
Isaiah 45

Just like Cyrus was a crucial piece or tool for the return of Israel from Babylon, so would the Book of Mormon be to the return of Israel to the Lord in the last days. The mention of Cyrus by name has been responsible for much of the controversy regarding the unity of Isaiah. Many scholars could not fathom the idea that Isaiah could predict ahead of his time—these scholars *not* understanding that a prophet, seer and revelator only prophecies through the power and influence of the Holy Ghost. I testify that there is a gift of prophecy and that prophets are permitted, as the Lord wills, to see into the future. Through prayer and study of the Book of Mormon, and through turning to Christ, men and women are promised that: “confidence [shall] wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall *distil upon thy soul* as the *dews from heaven*” (D&C 121:45, emphasis added). God makes it clear that we will not seek Him in vain, nor that mankind was created by accident. Finally, we are gloriously informed that every knee shall bend and every tongue confess and testify that Jesus is the very Christ, the Son of God.

vv. 1-4. From the pre-existence, Cyrus was set apart by the Lord to do an important work. Three reasons are given, all beginning with **לְמַעַן** *that* [or, *to that end*—Young], to explain why the Lord would bless Cyrus: (1) *that* Cyrus might know it was the Lord who helped him (ISAIAH 45:3); (2) *that* Israel might be blessed (ISAIAH 45:4); and (3) *that* the whole world might know the Lord (ISAIAH 45:6). In each of these cases the word **יָדַע** *know*, is involved in some way. In the first instance, *that* Cyrus might know the Lord; in the last, *that* the world might know the Lord; in the middle, *that* even through Cyrus did not know he was an instrument of the Lord, yet he would be used to bless Israel and at some point come to acknowledge His hand.

1 ¶ THUS saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, ✓ to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

✓ or, strengthened

THUS saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him.

The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “לְמַשִּׁיחֵיהִ” as does the Masoretic text (מ) “לְמַשִּׁיחֵהוּ,” to his anointed, or to his Messiah. Other individuals who have been anointed, such as kings (i.e., the Lord’s anointed) are often types of *The Anointed One*, or *Christ the Lord*. Here we have the title pointing to King Cyrus, כּוֹרֶשׁ, (or, כּוֹרֶשׁ in Aramaic), that is *Joresh* or *Jorash*, respectively (the ‘J

or כּ, pronounced as a Spanish j, or German Ch). The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whom I hold firm by his right hand, to deliver the nations unto him (literally, ‘before him’).” The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, “Thus saith the Lord God, For mine anointed, for Cyrus, (whose right hand I have taken hold of that nations may listen before him).” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Thus saith the Lord to my anointed Cyrus, whose right hand I have taken hold of, to subdue nations before his face.” ¶ *Whose right hand*. This is an emblem of being helped. Rawlinson follows the margin in suggesting, *Whose right hand I have strengthened*. Benson says: “. . . supporting and directing his right hand, and enabling him to surmount all difficulties, and to overcome all opposition.” There is, indeed, nothing sweeter than to be taken by the right hand of the Lord. I love living life in which the Lord holds us continually by the right hand. Being held by the right hand has multiple meanings to members of the Church: everything from the “signs and tokens pertaining to the Holy Priesthood”¹ to everyday life wherein we commune with the Lord in holy prayer and scripture study. ¶ Of Cyrus, Jenour writes many words of praise: “Cyrus, one of the most celebrated persons of antiquity, was the son [of] Cambyses, king of Persia, and was born about the year 590 B.C., sometime after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. He is described by Xenophon as remarkable for the beauty of his person, the strength and agility of his body, and the extraordinary qualities of his mind. Surpassing all others in every military exercise, he was at the same time endued with great intellectual powers; and with such sweetness of disposition, and such engaging manners, that he gained the hearts of all with whom he had to do, even of those whose country he had

¹ Young, President Brigham. *Journal of Discourses* 2:31, 1854.

conquered, and rendered tributary to himself. Of all conquerors, indeed, mentioned in ancient history he appears to have been the most free from those vices and extravagances by which the characters of such persons are generally disgraced, and to have been endued by God with more of those qualifications which are requisite for founding a great empire, than any other. The following extract from Xenophon's introduction to his *Cyropaedia* will show that the above remarks are not without foundation. Having said that no animal appeared to him, at one time, so difficult to govern as man, he adds; 'But, when I consider that Cyrus made himself to be obeyed by so many myriads of men, that he held under his command so many cities, and so many different nations, I am obliged to change my opinion and to acknowledge, that it is not impossible, nor even very difficult, to command men, if a person sets about it in a right way. In fact, people the most distant [sic] are known to have come to offer themselves to Cyrus of their own accord, although the greater part of them had never seen him and some were certain that they never should see him. They wished to be among the number of his subjects at any price. This is the reason why there is no hereditary prince or conqueror, the extent of whose dominions can be compared with his' (*Cyropaedia*. L. 1 § 1.1).² Delitzsch says: "The politics of Cyrus were pervaded by purer motives [than the rest of the world's leaders], and this brought him eternal honour." ¶ *To His anointed*, מְשִׁיחַ, לְמִשְׁחוֹ, מְשָׁחָה, from the root, מָשַׁח, or in Greek, *Christ*, χριστός. Slotki/Rosenberg have: "The Hebrew root of the verb does not necessarily imply actual anointment with oil. It may only mean 'consecration' or 'appointment to a high office' (Rashi, Kimhi, Ibn Ezra)." Some, in an effort to eliminate Christological references in the Old Testament, suggest that the Hebrew expression for Messiah or Anointed, מְשִׁיחַ, is *never* used for the future Christ in the prophetic books. While we have plenty of examples when the word מְשִׁיחַ is used for a king or "the Lord's anointed," yet there are at least three such references in the latter prophets that speak of Jesus Christ: two in the book of Daniel (Daniel 9:25-26) and one in the Minor Prophets (Habakkuk 3:13³). In

² Some scholars consider the *Cyropaedia* by Xenophon as an interesting book but not necessarily based on fact (Xenophon, by the way, is the author of one of the early treatises on academic equitation and the art of dressage). Those who malign Cyrus are just as likely to be incorrect, however. As my grandfather's friend, Professor Albert Einstein, told my father in his youth—upon hearing his desire to study history—"Half of history is true; the other, interesting."

³ "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed [מְשִׁיחֶךָ]; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah" (Habakkuk 3:13).

addition, Young points out a powerful reference in the *Wittings*: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against *his anointed* [מְשִׁיחוֹ], saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (Psalm 2:1-7, emphasis added). ¶ Henderson explains: "The allusion is to the ancient rite of anointing with oil those who were invested with royal dignity (e.g., Judges 9:8; 1Samuel 9:16; 15:1; 1Kings 1:34). To us today, of course, we tend to only think of *Messiah* or the *Anointed* מְשִׁיחַ, as especially associated with Jesus the Christ, fully understanding, of course, that in the Bible it is also used in other instances. Keith explains: "The Almighty is represented as addressing Cyrus as the anointed of the Lord, an expression which is often applied to the Saviour—which is the signification of his most familiar names, Christ, and the Messiah. As it was by anointing, that kings and others were consecrated to their office, under the Jewish economy, to be anointed would be equivalent to being *set apart* to the particular office, in which signification it was most applicable to Cyrus. In his wonderful achievements he was but the instrument of God, who led him by the hand, and upheld him (margin) as a child which needs support" (emphasis added). Cowles has: "Some have considered [this title, i.e., my anointed] a special indication that Cyrus was a type of the great Messiah. The just view seems to be that he was anointed as king for the special work which the Lord had for him to do, as Jesus was for his special work, while yet their respective missions were exceedingly unlike." ¶ *To subdue nations before him*. Alexander explains: "The treading down of nations is a trait peculiarly appropriate in this case, as the Greek historians give long catalogues of distinct nations subjugated by Cyrus, such as the Medes, Hyrcanians, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, Lydians, Carians, Babylonians, &c." ¶ *And I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut*. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, "I will break the power of kings; I will open gates before him, and cities shall not be shut up." The Peshitta (Ⓢ) is missing *the two leaved gates*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, "And to turn the backs of kings, and to open the doors before him, and the gates shall not be shut." Skinner explains: "To *loose* (lit. 'open'⁴)

⁴ *Open*, פָּתַח, from the root פָּתַח.

is to **ungird**, or **disarm**; see 1Kings 20:11⁵, where the same verb forms the contrast to ‘**gird**.’” So also Birks who further explains: “The loosing is a contrast to the girding of the loins. It denotes the weakening of every adverse power, so that resistance would be vain. There is a special allusion to the night when the handwriting appeared on the wall, when ‘the king’s countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote together one against another’ (Daniel 5:6).” Alexander notes: “Clericus and J. D. Michaelis suppose an allusion to the removal of the sword-belt, as the ancient method of disarming or dismissing from active service . . . But most of the modern writers are agreed that the words at least include a reference to the ordinary use of the girdle as a part of oriental dress, on which the activity of the wearer and his exercise of strength are in a great degree dependent, as it gathers up and tightens the flowing garments which would otherwise impede his movements.” Keith likewise has: “As girding the loins, or securing the flowing robe worn about the person in the East, indicated preparation for work, or war,—so loosing the loins, as it occurs in the text, expresses unpreparedness, unfitness, or feebleness . . . If the loins be regarded as the seat of strength, to loose them is to render helpless. In this view, which is in substance the same as the other, there was a fulfilment of the very language of the prophecy when Belshazzar the king of Babylon was startled by the writing on the wall, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed (Daniel 5:6).” ¶ *To open before him the two leaved gate.* Birks, referring back to Daniel says: “The opening of the doors and gates has a similar reference to that night of revelry, when the river-gates were carelessly left unclosed.” Rabbi Rosenberg has: “The dual form **דְּלָתַיִם**,⁶ used also in Deuteronomy 3:5, probably denotes two doors with which the gate was closed.” Alexander explains: “All interpreters admit that while this clause, in its most general sense, is perfectly appropriate to all the fortified places which were attacked by Cyrus, it is specifically and remarkably appropriate to the taking of Babylon. It can scarcely be considered a fortuitous coincidence, that Herodotus speaks of the gates which led to the river as having been left open on the night of the attack; and Xenophon says the doors of the palace itself having been unguardedly opened, the invaders took possession of it almost without resistance.” Calvin well says that while we wish to know how the Lord’s blessings will come about, that: “God frequently chooses to hold us in suspense, and

⁵ We have **זִנְרָהּ כְּמִצְפָּתָהּ** or “Let not him that **girdeth on his harness** boast himself **as** he that **putteth it off**.”

⁶ Gesenius explains: “Root **דָּלָה**, *the leaf* of a door, so called from its hanging and swinging.”

thus conceals from us the method which he has ready at hand, yet, in this instance he indulges the weakness of his people, and explains the method in which he will deliver them.” Furthermore, Calvin has: “. . . the Prophet shews that all defenses are useless, and that it serves no purpose to block up every entrance, when the Lord wishes to open up a way for the enemies. Although it is certain that the gates were shut and securely barred, yet . . . the Prophet justly affirms that nothing shall be closed against him.” When the Lord opens, who is there who can shut? See Revelation 3:7b where Christ applies the following to Himself: “These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.”

2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: The Chilton Targum (⚡) translation has, “*My Memra will go before you, and I will level walls.*” The LXX (⚡) reads, “I will go before thee and level mountains.” The Douay-Rheims (⚡) has, for the second clause, “And will humble the great ones of the earth.” I like the expression in Hebrew {Masoretic text (⚡)}, **אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ** as well as the DSS 1QIsa^a (⚡), **אֲנִי לְפָנֶיכָה** } where it says, “**I before thy face**” will walk &c. Cyrus, being given as a type of Christ, would have *the crooked places made straight* and all things prepared before him (see also ISAIAH 40:1 ff.). Birks has: “While Belshazzar and his nobles scoffed in their feasting, and drank wine, in scorn, in the vessels of God’s temple, the warning of God, published so long before, was fulfilled, first in their folly, and then in their speedy ruin. ‘If now the Babylonians had perceived beforehand, or learned what Cyrus was doing, they would, overlooking the entrance of the Persians, have destroyed them utterly. For by fastening all the gates towards the river, and themselves mounting on the walls along the river sides, they would have caught them as in a net. Now, however, the Persians come upon them unawares. Also from the size of the city, as those who live there report, when one end of it was taken, the Babylonians who lived in the middle did not know it; but as it happened to be a feast with them, they were dancing at the hour, and making merry, until indeed they knew it too well. And thus Babylon was taken for the first time’ (Herodotus 1:191).” ¶ Some years ago I was scheduled to fly back East from California and give a seminar. They had predicted *the perfect storm*, and many airports were closed. I was quite upset with the

idea of traveling under these conditions, and picked up the phone to call the sponsors of the event to tell them I was not going to be able to fulfil my commitment as a result of the weather conditions. But I had not inquired of the Lord in this matter and the Spirit chastised me for it. I put the phone down. After praying it was clear to me that the Lord would make my crooked places straight and that I would be able to deliver my talk. It took faith and courage to leave my home and I was indeed blessed in my travels, and the Lord provided some missionary opportunities on the way to my talk, also. A few of my connections were delayed but at the end the trip was a total success. When the Lord opens up the way for anyone all things are made possible. In my lifetime, the Lord has continually opened opportunities and gates that had been apparently closed. There is no more beautiful understanding than to know that the Lord will go before us to open the way. ¶ *I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and burst asunder the bars of iron.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, for the second clause, “And will burst the bars of iron.” Skinner notes: “Babylon had 100 gates ‘all of brass,’ according to the description of Herodotus (I. 179). Cf. Psalm 107:16.” Alexander has: “Herodotus and Abydenus say expressly that the gates of Babylon were all of brass (compare Psalms 107:16).” Lowth quotes Herodotus: “In the wall all round there are a hundred gates, all of brass; and so in like manner, are the sides and the lintels.’ The gates likewise within the city, opening to the river from the several streets, were of brass; as were those also of the temple of Belus: Herodotus 1:180, 181..” Once again, the Lord will push aside gates of brass and iron for us, when we are in His errand. Recall, for instance, Nephi’s return to Jerusalem to obtain the brass plates.

3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call [thee] by thy name, [am] the God of Israel.

