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## What Is Isaiah Doing in First Nephi? Or, How Did Lehi's Family Fare So Far from Home?

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Nephi said, "We did take our tents and depart into the wilderness, across the river Laman" (1 Ne. 16:12). Evidently with purpose, Nephi tells us indirectly that the base camp of his father, Lehi, had been pitched on the bank of the river Laman that was nearer to Jerusalem. When the members of their party crossed that stream, they left Jerusalem behind forever, striking out into the desert and cutting themselves off from home.<sup>1</sup>

At first blush, the question about Isaiah seems to be out of place or, at the very least, out of focus. After all, Nephi assures us that Isaiah had been one of his favorite books, and his acquaintance with this work had led him to quote significant parts of it (e.g., 1 Ne. 19:23; 2 Ne. 11:8).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Nephi supplies us with his reasons—public reasons, it turns out—why he had included chapters 48 and 49 of Isaiah at the end of his first book. I believe,

however, that he kept other poignantly personal reasons largely to himself, allowing those reasons to be expressed principally by others. As it turns out, it is his younger brother Jacob who, writing after Nephi's death, allows us to see most clearly the acutely personal inducements for including these passages from Isaiah.<sup>3</sup> Most of them have to do with the grave challenges that the family encountered in the desert of Arabia.

To be sure, the public reasons that Nephi offers to us for his appeal to Isaiah stand within the larger prophetic message about the scattering and gathering of Israel, of which he and his family—the scattered—and their distant posterity—the gathered—were a part.<sup>4</sup> One does not look far to find that Isaiah's prophecies had a good deal to say about these events.<sup>5</sup> As a prime example, one reads a passage that both addresses the scattered remnants of Israel and—this next point is especially important—fits precisely the circumstance of the departure of Lehi's family: "Hearken . . . 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" (1 Ne. 21:1 = Isa. 49:1).<sup>6</sup> On the side of the gathering, one reads the tender assurance that the Gentiles "shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And [Gentile] kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers" (1 Ne. 21:22–23 = Isa. 49:22–23). A third passage not only characterizes the Lord's loving care for his people at the time of the future gathering but, as in the first passage, mirrors his efforts to provide necessities for Lehi's party as they traveled in the desert, much as he had for the Hebrew slaves: "They thirsted not; he led them through the deserts; he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them; he clave the rock also and the waters gushed out" (1 Ne. 20:21 = Isa. 48:21).<sup>7</sup> The allusions to manna (Ex. 16:14–15; etc.) and water provided by the Lord from a rock (Ex. 17:1–6; Num. 20:2–11), of course, need no comment.

In light of the first and third passages that can plainly point to aspects of the journey of Lehi's family, one notes that in Nephi's view the words of Isaiah in chapters 48–49 apparently anticipated the entire trip, from beginning to end, starting with the flight from Jerusalem and ending with the settlement in the promised land. In a word, Nephi is saying, "Isaiah spoke about us."<sup>8</sup>

But before turning to Nephi's announced reasons for appealing to Isaiah's book and then to the travel experiences, as well as Isaiah's words about such, we should observe that Nephi's thorough acquaintance with Isaiah is beyond challenge.<sup>9</sup> Throughout his work, Nephi's expressions brighten with phrases and terms that reflect an influence radiating from Isaiah.<sup>10</sup> For instance, borrowing a phrase from Isa. 29:14, Nephi speaks of "a marvelous work" which will "be of great worth unto our seed" (1 Ne. 22:8). In fact, the angel who accompanied Nephi during his vision used this same phrase, a hint that the angel knew of Nephi's acquaintance with it from Isaiah (14:7).<sup>11</sup> In addition, Nephi calls God "the Holy One of Israel" and "Savior," titles at home in Isaiah's works.<sup>12</sup> Further, Nephi employs expressions that find parallels in Isaiah, such as "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die"<sup>13</sup> and "the four quarters of the earth."<sup>14</sup> As a capstone of sorts, even the Spirit of God recognized Nephi's grasp of Isaiah's book and virtually quoted to him what must have been a line familiar from Isaiah about the Lord giving a sign<sup>15</sup>—in Isaiah's prophecy, the sign consisted of the virgin who gives birth—and then followed it almost immediately with the vision of the virgin (11:7; 11:13–20).

### Nephi's Stated Reasons

Nephi's stated motives are straightforward and high-minded. In introducing chapters 48 and 49, he announces that his most important purpose—and I want to emphasize this purpose—is to "more fully persuade [his people] to believe in the Lord their Redeemer" (1 Ne. 19:23).<sup>16</sup> A companion motive appears in his introduction of the Isaiah chapters in his second book, "that whoso of my people shall see these words [of Isaiah] may . . . rejoice" (2 Ne. 11:8). Consistent with his first purpose of bringing others "to believe in the Lord," one observes that embedded in Isaiah 49 lies a clear prophecy about the future Messiah-king, portrayed as the "servant of the Lord" (Isa. 49:1–6 = 1 Ne. 21:1–6).<sup>17</sup> According to Isaiah, the Messiah-king will be called "from the womb" and, though his mouth will be "like a sharp sword," he will seemingly spend his "strength for nought" (Isa. 49:1, 2, 4). In the end, however, he will not only "bring Jacob again" to the Lord

but more broadly will be "a light to the Gentiles" and become the Lord's "salvation unto the end of the earth" (49:5-6).<sup>18</sup>

