
Isaiah 43

The glory of the gathering of Israel is announced. Even though Israel will face adversities, she will not be left alone. In the last days, Israel shall be converted and leave spiritual Babylon. The legal or court scenes are resumed, where the Lord challenges idols or anyone to declare the future as He has declared it. The Lord's leading Israel out of Egypt is shown as a type of His leading latter-day converts out of Babylon and into Zion. Despite all these things that the Lord will do for His people, Israel shows ingratitude. After we turn back to the Lord, He will blot out our transgressions. There are instances of the *prophetic past*, or the writing of a matter as if it had already come to pass (although several names are given to this form of syntax). Much of Isaiah 43 is rephrased in Isaiah 44.

vv. 1-7. Once again, the Lord wishes to comfort Israel, whom He has called to a special work. Although Israel will face adversities, she will never be alone. The Lord has loved Israel. The gathering of Israel from every quarter of the earth is once again announced.

1 ¶ BUT now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called [thee] by thy name; thou [art] mine.

*BUT now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee.*¹ The LXX (Θ) reads, “Still however thus saith the Lord, the God who made thee Jacob, and who formed thee, Israel! fear not. Because I

¹ Baltzer makes some interesting comparisons between what he calls the installation of Israel and the installation of the Prophet Jeremiah: “Here again, in my view, elements in the installation accounts of prophets are again comparable. This may be demonstrated from the installation of Jeremiah. (1) The vocation oracle in Jeremiah 1:5 declares expressly that Jeremiah has been chosen and created by God. It is a salvation saying that is directly related to the prophetic office. Creation is the justification for the right of ownership. Against this background, the reference to creation in Isaiah 43:1 would not seem to be fortuitous. (2) An essential element in the installation is the ‘word of encouragement.’ In Jeremiah 1:8 this runs: ‘Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you.’ This agrees with the present text right down to the wording. The fear is not a numinous fear. It is the fear of enemies. This becomes clear through the repetition of the word of encouragement in Jeremiah 1:19 ... (3) Words of encouragement often include extremely vivid comparisons. That does not mean that the dangers are any less concrete. Yahweh makes of Jeremiah ‘a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall, against the whole land.’ This is a way of promising him that ‘they will fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, says Yahweh, to deliver you’ (Jeremiah 1:19). Yahweh himself protects the one who enters his service. He confers immunity on that one. In the present text, danger is described through the elements of water and fire.”

have redeemed thee.” Cowles writes about **יָעַתָּה**: “The introductory words, ‘**But now**,’ propose to enter more fully into the relations between God and his chosen yet inconstant and very imperfect people. God would not have Israel fear the final issue of those afflictions which will befall her. He created and formed her, which means that he has chosen the posterity of Abraham and has made the nation of Israel all that she is in the line of moral worth and of peculiar honor as his chosen people. Therefore she ought to trust her Lord to determine all her future.” Cowles has: “‘Redeemed,’ refers to the consecration of the first born to God and the special redemption required by the Mosaic Law in their case (see Exodus 13:13, and Numbers 3:11-13).” Such redemption, of course, is a type of that expiatory sacrifice offered by our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Speaking of *created thee*, **בְּרָאָה** (root, **בָּרָא**), Whitehouse coincides with the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith: “‘Create’ (**בָּרָא**), however, which is employed in the first creation-story, is simply used to express *God’s* work in constructing the universe. The assumption that it signifies to create *out of nothing* is wholly gratuitous, and has been the unfortunate cause of many difficulties, and is obviously an impossible meaning here. The word for ‘create’ no more expresses this than the word for ‘form.’ The latter verb is really the term used to describe the work of a *potter* in Hebrew (the word for ‘form’ in Hebrew is **יָצַר**, which means to fashion, to mold. A ‘potter’ is **יוֹצֵר** {lit. molder—participle of the verb), the very term that occurs in this verse).” Keith explains: “Although punished as they have been, as previously described [earlier in Isaiah], yet Israel is here represented as being addressed in the language of encouragement and endearment, as, in their national character, the workmanship and people of God; and their deliverance from all their evils is described as accomplished.” Birks says: “The dark picture of Israel’s shame is here

followed by gracious promises, sealed by the most glorious titles of Israel's God." We have already seen and discussed the *Hosea Principle*, wherein indeed the Lord may castigate His people for a moment but immediately breaks forth in the most tender mercies and loving-kindness toward them. Whitehouse explains that redeemed is written in the *prophetic* or *perfect tense*²: "The perfect tenses are employed here in the original to express the certainty of the future event, which is for the moment treated as though already realized." So also Rabbi Rosenberg/Judaica Press, who calls it the *prophetic past*; Nägelsbach, in Latin, *praeterita prophetica* (see note on verse 14, about the absolute certainty of an event), Victor Ludlow, *Prophetic Perfect*; Delitzsch, *perfect consecutive* as indicating the object of all the means already set in motion." Alexander points out, regarding fear not, "*Fear not*, i.e. fear not that thou canst be utterly destroyed. It is not an assurance of immunity from suffering, the experience of which is implied and indeed expressly threatened in what follows." Sister Elaine S. Dalton wrote: "Believe in the Savior. He loves you, and I testify that He will not leave you alone. He has promised: '*Fear not, I am with thee; oh, be not dismayed, / For I am thy God and will still give thee aid. / I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, ... / Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.*' (How Firm a Foundation, *Hymns*, no. 85)." ¶ *I have called [thee] by thy name; thou [art] mine.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, "I have called thee who art mine by thy name." The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, "Have called thee by thy name—thou art mine." Shalom Paul reminds us that Israel, in Genesis 48:5, calls Joseph's two eldest sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, his. Henderson, regarding *called by thy name*, קָרָאתִי בְשֵׁמִי says that it "primarily means, *to call a person by enouncing his name.*" Interestingly, God the Eternal Father called Joseph Smith *by name* as did Angel Moroni: "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 1:17); and "The first thing that I can recollect was a voice speaking unto me, calling me *by name*. I looked up, and beheld the same messenger standing over my head, surrounded by light as before." (JS-History 1:49). See also Exodus 31:1-2a, "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, see, I have called by name Bezaleel" (i.e., in the shadow of God, or under God's protection), Exodus 33:12b, "Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight." Here, Moses is reminding the Lord that he is known by name by the Lord. Alexander notes: "The juxtaposition of this promise with the very different language at the close of the preceding chapter

has led to various false assumptions as to the connection of the passages. Some give *and now* the sense of *yet* or *nevertheless*, while others understand it as referring to a period following that just mentioned; as if he had said, "After these things have been suffered, fear no longer." Yet, such succession of expressions between punishment and comfort *do exist* in the scriptures, my favorite being what I call the *Hosea principle*, wherein the Lord, just after saying: "Then said God, Call his name Loammī: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God" the Lord says: "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." Cheyne says: "Israel was especially honored, for Jehovah combined his own name with Israel's, calling it 'my people.'" Spurgeon tenderly suggests: "There was a day and we can never forget it, when the Gospel of God came to us with a pointed and personal power such as we never felt before. Like as Mary Magdalene did not know the Savior until He said unto her, 'Mary³,' so we did not know the Lord until He called us by our name! Surely, no love-call with which our mother awakened us in the morning from the happy sleep of childhood was ever more distinct than the call of God's Grace to us when He spoke to us and said, 'Seek you My face.' Blessed was the day when our heart replied, 'Your face, Lord, will I seek.'" Yesterday, I celebrated 41 years since I was baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, on 9 March 2015. Indeed, I felt a very personal and dear invitation from the Savior *to come and follow Him* after I finished reading the Book of Mormon, a book that changed my heart and would end up changing my life. ¶ *Thou art mine* (לִי-אֶתָּה). This is THE greatest promise God can give us. When we become His. In Leviticus 26:12, in the *Rain in Due Season* chapters, we are promised, if we but follow Him: "And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." The gathering of Israel—shall we say one by one and by name—is one of the most glorious events in the history of man. "Then shall the children of Judah [as in those through whom the stick of Judah or the Bible came forth] and the children of Israel [as in those through whom the stick of Joseph or the Book of Mormon came forth] be gathered together [in His Church], and appoint themselves one head [even *one King*, Jesus Christ, Ezekiel 37:22, 24], and they shall come up out of the land [speaking of the gathering of Israel from all the lands from where she had been dispersed, Deuteronomy 30:1-6]: for great

² See further, notes on the subject of the prophetic or perfect tense under ISAIAH 43:14.

³ "Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master" (John 20:16).

shall be the day of Jezreel [i.e., among other meanings, *God will sow*, the day of the restoration of the Church in the last days]” (Hosea 1:9-11, *also see* Ezekiel 37:15-28). In my article on the dispersion and gathering of Israel⁴ I speak extensively about the importance of God’s title for Israel, as “my people.”

2 When thou passest through the waters, I [will be] with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

When thou passest through the waters, I [will be] with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “For at first when ye did pass the Red sea my Word was your support (or, ‘help’).” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “therefore when thou passest through water, I am with thee, and the streams shall not overwhelm thee.” Instead of *waters*, the Peshitta (Ⓔ) has *sea*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, for the second half, “And the rivers shall not cover thee.” Wordsworth has: “As I showed thee of old by carrying thee on dry land through the waters of the Red Sea, and in driving back the waters of the river of Jordan, that they might not overflow thee (Joshua 3:13). These miracles of old are pledges to thee of greater mercies in Christ.” Shalom Paul writes: “*When you pass through water, I will be with you* [אֲנִי־עִמָּךְ]—I shall save you from drowning, since you are Mine and I will protect you. This formula is a variant of *כִּי עִמָּךְ אֲנִי* (see Isaiah 41:10).” Cowles says: “The Psalmist has these figures for extreme trials: ‘We went through fire and through water’ (Psalm 66:12). The passing through waters and rivers may refer historically to the Red Sea and the Jordan.” Normally, it is the Brethren who speak about modern types of vehicles (or in this case more particularly a type of construction), so I was enthusiastically surprised when I read these words by Orelli: “Bridges were wanting in the ancient East. Biblical Hebrew has no word for them.” Simeon says: “The man that is in the presence of his God, and has the light of his countenance lifted upon him, is inaccessible to his enemies, and may laugh at all their assaults. See Paul and Silas in prison, under circumstances as painful as could well inflicted on them; yet, behold, they are singing praises to God at midnight. And see the Hebrew Youths in the furnace into which an infuriated tyrant has cast them: ‘not so much as a hair of their head was singed, or even the smell of fire had passed on them.’”

Such are the interpositions of God in behalf of all his faithful servants, that ‘where their afflictions have abounded, their consolations have much more abounded’ (2Corinthians 1:5). The very waves which desolated all the world besides, bore up the ark, and carried it to a place of safety. And so shall the sea itself afford a passage to all the ‘ransomed of the Lord to pass over,’ in the way to the land of promise (Isaiah 51:10).” ¶ *When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.* The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who were as many as the waters of the river, did not prevail against you. And again (literally, ‘also a second time’), when ye came amongst nations, who were as mighty as fire, they did not prevail against you.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “And when thou passest through fire, thou shalt not be burned up—the flame shall not quite consume thee.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, “When thou shalt walk in the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, and the flames shall not burn in thee.” Keith says: “Water and fire are common scriptural symbols of trouble. In all the past calamities of the nation God has so far been with her as to have brought her through them, not unscathed certainly, but still undestroyed, although a tithe of her judgments would have swept other nations from the earth. Like the three men in the furnace who survived it [Daniel 3:21 ff.—GB], while those who cast them in were caught by the flame wafted aside by the breeze which was intended for others, and consumed, Israel still preserves her national existence, while the more ancient nations that oppressed her have almost or altogether disappeared. There may be allusion, however, to the period of universal national judgments in the promise made here, for similar assurances are given to Israel in connexion with the trials of the last days (see Isaiah 66:12; Zechariah 13:9).” Whitehouse (see also Skinner’s work) similarly writes: “**Fire and waters** are material metaphors intended to convey the idea of human calamity and suffering, as in Psalm 66:12 (Rosenmüller)... The verb in Hebrew rendered ‘burn’ is more correctly interpreted ... ‘scorched,’ where the same Hebrew form is used ... the last clause should be translated ‘and flame shall not burn thee.’” But why shall it not burn the righteous? Joseph Fielding McConkie and Donald W. Parry, suggested (also see Parry, Parry & Peterson): “Interestingly, the same divine fire that cleanses the righteous also destroys the wicked. The unrighteous will burn in the ‘lake which burneth with fire and brimstone’ (Revelations 21:8) or in ‘everlasting fire’ (Matthew 25:41). They ‘shall burn as stubble’ (JS-H 1:37), but the righteous will ‘dwell with the devouring fire’ and ‘with everlasting burnings’ (Isaiah 33:14). ‘If the fire can scathe a green tree for the glory of God, how easy it will burn up the dry trees to purify the vineyard of corruption,’ wrote John Taylor (D&C 135:6). Thus, in sum, heavenly fire purifies the

⁴ “The Book of Mormon as a key to gathering Israel.”

righteous (Isaiah 43:1-2) but destroys the wicked (2Nephi 30:10).”⁵ Rashi (in Rosenberg/Judaica Press, from comments on Mid. Psalms 19:13; Genesis 6:6; Ned. 8b) likewise suggests: “In the future, ‘For behold, a sun is coming, burning like an oven (Malachi 3:19),’ for I will cause the sun to burn upon the wicked, ‘and the coming sun shall burn them.’ There, too, you shall not be burnt... [a flame] which shall burn the heathens (i.e., the nations), as it is said: ‘(supra 33:12) And the peoples shall be as the burnings of lime.’ That too shall not burn amidst you.” Baltzer suggests: “The story of ‘the three men in the burning fiery furnace’ (Daniel 3) reads positively like an illustration of the promise in Isaiah 43:2. Daniel’s friends are explicitly called ‘servants of the Most High God’ (Daniel 3:26; cf. vv. 16–18, 28). The protection that is originally given to the prophets in particular is in the book of Daniel granted to the devout individual too.”

