



Type: Book Chapter

1 Nephi Chapter 20

Author(s): Alan C. Miner

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Chapter 20

{Original 1830 Chapter VI – continued}

(Compare Isaiah 48)

[Added in 1920]

[Note: The following chapter and all other chapters or quotations from the prophet Isaiah will have simple commentary inserted within the text similar to or adapted from the format of Isaiah Made Easier, (1994, 2009) by David J. Ridges, with his personal permission. Because Isaiah is covenant oriented, my own textual headings will alert the reader to covenant understanding in addition to the key highlighted and underlined verses]

*The Lord speaks to the House of Israel scattered abroad
(or more specifically here to the remnant of the tribe of Joseph, which Lehi's family represented).
The Duplicity of Ancient Covenant Israel
(Of Such, the Brass Plates Bear Record)*

1 **Hearken**
and **Hear this**

O **House of Jacob** [or more specifically here the tribe of Joseph] [P= which]
who are **called** _____ by the [covenant] Name of Israel 01

and [who] are **come forth** out of the waters of Judah 02
[>or out of the waters of baptism] ["phrase" added in 1840]

who **swear** [or make covenants] [P= which]
by _____ The Name of the Lord

and [who] **make mention**
of [or pray to and talk about] The God of Israel aa

yet they **swear NOT** / **in truth**
NOR
[do
they **swear**] / **in righteousness** 03

[In other words they claim to be the Lord's people but they break covenants and don't live the gospel.]

2 **Nevertheless** they _____ **call themselves of the Holy City** [or claim to be the Lord's people]
but they do NOT **stay themselves** [or rely] upon _____ The God of Israel {AL}
***Who is the Lord of Hosts**
yea the Lord of Hosts
is His Name bb

[Heb. 01 – Calling one by a "name"]

[Heb. 02 – Separated compound preposition]

[Par. aa – Simple synonymous couplet]

[Heb. 03 – Preposition "in" plus noun = adverb]

[Par. bb – Simple inverse parallelism]

[1 Nephi 20]

[Note: In his writing style as exemplified above, Isaiah’s use of couplets can be seen very clearly. Most often he uses a couplet with simple synonymous parallelism, but he also uses couplets with alternating parallelism and even simple chiasmic parallelism. To these couplets he adds slight variations or combinations. I have chosen to illustrate these couplets by “coupling” them together, rather than always footnoting them in the usual way.]

From the Beginning, Israel Was Given Proof of the Lord
(The Brass Plates Testify of This)

[Note: In what follows, Isaiah reminds Israel that there is no lack of obvious evidence that the true God exists.]

3 **Behold** I [the Lord] *have **declared** cc
 the former things [or prophecies] **from the beginning**
and they [the former things or prophecies from the beginning
 went forth out of **My mouth** 03

and I [the Lord] ***showed them** [*P= shewed]
I [the Lord] did ***show** them suddenly [unexpectedly, without notice] [*P= shew]

[I provided prophets so you would have plenty of evidence that I exist. I did so that you can know I really am your God, and your idols are false.]

4 **And** I [the Lord] did it because
I [the Lord] **knew** that thou art obstinate

And [I the Lord knew] thy **neck *is an iron sinew** [*P= was] 04
And [I the Lord knew] thy **brow [is] brass**

[I did it because I knew that you won't bend your neck in humility. I did it because I knew that it is hard to get anything through your thick skulls.]

5 **And** I [the Lord] have
even from the beginning declared to thee [the prophesied events]

Before it [or the prophesied events] **came to pass**
I [the Lord] ***showed them** [to] thee [by My prophets who have SEEN the future]

And I [the Lord] ***showed them** for fear [*P= shewed]
 lest thou shouldst **say** mine idol _____ hath done _____ them
and my graven image [hath done _____ them]
and my molten image hath commanded them

[In other words, through My prophets I have prophesied to thee. I have shown you my power through prophecies so you couldn't claim your idols have power.]

[Par. cc – Circular repetition “I the Lord”]
[Heb. 03 – Metonymy “my mouth”]

[Heb. 04 – Idiom “neck is an iron sinew”]

6 Thou hast **heard**
and seen ALL this [these evidences] [\mathcal{P} = changed to **seen and heard** – why?]

and will ye NOT **declare** them? [or acknowledge them?] dd

and [will ye NOT **acknowledge**]
that I [the Lord] have ***showed** thee [* \mathcal{P} = shewed]
 new things **from this time**

[and that] I the Lord have ***showed** thee [* \mathcal{P} = shewed]
 even hidden things
and thou didst NOT **know** them?

[That is, I have shown you “new” things – “hidden” things that you couldn't have known in advance. And you can't even admit this?]

