
Isaiah 54

In the Book of Mormon, before quoting ISAIAH 54, the Lord teaches: “But if they [i.e., the Gentile nations] will repent and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance; And they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem. And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst. And then shall the work of the Father commence at that day, even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people. Verily I say unto you, at that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people, yea, even the tribes which have been lost, which the Father hath led away out of Jerusalem. Yea, the work shall commence among all the dispersed of my people, with the Father to prepare the way whereby they may come unto me, that they may call on the Father in my name. Yea, and then shall the work commence, with the Father among all nations in preparing the way whereby his people may be gathered home to the land of their inheritance. And they shall go out from all nations; and they shall not go out in haste, nor go by flight, for I will go before them, saith the Father, and I will be their rearward” (3 Nephi 21:22-29). Then, after quoting ISAIAH 54 the Savior says: “For surely [Isaiah] spake as touching all things concerning my people which are of the house of Israel; therefore it must needs be that he must speak also to the Gentiles” (3 Nephi 23:2). The Savior also speaks about the Book of Mormon going forth among the Gentile nations with an invitation to baptism (3 Nephi 23:4-5). Elder Orson Pratt explained these verses in 3 Nephi 21, which I believe must be understood in order to comprehend ISAIAH 54 in its proper context. Elder Orson Pratt quotes 2 Nephi 16:6-10: “And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you: At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel”—that is the Gospel contained in this book which he promised to bring forth unto them [i.e., the Book of Mormon—GB]—“and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth,”—you can judge whether this is true or not so far as the American nation is concerned—“. . . and shall reject the fulness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fulness of my gospel from among them.” Elder Pratt goes on to explain that this removal meant moving away from Jackson County and eventually setting in the Rocky Mountains . . . There is one thing which I am now about to read which has not yet been fulfilled, and which we must fulfill before Zion is redeemed. I will read it—“And then I will remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them” (3 Nephi 16:11). Elder Pratt then goes on to explain the importance of taking the Gospel to “the remnants of Joseph,” that is, to the Lamanites. “The Lord said when their record [i.e., the Book of Mormon—GB] should come forth in the latter days that he would send his messengers to them . . . After having foretold a great many things that should transpire in the latter days our Lord and Savior also spoke of that portion of the Gentiles which would repent and receive this book called the Book of Mormon, and he makes the following promise unto them—‘If they will repent and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them’ (3 Nephi 21:22) . . . This the Lord has done, and the Church now numbers over a hundred thousand right here [this was written back in 1875—GB] . . . Another thing mentioned in prophecy is that they, ‘the Gentiles, shall assist my people, the house of Israel, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem. And then shall they assist my people, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, that may be gathered in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the power of heaven come down and be in the midst of this people; and I also will be in their midst. And then shall the work of the Father commence at that day, even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people. Verily I say unto you, at that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people’ (3 Nephi 21:23-26).” Elder Pratt goes on to explain that members need to pray fervently for the conversion of the Lamanites which will lead to the building of the New Jerusalem. “The Lord says—‘They,’ the Gentiles, who believe in the Book of Mormon, ‘shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem’ (3 Nephi 21:23) . . . [this gathering must take place] to all the tribes that dwell in the Territories of the United States, also to all those who are scattered through Mexico, and Central and South America, and the object of our going will be to declare the principles of the Gospel unto them, and bring them to a knowledge of the truth . . . ‘then shall the powers of heaven come down and be in the midst of this people; and I also will be in your midst’ (3 Nephi 21:25) . . . Now I do not say that this will be a period after his second coming in the clouds of heaven, but I believe that it will be a coming prior to that time, when he comes to manifest himself to all the nations and kindreds of the earth” (Elder Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, 17:297b–302a.). Does not the *power of heavens* so spoken off above seem to include the

building of all these temples to the Lord? And the pouring out of the Holy Ghost? Does not the gathering of the Ten Lost Tribes seem to be included? So also the chapter heading for 3 Nephi 21 seems to indicate. So, who is *the barren that didst not bear* mentioned in Isaiah 54? I believe Judah and Israel are meant and it is they to whom the Lord speaks in so much tenderness. The latter-day restoration and gathering of Israel has begun. All are being invited to come unto Christ. Truly, there is reason to shout for joy. Through the principle of telescoping, the Prophet Isaiah was permitted to see the restoration of the Gospel, the preaching of the same throughout the world, as well as the New Jerusalem and the millennial day.

vv. 1-5. After all that Israel has suffered she is invited to shout for joy for she is no longer the desolate wife. The Restored Church is commanded to enlarge her tent and strengthen her stakes, and gather Israel from throughout the nations. The Holy One of Israel is Israel's husband.

1 ¶ **AND then shall that which is written come to pass:** SING, O barren, thou [that] didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou [that] didst not travail with child; for more [are] the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

AND then shall that which is written come to pass: SING, O barren, thou that didst not bear. Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Sing, O Jerusalem, who was like a barren woman that beareth not.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “Rejoice thou barren, who bearest not.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Give praise, O thou barren, that bearest not.” The expression “And then shall that which is written come to pass” is an allusion to the fulfillment of the promises in *Rain in Due Season* where the later-day gathering of Israel to her Lord is promised: “And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; 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 30:2-4). The Hebrew *sing* [שִׁיר] from the root, [שָׂרָה] is translated by Gesenius as “shout for joy.” Jennings points out that indeed we have reason to sing—or to shout for joy—when we receive the news of the completed atonement. In Job 38:4-7 we read of mankind's reaction to the Plan of Salvation in the premortal world—a plan whose foundation was Christ's atoning sacrifice: “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if

thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” ¶ I have always felt that this verse is intimately related to ISAIAH 49:21, “Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?” Both allude to the lost ten tribes as well as the Lamanite nation. But it will not end there, but will continue forth unto the calling of all the tribes ending up with Judah. In Isaiah 5 we can read the allegory of the Zenos regarding the olive vineyard. Why are we to weep with joy, it is because the Lord has once again restored His Church (Jacob 5:70) and called His servants for the last time to go forth into the vineyard calling both Jew and Gentile into the fold and grafting back the natural branches into the tree. All are invited to come unto Christ. The last shall be first and the first, last (Jacob 5:63). We are all called, but each one of us decides if we will be among the chosen. We decide if we will choose to believe the report (ISAIAH 53:1) or turn our backs on Christ. ¶ To *travail with child* means to bear gospel fruits. Most commentators have discarded the Jews and the rest of Israel. In the affectionate expressions of this chapter we find that while Israel has felt *forsaken* and *desolate*, that she will bring forth the fruits of repentance mentioned in Deuteronomy 30:3 and Jacob 5. The Lord will gather her with great and *tender mercies*. Keith observes: “The same call to sing and rejoice, in reference to the same period, is often addressed to the nation: ‘Sing, daughter of Zion; shout, Israel; be glad, and rejoice with all the heart, daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy,’ (Zephaniah 3:14-17). The view given of the verse is corroborated by other passages, as in Hosea 2, where Israel's calamities are represented as arising from, and continuing during, her separation from God her husband; but by judgment she will be brought to return to the Lord, when she shall sing as in the days of her youth, and shall call the Lord *Ishi* [אִשִּׁי], **my husband.**” Note that the Hosea quote is of particular

interest to us as it referred to the Northern Kingdom or the Ten Tribes who would soon be taken captive.