And I will give thee the treasures of darkness. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And give thee treasures of darkness.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, “And I will give thee hidden treasures.” The context suggests *out of darkness*, rather than *of darkness*. So also Skinner: “*the treasures of darkness*] i.e. treasures hid in darkness. The following word rendered *hidden riches* (Heb. מִצְרֵי חַיִּים, held by some to be the original of the N.T. ‘Mammon’), means properly treasure *hidden* underground (Job 3:21; Proverbs 2:4; Jeremiah 41:8). The treasures referred to are chiefly the loot of Sardis, which Xenophon

describes as ‘the richest city of Asia next to Babylon’ (Cyrop. VII. 2. 11), and of Babylon itself (Jeremiah 50:37; Jeremiah 51:13).” Keith has: “The treasures which fell into the hands of Cyrus . . . at the taking of Babylon, and in his other successes, is stated by historians to have been immense. These it was customary to secure in secret places ; often, it is stated, in periods of hostile invasion, in caves ; hence they are called ‘treasures of darkness,’ ‘hidden riches,’ riches ‘of secret places.’” In Matthew 13:44 we have: “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” ¶ *And hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call [thee] by thy name, [am] the God of Israel.* The Targum (Ⓣ) only has, “and hidden treasures” for the first clause. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Deep, hidden, unseen treasures I will disclose to thee, that thou mayest know, that I, the Lord thy God, who calleth thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, for the first clause, “And the concealed riches of secret places.” Alexander explains that Cyrus was able to get many riches out of these expeditions: “The last clause gives a reason why this circumstance is mentioned, namely, in order that Cyrus might be able to identify the Being who brought it to pass with the Being who foretold it. The same consideration will account for the mention of the name of Cyrus; so that even if it were a bolder violation of analogy and usage than it is, there would still be a sufficient explanation of it furnished by the divine purpose to exert a direct influence through this prediction upon Cyrus himself. That such an influence was really exerted by the writings of Isaiah is expressly asserted by Josephus, and would seem to be implied in the monarch’s solemn recognition of Jehovah as the true God, and the author of his successes (Ezra 1:27).” Lowth has: “Sardes and Babylon, when taken by Cyrus, were the wealthiest cities in the world. Croesus, celebrated beyond all the kings of that age for his riches, gave up his treasures to Cyrus, with an exact account, in writing, of the whole, containing the particulars with which each wagon was loaded, when they were carried away: and they were delivered to Cyrus at the palace of Babylon (*Xenophon Cyropaedia* 7:503, 515, 540). The gold and silver estimated by weight in this account, being converted into pounds sterling, amount to £ 126,224,000 (*Brerewood, De Ponderibus*, cap X).” Wordsworth well says: “Cyrus did not require to be told that *the Lord (Jehovah) was the God of Israel*. All the heathen knew this; but he and they needed to be taught that the Lord God of Israel was

⁷ “Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah” (Ezra 1:2).

the only God, and that all the gods whom the heathen worshipped were vanity.” ¶ *Treasures of darkness* and *hidden treasures* essentially mean the same thing: that which is not apparent. These treasures may be material, but the most valuable riches are treasures of knowledge. The Book of Mormon is one such treasure. It was kept hidden for centuries until the boy Prophet Joseph Smith was able to remove it from its dark place in Hill Cumorah and begin translating its pages. This verse also reminds us of the Word of Wisdom: “And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:19). I feel that the Lord has continually blessed me with treasures of understanding and knowledge in my work on worker productivity and interpersonal relations and mediation, and in all of the areas where I have developed an interest, and most important of all, an understanding of the Holy Scriptures. We have powerful promises given to us in these last days: “God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the *unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost*, that has not been revealed since the world was until now; Which our forefathers have awaited with anxious expectation to be revealed in the last times, which their minds were pointed to by the angels, as held in reserve for the fulness of their glory; A time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest. All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ . . . How long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, *as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints*” (DyC 121:26-30, 33, emphasis added).

4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: The LXX (Ϟ) reads, “For the sake of my servant Jacob, and of Israel my chosen one, I will call thee by thy name.” The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ϡ) has *Israel*, **יִשְׂרָאֵל**, while the Masoretic text (מ) has *and Israel*, **וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל**. Benson suggests: “The prophet here gives us the reasons why God showed such favour to a prince, who had been addicted to the superstition of his country, and ignorant of the true God, that he prospered all his under takings, and gave success to all his endeavours. It was, 1st, For Israel’s sake: For

Israel, mine elect, I have even called thee, &c.—I have called thee to this honour, and that by name; not for thy own sake, but for Israel’s: therefore, neither despise them, though a poor and despised people, nor be puffed up in a great opinion of thyself.” Luther points us to John 10:3: “To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.” In the *1989 Sperry Symposium on the Old Testament* we read: “Various aspects of God’s promises to Abraham and his descendants can be found throughout scripture, chiefly in Abraham 1 and 2 and in Genesis 12, 15, 17, 26, and 28. God called Abraham’s covenant children an ‘elect’ (ISAIAH 45:4) and a ‘chosen’ (Psalm 105:6) people. Almost all of the prophets spoke of the Abrahamic promises and responsibilities. Many people believed this meant they were favored above other nations because they were more loved of God; however, the words elect and chosen refer to certain responsibilities. Abraham’s seed were elected to service.”⁸ ¶ Elder Bruce R. McConkie explains: “Election is akin to and synonymous with calling, and in a general sense the elect comprise the whole house of Israel (ISAIAH 45:4; 65:9) . . . But in the most express and proper usage of terms, [The] elect of God comprise a very select group, an inner circle of faithful members of the Church . . . They are the portion of church members who are striving with all their hearts to keep the fulness of the gospel law in this life so that they can become inheritors of the fulness of gospel rewards in the life to come. As far as the male sex is concerned, they are the ones, the Lord says, who have the Melchizedek Priesthood conferred upon them and who thereafter magnify their callings and are sanctified by the Spirit. In this way, ‘They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.’”⁹ ¶ *I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “I have guided thee, though thou hast not known that thou shouldst fear me.”¹⁰ The LXX (Ϟ) reads, “and receive thee kindly. As for thee, thou didst not know me.” The Douay-Rheims (ϣ) has, “I have made a likeness of thee, and thou hast not known me.” Kay has, “Long before he knew God, he was ‘known’ by Him (see Jeremiah 1:5).” So also Delitzsch (and many others who say): “The passage is to be explained in the same way as Jeremiah 1:5, ‘Before I

⁸ Richard D. Draper, ed., *A Witness of Jesus Christ: The 1989 Sperry Symposium on the Old Testament*, p.271-272.

⁹ McConkie, Elder Bruce R. *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:330-331; *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 217); and *Commentary* 2:267-269, 271-278, 283-285.

¹⁰ Pauli has: “This paraphrase agrees with what Xenophon tells us of the end of Cyrus; when about to die, he sacrificed to Jupiter, to the sun, and to other idols, and supplicated to his wife, &c. (Cyropaedia, lib viii. cap 5).” In other words, that Cyrus only partially acknowledged the hand of the Lord in his great success.

formed thee in the womb, I knew thee.” In other words, even from the pre-existence.¹¹ ¶ Skinner says: “*though thou hast not known me*” . . . the words present no difficulty in their natural sense, which is that Cyrus entered on his career of conquest ignorant of the true God who made his way prosperous.” Numerous people throughout the history of mankind have been led to incredible discoveries in the fields of science and in other areas, although many of them think these were the fruit of their own work, and have not known the Lord. ¶ Cowles has: “‘Surnaming’ (here as in ISAIAH 44:5), means to give a special name of honor, implying significant relations to him who gave the name.”

vv. 5-10. It is the Lord who has power. A double allusion—one to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and one to the reuniting of the City of Enoch with the City of Zion in the last days—is given. The Lord foresees the persecution and murmuring that will arise with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, another witness of Christ.

5 ¶ I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else, [there is] no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

Wordsworth renders the first clause: “*I, the Lord (Jehovah), am God, and none else beside me is God.*” There is an interesting ellipsis in all of this. An ellipsis that is evident to every Latter-day Saint. It is clearly understood that Jehovah is God, and that furthermore He also, through Divine Investiture, speaks in representation of God the Father. And, furthermore, that the Holy Ghost—the third member of the Godhead—speaks to testify of the Father and of the Son and of all truth; and to guide; and to bring into remembrance. Such are the affairs of this earth and numberless other planets and universes (although they are numbered to God). However, many of the details of the even greater scheme of things are only partially known to man and will become clear in due time to “all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ” (D&C 121:29b). This will be in “a time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest” (D&C 121:28). The Lord, however, knows that such an *ellipsis* is implied and understood, i.e., that it goes without saying. The Lord’s concern here, and in other like places in the

¹¹ See President Joseph Fielding Smith’s notes on “Bible Evidences for Man’s Pre-Existence,” *Answers to Gospel Questions*. Also, in the same book, see President Smith’s comments on the talents we possessed in the pre-existence, under “Different Dispositions.” Furthermore, he taught that “pre-mortal callings [were not] confined to the prophets” (see under “Acceptance of the Prophet Joseph Smith”).

Scriptures, is that no one might confer godhood status to the idols and other no-gods of the heathen nations. ¶ The Targum (Ⓢ) has, for the second half, “I have supported thee, though thou hast not known that thou shouldest fear me (the Royal Polyglot has לְמַפְלֵא, ‘to worship’).” The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, “Because I am the Lord God and there is no God else besides me; I strengthened thee when thou didst not know me.” Skinner points out: “*I gird thee*] the contrast to ‘loose the loins of kings’ in Isaiah 45:1.” In other words, even though at first Cyrus did not know it he was being blessed and strengthened by the Lord. Birks says: “The former verse taught that it was the God of Israel, who, for Israel’s sake, led Cyrus to victory. Here the further truth is taught, that He is no mere tutelary, national God, like those of the heathen; but Jehovah, the unchangeable I AM, who claims justly the reverence and worship of all creation.” Alexander says: “What is said before of naming him is here said of girding him, i.e. investing him with royal dignity or personally strengthening him; both may be included.” ¶ *Though thou hast not known me*. At some point Cyrus finds out about the Lord, but these words suggest to me a *knowing* that goes beyond a *knowing about* the Lord. To me, it suggests that Cyrus did not *know the Lord* in a religious sense. In John we read: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that [there is] none beside me. I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else.

The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, “That they from the risings of the sun and they from its goings down may know, that there is no God besides me. I the Lord am God and there is none else.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓝ) has, for the first half, “That they may know who are from the rising of the sun, and they who are from the west, that there is none besides me.” Parry, Parry and Peterson have: “This prophecy is similar to the one made by Malachi: ‘For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; . . . for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts’ (Malachi 1:11).” Skinner has: “*from the west*] Lit. from the going down thereof.” Jenour has: “There can be little doubt that the pious Jews would shew these prophecies concerning Cyrus to those Gentile nations amongst whom they were dispersed. Josephus indeed affirms, that they were brought to the notice of Cyrus himself, and that he was principally induced by them to issue his decree in favor of the Jews. Now this edict, being a public document

generally made known throughout the dominions of Cyrus, would doubtless excite the curiosity of all those to whose knowledge it came, and lead them to inquire respecting that God of whom it made mention in such respectful terms. And thus, by means of these predictions, would many from different parts of the earth be convinced that Jehovah alone is God.” Keith suggests: “No doubt, the capture of so famed a city as Babylon, by such a conqueror as Cyrus, would attract universal notice in the then known world, and the public recognition of Jehovah in his decree would spread the name and fame of the one true God.” McFadyen says: “The section ends, as it began (ISAIAH 44:24), with the thought of God as the maker of all things.” Calvin well says regarding this matter that would be *known*: “He does not predict what shall happen immediately, but what shall happen afterwards, though these things were long concealed. God therefore did not permit the remembrance of this transaction to fade away, but determined that it should be handed down in permanent records, that it might be celebrated in all ages, and by the most distant nations, to the very end of the world.” Henderson writes: “Though the Persians, among whom Cyrus had received his education, held the worshippers of idols in abhorrence, they had no proper idea of the only living and true God.” Nägelsbach observes: “As the appearance of Christ did not effect the entire disappearance of heathenism, just as little and even much less could those manifestations of the true God in the centers of heathenism produce any enduring effect. But they could operate inwardly and secretly, and prepare for the appearance of the Saviour of the world. The appearance of the Magi (Matthew 2) is a proof of this.” The return of the Jews from Babylon, then, would pave the way for the birth of the Christ child and culminate, eventually, in the bending of every knee and witnessing of every tongue, that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the very son of God.

7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things].

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Who prepares the light, and creates darkness, makes peace, and creates punishment for evil (בִּישׁ). I the Lord do all these things.” Pauli notes that regarding בִּישׁ, “Words expressing, as in Hebrew, *evil*, sin, signify sometimes the punishment for sin, or sacrifice for sin; thus 2Corinthians 5:21, ‘He that made him ἀμαρταν, *sin*, (sacrifice) for us.’ The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “It was I who provided light and made darkness; who make peace and create evils: I the Lord God am he who doth all these things.” Instead of *evil*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *hardship* (Lamsa) / *adversity*

(BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “I form the light, and create darkness, I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord that do all these things.” Instead of *peace*, שְׁלוֹמִים, found in the Masoretic text (Ⓜ), the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓞ) has *good*, טוֹב. ¶ *Light and darkness*. See Genesis 1:14-19. In this Isaianic verse, the Lord is reminding us of these things. Rabbi Rosenberg, leaning on the ancient Rabbis has: “Since darkness is merely the absence of light, it is not really a creation, but a decree that the light absent itself (Ibn Ezra, Redak).” So likewise, Westermann, “Though he is lord over the darkness, God is certainly not its creator. He took it into creation and set bounds to it . . .” And of course, as Latter-day Saints we prefer the word *organize* or *form* than *create*. Most exegetes suggest that the Lord is doing away with the false doctrine held by the Persian Magi of the Zoroaster. Cowles writes: “[So] the people of the distant East, the regions of the rising sun, might know that there is no God beside me. For Persia, pre-eminently to the Hebrews the land of the rising sun, was the home of the celebrated doctrine of Zoroaster, taught in the Zend-Avesta, viz, that there is *not* one God only, but virtually two; one the author of all good; the other, of all evil; one, the former of light; the other, of darkness. These two rival creators were held to be each eternal; and if not precisely equal; yet both indefinitely powerful, and by their very nature terribly and eternally antagonistic.—But squarely in opposition to this dualistic system, and that his word might go at once through all that Eastern world whence Cyrus came, the Lord here affirms that he alone both formed the light and created darkness . . .” Govett names the two gods as Ormuzd (the good) and Ahriman (the evil). Jenour suggests: “. . . Jehovah declares that he is the creator, and supreme ruler of all things; and consequently that nothing, whether evil or good, can exist *independent* of him, much less can act in opposition to his will.” Ironside speaks in more positive terms of the Persian religion: “Some people think of them as dualists as though they believed in two great gods, the god of light and the god of darkness. But it seems more likely that they really believed in one true and living God, but with a great Adversary seeking to impede the carrying out of God’s counsels. A people believing in one God, symbolized by the sun (they did not actually worship it) would look with favor upon Israel, when they found that they did not worship idols.” ¶ *Evil*, רָע. Better, *calamity* (Skinner), *hardship* (Lamsa) or *adversity*. Jenour speaks about what he calls a mystery: “That evil exists, we know; but how did it first come? To say that God *permits* it, is saying nothing to the point, for permitting is not originating, and the question is as to the source of evil. Nor does it help the difficulty, to say that Satan is its author. Doubtless the evil there is in our world originated with that fallen spirit; but, how did he

himself become evil? . . . Volumes have been written upon it, but it remains as inextricable as ever.” Gladly, latter-day revelation sheds a clear light over all these matters. At the heart of the matter were both pride and a desire on the part of Lucifer to destroy man’s agency: “Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him” (Moses 4:3b). In LDS.org we read: “Heavenly Father allows Satan and Satan’s followers to tempt us as part of our experience in mortality (see 2Nephi 2:11-14; D&C 29:39). Because Satan ‘seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself’ (2Nephi 2:27), he and his followers try to lead us away from righteousness. He directs his most strenuous opposition at the most important aspects of Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness. For example, he seeks to discredit the Savior and the priesthood, to cast doubt on the power of the Atonement, to counterfeit revelation, to distract us from the truth, and to contradict individual accountability. He attempts to undermine the family by confusing gender, promoting sexual relations outside of marriage, ridiculing marriage, and discouraging childbearing by married adults who would otherwise raise children in righteousness. Individuals do not have to give in to Satan’s temptations. Each person has the power to choose good over evil, and the Lord has promised to help all who seek Him through sincere prayer and faithfulness.” ¶ I particularly appreciate what Ironside says here. Speaking of those who pervert the word of God: “[There are those who] insist that God has foreordained everything that takes place on the earth; therefore that man should sin, in order that He might have opportunity to display His redemptive grace. But that is not what is involved here when He says, ‘I create peace and I create evil.’ It is evil in the sense of calamity.” ¶ But returning to this Isaianic verse, if you are like me, the first thing you do is rush to your footnotes and look for the JST. But there is not JST here. Yet, in a similar verse we do have a JST: “Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be **evil** [רָעָה] in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?” (JST, *know it*, Amos 3:6). Since the prophet Joseph Smith was taken before he completed the JST, one possibility is that this verse might still need changes. But there are other, more likely, explanations at work here. We must begin by defining the word *evil* in English. Then we will look at the original word, רָעָה, in Hebrew. When we think of **evil**, we tend to first associate it with something that is “morally reprehensible, sinful, wicked” (*Webster*). Or, “disposition to do wrong; moral offence; wickedness; depravity” (*Webster Unabridged Dictionary*, pre-1923).¹² NBD suggests that *evil* is more than sin, “The

Hebrew word comes from a root meaning ‘to spoil’, ‘to break in pieces’: being broken and so made worthless. It is essentially what is unpleasant, disagreeable, offensive.” Dictionaries often distinguish between *moral evil* and *physical evil* (e.g., see *evil*, ISBE, רָעָה).

