

Isaiah and the Restoration of Israel

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DURING HIS THREE-DAY MINISTRY among the descendants of Lehi, the resurrected Savior taught many wonderful principles, practices, and truths (see 3 Nephi 11–26). While teaching on the second day, He explained how Heavenly Father would fulfill His promise to gather, restore, and redeem His covenant people. In doing so, He quoted extensively from the prophecies of Isaiah, declaring: “When they [the words of Isaiah] shall be fulfilled then is the fulfilling of the covenant which the Father hath made unto his people, O house of Israel. And then shall the remnants, which shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth, be gathered in from the east and from the west, and from the south and from the north; and they shall be brought to the knowledge of the Lord their God, who hath redeemed them” (3 Nephi 20:12–13).

As He finished quoting Isaiah, Christ further commanded the people to “search” the prophet’s writings “diligently,” assuring them that all things Isaiah spoke

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“have been and shall be, even according to the words which he spake” (3 Nephi 23:1, 3). What a wonderful endorsement of Isaiah! As Robert J. Matthews has said, “It’s nice to be able to quote the words of the Savior—it’s even nicer to be quoted by Him.”

Christ thus taught Lehi’s descendants that those who carefully search and ponder the words of Isaiah will better understand God’s plans to fulfill His covenant to restore His people. Through diligent study, latter-day students of Isaiah can reap the same blessings, for Isaiah answered many important questions concerning Israel’s restoration including the following: Why will a restoration be needed? When will the restoration occur? Who will be involved in the restoration? How will the restoration occur? And what will be the results of the restoration?

Why Will Israel’s Restoration Be Needed?

As Moses finished his mortal ministry among the children of Israel, he reminded them of the covenant of righteousness associated with the promised land they were about to enter. Great blessings would be theirs if they would “hearken diligently unto the voice of” the Lord, “to observe and do all his commandments” (Deuteronomy 28:1; see also vv. 1–14). Conversely, the prophet warned that the people would be severely cursed if they did not “hearken unto the voice” of the Lord and that ultimately God would “scatter” them “from the one end of the earth even unto the other” if they were wicked (Deuteronomy 28:15, 64; see also vv. 15–65).

Isaiah lived to see Moses’s warning become a reality. Wickedness and apostasy were rampant in his day. From his opening words, Isaiah decried the transgressions of his contemporaries. He described his contemporaries as being

more ignorant than their beasts of burden, for the ox and the ass at least knew their master and how to be nourished by him, “but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider” (Isaiah 1:3). He marveled at the apparent apathy accompanying their wickedness, for though they were spiritually sick in both head and heart—covered, as it were, with “wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores”—yet they did not bother to treat their festering spiritual injuries. “They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment” (v. 6). Isaiah particularly condemned the people for being proud, greedy, and dishonest; for rejecting prophets and trusting men more than God; for committing idolatry and adultery; for lacking charity and oppressing one another; for improper fasting and Sabbath observance; and for delighting in violence—all transgressions that plague us in the latter days as well.¹ He likened the apostate covenant people to a harlot, flirting and decking herself with the trappings of the trade (see Isaiah 3:16–26).

Isaiah knew the Lord would be true to His word and would chasten and scatter the apostate people. He warned that their land would become desolate, burned with fire, and devoured by foreigners (see Isaiah 1:8).² He prophesied of the deportation of those most influential in their society—the mighty men, the judges, the prophets, the craftsmen, the soldiers, the counselors, and the wise. He described the anarchy that would follow as children became their rulers and the people preyed upon one another while the poor and ignorant that remained desperately sought leadership (see Isaiah 3:1–8).³ The conquering army that would “lay hold” upon them and carry them away “safe” would invade quickly and powerfully, Isaiah foretold, allowing for no escape (see Isaiah 5:29).

In response to Isaiah's inquiry about how long he was to preach to this rebellious people, the Lord declared, "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land" (Isaiah 6:11–12). The Lord then assured Isaiah that a tithe of the people would remain (see v. 13). He later likened this remnant to a few "gleaning grapes" that remain after a harvest (Isaiah 17:6) because most would be carried away "with a mighty captivity" (Isaiah 22:17).⁴ Isaiah often refers to these scattered covenant people metaphorically as "isles" (see Isaiah 24:15; 41:5; 42:4; 49:1; 51:5; 60:9).⁵

Without a restoration, without a gathering of the covenant people back to their land and faith, Israel would be forever lost, and God's covenant with them would fail. But God will not fail. Through Isaiah, He assured:

For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

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

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

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

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

For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. (Isaiah 54:5–10)

When Will Israel's Restoration Occur?

