
Isaiah 14

ISAIAH 14 is closely related to ISAIAH 13. The Lord has a message of hope and mercy for the children of Jacob who would be gathered to their lands of promise. The fall of Satan, from his former glory as well as that of the king of Babylon. The Philistines are also warned.

vv. 1–3 The Lord would gather Israel back to her lands of restoration, and many converts would join with her, and others would help her return to her lands of restoration. For the Lord's chosen people would not be forgotten.

1 ¶ FOR the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose **Israel**, and set them in their own land; and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

FOR the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land. The Targum (Ⓢ) reads, “For the Lord will have compassion upon the house of Jacob, and will delight again in Israel, and shall make them to dwell in their land.” This is the message of hope delivered by Isaiah (similar to the *good words and comfortable words* spoken in Zechariah 1:13), that indeed the Lord would have mercy on Israel, His ancient chosen people. Alexander well says, “Jacob and Israel are here used for the whole race.” Young says, “In this first verse we have in germ the entire blessed message of comfort which Isaiah develops in the last twenty-seven chapters of his book. Again Yahweh will show mercy, he declares, and again He will choose His people.” Kay says, regarding *yet again*, “‘Choosing’ again him who once had been ‘rejected’ (ISAIAH 2:6) as reprobate silver, but had now been purified ‘in the furnace of affliction’ (ISAIAH 48:10).” Many exegetes limit this mercy to the rescue of the people from Babylonian captivity, but such a rescue is only a type and a shadow of the greater latter-day rescue from spiritual Babylon. This verse uses the prophetic כִּי, *for*, as something that *will* come to pass, often, *in that day*, or in this case, as the second coming approaches and as part of the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In Zechariah we find three instances of the Lord choosing His people again, there יְרוּשָׁלַם (Jerusalem) is put for all of יִשְׂרָאֵל (Zechariah 1:17; 2:12; 3:2). ¶ *And set them in their own land?* This refers

to **Israel** or Jacob. What a sublime message, that the God of Israel would restore her to her lands. Lowth well writes, “[God] will still regard Israel as his chosen people; however he may seem to desert them, by giving them up to their enemies, and scattering them among the nations. Judah is sometimes called Israel; see Ezekiel 13:16, Malachi 1:1; 2:11; but the name of Jacob and of Israel, used apparently with design in this place, each of which names includes the twelve tribes, and the other circumstances mentioned in this and the next verse, which did not in any complete sense accompany the return from the captivity of Babylon, seen to intimate, that this whole prophecy extends its view beyond that event.” The Lord, then, would continue to make covenants with Israel and would not abandon her. It is the great message of the Lord, “For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee” (ISAIAH 54:7). The time will come when it will be *amor correspondido* or reciprocated love. ¶ *And the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.* Even strangers or converts would join Israel. The Targum (Ⓢ) has: “And proselytes shall be joined unto them, and they shall be united unto¹ the house of Jacob.” While the greatest number of proselytes will join with the Lord in the last days, it is believed that there were converts who joined in with those who returned from the Babylonian captivity. Henderson writes, “[In] Ezra 2:65 ... it is expressly stated, that *seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven* servants and maids accompanied the exiles on their return. That these were foreigners and not Israelites, is evident from their not being reckoned in the total number of the congregation.” Cheyne suggests that the Hebrew word ‘sojourner’ came to mean *proselyte*. ¶ Delitzsch suggests, “Babylon falls that Israel may rise. This is effected by the compassion of God. He chooses Israel once more ... and therefore makes a new covenant with it. Then follows their return to Canaan, their own land, Jehovah’s land (as in Hosea 9:3). Proselytes from among the heathen, who have acknowledged the God of the exiles, go along with

¹ Stenning, “stay on.” יִסְתַּמְכִּין, that is, and lean on, or find support (CAL).

them, as Ruth did with Naomi. Heathen accompany the exiles to their own place ... For, according to the prophet's meaning, to be ruled by the people of God is the true happiness of the nations, and to allow themselves to be so ruled is their true liberty." Henry quotes this beautiful scripture: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zechariah 8:23). Barnes states, "If it is asked what *evidence* there is that any considerable number of the people of Chaldea became Jewish proselytes, I answer, that it is expressly stated in Esther 8:17b: 'And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.'" In the last days, the number of proselytes from the gentile nations who would join themselves to the Lord would grow: "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (ISAIAH 60:3). ¶ President Joseph Fielding Smith explained that through the scattering of Israel the Gentile nations would be blessed, "So the Lord fulfilled his promise to Abraham in scattering his blood among all nations, and through the atonement made by Jesus Christ. It is written: 'For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.'"²

2 And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place; yea, from far, unto the ends of the earth; and they shall return to their lands of promise. And the house of Israel shall possess them, ~~in~~ and* the land of the LORD shall be** for servants and handmaids; and they shall take them captives, ~~whose captives they were~~ ✓ unto whom they were captives;*** and they shall rule over their oppressors.

* KJV and JST use *in*; Book of Mormon, *and*.

** KJV and JST use *for*; Book of Mormon, *shall be*.

*** KJV and JST use *whose captives they were*; Book of Mormon, *unto whom they were captives*.

✓ that had taken them captives

And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place; yea, from far, unto the ends of the earth; and they shall return to their lands of promise. Nyman well observes, "The second verse of the Book of Mormon

contains an eighteen word retention which emphasizes the extent of the gathering of Israel—from 'the ends of the earth'—and establishes that there will be more than one land for the gathering." DSSB (Q), has in one instant, "To their land and their place" and in 1QIsa^a, "To their places." Two important messages underscored by the Book of Mormon manuscript is that, along with 1QIsa^a (Q), there would be multiple gathering places (Israel and the American continent); and that the gathering would be universal in nature (Deuteronomy 30:4). Who shall bring the people to their place? Rawlinson says, "The heathen nations among whom they have dwelt shall rejoice at the restoration of Israel to their own land, and even escort them in a friendly spirit to their borders (comp. Ezra 1:4, 6; Nehemiah 2:7–9). Some shall go so far as voluntarily to become their bondservants in Palestine." ¶ *And the house of Israel shall possess them, and the land of the LORD shall be for servants and handmaids. The land of the LORD, אֶרֶץ יְהוָה*, could be taken for the Promised Land. This includes both Israel and the American continent. ¶ *And they shall take them captives, unto whom they were captives; and they shall rule over their oppressors.* Ruling over their oppressors is given in contrast to: "they that hate you shall reign over you" (Leviticus 26:17, *Rain in Due Season*). Israel had been slave to other nations and now these other nations would be subservient to Israel—but not in the same way, but rather, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). According to Alexander, "The true principle of exposition is adopted even by the Rabbins. Jarchi refers the promise to the future (לעתיד), to the period of complete redemption. Kimhi more explicitly declares that its fulfillment is to be sought partly in the restoration from Babylon, and partly in the days of the Messiah." Once again, the idea is not one of vengeance and retribution, but rather one of prominence. Many of these wonderful things will begin to happen as Israel turns unto the Lord, and recognizes Jesus as the Messiah: "Until they shall be persuaded to believe in Christ, the Son of God, and the atonement, which is infinite for all mankind—and when that day shall come that they shall believe in Christ, and worship the Father in his name, with pure hearts and clean hands, and look not forward any more for another Messiah, then, at that time, the day will come that it must needs be expedient that they should believe these things. And the Lord will set his hand again the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore, he will proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men" (2 Nephi 25:16b–18a). I feel to rejoice that I am counted among those of Israel—being a descendant of Judah on my father's side and Ephraim

² Smith, Joseph Fielding. *The Restoration of All Things*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973, p. 137.

on my mother’s side—who have been found of the Messiah. Truly the Lord gathered me in mercies when I was not looking. This is the best thing that ever happened in my life and my feelings of gratitude swell in my heart as I write these words.

