

---

## Isaiah 57

The Lord makes a contrast between the righteous and the wicked. While the righteous shall enter into peace, there is no rest for the wicked.

---

vv. 1-2. These verses seem to address both the martyrs as well as others who are righteous yet die young.

1 ¶ THE righteous perisheth, and no man layeth [it] to heart: and merciful men<sup>✓</sup> [are] taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil [to come].<sup>✓ ✓</sup>

✓ men of kindness, or, godliness

✓ ✓ or, that which is evil

---

*THE righteous perisheth, and no man layeth [it] to heart:* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “The righteous die, and no man layeth my fear to heart.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “You see how a righteous one was destroyed, and no one layeth it to heart.” The BPE (Ⓢ) has, “The righteous perishes and none will give it importance.” Tertullian and Cyprian, in Alexander, suggest that *the righteous* refers to Christ; *men of mercy*, His apostles. Certainly this is so, but we will look at a number of additional applications. ¶ The word *perish*, אָבַד, was at times used of herd animals who wandered off or strayed and were left exposed to the elements or to predators. The term was also used of people who perished (Gesenius, DCH, TDOT). Some exegetes have suggested that the word implies a violent death. While the death *may* be violent—such as in the case of the martyrs—this should not be assumed in every case. So also Rawlinson who has: “*The righteous perisheth*] The word translated ‘perished’ does not imply any violence; but the context implies a premature death. The righteous disappear — are taken from the earth before their natural time.” ¶ Cheyne says, “*The righteous perish*] A concise and vigorous expression, fitted to stimulate thought. That the bad pastors [see ISAIAH 56] should live long and see good days, while the righteous (especially among the pastors or prophets) are prematurely cut off, is a contradiction peculiarly great<sup>1</sup> from the Old Testament point of view (comp. Ecclesiastes 7:15).” Nägelsbach

---

<sup>1</sup> Cheyne is alluding to the fifth commandment, “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.” (Exodus 20:12).

notes, “The context seems to me to demand that the mournful fate of the true and righteous servants of Jehovah be contrasted with the lazy, jovial doings of the dumb dogs.” ¶ King Josiah of Judah has been considered one of the great and pious ones. When he was a young man, Hilkiah the High Priest found the *Book of the Law* (i.e., the Torah, Pentateuch or five books of Moses) in the Temple. After the book was read to Josiah, it had such a forceful positive effect on his heart, that *he rent his clothes* (i.e., he tore them) in sign of mourning. Josiah instituted massive religious reforms in Judah in order to better conform with the law of God (see 2Kings 22-23; 2Chronicles 34-35). The book of 2Chronicles speaks about his death in less flattering words (2Chronicles 35:20 ff.) wherein Josiah involved himself in a war that did not directly seem to pertain to Israel. I generally tend to defend the pious when others speak of their apparent weaknesses. But in this case I had my doubt for years. Then I read Rawlinson’s comments about 2Kings 22:20, wherein: “Josiah is promised that he shall be gathered to his fathers (prematurely), in order that he may escape the sight of the evil that was coming on Jerusalem soon after his decease.” Indeed, the Scriptures say: “Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place” (2Kings 22:19-20a). When the Lord says Josiah would be *gathered in peace*, He is speaking of that eternal peace that comes to the righteous—rather than the violent way in which Josiah would die—of which we will say more below.<sup>2</sup> ¶ Whitehouse explains: “The ‘righteous’ here corresponds to the ‘men of devoted piety’ in the following parallel clause, who in the later days of the Maccabees (168 B.C. and after) meet us under the name

---

<sup>2</sup> I had also been guilty of misjudging Captain Moroni for the letter he wrote Pahoran (Alma 60), until I read Sister OraLyn Moran’s thoughtful article several months ago, “Moroni and Pahoran” at <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/re-15-no-3-2014/moroni-and-pahoran-0>. URL accessed 20August 2016.

of the *Hasidim* [חסידים], the forerunners of the Pharisees. The rendering ‘merciful’ is misleading, and the alteration supplied in R.V. margin || ‘godly’ is certainly an improvement. The original properly means ‘men of piety’ (*hesed*). *Hesed* [חסד] is frequently used in the O. T. in the sense of *loving-kindness*. When used in reference to God it expresses somewhat the same thing as the Latin *pietas*, viz. man’s attitude of loving devotion to his God.” So also Wade: “The HEB. word is the original of the term *Hasideans* in 1Maccabees 2:421.” Although the term *Hasidic* can apply to a number of Jewish sects in history, one branch of Ultra-Orthodox Jews also derives their name from חסידים, the *merciful*, *pious*, or *Godly*. This movement is called *Hasidic* Judaism. In contrast, the *Sadducees* derive their name from the word *righteous*, *tzaddek*, צַדִּיק. The first word of this verse begins with the word *Ha-tzedek*, the *righteous*. One of my favorite explanations comes from a Kay, a man I have come to love through my studies: “*merciful men*] Or, *gracious men*: who having felt the lovingkindness of God, deal kindly with their fellow-men (cp. Micah 7:2, where ‘good,’ or, ‘godly’ man is substantially the same term).” ¶ There seem to be two categories of individuals spoken of in this verse. The first are those who die and comparatively few seem to care or take it to heart. Certainly our Savior could be included, as well as the *martyrs* such as Abel, Zechariah the son of Jehoiada,<sup>3</sup> John the Baptist, Stephen, Abinadi, Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith and many others who lived for Christ and died for Christ. ¶ *And merciful men [are] taken away*. The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “And the men who shew (literally, ‘recompense’) mercy are taken away.” The LXX (Ⓢ) reads, “And righteous men are taken away.” Instead of *merciful*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *pious* (Lamsa, for BPE, see next clause). ¶ The second category includes the righteous in general, especially those who die at a young or tender age. We all know some of these individuals who simply seem too good to be among the living. Those of us who are left behind, however, suffer because we miss the departed loved ones. Those who move on among the righteous have accomplished what they had to do in this life. They have obtained their tabernacle and have faithfully kept their second estate. The faith of those who are left behind is sometimes tested. Yet the Lord tenderly tells us to trust in Him: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (ISAIAH 55:8-9). Next, we see yet another reason to consider God’s mercy. ¶ The Prophet Joseph Smith’s death is one that can fit well in both

descriptions given: “Knowing his mortal ministry would soon come to a close, the Prophet met frequently with members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to instruct them and to give them the priesthood keys necessary to govern the Church. These preparations culminated in a meeting with the Apostles and a few other close associates in March 1844. In this extraordinary council, the Prophet charged the Twelve to govern the Church after his death, explaining that he had conferred upon them all the ordinances, authority, and keys necessary to do so. ‘I roll the burden and responsibility of leading this church off from my shoulders on to yours,’ he declared. ‘Now, round up your shoulders and stand under it like men; for the Lord is going to let me rest awhile.’”<sup>4</sup> This *rest*, of course, has to do with a rest from earthly afflictions and persecutions. When the righteous cross the veil they are extremely busy: “Wilford Woodruff . . . told of a vision he received in which he spoke with Joseph Smith [after his death]: ‘I saw him at the door of the temple in heaven. He came to me and spoke to me. He said he could not stop to talk with me because he was in a hurry. The next man I met was Father Smith [Joseph Smith Sr.]; he could not talk with me because he was in a hurry. I met half a dozen brethren who had held high positions on earth, and none of them could stop to talk with me because they were in a hurry. I was much astonished. By and by I saw the Prophet again and I got the privilege of asking him a question. “‘Now,’ said I, ‘I want to know why you are in a hurry. I have been in a hurry all my life; but I expected my hurry would be over when I got into the kingdom of heaven, if I ever did.’ Joseph said: ‘I will tell you, Brother Woodruff. Every dispensation that has had the priesthood on the earth and has gone into the celestial kingdom has had a certain amount of work to do to prepare to go to the earth with the Savior when he goes to reign on the earth. Each dispensation has had ample time to do this work. We have not. We are the last dispensation, and so much work has to be done, and we need to be in a hurry in order to accomplish it.’”<sup>5</sup> ¶ *None considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil [to come]*. The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “And they consider not that the righteous are taken away on account of the evil which shall come.” The BPE (Ⓢ) has, “The righteous men are piled together without consideration, because the just lay before the evil.” The LXX (Ⓢ) reads, “And no one observeth, that on account of iniquity the righteous one

<sup>3</sup> Son or descendant of, possibly the grandson.

<sup>4</sup> *Teachings: Joseph Smith*. Chapter 46: The Martyrdom: The Prophet Seals His Testimony with His Blood. Also see the declaration of the Twelve Apostles (undated draft), reporting Mar. 1844 meeting; in Brigham Young, Office Files 1832–78, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>5</sup> *Teachings: Wilford Woodruff*. Chapter 3: The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. Also see *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham (1946), 288–89.

was taken away.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “For the just man is taken away from before the face of evil.”

נֶאֱסַף with the root אָסַף, is here translated as *taken away*. YLT, LITV, LEB, ERV and RV1865 *recogidos* [gathered in Spanish], use the word *gathered*, or *withdrawn* in the case of Rotherham. The idea is that they are *gathered* back into the presence of God.

Gesenius explains: “נֶאֱסַף (Numbers 20:26), ‘to be gathered to one’s people, to one’s father;’ used of entering into Hades, where the Hebrews regarded their ancestors as being *gathered* together.” That is, *gathered* together into *Paradise* in the *Spirit World*. So also,

נֶאֱסַף is used of those who *die* (Gesenius). ¶ Birks has: “From the evil to come] Before the face of the evil [מִפְּנֵי הָרָעָה], that is, before its arrival, and that he may be spared its actual endurance.” An example of this is given by Rabbi David Kimhi, in Rosenberg, who cites 2Kings 22:20a (but see 2Kings 22:15-20), the words of Huldah the prophetess [חִלְדָּה הַנְּבִיאָה] regarding King Josiah: “Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place.”

---

2 He shall enter<sup>✓</sup> into peace: they shall rest in their beds, [each one] walking [in] his uprightness.<sup>✓ ✓</sup>

✓ or, go in

✓ ✓ or, before him

---

*He shall enter into peace*: The Targum (T) has, “They shall enter into peace.” The LXX (G) reads, “His sepulture shall be in peace.” The Lamsa Peshitta (S) has, “And when peace comes.” The BPE (S) has, “But peace will come.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Let peace come.” Birks has: “. . . the righteous shall enter into peace, and his soul be kept safe in the hand of the Lord; and merciful men shall rest peacefully in the Paradise of the departed, awaiting a joyful resurrection. The last clause [i.e., the one which follow below—GB] is a weighty caution, restricting this blessed promise to the upright alone.” As LDS we like the employment of the word *Paradise*, used by Birks (see note 57:2a, TG *Paradise*, in the LDS edition). Lowth suggests, “*He shall go in peace* || ] יבוא שלום: the expression is elliptical, such as the Prophet frequently uses. The same sense is expressed at large and in full terms, Genesis 15:15. ואתה תבוא אל אבותיך בשלום, “And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace.” ¶ *They shall rest in their beds, [each one] walking [in] his uprightness*. The Targum (T) has, “They shall rest in the place of their beds, those that do His law.” The LXX (G) reads, “He

is taken from among you.” The Lamsa Peshitta (S) has, “They shall relax, and make progress.” The BPE (S) has, “They shall rest on their beds and continue forward.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Let him rest in his bed that hath walked in his uprightness.” The bodies of the righteous rest in their graves while their spirits go forth into Paradise in the Spirit world. There they await a glorious resurrection. Cowles well says: “The passage shows conclusively that the prophets of Isaiah’s age knew of an afterlife of blessedness for the righteous, but for the righteous only. It is marvelous that the Bible critic should dare to deny their possession of this knowledge.” Also, in Jenour we read: “Vitranga understands this to refer to the rest of the souls of the righteous in the place of departed spirits, until the resurrection.” We know the spirits of the departed righteous do rest from the sorrows of this world even though they are actively engaged in the Spirit World. They are partakers of true Peace. Jenour also notes: “Those who walk aright, or in the way of rectitude, are they who live according to the revealed will of God, and keep the path he has pointed out.” ¶ Barnes has: “The word נָכַח means *straight, right*, and is used of one who walks straight forward. It here means an upright man, who is often represented as walking in a straight path in opposition to [those] who are represented as walking in crooked ways.” Henderson says of the righteous: “Theirs was a straight forward, undeviating course.” We read of the Prophet Joseph Smith: “‘Sometimes,’ says Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, ‘we come to Christ too obliquely.’ As a boy, Joseph learned to take no indirect paths. He went straight to God for answers to his burning questions. The Book of Mormon taught him, ‘Behold, the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him, and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name’ (2 Nephi 9:41). Joseph followed an undeviating course and led the Saints—those who would follow—along that course.”<sup>6</sup>

---

vv. 3-12. Apostasy and idolatry is compared to spiritual adultery. “Now the address changes,” says Jennings, “from the persecuted to the persecutors.”

