"I Did Liken All Scriptures Unto Us": Early Nephite Understandings of Isaiah Implications for "Others" in the Land

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"I DID LIKEN ALL SCRIPTURES UNTO US"

EARLY NEPHITE UNDERSTANDINGS OF ISAIAH AND IMPLICATIONS FOR "OTHERS" IN THE LAND

John Gee and Matthew Roper

WHILE INTRODUCING LENGTHY quotations from the prophet Isaiah, Nephi invited his readers to "liken" the words of Isaiah to their own circumstances and peculiar situation. "I did liken all scriptures *unto us,* that it might be for our profit and learning" (1 Nephi 19:23; emphasis added). "Now these are the words, and ye may liken them *unto you* and unto all men" (2 Nephi 11:8; emphasis added).

As latter-day readers of the scriptures, we rightly apply the scriptures to our own contemporary situation. In our quest for greater understanding of the scriptures, it may also at times be helpful to put ourselves in the position of those who wrote the scriptures and first listened to their messages. President Brigham Young once asked: "Do you read the Scriptures, my brethren and sisters, as though you were writing them a thousand, two thousand, or five

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thousand years ago? Do you read them as though you stood in the place of the men who wrote them? If you do not feel thus, it is your privilege to do so."[1]

Sometimes in our tendency to read the Book of Mormon in our modern terms—and we certainly think this is proper and appropriate—we do not always consider what these words may have meant and signified for their ancient audience. While this is not true of all the Book of Mormon, some of the content, particularly the material from the small plates (1 Nephi–Omni), was written to both ancient and modern audiences. Nephi explained that the things which he wrote on the plates were specifically "for the instruction of *my people*, who should possess the land, and also for other wise purposes, which purposes are known unto the Lord" (1 Nephi 19:3; emphasis added). Elsewhere, Nephi tells us that although written for a latter-day audience, his plates, including those in the first part of our Book of Mormon, contained "things which *were* taught among *my people*" (2 Nephi 33:1; emphasis added).

In this essay we discuss how early Nephites in the time of Nephi and Jacob may have likened the words of Isaiah to their own peculiar situation in a newly discovered land of promise. We suggest that the words of Isaiah inscribed and rehearsed by Nephi and Jacob would have been especially meaningful to Nephi's ancient American audience if there were other non-Lehite and non-Israelite peoples in the land of promise when they arrived. First we will address the common assumption readers sometimes make that the promised land was devoid of inhabitants when Lehi's family arrived in the land of promise. Then we will suggest how the presence of others in the land makes the Isaiah passages in the Book of Mormon more meaningful.

Nephi's Neighbors

Some modern readers assume that when Book of Mormon peoples arrived they were alone in the land, yet Church leaders and other diligent students of the Book of Mormon have urged caution about making assumptions about New World peoples that go

beyond what the text actually says. In the April 1929 general conference of the Church, President Anthony W. Ivins of the First Presidency counseled the Saints: "We must be careful in the conclusions that we reach. The Book of Mormon teaches the history of three distinct peoples, or two peoples and three different colonies of people, who came from the old world to this continent. *It does not tell us that there was no one here before them. It does not tell us that people did not come after.* And so if discoveries are made which suggest differences in race origins it can very easily be accounted for, and reasonably, for *we do believe that other people came to this continent.*"[2] In 1952 Hugh Nibley observed: "Now there is a great deal said in the Book of Mormon about the past and future of the promised land, but never is it described as an empty land. The descendants of Lehi were never the only people on the continent, and the Jaredites never claimed to be."[3] More recently John Sorenson and Brant Gardner have summarized evidence from the Book of Mormon text that is best explained in the context of non-Lehites in the land of promise.[4] We will not repeat their arguments here, but we wish to make a few additional observations of our own.

Nephi, after telling us that Laman, Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael were angry at him because of the admonitions of the Lord (see 2 Nephi 4:13), states the following:

"And it came to pass that the Lord did warn me, that I, Nephi, should depart from them and flee into the wilderness, and all those who would go with me.