¶ *Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou [that] didst not travail with child.* Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Rejoice with praise and be glad.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “Break forth with shouts of joy, thou who sufferest not the pangs of child birth.” Instead of *cry aloud*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *rejoice* (Lamsa) / *exult* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, for the first half, “Sing forth praise, and make a joyful noise.” Regarding צְהַלֵּל. As a horseman I could not pass what Whitehouse says here: “. . . the verb rendered cry aloud is descriptive of a high-pitched voice (cf. ISAIAH 10:30), employed in Jeremiah 5:8 in reference to the neighing of horses. It is the natural expression of strong emotion, whether of joy or fear.” So also Gesenius, who defines צְהַלֵּל as: “an acute and clear voice; hence to neigh as a horse, (Arab. صهل compare הָלַל and צָלַל), Jeremiah 5:8; to shout for joy, to cry out (for joy), used of persons, ISAIAH 12:6; 54:1.” ¶ Regarding *barren*, Wade explains: “The word is used here, not in the sense of one that has never yet had offspring (as in 1 Samuel 2:5), but of one who has been bereaved of her children and separated from her husband.” ¶ *For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Who was like a woman that conceiveth not: for more shall be the children of Jerusalem that was laid desolate, than of the inhabited city, saith the Lord.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “For many more are the children of the desolate than of her who hath a husband.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “For many are the children of the desolate, more than of her that hath a husband, saith the Lord.” Nägelsbach has: “For the Israel to which he speaks here is the שְׁמֵמָה ‘desolate,’ that is no more בְּעוּלָה ‘married,’ but is forsaken and repudiated by her husband.” The expression “Children of the desolate [שְׁמֵמָה-בְּנֵי]” is an interesting one. ¶ The Pulpit Commentary in Galatians 4:27 (where this verse in Isaiah is used as an allegory) explains that *desolate* is the same word used in 2Samuel 13:20, “And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he is thy brother; regard not this thing. So Tamar remained *desolate* [שְׁמֵמָה] in her brother Absalom's house.” Gesenius explains the word שְׁמֵמָה, as *silent* as well as well as *desolate* in the sense of *laid waste*. TDOT speaks of both psychological as well as geographical desolation. ¶ The Pulpit Commentary in Galatians has: “It points in the present case to the solitary and unhappy condition of a woman ‘forsaken by her husband.’” Most exegetes in Galatians speak of Sarah as being the barren who could not

conceive, in contrast to Agar who was fertile. For those who may be interested, Govett, here in Isaiah, does an excellent job of presenting that perspective. However, if we look at the scriptures carefully, we can note that it has been Israel who has now been the *desolate* and *forsaken* one. As the times of the Gentile nations comes closer to being fulfilled, the gospel will go with much strength to all of the world. Paul warned the Gentiles: “And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert graft contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Romans 11:17-26). Jennings well notes: “We must not press this [what was said in Galatians] so far as to take the whole prophecy away from the Jew altogether, and apply it solely to the Church, leaving Israel cast away permanently—that all Scripture clearly forbids. Nor, indeed, can this whole prophecy be applied to the Church; for, as in Christ, God never hides His face from her ‘in a little wrath’; nor is the figure of a married wife applied to the Church, but that of a ‘chaste virgin’ (2 Corinthians 11:2); so that the whole scope of Scripture demands that this address be seen as directed primarily to the penitent remnant, representing the redeemed nation [of Israel].” Rabbi Rosenberg, leaning on Redak, observes: “*the children of the married woman*] This refers to the gentiles . . . as opposed to the bereaved widow, who is desolate, symbolizing Jerusalem . . . [and] alludes to the fourth kingdom mentioned by Daniel (Daniel 2:40), which will dominate the world prior to the coming of the Messiah.” As LDS we would say, compare it to Daniel 2:45, a kingdom to be established precisely before the Second Advent of Messiah. ¶ Horsley suggests: “The converted race of Israel is represented

under the image of the wife turned out of doors for misbehaviour, forgiven and taken home again.” Certainly Judah and Israel have been repudiated—but not forever. Nägelsbach writes: “In so far Israel is despised, repudiated, forsaken by its husband. But from the broken shell issues the kernel that from the beginning was hid in the shell till the period of ripeness. And this kernel now enters on a new existence, in which it develops to a greatness and glory, in comparison with which the greatness and glory of its former stage of existence almost vanish. For the narrow house becomes a mighty edifice under which all nations of the earth find room.”

2 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Enlarge the place of the house of thy dwelling, and from the cities of the land do not keep back the inhabitants; multiply the people of the camp, and increase the number of thy governors.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “For the Lord said, Enlarge the place of thy tent and thy curtains; fix up; spare not; lengthen thy cords and make thy stakes strong.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, for the first half, “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and stretch out the skins of thy tabernacles.” Cheyne, leaning on Dr. Weir, points to Jeremiah 10:20, where the opposite thought is found: “My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they are not: there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains.” Leeser renders the Jeremiah text: “*But now* my tent is laid waste, and all my cords are torn asunder; my children are gone away from me, and they are not *here*; there is no one to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains.” ¶ Speaking about tents, Henderson explains: “This beautiful metaphor is taken from the pastoral life, which, in the East, renders movable habitations absolutely necessary. The Orientals have two kinds of tents, the one larger, and the other smaller; but both constructed much in the same way. They are sustained by poles, more or fewer in number, according to the size of the tent, but the tallest is always in the midst; while the others suspend the covering round the sides. This covering is made of a stuff woven from wool and camel’s hair; it hangs down like a curtain over the side-poles, and is fastened by cords to wooden pegs, which are firmly driven into the ground. Other cords, fastened at the one end to the tops of the poles, and at the other to pegs or stakes, keep the tent steady, and secure it against the violence of storms. As the family increases, it is proportionally enlarged, and requires the cords to be longer, and the stakes to be

