
Isaiah 24

Most commentators feel that ISAIAH 24 through 27 are part of a single prophetic unit. The prophecy is directed to the whole world. Keith says that “much of it must be understood of events yet to come [as furthermore] the prophecy has not yet received its accomplishment in all its particulars.” Cheyne well says, “As for the vagueness or mysteriousness of the language, this ought to be no difficulty to those who recognise in any degree the eschatological purport of the prophecy. The more the authors of the prophetic or apocalyptic literature have their minds directed to the ‘latter days,’ the more mysterious becomes their language, the greater their tendency to wide and general expressions.” It is gratifying to see that many understand this prophecy correctly as being related to the end of times. Horsley says, “The terms of the prophecy are such as cannot be naturally expounded of anything less than the general tribulation of the last ages, and the succeeding prosperity of the Church in the end of the world.” Our Savior said, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:21–22). President Joseph Fielding Smith explained that the earth would die and be resurrected, just as its human inhabitants. So we also read in Matthew 24:24, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” Sometimes similar language is used to describe this process, but there are differences between the changes that will overtake the earth in (1) the *beginning* of the millennium (D&C 101:23–31; ISAIAH 65:17) and, (2) the *post-millennium* (D&C 88:18–26; 29:22–23; 77:1–2, ISAIAH 24:4, 19; ISAIAH 51:6). President Joseph Fielding Smith explained: “This earth is filling the measure of its creation. Today it is passing through its mortal state. The time will come when it shall die and pass away as do all things upon it. [In contrast] at the beginning of the Millennial reign, as we declare in the tenth article of the Articles of Faith, [the renewed earth] shall receive its paradisiacal glory, or be restored as it was before the fall of man.¹ We see references to the burning and melting down, some of which seems to be associated with the second coming, and some is given in reference to the final transition of the earth into a celestial orb. We then move from this scene, to a glorious one where “a remnant left in the midst of the earth, who should lift up their voice and sing for the majesty of the Lord.”² They sing to the Righteous One, even Christ Jesus. The moments of joy are short-lived for the prophet, who sees some horrible scenes before we can once again rejoice. Some have thought it was the crucifixion and rejection of our Lord in the meridian of time. Others, that it may regard the impending doom and the horrors of the end of days. The great mission of our Lord and Savior, who would liberate the repentant from spirit prison, is alluded to. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, referring to this chapter, that just as those who lived before the flood had a day of deliverance after the gospel was preached to them, so would those who came after Noah. While men generally believe that a man’s destiny is fixed forever at his death, to be eternally happy or miserable, this is not what the scriptures have to say on this matter; nor is man damned because he was deprived of an opportunity to know Christ in this life, explains Brother Joseph.³ The Lord would reign from both Zion and from Jerusalem during the Millennium. I include a brief note here on the circular logic of the higher critics. Ewald, beginning with ISAIAH 24:21 and spilling into ISAIAH 25:6–11, calls these verses a “beautiful and glowing picture of the Messianic reign.” So beautiful, indeed, that although Ewald assigns these set of chapters (ISAIAH 24–27) to some unknown, more modern writer, yet some strophes are regarded by Ewald as so *beautiful* that they must originate from some ancient writer, to include Isaiah himself! Stanley B. Frost⁴ according to Young, “maintains that these chapters were written by one who deliberately posed as Isaiah.” Wildberger, along similar lines says, speaking of Isaiah’s peculiar use of the word קרייה for a city, rather than the more usual עיר, “This is once again a small indicator that there must have been something like an Isaiah school.” In other words, this “unknown writer” who, according to the higher critics, could *not* be Isaiah, wrote just like Isaiah, in every peculiarity of style and vocabulary. So the author must have (1) either found some ancient writing that was originally written by Isaiah; or (2) there was an Isaiah school of writing to train these men. It would be comic if it was not so tragic.

¹ Smith, Joseph Fielding. *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 1:132.

² *Millennial Star*, Volume 5, No. 2, July 1844.

³ Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith, p.218.

⁴ Frost is the author of *Old Testament apocalyptic, its origins and growth*, Epworth Press, 1952.

vv. 1–5. Elder John Taylor wrote, “...it would seem that terrible judgments await the inhabitants of the world; that there will be a general destruction; the world will be full of war and confusion, the nations of the earth will be convulsed, and the wicked hurled out of it.”¹ Latter-day prophets have applied these verses of Isaiah to at least two distinct time periods when the earth will be cleansed: (1) the pre-millennial latter-day before the coming of our Lord; and (2) the post-millennial latter day, after Satan is permitted to torment the inhabitants of this earth one last time.

1 ¶ BEHOLD, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, ✓ and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

✓ perverteth the face thereof

BEHOLD, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste. The Dead Sea Scrolls² 4QIsa^c (Ⓚ) has *the earth* (הָאָרֶץ) while the Great Isaiah Scroll, 1QIsa^a (Ⓚ) ηασ *the land* (הָאָרֶץ). The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *the earth* (הָאָרֶץ). The Targum (Ⓣ) has the Lord delivering the earth “over to the enemy,” and adds that “confusion shall cover the faces of the princes.” The LXX³ (Ⓛ) reads, “Behold the Lord is about to destroy this inhabited land!” The Douay-Rheims (based on the Vulgate, Ⓟ)⁴ has, “Behold the Lord shall lay waste the earth, and shall strip it.” The Targum (Ⓣ), as translated by Pauli, tends to render the Aramaic אַרְעָא as *land* rather than as *earth*. Stenning’s (Ⓣ) translation systematically uses *earth*, for the complete globe rather than any one particular geographical area. ¶ *Behold, הַיְהִיָּה*. Ibn Ezra (in ISAIAH 24:14) explains: “The prophet refers to the remote future [beginning with ISAIAH

24:1].” For Ibn Ezra, this remote future would be around the time of Gog and Magog. Cheyne explains, “‘Behold’ with a participle, in the prophets, almost always points to the future... [and it is better] to regard these as prophetic—as proceeding from the point of view of one who had attained a specially clear insight into the eternal purposes of God.” ¶ *Make empty, בּוֹקֵק* (from the root, בָּקַק). The expression, to *make empty* or *empty*, according to Gesenius (see also Gray), is derived—as we have already pointed out in earlier chapters—from the sound made by a bottle when its liquid contents are *poured out*. Gesenius has it deriving from בִּקְבוּק, pronounced roughly as *bakbuk*, with the Persian equivalent being *gulgul*, غلغل. Calvin says, “בלקדה, *he maketh bare the earth*, because the earth is said to be ‘covered,’ when it is inhabited by a great multitude of men, and when it abounds in fruits and flocks; and it is said to be ‘uncovered’ or ‘laid bare,’ when it is deprived of its inhabitants, and when its covering is taken away from it, as if one were stripped of his raiment and ornaments.” Likewise in 2 Kings 21:13b: “And I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.” The word for *dish* used in 2 Kings 21:13 is אֶת־הַצֶּלֶתֶת, and a similar word is used for *jar* (BDB) צֶלְהִית, which matches this verse even more (see 2 Kings 2:20). ¶ *And turneth, וְעָנָה*. Gray explains, “The fundamental meaning of the root עָנָה, *to bend, twist*; and possibly the Hebrews thought of a ruin as a kind of distortion of the face of the earth into shapelessness.” Certainly this is a good way to describe distortions caused by such natural disasters as earthquakes, floods, volcano eruptions, hurricanes, and tsunamis. ¶ *Upside down, פְּנִיָּה*. Or, as in the margin ||, the *face* (פְּנִיָּה). So Alexander explains this expression, as to mean “the upper part or mouth of the vessel.” This matches well the allusion already spoken referred to in regards to making *empty, בּוֹקֵק* a dish or jar that is turned over. ¶ *And scatter, וְהִפִּיץ*. Alexander explains that “וְהִפִּיץ is not *to cause to flow*, as in Arabic, but *to scatter*, according to the uniform Hebrew usage” (emphases added). The earth would be put through violent distortions. ¶ *And turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof*. The Targum (Ⓣ) instead has, “confusion shall cover the faces of the princes, because they have transgressed the law, and scattered its inhabitants.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “He will lay it waste and uncover the face thereof and scatter abroad them who dwell therein.” The Douay-Rheims (based on the Vulgate, Ⓟ) has, “And shall afflict the face thereof, and scatter abroad the inhabitants thereof.” Wildberger

¹ Taylor, John. *The Government of God*. Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1852, Chapter 11.

² Beginning with Isaiah 24, I am also leaning on the Dead Sea Scrolls at the *Israel Museum* (<http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/isaiah>); *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, XXXII, Qumran Cave 1, Volume II. Ulrich and Flint; the *Accordance DSS-M* and *DSS-C*; *Biblical Dead Sea Scrolls* (Logos Bible Software), as well as the *Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* (DSSB). Another excellent reference, although it is limited to the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^a), are the photos of Fred P Miller of each page of the Dead Sea Scrolls in its ancient script.

³ Thompson, beginning with Isaiah 22, unless otherwise mentioned.

⁴ To simplify, future references to the Douay-Rheims (based on the Vulgate, Ⓟ), will appear simply as The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ), while direct quotes from the Vulgata Clementina in Latin will appear Vulgate (Ⓟ). Special thanks to Michael Tweedale for making available these texts as part of the VulSearch free software under the GNU General Public License at <http://vulsearch.sourceforge.net/>.

prefers *and disfigures* as a translation of **עֲנֶה** (*and turneth*): “the face of the earth will be disfigured. That would fit in with what happens in floods, earthquakes, and drought.” Kaiser, especially in ISAIAH 24:4 and 7 thinks of severe drought, such as those mentioned in *Rain in Due Season*. Regarding **עֲנֶה**, Young has, “Possibly the reference is to the ravages that war brings, and that so upset and displace everything that it no longer looks as formerly.” ¶ Elder Orson Pratt explained, “Many portions of the earth which now lie buried will be thrown to the surface, and many portions which now are the upper crust of the earth will be turned under.”⁵

2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; ✓ as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

✓ or, prince

Each pair in these expressions seems to indicate the totality of humanity who will be affected. Ibn Ezra explains it this way, “When two nouns with the prefix **כ** follow each other, the phrase is elliptical; the complete sentence would be: **as** with the people so with the priest, and **as** with the priest so with the people, **as** with the servant so with the master, and **as** with the master so with the servant, etc.” ¶ *And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest*. This expression is also used by Hosea: “And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings” (Hosea 4:9). This expression, explains Whitehouse, “seems to have been proverbial.” The Targum (**ܬ**), likewise, has the **non-priest** or laity, **חֵיל וְנֹאֲדָה** contrasted to the **priest**, **כֹּהֵן**. The Lamsa Peshitta (**ܣ**) renders the pair, “so with the priest; as with the servant,” while the *Biblia Peshitta en Español* (BPE **ܣ**) has it the same as the Masoretic text (**א**). Elder Matthias F. Cowly taught, “We learn from the twenty-fourth chapter of Isaiah that the effects of this ancient apostasy would be so universal as to cover all classes of society, affecting not only the religious and social circles, but the business transactions of the human family.”⁶ The Prophet Joseph Smith, in the same article in which he spoke about the Great Apostasy and ISAIAH 24:5, seemed to make some allusion to ISAIAH 24:3: “I

⁵ Elder Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, 18:315–316.

