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## Isaiah 59

The final words of the prophecy, that a covenant would be established forever and that the Spirit of the Lord would not depart from the mouth of the prophets “henceforth and forever” shows us that at least part of this prophecy is focused on the time of the restoration. Angel Moroni quoted ISAIAH 59:20 and gives us a context posterior to the return of the lost tribes from the north, in the latter days. There also seem to be other portions of the prophecy that point to the latter-days, speak of false doctrines abounding, and of the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum as well as the persecution of the early Saints [see, for instance, the *History of the Church* by the Prophet Joseph Smith and notes by B.H. Roberts and the *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*]. Comments made by the Savior in 3 Nephi 16 also seem to be related to this prophecy and speak of the gospel going forth to the nations and then to Israel and the times of the Gentiles coming to an end. Jenour notes: “. . . although there is a consolatory promise at the conclusion of the chapter, the general tenor of the prophecy is denunciatory.”

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vv. 1-8. Horsley suggests: “. . . the Prophet [Isaiah] argues that God’s apparent disregard of the complaints of his people, under the sufferings they were to endure, proceeded not from any want of power in Him to give them redress, nor from any mutability in his purposes, but from the enormity of their own corruptions.” Jenour notes that Paul paraphrases much of ISAIAH 59:3-8: “What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Romans 3:9-18). Jenour adds: “The picture [so quoted] indeed is bad; but is it not a faithful delineation of mankind at large? Are we any better?” This is always a good question to ask. “Lord, is it I?” (Matthew 26:22b). ¶ Now, let us turn to Christ’s words during His visit to the American continent. Let us begin as the Lord blesses the Gentiles: “And blessed are the Gentiles, because of their belief in me, in and of the Holy Ghost, which witnesses unto them of me and of the Father” (3Nephi 16:6). The Savior then contrasts between the belief of the Gentiles and the unbelief of Israel: “Behold, because of their belief in me, saith the Father, and because of the unbelief of you, O house of Israel, in the latter day shall the truth come unto the Gentiles, that the fulness of these things shall be made known unto

them” (3Nephi 16:7). The Lord, next, speaks to warn the unbelieving of the Gentiles: “But wo, saith the Father, unto the unbelieving of the Gentiles—for notwithstanding they have come forth upon the face of this land, and have scattered my people who are of the house of Israel; and my people who are of the house of Israel have been cast out from among them, and have been trodden under feet by them; And because of the mercies of the Father unto the Gentiles, and also the judgments of the Father upon my people who are of the house of Israel, verily, verily, I say unto you, that after all this, and I have caused my people who are of the house of Israel to be smitten, and to be afflicted, and to be slain, and to be cast out from among them, and to become hated by them, and to become a hiss and a byword among them—“ (3Nephi 16:8-9). The next verse in the Book of Mormon coincides closely with that of ISAIAH 59:3-15), “And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you: At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fulness of my gospel, and shall be *lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations*, and above all the people of the whole earth, and shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and of deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, and of secret abominations; and if they shall do all those things, and shall reject the fulness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fulness of my gospel from among them” (3Nephi 16:10, emphasis added). This theme, of the fulfillment of the *day of the Gentile*, is a strong one in the Book of Mormon and we also find it in the Bible as well as in the Joseph Smith History, when the Angel Moroni appeared to young Joseph: “And he further stated that the fulness of the Gentiles was soon to come in” (JS-History 1:41b). We must also quote the very last verse

in this chapter in the Book of Mormon, as it fits very well with Isaiah 59:1, “The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God” (3Nephi 16:20).

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## 1 ¶ BEHOLD, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

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*BEHOLD, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Behold, it is not on account of *any* deficiency in the power of the Lord that ye are not saved.” The LXX (Ⓠ) reads, “It is not that the hand of the Lord is unable to save.” Cowles has: “As usual the hand is the symbol of power. Its being ‘shortened’ supposes it unable to reach his remote creatures for their relief.” Alexander has: “The Prophet merely pauses, as it were, for a moment, to exonerate his Master from all blame, before continuing his accusation of the people.” ¶ Elder George Q. Cannon testified: “His eye does not grow dim by the lapse of ages; his ear does not become heavy by the passage of time, neither does his arm become short or feeble. He is the God whom we worship. When we call upon him, though he may be remote from us, dwelling in his holy habitation in the midst of the eternities, the very thoughts of our hearts, the very conceptions of our minds, the feeble whisperings of our voices, they ascend to him, are carried to him, his ear comprehends them; his bowels of compassion are moved towards us his children, his all-piercing eye penetrates eternity, and the glance of his vision reaches us.”<sup>1</sup> ¶ *Neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Nor because it is too difficult for Him to hear, that your prayer is not received.” The LXX (Ⓠ) reads, “Nor that his ear is grown dull to hear.” Instead of *heavy*, the Peshitta (Ⓟ) has *dull* (Lamsa) / *hardened* (BPE). Orelli explains: “כָּבֵד, of the senses: *to be heavy*, sluggish, dull.” That is, in terms of His ability to hear. Shalom Paul suggests: “This expression comes from the medical jargon, as one learns from the Akkadian cognates *uznā kabta* (The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, or CAD K:15), and the variant *nešmū kabit* (‘heavy or hard of hearing’).” ¶ President Orson Hyde explained it was no small thing to see the Savior: “The fact is, your very life must be suspended on a thread, as it were [if you wish to see your Savior] where no mortal arm can rescue, no earthly power save! When all other things fail, when everything else proves futile and fruitless, then perhaps

your Savior and your Redeemer may appear; his arm is not shortened that he cannot save, nor his ear heavy that he cannot hear; and when help on all sides appears to fail, my arm shall save, my power shall rescue, and you shall hear my voice, saith the Lord.”<sup>2</sup> Elder Mark E. Petersen taught, “We are told that the heavens are sealed as brass over our heads and that there can be no more revelation. \* \* \* At no time has He sealed the heavens—but, rather, the iniquities of the people have done so. It was the case even in Isaiah’s time, for he gave this explanation: ‘Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.’ When men supplanted revelation with their own wisdom, when they allowed worldly power to eliminate spiritual direction, of course God ceased speaking to them. Of course the heavens closed. But humans were the cause of it. Has He not always promised to answer prayer? Has He not always spoken through prophets when the people listen? And has He not always said that He would do nothing ‘but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets’?”<sup>3</sup> ¶ I wish to testify with all the strength I possess, that God indeed hears our sincere prayers. All day long His ears are open to hear us and to converse with us, if we will but learn the difference between God hearing our prayers and giving us what we think we want. As we ask God if He has heard our prayers He will fill us with comfort. And if He has heard, can we not be filled with extraordinary joy? If our petitions are not granted, it is because there is a higher purpose in play. But that He hears our prayers, I solemnly testify.

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## 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid [his] face from you, that he will not hear.

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✓ or, have made him hide

*But your iniquities have separated between you and your God.* The LXX (Ⓠ) reads, “But your sins make a separation between you and your God.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓡ) has *divided* rather than *separated*.

Alexander explains: “כִּי אֵם is the usual adversative after a negation, corresponding to the German *sondern*, which has no distinct equivalent in English.” Regarding the word *separated* [מִבְּדָלִים] root [בָּדַל] Kay notes: “In Exodus 26:33 the word is used in reference to the

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<sup>1</sup> Elder George Q. Cannon, Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, 5 October 1879. “Unchangeableness of God.” JD 21:73b.

<sup>2</sup> President Orson Hyde, General Conference, Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, 6 October 1853, “Overcoming.” JD 1:125.

<sup>3</sup> Petersen, Mark E. *The Way to Peace*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1969, pp. 277-278.

veil before the Ark of the Covenant, which was drawn aside only once a year, and that for a short time; on *the day of Atonement*.” Barnes similarly has: “The word used here (בדל) conveys the idea of division, usually by a curtain or a wall (Exodus 26:33; Ezekiel 42:20). Thus the ‘firmament’ (רקיע, ‘expanse’) is said to have ‘divided’ or ‘separated’ (גבדיל) the waters from the waters (Genesis 1:6).” So, here, iniquities had separated men from God. Barnes quotes Jeremiah, “Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that *our* prayer should not pass through” (Lamentations 3:44). ¶ John Gill says of *his own Church denomination*: “Like a partition wall dividing between them, so that they enjoy no communion with him in his worship and ordinances; which is greatly the case of the reformed churches: they profess the true God, and the worship of him, and do [only] attend the outward ordinances of it; but this is done in such a cold formal way, and such sins and wickedness are perpetrated and connived at, that the Lord does not grant his gracious presence to them, but stands at a distance from them.” Also see ISAIAH 29:13, Matthew 15:8 and Joseph Smith—History 1: 19. ¶ Most were horrified at the very idea of revelation at the time of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the restoration of the Gospel. They indeed had pronounced God as incapable of speaking or hearing. ¶ *And your sins have hid [his] face from you, that he will not hear.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “And your sins have caused *Him* to take away the favour of His Shekinah from you, not to receive your prayer.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And on account of your sins he hath turned away his face from you that he may not exercise compassion.” Rawlinson has: “Literally, *your sins have caused his face to be hidden from you.*” ¶ Elder Mark E. Peterson commented: “Lack of communication between human beings is responsible for much of the distress in the world. But when communication breaks down between God and man, even worse situations arise.”<sup>4</sup> Such was the state of mankind before the light shone forth upon the boy Prophet in that 1820 spring day in the Sacred Grove.

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**3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.**

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*For your hands are defiled with blood.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “For your hands are associated with innocent blood.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “For your hands are polluted with blood.” Of Judah, in this regard,

Rawlinson commented: “On the ‘innocent blood’ shed by the Jews of the later Judæan kingdom, see 2 Kings 21:6, 16; 24:4; 25:25; 2 Chronicles 24:21; 28:3; 33:6; 36:16, etc.) It consisted in (1) sacrifices of children to Moloch; (2) persecution of prophets; and (3) judicial murders, either actual (like that of Naboth, in Israel) or virtual, i.e. such perversion of justice as produced general poverty and misery, and tended to shorten men’s lives.” Cheyne leaning on Weir has: “*Your hands* [The very hands ye stretch out in prayer, ISAIAH 1:15’ (Dr. Weir).” ¶ President Gordon B. Hinckley explained: “The burden of their message [i.e., of the prophets] was a denunciation of wickedness. And the peril of those times was not peculiar to the Old World. The Book of Mormon documents that in the Western Hemisphere the armies of the Jaredites fought to the death. The Nephites and the Lamanites also fought until thousands had died and Moroni was forced to wander alone for the safety of his own life. His great and final plea, directed toward those of our day, was a call to righteousness.”<sup>5</sup> Jenour has: “*Your hands are defiled with blood &c.* [Murder, one evil act of the hands, is put for evil actions generally, because it is the worst that can be done. And so with the rest. The reader will observe that most of the members of the body are referred to [in these verses].” ¶ Whatever other applications that these verses may have, I also believe they apply to those mobs who persecuted the Saints and spilled their innocent blood. ¶ *And your fingers with iniquity.* The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And your fingers with sins.” Cowles notes: “. . . the prophet represents every physical organ of their body—hands, fingers, lips and tongue—as actively engaged in sinning as if to show that every power of their being was pressed to its utmost capacity of wrong doing.” These same organs, on the other hand, can be used to avoid evil and embrace all that is good. ¶ Gill says: “From a general charge, the prophet proceeds to a particular enumeration of sins they were guilty of; and idolatry not being mentioned, as Jerom observes, shows that the prophecy belongs to other times than Isaiah’s, when that sin greatly prevailed. He begins the account with the sin of shedding blood; the blood of innocents, as the Targum; designing either the sin of murder, now frequently committed in Christian nations; or wars between Christian princes, by means of which much blood is shed; or persecutions of Christian brethren, by casting them into prisons, which have issued in their death; and at least want of brotherly love, or, the hatred of brethren, which is called murder (1John 3:15) . . .”

