

Are Mormons the “people of Ephraim”

Most all LDS (Mormon) are told through a “patriarchal blessing” at a young age that they are “of the seed of Ephraim” ... some by birthright and others “by adoption.” Ephraim was the ‘birthright’ son of Joseph, great-grandson of Abraham, who was sold into Egypt as a slave and rose to power, secondly only to Pharaoh, about 1700 BC. In such position of power in a prosperous Egypt, Joseph ultimately aided in the salvation of all Israel—his father Jacob’s family—from seven years of a most devastating famine. Mormons claim to be of the lineage of Ephraim—having ‘been scattered among all nations, and now gathered in these last days.’

Joseph, son of Jacob, was given a wife in Egypt--the daughter of Potiphera, governor of Egypt, from who he had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. It was Ephraim that “held the birthright” of his father Joseph’s heritage. “Birthright” was a ‘legal’ so-to-speak issue, as to who had rights to one’s posterity. Joseph held this birthright of his father, Jacob’s heritage, who held the birthright from his father Isaac, who was given the birthright from his father Abraham. In short, Joseph held the birthright to the whole “house of Israel” in that--the other 11 sons of Jacob (name changed to Israel by a messenger of God) had defaulted.

A most excellent full feature Movie about this very epochal event, released about 1995, is called “Joseph” starring Ben Kingsley playing the role of Potiphera. Pharaoh was so impressed with the “semitic slave, Joseph” that he gives power over all Egypt and gifts him Asenath to wife, Potiphera’s daughter. Many believe it was under the hand of Joseph wherein the pyramids of Egypt flourished.

And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. (Genesis 41:45—King James Version)

Hence, the background of Ephraim. In the Bible Dictionary we read: **“Ephraim was given the birthright in Israel (1 Chr. 5:1-2; Jer. 31:9).**

From Mormon ‘scripture’ of the 1830’s, it is recorded that ‘today’s Ephraim has the “privilege first to bear the message of the restoration of the gospel to the world and to gather scattered Israel.” (D&C 133)

LDS Church president Joseph Fielding Smith, in 1970, said: ***“It is essential in this dispensation that Ephraim stand in his place at the head, exercising the birthright in Israel which was given to him by direct revelation. Therefore, Ephraim must be gathered first to prepare the way, through the gospel and the priesthood, for the rest of the tribes of Israel when the time comes for them to be gathered to Zion. The great majority of those who have come into the church are Ephraimites. It is the exception to find one of any other tribe, unless it is of Manasseh.***

It is Ephraim, today, who holds the priesthood. It is with Ephraim that the Lord has made covenant and has revealed the fullness of the everlasting gospel. It is Ephraim who is building temples and performing the ordinances in them for both the living and for the dead. When the “lost tribes” come ... in fulfillment of the promises made through Isaiah and Jeremiah, they will have to receive the

crowning blessings from the brother Ephraim, the “firstborn” in Israel. (Journal of Discourses. Vol. 10, 188)

Ezra Taft Benson—the President of the Mormon Church in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s and one time US Secretary of Agriculture in President Eisenhower’s administration—as prophet, seer and revelator for the LDS church said this of Ephraim: *“For nearly six thousand year, God has held you in reserve to make your appearance in the final days before the second coming of the Lord” ... “In all ages prophets have looked down through the corridors of time to our day ... make no mistake about it, you are a marked generation.”*

In all Christianity the most mentioned of Ephraim is in the Old Testament. A word count of the word Ephraim finds its usage 161 uses in the Old Testament but only 1 time in the New Testament. In Mormon scripture Ephraim is mentioned 15 times, mostly in the Book of Mormon, wherein Isaiah of the Old Testament is quoted often.

There are many of the writings and prophecies of Isaiah reiterated in the Book of Mormon. Its readers are strongly urged to *“search the prophecies of Isaiah, for his words are of great importance to them at the last day.”* Such as this strong admonition from Nephi:

Second Nephi of Nephi

3 Wherefore, I write unto my people, unto all those that shall receive hereafter these things which I write, ^athat they may know the judgments of God, that they come upon all nations, according to the word which he hath spoken.

*4 Wherefore, hearken, O my people, which are of the house of Israel, and give ear unto my words; for because **the words of Isaiah are not plain unto you, nevertheless they are plain unto all those that are filled with the ^aspirit of ^bprophecy.** But I give unto you a ^cprophecy, according to the spirit which is in me; wherefore I shall prophesy according to the ^dplainness which hath been with me from the time that I came out from Jerusalem with my father; for behold, my soul delighteth in ^eplainness unto my people, that they may learn.*

*5 Yea, and my soul delighteth in the **words of ^aIsaiah,** for I came out from Jerusalem, and mine eyes hath beheld the things of the ^bJews, and I know that the Jews do ^cunderstand the things of the prophets, and there is none other people that understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews like unto them, save it be that they are taught after the manner of the things of the Jews.*

7 But behold, I proceed with mine own prophecy, according to my ^aplainness; in the which I ^bknow that no man can err; nevertheless, in the days that the prophecies of Isaiah shall be fulfilled men shall know of a surety, at the times when they shall come to pass.

8 Wherefore, they are of ^aworth unto the children of men, and he that supposeth that they are not, unto them will I speak particularly, and confine the words unto mine ^bown people; for I know that they shall be of great worth unto them in the ^clast days; for in that day shall they understand them; wherefore, for their good have I written them.

Much of what Isaiah spoke about regarding the “last days” is about those called by the name Ephraim. Isaiah has this scathing prophecy to the Ephraimites. Mormons must wonder if this passage speaks about ‘them’ or of another people.

The Book of the Prophet **Isaiah**

Chapter 28

Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim!—Revelation comes line upon line and precept upon precept—Christ, the sure foundation, is promised.

1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:

...

7 ¶But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble *in* judgment.

8 For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

9 ¶Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.*

10 For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little:

11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.