"Wherefore, it came to pass that I, Nephi, did take my family, and also Zoram and his family, and Sam, mine elder brother and his family, and Jacob and Joseph, my younger brethren, and also my sisters, *and all those who would go with me.* And all those who would go with me were those who believed in the warnings and the revelations of God; wherefore, they did hearken unto my words" (2 Nephi 5:5–6; emphasis added).

Nephi tells us that at the time the Nephites and the Lamanites separated he was accompanied by his own family, Zoram, Sam, and their respective families, his younger brothers, Jacob and Joseph, and his sisters in addition to "all those who would go with me." Who

were these others, who in addition to those named by Nephi believed in the warnings and revelations of the Lord? The most likely answer seems to be that there were other people in the land who were not of Lehi's family and who were willing to follow Nephi (see 2 Nephi 5:9). Significantly, at this point in the text Nephi introduces the term "people of Nephi" for the first time in reference to his followers, a term that may suggest a larger society that now includes more than his immediate family.

At this point the term *Lamanite* first appears. Nephi states that he made preparations to defend his people, "lest by any means the people who were now called Lamanites should come upon us and destroy us; for I knew their hatred towards me and my children and those who were called my people" (2 Nephi 5:14). As demographer James Smith observes, "One reading of the latter phrase is that 'Lamanites' is a new name for the family and followers of Laman, Nephi's brother-enemy from whom Nephi fled. Another possible reading is that some people not previously called 'Lamanites' were now so called, presumably because of Laman's affiliation with them."[5]

After explaining how he and his people separated themselves from Laman, Lemuel, the sons of Ishmael, and their people, and having told how the people of Nephi became established in the land, Nephi quotes a prophecy of the Lord: "And cursed shall be the seed of *him that mixeth with their seed;* for they shall be cursed even with the same cursing. *And the Lord spake it and it was done*" (2 Nephi 5:23; emphasis added). This prophecy anticipates future mixing and intermarriage with the Lamanites, but the immediacy of Nephi's personal observation that "the Lord spake it and it was done," suggests that the process was already under way at the time Nephi left or very shortly after the separation. That is, unidentified people had, at this early period, already joined with the Lamanites in their opposition to Nephi and his people and had become like the Lamanites, and Nephi saw this event as a fulfilment of the Lord's prophecy. Since dissensions[6] from the Nephites are not mentioned until several generations later, during the time of Jarom (see Jarom 1:13), Nephi's statement about unidentified peoples intermarrying

with the Lamanites seems to indicate the presence of other non-Lehite peoples who had joined or were joining the Lamanites at the time of Nephi.

Being Numbered with the House of Israel

With this background in mind and the likelihood that additional non-Lehite peoples had united with both the Nephites and Lamanites, some of Nephi and Jacob's teachings relating to Isaiah take on greater significance. After explaining that "we had already had wars and contentions" with the Lamanites (see 2 Nephi 5:34), Nephi then inserts a lengthy sermon delivered by his brother Jacob (see 2 Nephi 6–10). Jacob indicates while he had previously spoken about many things (2 Nephi 6:2), Nephi now wanted him to preach from Isaiah. In fact, Jacob says, Nephi had even selected the scriptural passages he was to discuss (see 2 Nephi 6:4). The words that Jacob was assigned to preach were prophecies of Isaiah that concern the relationship between scattered Israel and the Gentiles. Why talk about this now? Jacob at that time asked his people to liken these passages from Isaiah to their present situation. He also suggested that the application of these teachings concerned "things which *are,* and which are to come" (2 Nephi 6:4; emphasis added). Given that latter-day prophecies concerning the house of Israel and the Gentiles would be informative to the Nephites on any occasion, what relevance did it have for the early Nephites?