One thing that should be absolutely clear is that God does not *create moral evil* and that there is nothing about Him that is *evil*. So let us move into the second definition of the word, using physical evil as a descriptor. The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary has: “Bad situations or natural calamities can be referred to as ‘evil,’ since such occurrences are typically interpreted as a consequence of human sin, if not a direct punishment for specific sin (e.g., Deuteronomy 31:17; Ezra 9:13; Proverbs 11:21 {רָעָה is translated as *wicked*—GB}; Jeremiah 26:19; Amos 3:6 {but see JST there}). It is only in this sense (evil as calamity as opposed to evil as immorality or wickedness) that God can be portrayed as the cause of evil. God is never presented as wicked or immoral in the Bible, but God does sometimes send evil upon people in the sense of causing misfortune to befall them (Deuteronomy 28:20 {רָעָה is translated as *wickedness*—GB}; 2Samuel 24:16; Job 42:11; cf. 1Kings 2:44 {רָעָה is translated as *the wickedness*—GB}; 14:10).” Furthermore, the Lord often *permits* or *knows about* such evil רָעָה, without causing it, as in the case of Job. Regarding Job, Jennings says: “Was not Job right in attributing both the giving and the taking away of his all to the Lord, even though Satan was the active intermediary?” We also know of Prophets sealing the heavens so it would not rain. In 1988 the Lord spoke to me and explained that a drought in Chile was His causing, and that I should not pray for rain, but rather, to know when it was the will of the Lord for it to rain. It is vital that our prayers be aligned with the will of God.

8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.

The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Let the heavens drop down from above, and the clouds flow with good, let the earth open itself, and the *dead* live, and let righteousness be revealed together; I the Lord have created them.” The LXX (Ⓠ) reads, “Let the heaven above be glad; and the clouds shower down righteousness. Let the earth spring

¹² Webster, Noah. *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*: Vintage Pre-

1923 Edition (Annotated).

and bloom with mercy and let it cause righteousness to spring up with it. I the Lord am he who created thee. Instead of *skies*, the Peshitta (S) has *clouds*; instead of *bring forth salvation*, the Peshitta (S) has *salvation be multiplied*. The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just: let the earth be opened, and bud forth a saviour: and let justice spring up together: I the Lord have created him.” Nägelsbach has: “Under the figure of rain is represented, in oriental fashion, the fructifying influence of the heaven on the earth (compare Deuteronomy 32:2).” Shalom M. Pau has: “For Heb. מִמַּעַל (‘from above’) serving as an adverb, see Exodus 20:4: ‘Or any likeness of what is in the heavens above (מִמַּעַל);’ Job 31:28: ‘For I would have denied God above (מִמַּעַל).’” Here, once again, we have a representation and direct allusion to God. Gill, leaning in the Vulgate (V) sees an allusion to the Savior, “Or, ‘the righteous One,’ as the Vulgate Latin version; the Lord our righteousness, Christ the author of righteousness . . . and whose coming was to be, and was, as the rain, as the former and latter rain to the earth, and who came from heaven to earth to fulfil all righteousness; and with him came an abundance of blessings of rich grace, even all spiritual blessings, peace, pardon, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life, which were poured down from above upon the sons of men . . .” We also have, of course, another scriptural reference to the Book of Mormon in: “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of *heaven*, having the *everlasting gospel* to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6, emphasis added). Lowth has: “These images of the dew and the rain descending from heaven and making the earth fruitful, employed by the prophet, and some of those nearly of the same kind which are used by the Psalmist¹³, may perhaps be primarily understood as designed to set forth in a splendid manner the happy state of God’s people restored to their country, and flourishing in peace and plenty, in piety and virtue; *but* justice and salvation, mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, and glory dwelling in the land, *cannot with any sort of propriety, in the one or the other, be interpreted as the consequences of that event; they must mean the blessings of the great redemption by Messiah*” (emphasis added). Yes, definitely *redemption by Messiah* is involved. There could be nothing greater! But the *how* of this is quite glorious as well, as we shall see in a moment. Luther says that *let the earth open* means that “the earth sprouts through the *Word of God*” (emphasis added). Calvin is inspired when he says that:

“The Prophet always speaks in the name of God, who, in the exercise of his authority, calls on heaven and earth to lend their services *to the restoration of the Church*” (emphasis added). ¶ We have a further hint in Deuteronomy 32, that these things are symbolic of the doctrine that would be poured forth in the First Vision: “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass” (Deuteronomy 32:2). The tender herb here is symbolic of the boy prophet and the beginnings of the restored Church, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ¶ We also find similar words in the Pearl of Great Price: “And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem” (Moses 7:62). Nyman quotes the Prophet Joseph Smith: “In commenting on the passage in Moses, Joseph Smith said: ‘And now, I ask, how righteousness and truth are going to sweep the earth as with a flood? I will answer. Men and angels are to be co-workers in bringing to pass this great work, and Zion is to be prepared, even a new Jerusalem, for the elect that are to be gathered from the four quarters of the earth, and to be established an holy city, for the tabernacle of the Lord shall be with them.’ (TPJS, p. 84.)” ¶ I was particularly touched by the words of Elder L. Aldin Porter, who after quoting Moses powerfully testified: “Did you note that He said, ‘Truth will I send forth out of the earth’? To do what? ‘To bear testimony of mine Only Begotten.’ The Book of Mormon was compiled and translated for our day. It came forth out of the earth as was prophesied to bless and guide the lives of the people of this day. It came in a day and time as the Lord knew it would when the dislocations caused by wickedness would be very intense. As Moroni concluded the immense work of his father and others, he made a promise that has been shared widely in a multitude of languages. But I fear it has become too commonplace among us. We learn about it in Sunday School, in seminary, in family home evenings, and we even memorize it as missionaries. But today I would ask that you listen as I read this promise as if you had never heard of it. ‘And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.’

¹³ Psalm 85:10-14.

This is the promise, that our Eternal Father will give us a manifestation of truth—a personal revelation of eternal consequence. The Book of Mormon was given to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, manifesting Himself unto all nations. Do not treat lightly the revelations of God. Do not treat lightly this astonishing promise. I bear a solemn testimony to you that this promise has been fulfilled not only in my life but in the lives of hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people. You will find that when Moroni's promise is fulfilled and you are given the knowledge that the Book of Mormon is truly the word of God, there will come with it a witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer and Savior of the world. I have never known an instance where this did not occur. Moreover, I do not believe a violation of this principle will ever take place. A spiritual witness of the Nephite scripture will always bring the certainty of the Savior's existence. With that witness borne of the Holy Ghost will come a sure knowledge that Joseph Smith told the truth when he said that he had seen the Father and the Son on that spring morning of 1820. A knowledge that Jesus Christ lives and is our Redeemer and Savior is worth whatever the cost may be. This is the fulfillment of Moroni's promise in our lives. After that, we then through study and prayer can come to know that He has given us life through the Resurrection. We will come to know that He has promised us a quality of life hereafter beyond our capacity to comprehend. We must understand that this testimony comes only through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the gospel. Read the Book of Mormon. 'With a sincere heart [and] real intent,' begin to read. Ponder the words. Often pause and ask your Heavenly Father 'if these things are not true.' Continue to read, to ponder, and to ask. It will not be easy reading. There will be roadblocks along the way. Persist. Approach your Father in Heaven having expelled your prejudices and biases. Leave your heart open to receive the impressions that come from eternal sources. Many inspiring treasures will be revealed to you. There will, in time, come into your heart and mind an assurance that Jesus Christ is the living Son of the living Father. With it will come a knowledge that Joseph Smith is the prophet of the Restoration and that there are apostles and prophets on the earth today . . . I make this promise to those who are investigating the Church, to those who are members but who have lost enthusiasm for the work and are, therefore, in a state of confusion in a world that is in moral chaos. I make this promise to those who through transgression and faithless living are in despair over eternal things. Our hearts will overflow with gratitude for His sacrifice in our behalf. This doctrine of personal revelation is not new [see Matthew 16:13-17]. After this sacred witness comes, you will see His hand in a thousand things. 'And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are

created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me.' We will find great joy in contemplating His life, and we will shortly realize that in truth all things do bear witness of Him. Furthermore, in the midst of our trials and challenges, we will find peace, knowing that in the end it will be all right. We will find serenity in the face of affliction. We will find this serenity in life even as chaos swirls around us. Such is the power of a testimony and witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer, our Advocate with the Father, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, the very Savior of the world."¹⁴ ¶ President Ezra Taft Benson mightily declared: "The Book of Mormon is the instrument that God designed to 'sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out [His] elect' (Moses 7:62). This sacred volume of scripture needs to become more central in our preaching, our teaching, and our missionary work."¹⁵ Furthermore, President Benson testified: "The Lord promised, therefore, that righteousness would come from heaven and truth out of the earth. We have seen the marvelous fulfillment of that prophecy in our generation. The Book of Mormon has come forth out of the earth, filled with truth, serving as the very 'keystone of our religion.' The Book of Mormon God has also sent down righteousness from heaven. The Father Himself appeared with His Son to the Prophet Joseph Smith. The angel Moroni, John the Baptist, Peter, James, and numerous other angels were directed by heaven to restore the necessary powers to the kingdom. Further, the Prophet Joseph Smith received revelation after revelation from the heavens during those first critical years of the Church's growth. These revelations have been preserved for us in the Doctrine and Covenants. These two great works of scripture, then, become a major tool in the Lord's hand for preserving His people in the latter days: the Book of Mormon, written under the hand of inspiration for our day, preserved through the centuries to come forth in our time, translated by the gift and power of God. It is the keystone of our religion. It is the keystone of our doctrine. It is the keystone of our testimony. It is a keystone in the witness of Jesus Christ. It is a keystone in helping us avoid the deceptions of the evil one in these latter days. Satan rages in the hearts of men and has power over all of his dominions. But the Book of Mormon has greater power—power to reveal false doctrine, power to help us overcome temptations, power

¹⁴ Porter, Elder L. Aldin. "To Bear Testimony of Mine Only Begotten," April 2001 General Conference.

¹⁵ Benson, President Ezra Taft Benson, Flooding the Earth with the Book of Mormon, October 1988 General Conference.

to help us get closer to God than any other book. The Book of Mormon must be reenthroned in the minds and hearts of our people. We must honor it by reading it, by studying it, by taking its precepts into our lives and transforming them into lives required of the true followers of Christ.”¹⁶ ¶ Let us now return to Isaiah. Skinner notes: “Two words are here used for righteousness, that which comes down from heaven is **קִדְּוָה**, that which springs from the earth is **קִדְּוָה**.” That is, the male and female versions of the word. Birks says: “The figure is varied and complete. The heavens are to distil righteousness, like dew, and the skies to pour it down in copious showers. The earth is to open her bosom, and to receive these gifts of heaven. Both, in concert, are thus to yield the fruit of salvation; and the earth is to bring forth righteousness {**קִדְּוָה**, feminine) in response to the floods of righteousness {**קִדְּוָה**, masculine) from on high.” Jenour has: “As by prophetic command he bids the *skies* and the *clouds*, the former *gently to drop down*, the latter to *pour forth*, not the fertilizing dews, or the refreshing shower, but, what would be far more beneficial to the soul of man than even these having issued his command to the *heavens*, the source of natural and spiritual good, the same divine word bids the *earth* open her bosom to receive the good prepared for her; or, in other words, the *inhabitants* of the earth to open their hearts for the reception of the quickening, *sanctifying gospel of Christ*” (emphasis added). In light of Elder McConkie’s comments about *revelation*, below, it is particularly interesting that Alexander writes: “J. D. Michaelis explains this whole verse as relating to prophecy and its fulfilment.” Horsley suggests: “*The universality of the blessing* is the thing particularly described in this verse, under the images of the dew and the rain, falling indiscriminately on all parts of the earth, and the herbage sprouting spontaneously from its whole surface” (emphasis added). Horsley’s comments make us think of the creation: “But I, the Lord God, spake, and there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground” (Moses 3:6). But in this verse we will see both the *revelatory* aspect and the *universality* of the Book of Mormon, both of which, along with the restored Church of Jesus Christ, bring priesthood authority and salvation would be made available to both the living and the dead. Young interestingly says: “Parallel is the command to the clouds to pour out righteousness. Here the verb is best taken as a jussive, *let them pour out*.” What interests me here is the plural, for both the Father and the Son are represented as coming forth in the First Vision. ¶ Elder

Bruce R. McConkie spoke these inspired words of gratitude about the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, “How will the gospel be restored? Heaven and earth will unite in one grand act of grace and goodness. Revelation will commence anew; angelic ministrants will come down from the courts of glory to give keys and powers; righteousness in all its forms will come down from the Son of Righteousness. And the very earth itself will speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel. Righteousness from a living heaven and truth from the dead earth shall unite to proclaim the glad tidings. Men shall hear a voice from the dust, a voice of truth springing out of the earth, an account of God’s dealings with the Lehtes and Jaredites, both of whom had the fulness of his everlasting gospel. The Book of Mormon—long lost to the knowledge of men; indeed, buried in the earth for more than fourteen hundred years shall come forth proving the resurrection of that Lord who was slain on Calvary, and proving also, because he rose from the dead, that he is the Son of God whose gospel is binding upon us all. ‘And righteousness and truth—these two, coming from heaven above and from the earth beneath—will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood,’ saith the Lord, ‘to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem.’ (Moses 7:60-62.) The restored gospel and the knowledge of the true God as set forth therein shall sweep the earth; this gospel and this knowledge shall cover the earth as the waters cover the mighty deep. Israel shall gather to Zion. What power will bring the Israelites from the ends of the earth to their New Jerusalem? It will be the gospel from heaven and the gospel from the dust. Note it and note it well: It is the power of the Book of Mormon that gathers Israel in the last days. [Certainly this was the case with me, for it was the testimony I received from the Book of Mormon that gave me the strength to become a follower of Christ—GB] Both Isaiah and David, as guided by the Spirit, and perhaps having Enoch’s record before them, bore a like witness. Isaiah, using the poetic and prophetic language in which he surpasses all others, records these words from the same lord who spoke to Enoch¹⁷: ‘Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it.’ (Isaiah 45:8.) Salvation comes because God speaks from heaven, and a voice from the dust echoes his divine words. Echoes? Nay, the voice from the dust recites

¹⁶ Benson, President Ezra Taft. The Gift of Modern Revelation. October 1986 General Conference.