3 For I [am] the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt [for] thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, for the last clause, “I gave Egypt in exchange for thee, Ethiopia, and Seba, in thy stead.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “Because I the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel am thy Saviour, I have given Egypt for thy ransom and Ethiopia and Soena in thy stead.” Instead of *ransom*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *sake* (Lamsa) / *in exchange for you* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has *atonement* instead of *ransom*. The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓚ) begins with *I [am the] LORD (YHWH), אֲנִי יְהוָה*, while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *for I [am the] LORD, כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה*, as so also DSS 1QIsa^b (Ⓚ) (*כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה*) and 4QIsa^g (Ⓚ) (*כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה*), *for I [am the] LORD*. The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓚ) has *thy Redeemer, גּוֹאֲלֶךָ*, while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *thy Saviour, מוֹשִׁיעֶךָ*. The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓚ) has *and I gave Egypt [for] thy ransom, וְנָתַתִּי מִצְרַיִם כּוֹפָרְךָ*, while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *I gave [for] thy ransom Egypt, נָתַתִּי כֹפֶרְךָ מִצְרַיִם* (note the reverse order for the words *Egypt* {pronounced *Mitsrayim*} and *thy ransom*). The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *and Seba, וְסִבְאָ*, as so also DSS 1QIsa^b (Ⓚ) and 4QIsa^g (Ⓚ), *וְסִבְאָ*, but DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓚ) has *and [the] Sebans* (i.e., the people of Seba), *וְסִבְאִים*. Barnes explains: “The word rendered

‘ransom’ here is **כֹּפֶר** . . . whence the Latin *cooperio*; the French *couvrir*; the English *cover*, and means literally to cover; to cover over; to overlay with anything, as pitch, as in Genesis 6:14. Hence, to cover over sins; to overlook; to forgive; and hence, to make an expiation for sins, or to atone for transgression so that it may be forgiven.” Alexander explains: “This is an amplification of the phrase *I have redeemed thee* in Isaiah 43:1. As the Israelite under the Mosaic law was obliged to redeem his first-born by the payment of a price, or by the substitution of some other object, so Jehovah secured Israel as his own by giving up the other nations.” Cowles says: “The [Egyptian] army—the pride and the prowess of Egypt—went down before the eyes of the escaping hosts of Israel—equivalent to buying the salvation of Israel at the cost of Egypt, or as the phrase here is, ‘giving Egypt for thy ransom.’ Ethiopia and Seba are grouped with Egypt, perhaps as her allies; at least in the same general sense. Both genealogically and geographically, they were near. Cush and Egypt (Misraim) were brothers; Seba was a son of Cush [Genesis 10:5, 6].” Henderson, instead, says: “The ransom consisted in the countries here specified, with which the Persians were rewarded for liberating the Jews from Babylon. They received no compensation from the Jews themselves; but under Cambyses, they pushed their conquests into Africa, subdued Egypt, and penetrated as far as Ethiopia and Meroë . . . situated in the fruitful peninsula formed by the rivers Astapus and Astaboras, or Tacazze, and now constituting part of the kingdom of Senaar, in Nubia . . . **סִבְאָ**, *Seba*, was descended from *Cush* (Genesis 10:7). On its being conquered by Cambyses, he gave it the name of Meroë, after that of his sister.” Orelli says: “These countries are not named here by chance. For, in fact, God let them fall into the hands of the Persian conqueror (not, indeed, of Cyrus, but of his son Cambyses), as compensation, so to speak, for Judah, which the conqueror set free.” Jenour believes that there is an allusion to the exodus, but also, “. . . when he gave up the Egyptians, together with the Ethiopians and Sabeans (see Isaiah 20), to the army of Sennacherib, instead of allowing it to destroy Jerusalem.” Gill has: “*I gave Egypt for thy ransom*; he sacrificed the Egyptians instead of the Israelites; he destroyed the firstborn of Egypt, and saved Israel his firstborn; he drowned the Egyptians in the Red sea, when the Israelites passed safely through it; and the destruction of the former was to make way for the salvation of the latter, and so said to be a ransom for them. *Ethiopia and Seba for thee*; this refers either to the rumour brought to Sennacherib of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia coming against him to war, which diverted him from the siege of Jerusalem for a time, and caused him to turn his forces upon the Ethiopians and Sabeans, whereby the Jews had

⁵ Joseph Fielding McConkie and Donald W. Parry, *A Guide to Scriptural Symbols*, p.50.

a respite, or rather to the overthrow of the Ethiopians in the time of Asa, 2Chronicles 14:9-13) or to the king of Assyria, perhaps Shalmaneser's being diverted from Palestine and Judea, and turning his forces upon Egypt and Ethiopia, as in (Isaiah 20:1) and the Lord, by putting his people in mind of these instances, suggests hereby that he will sacrifice all their enemies, rather than they shall be destroyed, and therefore they need not fear." And what did God the Father give as a ransom for you and for me? He gave His only begotten son, even Jesus Christ, as an expiation and ransom for our sins.

4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. ✓

✓ or, person

Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, "Because thou hast been precious in my sight—hast been honoured and I loved thee." The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, "Since thou becamest honourable in my eyes, thou art glorious: I have loved thee." What a beautiful sentiment, **וְאֲנִי אֶהְבֵּיתִיךָ**, and I have loved thee.

Indeed, "We love him, because he first loved us" (1John 4:19). Birks says: "Israel had been precious, not from yesterday, but in God's eternal counsel of love."

Cowles writes: "From the time when God set his heart on Israel, he had held her in honor and love, and therefore declares, 'I will [on every occasion] give men and nations for thy life.' This is to be taken in the same sense as 'giving Egypt for thy ransom.'" ¶ *Therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, "And I gave nations instead of thee, and kingdoms for thy soul." The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, "Therefore I will give men for thee and chiefs for thy life." A number of exegetes have suggested that the term *men*, or *people* (אָנְשֵׁי), here means *mankind*.

Alexander explains: "*Man* is here used collectively or indefinitely for *other men* or the rest of men (as in Judges 16:7; Psalm 73:5; Job 31:33; Jeremiah 32:20)."

5 Fear not: for I [am] with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, "Fear not, for my Word shall be thy support; I will bring thy children from the east, I will bring together thy captivity from the west." The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, "Fear not. Because I am with thee, from the east I will bring thy seed, and gather thee

together from the west." Instead of *seed*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) uses the synonym, *descendants*. Wade explains: "After the Fall of Jerusalem in 587 only a portion of its population was carried to Babylon; others dispersed to different parts of the world (see Jeremiah 43:7; 44:1)." And not only was Judah and her nations scattered (southern kingdom), but Ephraim and her nations were also scattered (northern kingdom). So it is that in Deuteronomy 30:1 ff. (*Rain in due Season*), the Lord speaks of the gathering of all of the tribes of Israel from every corner of the world under the heavens wherein they were scattered. Wordsworth suggests that the "overthrow of Babylon by Cyrus" was a type of "a pledge of a more general and glorious restoration of Israel by the Messiah." Rabbi David Kimhi (in Rosenberg/Judaica Press) explains that the Lord says: "... just as I delivered you from your oppressors in the past, so will I do to you in the future, when I will gather your exiles from all over the world." And regarding *your seed*, Kimhi suggests those of Israel "who will be gathered and returned to the Holy Land in Messianic times." Nägelsbach says: "The 'fear not' connects what follows with the 'fear not' of Isaiah 43:1, as a new phase of the salvation bringing future ... In this section the particular is made prominent, that all members of the holy nation, no matter how distant nor in what direction, shall be brought back home." Furthermore, Nägelsbach points out that the word *gather* (קָבַץ) in Isaiah 43:5 is also used in *Rain in Due Season* (Deuteronomy 30:3, 4). Here we depart from Nägelsbach, and all others, who suggest the gathering here mentioned refers to that associated from the return from the Babylonian captivity, as compared to the latter-day gathering of Israel. Indeed, a very limited part of Israel was gathered after the exile, and certainly most of those taken by Assyria (i.e., the Northern Kingdom, the Ten Lost Tribes, or Ephraim) did *not* return. The return from Babylon was only a type of the latter-day gathering of Israel; which gathering would indeed overshadow the Exodus from Egypt. Indeed, the present-day gathering of Israel from all the nations of the world prophesied in Deuteronomy 30:1-6—as begun through the First Vision and the restoration of the Lord's true Church—overshadows most all other historical events. Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote of the gathering: "'I have redeemed thee,' Jehovah says to Israel, '... thou art mine ... I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour ... I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name.' Truly this is what has been and is transpiring in this day. The scattered remnants of Israel, hearing again the voice of their Shepherd, are believing his gospel,

accepting baptism at the hands of his servants, coming into his sheepfold, taking upon themselves his name, and once again becoming his sons and his daughters.”⁶ Elder McConkie adds: “Now, however, let us note that those being thus gathered again into the sheepfold of the good Shepherd are identified as ‘Even every one that is called by my name’ (Isaiah 43:7), that is, by the name of Jehovah.”⁷ Victor Ludow has: “This literal gathering has been promised by modern prophets, including Joseph Fielding Smith, who quoted those verses and said that ‘the time was to come when they [the Israelites] would be restored again.’ (CHMR 4:92).” President Joseph Fielding Smith explained: “Moses, by prophecy, declared to ancient Israel, even before they had the privilege of entering the land of their inheritance, that for their rebellion the tribes of Israel would be driven to the four corners of the earth, but in the last days, if they would humble themselves, the Lord would gather them again. Such prophecies were constantly repeated by the prophets of Israel—Isaiah [Isaiah 2:1-5; 5:26-30; 11:1-16; 14:1-2; 18:1-3; 29:1-24; 35:4-10; 43:5-7; 54:1-17; 61:4], Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Hosea; in fact, all of the prophets have spoken of this scattering and of the gathering of Israel.”⁸ Elder Charles W. Penrose taught: “Those who receive the Gospel come in here ‘as the doves to their windows’ (Isaiah 60:8). From the east and from the west, from the north and from the south (Psalm 107:2-3; Isaiah 43:5-6). God is gathering His elect from the four quarters of the earth (3 Nephi 16:5; Moses 7:62). This is one of the signs of the second coming of the Son of Man (JS—M 1:27).”⁹ The Prophet Joseph Smith explains: “**The Gathering of Saints.** The greatest temporal and spiritual blessings which always come from faithfulness and concerted effort, never attended individual exertion or enterprise. The history of all past ages abundantly attests this fact. In addition to all temporal blessings, there is no other way for the Saints to be saved in these last days, [than by the gathering] as the concurrent testimony of all the holy prophets clearly proves, for it is written—‘They shall come from the east, and be gathered from the west; the north shall give up, and the south shall keep not back.’ ‘The sons of God shall be gathered from afar, and his daughters from the ends of the earth.’ It is also the concurrent testimony of all the prophets, that this gathering together of all the Saints,

must take place before the Lord comes to ‘take vengeance upon the ungodly,’ and ‘to be glorified and admired by all those who obey the Gospel.’ The fiftieth Psalm, from the first to the fifth verse inclusive, describes the glory and majesty of that event (DHC 4:272).”¹⁰

6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “I will say to the north, Bring; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from afar, and the captivity of my people from the ends of the earth.” The LXX (Ⓠ) reads, “I will say to the north, ‘Give up’ and to the south, ‘Keep thou not back; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth.” The expression מְקַיְמָהּ הָאָרֶץ, *from ends of the earth*, means exactly the same as the promise that: “If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven” (Deuteronomy 30:4a) from there would the Lord gather His people. Some have attempted to say that this promise is *not* to Israel as the Lord does not mention them by name: that this is rather a promise to the Gentiles. First, the Lord does not have to specifically say the people of Israel, as this language is a well-known allusion regarding the gathering of Israel. But second, the Lord has been talking about Israel and Jacob, so He does mention them by name! The exegetes have gone to every extreme to take away from Israel her blessing. I say to them (ISAIAH 40:1-2a):

נְחַמוּ נְחַמוּ עַמִּי יֹאמַר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:
דְּבַרוּ עַל-לֵב יְרוּשָׁלַם

The Talmud tradition (Seder Kodoshim, Menachoth 110a) makes the sons and daughters the *totality* of the matter¹¹—regardless of where the children of Israel have been dispersed: “Bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth. ‘Bring My sons from far’: Rabbi Huna said, These are the exiles in Babylon, who are at ease like sons. ‘And My daughters from the ends of the earth’: These are the exiles in other lands, who are not at ease, like daughters” (Talmud, Soncino). Alexander says: “This [Isaiah 43:6] is a poetical amplification of the promise in the foregoing verse. As it was there declared that God would bring and gather the whole seed of Israel, so here he

⁶ Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ*, p. 358-359.

⁷ Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ*, p. 368.

⁸ *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*: 3:254 by Joseph Fielding Smith, Bruce R. McConkie.

⁹ Penrose, Elder Charles W. Divisions of Modern Christendom—Effects of Sectarian Proselytism, Etc. Delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, 17 July 1881. Reported by John Irvine.

¹⁰ TPJS.

¹¹ For a similar Hebrew expression using the masculine and the feminine, meaning the totality of the matter, see Isaiah 3:1, מְשַׁעַן וּמִשְׁעָנָה.

