
Isaiah 40

יְבֹשׁ הָצִיָר נִבֵּל צִיָן וּדְבַר־אֱלֹהֵינוּ יָקוּם לְעוֹלָם

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand for ever.

This sublime prophecy deals most especially with the Second Coming of the Lord, a time that the Jews call *the days of the Messiah*, **לִימֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ** (Kimhi, in Rosenberg, 2:313). A few inspired Gentile exegetes also see in ISAIAH 40 the Second Advent. Govett writes: “Whence we conclude that this chapter, as in many, indeed in *most* prophecies of the Saviour’s appearance, his first and second advents are closely bound up together. But the prediction here bears principal reference to the second ... For then Jerusalem shall be comforted, and her ‘humiliation pardoned,’ when she acknowledges Jesus of Nazareth as her Messiah ... as John the Baptist heralded the *first* coming of Christ ‘in the spirit and power of Elias,’ shall Elijah himself herald the second coming in conjunction with Enoch.” ¶ We say to Govett, and the world, that not only would John the Baptist herald the First Advent, but also the Second. Indeed, John the Baptist, Elijah, Raphael and many other messengers appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and ordained him, blessed him, gave him the proper authority and keys in preparation for this, the dispensation of the fullness of times, preparatory to the day when the King of kings and Lord of lords shall come in glory. ¶ Keith wrote: “If the subject-matter of John’s cry be attended to, it will be seen, that while he announced the first appearance of Christ on earth, he intimated also another; that while he was the voice that cried that Christ came to ascend the altar of justice, to become the sacrifice, he also cried that he would come again to sit on the throne of righteousness, the period to which the context in Isaiah limits the full application of the passage. The party from Jerusalem to whose inquiry, ‘Who art thou?’ John replied, ‘I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness,’ put another question, ‘Why baptizest thou then?’ to which he answered, ‘I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worth to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Whose fan is in his hand, and he shall thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire’ (compare Matthew 3:3 and John 1:19–28). This second announcement did not apply to the appearance of Christ on earth then—it refers to his coming again to reign over a renewed world. The conclusion at least of the passage in Isaiah can be understood only of yet future times. In what sense was every valley exalted in the days of our Lord? The glory of the Lord is not yet revealed on Zion; all flesh have not yet seen it.” ¶ This Isaianic chapter also contains one of the most sublime verses of scripture: “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand for ever.” We will carefully examine the meaning of the verse, as well as those that build up to it, in the text of the commentary. In addition, this chapter contains one of the most tender expressions of the Lord’s love for His sheep (“He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry [them] in his bosom, [and] shall gently lead those that are with young”) as well as glorious promises to those who will abide in the covenant (“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew [their] strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; [and] they shall walk, and not faint”). ¶ Above all, this chapter reveals the Son, Emmanuel, in majestic tones. Elder David B. Haight declared, “We testify to all the world, as did the Apostles of old, that this same Jesus taken up into heaven as men watched, will return—will return in power and great glory, attended by the hosts of heaven. At that day ‘the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.’ But prior to that day, as foretold by the prophets, there must be a restoration of all things in the last days, the fulness of the gospel with all its saving powers to be returned to earth (see Acts 3:20–21). We proclaim with knowledge and power as witnesses of heavenly events that the final great restoration has taken place, that angelic ministers have been sent from heaven, that God’s voice has been heard declaring its truth, that the gift of the Holy Ghost and the priesthood powers with blessings and promises have again been given to man” (“He Is Not Here. He Is Risen,” *Ensign* (CR), May 1980, p.9). ¶ Wordsworth explains how ISAIAH 40 through 48 are tied together: “The addresses in this portion of Isaiah are connected by *catchwords*; that is to say, some leading word at the end of one address is taken up at the beginning of the following address, which is thus linked on to the foregoing one. This is the same principle of connexion as that which characterizes the Book of Psalms. It shows the accurate exactitude with which these prophecies are joined together. Thus, for example, in this portion of Isaiah: — (1) In ISAIAH 40:31 the phrase ‘renew their strength’ [נִתְּלִיפוּ כֹחַ] at the end of this first address is repeated at the beginning of the second address (ISAIAH 41:1); and thus these two addresses are riveted together. (2) Again, the word *breath* [רֵיחַ], at the end of the second address, is taken up and repeated at the beginning of the third address, and forms thereby a striking connexion and

contrast (ISAIAH 42:1). (3) Again, the words, *Israel* and *Jacob* [or rather, *Jacob and Israel* יַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל], ‘it set him on fire,’ [וַתִּלְהֹטֵהוּ] and ‘it burned him,’ [וַתִּבְעֶר־בּוֹ] at the end of the third address (ISAIAH 42:25), are taken up and repeated at the beginning of the fourth address (ISAIAH 43:1–2): ‘O *Jacob* ... *Israel* ... when thou walkest through the fire [בְּמוֹ-אֵשׁ], thou shalt not be burned [וְלֹא-תִבְעֶר-בָּךְ].’ (4) Again, the words at the end of the fourth address, ‘I have given *Jacob* to the curse, and *Israel* to reproaches,’ are followed by the Consolation, at the beginning of the fifth address: ‘Yet now hear, O *Jacob*, My servant, and *Israel*, whom I have chosen.’ (5) Again, the words at the end of the fifth address, ‘That saith of *Cyrus* [Coresh, לְכוּרֶשׁ], He is my Shepherd,’ are taken up at the beginning of the sixth address: ‘Thus saith the Lord to His Anointed, to *Cyrus* [לְכוּרֶשׁ].’ (6) Again, the divine declaration, ‘I have sworn [נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי] by Myself, unto Me every knee shall bow [תִּכְרַע], every tongue shall swear [תִּשָּׁבַע],’ at the close of the sixth address, is followed by the striking exemplification of its truth at the beginning of the seventh address : ‘Bel boweth down [כָּרַע]. . . . Nebo stoopeth [קָרַס]. They stoop, they bow down together.’ (7) This divine declaration is further confirmed by the beginning of the eighth address : ‘Come down [רָדִי], and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of *Babylon* [בְּבִלְיָ], sit on the ground.’ (8) Also the words, ‘Every tongue shall swear [כָּל-לְשׁוֹן תִּשָּׁבַע כָּל-לְשׁוֹן]. Surely, shall one say. In the Lord have I righteousness and strength,’ which is the second clause of that divine declaration, ‘I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness [בְּצִדְקָה],’ are taken up at the beginning of the ninth address: ‘Hear ye this, which swear by the Name of the Lord, but not in righteousness [בְּצִדְקָה].’ Thus all these nine addresses are connected together.”

vv. 1–2. The Lord speaks words of comfort to Israel and Judah. Elder Orson Pratt taught that these verses have mostly to do with the Second Coming and that the Lord has not forgotten His people Israel: “The Jews will then come in remembrance before the Lord. That is, the set time for their deliverance and restoration will have come, the period predicted by the mouth of the ancient prophet in which the Gospel shall be proclaimed to them.”¹

1 ¶ COMFORT ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.

- ✓ to the heart
- ✓ ✓ or, appointed time

נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי יֹאמַר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם :
דַּבְּרוּ עַל-לֵב יְרוּשָׁלַם

¹ Orson Pratt, March 26, 1871. *Journal of Discourses*, 26 March 1871. The restoration of the Jews and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, see pp. 59–70.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished. These words fill me with inexpressible joy and divine comfort. Henderson says: “The repetition נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ gives intensity to the address.” In Isaiah 40:2, however, rather than comfortably, we tenderly have, to the heart, עַל-לֵב, as indicated by the margin || : דַּבְּרוּ עַל-לֵב יְרוּשָׁלַם, speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem. ¶ The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “O ye prophets, prophesy comforts to my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably (Chaldee, ‘to the heart’), to Jerusalem, and prophesy concerning her.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith God: priests, speak to the understanding of Jerusalem; comfort her; for her humiliation is accomplished.” Instead of *her warfare is accomplished*, the Peshitta (Ⓟ) sadly has that Jerusalem has filled herself with violence and delighted in sin. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓡ) has, “Be comforted, be comforted, my people, saith your God. Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem, and call to her: for her evil is come to an end.” ¶ It is a wonderful thing when the Lord owns His people and says, “my people” עַמִּי, and furthermore calls Himself to them, “your God” אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. I never tire of the felicitous contrast between Israel’s rejection and her acceptance—for I feel my heart intertwined with hers as one. In Hosea we have, “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her [וְדַבַּרְתִּי עַל-לִבָּתָּהּ]”