stronger in proportion. By אֹהֶל, *tent*, is meant the entire habitation; by מִשְׁכָּנֹת, *dwelling*s, the different compartments into which it was divided by the smaller curtains suspended from the roof.” Cowles says: “With the figure of oriental and nomadic life in tents before the mind, Zion is exhorted to enlarge her tent-room; to spread out far more widely the tent-curtains within which she dwells; to push this enlargement with unsparing hand; to make her tent-cords longer and her tent-pins stronger; for she must enlarge (‘break forth’) on every hand.” Keith writes: “The increase of the nation is here farther developed in an allusion to the usage with a tent. As an eastern family dwelling in a tent would require, in order to provide for an increase to their numbers, to extend the curtain or covering, and to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes which supported it, so Israel is represented as requiring enlarged room for her population which are said to burst forth on all sides.” Nägelsbach explains: “נָטָה here does not mean ‘to stretch or strain’ (ISAIAH 44:13), but ‘to expand . . . The Prophet implies that Zion may become concerned lest her dwelling be too much extended, and that she would check the expansion. He therefore calls on her not to do so: אַל-תִּחְשְׁבִי ‘do not oppose, hinder it’ (ISAIAH 58:1). For all the nations of the earth are to find their spiritual dwelling under this tent. Corresponding to the greatness of the tent, the ropes must be lengthened and the pins be set firmly. But it has been justly remarked that strengthening the stakes refers not only to the greater resistance required for a tent of greater dimensions, but also to the fact that this is to be no more a nomadic tent, but is to be a tabernacle continuing forever (ISAIAH 33:20).” So also Elder Merrill J. Bateman, who has frequently quoted ISAIAH 54:1-2, explained that this verse includes an allusion to the Tabernacle built in the desert, during the time of Moses. And then he went on to explain that as the curtains and cords are expanded, they represent the idea that temples will cover the earth.¹ Faussett has: “. . . the Church is not merely to seek new converts, but to strengthen those she has in the faith.” ¶ Brewster writes: “The clarion call to ‘enlarge’ and ‘strengthen’ the stakes of Zion was given anciently to Isaiah (ISAIAH 54:2), repeated to the Nephites (3 Nephi 22:2), and reiterated in our day (D&C 109:59; 133:9). A stake is an ecclesiastical unit of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and covers a specific geographical area. According to the Lord, stakes are ‘curtains or the strength of Zion’ (D&C 101:21). They are places where the Saints of God may be instructed more perfectly in

¹ Bateman, Elder Merrill, BYU devotional, 11 January 2000.

the doctrines of salvation.”² President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: “Isaiah speaks of Zion as a tent, or tabernacle, having in mind the Tabernacle which was built and carried in the wilderness in the days of Moses, and the cords are the binding cables that extend from the tent, or tabernacle, to the stakes which are fastened in the ground. Now, the Lord revealed that Zion was to be built and surrounding her would be the stakes helping to bind and keep her in place . . . Zion is the tent, the stakes of Zion are the binding pegs that support her.”³ Bishop Merrill J. Bateman shared: “[the tent] represents the gospel of Christ. [Isaiah] states that in the last days the cords of the tent would be stretched across the earth and stakes would be planted in every land. We literally are seeing that fulfilled today. As I have thought about these passages, I have thought of the awesome task of supporting the Brethren in carrying the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.”⁴ President Ezra Taft Benson taught: “In revelation the Lord states: ‘For Zion must increase in beauty and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you, Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments’ (D&C 82:14). Here the Lord declares a great purpose of a stake: to be a beautiful emblem for all the world to see. The phrase ‘put on her beautiful garments’ refers, of course, to the inner sanctity that must be attained by every member who calls himself or herself a Saint . . . The Lord gives this explanation of the purpose of stakes: ‘Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations; And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth’ (D&C 115:5-6).”⁵ ¶ Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, in one of my all-time favorite talks—warning against those who criticize the Church or lean on false doctrines—pleaded: “I speak carefully and lovingly to any of the adults of the Church, parents or otherwise, who may be given to cynicism or skepticism, who in matters of whole-souled devotion always seem to hang back a little, who at the Church’s doctrinal campsite always like to pitch their tents out on the periphery of religious faith. To all such—whom we do love and wish were more comfortable camping nearer to us—I say, please be

² Hoyt W. Brewster, Jr., *Doctrine and Covenants Encyclopedia*, p. 271, 328, 559; *Isaiah Plain and Simple: The Message of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, p. 263.

³ Smith, Joseph Fielding. *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 2:88.

⁴ Bateman, Bishop Merrill J. *Stretching the Cords of the Tent*, *Ensign* (CR), May 1994, p.65.

⁵ Benson, Ezra Taft. *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1988, pp. 149-151.

aware that the full price to be paid for such a stance does not always come due in your lifetime. No, sadly, some elements of this can be a kind of profligate national debt, with payments coming out of your children’s and grandchildren’s pockets in far more expensive ways than you ever intended it to be . . . When erecting their sacred tabernacle in the wilderness of Sinai, the ancient children of Israel were commanded to make firm their supporting cords and strengthen the stakes which held them. The reason? Storms arise in life—regularly.”⁶

3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left. Targum (Ⓢ) has, “For thou shalt spread abroad to the south and to the north.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Extend still farther to the right and left.” Instead of *break forth*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *expand* (Lamsa) / *multiply* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓢ) has, “For thou shalt pass on to the right hand, and to the left.” Nägelsbach writes: “There appears in these words to be an allusion to Genesis 28:14, ‘and thy seed shall be as dust of the earth, and thou shalt break forth (וַיִּצְרַח וַיִּשְׁרַח) to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south.’” Several exegetes suggest that they shall expand on all sides. In Genesis, these words were given to Jacob (or Israel) in continuation of the Abrahamic covenant. This is also the meaning here, in the latter days. Nägelsbach continues: “We learn from these passages that the seed of Israel shall not merely take possession of some nations, but of all nations, and not of lands by expelling the inhabitants, but actually of the inhabitants themselves. For these themselves shall become the seed of Israel.” And most of the seed, rather than being adopted into Israel, will be literal descendants who have been spread throughout the nations of the world, where the Lord would “gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee” (Deuteronomy 30:3b). ¶ *And thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.* Targum (Ⓢ) has, “And thy children shall inherit the nations, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And thy seed shall inherit nations and thou shalt inhabit wasted cities.” Instead of inherit the **Gentiles**; I prefer to translate גוֹיִם here as **nations**, as in the ASV. Govett quotes the John the revelator, wherein those of every tribe (Juda,

⁶ Holland, Elder Jeffrey R. “A Prayer for the Children,” *General Conference*, April 2003.

Reuben, Gad, Asser, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin) are sealed and “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Revelation 7:1-9).

