Last revised: 17 December 2009 © 2012 Gregorio Billikopf

Isaiah 3

Israel was warned and forewarned that she would be blessed if she did that which was right, and cursed if she did that which was evil in the sight of God. Now the Lord would take away her support, both in terms of food, rulers or any sort of strength, but also spiritually. When a person has the Spirit of the Lord, this is visible in that individual's countenance. While the wicked will not go without punishment, it shall be well with the righteous. The Lord will stand to plead the cause of the righteous. Women, like men, have been guilty of pride, and will suffer the consequences through shame.

VV. 1-8. The Lord, through His prophets, had warned and forewarned Judah and Ephraim that they ought to repent, and come unto Him. Here Isaiah speaks explicitly as to what was going to take place if Judah did not repent of her ways. Many of these prophecies have multiple fulfillments. One such former time fulfillment took place long after Isaiah's time, during the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. The Lord would not punish directly, but would do so by the hand of the enemies of Israel. "And the LORD sent against him [Jehoiakim] bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets" (2 Kings 24:2). The narration in 2 Kings 24-25 is particularly instructive here, as it shows the fulfillment of these verses from Isaiah, below, as well as of the prophets from the beginning. In Isaiah 3:1, we are told that Jerusalem would suffer great hunger: "At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged" (2 Kings 24:10). Next, in Isaiah 3:2-3, we find that Jerusalem's mighty would be removed: "And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land" (2 Kings 24:12, 14). Among those who were not carried away captive, Zedekiah was established king of Judah by the king of Babylon. Zedekiah rebelled against Babylon, but not out of zeal for the Lord. The people were once again exposed to the horrors of an extended siege that brought Jerusalem to the ground. "And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign ... that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about. And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land" (2 Kings 25:1-3). Zedekiah tried to escape but was soon found, his children were put to death before his eyes, and then Zedekiah's eyes were removed before he was carried captive to Babylon. The House of the Lord, Solomon's Temple, was burnt to the ground. What the inhabitants of Jerusalem thought would never happen took place. As spoiled children who had been repeatedly warned and entreated to no avail are shocked and surprised when the punishment comes, so did Jerusalem find herself. Gedaliah was made ruler over the small remnant that remained in the land, but he would be murdered so the people would remain in complete anarchy. Likewise, at the time of the Second Temple, Jerusalem would once again fall after the death of Christ, this time by Roman forces, around 70 AD. In the last days, Babylon—or the world—will entice men away from their true Stay and Staff, and those who answer to her seductive beckoning will be surprised to find out the eternal nature of the law of the harvest. Our only hope is to continually drink at the hands of the Savior, lest we be seduced also.

1 ¶ For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem, and from Judah, the stay and the staff, the whole ~~stay~~ staff of bread, and the whole stay of water—

For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem, and from Judah. The more literal translation of the Hebrew (𝔐) would be "For behold, Adonai Yahweh of Tzevaoth" that is, "For behold, the Lord Jehovah of Hosts." The Lord, He who rules the armies of heaven has decreed what would befall upon Jerusalem and Judah. ¶ *The stay and the staff, the whole staff of bread, and the whole stay of water*. Or rather: "…stay (מַשְׁעֵן) and staff (וּמַשְׁעֶנֶה), *the* whole staff or bread, and *the* whole stay of water." It is interesting to note here, that the Targum (𝔗) agrees with the Prophet

Joseph Smith, in keeping the parallelism between *stay* and *staff*. In Hebrew these words are the male and female versions of a word (מַשְׁעֵן) or root (שׁען) that means to lean on for support. The Aramaic expression is "…stay (סָמֵיך) and support (וְסָעֵיד), *the* whole stay of food and *the* whole support of drink."[1] The Aramaic roots for these words are סמך and סעד respectively, and mean to either give or obtain support, help, strength, and so on. *Spurrell's Old Testament* English translation (which is supposed to follow Boothroyd[2]) corresponds exactly with that of the Book of Mormon: "... [Every] stay and support: The entire staff of bread, And the entire stay of water." I say supposed, because the Kennicott-Boothroyd manuscript I have does not include variants, and other than its unpointed character, it matches the Masoretic Text (𝔐):

כי הנה האדון יהוה צבאות
מסיר מירושלם ומיהודה
משען ומשענה
כל משען לחם
וכל משען מים :

I am certainly anxious to find the authority Spurrel used for following the Targum (𝔗) and Book of Mormon. The Spanish RVA 1960 (but not other editions) also coincides more with the Book of Mormon and JST, than with the KJV: "... quita de Jerusalén y de Judá al sustentador y al fuerte, todo sustento de pan y todo socorro de agua" (doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah, the sustainer and the strong, the whole support of bread, and the whole succor of water). ¶ Such drought and famine would be in an excruciatingly literal form, whose horrors are beyond description; as would it be a spiritual drought and famine, whose devastating effects are even more painful. The Lord would take away Jerusalem's support in terms of food and shelter, military defense, and every semblance of dignity. Oh, how different this would be, than what was promised were Israel to keep the Law, and lean on her true stay and staff, even the Lord: "And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee" (Exodus 23:25). The extent of the physical hunger would lead men to revolting practices. Israel was warned and forewarned about what would take place: "And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied. And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat" (Leviticus 26:26-29). Such would be the desperate hunger. "And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee: [So that] the man [that is] tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave: So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all [things] secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates" (Deuteronomy 28:53-57). Here is but one such example, of the famine to be experienced by the people as a consequence of disobedience: "And it came to pass after this, that Benhadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was [sold] for fourscore [pieces] of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five [pieces] of silver. And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son tomorrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son. And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by

[1] Stenning, *The Targum of Isaiah*. Interestingly, some of the Targum manuscripts do not show this difference, and thus the translations based on these texts are here similar to the Authorized Version. The main Aramaic text (not the critical apparatus) reproduced by Stenning (although I am unable to reproduce the superlinear points), has: "סַמך וסעֵיד כל סַמך מֵיכָל וַכל סעֵיד מִשתֵי."

[2] Boothroyd, Benjamin. *Biblia Hebraica, or, the Hebrew scriptures of the Old Testament : without points, after the text of Kennicott, with the chief various readings, selected from his collation of Hebrew mss., from that of De Rossi, and from the ancient versions: accompanied with English notes, critical, philological, and explanatory*. There may be other Kennicott manuscripts that may include the Targum and Book of Mormon variation.

upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, [he had] sackcloth within upon his flesh" (2 Kings 6:24-30).[3] But this is not all, worse than physical support, the Lord would remove Himself from being Israel's spiritual support. In these verses one can sense the utter agony of being left alone, of having the Spirit depart: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it" (Amos 8:11-12). There seems to be a totality expressed here. Jerusalem and Judah would be left without being able to lean on the strength of man. This is one of the great messages of the Old Testament, that man should not lean on his own strength, nor the strength of kings, rulers, or military power, and certainly not on the strength of Egypt (the nation of Egypt used as a representative or type of man-made strength). Instead, Judah would be made to acknowledge her true strength, Yahweh. During the time period when I was working on this passage of Isaiah, I was meditating one morning while I was showering, on how much I loved prayer and the scriptures. "How could I begin to explain how important these things are in my life?" I asked myself. Then the sweet thought of the Spirit came to my mind, "They are your stay and your staff." A few days later I read, "The idea of eating, as a metaphor for receiving spiritual benefit, was familiar to Christ's hearers, and was as readily understood as our expressions of 'devouring a book,' or 'drinking in' instruction. In Isaiah 3:1, the words 'the whole stay of bread,' were explained by the Rabbis as referring to their own teaching (*Chagiga*), and they laid it down as a rule, that wherever, in Ecclesiastes, allusion was made to food or drink, it meant study of the law, and the practice of good works (Midrash, *Koheleth*). It was a saying among them — 'In the time of the Messiah the Israelites will be fed by Him' (*Sanhedrim*). Nothing was more common in the schools and synagogues than the phrases of eating and drinking, in a metaphorical sense. 'Messiah is not likely to come to Israel,' said Hillel, 'for they have already eaten Him' — that is, greedily, received His words (Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb*.) — 'in the days of Hezekiah.' A current conventionalism in the synagogues was that the just would 'eat the Shechinah.'[4] It was peculiar to the Jews to be taught in such metaphorical language. Their Rabbis never spoke in plain words, and it is expressly said that Jesus submitted to the popular taste, for 'without a parable spake he not unto them' (Mark 4:34)."[5] We also have examples of prophets being asked to *eat the scriptures* in a literal way: "And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness" (Ezekiel 3:3); and "And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter" (Revelation 10:9-10).

---

2 The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient;

When used to describe man, these terms touch on his pride. "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches" (Jeremiah 9:23). ¶ *The mighty man*. The man who is strong, by virtue of wealth, intellect, valor, physical strength, power, or any other admired trait. ¶ *And the man of war*. A military man, or man of physical prowess. ¶ *The judge, and the prophet*. Those who judge and guide the people in their temporal of spiritual affairs. The allusion is to the false prophet. ¶ *And the prudent*. Barnes, following Vitringa, suggests that the prudent referred to a false prophet to whom people went for advice, and that the word eventually took on the meaning of a wise person. The word is based on the Hebrew קָסַם, and refers to the wicked profession of witchcraft, often translated as *diviner, soothsayer* or *augur*. ¶ *And the ancient*. Those who have lived long and especially in the eastern cultures are looked up to for their wisdom.

---

3 The captain of fifty, and the honourable˘ man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.˘ ˘

---

[3] No less horrible was the famine experienced at the time when Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans. See, for instance, the account found in Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book VI, Chapter 3:4).

[4] Transliteration of the non-Biblical Hebrew word שְׁכִינָה, from the root שׁכן meaning, "to dwell" or "reside", and often used for the *Divine Presence of the Lord* (ISBE, Holman, Jastrow).

[5] Geike, Cunningham. *Life and Words of Christ.* Revised Edition, Volume II, 1896, p. 184.

✔ a man eminent in countenance
✔ ✔ or, skilful of speech

The captain of fifty. Perhaps the most famous captains of fifty in the scriptures are the three who were sent by Ahaziah, king of Samaria, to capture Elijah. Elijah called upon them fire from heaven to consume the first two captains along with their fifty soldiers. While the first captain of fifty was probably overconfident, the last humbled himself, and entreated Elijah to follow him back to the king's presence (2 Kings 1:1-16). A captain of fifty is a man accustomed to give orders and to be obeyed.[6] ¶ *And the honourable man*. An honorable man would be any man of importance. Literally in Hebrew, וּנְשׂוּא פָנִים, "and the exalted of face" (Green), and "elevated countenance" (Barnes). ¶ *And the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator*. In the scriptures, counselors often take on a very high role, often as secretaries of state. *Artificer* is a craftsman. A *cunning artificer*, then, is a skilled craftsman, such as a master in working metal: "... an instructer of every artificer in brass and iron" (Genesis 4:22b). An *orator* is a public speaker, and *eloquent* means, a person who speaks with power, in a convincing manner. The Hebrew word לָחַשׁ means charmer, enchanter or magician. Barns points out that this same word was used in v. 20 to represent an amulet. "It is applied to the charm of the serpent—the secret breathing or gentle noise by which the charm is supposed to be effected" (Barnes). Kay, referring to the great orator, says: "Probably, the man who abused the power which his oratory gave him over men; and who, instead of instructing them, led them about at will, as if they were fascinated." CES educators are often warned about being lifted up in pride based on skillful teaching ability. A person who is blessed with a strong and powerful testimony of Christ, and the ability to speak well, needs to be ever vigilant to build to the Lord and not unto himself. One of the Brethren warned that those in Church leadership, likewise, should never put themselves between the members and God. Each individual has the opportunity and obligation to go directly to the *well of living water* through prayer. Any time persons who have been given a gift forget the purpose of that gift, it could be said "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" (Isaiah 5:21). It could then be said that such a person has crossed the line from a powerful testifier of Christ to a charmer and enchanter. When such a thing happens, the Spirit is grieved. Lowth points out that these verses (vv. 2-3) would be fulfilled at the time King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took captive the mighty and strong of Judah, as recorded in 2 Kings 24:14.

---

4 And I will give children unto them [to be] their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

Children would be left holding the monarchy in Judah. Kings, instead of being blessed with a long life, would be cut off leaving their children, even babes, as the next king. In some instances in the Bible, we hear the date when a person began to rein, but sometimes these dates involved co-regency with their father. Nevertheless, there were plenty of instances when a child came to the throne alone, after the death of the monarch. In Ecclesiastes we read, "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child ..." (Ecclesiastes 10:16). An early example of the folly of youth, was that of Solomon's son, Rehoboam. The people complained to the new king, that his father Solomon had made their burdens too heavy. If Rehoboam would lighten their load, they would serve him. The one wise move that Rehoboam made was to ask for more time before making a decision. King Rehoboam went first to the older men, who gave wise counsel, and suggested that the king lighten the burdens of the people. Then the king went to ask advice from the young people, "And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions" (1 Kings 12:10-11). As a result of forsaking the counsel of the older men, the Northern Kingdom or Israel, rebelled against Judah. (1 Kings 12:1-19). This is not to say that older is wiser, of course, as only the person who truly leans upon the Lord to do His will is wise. The Lord often chose the youngest child over an older one, "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). The Hebrew for babes, תַּעֲלוּלִים, has several meanings, including *capricious, wanton* (i.e., unrestrained), and *childish*.

[6] Much like the centurion, then, who pleaded with Jesus to heal his servant, and that only a word from the Savior was necessary, rather than His actual presence. The centurion sent a message to Jesus rather than coming in person: "Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it" (Luke 7:7-8).

5 And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.

And the people shall be oppressed. What does oppression mean? The exploitation and taking advantage of another person. This includes the person who takes advantage of the farm worker and the poor, to steal from them or to pay them a pittance. "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates" (Deuteronomy 24:14). My parents were always concerned for the poor and taught this to me. As a young man, at our farm in Chile, one of the farm workers told me that he appreciated the respect that I showed the workers, and that I had not demanded their daughters, to take them to myself. The implication was that there were men of power who would set their eyes upon the virgin daughters of the workers, do with them as they wished, and then discard them after satiating their carnal desire. I do not want to give the idea that this practice was the norm among farm owners, but it must have happened, as it did among those who in the history of the world owned slaves. The people in Judah, even her poor, then, would suffer oppression. This oppression would not only come from foreign invaders, or from the mighty within the land, but from within. ¶ *Every one by another, and every one by his neighbor*. Such a state of oppression would be so terrible, that hardly anyone would escape. ¶ *The child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient*. Among many cultures, especially those that value community over individualism, there is much respect shown to its older members. Certainly, we are living in a time where respect for one's elders is at a low point. The Law made it clear that man should honor his parents and his elders. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12) and "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, [7] and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:32). How about Abraham, who rebelled against his own father? I have heard it said, that the best way to honor your parents, is to honor the Lord. The Savior said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37). ¶ *And the base against the honorable*. It is not uncommon for people to use foul and degrading language without regard for who is present. This is an example of this negative behavior.