---

3 ¶ But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore.

---

<sup>6</sup> England, Breck, “An Undeviating Course: The Leadership Focus of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.” *BYU Religious Studies Center*. URL accessed 21 August 2016: <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/joseph-and-hyrum-leading-one/undeviating-course-leadership-focus-joseph-and-hyrum-smith>.

*But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “But ye, come nigh hither, O people of a generation whose works are evil, whose plant *was* of a holy plant.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “But as for you, draw near hither, ye lawless sons!” Instead of *sorceress*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *afflicted one* (Lamsa) / *humiliated one* (BPE). ¶ Cowles explains: “The Hebrew reads literally; ‘And *you*—draw ye near hither; the word ‘you’ being made emphatic.” The *you* is plural, thus we have, **but ye, אַתֶּם**. The Targum (Ⓣ) also makes the same idea emphatic with its **אַתֶּן**. Leeser translates it: “**But ye** draw near hither, sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the harlot.” Birks notes: “The pronoun here is emphatic. It marks a strong contrast between the righteous and merciful who have been taken from the evil, and the corrupt and sensual survivors who have to fear the stroke of coming judgment.” Whitehouse explains: “Magic went hand in hand with idolatrous ritual, and, since these practices of magic and necromancy were largely carried on by women (Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. ‘Magic,’ p. 208, left-hand column *ad fin*), the devotees of magical or, more properly, soothsaying practice are called in accordance with Semitic idiom **sons of the sorceress** [בְּנֵי עֲנָנָה]” The word **עֲנָנָה** is feminine. Rashi (in Rosenberg) is probably correct in saying that **בְּנֵי עֲנָנָה** means that *they were sorcerers*, not just the children of sorcerers. Fausset says, “No insult is greater to an Oriental than any slur cast on his *mother*.” ¶ Keith points out: “The nation is charged first with sorcery, what is otherwise described as seeking unto them that have familiar spirits, a custom universal among eastern nations, which was often practiced by [the people of Israel], and which formed a crime as inexcusable as it was heinous . . . for it was the substitution of false prophets for the one Prophet—of the enchantments of wretched men for the oracles of the living God,—a sin of parallel magnitude with that of substituting idols for the one King.” ¶ *The seed of the adulterer and the whore.* Targum (Ⓣ) has, “But they *are* adulterers, and fornicators.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “Ye seed of adulterers and of fornication!” Ibn Ezra suggests: “**זרע מנאף**, *The seed of the adulterer*, that is, of the adulterous father. **ותזנה** *And the whore*, the adulterous mother.” Once again, Rashi points (in Rosenberg) that *the seed* [זרע] is simply an expression, and that the people themselves are guilty of adultery and whoredom. The Savior in the New Testament uses a similar type of expression: “And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your *sons* cast them out?” (emphasis added, Luke 11:19a). Birks points out the apostasy, “The sorceress, the mystic Jezebel, is the company of the

idolaters, the apostate church or synagogue. Her children are the corrupt and sensual among the people of God’s covenant, whether of the Old or New Testament. They are called ‘an evil and adulterous generation.’” Birks feels it particularly applies to apostate Christianity. McFadyen has: “The verse simply means that the people themselves were adulterous, i.e. unfaithful to Jehovah and devoted to other gods, apostate and idolatrous, *sorcery* being one of the consequences or aspects of this apostasy (cf. ISAIAH 2:6). In the Old Testament idolatry is frequently described, as here, in terms of adultery.” There also seems to be a correlation between spiritual adultery and a physical one, especially of those who *ask for a sign*. Brother Joseph wrote: “When I was preaching in Philadelphia, a Quaker called out for a sign. I told him to be still. After the sermon, he again asked for a sign. I told the congregation the man was an adulterer; that a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and that the Lord had said to me in a revelation, that any man who wanted a sign was an adulterous person. ‘It is true,’ cried one, ‘for I caught him in the very act,’ which the man afterwards confessed, when he was baptized.”<sup>7</sup>

**4 Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, [and] draw out the tongue? [are] ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood,**

*Against whom do ye sport yourselves?* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Of whom do ye make your sport? The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “In what have you indulged yourselves?” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Upon whom have you jested?” ¶ Skinner explains that *sport yourselves* [תִּתְעַנְנֶנּוּ] root **עֲנָנָה** means “Lit. ‘**take your delight**’ (ISAIAH 55:2; 58:14; 66:11; Psalm 37:4, 11, etc.); only here used of malevolent **satisfaction**.” ¶ Birks says, regarding ISAIAH 57:4-5, “Two sins are here described, contempt for the true servants of God, and zeal for idolatrous rites in groves and valleys, and especially for Moloch worship.” The first of these sins is described in ISAIAH 57:4; the second in ISAIAH 57:5. When two of the righteous martyrs in Jerusalem are removed in the last days, there will be a general mocking and rejoicing on the part of the wicked. We read that this will take place after their death: “And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth” (Revelation 11:10). Such

<sup>7</sup> Smith, Joseph & Roberts, B.H. *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Volume 5.

rejoicing also took place after the martyrdom of the prophet Joseph Smith, and while our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was on the cross (Matthew 27:42, Mark 15:29-30). ¶ *Against whom make ye a wide mouth* [פִּתְחֵיכוֹן פִּתָּה], [and] draw out the tongue? The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And before whom do ye open your mouth? do ye continue speaking (literally, ‘multiply to speak’) great things?” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “And at whom have you opened your mouth, and at whom lolled your tongue?” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Upon whom have you opened your mouth wide, and put out your tongue?” ¶ *Draw out the tongue.* Today we would say, stick out the tongue. Kimhi, in Rabbis Slotki/Rosenberg, says: “Scornful facial contortions.” Barnes has: “Contempt was sometimes shown also by protruding the lips (Psalm 22:7), ‘they shoot out the lip.’”<sup>8</sup> ¶ There are those who mock the Church thinking they do God a favor, and misjudging the truth. Each one of us has to be careful how we judge others. Today I heard this wonderful quote from Rabbi Menachem Mendel about not judging. When one of his students found fault with another, Rabbi Mendel taught him that we fight that which is wrong around us: “With the same weapons we are fighting our own passions. By qualifying in sanctity [and furthermore, if we find wrong with others it is because] not everything is in order with us, too. Let us bring our thoughts, speech and deeds to a degree of holiness and then victory will come.”<sup>9</sup> The Savior teaches us that we will be judged according to how we judge others (Matthew 7:1-3). In D&C 1:10 we can understand that “. . . the Lord shall come to recompense unto every man according to his work [but also] *measure to every man according to the measure which he has measured to his fellow man*” (emphasis added). If this is the case in general, how much more true it is to those who judge with unrighteousness: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” ¶ [Are] ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Are ye not rebellious children, a lying seed?” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “Are you not children of destruction—a lawless race?” Instead of *transgression*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *iniquity*. The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Are not you wicked children, a false seed.” McFadyen points out: “The contempt with which the pious Jews and their efforts were treated by their opponents is well illustrated by Nehemiah 4:1–3.” Is it not interesting how in every age the enemies of the Church spend so much effort in trying to destroy what

<sup>8</sup> “All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him” (Psalm 22:7-8).

<sup>9</sup> Mayzlish, Saul and Charney, Leon. *Battle of the Two Talmuds: Judaism’s Struggle with Power, Glory, & Guilt*. Audible edition.

the Saints build under God’s tutelage? Fausset has: “Not merely *children of transgressors*, and a *seed of false parents*, but of *transgression* and *falsehood* itself, utterly unfaithful to God.” Gill has: “*Are ye not children of transgression*] given up to all manner of sin and wickedness; or children of the wicked one, as the Targum, either of Satan, or of the man of sin; or, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, ‘children of perdition’; of the same character, complexion, and religion, as the son of perdition is: ‘a seed of falsehood’; or a lie, given to lying; to believe a lie, and to speak lies in hypocrisy; professing a false religion; embracing false doctrines; a spurious breed, and not the sons of the true church of Christ.” Barnes well says: “*Are ye not children of transgression?*] That is, in view of the fact that you make a sport of sacred things, and deride the laws and the prophets of God.” The Savior said: “But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: *for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in*” (Matthew 23:13, emphasis added). ¶ Instead, we are invited to become the *children of Christ*. “And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters.” (Mosiah 5:7).

### 5 Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, ✓ slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?

✓ or, among the oaks

*Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Who worship idols beneath every green tree.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “Invoking idols under shady trees.” Instead of *enflaming*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *comforting*. The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Who seek your comfort in idols under every green tree.” Some refer to oak trees, others to terebinth trees or some evergreen. Cowles has: “The translation, ‘with idols,’ is not so well sustained as the English margin ¶; ‘Among the oaks.’ The Hebrew word favors the latter sense. The thought is not directly of idol worship, but of one of its adjuncts—prostitution. ‘Inflaming yourselves,’ enkindling your libidinous passions among the oaks, and indeed, under every green tree.” Barnes has: “Burning, i. e. with lust. The whole language here is derived from adulterous intercourse.” Rashi, in Slotki/Rosenberg, has “With sexual lust, referring to the immorality which was part of idolatrous rites” (cf. Hosea 4:13). Regarding unfaithfulness, Monte Nyman has: “The message was condensed by the angel who

announced the fall of Babylon; he declared that ‘all nations’ and the kings of the earth had committed fornication with Babylon (see Revelation 18:3). In other words, the nations honor the Lord with their mouths, but their hearts are far from him . . .”<sup>10</sup> Regarding temple prostitution, Parry, Parry and Peterson well say: “Israel seemed to go out of her way to offend the Lord by participating in religious practices that not only rejected him but also caused them to commit the very sins that were most abhorrent to him.”<sup>11</sup> This sexual theme is a common one in the book of Hosea, as Ephraim (*i.e.*, the northern ten tribes) had fallen into this type of perversion. See especially *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* by Hans Walter Wolff (Hermeneia, Fortress Press, 1974). ¶ *Slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Who sacrifice the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Slaying your children in the valleys among the rocks?” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) makes it clear that they are *sacrificing children*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Sacrificing children in the torrents, under the high rocks?” Cheyne also believes this should be translated as “Who slay the children under the torrent-valleys under the rents of the crags!” See also ABP, HCSB, ISV, LITV, NASB, Rotherham, TLV. For בְּנַחְלִים, in torrents, see singular נַחַל (Gesenius, DCH), which would render נַחְלִים *torrents, wadis*, etc. TDOT explains: “A נַחַל is the valley cut by a stream, often quite deep. The water, which runs down the mountains with great force during the rainy season (cf. Deuteronomy 9:21), carves a channel in the soil.” Cheyne points out that those who believe in the unity of Isaiah “have with much reason pointed out that the topographical references in this verse suggest the prophecy was written in [Israel] rather than in Babylonia. ‘I need scarcely say,’ observes Dr. Payne Smith [*Prophecy a Preparation for Christ*, p. 319], ‘that as there are no torrents, but only canals, in the flat alluvial soil of Babylonia, so there are no torrent-beds there, but that these form a common feature of the landscape in [Israel] and all mountainous countries.’” These comments from Cheyne are an allusion to the arguments made by those who believe the book of Isaiah was written by multiple authors and that these chapters were written during the Babylonian exile or at a later date. ¶ Cowles has: “Orgies of lust and of blood go together; so the next point in the outline is the murder of children, burning them to death in honor of Moloch and Saturn—a thing often done in the valley of

