

## Isaiah 9

כִּי־יֵלֶד יֵלֶד־לָנוּ בֶן נֹתֵן־לָנוּ  
 וְנִתְּהִי הַמְּשֻׁרָה עַל־שָׂכְמוֹ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ  
 : כִּלְא יוֹעֵץ אֵל גְּבוּר אָבִי עַד שֶׁר־שָׁלוֹם :

This chapter opens with the glorious Light that would shine upon Israel, where only darkness had existed before. The birth of the Messiah is put forth, as well as some of the glorious names that would describe Him. Because of the pride of the people, the Lord would stretch forth His hand with specific and terrible punishments. These thoughts are interrupted three quarters of the way through and continued in ISAIAH 10. Alexander notes: “The division of chapters is in this part of the book peculiarly unfortunate; the first part of the ninth ... containing the conclusion of the eighth, and the first part of the tenth ... the conclusion of the ninth.”

VV. 1–8. These verses are foremost Messianic in nature, although many have found application to the times when they were given.

1 ¶ NEVERTHELESS, the dimness [shall] not [be] such as [was] in her vexation, when at the\* first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards did more grievously afflict [her by] the way of the Red Sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. ✓

✓ or, populous

\* KJV and JST retain “the,” Book of Mormon does not.

NOTE: Verse 9:1 is included as 8:23 in the Hebrew scriptures (תנ"ך).

The ASV presents a beautiful and clear rendition of this verse: “But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations” (ASV). The ASV uses *gloom* rather than the KJV *dimness* for כּוֹעֵפָה. The idea can also be one of a *profound darkness* (Gesenius, HALOT). הִקְלִי can mean lightly esteemed, or *despised* (Gesenius, HALOT), or “brought into contempt” (ASV), for the KJV “lightly afflicted.” Whitehouse explains, “The general sense of the passage as it stands in the Hebrew text is fairly clear. In the former troubled days, preceding the downfall of Samaria, Tiglath-Pileser III had deprived the kingdom of Ephraim of its northern provinces, Zebulun and Naphtali. The ruin which Tiglath-Pileser had begun

Sargon completed in 722.” ¶ *Galilee of the nations*,<sup>1</sup> גְּלִיל הַגּוֹיִם. Galilee (גְּלִיל) also means *district*, so this region (גְּלִיל הַגּוֹיִם) could also be properly called district of *the gentiles*. We also read: “In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abelbethmaachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria” (2 Kings 15:29). The idea, then, is that in *the former* הַרְאֵשׁוֹן, derived from ראש, or *first* (times, days or epoch), Assyria, one of the gentile nations, would humiliate this area and take her away captive. These would be certainly some of the darkest days of Israel. But all of this in contrast to a day to come (הַאַחֲרָיוֹן) or *the latter* in contrast to *former* (Gesenius), something wonderful would happen in this same land of Galilee. In the context of the day when it was written, this Isaianic verse seems to be saying, that the dimness and vexation that would befall the land of Israel (Ephraim) by the hand of Assyria *would not be everlasting*. The time would come, where the very land occupied by the Northern Tribes, and more specifically, the tribes of Zebulun<sup>2</sup> and Naphtali,<sup>3</sup> would become

<sup>1</sup> The words גּוֹיִם, *goyim*, and ἔθνος, *ethnos*, can mean either gentiles, gentile nations, or nations, depending on their context. For instance, in Luke 2:32, it is my opinion that the verse should read “A light to lighten the *nations*, and the glory of thy people Israel.” By putting the word Gentiles in this verse, it implies that the Jews are left out. I do not believe that is the intent here. My interpretations are affected by my pro-Semitic stance.

<sup>2</sup> Zebulun was Israel’s tenth son, Leah’s 6<sup>th</sup>. “And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son. And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun” (Genesis 30:19–20).

Holy, for the Savior of Mankind would live and walk there during His Galilean ministry. All that gloominess in ISAIAH 8:21–22 is about to explode forth with a Great Light. Henderson tells us that the Rabbinic tradition states, “[in] the book of Zohar, part i. folio 119, Amst. יתגלי מלכא משיחא בארעה דגליל *Messiah the King shall be revealed in the land of Galilee.*” ¶ The New Testament confirms these thoughts: “Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up” (Matthew 4:12–16). ¶ *By the way of the Red Sea.* A number of critics have ridiculed the expression *Red Sea* (contained in both the Book of Mormon and the Inspired Version) and used it as a proof that the Book of Mormon is not true. They argue that the Red Sea is not exactly related in any way to Galilee. Yet we find a defense for the Prophet Joseph Smith and for the Book of Mormon in the ancient Targum (Ⓢ) which alludes to the miracles, by the power of God, that took place as Israel left Egypt behind (see ISAIAH 9:1–4—or 8:23–9:3—in the Ⓢ). Recall that there were two miraculous partings, the one that took place at the *Red Sea* (Exodus 14) and the one that took place at the *Jordan* (Joshua 3–4). While the word *red* does not appear in the Targum (Ⓢ) itself, the allusion to the Red Sea is clear. Stenning’s translation is: “because they remembered not the mighty act *which was done* at the sea, the miracles of Jordan.” Chilton has, “because they did not remember the *prodigy* of the sea, the wonders of Jordan.” Pauli renders it as, “because they did not remember the power of the *Red Sea*, neither the wonders of the Jordan.” The Targum (Ⓢ), then, chides the children of Israel for *not remembering the mighty [Red] sea nor the miracle of the Jordan*:  
 4“דָּלָא אִידְכְּרוּ גְבוּרַת יְמָא נִיִּסֵי יַרְדֵּנָא” In this place, Henderson well says that when we have יַרְדֵּן, it could refer to the Mediterranean, the Red Sea or even

<sup>3</sup> Naphtali was Israel’s sixth son, Bihah’s 2<sup>nd</sup>. Bilhah was Rachel’s maid. “And Bilhah Rachel’s maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali” (Genesis 30:7–8).

