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## God Will Fulfill His Covenants with the House of Israel

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Source: *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, The Doctrinal Structure*

Editor(s): Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr.

Published: 1989

Page(s): 159-176

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# 8

## **God Will Fulfill His Covenants with the House of Israel**

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**Leland Gentry**

**O**f all the writing prophets in our Old Testament, Moses and Isaiah are by far the most prolific. But while both men deal with history, doctrine, and prophecy, Moses' chief contribution comes in the form of one grand sweep of 2,500 years of history, while Isaiah uses events of his own day to transport us far into the prophetic future. The doctrinal enlightenment furnished by both men is obvious to any serious student of their works.

Nephite writers were particularly fond of Isaiah, as is evident to anyone who has read the Book of Mormon. What may be less apparent, however, is that approximately one in every eleven chapters of that sacred record is taken from Isaiah. To put it another way, of the 66 chapters which we have from the great prophet in our Old Testament, nearly one-third of them are quoted from or cited in full by Nephite prophets. This fact, combined with other Isaiah passages cited or referred to in our Book of Mormon, clearly indicates the high esteem in which Lehi's descendants held Isaiah.

Nephi and his brother, Jacob, appear to have been especially fond of Isaiah's writings. Of the 62 chapters written by these great men, seventeen, or one in every four, are taken from Isaiah. Without doubt, these were extracted from the brass plates which Nephi and his brothers returned to Jerusalem to secure. We may be inclined to take such a task for granted until we remember that Nephi was not only commanded to take Laban's life to obtain the record but has also given us this penetrating comment:

. . . My father, Lehi, took the records which were engraven upon the plates of brass, and he did search them from the beginning. And he beheld they did contain the five books of Moses. . . . And also the prophecies of the holy prophets, from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah [this would include Isaiah]; and also many prophecies which have been spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah. And we had obtained the records which the Lord had commanded us, and searched them and found that they were desirable; yea, even of great worth unto us, insomuch that we could preserve the commandments of the Lord with our children. Wherefore, it was wisdom in the Lord that we should carry them with us, as we journeyed in the wilderness toward the land of promise (1 Nephi 5:10-11, 13, 21-22).

Isaiah's appearance in time was approximately 150 years before the brass plates were obtained, about the same period of time from our own day to that of Joseph Smith. Knowing this may help us understand why Nephi and his brother, Jacob, could look back upon Isaiah with such favor, just as those of us today who believe the Prophet Joseph, view him with that same high regard.

Nephi wrote that his "soul delighteth" in the words of Isaiah, while Jacob was pleased to know that the Lord would "fulfill his covenants which he has made unto his children; and for this cause the prophet [Isaiah] has written these things" (2 Nephi 6:12). Several centuries later, Jesus commanded the Nephites to search the words of Isaiah diligently. When that prophet's words are fulfilled, the Savior said, that would signify the "fulfilling of the covenant which the Father hath made unto

his people, O house of Israel” (3 Nephi 20:11-12). In this same sermon, Jesus spoke approvingly of Isaiah’s words as follows: “And now, behold, I say unto you, that ye ought to search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah.” The Lord then tells us why: “For surely he [Isaiah] spake as touching all things concerning my people which are of the house of Israel” (3 Nephi 23:1-2).

### Jacob’s Quotations from Isaiah and Why

One reason Latter-day Saints understand Isaiah better than other students is the excellent commentary provided by Nephite prophets. According to our Bible Dictionary, “the reader today has no greater written commentary and guide to understanding Isaiah than the Book of Mormon” (707). A careful reading of the commentary of Jacob helps to illustrate how useful the Book of Mormon is in interpreting Isaiah. The material that Jacob chose to quote and comment upon is taken from Isaiah 49 through 52. Chapters 50 and 51 are given in their entirety, but only five verses of chapter 49 and two verses from 52. Jacob’s commentary sheds great light and understanding on Isaiah’s prophetic picture of the latter days, particularly as it relates God’s fulfillment of his promises to the house of Israel. Jacob states that he spoke to his people for five reasons:

1. his desire for the spiritual welfare of his people,
2. his desire to speak of things which are and are to come,
3. his wish to speak the words which Nephi desired,
4. his hope that his people might “learn and glorify the name” of their god,

5. his wish that his people would liken Isaiah's words unto themselves (2 Nephi 6:1-5).