3 And it shall come to pass in ~~the~~ **that** day that the LORD shall give thee rest, from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve.

And it shall come to pass in that day that the LORD shall give thee rest, from thy sorrow, and from thy fear. Lowth contributes once again, with his collection of manuscripts: “*in that day*] **בְּיוֹם הַהוּא**. The word **הַהוּא**³ is added in two MSS., and was in the copies from which the LXX and Vulgate translated . . . This is a matter of no great consequence: however, it restores the text to the common form almost constantly used on such occasions; and is one among many instances of a word lost out of the printed copies.” The Book of Mormon preserved the lost word, as does the LXX (Ⓞ), which has “*that*” instead of “*the*”: “And it shall come to pass in *that* day, that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow and vexation.” The Douay (Vulgate) (Ⓟ) translation) version also has *that*, “And it shall come to pass in *that* day, that when God shall give thee rest from thy labour.” As does SOT, “And it shall come to pass in *that* day that Jehovah will give thee rest . . .” ¶ *And from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve.* The bondage refers to the servitude under which she had served when she was taken into captivity by Babylon and Assyria. The following warning was given in *Rain in Due Season*: “Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity” (Deuteronomy 28:41). The time would come when such bondage would be done away with, both physical and spiritual. The return from Babylon would represent but a partial fulfillment of the prophecy in ISAIAH 14:3, with the gathering of Israel in the last days being the more complete fulfillment.

vv. 4–23. The King of Babylon⁴ is compared to Satan, as both desired to be lifted up and displace God, but where instead brought to an inglorious end.

³ Or, “*this, that, the same,*” based on **הוּא**, AHCL. Gesenius thus has under **הוּא**: “**בְּיוֹם הַהוּא** *in that day*, an expression of frequent use in the prophets, in speaking of a future time. See ISAIAH 2:11.

⁴ Barnes and Alexander suggest that the king was Nabonned, also known as Belshazzar (Daniel 5:1). Such an opinion is not unanimous.

4 ¶ And it shall come to pass in that day that thou shalt take up this proverb[✓] against the king of Babylon, and say: How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city^{✓ ✓} ceased!

✓ or, taunting speech

✓ ✓ or, exactress of gold

And it shall come to pass in that day that thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon. The Inspired Version includes **בְּיוֹם הַהוּא** as in ISAIAH 14:3. Here begins a taunting speech against both the King of Babylon and Lucifer. Regarding the latter, we read: “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:9). The nation of Babylon and spiritual Babylon cannot be separated in these verses, but both are subject to the words of the Lord. As Christ reigns over Zion, Satan does over Babylon. Speaking of *the proverb* or *satirical song*, **הַמְּשָׁל**, Calvin says, “By the term *witty saying*, or *parable*, (for the Hebrew word **מְשָׁל** denotes ‘saying that are weighty and remarkable, and worthy of being observed,’) he shows that the ruin of Babylon will be so great that it will even become a *proverb*, which usually happens in great and astonishing events.” Henderson explains further, “**מְשָׁל**, *Mashal*, the term by which it is designated, is singularly appropriate, since it signifies not merely *similitude, parable, figurative composition*, but also, *what is peculiarly sublime and energetic*, what is calculated by its boldness and force to strike and *influence the mind*. The signification of the root **מְשָׁל**, is to *assimilate*, and also to *rule or have dominion, to exert an influence over other* . . . **נְשֵׂאֵי מְשָׁל** means to give utterance to such sublime composition *in an elevated tone of voice*.” Cheyne also explains regarding the meaning of **מְשָׁל**, “[That it is] a parallelistic poem (*Dichtung*)—the parallelism may consist either in the moral application of emblems, or simply in the parallel disposition of the lines and the sense. From the fact that emblems were generally applied in a witty, satirical manner, *mashal* sometimes obtains the meaning of taunt-song, as here, and in Micah 2:4; Habakkuk 2:6.” Delitzsch has: “According to its primary and general meaning, *mashal* signifies figurative language, and hence poetry generally, more especially that kind of proverbial poetry which loves the emblematical, and, in fact, any artistic composition that is piquant in its character; so that the idea of what is satirical or defiant may easily be associated with it, as in the passage

before us.” Henderson explains, “The *Mashal* opens with a sudden exclamation of joy on the part of the Jews. The oppressed world and its inhabitants are then introduced as participating in the exultation. The forests of Lebanon join in the song; Hades personified, rouses departed kings and princes to receive the king of Babylon on his entrance into their gloomy abode. These give expression to no words of condolence, but merely to a brief sentence of surprise, not unmingled with satisfaction at his reverse of fortune. The Jews then tauntingly resume the song in which they confirm at some length the sentiment just uttered in Sheol⁵; and introduce the monarch boasting of his power and vastness of his purposes, while they contrast with these, his present state of utter prostration and ignominy; concluding with an execration on his offspring and memory.” Alexander suggests, “The dramatic form of the prediction is repeatedly shifted, so that the words of the triumphant Jews, of the dead, of the Prophet, and of God himself, succeed each other, as it were, insensibly, and without any attempt to make the points of transition prominent.” Regarding this *taunt*, Lowth considers it “one of the first and most eminent examples extant of the truly great and beautiful in poetic style.” The king of Babylon has become a proverb, and stands for Lucifer, also. ¶ *And say: How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!* Sin and the associated pain and suffering is the tribute we pay Satan. Just as Babylon would no longer be able to extract a tribute from Israel and the nations of the earth, the day will come when Satan will no longer be able to extract anguish from those who follow Messiah and come unto Zion. The taunting tone here as well as in ISAIAH 37 (e.g., “Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.” ISAIAH 37:29), is in part a response to the prideful arrogance of Babylon. Henry has, “Babylon was a *golden city*, ISAIAH 14:4 (it is a Chaldee word in the original, which intimates that she used to call herself so), so much did she abound in the riches and excel all other cities, as gold does all other metals.” Following the LXX (Ⓞ) and Vulgate (Ⓛ), Barnes suggests, “The word ‘oppressor’ (נִשְׁבֵּט) denotes, properly, the *extractor of tribute*, and refers here to the fact that Babylon had oppressed its dependent provinces, by exacting large revenues from them, and thus cruelly oppressing them.”

5 The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, [and] the sceptre of the rulers.

⁵ See ISAIAH 14:9, below.

