

The Firstborn Son versus the Birthright Son

Val Brinkerhoff, 4/12/20223, 4 pages

Why was Manasseh, firstborn son of Joseph of Egypt, by-passed for the *birthright* blessing under the hands of Jacob his grandfather? To understand this, we must first start with the concept of the *firstborn* son via the *birthright* son.

Jesus is the *Firstborn* of the Father. He is the Great High *Priest* and the *King* of all kings. He is the type for all “firstborn” sons. They are to lead in *both* types of *governing* within the Kingdom of God, which on earth, is the House of Israel. God said all things *firstborn* “are mine”, including *the Levites* (those in the priesthood those who ministered unto the LORD at the Tabernacle). They replaced *firstborn* males in the other Tribes of Israel after the Golden calf incident near Mt. Sinai (see Num. 3:1-13). In addition to *the Levites*, all *offerings*, whether *animals* or *Firstfruit offerings* of the field were made to God in the Old Testament as symbols of the future Lamb of God Jesus and His atonement for all sin. God called the House of Israel his “*firstborn*” in the Exodus. They are the *firstfruits* in Romans 11:16 (Paul went to the Gentiles after they – the House of Israel – rejected the *firstborn* Son of God among them). The Passover in Egypt was sometimes called “the ordinance of the *Firstborn*, the saving of the House of Israel there in captivity, via the blood of the Lamb (Jesus). The last of 10 plagues involved the death of *firstborn* males in Egypt and that of their animals. They worshipped a false god, rejecting the true God, Creator and Redeemer of earth and all creation.

Firstborn Sons In the ancient, *secular* world ruled by kings, the literal *firstborn* son (birth order) became the next ruler, whether he was good or evil. There were blessings *and* responsibilities tied to leading the people. The blessings included land, wealth, and power to lead the people into good or evil. These blessings were passed down to the king’s *firstborn* son as an “inheritance”. Wicked kings ignored their *responsibilities* to the people, to serve them and bring them to the true God, like a caring father. Instead they used their positions for self-serving reasons. King Noah was such a king in the Book of Mormon (see Mosiah 8). Brigham Young was much like him, seeking power, wealth, and many wives.

Birthright Sons God’s kingdom on earth was to be different. Kings like David and Solomon in the Bible *and* Benjamin and Mosiah in the Book of Mormon were put in place by God to *serve* their people, in wise and inspired ways. They led both *spiritually* and *physically* like a good father in a family. In the Bible stories of the Patriarchs (kings and priests), the natural *firstborn* son was rarely the *birthright* son. This is because it was God who chose the one to lead the House of Israel in connection with the son’s *righteousness* or some other characteristic known by God. When the nation of Israel was more *righteous*, it was God who chose the king over the people *and* those who were to be priests, based on the individuals *righteousness* and character. These 3 primary things were what determining factors in who received the *birthright* blessing.

There are 8 examples in the Bible of the *firstborn* son not receiving the *birthright* blessing. The most relevant example for our day is #6, Ephraim, who received the *birthright* blessing rather than Joseph’s *firstborn* son Manasseh. There is no record that he was sinful, like Cain, Esau, or Reuben below. Why then was Manasseh by-passed for the birthright blessing? As seen hereafter, this choice is tied to 5 related things; (1) *righteousness* or some other personal *characteristic* known by God, in connection with, (2) *bloodline*, in connection with, (3) *timing*, relative to, (4) God’s foreknowledge of the *future posterity of both sons*, in association with, (5) *fulfillment of prophecy*.

(1) **Seth** took the place of Cain, *firstborn* son

(2) **Shem** took the place of Japheth, *firstborn* son

(3) **Abraham’s** *firstborn* son Ishmael through Hagar, was not the *birthright* son. Isaac was, because of *Sarah* (Abram and Sarai were 1st cousins). This was more of a *bloodline* issue, not one tied to *sin*.

(4) **Isaac** and *Rebecca’s* *firstborn* son Esau (a twin *with* Jacob) lost his *birthright* to Jacob, because of Esau’s sin. He sold or traded the *birthright* blessing away to Jacob (with Rebecca having a hand in this too). Rebecca and Isaac had close family connection (bloodline). They were family.

(5) **Jacob’s** *firstborn* son Reuben was replaced by the *birthright* son Joseph. He was favored by God and his father Jacob, based on his *character*, *righteousness*, and *gifts*. Joseph was Rachel’s *firstborn* son (and Jacob’s 11th son of 4 wives). Rachel was Jacob’s *avored* wife. Reuben was replaced because he slept with Bilhah, Jacob’s 2nd wife, a handmaid to Leah. See Jacob’s Family Tree farther below.

