
Isaiah 5

ISAIAH 5 is divided into three distinct sections: (1) the allegory of the vineyard of “my beloved”; (2) a series of six “woes” directed to disobedient Israel, along with corresponding punishments; and (3) the establishment of a latter-day Ensign to which Israel will heed.

v. 1–7. The allegory of the vineyard is given as a warning that the Lord will follow up with the consequences outlined for disobedience as shown in *Rain in Due Season*. A choice vineyard was planted with great care and love, and yet it yielded worthless fruit. We are again transported to a court of law and judgment.

1 ¶ NOW AND then will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. ✓

✓ the horn of the son of oil

AND then will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved. The expression “my beloved” appears 24 times in the Song of Solomon, here in ISAIAH 5:1, and in Jeremiah 11:15. In our own Doctrine and Covenants, we also have an expression from the Song of Solomon: “clear as the moon, and fair as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners” (D&C 5:11b, see also 109:73).¹ Who is “my well-beloved” here in ISAIAH 5? He is the same as in “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17; and also see the allegory in Luke 20:9–16). It is Jesus the Christ. ¶ What does the expression “will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved” mean? The song appears to be sung by both the Father and the Son. The Father introduces the Son in verses 1–2. Then, in verses 3–6 it is the Great Jehovah or “my beloved” who speaks. Jesus speaks on behalf of both the Father and of Himself through the principle of Divine Investiture. Variations of this principle are accepted by other fellow Christians of other faiths: “The fact that the prophet speaks as if he were the beloved himself, shows at once who the beloved must be. The beloved of the prophet and the lover of the prophet ... were Jehovah, with whom he was so united by a *unio mystica* exalted above

¹ In the Song of Solomon, the expression is “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners” (Song of Solomon 6:7b, also see 6:4. The Prophet Joseph Smith did not question the authenticity of the Song of Solomon, but rather, its inspiration.

all earthly love, that, like the angel of Jehovah in the early histories, he would speak as if he were Jehovah Himself” (Delitzsch). ¶ *Touching his vineyard*. What is represented by the vineyard? The answer is given below, in ISAIAH 5:7, “For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel.” ¶ *My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill*. The well-beloved has a vineyard (the house of Israel), and has planted them in a very fruitful hill. A hill can have the advantage of good drainage and protection from the wind. The Lord of the vineyard certainly has more than one choice land. While this verse seems to apply specially and principally to the land of Israel, and this seems to be the meaning of the *fruitful hill* spoken about here, much of what is said also applies to the inhabitants of the ancient American continent and any people who have been entrusted with the good things of the Lord, but who have failed to lean upon the Lord. A wonderful allegory is that of Zenos, the tame and wild olive vineyard. When one understands Zenos’ allegory, one is better prepared to understand this allegory or parable of the vineyard. Regarding the marginal ¶ note, “the horn of the son of oil,” Rabbi David Kimhi has this to say, “He calls the land of Israel a horn, because it is higher than all lands; as the horn is higher than the whole body; and the **son of oil**,² because it is said to be a land flowing with milk and honey” (Kimhi, in Lowth). The word horn, in older English, means the peak or summit of a hill. The whole idea, then, is that the Lord had placed Israel in a land flowing with milk and honey and fertility, the very best that was available.

2 And he fenced ✓ it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made ✓ ✓ a wine-press therein; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

✓ or, made a wall about ✓ ✓ or, hewed

² בן-שמן

And he fenced it. From a viticulture perspective, there are a couple of important reasons to fence a vineyard. Vineyards are fenced to keep animals and people out. Horses that have grown in areas where vineyards abound, for instance, often learn to eat the grape leaves, and love eating the grapes, too. There may well be an allusion to the wall surrounding the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Cheyne suggests we study Ezra 9:9 ff. Certainly it fits well with this passage, “For we were bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem” (Ezra 9:9, emphasis added).” From a spiritual sense, what could the fence be? Certainly, something given for a protection. One of the first things that come to mind is the Law; the scriptures and commandments given to Israel to help her from being contaminated by the idolatrous beliefs of nearby nations. Today we have the scriptures as well as living prophets to be our fence, to keep the world out. We must live worthy of the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. ¶ *And gathered out the stones thereof.* One of the first jobs in preparing agricultural land is to remove the stones so the land can be plowed, and the plants have earth around them. Earth not only holds essential plant nutrients, but also holds water. Stones, obviously do not hold water, and release nutrients at an insignificant rate. The stones probably signify the surrounding nations and their idol worship (Deuteronomy 7:1–3). As Israel came into her fertile land, these other nations were to be utterly removed. The Lord feared the negative influence these nations would have upon Israel: “For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 7:4–6). Unfortunately, Israel did not hearken at that time and as a result would be removed from her land of promise for a season. ¶ *And planted it with the choicest vine.* Having the right genetic plant material makes all the difference in the world. Vineyards are not planted from seed, but rather, from vine cuttings, in order to produce genetically consistent excellent crops. So who was the choicest vine? In ISAIAH 5:7 we have the answer: “the men of Judah [are] his pleasant plant.” The expression, *choicest vine*,

corresponds to the Hebrew שֵׁרֶק, or *sorek*.³ Delitzsch has “*Sorek* [being] the finest kind of eastern vine, bearing small grapes of a bluish-red, with pips hardly perceptible to the tongue. The name is derived from its colour (compare the Arabic *zerka*, red wine).” Robert Lowth points us to the writings of Moses, particularly to the Patriarchal Blessings given by Jacob to his sons. There we find the feminine form of the word, שֵׁרֶקָה, translated the same way, *choicest vine*. The blessing to Judah reads in part: “Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes” (Genesis 49:11). Lowth, leaning on a number of former commentators, suggests that Sorek represents a region, much as we would consider the Napa Valley in California today, for its excellent vineyards and wines. Furthermore, “By naming particularly the vine of Sorek, and the vine belonging to Judah, the prophecy [i.e., the Patriarchal Blessing] intimates the very part of the country which was to fall to the lot of that tribe.” Lowth cites an instance of a vine that was so large that a man could hardly put his arms around the trunk, and thus one could tie an ass's colt to it. It is certainly true that vines can grow to very large proportions. I saw one such vine at the University of California, Davis, when I was a viticulture student there. Over the years the vine had been carefully trained and pruned so it covered a very large area. Lowth's insight leads us quickly into further parallels. Several translations use the word *vesture* (RV, ESV, JPS), *cloak* (Geneva), or *robes* (HCSB, HNV, WEB, NAS) for clothes (סוּת) in Genesis 49:11. So we then immediately think of: “Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.” (ISAIAH 63:3); and “And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God ... and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Revelation 19:13, 15b). Judah's blessing in Genesis is preceded by: “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the

³ “Sorek was a valley lying between Ascalon and Gaza, and running far up eastward in the tribe of Judah. Both Ascalon and Gaza were anciently famous for wine ... And it seems, that the upper part of the valley of Sorek, and that of Eshcol, where the spies gathered the single cluster of grapes which they were obliged to bear between two upon a staff, being both near to Hebron, were in the same neighbourhood; and that all this part of the country abounded with rich vineyards (cp. Numbers 13:22–23; Judges 16:3–4). P. Nau supposes Eshcol and Sorek to be only different names for the same valley.” (Lowth).

people be” (Genesis 49:10). We can see, then, all of the symbolism of the atoning sacrifice of our Savior. No wonder, one translator has gone even further in her beautiful symbolic rendering: “Binding his Sapling unto the vine; And the Son of His Strength to the choice vine. He *shall* cleanse His garments in wine. And His vesture in the blood of grapes” (SOT). The Scriptures point to the Savior’s atoning sacrifice. ¶ The Talmud tradition (Seder Mo’ed, Sukkah 49a) is also symbolic of the Savior’s great love for His people: “‘And planted it with the choicest vine’, refers to the Temple; ‘and built a tower in the midst of it’, refers to the altar; ‘and also hewed out a vat therein’, refers to the Pits” (Talmud, Soncino). ¶ *And built a tower in the midst of it.* The most frequent use of towers in the days of the Old Testament were for a defense or inspection against those who would enter unlawfully. In this context, what is the tower? It seems to be the Temple built in Jerusalem. (Also, see notes on ISAIAH 5:6.) The Targum (Ⓢ) more explicitly combines the Temple symbolism and the atonement: “I sanctified them, and I made them glorious, I propped them up as a precious vine; and I built my sanctuary in the midst of them; and I gave also mine altar to make an atonement for their sins; and I thought that they should do good works before me, but they did evil works.” ¶ *And also made a wine-press therein.* There are diverse types of winepresses. At my mother’s farm trucks loaded with grapes would come into the winepress areas where farm workers would throw the grapes into a cement press. The grapes were brushed into a spot where a small motor was used to crush them and extract the juice. (In former times, men would stomp on the grapes to separate the juice from the residues, *orujo* in Spanish.) In our farm the juice would be pumped into a very large concrete container. In order to slow down the fermentation process, the juice would continually pass through tubes under water that would help cool it, and prevent an overly quick fermentation that would be out of control. Or, in other words, prevent the wine from turning into vinegar. Interestingly, Lowth translates this portion of the verse as “And he hewed out also a *lake* therein” (emphasis added) and comments: “In very hot countries it was perhaps necessary, or at least very convenient, to have the lake underground, or in a cave hewed out of the side of the rock, for coolness; that the heat might not cause too great a fermentation, and sour the must.” This translation is also supported by Spurrell: “And He also hewed out a lake therein” (SOT). After fermentation, once again returning to my mother’s vineyard, the juice would be then pumped into either closed concrete or wooden containers. ¶ In former times wine was stored in bottles, or more correctly, *animal skins* that could expand as the fermentation process was completed. The