6 When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, and ~~[saying],~~ shall say: Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and [let] not this ruin ~~[be]~~ come under thy hand—

When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father… be thou our ruler. Lowth suggests that perhaps the brother would have some primogeniture over the family in order to become its *ruler* (קָצִין) or *head* (רֹאשׁ). "The case seems to require, that the man should apply to a person of some sort of rank and eminence; one that was the *head* of his father's house" (Lowth). This might be particularly true in those cases where the father had died and perhaps the oldest refused the responsibility of leadership (Ludlow). Henry suggests, "Whereas, commonly, men are not willing that their equals should be their superiors," here they entreat a brother to do just that. ¶ *Take hold.* In terms of taking hold, Lowth translates, "Take by the garment," and explains, "That is, shall entreat him in an humble and supplicating manner" as in Zechariah 8:23, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." ¶ *And shall say: Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler*. The clothing, שִׂמְלָה, referred to here is a large outer mantle, sometimes used as a bed covering (BDG, Gesenius, AHCL, Holladay). Perhaps it was very much like a Chilean *manta*, except a *manta* is often made out of sheep wool and is a heavy warm covering, which is worn like a *poncho*, with a slit through the center, and which also can play the role of a blanket for sleeping. Commentators debate as to whether this mantle was intended to be a sign of wealth, or rather, quite the opposite. ¶ *And let not this ruin come under thy hand*. This statement seems to indicate that by taking leadership in this harsh and extreme environment, the brother may be able to help the family save face and honor. Otherwise, the brother would be responsible for the impending ruin.

7 In that day shall he swear,˘ saying: I will not be a~~n~~ healer;˘ ˘for in my house there

[7] Gray or white haired.

[is] neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people.

✔ lift up the hand

✔ ✔ binder up

Despite the desperate pleading that he take on the leadership of the larger family circle, the man so approached utterly refused, on the ground that he did not have enough to even feed or clothe his immediate family. ¶ יִשָּׂא בַיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר *In that day shall he swear, saying*. The expression בַּיּוֹם "in that day" has reference to future events. The Hebrew text (𝔐) has the words *lift up*, and the margin provides the ellipsis, *lift up the hand*. To swear means to utter an *oath*. In ancient days an oath was of such great power, that a man would not think of breaking it. Such was the case, for instance, between Nephi and Zoram, Laban's servant. "And it came to pass that I spake with him," Nephi explained, "that if he would hearken unto my words, *as the Lord liveth, and as I live*, even so that if he would hearken unto our words, we would spare his life. And I spake unto him, *even with an oath*, that he need not fear; that he should be a free man like unto us if he would go down in the wilderness with us" (1 Nephi 4:31-32, emphasis added). Zoram, as a result, believed he would indeed be safe. "And it came to pass that when Zoram had made an oath unto us, our fears did cease concerning him" (1 Nephi 4:37). Zoram had multiple occasions to escape, but did not, because of this oath. The literal Hebrew word is יִשָּׂא. It means, to *lift up*, as in lift up the hand to make an oath, as found in the margin. SOT follows the margin, "Then he shall raise *his hand* in that day &c." Matthew Henry explains: "He *shall swear* (shall lift up the hand, the ancient ceremony used in taking an oath)." Other instances in the scriptures that we find relating to raising the hand in an oath include "put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness" (Exodus 23:1b), "And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth" (Exodus 14:22). The RV closes the ellipsis with "lift up *his voice*." Ebenezer Henderson suggests that in this case it is more likely to involve a mere raising of the *voice* (קוֹל), rather than the ceremonial swearing with the uplifted *hand* (יָד). So it is that Henderson explains: "After יִשָּׂא, supply קוֹל, or קוֹלוֹ; a much more natural filling up of the ellipsis than יָד, since swearing seems here to be out of the question." Henderson may well be right in saying that a lifting of the voice was involved. But it is just as likely that swearing—as indicated in the King James Version—could have taken place. Some people have the habit of accompanying their statements with the emphasis of a swearing—often false swearing or an expletive. This is especially true when a person is moved by fear, as the context of this verse makes clear. Such false swearing was quite common in ancient times, at the time of Isaiah. "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not" (Jeremiah 7:9). Isaiah could also see our times. ¶ *I will not be a healer*. In contrast to such refusal to serve, the Savior offered Himself to be our healer. "And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me" (Abraham 3:27). See notes on Isaiah 6:8. ¶ *For in my house there is neither bread nor clothing. Make me not a ruler of the people*. Such a brother being asked to be a leader explained that he could not solve the family's problems, for he was not any better off, in terms of food and raiment, than those who wished him to take charge. The rich in the East were expected to have food and raiment to give as gifts to their guests. "This explains the meaning of the excuse made by him that is desired to undertake the government: he alleges, that he has not wherewithal to support the dignity of the station, by such acts of liberality and hospitality as the law of custom required of persons of superior rank" (Lowth).

---

8 For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen, because their tongues and their doings ~~[are]~~ have been against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.

For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen. Jerusalem, as the capital of Judah would be ruined. For the Jews at that time when this prophesy was uttered, such a comment was pure blasphemy, and would enrage them with anger. The people of Jerusalem believed that the Lord would protect Jerusalem and her Temple, and that she would never fall. ¶ *Because their tongues and their doings have been against the LORD*. It was because the people of Judah and Jerusalem had set their words and their deeds against the Lord that punishment would befall them. They had forgotten the advice of the Psalmist, "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it." (Psalms 34:13-14). ¶ *To provoke the eyes*[8] *of his glory*. The Lord sees all, and nothing is

---

[8] A great number of commentators have attempted to explain away that the Lord could have eyes, a physical trait, to go along with their beliefs regarding God's incorporeality. Delitzsch, for instance, goes on to say that the Hebrew does not support such a vague notion of the eyes being just an abstract quality, and goes on to compare it with the statement, "the arm of glory." After having so argued, however, Delitzsch rejects the anthropomorphism by stating that it is man who

kept from Him. The eyes of His glory have been provoked by the wickedness of man's behavior.

---

vv. 9-15. Men's countenances stand as a witness that they have lost the spirit and have given themselves to doing evil. The wicked shall receive a just punishment. Those who rule over the people will lead them astray. They have been the first to abuse the poor. Nevertheless, it shall be well to the righteous, and the Lord will stand up to plead the cause of the righteous.

