

## Isaiah 58-66 Show Notes

### Ep 173: Isaiah 58-66

There are indications that Isaiah 58-66 is talking to two distinct groups of returning exiles in 520 BC. Not everyone agrees that this is what is going on. However, a careful reading of these chapters opens up the ideas that there were a group of disenfranchised Jews that were doing works of righteousness and that Isaiah (or his followers)<sup>1</sup> were talking to them. In the podcast we read the following verses that portrayed two distinct groups of Jewish returnees to Jerusalem:

Isaiah 63.9-10 – “He bare them, and carried them... but they rebelled... he was turned to be their enemy”

Isaiah 65.9-15 – “I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob... my people have sought me... but ye are they that forsake the Lord... therefore I will number you to the sword... behold my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry... my servants shall sing... but ye shall cry for sorrow... ye shall leave your name for a curse... for the Lord shall slay thee and call his servants by another name”

Isaiah 66. 5, 24 – “Your brethren hated you, that cast you out for my name’s sake... but he (the Lord) shall appear to your joy, and they (the other group) shall be ashamed... they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me, for their worm shall not die... they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh”

### Isaiah 58: Principles of the fast

Chapter 58 provides a unique opportunity to study one of Isaiah's sermons to his people and to learn how the same teachings are of great value in contemporary society. Isaiah's teachings about fasting and the Sabbath are straightforward and easily understood. His poetry includes numerous parallelisms, including a chiasmus that develops throughout the whole poem, and he maintains a smooth flow of ideas from beginning to end.

Proclamation needs to be bold and to strike at the heart (Maximus). It is the inward holiness that matters to God (Cyril). God as truth nevertheless welcomes the liar (Jerome). God has given free will for us to consecrate to him in works and a pure conscience (Isaac). True spirituality is about charity to the poor and cheerfulness (Jerome). Fasting should never be used to serve our own ends (Ephrem). To draw

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<sup>1</sup> The possibility that later followers of Isaiah wrote or edited this work has been discussed for years. I am open to this possibility, especially in light of the fact that Trito-Isaiah is not found in the Book of Mormon text as it is now constituted, and in light of the subject matter of these chapters. However, I do not know and just because I see evidence that causes me to lean in this direction it is not proof by any means. The idea is that the prophet Isaiah had followers, and that years after his death he was followed by other great literary prophets, also anonymous (now called Trito-Isaiah or Third Isaiah), during the restoration in Jerusalem (520 BCE), who composed further oracles that developed the message in light of the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple. These prophetic voices stressed further aspects of God's message that had become clear in the new situation of Israel as the exiles returned from Babylon. Some scholars such as J. Bright, hold that Third Isaiah was written by the same author who wrote Second Isaiah, but in the rebuilt Jerusalem. The theory that there exist an original Isaiah, followed by a “second Isaiah” (Isaiah 40-54), and finally a “third Isaiah” (Isaiah 55-66), can be read in the detailed biblical scholarship of M. Brettler, S. Mowinckel, A. Bentzen, A. Condamin, P. Auvray and J. Steinmann, A. Feuillet, A. Gelin, and others, and it is widely accepted, though some critics, Latter-day Saint, Catholic, Protestant as well as Jewish, still hold to and defend the unity of authorship by Isaiah for the entire book. See: [Encyclopedia.com](https://www.encyclopedia.com), Isaiah.

near to God occurs by refraining from sins as well as doing good works (Cyril). Drawing near to God concerns living a life worthy of him, not just asking him to draw near in favor and providence (Theodoret). Flesh submits to spirit, which should in turn submit to God (Augustine). A fast should be characterized by humility and obedience (Athanasius). Fasting should not make us think ourselves better than those who eat in moderation (Jerome). Fasting is a work that needs to be made good, not a good work in itself (Cassian).<sup>2</sup>