Savior explained, “Neither do *men* put new wine⁴ into old wine-skins: else the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins perish: but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins, and both are preserved.” (ASV, Matthew 9:17, also see Mark 2:22 and Luke 5:37–38). In other words, new wine, or wine that had not completed its fermentation process, needed to be put in animal skins that could stretch with the production of added fermentation gases. Else the animal skins would rupture; and the wine lost. This new wine, then, had already gone through part of the fermentation process (wherein the sugars are changed into alcohol). It was called new wine because the fermentation process was not yet completed. The Savior’s teaching about the new

⁴ Some believe that Christ did not drink wine, but grape juice, as he drank *new wine*. Yet, if new wine was not alcoholic, then why do we read: “Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine” (Acts 2:13). When the Holy Ghost fell abundantly upon the Saints, onlookers thought that the Saints were drunk. Furthermore, we read, “For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!” (Luke 7:33–34). How could the Lord be called a winebibber for drinking *grape juice*? In present time, the Lord for a time allowed the use of wine in Sacramental services, and that was not grape juice, either. After the restoration of the Gospel, the Prophet Joseph Smith was warned against purchasing wine from the enemies of the Church, who could poison it, and wrote in the *History of the Church*: “Early in the month of August Newel Knight and his wife paid us a visit at my place in harmony, Pennsylvania; and as neither his wife nor mine had been as yet confirmed, it was proposed that we should confirm them, and partake together of the Sacrament, before he and his wife should leave us. In order to prepare for this I set out to procure some wine for the occasion, but had gone only a short distance when I was met by a heavenly messenger, and received the following revelation . . . ‘Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Lord, your God, and your Redeemer, whose word is quick and powerful. For, behold, I say unto you, that it mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory—remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins. Wherefore, a commandment I give unto you, that you shall not purchase wine neither strong drink of your enemies; Wherefore, you shall partake of none except it is made new among you; yea, in this my Father’s kingdom which shall be built up on the earth (D&C 27:1–4).’” We also know of the great damage—both in terms of health as well as violations to the law of chastity—associated with drinking. Our Savior commanded: “Behold, verily, thus saith the Lord unto you: In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation—That inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink among you, behold it is not good, neither meet in the sight of your Father, only in assembling yourselves together to offer up your sacraments before him” (D&C 89:4–5). Today, in the Church, we do not use marrow for the Sacrament, either. Those who keep this and other commandments will receive blessings untold both in this life and in the next. “And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow for their bones; And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint. And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. Amen” (D&C 89:18–21).

wine may well be applied to the restoration of the Gospel. The Lord chose a pure young man, a clean vessel, a new bottle, even Joseph Smith, to be the prophet of the restoration. Brother Joseph would have to expand to his very limits to come to understand and partake of the doctrinal new wine of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Prophet Joseph Smith had not been contaminated with the doctrines of the sectarian world. ¶ My friend, and recent convert, Humberto Vallejos Prado, tells me that in the olden times the fermentation process took longer as it was not aided by supplemental yeast. The fermentation took place with the naturally present yeast in the grapes.⁵ Brother Vallejos explains that anciently, without all of the instruments available today, it was also a challenge to determine when the fermentation process was complete. Humberto suggests that it is likely that at the time of the Savior a partially fermented sweet wine (once again, where only parts of the sugars had been converted into alcohol and the remainder continued as sugars) was utilized. As a result, the alcohol levels in new wine would have been much lower and less inebriating.⁶ ¶ The expression יִקֵּב means a vine press or container where the juice was accumulated. These reservoirs may have been constructed by digging into the earth or hewing them out of a rock (Gesenius, HAL, BDB). The wine press is a type and shadow of the atonement (although there are also allusions to Judgment Day). “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment” (ISAIAH 63:3). ¶ *And he looked that it should bring forth grapes.* After all these extensive preparations, the Lord of the vineyard could expect that the vineyard would bring forth grapes, or good works. ¶ *And it brought forth wild grapes.* Instead of bringing forth sweet wonderful grapes, the grapes were spoiled. The Hebrew word translated as *wild grapes* is בְּאֵשִׁים, from the root בָּאָשׁ, representing something with a foul smell (Gesenius), most likely putrid: perhaps *botrytis bunch*

⁵ By the way, this is why the *Nazarites* were not permitted to eat grapes or raisins as some might have fermented. See Numbers 6:1–4.

⁶ Interview with Brother Humberto Vallejos P. on 27 May 2017, two days before his 78th birthday. Brother Humberto was baptized in February of 2014. Although he kept a Book of Mormon I had given him years earlier, I chuckle as my friend tells me that it was the Sister Missionaries who helped his conversion and I had nothing to do with it! He worked for our family vineyard, Barros Negros, for 39 years. Humberto was the agricultural technician and wine maker. As a pre-teenager, Humberto witnessed the making of artisanal wines that were produced the old fashioned way by his relatives, without added yeast, and crushed manually and then stored in barrels. The grapes were transported by oxen-pulled carts to the winepress. The leftover *orujo* (skins, seeds, and other residues) was given to the swine, who would get thoroughly drunk with it.

rot. Green supports the possibility of rotten grapes in his more literal interlinear text (but not in the side text). At the right time of the year, a rain might cause *botrytis* or other diseases to bring massive rot to the grapes in a whole vineyard. A grape that is not ripened is next in likelihood. These would indeed be small bitter or sour grapes. Finally, and least likely in a vineyard, there exists the possibility of the rootstock putting forth shoots⁷ and producing wild grapes. There are additional possibilities mentioned by some exegetes, such as the presence of noxious or poisonous weeds taking over the vineyard.⁸ The LXX (6) has, “Whereas I expected it to bring forth grapes, but it has brought forth thorns.” Returning to Isaiah, the בְּאֵשִׁים or “spoiled grapes” seem to represent evil works. “And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink” (ISAIAH 3:24a). Kay offers the following thought: “Israel, the ‘seed of Abraham, the friend of God’ (41:8), was a Vine of a noble stock, whose wine was to

⁷ The grapes that produce wine are mostly *vitis vinifera*, although there are other varieties that are sometimes used. Some varieties of “wild grapes” are often used today as rootstock to combat against root borne diseases, to which the scions (the top graft that produces the good grapes) would be susceptible if planted directly in the soil. With a few notable exceptions (such as Chile), most all countries in the world today require a rootstock to combat Phylloxera and other soil borne diseases. This was not always so, of course, before plant materials from one continent infested that of another. If vines are poorly tended, the graft might not work well and the rootstock might overpower the scion, thus producing wild grapes. In the winter of 1999–2000 we had a hard freeze in Modesto. The next winter, one of my daughters noticed that two huge lemons were growing in what had been an otherwise productive lemon tree. Each of these enormous lemons was almost the size of a person’s head. A colleague at the University of California quickly sized up the situation: “It is a ponderosa lemon,” he explained. A shoot from the rootstock had taken off. This branch had thorns and these two tremendous lemons. The lemons were mostly show. If one cuts through the middle he will find mostly rind, with a tiny little lemon inside. All show; no virtue. Exalted and boastful pride with nothing to show for it. By the time I removed the offending ponderosa limb, it had taken over a third of the tree, sapping much of the tree’s strength.

⁸ Lowth, for instance, explains that “בְּאֵשִׁים, not merely useless unprofitable grapes, such as wild grapes; but grapes offensive to the smell, noxious, poisonous. By the force of the intent of the allegory, to good grapes ought to be opposed fruit of a dangerous and pernicious quality.” Then he goes on to suggest another type of vine (גִּפְתָּי) rather than the grape vine (גִּפְתָּי דִּי) may be involved. Lowth quoted the story in 2 Kings 4:39–41, about Elisha and the poisoned pottage. Lowth quotes Fredric Hasselquist’s book of travels (*Voyages and Travels in the Levant*, 1766, p. 289) “I am inclined to believe that the Prophet here (ISAIAH 5:2, 4.) means the hoary night shade, *solarium incanum*: because it is common in Egypt, Palestine, and the East; and the Arabian name agrees well with it. The Arabs call it *aneb el dib*, i. e. wolf-grapes. The Prophet could not have found a plant more opposite to the vine than this; for it grows much in the vineyards, and is very pernicious to them; wherefore they root it out: it likewise resembles a vine by its shrubby stalk.” Lowth also quotes Deuteronomy 32:32–33: “For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.”