Plainly, Jacob hoped Isaiah's words would have a salutary effect upon the Nephites and thus he could fulfill the trust which Nephi had placed in him. He also hoped to glorify the name of God.

### God's Covenants with His People, Israel

Latter-day Saints are also part of covenant Israel, and likening Isaiah's words unto ourselves can have as much value for us as for those in Jacob's day. This can scarcely be accomplished, however, unless we understand what Isaiah meant. Perhaps this is why Jacob begins by citing Isaiah 49:22-23, a reference having to do with the relationship between the Gentiles and the House of Israel:

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 faces 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 (2 Nephi 6:6-7).

These same verses were quoted by Nephi earlier in 1 Nephi 21. He and Jacob appear to have viewed their fulfillment as having great importance for their own people as well as for all of Israel. Notice that they would be fulfilled after the Lord had raised his "standard" among the Gentiles. The Lord's standard has been variously interpreted to mean the Church, the Book of Mormon, the gospel, or as the Doctrine and Covenants puts it, the "everlasting covenant" (D&C 45:9). The reference to Gentile kings and queens being "nursing fathers . . . and mothers" and carrying God's covenant people in their arms and upon their shoulders may have its fulfillment in part through the

modern Indian Placement Program as well as the great missionary work currently being done among the Lamanites (see Kimball “A Changing World” and “The Expanded Indian Program”) whereas others have seen it in the modern restoration of the Jews to the land of Palestine (see Richards 189-209). It is to this second meaning that I wish to speak.

Consider the role played by Great Britain and the United Nations in Palestine following the end of World War I. The British were made responsible by the allied nations for seeing to the peace of the Holy Land, and almost at once Lord Balfour, the British Prime Minister, announced that “his majesty’s government” viewed with favor the establishment in Palestine of a permanent homeland for the Jews. After serving as the land’s protectorate for about 29 years, Britain relinquished control to the United Nations in 1946. These same Gentile nations helped create the modern State of Israel in 1947-48. Since that time, the world has witnessed a reversal of power from that which existed in ancient times. Isaiah prophesied of such a reversal: “Thy children [in the latter days] shall make haste [gain strength] against thy [ancient] destroyers; and they that laid thee waste [anciently] shall [in the latter days] go forth of thee” (49:17; also in 1 Nephi 21:17).

Even a limited understanding of modern history and the present situation in the Middle East shows the literal fulfillment of this promise. Descendants of ancient powers which surround Israel today—Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iran and Iraq (to name but a few)—respect Israel’s military might, even though they find it difficult to accept. And from whence has Israel’s might and power come? From a mighty Gentile father, even that nation among whom Isaiah prophesied the Lord would set up his “standard.”

It is at this point that Jacob begins his commentary on Isaiah’s words. He reports that the Lord had shown him that those who were at Jerusalem who had been slain or carried away captive by ancient powers (Babylon) would return to the city and

see the Savior come in the flesh. After our Lord had been scourged and crucified, those at Jerusalem would be smitten, scattered and afflicted. These are Jacob's words concerning the house of Israel:

Wherefore, after they are driven to and fro, for thus saith the angel, many shall be afflicted in the flesh, and shall not be suffered to perish, because of the prayers of the faithful; they shall be scattered, and smitten, and hated; nevertheless, 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.

And blessed are the Gentiles, they of whom the prophet has written; for behold, if it so be that they shall repent and fight not against Zion, and do not unite themselves to that great and abominable church, they shall be saved; for the Lord God will fulfill his covenants which he has made unto his children; and for this cause the prophet has written these things.

Wherefore, they that fight against Zion and the covenant people of the Lord shall lick up the dust of their feet; and the people of the Lord shall not be ashamed. For the people of the Lord are they who wait for him; for they still wait for the coming of the Messiah.