Hinnom and in the clefts of the rocks. The Scriptures repeatedly charge commission of this horrible crime (see Ezekiel 16:21; 23:39).” Jenour adds: “We are expressly told that Manasseh caused his children to pass through the fire to Moloch in this valley (2Chronicles 33:6).” Regarding Hinnom, Fausset explains: “Fire was put brazen statue, and the child was put in his heated arms; kettle drums (*Hebrew*, תִּנְיָה) were beaten to drown the child’s cries; whence the valley was called **Tophet**.” TDOT, based on the A. Neubauer, *La géographie du Talmud* (1868, תִּנְיָה, ‘music-grove’) also gives that explanation as one possible theory: “Ancient Jewish tradition has it that there were many drummers and musicians who drowned out the screams of the young consigned to the flames, so that the parents of these wretched children would not perceive their terror.” ISBE has: **Topheth**, תִּנְיָה, etymology uncertain; the most probable is its connection with a root meaning ‘burning – the ‘place of burning’; the King James Version, Tophet, except in 2Kings 23:10): The references are to such a place: ‘They have built the high places of **Topheth**, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire’ (Jeremiah 7:31). On account of this abomination **Topheth** and the Valley of Hinnom should be called ‘The valley of Slaughter: for they shall bury in **Topheth**, till there be no place to bury,’ the Revised Version margin || ‘because there shall be no place else’ (Jeremiah 7:32).” Rawlinson writes: “Arguments have been brought forward to prove that the child was merely passed before a fire, or between two fires, and not burnt; but the evidence to the contrary is overwhelming (see the article on ‘Moloch’ in Dr. W. Smith’s *Dictionary of the Bible*, 11: 403, 401). The rite belonged especially to the worship of Chemosh and Moloch by the Moabites and Ammonites (2 Kings 3:27; Micah 6:7), from whom it was adopted by the Israelites (2 Kings 17:7) and Jews. The sacrifice was supposed to be expiatory (Micah 6:7). In the later times of the Jewish kingdom the place of sacrifice was the valley of Hinnom, west and north of Jerusalem, which is overhung by rugged rocks.”

---

6 Among the smooth [stones] of the stream [is] thy portion; they, they [are] thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these?

---

*Among the smooth [stones] of the stream [is] thy portion; they, they [are] thy lot:* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “valley” instead of *stream*. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “This shall be thy portion—this thy lot.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has,

<sup>10</sup> Monte S. Nyman, *Great are the Words of Isaiah*.

<sup>11</sup> Donald W. Parry, Jay A. Parry, and Tina M. Peterson, *Understanding Isaiah*, pp. 499, 502.

“Your portion and your heritage is in the parts of the valleys.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “In the parts of the torrent is thy portion, this is thy lot.” Note that the word *stones* [אֲבָן] is an *elliptical* expression that does *not* appear in the text. We will later consider the possibility that the meaning has nothing to do with stones. Cheyne says: “The large smooth stones referred to above were the fetishes<sup>12</sup> of the primitive Semitic races, and anointed with oil, according to a widely-spread custom. It was such a stone which Jacob took for a pillow, and afterwards consecrated by pouring oil upon it (Genesis 28:11, 18).” By the way, while in American English we tend to think of stones as smallish and a rock as large, the word אֲבָן seems to be more flexible. For instance, the boulders that form part of the Western Wall and the associated tunnels in Jerusalem are called *stones* in the book, *The Western Wall Tunnels: Touching the Stones of our Heritage* by Dan Bahat, or לַנֶּעֱת בְּאֲבָנֵי הַמִּוֹרֶשֶׁת - מְנַהֲרוֹת הַכּוֹתֵל הַמְעֻרְבִי. Birks has: “They chose out idols from among the smooth stones of the ‘brooks,’ the wadis, or dry watercourses, where they carried on their worship.” Cowles explains: “. . . commentators differ as to the precise sense of the word rendered ‘smooth stones.’ The point has only minor importance. I concur in the sense of the English version, ‘smooth stones;’ understanding by it, however, not the worn and round pebbles found in abundance in running water, but stones polished by art or made smooth with oil. The reader will remember the account twice recorded (Genesis 28:18; 35:14) of Jacob’s setting up a stone for a pillar and pouring oil on the top of it.” And then Cowles says something that must be truly underscored about imitations of holy things: “Idolaters were wont to copy the rites and usages of God’s true worshipers, perverting them into idol worship.” It seems that this has always been the case, such as the use of horoscopes as an imitation to patriarchal blessings; babbling instead of the true speaking in tongues; and soothsaying instead of revelation from God. McFadyen points out a paronomasia: “There is a play upon the words *smooth* and *portion* [בְּתַלְקֵי נִתְּלַת תְּלַקְדָּי] which it is impossible to reproduce in English . . . but it is by no means certain that stones are meant at all; the allusion may be to smooth, *i.e.* flattering, deceptive, gods of the valley. Whatever they were, it was *they* (very emphatic) that were the people’s lot and portion, whereas *Jehovah* should have been their portion (Psalm 16:5)<sup>13</sup>.” The

<sup>12</sup> Fetishes: “an object (as a small stone carving of an animal) believed to have magical power to protect or aid its owner *broadly*: a material object regarded with superstitious or extravagant trust or reverence” Webster’s 11<sup>th</sup> Edition.

<sup>13</sup> Rawlinson also mentions Psalm 119:57, in the same connection.

repetition of the word *they* [הֵם הֵם] is of special force. Especially when the word *I* is repeated, an elliptical *even* is added in some translations. I suspect the same might be found here, “*they, even they.*” I found support for this point from the BBE and MKJV. Personally, I find it more striking the way it is in Hebrew, without the addition of the implied *even*. ¶ In 1913 the First Presidency, Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund and Charles W. Penrose warned: “From the days of Hiram Page . . . at different periods there have been manifestations from delusive spirits to members of the Church. Sometimes these have come to men and women who because of transgression become easy prey to the Arch-Deceiver. At other times people who pride themselves on their strict observance of the rules and ordinances and ceremonies of the Church are led astray by false spirits, who exercise an influence so imitative of that which proceeds from a Divine source that even these persons, who think they are ‘the very elect,’ find it difficult to discern the essential difference. Satan himself has transformed himself to be apparently ‘an angel of light.’ When visions, dreams, tongues, prophecy, impressions or any extraordinary gift or inspiration, convey something out of harmony with the accepted revelations of the Church or contrary to the decisions of its constituted authorities, Latter-day Saints may know that it is not of God . . . [As] directions for the guidance of the Church will come, by revelation, through the head. All faithful members are entitled to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for themselves, their families, and for those over whom they are appointed and ordained to preside. But anything at discord with that which comes from God through the head of the Church is not to be received as authoritative or reliable. In secular as well as spiritual affairs, Saints may receive Divine guidance and revelation affecting themselves, but this does not convey authority to direct others . . . Be not led by any spirit or influence that . . . leads away from the direct revelations of God for the government of the Church. The Holy Ghost does not contradict its own revealings. Truth is always harmonious with itself.”<sup>14</sup> ¶ *Even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering.* The Targum (T) has, “Yea, there they shall be thy lot, even to them thou hast poured out drink-offerings.” The LXX (G) reads, “As thou hast poured out libations to them and to them offered up sacrifices.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “And thou hast poured out libations to them, thou hast offered sacrifice.” Wade explains: “*drink offering*” The materials might be oil (Genesis 35:14, Micah 6:7), blood (Psalm 16:4), or wine (Bel and the Dragon, v. 3).” Whitehouse suggests “Here the *drink-offering* of

<sup>14</sup> Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose, “A Warning Voice,” *Improvement Era*, September 1913, pp. 1148–49.

which the deity was supposed to partake consisted of the blood of the slaughtered victim.” That is, of the children mentioned in ISAIAH 57:5b. Barnes explains, regarding the so-called ‘meat offerings’: “The מִנְחָה was in fact an offering of meal, fine flour, &c., mingled with oil (Leviticus 14:10; Numbers 7:13), and was distinguished expressly from the bloody sacrifice. The word ‘meal-offering’ would much more appropriately express the sense of the original than ‘meat-offering.’” *Merriam-Webster* (11<sup>th</sup> edition) explains of its former use of the word *meat*: “FOOD especially: solid food as distinguished from drink.” ¶ *Should I receive comfort* [מִנְחָה] *in these?* The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “Thou hast offered sacrifices; ah! on account of these things my Word shall retribute.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “Shall I not for these things be incensed?” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, “Shall I not be angry at these things?” This is similar to what we find in ISAIAH 1:11-16. Wade is probably correct in suggesting: “That the worship here described was not undiluted idolatry, but rather a syncretistic religion, in which the worship of idols was combined with that of the Lord (cf. 2 Kings 17:24–41, Ezra 4:2).” The Vulgate (Ⓓ), says Barnes, has a clear rendering of what is meant, “On account of these things shall I not be enraged?” Birks has: “The last clause is an indignant irony. Could they hope that the anger of God for their social iniquities would be appeased by these idol offerings, which only doubled and heightened their sin?” Cowles explains: “The Lord says, Shall I *comfort* myself in these things? Or shall I not rather ‘*ease* myself’ by inflicting fearful vengeance on such idolaters? The word used admits this twofold sense, and was probably chosen purposely to convey it. Precisely the same expression occurs (ISAIAH 1:24), ‘Aha, I will *ease* [מִנְחָה] me of mine adversaries,’ etc.” Jenour notes: “So in Jeremiah 5:9, ‘Shall I not visit for these things? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?’”

---

### 7 Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.

*Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed:* The Targum (Ⓒ) has, for the second half, “hast thou set the place of the house of thy dwelling.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “On a high and lofty mountain thou hast made thy bed.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has *laid* instead of *set*. Many of the wicked practices are aberrations of true principles, as we said earlier. Throughout history, mountains often were used for holy worship when Temples were not available. But that has been completely corrupted. Birks explains: “Mountain-tops and high-places were the favourite scenes of Jewish

idolatry.” Whitehouse has: “Here of course the reference is either to the idolatrous or to the syncretic worship on the mountains, regarded by this writer, as by Hosea, in the light of unfaithfulness to Yahweh, or harlotry. In accordance with this conception we may interpret the ‘bed’ in the first long line of this verse.” Barnes says the idea of the *lofty and high mountain* is that all this was done so that: “It was public and shameless.” Note the contrast made by Kay: “Instead of trusting in ‘the High and Lofty One’ (ISAIAH 57:15), who condescended to sanctify and guard lowly Zion, Judah has placed her hopes on that mighty empire, which towered so high above the kingdoms of the earth.” ¶ *Even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.* The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “Even thither didst thou go up to sacrifice sacrifice.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “And caused thy sacrifice to ascend thither.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, “And hast gone up thither to offer victims.” These words seem to introduce the idea of what more fully appears in ISAIAH 57:9, of their necromantic efforts. Else it just means that *rather* than worshipping in the Temple that was nearby, they were going far, even to the high places, to worship no-gods. In either case, people were very *diligent* in doing that which was wrong in the sight of the Lord.

---

### 8 Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered [thyself to another] than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee [a covenant] with them; thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest [it].