‘gladden God and men’ (Judges 9:13). It was planted amidst rich privileges, temporal and spiritual;—in a land that flowed with milk and honey and had the sanctifying presence of the Holy One with it. If the Vine had produced its fruit, it would have been a ‘blessing to all nations;’ making the ‘righteousness’ of faithful Abraham (Genesis 15:6) to overflow the earth. But Israel in the first cycle of its history—like the Nazarite⁹ Samson in the valley of Sorek—was seduced by the world; and became ‘a mockery’ to its neighbours” (Kay).

3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah. This is a frequent prophetic device. The Lord is taking the role of a prosecutor in a court of law.¹⁰ One cannot fail but sense the tenderness of the Lord, despite His disappointment. ¶ *Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.* The Lord here, as well as during His earthly ministry, used parables and illustrations to help hearers understand the justice of His perspective.¹¹

⁹ Nazarite, in the KJV. נָזִיר, one consecrated to the Lord, and as such would keep a strict law of conduct, including not partaking of alcohol, as we mentioned in a footnote above.

¹⁰ Two examples from Hosea are: “Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land” (Hosea 4:1) and “O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away” (Hosea 6:4).

¹¹ In the case of David and Bathsheba, the Lord used a similar approach. “And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man’s lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master’s house, and thy master’s wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to

Recalling the parable spoken regarding the Son who was killed by those husbandmen to whom the vineyard had been entrusted, here we see the question and answer approach: “When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matthew 21:40–43).

4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought it forth wild grapes?

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? What more could He have done as King and loving Lord, for the people to have repaid Him thus. ¶ *Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes.* One can read the melancholic disappointment. The Lord’s expectations were for good fruit, but instead found wickedness. See also the allegory of Zenos in Jacob 5.

5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard—I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; [and] I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down;

✓ for a treading

And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. The Lord is telling Judah and Jerusalem, as he did to King David, “Thou art the man,” and now would dictate the punishment that would follow. ¶ *I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down.* The hedge, wall, or fence would be removed, allowing men and beasts who would devour it into the vineyard. Animals, such as horses, will not only eat the grapes, but the leaves, also. The Lord would now permit

be thy wife. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun” (2 Samuel 12:1–12).

Assyria, Babylon, and other nations to trample the children of Jacob. In *Rain in Due Season* we read: “And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: ... *then* I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: ...” (Leviticus 26:15, 33a). Micah also spoke of the utter destruction that Jerusalem would face: “Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest” (Micah 3:12, cf. Jeremiah 26:18). “For your sake” can be taken with at least two meanings: because of your fault, and for your benefit. Sometimes when we face difficult predicaments in life it is hard to see the benefit, yet except for sin, all things can work for our good. So would it be with the dispersion of Israel. The great sorrows would in the latter-days become multiplied joys. A good parent often hurts more than the child he punishes, but must follow through with the reprimand. Without the reproof, the child does not know his limits. Israel would now be scattered to every nation and corner of the globe, and fulfill a key role in the sharing of blessings with the whole world. Until the Lord would say enough, “For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee” (ISAIAH 54:7).

6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

And I will lay it waste: Once again, here is a series of direct allusions to the promises and curses in *Rain in Due Season*: “... and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste” (Leviticus 26:33). Assyria, Babylon, Rome and other nations would all have a role in laying cities waste in Israel. In the latter days, the nations of the world will turn against Israel. ¶ *It shall not be pruned, nor digged.* When a vine is not pruned, it produces lots of leaves but little fruit. Digging, or plowing, plays an important role in reducing earth compaction, increasing root aeration, and controlling and reducing weeds and noxious plants. From a spiritual perspective, pruning and digging may be equivalent to the teaching of the word of God among the people. Such spiritual manifestations and prophetic voices would be in times silenced, because of disobedience. “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). Similarly, the Spirit of the Holy Ghost is

offended and departs, as does the Spirit of Christ, through disobedience. ¶ *But there shall come up briars and thorns.* Briars and thorns come up when the earth is not plowed. Like the wild or putrid grapes, these may also represent evil works all around. ¶ *I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.* In *Rain in Due Season* the Lord promised those who kept His word, that they would have “rain in due season” (Leviticus 26:4b), but to those who turned away from Him, “I will make your heaven as iron” (Leviticus 26:19b). When the Lord makes the heavens as iron, He often is speaking just as much about the closing of the heavens for spiritual manifestations as that of physical precipitation and other types of blessings. This is, in essence, what happened to King Saul because of his disobedience: “And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets” (1 Samuel 28:6, see more in ISAIAH 26 notes). Perhaps the Holy Temple stands in a unique way, above all others, to show that communications between the heavens and the earth are open. In Solomon’s dedicatory prayer he was alluding at least in part to *Rain in Due Season*, when he prayed to the Lord and asked that He would forgive Israel if she turned away from doing that which was right: “When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; yet if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them; Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, when thou hast taught them the good way, wherein they should walk; and send rain upon thy land, which thou hast given unto thy people for an inheritance” (2 Chronicles 6:26–27). In terms of both the scattering and subsequent gathering of Israel, the dedicatory prayer includes the following: “If they **return** (שׁוּבוּ) to thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name: Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee” (2 Chronicles 6:38–39). That the Lord heard the prayer was clearly manifested: “Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD’s house” (2 Chronicles 7:1–2). Furthermore, note what the Lord spoke to Solomon regarding this beautiful and inspired prayer: “And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him,

I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, **and turn** (וַיִּשְׁבוּ) from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:12–14). Note how the Lord loads with meaning the words, “... for an *house of sacrifice*.” By these words, the Lord not only was speaking of Solomon’s Temple, but of the House of Israel, who would be a house of sacrifice unto the Lord. First and foremost that House of Sacrifice would be the Lord Himself, who would give His life for us; and secondly, there is a reference to the suffering that the Jews and all of the house of Israel would be subjected to as part of the dispersion. What a glorious promise! In ISAIAH 5:2 we spoke of the *tower* as being a spiritual representation of the Holy Temple. It would make sense, then, that when revelations and Priesthood authority cease to be found upon the earth, that the Temple would also cease to be. The Targum (Ⓒ) has: “And now, now I will tell you what I will do to my people; I will cause my *Shekinah*¹² (שְׁכִינָה) to remove from them, and they

¹² So why is the word *Shekinah* substituted for *dwelt*? The following from J. F. Stenning, in the introduction to the Targum of Isaiah explains: “Since the main object of the Targumist was to render the Hebrew original intelligible to the ordinary people it is not surprising to find that its chief characteristic is the use of paraphrase. This is especially noticeable in the case of the Prophets, where a strictly literal translation would often have failed to convey the meaning of the Hebrew. But the desire to give an intelligible reproduction of the Hebrew text was not the only motive which prompted the translator: he was also concerned to avoid any rendering which seemed to conflict with later religious ideas. The most striking illustration of this motive is afforded by the treatment of those passages which relate to the Divine Being. From the standpoint of later Jewish theology the primitive representations of God in the Old Testament, and especially the anthropomorphic figures applied to Him ...” (Targum, p. xii). Sometimes great measures were taken to make changes, and it is surprising how well the scriptures have survived to our day, all things considered. “There were certain limits beyond which the translator could not venture without incurring the rebuke of the learned, but it does not appear that any definite rules were laid down for his guidance. The nearest approach to a general principle is the dictum ascribed to Jehuda ben Ilai (2nd century A.D., “Tos. Meg. end; Meg. 74d; Ber. 9c, is the Targum introductory footnote to this passage): ‘He who translates a verse quite literally is a liar, while he who adds anything thereto is a blasphemer.’ Thus Exodus 24:10 ‘and they saw the God of Israel’ must not be rendered literally since no man can be said to have seen God: on the other hand, to insert the word ‘angel’ (מַלְאָכָא) would be blasphemous, since an angel would be substituted for God. The correct rendering is ‘and they saw the glory (קָרָא) of the God of Israel’” (Ⓒ, p. ix). As LDS we believe that indeed God has a body, and that the scriptures did not need correcting in this respect. “The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us” (D&C 130:22).

shall be for a spoil; I will break down the house of their sanctuary, and they shall be for a treading down. I will make them abandoned ones; they shall not be visited, neither shall they be supported; and they shall be cast out and forsaken. I will command the prophets that they do not prophesy to them prophecy” (Ⓒ ISAIAH 5:5–6). Let us consider, for a moment, the word rendered as *Shekinah* (שְׁכִינָה), in the Targum (Ⓒ). *Shekinah* means *royal residence, royalty*, and most especially, *Divine Presence* (DOT). In the DOT we find a reference to Exodus 25:8, 22. “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell (וַשְׁכֵּנִי) among them” (Exodus 25:8). The root of the word is שָׁכַן, to *abide* or *dwelt*,¹³ related also to *habitation of God, the temple, the sacred tabernacle of the Israelites* (AHCL). TWOT has, “The verb שָׁכַן is used 129 times in the OT ... God is the designated subject of the verb 43 times. He may dwell on Mount Zion (Psalms 74:2). He dwells among his people (Exodus 25:8). He will dwell in Jerusalem (Zechariah 8:3).”