{Hosea 2:14 in KJV, 2:16 in Masoretic Text (מ)}. The more correct translation is “Therefore, behold, I will lure her and bring her to the wilderness, and speak to her heart” (LITV, also see ABP {LXX (Ϛ)}, AMP, Darby, ISV, YLT and most Spanish editions, as well, *hablaré a su corazón*). It is clear that the Lord is speaking of Israel, who would one day be brought back into His fold after a long departure. The time will come when the people of Jerusalem—the Jewish people and the rest of the house of Israel—will be comforted. Ibn Ezra says: “The expression *דַּבַּר עַל-לֵב* ‘speak to the heart’ means always ‘to speak kindly,’ so as to remove sorrow and regret for things which have already past.” ¶ Cheyne does well in reminding us of *Rain in Due Season*, regarding Israel, “that her guilt is paid off” (*that her iniquity is pardoned*—AV), by pointing us to Leviticus 26:41 ff.: “And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes” (Leviticus 26:41–43). Birks says: “The voice is addressed to the Prophet [and announces the] sure recovery [of the Jewish nation], after grievous sins and sore judgments, to the enjoyment of the lasting favor of the God of Israel.” ¶ Regarding these verses, President Wilford Woodruff taught: “The Gospel is now restored to us Gentiles, for we are all Gentiles in a national capacity,² and it will continue with us if we are faithful, until the law is bound, and the testimony sealed, and the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, when it will again revert to the Jews, whom the Lord will have prepared to receive it.³ They will gather to their own land, taking with them their gold and silver, and will re-build their city and temple, according to the prediction of Moses and the Prophets. When this time arrives, which is nigh, even at our doors, let the Gentile nations who reject the Gospel which is now sent to them, prepare to meet the judgments of an offended God! For when their cup is

² That is, found in the Gentile nations.

³ I cannot contain the tears of gratitude that I feel for these promises on behalf of the Jewish people and of Israel. I have traveled throughout the world and I have seen how the Lord has, since the words of President Wilford Woodruff, begun to gather Israel back. The Church today is not only found in the Gentile nations, but also among the nations of the Lamanites. As a convert, I am a partial fulfillment of many of these promises, being a descendant of both Ephraim (maternal side, including Lamanite blood) and Judah (paternal side).

full even to the brim, the Lord will then remember the chastisement of the Jews, his favored people, and at whose hands they will have received double for their iniquities. Offenses must come, said the Savior, but woe unto them by whom they come. Woe unto the Gentiles, who have administered afflictions to the Jews for these many years! Woe unto them if they now reject this only means of salvation, for the awful calamities spoken of in these books, the Bible and Book of Mormon, will certainly befall them.”⁴ ¶ *That her iniquity is pardoned*: The Targum (ܬ) has, “That she shall be filled with the people of the captivity, because her sins are forgiven.” The LXX (Ϛ) reads, “Her iniquity is pardoned.” The Douay-Rheims (ϑ) has, “Her iniquity is forgiven.” There is a sweetness in these words, *that her iniquity is pardoned*. Rashi, in Rosenberg, has, “has been appeased—Heb. *נִרְצָה*.” Rosenberg, quoting *Rain in Due Season*, explains: “I.e. her punishment has been completed. We find a similar expression in Leviticus 26:43: ‘Then the land shall appease its Sabbaths.’” This is an interesting word, *נִרְצָה*. HALOT defines its root *רָצַה*, as to *expiate* or *atone*. Let us also look at the broader context of this expiation from Leviticus: “If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the LORD” (Leviticus 26:40–45; also see Deuteronomy 30:4–6). ¶ Elder Orson Pratt explained: “In consequence of the wickedness of that people [the inhabitants of Jerusalem], and the great transgressions that they committed in the sight of heaven in rejecting the Lord, their true Messiah, great and severe calamities and judgments came upon them, and have continued upon

⁴ Woodruff, Elder Wilford, *Journal of Discourses* 18:221.

them and their posterity until this age of the world. In other words, all those curses which are pronounced in the Book of Deuteronomy upon the head of Israel have literally been fulfilled during the past eighteen hundred years {see *Rain in Due Season*—GB}.”⁵ ¶ The Book of Mormon also summarizes some of this: “Wherefore, the Jews shall be scattered among all nations; yea, and also Babylon shall be destroyed; wherefore, the Jews shall be scattered by other nations. And after they have been scattered, and the Lord God hath scourged them by other nations for the space of many generations, yea, even down from generation to generation until they shall be persuaded to believe in Christ, the Son of God, and the atonement, which is infinite for all mankind—and when that day shall come that they shall believe in Christ, and worship the Father in his name, with pure hearts and clean hands, and look not forward any more for another Messiah, then, at that time, the day will come that it must needs be expedient that they should believe these things. And the Lord will set his hand again the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore, he will proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men.” (2Nephi 25:15–17). The inhabitants of Jerusalem and the descendants of Israel—wherever they may be—then, will have once again turned their hearts towards their God and their Lord. ¶ *For she hath received of the LORD'S hand double* [כִּפְּלַיִם] for all her sins. The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “For she hath received the cup of consolations from the Lord, as if she had been smitten twice for all her sins.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “For she hath received from the hand of the Lord [blessings] double to the punishment of her sins.” The Peshitta (Ⓟ) explains that Jerusalem has received a double punishment for her sins as a natural consequence for her love for iniquity. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, “She hath received of the hand of the Lord double for all her sins.” ¶ Henderson says: “The language is hyperbolic, and is designed to inspire the strongest consolation.” Kay explains: “*Double for all her sins*] – Compare Jeremiah 16:18; 17:18. It was the ordinary rule under the law that ‘for all manner of trespass’ a man condemned by the judges should ‘pay double,’ Exodus 22:9.” CBNotes additionally give us “Put by figure of speech metonymy (of subject), for that which is complete, thorough, ample. See ISAIAH 61:7; Genesis 43:22; Job 11:6; 42:10; 41:13; and Zechariah 9:12.” Israel was warned in *Rain in Due Season* that she would be repeatedly punished if she did not repent. Also see in Isaiah (ISAIAH 5:25; 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4). Nyman has: “Judah was to be sent through the ‘furnace of affliction’ (see ISAIAH 48:10), so the message given here is to be

⁵ Orson Pratt, 26 March 1871. *Journal of Discourses*, pp. 59–70. “The restoration of the Jews and the rebuilding of Jerusalem.”

fulfilled after she has been through that furnace. A look at history and at present-day circumstances shows her still to be going through that furnace.”

vv. 3–8. Elias prepares the way for the Lord’s coming. Great physical upheavals will take place before the Second Coming. When the glory of Christ is revealed at His coming, all people shall see it together. Mortal man is compared to grass and flowers, which wither easily. The Word of our God, in contrast, shall stand forever. ¶ After quoting the first five verses in ISAIAH 40, Elder Parley P. Pratt said: “From these verses we learn, first, that the voice of one shall be heard in the wilderness, to prepare the way of the Lord, just at the time when Jerusalem has been trodden down of the Gentiles long enough to have received, at the Lord’s hands, double for all her sins, yea, when the warfare of Jerusalem is accomplished, and her iniquities pardoned. Then shall this proclamation be made as it was before by John, yea a second proclamation, to prepare the way of the Lord, for his second coming; and about that time every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and rough places plain, and then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”⁶

3 ¶ The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Ibn Ezra says: “These words are addressed to all nations.” The voice that cries in the wilderness is also one that invites all to come unto Christ—“whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38) for “Behold, that which you hear is as the voice of one crying in the wilderness—in the wilderness, because you cannot see him—my voice, because my voice is Spirit; my Spirit is truth; truth abideth and hath no end; and if it be in you it shall abound” (D&C 88:66). These verses continue to clarify that if we are faithful, we shall see God: “And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things. Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come

⁶ Pratt, Parley P. *A Voice of Warning and Instruction to All People Or, an Introduction to the Faith and Doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. New Edition. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1957. Included is the preface to the First American Edition (1837) and the Second European Edition (December 4, 1846), pp. 118–119.

that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will” (D&C 88:67–68). ¶ This verse lays out the first hint regarding the coming verses which all of Christendom loves but often does not understand, which culminates in verse eight. We hear a voice crying in the wilderness; it is the voice of John the Baptist. He was sent as an Elias to prepare the way of the Lord in the meridian of time. And then in the latter-day, through the restoration of the Priesthood, he helped lay out the way for the Second Coming. What is John the Baptist proclaiming? That the time has come! That the Savior is about to make His presence known! The light would shine in darkness yet the darkness would not comprehend it (John 1:5). In contrast, in the latter-day, the whole world would see the glory of the Lord and comprehend it together. ¶ The Targum (**Ⓣ**) has, “A voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way before the people of the Lord; cast ye up a highway in the plain before the congregation of our God.” The LXX (**Ⓛ**) reads, for the last clause, “Make straight the roads for our God.” The Douay-Rheims (**ⓓ**) has, “The voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God.” ¶ This verse is frequently and correctly quoted as an allusion to the Lord’s first coming. In the meridian of time John the Baptist was asked: “Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.” (John 1:22b–23). ¶ Keith explains that these verses have a strong application to the Second Advent: “While, therefore, the Baptist is to be regarded as the voice, what he did cry is not to be limited to the coming of Christ in his days.” On 15 May 1829, John the Baptist also played a vital role in the Restoration by conferring the Aaronic Priesthood upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.⁷ John the Baptist acted through the *spirit of Elias*,⁸ preparing the way for the conferring of the Melchizedek Priesthood and all things that had to be restored before the Second Coming. In Doctrine and Covenants we read: “HEARKEN, and lo, a voice as of one sent down from on high, who is mighty and powerful, whose going forth is unto the ends of the earth, yea, whose voice is unto men—Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth. Yea, a voice crying—Prepare ye

⁷ JS—History 1:72.

