

Isaiah 13-14; 24-30; 35 Show Notes

Ep 170: Isaiah 13-35

A reminder of some ways to see Isaiah

Brief Outline of Isaiah

1. THE ASSYRIAN PERIOD - CONFLICT AND VICTORY (Isaiah 1-39)

- a. Prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem (Isaiah 1-12)
- b. Prophecies concerning the nations (Isaiah 13-27)
- c. Deliverance found not in Egypt, but in the Lord (Isaiah 28-35)

2. HISTORICAL INTERLUDE (Isa 36-39)

3. THE BABYLONIAN PERIOD - HOPE FOR TROUBLED TIMES (Isa 40-66)

- a. The One True God against the idols (Isaiah 40-48)
- b. The Lord's servant brings salvation through his suffering (Isaiah 49-57)
- c. The future of the kingdom of God, Zion, the New Jerusalem (Isaiah 58-66)

Gileadi's Organization of Isaiah¹

1. Ruin and rebirth – Isaiah 1-5; 34-35
2. Rebellion and Compliance – Isaiah 6-8; 36-40
3. Punishment and Deliverance – Isaiah 9-12; 41-46
4. Humiliation and Exaltation – Isaiah 13-23; 47
5. Suffering and Salvation – Isaiah 24-27; 48-54
6. Disloyalty and Loyalty – Isaiah 28-31; 55-59
7. Disenfranchisement and Inheritance – Isaiah 32-33; 60-66

The main part of this weeks' study involves the prophecies concerning the nations (Isaiah 13-27), with the last section focusing on the idea that deliverance is found not in Egypt, but in the Lord (Isaiah 28-30, 35).

The opening words of this second set of oracles bring a change of focus², as they give as a title for the next section, "A prophecy about Babylon." While Isaiah 10 has spoken of the destiny of Assyria, the chapters that now follow speak of the destiny of a series of other peoples in Judah's world. The horizon

¹ Avraham Gileadi, [The Literary Message of Isaiah](#), Hebraeus Press, 1994, p. 9-26. Gileadi explains that because of the unity and overall structure of the book as it is laid out in his argument of his book, he contends that Isaiah is a unified work, the creation of one author, Isaiah the son of Amoz of the 8th century BC.

² David Butler would say that 13-14 go with 1-12. See: [The Goodness and the Mysteries: On the Path of the Book of Mormon's Visionary Men](#), CreateSpace, 2012, p. 186 where he sums up his argument.

thus broadens. At Isaiah 24:1 the horizon broadens again; four further chapters speak about the world as a whole. So Isaiah 1–27 keeps extending the horizon:

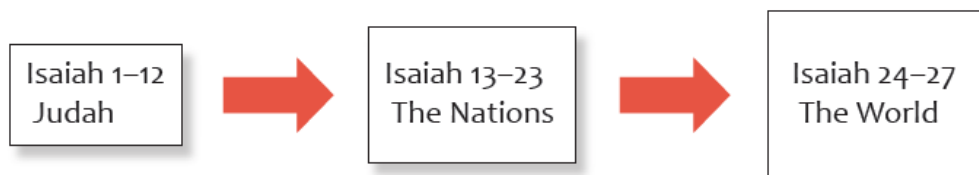


Figure 2.1

THE NATIONS (ISAIAH 13–23)

Chapters 13–23, then, deal with many of the peoples in Judah’s world:

Babylon	13:1–14:23; 21:1–10	The many nations 17:12–14	Sudan	18:1–7; 20:1–6
Assyria	14:24–27; 19:23–25		Egypt	19:1–25; 20:1–6
Philistia	14:28–32		Edom	21:11–12
Moab	15:1–16:14		Arabia	21:13–17
Damascus	17:1–11		Jerusalem	22:1–25
			Tyre	23:1–17

Figure 2.2

There are three reasons for telling Judah about them. *Their focus on disaster links with Judah’s understandable inclination to be afraid of many of these nations.* Judah needs to be reminded that **Yahweh is Lord in political events and to trust in Yahweh’s capacity to put down attackers and oppressors.** The important thing to note here is that Judah is inclined to trust in some of these nations as its means of deliverance from political pressures. This inclination is another reason for Yahweh to affirm his lordship of these nations and his capacity to put them down. **Judah is not to trust in them rather than trusting in Yahweh.** The point is explicit in the prophecy about Egypt and Sudan (Egypt’s dynasty at the time was Sudanese), where Isaiah goes about Jerusalem stripped and barefoot to represent the coming fate of these nations on whom other people were trusting and to whom they were fleeing for help and rescue (Isaiah 20.6).³

Isaiah 13-14: Babylon⁴ and her king

1. The Fall of Babylon (Isa. 13.1-14.23)

³ John Goldingay, *The Theology of the Book of Isaiah*, IVP Academic, 2014, p. 37-38.

⁴ Babylon was a vassal to the Assyrian empire in Isaiah’s day. Victor Ludlow, *Isaiah: Prophet, Seer, and Poet*, Deseret Book, 1982, p. 180.

- a. “The burden” of Babylon מַשָּׂא בְבִלְדָּא (Isa. 13.1).⁵
 - b. The Lord gathers his army (Isa. 13.2-5).
 - c. The Cosmic battle against Babylon (Isa. 13.6-13).
 - i. Stars... sun... moon “shall not cause her light to shine” (Isa. 13.10).
 - ii. “I will make a man more precious than fine gold, even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir” (Isa. 13.12).
 - iii. “I will shake the heavens!” (Isa. 13.13).
 - d. The Lord brings the Medes against Babylon (Isa. 13.14-22).
 - i. “I will stir up the Medes against them” (Isa. 13.17).
 - ii. “And Babylon... shall be as Sodom and Gomorrah” (Isa. 13.19).
 - iii. Babylon will never be inhabited... wild beasts... doleful creatures, owls... satyrs (Isa. 13.20-22).
 - e. Yet will I choose Israel... the house of Israel shall possess them... and shall rule over their oppressors! (Isa. 14.1-2).
 - f. God taunts the king of Babylon (Isa. 14.4-23).
 - i. “O Lucifer, son of the morning!” (Isa. 14.12).
 - ii. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee... thou art cast down... an abominable branch... I will cut the name and the remnant (Isa. 14.16-22).
2. The Fall of Assyria (Isa. 14.24-27)
 - a. “I will break the Assyrian” ... and “tread him under foot!” (Isa. 14.25)
 3. The Fall of the Philistines (Isa. 14.28-32).
 - a. Don’t rejoice Philistia, because you broke the rod of the one you opposed! (Isa. 14.29)
 - b. Isaiah indicates that “out of the serpents root” will come a טֶפֶץ a *tzepha*, (cockatrice – KJV), a poisonous viper.⁶

⁵ A *massa* is a burden, or something carried, and becomes a superscription throughout Isaiah’s prophecies to the outside nations (Isa. 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; 22:1; 23:1.) Some translators follow the King James Version and render *massa* as “burden,” others follow the more literal meaning of the Hebrew (“raise up”) and translate it as “oracle” or “message.”