represents himself as calling on the north and the south to execute his purpose.” Skinner suggests: “The individual Israelites [regarding the ingathering of the Dispersion] are the children of the marriage between Jehovah and the nation [of Israel] (Hosea 2:2, 5; Ezekiel 16:20, etc.)” The gathering will involve those of the twelve tribes of Israel, beginning from Ephraim and Manasse and ending with Judah. Of course there will be some of Judah gathered early and so this is just a general trend. Israel was scattered throughout the world, even into the *Gentile nations*. Govett says: “Their [The Jews {but should rather have said *Israel* in totality, not just one of the twelve tribes—GB}] restoration, after being carried captive into all parts of the earth, is predicted in Isaiah 43:5-6, for they will be the elect of God . . .” In the year 1850 Keith wrote: “The gathering of the nation to their own land will form another evidence of the love of the God of Israel. This language has never been fulfilled in their past history, and can refer only to what is future.” How short a time ago this was, when many commentators looked forward to some future day and now we find that this future day is no longer future at all, but it is here and now. Israel has begun to be gathered from every continent and today is a nation. Before Keith’s book was published, Elder Orson Hyde had gone to the Holy Land in the year 1841, and dedicated the land for the return of Israel. It is with great tenderness that the Lord speaks of the gathering of Israel, using such intimate terms as *my sons* (בְּנֵי) and *my daughters* (בְּנוֹת). Elder James E. Faust declared: “I believe that every person’s individual testimony of Jesus as the Christ comes as a spiritual gift. No one can successfully dispute or challenge it because it is so personal a gift to the one to whom it has been given. It will be as an ever-recharging spiritual energizer to keep our spiritual light running to show us the way to eternal happiness. But I testify that it can be more—much, much more. By covenanting with ‘God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us, all the remainder of our days,’ our ‘hearts are changed through faith on [Christ’s] name.’ Thus we may be ‘born of him and . . . become his sons and his daughters.’ I have a certain knowledge of this, which I declare in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen” (emphasis added). Barnes says: “Bring my sons . . . – Bring all my people from the distant lands where they have been driven in their dispersion. This is a beautiful passage. As if all lands were under the control of God, and he could at once command and they would obey, he calls on them to yield up his people to their own country. He issues a commandment which is heard in all quarters of the globe, and the scattered people of God come flocking again to their own land.” Elder Orson Pratt explained: “Would you suppose that the House of Jacob, the ten

tribes of Israel, can be gathered from the four quarters of the earth, and brought back to their own land, without the lifting of this ensign? No. Read the 11th chapter of Isaiah. There he says— ‘I will lift up an ensign for the nations, I will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and I will gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four quarters of the earth.’ Until the Lord God sends forth this proclamation to all the inhabitants of the world and dwellers on the earth, in vain may we look for the redemption of the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah. Israel, the ten tribes called the outcasts, will never return, the scattered Jews will never be restored, until such an ensign is raised. Isaiah, in the fifth chapter, speaks of that ensign— ‘I will lift up for the nations an ensign from afar.’ Why not lift it up in Jerusalem, Isaiah? Why not lift it up in Palestine? Why not commence the work in Asia? Says Isaiah— ‘I will lift up an ensign to the nations from afar.’ How far? Away off to the ends of the earth, from where Isaiah then was. After this ensign is raised, he speaks of how swiftly the people shall come— ‘They shall come with speed swiftly.’ Is that the way you came, Latter-day Saints? When you crossed the ocean, how did you come? In steamships; and when you crossed through the United States to Omaha how did you come? In steam cars. And when you crossed these desert sage plains, how did you come? With speed swiftly through most of the desert, just as Isaiah said you would in his fifth chapter. Many people thought that when the railroad came ‘Mormonism’ would be done away. But such a supposition shows their ignorance. Why, bless you, this people in the year 1847, when the pioneers crossed these plains without any track to guide them, were looking for this great highway then. Yes, I recollect almost every day when I could get an observation of the sun (for we had two sextants and artificial horizons, and mountain barometers, and one circle of reflection), taking the latitudes and longitudes of all the prominent places, crossing this great desert; and not satisfied with getting the latitude and longitude we attached and detached thermometers and took the altitude above sea level of all the prominent places on the route of this great highway which was to be cast up for us in the midst of the desert. Thus this people were the first to talk about this great highway, and we never lost sight of it. We petitioned Congress for its construction twenty-five years ago; our Legislature, knowing the minds of the people, sent our memorial to the National Legislature, and requested them to cast up the highway across this country. Our memorials were, for awhile, treated with silence; but by and by, when the proper time came, the Lord stirred up Congress and the great men and capitalists of the nations to go forth and construct this highway. Did we not rejoice and thank the Lord our God for fulfilling that which we had been expecting, and praying for so diligently? We certainly

did. ... I will quote a passage or two more in relation to the gathering. Paul saw this gathering, and he calls it a new dispensation that should come after his day. He says that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he would gather together in one all things in Christ, whether they be things in heaven or things on the earth. The dispensation of the fullness of times, then, was to be characterized by the gathering of all persons that were in Christ. All the righteous dead that are in heaven, whose bodies are asleep in the grave, together with all the Christians on the earth, will be gathered in one in that dispensation. Fulfilling another prophecy in the 43rd chapter of Isaiah, where the Lord says—‘I will say to the north give up, and to the south keep not back; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth, even every one that is called by my name.’ ... The Lord says, ‘I will say to the north give up.’ The Lord is going to speak the Lord is going to utter something—‘I will say to the south keep not back. I will say, Come ye, my sons and daughters, from the ends of the earth, even every one that is called by my name.’”¹² Rawlinson makes a few interesting observations regarding this verse, “—*Bring my sons*. The nations are called upon, not merely to ‘let Israel go,’ but to conduct and escort them from the places of their abode to their own country.” This, I contend, is because it will be done via missionary work, as we see in Isaiah 18:7, “In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD.” Rawlinson also says that modern critics exaggerate the degree that the diaspora had taken place at the time of Isaiah [probably so that these verses of the gathering could be thought of in terms of the Babylonian captivity—GB], but that rather, Isaiah was permitted to see in vision into the future. I so much agree with Rawlinson. Elder Orson Pratt testified: “Did the Prophets in ancient times testify that when the kingdom of God should be organized, the Saints should be gathered from the four quarters of the earth, that all that were called by the name of the Lord should be brought out from the north and from the south, and from the east and from the west, even the sons and daughters of God should be brought from all nations? The Latter-day Saints teach that the same angel which brought the Gospel (Revelation 14:6-7) the same God that has set up his kingdom on the earth in the latter days has commanded his servants that go forth with these doctrines, to gather out his elect from the four winds of

¹² *Journal of Discourses*, Orson Pratt, March 26, 1876. Delivered in the Fifteenth Ward Meeting-house, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon. (Reported by David W. Evans.) Restoration Of The Gospel Probable And Scriptural—Sent First To The Gentiles, Then To Israel—This Is A Gathering Dispensation Or The Fullness Of Times—Destiny Of All Nations, pp. 185-186.

heaven.”¹³ President Heber C. Kimball, speaking of the future at the time: “We are informed in the Bible that in the last days the sons of God shall be brought from afar, and his daughters from the ends of the earth; and also that the elect will be gathered from the four quarters of the globe. Now, this will most assuredly be fulfilled, and this is the work which you and I have got to perform.”¹⁴ The gathering will be both to Israel’s own land—as we have emphasized here—and just as important, back to Zion (with its multiple definitions) and away from Babylon. Yes, every missionary is helping to gather Israel from the four quarters of the earth. Is there anything more thrilling than to be involved in such a work? The Prophet Joseph Smith said: “After all that has been said, the greatest and most important duty is to preach the Gospel.”¹⁵

7 [Even] every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “All these things *shall come to pass* for the sake of your righteous fathers, upon whom my name was called, yea, for my glory I have created them. I will restore their captivity, yea, I will work wonders for them.” The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “All that are called by my name.’ For I have prepared him for my glory, I have fashioned him and made him.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, for the first clause, “And every one that calleth upon my name.” Wordsworth suggests: “Not only Jews, but Gentiles¹⁶ also united with them in the true Sion—the Church of Christ.” Rawlinson says: “The very name of ‘Israel’ meant ‘prince of God,’ or ‘soldier of God,’ and thus every Israelite was ‘called by God’s name.’” Furthermore, we see this theme expanded upon in Isaiah 44:5, “One shall say, I am the LORD’S; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.” Birks says: “The people of Israel were called by the name of God, and His glory was involved in their deliverance. They were created, formed, and made, to

¹³ Pratt, Elder Orson. The Setting Up of God’s Kingdom in These Latter Days. Delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, 4 February 1872. Reported by David W. Evans.

¹⁴ Kimball, President Heber C. Gathering of the People of God in The Last Days—Return to Jackson County, &c. Discourse given in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, 17 February 1861. Reported By: J. V. Long.

¹⁵ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, p. 113.

¹⁶ Or rather, the rest of Israel scattered among the Gentile nations. Most of those who join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are literal descendants of Israel, and only but a few are adopted in.

be His witnesses ... Only not all who were of Israel would be gathered, but only those who were called by the Divine name; and not the natural seed only, but also those who were of the faith of Abraham, the Gentile proselytes, who were to be grafted in." Alexander well says: "... [The Lord] now speaks of their being called by his name, as he did before of his calling them by their name, the latter denoting special designation, the former special authority and right." In other words, everyone who is the Lord's sheep and who will hear His voice.

vv. 8-13. Most exegetes explain that these verses are a renewal of the legal case, the trial brought up in earlier chapters between the foreknowledge of God vs. the nothingness of idols. Without a doubt this topic is strongly renewed here. But I believe that Isaiah 43:8 has been misunderstood by most exegetes, but gladly not all, and speaks itself of the wonderful conversion of the children of Israel in the latter-days, as they are gathered from every corner of the world. This is now the topic of celebration; this is the new thing that the Lord will do: He will bring about the great gathering unto Himself. And all of this is only possible because of the expiatory sacrifice of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The atonement and the gathering are what we celebrate and what we rejoice in.

8 ¶ Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, "When I brought forth my people from Egypt, they were like the blind, although they had eyes; and like the deaf, although they had ears." The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, "And have brought out a blind people: for their eyes are as if they were blind; and they are deaf, though they have ears." The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, "Bring forth the people that are blind, and have eyes: that are deaf, and have ears." Orelli suggests that "Jesus' frequent saying: Who has ears, let him hear, links on to such passages." Alexander writes: "*He* (i.e. God, or Israel as his messenger) *hath brought out a people (once) blind, and (now) they have eyes, and (once) deaf, and (now) they have ears*, i.e. of course, seeing eyes and hearing ears. This agrees perfectly with all that goes before and follows, with respect to the mission and vocation of God's people." Rawlinson says: "Israel is first summoned, as 'a blind people that have eyes;' i.e. a people long blind, who have now, to some extent, recovered their sight, and are ready to witness for God." Hitzig (in Birks) thinks of this as relating to the "promise of Jewish restoration." Again, it is better to expand it to not only Judah, but the rest of the tribes of Israel, too. Gill speaks of conversion: "... the enlightening of them, who before were blind; and

causing them to hear, who before were deaf to spiritual things." This verse is the antithesis of Isaiah 6:9-10, where the people refuse to see and to hear. Now, hearts have been softened and turned to the Lord so that eyes begin to see and ears begin to hear. My own change of heart took place as I read the Book of Mormon over a four day period during my 1973 Christmas break.¹⁷ Elder Bruce R. McConkie testified: "The gathering of Israel in the last days shall consist in bringing together 'the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears,' that is, the spiritually blind and deaf shall come to a knowledge of the things of God and they shall see and hear. In large part the opening of the eyes of the blind and the unstopping of the ears of the deaf shall take place by means of the Book of Mormon. 'And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness' (Isaiah 29:18)."¹⁸ Seeing and hearing are lifetime efforts rather than a one-time event ... "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to ... stand before the Son of man" (Luke 31:36). Nägelsbach beautifully suggests that it would be the Servant of the Lord who would open the blind eyes and lead the captives out of prison, making it possible for the blind and the deaf to see and hear.

9 Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, [It is] truth.

Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: The Targum (Ⓣ), for the second clause, has "Let the kingdoms be brought together." The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, "All the nations were assembled together; now let all the archons be assembled." The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, "All the nations are assembled together, and the tribes are gathered." Wade well says about Isaiah 43:9: "Probably the prediction of Israel's restoration, which the idols cannot parallel." ¶ *Who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? Let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, [It is] truth.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, "Who among them can declare this, and give us the joyful tidings of old? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified; let them

¹⁷ See my Mormon.org profile, <http://www.mormon.org/me/G5Y8> and <http://www.mormon.org/spa/me/G5Y8> (English and Spanish, respectively).

¹⁸ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed., p. 184. Similarly, see also, Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man*, p.173-174.

hear, and let them speak the truth.” The LXX (6) reads, “Can any among them announce these things? Or can any tell you these things before hand? Let them produce their witnesses and be justified, and let them hear and tell things true.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Who among you can declare this, and shall make us hear the former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, let them be justified, and hear, and say: It is truth.” What is being declared? What does the word *this* (זאת) refer to? I believe it refers to the gathering of Israel. Who could have ever predicted, then, the gathering of Israel from every corner of the globe in the latter days? Only God could declare it. It is a thrilling subject to meditate upon, and to see it evolving before our very eyes. This prophecy is being fulfilled at this time. A time more than two and a half millennia away from when the prediction was made. Barnes says: “*That they may be justified* – That it may be demonstrated that they are what they pretend to be, and that they are worthy of the confidence of people. The word ‘justified’ here, is used in the sense of being right, or true; - let them in this manner show that their claims are just, and well founded.”

10 Ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I [am] he: before me there was no God formed, [✓] neither shall there be after me.

✓ or, nothing formed of God

Ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: The Targum (T) has,

“יְעִבְרֵי מִשִּׁיחָא” and my servant Messiah, “Ye are my witnesses (literally, ‘before me’), saith the Lord, and my servant, the Messiah, in whom is my delight.” In the first line of the beautiful Hebrew prayer, based on

Deuteronomy, שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, *Shema Yisrael*,

(Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

— Deuteronomy 6:4, also see 6:4-9), the first letter and the last letter are written in larger type and together they spell out the word *witness*, עֵד:

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

Gill points out that Christ is, indeed, this witness: “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness”

(Revelation 1:5a); and “These things saith the Amen,¹⁹

¹⁹ “The saints used *Amen* at the end of prayer, or in assenting to the word of God; but none, save the Son of God, ever said, ‘Amen, I say unto you,’ for it is the language peculiar to God, who avers *by*

the faithful and true witness” (Revelation 3:14b). Even Baltzer speaks that this individual is singular: “Many commentaries would [incorrectly] like to change the singular ‘my servant’ into the plural ‘my servants’ [e.g., Duhm: ‘In the second stichos of v. 10a the reading must be יְעִבְרֵי, for it is the Israelites who are the subject here, not the hero of the Servant songs.’]” Jesus the Christ is the chosen servant spoken of in this verse, “and my servant whom I have chosen.” The LXX (6) reads, “Be you witnesses for me: and as for me I myself am a witness saith the Lord God; and this servant of mine whom I have chosen.” Instead of *servant*, the Peshitta (S) has the plural, *servants*. Skinner well says: “To bear witness to Jehovah’s divinity is one of the functions of Israel as the Servant of the Lord.” And in regards to the Savior of mankind, He always bore witness of His Father, with tenderness and love. Skinner quotes an ancient text showing that the Chaldees believed that *their gods were formed* and thus these words may be sarcastic: “The form of expression might be derived from the Babylonian cosmology, according to which the gods were the first beings to emerge from the primeval chaos. The following words occur in the Chaldean account of creation: ‘When of the gods none had yet arisen, when none named a name or [determined] fate; then were the [great] gods formed’ (Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions on Genesis 1:1*). It is probably to this origin of the gods themselves that reference is made, rather than to the formation of their images (Isaiah 44:9).” Ibn Ezra (in Rosenberg/Judaica Press) explains: “The intention is that there is, indeed, no time before God or after God, since He has no beginning and no end.” Indeed, as the Prophet Joseph Smith explained: “The elements are eternal. That which has a beginning will surely have an end; take a ring, it is without beginning or end—cut it for a beginning place and at the same time you have an ending place ... So it is with God” (TPJS), and also, “I believe that God is eternal. That He had no beginning, and can have no end.

