
Isaiah 28

ISAIAH 28 and 29 are intimately connected. Ephraim is drunk—but not just with wine or hard liquor (ISAIAH 29:9)—but with *false doctrine*. ISAIAH 28 has dual fulfillments, both to the children of Israel living at the time of Isaiah and shortly thereafter, as well as to the latter days. The Lord would deal with both Ephraim and Judah in His own wise way, as mentioned by Kay, for He “is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working” (ISAIAH 28:29). Various references to the Messiah are found here as well as to the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord gives more knowledge to those who accept what has already been given to them. Great calamities will threaten the earth in the last days. Spiritual bondage comes to those who will not accept the peace the Lord offers through His Gospel. A parable of a planter is given to show how the Lord will correct as needed, in order to guide His children back to the truth.

vv. 1-8. Ephraim is drunk. In former times it would be through the instrumentality of Asshur that Ephraim would be castigated. When it comes to crowns, the only true crown would be that of the Savior. After a rejoicing thought about the Messiah, Isaiah turns his attention to the calamities to befall Judah.

1 ¶ WOE to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty [is] a fading flower, which [are] on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome ✓ with wine!

✓ broken

WOE to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty [is] a fading flower. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Woe that he gave a crown to the proud and foolish prince of Israel, and that he gave a diadem to the wicked of the house of the sanctuary of His praise.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “Ah! the crown of haughtiness! The mercenaries of Ephraim! That flower which hath fallen from the glory” The Peshitta (Ⓟ) has, for the final clause, “the shameful diadem of the *strength* (Lamsa) / *power* (BPE) of his *glory* (Lamsa) / *boasting* (BPE).” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, for the last clause, “And to the fading flower the glory of his joy.” LHI here translates “יָהִי” as *Ah!* (see ISAIAH 18).

This concept of a fading flower is developed to its ultimate beauty in ISAIAH 40:6–8, where the glory of man—or a fading flower—is contrasted to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The *glorious beauty* of Ephraim is nothing but temporal and fleeting. In ISAIAH 28:7 we see that all have given themselves to drunkenness. Rawlinson has, “The ‘drunkards of Ephraim,’ or of the ten tribes, were at once intoxicated with wine (Amos 4:1; 6:6) and with pride (Amos 6:13). As the external aspect of affairs grew more and more threatening

through the advances of Tiglath-Pileser and Shalmaneser, they gave themselves up more and more to self-indulgence and luxury, lay upon beds of ivory, drank wine from bowls, feasted to the sound of the viol, and even invented fresh instruments of music (Amos 6:4–5). At the same time, they said in their hearts, ‘Have we not taken by our own strength?’ (Amos 6:13). They persisted in regarding themselves as secure, when even ordinary political foresight might have seen that their end was approaching.” ¶ This drunkenness, as we have already pointed out, is not just the imbibing of alcohol but also the drinking in of false doctrines. Ironside says, “Drunkenness, in Scripture, is often used to illustrate or represent the effects of spiritual intoxication brought about by refusing obedience to the Word of the Lord and giving heed to false teaching.” Jennings wrote of his fellow religious professors: “It is ever the characteristic mark of the ‘last days;’ so today, under cover of a formal religion called ‘church-membership,’ the mass of Christian professors are ‘lovers of pleasure, rather than lovers of God’ (2 Timothy 3:4), and there is again, alas, that same spiritual torpor as wine produces on the brain.” Jenour, leaning on Vitringa, speaks of the false or childish doctrines that would lead the people to reject the very Christ. It was Ephraim, through Jeroboam, who made false temples and ordained false priests after the Israeli civil war: “And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house

of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense” (1 Kings 12:26–33). ¶ As a result of these and subsequent actions, Asshur would take Ephraim captive. The Prophet, however, is getting ready to introduce a future apostasy, one that was just as sinister, and one which would take place before the coming forth of the Book of Mormon: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears” (2 Timothy 4:3). Isaiah, then, managed to weave together the present situation with Asshur, and the great apostasy. Delitzsch says, “The epithet **נִבֵּל** (fading: possibly a genitive, as in ISAIAH 28:4), which is introduced here into the midst of this picture of splendour, indicates that all this splendour is not only destined to fade, but is beginning to fade already.

¶ *Which [are] on the head [עַל-רֹאשׁ] of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “They who are at the head of the valley of fatness are smitten with wine.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “On the top of the fertile mountain! Ye who are drunk without wine!” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Who were on the head of the fat valley, staggering with wine.” Barnes writes, “The allusion in this verse to the ‘crown’ and ‘the fading flower’ encircling Samaria, Grotius thinks is derived from the fact that among the ancients, drunkards and revellers were accustomed to wear a crown or garland on their heads, or that a wreath or chaplet of flowers was usually worn on their festival occasions.” Lowth explains: “That this custom of wearing chaplets in their banquets prevailed among the Jews, as well as among the Greeks and Romans, appears from the following passage of the book of Wisdom: ‘Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments, And let no flower of the spring pass by us: Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they are withered’ (Wisdom 2:7–8).” Delitzsch writes: “Samaria stood upon a beautiful swelling hill, which commanded the whole country round in a most regal way (Amos 4:1; 6:1), in the centre of a large basin, of about two hours’ journey in diameter, shut in by a gigantic circle of still loftier mountains (Amos 3:9). The situation was commanding; the hill terraced up to the very top; and the surrounding country splendid and fruitful (Ritter,

Erkunde, xvi. 660, 661).” Let us also remember that in ISAIAH 7:9 Ephraim is condemned because her *head* (**רֹאשׁ**) was a man and *not* the Lord.

2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, [which] as a tempest of hail [and] a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Behold plagues (the Royal Polyglot reads **הִנֵּה הַמַּלְאָכִים**, ‘behold how’ &c.), strong and mighty, are coming from the Lord: like a storm of hail, like a whirlwind, like a storm of mighty waters, overflowing, thus (Royal Polyglot **כִּי**, ‘when’) the nations shall come upon them, and shall lead them into captivity to another land on account of the sins which are in their hands.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “Behold the wrath of the Lord is a harsh and terrible thing. Like a tempest of hail furiously driven when there is no shelter, like a mighty deluge sweeping a country.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) renders the last clause, “I will give rest to the earth through your hand.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Behold the Lord is mighty and strong, as a storm of hail: a destroying whirlwind, as the violence of many waters overflowing, and sent forth upon a spacious land.” The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *Lord (Adonai)* **אֲדֹנָי**, rather than *LORD (YHWH)* **יְהוָה**, as is found in the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓢ). ¶ *Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one.* As Gill says, “That is, a powerful king, with a mighty army, meaning Shalmaneser king of Assyria; whom the Lord had at his beck and command, and could use at his pleasure, as his instrument, to bring down the towering pride of Ephraim, and chastise him for his sensuality.” ¶ *[Which] as a tempest of hail [and] a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing.* The expression *a flood of mighty waters overflowing* reminds us of Asshur: “Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks” (ISAIAH 8:7). Rawlinson further explains: “The fearfully devastating force of an Assyrian invasion is set forth under three distinct images—a hailstorm, a furious tempest of wind, and a violent inundation—as though so only could its full horror be depicted. War is always a horrible scourge; but in ancient times, and with a people so cruel as the Assyrians, it was a calamity exceeding in terribleness the utmost that the modern reader can conceive. It involved the wholesale burning of cities and villages, the wanton destruction of trees and crops,

the slaughter of thousands in battles and sieges, the subsequent massacre of hundreds in cold blood, the plunder of all classes, and the deportation of tens of thousands of captives, who were carried into hopeless servitude in a strange land.” ¶ *Shall cast down to the earth with the hand.* Barnes has: “Septuagint: βία *bia* - ‘Force,’ ‘violence.’ This is its meaning here; as if it were taken in the hand, like a cup, and dashed indignantly to the ground.”

3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet: ✓

✓ with feet

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “The crown of the pride of the foolish prince of Israel shall be trodden down with feet.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “In this land it will put a stop to the labour of hands; and with the feet shall be trampled down the crown of your pride, mercenaries of Ephraim.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “The crown of pride of the drunkards &c.” In other words, Ephraim should be brought down in her pride despite the crown of beautiful flowers mentioned in ISAIAH 28:1, 4. Gill notes: “Not only cast down with the hand, but trampled upon with the feet; showing their utter destruction, and the contempt with which they should be used.”

4 And the glorious beauty, which [is] on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, [and] as the hasty fruit before the summer; which [when] he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth ✓ it up.