The second most important reason that Nephi included Isaiah's prophecies appears in a much later passage, just before recording Isaiah 2-14. He reveals that in quoting Isaiah he seeks to bring comfort, even joy, to his people: "I write some of the words of Isaiah, that whoso of my people shall see these words may lift up their hearts and rejoice" (2 Ne. 11:8). While we shall return to this passage, and the implications therein that Nephi's people needed a rejuvenation of sorts, we note here that Nephi set out other reasons for his quotations from Isaiah. For example, he adds that he "read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah . . . for our profit and learning" (1 Ne. 19:23). Further, immediately afterward, while addressing his people directly, he said first that Isaiah's words were written for "the house of Israel . . . who have been broken off" (19:24),<sup>19</sup> and second that since Isaiah was shown "concerning us" (19:21), Nephi wanted his people to "have hope" (19:24).

### Nephi's Personal Reasons

When we turn to his more personal view, on the other hand, I suggest that as Nephi looked back on his family's experience in the desert of Arabia, he eventually came to see those events in poignantly personal terms. In a word, the desert formed a decisive moment for his extended family. Although, as we have noted, he himself was guarded in expressing how the desert experience had affected him and the others,<sup>20</sup> his younger brother Jacob was not. As a result, Jacob supplies an important set of clues about what the family's separation from home meant for them. In short, the separation was painful and the early generations did not feel completely at home in their adopted surroundings in the New World. Near the end of his life, Jacob spoke of the record on the small plates of Nephi, sighing, "I conclude this record, declaring that I have written according to the best of my knowledge, by saying that the time passed away with us, and also our lives passed away like as it were unto us a dream, we being a lonesome and a solemn people, wanderers, cast out from Jerusalem, born in tribulation, in a wilderness, and hated of our brethren, which caused wars and contentions; wherefore, we did mourn out our

days" (Jacob 7:26). This mournful summary, in fact, cast in the language of lament, provides a key to the last chapters of 1 Nephi, including the personal reasons why Nephi inserted two chapters from Isaiah's book. How so?

Although Jacob was not born in Jerusalem, nor did he ever set foot in the city, he faithfully reflects the feelings of other family members about the harsh necessity of leaving their home, even though their departure was mandated by the Lord. After all, Jacob would not have generated such feelings on his own. They must have come from his family environment.<sup>21</sup>

Yes, the extended family had learned from Lehi just before his death that the prophetic warning about the fall of the city had come to dreadful fulfillment, thus sparing the lives of family members as the Lord had promised.<sup>22</sup> And yes, they all must have been grateful that they had not been ground down in the inevitable and terrible retributions leveled against citizens by the fierce Babylonian warriors.<sup>23</sup> But home was home.

In this light, the following will set out for us the reasons for, and dimensions of, family feelings about abandoning home. Significantly, most of them have to do with their journey through the desert which, with finality, separated them from Jerusalem.

First, Jacob speaks of "our lives" passing away "as it were unto us a dream," an expression that sounds tones of disappointment. When one combines this sort of language with his term "wanderers" for his people, who were "cast out from Jerusalem" (Jacob 7:26), one senses a mass of chafed, tender emotions lying barely below the surface. In an attempt to grapple with this passage, John Tanner has observed that "one feels the cost that the wilderness exacted on Jacob." He then attributes Jacob's words to "the accumulated sorrows of a nomadic life."<sup>24</sup> Yet there must be more. One must see that Jacob's sentiments also expressed those of others in the family, illuminating the strong cords that bound all of them to their former lives in Jerusalem. Moreover, one understands that a nomad, speaking realistically, would not be unhappy with life in the desert. Jacob, who had really known no other kind of existence in his youth, would not have expressed dissatisfaction about this kind of life if he had not been exposed to the misgivings and sorrows of others around him.

Second, from a review of other passages it becomes clear that the time in the desert had left a bitter taste in the mouths of family

members<sup>25</sup>—nothing but bad memories.<sup>26</sup> For instance, Lehi called the eight-year desert crossing “the wilderness of mine afflictions; . . . the days of my greatest sorrow” (2 Ne. 3:1). In addition, at the end of the desert trek Lehi’s sons complained—and it is important to note that, on one level, Nephi entered the complaints into his record because they told of unspeakable suffering—that “we have wandered in the wilderness for these many years; and our women have toiled, . . . and suffered all things, save it were death.”<sup>27</sup> So severe were the desert sufferings, they cried, that “it would have been better that [the women] had died before they came out of Jerusalem” (1 Ne. 17:20).<sup>28</sup> Further, generations later Alma would look back to the desert era and, hinting at specific experiences known to him and his hearers, say that the Lord had “delivered our fathers out of the hands of their enemies” and had “saved [them] from famine, and from sickness, and all manner of diseases” (Alma 9:10, 22), underscoring the ferocity of the challenges faced by Lehi’s family. Hence, Jacob’s choice of terms points to plainly painful events in the desert.<sup>29</sup>