⁶ Cowly, Mattias F. Cowley’s Talks on Doctrine. Apostasy.

will proceed to tell you what the Lord requires of all people, high and low, rich and poor, male and female, ministers and people, professors of religion and non-professors, in order that they may enjoy the Holy Spirit of God to a fullness, and escape the judgments of God, which are almost ready to burst upon the nations of the earth. Repent of all your sins, and be baptized in water for the remission of them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and receive the ordinance of the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power, that ye may receive the Holy Spirit of God; and this is according to the Holy Scriptures, and the Book of Mormon; and the only way that man can enter into the celestial kingdom. These are the requirements of the new covenant, or first principles of the Gospel of Christ: then ‘Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity [or love]; for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.’”⁷ President Spencer W. Kimball taught, speaking about ISAIAH 24:2, “The term *priest* is here used to denote all religious leaders of any faith ... From among the discordant voices we are shocked at those of many priests who encourage the defilement of men and wink at the eroding trends and who deny the omniscience of God. Certainly these men should be holding firm [regarding virtuous principles], yet some yield to popular clamor.”⁸ Elder John Taylor also used ISAIAH 24:2 to describe priests from other religious denominations,⁹ as did Elder Bruce R. McConkie, “If there are false Christs, there are false witnesses of these Christs. If there are false churches, there are false ministers.”¹⁰ A number of non-LDS exegetes have similar opinions. Gill suggests that these are not the righteous priests, but the apostate, “who have led the people into superstition and idolatry; blind leaders of the blind, and so both fall into the ditch together.” Jennings sounds very much as a LDS, “The New Testament [has], ‘For that day shall not come except there come *the* apostasy first,’ and every falsely called ‘Christian’ pulpit shall ring with open attacks on the

⁷ Smith, Joseph. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Selected by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Press, 1938. “January 4, 1833, the Prophet wrote to Mr. N. E. Seaton, an editor of a newspaper, the following words of counsel and warning concerning the state of the world and the purpose of the Lord in the restoration spoken of by the ancient prophets,” pp. 14–17.

⁸ Kimball, Spencer W. CR April 1971, Saturday Morning session.

⁹ Taylor, John. *Journal of Discourses* 11:50.

¹⁰ McConkie, Bruce R. *The Millennial Messiah, False Prophets Precede His Coming, False Prophets Minister on Every Hand*, p. 73.

Person and Work of the Son of God. I can leave my readers to decide as to there being any such indications this very day.” ¶ *As with the servant, so with his master. As with the maid, so with her mistress. As with the buyer, so with the seller. As with the lender, so with the borrower. As with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.* Ezekiel 7:12 also seems to be given in the same vein: “The time is come, the day draweth near: let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn: for wrath is upon all the multitude thereof.” Rabbi Rashi (in Rosenberg) has, “Not like other travelers, that the master is led by the slave, and the mistress is led by her maidservant; the master is esteemed and the slave is held in low esteem, the mistress is esteemed and the maidservant is held in low esteem, but when the captor leads the captives, all are equal before him.” The Lamsa Peshitta (S) renders the first pair, “his master; as with her mistress,” while the BPE (S) has it the same as the Masoretic text (MT). For the last clause, the Douay-Rheims (V) has, “As with him that calleth for his money, so with him that oweth.” Gill says, “There shall be no distinction of superiors and inferiors; as not of prince and subjects, so not of master and servant, mistress and maid; no respect will be had to persons, but the one shall be treated even as the other.” Regarding the *lender* and the *borrower*, mentioned here in ISAIAH 24:2, President Anthony W. Irvins wrote in 1932, “And we are nearing that condition now [regarding out of control debt]. I do not know who is the worse off today, the banker who is lending money, or the person to Whom he lends it.”¹¹

3 The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.

The Targum (T) has “utterly trampled underfoot,” for *spoiled*. The LXX (G) reads, “With destruction the land will be destroyed, and with spoiling this land will be ransacked: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken this.” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, for the first half, “With desolation shall the earth be laid waste, and it shall be utterly spoiled.” Some of the Rabbis interpreted this of Israel, but it is preferable to look at the subject from an eschatological worldwide perspective. Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, spoke in the 1968 General Conference about searching for peace: “I call your attention to the following quotations from the scriptures: Isaiah, envisioning our day, declared: ‘The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled. . . .’ And then, as if in retrospect, he lamented: ‘Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants

of the earth are burned, and few men left’ (ISAIAH 24:3, 6) . . . President George Albert Smith, speaking from this stand in 1950, said: ‘It will not be long until calamities will overtake the human family unless there is speedy repentance. It will not be long before those who are scattered over the face of the earth by millions will die like flies because of what will come’ (Era, Vol. 53 [May 1950], p. 412).”¹² President Brigham Young quoted Isaiah when he said, “There is no true faith, for all is uncertainty—every man pursuing his own way. They have no light of revelation to guide them, and that which would have saved this nation from its present awful chastisement they have cast out from them, therefore ‘Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled; for the Lord hath spoken this word.’”¹³ ¶ Regarding the *formula*, “**For the LORD hath spoken this word**”

(כִּי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה), Henderson explains that it “is usual with the prophets, and expresses the certainty of the events predicted.”

4 The earth mourneth [and] fadeth away, the world languisheth [and] fadeth away, the haughty people ✓ of the earth do languish.

✓ the height of the people

Regarding the last clause the Targum (T) adds, “the strength of the people of the land hath come to an end.” The LXX (G) reads, “The land mourned and this empire is destroyed—the lofty people of the land mourned.” The Peshitta (S)¹⁴ has *mourn* instead of “fadeth away,” in the first clause. For the second clause, BPE (S) has the world as weeping, sitting, and making lamentation. The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “The earth mourned, and faded away, and is weakened: the world faded away, the height of the people of the earth is weakened.” נָבַל, *fadeth*, is a favorite word with the Prophet Isaiah, and he also uses it in ISAIAH 40:7–8, there to describe the *wilting flower*. Regarding תִּבֵּל, Delitzsch has, “‘The world’ (תִּבֵּל) is used here in ISAIAH 24:4, as in ISAIAH 26:9 (always in the form of a proper name, and without the article), as a parallel to

¹² Romney, Marion G. Conference Report, April 1968, p. 113.

¹³ Young, Brigham. *Journal of Discourses* 9:367. Discourse delivered in the Bowery, Great Salt Lake City, August 31, 1862.

¹⁴ Unless otherwise noted, from this chapter on, the Peshitta (S) is based on George Lamsa’ Peshitta (S) and the BPE (S) translations. The PPE, of course, is in Spanish, so I am speaking about equivalent meanings.

¹¹ Irvins, Anthony W. CR October 1932.

‘the earth’ (אֶרֶץ), with which it alternates throughout this cycle of prophecies. It is used poetically to signify the globe, and that without limitation... and therefore ‘the earth’ is also to be understood here in its most comprehensive sense.” Young says, “Kittel asserts that תבל is never used of the land of Judah but always of the inhabited world... [and] hence he takes עַם הָאָרֶץ in the sense, ‘inhabitant¹⁵ of the earth.’” President Joseph Fielding Smith quoted ISAIAH 24:4 (along with ISAIAH 51:6; Psalm 102:25–28; 2 Peter 3:10; Matthew 24:35; D&C 29:22–25; 88:25–27) and the writings of the Prophet Joseph Smith and Brigham Young (D&C 130:8–9; Journal of Discourses 7: 163) to explain that (1) after the millennium, or thousand years of peace, there would once again come upon the earth the influence of Satan along with contention and wickedness; (2) the earth would die and Satan would be defeated; and (3) the earth would be resurrected into a glorious celestial body that would radiate light becoming a great Urim and Thummim. Furthermore, President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: “To Joseph Smith the Lord said, speaking of this earth... That is what the Lord means by the expression: ‘Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.’”¹⁶ In other words, only those who can abide a Celestial glory will be permitted to dwell upon this earth at that time. ¶ *The haughty people of the earth do languish.* Both Rabbis Rashi and David Kimhi believe that the expression “the lofty people” (גִּבּוֹרִים), the people refer to the nobility (Slotki/Rosenberg). Regarding *haughty people*, גִּבּוֹרִים, Barnes writes, “Margin ||, as in the Hebrew, ‘Height of the people.’ It denotes the great, the nobles, the princes of the land.” I like what Ludlow says here: “The ‘most exalted people on earth’ (New Jewish Version) could be those who exalt themselves and thus become the proud or haughty. They might also be the ancient Israelites or members of Christ’s latter-day church who have been called and ordained to great callings but who ‘languish’ (New Jewish Version) or grow prideful and fail to fulfill their stewardship. Whoever they are, their primary sin is that they have changed the teachings, laws &c.” As Ludlow tells us, no one is exempt, whether it is prideful nations or individuals. Elder Neal A. Maxwell wrote: “In Isaiah’s remarkable prophesy contained in the first part of chapter 24 of his book, we read that the ‘haughty people of the earth do languish.’ One rendering of the words ‘haughty people’ is the ‘upper class.’ Languish connotes a drooping, a spiritlessness, a loss of animation ... Hence the disappointment in the secular

¹⁵ Or, *people*.

¹⁶ Smith, Joseph Fielding. *The Restoration of All Things*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973, pp. 295–300.

search for the meaning of life. Hence the drooping of the human spirit in which the conscience can come to be regarded as an intruder. Indeed, ennui, boredom, and humdrum hedonism are descriptive of those thus afflicted.” Elder Maxwell concludes, “It is this [glorious perspective of the Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ] which can give meaning to life and which can remedy those conditions in which people languish and droop and are desolate ... The restored gospel is thus a gospel of hope and meaning: not a vague, generalized hope but a message of specific and justified hope for which myriad mortals hunger and which all mortals need.”¹⁷

5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, regarding the great apostasy: “After this chosen family [Israel] had rejected Christ and His proposals, the heralds of salvation said to them, ‘Lo we turn unto the Gentiles;’ and, the Gentiles received the covenant, and were grafted in from whence the chosen family were broken off: but the Gentiles have not continued in the goodness of God, but have departed from the faith that was once delivered to the Saints, and have broken the covenant in which their fathers were established (see ISAIAH 24:5); and have become high-minded, and have not feared; therefore, but few of them will be gathered with the chosen family ... [W]e may look at the Christian world and see the apostasy there has been from the apostolic platform; and who can look at this and not exclaim, in the language of Isaiah, ‘The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, and broken the everlasting covenant?’”¹⁸ Then Elder Ezra Taft Benson also spoke of the falling away that would precede the glorious latter-day restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ upon the earth: “As the restored Church, we affirm that with the passing of the apostolic age, the Church drifted into a condition of apostasy ... [I]n the Old Testament, prophets had prophesied in a similar manner. Isaiah indicated that the earth would be defiled

¹⁷ Maxwell, Neal A. *Sermons Not Spoken*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1985. ‘Search the Scriptures,’ pp. 65, 68–72, 82.