The Targum (Ⓢ) reads, “The Lord hath broken the strength of the wicked, the government of sinners.” The KJV added a connective *and*, where there is none in the MT. The MT, LXX (Ⓞ), Douay (Vulgate (Ⓛ) translation) agree with the Book of Mormon. In ISAIAH 3 we spoke about the stay and the staff upon which someone may lean. The wicked would not have anyone or anything to lean on, but be left desolate. A scepter is an ornamental staff, a symbol of the power held by a monarch. Babylon and Satan would be left powerless.

6 He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, [✓] he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, [and] none hindereth.

✓ a stroke without removing

The Targum (Ⓢ) reads, “Of him who was smiting the people in fury (Chaldee, *with might*), with a perpetual stroke (Chaldee, *with a stroke which shall not cease*⁶), of him who was ruling (Chaldee, *making servile*) the nations in anger (Chaldee, *with might*), ruling (Chaldee, *making servile*), and none hindered.” The Syriac (Ⓢ) reads, “He who smote the peoples in wrath, smiting without instruction, who chastised the peoples in anger and persecuted them without pity.” After acknowledging the great and formal power of Babylon and of Lucifer, we are informed that the tides have changed. Barnes says, regarding “he who smote” that “This may either refer to the king of Babylon, or to the rod or sceptre which he had used, and which was now broken.”

7 The whole earth is at rest, [and] is quiet; they break forth into singing.

As a result of the defeat suffered by Babylon, the surrounding nations could rejoice that the bully was no longer there to exact tribute from them. So also will it be with Satan’s defeat. No wonder all will *break forth into singing* and praises unto God! Delitzsch tells us, “The omission of the subject in the case of *בְּצִחָתָם* (they break forth) gives the greatest generality to the jubilant utterances: *רָנְּוּ בְּצִחָתָם* (*erumpere gaudio*⁷) is an expression that is characteristic of Isaiah alone (e.g., ISAIAH 44:23; 49:13)⁸; and it is a distinctive peculiarity

⁶ Compare to the margin ||.

⁷ That is, they *break forth into singing*.

⁸ Yet another indication of the unity of Isaiah.

of the prophet to bring in the trees of the forest, as living and speaking beings, to share in the universal joy (cf. ISAIAH 55:12).”

8 Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, [and] also the cedars of Lebanon, [saying]: Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and also the cedars of Lebanon, saying: That trees may stand as a type of people is included directly in the Targum (Ⓣ), “Rulers (Royal Polyglot, מְלָכִין, kings) also rejoiced over thee.” This is not the only time, of course, where even nature will rejoice. In Isaiah we also read: “For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands” (ISAIAH 55:12). We know that if man will not give glory to the Savior, that nature will: “And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out” (Luke 19:40). Cheyne explains that the cedars of Lebanon are mentioned “Because they had been cut down (a type of Israel’s ruin) by the Babylonians, see on 37:24.” Delitzsch continues, “Cypresses and cedars rejoice because of the treatment which they received from the Chaldean, who made use of the almost imperishable wood of both of them for ornamental buildings, for his siege apparatus, and for his fleets, and even for ordinary ships,—as Alexander, for example, built himself a fleet of cypress-wood, and the Syrian vessels had masts of cedar. Of the old cedars of Lebanon, there are hardly thirty left in the principal spot where they formerly grew.” ¶ *Since thou art laid down, no feller⁹ is come up against us.* IQIsa^a (Ⓣ) has it, “come up against us.” These words continue the same thought, that once the evil one is put away, that there will be no one to disturb the peace.

9 Hell[✓] from beneath is moved for thee to meet [thee] at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, [even] all the chief ones^{✓✓} of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

✓ or, the grave

✓ ✓ learners, or, great goats

Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee. Or rather, *sheol*

⁹ That is, someone who *fells* or brings down trees—a woodcutter.

שְׁאוֹל as found in the Biblia Hebraica (Ⓜ) and Targum (Ⓣ), as well as the Syriac (Ⓢ) and a number of translations. Once again, the allusion in this verse is to the world of Spirits, and how they will meet the Babylonian king. Luther explains, “Among the Hebrews *Sheol* very rarely means the place of punishments, but often it means grave, which they also call the pit.” Barnes has: “It is not the residence of the wicked only—the place of punishment—but the place where *all* the dead are supposed to be congregated before their final doom is pronounced.” ¶ שְׁאוֹל would be our LDS equivalent to the *spirit world*, which itself is divided into *spirit prison* and *paradise*. Young explains, “Isaiah refers not merely to the grave but to Sheol itself, and the expression, ‘the sides of the pit,’ even implies that there are distinctions of position in Sheol, and that this king was to be brought to the lowest part.” Young continues, “We may then note the following contrasts between this verse and ISAIAH 14:13: Sheol – mount of meeting – depths of the pit – extreme parts of Saphon¹⁰.” ¶ *Even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.* Delitzsch and many others prefer a more literal translation, and use *all the he-goats* or *rams*, כָּל-עֲתוּדֵי instead of *all the chief ones*. Those who thought themselves great while they lived will come forth to meet the Babylonian king in the Spirit world. The men of pride may well be the chiefs of the goats, but are among the goats nevertheless.¹¹ Likewise, those who will glance upon Lucifer will be amazed that he is a common man.

10 All they shall speak and say unto thee: Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?

The Babylonian king, and Satan, will no longer have power. There will be those who will stare at them and wonder how these at one time preeminent men have lost all strength and have become common. Calvin writes, “Tyrants are blinded by their greatness, and do not think that they are mortal, and even make themselves to be half-gods and adore themselves. On this account it is made known after their death that they shared in the condition of all mortals, to which they did not think that they were liable.”

11 Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, [and] the noise of thy viols is not

¹⁰ צָפוֹן, the north, v. 13.

¹¹ (Matthew 25:32–34).

heard; the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, the noise of thy viols is not heard. Once again, שְׂאוֹל should rather be translated as spirit world rather than grave. ¶ The Syriac (S) comes close to the JST, in terms of the clause, *is dead*, which is equivalent of *is not heard*, “Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, the noise of your harps is dead.” In royal courts of old, music often played an important role in creating *pomp and circumstance*. This would all be absent now. Calvin suggests, “Under the term *musical instruments*, he includes all the luxuries and enjoyments in which kings are wont to indulge.” As does Henry, “Death is a farewell to the pleasures, as well as to the pomps, of this world.” ¶ *The worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.* Men will be eaten by worms when they die, whether rich or poor, and this thought must be especially repugnant to those who think they will never die or face consequences for the use of moral agency. The word *worm* here represented by two different words, the first being רִמָּה and of the second תוֹלְעָה. Barnes explains: “*And the worm (תוֹלְעָה)*—the same word which occurs in ISAIAH 1:18, and there rendered *crimson*. This word is usually applied to the insect from which the crimson dye was obtained.” The Lord has power over both *death* and *sin*.