### Mike Wilcox on fasting

Perhaps the feel of hunger is why the Lord in his wisdom has linked fasting with giving to the poor. It took me a number of years to realize why we donate offerings on the day we fast. So often I have been reminded by others to have a purpose for the fast. This is excellent advice. It is healthy to think of a personal reason for fasting or to fast for the spiritual support of another member, but I think the greatest reason of all is linked to the donation and needs no other motive. Hunger is the greatest scourge of poverty. When we fast we feel, in the slightest of ways, what the poor may feel every moment of every day. Knowing that this is their experience, we are asked to alleviate it by our contribution. Our fasting is a monthly encouragement to consider the plight of the poor.<sup>3</sup>

The poem is essentially a dialogue between the Lord and Israel. God addresses Israel's complaints about not being rewarded for fasting by contrasting her hypocritical fasts with the true spirit of fasting. He then lists many blessings Israel can receive from fasting and concludes with some instruction about the Sabbath. The chapter naturally divides into four sections:<sup>4</sup>

1. Israel vainly seeks the Lord (Isa. 58.1-3b).
  - a. “as a nation that did righteousness” (Isa. 58.2). Oswalt explains, “Me they seek (of all things!) would capture the tone of astonishment here. These are people that are very serious about religion... They look like a nation that did justice... but like is a key word. To be like such a nation and to be such a nation are not the same thing.”<sup>5</sup>
  - b. Fasting to seek pleasure – Isa. 58.3.<sup>6</sup>
2. False and true fasts compared (Isa. 58.3c-7).
  - a. “ye fast for strife and debate”... “to smite with the fist of wickedness” ... (Isa. 58.4).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Mark W. Elliot (editor), *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Old Testament XI*, IVP Academic, 2007, Isaiah 40-66, p. 207.

<sup>3</sup> S. Michael Wilcox, *What the scriptures teach us about prosperity*, Deseret Book, 2010, p.120.

<sup>4</sup> Victor Ludlow, *Isaiah: Prophet, Seer, and Poet*, Deseret Book, 1982, p. 482.

<sup>5</sup> John Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66 Commentary*, Eerdmans, 1998, p. 496.

<sup>6</sup> Jerome: The unjust accuse the Lord of not respecting good works, and then they offer to God only hunger pangs of the stomach but not the work of virtue... This is what follows in the Septuagint: “And you wound all those who are subject to you,” [Isa 58.3] or “afflict,” as in the better translation of Theodotion and Symmachus, which we follow with “and you are demanding of your debtors.” From this he shows that it is not without danger to demand repayment of a poor person who is insolvent or to refuse to return to a freezing debtor the garment that you took as collateral, lest his cry reach God. For one who has mercy on the poor lends to God. In contrast, whoever demands repayment from those who have nothing violates God... Elliot, p. 209.

<sup>7</sup> The inveighing here and in the lines that follow against social injustice may reflect, as some scholars contend, the dire state of Judahite society in the early decades of the fifth century B.C.E., but it is difficult to link any of this to specific historical circumstances. Exploitation of the poor, after all, and indifference to suffering are prevalent enough in virtually all societies, including affluent twenty-first-century America. That is precisely what imparts a

3. Rewards for true fasting promised (Isa. 58.8-12).
  - a. “No, this is the fast I desire: to unlock the fetters of wickedness, and untie the cords of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, to break off every yoke, to share your bread with the hungry, and to take the wretched poor into your home...” (Isa. 58.6-7 JPS trans).
4. Counsel and promises for the Sabbath (Isa. 58.13-14).
  - a. Note the if... then clause: “If you turn away from doing what you want to do on the Sabbath, then you will delight in the Lord and you will enjoy the heritage of your father Jacob” (Isa. 58.13-14).

### Isaiah 59: Rebuke, Confession, and Reconciliation

This chapter presents a three-part dialogue.<sup>8</sup> Claus Westermann labels this chapter as a lament.<sup>9</sup> The prophet reprimands the nation; the nation, or at least the faithful among them, acknowledge their misdeeds; and then the prophet announces that God will bring justice and mercy to the people. God speaks directly to the faithful in the last verse. This chapter, like the previous one, attributes the delay of the redemption predicted in chapters 40-48 to the people's sins.<sup>10</sup>