¹⁸ Smith, Joseph. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Selected by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Press, 1938. “January 4, 1833, the Prophet wrote to Mr. N. E. Seaton, an editor of a newspaper, the following words of counsel and warning concerning the state of the world and the purpose of the Lord in the restoration spoken of by the ancient prophets,” pp. 14–17.

under the inhabitants thereof because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. (ISAIAH 24:5.) ... The everlasting covenant is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amos had spoken of a famine that should come in the land for ‘hearing the words of the Lord’ and that people would ‘run to and fro to seek the work of the Lord, and shall not find it’ (Amos 8:11). Not only by history, which is quite conclusive, but through prophecy also we have been informed definitely that there was and there would be a complete apostasy from the truth. Many of the early reformers recognized this fact as they struck out against the false teachings and practices of their day. Wesley, the founder of Methodism, lamented that the ‘Christians had turned heathen again and had only a dead form left.’ Even here in America, Roger Williams, head of the oldest Baptist congregation in the land, recognized, as he quit the ministry, that there was no divinely constituted authority or church upon the face of the earth, nor would there be such a church until one arose having apostles and other officers as found in the church established in the Meridian of Time ... I testify in all humility that God has again spoken from the heavens, following a long period of apostasy, that he has raised up a prophet, that Joseph Smith was the instrument in his hands in restoring again to the earth the Holy Priesthood, the true Church organization with all the blessings enjoyed in former days”¹⁹ Elder Sterling W. Sill, in General conference compared the spiritual famine spoken of in Amos 8:11–12 to ISAIAH 24:5.²⁰ ¶ *The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof.* The LXX (Ϛ) reads, “As for the land, it transgressed by means of its inhabitants.” The Peshitta (ܣ) has *like* rather than *under*. The Douay-Rheims (Ϸ) has, “And the earth is infected by the inhabitants thereof.” This concept of the earth being defiled, *and the earth defiled* **וְהָאֲרֶץ הִנְפָּה**, is critical to our LDS theology. Throughout the Book of Mormon we read about the blessing or cursing of the land, such as: “But the word of the Lord was verified, which he spake unto our fathers, saying that: Inasmuch as ye will keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land” (Jarom 1:9b), or a few pages later, the very opposite, “For the Lord would not suffer, after he had led them out of the land of Jerusalem and kept and preserved them from falling into the hands of their enemies, yea, he would not suffer that the words should not be verified, which he spake unto our fathers, saying that: Inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall not prosper in the land. Wherefore, the Lord did visit them in great

judgment; nevertheless, he did spare the righteous that they should not perish, but did deliver them out of the hands of their enemies” (Omni 1:6–7). Likewise, Alexander points out: “The land of [Israel] is said to be profaned as being a holy land or consecrated to Jehovah.” Skinner points out: “The condition of the world resembles that which preceded the Deluge (Genesis 6:11).” Such will be the case before the second coming of our Savior. ¶ *Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.* The Targum (ܛ) has “made the festivals to cease” instead of *ordinances*. The Furthermore, the Targum (ܛ) has *changed* instead of *broken*. The LXX (Ϛ) reads, “Because they transgressed the law, and changed the institutions—the everlasting covenant, therefore a curse devoureth the land.” Young says, “[Isaiah] has taken the language of the theocracy, terms such as *laws, statute, eternal covenant, they are reckoned guilty*, etc., designations which belong to Israel; and he has applied these to the whole world.”

¶ *Laws תּוֹרָה*,²¹ *ordinance חֹק*, *everlasting covenant בְּרִית עוֹלָם*. ¶ The expression *everlasting covenant בְּרִית עוֹלָם*, is first mentioned in relation to the post-flood covenant (Genesis 9:16, *see also* 1–17) between God and man. We often focus on what God agrees to do, that is, to withhold another universal Deluge. But it also appears that mankind was also commanded to keep some very specific laws as mentioned in Genesis 9:1–7. There are at least fourteen instances of the expression in the Old Testament, which can be found in Genesis, Leviticus, 2 Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In the Prophets, the expression is often looking to a *future* date, and to a *future* covenant, “*and I will make an everlasting covenant with them,*” **וַיַּבְרִית׃ יְהוָה אִתְּךָ וְעִם הָאָדָם** (ISAIAH 61:8), and **וַיַּבְרִית׃ יְהוָה אִתְּךָ וְעִם הָאָדָם** (Jeremiah 32:40, *literally, and I will make with them covenant everlasting*). Beside the everlasting covenant mentioned in relation to the flood and to circumcision, we have that all important *everlasting covenant* with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, all of which point to *the everlasting covenant* διαθήκης αἰωνίου, even that of Jesus Christ, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ himself. Elder B. H. Roberts elucidates: “The prophet cannot have reference to transgressing the law, and changing the ordinances of the Mosaic covenant, for the Mosaic Law was not an everlasting covenant, but merely a temporary law, ‘added to the Gospel because of transgression’ (Galatians 3). It was a law of carnal commandments to act as a schoolmaster to bring the

¹⁹ Elder Ezra Taft Benson, Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, October 1949 General Conference, p. 26–28.

²⁰ Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, 3 April 1956, General Conference, p. 14.

²¹ Some exegetes have spoken about the *unusual* form the word takes in the plural. It may be an unusual form, but it is quite typical. **תּוֹרָה** is often translated as the *law/s*. The very first usage of the word **וְתוֹרָתִי**, appears in Genesis 26:5, ‘*and my laws.*’

people to Christ; and when Christ came was laid aside, having fulfilled its purpose. It was not, therefore an everlasting covenant, and hence was not the thing the prophet Isaiah had in mind in his great prophecy. On the other hand, Paul refers to the blood of Christ as the ‘blood of the everlasting covenant’ (Hebrews 13:20). Hence, it is the covenant sealed by that blood to which Isaiah must have had reference—the Gospel; and the transgression of its laws, the changing of its ordinances, the breaking of that covenant, was to result in making desolate the earth and the inhabitants thereof. Hence, the everlasting covenant in the passage represents the gospel covenant.”²² Elsewhere, Elder B. H. Roberts has, “Because they have broken—not the covenant made with Moses, or with Abraham—but because they have broken the everlasting covenant; of which covenant the blood of Christ is the sign and seal. In other words, they have broken the Gospel covenant—departed from the Gospel faith—hence the predicted judgment.”²³ ¶ For *ordinance* אֲדָרָא, Calvin feels it refers to the *commandments*. Finally, Calvin says, “The third term employed by him is בְּרִיתָא, by which he means a *covenant* and *contract*.”

6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: The Masoretic text (א) has *devoured [the] earth* (אֲכָלָה אֶרֶץ), which is also supported Dead Sea Scrolls (א) 4QIsa^c fragment²⁴ (אֲכָלָה אֶרֶץ), but not by 1QIsa^a (אֲכָלָה) which has dropped *earth* from the expression. The Targum (א) adds, “Because of perjury (בְּוִיָּוָה, ‘an oath’ from וָיָוָה, ‘to swear’).” The LXX (א) reads, “Because they who dwell therein have sinned, therefore the inhabitants of the land shall be distressed.” The BPE (א) has *mourned* and Lamsa Peshitta has “sit in mourning” for *curse devoured*. The Douay-Rheims (א) has, for the second clause, “And the inhabitants thereof shall sin.” ¶ *Curse*.

²² Elder B. H. Roberts. *Improvement Era*, June 1908. Seventy’s Council Table.

²³ B. H. Roberts. *Seventy’s Course*, 2:205–206, The Apostatic Period., The Testimony of Prophecy.

²⁴ Translators sometimes use brackets [] or *italics* to indicate an *ellipsis*. Brackets [] are also used to indicate a *lacunae*. That is, pieces or fragments of the original are missing. In this case the Aleph א is missing from the word אֲכָלָה, *devoured*, but can safely be assumed to have been part of this word, based on either the Masoretic text (א) or other fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls (א).

Luther and Calvin see this reference, those found in the *Rain in Due Season*. ¶ *Desolate*. Elder Neal A. Maxwell wrote: “While we usually think of apostasy solely in terms of theological deviation, we often fail to see its connections to the everyday, human condition in which the consequences of that deviation are enormous. To continue the suggestion about connecting up the scriptures and the human condition, the words of Isaiah indicate that the dwellers of the earth will be ‘desolate’ (ISAIAH 24:6). ‘Desolate’ connotes joylessness or a grief-stricken condition—a state kindred to the spiritlessness which the word languish connotes.”²⁵ ¶ *Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left*. The LXX (א) reads, “And few are the men who shall be left.” The Peshitta (א) has *destroyed* (Lamsa) / *massacred* (BPE) rather than *burned*. The Douay-Rheims (א) has, “And therefore they that dwell therein shall be mad, and few men shall be left.”

¶ *Burned*, בָּרָא. Gray has, “*The inhabitants . . . are scorched*] Revelation 16:8 records that, as a result of the pouring out of the fourth vial of God’s wrath, ‘men were scorched with great heat.’” Elder Orson Pratt taught, “To the query, how many are to be overtaken by this last great judgment, Isaiah would answer, ‘the inhabitants of the earth are burned and few men left.’ What, only a few persons to be converted, only a few to receive the true Gospel, and be prepared for the coming of the Bridegroom; only a few people to escape this awful desolation? So says the Prophet Isaiah; that is, few in comparison to the great and numerous population of our globe.”²⁶ Elder B. H. Roberts wrote, “Clearly all this prophecy of Isaiah’s has not yet been fulfilled; for the earth, however much it may have been defiled under the inhabitants thereof, has not yet been burned, and but few men left. That is a judgment that still hangs over the world; and will come upon it as sure as the Lord has spoken the word.”²⁷ Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote, “Fire, flaming fire, literal fire, fire that burns trees, melts ore, and consumes corruption—such shall accompany the Lord Jesus and cover the earth when he returns in all the glory of his Father’s kingdom. Not only will the Lord come in flaming fire, but that fire will produce fervent, glowing, intense heat, heat that has not been known in the entire history of the earth, heat that will cause the very elements to melt, the mountains to flow down at his presence, and the very earth itself, as now constituted, to dissolve . . . Only those who are quickened, as were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, shall

²⁵ Maxwell, Neal A. *Sermons Not Spoken*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1985. ‘Search the Scriptures,’ pp. 65, 68–72, 82.