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<sup>5</sup> President Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Dawning of a Brighter Day,” April 1981 General Conference.

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<sup>4</sup> Elder Mark E. Petersen, “Another Prophet Now Has Come!” October 1972 General Conference.

¶ Hands and fingers were also used to write calumny and incite the mobs against the Saints. ¶ *Your lips have spoken lies*. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Your lips have spoken iniquity.” Luther speaks of it as the teaching of false doctrine and accusing those who have the truth of being false. Gill likewise suggests: “. . . or ‘falsehood’ (רַקִּישׁ ‘falsitatem,’ Montanus, Cocceius; ‘falsum.’ Junius & Tremeliius, Piscator); that is, false doctrines, so called because contrary to the word of truth, and which deceive men.” ¶ Once again, lips and mouths were used to speak untruths against the early Church and even today, this effort has multiplied and has not ceased. According to Oliver Cowdery, Angel Moroni shared the following with the young Prophet Joseph Smith on the instance of his first visit to the spot where the Book of Mormon had been buried: “[Moroni instructed the Prophet and taught him that after the Gospel was restored and the Church founded] Then will persecution rage more and more; for the iniquities of men shall be revealed, and those who are not built upon the rock will seek to overthrow this Church; but it will increase the more opposed, and spread farther and farther, increasing in knowledge till the saints shall be sanctified and receive an inheritance where the glory of God shall rest upon them.”<sup>6</sup> ¶ *Your tongue hath muttered perverseness*. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “deceit” for *perverseness*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And your tongue uttereth iniquity.” In the Talmud (T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 139. 1) these are explained of the several sorts of men in a court of judicature; the ‘hands’ of the judges; the ‘fingers’ of, the Scribes; the ‘lips’ of advocates and solicitors; and the ‘tongue’ of adversaries, or the contending parties.” Gill explains: “That which is a perversion of the Gospel of Christ, and of the souls of men; what is contrary to the sacred Scriptures, the standard of faith and practice, and that premeditated, as the word {תְּהַנֵּה, μελετα, LXX (Ⓞ)} signifies; done with design, and on purpose: the abounding of errors and heresies in the present day, openly taught and divulged, to the ruin of souls, seems here to be pointed at. ¶ This is the same idea of the teaching of false doctrines in the dark ages and throughout even to the time when Gospel was restored. ¶ The Lord sees the wickedness of those who persecuted His restored Church: “Wo unto all those that discomfort my people, and drive, and murder, and testify against them, saith the Lord of Hosts; a generation of vipers shall not escape the damnation of hell” (D&C 121:23). Note the connection between the persecution, murder and vipers.

<sup>6</sup> Brigham H. Roberts, *New Witness for God*, Volume II, p. 65. Special thanks to Monte S. Nyman, *Great are the Words of Isaiah*, pp.225-226, who quotes these words from Oliver Cowdery, *MA*, October 1835, p. 199.

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4 None calleth for justice, nor [any] pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

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*None calleth for justice*. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “There is none that truly prayeth.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “None speaketh just things.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “There is none that calleth upon justice.” Cowles has: “They do not administer law in honesty and faithfulness.” Alexander has: “Kimchi makes the verb [קָרָא] a simple passive, meaning to be tried or judged—‘no one is fairly tried.’” Barnes says: “There is a love of litigation; a desire to take all the advantage which the law can give; a desire to appeal to the law, not for the sake of having strict justice done, but for the sake of doing injury to others, and to take some undue advantage.” ¶ How many times was Joseph Smith taken to court on trumped up charges? ¶ *Nor [any] pleadeth for truth*: The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Nor any that pleadeth for faithfulness.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Nor is there any just judgment.” Instead of *pleadeth for truth*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *judges faithfully*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Neither is there any one that judgeth truly.” Gill says, “For the truth of the Gospel.” Oswalt suggests, “. . . one should not overlook Pieper’s alternate interpretation. He points out the important connections with ISAIAH 58, where the people call on God, but not in righteousness (v. 2), where they seek justice from God while practicing injustice (vv. 2–4). Thus he argues that this verse is another indictment of religion that is not backed up by action.” Luther says, “To judge means to teach. Judgment is the office of teaching and preaching. Then it is also a discerning of the spirit, because they are unable to distinguish between true and false.” ¶ There was little interest as to the truth as the Prophet was arrested time after time and spent week after week in jail. ¶ *They trust in vanity*. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “They trusted in vanities.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “But they trust in a mere nothing.” Horsley has: “Vanity and idle speech may denote the sophisms of irreligious philosophy” regardless of where it comes from. ¶ *And speak lies*. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And they speak lies.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And speak vanities.” One of the biggest lies that is taught against the Church is that we do not believe in Christ. ¶ *They conceive mischief*. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “They hasten.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Because they hatch mischief.” Instead of *mischief*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *iniquity* (Lamsa) / *deceit* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “They have conceived labour.” Wade notes: “*they conceive mischief*, etc. The phrase recurs in Job 15:35: cf. also Psalm 7:14.” Gill explains: “They

‘conceive’ and contrive ‘mischief’ in their minds against those that differ in doctrine and practice from them: ‘and bring forth iniquity’: do that which is criminal and sinful, by words and actions, by calumnies and reproaches, by violence and persecution.” ¶ *And bring forth iniquity.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And bring forth words of violence out of their heart.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “Therefore they bring forth iniquity.” Instead of *iniquity*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *grief* (Lamsa) / *pain* (BPE). The persecution against the Saints caused untold pain and suffering, murder and rapine.

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5 They hatch cockatrice’<sup>✓</sup> eggs, and weave the spider’s web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.<sup>✓ ✓</sup>

✓ or, adders’:

✓ ✓ or, sprinkled is as if there brake out a viper

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*They hatch cockatrice’ eggs.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Behold, they hatch as it were eggs of a basilisk.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “They hatched the eggs of asps.” The Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, as in the margin ||, *adders*. The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “They have broken the eggs of asps.” Shalom Paul suggests: “*They hatch adder’s eggs*] a metaphor for conceiving evil plans.” Cowles has: “One figure grows out of another. Having begun with the figure of ‘conceiving mischief’ and ‘bringing forth iniquity,’ he next thinks of their eggs as hatching out into adders—the most venomous of reptiles; or as death to the eater; or if crushed under foot, lo, a viper springs to life.—Next, their plots are like the spider’s woven web, which however in the outcomes of his figure, is not so much a snare to catch insects as a garment under which to conceal their malicious purposes, which yet is an abortive<sup>7</sup> endeavor.” Jenour suggests: “*The eggs of the basilisk*, mean the thoughts, principles, and doctrines, of the persons spoken of, because these, like eggs, are the *embryos* of actions; for by *brooding*, as it were, upon a certain sort or train of thoughts, actions are at length produced.” Keith explains: “The expression ‘they hatch cockatrice’ eggs,’ implies that their purposes against each other were mischievous and dangerous as serpents are; and that they nurtured these carefully until put in execution, as the serpent sits upon its eggs.” McFadyen has: “The **basilisks’ eggs**, symbolic of the schemes hatched by the wicked, are fatal alike to those who *eat* them (cherish them), and to those who attempt to *crush* them. As this figure brings out the *deadly* nature of those schemes, the other figure of the **spider’s web**, which is amplified in ISAIAH 59:6,

brings out their *futility*.” Wordsworth interestingly says of the cockatrice and the spider, respectively: “The one, the offspring of malice; the other, of human pride and intellectual presumption.” Kay notes: “John Baptist, when preaching repentance, applied the term ‘brood of vipers,’ to the [hypocrites] (Matthew 3:7).” Luther suggests, “When they have brooded for a long time, they hatch for themselves disciples like them, full of malice and the most poisonous vileness. The more showy they are in their hypocrisy, the viler and worse they are.” Gill has: “Invent false doctrines according to their own fancies, which may seem fair and plausible, but are poisonous and pernicious.” This is a description of full apostasy, where truly the darkness was not able to comprehend the light (John 1:5). ¶ *And weave the spider’s web:* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “They are like the threads which the spiders weave.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “And are weaving a spider’s web.” Birks explains: “The basilisk, a venomous serpent, and the spider, a venomous insect, are a double emblem for these plans of iniquity, hatched or woven with pains and care, only to ensnare and destroy.” ¶ *He that eateth of their eggs dieth.* The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “And he who was about to eat some of their eggs.” Jenour has: “Now the *eggs of the basilisk*, it is clear, were considered as poisonous, causing *death* to those who eat them. So then would their principles and doctrines lead to the eternal ruin of those who imbibed them.” Gill explains: “As a man that eats of cockatrice eggs dies immediately, being rank poison; so he that approves of false doctrines, receives them, and feeds upon them, dies spiritually.” ¶ *And that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “And when they are hatched, they bring forth the flying serpents.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “Upon breaking one that was hatched found therein a viper.” The Lamsa Peshitta (Ⓢ) has, “And those which hatch out will be found to be vipers.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “And that which is brought out, shall be hatched into a basilisk.” All of these actions were intended to do harm to the Saints.

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6 Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works [are] works of iniquity, and the act of violence [is] in their hands.

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*Their webs shall not become garments.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Behold, like a spider’s web.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “Their web will not serve for a mantle.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Their webs shall not be for clothing.” Birks well explains: “The spider’s web is now made to yield a further lesson. These subtle schemes, whereby they ensnare and destroy others, shall be worthless to

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<sup>7</sup> Fruitless or unsuccessful (Webster). In other words, they cannot conceal their wickedness.

themselves, as the spider's web is too flimsy to form a garment." Wordsworth similarly has: "Their webs shall not become garments] The ingenious schemes and subtle theories, which they spin, will be as vain as spiders' webs (see Job 8:14)." ¶ *Neither shall they cover themselves with their works:* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, "With which no one can be covered." The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, "Nor can they clothe themselves with their works." Fausset suggests: "The artificial self-deceiving sophisms of human philosophy (1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 2:16, 23)." Barnes has: "The spider's web is unfit for clothing; and the idea here is, that their works are as unfit to secure salvation as the attenuated web of a spider is for raiment. The sense is, says Vitranga, that their artificial sophisms avail nothing in producing true wisdom, piety, virtue, and religion, or the true righteousness and salvation of people, but are airy speculations. The works of the self-righteous and the wicked; their vain formality, their false opinions, their subtle reasonings, and their traditions, are like the web of the spider. They bide nothing, they answer none of the purposes of a garment of salvation." ¶ *Their works [are] works of iniquity, and the act of violence [is] in their hands.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, "Their works are the works of violence, and the work of a lie is in their hands." The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, "For their works are works of iniquity." The Douay-Rheims (Ⓜ) has, "Their works are unprofitable works, and the work of iniquity is in their hands." Henderson, of ISAIAH 59:5-6 explains: "The figures here employed are simple, but forcibly expressive of the fruitlessness of all ungodly plans, and the certainty, that, sooner or later, they will recoil on the head of their inventors." Gill has: "Persecuting such that preach and profess the contrary doctrine."

