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## Isaiah 41

All are invited to pass judgment on the divinity of Christ—and to contrast His power to that of the idols. We have Jehovah, speaking by Divine Investiture from the Father, announcing the coming of the Son, even Jesus Christ. There are transitional frames in a movie where one sees both the old and new scenes at one time. What we see in ISAIAH 41 is a somewhat faded frame of Abraham being supplanted by a more clear and glorious frame of Christ. Powerful scriptures are given about missionary work being carried out by *the weak and the simple* in gathering Israel in the last days, even by *thou worm Jacob*. Idols, or rather those who lean upon them, are invited into a contest with the Lord, who is able to clearly show His superiority. These are given at the beginning and end of the chapter as a chiasmus. All of these things are given as signs and tokens to scattered Israel to trust in Jehovah and come unto Christ in the last days. Tender and beautiful reassurances are given to those who would walk with Christ.

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vv. 1–9. These verses are quite similar to the contest with the false prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18. Here, with worthless idols. The Man from the east is spoken off.

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**1 ¶ KEEP silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew [their] strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.**

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The Lord invites all the people, including those from the islands, to the judgment bar. ¶ *KEEP silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew [their] strength:* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Listen unto my words, ye islands, and let the kingdoms increase their strength.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Dedicate yourselves to me, Islands, for the Archons will gather new strength.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) is missing *before me*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓝ) has, “And the nations take new strength.” ¶ Young says: “God does not appear before a judge, waiting to hear a verdict pronounced. Rather, He addresses the isles with the voice of absolute authority.” Gill has: “The great controversy in the world after the coming of Christ, which is expressly spoken of in the preceding chapter, was, as Cocceius observes, whether he was a divine Person; this was first objected to by the Jews, and afterwards by many that bore the Christian name; some, in the times of the apostles, especially the Apostle John; and others in later ages; some affirmed that he was a mere man ... and now, as when the judge is on the bench, and the court is set, and a cause just going to be tried, silence is proclaimed; so here, Jehovah himself being on the throne, and a cause depending between him and men being about to be tried, they are commanded silence (see Zechariah 2:13).” Not only is there a controversy as to whether Jesus be the Christ or the promised Messiah, but also if

Jesus is the Son of God and divine in nature. The Jews, for the most part, are waiting for either the Messiah, or for the Messianic Age. Muslims recognize the Messianic nature of Christ but expressly deny His divinity—as well as His atoning sacrifice for us. There are a number of Christian religions who deny His divinity.<sup>1</sup> ¶ Barnes explains: “On the word ‘renew,’ . . . Here it means, ‘Let them make themselves strong; let them prepare the argument; let them be ready to urge as strong reasons as possible; let them fit themselves to enter into the controversy about the power and glory of Yahweh’ (see ISAIAH 41:21).” ¶ Regarding the *islands*, they sometimes refer to the American continent and islands of the sea, but they can also at times refer to the countries away from Israel. ¶ *Silence*. Faussett has: “God is about to argue the case; therefore let the nations listen in reverential silence.” ¶ *Renew their strength*. As Wordsworth noted in ISAIAH 40, these words from the end of Isaiah 40 are repeated here in ISAIAH 41. While there they referred to those who put their trust in Jehovah, here they are a sarcastic invitation to the enemies of God to attempt to show strength. ¶ *Let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment*. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Let them come nigh, then let them speak; let us approach one another for judgment.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Let them draw near and confer together, then let them announce judgment.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *let them come near*

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<sup>1</sup> The scriptures testify of the divinity of Christ: (1) turn to ISAIAH 6, footnote 4, in regard to John 12:36–41), for proof that Jesus Christ is the Jehovah of the Old Testament; and (2) for an example of a scripture speaking of the divinity of Christ as well as His sonhood, we have ISAIAH 9:6, “For unto us a **child** is born, unto us a **son** is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty **God**, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” These verses make it clear that there would be a child, and that this child would also be God. And the greatest proof of all is the powerful testimony of the Holy Spirit. I received such a testimony as a young man of thirteen. I bear the most solemn witness of the Divinity of Jesus the Christ.

instead of *let us come near*. The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Let them come near, and then speak, let us come near to judgment together.” ¶ This is an invitation to approach the bench, or judgment bar, with the best arguments that those who detest the Lord can muster. Delitzsch asks: “But if Jehovah is one party to the cause, who is the judge to pronounce the decision? The answer to this question is the same as at ISAIAH 5:3. ‘The nations,’ says Rosenmüller, ‘are called to judgment, not to the tribunal of God, but to that of reason.’ The deciding authority is reason, which cannot fail to recognise the facts, and the consequences to be deduced from them.” Wesley has, “I will give them free liberty to say what they can on their own behalf.” In his translation, Lowth has, for the last clause: “Let us enter into solemn debate together,” a translation particularly celebrated by Keith, who goes on to say: “The same form of address occurs in other instances, as when it is said, ‘Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.’”

**2 Who raised up the righteous [man] from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made [him] rule over kings? he gave [them] as the dust to his sword, [and] as driven stubble to his bow.**

✓ righteousness

*Who raised up the righteous [man] from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made [him] rule over kings?* The Targum (T) has, “Who openly brought Abraham from the east? He brought the chosen of the righteous in truth to his place, He delivered up nations before him, and broke in pieces mighty (the Royal Polyglot omits **יִמְצִי**, ‘strong, mighty’) kings.” The LXX (G) reads, “Who raised up righteousness from the East—called upon it to attend his steps? when he marcheth on, he will exhibit it before nations and confound kings.” The Lamsa Peshitta (S) has, “Who has stirred up the righteous one from the east, and hastened him on? The nations shall surrender before him, and kings shall be confounded.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Who hath raised up the just one from the east, hath called him to follow him? he shall give the nations in his sight, and he shall rule over kings.” ¶ If we accept the ellipsis and permit the clause to read the *righteous man*, then we are speaking of Christ, or those that through Him may be called righteous. Wordsworth says: “We need not be surprised that many ancient interpreters (as S. Cyril, and S. Jerome) saw here a prophecy of CHRIST—‘the Lord our Righteousness.’ Cyrus, whose name signifies Sun, in many signal respects was a type of Christ,—the ‘Sun of

Righteousness’ (Malachi 4:2) ... It will be found, that whenever Isaiah has made mention of Cyrus, he almost always proceeds to speak of Christ.” Cowles suggests that the proper meaning may well be that justice was raised up. When one considers that the word **קָדַשׁ** can also be translated as *salvation*, or *well-being*, we have some interesting options here (for instance, see the 4<sup>th</sup> acceptance for **קָדַשׁ** in HAL). Some interesting translations include: “Who awakened [from *the* east righteousness]” (ABP {LXX (G)}). Or, by substituting salvation, “Who awakened salvation from the east.” The emphasis is on God’s power to awake, or to bring forward salvation. That Cyrus could be meant in such circumstances is certainly possible. AMP renders it: “Who has roused up one [*Cyrus*] from the east, whom He calls in righteousness to His service . . .” Or, “Who hath raised up one from the east, whom he calleth in righteousness to his foot?” (ASV), or “Who appointed this ruler from the east? Who puts nations and kings in his power?” (CEV). Finally: “Who raised up iustice from the East, and called him to his foote?” (Geneva).

Alexander argues: “Here and elsewhere **קָדַשׁ** means the *righteousness* of God as manifested in his providence, his dealings with his people and their enemies ... To *call to one’s foot* is a Hebrew idiom for calling to one’s service, or summoning to take a place among one’s followers. This act is here ascribed to the divine righteousness as a personified attribute. The other verbs may agree with the same subject or directly with Jehovah.” ¶ Gill writes: “The Targum interprets this of Abraham; and so the Talmud (T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 156. 2. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 108. 2. and Taanith, fol. 21. 1.); and this way go most Jewish and Christian commentators, and to him the characters agree; he was a righteous man ...” Birks writes: “The God of glory appeared to Abraham in Chaldea, stirred up his spirit to forsake his country’s idols, and made him heir of the righteousness of faith.” ¶ Any righteousness found in man is Christ’s righteousness. In the meridian of times a star to the East announced His coming: “Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him” (Matthew 2:2). Of the Second Coming we read: “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:27). While Cyrus, Abraham, Joseph of Egypt and others are given as types of Christ, it is the Messiah who is the *Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων καὶ κύριος κυρίων*, *King of kings, and Lord of lords* (Revelation 19:16). He will subdue the nations and overcome Satan as well as mystic Babylon. Horsley testifies: “Christ is perpetually described in the prophecies under the image of a conqueror, and the propagation of the Gospel under the image of universal conquest ... I have no doubt that

Christ is the person meant under the character of the righteous man raised up from the east.” Horsley continues: “It is to be observed, however, that the LXX rendered the noun צַדִּיק by δικαιοσύνην, as if they conceived that righteousness, or the true religion, was personified in this chapter; and I think this notion deserves great attention. It is adopted in the margin || of our English Bible. Righteousness was throughout all the Divine dispensations raised up from the east. Paradise was planted in the east of Eden. After the Fall, the symbols of the Divine presence, the cherubim, were placed at the east of the garden. Abraham was called from the east. The chosen people of God were a people of the eastern quarter of the globe. Our Lord was the righteous man raised from the east.” ¶ *He gave [them] as the dust to his sword, [and] as driven stubble to his bow.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “He cast the slain down like the dust before his sword, and he pursued them like stubble before his bow.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And dash their swords to the ground, and their bows shall be driven away like stubble.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “As stubble driven by the wind, to his bow.” ¶ The expression, *dust to his sword* means that the sword found no resistance at all. Likewise, *stubble to his bow*, i.e., arrow propelled by a bow finds no resistance in wind-driven chaff (allusion to fanned grain). AMP provides an interesting translation in that the Lord is shown to be behind all things but Cyrus the instrument in His hands: “He [*the Lord*] subdues nations before him and makes him ruler over kings. He turns them to dust with the sword [*of Cyrus*], and to driven straw and chaff with his bow. [*Ezra 1:2*].” Wordsworth points out to 2 Chronicles 36:23a, “Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” Alexander says: “Umbreit supposes a specific reference to the course of the sun, from which the name of Cyrus was derived.”