⁸ *TPJS*, pp. 335–336.

the way of the Lord, prepare ye the supper of the Lamb, make ready for the Bridegroom” (D&C 65:1–3).

4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: ✓ ✓

✓ or, a straight place

✓ ✓ or, a plain place

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: The LXX (**Ⓛ**) reads, “Let every valley be filled up, and every mountain and hill be leveled.” The Peshitta (**Ⓟ**) has “Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low.” In 3 Nephi 8 ff. we read of the great geological upheavals at the time of the death of our Saviour. At the time of the Second Coming, the scene will likewise be one of great cataclysms. Beside the physical changes, the low and humble followers of Christ shall be exalted while the prideful made low. ¶ *And the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:* The LXX (**Ⓛ**) reads, “And let all the crooked be made a straight road, and the rough way, smooth plains.” The Peshitta (**Ⓟ**) has, “And the steep place shall become straight, and the rough places smooth.” Henderson has: “That עָקָב is not to be taken in the acceptance of *hill* or *acclivity*, but in that of *crooked*, is evident, both from the primary meaning of מִישׁוֹר,⁹ its opposite.” Speaking of the Second Advent, President Joseph Fielding Smith felt that this scripture along with ISAIAH 54:10 and others support the fact that “The land of Zion and the land of Jerusalem shall be turned back into their own place and the sea be driven back to the north, and the earth be as it was before it was divided.”¹⁰

5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see [it] together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken [it].

The *hints* about the meaning of ISAIAH 40:8 continue to mount. ¶ *And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed.* The LXX (**Ⓛ**) reads, “And the glory of the Lord will appear.” The glory of the Lord will be revealed in many ways, including the restoration of His Church. When the Savior comes for the second time, in that day will His glory be made fully manifest. “They shall not hurt

⁹ Straight (KJV).

¹⁰ Smith, Joseph Fielding. *Church History and Modern Revelation*. Salt Lake City, Utah: The Council of The Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1946.

nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (cf. Habakkuk 2:14). Wade says that the Glory of the Lord is “the visible splendour that indicated the Divine Presence.” ¶ *And all flesh shall see [it] together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken [it].* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And all the sons of flesh shall see together, that by the Word of the Lord it has been decreed thus.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. For the Lord hath spoken.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, for the second half, “That the mouth of the Lord hath spoken.”

¶ Henderson says regarding *all the flesh*: “בְּשָׂרַ, *flesh*, is used metonymically of all animated beings, but especially of man; hence כָּל-הַבְּשָׂר, or כָּל-בְּשָׂר, means *all mankind*.” As we turn to Luke 3, the JST has, “As it is written in the book of the prophet Esaias; and these are the words, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight. For behold, and lo, he shall come, as it is written in the book of the prophets, to take away the sins of the world, and to bring salvation unto the heathen nations, to gather together those who are lost, who are of the sheepfold of Israel; Yea, even the dispersed and afflicted; and also to prepare the way, and make possible the preaching of the gospel unto the Gentiles; And to be a light unto all who sit in darkness, unto the uttermost parts of the earth; to bring to pass the resurrection from the dead, and to ascend up on high, to dwell on the right hand of the Father, Until the fulness of time, and the law and the testimony shall be sealed, and the keys of the kingdom shall be delivered up again unto the Father; To administer justice unto all; to come down in judgment upon all, and to convince all the ungodly of their ungodly deeds, which they have committed; and all this in the day that he shall come; For it is a day of power; yea, every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God” (JST Luke 3:4–11). Elder McConkie¹¹ points us to: “For as the light of the morning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, and covereth the whole earth, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be” (JS–Matthew 1:26).

6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh [is] grass, and all the goodness thereof [is] as the flower of the field:

¹¹ McConkie, Bruce R. Bruce R. McConkie. *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man*, pp. 418–419.

Alexander writes: “That two distinct speakers are here introduced, seems to be granted by [almost] all interpreters . . . There is a pleasing mystery, as Hitzig well observes, in the dialogue of these anonymous voices, which is dispelled by undertaking to determine too precisely who the speakers are. All that the words necessarily convey is, that one voice speaks and another voice answers. Interpreters are universally agreed that the last clause contains the words which the second speaker is required to utter [i.e., proclaim].” ¶ A voice is heard, “Cry!” This is a command to speak out or proclaim a message that comes from God Himself. A second voice—received by a disciple of Christ— inquires, “What shall I cry?” While we are not sure which prophet is receiving this message—Isaiah or John the Baptist or Joseph Smith—at the end, the command has been delegated to each disciple of Christ to proclaim the divinity of our Savior and the restoration of His Church. We are to proclaim these truths fearlessly and humbly. ¶ *The voice said, Cry.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “The voice of one crying, Prophecy!” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “A voice of one saying, Proclaim.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “The voice of one, saying: Cry.” That is, to proclaim. ¶ *And he said, What shall I cry?* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “He answered and said, What shall I prophesy?” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Wherefore I said, What shall I proclaim?” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “And I said: What shall I cry?” ¶ *All flesh [is] grass, and all the goodness thereof [is] as the flower of the field:* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “All the wicked *are* as grass, and all their strength as chaff of the field.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “All flesh is grass; and all the glory of man as a flower of grass.” Instead of *goodness*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *beauty*. The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field.” Cheyne, leaning on Weir, shows us a similar expression, found in ISAIAH 2:22b: “man, whose breath is in his nostrils.” Ibn Ezra quoted from Psalms: “*As the flower of the field, ‘which flourisheth in the morning and groweth up, but is cut down and withereth in the evening’ (Psalm 90:6).*” Rashi, in Rosenberg, has: “All those who are haughty—their greatness shall be turned over and become like grass.” Speaking of the haughtiness of some of the leaders of the United States at the time of Joseph Smith we have (D&C 124:3–10): “. . . for they are as grass, and all their glory as the flower thereof which soon falleth” (D&C 124:7b). ¶ Elder Neal A. Maxwell warns: “. . . we might myopically conclude that ‘all flesh is grass’ (ISAIAH 40:6) . . . Isaiah’s words, however, pertain not to man’s worthlessness but to the transitoriness of this second estate.”¹²

¹² Maxwell, Neal A. *But for a Small Moment*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1986. p. 88.

**7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth:
because the spirit of the LORD bloweth
upon it: surely the people [is] grass.**

Mankind is represented by a fading flower and withering grass. Mankind is upon the earth for an instant. The breath of the Lord—represented poetically as the dry, hot sirocco winds of the Middle East—is sufficient to cause these to wilt. The key to understanding ISAIAH 40:8 is to contrast it to ISAIAH 40:7. We must focus on the fact that flowers and grass represent man, who often in his pride thinks he has dominion of all things in heaven and upon the earth. Yet we read in Doctrine and Covenants: “As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints” (D&C 121:33b). ¶ *The grass withereth, the flower fadeth:* In the LXX (Ⓞ), ISAIAH 40:7 has fallen off and has been lost. *Because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it:* Instead of *spirit*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *breath*. This at once leads us to think of the hot, dry and devastating sirocco winds.¹³ That God has control of all of the elements is clear to me. In 1988, when Chile was experiencing a strong drought, I had prayed to the Father in the name of Christ for rain, only to be told not to pray for rain—but to know when to pray for rain—as this was the Lord’s doing. The grass and the flowers are left in wilted condition by the *spirit* of the *Lord*, or *wind* of the *Lord*, רִיחַ יְהוָה. ¶ *Surely the people [is] grass.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Surely the wicked among a people are considered like grass.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) also makes the comparison, “this people is like *grass* (Lamsa) / *herb* (BPE). The meaning of the text is that *the people* may be compared to *grass*.