⁶ Butler explains, “These verses need to be unpacked a little. First, **apostate Israel is warned not to rejoice** because someone who beat them with a priestly rod has been struck down. This man was a serpent, and his broken rod is another way of telling the same story we read in Isaiah 5:23, about the removal of Righteousness from the community of the righteous ones; **the murdered priest must have been known as a stern preacher**, fierce in his calls to repentance. Where have we seen a broken serpent before? In 2 Kings 18, where Hezekiah is praised for breaking in pieces “the brasen serpent that Moses had made” (2 Kings 18:4-5). Isaiah equates the murdered Melchizedek priest with the broken Nehushtan. The removed man has successors. The fallen priest might have been a serpent, Isaiah warns, but his successor is a “cockatrice,” a *tzepha* or ‘poisonous snake’ in Hebrew. He’s therefore more of a nuisance than his predecessor; I take Isaiah to be the poisonous snake. After Isaiah will come an even bigger threat, a *saraph*—a fiery creature which may be a seraph, one of the heavenly beings identified in Isaiah 6, or the fiery serpent of Numbers 21, or both... Since Isaiah seems to have believed the Day of Vengeance was imminent (or immanent), the *saraph* might also be Yahweh himself, the flaming sun about to rise behind the morning star. This is consistent with Isaiah 9:5, which shows the son of the Virgin coming with “burning,” *serepha*. On that reading, these verses again provide three witnesses on the model of the three priests in the Worship of the Shalems. **The first is the serpent, associated with Moses** because Moses made it, who is the Melchizedek priest described as “take[n] away” in Isaiah 5:23 and “broken” in Isaiah 14:29. **The second is the poisonous serpent, who I think is Isaiah himself**, as the Elias priest full of vitriolic chastisement in his calls to repentance. **The third is the saraph, the burning one**, who is the Lord who will come forth in glory.” David Butler, *The Goodness and the Mysteries*, p. 183-5.

- c. From out of the north will come a “smoke” אש and “none shall be alone in his appointed times” (Isa. 14.31).⁷

Isaiah 15-17: Woes upon Moab and Syria

1. The Burden of Moab (Isa. 15.1-16.14).
 - a. Baldness, and every beard cut off! (Isa. 15.2).
 - b. The armed soldiers will cry (v. 4), the waters desolate (v. 6), “there is no green thing!” (Isa. 15.6).
 - c. “The pride of Moab is very proud... his haughtiness... his pride... Moab shall howl for Moab!” (Isa. 16.6-7).
 - d. No joy, no singing... no wine (Isa. 16.10).
2. The Burden of Syria (Isa. 17).
 - a. Damascus “shall be a ruinous heap” (Isa. 17.1).
 - b. A prophecy of Israel and Syria’s demise at the hands of the Assyrians (Isa. 17.2-3).
 - c. Israel will dwindle (Isa. 17.4-6).
 - i. “it shall be as”... “in the valley of Rephaim” (Isa. 17.5).⁸
 - ii. There are no olives left on the tree! (Isa. 17.6).
 - d. The people will turn back to God (Isa. 17.7-8)
 - e. The cities will be like a “forsaken bough”... there “shall be desolation” (Isa. 17.9).
 - f. Those who threaten the people of God will be destroyed (Isa. 17.12-14).
 - i. “This is the portion of them that spoil us and the lot of them that rob us” (Isa. 17.14).

Isaiah 18: Messengers from a Foreign Land⁹

1. The land with wings (Isa. 18.1).¹⁰

⁷ Gileadi translates this as follows: “Wail at the gates; howl in the city! Utterly melt away, you Philistines! From the North shall come *pillars* of smoke, and no place he has designated shall evade it” (Isa. 14.31). He explains, “The enemies of Jehovah’s people have cause to “wail,” “howl,” and “melt away” when destruction comes “from the North”—from beyond the horizon (Isaiah 5:26; 13:5)—as conspired by the king of Assyria/Babylon (cf. Isaiah 54:16). The pillars of “smoke” form a word link to the “mushrooming clouds of smoke” that billow upward when “the earth is scorched and people are but fuel for the fire” in Jehovah’s Day of Judgment (Isaiah 9:18-19). While the wicked of the world suffer the fire and smoke of destruction, Jehovah protects his repentant people beneath his cloud of glory (Isaiah 4:5-6; 25:4-5).”

⁸ The rest of Jehovah’s people seek to survive in what literally becomes a valley of “rephaim” or “ghosts.”

⁹ What this land is, has troubled commentators. One commentator has written, “The setting, background, and meaning of this passage are not clear. Nubia (Heb “Kush”) is the area south of Egypt, sometimes referred to as Ethiopia.” *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 819. Robert Alter identifies this land as Nubia. He writes, “**Land of the whirring wings.** Nubia (Cush in the Hebrew), along the upper reaches of the Nile in equatorial Africa, was known for its abundance of insects, a phenomenon attested to by Herodotus. The vessels of reeds mentioned in the next verse are equally part of the poem’s evocation of the realia of a kingdom along the Nile. Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary*, p. 3049/6509 electronic version.

¹⁰ Victor Ludlow makes the case that perhaps this was a prophecy of America in the last days. He writes:

An important key to identifying this mysterious land was provided by a Latter-day Saint leader of this dispensation. Hyrum Smith, brother of the Prophet Joseph and patriarch to the Church, clarified this portion of Isaiah in the general conference of April 1844. In speaking of the gathering from all the nations to America, the land of Zion, Hyrum Smith said that “North and South America are the symbols of the wings.” (HC 6:322.) This brief statement

- a. *הוֹי אֶרֶץ צִלְצַל כְּנָפַיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעֵבֶר לְנְהַר־קוּשׁ* *Ho erez tziltzal kanaphim* “Ho! to the land of buzzing wings!” *asher maaver linaharay cush* “which is from across the rivers of Cush” (My translation). Most commentators I have read identify this land in Africa, not in the Americas. Although I really like Ludlow’s hypothesis here, I probably will go with the majority of those who see this as the land of Cush, or Nubia. That being said, what if everyone that is commenting on these enigmatic verses have a portion of the deep meaning of Isaiah’s prophecy? What if they are all right in various ways, as everything Isaiah taught “has been and shall be” ([3 Nephi 23.3](#)).
2. The land sends ambassadors by the sea, saying, “Go ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled!” (Isa. 18.2).¹¹
3. An ensign is lifted up to the world (Isa. 18.3).
4. The people “scattered and peeled” and “trodden under foot” will be brought to Mount Zion (Isa. 18.7).

Isaiah 19: The Burden of Egypt

1. “I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians” (Isa. 19.2). See Mormon 4.5.
2. The waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up (Isa. 19.5).¹²

by Hyrum clarifies a number of verses in [Isaiah 18](#). If the wings represent America, then the obscure land of verse 1 has been identified. And if the dominant theme of the chapter is the gathering of people to Mount Zion, later phrases in the chapter become more clear. Although other interpretations of [Isaiah 18](#) are possible, the remarks of this mouthpiece of the Lord provide a basis for the view that this pronouncement is directed to America and deals with missionary work and the gathering of Israel.

Many reasons exist for identifying America as the "land shadowing with wings." For one, Joseph Fielding Smith calls it a land literally "in the shape of wings." (SOT, p. 51). Also, Christian and Jewish Bible commentators use a variety of phrases to describe the land Isaiah refers to, many of which can be applied to America. Some examples are:

A land that is most sheltered. (America is a land protected by the Lord [1 Ne. 13:12-19].)