Himself. The New Testament formula, “Amen. I say unto you,” is equivalent to the Old Testament formula, “*as I live*, saith Jehovah” (Faussett). ACCS has: “**Christ Is the Amen.** Primasius: ‘He who is the Amen says these words, the faithful and true witness.’ We must consider the meaning here of ‘is’ and ‘Amen.’ The term *amen* is certainly said to mean ‘true’ or ‘faithful.’ And so, in this passage without question it refers to that essence of the divinity of which God spoke when he said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “He who is has sent me to you.”’ [Exodus 3:14.] For he truly is, who is always the same. Commentary on the Apocalypse 3.14. [CCL 92:42].” Robertson’s Word Pictures has: “**The Amen** (אָמֵן). Personal (masculine article) name here alone, though in Isaiah 65:16 we have ‘the God of Amen’ understood in the LXX as ‘the God of truth’ (τὸν θεὸν τὸν ἀληθινόν). Here applied to Christ. See Revelation 1:5 for ο μαρτυς ο πιστος (the faithful witness) and Revelation 3:7 for ο ἀληθινος (the genuine), ‘whose testimony never falls short of the truth’ (Swete).”

Eternity means that which is without beginning or end. I believe that the soul is eternal; and had no beginning; it can have no end” (Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith). Nägelsbach explains, then, that “besides Him there can only be fabricated gods, *dei ficticii*.” Nägelsbach, a gentile author, writing in 1884 (40 years after the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith), proceeds to add a second intellectual witness that what Brother Joseph taught was true: “And since whatever is made must have a beginning, and necessarily, too, must have an end, so must all these fictitious gods cease to be.” To know (יָדַע) and believe/trust (אָמַן),

יָדַעוּ וְאָמְנוּ, are indeed powerful words. The verb to know (יָדַע) is extremely intimate and is the expression used for a husband and wife’s intimacy. The Lord is inviting us to know Him—more than just casually—and to believe and put our trust in Him. What a beautiful invitation. Baltzer well says, regarding יָדַע, “... it becomes clear that this is not merely a question of knowing in the intellectual sense.” Elder Dallin H. Oaks spoke about the importance of witnesses: “Witnesses and witnessing are vital in God’s plan for the salvation of His children. In the Godhead, the function of the Holy Ghost is to bear witness of the Father and the Son (see 2 Ne. 31:18). The Father has borne witness of the Son (see Matt. 3:17; Matt. 17:5; John 5:31-39), and the Son has borne witness of the Father (see John 17). The Lord has commanded His servants to testify of Him (see Isa. 43:10; Mosiah 18:9; D&C 84:62), and all of the prophets have borne witness of Jesus Christ (see Acts 10:43; Rev. 19:10).”²⁰ Elder Bruce R. McConkie spoke of these verses: “Accordingly, [Christ] has ordained the law of witnesses, the law whereby he reveals himself to prophets and righteous men and sends them forth to teach his laws and bear testimony of their truth and divinity. ‘In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established’ (2 Corinthians 13:1). ‘Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same’ (D&C 1:38). This law of witnesses is described by Isaiah in a glorious prophecy about the gathering of Israel and the spread of truth in the last days. In so applying the law he is simply projecting to a future dispensation the principles that were in full operation in his own day, and for that matter had been binding upon his forebears back to the first man. ‘I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour,’ was the voice of Israel’s God to Isaiah. Then came the prophecy: ‘I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west.’ I will ‘bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my

name.’ That is, in the last days Israel shall be gathered again, and those who come to a knowledge of their true Messiah shall take upon them his name and become members of his family. To them, as Isaiah records it, comes this promise and directive: ‘Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord ... ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he. . . . I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour ... Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God’ (Isaiah 43:3-12).”²¹ Victor Ludlow says: “Centuries after Isaiah composed chapter 43, Joseph Smith borrowed some of Isaiah’s terminology in his praise of the Lord in the preface to the marvelous revelation on the three degrees of glory: ‘Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof, for the Lord is God, and beside him there is no Savior.’ (D&C 76:1; see Isaiah 1:2; 43:11).” This may be so, but it is also possible that these words were given independently to Brother Joseph. Before I even knew who the Prophet Joseph Smith was, some of the words recorded by Brother Joseph about not being able to deny that the truth came from God came to me, as I shared with my parents the manifestations I had received as a thirteen year old boy, in which I came to know that God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost were three distinct individuals but one in purpose. For this reason, when there are words that we find in the Book of Mormon that were also found in the Old Testament, from a time after Lehi had left Jerusalem, I am not surprised. I have been permitted to be a witness that the Lord may speak the same words to one of His children or to another, as He wills. As I have mentioned elsewhere, when I finally read the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, my first reaction, was to think, “He copied me!” Only to immediately realize the absurdity of the thought as the Prophet died over a hundred years before I was born. Birks says: “‘That ye may know, &c.’ The object of these testimonies is here defined. The Jews were to know God’s promise, believe in Him who gave it, and understand God’s unchanging love to Israel. The last clause [about idols ... no God formed &c.] is a lofty irony. Jehovah proclaims that there was no manufacture of idol gods in the past eternity, and that there shall be none in the ages to come.” Ironside brilliantly says: “It is to Israel the Lord says, “‘**Ye are my witnesses,**’ and this is true of them whether they are obedient to Him or disobedient, in the land or out of the land, whether they are keeping the law or breaking it, because God has given His testimony through Moses and other prophets showing just how He was going to deal with His people down through the centuries, the blessings that would be theirs, if they walked in obedience; the curses and judgments that would come upon them if they were

²⁰ Elder Dallin H. Oaks, The Witness: Martin Harris, *Ensign* (CR), May 1999, p. 35

²¹ Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ*, p. 84.

disobedient.” And to this we may add, the latter-day gathering of Israel (*Rain in Due Season*, see Deuteronomy 30:1-6) as spoken off in the very same chapters alluded to by Ironside. He continues, “History shows the truth of what God has declared and, therefore, Israel are God’s witnesses to the truth of His Word. Frederick the Great who had been listening to Voltaire’s agnostic ideas once asked one of his court chaplains, ‘If the Bible is true it ought to be capable of very clear and succinct witness. Generally when I ask if the Bible is true, I am handed some long scholarly volume which I have neither the time nor the patience to read. If your Bible is true, give me the proof of it in one word.’ The chaplain answered, ‘Sire, Israel.’ And Frederick acknowledged that this indeed is a proof that the Bible is true, the Word of the living God.” Kay, quoting from *Early Lessons on Christian Evidences* by Richard Whately has, “Nothing could be more unlikely than the events which have befallen the Jewish nation. *Nothing like them has ever been foretold of any other nation, or has ever happened to any other ...* The Jews, therefore, are a kind of standing miracle; being a monument of the wonderful fulfilment of the most extraordinary prophecies ever delivered, which prophecies they themselves preserve and *bear witness to ...*” (Abp Whately, ‘Evidences’ pp. 89, 90).” ¶ *That ye may know and believe me, and understand that I [am] he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “In order that ye may know, and that ye may believe in me, and understand that I am He who was from the beginning; yea, ages after ages are mine, and beside me there is no god.” The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, ““That you may know and believe and understand that with respect to me, The I am (Brenton, ‘and understand that I am he’), There is no other God before me; and after me none will exist.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “And understand that I myself am” instead of, “And understand that I [am] he.” Poole observes: “And withal he calleth them *formed* gods, in way of contempt, and to show the ridiculousness of their pretence to the Divinity, which are formed by the hands of men.” Barnes has: “This expression is equivalent to that which occurs in the Book of Revelation, ‘I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last’ Revelation 1:11; and it is remarkable that this language, which obviously implies eternity, and which in Isaiah is used expressly to prove the divinity of Yahweh, is, in the passage referred to in the Book of Revelation, applied no less unequivocally to the Lord Jesus Christ.” Elder Orson Pratt explains the apparent contradiction between LDS doctrine and this passage, by focusing on the principle of *one in purpose* or of *one in knowledge*: “‘But,’ inquires one, ‘how are you going to get along with the passage, in Isaiah, where the Lord declared that, ‘There is no God before me, nor shall there be any after me?’ How can we believe this, when

we believe in the revelation given through Joseph Smith, which says there are many Gods, and that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are Gods, and that all good men in this Church shall become Gods? Paul also speaks of the only wise God. Perhaps some may suppose that it is translated improperly. But you will find the same thing in the Book of Mormon (Mosiah 12:35) translated by the Urim and Thummim; the same things are also contained in the new translation of the book of Genesis, given to Moses, where the Lord declares that, ‘There is no God besides me.’ In these expressions, God has reference to the great principles of light and truth, or knowledge, and not to the tabernacles in which this knowledge may dwell; the tabernacles are many and without number, but the truth or knowledge which is often personified and called God, is one, being the same in all; God is one, being a unity, when represented by light, truth, wisdom, or knowledge; but when reference is made to the temples in which this knowledge dwells (1 Corinthians 3:16), the number of Gods is infinite.”²² We can also look at this same question from yet another angle. Elder Bruce R. McConkie testified: “There is one everlasting gospel, one Mediator between God and men, one alone who came to reconcile fallen men to their Maker. All men in all ages are saved by the same power, the same laws, the same Savior. And that Savior is Christ.”²³

11 I, [even] I, [am] the LORD; and beside me [there is] no saviour.

The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, “I am God and there is no Saviour besides me.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “I am, I am the Lord: and there is no saviour besides me.” ¶ I, I, Jehovah, אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה. The word אֲנֹכִי is the full or longer version of the more common word used for I, or אֲנִי (Gesenius) and is sometimes used in introductory formulas (אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה) as in Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 5:6; or Hosea 12:10) and sometimes for emphasis (HAL). Cowles says: “The repetition of ‘I’ is emphatic; I, and none but myself, am the one only Jehovah, the changeless, the ever truthful and faithful one. There is no Savior besides me. None else has power to save. But this implies in the strongest manner that God *has* such power, and is a perfect Savior for all who accept him as such.” In Matthew 1:21 we read about this very Savior, even Jesus the Christ: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his

²² Pratt, Elder Orson. The Holy Spirit and the Godhead. A Discourse delivered in the open air, on the Temple Block, Great Salt Lake City, 18 February, 1855. Reported By: G. D. Watt.

²³ McConkie, Elder Bruce R. *The Seven Christs* (or, rather, of the one Christ whose works and words are shown forth in seven ways). 1982.

people from their sins.” This is what Jesus or Joshua means; it means Savior.²⁴

24 H. Roberts was a great defender of the faith. “In the year 1926 a Jewish rabbi who for this purpose signed his name, Rasha, wrote an objection to the Christian claim that Jesus was the expected Jewish Messiah. The objection was written as a letter to Pastor Abraham Silverstein, editor of *The Redeemed Hebrew*, published at Binghamton, New York. The editor not only published the letter but also invited Christians to defend their point of view. The challenge was accepted by Elder B. H. Roberts of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The argument of Rasha was confined largely to quotations from Isaiah, chapters 43-48, and is summarized by him as follows: There is no need of a Savior outside of Jehovah, for Jehovah says that He is the Savior of the Jews. What need have we another? (Read Isaiah 43:3.) The words of Jehovah himself, which no Jew or Christian can deny, are these: I, even I am Jehovah and beside me there is no Savior (Isaiah 43:11). Elder B. H. Roberts in his rather extensive answer goes to the Old Testament alone to show that Jesus Christ is Jehovah and hence the very Messiah whom the Jews should accept. The following is quoted to show the consistency between the Old Testament and the declarations of the Doctrine and Covenants that Jesus Christ is none other than Jehovah. Certain it is that the Messiah and His mission were known—His birth, and names and titles. ‘Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name ‘Immanuel’—God with us; God with men! born of the woman, Mary of Nazareth. It was the mistake of Jewish Rabbis and people two thousand years ago, that they insisted then, as they do now, that these and other Messianic prophecies of their Scriptures had references to some earthly king who, in some glorious way, was to arise and rescue Israel from political subordination, and place Him in a commanding position among the nations of the earth; where, enlightened by the inspiration proceeding from the Anointed One, blessing would attend upon the leadership of Israel. Indeed it is insisted upon by Jewish scholarship that these prophecies in Isaiah, Chapters Seven and Nine referred strictly to a local situation in regard to the relations of Israel to nearby nations, and to be immediately fulfilled; that the child to be born of the virgin was to be born of the Prophet Isaiah’s wife, or that the prediction had reference to some young prince to be born in the palace. But this interpretation, if allowed, would involve our Jewish brethren in blasphemy more terrible than that which they conceive the acceptance of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah would bring to them. For consider what this child born of the ‘virgin’ is to be called; and it follows that what He is to be called that He is to be. And if He is to be called ‘Immanuel,’ God with us—that is, God with men—then that is what He is to be. God with men! Must a Being then, less than Jehovah incarnate be the ‘Immanuel’ of the text? Then what of the companion and parallel prophecy of Isaiah 9:6, ‘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 ... The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father.’ Would the Jew Rasha, would any Jew, dare say that a Being less than their Jehovah incarnated could fulfill this prediction? If the exposition of the text is to be applied to someone of the Jewish race immediate to the days of Isaiah, to some king or prophet, a temporal ruler to deliver Israel from political subordination, who was He? And when He came was He the ‘Mighty God’—The Jehovah of the Jews, contemporary with Isaiah or subsequent to Him until the coming of Jesus of Nazareth, who in His life and character fulfilled the terms of this prophecy, or gave any hope or promise of fulfilling it. How can this prophecy be fulfilled but by the incarnation of ‘The Mighty God,’ the incarnation of the ‘Everlasting Father’? But is it true that there shall be the incarnation of the ‘Mighty God,’ the Jehovah of the Old Testament? Shall God dwell with men in the flesh? Yea, verily. I marvel that the scripture which so strongly proclaims it is never used in argument upon the subject. I quote it here. The prophet Isaiah takes the sorrows and afflictions of Israel to Jehovah: ‘Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out prayer when thy chastening hand was upon them. Like a woman with child, that draweth near the time