<sup>4</sup> The Aramaic comes from the *The Targums from the files of the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project*, Targum Jonathan to the Prophets, ISAIAH 8:23, LOGOS. For different pointing, see Sperber, Alexander. *The Bible in Aramaic based on Old Manuscripts and Printed Texts*, Brill, 2004, p. 531; and Stenning, p. 31.

the Dead Sea. Even though Henderson thinks of the Sea of Tiberias (or Cinnereth) best fits the ellipsis, he mentions that the Red Sea is mentioned in ISAIAH 10:26. We have already said that ISAIAH 10 is intimately connected with this chapter. In ISAIAH 10:24 we see, again, an allusion to Egypt, and more specifically to the deliverance from Egypt in the Red Sea: “and *as his rod was upon the sea*, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt” (ISAIAH 10:26b). The Rabbis also ascribed this verse to the Red Sea, as we find in the Talmud tradition (Seder Nezikin, Sanhedrin 94b): “What is meant by, When aforetime the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali did lighten [its burden], but in later times it was made heavy by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilea of the nations? — It is not as the early generations, who rejected the yoke of the Torah; but as for the latter generations who strengthened the yoke of the Torah upon themselves and are therefore worthy of having a miracle wrought for them, like those who passed over the [Red] Sea and the Jordan” (Talmud, Soncino).

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**2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.**

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This verse forms a parallel structure: People that walked in darkness / Light / Land of the shadow of death / Light. Yet, as we have mentioned before, Isaiah would sometimes tuck in diverse thoughts in what many may have thought was simply parallel repetition. While the Light is the same in both cases, the two areas of darkness are different. ¶ *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.* To walk in darkness means to walk in *apostasy and captivity* (LDS footnote 2a). Isaiah has kept in this glorious thing, and now cannot contain it any longer. The Light of the world, even Christ, the very Messiah would burst upon the scene of mankind. From Matthew 4:12–16, it is clear that these Isaianic verses are a contrast between the horrors of war and removal by Assyria (a Gentile nation) and the Galilean ministry of the Christ. John wrote: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (John 1:1–5). Similar contrasts existed in the Savior’s ministry in the American continent after days of thick darkness—so also in the

Spirit World.<sup>5</sup> Anytime a person decides to walk in the way of the Lord, such transformation occurs—between darkness and light. They day will come, indeed, when: “The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended” (ISAIAH 60:19–20). ¶ *They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death. Upon them hath the light shined.* As we already saw in Matthew 4:12–16, these verses are particularly an allusion to the Savior’s Galilean ministry. Simeon had waited for the *consolation of Israel*, that is, the coming of the Holy Messiah. When the child Jesus was brought to the temple, and Simeon held the Savior, he gave thanks to God and said: “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the nations, and the glory of thy people Israel” (Luke 2:29–32, KJV, ἔθνος, *nations* substituted for *Gentiles*).<sup>6</sup> The Targum (Ⲯ), interestingly, continues to make allusion to the darkness felt by Israel as she lived and escaped out of Egypt. This light we have been speaking off, is not only the Savior, but *His restored Gospel*. Just as when the Savior walked upon the earth in person but many did not recognize Him as such, so will it be when the Gospel is restored among the gentile nations: “And when the times of the Gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fulness of my gospel; But they receive it not; for they perceive not the light, and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men. And in that generation shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (D&C 45:28–30).

3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, [and] **net** ✓ increased the joy—and they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, [and] as [men] rejoice when they divide the spoil.

✓ or, to him

*Thou hast multiplied the nation, and increased the joy.*

<sup>5</sup> “While this vast multitude waited and conversed, rejoicing in the hour of their deliverance from the chains of death, the Son of God appeared, declaring liberty to the captives who had been faithful” (D&C 138:18).

<sup>6</sup> YLT, LITV, MKJV, and not surprisingly the HNV, use the word *nations* for ἔθνος in this verse.

The Prophet Joseph Smith, by inspiration, corrected the verse to remove the negative. While the KJV reads **net**, *not*, most Hebraists including Gesenius, Lowth,<sup>7</sup> Delitzsch, Nægelsbach, Alexander, and others agree with the Prophet Joseph Smith in rendering it **to** as in the margin ||, *to him*. We have said that the original Hebrew text (Ⲛ) did not contain the many points and symbols, *puncta extraordinaria*, that it has since acquired. These were added by the Massorettes, as an aid in pronunciation and preservation of the text.

Among the notes, there is what is known as the **Qeri** and **Kethiv**, respectively. These stand for *that which is read* (Ⲛ) vs. *that which is written* (Ⲛ). The Masorettes, we have said, wanted to avoid any further corruption of the text. So rather than making an orthographical correction by deleting the incorrectly spelled word, and substituting what they considered correct, they instead preserved the extant orthography or word, and suggested the changes in margin || or critical apparatus. So it is that the Massora explains that this is “one of 17 instances where **net**, written thus, has the meaning of **to** [Mm 1795]”<sup>8</sup> ¶ This verse seems to have reference to ISAIAH 54:1, “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD” and ISAIAH 26:15, “Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth.” While the Lord had permitted Israel to be scattered, Isaiah could see the day when she would be gathered in much increased in population. I would suggest that this *increased nation* would include such peoples as the Lamanites in the American continent and isles of the sea, as well as the Lost Tribes. The majority of Church members are literal descendants of Jacob<sup>9</sup> rather than adopted. The first to join the Church in this dispensation of the fullness of times were generally from Ephraim, but as the Church expands into every corner of the earth, there are those

<sup>7</sup> Eleven manuscripts (two ancient) read **to**, according to the Masoretic correction” (Lowth)

<sup>8</sup> Kelly, P. H.; Mynatt, D. S. & Crawford, T. G. *The Masorah of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: Introduction and Annotated Glossary*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1998, p. 119. For more on this subject especially see pages 1–11. Also see *The Masoretic Notes: Contained in the Edition of the Hebrew Scriptures* published by The British and Foreign Bible Society, translated and explained by Alfred S. Geden. 1905; as well as Christian D. Gingsburg, *The Massorah translated into English with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, Vol. IV. 1905.