✓ swalloweth

And the glorious beauty, which [is] on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And the diadem, which he gave to the wicked of the house of the sanctuary of His praise, which is on the head of the valley of fatness.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And the flower which hath dropped from the hope of the Glory, on the top of the lofty mountain.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) renders it “And the shameful diadem, the *strength* (Lamsa) / *power* (BPE) of his *glory* (Lamsa) / *boasting* (BPE) which dominates at the entrance (Lamsa) / *is found in the best* (BPE) of the fertile valley.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And the fading flower the glory of his joy, who is on the head of the fat valley.” כְּבִפְרוֹתָא is correctly translated, as *first fruits*, from בְּכוֹר. Others translate more specifically as *early figs*, but *fig trees* are תְּאֵנִים. I suppose the latter

translation assumes an elliptical associated with בְּפְרוֹתָא, as we see below. For instance, the ASV has: “And the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be as the first-ripe fig before the summer.” There are various early crops that are harvested before the full summer comes in, such as strawberries, cherries and the first figs. Fig trees are very interesting in that they provide a double crop. In Spanish, the first and more delicious crop, *brevas* (but *albacora* from Hebrew בִּכּוֹר *bicur* and Arabic *alabakúra* (see María Moliner, below), is differentiated from the second, *higos*. In María Moliner we read the first acceptation for *albacora*¹: “(del árabe and. ‘albakúra’) f. *Breva (higo de la primera cosecha).” In Nahum we read: “All thy strong holds *shall be like* fig trees [תְּאֵנִים] with the *firstripe* [עֵם־בְּפְרוֹתָא] *figs*²: if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater” (Nahum 3:12). ¶ [And] as the hasty fruit before the summer; which [when] he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Shall be as the first ripe fig before the summer, which, when one sees it (literally, ‘when he seeth’ ‘on looking at it’), no sooner is it in the hand (literally, as if it were in his hands), that one devours it.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Shall be like the early fruit of a fig tree, which he who seeth it will wish to devour, before he can get it into his hand.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *early* (BPE) / *first* (Lamsa) fruits rather than *hasty fruit*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Shall be as a hasty fruit before the ripeness of autumn: which when he that seeth it shall behold, as soon as he taketh it in his hand, he will eat it up.” The CEV paraphrase offers, “It will be gobbled down like the first ripe fig at harvest season.” ¶ בְּעוֹדָהּ While it is yet. Henderson writes: “While the others [latter fig crops] hang long upon the tree after they become ripe, the boccora drops immediately on the tree being slightly shaken by the hand, or even of itself, Jeremiah 24:2; Hosea 9:10; Micah 7:1. It is from these circumstances the prophet here borrows his image, in order to shew how suddenly and easily Samaria should be taken. A three years’ siege must have been reckoned short in ancient times, since that of Tyre, under ebuchadnezzar, lasted thirteen, and that of Askalon twenty-nine years.” This idea of a short siege is mentioned by almost all of the exegetes, but I prefer Alexander’s comments: “The immediate eating of the fruit is only mentioned as a sign of eagerness or greediness³. Vitringa understands the simile as meaning

¹ Alexander has, “This name of the early fig is still retained not only in Arabic, but in Spanish, into which it was transplanted by the Moors.

² This second *figs* is not in the text, so it should also be in italics.

³ Archaic expression for someone who enjoys eating.

that Samaria when taken would be instantly destroyed, as the first ripe fruit is eaten and not stored away...

בְּעוֹרָה ... does not literally mean *as soon as*, but *while yet*, which renders the expression stronger still, as strictly denoting that he eats it while it is yet in his hand.” Certainly, if Samaria and the northern tribes are represented by the *breva*, or the early fig, Jerusalem and Judah are well represented by the *higo* or late fig. They would both be taken. In terms of history at that time, the first would be completely devoured in terms of the exile experience, but mixing metaphors, the latter would be *stored away* for seventy years and some of her peoples returned to the homeland.

5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,

The Targum (T) has, “At that time, the Messiah of the Lord of hosts shall be for a crown of rejoicing, and for a crown of praise to the remnant of his people.” Here is the *Hosea Principle*, where the Lord cannot speak of the evils that will befall his people Israel without very soon telling us how in the last days these things will happily change. These words have a thrilling tone to them. The fading glory of the crown of Ephraim is now replaced by the crown of glory, the crown of beauty, the crown of the King Messiah, of Jesus the Christ. Rabbi Rosenberg says, “The Rabbis, too, interpret this passage as referring to Messianic times, as is evidenced by their interpretation of וְלִצְפִירַת הַתְּפָאָרָה [and for a diadem of beauty] for those who hope for His glory, i.e., those who hope for God’s glory in Messianic times (Redak).”

¶ In that day, בְּיָוֵם / Unto the residue of his people.

The LXX (G) reads, “In that day the Lord of Hosts will be the crown of hope—the diadem of glory to the remnant of the people.” The Peshitta (S) uses *remnant* instead of *residue*. Most Jewish and Gentile authors think this as the residue of Judah, the tribes to remain after Ephraim would be captured by Asshur. Instead, it refers to the remnant of the children of Israel that the Lord would recover in the last days. The expression *in that day* בְּיָוֵם strengthens the view that the latter days are referred to, rather than the temporary righteousness of Judah under King Hezekiah. Skinner well says, “It means a converted remnant ... The writer is here looking beyond the whole series of national judgments, and the insertion of the promise is evidently suggested by the contrast between the false glory that has vanished and the true glory which shall endure.” ¶ *Shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty.* The Douay-Rheims (D) has *garland of joy* instead of *diadem of beauty*. Instead of wanting an

earthly king as demanded by the children of Israel in the days of Samuel, the Christ King will be the glory of Israel, even a diadem of beauty. The Targum tradition (Seder Nezikin, Sanhedrin 111b) has this: “R. Eleazar said in R. Hanina’s name: The Lord shall be a crown upon the head of every righteous man, as it is written, In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory [zebi], and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people etc. What is meant by for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty? — To those who obey His will and hope for His salvation. I might think, this applies to all; therefore Scripture states, unto the residue of his people, [meaning] unto those who make themselves as a remnant. And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate. ‘And for a spirit of judgment’ — this means, to him who rules over his [evil—GB] inclinations; ‘and to him that sitteth in judgment’: i.e., to him that renders an honest judgment according to the truth thereof; ‘and for strength’ — viz., to him that prevails against his evil inclinations; ‘that turn the battle’ — to those who engage in the battle of the Torah; ‘to the gate’ — to those who repair morning and evening to the synagogue and house of study” (Talmud, Soncino). Barnes says, “This reign of Yahweh shall be to *them* better than palaces, towers, walls, and fruitful fields, and shall be a more glorious ornament than the proud city of Samaria was to the kingdom of Israel ... [crown of glory] A beautiful garland. The phrase stands opposed to the wreath of flowers or the diadem which was represented ISAIAH 28:1, 3 as adorning the kingdom and capital of Israel. Yahweh and his government would be to *them* their chief glory and ornament” (emphasis added). As I read these words from Barnes I see, with thrilling gratitude, that this prophecy has been fulfilled in me as partly a descendant of Ephraim (maternal side), and partly a descendant of Judah (paternal side). And this reminds me of something that happened only a few weeks ago in our Gospel Doctrine class. This year (2012) our subject of study is the Book of Mormon. We were reading the words of Enos in the Modesto 12th Spanish Branch: “And after I, Enos, had heard these words, my faith began to be unshaken in the Lord; and I prayed unto him with many long strugglings for my brethren, the Lamanites. And it came to pass that after I had prayed and labored with all diligence, the Lord said unto me: I will grant unto thee according to thy desires, because of thy faith. And now behold, this was the desire which I desired of him—that if it should so be, that my people, the Nephites, should fall into transgression, and by any means be destroyed, and the Lamanites should not be destroyed, that the Lord God would *preserve a record of my people*, the Nephites; even if it so be by the power of his holy arm, that it might be brought forth at some future day unto the Lamanites, that, perhaps, *they might*

be brought unto salvation—For at the present our strugglings were vain in restoring them to the true faith. And they swore in their wrath that, if it were possible, they would destroy our records and us, and also all the traditions of our fathers. Wherefore, I knowing that the Lord God was able to preserve our records, I cried unto him continually, for he had said unto me: Whatsoever thing ye shall ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive in the name of Christ, ye shall receive it. And I had faith, and I did cry unto God that *he would preserve the records*; and he covenanted with me that he would bring them forth unto the Lamanites in his own due time” (Enos 1:11–16, emphasis added). The Spirit wrought upon me with much strength as we read those words in class and I was moved to ask class members: “What records were these, and to whom were they particularly written for?” While some had a bit of a blank stare for a moment, others caught the spirit of the moment and said, “The Book of Mormon... and to us, who are the very descendants of the Lamanites spoken about. Enos was praying for us!”⁴

6 And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “For a word of true judgment (literally, ‘judgment of truth’) to them that sit in the house of justice, in order that they should judge according to truth.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “They shall be left for the spirit of Justice.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *spirit of justice* instead of *spirit of judgment*. Also, *in that day* **בַּיּוֹם**, of ISAIAH 28:5, the remnant would be filled by a spirit of judgment and would judge with righteousness. Delitzsch says, “There would be an end to unjust judging and powerless submission.” ¶ *And for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And to give victory to them that are going forth into battle, to bring them back in peace to their homes.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “To administer justice and destroy the power of the opposers.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) renders it “And for strength to those who at the gate are able to resist the battle.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And strength to them that return out of the battle to the gate.”

⁴ I sometimes have very poignant moments as I prepare to teach. And it also has happened to me, often, that the Spirit is manifested in a very special way in our classes with additional information that I had not considered as I prepared. Every Priesthood, Sunday school, Seminary and Institute class can be a sort of *School of the Prophets* experience if we bring the right spirit with us.

The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has the *locative* **לְ**⁵ ending that here does not indicate *feminine gender* but rather the direction of the movement, **לְשַׁעַר הַ**, *to the gate*, in contrast to the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓞ), where we just find **שַׁעַר**, [*at the*] *gate* (DSSB). Henderson explains: “‘to the gate,’ i.e. of the enemy; not only repelling his attack in Judaea, but driving him back into his own fortified places. (Compare 1 Samuel 17:52.)”

7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble [in] judgment.