1. The Sins of the People (Isa. 59.1-8).
  - a. “Your iniquities have separated you and your God... he will not hear” (Isa. 59.2).
  - b. Your lips have spoken lies, none calleth for justice... they hatch cockatrice’s eggs<sup>11</sup> and weave spiders webs... violence is in their hands (Isa. 59.3-6).
  - c. “Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity” (Isa. 59.7).<sup>12</sup>
  - d. Note the body parts listed in this rebuke: hands, fingers, lips, tongue (v. 3), by implication: eyes (v.9-10), feet (“we walk in darkness” – v. 9).<sup>13</sup>

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sense of timeless relevance to this prophecy. Robert Alter, [The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary](#), W. W. Norton & Company, 2018, p. 2665/5277 electronic version.

<sup>8</sup> These three parts consist of the sins of the people, their confession before God, and his response.

<sup>9</sup> Claus Westermann, [Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary](#), Westminster John Knox Press, 1969, p. 344. Westermann notes that this chapter’s lament is answered, meaning that the reason for the lament is due to the sins of the people. He also notes that some of the language in this chapter reflects a later construction of the text (p. 346).

<sup>10</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, p. 901.

<sup>11</sup> כִּי־יִצְפְּעוּ־בִּקְעוֹנֵי־בִּקְעוֹנֵי “eggs of *tsiphoniy* they hatch” A *tsepha* טֶפֶפ is a poisonous serpent. This is translated as an “adder” by Berlin and Brettler and as “viper” by Robert Alter.

<sup>12</sup> Theodoret of Cyr: “They sin with all parts of the body, through hands, feet, tongue. But it is the life inside their minds that sins before all of these once it has fallen into imprudence, so that it cannot recognize the peace that is at hand.” Elliot, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, p. 221.

<sup>13</sup> Cyril (313-386), a bishop of Jerusalem, wrote of how Christians were anointed as part of their following Christ and partaking of the Eucharist. He wrote, “And you were first anointed on the forehead, that you might be delivered from the shame, which the first man who transgressed bore about with him everywhere; and that with unveiled face ye might reflect as a mirror the glory of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18 Then on your ears; that you might receive the ears which are quick to hear the Divine Mysteries, of which Esaias said, The Lord gave me also an ear to hear Isaiah 50:4; and the Lord Jesus in the Gospel, He that has ears to hear let him hear. Matthew 11:15 Then on the nostrils; that receiving the sacred ointment ye may say, We are to God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved. 2 Corinthians 2:15 Afterwards on your breast; that having put on the breast-plate of righteousness, you may stand against the wiles of the devil. For as Christ after His Baptism, and the visitation of the Holy Ghost, went forth and vanquished the adversary, so likewise ye, after Holy Baptism and the Mystical Chrism, having put on the whole armour of the Holy Ghost, are to stand against the power of the adversary, and vanquish it, saying, I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me Philippians 4:13 .” Cyril, [On Chrism, Catechetical Lecture 21](#). Accessed 9.15.2022.

2. The People Confess (Isa. 59.9-14).
  - a. Therefore justices is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us (Isa. 59.9).<sup>14</sup>
  - b. We walk in darkness... we are in desolate places as dead men... we look for judgment, but there is none... for salvation, but it is far from us... for our transgressions are multiplied... our sins testify against us (Isa. 59.10-12).
3. The Lord responds (Isa. 59.15-21).
  - a. “The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no *mishpat* - מִשְׁפָּט judgment” (Isa. 59.15).<sup>15</sup>
  - b. He saw that there was no man<sup>16</sup>... for he put on righteousness as a breastplate... he will repay fury to his adversaries... so shall they fear the name of the Lord... and the Redeemer shall come to Zion (Isa. 59.16-20).
  - c. God promises his eternal covenant: “My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed... from henceforth and forever” (Isa. 59.21).<sup>17</sup>

### Isaiah 60-62: Encouragement to Zion

1. Zion, the Holy City (Isa. 60.1-22).<sup>18</sup>
  - a. Arise, shine... the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee! (Isa. 60.1).<sup>19</sup>
  - b. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth... but the Lord shall arise upon thee! (Isa. 60.2).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> על-כן רחוק משפט מִמֵּנוּ וְלֹא תִשְׁגֹּחַ צְדָקָה “Therefore *mishpat* (justice/fairness) is far from us and righteousness does not reach us” (my translation). The KJV reads “Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us.”