Third, moving from Jerusalem had torn the family to the point that family members split more than once about whether to return to their family estates, this in direct disobedience to the Lord’s directives to flee (1 Ne. 2:11–14; 7:6–7).<sup>30</sup> Additionally, complaints about having to leave the city continued to surface throughout the desert journey, as illustrated first by the grieving of the daughters of Ishmael, vocalized *before* trudging into the heart of the Arabian peninsula, and later by the gripes of Lehi’s older sons, articulated *after* emerging from the desert. As Nephi records, in a burst of emotion Ishmael’s daughters murmured that Lehi had wronged them by bringing “them out of the land of Jerusalem” only to “perish in the wilderness with hunger” (16:35). On the subsequent occasion, Lehi’s older sons whined that their father, “led away by the foolish imaginations of his heart,” had “led [them] out of the land of Jerusalem,” with the result that “we have wandered in the wilderness for these many years” and could not enjoy “our possessions and the land of our inheritance” (17:20–21). By any standard, they desperately missed home.

Fourth, the memory of days in Jerusalem had evidently been cultivated at least in story, if not in song and verse, in such a way that the next generation was imbued with a nostalgia for a place that they had not seen. One thinks of Jews, at Passover, when they

say as part of their celebration, "Next year in Jerusalem." Something like this must have become a part of family tradition, naturally turning hearts back to their original home.<sup>31</sup>

Fifth, Jacob's words betray a feeling that even though the hand of the Lord had brought the families of Lehi and Ishmael to the promised land, it was not the same as possessing an inheritance in the land promised to Abraham.<sup>32</sup> One need only notice that Jacob called his extended family "a lonesome and a solemn people," hardly a happy description (Jacob 7:26). To be sure, Jacob does not strictly contradict Lehi, and would have been horrified to be thought of as espousing a different view of the status of their people.<sup>33</sup> But his father spoke more warmly of obtaining "a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands," which "the Lord God hath covenanted with me should be a land for the inheritance of my seed" (2 Ne. 1:5).<sup>34</sup> Even so, some fifty or so years later Jacob mournfully portrayed the self-image of his people as "wanderers," outcasts "from Jerusalem" (Jacob 7:26).

Sixth, Nephi reveals the need for comforting his people when bringing forward the chapters that he cites in the middle of his second book. To recall his words quoted above, "I write some of the words of Isaiah, that whoso of my people shall see these words may lift up their hearts and rejoice" (2 Ne. 11:8). As background, one must recollect that by the time Nephi copied these chapters, family members had already split geographically because of a bitter quarrel over leadership in the clan, those loyal to Nephi having fled their original place of residence (5:1-7). In this light, the fact that Nephi seeks to lift the spirits of his followers, now separated from other family members, reveals an underlying, unspoken despondency. This despondency, in my view, had to do with the fact that even after arriving in the land of promise, Nephi's part of the family had been forced to move from its original settlement, thus compounding the feeling of estrangement from home in this distant place. Even the observation that the flight came at the urging of the Lord (5:5) does not seem to have eased the loss of homes and property and family associations.<sup>35</sup>

Seventh, prophecies about the Messiah held believers' focus on Jerusalem. Circumstantial evidence exists, for instance, that the prophecies of Zenos spoke of the Messiah dying there (1 Ne. 19:10, 13).<sup>36</sup> Further, by vision Nephi—and before him Lehi—had evi-



dently learned the place of the Messiah's death and resurrection. For in one scene out of their parallel visions "the great city of Jerusalem" appeared, followed shortly afterward by the following vista: "And I [Nephi] . . . beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, . . . was judged of the world; and . . . was lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world" (1 Ne. 11:13, 32–33). It stands to reason that if Nephi saw in his vision "the city of Nazareth,"<sup>37</sup> the place of Jesus' youth, he would have noticed the place of his death, even though he does not record it directly.<sup>38</sup> It is Jacob who clinches the case, providing the proof that Jerusalem was known to the founding generation as the place of Jesus' death. Speaking to those in the colony of Nephi, he says, "Ye know that . . . he [Jesus] shall show himself unto those at Jerusalem, . . . for it is expedient that it should be among them; for . . . he suffereth himself to . . . die for all men" (2 Ne. 9:5). Naturally, the Messiah's tie to the city kept both memory and anticipation alive among Book of Mormon peoples.

Eighth, one gauge of the intensity of impressions from the wilderness lies in the names of the two sons born there to Lehi and Sariah—Jacob and Joseph. There is no doubt in my mind that these two boys were named after Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes,<sup>39</sup> and Joseph, his son, who was sold into Egypt.<sup>40</sup> One naturally asks what these two personalities from the Bible had in common, besides sharing the same tent for the years of Joseph's youth. The answer, of course, has to do with the fact that they both spent long periods of time away from home. In the case of Jacob, he was forced to flee after receiving the blessing that his brother Esau claimed for himself, living several hundred miles away for two decades in the home of his father-in-law. In addition, Jacob spent the last years of his life in Egypt because of the severe famine in the land of Canaan. In the case of Joseph, his brothers sold him to caravanners who in turn took him to Egypt where he lived out his days, dying with only one wish: to be buried at home, in the land of his ancestors.