But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “But verily these are drunk with wine, they are swallowed up of old wine: the priest and the scribe are drunk, in old wine are swallowed up: on account of wine they have erred.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “For by wine these were made transgressors; they were led astray by strong drink. Priest and prophet were stupefied with strong drink.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *gone astray* rather than *have erred*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “But these also have been ignorant through wine, and through drunkenness have erred: the priest and the prophet have been ignorant through drunkenness.” The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *But these also*, **וְגַם-אֵלֶּה**, while the MSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓞ) is missing the *vav* and renders it *These also*, **גַּם אֵלֶּה**. After condemning Ephraim, and stopping to briefly celebrate the times of King Messiah, the Prophet now turns his attention to Judah (see also ISAIAH 28:14, where Jerusalem is mentioned by name). This mutual censure is seen frequently. For instance, in Ezekiel 23 the Lord speaks of two sensual sisters—Aholah, representing Samaria; Aholibah, Jerusalem—as being guilty of apostasy. Such a state of apostasy was to be found both in pre-exilic Judah and Ephraim, as well as the latter days when counterfeit doctrine would prevail. Jennings explains that they were “intoxicated with the falsehood they preach.” Kay has, “Isaiah’s contemporary, Micah, represents the prophets as ‘making God’s people to err,’ by ‘prophesying to them of wine and strong drink’ (Micah 2:11; 3:5),—

⁵ Andersen, F. I., & Forbes, A. D. (2006; 2006). *A Systematic Glossary to the Andersen-Forbes Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*. Logos Bible Software.

promising them an interrupted course of worldly prosperity.” Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: “Truly this is the day of which Isaiah spoke: ‘The priest and the prophet have erred, . . . they are out of the way, . . . they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.’ And then with reference to the spiritual food they offer their congregations, he acclaimed: ‘All tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean’ (ISAIAH 28:7–8).”⁶ So also in the Book of Mormon we see such instances of apostasy: “And now Abinadi said unto them: Are you priests, and pretend to teach this people, and to understand the spirit of prophesying, and yet desire to know of me what these things mean? I say unto you, wo be unto you for perverting the ways of the Lord! For if ye understand these things ye have not taught them; therefore, ye have perverted the ways of the Lord” Mosiah 12:25–26). ¶ *They are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble [in] judgment.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “They are turned after sweet food; their judges have erred.” The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “They were gorged with wine—they were agitated by drunkenness; they reeled to and fro.” The Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, “They are overcome with wine, they stagger with strong drink, they err in judgment with drunkenness, they eat immoderately.” The BPE (Ⓢ) has, “They stagger because of drink that causes drunkenness; they are lost because of gluttony.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, beginning with the second clause, “They have gone astray in drunkenness, they have not known him that seeth, they have been ignorant of judgment.” This stumbling in judgment, then, is more than inebriation, but a stumbling in spiritual discernment. ¶ *In vision* בְּרֵאָה, from רָאָה, *too see* (Gesenius). Also see 1 Samuel 9:9.

8 For all tables are full of vomit [and] filthiness, [so that there is] no place [clean].

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Because all their tables are full of polluted and loathsome food: they have not a spot free from rapine.” The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “This is oracling! A curse shall devour their counsel; for their counsel is for the sake of gain.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, for the last clause, “So that there was no more place.”

¶ *all tables*. כל-שֶׁלֶחָנוֹת. Kay begins to tie this chapter to the coming one, “There is little indication of penitential sorrow having laid hold of the people... They ‘honoured the Lord with their lips,’ though ‘their heart was far from Him’ (ISAIAH 29:13)... Thus their

outward reform became to most of them like a draught of spiritual intoxication.” Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained that these tables of vomit and filth are reflective of false doctrines that abound outside of the restored Church.⁷

vv. 9–13. The question is asked regarding who is able to receive true doctrine and revelation. And how will such be received when it is received. The humble will accept revelation from God rather than lean on man’s teachings. The Lord instructs us through the Spirit, little by little, as we are able to bear it. The hearing of the word brings to pass much good, including entering into the rest or peace of the Lord. Yet many are not willing to accept this invitation and thus remain in spiritual bondage.

9 ¶ Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? [them that are] weaned from the milk, [and] drawn from the breasts.

✓ the hearing?

Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine [נִבְּיִן שְׂמוּעָה]? Of

שְׂמוּעָה Horsley explains that “This is a general word for the whole matter of Divine revelation, consisting of doctrine, precept, prophetic warning, promises and threatenings.” Alexander has, “שְׂמוּעָה properly denotes something heard, and here means that which the Prophet heard from God and the people from the Prophet; in other words, divine revelation, whether general or special.” The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “To whom was the law given? And to whom was the command given to understand wisdom? Was it not to the house of Israel, who were beloved above all nations, and beloved above all the kingdoms?” The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “To whom, [say they] have we announced evils? And to whom have we announced a message?” For *doctrine* the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *report* (Lamsa) / *message* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has *understand the hearing* for *understand doctrine*. The question at hand is to whom the Spirit of God can teach knowledge to, given such a great apostasy. As we see below, the context of this verse is strictly associated with the learning of doctrine line upon line, as individuals show they are able to do so. The Prophet Brigham Young taught “The Gospel may be preached to an individual, and the truth commend itself to the conscience of that person, creating but a little faith in its truth, to which there may

⁶ Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man*, pp. 75–76.

⁷ Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man*, p.693

be an addition made. If persons can receive a little, it proves they may receive more. If they can receive the first and second principles with an upright feeling, they may receive still more, and the words of the Prophet be fulfilled. He, seeing and understanding the mind of man, and the operations of the different spirits that have gone abroad into the world, and knowing the ways of the Lord, and the vision of his mind being opened to those things we call mysteries, said—‘Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.’ That is, He gives a little to His humble followers today, and if they improve upon it, tomorrow He will give them a little more, and the next day a little more. He does not add to that which they do not improve upon, but they are required to continually improve upon the knowledge they already possess, and thus obtain a store of wisdom. It is plain, then, that we may receive the truth, and know, through every portion of the soul, that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, that it is the way to life eternal; still there may be added to this, more power, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.”⁸

¶ [Them that are] weaned from the milk, [and] drawn from the breasts. The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “—we who have been weaned from milk, we who have been withdrawn from the breasts?” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, for the second clause, “that are drawn away from the breasts.” The idea here is that when men are ready, the Lord is ready to reveal more. But they first have to be weaned from the breasts, i.e., from the spiritual milk: “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Corinthians 3:1–3). ¶ Brigham Young explained: “The Lord gives us little by little, and is ever willing to give us more and more, even the fullness; when our hearts are prepared to receive all the truths of heaven. This is what the Lord desires, what he would delight in doing, for his children.”⁹ Jennings explains that “It shall be so simple that even infants with nothing but the ability of listening shall be able to understand it; yet that very simplicity will stumble the wise and prudent who in their pride will be blind to its perfections.” Indeed, we shall see in ISAIAH 29 “the boy that driveth the plow [i.e., Joseph Smith] to know more

of the Scriptures” than the professors of religion spoken about by Jennings and William Tyndale.

10 For precept [must be] ✓ upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little:

✓ or, hath been

For precept [must be] upon precept, precept upon precept. The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “Surely, they were commanded to do the law; but what they were commanded, they were not willing to do. The prophets prophesied unto them, that if they would repent, it should be forgiven them; but they did not obey the words of the prophets: they walked after the desire of their soul, neither did they desire to do my law. They hoped to have idolatrous worship established among them, and they did not consider the worship of the house of my sanctuary: to worship in the house of my sanctuary was a little thing in their eyes, my Shekinah was a little thing in their eyes.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “Expect affliction on affliction.” The Peshitta (Ⓔ), instead of *line* and *precept* uses such words as *filth* and *vomit*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, “For command, command again; command, command again.” Ibn Ezra explains: “This is just the way how writing is taught. *Here a little and there a little.* Little by little, gradually.” Many moderns have really twisted the meaning of this verse, so it is nice to find a straight forward interpretation offered by Ironside, that God had, through His prophets “who could teach them the way of righteousness, endeavoring to instruct them as one deals with little children, giving them ‘precept upon precept &c.’ as they were able to bear it.” So also Kay, who writes, “In his spiritual husbandry the prophet used the same minute discrimination, the same adjustment of means to end, as are set forth in the parable of ISAIAH 28:23–29.” ¶ There are volumes that could be written about ISAIAH 28:10. Truly, it has been my experience that this is the way the Lord reveals His truth unto us, *line upon line*. It is as waves of knowledge and understanding. Truly, there is *no greater call* than teaching. I so much love to be invited to speak about the Gospel either in a classroom, a fireside, as a home teacher or with the missionaries. I seldom encounter a teaching situations but that I do not get additional inspiration on the subject. This insight may come directly through the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, or through a member of the class. This has happened to me not only in spiritual matters, but also in my academic fields and in the equestrian sports. No sooner would I publish the most recent edition of a book, when I would have to begin revising the manuscript for the next edition. I have spent most of my academic and personal life studying, pondering and writing. But it is at those times

⁸ Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 2:1–2a. Also, compare to JD 9:167a.

⁹ Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 18:212.

when I leave my studying and my writing and get out and share with others when I tend to receive even a greater amount of revelation. I may well be the only person that has been chastised by the Spirit and told to stop studying the scriptures and get out and *minister*. I have so much to be grateful for. I feel I have received from the Lord “wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:19). One of my recurring prayers includes asking God for opportunities to share what I have learned. I feel the Spirit of God upon my mind and my hand as I study and write; but even more so, as I teach. But here I will say that God has indeed revealed many things to me, even before I joined the Church. The thing which I am most grateful for is that God answers my prayers as I ask in the name of His beloved Son Jesus Christ. I believe each one of us can obtain these answers. Most of my answers to prayer (perhaps because I am more interested in asking God if He heard my prayer and then leave things to Him than demanding that something happen the way I might want it to) come right away. Others take longer, and some I know will probably not be answered in this lifetime. The answer to one particular prayer that bears upon this study on Isaiah is instructive. I was in Yesterday’s Books in Modesto about ten years ago, checking to see if there were any new books on Isaiah or others related to my Scripture study. The word of the Lord came to me and said something to this effect: “You know how you asked to find the Chaldee. You already have it, it is also called the Targum.” I had been, little by little, finding the various ancient manuscripts that I have used for this study, including the LXX, Targum, Peshitta, and so on. But many authors spoke about the Chaldee and I yearned to add this to my collection. A year earlier I had prayed to the Father to help me find this book. Now I was amazed at what I was hearing. The voice of the Lord, when He speaks to me under these types of situations is often followed, *line upon line*. While I was still pondering what I had just received, not doubting at all, I received the next: “Go over across the room look up *Chaldee* in that dictionary.” This was Hastings’ five volume dictionary which I had looked at before. I walked across the room and opened Volume I¹⁰ to “Chaldee Versions” and read: “See TARGUMS.” So it is that the Lord does reveal line upon line &c., and I have noticed that if we will write these impressions more is revealed to us. By writing these things we honor what God has given us. The Lord will always honor His promises to us. ¶ In the Book of Mormon we read: “Wo