<sup>9</sup> Smith, Joseph Fielding. *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:246.

from other tribes that are coming into the fold.<sup>10</sup> So it is that a remnant would return. ¶ *And they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest.* That is, the joy of a plentiful harvest, often celebrated by end of season festivities. Henry suggests that those things that are hard bring more joy than those things that are easy: “When those who sowed in tears, and have with long patience waited for the precious fruits of the earth, reap in joy.” Barnes explains, “The phrase ‘before thee’ refers to the fact that the first fruits of the harvest among the Hebrews were presented with thanksgiving before God in the temple; Deuteronomy 12:7<sup>11</sup>; 14:22–26<sup>12</sup> (also see Delitzsch). In ISAIAH 18 we see how Judah would be brought back to her Lord in the last days, even to the temple, to mount Zion. Harvest festivals and celebrations are an important part of agrarian societies. ¶ *And as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.* This is an allusion to the joy of the victor after a battle. Christ will be the victor.

**4 For thou hast broken ✓ the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor. as in the day of Midian.**

✓ or, When thou brakest

*For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor.* With Ludlow, I see in this verse a Messianic utterance. In ISAIAH 10:27 we have a parallel scripture: “And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.” Or rather, as the Targum (Ⓢ) in ISAIAH 10:27, “*from before the Messiah*”<sup>13</sup> (בְּיָמֵי מְשִׁיחָא), or the **Anointed One**. This verse seems to speak of the sufferings of Christ, who would take upon the burdens of the world on His shoulder, and literally, on the way to Golgotha, he would bear a staff on His shoulders. Messiah has, through His suffering and resurrection, broken all bonds. I had expected at least one translator

<sup>10</sup> See for instance, Faust, James E. “Priesthood Blessings,” Sunday Morning Session, *October 1995 General Conference* (November 1995 *Ensign*, p. 62).

<sup>11</sup> “And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee” (Deuteronomy 12:7).

<sup>12</sup> “And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn [i.e., grain, such as wheat, oats, etc.—in old British English corn is not maize, something I learned from Rabbi Shaye J.D. Cohen], of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always” (Deuteronomy 14:23, also see verses 22, 24–26).

<sup>13</sup> CAL.

to render ISAIAH 9:4 with capital letters: “For Thou hast broken the yoke of His burden, and the staff of His shoulder, the rod of His oppressor.” If “His burden” סְבִילֹו is taken as representative of the Savior, who, then, is “His oppressor,” הַמְגִישׁ בּוֹ? ¶ *The rod of his oppressor.* In the pre-existence and in mortality Satan attempted against Christ. As Elder James E. Talmage points out, this did not only happen in the wilderness, but at different points in the Savior’s life. In the last supper, speaking of His apostles, the Savior said, “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations” (Luke 22:28).<sup>14</sup> But the idea here is that Christ would break the bands of death: “O death, where is thy sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:55a), and would crush Satan: “And I will put enmity between thee [Satan] and the woman [Eve], and between thy seed [Satan and his followers] and her seed [Christ, born of Mary]; it [rather, He, Christ] shall bruise thy head [or crush Satan], and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15).<sup>15</sup> So also the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to the Pentateuch, which has an explicit allusion to Christ, or “*in the days of King Messiah*”: בְּיָמֵי מְלָכָא מְשִׁיחָא. Christ shall have power to overcome all things, even to “the destroying of Satan and his works at the end of the world” (D&C 19:3b). Many commentators have thought of this Isaianic verse as man being freed from bondage through Christ’s triumph. Certainly, this does not contradict what we have said. The burden would be lifted off the shoulders of each individual who will turn and walk in the way of the Lord. This was done through the infinite atonement as the burden was placed on the Savior. ¶ ~~As in the day of Midian.~~ The Book of Mormon does not contain the clause, “as in the day of Midian.” Nyman suggests: “This could be an intentional omission by Nephi, as it did not apply to his people.” In

<sup>14</sup> Talmage explains: “It is not to be supposed that Christ’s victorious emergence from the dark clouds of the three specified temptations exempted Him from further assaults by Satan ... Luke closes his account of the temptations following the forty-day fast as follows: ‘And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.’ This victory over the devil ... [was] great but not final successes in the struggle between Jesus, the embodied God, and Satan, the fallen angel of light. That Christ was subject to temptation during the period of His association with the apostles He expressly affirmed ... Shortly before His betrayal, when admonishing the Twelve to humility, He said: ‘Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.’” Talmage, James E. *Jesus the Christ: A Study of the Messiah and His Mission According to Holy Scriptures Both Ancient and Modern*, pp.125, 127.

<sup>15</sup> “*Gen iii. 15. Schöttgen* conjectures that the Talmudic designation of ‘heels of the Messiah’ (Sot. 49 b, line 2 from top) in reference to the near Advent of the Messiah in the description of the troubles of those days (comp. St. Matthew 10: 35, 36) may have been chosen partly with a view to this passage.” Edersheim, Alfred. *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. Appendix IX. List Of Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied In Ancient Rabbinic Writings (Vol. i. Book II. ch. v.)

Midian the Lord saved Israel with only a few men “lest Israel vaunt themselves against me [the Lord], saying, Mine own hand hath saved me” (Judges 7:2); in His expiatory sacrifice, the Savior accomplished salvation by treading the wine press *alone*.

5 For every battle of the warrior [is] ✓ with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but [this] shall be with burning [and] fuel ✓ of fire.

- ✓ or, When the whole battle of the warrior was, &c.
- ✓ ✓ meat

This verse may be translated along these lines: “For every sandal / shoe / military boot that makes the earth tremble / quake / shake, and garment / clothing soaked in blood, shall come to be as combustible fuel for fire.” The noise of the soldiers advancing shakes the earth and resounds in the ear. Many modern Hebraists believe that rather than *warrior*, **נַעֲלָו** means shoe, boot, or sandal, based on the root, **נָעַף**. Rabbi Kimhi (in Kay) renders it “For every boot of trampling warrior.” Lowth translates as “The greaves<sup>16</sup> of the armed warrior” and explains: “This word, occurring only in one place, is of very doubtful signification. ... it seems as if something was rather meant which was capable of becoming fuel for the fire, together with the garments mentioned in the same sentence. In Syriac, the word, as a noun, signifies a *shoe* or a *sandal*, as a learned friend suggested to me some years ago: see Luke 15:22; Acts 12:8. I take it therefore to mean that part of the armour which covered the legs and feet, and I would render the two words [that is, **נַעֲלָו נַעֲלָוִים**] in Latin by *caliga caligati*. The burning of heaps of armour, gathered from the field of battle, as an offering made to the god supposed to be the giver of victory, was a custom that prevailed among some heathen nations; and the Romans used it as an emblem of peace: which perfectly well suits with the design of the Prophet in this place. A medal, struck by Vespasian on finishing his wars both at home and abroad, represents the goddess Peace, holding an olive branch in one hand, and with a lighted torch in the other setting fire to a heap of armour.” ¶ A large number of commentators are agreed that this verse represents the putting away of war in the millennium, to give place to peace, through Him whom peace comes. Lowth has compared this verse with one in Psalms that fits a similar context (in Psalms it is the chariot that is burnt to signify the end of war, while here it is the boots and the clothing of the soldier): “He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in