---

9 ¶ The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and ~~they~~ doth declare their sin to be even as Sodom, and they cannot hide [it] ~~not~~. Woe unto their souls! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

The shew of their countenance doth witness against them. Some people seem to glow with the light of Christ that is within them. At the May 2000, Stockton, California, regional priesthood leadership conference President Faust spoke about the Jerusalem Center and about the agreement not to proselyte in Israel. Someone observed that he had confidence that the Church would abide the agreement not to proselyte, but then asked, "But what will you do about the light in the eyes of your young people!" President David O. McKay said: "Every person radiates what he or she really is ... it is what we are and what we *radiate* that affects the people around us." [9] President McKay spoke often of this subject: "If we think noble thoughts, if we encourage and cherish noble aspirations, there will be that radiation when we meet people, especially when we associate with them. Every man, every person radiates what he or she is. Every person is a recipient of radiation. The Savior was conscious of this fact. Whenever he came into the presence of an individual, he sensed that radiation… Christ was ever conscious of the radiation from the individual, and, to a degree, so are you, and so am I. It is what we are and what we radiate that affects the people around us."[10] Elder Bruce R. McConkie, speaking along the same lines as President McKay, explained: "In a real though figurative sense, the book of life is the record of the acts of men as such record is written in their own bodies. It is the record engraven on the very bones, sinews, and flesh of the mortal body. That is, every thought, word and deed has an effect on the human body; all these leave their marks, marks which can be read by Him who is Eternal as easily as the words in a book can be read. By obedience to telestial law men obtain telestial bodies; terrestrial law leads to terrestrial bodies; and conformity to celestial law—because this law includes the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost—results in the creation of a body which is clean, pure, and spotless, a celestial body. When the book of life is opened in the day of judgment, men's bodies will show what law they have lived. The Great Judge will then read the record of the book of their lives; the account of their obedience or disobedience will be written in their bodies. Literally, it is the record kept in heaven of the names and righteous deeds of the faithful."[11] Alma asked people to consider their level of conversion: "Have ye received his image in your countenances?" (Alma 5:14b) In this verse of Isaiah, we are not speaking about the countenance of righteousness, but that of sin. "Two weeks ago our stake president attended a training session with President Packer," explains Reed Hopper, a friend who shared some pertinent thoughts on this topic. "President Packer said he could tell more about the saints by looking at faces during a meeting than by all the reports he could ever read. By way of example he mentioned he was visiting a stake once when he noticed a man enter the chapel. President Packer said he asked the stake president if he knew the man. The stake president said he didn't but President Packer suggested he get to know this man because he could tell from his countenance there was 'something wrong.' President Packer was informed by the stake president some time later that he learned the man was involved in serious transgression." My friend also shared some experiences he has had. "When I served as bishop, I could often see a darkness around the faces of those who were drifting in the Church or who were having deep spiritual problems. But, on the positive side of this principle, my daughter (Anna Hopper) said she spoke with a silver smith on her mission who told her that he could always tell when the silver he worked with was refined because he could see his image in it. The purer the silver, the clearer the image. This is how the Lord knows when we have been purified; when he sees his image in our countenances."[12] ¶ *And doth declare their sin to be even as Sodom*. "... the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly" (Genesis 13:3), whose "sin is very grievous" (Genesis 18:20b). Elder Neal A. Maxwell wrote: "In the societies of Sodom and Gomorrah there was rampant sexual immorality; there was also inordinate pride, idleness, and a neglect of the

---

is limited to thinking of God in such anthropomorphic terms. See ISAIAH 6:1.

[9] David O. McKay, Man May Know for Himself, p. 108, in OT Student Manual, p. 140.

[10] President David O. McKay, General Conference Reports, 1 April 1969.

[11] *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 97.

[12] President Reed Hopper serves as a counselor in the Davis, California Stake. Personal communication, November 2000.

poor and the needy. (Ezekiel 16:48–50.)[13] A haughty attitude towards God (who had given strict counsel on the need to care for the poor) led to the neglect of the poor and needy."[14] President Harold B. Lee taught: "I want to warn this great body of priesthood against that great sin of Sodom and Gomorrah … I speak of the sin of adultery, which, as you know, was the name used by the Master as He referred to unlicensed sexual sins of fornication as well as adultery; and besides this, the equally grievous sin of homosexuality, which seems to be gaining momentum with social acceptance in the Babylon of the world, of which Church members must not be a part."[15] Reed Hopper added: "Comparing wicked Jerusalem to wicked Sodom is a helpful metaphor because it reinforces the message that sin is to have an 'unnatural affection' for the things of the world as opposed to the things of God … the ultimate point is that the sins of Jerusalem are as pervasive as Sodom and therefore Jerusalem, like Sodom, would reap destruction. When grievous sin becomes socially acceptable, even institutional, there is no escaping the Judgment of God."[16] This same sort of thing took place in Book of Mormon times: "But behold, this people had rejected every word of God, and they were ripe in iniquity; and the fulness of the wrath of God was upon them" (1 Nephi 17:35, also see ISAIAH 6:12-13, in terms of consequences to be suffered by Israel). ¶ *And they cannot hide it*. As mentioned, our countenances show who we are, and we cannot hide it. Some decide to openly flaunt their defiance towards God. ¶ *Woe unto their souls! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves*. In Galatians 6:8 we read the law of the harvest: "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

---

10 Say ~~ye~~ unto the righteous, that [it ~~shall be~~] is well [with ~~him~~] them; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

Say unto the righteous. Any righteousness comes through the *Branch of Righteousness* (Jeremiah 33:15), even the Holy One of Israel, "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (1 John 2:29). ¶ *That it is well with them*. Anyone who has tasted of the fruit of the tree of life and who has been *filled* with *exceedingly great joy*, understands that the blessings to be tasted by the righteous person who endures to the end, will be exceedingly desirable. "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth." (Proverbs 10:28, 30). Furthermore, "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Malachi 3:16-18). ¶ *For they shall eat the fruit of their doings*. Once again, an allusion to the law of the harvest. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Revelations 22:11). Nevertheless, at that day none will be able to be made clean on his or her own merits, but only through Christ Jesus. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:50-55).

---

11 Woe unto the wicked! ~~[it shall be] ill [with him]~~ for they shall perish; for the reward of ~~his~~ their hands shall be ~~given~~ ✔ ~~him~~ upon them.

✔ done to

Woe unto the wicked! for they shall perish. At the second coming the wicked shall melt as fat or wax melts before a consuming fire: "But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away" (Psalms 37:20), and "... as wax melteth

---

[13] "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good." Ezekiel 16:48-50.

[14] Sermons Not Spoken, p. 37, in Maxwell, Cory H., ed. *The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1997.

[15] Lee, Harold B. *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*. Edited by Clyde J. Williams. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1996, p. 233.

[16] Reed Hopper, personal communication, November 2000.

before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God" (Psalms 68:2b). ¶ *For the reward of their hands shall be upon them*. This statement is parallel to that of the law of the harvest in verse 11, "for they shall eat the fruit of their doings" except that here it applies to harvest that can be expected by those who have done evil. Moses said, "For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands" (Deuteronomy 31:29).

---

12 And [as for] my people, children [are] their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they ~~which~~ who lead˘ ˘thee cause [thee] to err and destroy˘ the way of thy paths.