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**7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts [are] thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction ✓ [are] in their paths.**

✓ breaking

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*Their feet run to evil.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, "Their feet run to do that which is evil." The LXX (Ⓟ) reads, "Their feet are running to evil." The Douay-Rheims (Ⓜ) has, "Their feet run to evil." Wordsworth and others mention that Paul quoted this verse: "Their feet are swift to shed blood" (Romans 3:15). Luther says, "Under the guise of religion they thirst for the blood of the righteous all day long . . . The hypocrites hurry on the task of destruction and to the killing of the righteous . . . *They run*, that is, they are most eager to do harm. I,

Martin Luther, have been burned by them.<sup>8</sup> I am familiar with those who crave and thirst for my blood under the guise of doing homage to God. The prophet had to suffer this too." Wade notes: "Cf. Proverbs 1:16, 24:2." Cowles has: "'Running' and 'making haste' even to murder the innocent, testify to their eagerness in sinning and to their absolute, reckless committal to unscrupulous crime." Certainly, they ran up the stairs in Carthage to do their bloody deed. Barnes explains: "In accordance with the design of the prophet to show the entireness of their depravity, he states that all their members were employed in doing evil . . . The words 'run,' and 'make haste,' are designed to intimate the intensity of their purpose to do wrong. They did not walk slowly; they did not even take time to deliberate; but such was their desire of wrong-doing, that they hastened to execute their plans of evil. People usually walk slowly and with a great deal of deliberation when any good is to be done; they walk rapidly, or they run with haste and alacrity when evil is to be accomplished." ¶ The antithesis is found in the Book of Mormon, "And it came to pass that when Moroni had proclaimed these words, behold, the people came running together with their armor girded about their loins, rending their garments in token, or as a covenant, that they would not forsake the Lord their God; or, in other words, if they should transgress the commandments of God, or fall into transgression, and be ashamed to take upon them the name of Christ, the Lord should rend them even as they had rent their garments" (Alma 46:21). Shalom Paul points us to Proverbs where we find, "These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19). Certainly, all of these things were carried out against the Prophet Joseph Smith and the early Saints. ¶ Elder John Taylor observed, "There is a very material difference between associating with men and women who are the sons and daughters of Zion, and characters such as I have last named. The contrast is so striking, the spirit is so different, the atmosphere varies so much, that any man possessing one spark or particle of the Spirit of the Most High must experience it the moment he breathes the atmosphere and comes in contact with the two contending parties. The one is engaged in the acquisition of wealth: gold is their god, and, associated with that, lust, pollution, and corruption of every

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<sup>8</sup> Martin Luther was born in 1483 and died of illness in 1546. But many other of the reformers were, indeed, burned for their beliefs.

kind.”<sup>9</sup> ¶ *And they make haste to shed innocent blood:* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “They are swift to shed blood.” See Haun’s Mill Massacre and Carthage jail. ¶ *Their thoughts [are] thoughts of iniquity.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “violence” rather than *iniquity*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Their thoughts are unprofitable thoughts.” Alexander has: “The word translated *thoughts* [מַחְשְׁבוֹת], has here and elsewhere the specific sense of purposes, contrivances, devices, which last Lowth employs as an equivalent.” Alma explains that we may be: “raised to endless happiness to inherit the kingdom of God, or to endless misery to inherit the kingdom of the devil, the one on one hand, the other on the other—The one raised to happiness according to his desires of happiness, or good according to his desires of good; and the other to evil according to his desires of evil; for as he has desired to do evil all the day long even so shall he have his reward of evil when the night cometh” (Alma 41:4b-5). King Benjamin taught: “But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not” (Mosiah 4:30). ¶ *Wasting and destruction [are] in their paths.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “plunder” rather than *wasting*. The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Destruction and misery are in their ways.” Instead of *wasting*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *plunder*. Rabbi Ibn Ezra says, “The second half of the verse contains the same idea as the first half.” Gill has: “They waste and destroy all they meet with in their ways, their fellow creatures and their substance; and the ways they walk in lead to ruin and destruction, which will be their portion for evermore.”

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**8 The way of peace they know not; and [there is] no judgment<sup>✓</sup> in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.**

✓ or, right

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*The way of peace they know not; and [there is] no judgment in their goings:* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “The way of peace they know not; and there is not justice in their ways.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And the path of peace they do not know, nor is there any judgment in their ways.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has *steps* instead of *goings*. Oswald well says, “Whatever else the world

may offer us, it can never offer us peace.” Birks has: “‘The way of peace’ is the way of holiness.” Gill explains: “[There is] no justice in their actions, in their dealings with men; no judgment in their religious duties, which are done without any regard to the divine rule, or without being able to give a reason for them; they have no judgment in matters of doctrine or worship; they have no discerning of true and false doctrines, and between that which is spiritual and superstitious in worship; they have no knowledge of the word of God, which should be their guide both in faith and practice.” ¶ Elder John Taylor contrasted between those who truly love the Lord and others: “There is a very material difference between associating with those that have the fear of God before their eyes, whose first object is their own salvation, the salvation of their progenitors and posterity, and the building up of the kingdom of God, and associating with those who ‘have not God in all their thoughts,’ who regard him not in all their transactions, but who are living ‘without God and without hope in the world,’ whose hearts—and I am sorry to say it, but yet it is true—whose hearts are ‘full of cursing and bitterness,’ who roll sin under their tongues as a sweet morsel, ‘whose feet are swift to shed blood,’ and ‘the way of peace,’ as the Prophet hath said, ‘they have not known.’” ¶ *They have made them crooked paths:* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “They have perverted their ways.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “For the paths which they travel are crooked.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Their paths are become crooked to them.” Cheyne has: “Note the four words for ‘way’ in this and the preceding verse, all found in the Book of Proverbs. In ISAIAH 59:7 we have the laboriously constructed ‘highway’: in ISAIAH 59:8, first, the most general word for ‘way,’ next, the waggon-tracks, and lastly, the paths made by the constant treading of wayfarers . . . *Crooked*] reminds us of Proverbs 10:9, 28:18, 2:15.” Birks explains: “The last figure is that of a tortuous or winding footpath.” Such routes move people away from the straight and narrow path of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Savior taught: “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). Cowles has: “*They have made crooked paths, &c.*] Every deviation from the divine law, in the language of scripture, is a *crooked* path. God has in his word pointed out a *direct* way to eternal life, and we must not depart from it to follow courses of our own.” Gill says: “they have devised paths and modes of worship of their own, in which they walk, and which they observe, that are not according to the rule of the word; but deviate from it.” ¶ *Whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And peace they do not know.” Instead

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<sup>9</sup> Elder John Taylor, “Difference between the Spirit of Zion and the Spirit of the World.” Bowery, Great Salt Lake City, 9 August 1857. JD 5:112b.

of *goeth*, the Peshitta (S) has *walks*. The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “Every one that treadeth in them, knoweth no peace.” As was said earlier, peace, true peace, can only be found through discipleship to our Lord Jesus Christ.

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vv. 9-15. These words show the state of affairs at the time when the Gospel was restored to the earth, at the time the Father and the Son appeared to the boy Prophet.

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9 ¶ Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, [but] we walk in darkness.

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*Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us:* The Targum (C) has, “Therefore is judgment removed far from us, and *the least* righteousness does not meet us.” The LXX (G) reads, “Therefore judgment is far from them, and saving mercy shall not overtake them.” Right before the Gospel of Jesus Christ there were many honest individuals who realized that the Gospel and the authority to act in God’s name was not present in the world, but needed to be restored. They looked forward to the day when the Gospel, in its plainness, would be restored. ¶ *We wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, [but] we walk in darkness.* The LXX (G) reads, “When they were waiting for light, darkness came upon them, expecting a blaze of light they walked in obscurity.” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, “We looked for light, and behold darkness: brightness, and we have walked in the dark.” Cowles has: “‘Light’ is the favorite Hebrew emblem of happiness and prosperity.” And that happiness and prosperity came because the windows of heaven were opened to pour out light and truth, revelation from God, which was heeded by the people. Darkness and obscurity are the very opposite. Obscurity describes apostasy while light the restoration of the Gospel. Horsley suggests: “Rather, ‘in the midst of brightness we walk in obscurity.’ For they had eyes, and yet they saw not; light came into the world, but they loved darkness rather than light.” Such light came forth with the truth, be it in the meridian of times, with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, or be it at the time of the restoration of His Gospel in the latter-days. Gill says: “These are the words of the few godly persons in those times . . . in thick fogs, and have scarce any light at all. The meaning is, they waited for deliverance and salvation; but instead of that had the darkness of affliction and distress; or they were expecting latter day light and glory, the clear and bright shining of Gospel truths; but, instead of that, were surrounded with the darkness of ignorance and infidelity, superstition . . .

and walked in the mists and fogs of error and heresy of all sorts . . .”

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10 We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if [we had] no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; [we are] in desolate places as dead [men].

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*We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if [we had] no eyes.* The Targum (C) has, for the second half, “We stumble at noonday as those who stumble in the dark; it is shut up before us, as the graves are shut up before the dead.” The LXX (G) reads, “They shall grope like blind men for a wall and feel about like men who have no eyes, and fall at mid-day as at midnight.” For the last clause, the Peshitta (S) has, “We groan as those who are near death.” The Douay-Rheims (V) has, for the second half, “We have stumbled at noonday as in darkness, we are in dark places as dead men.” Wade, “*at noonday.* i.e. at a time when relief might be fully expected, their calamitous condition is unredressed.” Wordsworth has: “We grope along the wall to guide us.” Rawlinson also, “*We grope for the wall]* rather, *we grope along the wall.*” Wade does well in pointing to the connection with a *Rain in Due Season* verse: “cf. Deuteronomy 28:29.” Kay likewise has: “*We grope for]* Or, *We grope as blind men along the wall* (Deuteronomy 28:29<sup>10</sup>; Job 5:14); seeking in vain for an exit from prison; or, for the entrance into the city of peace (cp. Genesis 19:11).” Rabbi Rosenberg uses “We tap a wall like blind men” rather than *grobe*. Both of these expressions give us a very vivid idea. Fausset suggests: “There is no relaxation of our evils; at the time when we might look for the noon of relief, there is still the night of our calamity.” Gill says: “the eyes of their reason and understanding; but which either were not opened, or they made no use of them in searching the Scriptures, to come at the light and knowledge of divine things; and therefore only at most groped after them by the dim light of nature, if thereby they might find them.” These comments about blind men are a description of the terrible apostasy that would fill the earth. ¶ Oswalt makes several astute observations. He reminds us that in Isaiah 6, the prophet had accused his hearers of blindness, “And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not” (ISAIAH 6:9). And that true vision would have to be reserved for a latter day in the future. Oswalt also quoted ISAIAH 8:16-17 about sealing the testimony for a later date. ¶ Elder James E. Talmage well said: “Regarded from a spiritual point of view we have only to remember how commonly sin is