4 Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Be not terrified because thou hast been exposed to shame; nor blush because thou hast been reproached.” Instead of *confounded*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *rebuked* (Lamsa) / *overcome* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) instead of *confounded* and *blush* has *ashamed* and *confounded*. Gesenius explains that בּוֹשׁ not so much means *blush* but rather “paleness and terror.” Westermann points out that “With Israel and the nations round about her, suffering and shame went together as the outside and the inside of the same phenomenon.” Westermann goes on to explain that just as a barren woman suffered and also felt shame, so it was with Israel in her defeat. And we might say that military defeat was the small part and portion of it, compared to the knowledge that God had refused to continue, for the time, to be her God and to consider her His people. The shame spoken of here is that of Israel’s apostasy. We have heard the injunction often from the Lord, not to fear but to trust in His strength and in His arm. ¶ *For thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “For thou shalt forget the shame of ancient times, and the reproach of thy widowhood thou shalt remember no more.” Horsley has: “. . . ‘the shame of thy youth—the reproach of thy widowhood.’ —‘the shame,’ her transgressions, described under the image of incontinence;⁷ ‘the reproach,’ the punishment. The pardon shall be so complete that the memory both of the offence and the punishment shall be obliterated.” Regarding barrenness, Luther explains: “This is a Hebraism. Since virginity is the greatest kind of disorder [rather, not so much virginity as the unmarried

state for a woman of marriageable age; or the state of barrenness for a married woman—GB], fertility receives the highest praise. Where there was no fertility, there was disgrace, as the mother of John shows, ‘Behold, the Lord has taken away my reproach’ (cf. Luke 1:25).” Delitzsch has: “It was no real widowhood, however, but only an apparent one (Jeremiah 51:5), for the husband of Jerusalem was living still.” Kay explains that the *shame of thy youth* is associated with apostasy. So also Rawlinson who has: “Israel became a ‘widow’ when Jehovah withdrew his presence from her, when the Shekinah disappeared from the temple, and the temple itself was destroyed, and Jerusalem was a desolation, and the peoples captives in a far land.” The temple in Jerusalem was built twice and completely destroyed twice. Christ, during His ministry, spoke that the temple would be utterly demolished: “And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Mark 13:1-2). Finally, Alexander refreshingly argues: “The specific reference of youth to the Egyptian bondage, and of widowhood to the Babylonian exile, is extremely artificial, and forbidden by the context.”

5 For thy Maker, [is] thine husband, the LORD of hosts [is] his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel—the God of the whole earth shall he be called.

For thy Maker, thine husband, the LORD of hosts is his name. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “For the Lord who is thy maker, whose name is the Lord of Hosts.” Instead, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, for the first half, “For your LORD shall do thus to you.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “For he that made thee shall rule over thee, the Lord of hosts is his name.” Ibn Ezra has: “בּוֹעֲלֶיךָ ‘Thine husband’ is here used for מַלְכְּךָ ‘thy King,’ and עֹשֵׂיךָ ‘thy Maker’ for אֱלֹהֶיךָ ‘thy God.’” Rabbi Rosenberg, leaning on Ibn Ezra and on Redak explains: “These terms are grammatically plural, used as the plural of majesty.” Cowles has: “The magnificent thoughts of this verse are clothed in the richest poetical conceptions and in the finest style of Hebrew parallelism.—The God who made thee is thy Husband, and he is truly the Lord of Hosts, God of the celestial armies . . . Thy redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, their very Savior, their dearest Friend, to be particularly appropriated by them as their own Holy One. He is also truly ‘the God of the whole earth’ . . . In Hebrew life, the redeemer was nearest of kin, and especially bound to the sacred duties of

⁷ Lack of chastity.

personal protection, redress of wrongs and vindication of rights . . . Next to that of husband toward wife, his was in Hebrew life the relation that combined in itself most of the elements of a near and faithful friend, bound to make any possible sacrifices and efforts for the welfare of his brother. In this sense Jehovah appears here as the Redeemer as well as the Husband of his people.” Keith beautifully reminds us: “This comparison is often employed in describing the restored favour of God to Israel: ‘I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment, and in lovingkindness and in mercies:’ and what is meant by this is taught when it is added, ‘I will say to them who were not my people. Thou art *my people*; and they shall say, Thou art *my God*’ (Hosea 2:19, 23, emphasis added). The same reference as here to the power of God, along with the reference to his relation to Israel as peculiarly their God, is often introduced, as if intended as a pledge that he was able to perform what he promised.” Once again, note that Hosea was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom. ¶ *And thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel—the God of the whole earth shall he be called.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Even he who delivered thee, shall be called the God of Israel, in the whole earth.” Birks has: “The Redeemer hoped for . . . [t]he Holy One of Israel has now made himself the near kinsman (Leviticus 25:48); and He it is that will ransom His people from their bondage.” In 1 Kings 20:28b we read: “Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.” Just like the Lord is not just the Lord of the hills, nor is He simply the Lord of the valleys, so also the Lord, the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel is not limited in His power: He is *the God of the whole earth*. And not just the earth, but worlds without number. The day will come when this shall be openly recognized, and *every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess* this truth.

vv. 6-10. The Lord speaks tenderly to Israel. This is the last dispensation, the dispensation of the fullness of times, where the Church will never fall away again.

6 ¶ For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “For as a woman forsaken, and afflicted in spirit, the Shekinah, the Lord, met thee.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “The Lord hath not

called thee as a wife forsaken and disconsolate.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has *mourning* instead of *grieved*. Birks has: “The figure is that of a wife under double grief, not only as barren, but as rejected and disowned by her husband.” Leaser renders the verse: “For as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit did the Lord call thee back, and as a wife of youth, that was rejected, saith thy God.” Keith writes: “The act is represented as already past and done [prophetic perfect]—thy Maker is thine husband—the Lord hath called thee—as in other places, although the events were still future, a form of prophecy fitted to give increased assurance of the certainty of its accomplishment.” Alexander has: “Reduced to a prosaic form and order, this verse seems to mean, that Jehovah had espoused her in her youth, then cast her off for her iniquities, and now at last recalled her from her solitude and grief to be his wife again.” Orelli explains: “Israel was a wife of youth, the Lord’s first love, whom He only temporarily rejected.” It is this wife that the Lord so tenderly invites back to the fold in ISAIAH 54. In ISAIAH 50:1, for those concerned with Deuteronomy 24:4, we spoke that the repudiated wife could be taken back by the Husband because she did not enter into a covenant relationship with another husband—and thus in this sense was not defiled. ¶ *And a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And a woman of youth when she was forsaken.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Nor as a wife that hath been hated from her youth. Thy God hath said.” Instead of *a wife of youth*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *a wife forsaken from her youth*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And as a wife cast off from her youth, said thy God.” Cowles writes: “Thy Maker surely is they Husband, *for* he now invites thee to return into this relationship, despite of its suspension because of thy past sins . . . The spirit of the passage is, Thou shalt be recalled with renewed and yet stronger love, to a married life far more rich in its fruits of joy, and those fruits far more enduring.” Keith has: “The expression ‘a wife of youth,’ may denote the keenness of grief when forsaken or refused, as it is in the text, the affections being warmest in youth; or rather, it may refer to the circumstance that Israel was such, that it was in her youth as a nation that she was selected as the object of divine favour: or both ideas may be included, as in the following passage:—‘I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals’ (Jeremiah 2:2).⁸” Skinner explains: “Although Zion is temporarily estranged from Jehovah, she is yet a ‘wife of youth’ holding a permanent place in her husband’s affections.” Note the expression אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה, *thy God*. Here the Lord is

⁸ “Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown” (Jeremiah 2:2).

reminding Israel of His covenant relationship with her, as we saw in *Rain in Due Season*, “And I will walk among you, and will be *your God*, and ye shall be *my people*” (Leviticus 26:12). Israel may have been forsaken *for a small moment*, but she was not put away forever.