the fire” (Psalm 46:8, also see Psalm 46:7–11). Henderson suggests that “this verse describes the sure indications of a state of lasting peace, in language borrowed from an ancient custom of burning implements of war that had been taken from the enemy.” While man’s typical battles entail both terrifying noise and bloodshed, at the end-of-days the wicked will be burnt. Delitzsch sees the verse as building to the glorious King mentioned in verse ISAIAH 9:6: “Upon the two sentences with **וְ** [i.e., *for*] the prophet now builds a third. The reason for the triumph is the deliverance effected; and the reason for the deliverance, the destruction of the foe; and the reason for all the joy, all the freedom, all the peace, is the new great King.”

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.* This beautiful verse is beloved of all Christendom and made immortal by Handel’s Messiah. It testifies of Messiah, who would be born of woman, yet be Son of God. “By means of the words **וְיָלֵד**, ‘child,’ and **וְיָלֵד**, ‘is born,’ [Isaiah] has called attention to the Messiah’s humanity, but by the phrase **אֵל יְבִרָה** we are brought face to face with Messiah’s deity. This interpretation is strengthened by the word **פֶּלְאָא** in the first name. He is a *Wonder*, and in the light of this strong designation, we may well expect that in the second name also the prophet is attributing deity to the Messiah” (Young). Nyman suggests: “The angel who spoke to the shepherds on the night of Christ’s birth paraphrased ISAIAH 9:6 (see Luke 2:10–11)<sup>17</sup>” (Nyman). ¶ *And the government shall be upon his shoulder.* Although a rightful heir of the Davidic monarchy, Christ would not be a ruler in meridian of time, when He came upon the earth as the Lamb, but will be such when He comes as the Lion, and reigns personally upon the earth during the Millennium. Contrasting the government upon His shoulder and the staff of His shoulder (in ISAIAH 9:4), Calvin says, “I agree with those who think that there is an indirect contrast between *the government* which the Redeemer bore on his shoulders and the *staff of the shoulder*

<sup>17</sup> “And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10–11).

<sup>16</sup> “Armor for the leg below the knee” (Webster).

which was just now mentioned; for it agrees well, and is not liable to any objections.” ¶ *And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God,*<sup>18</sup> *The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.* To those who deny the divinity of Christ, we point to this scripture, which clearly states that the Christ child is the *Mighty God*, or אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹר. LDS understand, also, that Christ is also our *Everlasting Father*, אָבִי עֶד, in several types of contexts. Jesus Christ is: “the Father as creator... ‘Father’ of Those Who Abide in His Gospel ... [and] ‘Father’ by Divine Investiture of Authority.”<sup>19</sup> The Savior is also our Brother and Son of God, Elohim. Some moderns have made ‘wonderful’ an adjective pertaining to the title ‘Counselor,’ and thus render it, ‘Wonderful Counselor.’ Such joining of these words, explains Henderson, “on the specious ground, that all the other titles are in pairs; but whatever uniformity in point of construction might thus be introduced into the passage, it is completely at variance with Hebrew construction. To admit of this rendering, the form must be פְּלֵא עֲצָה, and not פְּלֵא יוֹעֵץ.” So also Delitzsch and Alexander, regarding the distinctiveness of the two titles. Regarding the title שֵׁר-שָׁלוֹם, *Prince of Peace*, Cheyne says, “[is] in striking contrast to the false ideal represented by Assyria.” The Targum (Ⓢ) reads: “The

<sup>18</sup> There is an interesting exegetical note here by Nägelsbach, regarding the use of the word אֱלֹהִים or *God* and its implications within the doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: “The question arises: can this name אֱלֹהִים ‘God’ be applied to a creature, and in what sense? Ps. 82:1, 6, comp. John 10:34 sq., are cited, where princes are called אֱלֹהִים ‘gods.’ When the Jews would have stoned Jesus ‘for blasphemy and because, being a man, he made himself God,’ Jesus replied by referring to the Psalm: ‘Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?’ Evidently He would say that it is not under all circumstances blasphemy to predicate divinity of a man, because otherwise the Psalm could not possibly have spoken so of men. He [Christ] therefore does not deny that he had called Himself *God*, but He challenged the right of the Jews to charge Him on that account with blasphemy, because it was possible He may have called Himself *God* in that sense that was allowable from their standpoint. It appears therefore that the notion אֱלֹהִים certainly can be used in various senses, and in some circumstances may be said of a creature, and without blasphemy. But there is a difference between אֱלֹהִים and אֱלֹהִים. For the former is never used in the wide sense in which we see the latter used.” Nägelsbach goes on to argue that אֱלֹהִים only takes place where *God* is intended, rather than god. Regardless of the merit of such an argument about the distinction between אֱלֹהִים and אֱלֹהִים, this discussion is of interest. In the LDS footnotes in the KJV, we find regarding Psalm 82:6, footnote a, after the word *child* in this context, “Topic Guide Man, A Spirit Child of Heavenly Father; Man, Potential to Become Like Heavenly Father; Sons and Daughters of God; Spirit Creation.”