¹⁷ This verse is also an allusion to the City of Enoch coming down and being met by the people of Zion in the last days.

anew what the heavenly voice said to holy men of old as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. David, whose inspired psalms were composed by the power of the Spirit, gave forth this heaven-sent word: ‘I will hear what God the Lord will speak,’ he said. Oh, that all men might feel to lend a listening ear to the words of the Almighty! Let the Lord speak, and let all the earth keep silence. ‘For he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints.’ The gospel message is always a message of peace, of a peace that passeth understanding in this life and of an eternal peace in the life that is to be. And always the message is received by those who are saints indeed. ‘Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.’ Salvation comes because God speaks from heaven; mercy is reserved for those who accept his truths; peace comes to the righteous. And then the climax of the whole matter: ‘Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.’ (Psalm 85:8-11.) How glorious it is when the heavens rain righteousness and the earth brings forth truth! Truly, such a day is a day of salvation for all who ‘will hear what God the Lord will speak.’”¹⁸ Regarding ISAIAH 45:8, Barnes says: “There cannot be found anywhere a more beautiful description of a genuine revival of pure religion than in this verse. It is descriptive, doubtless, of what is yet to take place in the better days which are to succeed the present, when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth.” Such began to be fulfilled with the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the formation of His Church, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! [Let] the potsherd [strive] with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Woe to him who thinks of striving against the words of his Creator, and trusts that the images of a potter shall do him good, which are made out of the dust of the earth. Is it possible, that the clay could say to him that worketh it, Thou hast not made me? or thy work, He hath no hands?” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “Is anything endowed with excellence? I fashioned it like the clay of a potter. Will the ploughman plough the ground all the day long? Will the clay say to the potter, ‘What art thou making? Or the work to the workman, ‘Thou hast not hands.’” For the

last clause, the Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, “Or am I not the work of your hands?” / “Was I not the work of thy hands?” (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓜ) has, “Woe to him that gainsayeth his maker, a sherd of the earthen pots: shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it: What art thou making, and thy work is without hands?” The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓢ) has *the earth*, הָאֲדָמָה, while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *earth*, אֲדָמָה. The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *no hands*, אֵין יָדַיִם, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓢ) has *no human hands*, אֵין אֲדָם יָדַיִם.

Barnes continues: “It may be designed to refer to the fact that any interposition of God; any mode of manifesting himself to men meets with enemies, and with those who are disposed to contend with him, and especially any display of his mercy and grace in a great revival of religion. In the previous verse the prophet had spoken of the revival of religion. Perhaps he here adverts to the fact that such a manifestation of his mercy would meet with opposition . . . Men thus contend with their Maker; resist the influences of his Spirit; strive against the appeals made to them; *oppose his sovereignty*; are enraged at the preaching of the Gospel, and often combine to oppose him.” So it was with the opposition to the restoration of His Church in the latter days, even to the present time. The Prophet Joseph Smith was the victim of vicious attacks from the beginning: “It seems as though the adversary was aware, at a very early period of my life, that I was destined to prove a disturber and an annoyer of his kingdom; else why should the powers of darkness combine against me? Why the opposition and persecution that arose against me, almost in my infancy? Some few days after I had this vision, I happened to be in company with one of the Methodist preachers, who was very active in the before mentioned religious excitement; and, conversing with him on the subject of religion, I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there would never be any more of them. I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me. It caused me

¹⁸ McConkie, Bruce R. *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1985, p. 420.

serious reflection then, and often has since, how very strange it was that an obscure boy, of a little over fourteen years of age, and one, too, who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor, should be thought a character of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, and in a manner to create in them a spirit of the most bitter persecution and reviling . . . However, it was nevertheless a fact that I had beheld a vision. I have thought since, that I felt much like Paul, when he made his defense before King Agrippa, and related the account of the vision he had when he saw a light, and heard a voice; but still there were but few who believed him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad; and he was ridiculed and reviled. But all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had, and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise; and though they should persecute him unto death, yet he knew, and would know to his latest breath, that he had both seen a light and heard a voice speaking unto him, and all the world could not make him think or believe otherwise. So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation” (JS-History 1:20-25). ¶ Young says: “To strive with God is to contend with Him in argument.” Keith has: “The connection of these verses is not very clear. They are, however, to be regarded as asserting, like the preceding, the power of the Almighty. Paul applies [these words] to the complaint of man against the Divine decrees¹⁹ . . . but whatever the special allusion may be, the object is the maintenance of the Divine sovereignty and power. God is the universal Creator, while man is declared to be but a potsherd and clay; as dependent on him as the clay is for its shape on the potter, as the child is for its existence on its parent.” Others, like Faussett, interpret Paul’s comments as suggesting the spread of the Gospel beyond the exclusivity of Israel, to the whole world (Romans 9:4-8, 11-21). And it certainly seems to be that this is the way Paul is applying or likening Isaiah to the times in which

¹⁹ Romans 9:20-21 (allusions to this verse as well as Isaiah 29:16).

Paul lived. It is, of course, embarrassing to admit that even in the latter-days there were members of the Lord’s Church who likewise murmured against the spread of the Gospel to others beyond their race and color. Then Elder Spencer W. Kimball said: “It pleases me greatly to notice that at each succeeding conference there is a larger sprinkling of Japanese and Chinese brothers and sisters; of Hawaiians and other islanders; of Indians, Mexicans, Spanish-Americans and others. It makes me very happy indeed . . . [but] Recently there came to my desk a letter, anonymously written [which I saved to share with you before throwing it in the wastebasket]: ‘I never dreamed I would live to see the day when the Church would invite an Indian buck to talk in the Salt Lake Tabernacle—an Indian buck appointed a bishop—an Indian squaw to talk in the Ogden Tabernacle—Indians to go through the Salt Lake Temple—The sacred places desecrated by the invasion of everything that is forced on the white race. . . .’” Elder Kimball goes on to say (and I only quote a few words from one of the most powerful talks I have ever read): “The Prophet Mormon wrote: Yea, wo unto him that shall deny the revelations of the Lord. . . . Yea, and ye need not any longer hiss, nor spurn, nor make game of the Jews, nor any of the remnant of the House of Israel; for behold, the Lord remembereth his covenant unto them . . . according to that which he hath sworn (3Nephi 29:6, 8) . . . What a monster is prejudice! It means prejudging. How many of us are guilty of it? Often we think ourselves free of its destructive force, but we need only to test ourselves. Our expressions, our voice tones, our movements, our thoughts betray us. We are often so willing that others make the contacts, do the proselyting, have the associations. Until we project ourselves into the very situation, we little realize our bias and our prejudice . . . This people ask not for your distant, faraway sympathy, your haughty disdain, your despicable contempt, your supercilious scorn, your turned-up nose, your scathing snobbery, your arrogant scoffing, nor your cold, calculating tolerance . . . I love the Lamanites, the Indians, and all their cousins. I expect to see them rise and fulfil their destiny. I know that the prophecies concerning them will all be fulfilled. May God bless the Lamanite-Nephite peoples, stir their hearts; bless the missionaries that are sent unto them; and help us, their nursing parents. And may God speed the day of their total deliverance. This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.”²⁰ ¶ Alexander suggests: “The absurdity consists in the thing made denying the existence of the hands by which it was itself produced. The essential idea is the same as in Isaiah 10:15, but the expression here much stronger, since the instrument is not merely charged with exalting itself above the

²⁰ Kimball, Elder Spencer W. “The Evil of Intolerance,” *Conference Report*, Apr. 1954, pp. 103–108.

efficient agent, but the creature with denying the power or skill of its Creator—The restriction of this verse, and of those which follow, to the Babylonians, or the Jews in exile, is entirely arbitrary and at variance with the context, which refers to the conquests of Cyrus and their consequences, not as the main subject of the prophecy, but as illustrations of a general truth.” Indeed, surely the refusal of the world to accept modern revelation and the Book of Mormon as the word of God, as Scripture, is pronounced in this and the next verse. That man would, in opposition to God, set out to attempt to extinguish the word of God, and murmur as to receiving a further witness (see 2Nephi 28-29): “. . . they shall teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance. And they deny the power of God, the Holy One of Israel . . .” (2 Nephi 28:4b-5a); “Yea, and there shall be many which shall teach after this manner, false and vain and foolish doctrines, and shall be puffed up in their hearts, and shall seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord; and their works shall be in the dark” (2 Nephi 28:9); “Wo unto them that turn aside the just for a thing of naught and revile against that which is good, and say that it is of no worth!” (2Nephi 28:16a); “But behold, there shall be many—at that day when I shall proceed to do a marvelous work among them, that I may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men, that I may set my hand again the second time to recover my people, which are of the house of Israel . . . And because my words shall hiss forth—many of the Gentiles shall say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible. But thus saith the Lord God: O fools, they shall have a Bible; and it shall proceed forth from the Jews, mine ancient covenant people. And what thank they the Jews for the Bible which they receive from them? . . . Do they remember the travails, and the labors, and the pains of the Jews, and their diligence unto me, in bringing forth salvation unto the Gentiles? O ye Gentiles, have ye remembered the Jews, mine ancient covenant people? . . . But behold, I will return all these things upon your own heads; for I the Lord have not forgotten my people. Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible . . . Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth? Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word? Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And when the two nations shall run together the testimony of the two nations shall

run together also” (2 Nephi 29:1, 3-8). ¶ And why *potsherd*s (i.e., weaklings, fools)? Henderson has: “The language is that of contempt, being expressive of the mean [i.e., *lowly* in modern English—GB] and worthless character of the subject spoken of.” Barnes says: “The word rendered ‘potsherd’ (פֶּרֶץ) means properly ‘a shard,’ or ‘sherd,’ that is, a fragment of an earthen vessel. It is then put proverbially for anything frail and mean²¹. Here it is undoubtedly put for man, regarded as weak and contemptible in his efforts against God . . .” This of the professors of religion, scholars and those who follow them—sadly even a few within our own Church—that scoff at the things of God, often contending with each other in an attempt to outdo each other in the most outlandish propositions and theories against the word of God, first against the Book of Mormon and of recent, against the Bible itself. ¶ Among the exegetes, there is almost total agreement that ISAIAH 45:9-10 constitute *murmuring* against the things of God, although the subject of the complaining varies (e.g., see Luther, Calvin, Nägelsbach, Wordsworth, Henderson, Jenour, Whitehouse, McFadyen, Benson, Lowth, Orelli, Wade, Cheyne and Rawlinson, to name but a few). Calvin paraphrases: “How far shall your insolence carry its excesses, that you will not allow me to be master in my own workshop, or to govern my family as I think fit?” Nägelsbach writes: “The whole [of Isaiah 40-66] is a book of consolation. Hence it begins with Isaiah 40:1 with the double ‘comfort ye.’ But the Prophet knows the human heart too well not to know, that among those for whom this book of consolation is written, there are many who will be content neither with the quality nor quantity of the comfort that is offered, and who strive with their Maker as if no comfort were there. Against these he justly utters a woe, for nothing offends God so much as unbelief. Thus there is an incisive contrast between Isaiah 45:8 and Isaiah 45:9 sqq. In Isaiah 45:8 we see the future beaming in clear light. But this clear light exists not for those who, when things are not as they wish, immediately despair, because they see no human help, and will not see the divine help. Yet what is man in comparison with God?”

10 Woe unto him that saith unto [his] father, What begetteth thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?

The LXX (6) reads, “Will the thing formed reply against him who formed it? Will one say to his father, What wilt thou beget? Or to his mother, What art thou bringing forth?” The Douay-Rheims (1) has *why* in

²¹ Insignificant.

each of the two cases of *what*. The Masoretic text (מ) has *woe [unto him that] saith unto [his] father,* **הוֹי אִמֶּךָ לְאָב**, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (פ) has *woe [unto] the [one who] saith unto [his] father,* **הוֹי הַאִמֶּר לְאָב**. The Stenning Targum (ט) translation has, for the second half, “And to a woman, With what travailest thou?” Pauli (ט) rather explains that the expression *to a woman* וּלְאִתְּתָא, in this case is a respectful title for a mother, and the signification or idea is rather, “And to his mother, What has thou

brought forth.” In Syriac-Aramaic, אַתְּ, אַתְּ (see Targum Lexicon) can also mean *wife*,²² almost giving the impression that a husband is asking her “who is the father of this child?” Young also points out that *woman* might be looked at as a mother, but possibly the *wife*, אִשְׁתָּא. Delitzsch likewise has: “In ISAIAH 45:10 a woe is denounced upon those who resemble a man who should say to his own father, What children dost thou beget? or to a wife, What dost thou bring forth?” Horsley says: “The Prophet, therefore, says, Wo to him who says to a father, to one who is already a father, Why goest thou about to beget children? and to a woman, already a mother, Why art thou again bringing forth?” Although Horsley takes his argument in a different direction, he supports my belief that this is a complaint by the people about God *bringing forth more*—not more children—but *more of His word* beyond the Bible. This verse continues, then, the very same theme as the previous, with those who demand that God has already spoken what He has spoken and that He will speak no more. “And I do this that I may prove unto many that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever; and that I speak forth my words according to mine own pleasure. And because that I have spoken one word ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever. Wherefore, because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written. For I command all men, both in the east and in the west, and in the north, and in the south, and in the islands of the sea, that they shall write the words which I speak unto them; for out of the books which shall be written I will judge the world, every man according to their works, according to that which is written. For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of

Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it. And it shall come to pass that the Jews shall have the words of the Nephites, and the Nephites shall have the words of the Jews; and the Nephites and the Jews shall have the words of the lost tribes of Israel; and the lost tribes of Israel shall have the words of the Nephites and the Jews” (2 Nephi 29:9-13). All of this, is what is implied, of course, when the missionaries go out and present the Book of Mormon as another witness of Christ along with the Bible, and people ask why we have another Bible: “And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these?” (Ezekiel 37:18). The Lord makes it clear what this answer is in both 2Nephi 29 and in Ezekiel 37.²³

vv. 11-19. The Lord contrasts His own strength, wisdom, knowledge and understanding to that of the potsherd of the earth. Once again, the Lord chastises those who dare challenge His right to govern and speak again. In the latter days, Israel will be gathered from all the nations, and all the nations of the earth shall begin to look to Christ, our Savior. Those who are ashamed or those who despise the words of Christ, the Book of Mormon, and the Lord’s restored Church, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, will in turn suffer shame. Those who repent and seek the Lord will have everlasting joy and eternal life. This earth was not created in vain but in due time will become the abode of celestial beings. The Lord is ever inviting us to come unto Him with stretched out arms. Cyrus is a type of Christ.

11 ¶ Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.

Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker. The Targum (ט) has, “Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and He that formed him, Ye question me about things concerning my people, which shall come to pass.” The LXX (Ϛ) reads, “Wherefore thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, even he who made the train of events.” After *his Maker*, the Peshitta (ܫ) has added the מ equivalent of, **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ**, “Yahweh of Hosts is his name.” Jenour well writes: “The folly of those who dared to doubt the goodness and justice of God’s dealings is here

²² “Woe to him who says to a father, ‘What will you beget?’ or to a woman, ‘With what will you be pregnant?’” *The Aramaic Bible: The Isaiah Targum* (B. D. Chilton, Trans.).