✔ or, call thee blessed

✔ ✔ swallow up

And as for my people, children are their oppressors. Part of the poetic form includes emphasis by repetition. As mentioned in verse 4, children would reign over Judah. A great number of commentators feel that the youth spoken about in this verse may also deal with a childish personality, besides that of young age. Hopper opines, "The term 'children' seems to me to be a metaphor for the weak of this world. It shows the utter abasement of Israel that they would be conquered and enslaved (that is oppressed) by such. To be ruled by women suggests to my mind that Israel would become subject to those who have no right of authority over the Lord's people. Because they have broken the Lord's covenants, the Lord will say amen to Israel's priesthood and set others as rulers over the people. 'Women,' or those without divine investiture, will rule because the men of God have abdicated their role, much like the brother in v. 7 who refuses to lead because he has no bread or clothes to satisfy his office as head of his clan. Taken as a whole, the verse seems to paint a picture of a world turned upside down. Israel would be dominated by the weak rather than the strong; Israel would be ruled by usurpers rather than those appointed of God; and, Israel's leaders would take the people down forbidden paths rather than guide them in the way of the Lord."[17] ¶ *And women rule over them*.
Some exegetes (e.g., Cheyne, Barnes) suggest that Judah's rulers would be powerless or effeminate in their leadership. An example of a wicked woman ruling over Judah was that of Athaliah, who was a follower of Baal. Perhaps, Isaiah was speaking of the *family unit*, parallel with v. 6. In this case, *women rule over them* because men will no longer be the head of households by either death (vv. 24-25, 27) or the disintegration of the family. Certainly we are living at a time when there are a unprecedented number of women who are single heads of the home. We know that children are most blessed when they live in a home with the benefit of both a loving father and mother. Alternative translations of this passage retain the word women in both the Syriac (𝔖) "The princes shall pluck my people out, and women shall rule over them" and Vulgate (𝔙). "populum meum exactores sui spoliaverunt et mulieres dominatae…" (or, its English translation, as found in the Douay, "As for my people, their oppressors have stripped them, and women have ruled over them."). The LXX (𝔊) and the Targum (𝔗) have the word usurer (or extortioner, creditor) for the word woman.[18] "O my people, your exactors strip you, and extortioners rule over you" (𝔊); and "As for my people, their oppressors plunder them, as those who glean the vineyard; and as usurers they rule over them" (𝔗). Such a translation might represent an allusion to the foreign rule that would soon be established. Usurers or money lenders, as well as tax collectors or publicans as they were often called in the New Testament, were not looked upon kindly by the general population. To have these rule over the people would be considered a great punishment. ¶ *O my people*. As we saw in Isaiah 1:3, עַמִּי, or *my people*, is a frequent and tender call or lamentation used by the Lord in the prophets to refer to his covenant relationship with Israel. ¶ *They who lead thee cause thee to err and destroy the way of thy paths*. When a path is destroyed, then people do not know the way anymore, and can more easily be deceived. The Lord lamented as he could see the people walking down the wrong path, as in the vision seen by Lehi and Nephi. What was worse, those who should have known better were their leaders in doing that which was wrong in the sight of God. One of the themes of the Old Testament is to show the importance of following the living prophets who will tell us what we need to know rather than what we want to hear. The LXX (𝔊) translates this portion of the verse as "O my people, they that pronounce you blessed lead you astray, and pervert the path of your feet." The KJV margin agrees with the 𝔊, and renders the passage, "O my people, they which *call thee blessed*" (emphasis added). In other words, the false prophets spoke well

---

[17] Reed Hopper, personal communication, November 2000.

[18] Stenning, on page xvii, provides a table contrasting some words presupposed by the Targum (𝔗) in contrast to the Masoretic text (𝔐). This table shows some differences in consonants between 𝔐 and 𝔗, so it is presupposed that the present 𝔗 reading הָוְבָא was based on וְנֹשִׁים or וְנֹשְׁאִים (and creditors—based on נשך to lend with usury, Gesenius, DBD, HAL, Jastrow) differently pointed than the 𝔐, וְנָשִׁים (and women).

about those who hired them. A notable example is that of Ahab, King of Israel, who asked for the support of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, in order to go out to battle against Syria. All the false prophets spoke in Ahab's favor, and provided false blessings upon his head. Jehoshaphat asked if Ahab had *inquired of the Lord*. Ahab answered, "There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil" (1 Kings 22:6). Ahab ended up consulting Micaiah, but did not heed his counsel, to the cost of his own life (1 Kings 22:1-40).

13 The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.

The LORD standeth up to plead. We seem to have been transported to a court room. There is a great flow of power in this verse, as we picture our Savior who has been sitting, now walking up to the bar. What will the Lord plead? Is the Savior ready to accuse or to defend? Numerous modern translations tend to the former interpretation, and read closely to the NJB, "Yahweh has risen to accuse, is standing to pass judgment on the people." Others tend closer to the KJV: "Yahweh has taken his station to plead" (EB), and "The Lord stands up to plead a cause, He rises to champion peoples" (Tanakh). Certainly an accusatory interpretation fits in with the verses that follow, but I am of the opinion that it is the Lord's mercies towards those who have tried to do right and have confessed the Christ who are mentioned first; that the Lord is pleading the cause as the Mediator of the Covenant: "Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified: Wherefore, Father, spare my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life" (D&C 45:4-5). Also see notes on Isaiah 1:18. ¶ *And standeth to judge the people*. In the LXX (𝔊), *his* people. "But now the Lord will stand up for judgment, and will enter into judgment with his people." The *Keeper of the Gate*, our Savior, will be our judge. See notes on Isaiah 2:4. In the Psalms we hear, "O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah"[19] (Psalms 67:4).

14 The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof; for ye have eaten ˇup the vineyard; and the spoil of the poor [is] in your houses.

✔ or, burnt

The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof. The Syriac (𝔖), Targum (𝔗) and LXX (𝔊) use *elders* for *ancients*. In the early history of Israel, elders were the rulers and spiritual leaders of their clans and tribes (Holman). After Yahweh appeared to Moses, he was commanded to go to the elders and share these things with them, "Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, ..." (Exodus 3:16). The Lord will make accountable both the spiritual teachers as well as the political rulers. ¶ *For ye have eaten up the vineyard*. Delitzsch suggests that the vineyard is a representation of the people (see also Isaiah 5:1 ff.). Ibn Ezra thinks it an allusion to Israel or the people of the Lord. Ibn Ezra also suggests we look at Exodus 22:5, where we see the consequences required for destroying another man's vineyard through neglect (in this case, having animals graze in the vineyard): "If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution." These words are of special interest when we consider the Targum (𝔗) and LXX (𝔊), both of which still have the Lord speaking. The 𝔊 has "my vineyard" (ἀμπελῶνά μου). Instead of a vineyard, the 𝔗[20] has: "You have robbed *my people* (emphasis added, עַמִּי)." Gill suggests that His people and his vineyard are synonymous. The LXX (𝔊) and Syriac (𝔖) imply a burning the vineyard, instead of the "eaten up" of the KJV, or *devoured* or *ravaged* often used in other translations of the Masoretic text (𝔐). In the Law, the Lord made it perfectly clear that part of the crop should be left in the field un-harvested for the poor to eat: "And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:10). This commandment was repeated with no less strength in Deuteronomy: "When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow" (Deuteronomy 24:21). This verse seems to say that the greed of the grape growers was such that they had left nothing behind for the poor, the stranger, the widow or the fatherless to eat. ¶ *And the spoil of the poor is in your houses*. Hardly a

[19] Selah or סֶלָה, used frequently in the Psalms, may be a musical direction, perhaps calling for a pause or the raising of the voice. (AHCL)

[20] Here, 𝔗, Chilton translation. Also see CAL, Gill and Stenning.

greater accusatory evidence can be found against a thief, than to find those things that have been stolen in his home. Such was the accusation against the well off; the spoil of the poor was to be found in their homes. Yet another way to look at this clause is that it is upon the sweat and exploitation of the poor that many of the rich have constructed their mansions and beautiful homes.