Jacob prophesies that in the latter days, some Jews will reject the Messiah and be destroyed, while others will believe and be saved (see 2 Nephi 6:14–15). Jacob also interprets Isaiah as referring to two distinct groups of Gentiles: those that nourish and unite with Israel (see 2 Nephi 6:12; 10:18–19)—who are called in Isaiah's terms "nursing fathers" and "nursing mothers" (see 2 Nephi 6:6)—and those who fight against Zion (see 2 Nephi 6:13; 10:16). In the latter days, both groups of Gentiles will play an active role in the drama of Israel's gathering and redemption: "Wherefore, he that fighteth against Zion, both *Jew* and *Gentile,* both bond and free, both male and female, shall perish; for they are the whore of all the earth; for

they who are not for me are against me, saith our God" (2 Nephi 10:16; emphasis added). But in likening Jacob's teachings to themselves, Jacob's contemporary listeners would have drawn the obvious parallel with their own situation. As a branch of scattered Israel in a covenant land they wanted to establish Zion but were opposed, hated, and persecuted by their former brethren. While Jacob spoke of the latter days, the prophecies had immediate relevance to his listeners, who would see their Lamanite persecutors as the "Jews" of Jacob's prophecy and the "Gentiles" as those non-Lehite peoples who had now joined with the Lamanites against the people of Nephi. In his application of Isaiah to the Lehites, Jacob also explained that not all Gentiles would oppose Zion. Some Gentiles would be joint heirs with the people of Lehi in the blessings of the land. "But behold, this land, said God, shall be a land of thine inheritance, and the Gentiles shall be blessed upon the land" (2 Nephi 10:10). How would the Gentiles in the land be blessed? By being numbered among the children of Lehi.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, thus saith our God: I will afflict thy seed by the hand of the Gentiles; nevertheless, I will soften the hearts of the Gentiles, that they shall be like unto a father to them; wherefore, the Gentiles shall be blessed and numbered among the house of Israel.

"Wherefore, I will consecrate this land unto thy seed, and them who shall be numbered among thy seed, forever, for the land of their inheritance; for it is a choice land, saith God unto me, above all other lands, wherefore I will have all men that dwell thereon that they shall worship me, saith God" (2 Nephi 10:18–19).

In addition to explaining the latter-day application of Isaiah's prophecy, Jacob's sermon can be read as addressing the question of how Lehite Israel is to relate to non-Lehite peoples in the promised land. The answer, Jacob taught, is that they may, if they so choose, join with the people of God in seeking to build up Zion as joint inheritors of the land. Once they do so, they become Israel too and are numbered with Lehi's seed. Some have wondered why, if other people were present in the land during Book of Mormon times, they are not mentioned more frequently in the record. This teaching,

delivered by the Nephites' first priest, would be foundational for later Nephite prophets and would likely have set a precedent for viewing all other peoples in the land, ideally in covenant terms. Previous cultural identity from the Lehite perspective would be swallowed up in this frame of reference. An example of this can be seen in the case of Nephi's righteous brother Sam. When Lehi blesses Sam he states, "Blessed art thou, and thy seed; for thou shalt inherit the land like unto thy brother Nephi. And thy seed shall be numbered with his seed; and thou shalt be even like unto thy brother, and thy seed like unto his seed; and thou shalt be blessed in all thy days" (2 Nephi 4:11). Lehi, who blessed all of his children, uses the term "numbered" only in Sam's blessing. Interestingly, when Lehite tribal designations are mentioned, there is no tribe of Sam (see Jacob 1:13; 4 Nephi 1:35–38). Why? Apparently because when one is "numbered" with a people, one takes upon himself the name and identity of that people. Gentiles, once numbered with Abraham (see Abraham 2:10), Isaac, Jacob (see 3 Nephi 21:22), Moses and Aaron (see D&C 84:34), or Lehi (see 1 Nephi 14:2; 2 Nephi 10:18–19), are thereafter identified with their covenant fathers, without respect to biological origin. From then on they are simply Israel.