²³ See my article, “The Book of Mormon as a Key to the Gathering of Israel and Judah.”

further shewn. Did they think that they were authorized to *demand* of him what providential dispensations he should send upon his children? Or will ye, asks the eternal Creator, *command* me how I am to set towards the work of my hands? Will ye, my creatures, give direction to your Creator? Let Christians learn here an useful lesson.—Are we not all too ready to suppose that we know better than God himself what is good for us?” ¶ *Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And will ye command me concerning the work of my power?” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Do you question me concerning my children; and concerning the works of my hands give me directions!” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Ask me of things to come, concerning my children, and concerning the work of my hands give ye charge to me.” Ibn Ezra explains: “*Will ye command me.* It is a question.” Wade has: “If the imperative is correct, it must be understood ironically; but many critics would substitute an indignant interrogation, *Will ye question me?* which harmonizes better with the mood of the parallel verb, which should be rendered, *will ye command me!*” Henderson suggests: “שאלוני” [ask me] is subordinated to פקדני [command me] in the Future, and both are to be rendered interrogatively. The indicative form, ‘ask ye me’ &c. is unsuitable to the connection. The expostulation concludes with an unanswerable argument for acquiescence in the special arrangements of providence, drawn from the creation and government of the Universe [see ISAIAH 45:12].” So it is that either a question or exclamation mark is given in many versions, as if to show incredulity that mankind can be so presumptuous as to command God: “Thus hath said the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and he who hath formed him, About events to come will you ask me? concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands will ye command me?” (Leeser); “Would you question Me about things to come concerning My children, and concerning the work of My hands [would you] command Me?” (AMP); “And concerning the works of my hands, shall you give charge to me!” (ABP); “Will you put a question to me about the things which are to come, or will you give me orders about my sons, and the work of my hands?” (BBE); “You ask for signs concerning my children? You give orders concerning the work of my hands?” (CJB); “You have no right to question me about my children or to tell me what I ought to do!” (GNB); “Ask me about what is going to happen to my children! Are you going to give me orders concerning my handiwork?” (GW); “Question me about my children? Or give me orders about the work of my hands?” (ISV); “Do you ask Me of the things to come? Do you give command to Me about My sons, and about the work of My hands?” (LITV); “¿Van acaso a pedirme cuentas del futuro de

mis hijos, o a darme órdenes sobre la obra de mis manos?” (NVI); and “You ask me about the things that are to come, concerning my sons, and you command me concerning the work of my hands!” (WEB).

¶ *Concerning my sons.* Cheyne suggests: “A deep saying. Jehovah implies at once that it must be well with those whom he regards as his sons (Hosea 1:10), and that those who murmur against him tacitly renounce the privilege of sonship.”

12 I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, [even] my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “It is I who have made the earth by my Word, and I have created man upon it; it is I who have suspended the heavens by my power, and I have laid the foundation of all the hosts of them.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “It was I who made the earth and man on it: it was I who with my hand established the heaven: it was I who gave direction to all the stars.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “I made the earth: and I created man upon it: my hand stretched forth the heavens, and I have commanded all their host.” ¶ Elder McConkie suggests that while the Savior was involved in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and all things therein, when it came to man, it was the Father who was solely and directly involved: “In a passage of great doctrinal worth and of surpassing literary beauty, Isaiah speaks of the Lord Jehovah, ‘the Holy One of Israel,’ who is Christ, as man’s ‘Maker.’ ‘I have made the earth, and created man upon it,’ says he who is the Son of God. ‘I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded’ (ISAIAH 45:9-12). And once again we have the creation of man ascribed, seemingly, to the Son of God. However, from other sacred sources we know that Jehovah—Christ, assisted by ‘many of the noble and great ones’ (Abraham 3:22), of whom Michael is but the illustration, did in fact create the earth and all forms of plant and animal life on the face thereof. But when it came to placing man on earth, there was a change in Creators. That is, the Father himself became personally involved. All things were created by the Son, using the power delegated by the Father, except man. In the spirit and again in the flesh, man was created by the Father. There was no delegation of authority where the crowning creature of creation was concerned.”²⁴ Elder McConkie suggests that we often misunderstand this point because the Savior and Jehovah often speak in the voice of the Father through the principle of *Divine Investiture*. “The Son may speak

²⁴ McConkie, Elder Bruce R. *The Promised Messiah*.

to man in his own name, and then, to dramatize and teach more effectively and powerfully whatever is involved, he may begin to speak in his Father's name, without so much as a break in thought presentation. He begins section 29 in the Doctrine and Covenants by saying 'Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, the Great I Am, whose arm of mercy hath atoned for your sins,' and without hesitation or explanation he soon assumes the voice of the Father, saying, 'I the Lord God' shall 'send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption, through faith on the name of mine Only Begotten Son' (D&C 29:1, 42-43). In such a context the meaning is clear; Christ is choosing to speak in the first person as though he were the Father. And so we read the various passages in which he says he created man, and although the meanings are not as plainly and clearly set forth as is his declaration in section 29, the principle is the same. He is once again teaching what the Father did, although to the spiritually untutored it seems as though he is saying that he did it. His words are those of the Father. And upon us the obligation rests, in Paul's language, of 'rightly dividing the word of truth' (2Timothy 2:15)—which we have here done, as should be clear to all."²⁵ And again, Elder McConkie explained: "In the ultimate and final sense of the word, the Father is the Creator of all things. That he used the Son and others to perform many of the creative acts, delegating to them his creative powers, does not make these others creators in their own right, independent of him. He is the source of all creative power, and he simply chooses others to act for him in many of his creative enterprises. But there are two creative events that are his and his alone. First, he is the Father of all spirits, Christ's included; none were fathered or created by anyone else. Second, he is the Creator of the physical body of man. Though Jehovah and Michael and many of the noble and great ones played their assigned roles in the various creative events, yet when it came time to place man on earth, the Lord God himself performed the creative acts. 'I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them' (Moses 2:27)."²⁶

13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct[✓] all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.

✓ or, make straight

²⁵ McConkie, Elder Bruce R. *The Promised Messiah*.

²⁶ McConkie, Elder Bruce R. *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, p.63.

I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: The Targum (Ⓢ) has, "It is I who will verily bring him forth publicly, and all his paths will I direct." The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, "It is I who have raised him up with righteousness to be king; and all his ways shall be straight." Gill says: "Though this may be said with some respect to Cyrus, yet chiefly to Christ, of whom Cyrus was a type." Alexander says: "From the general proof of divine power afforded by creation, he descends to the particular exercise of his omnipotence and wisdom in the raising up of Cyrus, who is thus referred to without the express mention of his name, because he had been previously made the subject of a similar appeal, and the Prophet simply takes up the thread which he had dropped at the close of the fifth verse, or perhaps of the seventh." Cowles paraphrases and suggests: "I, the same God who created all worlds, evermore controlling all events, have also raised up *him*, Cyrus. I have done it in *righteousness*, i.e., for purposes of justice and righteousness both toward my people whom I am to redeem, and toward the guilty king of Babylon whom in justice I must destroy. The words do not refer to the character of Cyrus as good or just, but to the purpose of God in raising him up." Horsley well says, in what we would call the *how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet* principle (see ISAIAH 52:7): "In whatever sense some may fancy this verse applicable to Cyrus, it is more clearly and naturally applicable to Christ." ¶ *He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, "He shall build my city, and he shall direct the captives of my people go, not for a price or for money, saith the Lord of hosts." The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, "He shall rebuild this city of mine, and send back the captives of this my people, not for ransom nor reward, said the Lord of Hosts." Instead of *reward*, the Peshitta (Ⓟ) has *bribe*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓡ) has, for the second half, "Not for ransom, nor for presents, saith the Lord the God of hosts." Cowles says: "The last clause means that Cyrus would send home those Jewish exiles without demanding any redemption price, doing it his own generous free will." In this way, however, Cyrus would be a type of Christ, who invites us to come unto Him *without money and without price*. Luther says: "'This king must set you free without charge. It won't cost you a penny.' So great are the consolations that surmount all tribulation. 'Not only will he accept no reward from you, but he will lavish gifts on you.'"

14 Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be

thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, [saying], Surely God [is] in thee; and [there is] none else, [there is] no God.

Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “men of traffic” instead of *men of stature*. The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, That for which Egypt laboured and the traffick of the Ethiopians, and the Sabeans men of tall stature shall come over to thee.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ), besides having the men pass, in what appears to imply a surrendering or joining in forces, has an additional clause, “they shall come after you” (Lamsa) / “And they shall be yours” (BPE). The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓚ) has *Sabeans*, סבאים, while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *and Sabeans*, וסבאים. The DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓚ) has the plural of *stature*, גדרות, while the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has the singular, גִּדְדָה. ¶ Wordsworth, leaning on Jerome, has: “The manner in which succeeding events, especially the conquests of Cyrus, and other Persian kings, exercised an influence over Egypt, and other countries, by the destruction of their idols, and by the weakening of their national trust in the protection of their deities and in the wisdom of their magicians, prepared the way for the reception of the Truth, and fulfilled the prophecies which foretold their conversion (Psalm 68:31; 72:10-11; Zephaniah 3:10). With regard to the mission of Persia, in the destruction of idolatry, see further below, on ISAIAH 46:1. No Nation was more addicted to idolatry, and worshipped more portentous and monstrous forms of it than Egypt; and therefore its subjection to the God of Israel is one of the noblest trophies of the victory of His Truth (S. Jerome).” Cowles suggests: “The next thought is the accession of the Gentiles to the true church of God, with their wealth, and of course with their hearts. Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sabeans are named here because they are named in ISAIAH 43:3, and as specimens of the whole Gentile world, the promise applying not less to all other nations.” It is of ISAIAH 45:14-15 particularly, that Keith sees a type in Cyrus’s efforts and success, of the gathering of Israel in the last days: “There is now made by the prophet, what is so frequent a transition from the events of the deliverance from Babylon to those of the final deliverance of Israel . . . If it seems to any an irrational thing to understand literally what is foretold of kings being her nursing fathers, and of her eating the riches of the Gentiles, let it be remembered that this will

be nothing more than she experienced first at the hands of the Egyptians, and again at the hands of Cyrus and the Persians; and the thing is not more improbable in regard to the future than to the past. The prophet having foretold the aid Israel would experience from the greatest of monarchs, when she would return from Babylon, foretells next how similar honour will be put upon her when she shall be gathered from all the nations among which she has been scattered.²⁷ Some of the consequences of the visible interferences of God in her behalf will be, that the nations around will place their wealth and service at her disposal, honouring God in honouring her . . . The different incidents of the verse are as distinct and positive as those of the preceding, and will doubtless receive as literal an accomplishment; and if they have not their exact counterpart in any past historical facts—and with scarcely an exception no attempt has been made by commentators so to apply them—it must be waited for in future events. And may it not be one purpose of placing prophecies, whose fulfilment has been the most literal and minute possible, side by side with others of which no literal fulfilment has yet been given, to teach that the accomplishment of the latter may be expected to be as minute as that of the former; and that if not supplied by past history, it will be by what is to come. Predictions corresponding with those in the text are made in regard to the nations of the earth generally, and all in connexion with the return and conversion of Israel: ‘The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces (margin, riches) of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord’ (ISAIAH 50:5-6). And in more particular coincidence with the text, we read, ‘Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God’ (Psalm 68:31, ‘The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts’ (Psalm 72:10) . . .” ¶ *The Sabeans, men of stature*. Lowth explains: “That the Sabeans were of a more majestic appearance than common, is particularly remarked by Agatharchides, an ancient Greek historian quoted by Bochart, Phaleg. (2:26) . . . So also the Septuagint understand it, rendering it ἀνδρες ὑψηλοί, ‘tall men.’ And the same phrase, אנשי מדה, is used for *persons* of extraordinary *stature* (Numbers 13:32²⁸, and

²⁷ Ironside well says: “There are those who insist that all the prophecies connected with the return of Israel have been fulfilled already and, therefore, we are not to look for any future fulfillment of them, but God says in this very book of Isaiah, ‘I will set my hand a second time to recover my people,’ and that is what He has already begun to do, as they gather back as a people to their land.” I am sure the critics would argue that the first time was the return from the Exodus, but with Ironside I agree it refers to the latter-day gathering.

²⁸ אנשי מדה

1 Chronicles 20:6.²⁹ ¶ *They shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, [saying], Surely God [is] in thee; and [there is] none else, [there is] no God.* The Targum (C) has, “They shall walk according to thy command; they shall pass along in chains; and they shall bow down unto thee, and shall supplicate thee saying, Verily (Chaldee, ‘in truth’) God *is* in thee, and there is no God whatever besides Him.” The LXX (G) reads, “And they shall be thy vassals and shall follow thee bound with chains. They will come over to thee and pay thee homage and pray to thee because God is in thee.” The Peshitta (S) has, for the second half, “Shall make supplication to thee, saying, ‘There is no other God.’” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “They shall walk after thee, they shall go bound with manacles: and they shall worship thee, and shall make supplication to thee: only in thee is God, and there is no God besides thee.” ¶ Rabbi Rosenberg, leaning on Rashi, has: “The feminine form [of *over to you*] indicates that it refers to a city, all names of cities and lands being feminine.” Regarding this verse, Henderson also has: “The punctators³⁰, who are followed, among the moderns, by Michaelis, Döderlein, Dathe, Gesenius, Hitzig, and Scholz, apply it to Jerusalem, and rightly. The prophecy refers to the result of the Persian conquests in Egypt, &c., as regards the Jews and their religion. Favored as the people of God were by the victors, the inhabitants of these countries would be led to respect them, inquire into their peculiar polity, send them munificent presents, and, in great numbers, become proselytes to their religion.” Kay, gives support to the idea of Jerusalem by his comment that: “The phrase, *make supplication unto*, is the same that is used in 1 Kings 8:35, 42; where it is rendered, *pray toward*.” Nägelsbach likewise has: “‘And they shall fall,’ etc., does not say that they shall worship Israel, but that they shall worship in the direction of the land of Israel, for they know the Temple and the throne of the true God to be there (comp. Daniel 6:10).” The very idea that someone might prostrate themselves to any other than God the Eternal Father or His Son Jesus Christ is embarrassing to a disciple of Christ (Acts 14:13; 17:30; Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9). ¶ Alexander explains: “*they shall pass in chains*] Whether these are here considered as imposed by their conquerors, or by themselves in token of a voluntary submission, is a question which the words themselves leave undecided.” It seems to me and most exegetes that this will be a voluntary submission to the Lord, as we see also in ISAIAH 45:23.

²⁹ Man of great stature, אִישׁ מְרִדָּה.

³⁰ That is, the Masoretes or the creators of the Masoretic text (M).