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, ✓ son of the morning! [həw] art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

✓ or, O day star

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! The Hebrew (מ) uses *morning star* הַיְלֵל rather than Lucifer. The Targum (C),¹² “How hast thou been cast down from the height, who wast resplendent among the sons of men as the *bright star* among the stars!” The LXX (G) also uses *morning star*, ἑωσφόρος. The Vulgate (V) uses Lucifer, “Quomodo cecidiste de coelo, lucifer, qui mane oriebaris?” Regardless of whether we call him Lucifer, morning star or bright star, this verse is foremost about the fall of Satan. Kay points out a scripture in Luke 10:18: “And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” Henry well observes, regarding Lucifer: “Here is the language of his vainglory, borrowed perhaps from that of the angels who fell, who [were] not content with their first estate.”

¹² Stenning.

Nägelsbach has, “If, then, the Babylonian reigns in the loftiest heights and everywhere, he has become like the highest God. But thereby he has supplanted the highest God: for two cannot occupy the highest place. And this, as remarked above, is the aim of Satan and of his earthly sphere of power, the world-power, which culminates in Antichrist.” In this respect, pre-mortal life was probably not unlike this earth, and the same principles and warnings against unrighteous dominion (D&C 121:36–40) applied then as they do now. ¶ *Art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!* In Moses 1:9–18 we read about how Moses was able to contrast between the glory of God and the nothingness of Satan. “Moses looked upon Satan and said: Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten; and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee?” (Moses 1:13b). Brent L. Top wrote extensively on the topic of the war in heaven from an LDS perspective in his book, *The Life Before*.¹³ Here I quote a brief passage: “President George Q. Cannon said, ‘[Lucifer] was a mighty personage, without doubt. The record that is given to us concerning him clearly shows that he occupied a very high position; that he was thought a great deal of, and that he was mighty in his sphere.’ . . . Mark E. Petersen indicates that despite his strengths, Lucifer’s weaknesses brought about his rebellion and resentment. Foremost among his character defects were his pride, selfishness, and jealousy. Elder Petersen suggests that Lucifer ‘coveted honor, prestige and glory; he wanted the adulation and praise of others; he sought to be lifted up above the rest.’”

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north;

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. The expression “said in thine heart” is here an allusion to the wicked intents or imaginations of man, and specifically here of the king of Babylon (compare to ISAIAH 47:10) and Satan. Zechariah also warned us against imagining evil intents regarding our neighbors (Zechariah 8:16). According to the *Enchiridion of Epictetus* (further elaborated by psychologist Albert Ellis, in *The Story of Psychology*, and the authors of *Crucial Conversations*), every negative emotion is preceded by our telling ourselves some story. As we

¹³ Top, Brent L. *The Life Before*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1988. pp. 102–133.

learn to moderate such stories, we will also learn to manage our emotions.¹⁴ Regarding the premortal

¹⁴ “At the time, I was the high council speaker assigned to deliver a Sacrament talk to the singles branch in our Modesto, California stake. The stake was an accurate reflection of the multi-cultural California population. As I was speaking, I noticed a young man sitting by an attractive Asian young woman, whispering something in her ear. I found this quite distracting. Being an educator by profession, I know the importance of only one person speaking at a time. When this happens to me in seminars or in the classroom, I simply stop talking until the guilty parties have done the same. So, true to form, I stopped talking. The young man also stopped conversing. It worked! But as soon as I resumed my talk, the young man once again leaned over to whisper pretty things in his friend’s ear. This pattern was repeated several times until I had completely lost all composure. I stopped in the middle of my talk and approached the Branch President and explained that I simply could not concentrate with the young couple flirting back there. The Branch President calmly explained that the young man was interpreting for a visitor from Japan. ¶ I frequently use this embarrassing episode, slightly changed, to illustrate presentations on interpersonal communication skills. I later learned that we cannot experience a negative emotion without it being first preceded by a story or narrative we tell ourselves. Negative emotions such as anger, jealousy, pride, and envy, then, can only take place—or grow into uglier feelings—if preceded by the corresponding negative self-talk. ¶ My frustration during the Sacrament Meeting talk had grown as I told myself that these individuals were being rude, interrupting, and not paying attention while they flirted. Since then, I have had countless opportunities to change the narrative in challenging situations into positive ones. ¶ Self-talk is behind both negative as well as positive attitudes, and furthermore, that all sin—both of omission and commission—requires that we tell ourselves a story. In the language of scripture, negative self-talk is sometimes referred to with such words as *the vain imaginations and thoughts of the heart*. These are all the excuses we allow ourselves for not doing that which is right—or for being judgmental and unforgiving. ¶ No wonder we read in Mosiah that we will be judged not only by our deeds and by our words, but also by our thoughts (Mosiah 4:30). It is easy to think that our thoughts are somehow disassociated from our words and acts in some way: that perhaps our thoughts are not such a serious problem. That we can entertain impure or unkind feelings, and that this is somehow natural. ¶ It has become clearer than ever that surely, ‘For as [man] thinketh in his heart, so is he’ (Proverbs 23:7). While we often excuse our unrighteous thoughts, we take these excuses even further when we give ourselves permission, through a story, to say something that is unkind rather than tame our tongue. “I probably shouldn’t say this, but...” It is a good thing when we can tame our tongue and when we realize that Mosiah is right. Our thoughts, our words, and our deeds are inseparably connected. ¶ It is a difficult challenge to rule our thoughts. We must master our thoughts if we wish to master our tongues and our deeds—and become more Christ like. We can tell ourselves stories that are full of mercy and kindness, especially as we look for the *honorable unmet needs* behind the behavior of others. ¶ Joseph of Egypt was in a position of power over his brothers when the famine came. He could have entertained thoughts of revenge and sent his brothers back empty handed—or made sure they suffered retribution for the abuse he experienced at their hands. Instead, Joseph repeatedly consoled his brothers and suggested they forgive themselves, as he had already forgiven them: “Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life . . . to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance” (Genesis 45:5, 7). Joseph picked the best, most generous, of the possible stories he could have entertained. ¶ Every day we make countless choices as to the stories we will contemplate. The imaginations and thoughts of our hearts, truly, if they are good, can bring us unbound joy. The right stories can also give us the strength to think what is right and then do what is right.” Adapted from my blog

council, we see the contrast between the Savior’s humility and Satan’s pride: “And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first. And the second was angry, and kept not his first estate; and, at that day, many followed after him” (Abraham 3:27–28). Satan was the other who got angry and did not keep his first estate, and thus, was cast down to the earth. We read more about this pivotal event: “AND I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying: That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning, and he came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor. But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever. Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down. And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice” (Moses 4:1–4). Cheyne says, “The king of Babylon expected to join the ranks of the gods. No, replies the prophet, thou shalt be hurled down to Sheól (v. 15).” ¶ *I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north*. The Targum (Ⲯ) reads, “And I will sit upon the mountain of the solemn assembly upon the ends of the north.” We know that the exalted Lord was to sit high and lifted up (ISAIAH 6) on the *mount of the congregation*, probably an allusion to the temple. Luther suggests, “This is Zion, and Jerusalem is situated on the side of the far north. There God dwelled.” We also read in Psalms, “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King” (Psalms 48:2). Lowth suggests, “It appears plainly from Exodus 25:22 and 29:42, 43, where God appoints the place of meeting with Moses, and promises to meet with him before the ark, to commune with him, and to speak unto him; and to meet the children of Israel at the door of the tabernacle; that the tabernacle, and afterward the temple and Mount Sion (or Moriah, which

posted 8 September 2010, *The Imaginations and Thoughts of the Heart*. (Additional references include Gregorio Billikopf, *Party-Directed Mediation*, 2014; Al Switzler, Joseph Grenny, Kerry Patterson, and Ron McMillan, *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*, 2002; and Marshall Rosenberg, *Non-violent Communication: A Language of Life*, 2003; Morton Hunt, *The Story of Psychology*, 2007.)