A land furnishing protection, as a hen's wings are a shelter for young chicks. (America has a tradition of defending the oppressed.)

There are many ways in which America is a "land shadowing with wings." (Most of these suggestions are found in Barnes, Notes on Isaiah 1:335-36.)

The symbol of wings is also very prevalent in the scriptures and usually represents shelter (Ps. 57:1; 17:8; 91:4; Matt. 23:27; Ruth 2:12; 3 Ne. 10:4-6), movement (Ex. 19:4; Ps. 18:10; D&C 77:4; 88:45; 2 Ne. 4:25) or power (2 Ne. 25:13; Ezek. 17:3, 7; Isa. 40:31; D&C 124:18, 99; Mal. 4:2). In Jewish literature, the presence and protection of the Lord for his chosen people is often represented by a wing and is called the shechinah. (See BD, "Shechinah.") It is clear that "the land in the shadow of wings" recorded in Isaiah 18 must be a land of refuge, shelter, and power. The phrase connotes the special protection promised America by the Lord (Ether 2:7-12; 2 Ne. 1:5-11), and thus can be the land shadowed by "the divine spirit" (VLL). Ludlow, p. 204-206.

¹¹ Some take this to mean that Egypt has sent ambassadors to other lands seeking an alliance against the rising star of Assyria. This can also be read as the missionaries coming out to gather Israel from her long dispersion.

¹² We have to read this passage with Eastern, not Western eyes. I do not see this nor take this literally, that God is promising to wipe out the Nile River, though this is how it is read by some commentators. One commentator explained it thus: The covenant curse of withering vegetation—synchronized with a plethora of other

Isaiah 20: Isaiah is told to go Naked and Barefoot

1. Isaiah is told to go out and prophesy “naked and barefoot” for a “sign and wonder upon Egypt” (Isa. 20.2-3).¹³

Isaiah 21: An oracle concerning Babylon¹⁴

1. The burden of the desert of the Sea/Babylon (Isa. 21.1).¹⁵
2. Babylon is fallen, is fallen (Isa. 21.9).
3. The burden of Dumah (Isa. 21.11).¹⁶
4. The burden of Arabia (Isa. 21.13-17).

misfortunes—afflicts Egypt as its vibrant society wanes like the vegetation itself. Egypt’s flora epitomize the transitory nature of life for its corrupt inhabitants (cf. Isaiah 5:24; 37:27; 40:6-8, 24). Foliage that “shrivels and blows away and is no more” typifies the fate awaiting them and all who comprise Greater Babylon. Egypt’s bodies of water that dry up and rivers that turn foul, too, are a metaphor of its people (cf. Isaiah 18:2, 7; 37:25; 42:15), their pollution and evaporation signifying their descent into chaos. [Isaiahexplained](#), accessed 8.20.22.

¹³ Not everyone agrees with how to read this chapter. Ludlow gives his take: **Isaiah was probably not completely naked, but simply without his tunic and outer robes**, (Isa. 19, footnote 2a.) In Isaiah's time, men usually wore a loincloth, tunic, and robe when they were in public; while working in the fields or at home, the robe was probably put aside and the tunic remained the main item of attire (the tunic was a loose-fitting linen garment, short-sleeved or sleeveless, that extended to the knees). Slaves, captives, and the lowest manual workers in the society would often not even wear a tunic, but labored in a loincloth. **However, it was considered embarrassing for one to be seen in public with only his loincloth, just as today one would be utterly humiliated to be seen in public in his underwear...** Even so, one might ask why the Lord would request the prophet to show himself in such humble and improper attire in public. It was probably intended as a graphic sign to the people, one they could not forget or ignore. It was similar to some of the signs Ezekiel gave the Jews during the early stages of their Babylonian captivity, such as cutting his hair, crawling under a wall, and so on. (See Ezek. 4-5.) Isaiah's bizarre behavior and dress was an unusual sign repeated over a three-year period. It is unknown where Isaiah had to be dressed in this manner the whole 3 years, or whether this was for specific times and places over the course of these three years. Ludlow, p. 224.

¹⁴ This oracle may date from Isaiah's day, during the reign of the Babylonian king, Merodachbaladan, at the end of the 8th century. At that time the relatively small kingdom of Babylonia attempted to defeat the larger Assyrian empire. This ultimately futile attempt was relevant to the Judeans, because the Babylonians endeavored to persuade the Judean king, Hezekiah, to join the anti-Assyrian coalition. **If this is the setting of the passage, Isaiah predicts defeat for the Babylonians, in spite of their attempt to create a unified front with the Judeans.** Alternatively, this text may date to a century after Isaiah, to a time in which the Babylonians had in fact become the great power of the ancient Near East. In that case, an unnamed prophet predicts the downfall of the Babylonians. The language of this oracle is unusually obscure. [The Jewish Study Bible](#), Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 823.

¹⁵ *Desert of the Sea*, i.e., Babylon. The term may be a Hebrew translation of an Akkadian term used to refer to southern Mesopotamia, where Babylon was located. Akkadian was the language of Babylonia and Assyria. [The Jewish Study Bible](#), p. 823.

¹⁶ This oracle is as obscure as it is brief; it is not even clear to whom it is addressed. *Dumah* may be a poetic, short form of the word "Edom," which was a nation located southeast of Judah. Seir was another name for Edom. Alternatively, *Dumah* may refer to a city in northern Arabia. These two explanations are not necessarily exclusive, since the Arabian city in question is due east of Edom. Thus the oracle may address both the Edomites and the Arab tribes with whom they traded. Finally, *Dumah* may be a noun meaning "silence"- an apt title for this oracle, whose meaning is not spoken clearly to us. In all likelihood, the oracle predicts that Edom and/or the northern Arabs will be defeated in the upcoming upheaval described in the previous ten verses. [The Jewish Study Bible](#), p. 824.

Isaiah 22: The Valley of Vision – An Oracle concerning Jerusalem

1. Isaiah compares the attitudes of the inhabitants of Jerusalem with his (Isa. 22.1-4).
 - a. “thou are full of stirs” (Isa. 22.2). The Hebrew denotes a city filled with commotion and riot, or a people filled with entertainments and revelry.
2. The Lord will send enemies instead of allies into their land (Isa. 22.5-7).
3. Isaiah warns that the people are ignoring God in their reliance upon their physical defenses (Isa. 22.8-11).
 - a. “The cover was exposed” – the KJV renders it, “he discovered the covering of Judah” (Isa. 22.8).¹⁷
 - b. “The armour of the house of the forest” (Isa. 22.8).¹⁸
4. Isaiah compares their behavior with what the Lord desires (Isa. 22.12-14).
5. **A prophecy of Shebna** (Isa. 22.15-19). After portraying the unconcerned and sinful condition of Jerusalem's inhabitants, Isaiah singles out a leading citizen and describes his selfish, vain actions. The individual selected is Shebna, the leader of the king's court, a position similar to a present-day secretary of state. **Isaiah apparently confronts Shebna in the Kidron Valley near the tombs of the kings.**¹⁹
 - a. Who was Shebna?²⁰
 - b. What happened to Shebna?²¹
 - c. Why did this happen to him?²²
6. The Prophecy regarding Eliakim (Isa. 22.20-25). Here Isaiah continues speaking to Shebna, but prophesies about **the person who will replace him**: Eliakim is to be invested with the keys and

¹⁷ The term for “cover,” *masakh*, is used for the cover of the Ark of the Covenant. This has led some scholars to a theological interpretation: God’s protective cover has been taken away. Others see a reference to a fortress protecting the approach to Jerusalem. Alter, 3073/6509, electronic version.