²⁶ Elder Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses* 20:14–16.

²⁷ B. H. Roberts. *Seventy’s Course*, 2:205–206, The Apostatic Period., The Testimony of Prophecy.

be able to abide the day of burning. In that day, as Isaiah says ... ‘The inhabitants of the earth are burned and few men left’ (ISAIAH 24:6).”²⁸ Here we can turn to the questions often posed by the Prophets of God, regarding the human qualities we are to possess if we wish to abide that day. We have three such *who* (וְיִ) questions (*emphasis added*). “*Who* among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? *who* among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; (ISAIAH 33:14b–15); “*Who* shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or *who* shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation” (Psalm 24:3–5); and “But *who* may abide the day of his coming? and *who* shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap” (Malachi 3:2).

7 The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh.

The Targum (ܬ) has, “All that drink wine mourn, because the vines are broken down &c.” The Peshitta (ܣ) has *grain* rather than *new wine*. The Douay-Rheims (V) has, for the first half, “The vintage hath mourned, the vine hath languished away.” Joel 1:10 has a similar note, “The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn²⁹ is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth.” The Dead Sea Scrolls 4QIsa^c (Q) adds *oil* ³⁰(יַצְדָּה) after *vine*. Not so the 1QIsa^a (Q). Rabbi Ibn Ezra (in Rosenberg) suggests that it is the vines that have been neglected and left without pruning or care so the vine no longer yields. Gray, along with a number of exegetes, here suggests that *new wine*, תִּירָשׁ (or, תִּירָשׁ) refers to *grape juice*. More likely, it was partially fermented. The Bible makes it clear that wine in excess can have a negative effect on people, and more importantly, the Lord in these latter days has prohibited its use. This has been a great blessing to

²⁸ McConkie, Bruce R. *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1985. pp. 644–646.

²⁹ Not maize, but rather *grains*.

³⁰ The Dead Sea Scrolls DSSB (Q) adds it as a separate clause, *the oil*: “The new wine dries up, the vine, the oil decays &c.” I had supposed that the intention of the 4QIsa^c (Q) scribe was to specify *olive tree*, in contrast to a grapevine. יַצְדָּה, however, is seldom used other than for grapevines and never for an olive tree.

members of the Church. Drinking of wine is much more than a health hazard; wine and other forms of alcohol are often associated with violations of the law of chastity (both today and in Biblical times). At any rate, in this verse people are weeping because they do not have wine to drink. I have seen plenty of that, but never because they lacked grape juice! Those who love their wine will whine because they will not find it. Vineyards will also be abandoned, and probably because of conditions of drought. Young says, “When [God] deprives them of their luxury, they do not turn to Him, but sigh at their own supposed misfortune.” Regarding *new wine*, also see notes under ISAIAH 5:2.

8 The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.

Instead of *the noise &c.*, the Targum (ܬ) has, “the tumultuous assembly of the mighty is restrained.” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “The mirth of timbrels hath ceased, the noise of them that rejoice is ended, the melody of the harp is silent.” Revelation 18:22 has, “And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee.” (See notes on ISAIAH 24:10.) The lack of wine spoken of in the previous verse may mean less drunken revelry?

9 They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.

They shall not drink wine with a song. The LXX (G) reads, “They are confounded: they have drunk no wine.” Whitehouse points us to Amos, “And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation” (Amos 8:10). Whitehouse says, “The mirth of tabrets would be the inevitable accompaniment of the vintage-season commemorated in the festival of Succoth (or Tabernacles).” Perhaps the drought would mean not only a lack of a vintage, but also of the general harvest. ¶ *Strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.* Instead of “strong drink,” the Targum (ܬ) has, “old wine.” Old wine is considered the best and most refined of wines. The LXX (G) reads, “The palm wine was bitter to them who drank it.” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “The drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.” Lowth and Horsley suggest that שִׁכָּר (in LXX, σικερα), refers to wine made out of the palm tree, that is, from dates. In ISAIAH 5:11, Lowth explains,

“Judea was famous for the abundance and excellence of its palm-trees; and consequently had plenty of this wine.” Even alcohol will not be able to reduce the feelings of despair of those who drink it.

10 The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in.

The city of confusion is broken down: The Targum (Ⓣ) has “Their city is broken down, *and* laid desolate.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Every city is desolated.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has the city being *plundered* rather than “broken down.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “The city of vanity is broken down.” תְּהוֹמָה is often rendered as *vanity*, *confusion*, *emptiness*, *wilderness*, or *nothingness*. Rabbi Joseph Kara (in Rosenberg), “This is Jerusalem, formerly called ‘joyous city,’ will now be called ‘wasted city.’” So also Delitzsch who has, “We understand it as referring to Jerusalem, as the majority of commentators have done, including even Schegg and Stier... after we have taken ‘the earth’ in the sense of *kosmos* (the world). It is rather the central city of the world as estranged from God; and it is here designated according to its end, which end will be *tohu*, as its nature was *tohu*.” Ibn Ezra has, “The city whose inhabitants go after vain things.” Rawlinson says, “No special city seems to be intended.” Wordsworth has, “The Earth of the last days is represented as a city of confusion. It will be in the same condition, socially and politically, as it was physically before its creation in its present form, viz. as a city of confusion, Heb. *tohu* [תְּהוֹמָה], a remarkable word; see on Genesis 1:2, where that word is rendered *without form*, and where it represents the Earth in its ruined condition, before its reproduction in its present state. The analogy is this. The Earth will be reduced to a ruinous and chaotic state, morally and socially, before the future creation of the ‘new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness’ (2 Peter 3:13).” Cheyne also believes that chaos תְּהוֹמָה, “is an allusion to the narrative... of the Creation... [and] it is the most striking expression for utter desolation [no germ of life remaining] which the prophet could have chosen.” Gill similarly explains תְּהוֹמָה: “Or ‘of *vanity*’, as the Vulgate Latin version; or of ‘emptiness’ or ‘desolation’; the word is ‘*tohu*,’ used in Genesis 1:2 this is to be understood not of Bethel, where one of Jeroboam’s calves was, called Bethaven, or ‘the house of *vanity*’; nor Samaria, the chief city of the ten tribes; nor Jerusalem; but mystical Babylon,³¹ whose name signifies ‘*confusion*’ ... in which there is

nothing but disorder and irregularity, no truth, justice, or religion; a city of *vanity*, full of superstition and idolatry, and devoted to ruin and desolation; and will be broke to pieces by the judgments of God, which will come upon it in one hour, Revelation 18:8.” In Revelation 24:21 we read, “And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.” The very next verse, Revelation 24:22, is associated with ISAIAH 24:8, as we have already seen. And yet another reason to believe the city here mentioned is Babylon is found in ISAIAH 25:2: “For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.” The clause *it shall never be built* alludes principally to Babylon, although there would be others who would suffer a similar fate. In the introduction to ISAIAH 24 we said that most commentators believe that ISAIAH 24 through 27 form part of a single unit. Isaiah often introduces a subject and then little by little comes back to it. We first hear some clues about the city here and then again in ISAIAH 25:2. Gray writes, “The city of Chaos is the city of idolatry, of sham gods, in contrast to Jerusalem, ‘the city of God’; it is essentially, as the capital of the world empire which is in rebellion against God...” Jennings writes: “I take no specific city is intended by the City of Confusion, but as in Revelations 16:9, where it is termed ‘the great city,’ not a literal city (for that would not accord with the intensely spiritual and symbolic character of that book), but what man has been building as in united opposition to God, as Babel of old, expressive of their pride... as the central city of Jerusalem is really representative of all Israel, as Babel was the representative of the whole earth, so here there is again a symbolic city that represents the proud building of the whole earth...” Yeah, the proud and great and spacious building with people pointing their mocking fingers at those who partake of the good fruit of the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Nephi 8:26–27). Gray continues, *is broken* נִשְׁבְּרָה, “compare ‘Babylon is fallen and broken,’ Jeremiah 51:8 like a cup (ib. v. 7). Possibly the writer has this v. in mind, for the use of נִשְׁבַר of the destruction of a city is uncommon.”

¶ *Every house is shut up, that no man may come in.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “The houses will be shut up that none may enter.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *almacén* (storage place or store, BPE) / *cellar* (Lamsa) rather than *house*. Ibn Ezra in Slotki/Rosenberg have that either “Most houses will be deserted, and there will be no one to enter them (Ibn Ezra³²) [or] alternatively, most of the houses will

³² “They had to count the houses, in order to know the number of the soldiers. *And the houses have ye broken down.* The houses that were near the wall from without” (Ibn Ezra).

³¹ Also, August Dillmann, according to Wade.

be in ruins (Kimhi).” Gill writes, “Not for fear of the enemy, and to keep him out; but because there are no inhabitants in them, being all destroyed by one means or another, by fire or sword, or famine or pestilence, so that there is none to go in or out.” ¶ Both ISAIAH 24:10 and 24:12 seem to be strongly related to ISAIAH 6:11, where Isaiah asks the question “Lord, how long?” For how long would the Gospel be preached? The answer seems to be: to the very end. Until every house is emptied and every city destroyed. In D&C 88:88–91 we read: “And after your testimony cometh wrath and indignation upon the people. For after your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes, that shall cause groanings in the midst of her, and men shall fall upon the ground and shall not be able to stand. And also cometh the testimony of the voice of thunders, and the voice of lightnings, and the voice of tempests, and the voice of the waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds. And all things shall be in commotion; and surely, men's hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all people.”

11 [There is] a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.

[There is] a crying for wine in the streets. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Raise the mournful cry everywhere for the wine.” The BPE (Ⓢ) renders this as does the Masoretic text (Ⓜ). Once again, we hear about the shortage of wine. Joel 1:5 has a similar bend, “Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.” ¶ *All joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “all joy is ended” rather than darkened. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “A stop is put to all the joy of the land—all the joy of the land is gone.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “All mirth is forsaken: the joy of the earth is gone away.” Regarding עֲרֵבָה, *darkened*, the Rabbis once again make some interesting points. Ibn Ezra explains that the word עֲרֵבָה is related to עָרַב. That is, *darkened* is related to *evening*, and as Rabbi Joseph Kara (in Rosenberg) says, “All joy is confused. The two interpretations are closely related, since darkness leads to impairment or confusion of perception.”