**8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth:
but the word of our God shall stand for
ever.**

For the longest time I loved this scripture without knowing why. I ask that you read and ponder it carefully before reading the comments below. The flower and the grass are chosen to represent a short lifespan, and represent the *life of man*. But the *word* of our God, וְדְבַר אֱלֹהֵינוּ, shall stand for ever. So what does the Word stand for? I believe this clause has at least two beautiful meanings: (1) what the Lord has

spoken will come to pass, “my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38b). (2) Is not the expression *word* used in a special way in another scripture? “In the beginning was the Word (λογος), and the Word (λογος) was with God, and the Word (λογος) was God” (John 1:1). *Who*, then, is the Word of our God? The Word is the very Messiah, the Son of God the Eternal Father, even Christ Jesus who shall stand forever. I know this to be true with the deepest sentiment of my being. I bear the most solemn witness of this, that the Word represents Christ, the Holy One of Israel. This was revealed to me by the Holy Spirit years ago as I pondered over this scripture. It is through Messiah that we can obtain comfort (ISAIAH 40:1). In Spanish, the expression word is translated as verb, and Christ is called *el Verbo Divino*, or the Divine Verb. ¶ The Hebrew text (BHS) uses the expression “*but-word-our Elohim*,” (וְדְבַר אֱלֹהֵינוּ) in contrast to the *word of the LORD* (דְבַר יְהוָה) “*word-Yahweh*” (e.g. Genesis 15:3; ISAIAH 1:10). 1 Peter 1:24–25 needs to be considered with this understanding and the following capitalization: “For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (*see also*, AMP version in 1 Peter 1:25 and LITV in ISAIAH 40:8). ¶ Alexander suggests: “The quotation in Peter confirms the supposition, here suggested by the context, that the words have reference to the preaching of the gospel, or the introduction of the new dispensation.” No doubt Alexander is correct, but the greater meaning is the announcement of the Word Himself, it is He who would *stand forever*. Alexander continues: “[Peter] adds, *and this is the word which is preached* (εὐαγγελισθέν) *unto you*.” Once again, yes, but the more perfect Word is Christ Himself, “*This is the Word which is preached unto you*.” Gill well says, in referring us to Paul’s words and interpreting these to equate the Word with Christ: “*and this is the word, which by the Gospel is preached unto you*” – who seems to distinguish the word from the Gospel, by which it is preached, and to intend Christ the essential Word; who stands or abides for ever as a divine Person; in his office as Mediator, being Prophet, Priest, and King forever.” Rawlinson, in ISAIAH 40:6 well has: “The speakers ... contrast the perishable nature of man with the enduringness and unchangingness of God. The point of their discourse is that ‘the Word of the Lord endureth for ever,’ and therefore the preceding promises (ISAIAH 40:2, 5) are sure.” And then adds here in ISAIAH 40:8: “Amid all human frailty, shiftingness, changefulness, there is one thing that endures, and shall endure—God’s Word.” Luther, Calvin, Kay, Ironside and others also

¹³ I note that J. D. Michaelis (in Alexander) came to the same conclusion, calling it the “east wind.”

capitalize “The Word of our God,” but invariably mean the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Keith says, regarding these verses: “One voice should be represented as announcing the approach to earth of the King of righteousness.” Simeon says: “The ‘word of God’ here spoken of, may be understood as relating to *Christ*, who is often called by this name, and whose immutability is mentioned by the Psalmist in this very view (Psalm 102:11–12, 26–27). These verses provide additional proof: “My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass. But thou, O LORD, shall endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations ... They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.” Wordsworth, almost alone among the Gentile authors, boldly testifies: “... therefore the Word which ‘endureth for ever was made flesh’ (John 1:14) by the operation of the Spirit, and God was ‘manifested in the flesh.’ The Word, which is here contrasted with the Voice, is (in the highest sense) the Eternal Word, Who became Incarnate for us, and Whose Advent was heralded by ‘the Voice of one crying in the wilderness,’ and Who animates the written Word, and speaks in it.” ¶ The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “The wicked dieth, and his thoughts perish; but the word¹⁴ of our God¹⁵ shall stand forever.” The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, “The grass is withered and the flower fallen; but the word of our God will endure forever.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓝ) has, “The grass is withered, and the flower is fallen: but the word of our Lord endureth for ever.” One last thought, here. The expression “**but-word-our Elohim**,” **וְדַבַּר-אֱלֹהִינוּ** is a clear instance where God the Eternal Father is mentioned in relationship to His beloved Son. Word and Elohim are title-names. Isaiah knew that the Scriptures would be corrupted by the hands of men, and left, along with the other prophets of God, hidden testimonies in verses like this. Yes, indeed, the Son of our Heavenly Father will stand forever! Even Christ Jesus!¹⁶

vv. 9–11. Zion can now proudly proclaim, “Behold your God!” as she boldly invites all to come unto Christ and into the Holy Temple. In the Second Coming the Lord God will come in strength and glory. And He shall tenderly care for his flock.

¹⁴ Here not Meimra, but *fitnama*, ‘word’ in Aramaic, **וּפְתָרְמָא**.

¹⁵ Elohim, or *Elahana*, **אֱלֹהָנָא**.

¹⁶ It was after I was so inspired to understand ISAIAH 40:8 that I looked at the footnotes of the LDS 1984 Holy Bible and found: “TG: Jesus Christ: Messenger of the Covenant.” It was probably Elder Bruce R. McConkie who put that note there. I was thrilled to have a second confirmation of the inspiration I had felt.

9 ¶ O Zion, that bringest good tidings, ✓
 get thee up into the high mountain; O
 Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, ✓
 lift up thy voice with strength; lift [it] up, be
 not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah,
 Behold your God!

✓ or, O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion

✓ ✓ or, O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem

Many a person has missed that the Word is given as a synonym to Christ in ISAIAH 40:8. But note that ISAIAH 40:4–7 build to this glorious testimony, and note what Henderson has to say about ISAIAH 40:3 as well as ISAIAH 40:9: “The purport of the message is the appearance of God in the person of Messiah, which had been predicted ISAIAH 40:3, and is here repeated for the sake of amplification in the following verses. The prophet employs the Divine names **יְהוָה**, **אֲדֹנָי**, and **אֱלֹהִים** specifically with this reference.” That is, **LORD**, **Lord**, and **God** (ISAIAH 40:9–10). And of course, not just in ISAIAH 40:9–10, but also in ISAIAH 40:8 where Christ is revealed as the Word. Henderson continues: “These verses exhibit certain attributes of the character and work of Christ; such as power, tenderness, and love.” It was not only predicted in ISAIAH 40:3, but with a glorious crescendo amplified from the promise, to the allusion, to the exquisite conclusion: *Behold your God!* ¶ The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Upon a high mountain get up, ye prophets, that bring good tidings unto Zion; lift ye up your voice with strength that bring good tidings to Jerusalem; lift *it* up, be not afraid, say to the cities of the house of Judah, The kingdom of your God is revealed.” The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, “Ascend a lofty mountain, thou who proclaimest good news to Sion: exalt thy voice with strength, thou who bringest glad tidings to Jerusalem: raise it up; be not afraid; say to the cities of Juda, Behold, your God!” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓝ) has, “Get thee up upon a high mountain, thou that bringest good tidings to Sion: lift up thy voice with strength, thou that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem: lift it up, fear not. Say to the cities of Juda: Behold your God.” ¶ Alexander says: “This construction is further recommended by the beautiful personification which it introduces of the Holy City as the seat of the true religion and the centre of the church. The office here ascribed to it is the same that is recognised in ISAIAH 2:3: *the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*. Not only in the restoration from captivity, or in the personal advent of the Saviour, but in every instance of the Lord’s return to his forsaken people, it is the duty of the church to communicate as well as to receive the joyful tidings ... The exhortation,

fear not, does not imply that there was danger in making the announcement, but that there might be doubt and hesitation as to its fulfilment.” ¶ President Lorenzo R. Snow explained, “The city of Zion will be built in Jackson County. The site for the city of Zion was pointed out by the Prophet Joseph Smith as Jackson County, Missouri, and there some of our people settled in 1831, but were subsequently driven from their homes. This event, while it delayed the building of the city, did not change the place of its location. The Latter-day Saints fully expect to return to Jackson County and ‘build up Zion.’ Their exodus to the Rocky Mountains and their sojourn in the stakes of Zion, as the places are called which they now inhabit, they regard as preparatory to that return, and as events that had to be in order to fulfill scripture, notably these words of Isaiah: ‘O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain’ [ISAIAH 40:9]. (2 January 1902, MS, 64:2.)”¹⁷ Elder Orson Pratt taught: “We find, in the 40th chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah, that the people of Zion are to be raised up preparatory to the second advent of the Son of God. Isaiah uses an exclamation something like this— ‘O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain.’ It seems by this, that the people called Zion, wherever they might be, were to be removed from the regions they originally inhabited, and were to be located in a high mountain, or in a very elevated region. If you wish to know the time which this prophetic exhortation to the people of Zion had reference to, read the whole of the 40th chapter of Isaiah, and you will find that, at that period, the glory of God is to be revealed and all flesh is to see it together, evidently referring to the great day when the Son of God shall come in his glory, when every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him, and all people, nations and tongues under heaven, who are spared unto that day, shall behold him descend in power and majesty to this earth ... Prior to the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord predicted through him that this people should be gathered out from all the nations under heaven, and should be established in the mountains, or elevated regions of this continent...”¹⁸ Finally, for a discussion of the expression *your God*, אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, see my notes under ISAIAH 37:4.