¹⁰ Hastings, James. *A Dictionary of the Bible dealing with its Language, Literature, and Contents Including the Biblical Theology*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons. 1911, p. 368. By the way, some months later I bought that set even though it was extremely expensive for me at the time.

be unto him that shall say: We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough! For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have. Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm, or shall hearken unto the precepts of men, save their precepts shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost” (2 Nephi 28:29–31)¹¹; and “And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, that ye shall live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God. For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith” (D&C 98:11–12). The first of these has reference to the rejection of the Book of Mormon by many; while the second speaks about the manner that we receive commandments through the Lord. As we learn to keep the commandments, more light and truth and guidance is given to us *until the perfect day*. Elder Gene R. Cook, formerly of the First Quorum of the Seventy, explained that our understanding of any given scripture can always grow—that we are never done learning: “[Then we finally] understand that revelation is continual on that verse. It almost doesn’t matter what the words are; if we continue to approach the verse humbly and prayerfully, the Lord will continue to give us additional revelations on it.”¹² Elder Cook also wrote: “Obedience to the Lord’s voice helps us receive additional instructions from that voice.”¹³ ¶ The Lord also guides us *line upon line, precept upon precept* when it comes to revealing His commandments to us. I had just baptized someone to whom I had taught the Gospel of Jesus Christ to in Chile. She said she was going to do some business transaction the next day—it was something I did not think was appropriate for a LDS to do, in terms of the integrity of the matter. The word of the Lord came to me something like this: “I

¹¹ Kent P. Jackson, ed., in *Studies in Scripture* (Vol. 4:1 Kings to Malachi, p.109) makes a very interesting observation: “Although about one-third of the entire book of Isaiah is directly quoted and interpreted in the Book of Mormon, apart from chapter 29 ... only one verse of Isaiah from chapters 18 through 33 is cited in the Book of Mormon (ISAIAH 28:10, in 2 Nephi 28:30).”

¹² Gene R. Cook, *Searching the Scriptures: Bringing Power to Your Personal and Family Study*, p.62.

¹³ Gene R. Cook, *Searching the Scriptures: Bringing Power to Your Personal and Family Study*, p.109. I have always thought of learning by *faith* as also implying direct revelation when the windows of heaven are opened and light and knowledge are poured into our minds and into our hearts.

gave you fourteen years before I taught you it was wrong to do such and such; I will teach her myself when she is ready.” Indeed, this is precisely what happens. As we show God that we are capable of keeping a commandment, He adds *precept to precept*. Just as I believe that it will be impossible to truly understand Isaiah in a single lifetime, our life is too short to become the person we wish to become. The Prophet Joseph Smith shared these reassuring words: “When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave.”¹⁴ ¶ *Line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little:* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Hope on hope, yet a little while—yet a little while.” The BPE (Ⓢ) instead of *line* uses *spitting*. The Peshitta (Ⓢ) also has the last clause as the Masoretic text (Ⓜ). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “Expect, expect again; expect, expect again: a little there, a little there.”

11 For with stammering lips[✓] and another tongue will he speak[✓] to this people.

✓ stammerings of lip ✓ ✓ or, he hath spoken

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Because with feigned speech, and with mocking language, these people mocked the prophets, who prophesied unto them.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “On account of the mockery of their lips—because they will speak to this people with a strange tongue.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, “Because with a difficult speech and with another tongue shall *he* (Lamsa) / *I* (BPE) speak to this people.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has *speech of lips* instead of *stammering lips*. In 1 Corinthians we read: “Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:20–21). Now this scripture is given in the New Testament quoting the Law תורה, or the Torah, where תורה is put for Scripture in general. A curious comment is made by Rawlinson: “The application of this Old Testament quotation furnishes one of the many singular instances of quotation which prove that the Jews often referred to

the words without any direct reference to their context or original meaning.” The reason for this comment is that most all exegetes feel that ISAIAH 28:11 is speaking about the fact that because Israel did not learn from her own prophets, she would learn from being taken captive into a land where people would speak in a foreign tongue to them. ¶ Latter-day Prophets, however, have consistently applied these scriptures to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by the weak and the humble. The correct idea here is that the Gospel of Jesus Christ would be taught by the Spirit through the weak unto the convincing of sincere seekers: “But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty” (1 Corinthians 1:27). And this weakness often comes not only because the young and inexperienced missionaries sent to confound the proud and the learned, but they often do so in a tongue they do not know. Think about this and rejoice! This is the Lord’s work and who can stay it? Elder Erastus Snow taught: “We testify and bear witness that it is not of man, but of God,—that it is the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—that it is the gift and influence of the Holy Ghost that bears witness to the hearts of this people. When in the simplicity of my heart I could speak but little unto them with stammering lips, I said more with my eyes and fingers than with my tongue. The power of the Holy Ghost rested upon the people; and when I asked them if they understood me, ‘Yes,’ said they, ‘we understood it all.’ It was not because I spoke it fully with my tongue, but God made them understand me. If I asked them if they believed it, ‘Yes,’ would be the reply; ‘we have the testimony of the Holy Ghost bearing witness within us that it is true.’”¹⁵ Kay well says, regarding *another tongue*, “A tongue that deviated widely from the ordinary style of speech; sometimes resorting to strangely bold figures, and constantly employing metaphor and parable and allegory (which last is almost literally ‘other speech,’ ἀλληγορία¹⁶).”

12 To whom he said, This [is] the rest [wherewith] ye may cause the weary to rest; and this [is] the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “The prophets said unto them, This is the house of the sanctuary, worship ye in it: and this is the possession in which there is rest; but they would not accept instructions.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads,

¹⁵ Erastus Snow, *Journal of Discourses* 7:129. Also see beginning with 7:125. Remarks by Elder Erastus Snow, Delivered in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, September 18, 1859.

¹⁶ Allegory, see Galatians 4:24.

¹⁴ Prophet Joseph Smith, “The King Follett Sermon,” April 1971 *Ensign*.

“Saying to them, ‘This is the rest for him who is hungry: and this is the destruction, but they would not hear.’” The Peshitta (S) has *tranquility* (Lamsa) / *peace* (BPE) for *refreshing*. The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “To whom he said: This is my rest, refresh the weary, and this is my refreshing: and they would not hear.” The Vulgate (V) renders it, “Cui dixit : Hæc est réquies mea, reficite lassum; et hoc est meum refrigerium: et noluerunt audire.” This verse speaks of the invitation to find peace (ISAIAH 27:5), or in other words *rest and refreshment*, through the Gospel of Christ, but the people would not hearken to it. Matthew has, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matthew 23:37). Rawlinson points us to the *Rain in Due Season*: “God had from remote times offered to his people ‘rest’ and ‘refreshing’ or a life of ease and peace in [the Holy Land] but on condition of their serving him faithfully and observing his Laws (Deuteronomy 28:1–14). But they had rejected this ‘rest,’ since they had refused to observe the condition on which it was promised.” So also Kay, “The words ‘rest’ and ‘refreshing’ occur in Deuteronomy 28:65, where the penalty of disobedience was proclaimed beforehand. (‘The Lord shall scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even to the other.) And among these nations shalt thou find no *ease* (*refreshing*, [תְּרַנֵּיעַ from מְרַנֵּיעַ and רָנַע, see HAL and here in ISAIAH, *the refreshing*, מְרַנֵּיעַ]), neither shall the sole of thy foot have *rest* [מְנוּחָה, see HAL מְנוּחָה, and here in ISAIAH, *the resting*, הַמְנוּחָה.]” Jennings says, “Here we get a forecast that the proud will reject the ‘report.’” Lowth writes, “God had warned them by his Prophets, that their safety and security, their deliverance from their present calamities, and from the apprehensions of still greater approaching, depended wholly on their trust in God, their faith and obedience; but they rejected this gracious warning with contempt and mockery.”

13 But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little. The Targum (T) has, “This shall be the cup of their punishment, because

they have transgressed the word of the Lord, and because they were commanded to do my law, but would not do what they were commanded. Therefore they shall be delivered unto the nations, who do not know the law; because they walked after the desire of their soul, and had no delight to do my will. Therefore they shall hope for help at the time that I shall bring distress upon them; but they shall have no help or support.” The LXX (G) reads, “Therefore the oracle of God will be to them ‘Affliction on affliction; hope on hope, yet a little while, yet a little while.’” The Peshitta (S), as in ISAIAH 28:10, instead of *line* and *precept* uses *filth* and *vomit*. The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “And the word of the Lord shall be to them: Command, command again; command, command again: expect, expect again; expect, expect again: a little there, a little there.” To those who *would not hear* the tender pleadings of *precept upon precept* and *line upon line* would come the punishment mentioned next (this also reminds us somewhat of ISAIAH 6:10). ¶ Kimhi explains (see Slotki / Rosenberg), related to ISAIAH 28:10, but fits better here, that this is the process used by the Lord to teach *line upon line* yet many of the people “do not accept it.” Ibn Ezra explains: “They indeed thought that the word of God itself was of no importance.” Ironside well writes that despite the careful efforts of the Prophets to teach the people, “They had not profited by such careful teaching but had turned away from the truth and like many today accepted in its place the traditions of men.” ¶ *That they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.* The Targum (T) has, “Because the house of my sanctuary was too little in their eyes to worship there, therefore they shall be left as a little thing in the eyes of the nations, among whom they shall go into captivity, in order that they may walk, and stumble backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.” The LXX (G) reads, “That they may proceed on and fall backwards; and they shall be broken and snared and caught.” The Peshitta (S) has that they might *return* instead of *that they might go*. With the expression to “fall backward” we are reminded of Eli, Samuel’s tutor, who had not raised his children in obedience to the Lord: “Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God... And it came to pass, when [the messenger of bad tidings] made mention of the ark of God [which had been captured by the enemies of Israel], that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died” (1 Samuel 4:13b; 18a). Calvin says, “We had a similar sentiment on a former occasion (ISAIAH 8:15), and expressed in nearly the same words; for there the Prophet speaks on the same subject, the blinding of the people, who by their obstinacy had provoked the wrath of God. He shews that they who go astray, in opposition to the word of God, are always very near destruction.” Here in Isaiah there seems to be an

allusion to Ephraim and Judah who would soon go into exile (*that they might go*, as well as *and [be] taken*) and suffer greatly (*and fall backward, and be broken, and snared*), because they refused to turn to the Lord. In the latter days these same words may be used of those who are taken captive and bound into mystic Babylon. The Prophet Joseph Smith explains that those who have fought against the Church, as Haman against the Jews, would “go backwards and stumble and fall.”¹⁷

vv. 14–22. We return here to the time of Isaiah. Delitzsch says, “The prophet now directly attacks the great men of Jerusalem, and holds up a Messianic prophecy before their eyes.” Barnes explains: “This verse commences a direct address to the scoffing and scornful nation, which is continued to the close of ISAIAH 28:22. It is addressed particularly to the rulers in Jerusalem, as being the leaders in crime, and as being eminently deserving of the wrath of God.” Christ is the foundation stone, a tried stone, a corner stone.