---

15 What mean ye? ~~[that]~~ Ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor~~?~~, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

What mean ye? Perhaps, "What do you think you are doing?" Tanakh translates as "How dare you ...." ¶ *Ye beat my people to pieces.* Several translations (NRSV, REB, NAB, NJB, Tanakh, EB, Green) use "crush" instead of "beat my people to pieces." The poetic aspect of the word crush reminds us of the grape harvest, once again. ¶ *And grind the faces of the poor, saith the Lord GOD of hosts*. To grind the faces of the poor gives the impression of exploiting the poor through oppressive work. The Syriac (ܣ) and LXX (𝔊) use to "shame the face(s) of the poor." This implies depriving the poor of dignity and respect. The face is where many of our emotions of joy, satisfaction, affection, embarrassment, shame, and so on are manifested. The word *face* can be used in psychological terms related to *saving* and *giving* face. We engage in saving face activities when we act in such a way that we promote a positive self image of ourselves to others, particularly after we have done something that may make us look foolish in the sight of others. People are often careful to protect their guests from embarrassment. In societies where there are very pronounced class differences, there are often servants and others whose faces are trampled on continually, as if they had no feelings whatsoever. In a study of farm worker feelings (1999) I found that workers highly valued being treated with dignity and respect by their supervisors and farm employers. President Harold B. Lee taught that the purpose of the Church welfare system is to "lift [the poor] to a point of independence," lest the Church be accused in the welfare program of 'grinding down the faces of the poor.'"[21] I suspect that President Lee was concerned that the welfare system help the poor retain a sense of dignity and independence. Regarding the expression, grinding the faces (פָּנִי) of the poor, Barnes has, "This is an expression also denoting great oppression. It is taken from the act of grinding a substance on a stone until it is worn away and nothing is left. So, by their cruel exactions, by their injustice to the poor, they exhausted their little property until nothing was left. The word *faces* here is synonymous with *persons*—or with the poor themselves."

---

vv. 16-27. The pride of the women shall be turned to shame, as they also are guilty.

---

16 ¶ Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes,˘ walking and mincing˘ ˘ [as] they go, and making a tinkling with their feet—

✔ deceiving with their eyes

✔ ✔ tripping nicely

Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty. *Daughter of Zion* is another name for Jerusalem. While Isaiah begins speaking about the female inhabitants of Zion, when we arrive at verse 26, the allusion very strongly includes Jerusalem as a city, and what was to befall her. Haughty is another word for puffed up, conceited, vain, arrogant, lifted up in pride. The women of Zion, who ought to have been a model of piety, have given themselves to the things of the world. Many commentaries speak about what these attires may have consisted off, but much of it is conjecture. Without understanding the exact nature of the items, the general idea is all too clear. ¶ *And walk with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes*. These first two items refer to *body language*. Pride or haughtiness is most often shown by the way the head is held high through the unnatural extension of the neck, as well as by an affectation of the eyes as a result of such high head carriage. Such a look gives others the non-validating message, "You do not exist." ¶ *Walking and mincing as they go*. Webster defines mincing as "affectedly dainty or delicate." Perhaps a seductive sort of walk is intended. A number of commentators have suggested that the steps are short because there is a chain connecting both legs, and thus the length of the stride is so limited mechanically. ¶ *And making a tinkling with their feet*. Perhaps an ankle bracelet with little bells or pieces of metal that make sounds as the women walk. The Targum (𝔗) translates this last thought quite differently, "with their hair rolled up, and with their feet they excite *lust*." The LXX (𝔊) talks about them "drawing their garments in trains, and at the same time sporting with their feet." Perhaps it speaks of wearing their clothing shorter so their legs were exposed to view and provoking desire. The Syriac (ܣ) offers, "Making a tinkling with their feet, and thus provoking the Lord." Delitzsch explains that Moslem women in modern times

[21] Lee, Harold B. *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*. Edited by Clyde J. Williams. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1996. p. 315.

also used such fashions as the "coquettish tinklings, although they are forbidden by the Koran."

17 Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover˘ their secret parts.

✔ make naked

Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion. If the punishment was directly related to the previous verse, which may or not be the case, then the Targum's (𝔗) reference to how the women wore their hair may be in line. A woman's hair is something of beauty, certainly, and the Lord would strike at the very center of such beauty. One translator suggests that the scab is formed as a result of leprosy, "Therefore will my Lord smite with leprosy the crown of hair of the daughters of Zion" (EB). Others suggest that it is baldness that will afflict the women, "the Lord will smite with baldness the women of Zion" (REB), "the Lord will give Zion's daughters scabby heads, Yahweh will lay their foreheads bare" (NJB). ¶ *And the LORD will discover their secret parts*. Some versions continue with the previous theme, about exposing their baldness (e.g., NAS, NJB, NAB, REB, Douay). The EB talks about exposing the *shame* of the daughters of Zion. The NRSV is close to the KJV, "and the Lord will lay bare their secret parts." The SOT, "And Jehovah will expose her destitute of raiment." In Hosea we read: "Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born ..." (Hosea 2:3a). Lowth explains: "It was the barbarous custom of the conquerors of those time to strip their captives naked, and to make them travel in that condition, exposed to the inclemency of the weather; and, the worst of all, to the intolerable heat of the sun. But this to the women was the height of cruelty and indignity; and especially to such as these here described, who had indulged themselves in all manner of delicacies of living, and all the superfluities of ornamental dress; and even whose faces had hardly ever been exposed to the sight of man. This is always mentioned as the hardest part of lot of captives. Nahum, denouncing the fate of Nineveh, paints it in very strong colours:[22]" (Lowth). So, these women who were puffed up in pride would be brought down to shame. The world's view is well represented by two rules given as guides to employment arbitrators: 1) on the one hand the employer has a right to set dress standards that will "keep employees from being distracted by outlandish and overly revealing attire," but, on the other hand; 2) that such standards "must be reasonably attuned to contemporary mores and attitudes toward dress and grooming. As styles change, the standard may have to change."[23] Parents can do much to teach their children the Lord's way, and expect appropriate dress form them. An excellent guide is the pamphlet, *For the Strength of Youth*.

18 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of [their] tinkling ornaments, ~~[about their feet]~~, and ~~[their]~~ cauls,˘ and ~~[their]~~ round tires like the moon;

✔ or, net-works

In that day the Lord will take away. In a day that will come, in the future, the Lord will remove ... ¶ *The bravery*. The *bravery* spoken here is not that of courage, but rather, of *fine clothing* or *showy display* (Webster). The word is sometimes translated into English as finery, beauty, brilliancy and glory. In a sense, the word bravery, as we know it today, is correct, in that it also means bold or shameless. ¶ *Of their tinkling ornaments, and cauls, and round tires like the moon*. See notes under vv. 19-23, below.

18b ... and ~~[their]~~ cauls, and ~~[their]~~ round tires like the moon;
19 The chains˘ and the bracelets, and the mufflers;˘

✔ or, sweet balls

✔ ✔ or, spangled ornaments

20 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets,˘ and the ear-rings;

✔ houses of the soul

21 The rings, and nose jewels;
22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping-pins;
23 The glasses, and the fine linen, and ~~the~~ hoods, and the vails.

