

2 Nephi 1-5

Wednesday, February 5, 2020

The Testament of Lehi



The land -2 Ne. 1.6-10

The Messiah – 2 Ne. 1.10-12

Awake and arise – 2 Ne.1.13-14;
2 Ne. 1.21-23

The embrace – 2 Ne. 2.15

Blessings & Cursings – 2 Ne.
2.18,22, 28-29

Seed/Posterity – 2 Ne. 2.31-32

John W. Welch, "[Lehi's Last Will and Testament: A Legal Approach](#)," in *Second Nephi, The Doctrinal Structure*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1989), 61–82.

Testament Literature

According to James H. Charlesworth, “No binding genre was employed by the authors of the testaments, but one can discern among them a loose format.” That format involves:

The ideal figure faces death and [1] causes his relatives and intimate friends to **circle around his bed**. He occasionally informs them of **his fatal flaw** and [2] exhorts them to **avoid certain temptations**; he typically [3] instructs them regarding the **way of righteousness** and [4] utters **blessings and curses**. Often he **illustrates his words**—as the apocalyptic seer in the apocalypse—with [5] descriptions of the **future** as it has been revealed to him in a **dream or vision**.

(James H. Charlesworth, Introduction to Testaments Section, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols., ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody, Mass.: Henrickson Publishers, 1983), 1:773, brackets added).



Take for example, the [Testament of Joseph](#), who was one of the twelve patriarchs of Israel.

1. The introduction says, “A copy of the testament of Joseph. When he was about to die, he called his sons and his brothers...” (1:1), proceeding from there to give lengthy instruction.
2. The patriarch Joseph tells, at length, the story of his resisting temptation from Potiphar’s wife, occasionally adding specific warnings and exhortations about sin (e.g., 7:8; 10:1–6).
3. His narrative is also laced with many instances of righteous instruction, such as his counsel, “in every act keep the fear of God before your eyes and honor your brothers” (11:1; cf. 2:4–7; 3:4; 4:3, 6; 9:3; 10:1–6; 11:1–7; 17:2–8).
4. He also promises blessings, saying, “If you live in accord with the Lord’s commands, God will exalt you with good things forever” (18:1, the blessings continue throughout 18:1–4).
5. Finally, the testament closes out with an apocalyptic prophecy (19:1–11).

(All verses in this refer to Joseph’s testament, which must be seen towards the end of [the document](#), as noted.)

TESTAMENTARY PATTERN



Gathers together relatives and close friends shortly before his death

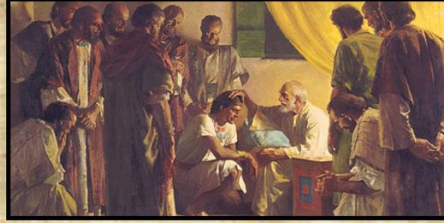
Exhorts them to avoid temptations

Instructs them in the ways of righteousness

Utters blessings and curses

Descriptions of the future as revealed in a dream or vision

TESTAMENT OF JOSEPH



"When he was about to die, he called his sons and his brothers" (1:1)

Joseph tells the story of his resisting temptation from Potiphar's wife (7:8; 10:1-6)

"In every act keep the fear of God before your eyes and honor your brothers" (11:1)

"If you live in accord with the Lord's commands, God will exalt you with good things forever" 18:1

The testament closes out with an apocalyptic prophecy (19:1-11)

TESTAMENT OF LEHI



Lehi did "speak many things" to his gathered family and members of his group (2 Nephi 1:28)

Lehi encouraged Laman and Lemuel to "awake," and "shake off the awful chains by which ye are bound" (2 Nephi 1:13)

Lehi says the Lord's "ways are righteousness forever" (2 Nephi 1:19)

He warns Laman and Lemuel of the curses that will befall them if they do not keep the commandments (2 Nephi 1:18,22)

Lehi prophesies about the future of the promised land (2 Nephi 1:6-12)

2 Nephi 2 – Lehi to Jacob

The power to act

Lehi's logic: 2 Ne. 2.13

The type of being God is: 2 Ne. 2.14, 26-29

Lehi explains how agency works



Exodus 3.13 “What is your name?”