And behold, according to the words of the prophet, the Messiah will set himself again the second time to recover them; wherefore, he will manifest himself unto them in power and great glory, unto the destruction of their enemies, when that day cometh when they shall believe in him; and none will he destroy that believe in him.

And they that believe not in him shall be destroyed, both by fire, and by tempest, and by earthquakes, and by bloodsheds, and by pestilence, and by famine. And they shall know that the Lord is God, the Holy One of Israel (2 Nephi 6:11-15).

At this point we must ask several questions and make some pertinent observations:

1. Have the descendants of those who were "at Jerusalem" in ancient times come to a knowledge of their Redeemer? Certainly the latter-day children of Israel have begun to gather to the lands of their inheritance, the Jews to Jerusalem, and Joseph's children, Ephraim and Manasseh, to the Americas (3 Nephi 20:21-23). The tribe of Joseph has begun to believe in its Redeemer, and President Joseph Fielding Smith once made the following observation respecting modern Jews and Jesus:

They have accepted him as one of their great teachers; they have said that, "He is Jew of Jew, the greatest Rabbi of them all," as one has stated it. When the gospel was restored in 1830, if a Jew had mentioned the name of Christ in one of the synagogues, he would have been rebuked. Had a rabbi referred to him, the congregation would have arisen and left the building. And so, we see the sentiment has changed. Now I state this on Jewish authority that they are beginning to believe in Christ, and some of them are accepting the gospel.

But in the main they will gather to Jerusalem in their unbelief; the gospel will be preached to them; some of them will believe. Not all of the Gentiles have believed when the gospel has been proclaimed to them, but the great body of the Jews who are there assembled will not receive Christ as their Redeemer until he comes himself and makes himself manifest unto them (*Doctrines of Salvation* 3:9).

2. Have the Gentiles ceased to fight against Zion and relinquished their ties to the great and abominable church? It would appear that at least *some* have, since many converts to the Church over the last 150 years have come from gentile nations. Thus, as Jacob states, God will fulfill his covenants and that is why Isaiah wrote.
3. Have those who through the centuries fought against Zion and her covenant people licked the dust of the feet of God's chosen people? Surely conditions with respect to modern Israel and their neighbors, as formerly discussed, are ample testimony they have. During the so-called Six-day War, for example, Egyptians in the Sinai desert who left their tanks and jeeps and fled into the desert from Israel's military might on foot saw the literal fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Since then, Israel and Egypt have even signed a peace agreement, thus ending centuries of bitterness and war. The Jews and the Gentiles will yet see the day when those who still await the coming of the Messiah shall not be ashamed.
4. The Savior has not yet "manifest himself . . . in power and great glory unto the destruction" of the enemies of those who wait for him to come with such power that those



who wait “shall know that the Lord is God, the Holy One of Israel.” But he will. Scripture reveals that the eventual victory shall be the Lord’s and both Jew and Gentile shall know it. This will be the famous day of Armageddon, the battle of battles in which it shall be as Ezekiel reports: “And I will set my glory among the heathen [i.e., the unbelieving], and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed. . . . So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward” (Ezekiel 39:21-22).

The last three verses of 2 Nephi 6 are taken from Isaiah 49 and also help to illustrate God’s fulfillment of his covenants with Israel:

For shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?

But thus saith the Lord: Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for the Mighty God shall deliver his covenant people. For thus saith the Lord: I will contend with them that contendeth with thee—

And I will feed them that oppress thee, with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood as with sweet wine; and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Savior and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob (2 Nephi 6:16-18).

