
- 10. Salvation through his hand (v. 15).** The latter-day seer brings *my people unto salvation* — not by mighty rhetoric but by the Lord’s power working in him.

The Two Josephs — A Patriarchal Typology

Joseph of Egypt prophesied a latter-day seer in his own image. The structural parallels between Joseph of Egypt and Joseph Smith are too exact to be coincidence.

Element	Joseph of Egypt	Joseph Smith Jr.
Father's name	Jacob (Israel)	Joseph Smith Sr.
Persecuted by brothers	Sold into Egypt (Gen. 37)	Persecuted by family and neighbors (JS-H 1)
Visions in youth	Dreams of sheaves and stars (Gen. 37:5–11)	First Vision at 14; Moroni at 17
Imprisoned unjustly	Potiphar's house → prison (Gen. 39)	Liberty Jail; Carthage (D&C 121–123)
Brought before a king	Pharaoh's court (Gen. 41)	Pres. Van Buren in Washington (1839)
Saved his people through famine	Stored grain through 7 years (Gen. 41)	Restored gospel through pre-Restoration apostasy
Joined two families/records	Reunited Judah and Joseph (Gen. 45)	Brought Bible and BoM together

Element	Joseph of Egypt	Joseph Smith Jr.
Died young in foreign land	Died at 110 in Egypt (Gen. 50:26)	Martyred at 38 in Illinois

The typology is the Lord's signature on the prophecy. Joseph of Egypt was *seeing* Joseph Smith in himself.

Cross-References

Gen. 30:24 (Joseph named); Gen. 37–50 (Joseph's biography); Gen. 49:22–26 (fruitful bough); Gen. 50:25 (Joseph's bones to be brought up); Ex. 13:19; Deut. 33:13–17 (Moses blesses Joseph); 1 Sam. 9:9 (he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer); 1 Sam. 16:7; Isa. 28:21 (the Lord's strange work); Isa. 29 (marvellous work and a wonder); Jer. 3:14–18; Ezek. 37:15–17 (two sticks); Mt. 1:21; Lk. 1:48; 1 Ne. 5:14 (Lehi's Josephite descent); 1 Ne. 22:8–9; 2 Ne. 27 (Isa. 29 expanded on the BoM coming forth); JS-H 1; D&C 6:25–27 (gift of translation); D&C 132:1, 17; Moses 1:41.

Apocryphal Correlations

Testament of Joseph 19. Joseph's deathbed prophecy of a Messiah from his loins. Same farewell-prophecy genre. The 2 Ne. 3:5 Brass-Plates prophecies likely belong to this stream.

Jubilees 31 (Isaac's blessing of Levi and Judah). Patriarchal deathbed blessings naming future destinies over particular descendants. Same form as 2 Ne. 3.

4Q372 (Dead Sea Scrolls — Joseph Apocryphon). Fragmentary Qumran text in which Joseph laments and prophesies the future gathering of his sons. Independent attestation of Joseph-the-Patriarch-prophecies literature.

2 Esdras (4 Ezra) 14:21–48. Ezra rewrites the public books and dictates 70 secret ones. Doctrine of a latter-day scribe restoring scripture by revelation.

Bereshit Rabbah 90–95. Rabbinic midrash that *Joseph's name shall not depart from his seed forever*. The same hermeneutic Lehi uses: name as covenantal carrier of destiny.

Hebrew Word Studies

ro'eh (רֹאֶה, "seer") — vv. 6–7. The vision-prophet office. 1 Sam. 9:9 explains the title.

peri (פֵּרִי, "fruit (of the loins)") — vv. 5, 12, 17–18. The Gen. 49:22 fruit-imagery. The Josephite branch of Israel.

shem (שֵׁם, "name") — v. 15. To be named after in Hebrew is to inherit the destiny of the named-for.

yad (יָד, "hand / power") — v. 24. The Lord's *hand* brings forth the seer's work; the seer's *hand* brings forth the writing.

davar (דָּבָר, "word / thing") — v. 11. The *word* of the Lord; the *writing* brought forth in the latter days.

yashua (יְשׁוּעָה, "salvation") — v. 15. The seer brings the people *unto salvation* by the Lord's power.

Personal Application

Two things. First, prophecy crosses centuries. Three and a half millennia of providence are described in this chapter — and the chapter itself was written six hundred years into that arc. The Lord works on a horizon you cannot see; your job is faithfulness in the day. Second, the two records grow together. Bible and BoM are not in competition; they are in fulfillment. Open them side by side. Hold Gen. 49 in one hand and 2 Ne. 3 in the other and you are doing what Joseph of Egypt prophesied.