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts [is] the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; ~ ~ and he looked for judgment, ~~but~~ **and** behold, oppression ~; for righteousness, ~~but~~ **and** behold, a cry.
 ✓ plant of his pleasures ✓ ✓ a scab

For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel. Now, the Lord explains the meaning of the parable. The vineyard represents the children of Jacob, or the house of Israel. The beloved, as we said, is the Great Jehovah, even Christ Jesus. ¶ *And the men of Judah his pleasant plant.* Each of the vines represent the men of Judah. Much of this parable applies to the whole house of Israel, however, with the men of Judah being a representative. ¶ *And he looked for judgment, and behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry.* (See notes on ISAIAH 1:17.) A number of translations capture the mood of this verse: “He expected fair judgment, but found injustice, uprightness, but found cries of distress” (NJB); “And he waited For equity but lo! murderous iniquity, For the rule of right but lo! the cry of the wronged” (EB); and “Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress” (NAS). The Tanakh and EB note the rhyme, paronomasia, or word play in the two set of Hebrew words, those corresponding to the words *judgment* (מִשְׁפָּט) /

¹³ A related word, מִשְׁכָּן, refers to the Tabernacle. (TWOT).

oppression (מִשְׁפָּחַד) as well as to righteousness (יְדִיּוּת) / cry (בְּעֵקֶב).

vv. 8–25. Here we have six woes against Israel based on sins she committed. These sins are the “wild grapes” mentioned in ISAIAH 5:2. Such wrongdoing included avarice, drunkenness, preference for sin over God, calling evil good and good evil, dishonesty and pride.

8 ¶ Woe unto them that join house to house, [that] lay field to field,* till [there] can [be] no place, that they^v may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

✓ ye

* JST & KJV include “[that] lay field to field,” while Book of Mormon deletes.

Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there can be no place. A number of commentators have suggested that this verse speaks of those seek to greatly increase the size of their properties. The Targum (Ⓢ), Syriac (Ⓣ) and LXX (Ⓤ) support that notion: “Woe unto them that join house to house, [that] attach the field [obtained] by oppression to their fields ...” (Ⓢ¹⁴); “Woe to those who trespass the boundaries between houses, who remove the landmarks between the fields, to steal the land”; and “Woe [to them] that join house to house, and add field to field, that they may take away something of their neighbour's” (Ⓣ). The implication here is that those riches were obtained through the exploitation and oppression of the poor, the widow, and the orphan, or outright theft.¹⁵ Barnes and Delitzsch well point out, that the Lord established the jubilee, so that those who ended up losing their land through either misfortune or mismanagement, would not have to always endure in their poor condition. The Law of Jubilee means that every 50 years the land reverted to the original owners.¹⁶ ¶ *That they may be placed alone in the midst*

¹⁴ Stenning.

¹⁵ So it was, for instance, that wicked Ahab and Jezebel by stratagem stole the vineyard or land of their neighbor (1 Kings 21:1–16). Other instances include: “Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards” (Nehemiah 5:5); “And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage” (Micah 2:2).

¹⁶ “And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family” (Leviticus 25:10); “In the year of the jubile the field shall return unto him of whom it was

of the earth! Turning, once again, to the Targum (Ⓢ), Syriac (Ⓣ) and LXX (Ⓤ), we have: “[Saying], Until we posses every place; and they think they shall dwell alone in the midst of the land” (Ⓢ); “That they may dwell alone in the midst of the earth!” (Ⓣ); and, “Will ye dwell alone in the land?” (Ⓤ). It points to a greedy and insatiable need for obtaining or conquering more land. Henry pointed out that Alexander wept when he “fancied he had conquered the world,” as he contemplated that there was no more to subjugate. Delitzsch suggests that “luxury was the leading vice of Judah” at the time. Brigham Young warned Latter-day Saints, “The worst fear I have about this people is that they will get rich in this country, forget God and His people, wax fat, and kick themselves out of the Church and go to hell. This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution, and be true. But my greater fear is that they cannot stand wealth.”¹⁷ With some concern, President Kimball, after quoting President Young, said, “To which I can hear many of you say, ‘Hasten the day.’” I have lived to see, sadly, this sort of pride manifested in intellectual arrogance on the part of a few ‘enlightened’ LDS, some of which trust more in the arm of the flesh than in the Brethren or in the Scriptures.

9 In mine ears, [said] the LORD^v of hosts, Of^v a truth many houses shall be desolate, [even] and great and fair cities, without inhabitant.

✓ This is in mine ears saith the LORD ✓ ✓ If not

In mine ears, said the LORD of hosts. (See also ISAIAH 22:14.) Ibn Ezra suggests that this expression means that the unjust nature of things had come to the attention of the Lord. Cheyne likewise explains that some words have fallen from the text, and that many have suggested the meaning to be something like, “The cry of the oppressed hath come up to my ears.” The LXX (Ⓤ) has, “For these things have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts: for thought many houses should be built, many and fair houses shall be no inhabitants in them.” The Talmud tradition (Seder Zerai’ m, Berachoth 58b) quotes this verse as “In mine ears, said the Lord of hosts: Of a truth many houses shall be desolate &c.” (Talmud, Soncino). ¶ *Of a truth many houses shall be desolate.* “Of a truth” (KJV, ASV), “surely” (Green, Tanakh, NAS, NRSV), or as in the margin ||, “if not” or

bought, even to him to whom the possession of the land did belong” (Leviticus 27:24).

¹⁷ Brown, James S., *Life of a Pioneer*, Salt Lake City: Geo. Q. Cannon and Sons Co., 1900, pp. 122–23, quoted by Elder Dean L. Larsen, *Beware Lest Thou Forget the Lord*, Ensign (CR), May 1991, p.10).

לֹא־אִם¹⁸ is, according to Delitzsch (and others), an oath formula. The complete formula being: לֹא־אִם־אֲנִי־חַי־הוּא, that is, “as I live, if not” (Delitzsch). “אִם in swearing is properly conditional, *if*, as in Samuel 3:17, God do so to thee, and more so, if thou, &c; but the form of imprecation is elsewhere omitted, and it is conveniently rendered by a negation, *not*, and לֹא־אִם by an affirmative” (AHCL). Although it may sound counter-intuitive, oftentimes an אִם introduces an emphatic *negative* while the clause לֹא־אִם, a forceful *positive* (BDB, Delitzsch). An example of the negative formula is: “The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works” (Amos 8:7, literally, *surely I will not forget forever* {Green}, and frequently translated as *never forget*). An example of the emphatic positive is: “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand” (ISAIAH 14:24). לֹא־אִם, אִם, and חַי־הוּא often form part of an oath formula.¹⁹ In contrast to the riches spoken of in the previous verse, many houses would be left without inhabitant, abandoned. Few things can have as humbling an effect on a person of wealth as to lose their earthly possessions and find themselves to be as everyone else. ¶ *And great and fair cities, without inhabitant*. The cities, even the beautifully constructed ones, would not escape the desolating scourge that would come. These occurrences may have a man-based origin, or be the result of the forces of nature.

10 Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah.

Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath. A bath was “a liquid measure roughly equivalent to five and one half gallons (U.S.) ... The bath was one-tenth of a homer” (HBD). An acre, אַמְרָה, constituted the measure of land that could be ploughed by a team of oxen in one day (HBD, AHCL, TWOT) and corresponds roughly to a half acre in today’s measure (TWOT). Ten acres, then, would be equivalent to five in modern times. A viticulturist told me that one can count on harvesting about 5,000 gallons of grape juice

¹⁸ אִם stands for *if*, while לֹא for *no*, or *negation*. For more on oath formulas, see ISAIAH 22:14; and especially ISAIAH 62:8.

¹⁹ Another example is: “Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou ...” (Ezekiel 5:11a). Indeed, Ezekiel includes a number of variations on the oath formula. For instance, “As I live ... ye shall not” as in “As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel” (Ezekiel 18:3).

with that amount of land, or about 1,000 gallons per acre. ¶ *And the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah*. A homer could be represented either as a dry or liquid measure. As a dry measure, a homer would be equivalent to ten ephahs (HBD). It is easy to see the disaster, when a farmer’s return on investment would be one tenth. Such a farmer would have been better off not planting at all. In *Rain in Due Season* we have: “Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it ... Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them” (Deuteronomy 28:38a, 39). While the land of Israel today has been dedicated for the restoration of Israel, and it growing agricultural abundance is something very much taken for granted by our present generation, this was not so even two hundred years ago, before Elder Orson Hyde, one of the Lord’s Twelve Apostles at the time, dedicated the Land of Israel from the Mount of Olives, on October 24, 1841.²⁰ Barnes, speaking of the lack of fertility of the Holy Land in the early 1800s wrote: “At present, this formerly fertile country is among the most unproductive on the face of the earth” (Barnes). The vineyard of the Lord had been destroyed: “I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down” (Proverbs 24:30–31).

11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, [that] they may follow strong drink; and that continue until night, [till] and wine inflame~them!