<sup>19</sup> Mosiah 15:1–7, Ether 3:12, and “The Father and the Son: A Doctrinal Exposition by the First Presidency and the Twelve,” in James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. [1924], pp. 465–73). Also see April 2002 *Ensign*.

prophet saith to the house of David, For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and He has taken the law upon Himself to keep it. His name is called from eternity, Wonderful, The Mighty God, who liveth to eternity, The Messiah, whose peace shall be great upon us in His days.” Note again how Messiah and God are interchangeable titles here. ¶ Henderson makes an important contribution here: “For thought they are not [the words describing Messiah] expressly or verbally quoted, it is evident the angel Gabriel thus applies them in his annunciation to Mary, Luke 1:32, 33). *First*, her child was to be ‘the *Son* of the Highest,’ in reference to the part of the prophecy, ‘To us a *Son* is given.’ *Secondly*, he was to be ‘great,’ which the assemblage of exalted and distinguished names in the prediction sufficiently indicates. *Thirdly*, he was to have given to him ‘the throne of his father David,’ which corresponds to ‘his government upon the throne of David’ in the prophecy; and his ‘reigning over the house of Jacob,’ to his being ‘over the kingdom of David’ in the following clause. *Fourthly*, the words, ‘Of his kingdom there shall be no end,’ are almost a literal quotation of the words, ‘Of the increase of his government—there shall be no end.” ¶ Despite the preferred translation of שֵׁר-שָׁלוֹם, as *Prince of Peace*, we read of the following dilemma in the translation of this passage by the *Jewish Publication Society*, “... but they had trouble with the translation of שֵׁר-שָׁלוֹם.’ Leeser<sup>20</sup> employed the phrase ‘prince of peace,’ using the lower case to avoid (presumably) misinterpretation. Samuel Schulman of the JPS translation committee urged his colleagues to follow the same practice, since ‘it calls attention to the fact, that we wish to avoid any possible Christological interpretation of the phrase.’ Max L. Margolis and Cyrus Adler, by contrast, insisted that using the lower case would imply that the ‘prince of peace’ was a human being, ‘exactly the thing we wished to avoid.’ Strongly worded letters flew back and forth. The final translation, clearly influenced more by the desire to instruct Christians and defend Jews than by considerations of scholarship, banished ‘prince of peace’ altogether: ‘For a child is born unto us, / A son is given us; / And the government is upon his shoulder; / And his name is called / <sup>a</sup>Pele-joez-el-gibbor-Abi-ad-sar-shalom. That is, Wonderful in counsel is God the Mighty, the everlasting father, the Ruler of peace.’”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Isaac Leeser (1806–1868) was one of the earliest Jewish translators of the Holy Scriptures into English, and one of my very favorite translators. I began to appreciate Leeser’s work long before I realized it was a Jewish translation. I first came across it through *e-Sword*. Later, I purchased my own hard copy. I love literal translations and Leeser’s is quite literal. What is much sadder to me, are translations produced for Christian audiences which obscure the Christ.

<sup>21</sup> Frerichs, Ernest S. (editor). *The Bible and Bibles in America*. Scholars Press, Atlanta, 1988, p. 100. Of particular interest in this

7 Of the increase of [his] government and peace [there shall be] is no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

*Of the increase of his government and peace there is no end.* These words refer to Christ, and His theocratic government. Some of the allusions are to the first coming of Christ and others to the second. Elder Holland writes: “One of the beautiful reminders in this magnificent passage, even with its splendor and royalty and sense of triumph, is the gentle declaration that through all of his power and majesty, Christ is still ‘the Son’ . . . humble, obedient, submissive, willing to yield to the demands of mortality, doing all this that he might ultimately order the government of temporal beings (the flesh) after the higher laws of divine transcendence (the spirit). We are reminded here that he is, gloriously, the Son of God, a child of heaven. The fact that the government would eventually be upon his shoulders affirms what all the world will one day acknowledge—that he is Lord of lords and King of kings and will one day rule over the earth and his Church in person, with all the majesty and sacred vestments belonging to a holy sovereign and a high priest. All can take comfort from the fact that because the government—and the burdens thereof—will be upon his shoulders, they will be lifted in great measure from our own. This is yet another reference in Isaiah to the Atonement, the bearing away of our sins (or at very least in this reference, our temporal burdens) on the shoulders of Christ.”<sup>22</sup> For Christ, says Calvin, “shall reign . . . over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end (Luke 1:33). We see that the mightiest governments of this world, as if they had been built on a slippery foundation (Psalm 73:18), are unexpectedly overturned and suddenly fall. How fickle and changeable all the kingdoms under heaven are, we learn from history and from daily examples.” Regarding שָׁלוֹם, Alexander explains: “Peace, though included in שָׁלוֹם, is not a

book to LDS readers, it mentions the good regard held by the Prophet Joseph Smith for his Hebrew tutor, Joshua Seixas: “Joshua Seixas, son of the famous Shearith Israel minister and also the author of a Hebrew grammar (1833, 1834), taught Hebrew at various colleges in Ohio. His best known student was Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, who held Seixas in high regard.” (p. 91). Also of interest is all of Chapter 7, entitled, “The Sacred Literature of the Latter-day Saints,” by Kent P. Jackson (pp. 163–191).

<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon*, p.80.

full equivalent. The Hebrew word denotes not only peace as opposed to war, intestine strife, or turbulence, but welfare and prosperity in general as opposed to want and sorrow. The reign here predicted was to be not only peaceful but in every respect prosperous. And this prosperity, like the reign of which is predicted, is to have no limit, either temporal or local. It is to be both universal and eternal.” ¶ *Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom.* Christ or Messiah would be born of the house of David, descendant of Judah. “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 people be” (Genesis 49:10). Furthermore we read, “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jeremiah 23:5–6). David is also another name given to King Messiah: “For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished” (Jeremiah 30:8–11); “And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd” (Ezekiel 34:23–24, and see also Ezekiel 37:24–25); “Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days” (Hosea 3:5). Of the *Second David* Elder McConkie wrote: “How beautiful the holy word is! How better could the ancient prophets have taught the glory and power of Christ's millennial reign than to equate it with the image David had in the eyes of the people? And David's greater Son shall soon come as the Second David to rule and reign over Israel and the world forever.”<sup>23</sup> ¶ *To order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever.* The kingdom of the Messiah will be eternal,

<sup>23</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man*, p.610.

