

WIVES FOR THE SONS OF LEHI

(1 Nephi 2:7-39)

With respect to Ishmael's descendency there is nothing in the Book of Mormon explicitly identifying either Ishmael's or Zoram's lineage. We know plainly that Lemhi was through Joseph via Manasseh per 1 Nephi 5:16 and Alma 10:3. Despite the lack of any explicit statement, it is likely Ishmael is of the lineage of Ephraim.

Joseph Smith said that the record of Lemhi was contained on the 116 pages that were first translated and subsequently stolen, and of which an abridgement is given us in the first Book of Nephi, which is the record of Nephi individually, he himself being of the lineage of Manasseh; but that Ishmael was of the lineage of Ephraim, and that his sons married into Lehi's family, and Lehi's sons married Ishmael's daughters.

Ishmael had five daughters, besides two sons who had families of their own. God wanted Lehi's four sons and Zoram to have Ishmael's daughters for wives so they could rear families in the land of promise. So Nephi and his brothers went back to Jerusalem, and with the help of God, they were able to convince Ishmael and his family that they should go into the wilderness with them.

As they journeyed, Laman, Lemuel, and some of the children of Ishmael rebelled and wanted to return to Jerusalem. Nephi was sorry they did not trust God and tried hard to persuade them to have faith.

He said to Laman and Lemuel, "How is it that you have forgotten that you have seen an angel of the Lord"(v.16)? How is it that you have forgotten that the Lord is able to do all things...for the children of men"(v.17)? God has said if we are faithful, he will lead us to the land of promise.

Nephi pleaded with them, reminding them that surely Jerusalem would be destroyed and, if they went back to the city, they would die, too.

Laman and Lemuel became very angry with Nephi, and they bound him with cords and were going to leave him in the wilderness for the wild beasts to kill. Nephi prayed to God for strength to break the cords, which bound him. As he prayed, the cords were loosed from his hands and feet, and he went to Laman and Lemuel.

When they saw that Nephi had broken loose, they were very angry and were going to kill him; but one of Ishmael's daughters, her mother, and one of her brothers talked with them until they were sorry and begged Nephi to forgive them. He did, and told them they must pray to God for forgiveness, also.

So, Nephi, Sam, Laman, Lemuel, and Zoram each married one of Ishmael's daughters, and all were ready to follow God's commandments leading them to the Promised Land.

1. Why did they go back to Jerusalem?

2. Why did Lehi's sons need wives?