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<sup>10</sup> One of the tragedies predicted if Israel would be disobedient, see *Rain in Due Season*.

contemplated in Scripture as a moral blindness (Deuteronomy 28:29; ISAIAH 59:10; Job 12:25; Zephaniah 1:17), and deliverance from sin as a removal of this blindness (ISAIAH 6:9, 10; 43:8; Ephesians 1:18; Matthew. 15:14); and we shall at once perceive how fit it was that He who was the ‘light of the world’ should often accomplish works which symbolized so well that higher work which He came into the world to accomplish.”<sup>11</sup> President Joseph Fielding Smith said, “Peter declared: ‘Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’ And there is no sound reason that can be given why the Lord cannot speak today through the agency of holy men, and give commandment to his children. The only reason that would preclude such revelation coming now is that his children refuse to hear his voice, or the voice of his servants. The words of Isaiah are just as true today as they were seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, when he said: ‘Behold the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear.... We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men’ (ISAIAH 59:1-2, 10). Come, let us reason together. In the midst of the religious confusion; when there are hundreds of conflicting doctrines; when men dispute over the meaning of every principle of eternal truth; when the pulpits are filled with disagreement; when modern revisions of the Bible, miscalled translations, have flooded the world with changed interpretations; when ordinances are changed and strange customs introduced in the religious worship, should we not seek the coming of a messenger from the presence of the Lord to set this babel of strife and disunity in order? . . . Never in the history of the world has there been more confusion and disagreement among religious professors than today. How else will this confusion which holds the religious world bound so helplessly in dispute and disagreement ever be brought to a unity in the pure love of God but by new revelation?”<sup>12</sup> Elder Charles W. Penrose similarly declared: “Preachers have multiplied, sects have multiplied, and doctrines have multiplied. And here we are in the latter times, in the nineteenth century, when the people boast so much about Gospel light as well as scientific light, here we are in the nineteenth

century, and the people are groping like blind men for the wall. They do not know God, and some do not care anything about Him.”<sup>13</sup> President Brigham Young taught that men outside the Church could not see the truths of the Gospel: “A great deal has been said and a great deal has been written, and there have been many reflections—more than has been spoken or written, and yet it is one eternal mystery to the world. Why? Because they have not eyes to see, nor ears to hear, and they do not understand the providences of God; and if they read the word of the Lord—the revelations that he has given concerning the living and the dead—they do not understand them, and so the world is left in darkness, to grope their way like the blind man by the wall. Thus it is with the children of men, taking the whole of the Christian world.”<sup>14</sup> Elder George Q. Cannon observed: “It should be a cause of thanksgiving and gratitude with us that God, our Heavenly Father, in the abundance of his goodness and mercy has revealed unto us his everlasting Gospel; that in his kindness he has sent his Holy Angels from the heavens, with the truth, and the power, and authority to administer the truth, and the ordinances pertaining to the truth, unto the inhabitants of the earth. Yes, God in his mercy has visited our planet, where darkness reigned, where confusion and ignorance had spread their dread consequences, and all were like the blind groping for the wall, when the voice of God sounded from the heavens and broke the long silence that had existed for so many generations.”<sup>15</sup> Elder Wilford Woodruff manifested: “Until the light [of the restored Gospel] came, we were groveling in the dark, in a great measure. Though we might be honest, and we might be actuated by the best and holiest feelings, yet, until the fulness of the Gospel was revealed, the world were like the blind groping for the wall. We had no Apostles—no Prophets; we had no inspired men to rise up and tell us what to do to be saved; and we had to go through with all that trouble, misery, and darkness to which the children of men are subject while living under false doctrines, false traditions, and false teachers.”<sup>16</sup>

¶ President George A. Smith warned against personal apostasy: “The facts are, brethren, that the work of the

<sup>11</sup> James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ: A Study of the Messiah and His Mission According to Holy Scriptures Both Ancient and Modern*, pp.260, 302

<sup>12</sup> Smith, Joseph Fielding. *The Restoration of All Things*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973, pp. 70-71.

<sup>13</sup> Elder Charles W. Penrose, “Apostate Condition of the World Foretold” delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, 20 May 1883. JD 25:43.

<sup>14</sup> President Brigham Young, “The World of Mankind Ignorant of Immortality,” delivered at the Funeral Services of Elder Thomas Williams, in the Fourteenth Ward Assembly Rooms, Salt Lake City, Sunday Morning, 19 July 1874. JD 17:140.

<sup>15</sup> Elder George Q. Cannon, “Riches of the Gospel.” Bowery, General Conference, Great Salt Lake City, 8 October 1865. JD 11:170b.

<sup>16</sup> Elder Wilford Woodruff, “Blessings of the Saints.” Delivered in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, 27 December 1857. JD 6:137. Also see JD 9:224b.

Lord does not depend upon us. If we go into darkness, if we let our hearts be filled with covetousness or corruption, or give way to licentiousness, drunkenness, Sabbath breaking, unbelief, or any crime that corrodes our system or organization, so that our tabernacles become unfit for the holy Spirit to dwell in, it will withdraw from us, and the light that is in us becomes darkened, and that darkness is so great that we grope as a blind man and wander hither and thither, and those who suffer themselves to be led by these blind men fall into the ditch with them, but the work rolls right along.”<sup>17</sup> Of those who leave the light and the spirit behind, the Lord warned: “Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God” (D&C 121:38). ¶ Elder Orson Pratt testified of the importance and wonder of living by the Spirit: “The great difficulty with me, and I presume it is also the experience of almost every man and woman in the Church of the living God, is, we are not so faithful as some of the servants of God have been in former days. Some of them were so faithful that they lived constantly in the light of revelation. Their minds were opened to it, and scarcely a thing could transpire but what they understood it beforehand. They did not need the news or intelligence to be brought to them from a distance, but there was a spirit within them and the candle of the Lord gave that spirit understanding in regard to things that were transpiring thousands of miles distant. They lived for this; they walked before the Lord so faithfully that they were entitled to know, not only things that were present with and that would benefit themselves and the people among whom they dwelt, but also things in the future—ages and ages to come were opened up to their minds, and their minds comprehended them by permitting this candle of the Lord to shine upon and illuminate them. It is my most earnest desire to live so as to discern under every condition and circumstance in life precisely what would be most pleasing in the sight of God for me to do, and when I comprehend this I can act as a person who does not grope in the dark, like the blind man who gropes for the wall; but if I live for it, the path in which I should walk will be plain, the Spirit of God being as it were a lamp to my feet, and my guide and instructor by day and by night. Do you not desire Latter-day Saints to be instructed in this way? Every honest-hearted person will answer yes. Everyone who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, and who desires eternal life will acknowledge that he does desire to be thus guided and led.”<sup>18</sup> ¶ *We stumble at noonday as in*

*the night; [we are] in desolate places as dead [men].* The idea is that those who are apostate stumble in the dark while everyone around them can see perfectly well. Nägelsbach has: “The light of midday does not help the blind; he stumbles anyway.” Oswalt here makes another interesting point: that the noonday light may appear as darkness to one while darkness may appear as light to another, all depending on the individuals involved. Horsley continues with his earlier theme of those who were too blind to recognize the truth: “. . . ‘like dead men,’ unable to use and enjoy the good things placed before us.” The antithesis is the restoration of the Gospel and the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon in the last days. When the Angel Moroni visited the boy Prophet, he reported: “While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor” (JS-History 1:30).

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**11 We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but [there is] none; for salvation, [but] it is far off from us.**

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*We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves:* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “We all roar (literally, according to the Royal Polyglot, ‘we gnash with our teeth’) like bears by reason of our enemies, who are gathered against us, and mourn like doves.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “When dying they will groan like a bear and mourn like a dove.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓜ) has, “We shall roar all of us like bears, and shall lament as mournful doves.” Calvin says: “He describes two classes of those who cannot silently endure their afflictions without making them known by external signs; for some howl fiercely, and others *moan* [רַגְזוּ] *like doves*. This latter metaphor was employed by him in describing the groans [רַגְזוּ] of Hezekiah (ISAIAH 38:14).” Cheyne has: “*Like bears ... like doves*] The ‘dove’ is a well-known symbol of lamentation (comp. ISAIAH 38:14, Ezekiel 7:16, Nahum 2:7) . . . but no other Biblical writer, speak of the bear as ‘groaning’ (*gemere, gemitus*).” Alexander says: “The Latin poets also speak of the voice of bears and doves as a *gemitus* or groaning.” Rabbi Ibn Ezra has: “*We roar*, etc. We cry, but nobody comes to our assistance, nobody comes to do us justice.” Who are those lamenting here? I suggest it is the early Saints who were so unfairly treated at every turn. See, for instance the mourning experienced by Joseph Smith while he was falsely imprisoned in Liberty Jail: “O GOD, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy

<sup>17</sup> President George A. Smith, Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, 6 October 1874.JD 17:196.

<sup>18</sup> Elder Orson Pratt, “Spirit of Light and Truth,” delivered in the 13th Ward Assembly Rooms, 24 November 1872. JD 13:233.

hiding place? How long shall thy hand be stayed, and thine eye, yea thy pure eye, behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants, and thine ear be penetrated with their cries? Yea, O Lord, how long shall they suffer these wrongs and unlawful oppressions, before thine heart shall be softened toward them, and thy bowels be moved with compassion toward them? O Lord God Almighty, maker of heaven, earth, and seas, and of all things that in them are, and who controlllest and subjectest the devil, and the dark and benighted dominion of Sheol—stretch forth thy hand; let thine eye pierce; let thy pavilion be taken up; let thy hiding place no longer be covered; let thine ear be inclined; let thine heart be softened, and thy bowels moved with compassion toward us. Let thine anger be kindled against our enemies; and, in the fury of thine heart, with thy sword avenge us of our wrongs. Remember thy suffering saints, O our God; and thy servants will rejoice in thy name forever” (D&C 121:1-6). ¶ *We look for judgment, but [there is] none.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “hoped” rather than *look*. The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And at their departing say, ‘We waited for judgment and there is none.’” In the same section of Doctrine and Covenants that we just quoted above, the Savior warned against those who had so persecuted the Saints: “And they who do charge thee with transgression, their hope shall be blasted, and their prospects shall melt away as the hoar frost melteth before the burning rays of the rising sun . . . Also because their hearts are corrupted, and the things which they are willing to bring upon others, and love to have others suffer, may come upon themselves to the very uttermost . . . and their hopes may be cut off; And not many years hence, that they and their posterity shall be swept from under heaven [allusion, among other things, to the Civil War], saith God, that not one of them is left to stand by the wall. Cursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed, saith the Lord, and cry they have sinned when they have not sinned before me, saith the Lord, but have done that which was meet in mine eyes, and which I commanded them” (D&C 121:11, 13, 14b-16, emphasis added). The injustice would not be remedied in a moment, but in the Lord’s time. Certainly, those who persecuted the Saints did not know the way of justice and salvation, and their feet run to do iniquity and hands to evil. Also, note especially, 121:23, which we quoted in relation to ISAIAH 59:3. ¶ *For salvation, [but] it is far off from us.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “For salvation, but it is far removed from us.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And as for safety, it is far from us.” These words seem to take us back to the questions asked by the Prophet Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail, regarding of the time when their rights would be protected and justice carried out.