(6) **Joseph’s** *firstborn* son Manasseh was not given the *birthright* blessing by the grandfather of the two sons, Jacob. He instead chose the younger son *Ephraim* via inspiration of God. Why?

(7) **Moses** took the place of Aaron, *firstborn* son

(8) **David** was the youngest of all his brothers

God's Foreknowledge Unlike the wrong *bloodline* of Ishmael through the Egyptian woman Hagar (3 above), or *sin* in the case of Cain, Esau, and Reuben (1, 2 & 5 above), we have **no written record** tying Manasseh to sin or poor character while in Egypt! Instead we see that God had foreknowledge of *sin* in the *future posterity* of both Ephraim and Manasseh, at different points in time, and on two different *Promised Lands*, and that Jacob's blessing giving the *birthright* to Ephraim was tied to *fulfillment of prophecy* for our day, as Manasseh is destined to "blossom as the rose" once Ephraim becomes "a fading flower."

The Book of Jasher, for example, records that Manasseh as a valiant *firstborn* son, evident in various 3 events involving him interacting with Joseph's brothers Judah and Simeon in Egypt. We see no *rebellion* or *sin* with Manasseh, nor character flaws, only good service to his father Joseph. He favored Manasseh in these events and wanted him to receive the *birthright* blessing as evidenced in his negative reaction to Jacob's choice of Ephraim. God had Jacob give the *birthright* blessing to Ephraim because of His foreknowledge of what would occur with the posterity of both sons. Ephraim would eventually become a "fading flower" and then Manasseh would blossom as a rose. This fulfills prophecy in Isaiah and especially the Book of Mormon (see 1 Ne. 15:12-16; Jacob 3:3-6; the Jacob 5 allegory).

Tame vs Wild Trees The whole issue here is one of *timing* tied to *sin* - in the *future posterity* of *the House of Israel* (Manasseh) and that of *the Gentiles* (those mainly of mixed blood, including Ephraim), and where they came to dwell on *two different lands*, as well as *prophecy*. Those of *Ephraim* of the Northern Kingdom (mostly Samaria), for example, sinned by turning away from God into idolatry (see all of Hosea). For this rejection, they were *scattered to the world* by way of the Assyrians (later inhabiting what is what is now called Europe). Such sin often began with mixed marriages to those of surrounding *Gentile* nations. Isaiah 28 and each chapter of Hosea reveals Ephraim's collective *sins* in northern Israel. Isaiah describes the people as "*the drunkards of Ephraim*", having a "*crown of pride*". They "*exalted*" themselves, "*provoking God to anger*". They became a "*fading flower*" and went a "*whoring*" after the gods of foreign nations.

Similar sins eventually infected the southern kingdom too, of Judah and Benjamin in the *south*. They too were eventually *scattered to world* as a result of the invasion of Babylon, with many being taken into bondage. After they returned to the Holy Land things worsened again. They collectively rejected the LORD Jesus when He came among them personally. The God of Israel was even crucified when He came among them. Paul and other Jewish Apostles then took the fulness of the gospel of Christ to *the Gentiles*. It thrived for a time among them then until the early Christian Church became very polluted too. Jerusalem was completely destroyed. God brought Lehi and his family to America just prior to it. The House of Israel had been planted here, through Joseph as the *birthright* son, and his son Manasseh (Lehi was of Manasseh, Alma 10:3). Later the seed of Ephraim and Judah came to this land too, via Ishmael and his daughters, and Mulek.

Like ancient Israel in the *east*, the House of Israel on this Promised Land *west* also became polluted. It began with the *unbelief* of Laman and Lemuel, the two eldest sons of Lehi. They and their posterity, though *unbelievers*, they did not embrace the *materialism*, *polygamy* of the later Nephites, nor *secret combinations*, all of which led, to the total destruction of the Nephite nation. The unbelieving, darker skinned Lamanites were not totally destroyed like the Nephites on this land, as promised them by way of a number of Book of Mormon prophets. These same prophecies said the remnant of Jacob through Manasseh would rise again in our day, when "the time of the Gentiles" ended (3 Ne. 16:10), and when "the time of Israel" returns. That day is right around the corner.