**3 He pursued them, [and] passed safely; ✓ [even] by the way [that] he had not gone with his feet.**

✓ in peace

The Targum (Ⓣ) has for the last clause, “The roughness of the path shall not affect his feet (Chaldee, ‘the strength of the path shall not enter his feet’).” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “When he pursueth them, the road for his feet shall pass through to peace.” The BPE (Ⓢ) has, “He shall pursue after them, then make peace; but he shall not enter with his feet on the road.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “He shall pursue them, he shall pass in peace, no path shall appear after his feet.” ¶ Skinner says, “*the*

*path with his feet he does not tread*]—a picture of the celerity of his movements (Daniel 8:5).” Alexander likewise has: “[Based on] Ewald’s supposition that the clause describes the swiftness of his motions, as flying rather than walking on foot. This, which would be natural and striking, even in itself considered, is confirmed by the analogy of Daniel 8:5, where we read that *an he-goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground.*” ¶ Rawlinson instead has: “*Even by the way that he had not gone with his feet*]; rather, *a path with his feet he shall not tread.* The meaning seems to be that he will dispense with customary paths, making his advance everywhere over all obstacles, by untrodden ways. Compare the frequent boasts of the Assyrian kings: ‘To the recesses of the deep forests and the peaks of the difficult mountains, which had never been trodden by the foot of man, I ascended’ (‘Records of the Past,’ 5:13). ‘Difficult mountain chains, and inaccessible hills, which none of our kings had ever previously reached tedious paths and unopened roads I traversed’ (ibid., p. 16).” As Horsley well says, so also the Gospel of Christ was taken by paths not taken before. ¶ Barnes writes: “*He pursued them* – When they were driven away. He followed on, and devoted them to discomfiture and ruin. *And passed safely* – Margin ||, as Hebrew, ‘In peace.’ That is, he followed them uninjured; they had no power to rally, he was not led into ambush, and he was safe as far as he chose to pursue them.”

**4 Who hath wrought and done [it], calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I [am] he.**

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Who hath promised these things and established them? Who hath spoken, and it was done? And *who* hath ranged the generations in their order from the beginning; yea, ages after ages are mine, and besides me there is no God.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Who hath performed and done these things? He who called that righteousness—who from the generations of the beginning is calling it—I God the First, and to the succeeding ages, THE I AM (Brenton, ‘I God, the first and to all futurity, I AM’).” Instead of *wrought*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *prepared*. Regarding the last clause, we have in the Peshitta (Ⓢ), “I the LORD, the first and the last; I am he” (Lamsa); and “I the LORD, the first and the last; I am” (BPE) whereas the AV last clause follows the Masoretic text (מס) and has אֲנִי-יְהוָה, I [am] he. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Who hath wrought and done these things, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, I am the first and the last.”

¶ אֲנִי יְהוָה רִאשׁוֹן וְאֶת-אַחֲרֵימֵי אֲנִי-יְהוָה, I LORD, first and last, I He. LITV has: “I Jehovah am the first

and *the last*; *I am He*.” The 1899 Douay-Rheims Bible (D), based on the Vulgate (V), “Ego Dóminus: primus et novíssimus ego sum,” that is, “I the Lord, the first and the last, I am.” So also the Peshitta LBP (S), “I the LORD, the first and the last; I am he.” ¶ We essentially have the same text in the Book of Revelation “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (Revelation 22:13). In Doctrine and Covenants we often hear the equivalent expression, Alpha and Omega used in the same context as we have here: “Thus saith the Lord your God, even Jesus Christ, the Great I Am, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end” (D&C 38:1a). ¶ We have another *who* question. Rawlinson has: “*i.e.* ‘by whom has this mighty conqueror been raised up?’ Can any of the idol-gods claim him as their *protege*? Assuredly not. He is my work; I, Jehovah, that have called (into being) the generations (of man) from the beginning (of the world) I, Jehovah, the First, and with the last, am he that he has done this thing. By ‘the First, and with the last’<sup>2</sup> a favourite phrase in these later chapters (*see ISALAH 45:6; 48:12*) seems to be meant simply ‘the Eternal.’”

5 The isles saw [it], and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came.

The Targum (T) translations (Chilton, Stenning, Pauli) have, from the second clause on, the future tense. Pauli has all of it in the future tense. The LXX (G) reads, “The nations saw and were affrighted; the ends of the earth drew near and came together.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has *astonished* instead of *afraid*. ¶ The paronomasia or play on words regarding the words *saw* and *feared* is mentioned by Delitzsch and Young: “The isles saw and feared, אִיִּים וְאִיִּים רָאוּ וְיָרְאוּ. The fear of the nations leads them to lean on each other and on idols—but to no avail.

6 They helped every one his neighbour; and [every one] said to his brother, Be of good courage. ✓

✓ Be strong

The Targum (T) has, “Let everyone help his neighbor, and every one say to his brother, Be of good courage (or, ‘be strong’).” The LXX (G) reads, “Every one is determining to help his neighbour and his brother, and one will say.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Every one shall help his neighbour, and shall say to his brother: Be

of good courage.” Barnes has: “*They helped everyone his neighbor* – The prophet describes a state of general consternation existing among them, when they supposed that all was in danger, and that their security consisted only in confederation; in increased attention to their religion; in repairing their idols and making new ones ... *Be of good courage*] – Margin ||, as Hebrew, ‘Be strong.’ The sense is, Do not be alarmed . . . Make new images, set them up in the temples, show unusual zeal in religion, and the favor of the gods may be secured, and the dangers be averted.”

7 So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, ✓ [and] he that smootheth [with] the hammer him that smote ✓ ✓ the anvil, saying, It [is] ready for the soldering: ✓ ✓ ✓ and he fastened it with nails, [that] it should not be moved.

✓ or, founder

✓ ✓ or, the smiting

✓ ✓ ✓ or, saying of the soder, It is good

The Targum (T) has, “Shall they not be confounded in their works? Because the artificer encourageth the silversmith, and he that smiteth with the great hammer him that smiteth with the small: It is time, one saith, for the soldering, it is ready; he fasteneth it with nails, that it may not be moved.” The LXX (G) reads, “The carpenter had strength, so had the smith who beateth with a hammer and plateth it. Sometimes indeed one will say, ‘It is a beautiful composition? ‘These things they made strong with nails; they will fix them up that they may not be moved.’” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “The coppersmith striking with the hammer encouraged him that forged at that time, saying: It is ready for soldering: and he strengthened it with nails, that it should not be moved.” ¶ Rawlinson observes: “Each encourages the others to manufacture a right good god. When all is done, there is, however, need of soldering, and of nails, that the wretched object may be kept erect, and not show its weakness by falling, like Dagon, upon its own threshold (*1 Samuel 5:4*).” Faussett has: “**nails** — to keep it steady in its place. Wisdom of Solomon 13:15, 16<sup>3</sup>, gives a similar picture of the folly of idolatry.” ¶ Next, in contrast, we see how those who lean upon the Lord are sustained in their moments of need.

<sup>3</sup> “And when he had made a convenient room for it, set it in a wall, and made it fast with iron: For he provided for it that it might not fall, knowing that it was unable to help itself; for it is an image, and hath need of help” (Apocrypha, Wisdom of Solomon 13:15–16).

<sup>2</sup> The Alpha and Omega with which Christ is often described in the Doctrine and Covenants.

8 But thou, Israel, [art] my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

The Targum (C) has בְּאֵתְרֵי־יְהוָה,<sup>4</sup> in whom I “delight” (Pauli) or in whom I am “pleased” (Stenning, Chilton) rather than *chosen*. The LXX (G) reads, “But thou Israel my servant; thou Jacob, whom I have chosen; thou seed of Abraham whom I loved! The last clause is rendered by the Peshitta (S) as, “The descendants of Abraham my friend, whom I have strengthened.”

Delitzsch writes: “The וְ [but—GB] before אֵתְרֵי [but thou—GB]<sup>5</sup> connects together antitheses, which show themselves at once to be antitheses. Whereas the nations, which put their trust in idols that they themselves had made, were thrown into alarm, and yielded before the world-wide commotions that had originated with the eastern conqueror, Israel, the nation of Jehovah, might take comfort to itself. Every word here breathes the deepest affection. The address moves on in soft undulating lines.” ¶ *My servant* (עֶבֶד־יְהוָה, from servant, עֶבֶד). Hawker<sup>6</sup> says “For all the promises of the Bible are first made to the Person of Christ, and then in Him, they are all yea and amen, to his people.” This is much like my *How beautiful are the feel principle*.