15 Verily thou [art] a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.

The Targum (C) has, “Verily (Chaldee, ‘in truth’), thou art He, who dost make thy Shekinah to dwell in the highest heaven, o God of Israel, the Saviour!” The LXX (G) reads, “There is indeed no God besides thee. For thou art God and we knew it. The God of Israel is a Saviour.” The BPE (S) has, “Of a truth, thou art a shelter, O God of Israel, and his Savior.” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “Verily thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel the saviour.” Young well says: “The profound truth is that God cannot be known by man apart from revelation, and His ways are hidden from the eyes of man until He Himself makes them clear.” Ibn Ezra explains: “Some say that אֵל מְסֻתָּר = אֵל נִסְתָּר ‘invisible God,’ and explain the verse thus: God, though invisible, revealed himself for the sake of Israel. This explanation, however, is not supported by the rules of Hebrew grammar, מְסֻתָּר being Hithpael, and signifying ‘who hid himself.’” Skinner suggests: “*a God that hidest thyself*] The prophet would perhaps hardly have used this language in his own name (see *Isaiah 45:19*). But to the nations of the world Jehovah had hitherto been a hidden deity; His power and glory had never been reflected in the fortunes of His own people. Now at length He is revealed in His true character, as a ‘Saviour’ (or **Deliverer**) (see on ISAIAH 43:3). Compare, however, ISAIAH 55:8 f.; Deuteronomy 29:29; Proverbs 25:2, for a sense in which Jehovah might be said to hide Himself even from Israel.” While the Lord can be found by anyone who looks with sincerity, He does not impose himself and force people to come to Him.³¹ Kay, in ISAIAH 45:19, reminds us that “He did, indeed, hide Himself from them; but that too had been proclaimed beforehand as the ordained penalty of rebellion (Deuteronomy 32:20).” So we have: “Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee . . . And he said, I will hide my face from them” (Deuteronomy 32:18, 20a). So also in Deuteronomy 31:16-18, “And

³¹ A very important part of this life is for us to see what it is that we really desire: “And it is requisite with the justice of God that men should be judged according to their works; and if their works were good in this life, and the desires of their hearts were good, that they should also, at the last day, be restored unto that which is good. And if their works are evil they shall be restored unto them for evil. Therefore, all things shall be restored to their proper order, everything to its natural frame—mortality raised to immortality, corruption to incorruption—raised to endless happiness to inherit the kingdom of God, or to endless misery to inherit the kingdom of the devil, the one on one hand, the other on the other—The one raised to happiness according to his desires of happiness, or good according to his desires of good; and the other to evil according to his desires of evil; for as he has desired to do evil all the day long even so shall he have his reward of evil when the night cometh” (Alma 41:3-5).

the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and *I will hide my face* from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? And *I will surely hide my face* in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods” (emphasis added). The Lord hiding His face is the opposite of His pouring out knowledge from heaven, as would happen again in the last days, marked by the First Vision and then by the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. In Deuteronomy 32:43, at the end of the special song that Moses was to give his people, however, the Lord does promise Israel *mercy*. The first few verses of Deuteronomy 32 also represent part of the *blessings* associated with *Rain in Due Season*, including the pouring out knowledge as represented by *the dews from heaven*, the *rain drops* and the *small rain*. All of these point to the First Vision. The *tender herb* represents the boy prophet, Joseph Smith, and the beginnings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon: “Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he” (Deuteronomy 32:1-4). ¶ Cowles writes: “*Thou art a God that hidest thyself!* How long the world has lain in darkness, ignorant of these glorious plans of God for its ultimate conversion!” Horsley suggests: “These words plainly allude to the concealment of the Divinity under the human form in the person of our Lord.” Keith beautifully has: “Similarly it is said, ‘I will wait upon the Lord who hideth his face from the house of Jacob; and I will look for him (ISAIAH 8:17); ‘In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee’ (ISAIAH 54:8).” In modern day the Prophet Joseph Smith poured out his heart to God likewise: “O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth *thy hiding place*? How long shall thy hand be stayed, and thine eye, yea thy pure eye, behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants, and thine ear be penetrated with their cries? Yea, O Lord, how long shall they suffer these wrongs and unlawful oppressions, before thine heart shall be softened toward

them, and thy bowels be moved with compassion toward them? O Lord God Almighty, maker of heaven, earth, and seas, and of all things that in them are, and who controlllest and subjectest the devil, and the dark and benighted dominion of Sheol—stretch forth thy hand; let thine eye pierce; let thy pavilion be taken up; *let thy hiding place no longer be covered*; let thine ear be inclined; let thine heart be softened, and thy bowels moved with compassion toward us” (D&C 121:1-4, emphasis added). To all of this the Savior answers: “My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment . . .” (D&C 121:7, plus read the verses that follow). One of my all-time favorite scriptures is: “But behold, verily, verily, I say unto you that mine eyes are upon you. I am in your midst and ye cannot see me; But the day soon cometh that ye shall see me, and know that I am; for the veil of darkness shall soon be rent, and he that is not purified shall not abide the day” (D&C 38:7-8).

16 They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together [that are] makers of idols.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, for the second half, “The worshippers of images shall walk in confusion.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “Let all that oppose him be ashamed and confounded and in shame let them march along. Dedicate yourselves to me, ye islands!” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, for the second half, “The forgers of errors are gone together into confusion.” Rawlinson explains that the language used here is the “perfect of the prophetic certainty.” In this verse we note who will be ashamed and confounded while in the next verse we see who will *not be ashamed nor confounded* (לֹא־תִבְשֹׁן וְלֹא־תִכְלָמוּ). Alexander explains: “. . . the sentence closes with a general expression, which has already been referred to as a proof that the war in question is a spiritual war, and that the enemies to be subdued are not certain nations in themselves considered, but the heathen world, the vast mixed multitude who worship idols. These are described as the carvers or artificers of images, which strengthens the conclusion before drawn, that the smith and carpenter, and cook and baker, and cultivator of ISAIAH 44:12–16, are one and the same person, viz. the idolatrous devotee himself.” Barnes writes: “That they should never be ashamed, i.e., have cause to regret that they had put their trust in [the Lord]. The idea is, that they who become his friends never regret it; never are ashamed of it. The time never can come, when anyone who has become a true friend of God will regret it. In prosperity or adversity; in sickness or health; at home or abroad; in

safety or in danger; in life or in death; there will be no situation in which they will be ashamed that they gave their hearts to God . . . Nor will they ever regret it. No man on a dying bed regrets that he is a friend of God. No man at the judgment bar will be ashamed to be a Christian. And in all the interminable duration of the world to come, the period never will, never *can* arrive, when any one will ever be ashamed that he gave his heart *early*, and *entirely* to the Redeemer.” All those who reject the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Book of Mormon shall suffer shame.

17 [But] Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

[But] Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: The Targum (Ⓣ) has it, “by the Word of the Lord,” rather than by the Lord. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “The Lord hath saved Israel with an everlasting salvation.” The BPE (Ⓢ) is particularly interesting to LDS, “The salvation of Israel is in Yahweh, *the Savior of the worlds*; they shall not ever be ashamed nor confounded” (emphasis added). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓝ) has, “Israel is saved in the Lord with an eternal salvation.” Cowles, says, regarding ISAIAH 45:16-17: “Two grand facts are here put in antithesis: (1) That the makers of idols [but also note the words *all of them*, speaking of the potsherd of the earth, i.e., those who reject the Book of Mormon and the divinity of Christ—GB] shall be confounded and put to shame; (2) That the true Israel shall be saved with everlasting salvation and never be put to shame through disappointment by the failure of her God to fulfill his promises. These promises, now fresh in mind and deeply affecting, are in these words guaranteed against possible failure.” Young reminds us that we are saved *in the Lord*, **יְהוָה**. ¶ *Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded for ever, yea, for ages after ages.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “They shall not be put to shame nor confounded any more forever.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓝ) has, “You shall not be confounded, and you shall not be ashamed for ever and ever.” ¶ **לֹא־תִבְשָׁוּ וְלֹא־תִכְלָמוּ**, *Not be ashamed nor confounded.* One of my frequent petitions to God is that a stamp of approval may be put upon my testimony as I teach by the Spirit. That is, that my testimony might be *justified* so that it may reach the hearts of others to strengthen them in the Lord, and so I might be an instrument in the hands of God. Today, 28 June 2015, I was asked by the first counselor in our Llanquihue Branch, President Cristian Carrillo, to give a brief eight-

minute talk. President Carrillo was presiding and one of the speakers did not show. I felt that the Lord answered my prayer and that I was able to speak with much force about the Sacrament, from ISAIAH 6:1-7. This has happened to me repeatedly. A few times in my life these situations have really stood out to me. I will mention only two here. One took place when I was a Branch President of the Modesto 12th Branch and we had a General Authority come and asked that a few of the Bishops / Branch Presidents would speak briefly on something that he had spoken on earlier. I chose the topic of “And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; *seek learning, even by study and also by faith*” (DyC 88:118, emphasis added). The other was a talk I gave in the San Javier Branch on September 2014, at the request of Branch President Jaime Cancino. In the latter it turns out that I misunderstood his instructions and he had requested that Linda speak, that I speak and that he would conclude. I thought that he *had* spoken, and after Linda bore her testimony I spoke for the remainder of the Sacrament Meeting. I spoke with much power and there is a part of me that feels as if this was what the Lord wished, and so I had no idea that I was not the remaining speaker. I have also experienced the opposite, where *no stamp of approval* has been put upon my words and these have fallen flat on their face. I remember one particularly painful occasion, speaking to a group of non-members in Sonora, California, on the topic of avoiding defensiveness in communication, where the Spirit had been strongly present before I made an unfortunate comment (it was my last presentation before I retired from the University of California) that drove the Spirit away. I believe that every participant in that classroom could tell the difference. Until we dealt with the problem, I was not able to continue my presentation. I never take it for granted that I will speak by the Spirit and that the same will reach those whom I am addressing. But having experienced the difference between speaking my own words and teaching by the Spirit, I deeply hope and pray for the latter. In Isaiah we read: “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; *and shalt honour him*, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, *nor speaking thine own words*: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (ISAIAH 58:13-14, emphasis added). ¶ As I think of the notion of not being confounded, I am transported to a beautiful scripture in D&C about bearing witness of the divinity of Christ, of the truthfulness of the restored Gospel, and the coming

forth of the Book of Mormon: “Therefore, verily I say unto you, lift up your voices unto this people; speak the thoughts that I shall put into your hearts, and *you shall not be confounded* before men; For it shall be given you in the very hour, yea, in the very moment, what ye shall say. But a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall declare whatsoever thing ye declare in my name, in solemnity of heart, in the spirit of meekness, in all things. And I give unto you this promise, that inasmuch as ye do this *the Holy Ghost shall be shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever ye shall say*” (D&C 100:5- 8, emphasis added). עַד-עוֹלָמֵי עַד, *Worlds without end*. עוֹלָם can mean eternity, as also עַד. So we can have, *time and eternity; from eternity to eternity*. LHI has, *forever to eternity*. Kimhi in Slotki/Rosenberg has: “to the worlds of everlasting,’ to all eternity.” Gill has, “unto the ages of eternity.” Skinner writes: “*world without end*] More literally: **to all eternity**. The exact expression does not occur again.” But it does in the Doctrine and Covenants: “And they shall be servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end” (D&C 76:112). Perhaps, *for all time and all eternity*.

18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I [am] the LORD; and [there is] none else.

The LXX (6) reads, “Thus saith the Lord who made the heaven, the same God who displayed the earth to view, and who, having made it, parcelled it out: he did not make it to be waste, but formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord and there is none else.” The Douay-Rheims (8) has, for the second half, beginning with *he hath established it* “The very maker thereof: he did not create it in vain: he formed it to be inhabited. I am the Lord, and there is no other.” The DSS 1QIsa^a (9) has *and [that] formed*, ויוצר, while the Masoretic text (10) has *[that] formed*, יצר. The Masoretic text (10) has *he hath established it*, הוּא כוֹנֵן, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (9) has *and he hath established it*, והוא כוֹנֵן. Finally, the Masoretic text (10) has *not [in] vain*, לֹא-תהוּ, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (9) has *not for nothing*, לֹא לַתְּהוּ (as in Bishops’ Bible, *not make it for naught*). Not in *vain* (literally, תהוּ, translated as *without form* in Genesis 1:2, can also mean *waste*, Gesenius—see also ISAIAH 45:19). In other words, God

organized (בְּרָא root בִּרְא) the earth for a purpose. Kay writes: “[God] had brought light and order and life out of the waste earth (Genesis 1:2 ff.); He would also rescue the world out of the confusion caused by man’s sin, and make it the abode of ‘righteousness’ (2Peter 3:13).” Birks has: “‘In vain’ might be rendered ‘as a waste or desert.’ It is implied that the chief design of the earth was to be the dwelling of intelligent rational creatures, the servants of God . . . He made the earth, not in vain, but to be inhabited; and has therefore revealed Himself in clear and just messages to mankind. He made not the earth to be a waste; but, when void and empty. He filled it with life and beauty; He made it not in vain, to be a moral waste, a home of idolaters, a spiritual graveyard, but to be the home of holy worshippers (ISAIAH 54:3³²).” Alexander translates as: “. . . he established it—not in vain (or not to be empty) did he create it—to dwell in (or to be inhabited) he formed it . . .” Nägelsbach likewise has: “For these words affirm that the object of . . . ‘forming’ was not that the earth might remain תהוּ ‘empty,’ but that it might become fit for dwelling . . .” ¶ *The God*. The Bishops, Leeser, ASV, NASB and WEB give a more literal translation of הָאֱלֹהִים: “the God.” Cheyne interprets that as “the God of gods, the true God.” ¶ Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught: “Some disbelievers regard the universe as ‘godless geometric space.’ Some see man as being hopelessly situated in ‘an unsponsored universe,’ a universe ‘without a master,’ which ‘cares nothing for [man’s] hopes and fears,’ an ‘empire of chance’ in which man falls victim to ‘the trampling march of unconscious power.’³³ Many who believe the Bible, in contrast, warmly acknowledge the following words of Isaiah—though not all of their implications: ‘For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited’ (ISAIAH 45:18). These same believers may also acknowledge the words of Paul, that God ‘hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made

³² “For thou shalt spread abroad on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall possess the nations, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited” (Isaiah 54:3—ASV): “For thou shalt spread abroad on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall possess the nations, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited” (Isaiah 54:3—JPS); “For to the right and to the left shalt thou spread forth; and thy seed shall drive out nations, desolate cities shall they repeople” (Isaiah 54:3—Leeser). I believe that the word *nations* is a clearer translation of גוֹיִם in this verse.

³³ Elder Maxwell quoted these sentiments elsewhere as coming from: Bertrand Russell, ‘A Free Man’s Worship,’ in *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays* [London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1950], p. 57. See, Elder Neal A. Maxwell, ‘Shine As Lights in the World’, *Ensign* (CR), May 1983, p.9.

the worlds' (Hebrews 1:2). Bereft of the Restoration, however, these believers may stumble over the doctrine of the plurality of worlds; they often end up believing, by implication at least, in a God who is a one-planet-God; who is 'there,' but often seems detached, His plans and purposes not being easily or clearly known to mankind except by revelation. With the Restoration, however, comes greater fulness. This includes, of course, the biblical views such as those of Isaiah and Paul. But these are measurably 'added upon' as we learn more of God's clear purposes. 'For behold, this is my work and my glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man' (Moses 1:39). How vast are God's dominions? 'And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them' (Moses 1:33).³⁴ Elder Maxwell also said, "The Restoration has added abundance to Isaiah's words about divine purposes for this earth: '[God] created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited' (ISAIAH 45:18; see also 1 Nephi 17:36). We have the words of the Lord that His work and glory is 'to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man' (Moses 1:39). This purposeful planet is, in fact, a proving and testing school. And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them (Abraham 3:25). Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith (Mosiah 23:21). For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith (D&C 98:12)."³⁵ Finally, the thought comes that this earth will move from its present less perfect form back to its paradisiacal glory and eventually it will fill the measure of its creation by its transformation into a celestial globe.