10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong ✓ [hand], and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward [is] with him, and his work ✓ ✓ before him.

¹⁷ Lorenzo Snow. Edited by Clyde J. Williams. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1984.

¹⁸ Elder Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*. “The rise of Zion in the last days,” 15 June 1873, pp. 79–80.

- ✓ or, against the strong
- ✓ ✓ or, recompence for his work

Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong [hand], and his arm shall rule for him: The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Behold, the Lord God shall be revealed, and the strength of the arm of His might shall rule before him.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Behold the Lord! The Lord is coming with majesty; and his arm with dominion.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has something like, “Behold, Yahweh God comes with might, and his arm with strength.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) renders it without the ellipsis, “Behold the Lord God shall come with strength, and his arm shall rule.” Note the exhortation of the double *behold!* (הִנֵּה, הִנֵּה). The word *hand*, as indicated by Ibn Ezra, is elliptical, and not included in the original: “הַיָּד ‘hand’ is to be supplied.” Govett explains that while ISAIAH 40:11 may well have a focus on the meridian of times, that ISAIAH 40:10 is centered on the Second Coming: “Words which, as Eusebius perceived, must be spoken of his second appearing. Then shall also his gracious character of a shepard be manifested in its full blessedness to his risen saints, and the inhabitants of the world living under his rule.” ¶ *Behold, his reward [is] with him, and his work before him.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Behold, the reward of those who perform His word is with Him, because their works are manifest to Him.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Behold his reward is with him; and his work, before him.” A number of exegetes suggest that the reward spoken of here belongs to the Lord himself. Along with the Jewish Rabbis Ibn Ezra, Kimhi and Kara (see Slotki/Rosenberg) I believe the reward is intended for the righteous. The greatest reward is exaltation and eternal life such that God will walk among His people to be their God.

11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry [them] in his bosom, [and] shall gently lead those that are with young. ✓

- ✓ or, that give suck

The Targum (Ⓣ) has for the third clause, “He shall carry the tender ones in His bosom,” and also prefers the margin ||, “that give suck,” in the last clause. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Like a shepherd he will tend his flock; and with his arm he will gather the lambs, and comfort the ewes that are with young.” For the last clause, *shall gently lead &c.* the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *sustains the new borns* (BPE) / *shall feed again those who give suck* (Lamsa). The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather together the lambs with his arm, and shall take them up in his bosom, and

he himself shall carry them that are with young.”

¶ Linda & I had the great blessing of seeing shepherds gently leading—rather than pushing from behind—their small flocks in Jordan in our 2012 Israel-Jordan trip. Lowth says: “A beautiful image, expressing, with the utmost propriety as well as elegance, the tender attention of the shepherd to his flock. That the greatest care in driving the cattle in regard to the dams and their young was necessary, appears clearly from Jacob’s apology to his brother Esau, ‘The flocks and the herds giving suck to their young are with me; and if they should be over-driven, all the flock will die’ (Genesis 33:13).” Henderson says: “The figures here borrowed from pastoral life are exquisitely beautiful; expressing, with the utmost elegance of language, the infinite care and tenderness of ‘the good Shepherd.’ He not only exercises a sovereign and uncontrollable power for the defence of his sheep (John 10:28), but attends to the weak and feeble, tenderly carries the young in his bosom, and gently guides such as give suck, that they may not be overdriven.” Alexander says: “The word correctly rendered *feed* denotes the whole care of a shepherd for his flock, and has therefore no exact equivalent in English.” A number of translators use the word *tend*: “He will tend his flock like a shepherd” (ESV, also see NASB, ABP {LXX (Ⓞ)}) and in Spanish, *apacentará* (RV, LBLA, NBLH, RVG, SRV, SSE). מְרִיבֵי means to shepherd, shelter, protect, guard, tend (HAL, Gesenius). ¶ Elder Delbert L. Stapley has: “The testimony that Jesus is the Good Shepherd was a figure of speech familiar to those accustomed to the pastoral conditions of Palestine. Jesus knew His hearers were acquainted with the prophecy that a shepherd had been promised the children of Israel. David, the shepherd boy who became king, wrote the beautiful Twenty-third Psalm that begins: ‘The Lord is my shepherd.’ ISAIAH prophesied that when God would come down, ‘He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm’ (ISAIAH 40:11). There was no mistaking what Jesus meant. He was their Lord—the promised Messiah!”¹⁹ Govett said of the Messiah’s first advent: “John the Baptist spoke of Christ in his first character of meekness as ‘the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world,’ answering to the well known description of the Saviour given in the 11th verse, as ‘feeding his flock like a shepherd.’ This the Lord applied to himself in his beautiful parable of the shepherd and his flock.” ¶ Everyone who accepts the invitation to *come unto Christ* will feel of His love. Elder Groberg shared how he was feeling an overflow of the Spirit and so much joy until suddenly he was accosted by feelings of inadequacy and despair. After

¹⁹ Elder Delbert L. Stapley, Of the Council of the Twelve, What Constitutes the True Church, A:22, 1977.

reading the words in 2 Nephi 4:17 something happened: “As I slowly read and pondered those verses the former feelings of warmth and love began to return. Finally, as light chases away darkness, these good feelings pushed the painful feelings out and I was once more filled with light and joy. What contrast! What gratitude! For a long time I basked in the warmth of eternal love and forgiveness and felt the approbation of a caring Savior. When we see more clearly everything He has done for us we will realize that what we feel and understand now is but the tiniest part of all He has actually done for us. Our whole desire will be to sing praises to His name forever. How good and forgiving and loving God is! The words of Isaiah sang in my heart: ‘He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young’ (ISAIAH 40:11). I could literally feel the Savior’s mercy cover my weaknesses in a blanket of forgiveness and love. I could do nothing but quietly weep and pray and express gratitude. I felt as though I was not in my body but somewhere else floating in a sea of ecstasy and peace and love, and moving through space and seeing and understanding things in a way I had not previously seen or understood them ... It came to me with brilliant clarity that I shouldn’t worry about the challenges ahead, for if we did our best, someday the Lord would see that things worked out.”²⁰

vv. 12–17. These verses seem to contrast God’s infinite understanding, knowledge and power with that of finite man. Three important *who* (מִי) questions are considered.

12 ¶ Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure,[✓] and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

✓ a tierce

The first question asked is *who formed the earth*. ¶ *Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span*. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “He who hath promised these things, shall confirm them; He hath spoken it, and He will do it; He in whose sight all the waters of the world are accounted as a drop in the hollow of the hand, and the expansion of the heavens as if they had been prepared with the span (‘the little finger’).” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Who hath

²⁰ Groberg, John H. *The Fire of Faith*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1996, pp. 303–304.

measured the water with his hand, and the heaven with a span and the whole earth with a hand breadth?” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and weighed the heavens with his palm?” Skinner (and many others) explains מִכְּנֵהוּ, *a measure*, as in the margin ||, “‘a third part,’ a tierce . . . a small measure, probably a third of an ephah.” Ibn Ezra has: “There are some that ask, How is it possible that such a thing shall happen? The answer is that the same Supreme Being will cause it to pass, who has created the whole universe, who knows the quantity of the water in the sea, as if He had measured it with His hand. בשעלו *In the hollow of His hand*, Comp. בשעלו ‘for handfuls’ (Ezekiel 13:19). *And meted out heaven with the span*. He knows the measure of heaven, which He has stretched out like a curtain; He has created it with His omnipotence, according to His wisdom, as if He had measured it with the span. The words of the text are an anthropomorphism.” This verse is a description of the role of Christ in the formation of this earth. Elder Heber C. Kimball explains that as he molds some clay—from materials that already existed—so likewise, our Savior, from materials that already existed, formed this earth.²¹ And we could add, worlds without number. Many of the Church leaders use the expression “in the hollow of His hand” as an expression of hope, that the Lord will safely preserve them. ¶ *And comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?* The Targum (T) has, “And the dust of the earth as if in a measure, and the mountains as if weighed in scales, and the hills in a balance.” The LXX (G) reads, “Who hath weighed the mountains in scales and the dales with a balance?” Instead of *comprehended*, the Peshitta (S) has *measured*. The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Who hath poised with three fingers the bulk of the earth, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?” Skinner suggests: “*scales and balance*” – might be better transposed; the first word (פֶּלֶס)

denotes the horizontal beam, the second (מֵאֲזֵנִים) the pair of scales.” ¶ President Brigham Young used some of the language in this verse to speak of the world’s reaction to the gospel truth: “[The world] will not be governed by the Spirit of God. We may correctly say that there is no difficulty in convincing people of the truth of the work in which we are engaged. We send our Elders into the world, in the midst of all the religion and philosophy of the day, and ‘Mormonism’ takes them up and weighs them ‘in the balances,’ as the Prophet says of the Lord’s measuring the seas in the hollow of his hand, and taking up the mountains as a very little thing. A person who understands the truth of the principles

and doctrines we preach and believe in can handle the religions and philosophy of the day as a small matter; consequently, it is not difficult to convince the world. There is but very little difficulty in convincing every person who will hearken to reason. You can convince them; but what is the difficulty. . . [t]he majority of the human family do not love the truth, and many forsake it after they have embraced it.”