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12 For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions [are] with us; and [as for] our iniquities, we know them;

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I see in ISAIAH 59:12 a parenthetical comment made by those who have persecuted the Saints and now find themselves in the Spirit Prison feeling the full weight of their hateful actions. ¶ *For our transgressions are multiplied before thee.* The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “For our manifold iniquity is before thee.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓜ) has *iniquities* instead of *transgressions*. Kay notes regarding *all of the* פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם, חַטָּאתָם and עֲוֹנוֹתָם: “The confession attains its fulness; embodying the three terms, which were used by the high priest on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:21); ‘transgressions . . . sins . . . iniquities.’ They have now exhibited the true ‘affliction of soul’ and are fit objects of the Redeemer’s pity [ISAIAH 59:20].” Westermann notes: “The accumulation of words for ‘sin’ is very noticeable: ‘few chapters in the Bible are so rich and diverse in their vocabulary of sin (cf. Psalm 51)’ (Muilenburg).” ¶ Gill says: “Not only an increase of immorality among the people in common, but among professors of religion.” It is these professors of religion who led the mobs against the Saints of the Most High God. ¶ *And our sins testify against us:* The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “And our sins are risen up against us.” James tells us about the lament of the wicked: “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you” (James 5:1-6). Note that in these verses we not only see the mobs who stole the land from the Saints in Missouri and elsewhere, but the staining of their bloody hands. ¶ *For our transgressions [are] with us.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “For our iniquities are revealed unto us.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “For our iniquities are in us.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓜ) has, “For our wicked doings are with us.” McFadyen has: “It is interesting to find apostasy, **turning away from our God**, which in ISAIAH 57 took the form of idolatry, here expressed in terms of morality.” Once again, those who have harmed the Saints will have to face the awful torment for having

done so. Returning to D&C 121 we have: “Cursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed, saith the Lord, and cry they have sinned when they have not sinned before me, saith the Lord, but have done that which was meet in mine eyes, and which I commanded them. But those who cry transgression do it because they are the servants of sin, and are the children of disobedience themselves. And those who swear falsely against my servants, that they might bring them into bondage and death—Wo unto them; because they have offended my little ones they shall be severed from the ordinances of mine house. Their basket shall not be full, their houses and their barns shall perish, and they themselves shall be despised by those that flattered them. They shall not have right to the priesthood, nor their posterity after them from generation to generation. It had been better for them that a millstone had been hanged about their necks, and they drowned in the depth of the sea” (D&C 121:16-22). ¶ *And [as for] our iniquities, we know them.* The LXX (Ⓜ) reads, “And we know our transgressions.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And we have known our iniquities.” Barnes has: “We recognize them as our sins, and we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that we are transgressors.” And here let us quote the next verses in D&C 121: “Wo unto all those that discomfort my people, and drive, and murder, and testify against them, saith the Lord of Hosts; a generation of vipers shall not escape the damnation of hell. Behold, mine eyes see and know all their works, and I have in reserve a swift judgment in the season thereof, for them all; For there is a time appointed for every man, according as his works shall be” (D&C 121:23-25).

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### 13 In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

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*In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “We have rebelled, and acted falsely against the Word of the Lord; we have turned backward<sup>19</sup> from following after the worship of our God.” The LXX (Ⓜ) reads, “We have sinned: we have lied, and turned back from following our God.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “In sinning and lying against the Lord: and we have turned away so that we went not after our God.” Again we see

<sup>19</sup> Uses the Aramaic (Ⓢ), “and turn around backward,”

וְאִסְתַּחֲרֵנָּה לְאַחֲרָה. Similarly, see verse 14 in the Ⓢ. The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) in verse 14 uses the same root-based expression: “וְהִסַּג אַחֲרָיִם.”

the description of the deepest of apostasies. Cowles has: “The original [Hebrew] of ISAIAH 59:13 is a model of compact and forcible description which can scarcely be transferred to our language.” Leaser translates it as: “We transgressed and denied the Lord, and departed away from our God; we spoke oppression and revolt, conceived and brought forth in our heart words of falsehood.” LITV renders it: “transgressing and lying against Jehovah, and backsliding from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and murmuring words of falsehood from the heart.” Horsley offers: “*Apostasy* and treachery towards Jehovah, A turning away from following our God, *Deceiving speech* and revolt: *Words of falsehood* have been conceived and studied in the heart” (emphasis added). ¶ Cheyne has: “A threefold description of apostasy opens the verse.—**Treason** (lit., ‘diruptio’ sc. fœderis), **unfaithfulness** (lit., ‘belying,’ i.e., atheism, Jeremiah 5:12), and **drawing back** (i.e., the overt act of apostasy). Evidently the prophet refers to a paganising movement of special intensity . . .” Gill says: “They transgress the doctrine of Christ.” Once again, still speaking of those who persecuted the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Saints. ¶ *Speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “We have spoken falsehood and apostasy, hastening and bringing forth from their hearts lying words.” The LXX (Ⓜ) reads, “We have spoken things unjust, and have been disobedient; we have conceived and meditated from our heart lying words” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “But spoke calumny and transgression: we have conceived, and uttered from the heart, words of falsehood.” Horsley has: “The ‘words of falsehood’ I take to be the sophisms of philosophers and the quibbles of hypocrites . . . ‘Deceiving speech’<sup>20</sup> is the same thing.” Cheyne, continuing from before, has: “Then follow sins of the lips (comp. on ISAIAH 6:5).—**Transgression**] Lit., ‘deviation’ Hebr. *sārāh*). Nägelsbach remarks that this phrase (‘speaking deviation’) is elsewhere used only of the false teaching of ‘pseudo-prophets’ Deuteronomy 13:5 (Biblia Hebraica 13:6), Jer. 28:16, 29:32), and that the writer is probably alluding to the seductive discourses of such persons. This is possible indeed, but far from certain, as sins of the lips are ascribed to the whole nation in v. 3, and ‘deviation’ from moral and spiritual truth was not peculiar to prophets.” Gill has: “The Targum renders it, ‘falsehood and apostasy’; false doctrine, which leads to apostasy from Christ . . . false doctrines; such as agree not with, but are contrary to, the word of God; these are of their own conceiving and contriving; the produce of their own brains; the fruit of their own fancy and imaginations.” Many words of calumny were spoken against the Saints.

<sup>20</sup> See Horsley’s translation, above.

14 And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

*And judgment is turned away backward.* The LXX (6) reads, “We have indeed turned judgment backward.” YLT reads: “And removed backward is judgment, And righteousness [מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה] afar off standeth.” Rotherham has: “So then there hath been a driving back of justice, And righteousness [מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה], afar off, standeth.” Luther says, “*Judgment and justice* Judgment must be present so that we may turn away from evil, and justice, so that we may do what is good.” Regarding the lack of justice and righteousness, please see below, ISAIAH 59:16, the report of the Prophet Joseph Smith and President Martin Van Buren, where precisely these words were used by the Prophet. Also, the Governor of Illinois, Thomas Ford, did nothing to protect the Prophet Joseph Smith and those incarcerated with him. President Gordon B. Hinckley related: “[Joseph Smith] told the governor of the danger surrounding him. The governor dismissed it. He said he was going to Nauvoo the next day and promised that if he did so, he would take Joseph with him. He repeated that pledge when he left that morning. In the afternoon, the constable arrived at the jail accompanied by men of the Carthage Grays. The prisoners were marched to the courthouse in public humiliation. There, after an hour of debate over legal matters, the court adjourned until noon the next day. Joseph and Hyrum were brought back to the jail. The weather was sultry and hot and miserable. The next morning, Dan Jones, who had spent the night in the jail with Joseph and Hyrum, left to carry a message. He talked with Frank Worrel, one of the Carthage Grays. He reported that Worrel said: ‘We have had too much trouble to bring old Joe here to let him ever escape alive, and unless you want to die with him, you had better leave before sundown. . . . You’ll see that I can prophesy better than old Joe, for neither he nor his brother, nor anyone who will remain with them will see the sunset today.’ Dan Jones reported this to Governor Ford who responded that Jones was ‘unnecessarily alarmed.’ At 10:30 that morning, Governor Ford and his troops left for Nauvoo, leaving those in the jail behind at the mercy of the mob militia.”<sup>21</sup> Where was judgment or truth in any of this? ¶ *And justice standeth afar off:* The LXX (6) reads, “Therefore saving mercy standeth aloof.” As one reads matters related to the history of the Church one senses that indeed there was

<sup>21</sup> President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Joseph, the Seer.” September 1994 *Ensign*.

so much hatred and enmity against the Saints. Truly, nothing was done, except by a very few righteous men who refused to harm the Saints. ¶ *For truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.* The Targum (7) has, “For they that follow truth stumble in the street; and they that follow faithfulness cannot shew themselves.” The LXX (6) reads, “Because truth was destroyed in their ways and; they could not walk in straight paths.” The Douay-Rheims (8) has, “Because truth hath fallen down in the street, and equity could not come in.” President John Taylor quoted this scripture as he spoke of the increasing epidemic of abortion in America in 1884.<sup>22</sup> ¶ Cheyne suggests: “*Hath stumbled in the broad place* ‘Broad places’ was a name specially given to the recesses on each side of the city-gate, ‘used as places of assembly during the day, and as places of rest for guests [say rather for strangers, Judges 19:20] during the night’ (Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 57) . . . *Cannot enter*’ i.e., cannot find admittance to the tribunal, to give evidence for the right.” Henderson has: “רחוב properly signifies a wide open street, but here it seems rather to be used in reference to the forum, or broad open place at the gate, where justice was administered.” ¶ When I read this verse a few weeks ago, I thought of the Prophet Joseph Smith as he fell down to the ground in Carthage jail, the day he was martyred along with his brother Hyrum. And also, of the two Prophets in Jerusalem, that shall be martyred in the last days. And then, today, I read this from Luther, “This is what happens when the preachers of the truth are condemned and killed . . .” Continuing with the narrative by President Hinckley of the happenings surrounding Carthage jail, we have: “The jailer suggested about 5:00 P.M. that the four of them in the jail—Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Willard Richards, and John Taylor—might be safer if they went into the cell at the back of the second floor. Joseph indicated that they would do so after supper. A few moments later, a noise was heard outside, followed by a cry of surrender. Then came two or three gunshots. Willard Richards looked out the window and saw a large group of men with painted faces. The mob ran up the steep stairs and began firing. The prisoners pushed the door shut and then tried to knock down the guns sticking through the door. John Taylor used Stephen Markham’s large hickory cane, and Willard Richards used John Taylor’s cane. A bullet fired through the door hit Hyrum on the left side of the nose. Another ball, coming through the window, hit him in the back almost simultaneously. Two other balls hit him as he fell. John Taylor was then hit. One of the balls struck his watch. It stopped at 5:16 P.M. We still have that watch. One or two balls then hit Joseph. He jumped to the window,

<sup>22</sup> President John Taylor, Ogden, 19 October 1884. JD 25:354.

paused for a moment, cried out, ‘Oh Lord, my God,’ then fell out the window, his body resting against the curb of the well. It was all over. Joseph was dead. Hyrum was dead. John Taylor was wounded. Willard Richards miraculously escaped.”<sup>23</sup>

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15 Yea, truth faileth; and he [that] departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: ✓ and the LORD saw [it], and it displeased him ✓ that [there was] no judgment.