¹⁸ **The Forest House was a cedar-paneled armory within the palace** (see 1 Kings 7:2–5, where it is called the Lebanon Forest House). The weapons kept there appear to have been ornamental, but in the desperation of the siege, here they are taken up for use in combat. Alter, 3073/6509, emphasis added.

¹⁹ Ludlow, p. 233. Gileadi explains, “Jehovah rebukes Shebna—calling him “that steward”—for assuming he will receive a lavish burial when he passes away. As a part of **the reversal of circumstances** between Greater Babylon and Zion, this passage reiterates how **that which exalts itself ends up humiliated and that which humbles itself Jehovah exalts**. Jesus predicts this very scenario prior to his second coming, when “a faithful and wise servant” succeeds “an evil servant” (Matthew 24:44-51).” [Isaiahexplained](#).

²⁰ Shebna was a royal steward in charge of the palace. The Jewish Study Bible, p. 826. Ludlow describes Shebna as being in a position similar to that of a present-day Secretary of State. Ludlow, 233. He explains, “According to some scholars, Shebna was actually a foreigner who rose to power in Jerusalem. They give three primary reasons for this supposition: (1) his father is never mentioned, although other officials are identified by their families (see Isa. 22.20; 26.2); (2) his name is not Hebrew; and (3) Isaiah makes a strong contrast between “here” in Jerusalem where Shebna hews out his tomb and “there” where he will die. (Young, *The Book of Isaiah* 2:106; Slotki, *Isaiah*, p. 103.)”

²¹ Shebna's hope for a magnificent tomb in Jerusalem is destined to come to naught. Indeed, **Shebna was eventually disgraced in office and demoted to the office of secretary or scribe of the king's court**. (Isa. 36:3.) This position was still influential, however, being the post second only to the head of the court. Ludlow, p. 234.

²² Here Shebna, supposedly a man of vision and leadership, is caught up in the building of his own tomb while great matters of state are left untended. Because he has failed in his stewardship, judgment is hastening down upon him. So it will be for Jerusalem and Judea, which also have failed in their stewardship of God's vision. Oswalt, p. 407.

authority of Shebna's office. Isaiah has a warning for Eliakim, however, concerning the way in which his family will rely upon Eliakim's position and influence for protection.²³

- a. "I will clothe him" (Isa. 22.21)
- b. "The key of the House of David will I lay upon his shoulder" (Isa. 22.22).²⁴
- c. "I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place" (Isa. 22.23).²⁵
- d. "They shall hang upon him all the glory of the father's house, the offspring and the issue" (Isa. 22.24).
- e. "The nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down" (Isa. 22.25).²⁶

Isaiah 23: The Burden of Tyre

Isaiah 24-27: Prophecies About the End of Days

1. Isaiah's Cosmic Apocalyptic Message of Doom to the Earth (Isa. 24).²⁷
 - a. The Lord maketh the earth empty... waste... he turns it upside down (Isa. 24.1).
 - b. So with the people so with the priest... as with the maid so with her mistress (Isa. 24.2).²⁸
 - c. The earth mourneth and fadeth away (Isa. 24.4).
 - d. The earth transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broke the everlasting covenant (Isa. 24.5). See D&C 1.15.
 - e. No more music (v. 8), the city is desolate (v. 12), the earth is broken (v. 19).

²³ Ludlow, p. 234-5.

²⁴ There were actually keys that were placed upon the servant. Alter explains, "These ancient keys were very large, and usually wooden, so placing a key on a shoulder, perhaps held by a strap, would make sense." Alter, p. 3074/6509.

²⁵ Some of the terminology of this warning also seems to refer to the priesthood keys and atoning powers of Jesus Christ. First of all, **the name Eliakim means "God shall cause to arise,"** a messianic title pointing to the Resurrection. Secondly, Eliakim is called as a servant of God. Third, he holds the physical keys to the king's storerooms. Fourth, Eliakim serves as a "nail in a sure place" (KJV) for his family, meaning that they depend upon him for security. Similarly, Christ was crucified by a "nail in a sure place," thus fulfilling the demands of the Atonement under the law of justice. Ludlow, p. 235.

²⁶ There are a few ways to read this verse. Gileadi reads it thus: At the very time Jehovah appoints his end-time servant, Jehovah's current, reprobate steward—of whom Shebna is a type (vv 15-19)—is "thrust out office" and "expelled from his post" (v 19). Remiss in his role as a proxy savior, he is "dislodged" or "hewn down" (nigde'a) and "falls" (napla), word links that identify him with the wicked of Jehovah's people and with Babylon and its king (Isaiah 8:15; 10:33-34; 14:12; 21:9). Those who hang or depend on him are "cut off," a word link to the wicked leaders of Jehovah's people and to Isaiah's Greater Babylon category (Isaiah 9:14-15; 14:22; 29:20; 48:19). [Isaiahexplained](#). Brettler reads it as follows, "The peg of Isaiah 22.25 seems to refer back to Shebna. Alternatively, if it is the same peg referred to in verse 23, then Eliakim is ultimately the subject to the same criticism as the man he replaces (Shebna)." *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 827. Robert Alter pins Isaiah 22.25 directly on Eliakim, "This entire verse is a blatant contradiction of the glowing prophecy concerning Eliakim's displacement of Shebna, and one must conclude that a later editor, aware of a disaster that had befallen Eliakim, added these dire words." Alter 3074/6509.

²⁷ Reviewing Isaiah 24 and 25, one sees a pattern that is very common in Isaiah's writings; Isaiah often delivers a pronouncement of serious warnings mingled with a note of optimism (as in chapter 24) and then follows it with a prophecy of joyful promises, concluding with a somber tone of caution (as in chapter 25). Ludlow, p. 248.

²⁸ This message will affect all classes of society.