**עוֹלָם**. The words *judgment* (**מִשְׁפָּט**) and *justice* (**צִדְקָה**) are frequent ones in the Old Testament, and are characteristic of what is expected of His disciples. Yet they are best exemplified by the Lord Himself. Justice implies acting in *rectitude*, while judgment has to do with *fairness*. ¶ *The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this*. This great work would be carried out by God, not man. Regarding zeal, Barnes explains: “The word used here denotes ‘ardor,’ intense desire in accomplishing an object.”

vv. 8–21 and these thoughts continue through ISAIAH 10:4. These verses, says Lowth, when “healed of the dislocation which it suffers by the absurd division of the chapters, makes a distinct prophecy, and a just poem, remarkable for the regularity of its disposition, and the elegance of its plan.” While on the surface, it appears that these verses, beginning with verse 8, are directed solely at Ephraim, they also seem to encompass the ungodly in Judah and Jerusalem. Israel would be punished for her iniquities. Chapter 8, which is also part of this larger thought, contains the idea of the darkness and burning that would exist, and here in Chapter 9, we return to these same thoughts, and in the middle of the chiasmic pattern, is the good news about coming Messiah in the meridian of times.

**8 ¶ The Lord sent a his word into unto Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.**

With this play on words, the Lord (Lowth knows of thirty Hebrew manuscripts that have LORD, or Yahweh, rather than Adonai, Lord), seems to now address Ephraim. According to Alexander, “The word which God had uttered against Israel had reached them as a message from him, as a revelation, so that there could be no doubt as to its authority and genuineness.” Nyman notes, “The Book of Mormon renders it ‘his word’ rather than ‘a word’ in the KJV. This retention broadens the meaning to include the gospel rather than just a single prophecy” (Nyman).

**9 And all the people shall know, [even] Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart:**

*And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria.* Samaria was the capital of Ephraim. The Targum (Ⓢ) reads: “The people, all of them have become great; Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, that say in the greatness and stoutness of heart.” ¶ *That say in the pride and stoutness of heart:*

The words beginning with ISAIAH 9:10, spoken by the inhabitants of Samaria and Ephraim (both of whom had combined against Judah) are those of great conceit and arrogance.

**10 The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycomores are cut down, but we will change [them into] cedars.**

This verse seems to refer to the pride of the people of Ephraim, and particularly those in Samaria, in terms of the construction of their edifices. “Tear our buildings down,” they bragged, “and we will build them again of even stronger materials.”<sup>24</sup> Alexander explains, “The oriental bricks are unburnt, so that most of their brick structures are as little durable as mud walls. The sycamore is durable, but too light and spongy to be used in solid building.” *Hewn* refers to that which is “cut with blows of a heavy cutting instrument ... to give form or shape to with or as if with heavy cutting blows” (Webster). These, perhaps, were quarried stones (see writings of Esarhaddon, in notes to ISAIAH 10:34). The exegetes are not in agreement as to which tree is intended here by **סְמוֹרֹם**, translated as *sycamores*. It seemed to have been a common tree of little value, in contrast to the rare, yet lofty, cedar **קִדְמוֹן**. Rawlinson points out such a contrast in 2 Chronicles 1:15: “And the king made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that are in the vale for abundance.” We find a similar scripture *about the futility of re-building, unless one builds upon the Rock of Jesus Christ*, in Malachi 1:4a, “Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down.” The pride and arrogance of the people is made clearly manifest.

**11 Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join<sup>v</sup> his enemies together;**

<sup>v</sup> mingle

<sup>24</sup> Just coincidentally, I have been working on this chapter of Isaiah for the last couple of months, and it was yesterday, 11 September 2001, that the horrible events surrounding the attack on the World Trade Center twin towers, the Pentagon, and so on took place. Today is the 12<sup>th</sup> of September, and as I was getting ready to come to work, a member of Congress stood up to make a declaration, which I heard on television. He quoted this verse of Isaiah with no further explanation. I do not know if he quoted in ignorance, for left alone, it is a self-accusation of the pride and arrogance of a nation that did not fear God.

12 The Syrians before and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still.

✓ whole

*Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together.* Rezin was the King of Syria (introduced in ISAIAH 7:1). The Lord would bring enemies against Ephraim because she had arrogantly boasted. The Northern Kingdom prided in that her war-torn structures would be rebuilt with finer manmade edifices. Among these enemies would be both Syria (i.e., Aram, who at present was her ally) and the Philistines (even though the scriptures are otherwise silent on this matter). These two verses in Isaiah are difficult indeed. I will share three of the leading options suggested by the exegetes, although none of them give a truly satisfactory explanation: (1) that the adversary of Rezin was Assyria (Asshur is not explicitly among the nations mentioned in ISAIAH 9:12, although some feel it is implied); (2) that one ought to read שָׂרִי (princes) for צָרִי (enemies), based on Hebrew manuscripts found by Houbigant;<sup>25</sup> and (3) that “devour Israel” implies all of Israel, not Ephraim alone but Judah also. This third view is espoused by Delitzsch “... for the northern kingdom never suffered anything from the Philistines; whereas an invasion of Judah by the Philistines was really one of the judgments belonging to the time of Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28:16–19). Consequently by *Israel* here we are to understand all Israel, the two halves of which would become a rich prize to the enemy. Ephraim would be swallowed up by Aram,—namely, by those who had been subjected by Asshur, and were now tributary to it,—and Judah would be swallowed up by the Philistines.” ¶ *The Syrians before and the Philistines behind.* The expression (אַרְם מִקְדָּם) *Aram before* is sometimes translated as “Aram from the East”; while for מִאֲחֹרֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים and *Phelishtim behind* is translated as “and the Philistines from the West.” Rawlinson explains, “The Semitic races regarded the world as looking to the rising sun, and used for the east the preposition signifying ‘in front,’ for the west that

<sup>25</sup> “For צָרִי, *enemies*, Houbigant by conjecture reads שָׂרִי, *princes*; which is confirmed by twenty-one MSS (two ancient), and nine more have צ upon a rasure, and therefore had probably at first שָׂרִי.” –Lowth. This second alternative simply means that Syria, who had been an ally to Ephraim, would turn against Ephraim. And not Syria alone, but also the Philistines.