- ✓ or, hewed it for thyself larger than theirs
- ✓ ✓ or, thou providedst room

*Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance:* The Targum (Ⓒ) ends with, “remembrance of thy idols.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “And behind the posts of thy doors thou hast set up thy memorial.” Instead of *set up*, the Peshitta (Ⓔ) has *inscribed*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, “And behind the door, and behind the post thou best set up thy remembrance.” One gets the sense that these words refer to the high places or vain places of idol worship. Cowles has: “The whole nation being in the marriage covenant with God, idolatry was precisely spiritual adultery—playing the harlot as to God, their Maker and their Husband. Hence the phrases, ‘Set up thy bed;’ ‘discovered’ [exposed] ‘thyself to another than me;’ ‘enlarged thy bed,’ to admit troops of other lovers (idols), in fragrant violation of their covenant with God.” Lowth suggests: “*Behind the door, and the door-posts, hast thou set thy memorial*] That is, the image of

their tutelary gods, or something dedicated to them; in direct opposition to the law of God, which commanded them to write upon the doorposts of their house, and upon their gables, the words of God's law; Deuteronomy 6:9; 11:20.<sup>15</sup> If they chose for them such a situation as more private, it was in defiance of a particular curse denounced in the law against the man who should make a graven or a molten image, and put it in a secret place; Deuteronomy 27:15." From numerous comments on the subject by the exegetes regarding the words of the Law, if they had given these words a secondary importance in where they had placed them (Cheyne, as "a sign of contempt"), or if they had joined to them idols, or if they had altogether replaced the words of the Law with the household idols—each of these shows the accompanying apostasy. Keith has: "The expression 'behind the doors,' appears to refer to the heathen practice of having household gods in addition to those of the public temples." Alexander has: "Gesenius and Maurer explain זְבָרוֹן as meaning *memory*, by which the former understands posthumous fame or notoriety, the latter something cherished or remembered with affection, meaning here the idol as a beloved object. The same sense is obtained in another way by those who make the word mean a *memorial*, or that which brings to mind an absent object." ¶ *For thou hast discovered [thyself to another] than me.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, "Thou hast been like a woman who is beloved by her husband, but goeth astray after strangers." The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, "Didst thou think, that, if thou departedst from me, thou shouldst have something more?" The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, "For thou hast discovered thyself near me, and hast received an adulterer." The allusion, then, is to an adulterous woman in her infidelity. Religiously speaking, Israel had prostituted herself by abandoning her first love, the Lord. As we have mentioned, this is a topic of repeated emphasis in Isaiah, Hosea, Jeremiah (e.g., 3:8) and Ezekiel (e.g., 23:4, as the two sisters, *Aholah*, אֲהוֹלָה, representing Israel; *Aholibah*, אֲהוֹלֵיבָה, Judah).<sup>16</sup> ¶ *And art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee [a covenant] with them.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, "Thou hast enlarged thy bed: thou hast made a covenant with some of them." The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, "Thou hast

<sup>15</sup> Cheyne explains that it is the *Shema* which was written, as "the formula 'Jehovah is our God, Jehovah is one,'" or in the KJV, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deuteronomy 6:4) In Hebrew, שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד. See also the prayer in the Jewish *mezuzah*, מְזוּזָה, which is placed in the entrance of Jewish homes (e.g., see in Wikipedia). Also see Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Old Testament*, p.16, 415, "... the practice of placing words of the Scriptures in certain places is implied in Deuteronomy 6:9 and 11:20. See also ISAIAH 57:8."

<sup>16</sup> See also ISBE.

loved them who lay with thee and multiplied thy fornication with them." The BPE (Ⓢ) has, "For before me thou undressed;<sup>17</sup> went up and enlarged your bed." The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, "Thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made a covenant with them." To enlarge the bed is an allusion to adultery, the inviting others to the bed who were not the husband. Delitzsch suggests: "After the church of Jehovah had turned away from its God to the world and its pleasures, it took more and more delight in the pleasures afforded it by idolatry, and indulged its tastes to the full." Birks has: "Besides public, shameless idolatry in high-places and on mountains, there was private idol-worship in their houses. Where God had commanded His words to be written for a memorial, they set up the memorial of their own shame. Their zeal in false worship was like the course of an adulteress, who not only prepares her bed for lovers who visit her, but solicits their presence, exacts their visits as a favour, and looks out for occasions to multiply her hateful sin." ¶ *Thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest [it].* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, "Thou lovedst the place, the place of their beds, the place thou hast chosen." The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, "And hast done it with many who are far from thee." The Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, "You have loved their bed where you saw their nakedness" (see also the BPE translation). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, "Thou hast loved their bed with open hand." The original Hebrew here is *hand*, יָד, which Whitehouse (and some others, including LHI—*nakedness* and *genitals* are used by numerous translators) leaning on Döderlein, suggest is here euphemistic, fitting the image of the adulteress. Horsley suggests: "[Israel is] taxed in this and the preceding verse with the double crime of resorting to places of idolatrous worship, and of receiving idols, or the implements of idol worship, into the precincts of God's own temple. This double impiety is represented as the lewdness of an adulterous woman, who, not content to run after her paramours, brings them home, and admits them to her own bed at the very times that she is lying at her husband's side." Cowles suggests: "In the last clause, the English margin || gives the probable sense of the original; 'Thou providest room, i.e., for those who were implicated in thine adulteries.' —In the first clause of ISAIAH 57:8 'thy remembrance' means, *thy memorial*; things that well represent thy spirit and keep in remembrance thy deeds; probably the insignia of idol worship; perhaps household gods. In every corner of thy house are seen the witnesses of thy shameless idolatry."

<sup>17</sup> The Lamsa and BPE translations give very different meanings to the term nakedness, with Lamsa attaching it to the end of the next clause, and BPE to this clause.

9 And thou wentest to<sup>v</sup> the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase [thyself even] unto hell.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>v</sup> or, thou respectedst

*And thou wentest to the king with ointment.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “When thou didst keep (literally, ‘when thou didst the law for thyself’) the law, thou didst prosper in the kingdom.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And hast sent ambassadors beyond thy borders.” The BPE (Ⓢ) has, “And made yourself beautiful for the kings with ointment.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And thou hast adorned thyself for the king with ointment.” Birks has: “But the resort to heathen alliances is so constantly joined with idolatry in other places, and its growth under Manasseh answers so plainly to the warning to Hezekiah (ISAIAH 39), as to establish this for the true meaning. The worship of idols, and slavish adulation of heathen despots, were two kindred forms of the same evil.” Wade opines: “The general context, the mention of ointment and perfumes, and the allusion to hell (Sheol) make it probable that the passage refers not to political embassies (as in Hosea 12:1) but to religious pilgrimages for the purpose of consulting or propitiating the deity of some foreign shrine (cf. 2 Kings 8:8, Ezekiel 23:16, 40).” Barnes has: “Jerome renders this, ‘thou hast adorned thyself with royal ointment, and hast multiplied thy painting;’ and evidently understands it as a continuance of the sentiment in the previous verses as referring to the kind of decoration which harlots used.” Cowles suggests: “Some apply this language to idol worship, taking the word rendered ‘king’ [מֶלֶךְ] to mean **Moloch** [מֹלֶךְ], from which it differs only in its vowels. Others . . . suppose a reference to efforts to secure foreign alliances.” So ISV renders it: “You went to **Molech** with olive oil and increased your perfumes; you sent your ambassadors far away, you sent them down even to **Sheol** itself!” Isaiah may well have meant both of these possibilities. ¶ *And didst increase thy perfumes.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And when thou didst multiply for thyself good works, thy camp was enlarged.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And hast multiplied thy perfumes.” Horsley has: “The Prophet pursues the image of a loose woman, studiously preparing her person for pleasure, according to the fashions of the times, softening the skin with ointments, and bedewing herself with rich perfumes.” Young thinks: “The oil here mentioned is apparently a gift,

<sup>18</sup> שְׁאוֹל, Sheol or Hades.

although Israel may have anointed herself with the oil the better to effect her coquetry. If this be correct it would mean that Israel went dripping in oil.” ¶ *And didst send thy messengers far off.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And thou didst send thy messengers to a distant land.” This was probably done to make covenants of protection from foreign lands rather than leaning on the Lord, who is the only who can provide true peace. Birks suggests: “The figure then passes into the reality. The messengers were sent ‘even far away,’ to Nineveh or Babylon, the royal residence of the idol-king.” Barnes says: “That is, to distant nations, for the purpose of securing their alliance.” But not only to distant lands, but the idea that follows: ¶ *And didst debase [thyself even] unto hell.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And thou didst humble mighty nations unto hades.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And humbled thyself even to Hades.” The BPE (Ⓢ) has, “And did debase thyself unto Sheol.” Birks suggests: “*Even to hell*] They had submitted to the lowest degradation, as if courting eagerly their own shame. As true religion is most ennobling, so superstition and idolatry sink men below the level of the beasts of the field.” Skinner has: “*and didst debase thyself even unto hell*] Rather, and hast sent deep to **Sheol** (lit. ‘hast deepened [sc. thy sending] to **Sheol**’), i.e. they sought the favour of the deities of the underworld, by consulting their oracles etc.” So also McFadyen: “*Ambassadors* are sent to the shrines of foreign gods, and even the gods of **Sheol** (so margin ||<sup>19</sup>), the oracles of the **nether world**, are consulted. There may here be an allusion to necromantic practices.” Indeed, the Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has עֵדֶן שְׁאוֹל. AMP (Ⓜ) has: “debased yourself **even to Sheol** (Hades).” ASV has: “and didst debase thyself **even unto Sheol**.” ESV renders it: “you sent your envoys far off, and sent down **even to Sheol**.” LITV gives us: “And you sent your messengers far away, and **lowered yourself to Sheol**.” Leeser has: “and thou didst send out thy messengers **even into the far-off distance**, and didst debase thyself **even down to the nether world**.”

According to the ISBE,<sup>20</sup> שְׁאוֹל “means really the

<sup>19</sup> McFadyen means the margin || of the Revised Version.

<sup>20</sup> The ISBE has: “This word [שְׁאוֹל] is often translated in the King James Version ‘grave’ (e.g. Genesis 37:35; 1 Samuel 2:6; Job 7:9; 14:13; Psalm 6:5; 49:14; Isaiah 14:11, etc.) or ‘hell’ (e.g. Deuteronomy 32:22; Psalm 9:17; 18:5; Isaiah 14:9; Amos 9:2, etc.); in 3 places by ‘pit’ (Numbers 16:30, 33; Job 17:16). It means really the unseen world, the state or abode of the dead, and is the equivalent of the Greek *Hades*, by which word it is translated in Septuagint. The English Revisers [*i.e.*, Revised Version, RV] have acted somewhat inconsistently in leaving ‘grave’ or ‘pit’ in the historical books and putting ‘Sheol’ in the margin, while substituting ‘Sheol’ in the poetical writings, and putting ‘grave’ in the margin (‘hell’ is retained in Isaiah 14). Compare their ‘Preface.’ The American Revisers [*i.e.*, American Standard Version, ASV] more properly use ‘Sheol’ throughout. Into Sheol, when life is ended, the dead are gathered in



*And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid [it] to thy heart?* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, beginning with the second clause, “And on account of whom hast thou feared? Thou hast surely multiplied speaking lies, and thou hast not remembered my service, and hast not had (literally, ‘put’) my fear in thine heart.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Of whom hast thou been so anxiously afraid that thou hast dealt falsely with me, and has not remembered nor taken me into thy thoughts, nor into thy heart?” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “For whom hast thou been solicitous and afraid, that thou hast lied, and hast not been mindful of me, nor thought on me in thy heart?” Stier, quoted by Birks, restates it, “Before whom art thou afraid and terrified, that thou so liest? Before me? No! for thou thinkest not of me, nor layest it to heart, go then entirely away from me. My long-suffering has occasioned thy ungodliness. Am not I he that keep silence, and that for long time, and thou fearest me not?” Of ISAIAH 57:11-12, Keith has: “These verses describe the futility of every refuge which is apart from God.” Kay has: “The root of their apostasy was their forgetting God and fearing man.” Alexander suggests that this: “. . . may be applied to all hypocritical professors of the truth. They have no real fear of God; why then should they affect to serve him? His forbearance only served to harden and embolden them.” ¶ *Have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “I would have given you the ends of the world, if you had returned to my law; but thou hast not returned to me.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “When I saw and neglected thee thou didst not fear me.” For the first clause, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has “I am the Holy One of old” (Lamsa) / “I am holy from eternity” (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “For I am silent, and as one that seeth not, and thou hast forgotten me.” Alexander renders it: “‘Have I not long kept silence? It cannot be that you fear me.’ There is no need, therefore, of making the last clause interrogative.” Birks paraphrases: “And who, then, are these rivals, of whom thou hast been afraid, forsaking the fear of thy true King? Men that shall die, sons of men that are as grass, and idols still more worthless, wind and confusion. Through fear of these thou hast lied, and been wholly false to my covenant, hast forgotten God, and ceased to care for Him. Am I then so little to be feared? My great long-suffering, hadst thou a heart to feel, would only deepen thy reverence. But I have long held my peace, and refrained myself, and still thou fearest me not. The goodness, which should have brought thee to repentance, has been abused to embolden thee in sin.” Whitehouse has: “The questions are intended to reveal the utter worthlessness of these objects of idolatrous worship which had seduced the Israelites from allegiance to their true object of reverence, Yahweh . . .