Ninth, a further indicator concerns place names. It was Lamanites, joined by dissident Nephites, who founded a city named Jerusalem more than five hundred years after Lehi's family departed from Jerusalem, creating an administrative territory of the same name, "after [the name of] the land of their fathers' nativity" (Alma 21:1). Evidently, in their tradition Lamanites had perpetu-

ated a deep tie to their distant homeland.<sup>41</sup> Of course, the name Jerusalem also comes into play in discussions of the New Jerusalem. Even though the expectations were millennial, the risen Jesus felt the need to explain that the New Jerusalem would be “in this land,” in the New World (3 Ne. 20:22), a point that Moroni repeats almost four hundred years later, tying its existence to that of the ancient city (Ether 13:3–10).<sup>42</sup> Thus, the memory of the Jerusalem from which both the founding family and the scriptures had come continued to live on in Book of Mormon society.

Tenth, the eight-year crossing indicates serious troubles in the wilderness (1 Ne. 17:4). It suggests that the family spent considerable time in at least one location, possibly at an oasis or a grazing area, and probably dependent on desert tribesmen. Eight years is far too long even for a cautious crossing of the Arabian desert. To make the point, the time required in antiquity for a loaded caravan to travel from the coast of the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea—approximately the assumed route traveled by Lehi and his family, though in reverse—was a matter of sixteen weeks, not eight years.<sup>43</sup>

### Isaiah Connections

The deep, at times terrible, impact that the desert trek made in the soul and memory of Nephi, I believe, can be seen in his choice of Isaiah passages that follow the narrative of his family’s trip to the land of promise. Understanding that Nephi saw Isaiah as one who had been shown matters “concerning us” (1 Ne. 19:21), a number of possible allusions to the family’s journey stand in chapters 48 and 49. We turn first to those that have to do with flight, next with difficulties in a desert clime, and then to passages which bring assurance of the Lord’s aid.<sup>44</sup>

Passages in Isaiah 48 and 49 spoke to the circumstance of Lehi’s departure from Jerusalem, directed by the Lord and forced by public pressure.<sup>45</sup> One must understand that less than a year earlier the Babylonians had forced the city to surrender and had installed Zedekiah as a puppet king (2 Kgs. 24:10–19). In this connection, one notices expressions in Isaiah that make reference to Babylonians. For instance, in an affirmation that the Lord is in charge, Isaiah says that the Lord “will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans” (Isa. 48:14 = 1 Ne. 20:14).<sup>46</sup>

In addition, for those who find themselves captive to the Babylonians, the Lord will exercise his right to seek the release of his people who are enslaved abroad,<sup>47</sup> saying to them, "Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, . . . The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob" (Isa. 48:20 = 1 Ne. 20:20).<sup>48</sup> In addition, one finds reference to the corruption and iniquity in the city that met Lehi when he began his preaching. Isaiah holds that the citizens of Jerusalem will "swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, yet they swear not in truth nor in righteousness. Nevertheless, they call themselves of the holy city, but they do not stay themselves upon the God of Israel" (1 Ne. 20:1–2 = Isa. 48:1–2).<sup>49</sup>

However, in addressing scattered Israel, Isaiah's condemnation is even more scathing. In a passage that does not appear in the received Hebrew text of Isaiah, the prophet admonishes, "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" (1 Ne. 21:1).<sup>50</sup> Here Isaiah had anticipated a day in which corrupt officials would rule people in the city, a situation that Lehi suffered in his day. And, it seems, Nephi had seen the relevance of this passage to the family's situation.

The strongest statement on difficulties in the desert arises from the refining process in "the furnace of affliction," which of course can also allude to the heat that one experiences in the desert, or a place of trial.<sup>51</sup> "I do this," the Lord says, because "I will not suffer my name to be polluted" (1 Ne. 20:10–11 = Isa. 48:10–11).<sup>52</sup> Many examples can be found in these chapters of Isaiah which give assurances of the Lord's assistance to those who may struggle. For instance, Nephi, if not others, must have taken courage from the Lord's assurance that he "leadeth thee by the way thou shouldst go" and that those who trust in him "thirsted not" because "he led them through the deserts" and "caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them" (1 Ne. 20:17, 21 = Isa. 48:17, 21). Moreover—continuing the desert imagery—"They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them" (Isa. 49:10 = 1 Ne. 21:10). Plainly, one can identify a number of passages that naturally would have spoken to the situation of the family while traveling through Arabia.<sup>53</sup>