The figure used here is that of a bird of prey with a victim in its grasp. The bird symbolizes Israel’s captors throughout her long dispersion and the prey is Israel herself. The question then is can the prey be released or the captive delivered. The answer, again, is yes: “even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered.” One has only to consider the Jews in the clutches of mighty Hitler, or the Jews of today who wish to emigrate to Israel from the grip of modern Russia. Hitler has long since vanished from the scene, and the day will come when the Lord will release His covenant ones from Russia’s grasp as well. How this will be done we do not know, but verse 15 may suggest some sort of insurrection or conflict, for they who hold Israel captive shall drink their own

blood and eat their own flesh in fulfillment of God's almighty word. All flesh shall know that the Lord is his people's physician as well as spiritual Savior and Redeemer, "the Mighty One of Jacob."

### God Has Not Forgotten His Covenant People

At this point, Isaiah presents us with two figures of speech which depict Israel's past and future and illustrate God's power to save and redeem. Jacob quotes all of Isaiah 50 and 51 and the first two verses of chapter 52. I quote 2 Nephi 7:1 (cf. Isaiah 50:1):

Yea, for thus saith the Lord: Have I put thee away, or have I cast thee off forever? For thus saith the Lord: Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement? To whom have I put thee away, or to which of my creditors have I sold you? Yea, to whom have I sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.

This passage employs several well-known images from the Old Testament to make its points: (1) a husband (Jehovah), (2) a wife (Israel), (3) a bill of divorce, and (4) the sale of personal property, in this case a member of one's own family, to satisfy a debt. Both the divorcing and paying a debt by selling a family member for domestic service have Old Testament relevance (see Deut. 24:1-2; 2 Kings 4:1). The picture given here, then, is of a wife who felt she had been divorced by her husband or sold into service as described. The husband, however, rightly asks, "Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement? Or to which of my creditors have I sold you?"

The Lord, of course, had not set Israel aside permanently but only until she repented of her wrong doings. Most certainly, the Lord has no creditors since all men are in debt to him. The perceived divorce or sale was merely supposition on Israel's part. Besides, the breach between the husband and his wife was clearly the result of her doings and not his.

Verses 2 through 7 detail the nature of the wife's transgressions and present what scholars refer to as a "servant song." When the Savior appeared on earth among the nation of Judah, she rejected him. That is the apparent meaning of Isaiah's words that "there was none to answer" or "no man" to respond. The Lord insists that in spite of this rejection by his chosen one—Judah—his power or arm is not curtailed, his knowledge and speech are not restricted, nor does he tire or manifest a rebellious nature. As a matter of fact, as man's Savior, Christ did not resist or hide his face from shame or spitting. Therefore, the Lord would come to his servant's assistance, would justify him before his adversaries, and would help him in his efforts. A modern scripture echoes this same thought:

In that day when I came unto mine own, no man among you received me, and you were driven out. When I called again [Second Coming?] there was none to answer; yet my arm is not shortened at all that I could not redeem, neither my power to deliver. Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea. I make the rivers a wilderness; their fish stink, and die for thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and make sackcloth their covering (D&C 133:66-69).

At this point, the Lord uses a new image to explain why Israel was called upon to suffer: Those who walk in darkness do so obstinately; they walk not by the light of the revelation of heaven but from sparks kindled by themselves (v. 11). Thus they are their own revelators. Such was the folly of ancient Israel! Such is the folly of many today as we prepare for his Second Coming.

The Lord uses yet another image in the next chapter: "Look unto the rock from whence you are hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence ye are digged" (Isaiah 51:1; also in 2 Nephi 8:1). Israel had her beginnings in father Abraham and the covenant which God made with him. The Lord admonishes straying Israel to return to the place of her original moorings, the source from which she sprang. Hence the counsel to "Look unto Abraham, your father, and Sarah, she that bare you; for I called him alone and blessed him" (Isaiah 51:2; also in 2 Nephi 8:2). Abraham and his seed were, in turn, under covenant to bless "all

the families of the earth . . . , even with the blessings of the gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal” (Abr. 2:8-11). With very few exceptions, ancient Israel never did this. Yet Isaiah’s words make clear that if she will even now repent, the Lord will comfort her, make her wilderness and desert places blossom, and restore the “voice of melody” (v. 3).