- f. The Lord will punish the “host of high ones on high and the kings of the earth” in that day (Isa. 24.21).
 - g. Cosmic signs: the moon and sun are confounded and ashamed (Isa. 24.23).
2. Isaiah’s Message of Hope (Isaiah 25).
- a. Isaiah expresses his hope and trust in God (Isa. 25.1), reminds his hearers that the city has been destroyed (Isa. 25.2), and promises that “in this mountain shall the Lord make a feast of fat things” (Isa. 25.6). The Greek translation reads:
καὶ ποιήσει κύριος σαβαωθ πάσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τοῦτο πίνονται εὐφροσύνην πίνονται οἶνον **χρίσονται μύρον**. “And the Lord of Sabaoth create for all nations (who come to Zion) upon this mountain (Mount Zion) *a feast* that they will drink joyfully, yes, they will drink wine and **they will be anointed with the holy anointing oil**” (My translation).
 - b. “He will swallow up death in victory and the Lord will wipe away tears from off all faces” (Isa. 25.8).
 - c. “We have waited for him, and he will save us!” (Isa. 25.9).²⁹
 - d. The enemies of Judah (portrayed here as Moab) will be destroyed and the hand of the Lord will rest “in this mountain” (Isa. 25.10-12).
3. A Song of Judah (Isa. 26).³⁰
- a. Isaiah sings of the strong city (v. 1) versus the lofty city (v. 5), noting that the lofty city will be brought down to the dust (Isa. 26.1-6).
 - b. A prayer of faith and trust (Isa. 26.7-19).
 - i. The other lords are dead and shall not live (Isa. 26.13-14).
 - ii. Isaiah 26.18 is a beautiful scene of anastasis at the presence of the Lord. In the LXX it reads as follows: ἐν γαστρὶ ἐλάβομεν καὶ ὠδινήσαμεν καὶ ἐτέκομεν πνεῦμα σωτηρίας σου ἐποίησαμεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀλλὰ πεσοῦνται οἱ ἐνοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. “In our belly we have seized and felt the pains of childbirth, and we have also brought forth a spirit of your salvation, this we have created on the earth, but those dwelling upon the earth will fall down prostrate!” (My translation).
 - iii. The dead all awake and arise before Yahweh (Isa. 26.19). The Hebrew text reads: **יְהוָה יִחְיֶה מִתֵּיךְ נִבְלֵתִי יְקוּמוּן הַקַּיִצוֹ וְרִנְנוּ שִׁכְנֵי עַפְרָא כִּי טַל אֲוֵרַת טֶלֶךְ וְאֶרֶץ רְפָאִים תִּפְּלִי** “**My dead body and your dead will all live! They will awake**, and arise, and sing! You dwelling in the dust, the dew of lights and your dew of the land will

²⁹ Note the powerful message Isaiah shares with those that wait for the Lord. See: Isaiah 8.17; 25.9; 26.8; 30.18; 33.2; 40.31; 49.23; 51.5; 64.4. I especially appreciated Isaiah 64.4, “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.”

³⁰ Chapter 26 is the song of rejoicing and thanksgiving that Judah will sing in the last days when Zion has been ultimately defended and her enemies humiliated. In praising the Lord, Judah expresses her trust in him, for even though she long endured sufferings and waited many centuries to see his judgments, she knows that he will remember his covenants and redeem his people. The chapter concludes with a description of the Lord's vengeance upon the wicked. This theme carries over into chapter 27, which begins with a promise of the Lord's power over Leviathan, the symbol of Satan. Ludlow, p. 249.

cause the Rephaim to **fall down prostrate** (as living ones before Yahweh) (My translation).³¹

- c. The Lord slays the ones committing acts of violence (Isa. 26.20-27.1).
 - i. “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers” (Isa. 26.20).
 - ii. Those guilty of bloods will be punished (Isa. 26.21).
 - iii. The Lord will punish Leviathan, that crooked serpent (Isa. 27.1).
4. Deliverance of Israel (Isa. 27.2-13).
 - a. A song of the Lord’s vineyard (Isa. 27.2-6).
 - b. The purpose of Israel’s suffering (Isa. 27.7-11).
 - c. A day of the harvest (Isa. 27.12-13).

Isaiah 28: Judgment against Samaria and Jerusalem

1. The downfall of Samaria (Isa. 28.1-6).
 - a. Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim! ... the crown of pride... shall be trodden under foot (Isa. 28.1-3). Remember that to be trodden under foot is the penalty for those that have broken Melchizedek temple covenants (Matthew 5.13; 7.6).³²
2. The judgment against Jerusalem (Isa. 28.7-22).
 - a. They have erred through wine and strong drink (Isa. 28.7).
 - b. “Line upon line and precept upon precept” (Isa. 28.13). This verse may not mean what many LDS think it means.³³

³¹ This can be read in connection with Ps. 110.3: רָגַלְתִּי בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ וְלֹא יִשְׁכַּח לְבָבִי לְעֵדֹתָיִךְ וְלֹא יִשְׁכַּח לְבָבִי לְעֵדֹתָיִךְ עֵמֶךָ נְדִבְתָּ בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ וְלֹא יִשְׁכַּח לְבָבִי לְעֵדֹתָיִךְ וְלֹא יִשְׁכַּח לְבָבִי לְעֵדֹתָיִךְ “Your people n^adābā/voluntarily in the day of your power, in the hādār/splendor of holiness from the rechem/everlasting love (lit: womb) from the dawn, to you is the dew of your youth.” The LXX reads as follows: μετὰ σοῦ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τῆς δυνάμεώς σου ἐν ταῖς λαμπρότησιν τῶν ἀγίων ἐκ γαστρὸς πρὸ **ἑωσφόρου** ἐξεγέννησά σε. “And then with the chief/*arche*/head of you in the day of you power, in your brilliancy, the day of your holiness, out of your belly will come **the morning star**.” This is difficult to get a perfect bead on the exact translation, but I get from Psalm 110.3 that 1) The Lord’s people, also the king’s (remember this is a coronation of the righteous king) will have power and brilliancy. 2) This power comes from their being voluntary members of this society, they are willing as the KJV puts it. 3) They exist in everlasting love or the *rechem* from the dawn (Morning Star in Greek). This is Christ, the bright and morning star. [ἑωσφόρος - From ἕως (héōs, “dawn”) + -φόρος (-phóros, “-bearing, -carrying”), from φέρω (phérō, “to bear, to carry”). Compare Φωσφόρος (Phōsphóros).] Compare this to 2 Peter 1.19 and Revelation 2.28, 22.16, where writers of these works identify Christ with the bringer of the dawn, or the Morning Star.

³² The Worship of the Shalems includes an admonition not to divulge things that were made known to the shalem inappropriately and a covenant penalty of being cast out and trodden under foot (Matthew 5:13, 7:6). The Goodness and the Mysteries, p. 76. This is the penalty for the apostate priest in Isaiah 14.19, and is the punishment Isaiah has promised his enemy (Isaiah 5.5). **This is also the penalty for Korihor (Alma 30.59), which seems to indicate that Korihor was an apostate Melchizedek priest.** Ludlow makes this obvious point when he writes: “The fact that Korihor was brought before Alma would seem to indicate that Korihor was or had been a member of the church.” Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, Deseret Book, 1976, 212. In addition, Korihor used the wording, “I always knew,” in his recanting, which could suggest a life raised in the Church and another connection with the Zoramites, who were all bitter Nephite dissenters. See: Godfrey J. Ellis, “The Rise and Fall of Korihor,” *Interpreter*, 48 (2021), p. 49-94.

³³ Alter (p. 709) translates it, “And the word of the LORD became for them—filth-pilth, filth-pilth, vomit-momit, vomit-momit, a little here, a little here. So that they should walk and stumble backward, and be broken, snared, and Trapped” (Isa. 28.13). *The Jewish Study Bible* (p. 837) renders it, “To them the word of the Lord is mutter upon mutter, murmur upon murmur, now here, now there. And so they march, but they shall fall backward, and be injured and snared and captured” (Isa. 28.13).

- c. "We have made a covenant with death and with hell we are at agreement!" (Isa. 28.15).³⁴
- 3. A parable about God's plan in the history of man (Isa. 28.23-29).
 - a. Cast abroad the fitches, scatter the cumin, and cast in the principal wheat, barley, and rye (Isa. 28.25).³⁵
 - b. This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working (Isa. 28.29). The Lord knows what he is doing with respect to the reaping and the thrashing of the nations.³⁶

³⁴ Isaiah again summarizes his opponents, this time sarcastically putting into their mouths words that uncover the folly of their thinking: They believe that their covenants (their treaties with foreign powers such as Egypt or Assyria) will protect them. In fact, those covenants will be no more effective than an attempt to defy death, which inevitably comes to all humans. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 837.