The pathos of the passage is restored to us through the emendation suggested by the LXX (Ⓞ). While Israel pursues the utterly vain and debasing objects of her worship, Yahweh, her true Lord and Husband, remains silent and veils His eyes at her misdeeds. The spirit of the passage is that of Hosea (cf. Hosea chaps. 1-3).”

## 12 I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “I have shewn thee those good works, which would have been thy righteousness; but thou hast multiplied evil works which did not profit thee.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Now I will declare my righteousness and thine evil deeds which shall not avail thee.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “I will declare thy justice, and thy works shall not profit thee.” Birks has: “The folly of these vain and wearying superstitions should soon be exposed. ‘Thy righteousness’ is a direct contrast to ‘the righteousness of God.’” Or rather, righteousness here means **no-righteousness**, or lack of righteousness [לא צדקתך], either through irony or an elliptical expression. Cowles has: “The language seems ironical, in as much as her righteousness was only outrageous iniquity.” Rawlinson suggests: “The Syriac Version has ‘my righteousness,’ which gives a much better sense, and is adopted by Bishop Lowth, Dr. Weir, and Mr. Cheyne.” Indeed, LBP (Ⓢ) has “I will declare my righteousness, and your works shall not profit you.” We have (Ⓢ) אָנָּה אֵלֹהִים וְצִדְקָתִי, or in Bauscher (Ⓢ),<sup>23</sup> אָנָּה אֵלֹהִים וְצִדְקָתִי. Also see the LXX (Ⓞ) above. Alexander suggests: “I will declare thy righteousness, i.e. I will shew clearly whether thou art righteous, and in order to do this I must declare thy works; and if this is done, they cannot profit thee, because, instead of justifying, they will condemn thee.” Here we have the law of the harvest: “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 . . . For that which ye do send out shall return unto you again, and be restored” (Alma 41:5, 15a).

vv. 13-16. Skinner points out: “In striking contrast to the menacing tone of ISAIAH 57: 3 ff. is the impressive and elevated language in which the prophet now sets forth the gracious thoughts of Jehovah towards His erring but repentant people.” Whitehouse says: “The speaker is evidently Yahweh, as the immediately

<sup>23</sup> Bauscher, Rev. David, *The Aramaic English Interlinear Peshitta Old Testament* (The Major Prophets), 2015, p. 101.

following expression ‘my people’ clearly indicates.” Those who do wickedly will have no one to deliver them.

13 ¶ When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take [them]: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain;

*When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take [them]:*. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Proclaim aloud, whether thy deceitful works will save thee, in which thou hast been occupied from thy youth? The wind shall carry away all of them, they shall be as nothing:” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “When thou criest; let them deliver thee in thine affliction. A wind indeed shall overtake them all; and a whirlwind shall sweep them away.” Instead of *thy companies*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *those who gather around you* (Lamsa) / *gather with thee* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has *all off* rather than *all away*. A breeze shall take them away. Instead of *vanity*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *whirlwind*; and furthermore, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *inherit* for *possess* and vice versa. The word *vanity* [הַבְּבִלָּה] is often used of idols. Furthermore, there seems to be an elliptical expression here, “let thy companies [i.e., *of idols you have gathered around yourself*] deliver thee.” So also Leeser, who has: “When thou criest, let thy masses of idols deliver thee; but all of them will the wind carry away.” ¶ When the people find themselves in peril with none to deliver, they are sarcastically invited to call upon the arm of the flesh or upon idols and see how much deliverance these will give—since they did not call upon the Lord. Cowles explains that *thy companies* mean “things accumulated—here either idols or dependence on foreign powers, for “All will be in vain, for the wind shall bear them all away, yea a breath [vanity] shall take them. They fly like chaff before the whirlwind.” ASV renders it: “When thou criest, let them that thou hast gathered deliver thee” (emphasis added). DCH explains קְבוּצָה from קָבַץ to mean a “collection (of images), pantheon” and קָבַץ as gather. So Wade has: “*them which thou hast gathered*” The original is a noun which only occurs here, and apparently refers to the collection of various deities (Cheyne, ‘thy medley of gods’) to which devotion was paid.” ¶ *The wind*, רִיחַ. Rawlinson suggests: “*The wind*—or rather, a *breath*—shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them.” רִיחַ also means *spirit*. Gesenius, however, explains that wind could be a

correct option: “*breath of air, air in motion, i.e. breeze.*” The idea, then, is just as perfectly well understood as either *wind* or *breath*. Even so, as Alexander points out, “even a wind is not required for the purpose; a mere *breath* would be sufficient.”

¶ Shalom Paul suggests that the word we read as *vanity* [הַבְּבִלָּה] may also be translated as *vapor*. See Gesenius also, who includes “vapour, mist, darkness” as one of its acceptations. ¶ *But he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land* [יִנְחַל-אֶרֶץ], and shall inherit my holy mountain [הַר-קֹדֶשׁ]. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “But he that putteth his trust in my Word shall possess the earth, and shall inherit my holy mountain.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “But they who adhere to me shall possess the land, and inherit my holy mountain.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “But he that putteth his trust in me, shall inherit the land, and shall possess my holy mount.” In contrast to those who do wickedly, those who put their trust in the Lord shall be greatly blessed and inherit in His Holy Temple, that is, receive the blessings of exaltation and eternal increase associated with the Temple (see ISAIAH 56). Yet another contrast is that between the false *high places* and the true *house of the Lord*. Fausset observes: “*possess ... land ... inherit*—that is, the literal land of Judea and Mount Zion; the believing remnant of Israel shall return and inherit the land. Secondly, the heavenly inheritance, and the spiritual Zion.” Barnes is more specific: “That is, they shall be admitted to elevated spiritual privileges and joys—as great as if they had possession of a portion of the mount on which the temple was built and were permitted to dwell there.” The Holy Mountains is certainly a reference to the Temple, to the *House of the Lord: Holiness to the Lord*. The gathering of Israel shall encompass all of the lands to which they have an inheritance, beside Israel. For instance, we read the words of Christ in 3Nephi 15:13, of the Book of Mormon people in the American Continent: “And behold, *this is the land of your inheritance*; and the Father hath given it unto you.” No doubt the same is true for those descendants of the Book of Mormon peoples who inhabit the isles of the sea. ¶ The Book of Mormon peoples were repeatedly told that they would be blessed in the land if they kept the commandments. “And if it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which he hath given, it shall be a land of liberty unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound cursed shall be the land for their sakes, but unto the righteous it shall be blessed forever . . . Wherefore, I, Lehi, have obtained a promise, that inasmuch as those whom the Lord God shall bring out of the land of Jerusalem shall keep his commandments, they shall prosper upon the face of this land; and they shall be kept from all other nations, that

they may possess this land [יְנַחֵל-אֶרֶץ] unto themselves. And if it so be that they shall keep his commandments they shall be blessed upon the face of this land, and there shall be none to molest them, nor to take away the land of their inheritance; and they shall dwell safely forever” (2Nephi 1:7, 9). And this very blessing for those who keep the commandments and thus be able to possess the land [יְנַחֵל-אֶרֶץ] would also translate into an even greater blessing: to inherit in *my holy mountain* [הַר-קָדְשִׁי] that is, the blessings of the *House of the Lord: Holiness to the Lord*, even an eternal increase. There is also a יְנַחֵל-אֶרֶץ in terms of this globe that will become celestialized. From Elder Parley P. Pratt we have these beautiful words: “Then cometh Jerusalem down from God, out of heaven, having been renewed as well as the heavens and the earth. ‘For,’ says He, ‘behold, I make all things new.’ / This new city, placed upon the new earth, with the Lord God and the Lamb in the midst, seems to be man’s eternal abode, insomuch that, after all our longings for a place beyond the bounds of time and space, as saith the poet, we are at last brought to our proper senses, and given to understand that man is destined forever to inherit this selfsame planet, upon which he was first created, which shall be redeemed, sanctified, renewed, purified, and prepared as an eternal inheritance for immortality and eternal life; with the holy city for its capital, the throne of God in the midst, for its seat of government; and watered with a stream, clear as crystal, called the Waters of Life, issuing from the throne of Jehovah; while either side is adorned with trees of never fading beauty.”<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the earth will be celestialized for the possession of the righteous as we have been taught by the Savior in the meridian of times (Matthew 5:5) as well as in Latter-day revelation (e.g., D&C 88:19-20).

14 And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.

*And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And he shall say, Teach and admonish, turn the heart of this people to the right way.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And they will say. Clear the ways before him.” Instead of *cast ye up, cast ye up*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *clear up, clear up* (Lamsa) / *make*

<sup>24</sup> Pratt, Elder Parley P. (1874, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition). *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*, pp. 50-51.

*flat, make flat* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And I will say: Make a way: give free passage.” Henderson suggests that אָמַר should be translated: “And it shall be said.” Alexander notes: “Gesenius and Ewald make אָמַר *impersonal*<sup>25</sup>, they say, one says, or it is said.

Vitringa in like manner long before had paraphrased it thus, *exit vox*; and Aben Ezra earlier still had proposed substantially the same thing.” Kay and Cheyne, similarly, “And one said.” AMP (Ⓜ) translates it: “And the word of One shall go forth,” ISV “And one has said,” LEB “And one shall say,” NASB, “And it will be said,” TLV “Then it will be said,” and YLT, “And he hath said.” In Hebrew it is the context which defines whether it is past or future, thus explaining this part of the difference between the various versions that use such an approach. This verse immediately reminds us of ISAIAH 40:3-8, but here spoken of the Gospel of Christ. Gill says, in part, “A causeway, a highway, for the people of the Jews to return to their own land: this is either said by the Lord, as some supply it; or by the prophet, as Jarchi; or by him that putteth his trust in the Lord, as Kimchi.” This verse seems to be about removing the blindness of the apostasy through the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Cowles has: “The sentiment is, There shall be a call to clear the way for the true people of God to come out from among the wicked before divine judgments shall crush and exterminate them.” Fausset has: “Cast ... up—a high road before the returning Jews.” Rashi (emphasis added), in Rosenberg, alternatively teaches: “so will the prophet say in My name to My people, ‘Pave, pave a paved highway, clear away the *evil inclination* from your ways.’” This being an invitation to each one of us to turn to the Lord and be gathered to Zion—leaving Babylon fully behind. ¶ *Take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Remove the stumbling-block of the wicked out of the way of the congregation of my people.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “Remove obstructions out of the road of my people.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Turn out of the path, take away the stumblingblocks out of the way of my people.” This is done in preparation for the restoration of the Gospel of Christ and the construction of Holy Temples. I love it when the Holy One of Israel speaks of “my people.” These words are a reminder of the Abrahamic covenant. Whether direct descendants of scattered Israel, or adopted, Christ invites all to come

<sup>25</sup> For those interested in the *impersonal* grammatical construction, see *A Hebrew Grammar* by Moses Stuart (1823), p. 351; and *Syntax of the Hebrew Language* (1891) by Heinrich Ewald, pp. 124, 148. It seems that it is used particularly when it is not clear who is speaking, as in our case here in Isaiah, אָמַר. It seems of particular use with the words *say* [אָמַר] and *speak* [דַּבֵּר] (see Driver 1881, *A Treatise on the use of the Tenses in Hebrew*, p. 201, for the latter).

unto Him that they may become *His people*. ¶ Rashi (emphasis added), in Rosenberg, picks up where he left off: “Remove the stones upon which your feet stumble; they are *wicked thoughts* (based on Sukkah 52a<sup>26</sup>).” Young well says of the stumbling block, “. . . here is figuratively employed to denote any obstacle standing in the way of God’s people that might cause them to stumble and fall and so fail in their journey . . . In the great eschatological return, when God will gather together all His people who are dispersed . . .”