14 ¶ Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which [is] in Jerusalem.

The LXX (6) reads, “Therefore hear the word of the Lord, ye afflicted men, and ye rulers of this people in Jerusalem!” The Douay-Rheims (9) has *over my people* rather than *this people*. As it is so clearly spoken about during the time of Jeremiah (e.g. Jeremiah 6, 8, 9, 15, 17, 21, etc.), those in Jerusalem thought it was impossible for them to fall. Never mind the fact that by then Ephraim had fallen to Asshur. Not too many years hence, and Jerusalem would fall and be taken captive by Babylon. This verse is a stinging reproach to the rulers of Jerusalem. Rawlinson writes, “Isaiah now turns from a denunciation of the priests and prophets, who especially opposed his teaching, to a threatening of the great men who guided the course of public affairs. He taxes them with being ‘men of scorn,’ *i.e.* scorners of Jehovah, and with ‘a proud and insolent self-confidence’ (Delitzsch).” I facilitated a meeting on interpersonal relations in 2012 and we had an interesting roundtable after the guest speaker was finished. I found it necessary to explain that I believed in right and wrong, good and bad, and in an absolute truth. To my shock—for this has not happened to me very frequently—one of the participants mocked my beliefs. I found it very interesting that the two of us in the room who had a firm belief in Christ were the most

¹⁷ Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts, 3:227 (also see 5:128, in regards to the Prophet Joseph Smith’s enemies).

confident when it came to life and joy, while those who did not have a belief (despite the immense amount of good that they had accomplished in the field of peace making) were full of misery. Truly, it is only through Christ that we can find peace. As it later became evident in that same meeting, those who rejected Christ leaned on superstition.

15 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

The LXX (6) reads, for the final section, “We have made falsehood our refuge and by this falsehood we shall be saved (or, ‘protected,’ Brenton).” The Douay-Rheims (9) has, “For you have said: We have entered into a league with death, and we have made a covenant with hell. When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come upon us: for we have placed our hope in lies, and by falsehood we are protected.” The theme of ISAIAH 28:14 continues here with Jerusalem truly thinking that she could not be captured. The expression, *a covenant with death and with hell* is a sarcastic comment as to Judah’s overconfident trust in Egypt and Assyria. Anytime that God is not our head, we are in effect making such a *covenant with death*. In speaking about covenants, Elder Matthias F. Cowley said, “In making a covenant with death they broke the ‘everlasting covenant’ and dishonored God, for He is everlasting and His ordinances endure forever, unimpaired by death, hell or the grave.”¹⁸ In ISAIAH 28:18 we shall say more about the proper order of covenants. The Lord uses in D&C many of the same expressions that He used when inspiring Isaiah to write. For instance, we read in D&C 97:23–26: “The Lord’s scourge shall pass over by night and by day, and the report thereof shall vex all people; yea, it shall not be stayed until the Lord come; For the indignation of the Lord is kindled against their abominations and all their wicked works. Nevertheless, Zion shall escape if she observe to do all things whatsoever I have commanded her. But if she observe not to do whatsoever I have commanded her, I will visit her according to all her works, with sore affliction, with pestilence, with plague, with sword, with vengeance, with devouring fire.”

¹⁸ Matthias F. Cowley, *Cowley’s Talks on Doctrine*, p.189.

16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner [stone], a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, beginning with the second clause, “Behold, I appoint a King in Zion; a King mighty, powerful, and terrible: I will make him powerful, and I will strengthen Him, saith the prophet. But the righteous, who believe these things shall not be moved, when distress shall come.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “Therefore thus saith the Sovereign Lord; behold I lay for the foundation of Sion a stone of inestimable worth—a chosen, precious cornerstone for the foundations of it, and he who believeth shall not be ashamed.” Brenton Ⓛ (also NETS Ⓛ) fills the ellipsis, “and he that believes *on him* shall by no means be ashamed.” So also the *Lexham Greek-English Interlinear* as well as the LXX SESB (πιστεῦσθαι ἐπ’ αὐτῷ). As in ISAIAH 27:5–6, amidst all of the challenges faced by man, an invitation is given to take hold of the horns of salvation through Christ Jesus. ¶ *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone.* Rashi (in Rabbi Rosenberg) has “I have set up the King-Messiah, who shall be in Zion as an בִּצְרָתָא a fortress stone, an expression of a fortress and strength.” Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained that a much better rendition of this verse was given in Romans 9:33, “As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”¹⁹ ¶ No doubt this is an excellent example of how the New Testament leans on the LXX (Ⓛ), which at times has excellent renderings. The beauty and power of its rendering and Messianic allusion are breathtaking. The Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓟ) renders it, “Therefore thus says the LORD God: Behold, I lay in Zion a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he who believes shall not be afraid.” The BPE (Ⓟ) has, “For thus saith Yahweh God: I have placed a stone in Zion, and approved stone, angular and precious, a fundamental and principal of the wall. He who believes shall not fear.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, “Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold I will lay a stone in the foundations of Sion, a tried stone, a corner stone, a precious stone, founded in the foundation. He that believeth, let him not hasten.”

¶ This verse clearly speaks of Christ, at His first coming. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland explained: “Jehovah

said to the prophet Isaiah that in building the kingdom of God on earth, a ‘stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation’ would be used (ISAIAH 28:16). He was, of course, speaking of himself. Paul used that same imagery in declaring that Jesus was the chief cornerstone, that basic block around which a foundation of apostles and prophets would be laid and onto which the Church of God would be built (Ephesians 2:20). Peter noted that builders of lesser vision simply shoved him aside in favor of less substantial material (see Acts 4:11). The tragic irony is that to most, he was not a building stone at all, but rather a mere stumbling block, a huge boulder obstructing the journey toward death (see 1 Corinthians 1:23.)”²⁰ Referring to 1 Peter 2:6–8, Elder McConkie writes: “Peter here quotes, combines, and interprets three Messianic prophecies, two from Isaiah and one from the Psalms. ‘Thus saith the Lord God,’ Isaiah announced in one of them, ‘I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste’ (ISAIAH 28:16). The clear meaning is: ‘Christ our Lord, the promised Messiah, the Stone of Israel—as a precious and tried person—shall come to Israel; and be the foundation upon which they shall build the house of salvation; he shall be the cornerstone of the house and kingdom of God itself; and all they who believe in him and build on the foundation he lays shall be saved.’ The other Isaiah prophecy says that ‘he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both²¹ the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken’ (ISAIAH 8:14–15). Again the meaning is clear: ‘When the stone of Israel comes, he shall be a sanctuary for the righteous; they shall find peace and safety under the shelter of his gospel; but he shall be a Stone of Stumbling and a Rock of Offense (as also a gin and a snare) to the rebellious and disobedient in Jerusalem and in all Israel. They shall stumble and fall because of him; they shall take offense because of his teachings and be condemned and broken and snared and taken for rejecting them.’ During his mortal ministry, our Lord discussed this very prophecy with his disciples and said that ‘on whomsoever this stone shall fall, it shall grind him to powder’ (*Commentary I*, pp. 590–595).”²² And today, we may say that the Book of Mormon is playing a like role. Some recognize the words of the Savior in this

²⁰ Jeffrey R. Holland, *However Long and Hard the Road*, p.23 (see also p. 24).

²¹ Ephraim and Judah.

²² Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:293.