Though the people would be carried away and scattered for their wickedness and apostasy, Isaiah knew the Lord would ultimately restore them by gathering them back to both the faith and the land. We can gain some idea of the timing of this restoration by considering Isaiah's description of conditions in the world at the time it would begin.

Naturally, to be gathered and restored, the people would first need to be scattered and lost. Isaiah indicates that this would be the case, since in the restoration people were to be gathered from throughout the world. "Fear not: for I am with thee," the Lord assured through Isaiah. "I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 43:5–6; see also Isaiah 49:12). Many of those to be gathered will not be recognized as, or even know that they are part of the covenant family until they are restored to the faith.

Isaiah speaks of the dismay that will be experienced by those of the covenant family who will think God has forsaken them when they come to realize that there are many members of their family lost to them. When they see these lost and scattered children gathered and restored, they will say in their hearts, "Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these?"

Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?" (Isaiah 49:21).

Thus we know that the restoration is to occur in a day when the people are scattered and many are no longer recognized as part of the covenant family. In Isaiah's day, Israel and Judah still maintained their identity, but Isaiah knew that sometime in the future that identity would be lost for much of the house of Israel. Scattered Israel's loss of identity was likely a long process rather than an event, but a process that would reach fruition long before the restoration.

Isaiah also indicates that God will begin the "marvelous work and a wonder" (Isaiah 29:14) of restoration at a time when men are in a spiritual slumber, without prophetic direction. Speaking of that day, Isaiah exclaimed, "Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered" (Isaiah 29:9–10). Thus, Isaiah's answer to the question of when the restoration will occur is that it will commence in a day when Israel has been scattered and many have lost their identity and in a day when many will spiritually stagger and slumber because of the dearth of prophetic guidance. The description fits well conditions at the time the Lord first appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Who Will Be Involved in Israel's Restoration?

While it is given that scattered Israel is to be gathered and restored, Isaiah includes a major role for a group he identifies as the Gentiles. He understood that many of the latter-day "Gentiles" would seek or be drawn to the light of

the restored gospel. The prophet exhorted: “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Isaiah 60:1–3; see also 42:5–7; 55:5; 65:1).

Isaiah made it clear that those Gentiles who accept the gospel and labor to do their part in the restoration will have access to all of God’s covenants and blessings, including those of the temple. To those “strangers,” a term here used to refer to Gentiles, who are willing to accept the gospel, the Lord promises to “give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name” and “make them joyful in my house of prayer,” for “their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people” (Isaiah 56:3–7; see also Isaiah 2:2).⁶ The Book of Mormon explains that these faithful Gentiles will ultimately be numbered among the house of Israel (see 1 Nephi 14:1–3; 2 Nephi 10:18; 30:2; 3 Nephi 16:13; 21:1–7, 22–25; 28:27, 32; 30:1–2). Indeed, among these Gentiles are the lost children who Isaiah prophesied will come to be recognized as part of the covenant family (see Isaiah 49:18–23). They are the “children of the desolate” (Isaiah 54:1) who, once rejoined to the covenant family, will be so numerous that they will plead for more room, crying out, “The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell” (Isaiah 49:20). These pleadings will cause the Lord to tell his people to “enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou

shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left” (Isaiah 54:2–3).

Latter-day Saints can identify themselves with these faithful children who will be numbered among the house of Israel, although they are now “identified with the Gentiles” (D&C 109:60; see also D&C 86:8–10; 103:16–18). Though the Saints are considered Gentiles in Isaiah’s and the Book of Mormon’s “Jew or Gentile” perspective, many are in fact a part of scattered Israel who have lost their identity. As Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained, “Joseph Smith, of the tribe of Ephraim, the chief and foremost tribe of Israel itself, was the Gentile by whose hand the Book of Mormon came forth, and the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who have the gospel and who are of Israel by blood descent, are the Gentiles who carry salvation to the Lamanites and the Jews.”⁷

How Will Israel’s Restoration Occur?

Just as the apostasy and scattering were processes, so too will be the restoration. Isaiah prophesied that the spiritual part of the restoration, the returning or gathering back to the faith, begins the process. He named one of his sons Shearjashub, meaning “the remnant shall return,” to serve as a type and reminder of this prophecy (Isaiah 7:3a; see also 8:18). The “jashub” part of the child’s name is a future tense of the Hebrew verb *šub*, which means “turn back,” “return,” “convert,” “change back,” or “restore.” In the King James Version of the Old Testament, the word is sometimes translated as “repent” (see 1 Kings 8:47; Ezekiel 14:6). While the use of the term in the child’s name can refer to a physical return, Isaiah made it clear that his primary intent for bestowing the name upon his son was to remind his people of his prophecy of a spiritual return.