One of the Isaiah passages Nephi cites is particularly interesting in this context: "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" (2 Nephi 24:1, quoting Isaiah 14:1). We do not doubt that such prophecies may quite properly be applied to latter-day readers of the Book of Mormon, but they need not refer to them exclusively. If we were in Nephi and Jacob's audience, how would we liken this scripture to our own situation as they invited them to do? Certainly, we would recognize, as Book of Mormon prophets do, the great mercy of the Lord in bringing us out from Jerusalem and saving us from destruction, but we would also see the Lord's hand in setting us in a new land of promise. Significantly, Isaiah's prophecy would also suggest to the ancient readers or listeners that there were "strangers" in the land who had joined or would join with them

in accepting the teachings of Nephi and could be numbered with the house of Jacob.

Temples

Nephi quotes Isaiah's prophecy, "And it shall come to pass in the last days,[7] when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (2 Nephi 12:2–3, quoting Isaiah 2:2–3). While we have our own ways of reading this passage, the Nephites would likely have thought about their own temple, recently built at the place called Nephi, which Nephi "did construct . . . after the manner of the temple of Solomon save it were not built of so many precious things" (2 Nephi 5:16). This was a temple at which Jacob taught (see Jacob 1:17; 2:11), and, as a place where teaching was done, it is a likely place at which Nephi's own teachings to his people and quotations of Isaiah were given. The place called Nephi was located at a higher elevation than Zarahemla and was one of the highest points in all the land (at least none mentioned is ever said to be higher).[8] So these "many people" of which Isaiah prophesied would have to "go up to the mountain of the Lord." It was also a place where many people came, not only those Nephi describes as "my children and those who were called my people" (2 Nephi 5:14), and "the people who are now called Lamanites" (2 Nephi 5:14), but also those like Sherem who "came . . . among the people of Nephi" (Jacob 7:1).

Those Who Fight against Zion

Nephi cites two long sections from the prophecy of Isaiah that deal with the destruction of the wicked. The first is the prophecy concerning the alliance of Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, against Ahaz, king of Judah (see 2 Nephi 17–22, quoting

Isaiah 7–12). The second prophecy is the Assyrian destruction of Babylon (see 2 Nephi 23–24, quoting Isaiah 13–14). Both of these passages can be seen as reflective of the political situation of the Nephites during Nephi's day.

In the first passage, an Israelite king, Pekah, has made a confederation with a non-Israelite king in an effort to depose the king of Judah and replace him with someone of their choosing (see 2 Nephi 17:1–6, quoting Isaiah 7:1–6). Isaiah prophesied that "it shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass" (2 Nephi 17:7, quoting Isaiah 7:7) and urges Ahaz to simply have faith and be faithful (see 2 Nephi 17:9, quoting Isaiah 7:9).[9] The sign for this being established is the birth of Immanuel (see 2 Nephi 17:14–16, quoting Isaiah 7:14–16). Before the child knows the difference between good and evil, the Lord will bring another non-Israelite nation, Assyria, who will conquer both nations that are confederate against Judah (see 2 Nephi 17:17–20; 18:4–13, quoting Isaiah 7:17–20; 8:4–13), and although this nation will itself threaten Judah (see 2 Nephi 18:7–8, quoting Isaiah 8:7–8), the Lord will in turn prevent the nation from conquering Judah if they will trust in Him (see 2 Nephi 20:5–27, quoting Isaiah 10:5–27).

Apply this now to Nephi's day. Within forty years of Lehi's departure from Jerusalem (see 2 Nephi 5:34), perhaps after thirty years in the promised land (see 1 Nephi 17:4), Nephi notes that "we had already had wars [i.e., large-scale conflicts] and contentions with our brethren" (2 Nephi 5:34). In his ambition to gain power and assert his claims to rulership, Laman, leader of "the people who are now called Lamanites" (2 Nephi 5:14), has made war on another ruler of Israelite descent, Nephi and his people (see 2 Nephi 5:1–3, 14, 19, 34). Perhaps frightened by the superior numbers of their enemies, the people are counseled to trust in the Lord, since those who fight against Zion will end up licking the dust of the feet of the covenant people of the Lord (see 2 Nephi 6:13; 10:16). If there were others in the land, it would also help explain why many of Nephi's people had difficulty understanding Isaiah, although not all of them did (see 2 Nephi 25:1–6). Nephi's emphasis on the universal nature of God's love is even more meaningful if written and

taught to a people grappling with issues of ethnic and social diversity. "And he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile" (2 Nephi 26:33). Nephites would understand Jews to be those who came out from Jerusalem, yet the additional reference to Gentiles and heathens would make sense to a Nephite only if there were others in the land.