³⁵ The style and content of this complex passage resemble that of wisdom literature, particularly the book of Proverbs; like many texts in Proverbs and Job, this poem focuses on the depth of divine wisdom. (Wisdom influence has been suggested for Isaiah and a variety of nonwisdom texts.) When a farmer breaks up soil, overturns it, and levels it, his activities seem destructive but are in fact wise and ultimately life-giving. So too God has a purpose as He breaks up and levels nations. Further, God treats Israel and Judah in different ways, just as the farmer uses different techniques when planting and harvesting various types of grain. The fates of Israel and Judah seem similar, but Jerusalem will never suffer the degree of defeat meted out to Samaria. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 838.

³⁶ Many years ago, when I was somewhere between nine and eleven, I participated in a community summer recreation program in the town where I grew up. I remember in particular a diving competition for the different age groups held at the community swimming pool. Some of the wealthier kids in our area had their own pools with diving boards, and they were pretty good amateur divers. But there was one kid my age from the less affluent part of town who didn't have his own pool. What he had was raw courage. While the rest of us did our crisp little swan dives, back dives, and jackknives, being ever so careful to arch our backs and point our toes, this young man attempted back flips, one-and-a-halves, doubles, and so on. But, oh, he was sloppy. He seldom kept his feet together, he never pointed his toes, and he usually missed his vertical entry. The rest of us observed with smug satisfaction as the judges held up their scorecards that he consistently got lower marks than we did with our safe and simple dives, and we congratulated ourselves that we were actually the better divers. "He is all heart and no finesse," we told ourselves. "After all, we keep our feet together and point our toes."

The announcement of the winners was a great shock to us, for the brave young lad with the flips had apparently beaten us all. However, I had kept rough track of the scores in my head, and I knew with the arrogance of limited information that the math didn't add up. I had consistently outscored the boy with the flips. And so, certain that an injustice was being perpetrated, I stormed the scorer's table and demanded an explanation. "Degree of difficulty," the scorer replied matter-of-factly as he looked me in the eye. "Sure, you had better form, but he did harder dives. When you factor in the degree of difficulty, he beat you hands down, kid." Until that moment I hadn't known that some dives were awarded "extra credit" because of their greater difficulty.

I have a friend to whom life has been unkind. Though she married in the temple, her husband proved unfaithful and eventually abandoned her and their small children. Since he has never paid a penny in child support, my friend works full time to support herself and her kids. For several years she also went to school at night to improve her financial situation. Therefore, of necessity, she could not be with her children as much as she would have liked and could not always give them the guidance and discipline they needed. It just wasn't possible in her difficult circumstances. One result of her less-than-perfect family situation was troubled teenagers. Now in middle age she is faced with raising some of her grandchildren—again, all alone. Without a faithful companion, without the priesthood in her home, without the blessings that are realized where the ideal family setting is possible, it is almost inevitable that my friend should feel that her "scores" as a wife and mother, and perhaps even as a person, aren't very high. When she goes to church and sees other "ideal" LDS families, when she hears them bear their testimonies and give thanks for all their spiritual and temporal blessings, she sees in her mind the judges holding

Isaiah 29: The Voice from the Dust... A Book that is Sealed

Many visions from the Lord have been recorded as scripture for all to read and study. Yet these scriptures often seem to be sealed, in that although we can read the words, we often don't understand them. Chapter 29 of Isaiah is one such vision; it often confuses readers with its promises of records and sealed books that will come out of the ground and perplex both the wise and the ignorant. Fortunately, later prophets have received additional revelation about this prophecy, and their insights help to illuminate the words of Isaiah. **Most Latter-Day Saints associate the promises of Isaiah 29 with the Book of Mormon, its coming forth out of Hill Cumorah and its translation, mainly because Nephi quotes most of the chapter in the Book of Mormon; he likens Isaiah's prophecy to his own plates and to the Book of Mormon.** Furthermore, as Nephi quotes Isaiah 29:3-24 in 2 Nephi 26-27, he adds additional information about Isaiah's prophecy. Whereas Isaiah 29 consists of twenty-four verses, Nephi's record contains fifty-four verses. (See 2 Ne. 26:15-27:35.)

There are several possible explanations as to why the material of Isaiah 29 is so much longer in 2 Nephi. Among them are the following:

1. Isaiah's record was originally much larger, but editing and the loss of plain and precious parts shortened it to its present twenty-four verses. However, Nephi had access to a more complete version of Isaiah from the Brass Plates of Laban, and thus his Isaiah material is longer.
2. Isaiah's record was originally the same basic size and format that it is now, but Nephi expounded upon the material and added many verses of his own commentary.

Since we lack the Brass Plates of Laban, we do not know how the record that we have compares to the record of Lehi's time, which probably closely resembled the original prophecy recorded by Isaiah. Also, since Nephi does not separate Isaiah's words from his own additions in his record, it is difficult to distinguish Isaiah's text from Nephi's commentary. The inspired efforts of a third prophet, who has also dealt with this same Isaiah material, can help to shed further light on the meaning of Isaiah's vision.

This third prophet is Joseph Smith. In March 1833, four years after he completed his translation of the Book of Mormon, Joseph was translating the Isaiah chapters of the Old Testament as he prepared his Inspired Version of the Bible (now known as the Joseph Smith Translation). **Although he had access to both the King James Version and his earlier Book of Mormon translation of Isaiah 29, his new translation differs somewhat from both.** The content of the Joseph Smith Translation is very similar to that of the Book of Mormon version, although some of the Book of Mormon additions are lacking from the Joseph Smith Translation, and there are some differences in punctuation. The inclusion of some phrases from the King James Version that are not in the Book of Mormon account indicates that Joseph

up scorecards that say 9.9 or 10.0. When she looks at her own life, her own failed marriage, her own troubled children, she knows that the scores are much lower, and she worries about her place in the kingdom.

Well, she needn't worry, for she is as faithful to her covenants in her troubles as the rest of us are in our blessings. True, there are some things she *cannot* do, but these are the result of her circumstances, not choices pursued by her own free will, and where there is no choice, there can be no condemnation. I have no doubt that when the "degree of difficulty" is factored in for the life she leads, her crown will shine brighter than many others, for God always factors into his judgments the "degree of difficulty" Stephen E. Robinson, *Following Christ*, 34-37.

did not simply "lift" the Isaiah material from the Book of Mormon and place it in his inspired translation. The Joseph Smith Translation stands partway between the King James and Book of Mormon translations in size, phraseology, and content, and seems to present the most correct text available of the original Isaiah 29. Its size, thirty-two verses, is larger than the King James Version's twenty-four verses, but smaller than the Book of Mormon's fifty-four verses. Although all of its phrases are found in either the King James Version or the Book of Mormon, many are found in one but not in both, which makes it a distinct document.³⁷

1. Warnings to Ariel (Isa. 29.1-4).
 - a. Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! (Isa. 29.1).
 - b. Ariel is brought down to the ground, and her speech shall be "low out of the dust" (Isa. 29.2-4).³⁸
2. Judgments upon the wicked (Isa. 29.5-10).
 - a. "The multitude of thy strangers³⁹ shall be like small dust... as chaff that passes away" (Isa. 29.5).⁴⁰
 - b. As a hungry man who eats, then awakens and is hungry (Isa. 29.8).
 - c. They are drunken, but not with wine (Isa. 29.9).⁴¹
 - d. The seers are covered (Isa. 29.10).
3. The words of a sealed book (Isa. 29.11-14).
 - a. "Read this I pray thee... I am not learned" (Isa. 29.12).
 - b. The people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me (Isa. 29.13).
4. A Marvelous Work and a Wonder (Isa. 29.14-21).
 - a. Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field (Isa. 29.17).⁴²
 - b. The deaf will hear the words of the book (Isa. 29.18).
 - c. The meek will increase their joy, the poor will rejoice (Isa. 29.19).
5. Blessings to Israel (Isa. 29.22-24).
 - a. Jacob will see his children and not be ashamed (Isa. 29.22-23).
 - b. Those that have erred will learn doctrine (Isa. 29.24).