<sup>15</sup> *Mishpat*, (מִשְׁפָּט) a justly ordered society, is one of the foundational values of Judaism. The prophets railed against the absence of *mishpat* in the days of kings who abused their power. Maimonides concludes his *Guide for the Perplexed* with the words from Jeremiah 9:23, Let not the mighty man glory in his might... let him glory only in this, that he knows me, for I am God who does lovingkindness, judgment [*mishpat*] and righteousness in the earth. [The Jewish Chronicle](#), Mishpat, March 06, 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Alter, commenting on Isaiah 59.16, wrote “At this point the prophet offers a new notion of God’s saving power: the society is so thoroughly given over to injustice that there is scarcely hope that anyone will emerge who can turn things around, and consequently God Himself decides that He must intervene.” Alter, p. 821.

<sup>17</sup> The Lord's promise can apply either to immortal beings who live in his presence or to a religious community that never forfeits divine direction through apostasy. Only resurrected persons in the celestial kingdom fit the first category, while The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints fits the second; they both will enjoy communion with the Lord through the eternities. Ludlow, p. 496.

<sup>18</sup> Throughout these verses, the prophet uses vocabulary and motifs associated with royalty in biblical and ancient Near Eastern literature. In particular, Deutero-Isaiah borrows royal vocabulary from texts that are concerned with the Davidic dynasty, including Isaiah 11, and Psalm 72. Here, however, the motifs are not applied to a Davidic king. Instead, they are transferred to the city of Zion and to the Israelite nation as a whole; the text makes no mention of the Davidic family. This prophet does not look forward to the arrival of a human Messiah to liberate the Israelites or a human king to govern them. Rather, God will rule the nation directly in the future, and the whole nation will enjoy royal status. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 903.

<sup>19</sup> This society seems to be The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Elder Orson Pratt interpreted verse 1 as a description of the Church in Zion in the latter days. (*Journal of Discourses* 16:78). Ludlow, p. 496.

<sup>20</sup> The prophet Joseph Smith applied the description in Isaiah 60.2 to the world in 1837 when the Twelve Apostles were sent to the nations of the earth. ([D&C 112:23](#)) Joseph Smith commented upon Isaiah 60:2:

Consider for a moment, brethren, the fulfillment of the words of the prophet; for we behold that darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the inhabitants thereof—that crimes of every description are increasing

- c. The kings of the earth come to the holy city to pay homage (Isa. 60.3-4, 10).
- d. “The multitude of camels shall cover thee!” (Isa. 60.6).<sup>21</sup>
- e. They shall bring gold and incense... all the flocks of Kedar<sup>22</sup> shall be gathered unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee, they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar... (Isa. 60.6-7).
- f. “Who are theses that fly as a cloud and as the doves to their windows?” (Isa. 60.8).
- g. “The ships of Tarshish... to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them”... “their kings shall minister unto thee, for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee” (Isa. 60.9-10).
- h. The royal city’s gates are continually open... the glory of Lebanon will come to the city, the fir, pine, and box trees... and “I will make the place of my feet glorious!” (Isa. 60.11-13).<sup>23</sup>

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among men—vices of great enormity are practiced—the rising generation growing up in the fullness of pride and arrogance. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 47.)

<sup>21</sup> The poetic image is of an endless flow of caravans of camels that is like a stream or tide. Alter, p. 823.

<sup>22</sup> The nations engaged in commerce, and those possessing cattle, vie with one another in enriching the church. Keil and Delitzsh, *Commentary*. Kedar—(Isa 21.16; Song 1.5), in the south of Arabia-Desert, or north of Arabia-Petræa; they traded in flocks (Eze 27.21). Nebaioth—son of Ishmael, as was Kedar. Father of the Nabatheans in Arabia-Petræa. Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, *Commentary*. These were areas that are governed today by Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Isaiah 60.7 tells of livestock coming from the area of Syria, a country to the north of Israel’s borders. **In Isaiah’s time, these were the prime grazing areas for camels and livestock; they also had the highest quality gold and incense. Isaiah may also be using these items and places to represent the choice people as well as goods that will become a part of Zion.** Verses 8 and 9 develop this theme further and promise a return by air (doves flying) and by sea (the ships of Tarshish; see Isa. 23:1, 6, 10, 14.). Ludlow, p. 498.