---

**15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name [is] Holy; I dwell in the high and holy [place], with him also [that is] of a contrite and**

---

26 “And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart. Is it not, they said, an a fortiori argument? If in the future when they will be engaged in mourning and the *Evil Inclination* will have no power over them, the Torah nevertheless says, men separately and women separately, how much more so now when they are engaged in rejoicing and the *Evil Inclination* has sway over them . . . R. Awira or, as some say, R. Joshua b. Levi, made the following exposition: The *Evil Inclination* has seven names. The Holy One, blessed be He, called it Evil, as it is said, For the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth. Moses called it the Uncircumcised, as it is said, Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart. David called it Unclean, as it is said, Create me a clean heart, O Lord, which implies that there is an unclean one. Solomon called it the Enemy, as it is said, If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat and if he be thirsty give him water to drink. For thou wilt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord will reward thee; read not, ‘will reward thee’ but ‘will cause it to be at peace with thee.’ Isaiah called it the Stumbling-Block, as it is said, Cast ye up, Cast ye up, clear the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people. Ezekiel called it Stone, as it is said, And I will take away the *heart of stone* out of your flesh and I will give you a *heart of flesh*. Joel called it the Hidden One, as it is said, But I will remove far off from you the hidden one” (from Sukkah 52a, *The Babylonian Talmud*, Soncino, emphasis added). We also have: “On going to bed one says from ‘Hear, oh Israel’ to ‘And it shall come to pass if ye hearken diligently’. Then he says: ‘Blessed is He who causes the bands of sleep to fall upon my eyes and slumber on my eyelids, and gives light to the apple of the eye. May it be Thy will, O Lord, my God, to make me lie down in peace, and set my portion in Thy law and accustom me to the performance of religious duties, but do not accustom me to transgression; and bring me not into sin, or into iniquity, or into temptation, or into contempt. And may the *good inclination* have sway over me and let not the *evil inclination* have sway over me. And deliver me from evil hap and sore diseases, and let not evil dreams and evil thoughts disturb me, and may my couch be flawless before Thee, and enlighten mine eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death. Blessed art Thou, oh Lord, who givest light to the whole world in Thy glory” (from Berachoth 60b, *The Babylonian Talmud*, Soncino, emphasis added). Furthermore, we have: “Woe is me because of my *evil inclination*” (from Berachoth 61a, *The Babylonian Talmud*, Soncino, emphasis added). Does not each one of us have at least one *evil inclination* to contend with? Moroni was *comforted* (Ether 12:29) by the following, and so can we: “And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27).

humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

---

*For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name [is] Holy.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “heavens” for *eternity*. The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “Him saith the Most High, who on earth inhabiteth eternity, who is Holy among holies: whose name is THE MOST HIGH.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “For thus saith the High and the Eminent that inhabiteth eternity: and his name is Holy.” Here we once again have words of comfort given to the disciple of Christ. ¶ *And Holy His name* (also see YLT, Rotherham), **וְקָדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ**. So He is called the **Holy** One of Israel. And so the Seraphim sing praises to Him, **קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ** (ISAIAH 6:3).

¶ *Inhabiteth eternity.* Ironside points out: “This is the only place in our Authorized Version where we get the word ‘eternity.’ The Hebrew word here so rendered is found in many other places, but here alone our English translators have used the word.” Ibn Ezra provides an elliptical comment: “**עַד** = **עוֹלָמֵי עַד** ‘Innumerable worlds;’ signifies that which cannot be counted; eternity.” From the root **עָלַם**, *eternity*. And according to Gesenius, **עַד** means “m. (from the foot **עָדָה** to pass over, to go on)—(A) subst.—(1) pr. passing, progress, (in space), then duration (of time). Hence perpetuity of time, eternity.” If we look at Elder Orson’s words and compare it to the definition given by Ibn Ezra, *innumerable worlds*, we find his comments even more interesting. How can we not love Elder Orson Pratt? He who was moved by great inspiration. ¶ Elder Orson Pratt taught: “[Jesus] has informed the world that there are many mansions in his Father’s house . . . Where is [the Father’s house], and what kind of a house may we conclude it to be? Are we to understand by the term house, used in this passage, small buildings such as are erected for our residence, here on earth, and if not, what are we to understand? I understand that God is a Being who, as the Scriptures declare, inhabits eternity. Eternity is His dwelling place, and in this eternity are vast numbers of worlds—creations formed by His mighty hands . . . He is not the God of one little world like ours; He is not a Being who presides over a few isolated worlds in one part of eternity, and all the rest left to go at random; He is not confined to the worlds that are made, comparatively speaking, today; but all worlds, past, present, and future, from eternity to eternity, may be considered His dominions . . . But if eternity is His house, habitation, or residence, what are the mansions referred to by our Savior, mentioned in the text? I understand them to be places that the Creator has constructed like this present world of ours; for this

world, in its future history and progress, will no doubt become one of the mansions of the Father, wherein His glory will be made manifest as it is in many other redeemed worlds. I consider that this idea of mansions has reference more especially to celestial mansions, or worlds that have been redeemed and made celestial.”<sup>27</sup> ¶ *I dwell in the high and holy [place], with him also [that is] of a contrite and humble spirit.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Who inhabits the height—yea, His holy Shekinah hath promised to save the contrite in heart.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “Who at rest in the holies giveth patience to the humble.” Instead of *I dwell* (first person), the Peshitta (Ⓟ) has *whose abode* (third person). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓛ) has, “Who dwelleth in the high and holy place, and with a contrite and humble spirit.” Numerous exegetes draw attention to the word *place* which is put as an ellipsis and suggest that a better rendering is that the Lord dwells on high as Holy (as in ISAIAH 6:1b “I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up,” and ISAIAH 6:2-4). The idea is that He is Holy. Of the English translations based on the Masoretic text (Ⓜ), I only find that the ISV leaves out the elliptical, “He lives in the height and in holiness.” On the other hand, most Spanish translations leave the elliptical out: “tengo por morada la altura y la santidad” (SSE); “habito en la altura y la santidad” (SRV); “habito en la altura y la santidad” (RVG); “habito en la altura y la santidad” (RV95); “habito en la altura y la santidad” (RV60); “tengo por morada la altura y la santidad” (RV1865); “habito en un lugar santo y sublime” (NVI); “habito *en* lo alto y santo” (NBLH); as does the LDS edition<sup>28</sup> “habito en la altura y la santidad” (RV2009 SUD). ¶ Cheyne suggests, “Jehovah cannot [or better, does not wish to—GB] direct the affairs of his people from without; he desires to be enthroned in their hearts. When they turn away from him, he punishes them; but by gentle, spiritual means he moves them to return to him as penitent sinners.” ¶ Several exegetes note the juxtaposition between *high* and *low*: despite the Lord’s Holiness, He is near to those who are contrite and humble. Shalom Paul points us to a like Scripture: “Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my

throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (ISAIAH 66:1-2). Shalom Paul quotes several other Scriptures, including Psalm 103:20-21; 113:5-7; and 138:6. In this last example we see a contrast between how the Lord sees a person who is prideful and haughty, versus one who is humble and contrite: “Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.” AMP (Ⓛ) offers: “For though the Lord is high, yet has He respect to the lowly [*bringing them into fellowship with Him*]; but the proud and haughty He knows and recognizes [*only*] at a distance.” HCSB offers: “Though the LORD is exalted, He takes note of the humble; but He knows the haughty from a distance.” ¶ Elder Orson Pratt taught: “[Daniel] saw a little one planted in the mountains. He saw a kingdom organized, an ecclesiastical government called the Kingdom of the God of Heaven. He saw it organized—not in the lower countries of the earth, but he saw it organized in a high and lofty region . . . he saw an ensign lifted up upon the mountains.”<sup>29</sup> ¶ *To revive [לְהַחְיֶה] the spirit of the humble, and to revive [לְהַחְיֶה] the heart of the contrite ones.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “And the humble of spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to support the heart of the contrite.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And life to them who are of a contrite heart.” Instead of *the contrite ones*, the Peshitta (Ⓟ) has *those who are in pain* (Lamsa) / *those who suffer* (BPE). I have dubbed it the *Hosea principle*, based on Hosea 1:9-10, when the Lord *follows* words of harshness with those of consolation. Rawlinson notes: “The prophet, in this portion of his discourse, whereof ‘comfort’ is the key-note, can never continue threatening long without relapsing into a tone of tenderness and pity.” ¶ Barnes explains: “The word ‘contrite’ (רָכַב) means properly that which is broken, crushed, beaten small, trodden down.” Gill suggests that the contrite “have the worst thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; they are humble under a sense of sin and unworthiness, and submit to the righteousness of Christ.” Elder Bruce D. Porter taught: “The Savior’s perfect submission to the Eternal Father is the very essence of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Christ’s example teaches us that a broken heart is an eternal attribute of godliness. When our hearts are broken, we are completely open to the Spirit of God and recognize our dependence on Him for all that we have and all that we are. The sacrifice so entailed is a sacrifice of pride in

<sup>27</sup> Elder Orson Pratt, “The Redemption of the Earth, Etc.” *Journal of Discourses* 14:233–234. August 1871.

<sup>28</sup> Please note that the LDS edition of the Spanish Bible does *not* purport to be more correct than other editions. Nor is it any less correct, either. It was produced primarily because the Church needed an edition that was not copyrighted that could be produced in mass, with the Joseph Smith Translation and other LDS helps. For the most part, the LDS RV2009 Bible is extremely well done. And having the JST and other LDS notes, in my opinion, makes this Bible the very best Spanish Bible available. I cringe when I see members who even today are bringing their older Bibles to Church. These older Bibles (*i.e.*, Reina Valera 1960), should be kept for comparative studies, especially when dealing with difficult verses. But I cannot fathom the idea of Bible without the JST when there is one available with these inspired notes from the Prophet.