This situation becomes evident in words of Isaiah about a river and the sea, recalling both that Lehi named a river after his son Laman and that the Red Sea, into which the river flowed, was one of the major geographical features near the first camp (1 Ne. 2:5, 8–9). In addition, on the far side of the Arabian desert the sea formed both a barrier as well as a highway of sorts to the promised land (17:5–6; 18:8, 23). Isaiah wrote, “O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea” (Isa. 48:18 = 1 Ne. 20:18). Lehi spoke similar words to Laman at the time he named the river after him: “O that thou mightest be like unto this river, continually running into the fountain of all righteousness!” (1 Ne. 2:9). The tie between Isaiah’s words and those of Lehi stands in plain relief. A dozen or more years later Lehi pleads with Laman and his siblings that they not be “carried away . . . down to the eternal gulf of misery” (2 Ne. 1:13), evoking a combined image of river and sea. In sum, Nephi’s record of Lehi’s words to his wayward sons, both at the departure from Jerusalem and in the New World, brims with allusions to words from Isaiah 48–49.<sup>54</sup>

### Conclusion

What have we learned? First, we have seen that Nephi balances two kinds of reasons throughout his story as to why he appeals to Isaiah, one public and the other personal. He holds to the former while he allows the voices of others to express the latter. In both cases, the ultimate reason for bringing the Isaiah passages into 1 Nephi was to bring comfort and joy to his people by directing their attention to the Holy One of Israel and his covenants with his people. Nephi’s secondary purpose radiates through the perceptible connections between Isaiah’s prophecies of the future scattering and gathering of the house of Israel and the experiences of Nephi’s family during their exodus from Jerusalem to the land of promise. Thus, Nephi found calming solace as well as proof of prophetic fulfillment in the words of Isaiah, words which he knew and loved.

## Notes

1. One can see that the desert formed a watershed in the family by the way that Lehi addressed his son Jacob at the time of his blessing, "my first-born in the wilderness" (2 Ne. 2:2, 11), clearly distinguishing him from his sons born in Jerusalem.
2. Nephi employs far more quotations from Isaiah in his second book, including a number to which his younger brother Jacob appeals. A handy list appears in the article by LeGrande Davies, "Isaiah: Texts in the Book of Mormon," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 700. For the most part, these passages have to do with the second exodus of God's people in the latter days or with the future Messiah and his work.
3. Even Blake T. Ostler, who has sought to identify "anachronisms" in the Book of Mormon ("The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 1 [spring 1987]: 66–115), admits that the Isaiah chapters quoted in the text had "appeared in the Nephite record in some form" although without qualification he maintains that "Joseph Smith clearly used the KJV translation," copying from it wholesale (77). What he fails to appreciate in the first instance is that in passages where the Book of Mormon text of Isaiah differs from the King James translation, the Book of Mormon reading agrees at least 9 percent of the time with the Septuagint version. This significant percentage stands firmly against the notion that Joseph Smith slavishly copied the KJV of Isaiah into the Book of Mormon. In addition, he has not taken into account the overwhelming evidence that the Book of Mormon was dictated—not copied—from beginning to end. See Davies, "Isaiah: Texts in the Book of Mormon," 700–701; and Royal Skousen, "Translating the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: F.A.R.M.S., 1997), 61–93.
4. For Nephi, the future survival of the posterity of his older and younger brothers was beyond question (1 Ne. 12:19–20; 2 Ne. 3:3, 23). Even though Nephi knew—and this knowledge brought him deep pain (1 Ne. 15:5; 2 Ne. 26:7, 10)—that his own descendants would eventually be destroyed, there are indisputable hints that a remnant would survive along with descendants from the other members of the family. See 1 Ne. 13:30; 15:13–14, 18; 22:7–8; 2 Ne. 10:2. Cf. 2 Ne. 3:3, 23; 4:7; 9:53; 25:8, 21; 3 Ne. 21:7; Ether 13:7.
5. See, for example, an allusion to both the scattering and gathering in the Lord's words to his Servant, "to restore the preserved of Israel" (1 Ne. 21:6 = Isa. 49:6).
6. The passage quoted here stands neither in the Hebrew nor in the Greek text of Isa. 49:1.