7 They [the prophesied events] are created now [or happening now]
and **NOT** from the beginning
 even before the day
when

thou _____ **heardest** them **NOT**
they were **declared** unto thee

lest thou shouldst **say**
Behold I _____ **knew** them

[That is, nobody could have guessed the fulfillment of these prophesied events back in the beginning when the prophecies were given. These prophecies were made even back when there was no clue that the prophesied events would take place. Otherwise you would have claimed you knew about the events also.]

8 **Yea and** thou **heardest** **NOT**
yea [and] thou **knewest** **NOT**

yea **from that time**
 [when] thine **ear** was **NOT** opened

[In essence, from the beginning you not only failed to understand, but refused to listen.]

for I [the Lord] **KNEW**
that thou wouldst _____ **deal very treacherously**
and I the Lord **KNEW**
that thou] wast called a **transgressor**
from the womb

[In other words, I the Lord knew from your infancy that you Israelites would be rebellious.]

[Par. dd – Questions used to make a point]

[Par. ee – Circular and general repetition “NOT”]

[1 Nephi 20]

The Lord Will Purify Covenant Israel with Affliction

9 Nevertheless

for My [covenant] Name's sake [or because I am called the God of Israel] [added in 1837]

will

I [the Lord] defer mine anger

[Note* Apostrophes were not used in the 1611 KJV Bible]

and for My praise

[or that I might merit your honor]

will

I [the Lord] refrain from thee

that I [the Lord] CUT thee NOT off

[In other words, I will not destroy Israel - or the tribe of Joseph – completely.]

[Note: The word “cut” alludes to the ancient covenant ceremony, where an animal was cut in two and those making the covenant passed through the cut parts, symbolizing the gravity of breaking the covenant.—see Raymond Treat]

10 For behold

I [the Lord] have refined thee [Israel] [implying a purification process with heat]

I [the Lord] have chosen thee [or I will make thee] in the furnace of affliction

[In other words (using the prophetic perfect tense where future events are spoken of in the past tense to confirm that they will happen), the Lord says to Israel: “ I will purify you in the refiner's fire.”]

11 For Mine own sake [or because I love you]

yea For Mine own sake will

I [the Lord] _____ do this [this refining and purifying]

for how should I /

[O / ^P]

^I [the Lord] will NOT suffer My Name to be polluted

and I [the Lord] will NOT give My glory unto another

[That is, I will not allow My covenant name or Priesthood (Abr. 1:18) to be made unholy by not keeping My own covenant promises. Thus, I will remain true to the covenants I have made with you.]

The Lord Governs All Things

The Lord Has Always Spoken to Israel by Covenant

12

Hearken unto Me O Jacob

and [Hearken unto Me O] Israel My called [or to whom I have given a covenant calling]

for I Am _____ He [your Jehovah, your Christ, your Messiah]

ff

[and] I Am _____ The First

[deleted]

and I Am also The Last [I Am the Firstborn, and the Eternal God]

[Par. ff – Repetition 3 times.]

13 **Mine hand** _____ **hath** also laid the foundation of the **earth**
And My right hand [covenant hand] **hath** spanned [or governed] the **heavens** gg

[I am the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and I have done this through the covenant power of the Priesthood] [P= called]

[And by that **covenant power**] I **call** unto **them** [or I call unto the house of Israel]
And [because of that **power**] **they stand up** together [Israel - stand up and listen!]

[Note: This is an allusion to the covenant ceremonies that happened in the temple at Jerusalem.]

14 **ALL ye assemble** yourselves
and [ALL ye] hear hh

Who* among them [or who among Israel's idols] [*P= which]
hath declared these **things** [these **prophecies**]
 unto **them** [or unto **Israel**] ?

[Answer – NOT Israel's idols]

yea and which **[He the Lord]** **hath loved him** _____ [the faithful **covenant servant--Israel**] ii
He [the Lord] will **fulfill His [covenant] word**
He [the Lord] **hath declared by them** [the faithful **covenant servants of Israel**]

and He [the Lord] will **do His pleasure** _____ on _____ **Babylon**
and His arm shall **come upon the Chaldeans**

[In other words, these powerful people of Babylon, who symbolize all those who are temporally and spiritually depraved, will be destroyed.]

15 **Also** _____ **saith**
the Lord
I the Lord
yea I [the Lord] have **spoken**
yea I [the Lord] have **called him** [my **covenant servant**]
 to **declare [My Way]**
I [the Lord] have **brought him** [brought my **covenant servant along the covenant path**]
and he shall **make his [Israel's] way prosperous**

[Par. gg – Distribution - the contrast defines the whole]

[Par. hh – Question used to make a point]

[Par. ii – Circular repetition “the Lord”]

[1 Nephi 20]

[Note: The Lord's covenant servant now speaks on behalf of the Lord.]