The Tanakh includes a footnote of interest: "Many of the articles named in vv. 18-24 cannot be identified with certainty." Nevertheless, just to give an idea of how they are translated, I will include the ASV

[22] "Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock" (Nahum 3:5-6).

[23] *Grievance Guide* (10th Edition), BNA Editorial Staff, The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., Washington D.C., p. 71. These suggestions can be found in earlier editions of this manual.

translation as well as the LXX (𝔊): "(18b) ...and the cauls, and the crescents; (19) the pendants, and the bracelets, and the mufflers; (20) the headtires, and the ankle chains, and the sashes, and the perfume-boxes, and the amulets; (21) the rings, and the nose-jewels; (22) the festival robes, and the mantles, and the shawls, and the satchels; (23) the hand-mirrors, and the fine linen, and the turbans, and the veils" (ASV). "(18b) ... the curls and the fringes, and the crescents, (19) and the chains, and the ornaments of their faces, (20) and the array of glorious ornaments, and the armlets, and the bracelets, and the wreathed work, and the finger-rings, and the ornaments for the right hand, (21) and the ear-rings, and the garments with scarlet borders, and the garments with purple grounds, and the shawls to be worn in the house, and the Spartan transparent dresses, and those made of fine linen, and the purple *ones*, and the scarlet *ones*, and the fine linen interwoven with gold and purple, and the light coverings for couches" (after v. 21, text does not mark paragraphs 22 and 23, LXX, 𝔊). It is interesting to see how fashions go in and out. While in the 1990s one could see women beginning to wear nose rings, "Actual nose rings are not represented in any of the ancient remains; and the use of them seems to be confined to very barbarous communities. Probably the 'nose jewels' here mentioned were ornaments depending from the forehead and touching the upper part of the nose" (Rawlinson). I only include this quote on the nose-jewels because it was such an impossible thing to imagine when the Pulpit commentary was written, that it may have affected the author's perceptions. Yet people today would have little trouble imagining that these nose-jewels may very well have been quite literal. So Lowth, for instance, says, "But it appears from many passages of Holy Scripture, that the phrase is to be literally and properly understood of nose-jewels, rings set with jewels hanging from the nostrils, as ear-rings from the ears, by holes bored to receive them. … This fashion, however strange it may appear to us, was formerly, and is still, common in many parts of the East, among women of all ranks." He refers us to Ezekiel and Proverbs: "I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head" (Ezekiel 16:11-12); "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion" (Proverbs 11:22). For illustrations on nose-jewels, see Barnes. Two extremes in dress weary the Lord: the dress that calls attention to riches and power, and the dress that belittles the person wearing it. The Lord has reiterated today the need for simplicity in dress: "And again, thou shalt not be proud in thy heart; let all thy garments be plain, and their beauty be the beauty of the work of thine own hands" (D&C 42:40). In terms of the daughters of Zion, it t is pleasing to the Lord when women do not forget their femininity as well as their modesty. These things have always been a concern, from Old Testament times, to the meridian of times, to today. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (1 Timothy 2:9-10). In Modern day Elder Richard G. Scott and President James E. Faust have, in General Conference, frequently addressed femininity's enduring importance. Men and women have distinct divine roles given to them. "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God" (Deuteronomy 22:5).[24]

---

[24] The responsibility for proper attire and appearance are not only those given to women. Men must dress appropriately, and wear a white shirt and a tie, especially when attending Church or involved in priesthood ordinances. As a new member of the Church, in the mid-1970s, in one of my first General Conferences I watched, I saw all these General Authorities, all dressed with a white shirt and a tie and clean shaven, and all Caucasian, and was for a brief moment had some negative feelings. When the first of these Brethren opened his mouth to speak, I was overcome by the Spirit, "these are Prophets, Seers and Revelators, these are the servants of the Lord." Now I am a man who wears a white shirt and tie to church! I love the Brethren, I want to emulate them, I want to emulate my Savior. When I wear a white shirt and tie, and a clean shaved face, to me it means that I sustain the Brethren, that I sustain my Stake President, that I sustain my Bishop. That I am willing to do what they ask of me, and accept whatever calling they give me. I realize that I will often fail, but I will keep trying. Surely, dress and facial hair are based on custom, these are not eternal principles, but as long as the Brethren dress this way, I will endeavor to do the same. That is what wearing a white shirt has come to symbolize to me. As a representative of the Savior, holding the Priesthood, I feel that I should so dress when I go out of my home to go home teaching, to go and give a blessing, or to extend a calling. Now a few words about nationality, ethnicity, and the like. Leaving my own beloved Chile was very traumatic to me, a decision forced on me by my earthly father as he had to make difficult choices on what he thought best for his family. I used to always wear a Chilean flag pin on my jacket lapel when I went to Church. About 15 years after I was baptized, however, I increasingly felt this was not pleasing to the Lord, and I stopped wearing my pin. I realize that now I am a Christian first, a follower of the Savior above all. I love the scripture, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). I love my beautiful country as much as ever, I give thanks that I was permitted to be born there, yet feel that there is simplicity and equality in being dressed in the plain Sunday dress, whose focal point is that white shirt. It is an honor for me to be a member of the Lord's Church and to be called a brother. It is as if I am willing to say *Amen* in response to the question: "Art thou a brother or brethren? I salute you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in token or remembrance of the everlasting covenant, in which covenant I receive you to fellowship, in a determination that is fixed, immovable, and unchangeable, to be your friend and brother through the grace of God in the bonds of love, to walk in all the commandments of God blameless, in thanksgiving, forever and ever. Amen" (D&C 88:133, also see v. 135).

24 And it shall come to pass, ~~[that]~~ instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle, a rent; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth; ~~[and]~~ burning instead of beauty.