But it is up to Israel to change before the Lord begins his move, for his blessings are predicated on faith and obedience. She is to hearken unto righteousness and not to fear men or be afraid of their revilings. Why? Note the emphasis on the pronouns *my* and *mine* in 2 Nephi 8:4-8. The Lord is quite obviously speaking of himself. One notes with interest that it is *his* righteousness, *his* law, and *his* salvation that shall prevail. Men who understand and accept this fact should find it easy to follow the Lord’s direction to Israel to “fear not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings” (v. 7). Hence the counsel is to follow and trust in the Lord rather than man. After all he is God, a being of great power. Why should his people fear men? Isaiah appears to have Judah in mind:

Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of His fury—thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling wrung out—

And none to guide her among all the sons she hath brought forth; neither that taketh her by the hand, of all the sons she hath brought up.

These two sons are come unto thee, who shall be sorry for thee—thy desolation and destruction, and the famine and the sword—and by whom shall I comfort thee?

Thy sons have fainted, save these two; they lie at the head of all the streets; as a wild bull in a net, they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of thy God (2 Nephi 8:17-20; also in Isaiah 51:17-20).

The command to awaken will be discussed in greater detail later. At this point, the Lord speaks of Judah as having drunk from the cup of his fury and of having none among her many sons in future times to lead her by the hand. For two thousand years this prophecy has literally been fulfilled. Little is known concerning the ten tribes, although an isolated reference in the

Doctrine and Covenants suggests that they now have or will have prophets who will hear God's voice and lead them to the place where they may "fall down and be crowned with glory, even in Zion, by the hands of the servants of the Lord, even the children of Ephraim" (133:26-34).

Jacob concludes his quotation of Isaiah with a promise that a day will come when two of Judah's sons will give her guidance in a critical period. According to the Doctrine and Covenants, these two men are "two prophets that are to be raised up to the Jewish nation in the last days, at the time of the restoration, and to prophesy to the Jews after they are gathered and have built the city of Jerusalem in the land of their fathers" (D&C 77:15). While we may not be certain that these "two sons" will be Jews, their presence among the Jews will be attended with power and authority. Surely they will be called and set apart by the First Presidency (Richards 197). Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote of these men as well:

Their ministry will take place after the latter-day temple has been built in Old Jerusalem, after some of the Jews who dwell there have been converted, and just before Armageddon and the return of the Lord Jesus. How long will they minister in Jerusalem and in the Holy Land? For three and a half years, the precise time spent by the Lord in his ministry to the ancient Jews. The Jews, as an assembled people, will hear again the testimony of legal administrators bearing record that salvation is in Christ and in his gospel. Who will these witnesses be? We do not know, except that they will be followers of Joseph Smith; they will hold the holy Melchizedek Priesthood; they will be members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is reasonable to suppose, knowing how the Lord has always dealt with his people in all ages, that they will be two members of the Council of the Twelve or of the First Presidency of the Church (*Millennial Messiah* 390).

How will the people receive their witness? Much the same as the ancient Jews received the Messiah. Elder McConkie continued:

The righteous will believe their words, and the wicked will thirst for their blood. . . . Satan shall slay them by the hands of his ministers, even as he slew their Lord by the hands of the Jews and the Romans who hearkened to his will.

“And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.” . . .

“And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.” The rejoicing of the wicked at the death of the righteous constitutes a witness, written in blood, that the rebels for the world have ripened in iniquity and are fit and ready for the burning.

“And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.”

Jerusalem is shaken by a mighty earthquake even as it was at the crucifixion of Christ. This time many of the wicked are slain, while the saints—those Jews who have accepted Christ and his gospel, those who have participated in building the temple, those who have received the ordinances of the house of the Lord and are waiting for his return—they shall give glory to the God of heaven (390-92).

Jacob completes his quotations from Isaiah by citing the rest of chapter 51 and the first two verses of chapter 52 in the nature of a condemnation, a promise, and an admonition:

Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, and not with wine:

Thus saith thy Lord, the Lord and thy God pleadeth the cause of his people; behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again.