12 In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, for the second clause, “and tumult at the destruction of the gates.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “The cities will be left desolate, and the houses being

forsaken will be destroyed.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, for the second clause, “And calamity shall oppress the gates.” Alexander writes, “The gate is here named as the most important part of the city; but it does not directly mean the city itself.” Barnes says, “The idea is, that the gates of the city, once so secure, are how battered down and demolished, so that the enemy can enter freely.” Henderson explains, “The gates of cities were well fortified. When laid in ruins, as here expressed, there was no more defence.” Birks well says, “It was threatened long before that ‘the cities would be wasted without inhabitant, and the land with desolation.’³³ The fulfillment is now shewn.” And even before that, we read in *Rain in Due Season* what would befall rebellion against our God, “And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee” (Deuteronomy 28:52). Rabbi Rosenberg has: “Redak [Rabbi David Kimhi] interprets this verse as a prophecy for the future, for the Messianic era, when Gog and Magog, as well as all sinful nations, will meet with divine retribution, and very few people will survive, as the prophet relates in the following verses.”

vv. 13–15. There will be few followers of Christ in the end of times. They shall glorify and sing praises to God. An invitation is made to all who will, to join these choirs of praise.

13 ¶ When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, [there shall be] as the shaking of an olive tree, [and] as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.

When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, [there shall be] as the shaking of an olive tree (see ISAIAH 17:6). The Targum (Ⓣ) thinks this verse as that of the few solitary righteous who are left: “When thus the righteous shall be left alone in the midst of the earth, among the kingdoms.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “All this shall come to pass in this land, in the midst of the nations. As when one shall shake an olive tree, so shall they be shaken.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “For it shall be thus in the midst of the earth, in the midst of the people, as if a few olives, that remain, should be shaken out of the olive tree.” As in ISAIAH 17:5–6, where very few men shall be left and this is compared to the difficulty in finding berries after the harvest is finished. ¶ Elder B. H. Roberts explained ISAIAH 24:13–14,

³³ ISAIAH 6:11.

“From which it is to be understood that there will be a few even in those disastrous times, whose righteousness will call down the favor of God.”³⁴ Gill says, “For now shall be left alone the righteous in the midst of the earth, among the kingdoms, as the shaking of olives, as the gleanings of grapes after the vintage;’ and to olives and grapes are these gracious persons fitly compared, for the goodness, loveliness, and fruitfulness of them, through the grace of God.” It is the job of all missionaries to “shake the olive tree.” ¶ [And] as the gleanings of grapes when the vintage is done. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And when the vintage is over a shout will be raised.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Or grapes, when the vintage is ended.” Govett says, “Jerome notices, in connexion with this, the Saviour’s words, ‘Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?’ implying, that believers shall be few as the gleanings of grapes.” We read these tender words in D&C 43:25: “How oft have I called upon you by the mouth of my servants, and by the ministering of angels, and by mine own voice, and by the voice of thunders, and by the voice of lightnings, and by the voice of tempests, and by the voice of earthquakes, and great hailstorms, and by the voice of famines and pestilences of every kind, and by the great sound of a trumpet, and by the voice of judgment, and by the voice of mercy all the day long, and by the voice of glory and honor and the riches of eternal life, and would have saved you with an everlasting salvation, but ye would not!”

14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea.

They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD. The Targum (Ⓣ), in the second clause, has “they shall praise on account of the Word of the Lord (the Royal Polyglot reads **בְּשֵׁמֶהּ**, ‘in,’ or ‘on account of the name;’ but all other copies agree with the Biblia Magna in reading **בְּמִמְרָא**, ‘in,’ or ‘on account of the Word.’” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “But they who are left in the land shall be gladdened with the glory of the Lord.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “These shall lift up their voice, and shall give praise: when the Lord shall be glorified.” Cowles well points out that here there is a sudden transition from grief to joy and a few verses later, in ISAIAH 24:16, the transition is just as abrupt the other direction. The joy seems to be placed in a chiasmus. ¶ According to

³⁴ B. H. Roberts. *Seventy’s Course*, 2:205–206, The Apostatic Period., The Testimony of Prophecy.

³⁵ Memra, **מִמְרָא**, Word, or Logos (λόγος).

Lowth, the Jews “were greatly instrumental in propagating the knowledge of the true God amongst these heathen nations, and preparing them for the reception of Christianity. This is what the Prophet seems to mean by the celebration of the name of JEHOVAH in the waters, in the distant coasts, and in the uttermost parts of the land.” Gill looks to the end of days, “These shall lift up their voice, in singing the praises of God, for his judgments on Babylon, and avenging the blood of his saints; and for their deliverance and salvation, and the inestimable blessings they are now put into the possession of; these are they, who, having gotten the victory over the beast and his image, sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, Revelation 15:2.” ¶ *They shall cry aloud from the sea.* Masoretic text (Ⓜ) (**מִיָּם**) and the Dead Sea Scrolls 1QIsa^a (Ⓛ) (**מִיָּם**) both have *from* [the] *sea*, while 4QIsa^c (Ⓢ) has *from* [the] *day* (**מִיּוֹם**). The Targum (Ⓣ) makes an allusion to the escape from Egypt, at the Red Sea, and the shout for joy made by the Israelites at that time: “They shall rejoice as they rejoiced on account of the mighty works which were done for them by the sea.” Alexander writes, “Dathe give the **מִן** its comparative sense: more (*i.e.* louder) than the sea. Jarchi [i.e., Rashi] had before given the same construction but a different sense: *more than* (*at*) *the sea*, i.e. more than they rejoiced at the deliverance from Egypt.” So also the Rabbis explains Rosenberg: “More than they shouted for joy by the sea during the redemption from Egypt—[Rashi, Kara, following Jonathan³⁶].” So also more modern exegetes, such as Kaiser. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “The water of the sea will be troubled.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “They shall make a joyful noise from the sea.” The sea may also be put for the isles, or the countries from afar, such as the American Continent and other nations who accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Nägelsbach surprises us with his insight, “Does there lie in the expression **מִיָּם** something like a foreboding of the fact that the Church of the LORD would spread especially in the lands of the west, and that, therefore, the great mass of the redeemed would come from that quarter?” Nägelsbach goes on to say that “All the godly dwelling in the east and west are to praise the name of the Lord who has given to them, in place of the terrible day of judgment, the promise of deliverance.” ¶ *They shall cry aloud*, **צִהֲלוּ**. Ibn Ezra compares this crying out loud to the neighing of the horse, **צִהֲלוֹת הַסּוּס**.³⁷

³⁶ “Following Jonathan” means, that Rashi and Kara followed the Targum Jonathan (Ⓣ).

³⁷ Friedländer prefers a Biblical expression, such as Jeremiah 8:16, “the neighing of his strong ones,” **מִצִּהֲלוֹת אֲבִירָיו**.

15 Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, ✓ [even] the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

✓ or, valleys

Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires. The Dead Sea Scrolls 4QIsa^c (Ⓢ) adds *in Aram* (בְּאַרָם) after *in the fires* while the 1QIsa^a (Ⓢ) follows the Masoretic text (Ⓜ). Some translate *in the fires* (בְּאַרְיִם) as *in the east* and so the DSSB (Ⓢ) τρανσλατιον renders 4QIsa^c as *in the east, in Aram*. Some believe that בְּאַרְיִם is an error for what should have been *the islands*. But this suggestion is not related to the way the word is spelled. (More on this topic, below.) The Targum (Ⓣ), “When light shall come to the righteous, they shall glorify the LORD.” The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “For this cause the glory of the Lord will be in the isles of the sea.” The Peshitta (Ⓟ) has, *song* (Lamsa) / *praise* (BPE) rather than *fires*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓢ) has, “Therefore glorify ye the Lord in instruction.” Kay writes, “Or, ‘in the light,’ that is, the bright light of divine revelation (*urim*): compare the Targum, ‘When light shall come to the righteous.’ They are to reflect the Divine Light, so that men may glorify God (Cp. Matthew 5:14, 16); Philippians 2:15–16.” To these scriptures we may well add from Doctrine & Covenants 50:24: “That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.” Birks suggests: “The faithful remnant, both in the land itself, in the fires of affliction, and as exiles, even in the farthest isles of the sea, will glorify Jehovah, the God of Israel.” There are two words used frequently for *fire*, אֵשׁ and אֵשׁ. Birks explains: “Isaiah’s own use of the word [בְּאַרְיִם or אֵשׁ] seems the safest guide, ISAIAH 31:9; 44:16; 47:14; and 50:2.” In ISAIAH 50:2, however, we read *walking in the light of your fire* בְּאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁכֶם, where the prophet uses the word אֵשׁ, in relation to “walking in the light [בְּאֵשׁ] and אֵשׁ for fire [אֲשֶׁכֶם]. Regarding אֲרִיִם, Delitzsch writes, “the lands of the Asiatic East, which are called ‘*urim*, the lands of light, i.e., of the sun-rising. This is the true meaning of ‘*urim*, as J. Schelling and Drechsler agree.” So also Faussett, “Rather translates for “fires,” “in the regions of morning light,” that is, the east, in antithesis to the “isles of the sea,” that is, the west [Maurer]. Wheresoever ye be scattered, east or west, still glorify the Lord (Malachi 1:11). The reference to Malachi is instructive: “For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every

place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 1:11). Gill writes, “These are the words of the remnant, now triumphing and singing, calling upon others also to glorify the Lord in the fires of affliction and tribulation, in which they had lately been, and had themselves done: or, ‘in the valleys’; in low estates and conditions: or, ‘in holes’; dens and clefts of rocks, where they fled from their persecuting enemies; but neither of these versions suit the state of the true church, as it will be at this time. The word ‘*Urim*’,³⁸ here used, which is one of the names of what was put into the breastplate of the high priest, signifies ‘lights’; which sense of the word the Vulgate Latin version retains, rendering it, ‘in doctrines glorify the Lord’, and so the Targum, ‘therefore, when light cometh to the righteous, they shall glorify the Lord’ and so the words may be rendered, ‘glorify the Lord for the *Urim*,’ or ‘the lights’; for Christ, who has the true ‘*Urim*’ and ‘Thummim’, lights and perfections; for the light of his Gospel, and the truths of it, which will now be spread in a most wonderful manner throughout the world; to which times may be applied those words, ‘arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee—and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising,’ (ISAIAH 60:1) and which will be a just and sufficient reason for giving glory to the Lord.” ¶ [*Even*] *the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has “In the islands of the sea they shall laud and bless the name of the Lord, the God of Israel.” The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “In the isles of the sea the name of the Lord will be glorious.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓢ) has, “The name of the Lord God of Israel in the islands of the sea.” Kaiser writes: “The most likely possibility is the redeemed Jews³⁹ in the Holy Land, who are now putting out a call to the nations of the world to give their God Yahweh the honour due to him, and hear their call echoed by the choirs of the ends of the earth. That this interpretation is not pure imagination is shown not only by the emphasis on Yahweh as the God of Israel, but also the fact that in passages such as Psalm 76:11; 97:1, 6; 98:2 ff.; ISAIAH 42:10, 12 and 51:5, we learn that the nations and islands are waiting upon Yahweh and giving him honour.” Gill writes, “Whose name will now be known, not in Israel, or among the Jews only, but in all distant and foreign countries, which are sometimes meant by the isles of the sea; and in all islands, even the most remote, who will have reason to join with them on the continent to

³⁸ בְּאַרְיִם (in *Urim*). As mentioned in the *LDS Scripture Resources*, ‘perhaps a scribal error for “islands.”’