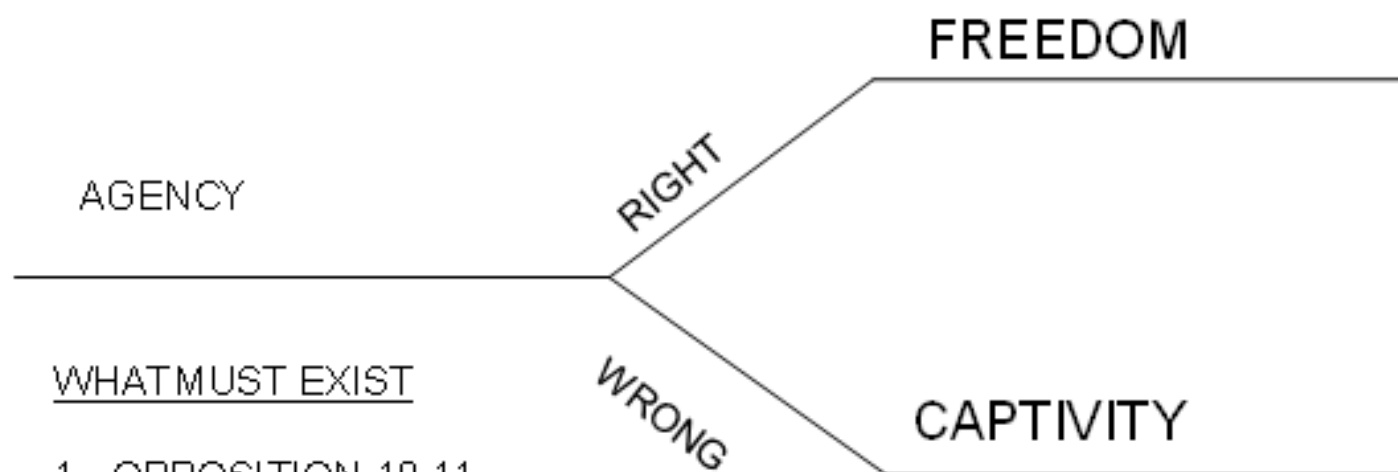
אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה

Students often ask, what does this mean? What does God mean when he says, “I AM THAT I AM?”

Frank Moore Cross explains that “the accumulated evidence ... strongly supports the view that the name Yahweh is a causative imperfect of the Canaanite-Proto-Hebrew verb *hwy*, ‘to be.’ Therefore, the divine name Yahweh, according to this view, literally means “He who causes to be...”

(Mike Day, [What is your name? Exodus 3: Some ways to look at the text](#), 10.05.18)

HOW AGENCY WORKS



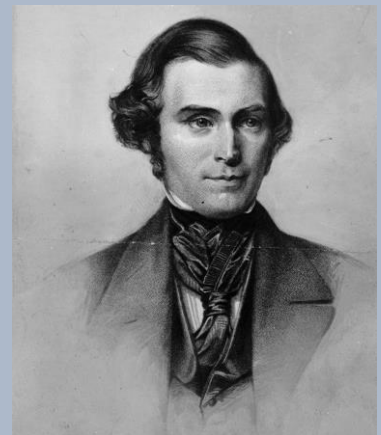
WHAT MUST EXIST

1. OPPOSITION-10-11
2. LAW- 5 & 13
3. KNOWLEDGE- 18
4. POWER TO CHOOSE- 16, 26-27

Why did not God just “make man mortal” to begin with?

Now, perhaps those who are not in the habit of reflecting upon this matter, may suppose that when Adam was placed on the earth, and Eve, his wife, they were mortal, like unto us; but that was not so. God did not make a mortal being. It would be contrary to this great goodness to make a man mortal, subject to pain, subject to sickness, subject to death. When he made this creation, and when he made these two intelligent beings and placed them upon this creation, he made them after his own likeness and his own image. He did not make them mortal, but he made them immortal, like unto himself. If he had made them mortal, and subject to pain, there would have been some cause, among intelligent beings, to say that the Lord subjected man, without a cause, to afflictions, sorrows, death and mortality. But he could not do this; it was contrary to the nature of his attributes, contrary to the nature of that infinite goodness which dwells in the bosom of the Father and the Son, to make a being subject to any kind of pain.

(Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 21: 290 – 291.)



The Fall & (conflicting) Commandments

In the words of President Joseph Fielding Smith: “Now this is the way I interpret that. The Lord said to Adam, here is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **If you want to stay here then you cannot eat of that fruit.** If you want to stay here then I forbid you to eat it. But you may act for yourself and you may eat of it if you want to. And if you eat it you will die.”

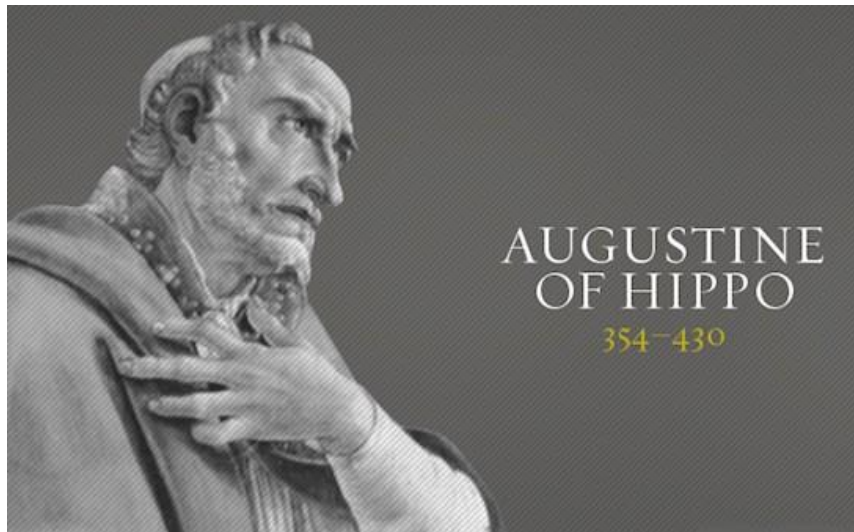
(Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, eds., *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 2: The Pearl of Great Price* [Salt Lake City: Randall Book, 1985], 94.)