¹⁹ McConkie, Bruce R. *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*. (3 vols.). Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1965–1973. Vol. II.

wonderful book and others have taken offense and rejected the message. This is so well expressed by Nephi: “And now, my beloved brethren, and also Jew, and all ye ends of the earth, hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. And if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ, and he hath given them unto me; and they teach all men that they should do good. And if they are not the words of Christ, judge ye—for Christ will show unto you, with power and great glory, that they are his words, at the last day; and you and I shall stand face to face before his bar; and ye shall know that I have been commanded of him to write these things, notwithstanding my weakness” (2 Nephi 33:10–11). ¶ *A tried stone, a precious corner [stone], a sure foundation.* Gill explains that King Messiah was tried, “... by the Old Testament saints, and by saints in all ages, who have ventured their souls on him, and laid the whole stress of their salvation upon him, and have been saved by him; by Satan, and his principalities and powers, by his temptations of him in the wilderness, and by his attacks upon him in the garden, and on the cross, and found him to be an immovable stone, and were broken by him; and by his divine Father, who tried his faithfulness by trusting him with all his elect, and the salvation of them; and his great strength, by laying upon him all their sins, and the punishment due unto them.” And even today, the Old Covenant promise is in force: “...prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” This is a promise that stands not only in regard to the principle of tithing, but upon all of the Gospel principles. Christ is a precious corner stone and a sure foundation. Rabshakeh had one thing right when he said: “Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him” (ISAIAH 36:6). Indeed, Christ is our true foundation, and if we put our trust in Him—and not in Egypt or the flesh of man—all will be well with us. ¶ *He that believeth shall not make haste.* In other words, all who put their trust in Christ can live in peace. Barnes explains: “The Hebrew word **יְהַיֵּשׁ**, from **יָשַׁע**, means properly ‘to make haste;’ and then to urge on; and then to be afraid, to flee. The idea is derived from one who is alarmed, and flees to a place of safety. The specific thought here is that of a man on whose house the tempest beats, and who apprehends that the foundation is insecure, and leaves it to seek a more safe position. The prophet says here, that the foundation on which Zion was reared would be so firm that if a man trusted to that he would have no cause of alarm, however, much the storms should beat around it. The same idea

essentially is conveyed in the version of the Septuagint, and by Paul and Peter, where it is rendered ‘shall not be ashamed,’ or ‘confounded.’ That is, he shall have no reason to be ashamed of his confidence in the firm foundation; he shall not flee from it as a man does who puts his trust in that which fails him in the day of trial.” Calvin, after quoting Paul (Romans 9:33; 10:11) explains: “The design of the Prophet is to shew, that they who believe will have peace and serenity of mind, so that they shall not desire anything more, and shall not wander in uncertainty, or hasten to seek other remedies, but shall be fully satisfied with this alone. That is not a departure from the meaning, for the word signifying to make haste conveys the idea of eagerness or trembling.”

17 Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: The Targum (**ܛ**) has, “And I will make judgment straight as a line of a building, and justice as a plummet, because you would hide yourselves *from the coming* distress, the nations shall lead you into captivity.” The LXX (**Ϛ**) reads, “And I will establish judgment for hope, and my mercy shall be for scales.” The Lamsa Peshitta (**ܫ**) has, for the first clause, “And I will make justice to the measuring line.” The Douay-Rheims (**ϑ**) has, “And I will set judgment in weight, and justice in measure.” ¶ Barnes explains, “The line is used by a carpenter for measuring; the plummet consists of a piece of lead attached to a string, and is also used by carpenters to obtain a perpendicular line. A carpenter works exactly according to the lines which are thus indicated, or his frame would not be properly adjusted.” Wildberger observes, “Both the plumb line and the sounding lead are to be taken symbolically as well, since they refer to **מִשְׁפָּט** (justice) and **צְדָקָה** (righteousness). These two concepts provided the very measuring tool that Yahweh used when judgment was described in the song of the vineyard (ISAIAH 5:7).” Gill has, “A metaphor taken from builders, who in building use the line and plummet to carry on their work even and regular, retaining such stones as agree thereunto, and rejecting such as do not.” Luther similarly has, “I will weigh out justice with a balance, that is, I will make a distinction between the good and the bad. I will not be so rash that I will destroy the good with the bad, nor ... will [I] not punish the bad for the sake of the good, but I will first separate the good from the bad. As a carpenter, who marks off with the plummet what must be cut off, so I will put the measure and rule around this

stone to determine who is to be saved and who is to be cast off.” Jenour explains: “So would God, as it were, measure the actions and characters of those who professed to belong to his church, by the *line* of his infallible *justice*, and with the *plummet* of his perfect *righteousness*.” Calvin here makes some interesting comments about the apostasy and restoration of the Lord’s Church—which fit so well with the subject of ISAIAH 28–29: “He shews that God has in his hand the ready means of forming the Church entirely anew. As he lately mentioned a building, so now, by a different metaphor, he shews that there is no reason to fear that God will not at length finish the work of building which has been begun. Yet indirectly he reproves the pride and insolence of those who wished to be accounted pillars of the Church, while they were endeavoring, as far as lay in their power, to raze it to the foundation. Although, in consequence of an almost total extinction of the light of faith, and a frightful corruption of the worship of God, the state of the people was hideous... I do not deny [regarding line and plummet] that he alludes to the examination of weights; but both metaphors are taken from buildings, in which the master-builders and masons try everything by a rule, in order to preserve a due proportion in every part. Thus it is said that the Lord administers equal judgment, when he restores the Church, in which otherwise everything is disordered and confused, as in a hideous ruin... He makes the same statement concerning ‘righteousness,’ ... The meaning is, that this foundation is laid, not only that the Church may be commenced, but that it may be perfectly restored, to use a common phrase, ‘from top to bottom’ (*De fonds en comble*).” ¶ *And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “But as for you who have vainly trusted in falsehood, that the tempest would not reach you.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, “And hail shall overturn the hope of falsehood: and waters shall overflow its protection.” The expression *waters shall overflow* reminds us of the Assyrian invasion (ISAIAH 8:7). The *refuge of lies* is the leaning upon Egypt, Assyria, Babylon or any great force—intellectual, academic, or worldly—rather than upon the Lord. Also, the *refuge of lies* implies leaning upon false doctrine.

18 And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. ✓

✓ a treading down to it

And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And that it would not break your treaty with death; the hope which you have with respect to the grave shall not last.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, “And your league with death shall be abolished, and your covenant with hell shall not stand.” Certainly, Satan will not stand by those with whom he has covenanted with. ¶ When it says *disannulled* (from כִּפַּר, to cover over, expiate, destroy, make void), it means that this covenant will be utterly useless. In D&C we read: “And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred), are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead” (D&C 132:7). ¶ *When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “When the stroke of the enemy shall come upon you, it shall be like an overwhelming river, and ye shall be unto them for a treading under foot.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “When the furious tempest cometh, by it you shall be beaten down.” Applying this verse to the time of Isaiah (for instance, see ISAIAH 8:7) as many exegetes do, Kaiser says, “Thus ISAIAH 28:18 explicitly states that the pact with death and the underworld will be of no use when the flood, or to abandon the metaphor, the Assyrian army, sweeps over the land and claims its victims.” ¶ The Doctrine and Covenants speaks directly to this *overflowing scourge* in the last days: “And in that day shall be heard of wars and rumors of wars, and the whole earth shall be in commotion, and men’s hearts shall fail them, and they shall say that Christ delayeth his coming until the end of the earth. And the love of men shall wax cold, and iniquity shall abound. And when the times of the Gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fulness of my gospel; But they receive it not; for they perceive not the light, and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men. And in that generation shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be men standing in that generation, that shall not pass until they shall see an overflowing scourge; for a desolating sickness shall cover the land.

But my disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved; but among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices and curse God and die. And there shall be earthquakes also in divers places, and many desolations; yet men will harden their hearts against me, and they will take up the sword, one against another, and they will kill one another” (D&C 45:26–33).

19 From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only [to] understand the report. ✓

✓ or, when he shall make you to understand doctrine

From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “At the time of its passing by, it shall lead you captive, because each morning it shall pass you by, by day and by night.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “When it cometh it will overtake you. Early, very early in the morning it will come, and at night.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Whensoever it shall pass through, it shall take you away: because in the morning early it shall pass through, in the day and in the night.” The *overflowing scourge* spoken about in the previous verse will be unrelenting, as shown by the expression *day and night* (see also ISAIAH 21:11–12). ¶ *And it shall be a vexation only [to] understand the report.* It is of interest that the words *understand doctrine*

[תְּבִין שְׂמוּעָה] in ISAIAH 28:9 are precisely the same as those found here (see the margin ||) in a slightly different context, *understand the report* [תְּבִין שְׂמוּעָה]. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And it shall come to pass before the time of the curse shall have come, that ye shall consider the words of the prophets.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Your hope will be wretched. Learn to hear.” The BPE (Ⓢ) has, for the last clause, “Only the message shall be understood.” Instead of *vexation*, the Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, *terror*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And vexation alone shall make you understand what you hear.” The Masoretic text (מ) has “*And it shall be only vexation* (וְהָיָה רַק זַעֲוָה) &c.” (of special interest to us as LDS, as וְהָיָה is often translated as either *and it came to pass* or *and it shall come to pass*), while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓟ) is missing the expression וְהָיָה and we simply have רַק זַעֲוָה. Rashi (in Rabbi Rosenberg) explains: “Terror for all those who hear, to understand the messages of the harsh retributions that I will bring upon you. Kay points out that the word *vexation* also appears in *Rain in Due Season*, i.e., in Deuteronomy 28:25 where we have *to be removed*,

KJV, לְזַעֲוָה, while here we have it as *vexation* זַעֲוָה [see BDB, “object of trembling, terror, fright”]. Both acceptations are correct, and indeed to be removed was a terror to the children of Jacob. Kaiser sees this and the coming verses as eschatological. The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote about this verse in the context of preaching the gospel and helping people to “save themselves from this untoward generation.” Not infrequently the prophets have been permitted to see the future and have become ill with the visions of impending disasters over the earth or particular nations. The Prophet Joseph Smith said: “The servants of God will not have gone over the nations of the Gentiles, with a warning voice, until the destroying angel will commence to waste the inhabitants of the earth, and as the prophet hath said, ‘It shall be a vexation to hear the report.’ I speak thus because I feel for my fellow men; I do it in the name of the Lord, being moved upon by the Holy Spirit. Oh, that I could snatch them from the vortex of misery, into which I behold them plunging themselves, by their sins; that I might be enabled by the warning voice, to be an instrument of bringing them to unfeigned repentance, that they might have faith to stand in the evil day!”²³ Also see notes on President Wilford Woodruff’s vision under ISAIAH 2:12.

20 For the bed is shorter than that [a man] can stretch himself [on it]: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself [in it].