<sup>23</sup> In his account of his commission, after speaking of comfort for the people who mourn Zion (that is, the community as a whole grieving over its still-devastated state), the prophet declares that “they will rebuild the long-lasting ruins” (Is 61:4). In isolation it would be natural to infer that it is the people of Jerusalem themselves who do the rebuilding, but **Isaiah 60 has already declared that foreigners will rebuild the city and serve it** (Is 60:10). **The nations will also bring the city’s children back from across the seas** (Is 60:9). It will be the foreigners who will look after flocks, fields and vineyards, while the Israelites function as Yahweh’s priests (Is 61:5-6). One should not infer that either building or shepherding and farming are lowly or despised occupations. Most Israelites had always been happy undertaking these tasks, while the Levites looked after the work of the temple, and one can imagine that as many Levites would be glad to escape the mucky and laborious work of the temple as non-Levites would wish that they had the chance to be involved in it. Yet the picture of a transformation in Zion’s fortunes does imply that **there is a great reversal here**. The children of the people who had humbled the city will bow down to acknowledge it as Yahweh’s city, a transformation of fortune that will lead Zion to acknowledge Yahweh as its deliverer (Is 60.14-16). John Goldingay, *The Theology of the Book of Isaiah*, IVP Academic, 2014, p. 79, emphasis added. The kings of the Gentiles will also come, led as in a procession. The word suggests that the yare escorted into the city, not against their will but freely and voluntarily, for they have been inwardly conquered and are true *douloi* (Greek: servants) of the Lord. Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah, Volume 3: Chapters 40-66*, Eerdmans, 1972, p. 450.

- i. Her tormentors will bow down before them, and Zion will “suck the milk of the Gentiles” and “suck the breast of kings”<sup>24</sup> and “know that I the Lord am thy Savior and Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob”<sup>25</sup> (Isa. 60.16).
- j. The treasures of the earth are brought to the Holy City (Isa. 60.17), violence ceases (Isa. 60.18), The Lord’s light is there (Isa. 60.19-20), the people are righteous forever and inherit the land (Isa. 60.21).
- k. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek... to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” (Isa. 61.1).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Robert Alter (p. 825) explains this phrase in this way: “And you shall suckle the milk of nations. In Isaiah 49:23, **foreign princesses were to become the wet nurses of Judahite infants**; here, that extravagant image is rerun metaphorically. The Masoretic Text is vocalized to read shod, “booty,” but the original word was almost certainly *shad*, “breast,” either mistakenly vocalized by the Masoretes or altered by them because the image troubled them.” This image, of Israel taking the milk from the kings of the earth, can be seen in several ways. On a basic level it is the subjugation of foreign powers. On another level this is the divine image of the goddess feeding the divine son as seen in Ancient Near Eastern art and thought. Working along these lines, John Oswalt stated, “Across the ancient world, the mark of greatness and exaltation was to have been suckled at the breast of a goddess. This meant the life of the gods flowed through one. Of course, no biblical writer would ever use such a figure.” Oswalt, p. 552. I would argue with Oswalt on this last point. This is one of the meanings of the Tree of Life, that it was literally the fruit of the gods. The Egyptians saw this as being nursed by the goddess, and Nephi includes this image, using words and symbols so close to the idea of the milk of the gods that the parallel must be examined. But I also see Oswalt’s point when he says “no biblical writer,” meaning that, in my view, the authors of these texts edited much of them to reflect their viewpoints. But enough of these images do pass through, and we get the main idea. We see this symbolically when we eat the sacrament, as a symbol at least. The goodness of Jesus’ lifeblood passes through us. But back to Oswalt: “For one thing, God’s life is not magically imparted; it is received as a gift. For another, God is never depicted in the imagery of a goddess...” Until it is! See David Biale, “[The God with Breasts: El Shaddai in the Bible](#),” *History of Religions* 21:3 (February 1982): 240-256. See also Margaret Barker, [The Mother of the Lord: Volume 1: The Lady in the Temple](#), T&T Clark, 2012. Back to Oswalt: “... because of the inescapable connotations of fertility that attach to a goddess figure. What can be done, however, is to use this language to say that the life of royalty flows through the despised slave Israel. Thus the mighty nations and their kings are said to be the nursemaids of Israel. The language is similar to that of Isaiah 49.23, but in the typical mode of the day, many modern commentators argue that this is a rather ineffective borrowing of the earlier line. Whybray goes so far as to say that the borrower commits the “absurdity of saying you shall suck the breast of kings.” But surely the poet did not intend to be taken so literally. If kings do not have breasts, neither do nations! What the writer is saying (as he was also saying in Isaiah 49.23 with less sweeping language) is that a day will come when Israel will find itself cared for and supported by the great nations of the earth. Those who have lived since 1948 should not find that promise absurd.” John Oswalt, [The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66](#), Eerdmans, 1998, p. 552-3, emphasis added.