- ✓ or, is accounted mad
- ✓ ✓ it was evil in his eyes

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*Yea, truth faileth; and he [that] departeth from evil maketh himself a prey:* The Targum (Ⓒ) has, for the first half, “And they that follow truth are hidden.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And truth was removed and they substituted opinion in place of knowledge.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ), “Yea, truth is hid, and *understanding* (Lamsa) / *prudence* (BPE) has departed from our mind.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And truth hath been forgotten: and he that departed from evil, lay open to be a prey.” Skinner says: “*maketh himself a prey*] . . . Another, and possibly a better rendering is, ‘withdraws himself’; compare the peculiar use of the simple verb in Ruth 2:16 (‘draw out’ corn from the sheaf).” ¶ Rawlinson has: “Once let there be no regard for truth in a state, no discredit attaching to lying, and all virtue is undermined, all soundness is vanished—nothing remains but ‘wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores’ (ISAIAH 1:6).” Gill notes: “He that does not give in to the prevailing vices of the age in which he lives, now become fashionable, but abstains from them, and departs from doctrinal as well as practical evils; from all false doctrines, and from all superstitious modes of worship; becomes a prey to others; a reproach and a laughing stock to them; they scoff at him, and deride him for his preciseness in religion; for his enthusiastic and irrational notions in doctrine; and for his stiffness in matters of worship: or, ‘he makes himself reckoned a madman’ (מִשְׁתוֹלֵל) ‘*facit ut insanus habeatur*,’ Junius & Tremellius; ‘*habitus est pro insano*,’ Vitranga; so Abendana, ‘he that fears God, and departs from evil,’ יַחֲשָׁבוּהוּ לְשׂוֹטָה, ‘they reckon him a fool or a madman.’); as some render it; and this is a common notion with profane men, and loose professors, to reckon such as madmen that are upright in doctrine, worship, and conversation; see Acts 26:24.” Cowles well says: “Let us pause here for a moment to note that

such flagrant immoralities, such utter prostration of all justice, even in those civil institutions which God had established among his people for its support, are accounted of God as overwhelming proofs of utter apostasy. In his view there can be no piety where there is such utter lack of common morality. His professed people are hopelessly degenerate; even their religion has become a mass of putridity.” Such conditions point to the state of affairs in every epoch of apostasy. It is not limited to the apostasy of Israel but encompasses also the Christian apostasy. It not only describes the violence with which the Savior was treated during His sojourn upon the earth, but also how His servants were treated when His Gospel was restored upon the earth in the latter days. ¶ *And the LORD saw [it], and it displeased him that [there was] no judgment.* The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “It is revealed before the Lord, that there is no justice, which is evil in His sight.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Therefore the Lord took a view, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “And the Lord saw, and it appeared evil in his eyes, because there is no judgment.” Alexander writes: “*Then Jehovah saw and it was evil in his eyes that there was no judgment*] or practical justice.” Wade has: “The writer, in ISAIAH 59:16-17, projects himself into the future, and relates what is to be as though it had already happened. The prophetic perfects are replaced by the future in ISAIAH 59:18 f.” Cheyne has: “All is still future, though described as past in the language of prophetic certitude.” ¶ **וַיֵּרָא בְּעֵינָיו**, and it displeased him, literally, as in the margin ||, is *and it was evil in his eyes*, as noted by the Targum (Ⓒ), and also see Barnes, LITV, YLT. One can see the mounting tension, where the Lord is not pleased with the way His Saints are being treated.

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vv. 16-18. There was no man in government to stand and make sure that the Saints were protected from mobocracy.

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16 ¶ And he saw that [there was] no man, and wondered that [there was] no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

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*And he saw that [there was] no man, and wondered that [there was] no intercessor:* The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “And it is revealed in His sight that there is no man who hath good works, and it is known to Him that there is no man, who would arise and seek after them.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “When he took a view and there was no man; and made close observation.” Instead of *intercessor*, the

<sup>23</sup> President Gordon B. Hinckley, “Joseph, the Seer.” September 1994 *Ensign*.

Peshitta (S) has *one to help* (Lamsa) / *no one to come to the rescue* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “And he saw that there is not a man: and he stood astonished, because there is none to oppose himself.” Rawlinson has: “God looked for some champion of the oppressed to arise; it was to be expected under the circumstances. But, alas! ‘there was no man.’ None stood up to resist the unrighteous and protect the innocent; much less did any stand up to deliver Israel from its heathen adversaries.” Wade has for אֵין מְפַיֵעַ: “no intercessor] Better, none to interpose. The verb, though identical with that used in ISAIAH 53:12 [מְפַיֵעַ], root פָּנַע, here has a different sense and means one who intervenes actively to aid.” Cheyne has: “The apparent parallelism of Jeremiah 5:1 is delusive; ‘no man’ does not here mean ‘no man of honesty and integrity,’ but ‘no champion.’ It corresponds to the phrase in the next line, ‘none to interpose.’” Alexander says: “The repetition of the words *and he saw* connects this verse in the closest manner with the one before it.” “Cowles has: “‘Man’ in the sense of a whole man, a hero, and ‘intercessor’ in the sense of one who intervenes for help, are equivalent expressions, meaning, that God saw no helper and no help for this state of things, and therefore aroused himself to the needful work.” The word “hero” here is an interesting one. In ISAIAH 9:6 some have substituted the word *God* for *hero* (e.g., see Luther and Moffatt). One of my Jewish friends insisted in translating it using the word *hero*, also, which of course is a way of taking Christ out of the equation. See also Whitehouse, who says, “. . . conception of Yahweh as a warrior-hero.” Gratefully, almost all translators use the word *God* in ISAIAH 9:6, as does the KJV: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” And this verse in ISAIAH 59 certainly seems to be speaking of the Christ as an intercessor. Even in pre-mortal life Christ offered Himself to be our intercessor, which is what we see in ISAIAH 63:3, 5. He would expiate for us alone. ¶ In ISAIAH 63 we will see some similar statements as made here, but in that place the reference is to the atonement. Here, there is an allusion to the atonement, which the Lord had to carry out on His own, but it also refers to the lack of man, especially the governors and even the President of the United States, in protecting the Saints from the persecutions they were submitted to. Indeed, there was no intercessor to defend the Saints against mobocracy. In the *History of the Church*, we read this from the Prophet Joseph Smith: “During my stay I had an interview with Martin Van Buren, the President [of the USA], who treated me very insolently, and it was with great reluctance he listened to our message, which, when he had heard, he said:

‘Gentlemen, your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you;’ and ‘If I take up for you I shall lose the vote of Missouri.’ His whole course went to show that he was an office-seeker, that self-aggrandizement was his ruling passion, and that *justice and righteousness* [מִשְׁפָּט וְצְדָקָה] were no part of his composition”<sup>24</sup> (emphasis added, see ISAIAH 59:14, above). ¶ *Therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.* The Targum (T) has, “Therefore He will redeem them by the arm of His strength, and by the Word of His delight He will help them.” The LXX (G) reads, “And there was no helper; then with his own arm he defended them and with mercy supported them.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “And his own arm brought salvation to him, and his own justice supported him.” Skinner also mentions the prophetic perfect: “That the whole description refers to a future event can hardly be questioned. The perfects in this verse and the next are those of prophetic certainty.” ¶ Jenour quotes Revelation 19:11 (“In righteousness doth he judge and make war”) and says: “But if the reference be to the salvation of the righteous, as is perhaps the case, for both the one and the other are treated of in these verses, then the expression, ‘His righteousness sustained him,’ must signify, that in accomplishing the work of redemption, the Son of God was sustained by that perfect and divine righteousness which was inherent in him.” ¶ This verse speaks of the Lord’s arm to be stretched forth for the benefit of the Saints.

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**17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance [for] clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.**

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*For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head.* The Targum (T) has, “It is revealed, that He will work a great salvation for His people.” The LXX (G) reads, “And he put on righteousness as a breast plate, and placed on his head the helmet of salvation.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has *justice* instead of *righteousness*. McFadyen has: “The fullest description in the Old Testament of Jehovah as a ‘man of war’ (Exodus 15:3), and the model for the New Testament descriptions of the Christian’s armor (1 Thessalonians 5:8; Ephesians 6:14–17).” Alexander notes: “צְדָקָה signifies the righteousness of God.” Barnes says: “That is, God the Redeemer. The prophet here introduces him as going forth to vindicate his

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<sup>24</sup> *History of the Church* 4:80.

people clad like an ancient warrior.” Gill suggests: “Here the Lord is represented as a warrior clothed with armour, and as Christ is, and as he will appear in the latter day on the behalf of his people, and against their enemies, who is called faithful and true, and in righteousness will make war, Revelation 19:11, he will proceed according to justice and equity in righting the wrongs and avenging the injuries of his people; and both in saving them, and destroying their enemies, he will secure the honour of his faithfulness and justice, and the credit of his name and character; which will be preserved by his conduct.” ¶ Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: “This same offer of forgiveness, of joy and comfort, and of salvation for gathered Israel is held out . . . in the great Messianic prophecy which includes the declaration: ‘Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned’ (ISAIAH 40:1-2). In another wondrous and scarcely known passage, Jehovah tells of his power to save, of Israel’s apostasy, of the need for an intercessor, and of how he put on the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation in the warfare that finally turned transgression from Jacob and brought them again into his everlasting covenant. Truly, when his people repent and return unto him, the importunings of the Great Jehovah are heeded by his Father and our Father and by his God and our God.”<sup>25</sup> ¶ *And he put on the garments of vengeance [for] clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Yea, He will render vengeance to His enemies.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And threw around him the mantle of vengeance; and his cloak.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) is missing the second clause, *and was clad &c.* Once again, this means that the Lord would avenge the Saints. And in a future day, will avenge Israel when she is under attack, also.

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**18 According to [their] deeds, ✓  
accordingly he will repay, fury to his  
adversaries, recompense to his enemies;  
to the islands he will repay recompense.**

✓ recompences

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*According to [their] deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “He is the Lord of retributions, He shall render recompense: vengeance to His enemies, retribution to His adversaries.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “As about to retribute retribution — reproach to his adversaries.” The first clause, in the Peshitta (Ⓢ), reads something like, “To the end that he may seek vengeance upon those who hate him.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has,

<sup>25</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ*, pp.312, 331.