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “For their strength shall be diminished by reason of mighty slavery; and the government of the oppressor shall increase their subjection. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “We are straitened for room, we cannot fight. We are weakened by your pressing upon us.” The BPE (Ⓢ) has, “For the garment is too short to cover, there is not sufficient thread to finish it.” The Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, “For the cloth is too short, and the warp grows weak and is insufficient for a garment.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “For the bed is straitened, so that one must fall out, and a short covering cannot cover both.” The Masoretic text (מ) includes the word *narrower* (צָרָה) which is absent from the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓟ). Instead of *stretching himself* (מִדְּשָׁתָרְעוֹ) as in the Masoretic text (מ), in the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓟ) we have *stretching themselves* (מִשְׁתַּרְעוּ). For a little humor, we read: “Robert Teske of the Leiden Branch, The Hague Netherlands Stake, is a little over 6 feet, 8 inches tall. When he returned from serving a mission, he said in a sacrament meeting talk,

²³ Smith, Joseph, *History of the Church*, 2:263.

‘During my mission, a prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled.’ He then turned to ISAIAH 28:20 and quoted, ‘For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it ...’²⁴ ¶ Faussett explains: “Proverbial, for they shall find all their sources of confidence fail them; all shall be hopeless perplexity in their affairs.” Barnes has: “So it would be with those who sought protection in idols, in the promises of false prophets, and in the aid which might be obtained from Egypt.” Jennings rather, speaks of the apostates and their false doctrine: “The apostates had made a comfortable bed for themselves, as they assumed; it is too short to permit them to stretch themselves upon it.”

21 For the LORD shall rise up as [in] mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as [in] the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.

For the LORD shall rise up as [in] mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as [in] the valley of Gibeon. The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “For as the mountains trembled when the glory of the Lord was revealed in the days of King Uzziah, and in the wonders which He performed for Joshua in the valley of Gibeon, taking vengeance on the wicked, who had transgressed against His Word.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “Like a mountain of wicked men the Lord will rise up; and he will be in the valley of Gabaon.” The Peshitta (Ⓟ) has *mountain pass* instead of *mount Perazim*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, “For the Lord shall stand up as in the mountain of divisions: he shall be angry as in the valley which is in Gabaon.” The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓛ) reads *in mount Perazim* (בְּהַר פְּרָצִים) while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *as mount Pertzim* (בְּהַר-פֶּרְצִים). Likewise, the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓛ) reads *in valley* (בְּעֵמֶק) of Gibeon, while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *as valley* (בְּעֵמֶק) of Gibeon. ¶ *For as mount Perazim, כִּי בְהַר-פְּרָצִים*. This spot near the Valley of Rephaim, near Jerusalem, is considered to be the same as mentioned in 2 Samuel 5:20; 1 Chronicles 14:11, where David triumphed over the Philistines. It is there referred to as *Baal-Perazim*, “בַּעַל-פְּרָצִים; Βααλ'φαρασειν, ‘the lord of breakings through’”) (ISBE). Barnes says, “The word ‘Perazim’ is from פָּרַץ, to tear, or break forth, as waters do that have been confined; and is indicative of sudden judgment, and of a complete overthrow.” The Targum (Ⓢ) makes reference

to the *great slaughter at Gibeon* at the time of Joshua, when “the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies” (Joshua 10:10, 13). Either way, these victories are used as a type for *his strange act*—the restoration of the Gospel—to be manifested in the last days. Most all of the Gentile authors suggest that this verse refers to the punishments that God had in mind, as does Jenour, for instance: “I take these verses to a general denunciation of the wrath of God against all those Jews who should refuse to believe in the promised Messiah, and prefer rather to trust in an arm of flesh.” In reality, it is a prediction of the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon and the restoration of the Gospel. ¶ *That he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “So shall he be revealed to take vengeance on them, who work works, strange works, and on those who worship with idolatrous worship.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “With wrath he will execute his work—a work of bitterness; and his wrath will attack in a strange manner; and its severity will be unusual.” That he may do his work, his strange work: that he may perform his work, his work is strange to him.” ¶ Cowles says, “‘Strange’ is here in the sense of peculiar, extraordinary, wonderful.” This fits in perfectly with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the restoration of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Jennings explains that the *strange work* is God’s work. Calvin says, “For my own part, I consider ‘strange’ to mean simply what is uncommon or wonderful; for this appellation is given to what is rare and unusual among men, and we know that they almost always view with astonishment whatever is new.” Young adds, “Apparently what Isaiah means (although the language is difficult and one must not be dogmatic), is that what it to take place is something unusual, foreign from the ordinary course of providence.” But here agreement ends. The exegetes think the strange work and act revolve around punishment, rather than upon the light of the Gospel that would shine in the night of apostasy. I only found that Alexander questions this view so prevalent with all the exegetes: “The English word *strange* is here the only satisfactory equivalent to the two Hebrew adjectives’ נִכְרָה²⁵ and נִכְרָה. The idea that punishment is God’s strange work because at variance with his goodness, is not only less appropriate in this connection, but inconsistent with the tenor of Scripture, which describes his vindicatory justice as an essential attribute of his nature.” ¶ Returning to the pruning and vineyard motif of previous chapters, we get a greater hint as to what this *strange act* may consist of in Doctrine and Covenants: “For the preparation wherewith I design to prepare mine

²⁴ C. de Bruijn, Amstelveen, the Netherlands. On the Bright Side, *LDS Church News*, 9 September 1995.

²⁵ Although נִכְרָה also means *peculiar* (LHI).

apostles to prune my vineyard for the last time, that I may bring to pass my strange act, that I may pour out my Spirit upon all flesh” (D&C 95:4). The Prophet Joseph Smith said: “The Lord has a hand in bringing to pass his strange act, and proving the Book of Mormon true in the eyes of all the people.”²⁶ Brother Joseph continues to explain that “the world will prove Joseph Smith a true prophet by circumstantial evidence” and then goes on to quote the history of the Quiche people of Guatemala and their knowledge of their Hebrew heritage. (My daughter Cristina spent time among the Quiche in Guatemala and recognized one of the words I was learning in Hebrew as also used by these people.) Monte Nyman writes, “The Lord probably calls his work a strange event because the world does not usually rely upon the Spirit to prove things. Oliver Cowdery said the angel Moroni told Joseph Smith that this strange act would bring about a marvelous work and a wonder, and that the scripture in Isaiah was about to be fulfilled (see MA, February 1835, p. 79).” From Elder Neal A. Maxwell we read the following observations, “President Brigham Young, while testifying of the restored and living Church, gave this practical caution: ‘This is the kingdom that was to be set up in the last days. It is like a stone taken from the mountain without hands, with all its roughness, with all its disfigured appearance—uncomely—even a stumbling-block and a stone of offence to the nations of the earth’ (*Journal of Discourses* 5:75. We are, in fact, a part of what at least in some respects is regarded in the eyes of the world as a ‘strange work,’ ‘disfigured’ and ‘uncomely’ (see ISAIAH 28:21).”²⁷ Elder Maxwell further states on this matter of a *strange act*, “The Restoration cannot be ‘a marvelous work and a wonder’ without at the same time being seen by some as unlikely, unusual, and unexpected.”²⁸

22 Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.

Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “deal not wickedly” rather than “be ye not mockers.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “As for you therefore, be not filled with joy, yet let not your bonds gather strength.” Instead of *bands be made*

²⁶ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (TPJS), p. 267.

²⁷ Maxwell, Neal A. *If Thou Endure It Well*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1996, p. 34.

²⁸ Maxwell, Neal A. Lord, *Increase Our Faith*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1994, p. 57.

strong, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *lest your chastisement be severe* (Lamsa) / *that thy punishment might not be severe* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And now do not mock, lest your bonds be tied strait.” The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *Lord LORD* (Adonai YHWH), אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה rather than just *LORD* (YHWH) יהוה, as is found in the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓢ).²⁹ Kay also sees a connection between ISAIAH 28:22, 29 and *the marvelous work and a wonder* in ISAIAH 29:14. Indeed “the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.” ¶ *For I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “For the things are complete and decisive which I have heard from the Lord of Hosts—which he will execute on all this land.” Instead of *a consumption, even determined* the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *devastation and judgment* (BPE) / *destruction and judgment* (Lamsa). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “For I have heard of the Lord the God of hosts a consumption and a cutting short upon all the earth.” Reference is again made of the judgment that would fall *upon the whole earth* in the last days, a *vexation only to understand the report*.

vv. 23–29. Regarding these next verses, Birks explains: “Here the solemn warning has a striking close. A parable is drawn from the various processes of husbandry, to teach us the deep and hidden wisdom of God in His moral government of the church and of the world. However strange some of those processes to the inexperienced, they all concur in securing one main result, the harvest. So too all the ways of God in His holy providence conspire to one great end, a blessed harvest of purified and ransomed souls.” We may take note, also, that not only does the Lord harvest with much care, but also plants each seed in the locale that best fits its needs (Jacob 5).

23 ¶ Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech.

The Targum (Ⓣ) makes these words explicitly introduced by the prophet, and instead of *my speech* has *my Word* or *to my Meimra*, “לְמִימְרָי.” The LXX (Ⓞ)

²⁹ I have pointed out every instance where the AV had “mistranslated” the expression as Lord God rather than Lord LORD. As it turns out, the AV has, rather than mistranslated, followed the Jewish tradition of reading these cases as Lord God, rather than the repeating of the words adonai ADONAI, for Lord LORD. In early 2017 I began reading along with a Hebrew audio of the Hebrew Bible beginning with Genesis. Today, when I was reading Ezekiel 6:11, I noticed it was read as Adonai Elohim rather than the more literal Adonai ADONAI. See also ISAIAH 50 and 56.

reads, “Listen and hear my voice; attend and hearken to these words of mine.” To *give ear* means to listen, as does *hearken* (see 1 Samuel 15:22). Behind the idea of listening and hearkening is that of obedience. Lowth writes: “The prophet concludes with an explanation and defense of God’s method of dealing with his people in an elegant parable or allegory; in which he employs a variety of images, all taken from the science of agriculture. As the husbandman uses various methods in preparing his land, and adapting it to the several kinds of seeds to be sown, with a due observation of times and seasons; and when he hath gathered in his harvest, employs methods as various in separating the corn from the straw and the chaff by different instruments, according to the nature of the different sorts of grain: so God, with unerring wisdom, and with strict justice, instructs, admonishes, and corrects his people; chastises and punishes them in various ways, as the exigence of the case requires; now more moderately, now more severely; always tempering justice with mercy; in order to reclaim the wicked, to improve the good, and, finally, to separate the one from the other.”