Multiple Interpretations of Isaiah

By encouraging his people to liken the scriptures unto themselves, Nephi allows for multiple interpretations of the same passage, and it is worth noting that Nephi's interpretations of passages from Isaiah differ from those of Isaiah's day as well as our own. We will take only two themes to show the variation in interpretation: the temple and the destruction of Babylon.

Isaiah's temple built in the tops of the mountains is Jerusalem. Nephi's temple built in the tops of the mountains is the temple that his people constructed. For us, the temple built in the tops of the mountains is in Salt Lake City, although recently President Hinckley has applied this same scripture to the new Conference Center in Salt Lake City.[10]

For Isaiah, prophesying the year of the death of Ahaz, about 715 B.C. (see Isaiah 14:28), the utter destruction of Babylon by the Assyrians was a future event that he vividly described:

"It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures [*'ohîm* "eagle-owls"]; and owls [*bᵉnôt yaʿᵃnâ* "ostriches"] shall dwell there, and satyrs [*sᵉʿîrîm* "goats"] shall dance there" (Isaiah 13:20–21). There is only one time in antiquity that we know of when Babylon was utterly destroyed. In 694 B.C. Babylon allied with Elam under Hallushu-Inshushinak and

assassinated Ashshur-nadin-shumi, Sennacherib's son, heir to the Assyrian throne, and regent of Babylon.[11] In 689 B.C., after three years of siege, a furious Sennacherib took Babylon:

"The city and (its) houses,—foundation and walls, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire. The wall and outer wall, temples and gods, temple-tower of brick and earth, as many as there were, I razed and dumped into the Arahtu-canal. Through the midst of that city I dug canals, I flooded its site with water, and the very foundations thereof I destroyed. I made its destruction more complete than that by a flood. That in days to come, the site of that city, and (its) temples and gods, might not be remembered, I completely blotted it out with (floods) of water and made it like a meadow."[12]

"After I had destroyed Babylon, had smashed the gods thereof, and had struck down its people with the sword,—that the ground of that city might be carried off, I removed its ground and had it carried to the Euphrates (and on) to the sea. Its dirt reached unto Dilmun [the island of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf]."[13]

So thorough was Sennacherib's destruction that no evidence exists that there was any inhabitation in the area until the city was rebuilt by Esarhaddon.[14] Excavation of Babylon shows a layer of "sand and clay with sherd, fragments of bricks, hearths and ash layers" immediately below the Neo-Babylonian settlement.[15] No dated texts from the time between Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon and its rebuilding by Esarhaddon have come forth from Babylon, although they have come from Nippur, Borsippa, and Ur.[16] After Sennacherib's assassination by his son Ardamulishshi,[17] his son Esarhaddon describes the area of Babylon before he rebuilt it as "a wasteland *(namuta)*" inhabited only by birds and fish (see Isaiah 13:20), the previous inhabitants having fled.[18] Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled a quarter of a century later at the end of Isaiah's life.[19]

For Nephi and Jacob, Babylon becomes a type of those "that fight against Zion and the covenant people of the Lord" (2 Nephi 6:13), the latter of which he associates with his family and those of the inhabitants round about who have joined them and who have been adopted into the covenant. For Nephi and Jacob, Babylon is

taken as referring to Laman, Lemuel, and those of the Gentiles around them who have rejected the covenant.