13 Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or [being] his counsellor^v hath taught him?

✓ man of his counsel

The second question asks *who could possibly be capable of instructing the Lord or giving Him advice.*

¶ The Targum (T) has, “Who hath directed the Holy Spirit in the mouth of all the prophets? Is it not the Lord? He maketh known the words of His will to the righteous, the servants of His Word.” The LXX (G) reads, “Who hath known the mind of the Lord? and who hath been of his counsel to teach him?” For the last clause, the Peshitta (S) ask who has been His counselor. The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Who hath forwarded the spirit of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor, and hath taught him?” In ISAIAH 55:8–9 the Lord makes it clear that His thinking is higher than man’s.

14 With whom took he counsel, and [who] instructed him,^v and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?^{v v}

✓ made him understand

✓ ✓ understandings?

The third question, like the second, asks *who is capable of counseling, instructing or imparting knowledge to the Lord.* ¶ The Targum (T) has, “I will make known wisdom to them who pray for it from Him (according to the Royal Polyglot קִדְּוִי, ‘from me’), and I will teach them the way of justice; yea, He will give the law to their sons, and He will make known to their sons’ sons the path of understanding.” The LXX (G) reads, “Or whom hath he consulted that he might instruct him? or who hath pointed out judgment him? or who hath shewn him the way of knowledge?” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “With whom hath he consulted, and who hath instructed him, and taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and shewed him the way of understanding?”

²¹ Heber C. Kimball, JD 2:161a.

15 Behold, the nations [are] as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

We now receive the answer to these questions: the nations are but a speck of dust in a balance in contrast to the Lord. ¶ *Behold, the nations [are] as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance:* The LXX (Ⓢ) reads, “If all the nations are as a drop from a cask; and are accounted as the turning of a balance.” Instead of *small dust*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *dipping* (Lamsa). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓢ) has, “Behold the Gentiles are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the smallest grain of a balance.” Ibn Ezra suggests: “כִּמְד מִדְּלִי As a drop of a bucket, as a drop that falls from the bucket.” Birks says: “There is a progress and climax in the figures. To Him who measures the ocean in the hollow of His hand, nations are less than a handful, even as a single drop spilt from a vessel.” ¶ *Behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Behold, the isles are as fine dust that flieth away.” The LXX (Ⓢ) reads, “May be reckoned as spittle.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has the isles being cast away as fine dust. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓢ) has, “Behold the islands are as a little dust.” Birks says: “He who weighs the hills in a balance, counts the people as the small dust of the balance of which the weight is insensible, and cannot even turn the scale.”

16 And Lebanon [is] not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

All of Lebanon is too small and insufficient for a burnt offering to be offered to the Lord. ¶ The Targum (Ⓢ) inserts the *trees* of Lebanon. The LXX (Ⓢ) reads, “If Lebanon is not sufficient for a fire, nor all the beasts sufficient for an homage offering.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓢ) has *not be enough* instead of *not sufficient*. ¶ Ibn Ezra says: “God does not want burnt offerings; Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, if He wanted offerings. Lebanon is mentioned by the prophet simply as an example which his hearers can understand; in reality, however, he refers to all the woods of the earth. The same remark applies to the words “and the beasts thereof.” Birks explains: “If Lebanon were the altar, its pine-forests and cedar-groves the pile, and its countless beasts the sacrifice, all would be far unworthy of His greatness . . . [and thus this message] prepares the way for [the] central truth [of these prophecies], the true

Sacrifice and great Sin-offering of the Son of God (ISAIAH 53:5–11).”

17 All nations before him [are] as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

Indeed, *all the nations* (כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם) are nothing, less than nothing, but rather, pure vanity, when compared to the Lord. ¶ The Targum (Ⓢ) has for the second clause, “their works are accounted before Him as naught.” The LXX (Ⓢ) reads, “And all the nations are as nothing and reckoned as nothing.” The last clause in the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has “And they are counted to him for destruction and for the sword.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓢ) has, “All nations are before him as if they had no being at all, and are counted to him as nothing, and vanity.” The full expression is quite interesting, מְאִפְסֵי תְהוֹ, translated in the AV as *less than nothing, and vanity*, meaning in a more literal way, “less than nothing and emptiness” (ESV, YLT), “nothing and chaos” (ISV). The first of these expressions (אִפְסֵי) means *nothing* and in Modern Hebrew it also used to express the number *zero*. The second expression (תְהוֹ) we have seen in Genesis to describe the disorganized nature of the materials before the Lord began to form the earth as “And the earth was *without form*, and void” (Genesis 1:2a). Skinner says, “The Hebrew is תְהוֹ, a word which means primarily ‘a waste,’ and is applied in Genesis 1:2 to the primeval chaos . . . Here and in many other cases it is a synonym for nonentity.”

vv. 18–26. God is incomparable, yet will man compare Him to idols? Or make Him equal to man? It is God who created the heavens and the earth and is incomparable. As Skinner says, “This is the first of several sarcastic passages in which the processes of an idol factory are minutely described.”

18 ¶ To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “And whom do you think able to contend with God? and what is the likeness that ye can compare with Him?” The LXX (Ⓢ) reads, “To whom have you likened the Lord? and to what likeness have you compared him?” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓢ) has, for the second clause, “Or what image will you make for him?” In the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓢ) we have “to whom *will ye liken me*, God,” תִּדְמִינִי, while the Masoretic text (Ⓢ) has “to whom *will ye liken* God,” תִּדְמִינֵי. Also, the

DSS 1QIsa^a (Q) has “*will ye compare unto me,*” תַּעֲרוֹכִי לִי, while the Masoretic text (M) has “*will ye compare unto him,*” תַּעֲרוֹכֵי לוֹ.

19 The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

The workman melteth a graven image. The LXX (G) reads, “Hath a carpenter when he hath made an image.” The BPE (S) follows the Masoretic text (M) here while Lamsa makes this a question, “Is he an image which the carpenter has &c.” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “Hath the workman cast a graven statue?” The DSS 1QIsa^a (Q) adds *and he maketh* (וַיַּעֲשֶׂה) to the process of pouring out a graven image. Henderson says of this verse and the next: “If the entire creation is nothing in comparison of God, how absurd to invest a piece of metal, or a block of wood, with the attributes of divinity; or even merely to regard such as an image of him! In the former of these verses is described the costly idol of the rich; in the latter, that of the poor, צַרְרָה²² is repeated in order to add to the force of the irony; and רָקַע²³ is understood, only in the acceptance of *beating*, to express the making of chains. In many of the Egyptian idols holes are found, through which chains passed for the purpose of suspending them on the wall.”²⁴ ¶ *And the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold.* The LXX (G) reads, “Or the goldsmith when he hath melted gold and gilded it.” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “Or hath the goldsmith formed it with gold.” ¶ *And casteth silver chains.* The Targum (C) has, “And with silver chains the silversmith fasteneth it.” The LXX (G) reads, “Prepared this as a likeness of him?” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “Or the silversmith with plates of silver?”

20 He that [is] so impoverished[✓] that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree [that] will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, [that] shall not be moved.

✓ is poor of oblation

He that [is] so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree [that] will not rot. The Targum (C) has, “He cuts a wild ash (the Royal Polyglot reads

²² Goldsmith or silversmith.

²³ Strike or beat.

²⁴ And, shall we also add, as idolatrous pendants carried on the chest.

בַּדְּאֵעָא דְלֵא אָהָר, ‘wood on which rottenness will not lay hold on’) of the forest, which rottenness will seize.” The LXX (G) reads, “For the carpenter chuseth a sound piece of timber and will inquire wisely.” The Peshitta (S) also has fine good wood that is selected for the project. The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “He hath chosen strong wood, and that will not rot.” ¶ Alexander, leaning on some comments by Gesenius, partly has: “To say that the poor man uses wood instead of gold and silver, is coherent and appropriate, but far less significant and striking than to say, that the man who has already reduced himself to want by lavish gifts to his idol, still continues his devotions, and as he no longer can afford an image of the precious metals is resolved at least to have a durable wooden one. Thus understood, the verse adds to the general description a particular trait highly expressive of the folly of idolaters.” The idolaters are careful to choose the very best wood that will not rot, but will endure (Rashi, in Rosenberg, and others as well). ¶ *He seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, [that] shall not be moved.* The LXX (G) reads, “How he may place his image that it may not be moved.” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “The skilful workman seeketh how he may set up an idol that may not be moved.” Regarding *cunning* חָכָם, Alexander has: “*Wise* is here used in what appears to be its primary meaning of artistically skilful.” Skinner prefers, for *shall not be moved*, “that will not totter²⁵ (1 Samuel 5:3–4; cf. Wisdom of Solomon 13:15 f.)”