The *Servant of the Lord* (עֶבֶד יְהוָה) is *Jesus Christ* but that He shares this title with His people Israel and with His disciples, and at times even with others through whom He accomplishes work. Young suggests: “No sooner had intimations been given of a human deliverer than the prophet, rising from consideration of the nation as a servant, focuses attention upon the *Servant par excellence*, who will perform for Israel a work that neither they themselves nor Cyrus can accomplish. Whereas Cyrus will set the people free from Babylonia, the *Servant* will deliver them from the spiritual bondage of sin in which they find themselves.” ¶ Nägelsbach says, “The Prophet turns to Israel with well-founded and glorious consolation. The LORD calls His people **Israel my servant**. We consider here for the first time the significant notion of the עֶבֶד יְהוָה ... they are so named because the LORD has chosen Israel

<sup>4</sup> Gesenius defines as object of thoughts and desires.

<sup>5</sup> So also Westermann, who explains that with the words אֵתְרֵי [but thou—GB] we have an *oracle of salvation*: “the address to Israel begins . . . they correspond to the *waw* adversative (= but) which in a number of psalms of lamentation indicates the change from distress to salvation in accordance with the oracle of salvation, or presupposing it.”

<sup>6</sup> Robert Hawker, (1816–1820). *Poor Man’s Old Testament Commentary*, Volume 5.

for his possession, His instrument, His servant. For a servant is the property of his lord, and Israel is the ‘peculiar people’ (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:2; Psalm 135:4; Malachi 3:17).” Matthew Henry says: “Happy are the servants of the Lord, whom he has called to be his friends, and to walk with him in faith and holy obedience. Let not such as have thus been favoured yield to fear; for the contest may be sharp, but the victory shall be sure.” Baltzer writes: “It is also unambiguously clear in this text who the servant is. It is ‘Israel/Jacob.’ Since the text goes on in the singular form of address, the servant is initially a single individual. The name ‘Israel’ and his description as ‘Abraham’s seed/offspring’ give the figure its special significance: he is the personification of God’s people.”

¶ יַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר בָּחַרְתִּיךָ, *Jacob whom I have chosen*. The Holy One of Israel has chosen Jacob, indeed He has chosen Israel. Westermann says, “Israel’s election is carried back to the patriarchs.” ¶ *My friend* (אֹהֶב־יְהוָה). More than just a *friend*, someone who is *greatly beloved* (“the seede of Abraham my beloved” 1568 Bishops’ Bible). GW renders it: “But you are my servant Israel, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the descendant of Abraham, my dear friend.” Westermann correctly has: “Whom I loved.” The expression “I have loved” (Brenton) or “my beloved” (Bishops), as well as the others mentioned above, here come to mean both love and friendship. And the love and friendship here extend beyond Abraham to all of Israel. Note clearly the Hebrew word for love (אֹהֶב) in “seed of Abraham my friend / whom I have loved” (יָרַע אֲבֹתָהֶם אֹהֶבִי). Literally, “Seed of Abraham [whom] I [have] loved.” Kimhi (in Slotki) suggests, “Abraham . . . who loved Me.” In James we read: “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:23–24). Skinner says: “Among the Mohammedans, Abraham is designated *chalil ullah* [خليل الله], ‘Friend of God.’” Alexander says, “Or absolutely, خلی the Friend.” ¶ Since the Restoration we similarly have: “And as I said unto mine apostles, even so I say unto you, for you are mine apostles, even God’s high priests; ye are they whom my Father hath given me; ye are *my friends*” (D&C 84:63, also see D&C 84:77).

9 [Thou] whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou [art] my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.

[Thou] whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “I have brought thee out of the families of the earth, I have chosen thee out of a kingdom.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “Have I not taken thee from the ends of the earth, and from the speculations thereof called thee.” The BPE (Ⓢ) leaves out the expression *from the chief men thereof* (BPE), while Lamsa has “from among the prophets.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “In whom I have taken thee from the ends of the earth, and from the remote parts thereof have called thee.” ¶ Abraham was found by God in Ur of the Chaldees, and taken from the ends of the earth to be the father of the nations. The very name *Abraham* may well mean father of the beloved [people], not just father of many (see ISBE). When Abram was about to be sacrificed in his father’s (Terah) house, he cried to God for help. The Lord tells him about the land that he would go to: “And his voice was unto me: Abraham, Abraham, behold, my name is Jehovah, and I have heard thee, and have come down to deliver thee, and to take thee away from thy father’s house, and from all thy kinsfolk, *into a strange land* which thou knowest not of (Abraham 1:16, emphasis added). This was a way to say that the land of Israel would be very far from his present residence. We next consider a completely different interpretation of this verse, from speaking of Abraham to speaking of Israel. But first, let us consider the clause in question. ¶ *From the chief men thereof*. The Vulgate (Ⓣ) has: “in quo apprehēdi te ab extrémis terræ, et a longinquis ejus vocāvi te, et dixi tibi : Servus meus es tu: elēgi te, et non abjēci te.” Rawlinson explains that the only other place where אֲצִיל appears in the Hebrew Bible, it “has the meaning of ‘chief men’ (Exodus 24:11).” There is another possible meaning to consider—that of a distant location. It is so rendered by most moderns (for example, see AMP, ASV, CJB, Darby, ERV, ESV, FDB, FLS, HCSB, ISV, JPS, LBLA, LITV, NASB, RV, RV60, RV2009 SUD [LDS 2009 Spanish edition<sup>7</sup>], Luther, YLT). The first acceptance of HAL for אֲצִיל is *remotest parts*; for Gesenius, *sides, extremities*. Whitehouse has: “We have a similar word אֲצִיל in Heb., Ezekiel 13:18; Jeremiah 38:12.” ¶ If we accept this last translation, about the *extremities* of the earth, then the verse ceases to focus on Abraham as our Patriarch. Instead it speaks of Israel and her calling to be a *servant of the Lord* (עֶבֶד יְהוָה). It would then be best understood of the latter-day gathering of Israel from the extremities of the earth: The NASB renders ISAIAH 41:9 thus: “You whom I have taken from the

<sup>7</sup> The LDS Spanish translation is absolutely wonderful and great care was taken in its production. No assumptions should be made, however, about the text itself being more correct or inspired than the KJV.

ends of the earth, And called from its remotest parts And said to you, ‘You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you’” (NASB). This, then, would be a summary of *Rain in Due Season*. The Lord was to *take*, bring back or gather Israel [Ezekiel 36:24; 37:15 ff.] from the *ends of the earth*, even *its remotest parts* [Deuteronomy 30:1–8]. Israel would be charged with helping with this process, especially Ephraim at first with the help of Manasseh. Truly, Israel would be a *servant of the Lord* in this matter. ¶ *And said unto thee, Thou [art] my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away*. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And I have said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I delight in thee, and I will not thrust thee away.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “And said to thee, Thou art my servant I have chosen thee and have not forsaken thee.” ¶ Skinner says: “Note that *Abraham* is called ‘my servant’ in Genesis 26:24 [אַבְרָהָם עֶבְדִּי]; and Psalm 105:6 [אַבְרָהָם עֶבְדִּי], Psalm 105:42 [אַתָּה אַבְרָהָם עֶבְדִּי].” Here in ISAIAH 41:8, we have עֶבְדִּי אַתָּה, *my servant you are*. ¶ Delitzsch writes of the past: “The leading thought, ‘servant of Jehovah,’ which is characteristic of chapters 40–46, and lies at the root of the whole spirit of these addresses, more especially of their Christology, we first meet with here ... On the one hand, Israel is the *servant of Jehovah* [עֶבֶד יְהוָה] by virtue of a divine act ... On the other hand, Israel was the servant of Jehovah, inasmuch as it acted out what Jehovah had made it, partly in reverential worship of this God, and partly in active obedience.” But Israel would play a key role in the latter days, also. ¶ *And not cast thee away*. This was promised to Israel in *Rain in Due Season*. Baltzer<sup>8</sup> notes: “But Leviticus 26 [see Leviticus 26:42, 44], the end of the Holiness Code, justifies the exile on the grounds of the people’s transgressions, and goes on: ‘Yet even then, when they are in the land of their enemies, I have not rejected them (בָּאֵס), or abhorred them (נִעַל), so as to destroy them utterly by breaking my covenant with them; for I Yahweh am their God; I will remember on their behalf the covenant with their forefathers.’” *I have chosen and not rejected you* is also an allusion back to ISAIAH 40:1–2. The proof that Israel was not rejected is that she would once again have a vital role to play in the latter days. Most of the members

<sup>8</sup> Baltzer also has: “Various scholars have noted that the section has rhythmical characteristics. In this relatively short section [ISAIAH 41:8–13], eighteen words end with the second person masculine suffix. In the present MT at least, the ׀ echoes throughout ... It contrasts with the fourfold ׀ of the first person masculine singular suffix (‘my servant’; twice ‘my friend,’ ‘I’). But this is not merely a superficial literary device. The correspondence between the ‘you’ of the servant and the ‘I’ of God is the real theme of the passage.”

of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are direct descendants of Israel (and a few are adopted) and are, beginning with the Prophet Joseph Smith, servants of the Lord.<sup>9</sup>

vv. 10–20. Regarding the verses of comfort in this section, Jenour says: “... may not every believer [liken these] promises to himself? Who can doubt that they were intended for the strengthening and consolation of the church to the end of the world?” Keith considers yet another application: “The language of the 10th verse, which is renewed in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> verses, describes the fears and the deliverances of Israel at last, when all nations shall be gathered against Jerusalem ... It will be in the moment of their utmost extremity that deliverance will come.”