of her delivery, is in pain and cryeth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O Lord.’ And the Lord, to comfort Israel, said in answer: ‘Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead, ...’ (Isaiah 26:16-20.) This is Jehovah speaking! ‘Thy dead men,’ O Israel, ‘shall live—The resurrection of the dead proclaimed! Together with Jehovah’s dead body shall they arise! Jehovah, then, is to have a body! He is to become ‘dead,’ and to ‘arise.’ Jehovah is to dwell with men in the flesh, to be ‘Immanuel,’ to live with men, to die, to arise from the dead, and the dead men of Israel to rise with Him! Can language more clearly outline the incarnation of Jehovah in the flesh, His death and His resurrection. Blasphemy this? Then it is Isaiah, the great Hebrew Prophet who blasphemeth; or rather, Jehovah, for it is He who is speaking. And who but the Christ of the New Testament fulfills, or can fulfill that inspired prophecy of Isaiah, or the incarnation of Jehovah, His death in that mortal state, His resurrection to immortality in that incarnation, and the resurrection of men to an immortality with Him,—‘together with my dead body shall they arise!’ I am not seeking in this writing to make out the whole case of the Christ of the New Testament being the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. I am only meeting here and now the very limited argument of Rasha that Jesus of Nazareth cannot be the Messiah of the Jews because it is Jehovah alone who will save His people, who is the Savior of men, who alone does or can forgive sin. All right. So let it stand. Jehovah alone will save His people. Jehovah alone can forgive sin. Jehovah alone is the Savior of men, of all men. But when Jehovah becomes One, He forgives sins, saves His people, and is alone Savior of men—is it not the Jehovah of the Hebrews that is doing all these things, functioning in all these capacities? And the Christ being Jehovah, and doing all this, do not all the objections of Rasha, the Jew, fall to the ground on the supposition that Jehovah and Jehovah alone must do them? For behold, the Jehovah of the Old Testament incarnated in the Christ of the New, is doing all these things,—saving His people, forgiving their sins, saving all men—it is Jehovah’s work throughout; for Jehovah and Christ are triumphantly one and the same Savior.” Berrett, William E. *Teachings of the Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1956, pp. 42-46. Footnote 8, *The Redeemed Hebrew*, December 1926, Vol. V, Number 6. (The complete answer continues in the January and February issues, 1927. It has also been published in the work by B. H. Roberts, Rasha, *The Jew*.) Here is some information on the publication of Rasha the Jew, “On June 14, 1926, Sister Alda Fugal brought to Roberts a copy of the *Redeemed Hebrew*, written and published as a monthly organ of Jewish-Christian influence by Abraham Silverstein in Rochester, New York. In this issue Silverstein had posed the question, ‘Who will defend Jesus Christ before Rabbi Rasha?’ This Canadian rabbi had written a tart reply to a booklet of Silverstein’s, a reply Silverstein then printed. [Roberts] looked up from Rasha’s letter which I had handed him [reprinted in the *Redeemed Hebrew*] and exclaimed, ‘Sister Fugal, this is a Godsend. All my life I have desired to give this message to the Jews and have compiled material on it but the proper time had not arrived. Now I will answer.’ Roberts’s first article reached Silverstein by December, 1926; it was immediately published. Roberts wrote two more and Silverstein published them; but after the first article, Roberts became embroiled in hard, textual analysis of Isaiah 26:19: ‘Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.’ The learned Hebrew objected that, in the first place, ‘thy dead’ is all the Hebrew means and there is no such meaning as ‘with my dead body shall arise.’ F23 The Hebrew word simply means ‘corpse.’ Roberts answered from eight different commentaries, including the highly esteemed Authorized Version. Then he argued from the context and the text that Jehovah was to become incarnate-tabernacled in the flesh-and have a body; that Jehovah was in a real body to suffer the pains of all men and to die; and that Jehovah was to be raised from the dead—and with him many of his ancient Saints were to be raised from the dead. A Binghamton philanthropist was so moved by the articles that he volunteered to publish a million copies of each of the first and second, to be

Clarke well explains: “Joshua, **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ** Yehoshua, from **ישע** yasha, **he saved**, delivered, put in a state of safety.” Delitzsch has: “The proper name ‘Jehovah’ is used here²⁵ as a name indicating essence: ‘I and no other am the absolutely existing and living One,’ i.e., He who proves His existence by His acts, and indeed by His saving acts. **מוֹשִׁיעַ** [NOTE: root **ישע**, and not beside me savior, : **מוֹשִׁיעַ**, **וְאֵין מִבְּלִעְדֵי מוֹשִׁיעַ**—GB] and Jehovah are kindred epithets here; just as in the New Testament the name Jehovah sets, as it were, but only to rise again in the name Jesus, in which it is historically fulfilled. Jehovah's previous self-manifestation in history furnished a pledge of the coming redemption.”

12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when [there was] no strange [god] among you: therefore ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I [am] God.

I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when [there was] no strange [god] among you: The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “I, I have declared to Abraham your father what would come to pass; I, I redeemed you out of Egypt, as I swore to him between the pieces²⁶; and I, I have made you to hear the doctrine of my law from Sinai, and ye are still alive, when there was no strange god among you.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “I have announced and saved; I reproached when there was no strange god among you.” The Peshitta (Ⓟ) renders it that there was no strange god among the people. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, “I have declared, and have saved. I have made it heard, and there was no strange one among you.” Wordsworth says: “And therefore ye [Israel] would not have learnt anything of the future from any other god but Me. Then Israel said, ‘The Lord alone did lead me, and there was no strange god with me’ (Deuteronomy 32:12).” Rashi, in Rosenberg/Slotki explains: “The word *god* is not in the text, but is to be understood.” In other words, it is an elliptical expression. ¶ *Therefore ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I [am] God.* The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “You are witnesses for me; and I the Lord am still the same God

distributed throughout New York. Roberts simultaneously had tens of thousands printed for his missionaries as tracts. These tracts were disseminated throughout the United States and western Europe, and were then reprinted in the Millennial Star in England. Finally they were printed as a book, *Rasha the Jew*.” (In Madsen, Truman G. *Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1980, p. 329.)

²⁵ In the text it says ... here (Isaiah 43:13), but this does not appear at all in verse 13, but the comments fit well with Isaiah 43:11.

²⁶ *Between the pieces*, this is an allusion to Genesis 15:9-10.

from the beginning.” Shalom Paul has: “The rabbis based a very daring midrash on this verse: “When you are My witnesses, I am God. When you are not My witnesses, it is as if I am not God” (*Sifre Deuteronomy* 144 [ed. Finkelstein], 403–4).” Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught of the importance of a testimony derived of the Spirit: “Now I do not minimize in any degree or to any extent the obligation that rests upon us to be gospel scholars, to search the revelations, to learn how to reason and analyze, to present the message of salvation among ourselves and to the world with all the power and ability we have; but that standing alone does not suffice. When that is all over, we have to comply with the command the Lord gave for us in this day: ‘. . . ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.’ (Isaiah 43:12.) We have to put an approving, divine seal on the doctrine that we teach and that seal is the seal of testimony, the seal of a personal knowledge borne of the Holy Ghost . . . Now how do you prove and establish that the Father and Son appeared to Joseph Smith; that angels came in our day; that there has been a restoration of the gospel; that all the glorious things we present to the world are true? Well, you reason out of the revelations. You can make a good case; and that isn’t any problem. The truth is with us. The Lord is the author of the system we have received. But after you have reasoned and after you have analyzed, you have got to *stand as a personal witness* who knows what he is saying. You have to . . . *speak and teach by the spirit of prophecy and the spirit of revelation*; and the result is that you *speak as one having authority*. This is the great thing that separates us from the world, and thanks be to God we have this knowledge. We have received this revelation, and we are in a position to *speak as those having authority*. (Bruce R. McConkie, Conference Report, Apr. 1973, pp. 36-37.)”²⁷

13 Yea, before the day [was] I [am] he; and [there is] none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it? ✓

✓ turn it back?

The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Yea, from eternity I am He; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will do it, and who shall turn it back?” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And there is none who can rescue out of my hands. I will act; and who can prevent it.” The Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓟ) has, “Yea, from the first day I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hands; what I will do, who can stop it?” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, “And from the beginning I am the same, and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall

²⁷ Testimony. Compiled by H. Stephen Stoker and Joseph C. Muren. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1980. 165-166. Emphasis added.

turn it away?” This last statement, “and who shall let it?” is the equivalent of saying, “and who shall stop it?” Keith says: “The word ‘let’ is here used, as in other parts of Scripture, in the old English. but now obsolete, sense of hinder. The marginal reading [i.e., and who shall *turn it back*, וְגַם יְשִׁיבֶנָּה—GB] expresses better the Hebrew original.” Kimhi (in Rosenberg/Judaica Press) has: “... he continues to tell us that God was God even before the Creation of the world.” Yes, before *day one*, before the first day, יוֹם אֶחָד. Cowles says: “. . . from before ‘the evening and the morning were the first day,’ I have been he—the one all-controlling God.” Birks sees a link to ISAIAH 14:27 in the last clause, “who shall turn it away?” Ibn Ezra has: “I was God before the existence of day. Therefore, the word נָם ‘yea’ is added. מִיּוֹם = מִהַיּוֹת יוֹם ‘When day was not yet.’” We have literally, “Even (yeah, also), from the day, I he,” נָם־מִיּוֹם אֲנִי הוּא.

vv. 14-21. Babylon will be punished. The Lord opened the Red Sea for Israel to pass. And new wonders will be brought to pass. Waters will now pass through the desert. The Lord will give waters to His people. Israel shall praise the Lord.

14 ¶ Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry [is] in the ships.

✓ bars

Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon. The Targum (T) has the last clause as, “Because of your sins I led you captive to Babylon.” The LXX (G) reads, “Thus saith the Lord, the God who redeemed you, the Holy One of Israel; For your sakes I will send to Babylon.” *To Babylon* is spelled differently in the Masoretic text (מ), בְּבָבֶלָה (see ב, Gesenius, “of motion to a place”) and the DSS 1QIsa^a (Q), בבבל, and 4QIsa^b (Q), בבל (missing the ב of motion).

Henderson explains that *I have sent*, שְׁלַחְתִּי, is the “prophetic future, indicating the absolute certainty.” That is, “it is as clear as though it had already passed” (Kimhi, cited in Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, quoted in *Jews for Jesus*).²⁸

²⁸ Also see quotes of other interesting sources on the very same topic. <http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/m.sion/hebrtens.htm> (URL accessed 23Jan15).

Rawlinson calls it the “*praesens historicum*.” (See Isaiah 43:1, where we also speak of prophetic certainty.) Both of these verses (Isaiah 43:14-15) have a Holy One of Israel motif, “קדוש ישראל” and “קדושכם / ישראל.” Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: “Christ is the Holy One of Israel, an appellation signifying that he is both the embodiment of holiness and the God of Israel who came into the world through the lineage of that chosen people. This particular name was in constant and popular usage anciently. It is found 40 times in the Book of Mormon and over 30 in the Old Testament, but it is not found of record in either the New Testament or the Doctrine and Covenants (2 Nephi 25:29; 30:2; Omni 26; Psalm 89:18; Isaiah 43:14; Ezekiel 39:7).”²⁹ Poole says, regarding *I have sent to Babylon*, “I have sent Cyrus, and the Medes and Persians with him, to war against Babylon, to this very end and purpose, that he might deliver you out of captivity, and restore you to your land according to promise. So also, now in the last days, has the Lord sent His ambassadors—His witnesses—to gather scattered Israel from mystical Babylon into Zion. Govett also thinks of Babylon as mystic Babylon: “. . . our blessed Lord speaks as the Deliverer of Israel and their King, and thence continues his address to the end of the chapter. For his people’s sakes he declares that he smote the mystic Babylon and its inhabitants.” This is happening from almost every corner of the world. At this writing, 20 March 2015, there are few nations left where the missionaries are not permitted in to preach the Gospel. The Talmud tradition (Seder Mo’ed, Megilah 29a) renders this somewhat differently and speaks of the love of the Lord for His people Israel: “It has been taught: Rabbi Simon ben Yohai said: Come and see how beloved are Israel in the sight of God, in that to every place to which they were exiled the Shechinah went with them. They were exiled to Egypt and the Shechinah was with them, as it says, Did I reveal myself unto the house of thy father when they were in Egypt. They were exiled to Babylon, and the Shechinah was with them, as it says, for your sake I was sent to Babylon. And when they will be redeemed in the future, the Shechinah will be with them, as it says, Then the Lord thy God will return [with] thy captivity. It does not say here we-heshib [and he shall bring back] but we-shab [and he shall return]. This teaches us that the Holy One, blessed be He, will return with them from the places of exile” (Talmud, Soncino). Cowles explains this verse and the next three: “These two verses [Isaiah 43:14-15] appeal to the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon as the two next in order [Isaiah 43:16-17] appeal to the Exodus from Egypt, in proof that Jehovah is truly the mighty God of his people Israel, their

²⁹ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed., p. 360.

Creator, Redeemer and King. The deliverance from Babylon was indeed in the distant future relatively to the actual life of Isaiah, while that from Egypt was past, yet the former is presented here as seen by the prophet already past or passing. ‘I have sent,’ and ‘have brought down’ etc. This mode of writing is due to the nature of prophetic vision.” And we might well add, to the fact that the vision was given by the Lord, to whom all things past, present and future are before His eyes in *one eternal round* (D&C 35:1). ¶ *And have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry [is] in the ships.* Rawlinson suggests: “The Chaldeans are not in Isaiah, as in Daniel, a special class of Babylonians, but, as elsewhere commonly in Scripture, the Babylonians generally.” The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “But I will prostrate all of them with their oars, yea, the Chaldeans in the ships of which they boast.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And rouse up all who are fleeing; and the Chaldeans shall be bound in ships.” The BPE (Ⓢ) has, “And made the fugitives return, even the Chaldeans who pride themselves in their ships.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, following the margin in part, “And have brought down all their bars, and the Chaldeans glorying in their ships.” Most translations retain the word *ships*. The idea seems to be that the Chaldeans were very proud of their ships and leaned upon them for their strength, yet their joy would be short-lived. ISV, instead, has “Now as for the Babylonians, their ringing cry will become lamentation.” GNB has, “I will break down the city gates, and the shouts of her people will turn into crying.” CEV has, “I will send an army against Babylon to drag its people away, crying as they go.” Because so many of the exegetes and Biblical versions speak of the margin, *bars*, and also *fugitives*, as another possible translation, I will include the words of Barnes and Gill on the matter. Barnes has, in part, “Barnes opines: “The word used (בַּרִּית), means sometimes bar, cross-bar, that which passed from one side of the tabernacle to the other through rings, in order to carry it; thou a harbor bolt of any kind Judges 16:3; Nehemiah 3:3. But the word may also denote one who flies; a fugitive; and is properly used in that sense here. The verb בָּרַח, from which the word is derived, means often to break away, to flee Genesis 16:8; 35:1; 35:7; 1 Samuel 19:12; Job 27:22; Jonas 1:3. Here it means those who endeavored to escape from the impending calamity and destruction . . . Jerome, however, understands it of removing the strong bars with which the prisoners of the exile Jews were protected, so that they would be permitted to go forth in peace and safety.” Gill says: “**and have brought down all their nobles]** from their seats of honour and glory, stripped them of all their grandeur and dignity, and reduced them to a low and mean estate. This is to be understood of the princes and nobles of Babylon, who fell with the