24 Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground?

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “The prophets prophesied at all times in order to teach, if peradventure the ears of sinners might be opened, and receive instruction.” The LXX (Ⓢ) reads, “Will the ploughman plough the whole day? Or prepare seed before he hath tilled the ground?” Instead of *open and break the clods* the Peshitta (Ⓟ) has *picking up and breaking up* (BPE) / *open and harrow* (Lamsa). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, for the second half, “Shall he open and harrow his ground?”

Henderson explains, “כָּל הַיּוֹם, literally *all the day*, an idiom for *always, continually*.” Gill explains it: “By ploughing he prepares the ground for sowing, that is his end in ploughing; and he may plough a whole day together when he is at it, but he does not plough every day in the year; he has other work to do besides ploughing, as is later mentioned; such as breaking of clods, sowing seed, and threshing the grain after it is ripe, and reaped, and gathered.”

25 When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie ✓ in their place? ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

✓ or, spelt ✓ ✓ border?

✓ ✓ ✓ or, the wheat in the principal place, and barley in the appointed place

When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Is it not so? If the house of Israel would set their faces to do the law, and repent (the Royal Polyglot reads אָתוּב, ‘I will return’), then behold, He would gather them (the Royal Polyglot reads אֶכְנֶשׁ, ‘I will gather them’)³⁰ from among the nations, amongst whom they were dispersed, like fitches and cummin that are scattered.” The LXX (Ⓢ) reads, “Doth he not, when he hath levelled the face of the soil, then sow the small dill or cummin?” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Will he not, when he hath made plain the surface thereof, sow gith³¹.” ¶ *And scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place?* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And, behold, he would bring their offspring together according to their tribes, as seed of wheat in the uncultivated field (the Royal Polyglot reads לְגַנֵּי, ‘garden beds’ or ‘cultivated land’), and barley in the appointed place, and spelt in the borders.” The LXX (Ⓢ) reads, “And again sow wheat and barley and millet and rye in all thy borders?” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And scatter cummin, and put wheat in order, and barley, and millet, and vetches in their bounds?”

26 For his God doth instruct him to discretion, [and] doth teach him. ✓

✓ or, And he bindeth it in such sort as his God doeth teach him

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “All these things are instruction of judgment (the Royal Polyglot reads לְחֻזֵן אֱלֹפִין דְּרִין, ‘all these things are to their instruction, that the generations may know &c.’), that they may know, that our God shows them the right path, in which they ought to walk.” The LXX (Ⓢ) reads, “So thou shalt be corrected by the judgment of God; and be made glad.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “For he will instruct him in judgment: his God will teach him.” Birks explains: “The word *yasar* [יָסַר] here, based on the root יָסַר, to *chastise*, or *train by discipline*, is here very fitly applied to the whole process of agriculture ; and *mishpat* [מִשְׁפָּט], *judgment*, refers to the wise, orderly method, in which the whole work needs to be carried on. The verse refers alike to what has gone before, and to that which follows; and thus connects the whole by the

³⁰ Pauli suggests that it should rather be יִקְרַב, “and he shall bring together.”

³¹ Gith is a type of pepper, see Noah Webster’s 1828 dictionary.

common lesson of man's dependence on a wisdom that comes from God." Rabbi Joseph Kimhi (in Rabbi Rosenberg) has, "The farmer, so to speak, chastens the earth by breaking the hard clods. Then his God causes rain to fall upon it."

27 For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.

For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin. Alexander explains: "Nothing more is necessary here to the correct understanding of the verse than a just view of the contrast intended between heavy and light threshing." The Targum (Ⓣ) makes the threshing instrument iron. The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, "For the dill is not cleaned with a corn drag; nor is the wheel of a wain to turn round on the cummin." The Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, "under the feet of oxen" rather than *threshing instrument*." The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, "For gith shall not be thrashed with saws, neither shall the cart wheel turn about upon cummin." Henderson explains the general idea: "We have here a description of the different implements used in threshing [*trilla* in Spanish]. The מִרְוּץ [i.e., sharp] in full, מוֹרְגַן מִרְוּץ [sharp threshing sled] ISAIAH 41:15, was a kind of sledge drawn by two oxen, in the front of which stood the driver on his knees, or sat on a piece of wood fixed crossways on the car. Under this machine were rollers of wood, with sharp stones, or pieces of iron, by which the straw was cut in pieces, and the grain separated from the ears. The עֲגִלָּה was also a cart [ISAIAH 28:28], but differed from the former by its having wheels instead of rollers, which, being serrated, produced the same effect, when drawn over the corn. Besides oxen, both horses and asses were employed in drawing these instruments; and, as appears from this passage, horses were made to perform the operation merely by treading out the grain, as they still do in different parts of the East [as well as the *trilla de yeguas* in Chile, where mares would trample over the cut grain and help separate the seed kernels from the straw]. When the quantity was small, or when more minute kinds of seed were to be threshed out, a flail or switch was used, with which it was beat." ¶ *But the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.* The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, "But with a rod are beaten out the dill—and cummin." The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, "But gith shall be beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a staff." Rashi explains that these do not need the harshness of a wooden threshing implement, "for its

seed is easily extracted from within its straw, and, likewise, on cummin they do not turn the wheel of a wagon to thresh it, because the black cummin is easily beaten with a staff and the cummin with the rod."

28 Bread [corn] is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break [it with] the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it [with] his horsemen.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, "Corn³² they tread out, yet they will not continue to tread it out for ever; but he will throw it into confusion with the wheel of his wain,³³ and would separate the corn, and blow away the chaff." The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, "Yet with bread they will be eaten. For I, *the I Am* (Brenton and NETS do not fill the ellipsis) will not be angry with you forever, nor shall the voice of my severity destroy you." The Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, "Grain is threshed for our sakes because man would not otherwise be threshing it, nor break it with many wheels of his threshing instruments, nor crush it under the feet of his oxen." The BPE (Ⓢ) has, "For our sakes the grain is threshed, but it shall not be threshed indefinitely with the many wheels of the thresher, nor with the hoofs of the beasts shall it be crushed." The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, "But bread corn shall be broken small: but the thrasher shall not thrash it for ever, neither shall the cart wheel hurt it, nor break it with its teeth." The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓤ) reads *and it [is] crushed* (וּגִי יִדָק), 4QIsa^k (Ⓤ) reads *and [the] grain [is] crushed* (וּגִי לָחֶם יִדָק), as does the Masoretic text (Ⓜ), except it is missing the *and*, thus we read *[the] grain (i.e., bread, or grain seed) [is] crushed* (לָחֶם יִדָק). Ibn Ezra explains: "That he shall not bruise it always." Regarding verses 27 and 28, Lowth explains: "Four methods of threshing are here mentioned, by different instruments; the flail, the drag, the wain, and the treading of the cattle... The drag consisted of a sort of frame of strong planks, made rough at the bottom, with hard stones or iron: it was drawn by horses or oxen over the corn sheaves spread on the floor, the driver sitting upon it... The wain was much like the former; but had wheels with iron teeth, or edges like a saw ... by which it would seem that the axle was armed with iron teeth or serrated wheels throughout... This not only forced out the grain, but cut the straw in pieces for fodder for the cattle; for in the eastern countries they have no hay... The last method is well known from the law of Moses, which 'forbids the

³² Not maize, but rather *grains* (see ISAIAH 17:5).

³³ "A wagon; a carriage for the transportation of goods on wheels," in Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary.

ox to be muzzled, when he treadeth out the corn;’ Deuteronomy 25:4.” Henderson explains, “The practical idea conveyed is, that God mingles mercy with his judgments. His design is not to crush his people, but to render them fit for becoming useful subjects of his government; so that when these judgments have answered their end, they shall cease.”

29 This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, [which] is wonderful in counsel, [and] excellent in working.

The Targum (Ⓒ) has, beginning with the second clause, “Who in the vast knowledge of His mind hath established the world; He hath multiplied His works in the beginning (בְּרִישִׁית),³⁴ occurs also in the sense of creation... hence, we may render here ‘He hath multiplied His works of the creation.’ מְעַשֶׂה בְּרִישִׁית, ‘the work of creation’ is a common phrase in the Rabbinical writings) by His great wisdom.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “These wonders have indeed proceeded from the Lord of Hosts.” The Peshitta (Ⓔ) renders *excellent in working*, as *excellent in instruction*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓔ) has, “This also is come forth from the Lord God of hosts, to make his counsel wonderful, and magnify justice.” ¶ Barnes writes: “*This also cometh*—That is, these various devices for threshing his grain comes from the Lord no less than the skill with

which he tills his land (see ISAIAH 28:26). *And excellent in working*—Or rather, who magnifies (תַּגְדִּיל) his wisdom (תְּוִשִׁיָה). This word properly means wisdom, or understanding Job 11:6; 12:16; 26:3; Proverbs 3:21; 8:14; 18:1. The idea of the prophet is, that God, who had so wisely taught the farmer, and who had instructed him to use such various methods in his husbandry, would also be himself wise, and would pursue similar methods with his people. He would not always pursue the same unvarying course, but would vary his dispensations as they should need, and as would best secure their holiness and happiness.” Redak (in Rabbi Rosenberg) explains that “The plowman is the Almighty, and the earth is Israel. Just as the plowman prepares the earth to receive seed, so did the Almighty prepare Israel to accept His words.” He goes on to explain how He took his people out of Egypt in the exodus and continues on until He gives them doctrine through the Torah. And we add, through the Book of Mormon.

20 June 2012

³⁴ See the King Follett sermon to see the Prophet Joseph Smith’s inspired exposition on Genesis 1:1 and בְּרִישִׁית.