³⁹ As LDS we would say Jews, but not only Jews, but all of those of Israel, who have returned to the covenant, along with a minority who have been adopted in.

glorify God, whose name will now be great in all the earth.” M. H. Mansfield wrote in the *Improvement Era*, “Lands distant from Palestine, where the sea separated them from that land, are referred to by the prophets as isles of the sea. ‘Wherefore, glorify ye the Lord in the fires [valleys], even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea’ (ISAIAH 24:15).”⁴⁰ ¶ Now, here we have an interesting quote from Jenour: “The prophet, as if transported to the times in which he speaks, encourages the scattered pious remnant to proclaim the name of Jehovah in those parts wither they had fled.” Or rather, where they had been *scattered*. This would serve an important purpose, to bring Israel back to the Lord.

vv. 16–19. Christ is the recipient of the songs of praise, but suddenly the prophet sees something that makes him gasp in agony. The cheerfulness departs as suddenly as it came. We are then transported to the end of days one more time, where various disasters are enumerated. In JS–M (Matthew 24) we read: “Behold I speak for mine elect’s; for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. And again, because iniquity shall abound, the love of men shall wax cold; but he that shall not be overcome, the same shall be saved. And again, this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come, or the destruction of the wicked” (JS–M:29–31).

16 ¶ From the uttermost ✓ part of the earth have we heard songs, [even] glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, ✓ my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

✓ wing

✓ ✓ Leanness to me, or, My secret to me

From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, [even] glory to the righteous. The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “From the house of the sanctuary,⁴¹ yea, from thence joy shall go forth to all the inhabitants of the earth, for we have heard the praise of the righteous!” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “‘Lord the God of Israel! from the outskirts of the earth we have heard of thy wonders : there is hope for the righteous.’” The Douay-Rheims

⁴⁰ Mansfield, M. H. *Improvement Era*, February 1904. Jacob’s Isle.

⁴¹ Or temple, בֵּית.

(Ⓢ) has, “From the ends of the earth we have heard praises, the glory of the just one.” Compare with *Rain in Due Season*, “If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee” (Deuteronomy 30:4). Regarding מְקַנְנֵי, and also making allusion to the margin ||, Birks says, “The wing, or uttermost part of the earth, seems to refer, not to the bounds of Judea, but to the furthest limit of Jewish dispersion among the heathen.” The remnant that shall be gathered into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will break out in songs of praise to the Lord. Gill writes, that praise would be given “For the glorious appearance of Christ’s kingdom; for the spread of his Gospel throughout the world; for the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles everywhere; wherefore these songs are heard from all parts of the world, and the uttermost parts of them; these are the voices said to be heard in heaven, or in the church, everywhere, Revelation 11:15 so some Jewish writers (Midrash Kohelet, fol. 62:3) interpret the words of the days of the Messiah, and of the songs then to be sung.” ¶ *Glory to the righteous, צְבִי לְצַדִּיק, הַמְּשִׁיחַ.* Most exegetes feel these words are supposed to refer to various classes of men or even to the land of Israel. I cannot entertain such thoughts, as to me there is but only one Righteous, even the Messiah, הַמְּשִׁיחַ.

Horsley well suggests that צְבִי לְצַדִּיק should read *glory to the Just One*. Wildberger, likewise says, “Since Yahweh is apparently the one who is to be praised, it seems likely that the צַדִּיק (righteous one), to whom צְבִי (majesty) is attributed, is God.” Wildberger backs up this assertion with three excellent points, that although in the Old Testament *the Righteous* does not appear elsewhere as a title, that: (1) leaning on Henry, how odd it would be to suddenly change the focus of praise from the Lord to some other person or thing; (2) similar expressions are found in Psalm 11:7 and elsewhere in the Old Testament (*For the righteous Lord, כִּי צַדִּיק יְהוָה*); and (3) we find the title in I Enoch 38:2, “And when the Righteous One shall appear &c.” and 1 Enoch 53:6, “And after this the Righteous and Elect One &c.” In any case, ISAIAH 24:16 here continues the praise for the Lord, *to the name of the Lord God of Israel, שֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.* ¶ *But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has: “The Prophet said, a secret! A reward to the righteous is shown to me, a secret! A punishment for the wicked is revealed to me. Woe to the oppressors, for they shall be oppressed; and to those who spoil, for,

behold, they shall be spoiled.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Let them say also, ‘Woe to the rebels who reject the law.’” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) repeats the expression, “it is a mystery to me” instead of “my leanness.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And I said: My secret to myself, my secret to myself, woe is me: the prevaricators have prevaricated, and with the prevarication of transgressors they have prevaricated.” ¶ *My leanness, my leanness, לְיָיִלִי לְיָיִלִי*. The word לְיָיִלִי means *destruction* (Gesenius); *leanness, wasting [away]* (BDB); *my secret, diminution, vanishing* (HALOT, based on Wildberger and Bauer); and *consumption* (Bosman & Potsma). Gesenius, with the Douay-Rheims, has the full expression meaning something equivalent to “Woe is me.” Wildberger, similarly translates is as “I am done for.” Regarding this clause, Horsley explains this looking toward the first coming of the Savior: “The Prophet, hearing songs of praise to the Just One, is naturally led to think of the general corruption of human nature, and of the base treatment which the Just One met with from the Jews.” Luther presents a similar view, at the distress of the rejection of Christ by “the Jews, who have not accepted this loveliness of the Gospel.” Gill, rather, thinks of the pain of the present moment and has, “[Isaiah is] either pining and fretting at the present state of his people, so very unlike to that which he now had a view of.” So also Rawlinson, “The thought of this joyful time, when the saints shall reign with their Lord in a new heaven and a new earth, recalls the prophet (contrast being one of the laws of the association of ideas) to the misery of the present, and his own participation therein. A time of suffering, of wasting, and pining away must be endured—for how long he knows not—before the joyous consummation, towards which he stretches in hope and confident expectancy, can be reached.” Or, even perhaps the view of the impending disasters that would come upon the earth in the last days as spoken of in Joseph Smith-Matthew (Matthew 24). There we read that most will be clueless about the impending appearance of the Savior despite all of the signs of the times: “But of that day, and hour, no one knoweth; no, not the angels of God in heaven, but my Father only. But as it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be also at the coming of the Son of Man; For it shall be with them, as it was in the days which were before the flood; for until the day that Noah entered into the ark they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage; And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also⁴² the coming of the Son of Man be” (JS-M:40–43). ¶ *The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, בְּגַדְתִּים בְּגַדְתִּים וּבְגָדָה*. Wordsworth would rather translate this expression as *the transgressors have transgressed*.

⁴² Speaking of the surprise factor, not of the universal flood.

To support his argument, Wordsworth points to 1 Samuel 14:33, where it is translated as *transgress*.⁴³ BDB for בְּגַדָה has, “act or deal treacherously, faithlessly, deceitfully, in the marriage relation, in matters of property or right, in covenants, in word and in general conduct.” Wildberger explains, “When the Prophet “writes בְּגַדְתִּים בְּגַדְתִּים וּבְגָדָה (in cunning the cunning ones act cunningly)... one cannot conceive of, and plumb the depths of, how horrible this event really is.”

17 Fear, and the pit, and the snare, [are] upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.

See also, Jeremiah 48:43–44, who repeats the same paronomasia we have here. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “**Terror** and a **pit** and a **snare** are for you who dwell in the land.” Gill writes, “There is an elegant play on words in the Hebrew, which cannot well be expressed in English, in the words ‘pachad, pachath, pach’,⁴⁴ fear, pit, and a snare; which are expressive of a variety of dangers, difficulties, and distresses; there seems to be an allusion to creatures that are hunted, who flee through fear, and fleeing fall into pits, or are entangled in snares, and so taken.” Barnes explains: “In the passage before us, there is an advance from one danger to another, or the subsequent one is more to be dreaded than the preceding. The figure is taken from the mode of taking wild beasts, where various nets, toils, or pitfalls were employed to secure them. The word ‘fear’ (פַּחַד), denotes anything that was used to frighten or arouse the wild beasts in hunting, or to drive them into the pitfall that was prepared for them. Among the Romans the name ‘fears’ (‘formidines’) was given to lines or cords strung with feathers of all colors, which, when they fluttered in the air or were shaken, frightened the beasts into the pits, or the birds into the snares which were prepared to take them (Seneca, De Ira, ii. 122; virg. AE. xii. 7499; Geor. iii. 372). It is possible that this may be referred to here under the name of ‘fear.’ The word ‘pit’ (פִּתְּהָ) denotes the pitfall; a hole dug in the ground, and covered over with bushes, leaves, etc., into which they might fall unawares. The word ‘snare’ (פַּחַד) denotes a net, or gin [a snare or trap], and perhaps refers to a series of nets enclosing at first a large space of ground, in which the wild beasts were, and then drawn by degrees into a narrow compass, so that they could not escape.” Lowth describes it as “a series of nets, inclosing at first a great space of ground, in which the

⁴³ בְּגַדְתִּים, Ye have transgressed.