city, as their king did: or, ‘their bars’ (1); for what bars are to houses and cities, that princes should be to the people, the defence and protection of them. Though some think this refers to the gates of Babylon, and the strong bars of them now broken (see Isaiah 45:2). Ibn Ezra explains it: “The bars of the gates of the place are meant.” The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it ‘fugitives’; and which some understand of the Jews, who were as such in Babylon, but now should be brought out of it; which sense is countenanced by the above versions, which render it, I will raise up, bring, or bring back, ‘all the fugitives’ (‘*Fugitivos universos,*’ Vatablus, Paginus, Montanus; ‘*fugientes omnes,*’ Vitringa); others of the Chaldeans, who should be forced to fly upon the taking of their city; but the first sense seems best, which distinguishes them from the common people.” Rawlinson has: “The Chaldeans, flying from the Persian attack, betake themselves to their ships with cries of grief, the ships thereby becoming ‘ships of wailing.’” Wade suggests: “*I will bring down*, etc. The text, if correct, must mean that the Babylonians will be compelled to seek escape from the invaders (advancing from the North) by descending the Euphrates in their ships as Merodach-baladan did when Babylon was attacked by Sennacherib. *The ships of their rejoicing* is literally *the ships of their ringing cry*, the cry being usually understood of the loud vaunts with which the Babylonians expressed their pride in their vessels . . .” Wordsworth suggests: “It may be inferred from this passage of Isaiah, that, when Babylon was suddenly taken at night by Cyrus, many of the Chaldean nobles and warriors fled, in panic and confusion, for refuge to their *ships* on the Euphrates, and escaped as *fugitives* by means of those vessels, in which they had formerly gloried . . . In the Apocalypse, they who had once traded, in spiritual commerce, with the mystical Babylon, are represented as fleeing from her (see Revelation 18:15—18, ‘In one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every *shipmaster*, and all the company in *ships*, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning.’” Skinner says: “Accepting the text as it stands, the best translation is no doubt that of R.V. and I will bring down all of them as fugitives, even the Chaldeans in the ships of their rejoicing. Since the verb ‘bring down’ cannot be understood in two different senses in the two members, the idea must be that they shall all be sent down the Euphrates as fugitives in ships, which was precisely the manner in which Merodach-baladan made his escape from Sennacherib (see Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, E. T. vol. II. p. 36). A description of the ships on the Euphrates is to be found in Herod. I. 194; they are here called ‘ships of rejoicing’ as having formerly been used for pleasure.” Cheyne interestingly proposes: “‘To bring down,’ if used without qualification, would, in such a connection,

most naturally be referred to the overthrow of proud Babylon; comp. 10:13, 14:11, 15. But here the verb does not really stand unqualifiedly; it must be taken together with ‘in (or into) the ships,’ and then the phrase becomes analogous to ‘to go down upon the sea’ (42:10, &c.) for ‘to embark on a voyage.’ ‘The ships of their shouting’ is one of those *équivoques* in which the prophets delight. It suggests that the very ships, which formerly resounded with shouts of exultation, now only echo with the cries of despair, and thus forms a condensed elegy on the strange *περιπέτεια* in the fortunes of the Chaldeans.” Some exegetes have suggested that the ships will not be used to escape, but rather, to be taken captive. Along these lines, Nägelsbach seems to connect another *Rain in Due Season* verse (Deuteronomy 28:68) to the understanding of this scripture: “And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.” Nägelsbach suggests that what was once threatened against Israel is here also fulfilled against the Chaldeans. Cowles explains: “That the Chaldeans were in their early days a maritime people is scarcely doubtful. An immense canal connected the Euphrates at Babylon with the Tigris, making Babylon the great commercial mart for the countries lying on both the Euphrates and the Tigris, and also those reached through the Persian Gulf into which the Euphrates emptied.”

15 I [am] the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.

The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “I am the Lord God, your Holy One, who pointed out Israel your king.” The Lord is our King, despite we having rejected Him when we asked for a human king like that of the other nations at the time of the Prophet Samuel. But once again Israel will consider Him King, in the last days. In Ezekiel this is made clear, that through the Bible and the Book of Mormon, Israel will be gathered from the four corners of the earth and will once again consider the Lord, our King: “And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all” (AV, Ezekiel 37:22). Or even better, the 1611 AV has “... one King shall be king to them all,” testifying precisely that this King would be our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

16 Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters;

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Thus saith the Lord, I am He who prepared a way in the sea, and a path in mighty waters.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Thus saith the Lord who made a highway in a sea, and a path in the mighty water.” Birks well says regarding verses 16-19: “. . . the Israelites are now reminded of the mighty power of God at the Exodus, where chariot and horse, army and power, fell under the stroke of His hand. Those earlier acts of judgment are to be followed by new things, works of mercy more excellent than ‘the former things . . .’ The ‘new thing’ most moderns apply to the Return, but the Christian Fathers and Jewish Talmudists to the times of Messiah (Kimchi, Abarb., Rashi, Vitranga, Stier, &c.). The event predicted is some greater antitype of the desert journey in the days of Moses. But the Return from Babylon . . . fell very greatly short of the wonders of the Exodus, however striking as a fulfilment of express prophecies. This seems a strong proof of the Messianic reference.” This verse begins with the prophetic formula, *Thus sayeth the LORD,* **כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה**, making sure the reader pays more careful attention, for it is not just the Prophet speaking, *but the Prophet speaking the words of the Lord through divine investiture.* For “whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation” (D&C 68:3-4). Cowles says: “The special points seized upon here are his making so perfect a pathway for the escape of his hedged up and imperiled people; his gathering together the flower of Egypt’s military force, especially the horses and chariots in which they gloried most; and then laying them low in their watery grave from which they should rise no more—extinguishing their brilliant glory as the flames of burnt tow when plunged in the sea. The whole description is graphic and terse, full of fire and withal of most impressive truth for the comfort of God’s people in every age.” Keith writes: “What formed the path of the Israelites was made the grave of the Egyptians. As the flame of tow is extinguished by water, so were they quenched by the waters of the Red Sea. The scriptural allusions to that disaster furnish some of the most sublime descriptions to be found in any language: ‘Thou didst blow with the wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters’ (Exodus 15:10).”

17 Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as tow.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “I who brought out the chariots, and horses, *and* a great host, yea, much people; they were swallowed up together, they did not rise, they were extinguished, they are extinct like glimmering wick is extinguished.” The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “Who brought out chariots and horses and a mighty host, but they lay down to sleep and shall rise no more: they were extinguished like an extinguished taper.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) uses the plural, *chariots* and *horses*. Furthermore, instead of “the army and the power,” the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has “mighty army.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “Who brought forth the chariot and the horse, the army and the strong: they lay down to sleep together, and they shall not rise again: they are broken as flax, and are extinct.” The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓢ) has *and [the] army*, וְהֵיל, while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *[the] army*, חֵיל. Of the Egyptian army, Orelli says: “As a firebrand thrown into the water hisses and smokes, so their barbarous might was smothered and quenched in the waves.” Skinner observes: “*which bringeth forth*] i.e. allows them to come forth to their destruction (cf. Ezekiel 38:4, where the same expression is used with regard to the expedition of Gog, king of Magog).” Poole has: “as the wick of a candle when it is put into the water is wholly extinguished, and not the least spark of fire left, so were they utterly destroyed, and not one of them remained.”

This *extinguish* (כָּבַד), this quenched as tow or *smoking flax* representing Pharaoh’s army being put out by the Red Sea (כַּפְּשֵׁתָהּ כָּבוֹד), is a play on words from Isaiah 42:3, wherein we hear the Messiah would *not extinguish* or *quench* the *faltering wick* (וּפְשֵׁתָהּ כִּתְּהָ לֹא יִכְבֶּהָ) representing the most spiritually humble (“Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” Mark 9:24). Barnes has: “*They are extinct* – They are destroyed, as the wick of a lamp is quenched suddenly when immersed in water. This is a striking figure, to denote the suddenness with which it was done, and the completeness of their destruction.” Alma also speaks about these scenes as Israel left Egypt and speaks of the joy of coming to the promised land: “... yea, and I will praise him forever, for he has brought our fathers out of Egypt, and he has swallowed up the Egyptians in the Red Sea; and he led them by his power into the promised land; yea, and he has delivered them out of bondage and captivity from time to time. Yea, and he has also brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem; and he has also, by his everlasting power,

delivered them out of bondage and captivity, from time to time even down to the present day; and I have always retained in remembrance their captivity; yea, and ye also ought to retain in remembrance, as I have done, their captivity” (Alma 36:28b-29).

18 Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “Mention not these former things, nor reason from the things of old.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “Remember not former things, and look not on things of old.” Cowles explains that the former things would be *eclipsed* by the new things. As Jeremiah says: “Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land” (Jeremiah 23:7-8). Cheyne well says: “So Jeremiah (23:7, 8) points to a time when the great manifestation of the living God shall no longer be the deliverance from Egypt, but the restoration of Israel from ‘the recesses of the earth.’ (Comp. by all means Jeremiah 3:16, 17.) Both to Jeremiah and to our prophet the chief glories of the second manifestation are spiritual. ‘I will make a new covenant ... I will put my law in their inward parts’ (Jeremiah 32:31, 33). ‘They shall tell out my praise’ (v. 21).”

19 Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, [and] rivers in the desert.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Behold, I make a new thing, and now it shall be revealed: and will ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.” The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, “Behold I am in act to do new things, which shall now spring up and you shall know them—I will make a way in the wilderness, and streams of water in the desert.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “Verily you shall know them,” instead of “Shall ye not know it?” The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓢ) has *and now*, וְעַתָּה, while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *now*, עַתָּה. Kimhi (in Rosenberg/Slotki) says that *rivers in the desert* is “a greater miracle than turning the Red Sea to dry land.” Regarding *a new thing*, Poole well says: “such a work as was never yet done in the world, even the redemption of the world by the Messiah.” Many exegetes suggest that these verses refer to the end of the Babylonian

captivity and the return of Judah to Israel. And indeed, to a degree, these words apply to this epoch. But they have a further fulfillment in the last days associated with the restoration of the Gospel and the gathering of Israel. Bishop LeGrand Richards, for instance, felt that the irrigation canals that would be built represented rivers that would spring forth in the desert. He said, “Do you remember the statement of Daniel Webster about this western part of America, when he said that he would not vote one cent from the public treasury to place the Pacific coast one inch nearer Boston than it was then? And Jim Bridger, when Brigham Young met him, said that he would give one thousand dollars if he only knew we could raise an ear of corn in these valleys, but Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the prophets of old, had seen the prosperity of Zion in these valleys of the mountains. The Prophet Joseph had declared that the Saints would continue to suffer persecution and be driven, and many would apostatize, and some would be put to death, and that they should ultimately be driven to the Rocky Mountains, and here they should become a mighty people in the Rocky Mountains. I want to read to you two brief statements from Isaiah with respect to what the Lord promised to do in the redemption of this wilderness, to make it blossom as the rose, and I want to say to you it is a miracle in my mind the part ‘water’ was to play in the redemption of latter-day Zion. Isaiah said: ‘Behold, I will do a new thing,’ and as far as my understanding of this scripture is concerned, that new thing was the great principle of irrigation. It is true the Saints had to make the canals, they had to make the ditches, they had to put in the dams, but the land might have remained arid had not the Lord put into their minds the inspiration to do this very thing, and that is what Isaiah saw that the Lord would do. He said: ‘Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. . . .’ (Isaiah 43:19-20.) If you want to see the rivers in the desert, just go up through Idaho³⁰ and see the great canals that come out of the Snake River. They are greater than many of the rivers of the land. ‘[The Lord has done this] . . . to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.’ And Isaiah states: ‘I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. 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’ (Isaiah 43:20-21; 41:18, 20). So as you brethren gather in your crops by day in the

³⁰ Or, to California.

harvest time, remember that it was the Lord God of Israel who did this new thing in this great wilderness to make it to prosper as a rose and to be a land that would attract the attention of all the world.”³¹ Parry, Parry & Peterson say: “As we travel through this telestial world, the Lord provides for us a ‘way,’ which is the gospel with its ordinances; and ‘rivers’ and ‘waters’ (43:19-20), which refer to spiritual drink. In return, we are required to ‘shew forth [the Lord’s] praise’ (43:21), or to witness to the world that Jehovah is our God.”

20 The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, [and] rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.

✓ or, ostriches, HEB. daughters of the owl

The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “They shall honour me, when I make habitable provinces at the desert, and the places where the dragons and the daughters of the ostrich dwell.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “The wild beasts of the field will bless me—the Seirens (NETS, ‘sirens’) and the daughters of the ostrich.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) uses the plural, *beasts*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has *glorify* instead of *honour*. Skinner suggests: “Even the wild beasts shall honour Jehovah, unconsciously, through their joy at the abundant supply of water.” And perhaps, not so unconsciously. ¶ *Because I give waters in the wilderness, [and] rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.* The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “Because I will give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to the captives of my people (the Royal Polyglot omits בְּחִירֵי, ‘captivity’), in whom I delight (or, ‘I have chosen’).” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Because I have given water in the wilderness, and flowing streams in the desert, to give drink to this race of mine which I have chosen.” The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓤ) has *and my chosen*, **וּבְחִירֵי**, while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *my chosen*, **בְּחִירֵי**. Lowth similarly has: “The image is elegant and highly poetical. God will give such an abundant miraculous supply of water to his people traversing the dry desert, in their return to their country, that even the wild beasts, the serpents, the ostriches, and other animals that haunt those adust regions, shall be sensible of the blessing; and shall break forth into thanksgiving and praises to him for the unusual refreshment, which they receive from his so plentifully watering the sandy wastes of Arabia Deserta, for the benefit of his people

³¹ Bishop LeGrand Richards, General Conference, October 1948, pp. 44-45.

passing through them.” Please see the notes by Elder LeGrand Richards in the previous verse regarding the literal fulfillment of these scriptures. We know there is more than one desert and more than one return through the desert. The most important desert and return are spiritual in their interpretation. The end of the famine and drought spoken of in Amos: “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” (Amos 8:11). This end of this famine coincides with the coming forth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Book of Mormon, and the General Conferences where the Brethren speak: spiritual waters full of the word of Christ to give drink to parched tongues in need of spiritual fountains. Christ also is the spring of living waters, or the waters of Shiloah as we see in Isaiah 8:6, “Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly.” In Jeremiah we read: “For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me *the fountain of living waters*, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water” (emphasis added, Jeremiah 2:13).