✓ pursue

²⁰ Orson Hyde wrote: “On Sunday morning, October 24, a good while before day, I arose from sleep, and went out of the city as soon as the gates were opened, crossed the brook Kedron, and went upon the Mount of Olives, and there, in solemn silence, with pen, ink, and paper, just as I saw in the vision, offered up the following prayer to Him who lives forever and ever.” Among the things mentioned in that prayer were these words: “Grant, therefore, O Lord, in the name of Thy well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to remove the barrenness and sterility of this land, and let springs of living water break forth to water its thirsty soil. Let the vine and olive produce in their strength, and let the fig-tree bloom and flourish. Let the land become abundantly fruitful when possessed by its rightful heirs; let it again flow with plenty to feed the returning prodigals who come home with a spirit of grace and supplication; upon it let the clouds distil virtue and richness, and let the fields smile with plenty. Let the flocks and the herds greatly increase and multiply upon the mountains and the hills....” (Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts, Volume 4, pp. 456, 457.) I had the great privilege of being at the Orson Hyde memorial in the Mount of Olives in September 2012.

Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink. That is, woe unto those persons who begin their day partaking of alcoholic beverages. **יִשְׁכֵּר** also means, beside strong drink, an alcoholic beverage with intoxicating qualities. That is, drinks with a higher concentration of alcohol. The higher the sugar content of a liquid before fermentation (measured in degrees Brix), the higher the *proof* or alcohol content. Lowth, based on some Syrian authorities, suggests that strong drink “meant properly *palm wine*, or date wine, which was and is still much in use in the Eastern countries. Judea was famous for the abundance and excellence of its palm tree; and consequently had plenty of this wine.” This is very likely the way ancient strong drink was made, and peoples everywhere have been known to make alcohol out of various fruits and concoctions. For instance, in Chile, a famous alcoholic beverage is *chicha*, made out of apple juice. ¶ *And that continue until night, and wine inflame them!* And then, who continue until late at night drinking, and continue to drink until they are utterly drunk. People can be inflamed by alcohol or lust. The word *inflame* implies a burning or increase in heat, such as from a flame. “The American Indians appropriately call [their alcoholic beverage] *fire-water*” (Barnes). Similar verses to ISAIAH 5:11–13 can be found in Amos: “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion Ye that put far away the evil day,²¹ and cause the seat of violence to come near; That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David; That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed” (Amos 6:1a, 3–7). There are records among a number of native peoples that have documented this type of drinking parties that may have lasted for days.²²

12 And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.

²¹ Seems to be saying that the time when consequences are to be paid for wrongdoing are far away or can be ignored.

²² See for instance, *El Cautiverio Feliz*, by Angel Custodio González, which details these excesses among the Lamanites of Chile toward the end of the 1600s. This book also speaks much about the good qualities found in the native peoples.

And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts. Men may take extreme measures to make sure their feasts have every needful ingredient. ¶ *But they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.* Yet when it comes to things of eternal worth, in contrast, little thought is given. Such as the price paid by the Savior if we will but follow Him.

13 Therefore, my people are gone into captivity, because [they have] no knowledge; and their honourable men [are] famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.

✓ glory are men of famine

Therefore, my people are gone into captivity. We again turn to *Rain in Due Season*: “The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone” (Deuteronomy 28:36). Here Isaiah is saying, furthermore, you have provoked the Lord with your continual wickedness so that time which was written of aforesaid will now come to pass. ¶ *Because they have no knowledge.* What knowledge is being spoken about here? Knowledge of the Law and of the Covenant made with the Lord. “And thou shalt grope at noontide, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee” (Deuteronomy 28:29). People will be blind to spiritual things. ¶ *And their honourable men are famished.* The idea of spiritual and physical bondage are both present (also see ISAIAH 5:6). ¶ *And their multitude dried up with thirst.* This thirst is associated with drought and famine of food and of the word of God. In *Rain in Dues Season* we have: “Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee” (Deuteronomy 28:48). Barnes applies this to the coming Babylonian captivity: “The punishment here specified, refers particularly to a journey through an arid, desolate region, where drink could be obtained only with difficulty. Such was the route which the nation was compelled afterwards to take in going to Babylon.” Certainly, the captivity and scattering of Israel into Assyrian and Babylonia is included.

14 Therefore, hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and

their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.

Therefore, hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure. Hell is compared to a wild beast who has opened her mouth wide, and is ready to devour her prey. The Hebrew term for hell, as translated by the KJV, is **שְׁאוֹל**, and is often transliterated as *Sheol* in other scripture translations. “Therefore *Sheol* hath enlarged its desire, and opened its mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth among them, descend into it” (ASV, cf. NAS, NRSV, REB, NJB, Syriac (S), Tanakh). Sometimes it is translated as “nether world” (NAB, JPS). The LXX (G) uses the Greek term *Hades*,

αδης. In the TWOT we read, “There is much difference of opinion on the meaning of the term, occasioned in part by differing approaches to the Old Testament teaching on a future life ... The New Testament verses are highly problematical [such as] Christ’s descent from heaven and return there.” Through modern-day revelation, as LDS we have a good understanding of these issues. It seems that the best equivalent to *Sheol* or *Hades* is the *Spirit World*. In the spirit world the righteous spirits of the dead go to *paradise*, while the wicked ones go to *spirit prison*. Here it seems to refer to the spirit prison, which seemed anxious to receive those who had done wickedly. D&C 138 is the beautiful and tender account of the visit of the Lord to the Spirit World, wherein “the Son of God appeared, declaring liberty to the captives who had been faithful.” And furthermore, “from among the righteous, he organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men; and thus was the gospel preached to the dead.” ¶ *And their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.* All that is prideful and replete with vainglory will descend into that spirit prison.

15 And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled:

And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled. The thought is an allusion to ISAIAH 2:9, where we saw that both the mean (or common) man as well as the mighty one refused to humble themselves before the Lord. While both versions of ISAIAH 2:9 are understandable, the JST

correction makes the stronger contrast between a refusal to bow down before the Lord and subsequently being humbled before Him. ¶ LITV translates this clause as: “And man is bowed down, and man is humbled.” That is because two synonyms are used for the word *man* in the Hebrew: **אָדָם** (*adam* or man) and **אִישׁ** (*ish*, or man). Hebrew scholars suggest that the former is an ordinary man while the latter is a mighty one (also see ISAIAH 2:9). ¶ *And the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled:* Perhaps no other part of man can speak as eloquently the feelings and attitudes of a man as his eyes. So it will be that the prideful look of man shall also be brought down.

16 But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.

✓ or, the holy God; the God, the holy.

Delitzsch suggests: “God, who is both exalted and holy in Himself, demanded that as the exalted One He should be exalted, and that as the Holy One He should be sanctified. But Jerusalem had not done that; He would therefore prove Himself the exalted One by the execution of justice, and sanctify Himself ... by the manifestation of righteousness, in consequence of which the people of Jerusalem would have to give Him glory against their will, as forming part of ‘the things under the earth’ (Philippians 2:10).” Similarly we have Rabbi Ibn Ezra’s comments: “Then the excellence of the Lord will be known by the judgment (**בְּשֹׁפֵט**) which He will have executed on Israel, and His holiness will be revealed by the kindness (**בְּצַדִּיקוֹת**) shown to them.”

17 Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.

This verse has been given a number of contrasting meanings.²³ The context is key in properly interpreting this verse. It appears that the verse is an allusion to the

²³ For instance, the Syriac (S) has a message of redemption: “Then shall the lambs feed there in their usual fashion, and the waste places that shall be rebuilt shall be the property of the rightful owners.” The Targum (T) has a message of reversed fortunes, between the rich and those they exploited: “And the righteous shall be nurtured as was promised concerning them, and the riches of the wicked shall the righteous possess.” The LXX (G) seems to indicate that the people who once lived lavishly would be reduced and humbled to the level of animals fed in pasture and carried away captive, while their own lands would be abandoned. “And they that were spoiled shall be fed as bulls, and lambs shall feed on the waste places of them that are taken away” (G).

contrast between ISAIAH 5:8 and the verses that follow—showing the great excesses of the day—and the desolation that would follow. Lambs now feed where the former beautiful and expensive homes and lands of the rich used to be. In my trip to the Holy Land I saw a shepherd feeding his flock in the ruins of one of the ancient buildings. Besides the literal lambs, these may also be meant to represent the poor of the people who were left behind after the Babylonian defeat of Judah.²⁴ In the 19th Century, Delitzsch observed, “And when we consider that the Holy Land is at the present time an extensive pasture-ground for Arab shepherds, and that the modern Jerusalem which has arisen from the dust is a Mohammedan city, we may see in this also a literal fulfillment of ISAIAH 5:17.” The *fat ones* represent the wealthy men of Judah, to whom the good things of the earth had been plentiful; the *stranger*, the foreign forces who took possession of the land.