is reckoned a part of Zion), whereon it stood, was called the tabernacle, and the mount of convention, or of appointment; not from the people's assembling there to perform the services of their religion (which is what our translation expresses by calling the tabernacle of the congregation), but because God appointed that for the place where he himself would meet with Moses, and commune with him, and would meet with the people. Therefore, **הר-מועד**,¹⁵ or **אהל מועד**,¹⁶ means the place appointed by God, where he would present himself; agreeably to which I have rendered it, in this place, the **mount** of the divine presence." Cheyne argues that the **mount** is not intended to represent an earthly one: "Still it is not of that mountain in its phenomenal but in its ideal character that he speaks—not of mount Zion as it appears, but as it is before God, and will be one day before men. Now, a conception of this kind would be unintelligible to a Babylonian, unless he could connect it with some similar beliefs of his own people ... only since the recent advances of Assyriology that we have learned their existence among the Assyrians and Babylonians. Among the titles of the great god Assur is 'king of all the **assembly** of the great gods' (Syce, R. P., iii. 83), and there is a fragment of Berosus (Moses of Khorene, i. 7), which speaks of a **mountain** of the **assembly** of the gods." Barnes and some others also point out, "'The **mount** of the **congregation**, in the sides of the north,' there is a reference to a belief prevalent in Babylon that the [heathen] gods had their residence on some mountain of the north. This was a common opinion among the ancients." Calvin writes, "This plainly shows the reason why the Prophet especially accuses the Babylonian tyrant of so great madness, and what the Prophet means by such figures. He desired to *sit on the mountain of the testimony*. By this effrontery he attempted to make himself equal to God." Isaiah was speaking not only of the king of Babylon, but also about Lucifer. Satan had wished to take this honor to himself and thus satisfy his vain ambition. Paul speaks with an obvious allusion to Lucifer, the great antichrist, "that the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3b–4)."

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Alexander suggests, "As **אָהַל מוֹעֵד** is a reflexive form (Gesenius 53, 2), it means not merely *I will be like*, but *I*

¹⁵ **Mount** of congregation.

¹⁶ **Tent** of congregation.

will make myself like, or as Michaelis supposes, *I will act like*." The ASV has, "I will make myself like the Most High."

15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

Even though the Hebrew (**גֵּהֶנְזִים**) has **Sheol שְׂאוֹל** or *spirit world*, it is to the *spirit prison* that the arrogant Babylonian king would be removed. Satan, on the other hand, would be altogether expelled from the presence of God. The word *hell* is an elliptical addition by the translators of the AV, for it is not in the Hebrew text (**גֵּהֶנְזִים**) where instead we have, **אֶל-יַרְכְּתֵי-בוֹר**, to the **sides/depths** of the **pit**. Leaser renders it: "But into the nether world shalt thou be brought down, into the lowest depth." LITV, "Yet you shall go down to Sheol, to the sides of the Pit." Even so, the ellipsis is appropriate to our understanding. ¶ Henderson comments: "In accordance to the Oriental custom of erecting splendid mausoleums for kings and other great men, in the sides of which were subordinate apartments or cells fitted for the reception of the dead bodies, and of depositing them in these apartments, after the previous funeral solemnities had been completed, all the other kings of the earth are represented as occupying in silent state the chambers allotted to them; whereas to the king of Babylon the rites of sepulture are denied; no royal mausoleum receives his dead body; nor is it committed to a common grave, but is left to putrefy on the ground." Regarding the idea of **sides** Alexander suggests, "According to its probable etymology the Hebrew word does not mean **sides** in the ordinary sense, but rather **hinder parts** and then **remote parts** or **extremities**, as explained by the Targum (**ܬܪܘܡܐ**) here and in Isaiah 14:13." This corresponds well with **outer darkness**.¹⁷ Cheyne points out the satire here involved, that instead of being sent to the sides of the 'recesses of the north' the 'sides of the pit' would do.

16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, [and] shall consider thee, [saying,] and shall say: [Is] this the man

¹⁷ **Outer darkness** is sometimes used as a synonym of **hell** in the Scriptures. There are two places so called: (1) the place where the spirits of the disobedient who are *not* sons of perdition abide until they receive a resurrection in the Telestial Kingdom (see Alma 40:13–14); (2) the place reserved for the sons of perdition (D&C 29:37–38). See Hell, LDS Guide to the Scriptures. In *Gospel Principles*, "The Final Judgment, Ch. 46," the expression **outer darkness** is used in conjunction with the sons of perdition. But we also see the expression used of those who will inherit the Telestial Kingdom, as we see above in Alma 40:13–14.

that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?

They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and shall consider thee, and shall say: When Moses gazed upon Satan he was not impressed. He lacked all glory, for Moses had just come from the presence of the Lord and could clearly tell the difference between both. So it will be with all who look upon Lucifer. To look narrowly, seems to mean a focused or detained look.

¶ *Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?* Satan has surely shook the kingdoms, but his power and strength will have an end. After the chaos and harm that Satan and the Babylonian king have inflicted, people who look upon them will be surprised by their plainness.

17 [That] And made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; [that] and opened not the house of his prisoners? ✓

✓ or, did not let his prisoners loose homeward?

The result of war is desolation. Scenes of beautiful color disappear and give way to black and white. Babylon did not let her prisoners go on their own accord, but only after she was conquered. Not only did the Babylonian tyrants cause such desolation, but also Satan. Beside desolation, we often think as the grave being a place where Satan has captive spirits. Yet the gospel will be taught among them, and the truth shall make them free. Through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ this is made possible. “I beheld that the faithful elders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the preaching of the gospel of repentance and redemption, through the sacrifice of the Only Begotten Son of God, among those who are in darkness and under the bondage of sin in the great world of the spirits of the dead. The dead who repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God, And after they have paid the penalty of their transgressions, and are washed clean, shall receive a reward according to their works, for they are heirs of salvation” (D&C 138:57–59). This is why Paul well exclaimed, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:55).

18 All the kings of the nations, [even] yea, all of them, lie in glory, every one of them in his own house.

The kings of the earth, as disobedient as they may have been, obtained a ‘house’ or mortal body, and thus have the hope of the resurrection, even if it is in the lowest degree of glory. Satan gave up his first estate and the possibility for any kingdom of glory. Thus, he will have no burial place. Alexander gives another explanation, one that is interesting to note in terms of royalty who have been denied an honorable burial¹⁸: “The ancient oriental practice of burying above the ground and in solid structures, often reared by those who were to occupy them will account for the use of *house* here in the sense of *sepulchre*, without supposing any reference to the burial of kings within their palaces.” It is also interesting to note that many of the nobility are buried *inside* cathedrals and churches, or in imposing mausoleums.