10 ¶ Fear thou not; for I [am] with thee: be not dismayed; for I [am] thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

*Fear thou not; for I [am] with thee: be not dismayed.* The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “Fear not for my Word shall be thy support; be not dismayed.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “Fear not, for I am with thee; be not led astray.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, “Fear not, for I am with thee: turn not aside.” Kay (as does Rawlinson) notes that *I am with thee* [עִמָּךְ-אֲנִי] will “fulfill all that was implied in the name, *Immanu-El* [עִמָּנוּ אֱלֹ].” *Fear not* אַל-תִּירָא. Revelation 1:17 has: “And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.” Young says: “God had once spoken, ‘Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward’ (Genesis 15:1) [and then to Isaac in Genesis 26:24<sup>10</sup>].” Fear and hope cannot co-exist in the mind at the same instance. ¶ *Yeah*, or *surely*, אַף, we have a

<sup>9</sup> Once again, our thoughts go to: “. . . ye are they whom my Father hath given me; ye are my friends” (D&C 84:63). Abraham was foreordained before he was born: “Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born” (Abraham 3:22–23). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose that I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council” *History of the Church*, 6:364.

<sup>10</sup> “And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham’s sake.”

double instance, אַף-עֲזֹרְתִיךָ אַף-תִּמְכָּרְתִּיךָ (*yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee*). President Thomas S. Monson explained that this verse was given as a promise to those who will trust in the Lord.<sup>11</sup> Once we have learned how to pray and hear the comfort that the Lord gives, we need to trust these promises. Here, God tells us **not** to be **dismayed** (אַל-תִּשְׁתַּע). The DBL has שָׁתַע as: “[to] be in a state of great alarm, with a possible focus of discouragement about the future.” ¶ I believe this is one of the most significant lessons Heavenly Father wishes for me to learn: to trust in His reassuring spirit when dark clouds approach or doors close. Since joining the Church I have been able to see His hand in my life. Shortly after joining the Church I wanted to become a high school science teacher. I was asked to write an essay about the most important thing that happened to me when I was a college student as part of my application to enter a credentialing program. I knew that if I wrote about the most important thing that transpired during those years—my joining The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—I would most likely not be accepted into the program. I wrote my testimony and I was not accepted. In the interest of full disclosure, I should say that my grades were not good, either. While that door closed, another opened. In a year I was hired by the University of California where I was able to develop—with the Lord’s help—several models of conflict management and improved worker productivity.<sup>12</sup> As we put our trust in God and refuse to yield to feelings of despair we will experience emotional wellbeing and joy. The Lord always comes through. When people have needed my empathic listening, I often have had things happen in my life to permit me to be more empathetic.<sup>13</sup> Yes, God loves us and knows us and our

<sup>11</sup> Monson, President Thomas S. Monson. *Stand in Holy Places*. Retrieved from LDS.org 18 January 2014.

<sup>12</sup> I cringe at the thought of the pressures that would have been placed upon me to teach science in a way that would have been incompatible with my religious views. While religion need not be afraid of science, for science will eventually conform itself to eternal truth, science is one of many of today’s idols. I have no problem with science as long as it does not contradict what God has taught through His scriptures and holy prophets. My work for the University of California, on the other hand, was guided by the hand of the Lord and permitted me to travel all over the world and especially to return frequently to the country of my birth. This also paved the way for my return to Chile with my wife after retiring.

<sup>13</sup> I have been blessed with amazing health. Yet sometimes we do need to suffer so that we can show empathy for others. In March 2014, I was operated and two benign tumors were found, associated with my salivary glands. The blood in the tube to drain my wound coagulated and within half an hour of coming home that night, I had to return to the hospital for a follow-up operation. I was able to clearly see the merciful hand of the Lord in all of this (I had a wonderful surgeon who was extremely careful not to sever nerves in the first operation and a wonderful second surgeon who was able to go in and

needs intimately. ¶ *For I [am] thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “For I am thy God. I have strengthened thee and helped thee.” God knows of our weaknesses and will strengthen us if we will permit Him to do so. ¶ *Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has קִישׁוֹטִי, *my truth* rather than *my righteousness*.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And secured thee with my just right hand.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And the right hand of my just one hath upheld thee.” ¶ President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: “There are numerous passages in the scriptures referring to the right hand, indicating that it is a symbol of righteousness and was used in the making of covenants.” President Smith quotes this verse and others in teaching that the Sacrament and other ordinances need to—when possible—be partaken off or carried out with the right hand.<sup>14</sup> ¶ It is by the right hand that Peter strengthened the man who had been disabled for a lifetime (Acts 3:1–8). In General Conference today 6 April 2014, Sister Jean A. Stevens spoke about the importance of our reaching out for that hand of comfort and healing. It is not enough for the Savior or others who kindly love us to extend their hand out to us. We must take hold of it.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the Lord’s hands are always stretched toward us in loving invitation (Matthew 23:37b). To Israel the Lord says: “And I will bring you out from the people [or rather, אֲרָצוֹת, *the peoples*, suggestive of *the nations*—GB], and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out” (Ezekiel 20:34).

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11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive<sup>✓</sup> with thee shall perish.

✓ the men of thy strife

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*Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded:* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Behold all thine adversaries shall be ashamed and confounded.”

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clean up and thus permit me to avoid an infection during the second operation), and besides, I had a chance to bear my testimony to the medical staff as I was coming out of my second operation while I was still under the effects of the anesthesia. And He also knows how we can succor each other. When I came back to Church after my operation, young deacon Alan Uriel Martínez approached me and tenderly and empathically told me he understood what I was going through as he had been operated twice himself.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, President. *Answers to Gospel Questions*, p. 153; *Doctrines of Salvation* 3:107–8.

<sup>15</sup> Sister Jean A. Stevens: ‘Fear not I am with thee.’ Sunday Morning General Conference address, 6 April 2014.

Instead of *incensed against thee*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *reproach you* (Lamsa) / *envy thee* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has *fight* instead of *incensed*. While the Lord will comfort those who lean upon God for help, there is no such promise for those who reject Him. ¶ Cowles says: “God will confound and even annihilate the enemies of his people. They are described as having been enraged against Zion as having striven and fought against her; but God will bring them utterly to nought, so that, though sought for, they shall not be found.” ¶ Young says: “By means of an introductory *Behold!* [וְהִנֵּה] the prophet directs attention to his message. The two verbs immediately follow, the first of which may be rendered *they will be ashamed*, and the second *they will be confounded* [וַיִּכְלְמוּ].” Note that in the Hebrew text, these verbs follow immediately after the *Behold!* וְהִנֵּה יִבְשׁוּ וַיִּכְלְמוּ, “Behold, they shall be ashamed and they shall be confounded ...” Leeser preserves the right emphasis: “Behold, ashamed and confounded shall be all that were incensed against thee.” ¶ *They shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “For they shall be as nothing and all thine opponents shall be destroyed.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “They shall be as nothing, and the men shall perish that strive against thee.” All those who contend with thee shall perish. So it is that we read: “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:3).

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12 Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, [even] them that contended with thee: ✓ they that war against thee ✓ shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

✓ the men of thy contention  
 ✓ ✓ the men of thy war

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*Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, [even] them that contended with thee:* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Thou mayst seek but thou shalt not find the men, who through drunkenness will dare to insult thee.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, *those who contend against thee shall not be found*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find the men that resist thee.” Those who fight against the Lord’s children shall not be found anymore. Those Saints who were persecuted, such as the Prophet Joseph Smith, will no longer be contending with the mobs and others who sought their harm: “Traitors and tyrants now fight him in vain” (Praise to the man<sup>16</sup>). ¶ *They that war against thee shall*

<sup>16</sup> William W. Phelps, 1792–1872.

be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “They shall be as nothing; the men that stirred themselves up to make war with thee *shall* be less than nothing.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “For they shall be as mere nothing: and they who war against thee shall be no more.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “They shall be as nothing: and as a thing consumed the men that war against thee.” Alexander notes, as we have previously (see אֵין in ISAIAH 40:17), that “אֵין and אֵין־אֵין strictly denote nonexistence and annihilation.” אֵין is an expression of negation that also means non-existence, emptiness, vacuity (HALOT, Gesenius).