And it shall come to pass, instead of sweet smell there shall be stink. Perfume is often part of what people wear to be attractive. Instead of smelling well, however, there will be a reeking stench. Such human odors can come from a number of factors, including poor oral hygiene, lack of proper washing of body or clothing, lack of deodorant, and disease. Often, these can be a consequence of extreme poverty and want. Another source of bad smell is that of a decomposing body. In the scriptures there is frequent mention of the type of putrid odors that will accompany the many dead in battles. For instance, "Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood" (Isaiah 34:3). ¶ *And instead of a girdle, a rent*. This verse is frequently translated where girdles or sashes on the one hand are replaced by a rope on the other. The חֲגוֹרָה as worn by women was not an undergarment, as the word "girdle" connotes in modern usage, but a valuable ornamented belt or sash like the Japanese *cobi*.[25] The word here used for rent (נִקְפָּה) in the KJV, means rather a rope or even something to tie prisoners or slaves. At the very least we have abject poverty, where women are using a rope to hold up their skirts. Continuing with the worst case scenario, where there is not death, there will be captivity, slavery, and the other horrors of war. The Targum (𝔗) has "in the place where they were binding the girdles, shall be marks of smiting," with an allusion to slavery and captivity. The Syriac (𝔖) has, "And instead of an ornamental girdle, a worker's apron." SOT translates as "the captive's rope." ¶ *And instead of well-set hair, baldness*. The NJB translates as: "Instead of hair elaborately dressed, a shaven scalp." The Syriac (𝔖) translates as "instead of curled hair, baldness." One of the indignities suffered by slaves, especially so for women, was shaving their scalps. Baldness can also be a side-effect of disease, such as radiation treatment for cancer patients, or those exposed to nuclear radiation. ¶ *And instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth*. A stomacher (פְּתִיגִיל) is a fancy evening gown or other expensive clothing of its type, while a sackcloth (שָׂק) is the material used in mourning, made from rough materials. The word in English and many other languages is pronounced the same as the Hebrew, namely, *sack*. ¶ *Burning instead of beauty*. Here כִּי in Hebrew stands for *burning,* or rather, *branding* (not to be confused the word *for*, or *because* we have seen before, the branding כִּי is a shortened version and comes from the root כָּוָה which stands for *burnt* or *scorched*).[26] Once again, we have the idea of slavery. An alternative translation—for manuscripts following the Dead Sea Scrolls (𝔔) text rather than the Masoretic text (𝔐)—is that of *shame*: "Instead of beauty, shame" (DSSB, 𝔔). Certainly, the idea of being branded as livestock would bring shame. ¶ Margalioth considers the *thesis and antithesis* of this verse, using the words *instead of / and instead of*, תַּחַת / וְתַחַת, "And it shall come to pass, that INSTEAD OF sweet smell there shall be stink; AND INSTEAD OF a girdle a rent; AND INSTEAD OF well set hair baldness; AND INSTEAD OF a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning INSTEAD OF beauty," and contrasts them to those in the second half of Isaiah. Whereas here in Isaiah 3 the comparison was of something good turned into something bad, the same words are inverted so that instead good there would be something better. While the KJV uses, "and for" whereas the Hebrew text (𝔐) is exactly that of Isaiah 3:24, וְתַחַת, so substituting *and instead of* in place of *and for* we then have: "For brass I will bring gold, AND INSTEAD OF iron I will bring silver, AND INSTEAD OF wood brass, AND INSTEAD OF stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness" (Isaiah 60:17). Furthermore, Margalioth points us to two other like verses (the JKV has *for* in place of תַּחַת so we make the same substitution as before: "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty INSTEAD OF ashes, the oil of joy INSTEAD OF mourning, the garment of praise INSTEAD OF the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified" (Isaiah 61:3); and "INSTEAD OF the thorn shall come up the fir tree, AND INSTEAD OF the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off" (Isaiah 55:13).

25 Thy men shall fall by the sword and thy mighty˘ in the war.

✔ might

Thy men shall fall by the sword. While women's beauty will now be gone as they are put to shame, men shall

[25] Harris, R. L., Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L., & Waltke, B. K. (1999, c1980). *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed.) (263). Chicago: Moody Press.

[26] AHCL.

not go without feeling the consequences of such horrible times. It is perhaps the stink of these men who fall by the sword that is mentioned in v. 24 above. Alternate translations include, "And thy most beautiful son whom thou lovest shall fall by the sword" (LXX, 𝔊), "Thy beautiful men shall be killed by the sword" (Targum, 𝔗) and "Your mighty men shall fall by the sword" (Syriac, 𝔖). ¶ *And thy mighty in the war*. The mighty are often thought of as invincible, even immortal. Yet, "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall" (Isaiah 40:30).

---

26 And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she ~~[being]~~ shall be desolate,˘ and shall sit upon the ground.

✔ cleansed, or emptied

While discussing verse 16 we noted that *Daughter of Zion* was another name for Jerusalem. Here, the allusion is to Jerusalem herself, along with all her inhabitants. ¶ *And her gates shall lament and mourn*. The gates spoken of hear are those of Jerusalem. This topic was a familiar mourning for Jeremiah: "Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish; they are black unto the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up" Jeremiah 14:2) and Lamentations: "Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars: her king and her princes are among the Gentiles: the law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the LORD" (Lamentations 2:9); "The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness" (Lamentations 1:4); and "The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem" (Lamentations 4:12). In Nahum we have, "Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women: the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars" (Nahum 3:13). These seem to speak of a time where all of Jerusalem, even her gates, will have been burnt, Jerusalem left desolate. The gates of the city were an important meeting place where the people could bring their challenges and controversies to be heard of judges, as well as wise and prudent men: "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment" (Deuteronomy 16:18); and "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land" (Proverbs 31:23). The gates were also a place where people gave thanks for the mercies of the Lord, "They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, even the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of his villages in Israel: then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates" (Judges 5:11); and "That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation" (Psalms 9:14). Now, instead of judgment and gratitude, there would be mourning, burning and desolation. ¶ *And she shall be desolate, and shall sit upon the ground*. The Prophet Jeremiah makes the bridge or connection between the city itself and her inhabitants: "The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, and keep silence: they have cast up dust upon their heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth: the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground" (Lamentations 2:10). The Psalmist expressed it so: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion" (Psalms 137:1). Babylon would, in a future day, suffer the same consequences that would be inflicted upon Jerusalem: "Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate" (Isaiah 47:1). Like Babylon, Israel had exalted herself, and would be brought down. While Babylon's punishment would be for ever, a remnant of Israel would be kept and brought forth. There is a curious Roman coin with a diagram of a Jewish woman sitting on the ground, mourning, and the word Judea. While this coin represents a later captivity, the custom of the Jews of mourning by sitting on the ground is preserved.[27]

---

27 {KJV: Isaiah 4:1}[28] ¶ AND in that day, seven women shall take hold of one man, saying: We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us˘ be called by thy name, to take away˘ ˘ our reproach.

---

[27] Snowden, James Ross, *Coins of the Bible*, Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1864, pp. 43 ff.

[28] Agreeing with the JST, Lowth says, "The division of the chapters has interrupted the Prophet's discourse, and broken it off almost in the midst of the sentence."

✔ thy name be called upon us
✔ ✔ or, take thou away
* KJV: This verse is first in Isaiah 4, JST and Masoretic text (𝔐) considers it as part of Ch. 3.

AND in that day, seven women shall take hold of one man, saying. So few men would be left upon the land, as a result of having fallen in war (vv. 24-25), that for each man there would be seven women. Ibn Ezra rather puts seven (שֶׁבַע) to mean "many," and explains that "this will happen in consequence of the death of the male persons in battle." The death in battle of Israelite men in former days was extensive. "For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers" (2 Chronicles 28:6). The death of men was to be such that Jeremiah would lament, "Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas" (Jeremiah 15:8a). The Psalmist says, that despite the blessings received from the hand of the Lord, "Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies: But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow. For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images" (Psalms 78:56-58). As a result, the Lord "...delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance. The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage" (Psalms 78:61-63). Besides the horror of warfare, the disintegration of the family is likely to also play a role in such modern day scenes. ¶ *We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel*. These women would offer to cook and provide for themselves in every way, contrary to the proper order of the Lord (Exodus 21:10), just so they could have children. ¶ *Only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach*. LDS understand that when the Lord told Adam, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Genesis 3:19a), that the principle of work would be one that was a blessing to man. Likewise, while women would bear children in sorrow,[29] that is, through suffering and pain, that children would nevertheless be a *blessing* to women. For women everywhere it has often been considered a disgrace not to bear children. Many of the verses in Isaiah are those of contrast. So it is with this one, where as Delitzsch points out that women of society are often pursued by a number of suitors, yet the tables would change so multiple women would be content to share one man. Rawlinson further suggests, "Among the Jews childlessness was a special reproach, because it took away all possibility of the woman being in the line of the Messiah's descent" (Rawlinson).

FIRST POSTED: 11 July 2000

---

[29] "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children" (Genesis 3:16b).