7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee.

For a small moment [בְּרִנָּה קָטָן] *have I forsaken thee.*

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “In a little anger have I forsaken thee.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “I left thee for a little while.” Wordsworth has: “*In a little wrath*] *In an outburst of wrath*, breaking forth like the Flood, to which there is a reference in what follows [ISAIAH 54:9], and which was of short duration.” Keith writes: “There is here a contrast between the sorrows and the future joys of the nation when gathered and blessed. Protracted in duration and grievous in character as has been her shame, it will yet be short and light in comparison of her glory: how great, then, must that glory be?” Luther explains that despite the brevity of our difficult moments, we tend to elongate them in our minds. The Prophet Joseph Smith was comforted by the Savior: “My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a *small moment*; And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high” (D&C 121:7-8a, emphasis added). These words also remind us of “Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death” (D&C 121:43-44). For a *small moment*, then, puts mortality in the context of eternity. ¶ *But with great mercies will I gather thee.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “But with great mercies will I bring together thy captivity.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “But with great mercy I will compassionate thee.” In Hosea 1:10 the Lord turns in tenderness towards Israel after having rejected her. There are few topics that give me more joy than that of the gathering of Israel. She is no longer considered the rejected *לֹא עַמִּי* *not my people* of Hosea 1:9, but rather, *בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים* *sons of the living God*.

8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “For a little moment I removed the presence of my Shekinah.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “In a short wrath I turned away my face from thee.” Instead of *in a little wrath*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *in a raging wrath* (Lamsa) / *with great indignation* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “In a moment of indignation have I hid my face a little while from thee.” Henderson points out the paronomasia in the first two words, *in a little wrath*, בְּרִנָּה קָטָן. Gill says: “The Syriac version renders it, ‘great wrath’; and so Schultens thinks the word signifies ‘overflowing wrath,’ and the vehemency of it; to which agrees R. Menachem [Apud Jarchi, Kimhi & Ben Melech, in loc.], who interprets it, ‘the heat of wrath.’” Ibn Ezra explains: “The kingdom of Israel will remain forever (comp. Daniel 7:27); and the days of the exile [or we may add, the days before the restoration of the Gospel—GB], though many, will be like a moment in comparison with the everlasting days of the future happiness.” Young says, “The loving-kindness that God will show . . . is eternal. The designation *Redeemer* suggests that mercy has indeed been shown . . . The lesson, however, is true for each time when because of our sins the Lord removes His presence from us.” Indeed, it is us who hide from the presence of the Lord. ¶ *But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “*Yea*, for a short time from thee, but with everlasting kindness, which shall not cease, will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on thee.” Birks notes that both here and in ISAIAH 54:10, “. . . the sacred name stands with emphasis at the very close.” The Lord had to permit Israel to be scattered but with great mercies He gathers her. Indeed, the Lord stands with outstretched arms. Our Redeemer invites us to follow Him and be embraced by His *everlasting kindness* [חֶסֶד עוֹלָם].

9 For this, [is-as] the waters of Noah unto me, for [as] I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

For this, the waters of Noah unto me, for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “This shall be before me as the days of Noah, when I swore by my Word, that the waters of the deluge, which were in the days of Noah, shall no more pass over the earth.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “The Lord who delivered thee hath said, ‘From the

flood which was in Noah’s time this is my purpose.” Instead of the first *waters of Noah*, the Peshitta (S) has *days of Noah*. The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “This thing is to me as in the days of Noe, to whom I swore, that I would no more bring in the waters of Noe upon the earth.” Alexander writes [as do several others]: “Instead of כִּי־מַי [For waters—GB], one or two manuscripts have כִּי־מַי all in one word, meaning as the days of Noah, and Kimchi speaks of this division as existing in some ancient codices of his day. This reading likewise appears in all the ancient versions but the Septuagint, and is preferred by Lowth (as in the days of Noah). It is also a remarkable coincidence that this expression occurs twice in the New Testament (Mathew 24:37, 1 Peter 3:20), but not in reference to this place or to the comparison here instituted. All the latest writers seem to be in favour of adhering to the common text, which is probably the only safe conclusion.” Birks suggests: “The word ‘this’ [זֶה] refers to the whole event, mercy following after judgment (Rosenmüller) . . . The waters of Noah, when named the second time [מַי־נֹחַ], are to be taken strictly, but the first time [מַי־נֹחַ] for the whole event.” Cowles writes: “The case is like that of Noah’s flood in this respect, viz., that as God bound himself by a solemn oath never to drown the earth again with water; so had he bound himself never again (as before) to be wroth with and to rebuke his Zion.” Nägelsbach writes: “The Prophet supports the foregoing promise of ‘everlasting kindness’ by giving it equal rank with the promise made to Noah (Genesis 8:21 ff., 9:9 ff.). Jehovah Himself calls this promise an everlasting covenant (Genesis 9:16). And on this covenant, as on an immovable basis, rests the present stability of the earth. Here then the promise that the LORD will no more be wroth with Zion is put on a par with this covenant.” ¶ *So have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee.* The Targum (C) has, “Thus I swear by my Word, that my anger shall not be hurled upon thee, O Jerusalem, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that will have mercy on thee.” The LXX (G) reads, “As I solemnly promised him at that time that I would no more be angry with the earth on thine account.” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “So have I sworn not to be angry with thee, and not to rebuke thee.” Keith explains: “The expression, ‘I have sworn,’ implies that the Lord had given assurance in the most solemn way, and implies that all his declarations of ultimate peace to Israel would be observed as sacredly as his promise that the waters of the flood should not a second time destroy all flesh.” Alexander says: “The Prophet does not say that God’s displeasure with the church is a flood which shall never be repeated, but that it shall never be repeated any more than the flood.” While there have been many periods of apostasy on the earth, the Lord

has promised that with the restoration associated with the dispensation of the fulness of times, the Church would never fall away again.

10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace* be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

* KJV and Book of Mormon, *peace*; JST, *people*.