21 Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

The Targum (C) has, beginning with the third clause, “Hath not the work in the creation been declared unto you in its order from the beginning? Have ye not understood that ye ought to fear Him, who hath created the foundations of the earth?” The LXX (G) reads, “Will you not know? will you not hear? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have you not known the foundations of the earth?” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “Do you not know? hath it not been heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have you not understood the foundations of the earth?” ¶ Alexander, leaning on the LXX (G) suggests: “But the most satisfactory, because the safest and most regular construction, is the strict one given in the Septuagint

²⁵ See also HALOT for this word, מוֹט, with root מוּט, “2. to be made to totter” מוֹטֵל ISAIAH 40:20.”

(οὐ γνώσεσθε; οὐκ ἀκούσεσθε;), revived by Lowth (*will you not know? will you not hear?*), and approved by Ewald (*o wollt ihr nicht erkennen? o wollt ihr nicht hören?*). The clause is then not a mere expression of surprise at their not knowing, but of concern or indignation at their being unwilling to know.”

Regarding *from the beginning* בְּרֵאשִׁית, Alexander suggests: “בְּרֵאשִׁית is not a mere indefinite expression meaning *long ago, of old, or the like*, but must refer to some specific *terminus a quo* . . . the reference of the words [is] to the beginning of the human race, or of the world itself, which is, moreover, favoured by the subsequent appeal to the creation.” These comments are an allusion to the בְּרֵאשִׁית in Genesis 1:1.

22 [It is] he that sitteth[✓] upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof [are] as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

✓ or, Him that sitteth, &c.

[It is] he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof [are] as grasshoppers. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Who maketh the Shekinah of His glory to dwell in exalted strength, and all the inhabitants of the earth are in His estimation as locusts.” The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “He it is, who occupieth the circuit of the earth; and the inhabitants thereon are as grasshoppers.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “It is he that sitteth upon the globe of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as locusts.” Regarding *upon the circle of the earth* [עַל-הַיָּרֵךְ הָאָרֶץ], Ibn Ezra has: “Here it is stated that the earth is round and not square.” So also Gill, who comments: “Or, ‘the globe’ of it; for the earth is spherical or globular: not a flat plain, but round.” Redak [in Rosenberg] explains that “God is depicted anthropomorphically” as sitting in upon the center of the earth, and further adds: “He sees everything as one who sits on a high place sees everything that transpires on the lower places before him. For this reason, the prophet describes the inhabitants of the earth as grasshoppers, in keeping with the anthropomorphism of the person sitting on high and viewing all that is below him.” ¶ *That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “He that stretched out the heavens as a little thing, and spreadeth them out as the tent of the glory of the house of the Shekinah.” The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “He it is, who established the heaven as an arch, and spread it out as a tent to be dwelt in.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has *as nothing* instead of *as a curtain*.

23 That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Who gives princes over to weakness; the judges of the earth He bringeth to naught.” The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “Who giveth chiefs as a nothingness to govern: and hath made the earth as a mere nothing.” Instead of *as vanity*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *as if they were non-existent*. The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has *searchers of secrets* instead of *princes*. Here we return to what was said earlier by the Prophet Joseph Smith (see ISAIAH 40:6) about the haughtiness and pride of the judges or leaders of nations.

24 Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Although they multiply, although they increase, although their children become great in the earth, yet, nevertheless, He will send his wrath among them, and they shall be confounded . . .” The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “For they could not plant nor could they sow, nor could their root strike into the ground.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “And surely their stock was neither planted, nor sown, nor rooted in the earth.” These comments speak about the impotence of mortal man, once again, following the earlier theme of the chapter of the withering plants and flowers. ¶ *And he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And His Word shall scatter them, as the whirlwind the chaff.” The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “He blew upon them and they withered, and a whirlwind will sweep them away like stubble.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Suddenly he hath blown upon them, and they are withered, and a whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.” There seems to be a chiasmus, then, returning to many of the early expressions. Here, that of the power of even the breath of the Lord, “because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it.”

25 To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Now therefore to whom have you likened me; that I may be exalted? Said the Holy One.” ¶ Alexander says: “The epithet *Holy* is in this connection well explained by J. D. Michaelis as including all that distinguishes between God and his creatures ...” *Shall I be equal* seems to have an allusion to the nations who considered Jehovah just one more god of many.

26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these [things], that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that [he is] strong in power; not one faileth.

Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these [things], that bringeth out their host by number: The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, that ye may fear Him, who hath created these things, who bringeth forth the host of the heavens by number.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Raise your eyes upwards and take a view: who hath displayed all those? He who bringeth out his host by number.” This is an invitation to consider the truth, and consider the great majesty and power of God. ¶ *He calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that [he is] strong in power; not one faileth.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “He calleth them all by their name: on account of the combination of forces and might of power, not one is hindered in its orb.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Can call them all by name. On the account of abundant glory, by reason of the mightiness of his power he hath in no wise escaped thy notice.” In the Peshitta (Ⓢ) the clause ends, “By the greatness of his glory and the strength of his power; none is missing.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And calleth them all by their names: by the greatness of his might, and strength, and power, not one of them was missing.” ¶ Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: “I testify to you that God has known you individually, brethren, for a long, long time (see D&C 93:23). He has loved you for a long, long time. He not only knows the names of all the stars (see Psalm 147:4; ISAIAH 40:26); He knows your names and all your heartaches and your joys!”²⁶

vv. 27–31. Indeed, God is almighty. All those who lean upon Him will be lifted up and their weaknesses shall be turned into strength.

²⁶ Maxwell, Neal A. Remember How Merciful the Lord Hath Been, *Ensign* (CR), May 2004, p. 44.

27 ¶ Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

The Targum (Ⓣ) has for the last clause, “And my cause is removed from my God?” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Wherefore, thou, Jacob, shouldst not say, yet what hast thou, Israel, spoken? ‘My way is hidden from God’ and, ‘My God hath put off my cause and is gone.’” For the second half, the BPE Peshitta (Ⓢ) has “My ways are hidden from the Yahweh, and before God my cause passes unobserved.” This dialogue reminds us a little of the argument between the people and the Lord cited in Malachi (2:13 ff.; 3:7 ff.).

28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, [that] the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? [there is] no searching of his understanding.

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, [that] the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth. The Targum (Ⓣ) has for the last clause, “the Lord who hath created the foundations of the earth.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Hast thou then not known? hast thou not heard? The everlasting God, the God who fitted up the ends of the earth.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Knowest thou not, or hast thou not heard? the Lord is the everlasting God, who hath created the ends of the earth.” Ibn Ezra and the Prophet Joseph Smith agree on the meaning of **ברא**, “**בורא** *Creator*. I have explained already (Genesis 1:1), that **ברא** literally means ‘to cut.’ [Translator’s note: Ibn Ezra repeatedly remarks, that **ברא** means (1) to shape, to **produce** a **thing** from a given **substance** (**לְחֻצֵי יֵשׁ מִיֵּשׁ**): (2) to decree, or to decide: both meanings he derives from **ברא** = **נזר** ‘to cut.’” ¶ *Fainteth not, neither is weary?* [There is] *no searching of his understanding.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Is not fatigued, neither is weary? (Chaldee, ‘in fatigue, neither in weariness’) there is no end to His wisdom.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Cannot hunger, nor can he be weary; nor can his understanding be searched out.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “He shall not faint, nor labour, neither is there any searching out of his wisdom.”

29 He giveth power to the faint; and to [them that have] no might he increaseth strength.

All strength and power come from the Lord. The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “Who giveth wisdom to the righteous that long for the words of the law; and to those who have no strength, he multiplieth strength.” The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, “He it is who giveth strength to the hungry and grief to them who have not had sorrow.” Instead of *them that have no might*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *to them that are affected by sickness*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “It is he that giveth strength to the weary, and increaseth force and might to them that are not.”

30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

The Targum (Ⓒ) adds *wicked* and *impious* to modify *youths* and *young men* respectively. The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, “For youths will hunger and young men be weary, and chosen warriors will become strengthless.” Instead of *utterly fall*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *stumble*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Youths shall faint, and labour, and young men shall fall by infirmity.” In contrast to God [ISAIAH 40:28], the *youth* בַּחֲנוּרִים —or as Alexander explains, “not only of men in general, but of the stoutest and most vigorous, aptly represented by the young men chosen for military service” —we again return to what we saw earlier in the chapter: that man is nothing, less than nothing. ¶ *Shall utterly fall* (כָּשׁוּל יִכָּשְׁלוּ). The repetition of the word shows not only falling, but *utterly* falling.

31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew [their] strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; [and] they shall walk, and not faint.