7. See also "They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them" (1 Ne. 21:10 = Isa. 49:10).
8. Nephi says that the Lord "did show unto many [prophets] *concerning us*" (1 Ne. 19:21, emphasis added)—which must also have included Zenock, Neum, and Zenos, whose words he had just quoted (19:10–17). Nephi then immediately introduces Isaiah 48–49 by instructing his people not only to "hear . . . the words of the prophet [Isaiah]" but also to "liken [these words] unto yourselves" (2 Ne. 19:24; cf. Jacob's observation in 2 Ne. 6:5).
9. The depreciating claims of Jerald and Sandra Tanner in *Covering up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Lighthouse, 1990) that the Book of Mormon plagiarizes sections of Isaiah rather than Nephi copying them or being influenced thereby have been answered by Matthew Roper in his review of their work, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 3 (1991): 170–87. A number of examples that follow match Roper's observations.
10. Notice Nephi's personal responses: "my soul delighteth in the words of Isaiah" (2 Ne. 25:5) and "my soul delighteth in [Isaiah's] words . . . for he verily saw my Redeemer, even as I have seen him" (11:2).
11. In his second book, of course, Nephi discusses chapter 29 of Isaiah at length in a prophetic vein (2 Nephi 26–27), introducing the issues by citing Isa. 29:14 (2 Ne. 25:17).
12. On "Holy One of Israel," see 1 Ne. 19:14; etc. (from Isa. 48:17 = 1 Ne. 20:17; Isa. 49:7 = 1 Ne. 21:7, although the Nephite text omits the last phrases of this verse, including the title Holy One of Israel). On "Savior," see 1 Ne. 10:4; 13:40; Isa. 43:3, 11; 45:15, 21; 49:26; 60:16; 63:8. Cf. "Lamb of God" (1 Ne. 10:10 from Lehi; 11:21, 27, 31–32; etc.), which may recall the Servant of Isa. 53:6–7 who is "brought as a lamb to the slaughter" (this last was suggested by Roper, 178).
13. 2 Ne. 28:7; Isa. 22:13; cf. 2 Ne. 28:8; see Martin S. Tanner, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6 (1994): 426. Tanner also points to Nephi's reference to the cynical view of God beating sinners only "with a few stripes" (2 Ne. 28:8) as an echo of Isaiah's more serious words about God's Servant who receives stripes so that we can be healed of sin (Isa. 53:5).
14. 1 Ne. 19:16; cf. "the four corners of the earth" in Isa. 11:12 (= 2 Ne. 21:2).
15. Isa. 7:14; the common terms in 1 Ne. 11:7 are the verb *to give* and the noun *sign*.
16. One must also recall that the prophecies cited by Nephi in 1 Nephi 19 from the prophets Zenock, Neum, and especially Zenos correlate with Isaiah's words about the Messiah (19:10–12). The point of quoting these three prophets was so that he "might persuade [his people] that they would remember the Lord" (19:18). In a sense, Nephi is specifying that Isaiah stands

as another witness of the coming Messiah, side by side with these three earlier prophets. See also 2 Ne. 11:2–3.

17. This passage constitutes one of the four so-called Servant Songs of Isaiah (42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–9; 52:13–53:12). For further discussion, see Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 340–41; also Bernard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 488. In the version embedded in 1 Nephi, one finds not only the Servant Song, in which the Servant speaks following a long introduction not found in the Hebrew text (1 Ne. 21:1b–6), but also other expressions that point to the Messiah, such as “him whom man despiseth” and “him whom the nations abhorreth” (Isa. 53:3, part of the fourth Servant Song) in whose presence “kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship” (1 Ne. 21:7 = Isa. 49:7). In addition, one reads that the Lord will give “my servant for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause [them] to inherit the desolate heritages” (1 Ne. 21:8 = Isa. 49:8). Further, Isaiah speaks of the one who will bring freedom and be able to “say to the prisoners: Go forth; to them that sit in darkness: Show yourselves [in the light]” (1 Ne. 21:9 = Isa. 49:9). In another possible reference to the Messiah, Isaiah mentions him “that hath mercy on them [and] shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them” (1 Ne. 21:10 = Isa. 49:10).

18. 1 Ne. 20:15 (= Isa. 48:15) also contains a possible reference to the work of the Messiah.

19. Actually, Nephi’s introduction to Isaiah is addressed directly to his hearers: “Ye who are a remnant of the house of Israel, a branch who have been broken off” (1 Ne. 19:24). This kind of address conveys the reassurance that points to the need for rejuvenation.

20. Nephi, stalwart that he was, seems to soften the severity of the problems that faced family members by speaking simply of “much affliction” (1 Ne. 17:1) and “many afflictions and much difficulty” (17:6). But he does reveal the existence of personal difficulties when he expressed gratitude to the Lord, in his poetic lament, for guiding him “through mine afflictions in the wilderness” (2 Ne. 4:20; cf. 4:26).

21. Notice that even though Jacob has never visited the city, in behalf of the family he speaks of “Jerusalem, from whence *we* came” (2 Ne. 9:5, emphasis added).

22. 2 Ne. 1:3–4; cf. also 1 Ne. 5:4; 7:15; 19:20. The situation within the city of Jerusalem was to be so terrible that Jeremiah was forbidden to marry because of the certainty of death and suffering to family members (Jer. 16:1–4).

23. 2 Kgs. 25:1–4, 8–10, 18–21; 2 Chr. 36:17–20.

24. John S. Tanner, “Literary Reflections on Jacob and His Descendants,” in *Jacob through the Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and

Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1990), 251–69; the quotations are from p. 267.

25. To be sure, Nephi remained positive by saying that “the blessings of the Lord upon us” were “great” during “our journey in the wilderness” (1 Ne. 17:1–2). But his later use of the term *sojourn* (17:3–4), which often carries the sense of servility, points to a knot of difficulties, which Nephi rather blandly styles “much affliction” (17:1), and “many afflictions and much difficulty” (17:6). For the possible connections of his expression *sojourn* to servility, see my study in this volume, chapter 4, “Sojourn, Dwell, and Stay: Terms of Servitude.”

26. For other depictions of the period in the desert of Arabia, as well as some general details about experiences there, see 1 Ne. 17:1–2, 12; 2 Ne. 1:24; 2:2; 3:3; Alma 18:37–38; 36:29.

27. For women as a measure of suffering or severe difficulty in a situation, see Matt. 24:19 (JS–M 1:16); Morm. 4:14, 21; Moro. 9:8.