For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness [חַסְדִּי] shall not depart from thee. The Targum (C) has, “rent” for *removed*, and ends with “O Jerusalem.” The LXX (G) reads, “Nor in rebuking thee overturn the mountains; and that thy hills should no more be moved.” The Peshitta (S) has “For the mountains shall be brought low” (Lamsa) / “Thou the mountains be abased” (BPE) and the hills bent downward.” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “For the mountains shall be moved, and the hills shall tremble; but my mercy shall not depart from thee.” Alexander explains: “The meaning is not that God’s promise is as stable as the mountains, but that it is more so; they shall be removed, but it shall stand for ever.” Wade has: “A second interruption of God’s mercy to Israel is even more impossible than the removal of the unchangeable mountains.” Cowles has: “This declares not merely that the mountains shall *sooner* depart and the hills be *sooner* shaken on their foundations than God’s kindness shall depart and his covenant be shaken—(although it fully covers and implies this) but it means more, viz., that God’s kindness shall outlast the mountains and his covenant stand firm after the hills shall have been shaken to their deep foundations.” Birks has: “The rendering ‘may depart’ (Vitranga, Knobel) or ‘should the mountains depart’ (Henderson), is grammatically lawful. But the simpler version is confirmed by the words of our Lord himself,—‘Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.’” Kay explains: “. . . the earth itself, with its granite mountains, shall decay; but not so God’s *kindness* [חַסְדִּי].” ¶ *Neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee [מִרְחַמֵּי־חַסְדֵּי].* The LXX (G) reads, “So my kindness for thee shall not fail, nor shall the covenant of thy peace ever be changed.” Instead of *hath mercy on thee*, the Peshitta (S) has *the Merciful One*. Elder Russell M. Nelson taught us, associated with this verse, about the importance of wearing our temple garments: “Wearing the temple garment has deep symbolic significance. It represents a continuing commitment. Just as the Savior exemplified the need to endure to the end, we wear the

garment faithfully as part of the enduring armor of God. Thus we demonstrate our faith in Him and in His eternal covenants with us. The Lord assured that even though ‘the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my people be removed’ (JST, Inspired Version, ISAIAH 54:10). Surely we would not ever want knowingly to discard from us an emblem of His everlasting covenant.”⁹ Henderson suggests: “That these promises cannot apply to the past history of the Jews as a nation, is evident from the fact of their present dispersion, which has continued nearly eighteen centuries.” But now, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, on the other hand, Israel and Judah will be brought back from their dispersion.

vv. 11-17. Elder Parley P. Pratt explains these verses: “Having traced the great restoration of the earth and its inhabitants, until we find them in the full enjoyment of the promises made to their fathers; and having learned that a future state is not a state of shadows and fables, but something tangible, even a more enduring substance; we shall now take a view of the division of their land, and the laying out of their city, even the holy city, where the tabernacle of God and his sanctuary shall be forever more; for of course this was the city sought for by Abraham and others, who found it not. This view is given in the last chapter of Ezekiel, where he divides the land, by lots to the whole twelve tribes; and lays off the city, and sanctuary in the midst, with its twelve gates, three on each side, the whole lying four-square. But in his 47th chapter, we have a description of a beautiful river, which will issue forth from the eastern front of the temple from under the sanctuary, and run eastward into the Dead Sea, healing the waters and causing a very great multitude of fishes spread from Engedi and Eneglaim, the fishers spread forth their nets; while the miry places shall not be healed, but shall be given to salt. And on either side shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, nor shall the fruit thereof be consumed; it shall bring forth new fruit according to its months, because of the waters issuing from the sanctuary, and their fruits shall be for meat, and their leaves for medicine. But to set forth more fully the building of the city, and the materials of which it will be built, we quote ISAIAH 54:11, to the end of the chapter: ‘O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt

thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.”¹⁰ Some of these verses seem particularly pointed to the construction of the New Jerusalem, and to the Millennium, but also have application to Zion, or the restored Church. Evil forces will form against the Saints but the Lord will comfort and protect His disciples.

11 ¶ O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, [and] not comforted! Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, [and] not comforted! The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “O distressed city that receiveth affliction, concerning her the nations say, She shall not be comforted.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “For he said for thee, Be appeased, Lord.’ thou afflicted and storm beaten! art thou not comforted?” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “O poor little one, tossed with tempest, without all comfort.” Cowles explains: “In these verses the church appears first as a lone female, long afflicted, tempest-tossed, and not comforted: then as a city, walled and adorned magnificently; the very conception of Zion in that ancient age.” Wordsworth suggests: “Here is another allusion to the Flood.” Nägelsbach notes: “Now the blessing is extended to all. Zion was wretched, hunted, comfortless in her youth and widowhood. לֹא נִחְמָהּ [not comforted] recalls

לֹא רָחַמָהּ [not having obtained mercy] (Hosea 1:6)

. . . What a contrast between this past and the future which the Prophet has in mind.” Barnes writes: “The idea is that of a ship that is driven by the tempest; or any object that is tossed about with a whirlwind.”

¶ Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Behold, I lay the stoned of thy pavement with Mosaic

⁹ Elder Russell M. Nelson, Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings, *Ensign* (CR), May 2001, p. 32.

¹⁰ Pratt, Parley P. *A Voice of Warning and Instruction to All People Or, an Introduction to the Faith and Doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* By Elder Parley P. Pratt. New Edition. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1957. Included is the preface to the First American Edition (1837) and the Second European Edition (December 4, 1846), pp. 127-129.

(the Royal Polyglot reads **צִיָּבִיּוֹן**, ‘stibium’), and thy foundations with costly stones.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Behold I am preparing for thee carbuncles for thy building stones, and the sapphire for thy foundations.” Instead of *fair colors*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *beryl*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, for the first half, “Behold I will lay thy stones in order.” Birks has: “The figure now changes, from a wife restored to favour and blessed with children, to a city after storms and ruin rebuilt in magnificence and beauty . . . The true meaning is that the stones would not be coarse and rude, but costly and beautiful, like the sapphire foundations.” And it would not be just any city, there being an allusion to the New Jerusalem. Keith writes: “A similar but more detailed description of the holy, the new Jerusalem, is given in Revelation 21:18.” Cowles has: “God will rebuild her walls from their very base; will lay her stones in the fine paint used by the ancients upon and about the eye: will make sapphires her foundations; her battlements (not ‘windows’) of rubies (‘agates’) sparkling and gleaming in the sunbeams; and her gates of flashing gems (‘carbuncles’) and all her borders with stones most beautiful.—This passage is the quarry of thought and figure whence the Revelator John drew out his material for the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21). —Remarkably the Hebrew word, ‘I will lay,’ *i.e.*, thy stones, is always used elsewhere for the quiet lying down of animals to take their rest. The conception seems to be pastoral—an image of peaceful repose. —‘Windows,’ from the word which means the *sun*, probably refer to the shining battlements and gilded towers which reflected the sunbeams.” I studiously avoid trying to determine what plants or animals are meant from the Hebrew. But as a Chilean I could not help notice that for **סַפִּיר**, LHI, and several others, suggests “lapis-lazuli /sapphires.” Whitehouse mentions: “The word here rendered by fair colours (פִּיָּוִן) properly means the *stibium*, ‘antimony,’ or, more accurately stated, sulphuret of antimony, corresponding to the kohl used by the Orientals at the present day. This substance was used in painting the eyes and eyebrows of fashionable women (such as Jezebel in 2Kings 9:30) in order to give them a more distinctive appearance. The stibium consisted of black metallic powder, which was applied partly in a dry state and partly as ointment to the eyelids and brows. It was supposed that the dark rim enhanced the brilliant appearance of the eyes . . . Ewald and Dillmann held that the meaning of the passage is that instead of the stones being laid in ordinary mortar they were to be laid in this black stibium, so that they would gleam forth like a woman’s brilliant eyes.” Some exegetes point us to Tobit 13:16-18: “For Ierusalem shall be built vp with Sapphires, and Emeralds, and precious stone: thy walles and towres, and battlements with pure golde. And the streets of Ierusalem shal be paved with Berill, and

Carbuncle, and stones of Ophir. And all her streets shall say, Halleluiah, and they shall praise him, saying, Blessed be God which hath extolled it for euer” (KJV 1611).