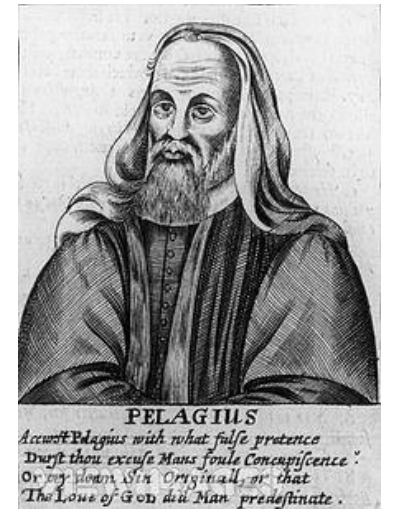
“What, therefore, did God really say to them in the garden? I suggest that He might have said something like the following: ‘If you want to stay in the Garden of Eden with no cares and no possibility of growth, you should not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. However, if you desire to grow and receive all that I have in store for you, you will have to leave the garden. **If you eat of the tree, you will be cast out of the garden into the earth and into mortality, and you will die both temporally and spiritually, but you will open the door for yourselves and for all humanity to receive eternal life like I have. The choice is yours.’** In other words, God gave them information.” (Keller, Roger R. 1990. Adam: As Understood by Four Men Who Shaped Western Christianity. In Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, eds, *The Man Adam*. [Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft.], p. 104)

Original Sin and the Fall of Adam & Eve

400 AD- Augustine: Man is in all his parts inherently perverted by sin.



360-420 AD- Pelagius: Man is born on the same plane as Adam, sin is the result of Adam's bad example, it is possible for humanity to live a sinless life, the grace of God is only an aid.



Eve explains it to her children

And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God. And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient. (Moses 5.10-11)



2 Nephi 3 – Lehi to Joseph

What do prophets do?

V5- they “see”, bring you out of darkness into light

V6- they testify

V7- they bring us to a knowledge of our covenants

V9- prophets deliver HIS people

V11- they bring forth the word and convince us of truth

V12- confound false doctrines, establish peace, lay down contention(s)

V15- bring us to salvation

V24- work mighty wonders, bring a restoration- what do prophets restore? Families to their rightful place- note the very first time Moroni came to Joseph what he said- D&C 2- This work is all about families being united- knowing this, how should you treat them? (application)

2 Nephi 3 – Lehi to Joseph

What will happen in my life if I choose to follow the prophet?

V5- I will come out of darkness

V12- I will not be confounded

V13- out of weakness I will be made strong

V15- I will have salvation

Your last words to your children

Lehi's last admonitions – 2 Ne. 4.1-12

Note how Lehi approaches his grandchildren...
this is an example of “degree of difficulty”!

The things of my soul – 2 Ne. 4.13-15

The Psalm of Nephi – 2 Ne. 4.17-35

“And he caused the cursing to come upon them” – 2 Nephi 5.21-25

How to read this (and other verses):

1. Not literal – see 2 Nephi 26.33.
2. Metaphor for spiritual cleanliness – see 1 Ne. 11.13; 3 Ne. 2.14-15
3. It is talking about something else – ceremonial “skins”, in other words, this is a temple text, speaking about authorized servants vs. **imitators** – see: Ethan Sproat, [Skins as Garments in the Book of Mormon](#), *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Vol. 41, no. 1, article 7.

Other references in the Book of Mormon: 1 Ne. 13.15; Jacob 3.5, 8-9; Alma 3.5-6; Alma 55 – this text unpacks the whole idea of this being literal when read critically.

Elder Stevenson, made at the 2020 NAACP Salt Lake Branch Martin Luther King Jr Memorial Luncheon regarding what was included in the print version of *Come, Follow Me* for Book of Mormon (which was edited for the digital version). This is specifically in regard to 2 Nephi 5:20-21:

“Now, prior to my prepared remarks I’d like to address the matter with you. Some of you may be aware from a news article published over the weekend. One of our recent church manuals includes a paragraph with some outdated commentary about race. It was mistakenly included in the printed version of the manual, which had been prepared for print nearly two years ago. When it was brought to the attention of church leaders late last year. They directed that it be immediately removed in our annual online manual which is used by the great majority of our members. We have also directed that any future printed manuals will reflect this change. We’re asking our members to disregard the paragraph in the printed manual. Now I’m deeply saddened and hurt by this error and for any pain that it may have caused our members and for others. I would just like to reiterate our position as a church is clear. We do condemn all racism, past and present, in any form, and we disavow any theory advance that black or dark skin is a sign of a curse. We are brothers and sisters, and I consider you friends. I love and appreciate you.” (All are alike unto God, [Church News](#), Jan. 20, 2020)



2 Nephi 5 – The Separation

Nephi is warned – 2 Ne. 5.5

“All those that would go with me” – 2 Ne. 5.6

What it means to “prosper” = “after the manner of happiness” (v. 27)

2 Ne. 5.14

2 Ne. 5.15, 17

2 Ne. 5.16

2 Ne. 5.27