We normally take the destruction of Babylon to refer to the destruction of the wicked at the end of time. As a "type of the world,"[20] "Babylon represents the world, which must eventually be overcome by covenant Israel."[21] As Sidney Sperry put it, "I cannot escape the belief that in [Isaiah 13–14] . . . Isaiah is dealing with the events of the latter days. As I view it, these verses are directed against the spiritual Babylon prevalent in the world of the day when Israel is being gathered and redeemed."[22] While we prefer to apply our own interpretation on events, we should realize that prophets can be inspired to apply earlier scriptures to their own time.

Conclusion

Nephi and Jacob quoted the Isaiah passages found in the Book of Mormon dealing with the Gentiles because they found them directly relevant to the situation they found themselves in, having to deal with the Gentiles surrounding them and because of their relationship to the covenant God made with the house of Israel. In their explication of these passages, they taught a doctrine that allowed the Gentiles to be adopted into the covenant, to become nursing fathers and mothers, and to be partakers of the blessings of the gospel. After that time the issue seems to have disappeared among the Nephites, as it does not surface in Book of Mormon times. By likening the scriptures to his people, Nephi sometimes reapplies to his day passages which Isaiah had intended for his day. We in turn follow the same pattern by applying those same scriptures to our day.

Notes

1. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 7:333.

2. Anthony W. Ivins, in Conference Report, April 1929, 15; emphasis added.

3. Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert/The World of the Jaredites/There Were Jaredites* (Salt Lake City and Provo, Utah: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 250.

4. John L. Sorenson, "When Lehi's party arrived in the land, did they find others there?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1, no. 1 (1992): 1–34; Brant A. Gardner, "The Other Stuff: Reading the Book of Mormon for Cultural Information," *FARMS Review of Books* 13, no. 2 (2001): 21–52.

5. James E. Smith, "How Many Nephites? The Book of Mormon at the Bar of Demography," in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins,* ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1997), 272.

6. "Dissension" in Joseph Smith's day referred to "disagreement in opinion, usually a disagreement which is violent, producing warm debates or angry words; . . . and the word is sometimes applied to differences which produce war" (Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* [New York: S. Converse, 1828], s.v. "dissension"). The Book of Mormon generally refers to the last definition. Thus there were "many dissensions away unto the Lamanites" (Words of Mormon 1:16), and Zoramite separation from the Nephites is referred to as "your dissension from among us" (Alma 34:2). Those flattered by Amalickiah "were led away by Amalickiah to dissensions" politically (Alma 46:6), "they dissented even from the church" (Alma 46:7), and "not long after their dissensions they became more hardened and impenitent, and more wild, wicked and ferocious than the Lamanites" (Alma 47:36). In the Book of Mormon there is no sanctity in dissent.

Jacob relates, "There came a man among the people of Nephi, whose name was Sherem" (Jacob 7:1; emphasis added), suggesting Sherem may have been an outsider rather than a Nephite.

7. It is sometimes assumed that use of the phrase *bᵉ'aḥarît hayamîm* "last days" applies exclusively to our own "latter days." The Hebrew phrase is "a prophetic phrase denoting the final period of the history so far as the speaker's perspective reaches; the sense thus varies with the context" (Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968], 31). We should remember that the Qumran sect also considered itself to be in the last days two thousand years ago (see Eduard Lohse, *Die Texte aus Qumran,* 4th ed. [München: Kösel-Verlag, 1986], XV, XVIII). Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah,* 2d ed. (Salt Lake City and Provo, Utah: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 19, notes: "One indication of this is the observation of one of the foremost Catholic authorities on the Dead Sea Scrolls, in one of the first and best books ever to appear on the subject, that the correct title for the community at Qumran should be Latter-day Saints, but that the title could not be used because unfortunately it had been preempted by a 'so-called Christian sect.'"

8. See Omni 1:12, 27–28; Mosiah 20:7, 9, 15; 28:1, 5, 9; 29:3; John L. Sorenson, *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book,* 2d ed. (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1992), 329; John L. Sorenson, *Mormon's Map* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2000), 32–34.