16 **Come** ye [Israel]
 near unto **me** [the Lord's servant]
[for] I _____ have NOT **spoken** in secret **from the beginning**

From the time

that it [the covenant] was **declared**
 have
 I _____ **spoken**

and [He] **the Lord** _____ **God**
and **His Spirit** _____ hath **sent** **me**

17 **And** _____ thus **saith**
 The Lord
 Thy Redeemer [Christ]
 The Holy One of Israel

I [the Lord] have **sent** **him** [my servant]
[I] **The Lord Thy God**
 ***Who Teacheth Thee to Profit** [by **My word**] [*P= which]
 ***Who Leadeth Thee** **by the Way Thou Shouldst Go**
 hath **done** it

*Obedience to the Lord's Servant Brings Covenant Blessings
The Same as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*

18 **O that** thou [Israel] hadst **hearkened** to **My commandments** [^O]
 Then had thy **peace** been **as** a river [continually flowing] jj
 and thy **righteousness** **as** the waves of the sea [constant]

[Note: This couplet above could have been directed at Laman & Lemuel. Remember what Lehi said to Laman when he named the river Laman—that through Christ he might have peace flowing constantly into his life—see 1 Ne 2:9.]

19 Thy **seed** also had been [or would have been]
 as the sand [or grains of sand] kk

The **offspring** of thy bowels [would have been]
 like the gravel thereof

[In other words, if you would be faithful to your covenants you would have the same covenant blessings as promised to father Abraham and Jacob.]

[Par. jj – Simile / simple alternating”]
[Par. kk -- Simile / simple synonymous]

His [Jacob's—Israel's] [covenant] name
 should NOT have been **cut off**
 NOR [should have been] **destroyed** from before **Me**

[That is, the house of Israel could have had it very good, and avoided such great destruction.]

20 **Go** ye forth of **Babylon** *[Stop following wicked Babylon!]*
 Flee ye from the **Chaldeans** *[Flee from unrighteousness]*

With a **voice** of singing
 Declare ye *[that is, declare my servant's message]* LL
 Tell [ye] this [message]
 Utter [ye] this message] to the end of the earth *[or to all men]*

[Note the use of the figure of speech called “omission” in the previous verse. It makes the reader focus on the verse because of the parts [in brackets] that are omitted but should be a part of the sequence of lines.]

Say ye

 21 [He] **the Lord** hath **redeemed** his servant **Jacob** *[Israel]* mm
 and they [Israel] thirsted NOT
 [when the children of Israel were brought out of bondage in Egypt]

 He **the Lord** *or the Lord's servant*] **led** them through the deserts
 He **the Lord** *or the Lord's servant*] **caused** [A] the **waters to flow** nn
 [B] out of the **rock** for them

 He **the Lord** *or the Lord's servant*] [B] **clave** the **rock** also *[P= cleaved]*
 and [A] the **waters gushed out**

[In other words, just look what the Lord has done for the children of Israel!]

22 **And notwithstanding**
 He **the Lord** hath **done** ALL this

 And notwithstanding
 He **the Lord** hath **done** ALL this] and GREATER also

 there is NO **peace** **saith** **the Lord**
 [there is NO **peace**] unto the **wicked**

[Par. LL – Synonymous list of commands with no “and”s]
 [Par. mm – Like beginnings]
 [Par. nn – Simple chiasmic or inverted parallelism]

[1 Nephi 20]

[Note: The following statistical observations concerning the Book of Mormon Isaiah passages and their King James Version counterparts are instructive.

A. Of the 372 verses in the twenty chapters of Isaiah found in the Book of Mormon, differences are found in 165 verses (44% of the verses).

B. Thirty-eight percent of the altered verses contain substantive changes (62 verses).

C. Only one of the 20 Isaiah chapters in the Book of Mormon contains no differences—2 Ne. 21/ Isaiah 11.

D. 2 Nephi 22 / Isaiah 12 contain only one different word. In verse two the Book of Mormon version records "he also has become my salvation," whereas in the King James version we read "he also is become my salvation." This innocuous change of tense does not alter the meaning of the passage.

E. A total of 348 textual changes are found in the 165 altered verses.

F. The differences between the Book of Mormon and King James Isaiah texts are in the form of either additions, deletions, or modifications to the original text of the Book of Mormon translation of the original records. Of these, 28% (104 verses) are additions, 30% (112 verses) are deletions and 42% (156 verses) are modifications. (H. Clay Gorton, *The Legacy of the Brass Plates of Laban*, p. 32)]

[Note: For a complete treatment of the Isaiah variants in the Book of Mormon, see John A. Tvedtnes, "The Isaiah Variants in the Book of Mormon," FARMS, 1981. Also John A. Tvedtnes, "Isaiah Variants in the Book of Mormon," in *Isaiah and the Prophets*, edited by Monte S. Nyman, 1984.]