Isaiah 30: Reliance on the arm of flesh is rebellion against God

Historical Setting:

King Hezekiah's rule over Judah was constantly threatened by the Assyrian Empire. After the Assyrians, under Sargon II, had conquered the northern kingdom, Israel, and deported her leading citizens to the far northeastern Assyrian territories, Judah remained one of the few independent countries in the

³⁷ Ludlow, p. 268-9, emphasis added.

³⁸ Nephi recontextualizes this passage to his seed and his people. See 2 Nephi 26.15-16.

³⁹ Gileadi translates this as "Suddenly, in an instant, your crowds of evildoers shall become as fine dust, your violent mobs like flying chaff" (Isa. 29.5). He notes that So 1QIsa^a renders it "evildoers" or "haughty men" LXX. MT *of strangers*. [Isaiahexplained](#). Accessed 8.20.22. See also *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 840.

⁴⁰ Dust and chaff are chaos images. The strangers will be dissolved like dust.

⁴¹ Nephi says that this is the Gentiles and the Jews "drunken with iniquity and all manner of abominations" (2 Ne. 27.1).

⁴² I take this to mean that the words of the Book have the power to heal the world. Abiding by the precepts of the Book of Mormon has great potential, even the ability to heal the breach with all creation.

western Fertile Crescent. Sargon II attempted to encircle Judah with his armies as he had established dominion over the coastal states Phoenicia and Philistia and had forced Egypt to open trade relations with her. King Hezekiah knew that any offensive action by Judah would immediately bring the Assyrian army upon his country. However, after Sargon II's death in 705 B.C., a number of political conditions seemed to favor a move away from Assyrian domination:

1. With Sargon's death on the Hittite battlefield of Tabal (now part of southern Turkey), internal dissension and questions over the power of his successor encouraged numerous vassal states to revolt against Assyrian power and taxation.
2. Egypt seemed to be growing more powerful as the Nubian pharaoh, Shabako, developed the twenty-fifth (or Ethiopian) dynasty into a strong threat against Assyrian expansion in the west.
3. In the east, Babylon showed signs of resurgent power, as a new leader, Merodach-baladan, received support from neighboring states.
4. Closer to Judah, other states were exerting increased independence.

Taking advantage of these circumstances, Judah joined a coalition of states in Philistia and Phoenicia in their rebellion against Assyria. She also entered into a treaty with Egypt, with the Egyptians promising military aid against any Assyrian attack.

Isaiah strongly opposed this whole series of events as they developed from 705 to 701 B.C. and renounced Judah's reliance upon Egyptian power. He desired the people to seek counsel and strength from the Lord instead of turning to Egypt, the land of their former bondage and affliction. Isaiah prophesied that, because the Judeans rejected the prophets and relied upon the power of men, Judah would fall along with her guardian, Egypt, and her inhabitants would be scattered until the Lord's judgments upon them were complete.⁴³

1. Reliance on man instead of God is vain (Isa. 30.1-17).
 - a. They take counsel, but not of me! (Isa. 30.1).
 - b. The strength of Pharaoh will be your shame! (Isa. 30.3).
 - c. Zoan and Hanes (Isa. 30.4).⁴⁴
 - d. The rebellious people of Judah will not listen to the seers (Isa. 30.9-10).
2. God's justice and grace will be extended at the end of days (Isa. 30.18-33).
 - a. "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold!" (Isa. 30.26).⁴⁵

⁴³ Ludlow, p. 278-9, emphasis added.

⁴⁴ Both these are Egyptian cities. A Judahite delegation actually traveled to Egypt to discuss a possible anti-Assyrian alliance. Alter, p. 717. He referred to Zoan earlier in 19:11, 13. (See also Ps. 78:12, 43.) It was a northern Egyptian city, the regional center of the delta, and was located near the border of the Sinai toward Palestine. It was also known as Tanis. Hanes is mentioned nowhere else in scripture and is thought to be either a city known as Anusis in middle Egypt or the name of the pharaoh's palace in Zoan. If Hanes is a city in southern Egypt, then the idea of having messengers "in Zoan and in Hanes" could mean "from one end of the kingdom to the other." Ludlow, p. 288.

⁴⁵ The great increase of light promised in these verses could be either a literal magnification of light from the moon and the sun (as is stressed in the apocalyptic works *Jubilees* 1:29; 19:25 and *First or Ethiopic Enoch* 91:16) or the great light of Christ's glory when he returns to the earth. (Compare Rev. 21:23 and Isa. 24:23 with D&C 133:49.)

- b. The Lord shall cause his voice to be heard (Isa. 30.30).
- c. The Assyrian will be “beaten down” (Isa. 30.31).
- d. כִּי־עָרוֹךְ מֵאֲתָמוֹל תִּפְתָּה “For Tophet is ordained of old” (Isa. 30.33).⁴⁶

Isaiah 34-35: Burning Pitch and A Wilderness that Blossoms

In these two chapters his message is universal and his poetic style superb. The warnings and judgments of chapter 34 recapitulate many pronouncements given in his earlier chapters, and the hopes and promises of chapter 35 become favorite themes in his later writings, where he repeats its ideas, words, and entire verses. His visions of a blossoming desert, a crippled people becoming whole, and a righteous remnant returning to Zion have inspired countless generations of Bible readers. Throughout his writings, Isaiah longs for the time when God's justice and mercy will be vindicated. He loves to stress the contrasts between the wicked and the righteous. In order that his listeners will more easily remember the messages he delivers for the Lord, he arranges his writings into thematic patterns and poetry. These two chapters are good examples of this.⁴⁷

1. Judgment against the nations and the Edomites in particular (Isa. 34.1-17)
 - a. “Come near, ye nations” (Isa. 34.1). This seems to be a worldwide event.
 - b. The hosts of heaven shall be dissolved (Isa. 34.4). This is a cosmic event.
 - c. My sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea (Isa. 34.5).⁴⁸
 - d. The sacrifice at Bozrah (Isa. 34.6).⁴⁹
 - e. “Fall buffalo, bulls, and steers. Their land shall be saturated with blood, their soil enriched with fat” (Isa. 34.7 [Gileadi translation](#)).⁵⁰

Other symbolic meanings of light during and after the Millennium can be found in this verse, since the moon and the sun represent terrestrial and celestial glories. The seventh or sevenfold light could represent the seventh gospel dispensation (or a "sabbath" dispensation) or the seventh thousand-year period (millennium) of the earth's history. A sevenfold increase of the Lord's Spirit or of missionary work and the light of the gospel might also be implied. **Numerous other interpretations might also apply. Whatever the case, great blessings will come to the people during this period of great light, when they will be healed from their physical and spiritual wounds.**

Ludlow, p. 288-9, emphasis added. Robert Alter gave this interpretation, “In any case, the striking hyperbole has invited eschatological readings, and “the light of the seven days” is clearly a mythological reference to the seven days of creation during which, according to some understandings, the light was more perfect. Creation begins with God’s summoning light to replace the primordial darkness, so national restoration is imagined in cosmic terms as a kind of renewal of creation.” Robert Alter, [The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary](#), p. 720.