28. Before turning “nearly eastward” across the southern end of the Arabian peninsula (1 Ne. 17:1), the daughters of Ishmael responded in part to Ishmael’s death, which came only months after beginning the journey, by complaining that they had already “suffered much affliction, hunger, thirst, and fatigue” after wandering “much in the wilderness” (16:35). The most difficult part of the journey still lay ahead of them.

29. Isaiah prophesied of troubles in the desert, speaking of “destroyers” who make “thee [a] waste” (1 Ne. 21:17 = Isa. 49:17). One thus victimized will become “desolate, a captive” (1 Ne. 21:21 = Isa. 49:21). But such “captives of the mighty . . . shall be delivered” by the Lord (1 Ne. 21:25 = Isa. 49:25), with the result that “they that swallowed thee up shall be far away,” because the captive has been released (1 Ne. 21:19 = Isa. 49:19). The “children” of the captives, multiplying in their lands of inheritance, shall say, “the place [of inheritance] is too strait [small] for me” (1 Ne. 21:19–21 = Isa. 49:19–21).

30. In the latter instance, Nephi indicated to his older brothers that they had a “choice” whether to return, but that they would surely perish in the coming conflagration (1 Ne. 7:15). The effect of Nephi’s warning was to persuade the older brothers to remain with the family, thus assuring that the future would be fraught with family antagonisms. Isaiah could be understood as anticipating such a situation when he wrote that there would be “no peace . . . unto the wicked,” mirroring the Lord’s warning to Nephi and his posterity that the descendants of his brothers would be “a scourge unto [Nephi’s] seed” whenever “they rebel against me” (1 Ne. 2:24; cf. 2 Ne. 5:25).

31. Although descendants continued to thank God for delivering their ancestors from Jerusalem (e.g., Mosiah 2:4), interest in Jerusalem permeated society until the final generation, as one can see in Moroni’s quotation of expressions about the city from Isa. 52:1–2 and 54:2 (Moro. 10:31).



32. One notes the prominent mention of Abraham and his seed, the latter to bless "all the kindreds of the earth" (1 Ne. 22:9). Centuries later, the resurrected Jesus seems to have felt the need to address this issue during his visit by reassuring his hearers that "the Father hath commanded me that I should give unto you this land, for your inheritance," and "this people will I establish in this land, unto the fulfilling of the covenant which I made with your father Jacob" (3 Ne. 20:14, 22). Isaiah's prophecies in chapters 48–49 also allude to the promise made to Abraham, speaking of "thy seed" which is "as the sand," never to be "cut off nor destroyed from before [the Lord]" (1 Ne. 20:19 = Isa. 48:19).

33. In other passages, Jacob speaks much more positively about the situation of the clan in their new land, the recorded occasions falling during the lifetime of his older brother Nephi. See 2 Ne. 9:1–4, 53; 10:2, 18–23. But even the passage in 2 Ne. 9:1–4 reveals a despondency that Jacob seeks to address. One guesses that his accompanying discussion of the resurrection was occasioned by the death of several persons, perhaps prominent, in the colony.

34. Cf. also Lehi's characterization of "this land, which is a most precious land" (2 Ne. 3:2).

35. In preparing for flight, Nephi took "all those who would go with me" (2 Ne. 5:6). One can imagine the trauma that this necessity caused among family members who were close to one another but found themselves on different sides on the question of leadership in the clan. In addition, those fleeing took "tents and whatsoever things were possible" (5:7), evidently leaving behind property that they had acquired since their arrival but could not carry, an action that would have chafed feelings even more.

36. In Zenos' prophecy, events following the crucifixion are tied to Jerusalem, a circumstance which most certainly points to Jerusalem as the place of the Messiah's death (1 Ne. 19:13); compare Alma's words that summarize prophecies from Zenos and Zenock, implicitly pointing to Jerusalem as the place of Jesus' death (Alma 33:22).

37. It is a bit puzzling that Nephi recognized Nazareth (1 Ne. 11:13). Archeological remains date no earlier than the third century B.C. and indicate only a very small settlement, not a "city." One has to assume help from his angelic guide.

38. The same is hinted in Nephi's summary of his father's words about his own vision (1 Ne. 10:4); so Nephi's expectation, "[the Messiah] cometh . . . six hundred years from the time my father left Jerusalem" (19:8). Comes where? To earth? The only place mentioned in the passage is Jerusalem. Cf. Nephi's later words which also imply that Jerusalem would be the place of the Messiah's death, in 2 Ne. 25:10–14; also Abinadi's quotation of Isa. 52:9 at Mosiah 12:23 and 15:30.

39. First suggested by Hugh Nibley in *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S.,

1988), 42. See also Robert J. Matthews, "Jacob: Prophet, Theologian, Historian," in *Jacob through the Words of Mormon*, ed. Nyman and Tate, 33–53; the idea is expressed on 35–36.

40. Lehi all but says that his son Joseph was named after the Joseph who was sold into Egypt (2 Ne. 3:3–5), tying the Lord's promise about the endurance of the posterity of Joseph in Egypt (3:5) to a similar promise to his son Joseph (3:3, 23).