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13 For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

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*For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “For I am the Lord thy God, that will hold thee fast by thy right hand.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “For I am thy God, who have hold of thy right hand.” Instead of *hold*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *strengthen*. The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “For I am the Lord thy God, who take thee by the hand.” ¶ Elder W. Craig Zwick quoted this scripture and observed that we must do our part: “If we will keep the commandments of God and walk hand in hand with Him in His paths, we will go forward with faith and never feel alone. Trust in His promise of eternal life, and allow peace and hope to distill upon you. When we connect with the Author of Peace and with His perfect and redeeming love, then we can come to know the reality of the Lord’s promise [in ISAIAH 41:13].”<sup>17</sup> Note that the Lord offers to hold our right *hand*, which is very important, as it shows that the Prophet Joseph Smith did well in correcting the scriptures, for instance, where Abraham’s servant, incorrectly, entered into a covenant or swore, by putting his hand under Abraham’s thigh (Genesis 24:2, 9; 47:29). Instead, like here, it should be *hand*. The Lord gives us assurances, then, *by taking hold of our right hand* (also see Galatians 2:9, *the right hands of fellowship*). The Lord comes to our rescue. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “Nothing is so much calculated to lead people to forsake sin as to take them by the hand, and watch over them with tenderness. When persons manifest the least kindness and love to me, O what power it has over my mind ...”<sup>18</sup> ¶ *Saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Who saith unto thee, Fear not, my Word *shall be* thy help (or, ‘thy support’).” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And who say to

<sup>17</sup> Elder W. Craig Zwick, *The Lord Thy God Will Hold Thy Hand*, *Ensign* (CR), November 2003, p.34.

<sup>18</sup> *History of the Church* 5:23–24.

thee, Fear not.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “And say to thee: Fear not, I have helped thee.” There is nothing to fear when the Lord extends His hand to us. We must lay hold of it, however.

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14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, [and] ye men<sup>✓</sup> of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

✓ or, few men

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*Fear not, thou worm Jacob, [and] ye men of Israel.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Fear ye not, ye tribes of the house of Jacob, ye seed of Israel.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Jacob, diminutive Israel!” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, for the second clause, “You that are dead of Israel.”

¶ Alexander explains: “The same encouragement is here repeated, but with a direct contrast between Israel’s weakness and the strength of God.” Ibn Ezra suggests: “Israel had been considered by the Babylonians as worms.” Birks says: “This worm must prevail over all the banded strength of idolatrous kingdoms. This dying remnant shall beat into dust the confederacies of the world’s ungodliness ... above all, the time when the Stone shall smite the divided kingdoms of the fourth and latest empire (Daniel 2:34). Then all rule and authority that resists the dominion of Christ will be as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, and the wind of judgment will carry it away for ever.” Regarding *worm*, Cowles says: “‘Not for your sake, be it known unto you, nor for your righteousness; but for my holy name’s sake’ (Compare with Ezekiel 36:32). There is but too much occasion to introduce this idea in connection with God’s exceeding great and precious promises, lest his people should assume that their own personal merits lie at the foundation of God’s discriminating mercies toward them.” ¶ One can always count on Kay to bring forth brilliant ideas and scripture links: “To accomplish that work the Redeemer Himself became ‘as a worm, and no man’ (Psalms 22:6<sup>19</sup>).” ¶ We here have an allusion to weakness—whether in numbers or strength as in: “That the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers” (D&C 1:23). Some of the exegetes have suggested that the mountains (ISAIAH 41:15) may well represent the powerful. In D&C we also have: “The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones” (D&C 1:19a). As members of the Lord’s Church we can only be an instrument in His hand if we retain the humble qualities of the weak and the simple. ¶ *I will*

<sup>19</sup> “But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people” (Psalm 22:6). Westermann suggests that we also look at Psalm 119:141.

help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer [נִצְּלֶךָ], the Holy One of Israel. The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “My Word shall be your help (or, ‘thy support’), saith the Lord, and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “I have helped thee, saith thy God, who redeemeth thee, Israel.” ¶ Alexander suggests: “The word נִצְּלֶךָ, *redeemer*, would suggest to a Hebrew reader the ideas of a near kinsman (Leviticus 25:24, 25) and of deliverance from bondage by the payment of a ransom ... [as accomplished by the Son of God].” The Lord is our נִצְּלֶךָ, all other instances being but a type of the deliverance from sin and from perdition through the infinite atonement and expiatory sacrifice of our Lord, Savior and Redeemer, even Jesus Christ.

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15 Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: ♣ thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat [them] small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.

♣ mouths

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*Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth:* The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “Behold I have made thee like the wheels of a wain<sup>20</sup> bruising to pieces a brood of pigeons (Brenton, ‘saw-shaped threshing wheels of a wagon,’ NETS, ‘new threshing wheels of a cart, new and saw shaped’).” In the Peshitta (Ⓢ) it then adds that this threshing instrument *tears and crushes*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓡ) has, “I have made thee as a new thrashing wain, with teeth like a saw.” The Talmud tradition (Seder Nezikin, Avodah Zarah 24b) has this related to goats who can then thresh the mountains. “What are morigim<sup>21</sup>?— Ulla said, It is a ‘turbel bed’, And what is a ‘turbel bed’? — Rab Judah said, A ‘goat with hooks’, wherewith the threshers thresh. Said Rabbi Joseph, What is the Scriptural [evidence]? It is written, Behold, I make thee a new morag<sup>22</sup> having sharp teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains” (Talmud, Soncino). ¶ Alexander says: “The image presented is [that of a] down-trodden worm reducing hills to powder, the essential idea being that of a weak and helpless object overcoming the most disproportionate obstacles.” Cowles says in part: “The ancient threshing sledge was built of planks of which

<sup>20</sup> “A wagon or cart” (Oxford).

<sup>21</sup> מוֹרִיגִים, Gesenius explains, “Spanish, *trillo*, an instrument of husbandry for rubbing out corn on a threshing floor. It consists of three or four wooden cylinders armed with stones or iron, and joined together as a sledge; it is drawn by cattle over the corn, to separate the grains from the ear.”

<sup>22</sup> מוֹרָג

two or three might be attached together in the manner of a stone-boat, with the forward ends raised, and the bottom set with sharp pieces of stone or iron, projecting downward to cut the straw and beat out the grain ... Here the bold figure makes it thresh the mountains and beat them fine as dust, and then the people fan their threshed-out grain and the Lord’s whirlwind scatters chaff and grain alike to the four winds—a clean and terrible destruction; in view of which the Lord’s people exult in him as their strength in the day of battle.” It is a day of battle for human souls. Ironside suggests, “The expression concerning Israel that God will make them a ‘sharp threshing instrument with teeth,’ points on to the great harvest of the last days when a remnant of Israel restored to the Lord will be used of Him to bring many down before Him in repentance and lead them to put faith in the message that they proclaim.” Jenour says: “It seems to intimate generally the gradual overthrow, by the instrumentality of the church, of all false religions and their upholders, who are compared to *mountains* and *hills*, which mean therefore idolatrous princes and governments.” ¶ *Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat [them] small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Thou shalt slay the nations, thou shalt consume the kingdoms, thou shalt make *them* like chaff.” The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “Thou indeed shalt grind mountains and reduce hills to small pieces, and make them like dust.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓡ) has, “Thou shalt thrash the mountains, and break them in pieces: and shalt make the hills as chaff.” ¶ Keith says: “The instrumentality of Israel in the infliction of the judgments of heaven upon the nations of the world, here represented by mountains, is often asserted. The very same figure is employed in another instance, in reference to the same events, ‘Arise and thrash, daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass (in allusion to the dragging of the thrashing machine by cattle): and thou shalt beat in pieces many people’ (Micah 4:13).” It speaks of the gathering of Israel.

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16 Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, [and] shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

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*Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them:* The Targum (Ⓢ) has for the last clause, “And my Word shall scatter them as the whirlwind scattereth the chaff.” The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “And thou shalt winnow them; and a wind shall take them up, and a whirlwind shall sweep them away.” The Talmud tradition (Seder Nezikin,

Avodah Zarah 44a), in speaking about the scattering, has: “It is an expression for scattering, as Rabbi Joseph translated the word in the passage, Thou shalt fan them and the wind shall carry them away, and we translate it: ‘Thou shalt winnow them and a wind will disperse them!’” (Talmud, Soncino). ¶ Whitehouse says: “The metaphor is continued: ‘Thou shalt winnow (literally, scatter) them, and a wind shall carry them away.’ This was the next stage in the agricultural operations. After the threshing of the corn, by the threshing-sledge driven over it, came the winnowing process. ‘The bruised corn-ears were thrown up on wooden shovels when a moderate wind was blowing. The wind carried away the chaff from the threshing-floor while the heavier grains remained behind’ (*Hebrew Antiquities*, p. 92). This metaphor of the bruising and the scattering describes Yahweh’s treatment of the enemies of Israel. We have a similar use of this agricultural metaphor in Jeremiah 15:7 [‘And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land; I will bereave them of children, I will destroy my people since they return not from their ways.’].” The metaphor is frequently used to describe the separation of the wheat from the chaff, spiritually speaking. ¶ *And thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, [and] shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “But as for thee, thou shalt rejoice in the Word of the Lord, thou shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “But thou shalt be gladdened in the sanctuaries of Israel.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, for the second clause, “In the Holy One of Israel thou shalt be joyful.” ¶ Keith well says: “The conversion of the nation to God will follow or accompany these doings—they will then rejoice in him. The signal deliverance then vouchsafed to Israel will be blessed for the removal of the veil from their eyes at last.” I love to rejoice in the Holy One of Israel, even Jesus the Christ. Tears stream down my face with joy and gratitude that I have this testimony of Christ. The two things I am most grateful in my life are my testimony of Jesus Christ and the knowledge that God *hears* [עָנָה] my prayers (see ISAIAH 41:17). These words about glorying or boasting in *the Holy One of Israel*, בְּקִדּוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּתְהַלֵּל are further developed in Jeremiah:

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִתְהַלֵּל חָכֵם בְּחֻמְתּוֹ  
וְאֵלֵי-יִתְהַלֵּל הַגִּבּוֹר בְּגִבּוֹרָתוֹ אֱלֹהֵי-יִתְהַלֵּל  
עָשִׂיר בְּעֶשְׂרוֹ:  
כִּי אִם-בְּזֹאת יִתְהַלֵּל הַמִּתְהַלֵּל הַשָּׂבֵל וַיִּדַע  
אוֹתִי כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד מִשְׁפָּט וְצַדִּיקָה  
בְּאֶרֶץ כִּי-בְאֵלֶּה חִפְצָתִי נְאֻם-יְהוָה:

“Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man *glory* in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man *glory* in his might, let not the rich man *glory* in his riches: But let him that *glorior* *glory* in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 9:23–24, in *Biblia Hebraica, Jeremia* 9:22–23).