“As unto revenge, as it were to repay wrath to his adversaries, and a reward to his enemies.” The only ancient manuscript that makes any sense here is the Syriac (Ⓢ). The Spanish Syriac (Ⓢ) translation is not as clear: “A fin de vengarse de los que lo aborrecían y retribuir a sus adversarios. Dara el pago a las islas”.<sup>26</sup> Rawlinson has: “*He will repay*] The ordinary future here, and in the remainder of the prophecy, replaces the ‘perfect of prophetic certitude,’ which has been employed in ISAIAH 59:16-17.” Keith well says: “This language is applied to the destruction of the nations which shall be gathered against Jerusalem.” ¶ Elder Orson Hyde used this scripture to teach that we ought to fear God more than man.<sup>27</sup> This scripture has other applications, also. The Saints looked for redress from the government to no avail, and the Lord permitted the US Civil War to take place, partly in fulfillment to the persecutions and atrocities against the Saints. Brent D. Dowdle says in his paper, “Although acknowledging that the [Civil] war would come at a tremendous cost to the nation, Brigham Young believed that America had contracted a substantial debt through its persecution of the Saints and that any result other than the ‘overthrow’ of the nation ‘would rob justice of its claims.’ [Brigham Young to Charles C. Rich, April 4, 1861, Brigham Young Office Files, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City]”<sup>28</sup> ¶ *To the islands he will repay recompense.* The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “He will repay the like to the islands.” Lamsa’s Syriac (Ⓢ) has: “That he may seek vengeance upon those who hate him, and retribution to his adversaries, and to the islands he will render recompense.”<sup>29</sup> As does Bauscher’s interlinear, “And he shall repay his enemies and to the islands he will pay reward.”<sup>30</sup> Oswalt notes that *repay* or *recompense*—as *appeasing debts* (שָׁלוֹם, from שָׁלוֹם), come from the same root as *peace* (שָׁלוֹם). Oswalt says, “It is hard to escape the sense that the choice of the word is ironic. God will give שָׁלוֹם, ‘peace,’ to those who love him (cf. ISAIAH 57:19), but he will ‘pacify’ all accounts with his enemies.” We know that the people of the islands

<sup>26</sup> *Biblia Peshitta en Español. Traducción de los antiguos manuscritos arameos.* Holman.

<sup>27</sup> Elder Orson Hyde, “Zion,” *Tabernacle*, Salt Lake City, 10 March 1872. JD 5:141b.

<sup>28</sup> Brett D. Dowdle, “‘What Means This Carnage?’: The Civil War in Mormon Thought,” in *Civil War Saints*, ed. Kenneth L. Alford (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012), 107–25. URL accessed 25Oct2016. <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/civil-war-saints/what-means-carnage-civil-war-mormon-thought>

<sup>29</sup> George Lamsa *Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts*, Holman.

<sup>30</sup> Rev. Glenn David Bauscher, *The Aramaic-English Interlinear Peshitta Old Testament, An Interlinear Translation*, Lulu Publishing.

would become disciples of the Lord. Keith well says: “Israel is to be recovered at last from the islands of the sea (ISAIAH 41:4); they are called on as particularly concerned in the final restoration of Israel (ISAIAH 41:1); and to them the knowledge of the Lord is at last to extend (ISAIAH 51:5).”

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vv. 19-21. Now, let us return again to the words of the Savior in 3 Nephi 16: “And then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them. And I will show unto thee, O house of Israel, that the Gentiles shall not have power over you; but I will remember my covenant unto you, O house of Israel, and ye shall come unto the knowledge of the fulness of my gospel” (3Nephi 16:11-12). The Lord will be merciful upon the Gentiles, also: “But if the Gentiles will repent and return unto me, saith the Father, behold they shall be numbered among my people, O house of Israel. And I will not suffer my people, who are of the house of Israel, to go through among them, and tread them down, saith the Father” (3 Nephi 16:13-14). To the Gentiles who reject the Gospel and the Book of Mormon the Lord says: “But if they will not turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, I will suffer them, yea, I will suffer my people, O house of Israel, that they shall go through among them, and shall tread them down, and they shall be as salt that hath lost its savor, which is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of my people, O house of Israel. Verily, verily, I say unto you, thus hath the Father commanded me—that I should give unto this people this land for their inheritance” (3 Nephi 16:15-16). ¶ Elder Orson Pratt rejoiced: “But when the Lord begins to move, and show forth his power, when he begins to light up the habitations of Zion, when he comes to Zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob, then I think the nations will begin to wake up. Let us read a little more about the glory of Zion in the 59<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> chapters of ISAIAH. I told you a little while ago that Jesus would come to Zion and would show forth his glory there . . . Now let me read a prophecy in the latter part of the 59<sup>th</sup> chapter of ISAIAH. ‘So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words that I put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth even forever. Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.’ You notice here, then, that the Redeemer is to come to Zion, at the time when

every habitation is lighted up with his light, and to all that turn from transgression in Jacob. Now let me here remark that this remnant of the house of Israel or Jacob, which we term the American Indians, are eventually to become a righteous branch of the house of Israel; when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, they will be numbered among the people of the covenant made with ancient Israel, they will be a branch of the Lord, beautiful and glorious, excellent and comely, and the power of the Lord will be upon them. In that day Jesus will come to them, they being a remnant of the tribe of Joseph. Then will be fulfilled that which was predicted by the Patriarch Jacob upon the descendants of Joseph. Speaking of Joseph he says, ‘Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel.)’ (Genesis 49:22-24). When Jesus comes to Zion as is here predicted, in the 59<sup>th</sup> chapter of ISAIAH, he will come in the character of a great shepherd. Not in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; but appearing in the midst of Zion and administering to the remnants of Joseph in the character of a shepherd. From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel (Genesis 49:24). Now we all know that Jesus sprang from Judah; but here is a declaration that from Joseph is the shepherd, the stone of Israel. That is, he will come the second time as a shepherd. He will gather his flock, or as the Psalmist David has said, ‘Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; stir up thy strength, and come and save us’ (Psalm 80:1-2). He will come as a shepherd, he will stir up his strength and show forth his power and the remnant of Joseph will be led by their shepherd, long before the Jews are redeemed. ‘Arise, and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee’ (ISAIAH 60:1).”<sup>31</sup>

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**19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard<sup>v</sup> against him.**

✓ or, put him to flight

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*So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And they from the west shall revere the name of the Lord; and they from the rising of the sun, his glorious name.” Instead of *fear*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has

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<sup>31</sup> JD 14:354a-355a.

revere. The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “And they from the west, shall fear the name of the Lord: and they from the rising of the sun.” Kay suggests: “The consequence will be the spread of true religion—the ‘fear of the name of the Lord,’ Psalm 102:15—over the whole world (Malachi 1:11<sup>32</sup>). The *west* is mentioned first; resuming the ‘isles’ of ISAIAH 59:18.” Now observe Henderson’s comments here: “It is particularly worthy of notice, that, while in every other passage of Scripture in which the spread of the Gospel is spoken of, it is uniformly represented as advancing from the East towards the West, that order is here reversed. True religion is first set forth as flourishing in the West, and then in the Eastern regions of the earth.” See notes on ISAIAH 18.

¶ *When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.* The Targum (C) has, “When the oppressors shall come in like an inundation of the river Euphrates, they shall be broken (or, ‘dispersed’) by the Word of the Lord.” The LXX (G) reads, “For he will come like an impetuous stream—for the wrath of the Lord will come with fury.” Instead of *enemy*, the Peshitta (S) has *oppressor*; and instead of *lift up, bring down* (BPE) / *humble* (Lamsa). The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “His glory: when he shall come as a violent stream, which the spirit of the Lord driveth on.” Wordsworth notes: “. . . the Hebrew verb to ‘lift up a standard’ (נָסַף), carries back the thoughts to *Jehovahnessi* (יְהוָה נָסַף, Exodus 17:15).” Alexander explains: “נָסַף [here is given] the sense of *when*.” Gill has: “When Satan, the common ‘enemy’ of mankind, the avowed and implacable enemy of Christ and his people, ‘shall come’ into the world . . . and has already entered ‘like’ an impetuous flood, threatening to carry all before him, introducing a flood of immorality and profaneness, as in the days of Noah and Lot, to which the times of the Son of Man’s coming are likened, Luke 17:26 or else a flood of error and heresy of all sorts; see Revelation 12:15 and likewise a flood of persecution, as will be at the slaying of the witnesses, that hour of temptation that will come upon all the earth, to try the inhabitants of it, Revelation 3:10 . . . Christ and his Gospel, or Christ the standard lifted up in the ministry of the Gospel (Isaiah 11:10), a set of ministers shall be raised up, having the everlasting Gospel, which they shall publish to all nations, and which shall have an universal spread; and by means of which the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; and which will be a sufficient check to the enemy’s flood of immorality, error, and persecution; and which, after this, shall be no more; see Revelation 14:6.” Kay suggests: “So, above all, when *the prince of this world came*, expecting to complete his victory over

man (John 14:30). So at all later epochs (Revelation 12:15-17).” Horsley has: “‘He shall come as a river straitened in its course.’<sup>33</sup> The river straitened in its course, and acquiring force and velocity from its confinement, is an image of the suddenness and irresistible force of the Messiah’s coming in the latter ages, when the reasons that have so long restrained the full display of his might shall no longer operate.” Keith suggests: “When the guilty nations of the earth shall have gathered in great force against Jerusalem, the Lord, through some instrumentality, will meet them, and put them down (margin ||): ‘I will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them for my people and for my heritage Israel,’ (Joel 3:2).” Skinner suggests: “For the image in the last clause cf. ISAIAH 30:28 (‘His breath is as an overflowing stream’).” Clarke, leaning on Kimhi, has: “Kimchi says, he that was the standard-bearer always began the battle by first smiting at the enemy. Here then the Spirit of the Lord is the standard-bearer, and strikes the first blow. They who go against sin and Satan with the Holy Spirit at their head, are sure to win the day.” Shalom Paul observes: “The word נָסַף is thus an attribute of the river (Abravanel), described as having a devastatingly strong current {so too LXX (G) and Vulgate (D)}.”

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20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

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The Targum (C) has, from the second clause, “And turn<sup>34</sup> the transgressors of the house of Jacob to the law, saith the Lord.” The LXX (G) reads, “For the sake of Sion the Deliverer will come, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “And there shall come a redeemer to Sion, and to them that return from iniquity in Jacob, saith the Lord.” The Targum tradition (Seder Mo’ed, Yoma 86b) has “Great is repentance, because it brings about redemption, as it is said And a redeemer will come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, i.e., why will a redeemer come to Zion? Because of those that turn from transgression in Jacob” (Talmud, Soncino). The expression וְלִשְׁבִי פָשַׁע, and [to] turn from transgression, is a beautiful one. As we have said, in the Old Testament, the words *turn* or *return* (from the root שׁוּב), indicate *repentance*—or else, apostasy, turning away from God. Whitehouse also points out that “turn”

<sup>32</sup> Better, with AMP, Leeser, and others, “among the *nations*.”

<sup>33</sup> This is an interesting figure in that very old rivers twist and wind like a serpent, while younger ones are straighter and faster.

<sup>34</sup> Here the Masoretic text (M) has וְלִשְׁבִי, associated with the שׁוּב of repentance, while the Targum (C) has וְלִשְׁבִי תָּבָא.