18 ¶ Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope;

Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords (בְּחִבְלֵי) *of vanity.* It is instructive to see how the word *cord* is used elsewhere in scripture: “And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction” (Job 36:8); “Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us” (Psalms 2:3); “The LORD is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked” (Psalms 129:4); and “His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins” (Proverbs 5:22). Cords can bind or hold something fast, as a prisoner. Sins can act to bind a man, taking away his freedom and obstructing his agency. To *draw* iniquity gives the impression of pulling or leading a prisoner with such cords: “lead captive silly women laden with sins” (2 Timothy 3:6b). Almost the same terminology is used of the opposite of sin, when man is drawn with the love of the Lord: “I drew them with cords (בְּחִבְלֵי) of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke” (Hosea 11:4a). Matthew Henry suggests: “[Those intent on iniquity]

²⁴ “And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king’s house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man’s house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away. But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen” (2 Kings 25:8–12).

think themselves as sure of compassing their wicked project as if they were pulling it towards them with strong cart-ropes; but they will find themselves disappointed, for they will prove cords of vanity, which will break when they come to any stress.” Perhaps one can picture the building of an ancient bridge made out of rope. Those made out of *cords of vanity* will give way to their loads, sending those who have trusted in them into certain spiritual death; those who have trusted in the Lord will, instead, be able to cross their bridge in confidence and fall at the feet of the Lord with eternal tears of gratitude. ¶ *And sin as it were with a cart rope.* One may picture, perhaps, an ox pulling a cart full of sins. The Targum (Ⓢ) has: “Woe to them that begin to sin by little, drawing sins with the ropes of vanity, and they go on and increase until they are strong, and *their sins are as a cart-rope*” (Ⓢ). Kimhi explains, “An evil inclination is the beginning like a fine hair-string, but at the finishing like a thick cart-rope” (Kimhi from ancient Rabbins, in Lowth). Bishop Patrick Rhoades, of the Modesto 3rd Ward, once compared sin to a swimming pool in a hot summer day. It is unusual for people to jump head in into the pool. Most first put a toe in, and swirl it around a bit. Others may splash themselves a little with the water. But before a person knows it, the individual finds himself in the water, fully immersed. Likewise, sin may begin as a thin strand that can easily be broken, but when strand is added to strand, the force of habit before long can bind as a cord. The Talmud tradition (Seder Mo’ed, Sukkah 52a) explains the tyranny of addiction: “Rabbi Assi stated, The Evil Inclination is at first like the thread of a spider, but ultimately becomes like cart ropes, as it is said, Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope” (Talmud, Soncino).

19 That say: Let him make speed, [and] hasten his work, that we may see [it]: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know [it]!

That say: Let him make speed, hasten his work, that we may see it. The essence of this verse seems to be a taunt by the unbeliever, as to when the prophecies of good, or warnings of punishment for evil, would come to pass (see also ISAIAH 66:5). Their taunt would soon enough be addressed, as the Lord would allow other nations to fall upon them (see ISAIAH 8:3). Just prior to the first coming, there was a great commotion manifested in the people of the American continent, as regarding the sign that would be given indicating that Christ would be born (3 Nephi 1:4–9). In the last days there will be a similar unbelief (ISAIAH 66:5), as manifested in the

New Testament: “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?” (2 Peter 3:3–4a). ¶ *And let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!* In this parallel thought, essentially the same idea is manifested, in a taunting voice toward the prophet, as well as the taking of the Lord’s name in vain. In the Targum (Ⓣ) we read: “That say, When will He hasten and reveal His miracle, that we may see *it*: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!”

**20 Woe unto them that call evil good, ✓
and good evil, that put darkness for light,
and light for darkness, that put bitter for
sweet, and sweet for bitter!**

✓ or, Say concerning evil, It is good

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil, etc.
The same thought is repeated three times, contrasting good with evil with ever increasing strength, light with darkness, and sweet with bitter. Evil is described as dark and bitter; good as light and sweet. While it should be easy to tell good apart from evil, the day is here where people are so blind that they can no longer see in noon day because the Scriptures have been set aside as a thing of naught. Speaking of this verse, President Kimball taught, “The Savior said that if it were possible the very elect would be deceived by Lucifer. He uses his logic to confuse and his rationalizations to destroy. He will shade meanings, open doors an inch at a time, and lead from purest white through all the shades of gray to the darkest black.”²⁵ President James E. Faust observed: “The gap between what is popular and what is righteous is widening.”²⁶ In that same General Conference, Elder M. Russell Ballard observed: “Let me say again that the family is the main target of evil’s attack and must therefore be the main point of our protection and defense. As I said once before, when you stop and think about it from a diabolically tactical point of view, fighting the family makes sense to Satan. When he wants to disrupt the work of the Lord, he doesn’t poison the world’s peanut butter supply, thus bringing the Church’s missionary system to its collective knees. He doesn’t send a plague of laryngitis to afflict the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. He doesn’t legislate against green Jell-O and casseroles. When evil wants to strike out and disrupt the essence of God’s work, it attacks the family. It does so by attempting to

²⁵ Kimball, Spencer W. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*. Edited by Edward L. Kimball. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1982. p. 279.

²⁶ President James E. Faust, “Lord, I Believe; Help Thou Mine Unbelief.” October 2003 General Conference.

disregard the law of chastity, to confuse gender, to desensitize violence, to make crude and blasphemous language the norm, and to make immoral and deviant behavior seem like the rule rather than the exception.”²⁷ Elder Durrel A. Woolsey said, “The war is for the souls of men. The battle lines have been drawn since Adam: evil versus righteousness. In this the final dispensation and in preparation for the Millennium, the forces of evil have intensified and united under the powerful influences of Satan. On the opposite side of the line, the kingdom of God is clearly sounding the trumpet of righteousness, as perhaps never before. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is on the offensive in the declaration of good to be good and evil to be evil.”²⁸

**21 Woe unto [~~them that are~~] the wise in
their own eyes, and prudent in their own
sight! ✓**

✓ before their face

Jacob, the brother of Nephi, exclaims: “O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish. But to be learned is good²⁹ if they hearken unto

²⁷ Elder M. Russell Ballard, “Let Our Voices Be Heard.” October 2003 General Conference.

²⁸ Elder Durrel A. Woolsey, “A Strategy for War.” October 1995 General Conference.

²⁹ Without a doubt, the Saints have been commanded to study and not be ignorant: “And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom, seek learning even by study and also by faith; ... And do thou grant, Holy Father, that all those who shall worship in this house may be taught words of wisdom out of the best books, and that they may seek learning even by study, and also by faith ...” (D&C 109:7, 14). Furthermore, “And set in order the churches, and study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people” (D&C 90:15). We also learn that in the Church, the teacher is not to set himself higher than the student: “And when the priests left their labor to impart the word of God unto the people, the people also left their labors to hear the word of God. And when the priest had imparted unto them the word of God they all returned again diligently unto their labors; and the priest, not esteeming himself above his hearers, for the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner; and thus they were all equal, and they did all labor, every man according to his strength” (Alma 1:26). When we leave this mortal life, we can take those things we have learned. “Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come” (D&C 130:18–19). Knowledge ought to be searched by us not only through good books, but also through inspiration, as the Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “for

the counsels of God” (2 Nephi 9:28–29). Regarding the last days, we are told that men will be “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:1–5, 7). We are also informed that in the last days a spirit of pride will be prevalent. “Yea, it shall come in a day when the power of God shall be denied, and churches become defiled and be lifted up in the pride of their hearts” (Mormon 8:28a).

22 Woe unto [them that are] the mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink;

Woe unto them that are the mighty to drink wine. By repetition (see ISAIAH 5:11) a woe is pronounced against those who drink wine in excess. Alcoholism is probably among the worst ills to affect mankind. Latter-day Saints who faithfully keep the modern day commandment—the Word of Wisdom—to not drink any alcohol at all, are greatly blessed. ¶ *And men of strength to mingle strong drink* (שִׁכָּר). Such as men who boast in their ability to drink strong liquor.

23 Which Who justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

The NAS has, “Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!” Nyman cries out against a hypocritical stance that considers the man who committed the crime: “The gross dishonesty and distorted value system accepted by some in our day labels a man a thief for petty stealing, but regards unscrupulous business deals involving thousands or millions of dollars as just a good business.” Of course we know that both of these behaviors are wrong in the sight of God.

24 Therefore, as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, [sø] their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossoms shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

✓ tongue of fire

Therefore, as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff. Stubble, or chaff, is the

one truth revealed from heaven is worth all the sectarian notions in existence” (TPJS, p. 338).

leftover stalk after the wheat, oats, or other grain is removed. This leftover plant would dry out as it was no longer attached to the roots. And in those cases where the crop was removed from the plant without separating it from the roots, it also dries out because it is no longer irrigated. Two properties of stubble are its (1) *lightness*, so the wind could easily remove it and allow the heavier grain to remain, and (2) its high combustibility, largely because of its dryness. So it is that the flame would consume it quickly. The more literal Hebrew in the margin ¶ depicts the fire as having a devouring tongue that licks up all that is in his way.³⁰ We read in Jeremiah: “I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them. Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say. Their quiver is as an open sepulchre, they are all mighty men. And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds: they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword” (Jeremiah 5:14b–17). An important difference between the LDS and many other Christian faiths, is that as LDS we do not think the Lord has abandoned Israel in favor of the Gentile nations. “Nevertheless in those days, saith the LORD, I will not make a full end with you” (Jeremiah 5:18). The scriptures are replete with promises to Israel, for the Lord would in the last days begin to recover His people Israel from every corner of the earth. ¶ *Their root shall be rottenness.* Hosea used quite a similar expression and reasoning: “Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb. My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations” (Hosea 9:16–17). Root rot is a major and serious disease of plants. One cause of root rot is overwatering. ¶ *And their blossoms shall go up as dust.* The blossom is what turns into a flower and then into the fruit. When there is excess blossom fall, then trees and plants yield little fruit. How different from the promise of the Lord to those who would keep His statutes: “For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you” (Leviticus 26:9, *Rain in Due Season*). When Matthew Henry says, “The sin of unfruitfulness is punished with the plague of unfruitfulness” he is more correct than he could have ever imagined, as it is only in the highest degree of the

³⁰ The ASV uses the margin in this verse: “Therefore as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble, and as the dry grass sinketh down in the flame.”