<sup>29</sup> Pratt, Apostle Orson, discourse delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, 26 October 1879. JD 24:31a.

all its forms. Like malleable clay in the hands of a skilled potter, the brokenhearted can be molded and shaped in the hands of the Master . . . When we sin and desire forgiveness, a broken heart and a contrite spirit mean to experience ‘godly sorrow [that] worketh repentance’ (2 Corinthians 7:10). This comes when our desire to be cleansed from sin is so consuming that our hearts ache with sorrow and we yearn to feel at peace with our Father in Heaven. Those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit are willing to do anything and everything that God asks of them, without resistance or resentment. We cease doing things our way and learn to do them God’s way instead. In such a condition of submissiveness, the Atonement can take effect and true repentance can occur. The penitent will then experience the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost, which will fill them with peace of conscience and the joy of reconciliation with God. In a wondrous union of divine attributes, the same God who teaches us to walk with a broken heart invites us to rejoice and to be of good cheer . . . When we have received a forgiveness of sins, a broken heart serves as a divine shield against temptation. Nephi prayed, ‘May the gates of hell be shut continually before me, because that my heart is broken and my spirit is contrite!’ (2 Nephi 4:32). King Benjamin taught his people that if they would walk in the depths of humility, they might ever rejoice, ‘be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of . . . sins’ (Mosiah 4:12). When we yield our hearts to the Lord, the attractions of the world simply lose their luster. There is yet another dimension of a broken heart—namely, our deep gratitude for Christ’s suffering on our behalf.”<sup>30</sup>

**16 For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls [which] I have made.**

*For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth:* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “For I will not take vengeance of judgment for ever, neither shall my wrath be eternal.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “I will not contend with you forever, nor will I be continually angry with you.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be angry unto the end.” We shall separate the two clauses. First, *I will not contend for ever.* This clause reminds us of 2 Nephi 26:11a: “For the Spirit of the Lord will not always strive with man. And when the Spirit ceaseth to strive with man then cometh speedy destruction . . .” President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: “Now the Lord has

withdrawn His Spirit from the world. Do not let this thought become confused in your minds. The spirit he has withdrawn from the world is not the Holy Ghost (for they never had that!) but it is the light of truth, spoken of in our Scriptures as the Spirit of Christ [light of Christ], which is given to every man that cometh into the world (D&C 84:46). Now because of the wickedness of the world, that Spirit has been withdrawn, and when the Spirit of the Lord is not striving with men, the spirit of Satan is. Therefore, we may be sure that the time has come spoken of in Section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants. . . . Peace has been taken from the earth. The devil has power over his own dominion. The Spirit of the Lord has been withdrawn. Not because the Lord desires to withdraw that Spirit, but because of the wickedness of mankind, it becomes necessary that this Spirit of the Lord be withdrawn.”<sup>31</sup> ¶ The second clause, *neither will I be always wroth.* While the first clause seems to refer to the withdrawing of the spirit from the world before the Second Coming; the words, *neither will I be always wroth* appears to speak of the millennium—with the resurrection of the just, but before the mounting tensions associated with the end of the thousand years. Rabbi David Kimhi (in Rosenberg) writes of the day when the Lord will replace our *stony heart* with a *heart of flesh*, and further, even remove our *evil inclinations*. ¶ *For the spirit should fail before me, and the souls [which] I have made.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “For I will revive (literally, ‘I am ready to revive’) the spirits of the dead, and the souls I have created.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “For from me spirit is to proceed and I have made every breathing soul.” Instead of *fail before me*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *proceeds from before me*; instead of *souls*, *breath*. The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Because the spirit shall go forth from my face, and breathings I will make.” Barnes has: “The Hebrew word which is rendered here ‘should fail’ (פָּטַח), means properly to cover, as with a garment; or to envelope with anything, as darkness. Then it is used in the sense of having the mind covered or muffled up with sorrow; and means to languish, to be faint or feeble, to fail . . . According to this, it furnishes ground of encouragement and comfort to all the children of God who are afflicted. No sorrow will be sent which they will not be able to endure, no calamity which will not be finally for their own good.” Delitzsch suggests: “פָּטַח [for] introduces the reason for the self-limitation of the divine wrath, just as in Psalm 78:38-39 (cf., Psalm 103:14): if God should put no restraint upon His wrath, the consequence would be the entire destruction of human life, which was His creative work at first. The verb פָּטַח, from its primary meaning to bend round, has

<sup>30</sup> Porter, Elder Bruce D. “A Broken Heart and a Contrite Spirit,” October 2007 General Conference.

<sup>31</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Predicted Judgments*. BYU speeches of the year. Provo, 21 Mar. 1967, pp. 5–6.

sometimes the transitive meaning to *cover*, and sometimes the meaning to *wrap one's self round*, i.e., to become *faint* or *weak* (compare עָטוּף, fainted away, Lamentations 2:19; and הִתְעַטֵּף in Psalm 142:4, which is applied to the spirit). נְשָׁמוֹת is equivalent to 'in consequence of the wrath proceeding from me.' נְשָׁמוֹת (a plural only met with here) signifies, according to the fixed usage of the Old Testament (ISAIAH 2:22; 42:5), *the souls of men*, the origin of which is described as a creation in the attributive clause (with an emphatic אֲנִי [I]), just as in Jeremiah 38:16 (cf., Zechariah 12:1). . . . The prophet, who refers to the flood in other passages also (e.g., Isaiah 54:9), had probably in his mind the promise given after the flood, according to which God would not make the existing and inherited moral depravity an occasion for utterly destroying the human race." Clarke has: "And the souls – נְשָׁמוֹת the immortal spirits." Gill offers: "The spirit of the afflicted, which not being able to bear up any longer under the affliction, would sink and faint, or be 'overwhelmed,' as the word (עָטוּף) signifies: and the souls which I have made . . . The Lord knowing the weakness of the human frame, therefore restrains his hand, or moderates or removes the affliction; see a like reason in Psalm 78:38, the last days of trouble to God's people, which will be the time of the slaying of the witnesses, will be such that if they are not shortened, no flesh can be saved, but for the elect's sake they will be shortened (Matthew 24:22)." The Geneva notes summarizes this point: "I will not use my power against frail man, whose life is but a blast." Of ISAIAH 57:15-16, Henderson says: "These verses contain the most sublime description of the Divine majesty and condescension to be found in the Scriptures. The words require no comment; but they have a depth of meaning which no finite mind can fully comprehend."

---

vv. 17-21. The wicked receive the Lord's punishment, but God has pity on the repentant. They receive peace and salvation.

---

17 ¶ For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly<sup>v</sup> in the way of his heart.

✓ turning away

---

*For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him:* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, "For my wrath is upon them on account of their robbed riches, and I smote them." The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, "Because of sin I grieved

him a little while and smote him." Instead of *covetousness*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *treachery*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓢ) has, "For the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry, and I struck him." Kay has: "*his covetousness*] Out of that sin, which is, in essence, idolatry (Colossians 3:5<sup>32</sup>), every form of *iniquity* might germinate (1 Timothy 6:10<sup>33</sup>)." Elder Jeffrey R. Holland spoke these powerful words: "Brothers and sisters, there are going to be times in our lives when someone else gets an unexpected blessing or receives some special recognition. May I plead with us not to be hurt—and certainly not to feel envious—when good fortune comes to another person? We are not diminished when someone else is added upon. We are not in a race against each other to see who is the wealthiest or the most talented or the most beautiful or even the most blessed. The race we are *really* in is the race against sin, and surely envy is one of the most universal of those. Furthermore, envy is a mistake that just keeps on giving. Obviously we suffer a little when some *misfortune* befalls *us*, but envy requires us to suffer all good *fortune* that befalls *everyone* we know! What a bright prospect that is—downing another quart of pickle juice every time anyone around you has a happy moment! To say nothing of the chagrin in the end, when we find that God really is both just and merciful, giving to all who stand with Him 'all that he hath,' as the scripture says. So lesson number one from the Lord's vineyard: coveting, pouting, or tearing others down does *not* elevate *your* standing, nor does demeaning someone else improve your self-image. So be kind, and be grateful that God is kind. It is a happy way to live."<sup>34</sup> ¶ *I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, "I removed my Shekinah from them, and cast them out; I scattered their captives, because they went astray after the imagination of their hearts." The LXX (Ⓣ) reads, "And turned away my face from him; and he was grieved and went his ways sorrowing." The BPE (Ⓢ) has, "I turned and was wroth, but his sigh followed the way of his heart." The Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, "But she backslid and was wroth, and went away groaning in her heart." The Douay-Rheims (Ⓢ) has, "I hid my face from thee, and was angry: and he went away wandering in his own heart." Barnes has: "*I hid me*] I withdrew the evidences of my presence and the tokens of my favour, and left them to themselves." This is what happens when we fail

---

<sup>32</sup> "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5).

<sup>33</sup> For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:10).

<sup>34</sup> Holland, Elder Jeffrey R., "The Laborers in the Vineyard." April 2012 General Conference.

to turn to the Lord: “They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble” (D&C 101:7). But the very next verse shows that the Lord never hides long from man. Fausset and Bullinger’s *Companion Bible Notes* (CBN) send us to ISAIAH 8:17; 45:15; 59:2; and 64:7. Gill makes an interesting comment on apostasy and modern Christianity: “*I hid me, and was wroth*” showed his displeasure by departing from them; and how much God has withdrawn his presence, and caused his spirit to depart from the churches of the Reformation, is too notorious.” ¶ Whitehouse has: “The word rendered ‘froward’<sup>35</sup> . . . [שׁוֹכֵב] is a favourite one in Jeremiah, and means ‘unfaithful,’ ‘rebellious’ (Jeremiah 3:14, 22; cf. 31:22, 49:4).” Other translations into English also include *turning away* (NASB, AMP (♾) and margin ||), *turning back* (HCSB, ISV, YLT), *turning aside* (Rotherham), *backsliding / backslidingly* (ASV, ESV, WEB, TLV, Darby), *turneth* (Bishops), *returning* (CEV), and *walked apostate* (LEB).

**18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.**

*I have seen his ways, and will heal him:* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “The way of their repentance is revealed before me, and I will forgive them.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “I have seen his ways and healed him.” Alexander says, “The Targum puts a favourable sense on *ways*, as meaning his repentance and conversion. So Jarchi, I have seen his humiliation; and Ewald, I have seen his patient endurance of trial.” Whitehouse has: “The words of comfort in these verses are evidently addressed to the faithful and repentant portion of the Zion community, who are sharply distinguished from the wicked and unfaithful.” Words of comfort are given indeed, *yet I will heal him and*<sup>36</sup> *I will lead him* [וְאֶרְפְּאֵהוּ וְאֶנְתְּנֵהוּ]. Despite our best efforts we are still afflicted with our imperfections and weaknesses, our *evil inclinations* —which the Lord has seen. He says, *I have seen his ways*—yet even so the Lord will be merciful unto those who look unto Him for help. The Lord will help us turn those weaknesses into strength (Ether 12:29). There must be repentance or a turning unto the Lord for this healing grace to take place. The

Spirit of the Lord will help us in making these changes—some of which will take a lifetime of work. Shalom Paul has: “*Then I noted his ways and I healed him*”—Some commentators interpret רַרְכִּי as referring to the people’s upright *ways*, i.e., I saw that the people returned to a more virtuous *path*, and so I healed them (note once again the correct vocalization should be in the past tense: אֶרְפְּאֵהוּ).” The past tense shows the *prophetic perfect* wherein the Lord is not only looking at His people after the restoration of the Gospel, but even into the Millennium. Elder George Q. Cannon declared: “If Satan, therefore, has power with man, it is because man yields to his influence . . . Satan will be bound by the power of God; but he will be bound also by the determination of the people of God not to listen to him, not to be governed by him. The Lord will not bind him and take his power from the earth while there are men and women willing to be governed by him. That is contrary to the plan of salvation. To deprive men of their agency is contrary to the purposes of our God” (*Gospel Truth*, 1:86-87).<sup>37</sup> ¶ The Prophet Alma helps us not to *misunderstand*<sup>38</sup> the meaning of ISAIAH 57:18: “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, every thing 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. And so it is on the other hand. If he hath repented of his sins, and desired righteousness until the end of his days, even so he shall be rewarded unto righteousness. These are they that are redeemed of the Lord; yea, these are they that are taken out, that are delivered from that endless night of darkness; and thus they stand or fall; for behold, they are their own judges, whether to do good or do evil. Now, the decrees of God are unalterable; therefore, the way is prepared that whosoever will may walk therein and be saved . . . Do

<sup>35</sup> Also see definition of שׁוֹכֵב given in the margin ||, *turning away*, which also has the sense of apostasy.

<sup>36</sup> Instead of *and*, Fausset (leaning on Horsley who uses *but*) has, “I have seen his ways (in sin), *yet* will I heal him.” ESV and HCSB (also see LEB, NASB, TLV and LITV) have “I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him . . .”

<sup>37</sup> “Chapter 37: The Millennium and the Glorification of the Earth.” *Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual*, (2000), 104–6.