19 I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, for the second half, "Seek me reverently in vain: I the Lord speak the truth, declaring upright things." The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, "I have not spoken in secret nor in an obscure part of the earth. I have not said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye a vain thing. I am THE I AM, the Lord, who speak righteousness and proclaim truth." The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, for the

second half, "I am the Lord that speak justice, that declare right things." Birks has: "The God of Israel . . . reveals himself, and always has revealed himself to His people, by clear declarations of His holy will . . . The Creator of heaven and earth, and no vain idol, the God who has made known His will from the first by public messages, and no lying oracle, here invites the whole heathen world." McFadyen has: "Though it is true that it is in Israel that Jehovah hides (and reveals) himself (ISAIAH 45:15), his words within Israel, spoken by his human representatives, the prophets, have not been obscure or mysterious, like the oracular utterances of the heathen, but clear, frank and true—**righteousness and right**, i.e., words which are right and true . . ." Wade has: "The Lord's predictions were public and explicit (cf. Jeremiah 2:31), so that men could judge of the correspondence of events with them; and in this respect they differed from many heathen oracles which were often to be obtained only in out-of-the-way localities and were ambiguous and enigmatic in character." Rawlinson reminds us, "So our Lord says of his own teaching, 'I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and *in secret have I said nothing*' (John 18:20b)." Ibn Ezra writes: "Many refer this verse to the revelation on Sinai; but I refer it to those future events, of which the Lord informed the prophet, and which the prophet announced to Israel and all other nations." The Book of Mormon has not been given in secret, but rather, has gone forth to *flood the earth*. ¶ *In a dark place of the earth*. Lowth explains: "In opposition to the manner in which the heathen oracles gave their answers, which were generally delivered from some deep and obscure cavern." ¶ *Righteousness*. Wade has: "The Lord's predictions and promises were true and consistent with the facts: hence they did not require secrecy, as being something that shunned the light. For *righteousness* in the sense of what is true . . ." Cheyne suggests the following as a possibility: "The prophet, as it were, supplements the words of Moses, and declares that Jehovah's *Torah*, or prophetic revelation, is not to be obtained by any occult arts from Sheól or the Underworld. For the phraseology, compare Job 10:21, Psalm 88:12.—The best commentary on alternate renderings is Jeremiah 2:31, where Jehovah pathetically exclaims, 'Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?' i.e., Have I not been the source of light and happiness to my people, and all temporal blessings' (compare Jeremiah 2:6)? ¶ Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: "There are no private doctrines. All of the doctrines and practices of the Church are taught publicly. There are no secret doctrines, no private practices, no courses of conduct approved for a few only (Isaiah 45:19; 48:16; 2 Nephi 20:16; D&C 1:34). The blessings of the gospel are for all men . . . Everything that is taught and practiced in

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

³⁵ Maxwell, Neal A. 'Not My Will, But Thine'. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1988, pp. 38-39. Also similarly see, Maxwell, Elder Neal A. 'God Will Yet Reveal,' *Ensign* (CR), November 1986, p.52.

the Church is open to public inspection, or, at least, where temple ordinances are concerned, to the inspection and knowledge of everyone who qualifies himself by personal righteousness to enter the house of the Lord.”³⁶ Nephi asked his brothers who could not see the hand of God, “For he truly spake many great things unto them, which were hard to be understood, save a man should inquire of the Lord; and they being hard in their hearts, therefore they did not look unto the Lord as they ought . . . And it came to pass that after I had received strength I spake unto my brethren, desiring to know of them the cause of their disputations. And they said: Behold, we cannot understand the words which our father hath spoken concerning the natural branches of the olive-tree, and also concerning the Gentiles. And I said unto them: *Have ye inquired of the Lord?* And they said unto me: We have not; for the Lord maketh no such thing known unto us” (1 Nephi 15:3, 6-9, emphasis added). ¶ In asking us to pray, God did not say to us to pray that we might seek Him in vain (literally, *תוהו*, translated as *without form* in Genesis 1:2, can also mean *waste*, Gesenius—see also ISAIAH 45:18). We read this from Rawlinson: “God wills to be importuned. Not, however, for his own sake, but for ours. He would have us fervent and persistent in prayer, for the improvement of our characters, the increase of our faith by exercise, the intensifying of our sense of dependence upon him. Especially he would have us persistent in intercessory prayer, because we are then exercising, not only faith, but love; and by increasing in love, we advance in resemblance to himself” (see in Exodus 33:12). I love the Scripture that says: “And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew *that thou hearest me always*: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 11:41b-42, emphasis added). I would suggest that Christ’s prayer was answered *before* he left Bethabara (beyond the river Jordan), where He first heard of Lazarus illness and impending death, and before he departed for Bethany (a village near Jerusalem were Martha, Mary and Lazarus dwelt). Christ is our example of what we can expect when we pray to the Father in His name. I bear the most solemn witness that God *always hears* our prayers and—if we pray properly—answers *all* of our prayers. If we ask God if He has *heard* our prayer, He will manifest this to us. Please note I am not suggesting that God will give us what *we think is best* for us. But let us pray and give thanks and ask God if He has heard our thanks, and He will manifest it that He has. Or let us pray and let God know we are concerned about someone or something and ask if He has heard this

prayer, and He will manifest it that He has. Or, let us pray and let God know we seek after knowledge and ask if He has heard our prayer, and He will manifest it to us that He has. God will not forget our prayers and our requests and will remind us at times, when the answer to a request is given at a later date, that this answer is a response to an earlier request on our part. What a joy it is to know that God hears our prayers and that He will, if it be right, grant our petition in due time. God will never forget a righteous prayer. A virtuous prayer will never be uttered in vain. The Lord has made it clear in this verse that we will not seek Him in vain and I testify that He makes true on His word.

vv. 20-25. Regarding these verses Elder Bruce R. McConkie penned these beautiful words: “When Israel gathers, she returns to the Lord and worships again him that made heaven and earth and the sea and the fountains of waters. In the world ‘every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon.’ (D&C 1:16.) In the true church men worship again the true God. Hence the call: ‘Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations.’ As to those yet in Babylon, the holy word says: ‘They have no knowledge, . . . and pray unto a god that cannot save.’ Let them heed the call: ‘Look unto me,’ saith the Lord Jehovah, who is Christ, ‘and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. . . . In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.’ (Isaiah 45:20-25.) One prophet after another proclaims that those of Israel will be gathered when they turn again to the God of their fathers and worship him as their forebears did. Isaiah does more. He tells how the true God will be known to the seed of Israel. ‘I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.’ Thus spoke the Lord Jesus Christ to his ancient chosen people. ‘Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable and I have loved thee.’ Blessed blessed Israel—how loved they were of the Lord in the days of their faith and righteousness! But they are not, in their scattered and desolate state, to be forsaken forever. ‘Fear not: for I am with thee,’ saith the Lord. ‘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.’”³⁷ Regarding vv. 20-21, Skinner says: “The heathen are now summoned together

³⁶ McConkie, Elder Bruce R. *Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie*, p.234.

³⁷ McConkie, Bruce R. *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1985, p. 537.

that they may consider this attribute of Jehovah's character, as illustrated by the prediction of the victories of Cyrus. The question submitted to them is the same as in ISAIAH 41:1-4; 41:21-29; 43:9-13: who has foretold these events?" The prophet Joseph Smith quoted ISAIAH 45:22-24, as an invitation for the whole world to turn to Christ and repent.³⁸

20 ¶ Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye [that are] escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god [that] cannot save.

Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye [that are] escaped of the nations: The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, "Assemble yourselves together and come; consult together ye who escape from among the nations. They are devoid of knowledge, who carry the wood—their carved image; and who pray to gods which cannot save them." Instead of *escaped*, the Peshitta (Ⓔ) has *delivered* (Lamsa) / *liberated* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, for the second half, "Ye that are saved of the Gentiles." The Masoretic text (Ⓔ) has *and come draw near together*, וְבָאוּ הַתְּנַנְּשׁוּ יַחְדָּו, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓔ) has *and come draw near and come*, וּבָאוּ הַתְּנַנְּשׁוּ וְאָתוּ. The second *come* is rooted in the word, אָתָה, *to bring* or *to come* (see Gesenius), while the first on בָּאוּ, *to come in, to enter* (Gesenius, HALOT, BDB). ¶ *Escaped from the nations* (פְּלִיטי הַגּוֹיִם) is a reference to scattered Israel as a remnant and recovered back into the fold by conversion. Similarly, Alexander writes: "The Hebrew phrase is in itself ambiguous, the noun added to פְּלִיטי sometimes denoting the whole body, out of which a remnant has escaped, sometimes the power from which they are delivered." Nägelsbach, speaking of the former days, of times related to the release of Judah from Babylon has: "the Israelites are called escaped of the nations, and he that helped them to this title can be no other than Cyrus." In the last days there would be *escaped from the nations* in a much larger scale, not just from Babylon and surrounding areas: "That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee *from all the nations*, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto *the outmost parts of*

heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee" (Deuteronomy 30:3-4, emphasis added). There seems to be an invitation to the former exiles as well as to the latter-day converts to put away idolatry—in any of its forms—and put their trust in God. ¶ *They have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god [that] cannot save.* The Targum (Ⓒ) has, "They know nothing that carry about their wooden images, and *who* pray unto a god who shall not save." Kimhi, in Slotki/Rosenberg has: "The idols are so helpless that they cannot even carry themselves. They must be carried by their worshippers to their temples, in their processions or into battle (compare 2Samuel 5:21)." Skinner translates as *that carry the wood* and then observes: "That idols have to be carried is a sign of their powerlessness." Skinner also points out the contrast between the idols who cannot save and Jehovah who can (ISAIAH 45:21). Rawlinson similarly has: "It was a practice of the idolatrous heathen to carry the images of their gods in processions, generally exposed to view upon their shoulders (Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. 2. opp. p. 451), but sometimes partially concealed in shrines, or 'arks' (Rawlinson, *Herodotus*, vol. 2. pp. 100, 101). There would be still among the 'escaped' some who would so act." Barnes says: "The word *wood* is used here to show the folly of worshipping an image thus made, and to show how utterly unable it was to save." Calvin translates as: "*That carry the wood of their graven image*," and adds: "He [i.e., Isaiah] shews how great is the madness which seizes idolaters, who worship images, which they bear on their shoulders and carry round on waggons." Alexander has: "*They do not know* is commonly explained to mean *they have no knowledge*; but it is more accordant with the usage of the language to supply a specific object. They do not know it, or, they do not know what they are doing, they are not conscious of their own impiety and folly.—The verse contains two indirect reflections on the idols: first, that they are wooden; then, that they are lifeless and dependent on their worshippers for locomotion."

21 Tell ye, and bring [them] near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? [who] hath told it from that time? [have] not I the LORD? and [there is] no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; [there is] none beside me.

Tell ye, and bring [them] near; yea, let them take counsel together: The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, "If they will proclaim, let them draw near and know at once." The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, "Tell ye, and come, and consult

³⁸ Smith, Joseph. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Selected by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Press, 1938, p. 81.

together: who hath declared this from the beginning.” Alexander says: “According to Vitringa’s exposition, the idolaters are called upon to state their case, and to defend it.” McFadyen says: “Another scene like ISAIAH 41:1-4; 21-29; 43:9-13. The futility of the heathen gods is proved by their inability to predict the future.” ¶ *Who hath declared this from ancient time? [who] hath told it from that time? [have] not I the LORD?* The LXX (Ϝ) reads, “Who hath published these things from the beginning: then let them be announced to you.” The Douay-Rheims (ϙ) has, “Who hath foretold this from that time?” Alexander has: “Instead of waiting longer for their plea, however, he presents his own, in the common form of an interrogation, asking who, except himself, had given evidence of prescience by explicitly foretelling events still far distant, and of saving power by delivering his people from calamity and bondage.” ¶ *And [there is] no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; [there is] none beside me.* The LXX (Ϝ) reads, “I am God and there is no other besides me; a just God and a saviour besides me there is none.” The Douay-Rheims (ϙ) has, “Have not I the Lord, and there is no God else besides me? A just God and a saviour, there is none besides me.” The Masoretic text (מ) has *none beside me*, אֵין זולָתִי, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (ϙ) has *and none beside me*, וְאֵין זולָתִי. A just God, or a righteous³⁹ God (אֱלֹהֵי צְדִיק). Nägelsbach observes: “[The Lord] calls Himself Saviour in contrast with a god that cannot save, Isaiah 45:20.”

22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I [am] God, and [there is] none else.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, for the first half, “Turn unto my Word, and be ye saved, all that are at the ends of the earth.” The LXX (Ϝ) reads, “Turn to me and ye shall be saved, ye from the farthest part of the earth, I am God and there is none else.” The Peshitta (ܫ) begins, “Draw near to me” (Lamsa) / “Come near unto me” (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (ϙ) has, “Be converted to me, and you shall be saved, all ye ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is no other.” The Masoretic text (מ) has: *פְּנֹה־אֵלַי*, rendered *look unto me* by the KJV (as well as

³⁹ I was browsing through Geikie’s *The Life and Words of Christ* and came across this little pearl: “The word righteous receives an illustration of its meaning among the Jews, from the name by which the Zealots of the Law were known, from the time of John Hyrcanus. צְדִיק (Tsaddouk) or צְדִיקִי (Tsaddouki)—Sadducees—was the name given to the party who prided themselves on strict legality. It came from צְדִיק (Tsaddik) ‘just, righteous’ applied both to God and men. —Isaiah 45:21; Proverbs 29:7. Yet, besides legal exactness, it, in other cases, implied moral worth.” (p.562, 1896 Revised Edition).

AMP, ASV, CJB, Darby, Geneva, JPS, JUB, RV, RV1865, RV60, RVG, SRV, SSE, WEB, Webster), and by some of the Lexicons (Gesenius, HALOT, DBL) and some versions (Leeser, Bishops, ABP, CEV, ERV, FDB, FLS, GNB, GW, HCSB, ISV, LBLA, LEB, LITV, NASB, NBLH, NVI, Rotherham, TLV, YLV), *turn unto me*. TWOT, DHB, Holladay and Lexham Theological Workbook particularly give the idea of *turn to face*. It is Christ’s loving invitation to look unto Him, or turn unto Him, that is, repent, and follow Him.

Alexander explains: “פְּנֹה does not correspond exactly to the English *look*, but denotes the act of *turning round* in order to look in a different direction.” The usage of פְּנֹה (root פָּנָה), as an *invitation to repent*, seems almost identical to that of שׁוּבוּ (turn ye). This is in essence the modern-day invitation of the Savior to the nations to repent and follow Him: “Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not” (D&C 6:36). We also have the Savior’s invitation to those in ancient America: “Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life” (3 Nephi 15:9). Wordsworth writes: “Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, that all the Israelites who looked at it from any part of the camp might be healed; Christ is lifted up on the Cross, that whosoever looks at Him with faith from the ends of the earth, may be saved (John 3:14-15).” The invitation to turn unto Christ is to *all the ends of the earth*, כָּל־אַפְסֵי־אָרֶץ, reminding us at once that in the last days, Israel would be gathered *from all the nations* [literally, מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים, *from all the peoples*], *whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee* (Deuteronomy 30:3b), even from “the outmost parts of heaven” בְּקִצְהַ השָׁמַיִם (Deuteronomy 30:4b, see 30:1-10). Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: “Isaiah has ‘Christ’ say: ‘Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.’ (ISAIAH 45:22-23). That is to say, that salvation which is in Israel’s Messiah is for all men, for all the ends of the earth. A parallel passage in the Psalms says: ‘All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.’ (Psalm 98:3).”⁴⁰

23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth [in] righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

⁴⁰ McConkie, Elder Bruce R. *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ*, p.503.