Echoing his son's name, the prophet declared a "remnant shall return [*shearjashub*], even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God" (Isaiah 10:21). As the "judges" and "counsellors" are restored, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness" (Isaiah 1:26–27; see also Isaiah 51:11).⁸ Each among these "gleaning grapes" will "look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 17:6–7). "They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of Lord" (Isaiah 24:14). As they are gathered "one by one," they will hearken to "the great trumpet" that shall be calling them to the faith, and they "shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem" (Isaiah 27:12–13; see also Isaiah 2:1–5).

Book of Mormon prophets shared Isaiah's understanding that the restoration of scattered Israel would begin with a restoration to the faith. Jacob said of scattered Israel, "The Lord will be merciful unto them, that when they shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer, they shall be gathered together again to the lands of their inheritance" (2 Nephi 6:11; see also 2 Nephi 10:7–9; 25:16–17; 30:7–8).

Isaiah understood that this gathering of scattered Israel "one by one" would include a role for righteous Gentiles, among whom the gospel would first be restored. The prophet declared:

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

And he shall set up an ensign for the nations [Gentiles], and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. (Isaiah 11:10–12)

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord helps us understand that the “ensign” (a word meaning “banner,” “flag,” or “standard”) that is to be set up and which the Gentiles, or nations, will seek is the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.⁹ In a revelation to Joseph Smith, He declared, “I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people, and for the Gentiles to seek to it, and to be a messenger before my face to prepare the way before me” (D&C 45:9).¹⁰ The Lord identified the “root of Jesse” mentioned in Isaiah 11:10 as “a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days” (D&C 113:6). Latter-day Saints typically understand that Joseph Smith himself fits this description.¹¹

Isaiah knew then that the Lord’s work to “recover the remnant of his people” would begin with the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ through the latter-day prophet Joseph Smith. He further understood that as the latter-day Gentiles were drawn to the ensign, or the light of the restored gospel, they would then help to gather scattered Israel. The prophet promised that the Gentiles will “bring thy [Israel’s] sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders” (Isaiah 49:22–23; see also Isaiah 66:19–20).

The Book of Mormon prophet Nephi bore similar testimony:

In the latter days, when our seed shall have dwindled in unbelief, yea, for the space of many years, and many generations after the Messiah shall be manifested in body unto the children of men, then shall the fulness of the gospel of the Messiah come unto the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles unto the remnant of our seed—

And at that day shall the remnant of our seed know that they are of the house of Israel, and that they are the covenant people of the Lord; and then shall they know and come to the knowledge of their forefathers, and also to the knowledge of the gospel of their Redeemer, which was ministered unto their fathers by him; wherefore, they shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer and the very points of his doctrine, that they may know how to come unto him and be saved. (1 Nephi 15:13–14)¹²

In fact, Isaiah understood—as the prophets Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni did—that the Book of Mormon itself would play an important role in the righteous Gentiles’ efforts to restore the covenant people to the true faith. He knew that this “book that is sealed” would be brought forth to “speak out of the ground” in a day of apostasy and confusion (Isaiah 29:4, 9–16). He saw that the book would be heard by the deaf and seen by the blind, changing men’s values, so that the forests of Lebanon, a symbol of pride and apostasy, would be turned into a valued fruitful field, a symbol of a productive covenant people (see Isaiah 29:17–19). He testified that the book would expose those evil men who “seek deep to hide” their works from the Lord and would teach true doctrine to those that “erred in spirit” (Isaiah 29:4–24; see also 2 Nephi 27; 3 Nephi 26:6–8; Mormon 5:12–15; Ether 3:27–28).¹³

In addition to spiritually gathering and restoring scattered Israel to the faith and covenants of Israel’s fathers,

Isaiah taught that the Gentiles will also help to physically restore them to and in their lands of promise. “The sons of strangers” (that is, Gentiles) will “build up” Israel’s walls and be their shepherds, plowmen, and “vinedressers” (Isaiah 60:10; 61:5).¹⁴ The imagery suggests that the Gentiles’ labors will make this unproductive people (see Isaiah 5:1–6) productive again.

As these Gentiles labor to spiritually and physically restore the covenant people, they will be like “nursing” fathers and mothers: “Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me” (Isaiah 49:22–23; see also Isaiah 60:16).¹⁵

The Book of Mormon prophet Nephi clarified the meaning of Isaiah’s imagery in this passage:

And after our seed is scattered the Lord God will proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles, which shall be of great worth unto our seed; wherefore, it is likened unto their being nourished by the Gentiles and being carried in their arms and upon their shoulders.