Celestial Kingdom that man will be able to have increase and posterity. ¶ *Because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.* This is a reminder that the people of Israel had not kept the Law, and would now suffer the consequences described in *Rain in Due Season*: “...and ye shall sow your seed in vain ... neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits” (Leviticus 26:16b, 20b,); “The LORD shall smite thee ... with mildew ... Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit. (Deuteronomy 28:22, 40).

25 Therefore, is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them; and the hills did tremble, and their carcases [were] torn[✓] in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still.

✓ cut off

Therefore, is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people. We have seen the kindling of fire on the chaff, now we see the kindling of the indignation of the Lord. For “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes” (Proverbs 13:24); and “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth” (Hebrews 12:6a). But there is a pattern in all of this. The Lord does not destroy at the first sign of disobedience, but rather, after iniquity has ripened.³¹ ¶ *And he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them.* The outstretched hand of the Lord is symbolic of either judgment toward the children of Jacob, or mercy toward them. Here it is judgment. ¶ *And the hills did tremble.* Barns says: “Gesenius supposes that the expressions which follow are descriptive of pestilence. Lowth and Rosenmüller

³¹ Abraham would be greatly blessed of the Lord in the land of Canaan: “And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever” (Genesis 13:14–15). This promise is later clarified, as it would not take place during Abraham’s own lifetime. Before this would happen, Israel would become a captive people in Egypt. The Lord would not displace the Amorites who inhabited the promised land quite yet: “And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Genesis 15:13–16).

suppose that they refer to the earthquakes which occurred in the days of Uzziah, and in the time of the prophets.” It has also been suggested that during the Syro-Ephraimitish war (and one could add others such as the Syrian, Babylonian, and Roman invasions, for instance) that “the mountains may then have trembled with the marching of troops, and the din of arms, and the felling of trees, and the shout of war” (Delitzsch). ¶ *And their carcases were torn in the midst of the streets.* The Targum (Ⓢ) reads, “And their carcases were cast out as dung into the midst of the streets.” The picture is one of distress and pain. So we read in Jeremiah: “And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away (Jeremiah 7:33)”; as well as, “And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them. Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them; Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow. If I go forth into the field, then behold the slain with the sword! and if I enter into the city, then behold them that are sick with famine!” (Jeremiah 14:16–18a). ¶ *For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.* This phraseology is a *formula* similar to that in *Rain in Due Season* (“And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more [punishment] upon you according to your sins,” Leviticus 26:21, 24, 27, 28) for the multiplication of punishments to fall upon mankind in an effort to reclaim souls.

vv. 26–30. In Isaiah, we often see parallel structures that seem to be a simple repetition. Yet in them, we sometimes find that the Lord has a *hidden* statement within one of these parallel halves. Likewise, it would be easy to think that verses 26 through 30 are simply a description of further punishments to be poured out against Judah by the hand of a nation or nations to come from the north, namely Assyria and Babylonia. Alexander writes about the folly of *forced parallelism*, “These [false] constructions are so violent, and the contrary usage so plain, that the question naturally arises, why should the latter be departed from at all? The answer is, because the favorite notion of exact parallelism requires it. All the writers who maintain this opinion assume that the second clause must express the same idea with the first, and in the same order ... the modern writers must have parallelism still more exact, and to this rhetorical chimera both the syntax and the true sense of the passage must be sacrificed.” ¶ The reason these verses are challenging, is that *ensigns* can

be raised for war as much as for spreading the gospel. **Jeremiah 4** includes almost every single allusion in these verses in ISAIAH 5:26–30 and yet appears to be a warning to Judah to turn to the Lord or face dire consequences.³² We see the standard or ensign (v. 6), the lion (v. 7), swift chariots (v. 13) and horses (v. 13, 29), the coming from a far country (v. 16), and the impending darkness (v. 23, 28), the shaking mountains (v. 24), the bowmen (v. 29). But when we turn to Jeremiah 50, the tides have changed. It is now Babylon and Assyria—the subject that attacked Israel in Chapter 4—who is being pursued with force. So it is that in **Jeremiah 50** we have the ensign (v. 2); a nation that comes out of the north against Babylon (v. 3); even “an assembly of great nations from the north country” (v. 9, also v. 41); Israel is redeemed in tears of joy, “In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their God” (v. 4); bowmen of great accuracy, “their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain” (v. 9, also vv. 14, 29); although Israel had been devoured and her bones broken by the lion of Assyria and Babylon (v. 17, also 44), Jehovah would punish Assyria and Babylon (v. 18) and “bring Israel again to his habitation” (v. 19); a fire would be kindled (v. 32); the nations who shall fight against Babylon shall roar like the sea (v. 32); mighty horsemen (v. 42); and the voice of the armies shakes the land (v. 46)! ¶ In these verses the Lord *hisses* for the obedience of the nations from afar. In ISAIAH 18 we also see the speed with which the Lord’s ambassadors are sent to recover Israel. ¶ In ISAIAH 5:25 we read that the Lord’s hand is raised and stretched out still, ready to fall again on Judah. If ISAIAH 5:26 ff. are not about Judah being punished, it means that the Lord was left with the hand in the air. Is there any other analogous case? The answer is a resounding YES! Speaking of ISAIAH 9:21, Skinner says: “...we feel that the last word has not been spoken: the hand is still outstretched, we wait to hear of the final blow.” Indeed, there is nothing more frightening than a *vague* threat. The hanging expression is certainly filled with a great rhetorical power. ¶ Rawlinson, based on Oppert (*Inscriptions des Sargonides*, pp. 45, 46), wrote that “Sennacherib says in one of his inscriptions, that he carried off to Nineveh 200,150 captives on his first expedition against

Jerusalem.” Furthermore, we also know the Babylonians took thousands of captives also. Kay, however, makes a beautiful set of connections here: (1) “Of old the Lord had been Himself a ‘standard’ for His people to fight under,” as shown in Exodus 17:15, “And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi³³.” (2) “The description in ISAIAH 5:29 is plainly parallel to Hosea 5:14: ‘For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him.’” (3) Rather than “and shall carry it away safe” read, “‘he shall take alive.’ This is a singular expression; which almost compels us to think of God Himself as the real Invader (cp. especially ISAIAH 31:4–6). The verb means to ‘liberate’ from danger, to ‘cause to escape.’” ¶ The opposite word to Invader is Savior. And thus we would see this logical development, from the perspective of the LDS, as one where Christ is the Savior of His people Judah and Israel. Of course He sends His army to the ends of the earth to proclaim the good news, but it is He, even Jesus Christ who is the **Redeemer of Israel**. ¶ In Deuteronomy 28:39, *Rain in Due Season*, the Lord teaches Israel that if she is disobedient, “The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand.” In ISAIAH 18, however, we see how the Lord would bless Israel in the end of days. After the nations shall have trodden Israel under foot and punished her, in the last days a great blessing would come upon her, “In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.” And furthermore, we read: “Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: And they *shall be my people*, and *I will be their God*: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them.” (Jeremiah 32:37–40, emphasis added). To summarize then, while these verses in ISAIAH, on the surface, appear as an impending punishment, they are in reality a message of hope and deliverance. The source of all hope is Jesus the Christ. The glorious Gospel Standard has been erected, to go out to every corner of the world in order to gather Israel.

³² Elder Orson Hyde quoted some of these key verses in modern day, in a letter to Brother Joseph, while in route to Jerusalem. They appear to have been given as a summary of the suffering of the Jews, but also of yet future troubles to come upon Israel. Despite all that, the Lord would soon bless Judah. See Elder Orson Hyde’s Letter to Rabbi Hirschell, in Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts, 4:375–378.

³³ That is, “The Lord is my banner,” or, יהוה נסִי

26 And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth; and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly; none shall be weary nor stumble among them.*

* KJV begins new verse with "None shall be weary nor stumble among them."