But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; who have said to thy soul: Bow down, that we may go over—and thou hast laid thy body as the ground and as the street to them that went over.

Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

Shake thyself from the dust; arise, sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion (2 Nephi 8:21-25).

Judah is drunken and afflicted because of her rejection of God and his prophets. We are then confronted with the figure of an advocate or lawyer, one who pleads the case of his people and removes “the cup of trembling” and bitter dregs from Judah’s lips. The cup of trembling and bitter dregs represent Judah’s scattering and affliction. Judah, however, must act in her own

behalf. Mercy and forgiveness are not a one-way street, and she must repent and change her ways in order for God's redeeming power to take effect. Literally, she must awaken, arise, put on strength, and loose the bands around her neck. Fortunately, we have an interpretation of Isaiah 52:1-2 in the Doctrine and Covenants:

Questions by Elias Higbee: What is meant by the command in Isaiah, 52nd chapter, 1st verse, which saith: Put on thy strength, O Zion—and what people had Isaiah reference to?

He had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of priesthood to bring again Zion, and the redemption of Israel; and to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the priesthood, which she, Zion, has a right to by lineage; also to return to that power which she had lost.

What are we to understand by Zion loosing herself from the bands of her neck; 2nd verse?

We are to understand that the scattered remnants are exhorted to return to the Lord from whence they have fallen; which if they do, the promise of the Lord is that he will speak to them, or give them revelation. See the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses. The bands of her neck are the curses of God upon her, or the remnants of Israel in their scattered condition among the Gentiles (113:7-10).

These verses shed light upon Israel's future and the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies. Note that they refer to those of the latter days with priesthood power to restore Zion and to restore her to the knowledge of her true lineage. Most of the world knows who the Jews are and where they may be found, but fewer recognize the existence of the eleven other tribes, ten of whom are "lost." It is obvious from the verses of scripture cited above that Zion's eventual restoration will come with power and by revelation, for the Lord will speak to her by revelation. Most of the world does not know this, either.

### Jacob Elaborates upon Isaiah

Second Nephi 10 is Jacob's personal commentary on the Isaiah passages he had just quoted. As noted above, Zion's redemption and return to her former stature will come by power

and by revelation, the way God has always tried to do with his people. Although the Nephites at this time were well aware of the source of Zion's latter-day authority and truth, Jacob relates something he had learned only the previous night from an angel of God: the true Redeemer and Restorer of the house of Israel will be known as "Christ." Heretofore, Israel's deliverer had been known in the Book of Mormon as the Holy One of Israel, the God of Abraham, and the Lamb of God (to mention just a few). Armed with his new knowledge, Jacob then shares a point of doctrine not found anywhere else in scripture:

Wherefore, as I said unto you, it must needs be expedient that Christ—for in the last night the angel spake unto me that this should be his name—should come among the Jews, among those who are the more wicked part of the world; and they shall crucify him—for thus it behooveth our God, and there is none other nation on earth that would crucify their God.

For should the mighty miracles be wrought among other nations they would repent, and know that he be their God.

But because of priestcrafts and iniquities, they at Jerusalem will stiffen their necks against him, that he be crucified.

Wherefore, because of their iniquities, destructions, famines, pestilences, and bloodshed shall come upon them; and they who shall not be destroyed shall be scattered among all nations (2 Nephi 10:3-6).

Still Jacob holds out great hope for Israel, for he believes implicitly in Isaiah's words. In spite of Israel's iniquities, Nephi's brother quotes the Lord as saying that his people "shall be restored in the flesh, upon the earth, unto the lands of their inheritance," but not until "the day cometh that they shall believe in me, that I am Christ" (vv. 7-14). Careful students at this point will want to ask if that day has arrived. After all, it is one thing to admit his existence among men and quite another to "believe" that he is the Christ. While it can be pointed out that few Jews today accept Jesus as the Christ, it is likely that at least some of Jacob's descendants are numbered among Lamanites who do believe. It is for this reason, then, that Jacob holds forth a hope that some of his people will be "restored in the flesh . . . unto the lands of their inheritance." Whereas gentile kings and queens



have helped restore Jews to the Holy Land, Jacob tells his people that “this land [North, Central, and South America], said God, shall be a land of thine inheritance.” Gentiles also, so Jacob states, will be centered here. There is but one condition: the Gentiles will have no king upon this land, “for I, the Lord, the king of heaven, will be their king” (2 Nephi 10:10-14). As all true students of history know, it has been so ever since the Gentiles first arrived to settle here. Consider these words also, in the context of the history of this hemisphere:

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, thus said our God: I will afflict thy seed by 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 that dwell thereon that they shall worship me, saith God (2 Nephi 10:18-19).

One has only to consider the manner in which the early Europeans, following their arrival on this side of the ocean, treated the Lamanites to see how the Gentiles afflicted Jacob’s seed. In spite of this, gentile hearts have been softened at times to come to the aid of the Lamanites in North and South America.

In view of these promises, Jacob pleads with his people to remember their Redeemer, repent of their sins, and not hang down their heads. “We are not cast off,” and in spite of having lost their land in Jerusalem, “we have been led to a better land.” In addition, those on the “isles of the sea” likewise receive God’s blessings. Certainly, Lehi’s children in Tonga, New Zealand, Samoa and the Hawaiian chain are a testimony to the fulfillment of these promises. Jacob concludes by urging all who have been thus blessed to be “reconciled unto God” and remember “that it is only in and through the grace of God” that they shall be saved, either spiritually or temporally (2 Nephi 10:20, 21, 24).

## Final Comments

The Book of Mormon is a modern miracle, literally a major part of that “marvelous work and a wonder” of the latter days (2 Nephi 27:26; Isaiah 29:14). Enemies of the Church simply do not realize the genius they attribute to Joseph Smith when they say that he wrote the Book of Mormon. External evidence such as archaeology aside, the internal evidence clearly leaves an indelible stamp of divinity upon the book.

The scattering, “destructions, famines, pestilences and bloodshed” came upon those “at Jerusalem” because of their iniquities, priestcrafts, stiffening of necks and crucifixion of their God (2 Nephi 10:5-6). All of this, Jacob reports, will continue until the day comes that the Jews “shall believe in me, that I am Christ . . . .” When this event materializes, Jacob says, the Jews will be “restored in the flesh . . . unto the lands of their inheritance” (2 Nephi 10:7). Jacob then interprets Isaiah concerning the role of the Gentiles:

And it shall come to pass that they shall be gathered in from their long dispersion, from the isles of the sea, and from the four parts of the earth; and the nations of the Gentiles shall be great in the eyes of me, saith God, in carrying them forth to the lands of their inheritance.

Yea, the kings of the Gentiles shall be nursing fathers unto them, and their queens shall become nursing mothers; wherefore, the promises of the Lord are great unto the Gentiles, for he hath spoken it, and who can dispute? (2 Nephi 10:8-9).

Note that “the promises of the Lord” will be “great unto the Gentiles.” As Jacob proceeds to speak of these promises, his words are represented as coming from God and thus, “who can dispute” it? Jacob then bears his testimony regarding the Americas, the land of his people’s inheritance. It shall be, he says, “a land of liberty unto the Gentiles” who shall raise “no kings” upon it. He who “raiseth up a king against me shall perish, for I, the Lord, the king of heaven, will be their king . . . .” (2 Nephi 10:10-14). This is a most remarkable revelation and promise.

This study of Jacob and his work with Isaiah has helped me to appreciate a single prophet's depth of understanding of another prophet whom so many today set down as an inexplicable conundrum. Plainly, Jacob could and did understand Isaiah's words and loved to "liken all scripture" unto his people "that it might be for [their] profit and learning" (1 Nephi 19:23). He was also true to his intent and showed Isaiah's prophetic power and insight into precisely how God will fulfill his covenants with the House of Israel. This, after all, is the very reason for which Isaiah wrote what he did in the first place (2 Nephi 6:12).

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