I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth [in] righteousness, and shall not return. The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “I have sworn by my Word, the word is gone forth in righteousness from my presence, and shall not fail.” The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, “By myself I swear (righteousness shall proceed from my mouth; my words shall not be reversed).” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓤ) has, “I have sworn by myself, the word of justice shall go out of my mouth, and shall not return.” ¶ Cheyne has: “Jehovah swears ‘by himself’ (‘because he could swear by no greater,’ Hebrews 6:13), when the accompanying revelation is especially grand, or especially hard to believe.” Skinner points out: “*By myself have I sworn*” Cf. Genesis 22:16; Jeremiah 22:5; and see Hebrews 6:13. The form of Jehovah’s oath by Himself is given in ISAIAH 49:18, ‘as I live, saith Jehovah.’” Beale and Carson give additional references in which the Lord swears or pronounces an oath in the Old Testament, including: “Genesis 22:16; Exodus 32:13; Jeremiah 49:13; Ezekiel 20:5; Amos 6:8; cf. Heb. 6:13; see Chilton 1987: 264.” Birks explains that in these verses: “The oath, that all nations should be blessed in the seed of Abraham, is here renewed, the same in substance, and only varied in its form. The Word made flesh, one with the Father, is the promised Seed.” To *swear*, indeed, is to pronounce an *oath*. Benson says: “This plainly points us to the Messiah, whose very name is the *Lord our righteousness*, Jeremiah 23:6; and whose great business it was to bring in *everlasting righteousness*, Daniel 9:24; and *who of God is made unto us righteousness*, 1Corinthians 1:30.” In the scripture before us, “The word is gone out of my mouth [in] righteousness, and shall not return” can benefit from the missing ellipsis *unfulfilled*. This is similar to the “. . . and did let none of his words fall to the ground [unfulfilled]” (1Samuel 3:19) “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (ISAIAH 55:11), and “For as I, the Lord God, liveth, even so my words cannot *return void*, for as they go forth out of my mouth they must be fulfilled” (Moses 4:30). Luther translates as: “. . . from My mouth has gone forth a Word . . . in righteousness a Word, that is, the Gospel.” Furthermore, this seems to have reference to the righteousness spoken about in ISAIAH 45:8, regarding the First Vision. In no case is the word clearer, the Gospel purer, than in the Book of Mormon. In a day when so many are attempting to sow seeds of doubt on the divinity of Christ—on the Sonship of Christ—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Book of Mormon stand firm, as a beacon of light, in declaring these truths: “And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look

for a remission of their sins” (2Nephi 25:26). Elder Marion G. Romney, speaking of the Book of Mormon, testified: “From almost every page of the book, there will come to them a moving testimony that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Redeemer and Savior. This witness alone will be a sustaining anchor in every storm. In the Book of Mormon, they will find the plainest explanation of Christ’s divine mission and atonement to be found anywhere in sacred writ.”⁴¹ ¶ *That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “That before me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, “That to me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓤ) has, “For every knee shall be bowed to me, and every tongue shall swear.” The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *swear* (i.e., *swear allegiance*, as explained by AMP), תִּשָּׁבַע, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓣ) has *and swear*, וְתִשָּׁבַע. Ibn Ezra well suggests: “These things here foretold I shall do, till ‘unto me every knee shall bow’ and ‘every tongue shall swear’ to belong to me. לִי ‘unto me’ must be repeated before תִּשָּׁבַע ‘shall swear;’ it is an ellipsis, such as is frequently met with.” Cowles has: “Paul quotes this passage twice, first applying it (Romans 14:11) to the whole world standing before Christ’s judgment seat and recognizing his infinite supremacy there; and again (Philippians 2:9-11) to Christ’s glorious exaltation by the Father to the throne of the universe, with perhaps a tacit reference to the same judgment seat.” Wordsworth, leaning on the same scriptures, explains that Paul’s words are a testimony of Jesus Christ’s divinity. At a time when Christ’s divinity is put into question by so many, I rejoice to testify that I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. ¶ Elder Bruce R. McConkie shared: “Jehovah said to Isaiah: ‘Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear’ (Isaiah 45:22-23). Paul, by the spirit of revelation, quotes from this ancient declaration and applies it pointedly and specifically to Christ—thus making Jehovah and Christ the same being.”⁴² ¶ Nägelsbach has: “The Prophet, moreover, is very far from believing that . . . the conversion of the heathen [i.e., *nations*—GB] and of Israel will be sudden and universal. Rather this conversion will progress by successive stages, and many will make decided resistance.” For years it has been my contention that the

⁴¹ Romney, Elder Marion G. Romney. “Drink Deeply from the Divine Fountain,” *Conference Report*, April 1960, pp. 110–113.

⁴² McConkie, Elder Bruce R., *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:301.

day will come when *every* knee shall bow and tongue confess *gladly, without compulsion*.⁴³ I would suggest that this will be so regardless of which kingdom of glory people are assigned to, for each person will need to lean on the atonement of our Savior for that appointment. Nyman writes: “The prophet Abinadi gave an indication of the time when this prophecy will be fulfilled (see Mosiah 16:1-4), and his text was used by President Joseph Fielding Smith to show that those who ‘bow’ and ‘confess’ are not [only] celestial beings who will receive exaltation, but primarily testial beings who will have to acknowledge the Savior and admit that his judgments are just (see DS, 2:30-31). The Doctrine and Covenants also uses similar language in reference to the testial beings (see D&C 76:110; compare 88:104⁴⁴).” It is my assertion, then, that every single person will need of the atonement regardless of which degree of glory he or she is assigned to; that *tears of gratitude* will flow down each one of our faces; that each one of us will bend the knee and confess the Christ without compulsion. Halleluiah!

24 Surely, shall [one] say, in the LORD have I righteousness[✓] and strength: [✓] [even] to him shall [men] come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.

✓ righteousness

✓ ✓ or, Surely he shall say of me, In the LORD is all righteousness and strength

Surely, shall [one] say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Surely, He has promised to bring me righteousness and strength by the Word of the Lord.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “With respect to God, saying, Righteousness and glory shall come to him.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, “And they shall say, In Yahweh is righteousness.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Therefore shall he say: In the Lord are my justices and empire.” ¶ *Righteousness*. Henderson explains, “צִדְקוֹת, *righteousness*, is the plural of excellence or eminence; signifying *the most distinguished righteousness*.” Birks says: “In Him assuredly, and in none beside, these blessings are to be found. The seed of Israel are, first, the faithful Jewish remnant, next, the engrafted Gentile olive branches⁴⁵, and finally, the whole recovered nation. The words are a

⁴³ So also Delitzsch “This bending of the knee, this confession as an oath of homage, will be no forced one.”

⁴⁴ Parry, Parry and Peterson also suggest we look at Romans 14:10-12; Mosiah 27:31; D&C 76:110-11; 88:104.

⁴⁵ In Jacob 5, the latter is represented by the wild olive grafts as compared by the natural branches.

striking prediction of the spiritual blessings to be found in the promised Emmanuel.” Horsley, leaning on Lowth (and perhaps also on the Targum Ⓣ) suggests: “. . . Surely to Jehovah it belongeth to speak truth.” And may we enlarge these comments, to speak *additional truth, modern-day revelation* beyond that which is preserved for us in our beloved Bible. President Hugh B. Brown relates a wonderful conversation he had with a “very prominent English gentleman, a member of the House of Commons and formerly one of the justices of the supreme court of Britain.” President Brown explains: “He called me on the phone one day and asked if I would meet him at his office and explain some phases of my faith. He said, ‘There is going to be a war, and you will have to return to America, and we may not meet again.’ His statement regarding the imminence of war and the possibility that we would not meet again proved to be prophetic. When I went to his office, he said he had been intrigued by some things I had told about my church. He asked me if I would prepare a brief on Mormonism and discuss it with him as I would discuss a legal problem. He said, ‘You have told me that you believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet and that you believe that God the Father and Jesus of Nazareth appeared to him in vision . . . I cannot understand,’ he said, ‘how a barrister and solicitor from Canada, a man trained in logic and evidence and unemotional cold fact, could accept such absurd statements. What you tell me about Joseph Smith seems fantastic, but I wish you would take three days at least to prepare a brief and permit me to examine it and question you on it.’ I suggested that, as I had been working on such a brief for more than 50 years, we proceed at once to have an examination for discovery, which is briefly a meeting of the opposing sides in a lawsuit where the plaintiff and defendant, with their attorneys, meet to examine each other’s claims and see whether they can find some area of agreement and thus save the time of the court later on. I said perhaps we could find some common ground from which we could discuss my ‘fantastic ideas.’ He agreed, and we proceeded with our ‘examination for discovery.’ Because of time limitations, I can only give a condensed or abbreviated synopsis of the three-hour conversation that followed.

I began by asking, ‘May I proceed, sir, on the assumption that you are a Christian?’

‘I am.’

‘I assume that you believe in the Bible—the Old and New Testaments?’

‘I do!’

‘Do you believe in prayer?’

‘I do!’

‘You say that my belief that God spoke to a man in this age is fantastic and absurd?’

‘To me it is.’

‘Do you believe that God ever did speak to anyone?’
‘Certainly, all through the Bible we have evidence of that.’

‘Did he speak to Adam?’

‘Yes.’

‘To Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jacob, and to others of the prophets?’

‘I believe he spoke to each of them.’

‘Do you believe that contact between God and man ceased when Jesus appeared on the earth?’

‘Certainly not. Such communication reached its climax, its apex at that time.’

‘Do you believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God?’

‘He was.’

‘Do you believe, sir, that after the resurrection of Christ, God ever spoke to any man?’

He thought for a moment and then said, ‘I remember one Saul of Tarsus who was going down to Damascus to persecute the saints and who had a vision, was stricken blind, in fact, and heard a voice.’

‘Whose voice did he hear?’

‘Well,’ he said, ‘the voice said “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (Acts 9:5).”’

‘Do you believe that actually took place?’

‘I do.’

‘Then, my Lord’—that is the way we address judges in the British commonwealth—‘my Lord, I am submitting to you in all seriousness that it was standard procedure in Bible times for God to talk to men.’

‘I think I will admit that, but it stopped shortly after the first century of the Christian era.’

‘Why do you think it stopped?’

‘I can’t say.’

‘You think that God hasn’t spoken since then?’

‘Not to my knowledge.’

‘May I suggest some possible reasons why he has not spoken. Perhaps it is because he cannot. He has lost the power.’

He said, ‘Of course that would be blasphemous.’

‘Well, then, if you don’t accept that, perhaps he doesn’t speak to men because he doesn’t love us anymore. He is no longer interested in the affairs of men.’

‘No,’ he said, ‘God loves all men, and he is no respecter of persons’ (Acts 10:34).

‘Well, then, if He could speak, and if He loves us, then the only other possible answer, as I see it, is that we don’t need Him. We have made such rapid strides in science and we are so well educated that we don’t need God anymore.’

And then he said, and his voice trembled as he thought of impending war, ‘Mr. Brown, there never was a time in the history of the world when the voice of God

was needed as it is needed now. Perhaps you can tell me why he doesn’t speak.’

My answer was, ‘He does speak, he has spoken; but men need faith to hear him.’⁴⁶

¶ [Even] to him shall [men] come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “In His Word they shall offer praise, and all the nations that are incensed (or, ‘have waged war’) against His people shall be ashamed.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And all that make distinctions among them shall be ashamed.” The Peshitta (Ⓟ) has, “Even to him shall mighty men come (Lamsa) / “Even the powerful shall come unto him” (BPE) and all who *reproach* (Lamsa) / *envy* (BPE) thee shall be ashamed.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “They shall come to him, and all that resist him shall be confounded.” We return to the theme of who will be *ashamed*.

25 In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “In the Word of the Lord all the seed of Israel shall be justified and glorified.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “On account of the Lord they shall be acquitted; and in God all the seed of Israel will glory.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, *and praised* instead of *and shall glory*. Baltzer well says, in explaining that they will more literally “‘praise’ (תְּהַלְלוּ), that is, ‘the whole of Israel’s seed’ is to raise the ‘Hallelujah.’” That is, תְּהַלְלוּ יְהוָה, *praise Yah*, praise the Lord. ¶ Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: “It is Jehovah who shall justify his people, as Isaiah says. ‘Look unto me, and be ye saved’ is Jehovah’s invitation to ‘all the ends of the earth,’ for he it is unto whom ‘every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.’ The faithful shall have ‘righteousness and strength’ in him, ‘and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.’ Having thus set forth that salvation is in Christ, Isaiah proclaims: ‘In the Lord’—that is, in Jehovah who is the Messiah—‘shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory’ (Isaiah 45:22-25.) Israel-the faithful! —shall be justified, which is to say, ‘All Israel shall be saved’ (Romans 11:26).”⁴⁷ ¶ Both justification and sanctification have many elements in common and are part of the same process of helping us come unto Christ and be perfected in Him. Both require the atoning sacrifice of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And both require that His grace be imparted upon us. Both are on-going processes rather than a single event—although there appears to be a

⁴⁶ Brown, President Hugh B. The Profile of a Prophet, October 1967 General Conference.

⁴⁷ McConkie, Elder Bruce R. *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ*, p.344.

time, in the future, when both justification and sanctification are imparted in a fuller and more complete way upon a person who has been faithful and endured to the end. *Justification* seems to be related to specific human acts revolving around what we do, say and think. For instance, anything we do, if we do it in righteousness—or often even with a righteous desire which falls short of righteousness (through God’s tender mercies and loving kindness)—may be justified by the Holy Ghost. This may be any brief and finite action we take, such as giving a talk at Church, bearing a testimony, forgiving someone who has hurt us, speaking a word in kindness, feeding the poor, or showing mercy. We often feel the strong presence of the Spirit at those times, confirming that our offering before the Lord has been accepted. For instance, if we share a testimony humbly and teach by the Spirit “the Holy Ghost shall be shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever ye shall say” (D&C 100:8b). I believe that usually we will also receive a confirmation by that same Spirit, “Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together” (D&C 50:22). Longer efforts may, in the same way, be justified or be accepted by the Lord, such as serving a mission, magnifying a Church calling, being faithful in our employment, or having a temple sealing ratified by the Holy Spirit of Promise. Of course, we are not aware of all the positive effects of our actions in this life. To summarize, then, it is what

we do together with the eternal effects of the atonement of Christ—wherein the imperfection in our offering is coupled with the perfection in His Holy offering—that brings about justification, or the acceptance of this offering we brought to the Lord. While justification has to do with a stamp of approval—or the acceptance of our offering before the Lord—*sanctification* appears to be the long process wherein we are transformed into a different, holier being. Wherein we begin to become like the person we hope to someday be. Like justification, we can never do this on our own merits. Rather, it is through the grace of Christ as the result of His holy expiatory sacrifice, after we “have expended [our] own best efforts” (Grace, LDS Bible Dictionary), that we are slowly changed or sanctified that we may in time enter into the presence of the Father. Satan attempts to discourage our efforts by pointing out our weaknesses. Yet the Holy One of Israel is continually inviting us to turn unto Him—“look unto me” He beckons (ISAIAH 45:22)—and put our trust in Him and become His disciples. As with justification, we also have manifestations of the spirit—such as a great joy and feelings of gratitude—that help us understand that indeed this transformation is beginning to take place.

FIRST POSTED: 13 August 2015