signifying ‘behind.’” The Vulgate (V) thus has: “Syriam ab Oriente, et Philisthiim ab Occidente,” and the LXX (G), “The Syrians from the east, and, the Philistines from the west.” ¶ *And they shall devour Israel with open mouth.* With these words Isaiah paints a picture of the horror and completeness of the attack. ¶ *For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.* In connection with the Lord, the words *hand* (יָד) and his *arm* (זְרוֹעַ) are reflexive of the power of God: “I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments” (Exodus 6:6b); “Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, ... by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm (וּבְיָד חֲזָקָה וּבְזְרוֹעַ נְטוּיָה), ... according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him” (Deuteronomy 4:34–35). The idea of a hand that is stretched out is frequent in Isaiah, and the expression “stretched out still” appears four times in ISAIAH 9–10. This expression means that the Lord is not asleep or gone away on a trip, but that His hand or power is very much alive and active. In ISAIAH 9 and 10, it is equivalent to the repeated expression in *Rain in Due Season*, Leviticus 26, “and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.” The number *seven* in Hebrew has a special significance, and among its meanings is the implication of perfection. Seven or שֶׁבַע often stands for the word *perfect*. So the Lord would punish Israel with a *perfect* punishment. In the latter days the Lord would explain that likewise, *Endless Punishment* meant *God’s Punishment*: “For, behold, the mystery of godliness, how great is it! For, behold, I am endless, and the punishment which is given from my hand is endless punishment, for Endless is my name” (D&C 13:10a).

13 For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts.

וְהָעָם לֹא־שָׁב. Regarding וְ, often translated as *and* (e.g., Targum, T and Vulgate, V), rather than the Hebrew כִּי, that is, *for*. Calvin explains, “The copulative וְ is rendered by some interpreters *for*, as if the Prophet were assigning a reason why the Lord does not cease to employ his scourges in the continual infliction of chastisements; that is, because *the people* are so hardened and obstinate that they will not repent.” The fact is here mentioned, that the people *turneth not* (לֹא־שָׁב), that is, refuse to repent. One of the first signs of repentance might be that of seeking after the Lord.

14 Therefore **will** the LORD ~~will~~ cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush in one day.

15 The ancient ~~and honourable~~, he **[is]** the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he **[is]** the tail.

*Therefore will the LORD cut off from Israel head and tail.* Isaiah interprets verse 14 for us by explaining that: “The ancient, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.” The prophets referred to here are either the *false prophets*—those who had not been ordained and commissioned by the Lord—or the *fallen prophets*. In the whole of the Bible narrative there were few men of God who fell away. Most likely, Isaiah was speaking of the false prophet.<sup>26</sup> This verse, then, can be better understood if we fill in the missing ellipsis, “the *false* prophet that teacheth lies.” As LDS we often equate the word *prophet* with the leader of the Lord’s Church upon the earth, the *Prophet, Seer, and Revelator*. While some prophets in former times also led the Church (Moses, Joshua, and Nephi being notable examples), many prophets had no administrative obligations. Furthermore, there often were several prophets serving the Lord upon the earth at one time. In olden times there was also what was called the “school of the prophets,”<sup>27</sup> not totally unlike the school of the prophets instituted by the Lord during Brother Joseph’s time. In D&C 88:127 we read that the school of the prophets was established so Church leaders and officers could be instructed in the ways of the Lord. ¶ *The ancient*. These seem to be the elders who preferred error over light. Such as when the elders came to Samuel and asked to have a king like unto other nations (1 Samuel 8:4–5). In another instance, the elders acted in all prudence, such as when they advised Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, to act in kindness toward the people (1 Kings 12:6–7). So, this class of men included those who advised the kings or rulers. In the

<sup>26</sup> In Ezekiel 13:3 we read: “Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!” In Jeremiah the Lord also speaks of false prophets that He did not send: “Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart” (Jeremiah 14:14). Also see Jeremiah 23:14.

<sup>27</sup> ISBE has, “Since the days of Samuel we hear of schools of prophets, or ‘sons of prophets.’ These associations probably originated in this way, that an experienced prophet attracted to himself bands of youths, who sought to receive a measure of his spirit. These disciples of the prophets, together with their families, lived in colonies around the master.”

time of Isaiah and Jeremiah, most of these elders were past feeling in terms of spiritual matters. ¶ *Head and tail / Branch and rush*. Isaiah seems to avail himself of both expressions—head and tail—to ridicule the leaders of the people, and most especially the pretended prophets, for whom he reserved the ‘honor’ of being the tail. Alexander explains, “The false prophets are called the *tail* ... because the false prophets were morally the basest of the people, and because they were the servile adherents and supporters of the wicked rulers.” In contrast to the high branches, rushes grow in swamps or marshes. This description is probably reserved for the common people, who normally are more humble and tend to follow the Lord, to indicate that even they had despised and turned away from the Holy One. The rush stands in contrast to the branch, or the higher class. All had done wickedly before the Lord. ¶ *In one day*. The word *day* ☐☐ can have different significations, such as a 24 hour period of time or a season. In one day means quickly, at one time, and refers to the elders and false priests as well as society and the common people, all of which would be affected at the same time. All would be punished. Note the textual deletion in the Book of Mormon of the expression: “and honourable.”

16 For the leaders of this people ✓ cause **[them]** to err; and **[they that are]** led of ✓ them **[are]** destroyed. ✓ ✓ ✓

✓ or, they that call them blessed    ✓ ✓ or, called blessed of  
✓ ✓ ✓ swallowed

The people deserve to be led by those who should have pointed the way by their good example, but instead, have led their followers astray by their own iniquity. So it is that Alma laments the bad example set by his son Corianton: “Behold, O my son, how great iniquity ye brought upon the Zoramites; for when they saw your conduct they would not believe in my words. And now the Spirit of the Lord doth say unto me: Command thy children to do good, lest they lead away the hearts of many people to destruction; therefore I command you, my son, in the fear of God, that ye refrain from your iniquities; That ye turn to the Lord with all your mind, might, and strength; that ye lead away the hearts of no more to do wickedly; but rather return unto them, and acknowledge your faults and that wrong which ye have done.” (Alma 39:11–13).

17 Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows; for every one **of them [is]** an a hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh

folly<sup>✓</sup>. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still.