17 [When] the poor and needy seek water, and [there is] none, [and] their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “The poor and the needy long after instruction (or, ‘doctrine’), as the thirsty after water, but do not find it; their spirit faints in affliction. I, the Lord, will hear their prayer; I, the God of Israel, will not cast them off.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And the poor and the needy shall exult with joy: for when they shall seek water and there shall be none, and their tongue is parched with thirst; I the Lord their God, I the God of Israel will hear and will not forsake them.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) renders *been dry* instead of *faileth*. ¶ Rashi, in Rabbi Rosenberg correctly explains that this verse is similar to Amos 8:11, at it refers to the latter days. Rashi adds (see R. Rosenberg, who also mentions *Shabbath* 138b,<sup>23</sup> *Midrash Psalms* 63:2): “He shall prepare for them bread and water and cause His Shechinah and His spirit to rest in the mouth of their prophets.” ¶ This verse is a promise that the Lord will not abandon Israel and will also cause Zion to flourish like a rose. Horsley explains of Isaiah 41:17–19: “The images used in these verses are consecrated by the perpetual usage of the prophets to denote the spiritual blessings and graces of the Gospel.” ¶ *I the LORD will hear them.* Alexander says: “עָנָה is not to hear in general, but to hear prayer in a favourable sense, to answer it.” This is because of the new covenant wherein God will again be the God of Israel, and the children of Jacob His people.

18 I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will

<sup>23</sup> “For Rab said, ‘Our Rabbis taught . . . The Torah is destined to be forgotten in Israel, as it is said, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And it is said, And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. “The word of the Lord” means . . . prophecy” (Talmud, Mas. Shabbath 138b).

make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

*I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys:* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “I will gather their captives from the midst of the nations, and I will lead them in the right path; and I will open for them rivers in torrent-beds, and fountains in the midst of the valleys.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “But will open rivers on the mountains, and fountains in the midst of plains.” Instead of *high places*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has the equivalent of רִיב *mountain* (Lamsa) or *mount* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “I will open rivers in the high hills, and fountains in the midst of the plains.” ¶ Orelli says: “Physical and spiritual here pass into each other ... hereafter it will enjoy, even in inhospitable paths, inwardly and outwardly divine fulness of blessing, as to which it is to be noted, that already such a recreating even of the most barren tracts of its land was often promised the nation in reference to the time of its gracious restoration.” ¶ The opening of rivers in high places seems an allusion to the river that will come out of the House of the Lord in Jerusalem—a river associated with the healing of the Dead Sea.<sup>24</sup> Keith explains: “Another consequent, or concomitant, of the foregoing events, is the restored fertility of the land. That this description is to be understood literally, and not of spiritual blessings, which are often represented by water, although these will then also be bestowed, appears from the 19<sup>th</sup> verse, which will not bear such an application.” Rashi (in Rabbi Rosenberg) suggests that the rivers also stand for the revelatory power of prophecy that will be manifest in the last days. Rabbi Rosenberg suggests we return to look at the Talmudic note we quoted in ISAIAH 41:7. Here is an additional quote of interest: “. . . for Rab [Rashi] said: ‘The Torah

<sup>24</sup> “Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed” (Ezekiel 47:1-8).

is destined to be forgotten in Israel, because it is said, Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful: now, I do not know what this wonder is, but when it is said, Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a wonderful work among this people, even a wonderful work and a wonder [and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish], it follows that this wonder refers to Torah.” The context makes it clear that *Torah* means not just the *law*, or the five books of Moses. There also will be *Torah* תּוֹרָה, or *instruction*. For more on this acceptance, see Gesenius, HALOT, BDB, DBL and other lexicons. In ISAIAH 42:4, the children of Israel wait to receive the law or instruction from the Lord. This is to be understood as renewed revelation from on high. ¶ And this has been fulfilled beginning with the day a young Ephraimite boy went to the woods to pray. In Joseph’s own words we read: “I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me ... When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*” (JS-History 1:16–17). It is at this point where תּוֹרָה has once again poured out upon the earth and the gathering of Israel begun in earnest as spoken about in Deuteronomy 30 and Ezekiel 37. Wordsworth similarly suggests that this verse is made manifest: “By the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit on all nations (ISAIAH 30:25; 35:6; 44:3).” ¶ Elder LeGrand Richards said of Isaiah: “He saw the water flow down from the high places where we have reservoired it in these mountain fastnesses for summer’s use.”<sup>25</sup> Besides its application to the Saints lodging in the Rocky Mountains, this verse speaks about the land of Israel. George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl wrote: “On December 9, 1917, General Allenby took possession of Jerusalem, and on November 2, the same year, Balfour issued his famous letter to Baron Rothschild, in which he stated that, ‘His Majesty’s government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.’ Ten nations, including the United States, gave official endorsement to that policy. ... The barren soil has been covered with trees, and herds and flocks have found feed on the hill sides (ISAIAH 41:18–20).”<sup>26</sup> Pools of water, especially in high places, as has been mentioned, can be applied to revelation and inspiration from God. Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained in part: “It will be but a similitude

<sup>25</sup> Elder LeGrand Richards, A Testimony, *Ensign* (CR), November 1980, p.63.

<sup>26</sup> George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon, The World War Predicted*, edited and arranged by Philip C. Reynolds, 7 vols., 4:, p.263–264.

of the living waters then being poured out upon the Lord's people."<sup>27</sup> ¶ *I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has **צָרָה וְנָאָה**, *thirsty* instead of **צָרָה** *dry land* in the Masoretic text (Ⓜ).<sup>28</sup> The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “I will turn the wilderness into watery fens (Brenton, ‘I will make the desert pools of water’), and with streams refresh the thirsty ground.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “I will turn the desert into pools of waters, and the impassable land into streams of waters.” ¶ Once again, water is used to describe the gift of revelation as well as gifts from on high.

19 I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, [and] the pine, and the box tree together:

The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “And I will plant in the dry wilderness the cedar and box, the myrtle and cypress and elm.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has *olive tree* instead of *oil tree*. ¶ The blessings that will accompany the gathering will be spiritual and physical. Cowles says: “He plants all the choicest trees in the most unlikely situations, where you would least of all expect them. With trees [fertility, verdure and beauty return]—God makes these extraordinary superhuman changes that all men may know that this is his almighty hand, working to new-create where needs be, for the relief, comfort and joy of his trusting people.”

20 That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “That they may see and know, and consider and understand at once that the hand of the Lord hath done these things; even what the Holy One of Israel hath pointed out.” ¶ To **see**, and **know**, and **consider** and **understand** form a most forceful expression of comfort that a believer may put on the Holy One of Israel (**וְיָדְעוּ וְיִשְׂמְנוּ וְיִשְׁכַּחוּ**). Alexander says: “**וְיִשְׂמְנוּ**, they may place, seems to be an elliptical expression for **וְיִשְׂמְנוּ לָב** may place their

<sup>27</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ*, p.204–206.

<sup>28</sup> Halfway through verse 18 to the end of the chapter, Pauli's Targum (Ⓢ) translation is missing. For the rest of this chapter I lean mostly on Stenning and Chilton as well as on the Aramaic text in the CAL Targums.

**heart**, i.e. apply their mind, or give attention.” LHI translates it as *take to heart*. Jenour says: “Here the reason why God had predicted these things is assigned. It was, that men, before ignorant of him, might see and know, by the accomplishment of these prophecies, that he, by whose inspiration they were uttered, is the only true God.” This rings a bell to us as Latter-day Saints that realize that the Book of Mormon was specially preserved for us, in the latter days. Westermann says: “Here the verb [**בְּרָאָה**] has the overtone, inherent from the beginning, of miraculous new **creation**.” Indeed, **and the Holy One of Israel hath created it**,

**וְקָדַשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרָאָה**. It seems to bring forth the time spoken of by Jeremiah when a new heart<sup>29</sup> shall be put into us: “But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; **and will be their God**, and they shall be **my people**. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:33–34, emphasis added).

vv. 21–29. Jenour says: “Jehovah, having proved his divinity by the prediction of future events; and having, as it were by the way, addressed his people in terms of consolation, now turns to the idolaters supposed to be assembled before him, and calls upon them to bring forth their idols, that they in their turn might speak and foretel something [that would] take place immediately, or more distant events, which would not happen for a long time: or, if they confessed themselves unable to do either of these, to shew by the performance of some action, either good or evil, that they at least possessed some power. But, in answer to this appeal, the idols can neither say nor do anything, and are therefore pronounced vain and unprofitable.” Keith here goes beyond the nothingness of the idols to the nothingness of man—unless man leans upon God.