<sup>38</sup> Some have incorrectly reasoned that individuals “shall be restored from sin to happiness” (Alma 41:10b). “Hitzig strangely understands the words [of ISAIAH 57:18]” says Alexander, “to mean that God saw punishment to be without effect and therefore pardoned him.”

not suppose, because it has been spoken concerning restoration, that ye shall be restored from sin to happiness. Behold, I say unto you, wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:3-8, 10). It is no coincidence that Isaiah clarifies this point a few verses below: “[There is] no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (ISAIAH 57:21). ¶ *I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And I will have compassion upon them, and requite consolations to them and to those that mourn with them (or, ‘in behalf of them’).” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And comforted him.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) has something like, “And I have comforted her, and consoled her and those that with her are in mourning.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “And brought him back, and restored comforts to him, and to them that mourn for him.” *I will lead him also*, seems to mean that the Holy Ghost will hold Christ’s disciples by the hand and lead them back into righteousness, where they will be filled with *comfort* through repentance. Barnes says: “*And will heal him*] That is, I will pardon and restore him. Sin, in the Scriptures, is often represented as a disease, and pardon and salvation as a healing of the disease.” Gill says, in part, “of such who trust in the Lord, the ways of the humble and contrite, who are brought by repentance and reformation, by the dealings of God with them; these he sees, knows, and approves of, and heals their former backslidings . . .”

---

**19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to [him that is] far off, and to [him that is] near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him.**

---

*I create the fruit of the lips.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “The prophet said: He that creates the speech in the lips of every man.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And given him true consolation.” Instead of *fruit*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *speech*. See also Hosea 14:2, mentioned by several exegetes: “Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.” That is, offer praises to the Lord. Cowles explains: “The appropriate fruit of the lips is praise. God ‘creates’ it by giving both the occasion and the heart for it.—As to the figure of the ‘fruit’ applied to the lips, see Hebrews 13:15: ‘By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.’—The connection of thought in our passage is that his wayward people when brought to repentance by his corrective discipline so as to be truly broken and humbled in spirit, will have their mouths filled with praise and will be blessed with double peace [which] . . . comprehends all spiritual blessings.” Wade points us to Daniel 9:7. The complete

chapter is particularly beautiful and must be reread, as Daniel recognizes that the people have been guilty as set out in *Rain in Due Season* but prays for the blessings to come upon Israel: “O LORD, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him” (Daniel 9:7-11). The angel Gabriel appears to him and gives him the consolation of the coming Messiah. Although Deuteronomy 30 would not be fulfilled with the First Coming, but rather in the gathering of Israel, the Savior would bring Peace upon all those who turn to Him thanks to the expiatory sacrifice. ¶ *Peace, peace to [him that is] far off, and to [him that is] near, saith the LORD.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Peace shall be wrought for the righteous, who have kept my law of old, and peace shall be wrought out for the penitent, who return to my law.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Peace upon peace to them near and to them far off.” Instead of *him*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) uses the plural. Keith has: “The repetition ‘*peace, peace*,’ [שְׁלוֹם שְׁלוֹם] indicates, according to the Hebrew idiom, the superlative, or highest degree.” One of the suggestions offered by Rawlinson is: “to both the scattered members of the Jewish body [means Israel, Ephraim—including the lost ten tribes as well as the Lamanites—as well as Judah—GB].” This is also the Jewish interpretation, according to Kay. Alexander says: “Jarchi and Knobel explain it to mean all the Jews [meaning Israel—GB] wherever scattered . . . [And Kimchi] understands the words as abolishing all difference between the earlier and later converts, an idea similar to that embodied in our Saviour’s parable of the labourers in the vineyard.” Nägelsbach points us to the writings of Paul that apply to the meridian of times, Ephesians 2:17, which we will look in the larger context: “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Circumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God

in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes *were far off* are *made nigh* by the blood of Christ. For he is *our peace*, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached *peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh*. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto *an holy temple in the Lord*: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:11-22, emphasis added). It is certainly clear that Paul had ISAIAH 57 in mind when he penned these words. Nägelsbach well suggests: “. . . the LORD knows no salvation without healing. There is indeed no salvation for those not healed . . .” ¶ Elder Harold B. Lee said: “Brothers and sisters, my prayer is for all of us, that we may so live, that when our time comes, we may not be afraid to die, and that when we die, we may look confidently forward to a life, an eternal life, in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in the celestial kingdom . . .”<sup>39</sup> ¶ *And I will heal him*. The Targum (T) has, “It is at hand that I will pardon them, saith the Lord.” The LXX (G) reads, “So the Lord said, I will heal them.” Instead of *him*, the Peshitta (S) has *them*. Alexander points out: “Hitzig directs attention to the way in which the writer here comes back

[וְיִרְפָּאֵתוּן] to the beginning of ISAIAH 57:18

[וְיִרְפָּאֵתוּן], as an observable rhetorical beauty.” Christ is the only one who can heal us—through His atoning sacrifice. With Jeremiah we can plead: “O LORD, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life” (Lamentations 3:58). If we walk uprightly, through Christ’s expiatory sacrifice, we can someday return to the presence of the Father. ¶ President Gordon B. Hinckley beautifully said: “I invoke the healing power of Christ, giving my witness of its efficacy and wonder. I testify of Him who is the great source of healing. He is the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, ‘The Sun of Righteousness,’ who came ‘with healing in his wings.’ Of this I humbly testify in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.”<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Lee, Elder Harold B. Spiritual Re-birth and Death. October 1947 General Conference.

<sup>40</sup> Hinckley, President Gordon B., “The Healing Power of Christ.” October 1988 General Conference.

20 But the wicked [are] like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

The LXX (G) reads, “But the wicked shall be tossed like waves and shall not be able to rest.” Instead of *mire and dirt*, the Peshitta (S) has *creeping things* (Lamsa) / *reptiles* (BPE) *and mire*. The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “But the wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest, and the waves thereof cast up dirt and mire.” Alexander has: “Lowth’s version of this last clause is more than usually plain and vigorous: *its waters work up mire and filth*. The verb means strictly to expel or drive out, and is therefore happily descriptive of the natural process here referred to.” Alexander then points us to Jude 1:13: “Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.” Delitzsch has: “As [the sea] cannot rest, and as its waters cast out slime and mud, so has their [the wicked] natural state become one of perpetual disturbance, leading to the uninterrupted production of unclean and ungodly thoughts, words, and works.” Nägelsbach explains: “The likings and cravings, the passions are the storms that stir up the human heart and let it have no rest. The wicked works are the foam and slime that then come to the surface and make manifest the uncleanness, the depravity, therefore the malady within.” So also Elder Bruce R. McConkie who has: “. . . the sea—a raging, restless sea—is a symbol of a sinful and wicked world.”<sup>41</sup> The sea is somewhat interesting in that somewhere it will be agitated. A person may be busy putting off fires here only for others to start elsewhere, thus never finding peace. ¶ President Harold B. Lee taught: “To those who fail to heed the warnings of those who are striving to teach these principles and choose to go in the opposite course, they will eventually find themselves in the pitiable state which you are witnessing so often among us. The prophet Isaiah described the tragic result most dramatically when he repeated the words of God which came to him as he sought to fortify his people against the wickedness of the world, and I quote his words: [then quoted Isaiah 57:19-21].”<sup>42</sup> Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin testified: “Earth life is a period of probation to provide an opportunity for choices. Two mighty forces are pulling in opposite directions. On the one hand is the power of Christ and his righteousness. On the other hand is Satan and the spirits who follow him. President Marion G. Romney said: ‘Mankind . . . must determine

<sup>41</sup> McConkie, Elder Bruce R. *The Mortal Messiah*, in the Messiah Series.

<sup>42</sup> Lee, President Harold B. “Understanding Who We Are Brings Self-Respect.” October 1973 General Conference.

to travel in company with the one or the other. The reward for following the one is the fruit of the Spirit—peace. The reward for following the other is the works of the flesh—the antithesis of peace.’ Further, he said: ‘The price of peace is victory over Satan’ (*Ensign*, October 1983, pp. 4–5). We can know which one to follow because God has given everyone the Spirit of Christ to know good from evil and to protect themselves from sin. We sometimes refer to the Spirit of Christ as our conscience. If we follow its promptings, we can be free of sin and filled with peace. If we do not, but instead let our carnal appetites control us, we never will know true peace. We will be tossed ‘like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest . . . there is no peace, saith . . . God, to the wicked.’ If we damage or violate our conscience by ignoring it, we can lose that gift because we no longer are sensitive to it. We will be beyond feeling, beyond the influence of that Spirit.”<sup>43</sup> Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught: “What we mortals encounter as the unforeseen, God has already seen, such as how the oil deposits of this earth would shape the latter-day conflicts among nations. God’s ‘is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.’ He likewise foresaw all the awful famines, some resulting from the unwise, unnecessary erosions of precious topsoil. He surely foresaw the terrible persecutions of the Jews. Having created the earth, He has anticipated the impact of continental drifts on the frequency and intensity of latter-day earthquakes. He who analogized that ‘the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest’ also knows where and when, in latter days, the seas’ tidal waves will heave themselves savagely ‘beyond their bounds.’”<sup>44</sup> Elder Bruce R. McConkie beautifully says: “. . . when Christ calms the seas of life, peace enters the hearts of men.”<sup>45</sup>

21 [There is] no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “There is no peace, said God, to the wicked.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord God.” In ISAIAH 48:22 we have: “There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.” Several exegetes have noted that the only difference is that the words “saith my God”

[אֱמַר אֱלֹהֵי] are used here instead of “saith Jehovah” [אֱמַר יְהוָה]. Why the difference? While I do believe

<sup>43</sup> Wirthlin, Elder Joseph B., Peace Within. April 1991 General Conference.

<sup>44</sup> Maxwell, Elder Neal A., “Yet Thou Art There.” October 1987 General Conference.

<sup>45</sup> McConkie, Elder Bruce R., *The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary*, 2:278.

that the Lord sometimes reveals specific<sup>46</sup> words, often the *revelation* or *intelligence* given through the Holy Ghost comes through bursts of *light and truth* (see D&C 93:36). We receive revelation from the Lord in these bursts of light and truth and then translate them into human language. ¶ President Howard W. Hunter taught: “No peace comes to those who reject God. There is no promise of peace to those who reject God, to those who will not keep his commandments, or to those who violate his laws. The Prophet Isaiah spoke of the decadence and corruption of leaders, and then continued in his admonitions by saying: ‘But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked’ (ISAIAH 57:20-21) . . . Peace comes by an unconditional surrender. Indifference to the Savior or failure to keep the commandments of God brings about insecurity, inner turmoil, and contention. These are the opposite of peace . . . Fundamental truths will bring peace. It seems that two eternal truths must be accepted by all if we are to find peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come. (1) That Jesus is the Christ, the very eternal son of our Heavenly Father, who came to earth for the express purpose of redeeming mankind from sin and the grave, and that he lives to bring us back to the presence of the Father. (2) That Joseph Smith was his prophet, raised up in this latter-day to restore the truth which had been lost to mankind because of transgression . . . We need to be kinder with one another, more gentle and forgiving. We need to be slower to anger and more prompt to help.”<sup>47</sup> Elder Marvin J. Ashton taught: “True Christians have no time for contention. Lasting peace cannot be built while we are reviling or hating others . . . Feelings of enmity and malice can never be compatible with feelings of peace. [He then quotes ISAIAH 57:20-21.]”<sup>48</sup>

FIRST POSTED: 28 August 2016

<sup>46</sup> Oliver Cowdery spoke of his impression of John the Baptist’s language. Joseph and Oliver had been praying regarding baptism when the veil parted and Angel John the Baptist appeared: “I shall not attempt to paint to you the feelings of this heart, nor the majestic beauty and glory which surrounded us on this occasion; but you will believe me when I say, that earth, nor men, with the eloquence of time, cannot begin to clothe language in as interesting and sublime a manner as this holy personage. No; nor has this earth power to give the joy, to bestow the peace, or comprehend the wisdom which was contained in each sentence as they were delivered by the power of the Holy Spirit!” (JS-History Note:7b).

<sup>47</sup> Hunter, Howard W. *The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*. Edited by Clyde J. Williams. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1997, pp. 171-174.

<sup>48</sup> Ashton, Elder Marvin J., Peace—A Triumph of Principles. October 1985 General Conference.