19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, [and as] the raiment remnant of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under feet.

But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and the remnant of those that are slain. Satan will not be able to be buried, as he never received a body. Henderson makes the following comments, “הַשֵּׁלֶת מִקְבְּרָךְ¹⁹ does not imply that the king had been buried and afterwards thrown out of his sepulchre, that he might be exposed as here described. The מ is used absolutely, signifying *in a state of separation from, at a distance from, without, or destitute of*, and is quite independent of the verb. *Without thy grave*, means, without being deposited in the sepulchre which thou hadst prepared for thyself, or which was destined for thee.” Delitzsch likewise observes “... but the king of Babylon is left lying there, like a carcass that is trampled under foot, and deserves nothing better than to be trampled under foot ... They do not even think him worth throwing into a hole along with the rest of the corpses.” The MT has *raiment* rather than *remnant*. Leeser translates it: “But you are thrown from your grave like a despised branch, like the covering of the slain.” Nägelsbach suggests, “For were they thrust through with a sword, then, too, the garment would be cut into holes, and at least spotted with blood, and if

¹⁸ Jehoram, for instance, was not buried in the sepulchers of the kings (2 Chronicles 21:20). The same fate was suffered by Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28:27) and Joash (2 Chronicles 24:25).

¹⁹ Actually, the MT (מז) has הַשֵּׁלֶת מִקְבְּרָךְ. This is an easy mistake to make as the פ and כ are pronounced the same.

they are buried, it is explained how their garment comes into the hands of others. When the dead are buried on the field of battle, their clothes are taken off them, but those that are torn and cut in holes and smeared with blood, are cast away, while those unharmed are retained as valuable booty.” The use of the word remnant, here, changes the meaning of this verse substantially. The branch refers to a group of people, and the remnant, to what is left of that group. It reminds us of what we have already read earlier in Isaiah about the trees leaving but a few to be counted (ISAIAH 10:19), and of those a remnant surviving. Regarding a branch, **רֵבִי**, Barnes leans on Jerome for the description of what today we would call a *sucker*. Suckers are especially destructive when they exist in grafted trees, for the root does not provide good fruit, but only protection from root diseases. The fruit of such suckers is usually worthless. In some trees these suckers take over and drain all the strength from the good branches. They are only good to be cast away. This is the fate of Satan and the sons of perdition who are assigned to outer darkness after the resurrection. ¶ *Thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.* Henderson likes to think that “While the bodies of the slain courtiers and captains, with which that of the king of Babylon was covered, should be sought out, and after having been embalmed, placed, each in its sarcophagus, in the subterranean chambers, his would be left, no one being able to recognize it, from the mangled state to which it had been reduced, and the disfiguration it had undergone by being trampled upon by the multitude.” Henderson, in carrying out this idea feels that the stones in this verse represent sarcophagi, *Mujelibé*, made out of stone that contain human remains, as have been found near Babylon and can be found in the British Museum. Moreover, Henderson speaks of the death of the king of Babylon, “On entering the city, the army of Cyrus marched straight to the palace; and meeting the king, who was coming out sword in hand, they slew him, and put all who followed him to the sword; and, though Xenophon specially notices the permission given to bury the dead, he takes no notice whatever of the royal corpse.”

20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, [and] slain thy people; the seed of evil-doers shall never be renowned.

Henderson suggests that the place of burial of the Babylonian king would never be named, or known, “implying that no inscription should tell where he lay.” Just as the evil kings of Israel and Judah were not

buried with the other kings, likewise an allusion is made to the king of Babylon and to Satan—and to the fact that Satan would never have offspring and the royalty line of the Babylonians would die off. Calvin speaks of the disobedient, such that “... the Lord blots out their name and remembrance, which appeared to be inscribed on lasting records; and the result is, that they are not only despised but even abhorred by all men. This happens to all tyrants, that though, while they live, they are universally applauded and flattered, yet after they are dead, they and their posterity are universally abhorred.” In the Book of Life spoken about in the Book of Revelation, we know that some names will be blotted out and some will be exalted.

21 Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity iniquities of their fathers, that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.

Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquities of their fathers. We read, “For I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me” (Exodus 20:5b). Delitzsch writes, “After the nocturnal storming of Babylon by the Medes, the new Babylonian kingdom and royal house which had been established by Nabopolassar vanished entirely from history. The last shoot of the royal family of Nabopolassar was slain as a child of conspirators ... Nimrod, the first founder of a Babylonio-Assyrian kingdom, built cities for the Medes, for the purpose of keeping them better in check. And it is to this building of cities, as a support to despotism, that the prophet here refers.” ¶ *That they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.* Rawlinson suggests, “The destruction of their posterity was a part of the punishment of the fathers. That they do not rise; i.e., ‘that they do not recover themselves and become great monarchs once more, and once more build great cities,’ such as those which they were famous for—Babel, Erech, Accad, Calneh, Ur, Sepharvaim, Borsippa, Opis, Teredon, etc. It was as city builders that the Babylonians were especially celebrated (Genesis 10:10; Daniel 4:30; Herodotus 1:178, etc.).”

22 For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD.

The Douay Vulgate (V) translation gives a very poetic rendering here, “And I will rise up against them, saith

the Lord of hosts: and I will destroy the name of Babylon, and the remains, and the bud, and the offspring, saith the Lord.” Regarding *name and remnant* and *son and nephew* Delitzsch writes, “שֵׁם וְיֶשְׁאָרֹת and בֵּן וְנֶכֶד are two pairs of alliterative proverbial words, and are used to signify ‘the whole, without exception’ (compare the Arabic expression ‘*Kiesel und Kies*,’ ‘flint and pebble,’ in the sense of ‘altogether:’ Nöldecke, *Poesie der alten Araber*, p. 1620).” Once again, Babylon would be so wiped out that there would be no remnant or posterity. Satan would never have posterity.

23 I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts.

The Targum (Ⓣ) reads, “And I will make it an inheritance for the hedgehog, a place of desolation, pools of water: and I will sweep her as they are sweeping with a besom:²⁰ and I will throw her down to destroy her, saith the Lord of hosts.” The Talmud tradition (Seder Mo’ed, Rosh HaShana 26b) has: “The Rabbis did not know what was meant by we-tetethia bemate²¹ of destruction, till one day they heard the handmaid of the household of Rabbi say to her companion, Take the tatitha²² [broom] and tati²³ [sweep] the house” (Talmud, Soncino). ¶ Rawlinson explains, “The swampy character of the country about the ruins of Babylon is generally noticed by travelers. It arises from neglect of the dams along the course of the Euphrates.” Likewise, Delitzsch comments, “The destructive forces, which Babylon has hitherto been able to control by raising artificial defences, are now let loose; and the Euphrates, left without a dam, lays the whole region under water. *Hedgehogs* now take the place of men, and *marshes* the place of palaces.” As Delitzsch says, “Jehovah treats Babylon as rubbish, and sweeps it away, destruction ... serving Him as a broom.”

vv. 24–27. Having spoken against Babylonian rule and predicted her fall in future days, the Prophet Isaiah now turns to matters closer at hand, the invasion of Assyria. In future days when Babylon would take Judah captive, the exiles would be able to remember how the Lord saved them from Assyria and know that His word would come to pass about Babylon as surely as it came

²⁰ *Besom* means a broom or a sweeping instrument. (Webster, 1960).