⁴⁶ This is the Valley of Ben-Hinnom in Jerusalem, where human sacrifice was offered. In later Hebrew usage, it became a term for “hell.” Alter, p. 722. כִּי־עָרוֹךְ מֵאֲתָמוֹל תִּפְתָּה literally reads, “For set in place from long ago is Tophet.”

⁴⁷ Ludlow, p. 305.

⁴⁸ Idumea is Edom, Judah’s neighbor to the east. Robert Alter places this bit of Isaiah in the realm of Second Isaiah. He explains, “The appearance of Edom as the hated archenemy to be devastated by divine wrath suggests a relatively late date for this prophecy. Edom notoriously collaborated with the Babylonian invaders of Judah in 586 B.C.E., as Psalm 137 bitterly recalls.” Alter, p. 731.

⁴⁹ Bozrah was the capital of Edom. It means “sheepfold” in Hebrew and was a the home of Esau. It is probably Busaira today, located in Jordan.

⁵⁰ As anciently the land of Edom was cattle country, so the nations’ destruction compares to the bloody “slaughter” or “sacrifice” (*zebah*) and “massacre” or “slaughter” (*tebah*) of fattened beasts who turn into fertilizer. **The ritually clean nature of the animals—lambs, he-goats, rams, buffalo, bulls, and steers—identifies them as Jehovah’s apostate people:** “I will destine you to the sword; all of you shall succumb to the slaughter. For when I called, you

- f. Edom's streams will turn to pitch/lava and her earth into brimstone, and her land will become burning pitch! (Isa. 34.9).
 - g. Chaos creatures will inhabit the land of Edom (Isa. 34.11-17).⁵¹
2. The Desert will blossom (Isa. 35.1-10).
- a. The Desert will blossom as the חַבְצֵלֶת *ḥăḇṣṣelet*, the crocus (Isa. 35.1).⁵²
 - b. "The glory of Lebanon will be given to (the desert), the excellency of Carmel and Sharon" (Isa. 35.2).⁵³
 - c. Strengthen the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees (Isa. 35.3).⁵⁴
 - d. The eyes of the blind are opened, the ears of the deaf will be unstopped (Isa. 35.5).
 - e. The lame will leap like deer! The tongue of the dumb will shout for joy (Isa. 35.6).
 - f. Water will break forth in the wilderness and streams will flow in the desert (Isa. 35.7).
 - i. "in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes" (Isa. 35.7). ⁵⁵בְּנֵי חַיִּים רִבְצָה חֲצִיר לְקִנָּה וְגִמְא
 - g. The highway, "the way of holiness" will be there, where no unclean thing shall pass (Isa. 35.8).⁵⁶
 - h. No lion or ravenous beast will be there (Isa. 35.9).⁵⁷

did not respond; when I spoke, you would not give heed. You did what was evil in my eyes; you chose to do what was not my will" (Isaiah 65:12; cf. 63:1-6). Gileadi, [Isaiahexplained](#). Accessed 8.20.22.

⁵¹ This could refer to animals as representations of peoples. In one interpretation, these animals being in the land could represent the Gentile occupation of the Holy Land. It is noteworthy the Idumea is also a symbol for the world and the worldly. See D&C 1.36. The Hebrew word אֶדוֹם Edom also means "red" or "earth" and is the root for the words Adam and man. Therefore, "Edom" often connotes human or worldly qualities. As one scholar defines it, "Edom is always figurative of the natural state of man in his antagonism against God." ([Vine's Expository Commentary on Isaiah](#), Thomans Nelson, 1997, p. 84; see also Mosiah 3:19.)

⁵² The KJV chose to translate the word for the crocus as "rose," a fitting description, though not an exact translation. Crocuses are native to woodland, scrub, and meadows from sea level to alpine tundra from the Mediterranean, through North Africa, central and southern Europe, the islands of the Aegean, the Middle East and across Central Asia. They arrived in Europe from Turkey in the 16th century and became valued as an ornamental flowering plant. See: [Crocus, Wikipedia](#).

⁵³ Lebanon, Carmel, and Sharon were beautiful and productive places during Isaiah's time. All three areas were near the Mediterranean Sea, where they received abundant rain and enjoyed moderate climates. Lebanon is northwest of Israel, Carmel juts into the sea along Israel's western coastline, and Sharon extends along the coast south of Carmel. Lebanon's glory consisted in her beautiful trees (especially cedars) and magnificent vegetation. The excellency of Carmel was (and still is) in her productive vineyards. The plains of Sharon excelled in all types of fruits and vegetables. Note how Isaiah transferred the glory and excellency of these areas over to the Lord in the second half of the verse. These areas were bountiful only because of the Lord's favor. If he so desired he could also bestow such blessings upon the deserts. The glory or credit for the productivity of a place did not belong to the area itself, but to the Lord. Ludlow, p. 315.

⁵⁴ Strengthen the weak hands רַפּוֹת יָדַיִם is a second person plural masculine imperative.

⁵⁵ Alter (p. 735) translates this bit as "where a jackal's abode was, it's lair a courtyard for reeds and rushes."

⁵⁶ "And a way of holiness is what it is called." The Way of Holiness—the return road to the Lord's mountain (Isaiah 27:13; 56:7; 57:13b)—is now cleared of obstructions (Isaiah 40:3-4; 57:14; 62:10), and is used as a path for the Saints that survive Jehovah's destruction of the wicked in his Day of Judgment (Isaiah 4:3; 13:3; 62:10-12). These Saints or holy ones come from the four cardinal directions of the earth and stand as witnesses to the Lord's coming to Zion (Isaiah 11:11-12; 43:5-7; 49:11-12) See also D&C 45.64-75 and D&C 133.25-34.

⁵⁷ It appears that a way will be provided to assemble the outcasts of Israel again in their promised land. The safe and secure physical arrangements, whatever they may be, will, in fact, be but **symbolical of the way of holiness**

- i. The ransomed of the Lord will return and come to Zion with songs of everlasting joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away⁵⁸ (Isa. 35.10). See D&C 45.71.

whereon only the righteous can find footing. The way of holiness cannot be other than the strait and narrow path. The wayward tribes, having forsaken the ancient holy way, having been scattered for their wickedness, shall now be gathered because they forsake the world and seek again that whereon the footprints of their fathers are found. Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man*, Deseret Book., 1982, p. 327.

⁵⁸ Heb: יָגוֹן וְאֲנָחָה "yagon and anachah" grief and groaning flee away.