The Nursing Fathers & Mothers Prophecy of Isaiah - Temporary Custodial Care of the Remnant

Following the dark ages in lands *east*, God brought select believing *Gentiles* to the *Promised Land* of America west, once again. They wanted religious liberty here. They were the early pilgrims of Europe who had Bibles. Many of these Europeans had the mixed blood of *Ephraim* in them. Later Joseph Smith ushered in a Restoration of "fulness" in Christ's gospel for a time, with the aid of the Book of Mormon, and its return of many "*plain and precious things*" taken from the Bible (1 Ne. 13). *The Title Page* of the book says it was written to the Lamanites, the remnant of Joseph (of the House of Israel) remaining on this land, along with "Jews and Gentiles". It has had greatest success with the remnant (in terms of numbers) in Central and South America (less than 50% stay in the modern LDS Church). It has failed worse in North America, primarily because of the corruption of the LDS Church and other Christian churches, and pressure to conform to the ways of the white man and his culture in these churches.

The Gentiles, including Latter-day Saints were to be "*nursing mothers and fathers*" to the House of Israel here (see Isaiah 49:23 and 1 Nephi 21:22-23, 22:8 and 2 Nephi 10:8-18). Native Americans here (mostly of Manasseh) were to be under the *temporary custodial care* of Gentiles. Instead they have been smitten and forgotten, pushed onto dry, windswept lands mostly in the west. Their nursing care was also to include instruction in the *fulness* of the gospel of Jesus Christ (as contained in the Bible and Book of Mormon). The Latter-day Saints have had this "fulness" within these two books, but have pushed a corrupted "church" upon them more than Christ as Savior. Their Native culture has been suppressed as well.

God saw that *the Gentiles* and the LDS Church would again turn from Him and the fulness of the Gospel as contained in both books. He said that this "*fulness*" (which focuses on *saving* the House of Israel) would be taken from *the Gentiles* and be given to the remnant of Joseph here in the later part of the end times, and in fulfillment of prophecies given by Jesus Himself in 3 Nephi

16, 20 and 21. The Manasseh remnant has rejected modern-day Mormonism and with it the Book of Mormon – where many plain and precious truths have been restored (1 Ne. 13) tied to; (1) Their identify as the House of Israel through Joseph of Egypt and Lehi; And (2) The “fulness” of Christ’s gospel when effectively combined with the Bible.

Prophecy states that the eventual reception of the full gospel of Christ by the House of Israel on this land will not occur until *the Gentiles* - who had it for a time as *temporary custodians* - corrupt it and reject it again in their many polluted churches as addressed in Mormon chapter 8 (and 3 Ne. 16:10). This was around 2012. According to Mayan Elders, the year 2012 marked the end of *one age* and the beginning of *the next*, or the end of “*the times of the gentiles*” and the beginning of “*the times of Israel*”, the *first* being *last* to once again to obtain the knowledge of their LORD and His gospel in its fulness.

A Marvelous Work and a Wonder This fulness of light among the gathered House of Israel on this land (the Native Americans) is the result of God’s outpouring of His Spirit in the coming days (Joel 2) *and* the important work of the special last-days *servant*, known as the “branch” prophet, the “choice seer”, or the “one mighty and strong”. He will “set in order the house of God” taking *truth* and *light* to the Manasseh remnant and to *repentant Gentiles* who will receive him and his teachings in our day (see 3 Ne. 28:34). His work is God’s work in *recovering* Israel here – “*from their lost and fallen state*” a second time in our day! It *fulfills many covenant prophecies* in the Bible, especially those in *Isaiah* and *the Book of Mormon*. This is why Jesus commanded readers of the Book of Mormon “*to diligently search Isaiah*” (3 Ne. 23:1-3). It is “*the marvelous work and a wonder*” spoken of by Nephi in 1 Nephi 25:17, the blessed work of 1 Nephi 15:12-16. They will be brought to Christ their Redeemer, and then help *lost* but repentant Gentiles return to Him too in His pure way! In this way these people will “blossom as the rose” (see Bk of Comm. 52:21-26; D&C 49:24-25, 109:65; JD 15:282; 3 Ne. 21:22-26).