And he will lift up an ensign to the nations (לְגוֹיִם) from far. Speaking of the gathering of Israel and the flow of nations unto the House of the Lord, Joseph Field Smith taught: "This prediction has been literally fulfilled. Thousands of people have come to the valleys of these mountains from all lands and climes, proclaiming these words of Isaiah³⁴ and Micah,³⁵ and here they have found the word of the Lord and have entered into the covenants, in the house of the Lord which the prophets said would be offered them that they might walk in his ways. No other place on the earth is there to be found a place which fits this description and unto which the people are gathering. Isaiah said further: 'And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly: None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken: Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind . . .' This may not have been fulfilled yet in completeness, but people have gathered swiftly. They have crossed the continent on trains without unlatching their shoes or removing their clothes, on their way to Zion. The time may not be far distant when they will come by air and thus fulfill all the rest of this prophecy. Then in speaking of horses' hoofs and wheels, may it not be that the prophet endeavored to picture the railroads on which the people should travel? Remember, this prophecy was spoken in Palestine and that is about as far away from these valleys as need be to fulfill the prophecy."³⁶ Elder Orson Pratt likewise taught: "'Where was Isaiah when he delivered this prophecy? In Palestine. Do you think you could get much further from Palestine and have an ensign raised up from afar? It is not an ensign that is to be raised up in the land of Palestine, right where the prophet predicted it; but he saw from afar, from a great distance,

³⁴ ISAIAH 2:2.

³⁵ Micah 4:1.

³⁶ Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Restoration of All Things*, p.143–144.

the great work God would perform in the latter day. 'Lift up an ensign for the nations;' not for one nation, not for a few people; but it was a work that was general in its nature—an ensign or standard the raising of which was to affect all the inhabitants of the earth."³⁷

Speaking of the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Joseph Fielding Smith also taught: "That ensign was the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which was established for the last time, never again to be destroyed or given to other people. It was the greatest event the world has seen since the day that the Redeemer was lifted upon the cross and worked out the infinite and eternal atonement. It meant more to mankind than anything else that has occurred since that day. No event should have been heralded among the people with greater effectiveness and received with greater evidence of joy and satisfaction. The nations should have rejoiced and welcomed it with gladness of heart, for with it came the establishment of divine truth in the earth—the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation unto all who believe. The world had been without this gospel for many hundreds of years, ever since the great apostasy and turning away from the truth which had been established by the primitive Church. Following the raising of this ensign, the Lord sent forth his elders clothed with the priesthood and with power and authority, among the nations of the earth, bearing witness unto all peoples of the restoration of his Church, and calling upon the children of men to repent and receive the gospel; for now it was being preached in all the world as a witness before the end should come, that is, the end of the reign of wickedness and the establishment of the millennial reign of peace. The elders went forth as they were commanded, and are still preaching the gospel and gathering out from the nations the seed of Israel unto whom the promise was made."³⁸ ¶ *And will hiss unto them from the end of the earth.* This hissing or whistling refers to a signal that beckons, summons, or invites people to come. Cyril is often quoted in this respect. In Lowth we have: "The metaphor is taken from the practice of those that keep bees; who draw them out of their hives into the fields, and lead them back again, συρισμασι, by a hiss or a whistle." Rawlinson likewise explains Cyril's words: "'Hissing' is said to have been practiced by bee-keepers to draw their bees out of the hives in the morning, and bring them home again from the fields at nightfall." We might say: to first disperse the children of Jacob to the four corners of the earth, but then to call Israel back home with tender mercies.

³⁷ Pratt, Elder Orson, "The Restoration of the Jews, Etc." *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 14, No. 9, May 26, 1871, pp. 58–70.

³⁸ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, edited by Bruce R. McConkie, 3:254–255.

¶ *And, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly.* The response to the call to come to Zion shall be a quick one, as a parallel passage in Zechariah: “And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the LORD their God, and will hear them. And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see it, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the LORD. I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased. And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and **turn again** (וָשׁוּבוּ)” (Zechariah 10:6–9). The Lord’s armies of missionaries shall go out swiftly among the nations to help bring in the harvest of souls. The Targum (Ⓣ) has: “And He will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and he will call him from the end of the earth: and, behold, a king with his army shall come swiftly, as light clouds” (Ⓣ). ¶ *None shall be weary nor stumble among them.* All of this would take place at a time when travelers would cover great distances in trains, boats and airplanes.

27 None shall be weary nor stumble among them;* None shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken;

* Book of Mormon begins this verse with “None shall slumber ...”

28 Whose arrows [are] shall be sharp, and all their bows bent, and their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind, their roaring [shall be] like a lion.*

* KJV begins new verse with “Their roaring [shall be] like a lion.”

29 Their roaring like a lion.* They shall roar like young lions; yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry [it] away safe, and none shall deliver [it].

* Book of Mormon and JST begins new verse with “They shall roar like young lions ...”

Lowth says, regarding these verses, “Kimhi has well illustrated this continued exaggeration or hyperbole, as he rightly calls it.” Kimhi, the Jewish exegete said,

“Through the greatness of their courage, they shall not be fatigued with their march; nor shall they stumble, though they march with the utmost speed: they shall not slumber by day, nor sleep by night; neither shall they ungird their armour, or put off their sandals, to take their rest: their arms shall be always in readiness, their arrows sharpened, and their bows bent: the hoof of their horses are hard as a rock; they shall not fail, or need to be shod with iron: the wheels of their carriages shall move as rapidly as a whirlwind” (Kimhi, in Lowth). There is much less hyperbole involved than what it appears to Kimhi and many other commentators. Elder Orson Pratt spoke of the swiftness with which the Saints would migrate to Zion: “‘Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?’ (ISAIAH 60:8). Sure enough we come with great speed. As Isaiah has said in the fifth chapter—the Lord should hiss unto thee from the ends of the earth, he should lift up an ensign for the nations, and they should come with speed swiftly; just as you emigrants do when you get on board of these railroads, when, instead of being ninety or a hundred days coming to this elevated region, as was the case for several years, you come in two or three days. ‘They shall come with speed swiftly, and he shall lift up an ensign from afar.’”³⁹ Similarly, Elder LeGrand Richards wrote: “Since there were neither trains nor airplanes in that day, Isaiah could hardly have mentioned them by name. However, he seems to have described them in unmistakable words. How better could ‘their horses hoofs be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind’ than in the modern train? How better could ‘their roaring . . . be like a lion’ than in the roar of the airplane? Trains and airplanes do not stop for night. Therefore, was not Isaiah justified in saying: ‘none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken’? With this manner of transportation the Lord can really ‘hiss unto them from the end of the earth,’ that ‘they shall come with speed swiftly.’ Indicating that Isaiah must have foreseen the airplane, he stated: ‘Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?’ (ISAIAH 60:8).”⁴⁰ The Lord’s armies surely will be a great force, but at the end, it is only the converting power of the Spirit of the Holy Ghost that provides any safety. The Savior, as we alluded to in Hosea 5:14 is our Redeemer: “For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him.”

³⁹ Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, 16:85.

⁴⁰ LeGrand Richards, *Israel! Do You Know?*, p.182.

30 And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if [~~one~~] they look unto the land, behold, darkness [and] sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof. ✓ ✓

✓ or, distress

✓ ✓ or, when it is light it shall be dark in the destructions thereof

And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: It seems that Isaiah was getting excited with the day of restoration, but as often happened in his prophecies, returned to the impending gloom that would precede the Second Coming. *In that day* refers to the end of days. The coming forth of the Gospel light would make the contrast all the more pronounced. And even after the Restoration, there would be gloomy times ahead, such as the Holocaust and the commotion of the earth in preparation for the Second Advent of our Lord and Savior. Regarding the times when there would be great devastation to come forth we read: “Wherefore, be not deceived, but continue in steadfastness, looking forth for the heavens to be shaken, and the earth to tremble and to reel to and fro as a drunken man, and for the valleys to be exalted, and for the mountains to be made low, and for the rough places to become smooth-and all this when the angel shall sound his trumpet. But before the great day of the Lord shall come, Jacob shall flourish in the wilderness, and the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose. Zion shall flourish upon the hills and rejoice upon the mountains, and shall be assembled together unto the place which I have appointed. Behold, I say unto you, go forth as I have commanded you; repent of all your sins; ask and ye shall receive; knock and it shall be opened unto you.

Behold, I will go before you and be your rearward; and I will be in your midst, and you shall not be confounded. Behold, I am Jesus Christ, and I come quickly. Even so. Amen” (D&C 49:23–28). ¶ *And the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.* “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light” (Mark 13:24); “But, behold, I say unto you that before this great day shall come the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall be turned into blood, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and there shall be greater signs in heaven above and in the earth beneath; And there shall be weeping and wailing among the hosts of men; And there shall be a great hailstorm sent forth to destroy the crops of the earth. And it shall come to pass, because of the wickedness of the world, that I will take vengeance upon the wicked, for they will not repent; for the cup of mine indignation is full; for behold, my blood shall not cleanse them if they hear me not. Wherefore, I the Lord God will send forth flies upon the face of the earth, which shall take hold of the inhabitants thereof, and shall eat their flesh, and shall cause maggots to come in upon them; And their tongues shall be stayed that they shall not utter against me; and their flesh shall fall from off their bones, and their eyes from their sockets; And it shall come to pass that the beasts of the forest and the fowls of the air shall devour them up. And the great and abominable church, which is the whore of all the earth, shall be cast down by devouring fire, according as it is spoken by the mouth of Ezekiel the prophet, who spoke of these things, which have not come to pass but surely must, as I live, for abominations shall not reign” (D&C 29:14–21).

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