²¹ Broom, בְּמִטְאֵטָא.

²² מִטְאֵטָא

²³ לְטֹאֵטָא, to sweep, or טֹאֵטָא

to pass about Assyria. The latter would fall, and her fall would be in the very act of attacking Judah. So it is, that the Prophet says, “in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot.” It was upon the mountainous land of Judah that Assyria would be defeated, and most specially upon Mount Zion, where the Temple stood.

24 ¶ 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—

IQIsa^a (Ⓠ) has it, “The Lord of hosts has sworn: Surely as I have thought, so will she be; and as I have purposed, so it will stand.” Regarding נִשְׁבַּע, Henderson says, “The verb *to swear*, in Hebrew, is always used in the passive, in reference to the person who takes an oath, which would seem to intimate *his being laid under the obligation* which such an act involves.” Furthermore, the word *surely*, לֵאמֹר, “is a formula for swearing; but instead of a negative, it has a strongly affirmative meaning” (Henderson, also see ISAIAH 5:9). The expression לֵאמֹר is composed of אִם, that is, *if*, and לֹא, that is, *not*, and thus means *if not*. It is a warning that something will come to pass. Calvin says, “[*If it hath not been as I thought.*] The elliptical form of an oath which he employs must be well known, for it occurs frequently in Scripture.” The idea is that of a vague threat where each person can fill in the blanks. Alexander writes, “The Prophet suddenly reverts to that of the Assyrian host, either for the purpose of making one of these events accredit the prediction of the other, or for the purpose of assuring true believers, that while God had decreed the deliverance of his people from remoter dangers, he would also protect them from those near at hand.” ¶ Rawlinson says something here that I like, and makes me think of the reassurances that I often ask of God. I may have received a witness of something, such as the propriety of traveling to a certain location, but then find myself asking again for reassurance when fear attempts to creep in. Here is what Rawlinson says: “From the distant prospect of an ultimate deliverance from the power of Babylon, the prophet turns his gaze to a nearer, if not greater, deliverance. The present enemy is Assyria. It is she who has carried Samaria into captivity, and who threatens the independence of Judah. Deliverance from her has already been promised more than once (10:16–19, 25–27, 33–34); but apparently the people are not reassured—they still dread the foe who is so near, and who seems so irresistible. God, therefore, condescends to give them a fresh prophecy, a fresh assurance, and to confirm it to them *by an oath* (ISAIAH

14:24).” Regarding the oath itself, Rawlinson continues, “God but seldom declares his purposes *with an oath*—never but in condescension to the weakness of his creatures, who, though they misdoubt his word, can feel the immutability of an oath (Hebrews 6:17), and yield it the credence and the confidence which they refuse to a bare assertion. As I have thought . . . as I have purposed. A reference to the prophecies previously given in ISAIAH 10. So shall it come to pass; literally, *so it hath been*—a striking instance of the ‘preterite of prophetic certainty.’²⁴ So shall it stand; literally, *as I have purposed, that shall stand.*”

25 That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot; then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.

The LXX (Ⓞ) has, “*Even to destroy the Assyrians upon my land, and upon my mountains: and they shall be for trampling; and their yoke shall be taken away from them, and their glory shall be taken away from their shoulders.*” Assyria would crumble, but the beginning of that crumbling would take place *in my land*, or בְּאַרְצִי, that is, the land of Israel אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל, or more precisely, in Judah. For the Lord would allow Assyria to come all the way down to Judah, upon the mountains of Judah, that is *my mountain* הַר יְהוּדָה, and most especially Jerusalem, before He would blast Assyria and break her burden. Calvin has, “Some think that this relates to Sennacherib’s army, which the hand of God destroyed by means of an angel, when he besieged Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:35; ISAIAH 37:36).” Barnes says, “*In my land*—That is, in the land of Canaan. This is often called his land; and this expression shows that the passage does not and cannot refer to the king of Babylon, for he was destroyed in his own city (Daniel 5). *And upon my mountains*—That is, upon the mountains of Palestine. The army of Sennacherib was destroyed on the mountains that were near to Jerusalem.” Regarding *mountains*, Alexander says: “*My mountains*] some have understood to be Mount Zion, others more generally the mountains of Jerusalem; but it seems to be rather a description of the whole land of

²⁴ The prophetic perfect refers to *future actions* pronounced as if they were past already. Joüon, P., & Muraoka, T. (2006) explain: “This prophetic perfect is not a special grammatical perfect, but a rhetorical device” (*A grammar of biblical Hebrew*, Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico). Gesenius writes of this very verse: “ISAIAH 14:24, where אֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל occurs first with the perfect in the sense of a prophetic perfect” (Gesenius, F. W., 1910. *Gesenius’ Hebrew grammar*. (E. Kautzsch & S. A. E. Cowley, Eds.) (2nd English ed., p. 472). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Israel, or at least of Judah, as a mountainous region.” Yet, those who have supposed *my mountain* to mean Mount Zion have not been far off, as we read the earlier prophecy of the Assyrian attack (ISAIAH 8) that the water would reach to the neck: “And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel” (ISAIAH 8:8).

26 This [is] the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth; and this [is] the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

Note the anthropomorphic figure is removed in the Targum (Ⓢ) reading, “This is the purpose that is purposed upon all the inhabitants of the earth; and this is the might of the ruler which is lifted up over all the kingdoms.” The Douay version, based on the Vulgate (Ⓥ), also has *all nations* as does the Book of Mormon, dropping *the* in *the nations*²⁵: “This is the counsel that I have purposed upon all the earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all nations.” ¶ Cheyne explains that the words “all the earth” are used, “Partly because this is an act of the great drama of the world-judgment.” In Jeremiah 50:23, we read of Babylon—and the same could be said of Assyria: “How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations!” These nations may have felt mighty but true and enduring might is not of man.

27 For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul [it]? and his hand [is] stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul? This idea mentioned in ISAIAH 14:24 takes greater strength with its repetition here. What the Lord decides to do, He can perform even when it seems impossible. ¶ *And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?* Even going back to Exodus we read as to how the Lord stretched out His mighty hand in protecting Israel (see Exodus 3:20, Deuteronomy 5:15a). This verse, then, is an allusion to the power of God to take us out of Egypt and out of Babylon if we will but turn to Him and worship Him and none else. The Lord will stretch out His arm to punish, to save, or do as it pleases Him, in order to bless man.