And it shall also be of worth unto the Gentiles; and not only unto the Gentiles but unto all the house of Israel, unto the making known of the covenants of the Father of heaven unto Abraham, saying: In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

And I would, my brethren, that ye should know that all the kindreds of the earth cannot be blessed unless he shall make bare his arm in the eyes of the nations.

Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations, in bringing about his covenants and his gospel unto those who are of the house of Israel.

Wherefore, he will bring them again out of captivity, and they shall be gathered together to the lands of their inheritance; and they shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness; and they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel. (1 Nephi 22:8–12)

Together, the “strangers,” or Gentiles, and the house of Israel will serve the Lord in the promised lands. “For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land; and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them and bring them to their place; yea, from far unto the ends of the earth; and they shall return to their lands of promise. And the house of Israel shall possess them, and the land of the Lord shall be for servants and handmaids” (2 Nephi 24:1–2; see also Isaiah 14:1–2).¹⁶

Knowing that the latter-day Gentiles will play such a significant role in the restoration helps us understand the Savior’s observation when He endorsed Isaiah’s writings. “For surely he [Isaiah] spake as touching all things concerning my people which are of the house of Israel; therefore it must needs be that he must speak also to the Gentiles” (3 Nephi 23:2).

What Will Be the Results of Israel’s Restoration?

The latter-day spiritual and physical restoration of the covenant people will not only fulfill God’s promise and covenant to Abraham but will also prepare the earth for

the coming of the millennial Messiah. Isaiah uses some of the most stirring and beautiful language in all scripture to describe the millennial peace and happiness that the redeemed and restored will enjoy. His message offers hope and perspective to those engaged in the restoration labor during these troubled times. I have compiled Isaiah's teachings on the topic into one continuous paragraph.

The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression [Isaiah 59:20]; He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people [2:4]; Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever [9:7]; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more [2:4]; Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory [60:18–19]; The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea [11:6, 9]; The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away [35:10]; In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in

Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living [4:2–3]; Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off [33:17]; He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces [25:8]; Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped [35:5]; He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom. [40:11]

The prophet Isaiah promises that in that day the Lord will give us “beauty for ashes” and “the oil of joy for mourning” (Isaiah 61:3). And in that day when we see Him, we will confess, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him” (Isaiah 25:9). Our longing to be part of those so testifying ought to encourage us to follow the Savior’s admonition to diligently search the writings of this great prophet. Thereby we will better know the why, when, who, how, and what of the restoration of Israel.

Notes

1. The following are examples of Isaiah’s teaching about the people’s transgressions. Being proud, greedy, and dishonest: Isaiah 1:22–24; 2:7, 9–11; 5:8, 20–23; 9:9–10; 28:1–4, 17; 48:4; 59:3–5; rejecting prophets and trusting men more than God: Isaiah 2:6; 8:6–10, 19; 30:1–12; 31:1–3; 48:3–8; committing idolatry and adultery: Isaiah 2:8–9; 31:7–8; 41:22–23, 29; 44:12–20; 46:1–8; 48:5; 57:3–9; lacking charity and oppressing one another: Isaiah 3:5, 15; 10:1–4; 27:7; improper fasting and Sabbath observance: Isaiah 58:1–14; loving violence: Isaiah 59:3–8.

2. In the King James Version of Isaiah 1:8, Isaiah compares Israel’s final state to a “lodge in a garden of cucumbers” and a “cottage in a vineyard,” likely referring to harvest shacks found in

farm fields that are typically empty, ignored, and dilapidated during all but the harvest season.

3. This prophecy found fulfillment in the Babylonian conquest of Judah and the subsequent deportation of the people circa 587 BC. The northern kingdom, Israel, suffered a similar fate about one hundred fifty years earlier when it was conquered and carried away by the Assyrians.

4. This prophecy was directed to a man named Shebna, who at the time was a “treasurer” in the royal court (see Isaiah 22:15). Shebna was a type of the worldly and apostate people at the time. Interestingly, Shebna later repented when he served under faithful King Hezekiah, and the Assyrian conquest of Jerusalem foretold in this prophecy did not occur. This is because Hezekiah trusted in the Lord and God delivered him from the Assyrians when they attacked (see Isaiah 36–37). Sadly, after Hezekiah died, Judah’s kings returned to wicked ways, and consequently, a little over a century later, Judah was conquered and carried away by the Babylonians. Some later returned to the promised land during the Persian period, only to be driven and scattered again during the Roman period.