[וְיִשְׁכְּבוּ] here means “converted.” ¶ Henderson suggests, regarding ISAIAH 59:20-21: “It is impossible for anyone impartially to examine the scope and management of the Apostle’s argument, Romans 11, and not to perceive that he quotes this passage in verses 26, 27, for the express purpose of proving, from the Old Testament, the future conversion of the Jewish people. The chronology of the two writers is in the strictest harmony. For, as Isaiah introduces the conversion of the Jews as happening after the general extension of true religion among the Gentiles, so Paul manifestly links the two events together in the same order: ‘Blindness in part is happened to Israel UNTIL THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES BE COME IN. AND SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED: as it is written,’ &c. . . . The principal idea being the conversion of the Jewish people . . . From the circumstance that the advent of the Saviour is limited, in the way of promise, to such of the Jews as should repent, and turn to God.” Oswalt observes that יִשְׁכְּבוּ is also mentioned in ISAIAH 58:1, but there Jacob is declared as rebellious while here repentant: “Thus the section (ISAIAH 58:1–59:21) has moved from declaration of sin to turning from sin, and from judgment to redemption.” ¶ Elder Reed Smoot said in General Conference, “. . . it had been declared (Numbers 24:17): ‘There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel.’ The great Prophet Isaiah later explained (ISAIAH 59:20): ‘The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.’ This was to Israel the promised and hoped for Christ, who so firmly declared this basic principle of faith in the living God (John 14:1): ‘Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.’”<sup>35</sup> Birks suggests: “*And there shall come for Zion*] The renderings ‘unto Zion,’ AV, ‘for the sake of Zion,’ LXX, ‘out of Zion,’ Romans 11:26, are not inconsistent. The Hebrew is ‘for’ in the sense, ‘on behalf of,’ which ‘unto’ nearly expresses, only not being understood in its local sense. The Apostle’s version ‘out of’ seems an allusion to Psalm 14:7. That this Redeemer will ‘turn away ungodliness from Jacob’ is implied, though not clearly expressed. After the dark description in ISAIAH 59:11–15, the fact that so many converts are found is a proof that this Redeemer has been exalted ‘to give repentance to Israel.’” Kay mentions: “In Romans 11:26 St. Paul unites ISAIAH 2:3 and ISAIAH 27:9 with ISAIAH 59:20-21.” Cheyne notes: “*To Zion*] i.e., to the remnant of Israel—‘those that have turned from rebellion’ (comp. ISAIAH 1:27), as the parallel line tells us. This limitation is one which English students of the prophecies would do well to remember: it shows that the Messianic promises to Israel are only meant for a converted and

regenerate people.” Young has: “In Romans 11:26 Paul renders *from Zion*, which is correct grammatically, the preposition may also have this force.” Wordsworth notes: “*the Redeemer shall come to Zion*] Compare to Malachi 3:1, ‘The Lord shall suddenly come to His Temple.’” President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: “Malachi speaks of the Lord sending his messenger to prepare the way before him, and while that does have reference to the coming of John the Baptist, it is one of those prophecies in the scriptures that has a double fulfilment. It has reference also to the coming of the Prophet Joseph Smith, because that messenger which was to come and prepare the way before him, was to come in this day.”<sup>36</sup> ¶ Birks has: “Another event in those days is the presence of the Redeemer in Zion; see ISAIAH 2:2. That will be when the judgments of Israel shall be over, and their enemies subdued, and the fear of the Lord upon all flesh. The apostle Paul applies the verse, which he quotes with some variations, to the occasion of the final conversion of the Jews, and the application of this one determines the meaning of all similar passages: ‘And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written. There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob,’ (Romans 11:26). The import of the original and of the quotation is similar. It amounts to the same thing whether it be said that Christ comes to Zion to deliver, or that the deliverer appears from that quarter. Both agree on the direction from which salvation is to come to Judea and to the world. But while the fact of some manifestation of Christ’s presence in Zion is made clear, the manner of it is left as much in the dark.” Perhaps not so dark to the LDS. ¶ Elder Orson Pratt explained: “[The Lord] will return [the Saints] to Jackson County, and in the western part of the State of Missouri they will build up a city which shall be called Zion, which will be the headquarters of this Latter-day Saint Church; and that will be the place where the prophets, apostles, and inspired men of God will have their headquarters. It will be the place where the Lord God will manifest Himself to His people, as He has promised in the Scriptures (Zechariah 2:10; ISAIAH 59:20) as well as in modern revelation (D&C 45:67; D&C 116:1).”<sup>37</sup> Similarly, President Brigham Young stated: “When will Zion be redeemed? When will the Savior make his appearance in the midst of his people? ( D&C 1:36). When will the veil be taken away, that we may behold the glory of God? Can any of you answer these questions? Yes, readily, when I tell you. The redemption of Zion is the first step preparatory to the two last-named events. Just as soon as the Latter-day Saints are ready and prepared

<sup>35</sup> Elder Reed Smoot, General Conference – October 1933, p. 111.

<sup>36</sup> President Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*.

<sup>37</sup> Elder Orson Pratt, “The Latter-Day Kingdom of God,” Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, 10 April 1870. JD 13:138a.

to return to Independence, Jackson County, in the State of Missouri, North America, just so soon will the voice of the Lord be heard, ‘Arise now, Israel, and make your way to the Center Stake of Zion.’”<sup>38</sup> ¶ The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that spiritual things are shown to the Prophets and those who humble themselves as little children: “Wherefore, we again say, search the revelations of God; study the prophecies, and rejoice that God grants unto the world Seers and Prophets. They are they who saw the mysteries of godliness; they saw the flood before it came; they saw angels ascending and descending upon a ladder that reached from earth to heaven; they saw the stone cut out of the mountain, which filled the whole earth; they saw the Son of God come from the regions of bliss and dwell with men on earth; they saw the deliverer come out of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob; they saw the glory of the Lord when he showed the transfiguration of the earth on the mount; they saw every mountain laid low and every valley exalted when the Lord was taking vengeance upon the wicked; they saw truth spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven in the last days, before the Lord came the second time to gather His elect; they saw the end of wickedness on earth, and the Sabbath of creation crowned with peace; they saw the end of the glorious thousand years, when Satan was loosed for a little season; they saw the day of judgment when all men received according to their works, and they saw the heaven and the earth flee away to make room for the city of God, when the righteous receive an inheritance in eternity. And, fellow sojourners upon earth, it is your privilege to purify yourselves and come up to the same glory, and see for yourselves, and know for yourselves. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (—E&MS August, 1832. DHC 1:282-284).”<sup>39</sup>

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21 As for me, this [is] my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that [is] upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

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*As for me, this [is] my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that [is] upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, for the first half, “And as for me, this shall be my covenant

with them, saith the Lord; My Holy Spirit that is upon thee, and the words of my prophecy which I have put in thy mouth.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “And this shall be my covenant with them, said the Lord, this spirit of mine which is upon thee, and these words which I have put in thy mouth shall not fail from thy mouth, nor from the mouth of thy seed, (for the Lord hath spoken) from this time forth forever.” Instead of *covenant with them*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *covenant with you*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) begins with, “This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My spirit &c.” Rawlinson has: “*As for me*] literally, *and I*” [אֲנִי]. Wade has: “The opening words have some resemblance to Genesis 9:9, 17:4,” the latter related to the Abrahamic covenant. Young says, “It is because the Lord once made this covenant with Abraham that He will come for Zion.” Henderson says: “The subject, [in] ISAIAH 59:21, is the dispensation of the spirit and truth to the restored Israelites, of which they should no more be deprived as in times past. The change from the third person plural to the second singular is not uncommon in Hebrew, and seems to be here specially made with a view to give greater point and interest to the promise . . . the events to which the prediction refers—the future conversion of the Jews.” And not the Jews only, but also of Israel. Barnes has: “In the verse previous, it had been stated that the qualifications on the part of people for their partaking of the benefits of the Redeemer’s work, were, that they should turn from transgression . . . The word ‘thee’ here does not refer, as Jerome and others suppose, to the prophet, but to the pious Hebrew people.” That is, to Israel. Cowles suggests: “It is naturally associated most closely with the word of truth which God puts into the mouth of his Son, and then through him and through the Spirit, into the mouth and into the heart of all his people, his spiritual seed, and their seed onward through all generations of the church to the end of times.” Rabbi Rosenberg notes that the covenant here mentioned is that mentioned in Jeremiah 31:31-34. It is the new and everlasting covenant that is here mentioned, including the Abrahamic covenant. Ibn Ezra associates these promises with those of Joel, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28). This particular verse in Joel was one which Angel Moroni told the Prophet Joseph Smith was soon to take place (Joseph Smith—History 1:41). ¶ *Shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and [until] forever.* מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם. Bishops Bible translates it as: “from this time foorth for euermore, worlde without ende.” Shalom Paul suggests that “Israel is destined to be a nation of prophets,” and quotes Moses, “Would God that all the LORD’S people were prophets, and that

<sup>38</sup> President Brigham Young, “Gathering of the Saints.” Bowery, Great Salt Lake City, 28 July 1861. JD 9:137.

<sup>39</sup> Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 12-13.

the LORD would put his spirit upon them!” (Numbers 11:29b). Birks has: “[From] Israel, ISAIAH 49:3, righteousness will now overflow to the whole people. They will be raised at length to their high calling as the Lord’s royal priesthood; and the oath to Abraham, and the truth to Jacob, be fulfilled through successive generations, as it had been sworn to the fathers from the days of old.” Alexander well says, and this fits perfectly with what we know as LDS, “The true explanation seems to be that Israel is here, as in many other parts of this great prophecy, regarded not merely as a receiver but as a dispenser of the truth.” Indeed, it is Ephraim and Manasseh who shall help gather the rest of Israel, scattered throughout the world, into Zion. ¶ Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught, “There is an eternal decree, issued in heaven above by the Lord himself. It is that in the day of gathering, when for the last time he assembles the outcasts of Israel, he will never again forsake them. They and their seed forever shall remain steadfast to the truth. The gospel will never be given to another people, nor the kingdom placed in other hands. The Lord’s work will roll forward until the conversion of the world is completed. The holy word also says that the way to come to Zion is to accept the Lord Jesus Christ; to believe his word, his doctrine, his gospel; to worship the Father, in his name, by the power of the Holy Ghost. ‘Come unto Christ’ is the plea of Moroni, addressed to the Lamanites and to all the scattered sheep of Israel.”<sup>40</sup>

¶ Elder Erastus Snow declared: “[The Lord] promised Abraham on another occasion that in him and his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed . . . This was a great work that the Lord purposed concerning the seed of Abraham, and it was for this reason and purpose that he promised to establish his covenant with them forever.”<sup>41</sup> ¶ Now, Keith’s comments here are of particular interest: “His Spirit, then poured upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, will continue with them, keeping them faithful to him who will then be in reality, as well as by title, the King of the Jews. It is of this period of their history that it is similarly said, ‘I will make a covenant of peace with them, it shall be an everlasting covenant with them, and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore,’ (Ezekiel 37:26).” The Ezekiel scripture is the one associated with the Book of Mormon as a tool to gather Israel and re-establish the Abrahamic covenant (see also Wade’s comment at the beginning of this verse) through the Book of Mormon.

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<sup>40</sup> McConkie, Bruce R. *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1985, p. 571.

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<sup>41</sup> Apostle Erastus Snow, Logan, 6 May 1882. JD 23:182a