9. The sentence "If ye will not believe surely ye shall not be established" may also be translated (from Hebrew), "If ye have no faith, it is because ye are not faithful."

10. See Gordon B. Hinckley, "This Great Millennial Year," *Ensign,* November 2000, 67–71.

11. Babylonian Chronicle I.ii.26–iii.38, in A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley, N.Y.: J. J. Augustin, 1975), 77–82; Grant Frame, *Babylonia, 689–627 B.C.: A Political History* (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1992), 52–53; Walter Mayer, *Politik und Kriegskunst der Assyrer* (Münster, Ugarit-Verlag, 1995), 373. Unfortunately, the inscriptions of Hallashu-Inshushinak, also known as Hallutash-Inshushinak II, do not shed any useful light on the incident (see Friedrich Wilhelm König, *Die elamischen Königsinschriften,* Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft 16 [Graz: Ernst Weidner, 1965], 168–69).

12. Annals of Sennacherib, Bavian Inscription, lines 50–54, in Daniel D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), 83–84.

13. Annals of Sennacherib, Assur Foundation Stela, lines 36–39, in Luckenbill, *Annals of Sennacherib,* 137.

14. Frame, Babylonia, 52–63; Mayer, *Politik und Kriegskunst der Assyrer,* 370–74. The Babylonian Chronicle I.iii.28 (in *Grayson, Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles,* 81) refers to it as the years when "no king was in Babylon (*šarru ina Babili*^{ki} *là baši*)." See also Joan Oates, *Babylon,* 2d ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 119–20.

15. Frame, *Babylonia,* 55–56.

16. Frame, *Babylonia,* 61–62.

17. See Simo Parpola, "The Murderer of Sennacherib," in *Death in Mesopotamia: XXVIe Rencontre assyriologique internationale,* ed. Bendt Alster (Copenhagen: Akademisk forlag, 1980), 171–82.

18. Esarhaddon Bab. A-G, Episodes 7–9, in Riekele Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien,* Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft 9 (Graz: Ernst Weidner, 1956), 14–15. For the previous destruction, attributed by Esarhaddon to an unnamed king rather than his father, see episodes 3–6 on pp. 12–14.

19. It might be objected that Isaiah identifies the destruction of Babylon as being by "the Medes" (Isaiah 13:17), even though the other agents of destruction mentioned are Assyrians (see Isaiah 7:17–20; 20:4). But at the time of the conquest of Babylon in 689 B.C., Media was an Assyrian province loaded with people from Samaria (ancient Israel), and Hatti (modern Turkey) by Tiglathpileser III (744–727 B.C.), Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), and Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.), from

which large numbers of conscripts were impressed into the Assyrian army (see Bustenay Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* [Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1979], 16, 26–27, 30, 48–54, 63–65, 70, 83, 128). One should note that Sennacherib's army included 61,000 Elamite (Persian) archers and footmen (Annals of Sennacherib, Nineveh Bull Inscription 102–4, in Luckenbill, *Annals of Sennacherib,* 76, correcting with *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* [Chicago: Oriental Institute and Glückstadt: J. J. Augustin, 1968], A.2: 270; see also Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire,* 52).

On the other hand, when the Medes and the Persians under Cyrus conquered Babylon, "Cyrus moved into the capital without encountering resistance and treated Nabonidus with his characteristic leniency toward defeated kings" (A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization,* 2d ed. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977], 163). Cyrus's army fought only one battle in the greater Babylonian area in 539 B.C. and took cities like Sippar and Babylon without a fight. The buildings were not destroyed, most government officials retained their posts, and life went on much as it had before the change in government (see A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948], 49–56; Herodotus, *Histories* I.189–91; Oates, *Babylon,* 134–38).

20. David R. Seely, "Nephi's Use of Isaiah 2–14 in 2 Nephi 12–30," in *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1998), 154.

21. Seely, "Nephi's Use of Isaiah 2–14," 155.

22. Sidney B. Sperry, "The Isaiah Quotation: 2 Nephi 12–24," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4, no. 1 (1995): 207–8.