21 This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “This people have I prepared for my service, they shall declare my praise.” The LXX (Ⓥ) reads, “My people whom I have preserved to recount my praises.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) renders it something like, drink.” The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓤ) has *and they speak my praise*, ותהלתִי יואמרו, while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *they shew forth* (i.e., *recount*) *my praise*, תהלתִי יספרו. Birks says: “God must without fail be glorified in those whom He has formed for Himself, to shew forth His praise.” Faussett observes: “*This people*—namely, The same as ‘My people, My chosen’ (see Isa 43:1, 7; Ps 102:18).” Cowles says: “Isaiah 43:21 contains obvious allusions to Isaiah 43:7. ‘This people that I have formed for myself’ are the same whom he has ‘created, formed and made for his glory.’ And yet, further, Isaiah 44:3-5, doubtless refers to this and heightens the proof that this describes spiritual blessings upon the whole church ...”

vv. 22-27. As Cowles well says, “From such glorious views of the distant future, the prophet falls back upon the present state of the chosen people.” Govett says: “After these signal instances of his mercy, the Saviour beautifully contrasts with it their ingratitude towards him. Yet in spite of all, he ‘would blot out their transgressions for his own sake, and not remember their

sins.” We shall see that a turning back to the Lord, שׁוּבוּ, is an essential part of this formula.

22 ¶ But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “It hath been said by the prophets, that ye of the house of Jacob have not met together for my worship; but that ye were weary of the doctrine of my law, O Israel.” The LXX (Ⓥ) reads, “I had not now called upon thee, Jacob, nor caused thee Israel.” For the second clause, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) does not say that Israel has been weary of Him, but instead simply has, “I called thee, O Israel.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, for the second half, “Neither hast thou laboured about me, O Israel.” McFadyen says: “Jehovah had called Israel (Isaiah 43:1), but Israel had not called upon Jehovah, *nor hast thou wearied thyself about me.*” Cheyne suggests that the sin here involved in, “thou hast not called upon me,” is that Israel had forsaken her prayers and ceased to give this sufficient importance. Spurgeon says: “Alas, some of my hearers have never spoken with God in all their lives! They are not on speaking terms with Him—they do not know Him!” Ibn Ezra has: “Thou hast even not called me; how then shouldst thou be weary for my sake.” Skinner has: “*Yet thou hast not called upon me*] To call upon Jehovah ‘in the day of trouble’³² was the first and most obvious duty of Israel (Psalm 50:15), but this duty Israel has neglected. The statement is of course general; it does not exclude the existence of a believing minority which poured out its heart in prayer to God. The position of the word ‘me’ is emphatic in the original; but the emphasis on the object throws a corresponding emphasis on the subject: ‘But not upon *me* hast *thou* called, Jacob’; it is I who have called thee (Isaiah 41:9, Isaiah 42:6, Isaiah 43:1 &c.).” Skinner, leaning on Cheyne suggests: “Or, perhaps: ‘much less hast thou wearied thyself about me’ (Cheyne).” Rawlinson has: “But thou hast been weary of me; rather, *for thou hast wearied of me*. Thou hast left off praying, because thou wast weary of my service.” Note the similarity with Isaiah 1:3 “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider,” as here a similar contrast is made: this time the animals praise the Lord (Isaiah 43:20) while Israel neglects Him (Isaiah 43:22). Spurgeon asks if some “. . . have been weary of God’s Word and weary of God, Himself.” In Galatians 6:9 we read: “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” And we also read: “Wherefore, be not weary in well—

³² But see D&C 101:7-9.

doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great” (D&C 64:33).

23 Thou hast not brought me the small cattle ✓ of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.

✓ lambs, or, kids

Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Thou hast not brought unto me the lambs of thy burnt offerings, and with thy holy sacrifices thou hast not honoured me.” The LXX (Ⓢ) reads, “To weary thyself: thou hadst not brought me thy sheep of thy whole burnt offering; nor honoured me with thine incense offerings.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) uses the margin, *lambs*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓢ) has, “Thou hast not offered me the ram of thy holocaust, nor hast thou glorified me with thy victims.” The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓢ) has *for*³³ *thy burnt offering* (i.e., *holocaust*) *and with thy sacrifice*, לעולה ובזבחה, while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *thy burnt offering* (i.e., *holocaust*) *and thy sacrifice*, על תיך וזבחיך. Barnes—and many others explain: “*The small cattle* - Margin, ‘Lambs,’ or ‘kids.’ The Hebrew word (שה) denotes properly one of a flock – a sheep or a goat.” Wordsworth writes: “The emphasis is on *Me*: thou hast given to strange gods the honour due to *Me alone*. See on Amos v. 25, ‘Have ye offered- unto *Me* sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?’ No—not to *Me*, but to idols. Cp. on Acts 7:42- 43.” Nägelsbach says: “[This does] not mean that Israel has *never* fulfilled the duties of divine service therein mentioned, but only that they have not *fulfilled* them i.e., not fully satisfied the requirements.” Rawlinson suggests: “If this reproach is regarded as addressed to *captive* Israel, who *could not* offer sacrifices, we must explain it by the analogy of the expression, ‘the calves of your lips’ (Hosea 14:2). All prayer may be regarded as a sort of offering, and withholding it as withholding sacrifice. But it is possible that the prophet is not addressing captive Israel only, but carrying his thoughts back to the period preceding the Captivity, when there was a general neglect of God’s service, and for a time the temple was given up to idol-worship (2 Kings 21:3-7; 23: 4-14) . . . I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, etc.; rather, *I put no heavy service on thee in*

respect of meat offering, neither made I thee to toil in respect of incense; i.e. ‘my positive requirements have been light—surely thou shouldst have complied with them.’ Meat offerings were to accompany every sacrifice, but were a small burthen. Incense was not required from any private person.” Delitzsch explains: “The עלת (burnt-offerings) stand first, as the expression of adoration, and are connected with שֶׁה, which points to the daily morning and evening sacrifice (the תמיד). Then follow the זבחים (slain-offerings), the expression of the establishment of fellowship with Jehovah (וּזְבַחְיָהוּ) is equivalent to וּבְזִבְחֶיךָ, like תָּמָה תָּמָה =, Isaiah 43:25). The ‘fat’ (חֶלֶב) in Isaiah 43:24 refers to the portions of fat that were placed upon the altar in connection with this kind of sacrifice. After the זבחים comes the michâh, the expression of desire for the blessing of Jehovah, a portion of which, the so-called remembrance portion (‘azkârâh), was placed upon the altar along with the whole of the incense. And lastly, the קָנָה (spice-cane), i.e., some one of the *Amoma*.” Alexander likewise explains: “The whole Mosaic ritual is here represented by an enumeration of some of the principal offerings: the *olah*, or general expiation; the זבחים, or animal sacrifices in general; the *minhah*, or meal-offering; and the *lebonah*, or aromatic fumigation.—שֶׁה includes the goat as well as the sheep, and is therefore correctly rendered in the English Version by the phrase *small cattle*.” ¶ *I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “I have not caused thee to multiply offerings, neither did I burden thee with frankincense.” The LXX (Ⓢ) reads, “I had not burdened thee with sacrifices of flour; nor wearied thee with demands of frankincense.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓢ) has *oblations* instead of *offering*. The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓢ) has *and [thou hast]not made unto me [an] offering*, ולוא עשיתה ליא מנחה, while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *I burdened thee not with [an] offering*, לא העבדתיך במנחה. Wade speaks of grain or cereal sacrifices and also says: “*Frankincense*] This under the Levitical law was generally accompaniment of other sacrifices (Leviticus 2:1 f.; 6:15; Numbers 5:15).” Wordsworth suggests: “I have not burdened thee with service; but thou hast burdened Me by sin.” Jenour believes this verse is associated with Jeremiah 7:22 (I also include 7:23): “For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or

³³ HALOT, ל—19, *for*, example, 1 Kings 10:23, לעשר ולחכמה, *for riches and for wisdom*.

sacrifices:³⁴ But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.” Alexander has: “[Rather than limiting this verse to a particular time period] How much more natural and satisfactory to give the words the general and unrestricted meaning which they naturally bear as a description of the people’s conduct, not at one time or at one place, but throughout their history . . . The most satisfactory interpretation of the verse, and that which best agrees with the whole context, is, that it has reference not merely to the outward or material act, but to its moral value and effect.” Ibn Ezra suggests: “*But thou hast made me to serve*. This is an anthropomorphism.” Skinner suggests: “*I have not caused thee to serve*” “have not treated thee as a slave,” by exacting tribute.” I wonder if these words, “I have not caused &c.” along with these other verses related to animal and other sacrifices are not a reference to Israel’s scattered condition, after the first advent of our Savior, where for the most part, sacrificial requirements have been abolished (and only will be restored in the last days but for a brief moment). Since the Lord has not required those types of time-consuming sacrifices at our hands, what excuse do we have not to pour out our hearts to Him in mighty prayer and service to our fellow beings? Barnes explains: “*I have not caused thee to serve with an offering* – ‘I have not made a slave of thee; I have not exacted such a service as would be oppressive and intolerable - such as is imposed on a slave.’ The word used here (עֲבַד), is often used in such a sense, and with such a reference Leviticus 25:39; ‘Thou shalt not compel him to serve the service of a bondman’ Exodus 1:14; Jeremiah 22:13; 25:14; 30:8. The sense is, that the laws of God on the subject, were not grievous and oppressive.” So also Faussett: “*I have not caused thee to serve*—that is, to render the service of a *slave* (Matthew 11:30; Romans 8:15; 1John 4:18; 5:3).” Spurgeon, speaking about our sacrifices, says: “Often we have the posture of devotion without devotion; the words of praise without the praise.”

24 Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.

✓ made me drunk, or, abundantly moistened

³⁴ Note that this was before Mount Sinai, before the Mosaic Law was given, wherein the children of Israel were given a lower law of commandments than what they had originally. These new precepts were given as a schoolmaster to help Israel return to her God.

Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “Thou hast not bought for me the aromatic reed with silver; with the fat of thy holy sacrifices thou hast not anointed (literally, ‘made fat’) mine altar.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “Nor hadst thou purchased with silver perfumes for me; nor had I desired the suet of thy sacrifices.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has *victims* instead of *sacrifices*. In the DSS 4QIsa^g (Ⓢ) we have *and not*, וְלֹא (and thou has not brought me &c.) while the *and* is not present in the Masoretic text (Ⓜ), לֹא, nor in either the 1QIsa^a or 1QIsa^b, לֹא. Rosenberg/Slotki points out the paronomasia between *thou has bought* (קָנִיתָ) and *sweet cane* (קָנִיָּה). Birks says: “The sweet cane, *calamus aromaticus*, is in high esteem in India, Western Asia, and Africa. It was an article of traffic often brought from a distance (Jeremiah 6:20), and a main ingredient in the holy anointing oil (Exodus 30:23).” Regarding the *fat*, Wade suggests, “This, in peace-offerings (which were for the most part consumed by the priest or the worshippers), was appropriated to the Lord (see Leviticus 3:4, 10, and cf. on Isaiah 34:6). Alexander has: “Kimchi [and most other writers explain] . . . that this cane was an exotic, which could only be procured with trouble and expense. This particular is mentioned, like the others with which it stands connected, as a specimen or sample of the whole congeries of ceremonial services. The antithesis between the clauses seems to shew that the idea meant to be conveyed in this whole context is, that their external services were nullified by sin. So far from being satisfied or pleased with what they offered, God was only vexed with their transgressions and neglects.” ¶ *But thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.* The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “But thou hast multiplied thy sins before me; thou hast burdened me with thine iniquities.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “But thou stoodest before me in thy sins and in thine iniquities.” Instead of *made me to serve with thy sins*, the Peshitta (Ⓔ) has “burdened me with your sins.” Regarding הָעֲבָדָה תַּנִּי (thou hast made me to serve OR burdened) and הוֹנֵעַתָּנִי (thou has wearied me), Henderson says: “The verbs הָעֲבָדָה and הוֹנֵעַתָּנִי are repeated with great effect from the preceding verse; and, as here used, are strongly anthropopathic.³⁵” Kay beautifully has, speaking of the servitude of our Lord as He paid for our sins: “He had not made them to toil for His good; but *they* had reduced Him to the necessity of servitude. Verily, *thou* hast caused Me to labour (as a

³⁵ Anthropopathic here means ascribing human feelings to God.

servant) *by thy sins*;³⁶ *thou hast* made Me to toil by *thine iniquities*.—The next verse informs us of the nature of the work here spoken of: it was for the blotting out of Israel’s sins.—So that here we have an explanation of the mystery respecting the ‘Servant of the Lord.’ He who ‘bore our iniquities’ (Isaiah 53:11) was none other than Jehovah Himself.”