41. Cf. Alma 22:9. In reviews of the "traditions" of the Lamanites, this sort of element has not yet come in for discussion; see, for example, Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephi's Political Testament," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1991), 223; and the comments on Mosiah 10:12 by Joseph F. McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 2:198.

42. See also 3 Ne. 21:23–24.

43. According to Nigel Groom, the maximum time for a caravan to travel from Zufar (or Dhofar) on the Indian Ocean to Gaza on the Mediterranean coast was 120 days, a distance of about 2,100 miles; *Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade* (London: Longman, 1981), chart on 213. Lynn and Hope Hilton also reckon the distance as 2,100 miles, offering a different beginning point; *Discovering Lehi* (Springville, Utah: CFI, 1996), 16. Naturally, caravans did not include flocks, something which Lehi's family seems to have eschewed (see 1 Ne. 2:4; 16:11–12). A handy summary of travel to and through the "empty quarter" of the Arabian Peninsula is found in Eugene England's work, "Through the Arabian Desert to a Bountiful Land: Could Joseph Smith Have Known the Way?" in *Book of Mormon Authorship*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1982), 143–56.

44. If passages in Isaiah 48–49 can be seen to anticipate, even outline, the family's trip through the desert, then one is justified in understanding Isaiah's words about releasing captives to describe, in a somewhat round-about way, circumstances that the family faced in the wilderness (e.g., 1 Ne. 20:20; 21:21, 24–26 = Isa. 48:20; 49:21, 24–26). Simply stated, they appear to have spent time as indentured servants, as I have argued in the article in this volume, chapter 4, entitled "Sojourn, Dwell, and Stay: Terms of Servitude." It is also possible to understand Lehi's phraseology about the latter-day release from "captivity unto freedom" (2 Ne. 3:5) as a prophetic insight sharpened by personal experience.

45. See 1 Ne. 2:1–2 ("the Lord commanded my father . . . that he should . . . depart"); 7:14 ("they have driven him [Lehi] out of the land").

46. These verses (Isa. 48:14 and 1 Ne. 20:14) are not the same. The Book of Mormon text adds an entire sentence in the middle of the verse that concerns

the fulfillment of prophecy and does not appear in the Hebrew or Greek texts of Isaiah.

47. This legal right undergirds the entire exodus saga of the Hebrew slaves. See David Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 39–41. In addition, I have set out the meaning of this legal right for the visit of the risen Jesus to Nephites and Lamanites in “Moses and Jesus: The Old Adorns the New,” chapter 10, and in “The Exodus Pattern in the Book of Mormon,” chapter 5, both in this volume.

48. Compare Lehi’s interest in freedom and captivity (2 Ne. 2:26–29; 3:5) and the words of Isaiah on the same subject (Isa. 49:21–26 = 1 Ne. 21:21–26); and see my “Sojourn, Dwell, and Stay: Terms of Servitude,” chapter 4.

49. The Book of Mormon text, which I follow here, differs in important ways from the underlying Hebrew text of Isa. 48:1–2.

50. Referring to the wickedness in Jerusalem, Nephi will later say that “their works were works of darkness, and their doings were doings of abominations” (2 Ne. 25:2).

51. As in the portrayal of Egypt in Deut. 4:20; 1 Kgs. 8:51; Jer. 11:4.

52. I follow the reading of 1 Nephi, not that of the King James Version.

53. Assuming a period of servitude suffered by the family, one can also include reference to those whom the Lord looses from prison and darkness, whom he “shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places” because the Lord “will . . . not forget thee” since “I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands” (Isa. 49:9, 15–16 = 1 Ne. 22:9, 15–16). In addition, it is the Lord “who leadeth thee by the way thou shouldst go” (1 Ne. 20:17 = Isa. 48:17). On darkness and prison, see Lehi’s appeal to his older sons to “awake from a deep sleep” in order to “shake off the awful chains by which ye are bound” that make them “captive” (2 Ne. 1:13; see also 1:21, 23). On feeding and pasturing “in all high places,” as well as the Lord’s promise to “make all my mountains a way” (1 Ne. 21:9–11 = Isa. 49:9–11), compare the function of the brass ball that “led us in the more fertile parts of the wilderness” (1 Ne. 16:16). See my “A Case for Lehi’s Bondage in Arabia,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6, no. 2 (fall 1997): 205–17.

54. Without multiplying examples, we note that other allusions to the family’s situation appear in Isaiah 48–49. For instance, the reference to “children” born while one is “a captive” (1 Ne. 21:21 = Isa. 49:21) could be understood as allusions to Jacob and Joseph. In addition, the expression “those who are in the east” (1 Ne. 21:13 = Isa. 49:13) could be seen as referring not only to the extended family who traveled east through Arabia to reach the shore of the sea, but possibly to the direction that they traveled by sea in order to reach the Americas. Moreover, the remark about the one who “wouldst deal very treacherously” but from whom the Lord “will . . . defer mine anger . . . that I cut thee not off” (1 Ne. 20:8–9 = Isa. 48:8–9) could be understood to apply

to Nephi's older brothers, for whom the Lord showed abundant patience during the journey and whose posterity was to survive.