5. The Book of Mormon version of Isaiah 49:1 makes it clear that “isles” is used by Isaiah with reference to scattered Israel. The Book of Mormon reads, “And again: Hearken, O ye house of Israel, all ye that are broken off and are driven out because of the wickedness of the pastors of my people; yea, all ye that are broken off, that are scattered abroad, who are of my people, O house of Israel. Listen, O isles, unto me” (1 Nephi 21:1; see also Isaiah 49:1).

6. The phrase “place and a name” in this passage is more accurately translated “hand and a name.” The KJV translators used the word *stranger* to translate a number of different Hebrew terms, all referring to foreigners—in each case meaning someone not of the house of Israel, thus making them Gentiles.

7. Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 233. See also D&C 109:60; 1 Nephi 13:38–40; 15:13–14; 22:7–12. In 1 Nephi 22 we read: “It appears that the

house of Israel, sooner or later, will be scattered upon all the face of the earth, and also among all nations. And behold, there are many who are already lost from the knowledge of those who are at Jerusalem. Yea, the more part of all the tribes have been led away; and they are scattered to and fro upon the isles of the sea” (vv. 3–4). As discussed in note 5 above, 1 Nephi 21:1 suggests that the term “isles” was understood by Nephi to mean any place to which Israel had been scattered. Joseph Fielding Smith added to our understanding of what became of those tribes as he discussed the purposes for the scattering of Ephraim. Among other reasons, he declared, “It [the scattering of Ephraim] was for the purpose of blessing the people of other nations with the blood of Israel among whom Ephraim ‘mixed’ himself. The scattering of other Israelites answered the same purpose” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56], 3:252). Apparently, then, after being carried away from the Holy Land, all or at least part of the ten tribes dispersed themselves among the nations and were assimilated by or mixed with them. For more discussion on this topic, see Terry B. Ball, “Isaiah and the Gentiles,” in *Covenants, Prophecies, and Hymns of the Old Testament: The 30th Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2001), 181–84.

8. Here the word translated as “converts” is again a form of the verb *šub*.

9. The Hebrew *gōyim* means “nations” and is variously translated as “Gentiles” or “nations” in the King James translation. Thus in verse 10 of this passage, the KJV translates the term as “gentiles,” while in verse 12 it is translated as “nations.” In Isaiah’s writings the Gentiles are often referred to as “the nations” (see Isaiah 5:26; 14:18; 17:13; 29:7), as “strangers” (see Isaiah 1:7; 2:6; 5:17), and in one instance as “heathen” (Isaiah 16:8).

10. Here the word *standard* can be understood to be the same as “ensign” (see also Donald W. Parry, Jay A. Parry, and Tina M.

Peterson, *Understanding Isaiah* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998], 123).

11. See Victor L. Ludlow, *Isaiah: Prophet, Seer, and Poet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 170–74; Parry, Parry, and Peterson, *Understanding Isaiah*, 120–21.

12. The “remnant of our seed” in this passage refers primarily to the descendants of Lehi, one group of scattered Israel. That the promise applies to all of scattered Israel is made evident throughout the Book of Mormon (see 1 Nephi 13:38–42; 21:22–23; 22:8–12; 2 Nephi 6:6–7; 10:8–9, 18; 30:3–7, 18; 3 Nephi 16:4–5; 16:10–11; 21:1–7, 22–26; 26:8; Mormon 5:10; 7:8; Ether 12:22).

13. Scholars often understand the first part of Isaiah 29 to be a prophecy of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem (Ariel) and the latter part of the chapter to be a prophecy of restoration, but they often struggle to identify the “book that is sealed.” One provocative explanation is that the book is like that discussed in Jeremiah 32:9–15, where the prophet purchased a field and had the documentation of the purchase written in duplicate. One copy was sealed and the other left open, apparently with the idea that should the open copy ever be altered or questioned, the sealed copy could then be consulted to establish or validate the true terms of the transaction. The explanation fits the Bible and Book of Mormon well—the Bible being the “open” book and the Book of Mormon being the “book that is sealed” that is to be consulted in the latter days to clarify and establish the truth of the open book (see also 1 Nephi 14:38–42).

14. For use of “strangers” in this context, see note 6 above.

15. Commenting on this prophecy, the Book of Mormon prophet Jacob clarified that those Gentiles who will “lick up the dust of their [Israel’s] feet” are not those that are assisting and nursing them but rather those that “that fight against Zion and the covenant people of the Lord” (2 Nephi 6:13).

16. The text of Isaiah quoted in 2 Nephi 24:1–2 contains important additions and wording which clarify that the Gentiles will join with Israel as servants of the Lord in the promised lands, rather

than simply being servants to Israel. The Book of Mormon text uses the phrase “lands of promise” because its authors understood that there are promised lands for the covenant people in both the Old World and the New.