⁴⁴ Or in the Hebrew, פַּחַד וּפִתְּהָ וּפַחַד.

wild beasts were known to be; and then drawn in by degrees into a narrower compass, till they were at last closely shut up, and entangled in them.” Wordsworth writes, “These words are adopted by our Blessed Lord, when speaking of the Day of Doom: ‘As a snare shall it come upon all them that dwelt on the face of the whole earth’ (see Luke 21:35).” In that same place, the Lord says, “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

18 And it shall come to pass, [that] he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.

And it shall come to pass, [that] he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the terror, shall fall into the pit.” Regarding *the noise of the fear*, Barnes explains, “A cry or shout was made in hunting, designed to arouse the game, and drive it to the pitfall.” Recall in *Rain in Due Season* the Lord warns Israel that disobedience will bring fright: “And upon them that are left *alive* of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and *the sound of a shaken leaf* shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth” (Leviticus 26:36). This whole verse shows how escape from one danger only exposes them to the next. Joel 1:4 has a similar tone: “That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.” See also, Amos 5:19. In reality, the only escape from danger is turning to the Lord for refuge. ¶ *From the noise*, קוֹל גְּבוּהָ usually stands for *sound, voice, word, speech* and *noise*, especially in relation to the crack of thunder (see HAL, BDB, Gesenius). Noise is often heard during times of war, as well as in storms and large earthquakes. I have heard the sound of earthquakes in Chile that sounded like that of a lion during feeding time. So also can anyone attest who has woken up to the sound of nearby thunder strikes. It is interesting to see how in Psalm 29:3 the *voice* of Yahweh (קוֹל יְהוָה) is associated with thunder (Gesenius). ¶ *And he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare*: The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And he who getteth out of the pit, shall be caught by the snare.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, *rid himself*

rather than *cometh up*. Barnes adds, “A figure taken still from hunting. It was possible that some of the more strong and active of the wild beasts driven into the pitfall would spring out, and attempt to escape, yet they might be secured by snares or gins purposely contrived for such an occurrence.” ¶ *For the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake*. The Targum (Ⓢ), “For mighty works are done in the heavens, therefore the foundations of the earth quake.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Because the flood gates of heaven are opened, therefore the foundations of the land shall be shaken.” The Peshitta (Ⓟ) has, *torrents* (BPE) / *fountains* (Lamsa) for *windows*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, *flood-gates* rather than *windows*. Regarding *the windows from on high*, Barnes has, “The word ‘windows’ here (אֲרְבוֹת) is the same which occurs in Genesis, and properly denotes a grate, a lattice, a window, and then any opening, as a sluice or floodgate, and is applied to a tempest or a deluge, because when the rain descends, it seems like opening sluices or floodgates in the sky. The sense here is, that calamities had come upon the nation resembling the universal deluge.” Rawlinson well says, “It is not actually another flood that is threatened, but it is a judgment as sweeping and destructive as the Flood.” So says Young, “Just as that deluge was all-destroying, so will this judgment be also ... Isaiah does not teach that there will be a repetition of that flood, for it was expressly revealed (Genesis 8:21) that such a means of universal destruction would never be repeated ... The ‘windows from on high’ are the windows through which the power from on high will flood.” Gill writes regarding the *shaking of the earth*, “Very probably the dissolution⁴⁵ of the world may be attended with a general earthquake; or this may denote the dread and terror that will seize the inhabitants of it.”

19 The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

The Targum Stenning (Ⓢ), “The earth shall tremble greatly, the earth shall shake to and fro, the earth shall be utterly torn asunder.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “With confusion the land will be confounded; with perplexity this land will be perplexed.” The Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓟ) renders it, “The earth is broken down, the earth is utterly moved, the earth is staggering exceedingly.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “With breaking shall the earth be broken, with crushing shall the earth be crushed, with trembling shall the earth be moved.” Rabbi Rosenberg has: “The repetition is for emphasis of the

⁴⁵ Better, transformation.

grave troubles destined to befall the nations at the onset of the Messianic era⁴⁶.—[Redak].” Whitehouse renders it, “the earth is shattered to pieces, the earth violently swayed to and fro.” Barnes explains, “Everything in this verse is intense and emphatic. The verbs are in the strongest form of emphasis: ‘By breaking, the land is broken;’⁴⁷ ‘by scattering, the land is scattered;’⁴⁸ ‘by commotion, the land is moved.’⁴⁹ The repetition also of the expression in the same sense three times, is a strong form of emphasis; and the whole passage is designed to denote the utter desolation and ruin that had come upon the land.” Keith points out the writings of Revelation: “And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath” (Revelation 16:18–19). ¶ President Joseph Fielding Smith taught that this verse was related to the post-millennial death of the earth, before its resurrection.⁵⁰ Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote about this verse, “Employing the strong language and graphic imagery that he alone can use with such power, Isaiah says: ‘The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.’ He is talking of the new heaven and the new earth that shall come into being when the elements melt with fervent heat.”⁵¹ Of course some of the elements of this prophecy can also be applied to the Second Coming. See also ISAIAH 51:6.

vv. 20–22. The principle of deliverance of the dead from their bonds of spiritual prison is among the most glorious to be found in the Holy Scriptures but has only come to be understood after the restoration of the Gospel in these latter days. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that just as the antediluvians had their day of deliverance and visitation from the bonds of spiritual prison, so would those who lived after them: “The situation of the Christian nations after death, is a subject that has called forth all the wisdom and talent of the philosopher and the divine, and it is an opinion which is generally received, that the destiny of man is

irretrievably fixed at his death, and that he is made either eternally happy, or eternally miserable; that if a man dies without a knowledge of God, he must be eternally damned, without any mitigation of his punishment, alleviation of his pain, or the most latent hope of a deliverance while endless ages shall roll along. However orthodox this principle may be, we shall find that it is at variance with the testimony of Holy Writ, for our Savior says, that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men wherewith they shall blaspheme; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, *nor in the world to come*, evidently showing that there are sins which may be forgiven in the world to come... Peter, also, in speaking concerning our Savior, says, that ‘He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah’ (1 Peter 3:19, 20). Here then we have an account of our Savior preaching to the spirits in prison, to spirits that had been imprisoned from the days of Noah; and what did He preach to them? That they were to stay there? Certainly not! Let His own declaration testify. ‘He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight of the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised’ (Luke 4:18). Isaiah has it—‘To bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness from the prison house.’ (ISAIAH 42:7.) It is very evident from this that he not only went to preach to them, but to *deliver*, or *bring them out of the prison house*. Isaiah, in testifying concerning the calamities that will overtake the inhabitants of the earth, says, ‘The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. *And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.*’ Thus we find that God will deal with all the human family equally, and that as the antediluvians had their day of visitation, so will those characters referred to by Isaiah, have their time of visitation and deliverance; after having been many days in prison” (emphasis added).⁵² Elder Theodore M Burton, spoke at the October 1964 General Conference regarding ISAIAH 24:21–22, “There is no question but that Jesus was to be the Deliverer and that they that sit in this prison were to be in the bonds of darkness, which must refer to spiritual darkness rather than to political prisoners here upon the earth. The work of Jesus definitely was not

⁴⁶ Many of the Jews today have lost hope for the coming of an actual Messiah, and are waiting for a *Messianic Era* instead.

⁴⁷ רעה הַתְּרַעְעָה הָאָרֶץ

⁴⁸ פּוֹר הַתְּפוֹרְרָה אָרֶץ

⁴⁹ מוֹט הַתְּמוֹטָה אָרֶץ

⁵⁰ Smith, Joseph Fielding. *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 1:132.

⁵¹ McConkie, Bruce R. *Millennial Messiah*, The Promised Signs and Wonders, Signs and Wonders in Heaven and on Earth, p. 411.

⁵² Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith, p.218.

confined solely to those of his own earthly generation who heard his voice in person as on this occasion when he spoke in the synagogue at Nazareth. His work was a greater work, a *universal work*, and applied not only to the whole wide world of those then living, but *also to all who ever lived or ever would live upon this earth*" (emphasis added).⁵³ ¶ In these verses, then, we read about the consequences of man's transgression, but also the ultimate mercy of the Lord *after* these individuals have come to a repentant understanding. Those who will inherit in the Telestial Kingdom, such as King David ben Jesse,⁵⁴ will not come forth in the first resurrection but will, eventually, toward the end of the millennium, obtain their resurrection and be released from spirit prison (*see* Psalm 16:10a, *see also* TPJS, 339). Elder Talmage explains, "Further, if, in the plan of God, provision be made for the redemption of the wilfully disobedient, those who actually spurn the truth, can we believe that the still greater multitudes of spirits who have never heard the Gospel are to be left in punishment eternally? No; God has decreed that even the heathen nations, and those that knew no law, shall be redeemed. The gifts of God are not confined to this sphere of action, but will be bestowed in justice throughout eternity. Upon all who reject the word of God in this life will fall the penalties provided; but after the debt has been paid the prison doors shall be opened, and the spirits once confined in suffering, then chastened and clean, shall come forth to partake of the glory provided for their class."⁵⁵ In ISAIAH 42:7, we include additional pertinent quotes on the matter of the teaching of the gospel to those in the spirit world.

20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, "The land is utterly cast down like a drunkard." The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, "It reeled to and fro like a drunkard when intoxicated." The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, "With shaking shall the earth be shaken as a

drunken man." Nyman has, "The Savior quoted part of ISAIAH 24:20 in two revelations given to Joseph Smith (*see* D&C 49:23; 88:87). Oliver Cowdery paraphrased the same verse in noting which scriptures the angel Moroni said were soon to be fulfilled (*see* MA, April 1835, pp. 111–12). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the events spoken of in ISAIAH 24:20 were soon to occur as the Second Coming rapidly approached (TPJS, pp. 29, 71)." Kaiser well writes, "The world and history will not really come to an end, but will only then have their true beginning, which will then continue throughout the future." Enormous earthquakes must have played a role in the dividing of the land mass into continents. In the last days there once again will be earthquakes of great proportion (I write these words in Chile about a year after the 2010 earthquake and in a nation where we have suffered the very largest earthquakes in recorded history). Bishop Edward Partridge taught, "When we reflect upon the many mighty earthquakes that have been, and that the earth was never so shook as it then will be: and especially when we reflect that in the days of Peleg it was so shaken as to be divided, probably into two continents, besides numerous islands—I say, when we reflect upon this subject and see what a tremendous shaking the earth must have, we are not at all surprised that the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and be removed like a cottage."⁵⁶ ¶ *And shall be removed like a cottage.* The Stenning Targum (Ⓣ), "And shall swing to and fro like a booth." The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, "Like a lodge in a vineyard the land shall be shaken." The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, "And shall be removed as the tent of one night." *As a cottage*, כְּמִלְוֵנָה. Gill explains, "Or, 'a tent'; either of soldiers or shepherds, which are easily taken down and moved; or like 'a lodge', as the word is rendered (ISAIAH 1:8). The Septuagint render it a 'fruit watch'; and, according to the Jewish writers, it signifies a booth or tent, in which the keepers of gardens or vineyards watched in the night; which Jarchi [i.e., Rashi] says was built on the top of a tree, and Kimhi on a hill; and, being made of light wood, was easily moved to and fro with the wind." Or, moved from one location to another. This is the reason why it will appear as if the stars are falling because the whole earth will be transported to another location. President Brigham Young explains: "This earth is our home, it was framed expressly for the habitation of those who are faithful to God, and who prove themselves worthy to inherit the earth when the Lord shall have sanctified, purified and glorified it and brought it back into his presence, from which it fell far into space ... When the earth was framed and brought into existence and man

⁵³ Elder Theodore M Burton, October 1964 General Conference CR.

⁵⁴ To me, no story is sadder than that of King David. No youth or man was ever so valiant as young David. He truly feared God more than man. And this is why his fall is so painful. He was worthy to receive some of the most transcendental Messianic revelations ever given to man. The life of David is a warning to each one of us to ever be vigilant and pray always that we might endure to the end in righteousness.

⁵⁵ Elder James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*. Baptism for the Dead, p. 134. With the words, "glory provided for their class"

⁵⁶ Partridge, Edward. *Messenger and Advocate*, January 1835, p. 58.