25 I, [even] I, [am] he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “I, *even* I, *am* He who forgiveth thy sins (Chaldee, ‘debt’), for the sake of my name, and thy sins shall not be remembered.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “I even I, THE I AM, am (Brenton, ‘I, even I, am he,’ NETS, ‘I am, I am the one’) he who blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake; and of thy sins I will no more make mention.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, for the first half, “I am, I am he that blot out thy iniquities for my own sake.” In the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓣ) we have *not remember again*, **לֹא אֶזְכֹּר עוֹד**, while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *not remember*, **לֹא אֶזְכֹּר**. I have loved the Septuagint translation here. Nägelsbach, leaning on the Septuagint “I AM,” explained by the Targum as *He Who Is and Shall Be*, well explains: “I, I am Jehovah : that such is the proper rendering appears from the fact that the *Jehovah-name* manifestly corresponds to the latter part of Isaiah 43:10, the sentiment of which is *comprehended in that name*. For if before the LORD there was no god, and there will be none after Him, then He is the One *that was and shall be the eternally Existent*, i. e., Jehovah (comp. Exodus 3:14). And, because this entire part of Isaiah deals with the deliverance of Israel and the ground and consequences of it, it is added: and beside Me there is no Saviour. Therefore Israel must take care not to look for its salvation from any other” (emphasis added). Skinner well says that : “In accordance with O.T. analogies, the act of forgiveness is described simply as ‘not remembering’ sin; but the actual working out of forgiveness in history calls into exercise the resources of Omnipotence; it includes all Jehovah’s dealings with His people, His handing them over to the dominion of the heathen (Isaiah 43:28), and saving them again in His marvellous providence. The verse, moreover, contains only one half of the prophet’s teaching about forgiveness; the other half is the process by which the people are brought to repentance, and this is the work of the Servant of the Lord, as described in Isaiah 53.” Gill

³⁶ Yes, for my sins and for all who will accept Him as Redeemer as all will have to do *for every knee shall bow and tongue confess* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

has: “[Sin] which is here expressed by a ‘blotting’ them out, in allusion to the blotting of a debt book: sins are debts, and these are many, and which cannot be paid by the sinner; Christ has made full payment; as the surety of his people: upon this the debt book is crossed; these debts are remitted for his sake: or as a cloud is blotted out, dispelled by the wind, or scattered by the sun.” We read in Alma: “But few understood the meaning of those things, and this because of the hardness of their hearts. But there were many who were so hardened that they would not look, therefore they perished. Now the reason they would not look is because they did not believe that it would heal them. O my brethren, if ye could be healed by merely casting about your eyes that ye might be healed, would ye not behold quickly, or would ye rather harden your hearts in unbelief, and be slothful, that ye would not cast about your eyes, that ye might perish? If so, wo shall come upon you; but if not so, then cast about your eyes and begin to believe in the Son of God, that he will come to redeem his people, and that he shall suffer and die to atone for their sins; and that he shall rise again from the dead, which shall bring to pass the resurrection, that all men shall stand before him, to be judged at the last and judgment day, according to their works” (Alma 33:20-22). When we read that *the Lord blotteth out our transgressions*, then, we must understand that there is an eternal principle at play here, to include repentance or turning unto Christ, an effort to forsake our sins, restitution where possible, the forgiving of others who have sinned against us and above all, the expiatory sacrifice and grace of our Lord—without which none of this would be possible. Elder Boyd K. Packard made this power statement about forgiveness of our sins, “Those who make one serious mistake tend to add another by assuming that it is then too late for them. It is never too late! Never! While your temptations are greater than were ours, that will be considered in the judgments of the Lord. He said that ‘his mercies [are suited] according to the conditions of the children of men’ (D&C 46:15). That is only just. A great contribution to Christian doctrine is the explanation in the Book of Mormon of how justice and mercy and repentance and forgiveness work together to erase transgressions (see Alma 42). The discouraging idea that a mistake (or even a series of them) makes it everlastingly too late does not come from the Lord. He has said that if we will repent, not only will He forgive us our transgressions but He will also forget them, will remember our sins no more (see Isaiah 43:25; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17; D&C 58:42; Alma 36:19). Repentance is like soap; it can wash sin away. Ground-in dirt may take the strong detergent of discipline to get the stains out, but out they will come.”³⁷ Elder Packard, however,

³⁷ Packer, Boyd K. *Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1991.

made it clear that the process is not easy: “The bishop represents the Lord in extending forgiveness for the Church. At times he must administer bitter medicine. Alma told Corianton, ‘Now, repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment’ (Alma 42:16). I would not want to live in a world where there was no repentance, and if punishment is a condition of that, I will willingly accept that. There is the idea abroad that one can send a postcard of prayer and receive in return full forgiveness and be ready at once for a mission or for marriage in the temple. Not so. There are payments to be made. If a bishop offers comfort only and, in misguided kindness, seeks to relieve you of the painful but healing process in connection with repentance, he will not serve you well. Forgiveness from the Lord is earned through great personal effort. It takes courage to face the reality of your transgression, accept whatever penalty is required, and allow sufficient time for the process to work. When that is done, you will be innocent again. The Lord said: ‘I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins’ (Isaiah 43:25).”³⁸ Regarding *blot out*, Shalom Paul explains that “The root **נָחַם** denotes wiping the slate clean” and points us to its use again in Isaiah 44:22 and in Psalms 109:14. This sentiment of not remembering our sins is also repeated throughout the scriptures. For instance, in Jeremiah we read: “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 31:34). As a son of Israel, it is comforting to me, **נָחַמוּ נְחֻמוּ**, to read these two scriptures (among many others): (1) “For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee: *but I will correct thee in measure*, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished” (Jeremiah 30:11, emphasis added); (2) “And they also of the tribe of Judah, *after their pain*, shall be sanctified in holiness before the Lord, to dwell in his presence day and night, forever and ever” (D&C 133:35, *see also* Isaiah 40:1-2a, emphasis added). I conclude with these words from then Elder Spencer W. Kimball: “Much has been said in this conference already about the fundamental principle of repentance. President Clark repeated the other night the passage where the Lord said, ‘...preach nothing but repentance unto this people.’ It seems that most of us think that repentance is for the other person . . . as I read the scriptures, is for us all. It is my pleasure, also, to go into

the homes of the leaders in the missions, wards, and stakes of Zion, and I am deeply appreciative of the fact that most of our people are trying to live the commandments of the Lord. I find in this Church many people who amaze me with their close approach toward perfection, but I do find, as I go about the Church, some who need this principle of repentance. I thank the Lord for this glorious principle . . . the Lord says: ‘. . . repent and walk more uprightly before me’ (D&C 5:21). Repentance is required of us all. In this dispensation the Lord said: ‘. . . entangle not yourselves in sin, but let your hands be clean, until the Lord comes’ (D&C 88:86). Paul told the Romans: ‘. . . There is none righteous, no, not one’ (Romans 3:10) . . . Repentance is a glorious and merciful law. It means a sorrow for sin, a confession of sin, abandonment of sin, restitution for sin, and then the living of the commandments of the Lord, which itself includes the forgiving of others, even those who sin against us . . . Now, in Proverbs 28:13, the Lord inspired his prophets to say, ‘He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.’ . . . To obtain forgiveness of our sins, we must forgive . . . Even the ancient Apostles suffered on this account: ‘My disciples, in days of old, sought occasion against one another and forgave not one another in their hearts; and for this evil they were afflicted and sorely chastened. Wherefore I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin’ (D&C 64:8-9) . . . When they have repented and come on their knees to ask forgiveness, most of us can forgive, but the Lord has required that we shall even forgive them if they do not repent nor ask forgiveness of us . . . [We] would do well to sing frequently the beautiful hymns: ‘Should You Feel Inclined to Censure,’ by George H. Durham; ‘School Thy Feelings, O My Brother,’ by President Charles W. Penrose; and ‘Let Each Man Learn to Know Himself,’ so much sung and loved by President Heber J. Grant . . . The offended one treasures in his heart the offense, adding to it such other things as might give fuel to the fire and justify his conclusions. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the Lord requires that the offended one should make the overtures toward peace. He says: ‘And if thy brother or sister offend thee, thou shalt take him or her between him or her and thee alone; and if he or she confess thou shalt be reconciled’ (D&C 42:88, also see Matt. 5:23-24). The Lord forgets when he has forgiven, and certainly must we. He inspired Isaiah to say: ‘I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins’ (Isaiah 43:25). Brothers and sisters and friends, if we will sue for peace, taking the initiative in settling differences—if we can forgive and forget with all our hearts—if we can cleanse our own

³⁸ Packer, Boyd K. *The Things of the Soul*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1996, pp. 115-116.

souls of sin, accusations, bitterness, and guilt before we cast a stone at others—if we forgive all real or fancied offenses before we ask forgiveness for our own sins—if we pay our own debts, large or small, before we press our debtors—if we manage to clear our own eyes of the blinding beams before we magnify the motes in the eyes of others—what a glorious world this would be! . . . May the Lord bless us all that we may continually carry in our hearts the true spirit of repentance and forgiveness until we shall have perfected ourselves, looking toward the glories of exaltation awaiting the most faithful, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.”³⁹ In ISAIAH 44:22, we will continue this conversation and speak particularly of the *gift of grace* that is so strongly involved in God’s forgetting our transgressions and in permitting us to forgive others.

26 Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Speak now, we will plead together, declare thou for the purpose, that thou mayest justify thyself, if thou art able to do so.” The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “But do thou mention them and let us be judged; do thou first state thy transgressions, that thou mayest be acquitted.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, for the second half, “Tell if thou hast any thing to justify thyself.” Nägelsbach says: “The LORD must have in mind here that sacrifice which did what all sacrifices of the Old Testament were unable to do. Acts 3:19; and Colossians 2:14 seem to be founded on our passage. In the latter it appears that Paul recognized as the basis of the expression the representation of a delible writing. On ‘blot out’ and ‘will not remember’ [see] Jeremiah 31:34.”⁴⁰ Jennings says: “Isaiah 43:26 is a gracious parallel to Isaiah 1:18: ‘Come now, and let us reason together.’” Elder Bruce R. McConkie explains how the Savior will join us in pleading with the Father, much as in the intercessory prayer: “‘Let us plead together.’ That is, ‘I, Jehovah, will join with you in a plea for forgiveness from our Father, if you will keep my commandments.’”⁴¹ Without the saving grace of our Savior, we would never be able to come into the presence of the Father. But when He is our advocate, then we can be made clean so long as the Lord

³⁹ Elder Spencer W. Kimball, Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, October 1949 General Conference, pp. 124-134.

⁴⁰ “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 31:34).

⁴¹ Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ*, p. 332.

acknowledges us before the Father and does not bid us depart (see Matthew 7:21-23).

27 Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers[✓] have transgressed against me.

✓ interpreters

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have rebelled against my Word.” The LXX (Ⓦ) reads, “Your fathers first, then your chiefs transgressed against me.” Instead of *teachers*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *rulers* (Lamsa) / *governors* (BPE). There is a question as to what *first father* or אֲבִיךָ הַרְאִשׁוֹן really means. Does it mean rulers as suggested by Keith? Many names have been proposed and none are satisfactory to me other than using the word *first* as *chief* (רִאשׁוֹן) ruler. Perhaps even a title for the High Priest when one puts it into the context of Isaiah 43:28 (the princes of the sanctuary). A few days after I wrote this, I was pleased to find that Henderson is of the same opinion: “The parallelism requires us to understand a person in office, and none is so likely to be intended as the *High Priest*. רִאשׁוֹן, *first*, is used not only of time, but also of *dignity*, as 1 Chronicles 18:17; and פִּהֵן הָרִאשׁוֹן, *the lead* or *chief priest*, and simply הָרִאשׁוֹן, *the chief*, are employed to denote the Jewish pontiff. At the same time, there is no reason to conclude that only one High Priest is meant.” After refuting the usual suggestions of most exegetes, Barnes includes these thoughts: “Others, as Gesenius, suppose that the word is to be taken collectively, not as referring to any particular individual, but to the high priests in general. It is not uncommon to give the name ‘father’ thus to a principal man among a people, and especially to one eminent in religious authority. The word ‘first’ here does not refer to time, but to rank; not the ancestor of the people, but the one having appropriately the title of father, who had the priority also in rank. The Septuagint renders it, Οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν πρῶτοι. It refers therefore, probably, to the character of the presiding officers in religion, and means that the priests, supreme in rank, and whose example was so important, had sinned; that there was irreligion at the very foundation of influence and authority; and that therefore it was necessary to bring these heavy judgments on the nation. No one acquainted with the history of the Jewish people in the times immediately preceding the captivity, can doubt that this was the character of the high priesthood.” Regarding interpreters (see margin), Birks well suggests: “... *thine interpreters*, i.e. the professed expounders of the Divine will (cf. Job 33:23), especially the prophets: for the unfaithfulness of such.” So also Whitehouse, “The interpreters or ‘intermediaries’ are

here the prophets, who are the interpreters of God's will to men. The reference is to the false prophets such as Isaiah denounced (29:9-10) and whom Micaiah confronted (1 Kings 22), in the ninth century (853 BC), and in more recent times Jeremiah 23:11-18; 26:8-15; 27:9-18; 28:10-17, &c.). No doubt priests are also included." Jenour also says: "Vitranga thinks there is a particular allusion to Urijah, the High Priest in the reign of Ahaz, who, by the direction of the impious king, made an altar at Jerusalem like one at Damascus, and offered daily sacrifices upon it . . . *The princes of the Sanctuary*] Meaning, the High Priests and the other ministers of the Temple service, whom God *profaned* when he permitted them to be carried away captive by idolaters." Gill has: "*and thy teachers have transgressed against me*; or 'interpreters'; of the law to the people, the Priests and Levites, Scribes and Pharisees; such who should have taught the people, and instructed them in the knowledge of divine things, and interceded with God for them; these were transgressors of the law themselves, as well as despisers of the Gospel . . ." Cheyne makes a beautiful contribution here, explaining that these passages "prepare us for the announcement of a Higher Mediator," one in whom the Lord is "so 'well pleased' that he cannot refuse to accept his intercession." So we see a contrast between the unconverted deceitful priests, high priests and false prophets with the perfect "merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17b), even Jesus Christ our Lord.

28 Therefore I have profaned the princes ✓ of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

✓ or, holy princes

The Targum (Ⓒ) has, "Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and I have delivered Jacob to the slaughter, and Israel to reproaches." The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, "When the chiefs polluted my sanctuary, then I gave up. Jacob to be destroyed, and Israel to reproach." For the first clause, likewise, instead of the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) rendering, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, "Thy princes have profaned the sanctuary." The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, as in the margin, *principes sanctos* (Vulgate, Ⓟ), "And I have profaned the holy princes, I have given Jacob to slaughter, and Israel to reproach." Regarding נְאֻחֵי, and *profaned* (root, חָלַל), Cowles has: "The Hebrew word means etymologically to pierce, to mutilate, to treat as worthless and not as sacred. Speaking of those who were by their office, sacred, holy men, God says, I will strip them of every thing sacred

and treat them as having no sanctity, but as being worthless . . . blighting judgments that must come on a recreantly apostate people for their rebellion against God." Barnes explains: "*Therefore I have profaned* – The princes of the sanctuary, that is, the priests, were by their office regarded as sacred, or set apart to the service of God. To depose them from that office, to subject them to punishment, and to send them into captivity, was, therefore, regarded as profaning them. They were stripped of their office, and robes, and honors, and reduced to the same condition, and compelled to meet with the same treatment, as the common people. The sense is, that he had made them common (for so the word חָלַל is used in Exodus 31:14; 19:22; Leviticus 19:8; 21:9; Malachi 1:12; 2:2); he did not regard their office; he used them all alike." Henderson suggests that "שָׂרֵי קִדְשׁ, *princes of the sanctuary*,⁴² are the priests (1 Chronicles 24:5)," as well as Ibn Ezra who points to the same scripture. Jennings has: "Even the high priests who have a place of rule—'princes,' thus as they are—He has been compelled to expose as the reverse of holy. They are 'holy' as to their position, but 'profane' as to their condition." Barnes explains: "*The princes of the sanctuary* – Margin, 'Holy princes.' It means, either those who presided over and directed the services of the sanctuary, called in 1 Chronicles 24:5, 'governors of the sanctuary;' or those who were holy in office. The Septuagint renders it, *Oi ἄρχοντες τὰ ἅγια μου* – 'Who preside over my holy things,' or my sanctuary."

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⁴² Or, holy princess (see margin).