✓ or, villany

In a General Conference one of the Brethren was lamenting that he had been driving behind some young women who behaved in the most indelicate way, and where lacking in the virtues of femininity and decency.<sup>28</sup> As these young women had made themselves gross, so it would be that young men, the fatherless, and the widows, often mentioned as groups for whose wellbeing the Lord is especially concerned, would become evil in the sight of God, for they would speak and do vulgarly. In Deuteronomy 28:54, 56, *Rain in Due Season*, the Lord speaks of both the tender and delicate men and women who would act in the grossest manner. Note the marginal || note on the word folly. Rawlinson explains: “The word translated here (and generally) ‘folly’<sup>29</sup> is rendered ‘villany’ in ISAIAH 32:6 and Jeremiah 29:23. Its proper meaning seems to be ‘lewdness’ or ‘profligacy.’”

18 For wickedness burneth as the fire; it shall devour the briers and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forests, and they shall mount up [like] the lifting up of smoke.

*For wickedness burneth as the fire; it shall devour the briers and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forests.* Fire would consume the wicked as fire devours dry briers, thorns and even forests. See for instance, the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:30). This, in contrast to the purifying effect of fire on the righteous: “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” (ISAIAH 33:14b). ¶ *And they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke.* This expression shows the awfulness of the consuming fire rising to the skies together with terrible smoke. This in contrast to the untold joy of those who turn to the Lord: “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (ISAIAH 40:31).

<sup>28</sup> Elder Richard G. Scott, *The Sanctity of Womanhood*, General Conference, April 2000.

<sup>29</sup> The Hebrew, נְבִילָה, Green prefers to translate as “foolishness.”

From the root נָבַל, senseless, foolish, disgraceful, ungodly, wicked, and impious—opposite of noble and distinguished (BDB, AHCL).

19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel<sup>✓</sup> of the fire; no man shall spare his brother.

✓ or, meat

*Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire.* It can be said that there are clouds of spiritual darkness, “The people that walked in darkness &c.” (ISAIAH 9:2a). But also, fire can reach such proportions that the land can be darkened by clouds of thick smoke. Smoke from burning all things in its path, including men. Kay quotes a description of an event that seems a type of things to come: “After the great forest fires of 1871 in Wisconsin and Michigan, ‘so deep was the darkness caused by immense volume of smoke that the sun was totally obscured for a distance of 200 miles. This midnight darkness continued for a week’ (‘The Guardian,’ 1 Nov. 1871).” ¶ It is not possible to read that “people shall be as the fuel of the fire” without thinking of the untold atrocities of the Holocaust (or Shoah, שואה), where millions of Jews were systematically slaughtered and burned. ¶ *No man shall spare his brother.* While there are many reasons why wicked men will die in the last days, perhaps none of them is more horrible than the carnage produced when man lifts his hand against man.

20 And he shall snatch<sup>✓</sup> on the right hand and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand and they shall not be satisfied; they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm:

✓ or, cut

Here is a strong allusion to the punishments promised in *Rain in Due Season* if Israel would not repent and lean upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. “And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee: So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave: So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot

upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates” (Deuteronomy 28:53–57). Likewise, we find, “And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them” (Jeremiah 19:9). The Talmud tradition (Seder Mo’ed, Shabbath 33a) does well in suggesting: “Read not, the flesh of his own arm [זרעו], but, the flesh of his own seed [זרעו]” (Talmud, Soncino). Lowth (in support of Secker) prefers to translate *flesh of his own arm* as the *flesh of his neighbour*. I understand the flesh of his *own arm* as that of members of his family, clan or tribe. “The Chaldee manifestly reads רעו, not זרעו; for he renders it by קריביו, *his neighbour*. And Jeremiah has the very same expression: ואיש בשר רעהו אכלו, ‘And every one shall eat the flesh of his neighbour’ (Jeremiah 19:9).<sup>30</sup>” Lowth explains that such a context fits perfectly well with the next verse, where Manasseh and Ephraim would fight against each other, and then together against Judah. The expression קריביו can also be translated as *relative*, besides *neighbor*. The Targum (C) substitutes *substance (property, goods or possessions)* for *flesh*, נכסי קריביו יבזון, both here in Isaiah and in Jeremiah 19:9, “they shall plunder everyone the goods of his neighbour.” The context in both scriptures is one of extreme famine. The Syriac (S) renders it, “... they shall eat every man the flesh of his own kinsmen.” The LXX (G) reads, “... and a man shall by no means be satisfied with eating the flesh of his own arm.” Alexander suggests, “Judah and Joseph were the most important branches of the stock of Israel, as well before as after the disruption; and secondly, because the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were more nearly related to each other than to any of the rest, and therefore their hostility afforded the most striking illustration of the mutual rancour which the Prophet has described as prevalent.” Delitzsch says, “This interminable self-immolation, and the regicide associated with the jealousy of the different tribes, shook the northern kingdom again and again to its utter destruction. And the readiness with which the

<sup>30</sup> “And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them” (Jeremiah 19:9).

unbrotherly feelings of the northern tribes towards one another could turn into combined hostility towards Judah, was evident enough from the Syro-Ephraimitish war, the consequences of which had not passed away at the time when these prophecies were uttered. This hostility on the part of the brother kingdoms would still further increase. And the end of the judgments of wrath had not come yet.” Nägelsbach comments, “It may be said that the Israelites did themselves more harm than all foreign foes could ever have done. Thus dissension was the destruction of Israel.” All of this reminds us of the atrocious wars among the unbrotherly nations of the Nephites and Lamanites upon the American continent.

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21 Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh; [and] they together [shall be] against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still.

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There shall be hatred among brothers, between Manasseh and Ephraim (both in Northern Israel), as well as the two against their brother Judah<sup>31</sup> (continued contention between the Northern Kingdom and Judah). Such contention in itself could give rise to sieges and great hunger among the people (Isaiah 9:20). “Manasseh and Ephraim were the two sons of Joseph (Genesis 46:20), and their names are used as expressive of tender union friendship: compare Genesis 48:20. The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were near each other, and they always were allied together. The expression here denotes that they who had hitherto been joined in tender alliance, would be rent into contending factions, thirsting for each other’s blood” (Barnes). Gladly, in the latter days, with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, these disputes and hatred between the tribes would end among those who would join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: “And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all” (Ezekiel 37:22).

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The first four verses of chapter 10 are a direct continuation of these verses, beginning with verse Isaiah 9:8.

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<sup>31</sup> Although literally Judah was uncle to Ephraim and Manasseh, through the blessing of Jacob, they were made essentially brothers.