The moon, without the sun, has no glory at all. In ISAIAH 24:23 we see that just as the moon has no glory without the sun, neither the sun nor the moon have any glory compared to the Son. This passage in 1 Enoch 18:14b–16 seems to go hand in hand with what we know about the millennium and those who will come forth in the resurrection of the unjust. Regarding the word *pit*, Henderson writes, “[בּוֹר] is descriptive of the most ancient kinds of prisons, which consisted of empty cisterns that narrowed towards the mouth, so that it was scarcely possible for those who were confined in them to make their escape without assistance (Genesis 37:20, 22; Jeremiah 38:13). Not unfrequently the bottom was covered with mire or soft clay, which rendered them at once unhealthy and disagreeable.” Nägelsbach says, “The pit is here used for Sheol ... oftentimes (ISAIAH 14:15, 19; 38:18).” Lowth adds, “The image seems to be taken from the practice of the great monarchs of that time; who, when they had thrown their wretched captives into a dungeon, never gave themselves the trouble of inquiring about them; but let them lie a long time in that miserable condition, wholly destitute of relief, and disregarded.” Contrary to these rulers, Lowth explains that the Lord will visit these prisoners with mercy. Lowth, however, makes the prisoners *his people*, implying Israel will not be abandoned. ¶ *And after many days shall they be visited* [וַיִּבְקְרוּ]. Exegetes are here divided as to the nature of this *visitation*, whether one of mercy or one of punishment. We saw this same word, **יִבְקֹד**, in ISAIAH 23:17, where it also appears to be used in the sense of *visit to redeem*, to *remember in mercy*. Rabbi David Kimhi felt that the purpose of the visitation was to release the prisoners from the pit (in Rosenberg). Barnes has, “To me it seems that the connection seems to require the idea of a visitation for the purpose of relief or of deliverance... [and] after a long time they would be visited by the Great Deliverer.” Henderson says, “A *merciful visitation*, for the purpose of restoring those here spoken of from captivity, alone suits the connexion.” Cheyne tends towards a merciful visitation, for, says he, “It is difficult... to see why there should be two punishments.” Alexander says, regarding the opinion of mercy, “This explanation is as old as Rabbi Joseph Kimhi, if not as the Peshito.” To these voices we add that of Jenour and according to Delitzsch, also Hitzig, Knobel and Luzzatto. For every exegete who believes this is a merciful visit, there are probably four who believe the visitation is one of punishment. ¶ Gladly, we have the inspired comments of prophets who have made it clear that indeed this is a *visitation of mercy*. To us as LDS, it is of great interest that Faussett associates this verse with 1 Peter 3:19, “By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison,” and calls that verse “the disputed passage.” Also see ISAIAH 42:7.

23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. ✓

✓ or, there shall be glory before his ancients

Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed. The Targum (Ⓣ), “And they shall be confounded that worship the moon, and they shall be ashamed that worship the sun.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “When the bricks shall have mouldered away, and the wall shall have fallen.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has *blush* instead of *confounded*. Slotki/Rosenberg have: “God’s glory will outshine the celestial lights, the moon and the sun being eclipsed into insignificance (cf. 60:19) (Ibn Ezra⁵⁹).” Young is correct in saying, “Isaiah uses a poetic word for ‘moon,’ a word that really means ‘white⁶⁰’” Likewise, Young points out that for the sun, Isaiah has *the hot*. **הַחֹם**, (in several places), rather than **שֶׁמֶשׁ**. ISAIAH 60:19–20 has, “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.” Alexander correctly says, “It was not merely *when* Jehovah reigned, but *because* he reigned, that all inferior luminaries were to be eclipsed.” Nägelsbach says, not exactly as we would as LDS explain it, but interestingly close: “Then follows the last, highest and grandest revelation of God. The earth now becomes what it ought originally to have been, but which it was hindered from being by sin, *viz.*, the common dwelling-place of God and of men. The heavenly Jerusalem, the tabernacle in which God dwells with men (Revelation 21:3) descends upon the renovated earth. This is the Jerusalem in which according to ISAIAH 24:23, Jehovah Zebaoth reigns as King.” Elder Orson Pratt taught, “In describing the glory of his personal reign on the earth, [Isaiah] says that ‘Then the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed,’ because of the superior light that will attend the presence of the being who is to reign in Zion and Jerusalem.”⁶¹ Rashi suggests that the reason the moon and the sun will “fade into insignificance because of the light radiating from the righteous (Rashi in Sanh. 91b)” (Talmud, Soncino). Elder Orson Pratt makes uses similar language in the Journal of Discourses: “... because of the superior light that will

⁵⁹ Not in my copy of Ibn Ezra, in Isaiah 60:19 we have: “Thou wilt not want the light of the sun, because of the light of God.”

⁶⁰ **הַלְבֵּן** means *the white*, from **לָבַן**, instead of moon, **יָרֵחַ**.

⁶¹ Elder Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses* 20:14–16.

attend the presence of the being who is to reign in Zion and Jerusalem.”⁶² Who is this Being, this Righteous? The Holy One of Israel. Elder Pratt goes on to explain that it is this same light and heat—ininitely more powerful than that of the sun—that will burn the wicked at His coming: “This seems, then, to be a work preparatory to the coming of the Lord in flaming fire. The nature of the fire that will be exhibited at his second coming in the clouds of heaven will be such that it will consume the wicked and ungodly, and those who repent not and who do not sanctify themselves before the Lord. Our God in that day will be a consuming fire; the intensity of this fire will be so great that the very hills, the Psalmist David informs us in another place, ‘will melt like wax before his presence.’ The Prophet Isaiah in speaking of the fire or heat that would accompany the second advent of the Son of God, declares that the mountains shall flow down at his presence. The elements that now constitute these rugged mountains which we see here on this continent and in all parts of the earth where we travel will melt with fervent heat, and will flow down before the presence of the Lord. The brightness of this fire will be greater than that of the sun in its glory. I mean our temporal, literal sun, from which we receive light and heat, as you will find recorded in the last verse of the 24th chapter of Isaiah, which says that ‘when the Lord of Hosts shall come to reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously, the sun shall hide his face in shame and the moon shall be confounded.’ With all the brightness of that luminary which lights this creation it will hide its face in shame; and the bright luminaries of heaven will be confounded as it were, so great will be the glory of his presence—a fire devouring before him, and all nature feeling the power of the Almighty, which will be exerted on that grand occasion.”⁶³ Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: “In his vision of the Celestial Jerusalem, John saw ‘the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God ... The street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.’ There was no temple therein, neither the need for the sun nor moon to give light, ‘for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.’ (Revelation 21).”⁶⁴ ¶ *When the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.* The Targum (Ⓣ) renders it: “Because the power of the Lord of hosts shall be revealed in mount Zion, and before the elders of his people in glory.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Because the Lord will commence his reign from Sion and from Jerusalem, and be glorified in the presence of

the elders.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *for* (Lamsa) / *because* (BPE) rather than *when*. The Peshitta (Ⓢ) also has the Lord *praised* (BPE) / *glorified* (Lamsa) by His *saints* rather than *ancients*. The book of Revelation talks about a New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2) and the Talmud tradition (Seder Nezikin, Baba Bathra 75b) likewise speaks of a Messianic one: “Rabbah said in the name of Rabbi Johanan: Jerusalem of the world to come will not be like Jerusalem of the present world. [To] Jerusalem of the present world, anyone who wishes goes up, but to that of the world to come only those invited will go” (Talmud, Soncino). ¶ *Before his ancients*, אֲנִי אֲנִי. It is interesting to note that the word *ancients* אֲנִי, here also stands for *elders*. Calvin writes, “By expressly mentioning the ‘elders,’ he employs a figure of speech frequently used in Scripture, by which the chief part of the Church is taken for the whole body of it.” Cheyne says, “These shall be admitted to a direct intuition of the Divine glory, like the seventy elders of old (Exodus 24:9), and shall carry the reflection of it wherever they go (Exodus 34:29). ¶ Regarding the *Lord of hosts*, here it may well be asked, “Who is this King of glory?” The answer, “The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory,” (Psalm 24:10) even *Jesus Christ!* Regarding *Lord of hosts*, Gill testifies: “Who is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Jehovah, the Lord of hosts or armies, of the sun, moon, and stars, the host of heaven, and of the heavenly host of angels, and of men on earth; who was King from eternity, and reigned during the Old Testament dispensation; came a King into this world, though his kingdom was not of it.” Calvin writes, “He shews how great will be the splendor and glory of God, when the kingdom of Christ shall be established, because all that is brilliant must be obscured, and the glory of Christ alone must hold a high and prominent place.” From Bishop Edward Partridge, in the *Messenger and Advocate*, we have this: “Thus we see that the Lord is not only to reign in Jerusalem, but in mount Zion, also, which shows that Jerusalem and Zion are two places.”⁶⁵ We read in the *Evening and Morning Star*, “[In ISAIAH 24:23]... here he is said to reign before his ancients, that is, all the saints from our father Adam, down...”⁶⁶ President Charles W. Penrose often quoted ISAIAH 24:23 in his General Conference talks: “*He shall rule and reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients, gloriously*, as the prophets predicted. This is to be a kingdom of righteousness, a kingdom of truth, a kingdom of equity, of kindness, of brotherly love and of unity, a kingdom and organization in which the utmost fraternity will

⁶² Pratt, Elder Orson. *Journal of Discourses* 20:16.

⁶³ Pratt, Elder Orson, *Journal of Discourses* 15:55.

⁶⁴ McConkie, Elder Bruce R. *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, p. 588

⁶⁵ Partridge, Edward. *Messenger and Advocate*, January 1835, p. 58.

⁶⁶ *Evening and Morning Star*, 2:155, May, 1834.

prevail” (emphasis added).⁶⁷ On another occasion President Penrose said, “[Christ] said, the keys should not be taken from the Prophet Joseph, for he had been tested and proved and found worthy before the Lord, before the angels and before the Church. They should not be taken from him and from the Twelve (that is the promise) ‘until I shall come, saith the Lord.’ So the keys were to abide with the Church from that time henceforth, *until the Lord Himself should come and reign in Zion and Jerusalem and before His ancients gloriously*” (emphasis added).⁶⁸ In the 1842 *Times and*

Seasons we read, “The prophet [Isaiah] says, that the Lord shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously; hence, when the redeemed saints dwell on earth, they will dwell in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem which places the Lord will fully prepare for them.”⁶⁹

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⁶⁷ Penrose, Elder Charles W. April 1912 CR, pp. 18–19. Also see *Journal of Discourses* 21:140.

⁶⁸ Penrose, Elder Charles W. CR October 1905.

⁶⁹ *Times and Seasons* 3:690–692, February 15, 1842. The Millennium.