Jacob’s Family Tree As discussed earlier, *natural* birth order does not automatically grant *birthright* status in the kingdom of God on the earth. Joseph became Jacob’s *birthright* son, replacing the *firstborn* son Reuben because of his *sin* and because Joseph was favored by God, based on Joseph’s *character, righteousness, and choices* with the family *bloodline*. Joseph was Jacob’s 11th son, but was Rachel’s *firstborn* son. She was Jacob’s *favored* wife. Ishmael was not born of the favored wife of Abraham. This wife was not of the purer bloodline of the House of Israel like Sarah was. Reuben slept with Bilhah, Jacob’s 2nd wife, a handmaid to Leah (alternative stories suggest another reason, see their stories in scripture and commentaries on-line). And Jacob was tricked by into taking Leah as a wife *first*. Fourteen years later, Laban finally gave Rachel to him as a wife, his *favored* wife all along, the one God chose for him to bring for Joseph of Egypt and his two *favored* sons.

Jacob’s 2 wives (and their handmaidens) provided the 12 sons of the House of Israel.

Leah (oldest daughter of Laban, *first* wife via trickery of Laban) / Leah’s 6 sons are given below

Rachel (daughter of Laban, preferred wife of Jacob) / Her 2 sons are Joseph and Benjamin

Bilhah (*handmaid* Rachel, sister to Zilpah [according to Book of Jubilees])

Zilpah (*handmaid* of Leah, sister of Bilhah [according to Book of Jubilees])

Birth order of the 12 sons of Father Jacob

Jacob’s Favor Among His 4 Wives

1. **Reuben** via *Leah*

1. **Rachel**, Jacob’s *favored wife* / 2 sons

2. **Simeon** via *Leah*

2. Bilhah loved Jacob & became his *favored wife after Rachel’s death* / 2 sons

3. **Levi** via *Leah*

3. Leah was jealous of Jacob’s favor for Rachel / 6 sons - most

4. **Judah** via *Leah*

4. Zilpah was Leah’s handmaid / 2 sons

5. **Dan** via *Bilhah*

6. **Naphtali** via *Bilhah*

7. **Gad** *Zilpah*

8. **Asher** via *Zilpah*

9. **Issachar** via *Leah*

10. **Zebulon** via *Leah*

Dinah (daughter) via *Leah*, an 11th child, believed to be the mother of *Asenath* (with Shechem), Joseph’s wife.

Dinah’s child *Asenath* (thought to be illegitimate) may have been taken to Egypt, becoming the adopted daughter of Potiphar, priest at On.

11. **Joseph** via *Rachel* – the *favored* wife of Jacob and God - her *firstborn* son was Joseph (Jacob’s 11th son)

12. **Benjamin** via *Rachel*

Scriptures supportive of the topics of this endnote, include:

Who has Priesthood? *Gen. 9:18-27, 10:2-5, 12:1-4, 21:9-13, 22:18; Ex.4:22, 13:2, 12, 15; Lev. 18:7-8; Num. 18:15, 27:8-11; Judg. 11:1-2; 2 Sam. 7:12-16, 24, 29; Psalm 2:7-9, 89:27; Prov. 19:14; Luke 2:23; Gal. 3:8; Heb. 1:5; Rev. 1:5; JST Gen. 14; Moses 7:1, 6-8, 12, 22; Abra. 1:2-4; 2:8-11; Alma 13:1-12; 2 Nephi 3; D&C 28:2 & 5; 43:2-7; 84; 86:7-10; 107:16-17, 40-52; 110:12; 118:8.*

Who are the Gentiles? *Gen. 10:1-5; Deut 33:1-17, 2; Isa. 52:1; Luke 21:24; Romans 9:24-30, 10:11-21; Chap. 11; Eph. 3:1-11; Heb. 2:12-19; 7:1-17; Gal. 2:7-14; Rev. 7:4-8 (no Ephraim in 144,000); 1 Nephi 13:30-38; 15:7-20; 14:1-2; 19:24; 2 Nephi 15:1-2; Jacob 5:1-7; Mosiah 14:1; 3 Ne. 5:20-26; 15:11-17; 3 Ne. 21:11-24; The Words of Morm. 1:4-11; Ether 13:1-10; D&C 45:25-30, 109: 58-70; JHS 1:34-41*

Promised Land *west* as an Inheritance

Manasseh rising up in our Day

Nursing Fathers and Mothers

Birthright Revoked on the 1st born son Reuben

Law of the Favored Wife & Firstborn Son

2 Nephi 10:8, 10, 19, 20, 21; Ether 1 and 13.

1 Nephi 15:12-16; Jacob 3:3-6; Jacob 5 Allegory

Isaiah 49:23; 1 Nephi 21:22-23, 22:8; 2 Nephi 10:8-18

Gen. 35:22; 49:3-4; & 1 Chron. 5:1-3

Deut. 21:15-17 (law of *favored* wife status and their firstborn son)