12 And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And I will place thy timbers with gems, and thy gates shall be of carbuncles, and all thy borders with precious stones.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And for thy battlements I will lay jasper; and crystal, for thy gates; and for thy circumambient walls, precious stones.” The Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, “And I will make your walls of jasper and your gates of crystal and your borders of precious stones. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “And I will make thy bulwarks of jasper: and thy gates of graven stones, and all thy borders of desirable stones.” Govett writes: “Following this gracious promise is the description of the new Jerusalem, agreeing beautifully with that in the Revelation. ‘I will prepare sapphires as thy foundations,’ saith Isaiah. ‘The second’ (foundation) saith St. John, ‘a *sapphire*.’ ‘And thy gates of crystal.’ ‘And the twelve gates,’ saith the beloved disciple, ‘were *twelve pearls*: every several gate was one *pearl*.’ It need scarcely be noticed how well the ‘crystal’ of Isaiah agrees with ‘the pearl’ of St. John, the pearl being of a crystalline semi-transparent texture. ‘And the circumference of precious stones.’ Even so St. John: ‘And the *foundations of the wall of the city* were garnished with *all manner of precious stones*’ (Revelation 21:19-21).” Slotki/Rosenberg, leaning on Rashi and Kimhi, explain for **שָׁמַשׁ תִּיָּוִן**, “The Hebrew noun denotes windows through which the sun (שָׁמַשׁ) shines.” One exegete suggested that each stone, similarly to those on the breastplate of the High Priest, stands for each tribe of Israel.

13 And all thy children [shall be] taught of the LORD; and great [shall be] the peace of thy children.

And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “learn the law” instead of *taught*. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Even thy sons, all instructed of God.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) renders it, “And all thy children shall learn of me.” Henderson, and several other exegetes, explains that by **לְמוֹדֵי יְהוָה** (see also Gesenius) we literally have *disciples of Jehovah*. Leeser translates “*And all thy children shall be disciples of the Lord,*” **וְכָל-בְּנֵיךָ לְמוֹדֵי יְהוָה**. Alexander renders it: “And

all thy children disciples of Jehovah . . . The promise is not one of occasional instruction, but of permanent connection with Jehovah as his followers, and partakers of his constant teaching.” Govett beautifully says: “But its [the New Jerusalem] chief bliss shall not be the splendor of its decorations, but the fact ‘that they shall be all,’ as the Savior remarked, ‘taught of God.’” In Jeremiah 31:33-34 we read: “But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be *their God*, and they shall be *my people*. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: *for they shall all know me*, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (emphasis added). As mentioned by several exegetes, this verse is quoted by our Redeemer: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:44-45). Faussett also points to these New Testament references: 1 Corinthians 2:10; Hebrews 8:10; 10:16; and 1 John 2:20. While the most complete fulfillment of this prophecy may point to the Millennium, I feel that in the Lord’s Church this already happens, that we are continually instructed from on high. ¶ President Gordon B. Hinckley taught mothers that despite the challenges they might be facing, to make sure to teach the children in the way of the Lord: “But if when they are very small there is much of affection, there is shown much of love, there is prayer together, then there will more likely be peace in the hearts and strength in the character of your children. Teach them the ways of the Lord. Declared Isaiah, ‘All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children’ (ISAIAH 54:13).¹¹ Furthermore, “I hope you keep nurturing and loving your children, leading them in light and truth. They are the most precious things you have in all the world. Among all the assets you possess nothing is so precious as your children.”¹² And also: “If you want to see peace in the lives of your children, then teach them the ways of righteousness and truth . . . Peace comes of living the gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹³ ¶ *And great shall be the peace of thy children*. The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “And thy children in great prosperity.” As disciples of Christ

permit themselves to be taught by the Spirit, and have continual communication with God and permit themselves to be taught by the Holy Spirit, truly, great shall be their peace. Once again, while some of these scriptures will be fulfilled more fully during the Millennium, I strongly believe that this peace is available today, even in the midst of the chaos we live in.

14 In righteousness shalt thou be established; thou shalt be far from oppression for thou shalt not fear, and from terror for it shall not come near thee.

In righteousness shalt thou be established. The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “And with righteousness thou shalt be rebuilt.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, “And thou shalt be founded in justice.” The Lord expects us to move forward in righteousness for in doing right there is safety and peace. But note that this righteousness *is of me*, the Lord (ISAIAH 54:17). To be established means to be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise and prepared to come forth in the morning of the first resurrection as candidates for the Celestial Kingdom. ¶ *Thou shalt be far from oppression for thou shalt not fear, and from terror for it shall not come near thee.* The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “Abstain from injustice and thou shalt not be affrighted; and as for terror, it shall not approach thee.” Instead of *terror*, the Peshitta (Ⓔ) has *destruction* (Lamsa) / *devastation* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, “Depart far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee.” Luther suggests that we ought not to fear “slander and injury.” Once again, the Lord is offering the enduring peace of discipleship; a peace that will give comfort and diminish fear. The promise is that terror will be kept from the disciples. This is not a promise that disciples will be protected in a bubble from the vicissitudes of life (for as the next verse shows, such *shall gather together*), but rather, that the companionship of the Holy Ghost will provide unending comfort.

15 Behold, they shall surely gather together, [but] not by me; whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.

Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me. The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “Behold, the captivity of thy people shall surely be gathered unto thee.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “Behold proselytes shall come to thee for my sake.” The Peshitta (Ⓔ) has something like, “All who are brought back by my hand shall enter into you; and

¹¹ Hinckley, President Gordon B., Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World, *Ensign* (CR), November 1995, p. 98.

¹² Messages of Inspiration from President Hinckley, *LDS Church News*, 1996, 3 February 1996.