✓ change

But they that wait upon the LORD. The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, “But they who wait upon God.” The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “But they that hope for the salvation of the Lord (וְדַסְבְּרוּ לְפָרְקָנָא דִּיִּוִּי) shall be gathered together from the midst of their captivity.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “But they that hope in the Lord.” Several translations use the word *trust*, as does Bishops, “But vnto them that haue their trust in the Lorde, shall &c.”

AMP renders it “But those who wait for the Lord [*who expect, look for, and hope in Him*] shall &c.” The Spanish Reina Valera 1960 and LDS 2009 use the expression “pero los que esperan” the word *esperar* has various significations including to wait, but the first given by the iREA (the dictionary of the Real Academia) is “tener esperanza de conseguir lo que se desea,” i.e., hope). Only the third meaning is related to waiting. The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has, וְקִוִּי יְהוָה, where the lexicons include the word *hope* as one of the principal meanings of the word קוּה. For instance, Gesenius explains that when used in conjunction with the word YHWH, קִוִּי אֶת־יְהוָה, as is also used in this verse, that it means to “to fix one’s hope on Jehovah.” This verse, then, would be better translated as “*But they that place their hope upon the LORD* &c.” It is precisely this word; *hope*, that Elder Robert D. Hales explains is at the core of *waiting upon the Lord* (e.g., also see Psalm 37:9; 123:2; ISAIAH 8:17; ISAIAH 33:2 and Jeremiah 14:22). The psalmist says: “I wait for the LORD {קִוִּי יְהוָה קִוִּיָּה}, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning” (Psalm 130:5–6).

Alexander has “קִוִּי is to *wait* for or *expect*, implying faith and patience. This is also the old English meaning of the phrase *to wait upon*, as applied to servants who await their master’s orders; but in modern usage the idea of personal service or attendance has become predominant, so that the English phrase [*they that wait upon the Lord*] no longer represents the Hebrew one.”²⁷ ¶ Alexander himself prefers “those waiting for Jehovah.” ASV translates this verse as: “but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint” (see also ESV, JPS, LITV, and NASB). There is nothing *passive* about this קִוִּי. As I was subsequently asked to prepare a Priesthood class based on Elder Hales’ talk, I realized that only five days earlier, I had been prompted to use very similar language in a Priesthood blessing given to someone suffering great anguish and affliction. Truly, the Lord *is good: for his mercy endureth for ever*. I only include a portion of his talk. “During the past few months,” explained Elder Hales. “I have had the

²⁷ I asked my friend Ryan Boothe for his interpretation of Alexander’s comments: “As I read it, Alexander appears to be saying that the word *wait* used to have a similar meaning as *esperar*. We wait upon the Lord by waiting for His command (as opposed to doing our own thing) and expecting that it will come. In Modern English, if I’m waiting on a customer that implies that I am going to write down what food and drink he wants and make sure that he is satisfied with his order. The meaning is similar but the first wait is not exactly the same as the second.”

opportunity to study and learn more about the Savior's atoning sacrifice and how He prepared Himself to make that eternal offering for each one of us ... I have often pondered, Why is it that the Son of God and His holy prophets and all the faithful Saints have trials and tribulations, even when they are trying to do Heavenly Father's will? ... Why such terrible tribulation? To what end? For what purpose? As we ask these questions, we realize that the purpose of our life on earth is to grow, develop, and be strengthened through our own experiences. How do we do this? The scriptures give us an answer in one simple phrase: we 'wait upon the Lord.' Tests and trials are given to all of us ... [But] What, then, does it mean to wait upon the Lord? In the scriptures, the word *wait* means to hope, to anticipate, and to trust. To hope and trust in the Lord requires faith, patience, humility, meekness, long-suffering, keeping the commandments, and enduring to the end. To wait upon the Lord means planting the seed of faith and nourishing it 'with great diligence, and . . . patience.'²⁸ ... Waiting upon the Lord means pondering in our hearts and 'receiv[ing] the Holy Ghost' so that we can know 'all things what [we] should do.' As we follow the promptings of the Spirit, we discover that 'tribulation worketh patience' and we learn to 'continue in patience until [we] are perfected.' Waiting upon the Lord means to 'stand fast' and 'press forward' in faith, 'having a perfect brightness of hope.' It means 'relying alone upon the merits of Christ' and 'with [His] grace assisting [us, saying]: Thy will be done, O Lord, and not ours.' As we wait upon the Lord, we are 'immovable in keeping the commandments,' knowing that we will 'one day rest from all [our] afflictions.' And we 'cast not away ... [our] confidence' that 'all things wherewith [we] have been afflicted shall work together for [our] good.' ... Even with the shining examples of Job, the prophets, and the Savior, we will still find it challenging to wait upon the Lord, especially when we cannot fully understand His plan and purposes for us. That understanding is most often given 'line upon line, [and] precept upon precept.' In my life I have learned that sometimes I do not receive an answer to a prayer because the Lord knows I am not ready. When He does answer, it is often 'here a little and there a little' because that is all that I can bear or all I am willing to do. Too often we pray to have patience, but we want it right now! ... We may not know when or how the Lord's answers will be given, but in His time and His way, I testify, His answers will come. For some answers we may have to wait until the hereafter. This may be true for some promises in our patriarchal blessings and for some blessings for family members. Let us not give

up on the Lord. His blessings are eternal, not temporary. ... As we endure physical suffering, we are increasingly aware of how many wait upon each of us. To all the Marys and Marthas, to all of the good Samaritans who minister to the sick, succor the weak, and care for the mentally and physically infirm, I feel the gratitude of a loving Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son ... He knows your sacrifices and your sorrows. He hears your prayers. His peace and rest will be yours as you continue to wait upon Him in faith.

Every one of us is more beloved to the Lord than we can possibly understand or imagine. Let us therefore be kinder to one another and kinder toward ourselves. Let us remember that as we wait upon the Lord, we are becoming 'saint[s] through [His] atonement . . . submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [us], even as a child doth submit to his father.' Such was the submission of our Savior to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane . . . [Where He] 'shrank not to drink the bitter cup.' He waited upon His Father, saying, 'Thy will be done,' and He humbly trod the winepress alone ... On this Sabbath morning, I express gratitude that 'in my Gethsemane' and yours, we are not alone. He that watches over *us* 'shall neither slumber nor sleep.' His angels here and beyond the veil are 'round about [us], to bear [us] up.' I bear my special witness that our Savior's promise is true, for He says, 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.' May we wait upon Him by pressing forward in faith, that we may say in our prayers, 'Thy will be done,' and return to Him with honor. ...'²⁹ Elder Hales seems to be describing the process of sanctification wherein the Holy Spirit of Promise, after putting a stamp of approval or justifying individual acts, slowly begins to transform our lives into true disciples of Jesus Christ. ¶ *Shall renew [their] strength.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, "And shall increase their strength." The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, "Shall have new strength." Lowth writes: "It has been a common and popular opinion that the eagle lives and retains his vigor to a great age; and that, beyond the common lot of other birds, he molts in his old age, and renews his feathers, and with them his youth. 'Thou shalt renew thy youth like the eagle,' says the Psalmist (Psalm 103:5) ... Whether the notion of the eagle's renewing his youth is in any degree well founded or not, I need not inquire; it is enough for a poet, whether profane or sacred, to have the authority of popular opinion to support an image introduced for illustration or ornament." ¶ *They shall mount up with wings as eagles.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, "And their youths shall be

²⁸ Regarding ISAIAH 40, Alexander says: "That the ultimate fulfillment of the promise was still distant is implied in the exhortation to faith and patience."

²⁹ Hales, Robert D. 2011 October General Conference, Sunday morning session.

renewed like the sprout that springeth up: they shall hasten upon the wings of eagles.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “They shall put forth fresh feathers like eagles.” Instead of *eagle*, the Peshitta (Ⓔ) has *dove*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓔ) has, “They shall take wings as eagles.” ¶ Alexander explains that the beauty of this verse does not come from the idea of the eagle molting, but rather, from the very act of rising up the wings in majesty as the eagle takes off. ¶ *They shall run, and not be weary; [and] they shall walk, and not faint.* The Targum (Ⓔ) has, “And not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “They shall run and not be wearied; they shall march on and shall not faint.” We find a similar promise given to those who keep the Word of Wisdom: “And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint” (D&C 89:20). Ludlow suggests “that those who wait and trust in the Lord will share in

his powers and renew their strength (through the resurrection so that they will ‘run and not be weary,’ and ‘walk, and not faint.’” Alexander has: “In the last clause the verbs **לָרַץ** and **לָלַךְ** are introduced together for the third time in a beautiful antithesis. In ISAIAH 40:28 they are applied to Jehovah, in ISAIAH 40:30 to the strongest and most vigorous of men, as they are in themselves, and here to the waiters for Jehovah, the believers in his promises, who glory in infirmity that his strength may be made perfect in their weakness (2Corinthians 12:9).”

13 January 2014