21 ¶ Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong [reasons], saith the King of Jacob.

✓ Cause to come near

The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “The trial of you is near, saith the Lord God; your councils are nigh at hand, saith the king of Jacob.” The BPE (Ⓢ), instead of *your strong [reasons]* has *your arguments*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ)

<sup>29</sup> Also see Psalm 51:10.

has, “Bring your cause near, saith the Lord: bring hither, if you have any thing to allege, saith the King of Jacob.” ¶ Birks has: “The controversy with the nations is resumed again, under the same figure of a trial or assize.<sup>30</sup> The idolaters are called to state their own case, and bring forward their strongest reasons, to disprove God’s charge against them of blindness and folly. The appeal turns from God’s power to His prescient wisdom, in which these idols, their priests, and their worshippers, have no share.” ¶ *King of Jacob*, מֶלֶךְ יַעֲקֹב. Nägelsbach explains: “Jehovah is often called King of the chosen people (compare on ISAIAH 43:15); but the expression *King of Jacob* occurs only here ... In ISAIAH 41:22 the LORD addresses Israel, claiming them for His side, and identifying His and their cause.” ¶ Elder Bruce R. McConkie gave us an exquisite application for this scripture: “On the one hand we are obligated and required to know the doctrines of the Church. We are to treasure up the words of eternal life. We are to reason as intelligently as we are able. We are to use every faculty and capacity with which we are endowed to proclaim the message of salvation and to make it intelligent to ourselves and to our Father’s other children. But after we have done that, and also in the process of doing it, we are obligated to bear testimony—to let the world know and our associate members of the Church know—that in our hearts, by the revelation of the Holy Spirit to our souls, we know of the truth and divinity of the work and of the doctrines that we teach. Now let me, if I may, take a classical illustration from the ancient records of how this is done. Peter and his associates had the same obligation for their day that we have for ours: to carry the message of salvation to the ends of the earth. I suppose Peter read and taught the revelations that Isaiah and the prophets gave about Christ and his gospel. He reasoned with the people about them. He followed the divine counsel, ‘Come now, and let us reason together ...’ (ISAIAH 1:18). He obeyed the divine decree, ‘... bring forth your strong reasons’ (ISAIAH. 41: 21). But he did something more than that. After he had taught the doctrines and after he had reasoned, he bore a personal witness of the truth and divinity of what he was presenting to his fellowmen; and the Lord prepared him to do just that by giving him spiritual experiences, by letting the power of the Holy Spirit rest upon him.”<sup>31</sup>

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22 Let them bring [them] forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they [be], that we may

<sup>30</sup> Judicial inquest (Webster).

<sup>31</sup> Elder Bruce R. McConkie, Upon Judea’s Plains, *Ensign* (CR), July 1973, p.27.

consider them, ✓ and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.

✓ set our heart upon them

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*Let them bring [them] forth, and shew us what shall happen:* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Let them draw near and tell you what will happen.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Let them come, and tell us all things that are to come.” ¶ Cowles writes: “The single point here is a challenge to produce a case of real prophecy. It may be a prediction previously made, but of events then appearing or about to appear; or a new prophecy first brought out at that time.” ¶ People in the latter-days were challenged to come up with a prophecy to equal the least of those found in the Doctrine and Covenants: “Your eyes have been upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and his language you have known, and his imperfections you have known; and you have sought in your hearts knowledge that you might express beyond his language; this you also know. Now, seek ye out of the Book of Commandments, even the least that is among them, and appoint him that is the most wise among you; Or, if there be any among you that shall make one alike unto it, then ye are justified in saying that ye do not know that they are true” (D&C 67:5–7). A similar challenge is made by Allah regarding the Quran (Hud 11:13; Yunus 10:38), about coming up with ten surahs (i.e., chapters) or even one. ¶ *Let them shew the former things, what they [be], that we may consider them.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Or such things as these before they come to pass. Tell us that we may apply our understanding.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Tell us the former things what they were: and we will set our heart upon them.” ¶ Barnes says: “Let the idols, or the worshippers of idols, bring forth the evidences of their divine nature and power. Or more probably it means, ‘let them draw near or approach.’” ¶ *And know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And that we may know the final issue, and the train of events leading to it.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, for the second half, “And tell us the things that are to come.” Faussett, leaning on Maurer, has: “Show what former predictions the idols have given, that we may compare the event (‘latter end’) with them; or give new prophecies (‘declare things to come’) (ISAIAH 42:9).” The idols are challenged to bring forth any sort of prophecy, form the most basic.

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23 Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye [are] gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold [it] together.

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*Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye [are] gods:* The Stenning Targum translation (Ⓒ) has, “Declare the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know whether ye are serving idols wherein is any profit.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “Tell us, announce to us the things in successive train to the issue; and we will acknowledge that you are gods.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, for the second clause, “And we shall know that ye are gods.” ¶ Elder B. H. Roberts beautifully testified: “Such the challenge of God to those who questioned the things that he had done in Israel in ancient times; that doubted that he had made Israel; and now, looking into the future, doubted if God would bring forth Israel’s deliverer, the Messiah. God was saying to these: Produce your cause, let us reason together; ‘show us things that are to come, that we may know that ye are gods.’ God’s challenge to their unbelief, makes it clear that the future, the knowledge of it, belongs to God alone, and to his servants to whom he reveals it; not to those who question his work, or challenge his power. ‘Prophecy’ or power to penetrate into the future, is not given to Satan or to his emissaries. For them that veil will not part. ‘For prophecy came not in olden time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’ So now, prophecy, knowledge of the future, is of God, and of his servants to whom he reveals it. Prophecy, in a way, is history reversed. Prophecy is a fore-telling of that which shall be; History, an after-telling, events that have been.”<sup>32</sup> Elder Parley P. Pratt suggested, “Says the prophet to the idols, ‘Tell us what shall be, that we may know that ye are gods.’”<sup>33</sup> ¶ Cowles has: “The challenge, ‘Do good, or do evil,’ we must consider as addressed to idol gods. Let them really show that they do anything, good or evil; and they shall have all credit for it. The implication here—affirmed in the strongest form in ISAIAH 41:24—is that they are mere nothings, utterly powerless for any result, even the least possible, good or evil.—The word ‘dismayed,’ (here as in ISAIAH 41:10) has the meaning of *looking about* on all sides.” ¶ I testify that Latter-day Prophets, Seers and Revelators have the gift of prophecy and prophecy to the whole world as directed by the Lord. Members receive revelation and inspiration for themselves. On occasion, members may receive revelation through the *tender*

<sup>32</sup> Roberts, B. H. *Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. 6 vols. 1930. Reprint. Orem, Utah: Sonos Publishing Inc., 1991, p. 550.

<sup>33</sup> 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* By Elder Parley P. Pratt. 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), p. 27.

*mercies of the Lord* for their own edification.<sup>34</sup> Joseph Smith the Prophet taught that “No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator.”<sup>35</sup> Although most revelations are driven by a question or a request, this is not always the case. Many scholars deny the unity of Isaiah simply because they do not believe that God can reveal the future to man; and that Isaiah was too accurate about the future. Thus, they argue, someone else wrote ISAIAH 40 ff. One well-known present-day Rabbi and university biblical professor declared that you have to begin exegesis from the perspective of an atheist. At least he was willing to admit it on the record, and I heard him say it. The Savior warned: “Yea, wo unto him that shall deny the revelations of the Lord, and that shall say the Lord no longer worketh by revelation, or by prophecy, or by gifts, or by tongues, or by healings, or by the power of the Holy Ghost!” (3 Nephi 29:6).

¶ *Yea, do good or do evil,* אַף־יִשְׁכַּחוּ וְיִתְרַעוּ that we may be dismayed, and behold [it] together. The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “Confer favours and inflict punishments, and we will pay respect and see at once.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, “Do ye also good or evil, if you can: and let us speak, and see together.” ¶ Of course the idols were no more able to do good or evil than to prophesy of something good or bad. ¶ Alexander says: “The Hebrews constantly employing *and* where *or* in English seems essential to the sense ... Most interpreters retain the idiomatic meaning of the same expressions elsewhere, namely, that of doing anything whatever, good or bad (see Jeremiah 10:5, Zephaniah 1:12).” Westermann cleverly suggests: “Do something, good or evil, so that we bow down and feel dread.” Nägelsbach calls the clause אַף־יִשְׁכַּחוּ וְיִתְרַעוּ a “proverbial expression.” ¶ *And be dismayed,* וְיִנְשָׁתָעוּ from שָׁתַע.