²⁵ MT (Ⓜ) has אֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

vv. 28–32. The people of Philistia (or Philistines) should not rejoice upon the death of Ahaz (about 726 B.C.), for after him would come one more formidable, King Hezekiah. Likewise, in a more global way, Philistia, or *The World* should not rejoice over the apparent despair of Zion, the pure in heart, for Messiah will eventually triumph and all evil will be put away in the Lord’s mountain or Zion. Regarding prophecies against the Philistines, we also can see Jeremiah 47; Ezekiel 25:15–16; and Amos 1:8.

28 In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden.

Nägelsbach suggests that these words were written after Ahaz (see notes on ISAIAH 7) had died. This may well be so, based on the taunting words that follow.

29 Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken; for out of the serpent’s root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit [shall be] a fiery flying serpent.

Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken. The Targum (Ⓣ) reads, “Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of ye, because the government that hath made you servile is broken.” The Philistines were known to laugh at the troubles of Israel, and so it was that David mourned when Saul and Jonathan died and said: “The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph” (2 Samuel 1:19–20). Henderson suggests, “By the ‘rod which smote’ the Philistines, is meant the Jewish power, which had ... punished them in the days of Uzziah, but was now broken in those of Ahaz, partly by the Syrians and Israelites, partly by the inroads of the Edomites and Philistines, and partly by Tiglathpileser (2 Chronicles 28). To repress their joy at these disastrous events, the prophet tells them, in highly figurative language, that from the royal house of Judah, a prince should arise, who would prove more formidable and destructive to them than his predecessors.” Many commentators rightly see Hezekiah as this prince. Yet on a larger scale, there would yet be another PRINCE to come forth, even the LORD OF HOSTS, even Jesus the Christ. ¶ *For out of the serpent’s root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.* Note the Messianic application in the Targum (Ⓣ), “Because

from the children of Jesse shall come forth the Messiah (משיח), and His works among you shall be as a flying serpent.” In earlier chapters we have spoken about the flying serpent, and its Messianic connotations, too (see ISAIAH 6, also see Numbers 21:9). Kay observes, “It is scarcely possible not to see here an antithesis to ISAIAH 11:1, 10. Out of the root of Jesse should come forth One, who should defend the poor; and make the viper innocuous; and set up a standard, beneath which should be rest.” Henderson says that the fiery serpents get their name “on account of their *vivid fiery colour*, being somewhat like the copper-coloured snake in appearance; on which account, a serpent of copper or brass was set up, to which the bitten Israelites were to look, in order to be healed ... The most remarkable circumstance connected with those described here ... is that of their *flying*: no serpents now in existence being known to naturalists to have wings, from which it is inferred that they never did exist. There can, however, be no doubt that some of the most respectable authorities among the ancients speak of winged or flying serpents, on occasions which would lead us to suppose that they are not treating the fabulous, but of facts known to themselves and their contemporaries.” Regarding the flying serpents, one possibility is as described by Henderson of some extinct species, while another is that these snakes were so agile when striking that they gave the appearance of flying through the air to attack their victims. Delitzsch well says, “The power from which Philistia had escaped was a common snake (שׂוֹפֵר), which had been either cut to pieces, or had died out down to the very roots. But out of this root, *i.e.*, out of the house of David, which had been reduced to the humble condition of its tribal house, there was coming forth a נִפְעַת, a basilisk (*regulus*, as Jerome and other translators render it: see at ISAIAH 11:8)); and this basilisk, which is dangerous and even fatal in itself, as soon as it had reached maturity, would bring forth a winged dragon as its fruit. The basilisk is Hezekiah,²⁶ and the flying dragon is the Messiah (this is the explanation given by the Targum); or, what is the same thing, the former is the Davidic government of the immediate future, the latter the Davidic government of the ultimate future.”

30 And the first-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in

²⁶ We read of Hezekiah that he was a righteous king, trusting in the Lord, a man often described as a type of Christ, and as a result: “He smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city” (2 Kings 18:8).

safety; and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant.

And the first-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety. Barnes writes, “The phrase ‘the first-born of the poor’ is an Hebraism, a strong, emphatic expression, denoting those who are the most poor; the most abject sons of poverty; those who have an eminence or a double portion of need, as the first-born among the Hebrews were entitled to special distinctions and privileges. The idea is, that even the most poor and defenseless would be safe.” When the Messiah would come—in the First Advent—he would feed the poor and heal the lame. There is also an allusion to the Millennium and the Second Advent, when there would be peace even among the animals. These would be returned to their paradisiacal state, as formerly found in the Garden of Eden. In the Millennial day, these would include the *poor in spirit*. ¶ *And I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant.* 1QIsa^a (Q) has it, “and I will kill thy root . . . and I will slay thy remnant.” In ISAIAH 11:11a we read of the remnant that would be preserved. Those who would read this would be well acquainted with the promises made to the remnant of Israel. In Genesis we have: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15). This is as to say that in the long run God will punish the wicked, but will allow the wicked to inflict punishment on His people, that only a remnant shall remain.

31 Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, [art] dissolved; for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none [shall be] alone in his appointed times.

The Targum (T) reads, “Howl, on account of thy gate, cry on account of the city, ye, O Philistines, all of you; ye shall be broken: because from the north vengeance is coming, and is not delaying its appointed time.” *Howl for thy gates* seems to mean that a person is homesick to return for the homeland. Some exegetes believe that the smoke is the dirt raised by the armies of the approaching enemy. Others, like Cheyne, prefer the thought of the devastations left behind of burning buildings and towns after the invading armies have passed. The invading armies are those of Babylon. The expression *the north* is used frequently in Jeremiah to mean Babylon (e.g., Jeremiah 1:13; 47:2–3). Gill likewise suggests that “the utter destruction of Palestine was by the Chaldean army under Nebuchadnezzar; and so the prophecy from the time of Hezekiah, with which

it begins, is carried on unto the entire dissolution of this country by the Babylonians.”

32 What shall [œne] then answer the messengers of the nations? That the LORD hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.

Outside the Hebrew Bible (M) most ancient texts (C, G, S, V) use a plural form גוֹיִם, *nations*, as does the Book of Mormon, instead of *nation*, גוֹי. The SOT based on the *Boothroyd’s Biblia Hebraica* (Kennicott) also renders it as the Book of Mormon, *nations*. ¶ President George Q. Cannon had this to say about Zion: “The Lord has shown His people that He is able to take care of His own work, to carry out His own purposes, and to fulfill His promises . . . The testimonies of the servants of God have been amply sustained wherein they have said that whatever might occur, and however fiercely the work of God might be warred against, it would stand impregnable and unshaken and would proceed in its onward march unchecked by the attacks that should be made upon it. This ought to be a great source of comfort to all who are connected with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. God has spoken. He has laid the foundation of His work. He has promised that it shall be built up and that no power shall prevail against it. As one of the Prophets has said, ‘What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of His people shall trust in it’ (ISAIAH 14:32). This prediction is literally fulfilled in our case. We do put our trust in Zion, the Lord having founded it (1 January 1893, JI 28:24).”²⁷

FIRST POSTED: 17 October 2003

²⁷ George Q. Cannon, *Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon*, selected, arranged, and edited by Jerreld L. Newquist, p.116–117.