¹³ Messages of Inspiration from President Hinckley, *LDS Church News*, 1998, 3 January 1988.

they shall be as a place of refuge to your inhabitants.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Behold, an inhabitant shall come, who was not with me.” Birks has: “All enemies, however mighty, who fight against this city of God, shall ‘stumble, and fall, and not be found,’ (Daniel 11:19). There seems a special reference to the last revealed gathering of God’s enemies (Revelation 20:7-9), and to the solemn issue which is there foretold.” There also seems to be an allusion to Jerusalem surrounded by her enemies in the last days, at the time of Christ’s Second Advent. So also Keith: “The previous allusion to the righteous manner of the re-establishment of the nation in their own land, and to their liberty and peace there, introduces a notice of the destruction of their enemies. The gathering together of all the nations against Jerusalem, so often referred to, will be followed by their downfall.” Nägelsbach explains: “First [Isaiah] does not deny that there may be hostile conspiracies against Israel. Behold, they shall surely gather . . . in a hostile sense . . . But though that may happen *it is not from Me*, says the LORD.” Young has: “God Himself does not instigate the gathering of enemies against His people.” So also Ibn Ezra who has: “The meaning of the whole verse is accordingly: ‘Is it possible, that any alliance should be made except [i.e., contrary to—GB] with my permission?’ (The alliance between Gog and Magog is here referred to).” Henderson suggests that there are cases when those who have turned against Zion have been permitted to succeed, but that this would not be the case at the times spoken of in these verses: “The meaning of this verse is, that whatever enemies might assault the church, they were not to be viewed as commissioned by God to execute wrath upon her, as the Assyrians and Babylonians had been, and consequently should not succeed in their attempts to remove her.” ¶ *Whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.* The Targum (T) has, “In the end, the kings of the nations, who are gathered together to oppress thee, O Jerusalem, shall be cast down in the midst of thee.” The LXX (G) reads, “And they shall sojourn with thee and fly to thee.” The Peshitta (S) is missing this clause. The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “He that was a stranger to thee before, shall be joined to thee.” JUB renders it, “shall fall before thee.” Those who fight against Zion are fighting against God and kicking against the pricks. They will not succeed. Luther reminds us that “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

16 Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy.

Behold, I have created [פְּרָאֲתִי] *the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work.* The LXX (G) reads, “Behold I have created thee, not like a coppersmith blowing coals and using a tool for the work.” Better, *I formed*, פְּרָאֲתִי. Birks suggests: “The pronouns are emphatic. The great Creator permits the plots of evil men to prosper for a season, but condemns them at last to disappointment and utter shame.” The essence of this verse is explained by Skinner: “No weapon formed against Zion shall prosper, because both the makers of weapons [the smith] and those who use them [the waster] are alike created by Jehovah, and all their activity is under His control.” Alexander also: “The general meaning evidently is, that God can certainly redeem his pledge, because all instruments and agents are alike at his disposal and under his control. He is not only the maker of the weapons of war, but the maker of their maker, as well as of the warrior who wields them.—The pronoun in both clauses is emphatic. It is I (and not another) who created them.” The idea seems to be that the activity against Jerusalem or against Zion will be limited in its ability to do harm. ¶ *And I have created the waster to destroy.* The LXX (G) reads, “But I have created thee, not for destruction.” Instead of *waster*, the Peshitta (S) has *ravager* (Lamsa) / *destroyer* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (D) has *killer* instead of *waster*. Rabbi Rosenberg, leaning on Redak, explains this as an allusion to the great battle of Gog and Magog against Jerusalem. In it, a large number shall fall before the Lord will make His appearance in great majesty and power.

17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue [that] shall rise revile against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This [is] the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness [is] of me, saith the LORD.

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper. The Targum (T) adds, “O Jerusalem,” after *against thee*. The LXX (G) reads, “Perish every weapon formed against thee! I will not prosper it.” Elder Packer eulogized President Ezra Taft Benson, and said that the latter had much opposition during his mission to England and ‘always kept this verse from the Book of Mormon in his wallet: “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall revile against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord’ (3Nephi

22:17).¹⁴ Indeed, no weapon made can triumph against the Lord and His disciples. As the Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.”¹⁵ ¶ *And every tongue that shall revile against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Though every voice should rise up against thee for judgment, thou shalt overcome them all and in the trial they shall be condemned.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has *resisteth thee* instead of *revile against thee*. Govett writes: “The next promise of Isaiah, that ‘every tongue which riseth against them in judgement they shall condemn,’ receives a glorious illustration from the words of Paul, ‘Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?’ (Romans 8:33-35).” Rabbi Rosenberg, leaning on Redak, beautifully explains: “they will harm you neither with their deeds nor with their speech.” Elder Robert D. Hales spoke exquisitely about the need for Church members to respond to attacks with love, and further, that the Church does not feel a need to defend herself from verbal assaults from others: “Paul reminded the Corinthians that his preaching was ‘not with the enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power’ (1 Corinthians 2:4). Because that power resides in the Spirit of the Lord, we must never become contentious when we are discussing our faith. As almost every missionary learns, Bible bashing always drives the Spirit away. The Savior has said, ‘He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me.’ More regrettable than the Church being accused of not being Christian is when Church members react to such accusations in an un-Christlike way! May our conversations with others always be marked by the fruits of the Spirit—‘love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, [and] temperance.’ To be meek, as defined in Webster’s dictionary, is ‘manifesting patience and longsuffering: enduring injury without resentment.’ Meekness is not weakness. It is a badge of Christian courage. This is especially important in our interactions with members of other Christian denominations. Surely our Heavenly Father is saddened—and the devil laughs—when we contentiously debate doctrinal differences with our Christian neighbors. This is not to suggest that we

compromise our principles or dilute our beliefs. We cannot change the doctrines of the restored gospel, even if teaching and obeying them makes us unpopular in the eyes of the world. Yet even as we feel to speak the word of God with boldness, we must pray to be filled with the Holy Ghost (see Acts 4:29, 31). We should never confuse boldness with Satan’s counterfeit: overbearance (see Alma 38:12). True disciples speak with quiet confidence, not boastful pride.”¹⁶ ¶ *This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “There is an inheritance for them who serve the Lord.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has *inheritance* instead of *heritage*. Nägelsbach writes: “*This* (זאת) refers back to the rich promise of blessing of the chapter. This is given to the *servants of Jehovah* [עֲבָדֵי יְהוָה]. Isaiah intentionally speaks here for the first and only time of servants of Jehovah. Manifestly there is intended an antithesis to the Servant of Jehovah that plays so prominent a part in ISAIAH 53. After that chapter the Prophet has nothing more to say concerning the Servant of Jehovah. But he has still to indicate how the salvation from the Saviour will be conveyed to those that need and are worthy of salvation.” And what is this heritage that the Prophet speaks about here? Exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom of God. ¶ *And their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Therefore you are to be just for me, saith the Lord.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And their justice with me, saith the Lord.” It is clear to me that the Lord lends us His righteousness and helps us to improve and become better persons little by little as we progress through life. It is indeed a job for a lifetime and “it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil,” that this effort will continue, as taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith.¹⁷ ¶ *Saith the Lord.* Several translators used the expression *declares the LORD*. Young points out that the final *saith the LORD*, or oracle of the LORD, אָמֵן יְהוָה, stands as a “strong affirmation, an Amen, to the truth of this assertion.”

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¹⁴ Avant, Gerry. President Benson Eulogized. *Church News*, 11 June 1994.

¹⁵ Smith, Prophet Joseph. *History of the Church*, 4:540.

¹⁶ Hales, Elder Robert D. “Christian Courage: The Price of Discipleship,” October 2008 *General Conference*.

¹⁷ Smith, Joseph & Roberts, B.H. *History of the Church*, Volume 6.