<sup>34</sup> I had one such experience in 1998. I feel that since the event has transpired, I may share it here. Elder Travis Tuttle and Elder Andrew Propst were taken hostage for a ransom, when they were serving as LDS missionaries in Samara, Russia, in March 1998. I wrote in my journal: “Two Elders were abducted in Russia last Wednesday. It came out in the local paper Friday morning. When I read the information to Linda she was quite shaken and filled with empathy for the missionaries and for their families. There was much prayer on their behalf around the world. Saturday night, as I was ready to go to bed, after having said my kneeling prayers, I heard the Spirit: ‘The missionaries will be released tomorrow.’ I wondered if that meant my tomorrow or if I would find out tomorrow (Sunday). Sunday morning, while I was working translating a patriarchal blessing for a friend in our ward, Linda came in all excited to tell me the Elders had been freed. Linda followed the whole event very closely, by monitoring papers on the Web etc. Later on that day, Linda came in crying as she saw an interview of the parents of one of the missionaries. The mother, according to Linda, kept asking her son if he was Okay. ‘I don’t have to wait ‘till Mother’s Day to talk to you?’ the mother had asked in disbelief” [Journal entry, 23 March 1998].

<sup>35</sup> Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6:58.

Baltzer suggests: “The reaction that must be meant could be described as *stupor*, a word that can cover fear, awe, astonishment, and paralysis.”

24 Behold, ye [are] of nothing, <sup>✓</sup> and your work of nought: <sup>✓</sup> an abomination [is he that] chooseth you.

- ✓ or, worse than nothing
- ✓ ✓ or, worse than a viper

The Stenning Targum (Ⓣ) translation has, “wherein ye take pleasure” rather than “chooseth you.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “That wherever you are thence is your operation. They have chosen you an abomination from the earth.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Behold, you are of nothing, and your work of that which hath no being: he that hath chosen you is an abomination.” ¶ McFadyen says: “A dead silence follows the challenge. The gods have nothing to say; therefore they are of nothing, nonentities, not gods at all.”

25 I have raised up [one] from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as [upon] mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.

The Targum (Ⓣ) is explicit about making this *one from the north* a מֶלֶךְ, or king. Rather than *call upon my name*, Chilton (Ⓣ) has “I will make him mighty by my name,” and Stenning (Ⓣ) “I will make him strong in my name.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “But I have raised up that one from the north, and that other from the risings of the sun; they shall be called by my name: let the Archons come, and as the clay of the potter— even as a potter treadeth clay so shall you be trampled down.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come from the rising of the sun: he shall call upon my name, and he shall make princes to be as dirt, and as the potter treading clay.”

¶ Whitehouse says about קָרָא בְשֵׁמִי: “calles upon my name” is the ordinary Hebrew phrase for ‘invoke’; cf. Genesis 4:26 [הוֹתֵל לְקָרָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה] ‘then began men to call upon the name of the LORD’].” Many exegetes make much of this chapter, and certainly this verse, about Cyrus. Alexander explains it: “[The passage] affords a remarkable example of prophetic foresight. The act of calling on the name of Jehovah is commonly regarded as an allusion to the profession of the true religion, or at least the recognition of Jehovah as the true God, on the part of Cyrus (Ezra 1:2).” Birks has: “The change from the past to the future tense is ...

to teach that this coming of Cyrus, though future, is as sure as if already past. The promise ‘he shall call upon my name’ is the counterpart to ISAIAH 45:3–4, ‘I have called thee by thy name.’ ... The Allwise God here calls Cyrus by his name, long before his birth; and Cyrus owns, in his turn, the Power which has exalted and honoured him. In his decree he calls Him by His own proper name, ‘Jehovah, the God of Israel, He is the God, Whose house is in Jerusalem.’” The Lord prophecies of such notable future events; the idols are left speechless.

26 Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, [He is] righteous? yea, [there is] none that sheweth, yea, [there is] none that declareth, yea, [there is] none that heareth your words.

*Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, [He is] righteous?* The Targum (Ⓣ) translations render, instead of “[He is] righteous?” the expression “It is true” as a question (Stenning) and as an exclamation (Chilton). The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “Who now can tell these things from the beginning, that we may know, even these things before hand: that we may say, The prediction is true.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has *and from time of old* instead of *and beforetime*. ¶ Ibn Ezra says that here צָדִיק means *correct* (as compared to false) rather than *righteous*. HALOT likewise gives as one acceptance “1. of a thing which is examined and found to be in order: just: —a. וְנִאֲמָר צָדִיק we say, ‘It is correct’ [as in ISAIAH 41<sup>26</sup>].” ¶ *Yea, [there is] none that sheweth, yea, [there is] none that declareth, yea, [there is] none that heareth your words.* The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “There is none who predicteth, nor doth any one hear your words.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Thou art just. ¶ Keith says: “The tone of irony is here resumed.” The Lord asks why there is silence.

27 The first [shall say] to Zion, Behold, behold them: and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.

*The first [shall say] to Zion, Behold, behold them:* The Stenning Targum translation (Ⓣ) has, “The words of comfort that the prophets prophesied aforetime concerning Zion, behold, they have come to pass.” Chilton renders it “*The words of consolation which the prophets prophesied from the first to Zion, behold they come [to pass].*” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “I will first give

notice to Sion.” For the first clause, the Peshitta (S) explains that these things are important for Zion. The Douay-Rheims (D) has, for the second clause, “Behold they are here.” ¶ Cowles explains: “The reader will scarcely get the sense of this verse unless he considers that *‘the first’* is taken from ISAIAH 41:4, ‘I the Lord, *the first.*’ ... The sense therefore is not, I was the first to make this prediction; but [rather that Christ is the Alpha and Omega.]” ¶ *And I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.* The LXX (G) reads, “And I will comfort Jerusalem on the way.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “And to Jerusalem I will give an evangelist.” Cowles suggests this is intimately tied to ISAIAH 40:9.

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28 For I beheld, and [there was] no man; even among them men, and [there was] no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word.

✓ return

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*For I beheld, and there was no man; even among men.* The Stenning Targum (T) translation has, “And it is revealed before me that (lit. *and*) there is no man whose works are good.” The LXX (G) reads, “For of the nations behold there is none, and of the idols none giveth warning.” The Peshitta (S) renders it something like, “I observed that there was none who could meditate upon these things.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “And I saw, and there was no one even among them to consult.” ¶ It is clear from the JST textual correction that it was not only the idols who were left speechless, but also the men who leaned upon them. ¶ *And there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word.* The Stenning Targum (T) translation has, “And of these that (lit. *and*) there is no one that giveth counsel: and I asked them, *to see* if they would answer a word,” while Chilton has, “Among these there is no counsellor. I asked them, *if only* they would give an answer!” The LXX (G) reads, “And should I ask them, Whence are you? They could not make me any answer.” The Peshitta (S) renders it something like, “Nor that I could ask and receive an answer.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Or who, when I asked, could answer a word.” ¶ And indeed, no answer would be forthcoming. All falsehood—whether it comes from philosophy, science or false religion—will fall before the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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29 Behold, they [are] all vanity; their works [are] nothing: their molten images [are] wind and confusion.

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*Behold, they [are] all vanity.* The LXX (G) reads, “For are these they who made you? They are indeed those who vainly lead you astray.” The Peshitta (S) has “Behold, they are all nothing.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Behold they are all in the wrong.” ¶ Returning to the idols again, the Lord makes it clear that they have nothing positive to contribute to the conversation. Cowles notes: “The English version seems to assume that the Lord has looked among the heathen gods for some wise man to give counsel or aid, but finds none; and assigns this as a reason for what he is said in the verse previous to have done. A closer rendering will much improve the sense: ‘I will look’ (i.e., once more, to give the idol gods yet another trial), ‘but there is no one’ [to attempt it]; ‘even of them all, there is none to speak wisdom.’ The whole verse is remarkably elliptical. The last clause seems to mean; I will ask them yet again, and [perhaps] they will give back a word.” ¶ *Their works [are] nothing:* The Peshitta (S) has *their works are in vain* (BPE) / *their works are vanity* (Lamsa). The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “And their works are vain.” ¶ *Their molten images [are] wind* [𐤒𐤓𐤓] *and confusion* [𐤒𐤓𐤓]. The Stenning Targum (T) translation has, “Plunder and destruction are *the subject of* their thoughts.” The Peshitta (S) has *their works are wind and vanity* (BPE) / *their images are wind and vanity* (Lamsa). The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Their idols are wind and vanity.” The word for *wind* (𐤒𐤓𐤓) in this instance is equivalent to the expression *hot air*. That is, nothing but empty and vain words. Cowles has: “But no; not the first word can be elicited from these senseless gods, even by the most reasonable call, the fairest opportunity, the most pressing exigency, or the most caustic sarcasm. They are utter vanity, mere nothings. Their molten images are only wind—void and empty as old chaos. The word rendered ‘*confusion*’ is the same that Moses applies to chaos (Genesis 1:2) [𐤒𐤓𐤓, *without form*, KJV—GB].” A FINAL NOTE: Many suggest that this and other chapters that speak of Cyrus were written after-the-fact, to which Birks says: “Those who seek to degrade these chapters into forgeries after Cyrus had arisen and prospered, only range themselves, in this great controversy, side by side with the idolatrous heathen of ISAIAH’s days.” Birks chastises the critics: “The whole description is true, not only in reference to these old heathen idolaters, but to heathenized critics in modern times, who see only forgeries after the event in these Divine prophecies.”

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