<sup>25</sup> Mighty One of Jacob is *Abir Yaacov* אָבִיר יַעֲקֹב. See also Isa. 49.26 and [Genesis 49.24](#). This can be translated as “The Bull of Jacob.”

<sup>26</sup> The Savior Jesus Christ quoted this verse to his fellow Jews in a synagogue in his homeland of Nazareth ([Luke 4.18-19](#)), stating, “this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4.21). The response was not positive, as the Jews “rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong” ([Luke 4.29](#)). Psalm 22 portrays the Savior and his descent into the underworld. Reading Psalm 22.22-31 in connection with Isaiah 61.1-3 and D&C 138.15, 18, and 23 illustrate how this works. **In the festival drama, the prayers of the people and the king were answered. Jehovah unlocked the gates of death and hell, and the king was saved from their grasp.** He tells his own story in the 18th Psalm, where “the worshiper is entangled in the cords of the Underworld. His plight takes on cosmic proportions as does his theophanic deliverance.” (Norman C. Habel, “He Who Stretches Out the Heavens,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 34 (1972): 424-25.) In Psalm 18, the king’s return was recognized as both the fulfillment of his request to live and

- l. The Cosmic King exchanges tokens of fallen brokenness with perfection: “beauty for ashes,”<sup>27</sup> and “the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (Isa. 61.3).<sup>28</sup>
- m. “Ye shall eat” (Isa. 61.6).<sup>29</sup>
- n. The people will rebuild what was destroyed (Isa. 61.4),<sup>30</sup> they will be “named the Priests of the Lord” (Isa. 61.5), “they shall rejoice in their portion, therefore in their land they shall possess the double” (Isa. 61.7).<sup>31</sup>
- o. “I will rejoice in the Lord... for he hath clothed me with the garment of salvation... as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth...” (Isa. 61.10-11).<sup>32</sup>
- p. Zion receives a “New Name,” and a “Crown” (Isa. 62.3).<sup>33</sup>
- q. Thou shalt be a crown, shalt be called nor more “Forsaken,” but Hephzi-bah, and “thy land Beulah” (Isa. 62.2-4).<sup>34</sup>

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his re-investiture of the royal clothing that had been given to him earlier. The covenant between the king and God was also re-affirmed as he was promised eternal life (see Ps. 18.4-10, 16-20, 49-50). Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend?* Eborn Books, p. 318-320, emphasis added.

<sup>27</sup> This bit of verse (Isa. 61.3) has some word-play: לָהֶם פָּאֵר תַּחַת אֶפְרַיִם “to give them *pewier*/splendor in the stead of *ayfer*/ashes” ... these are the same Hebrew consonants, only in a different order, thus creating a bit of poetry here.

<sup>28</sup> These images are all beautiful examples of the reversal of The Fall. Jesus is the solution to all things that are broken.

<sup>29</sup> Note what is going on in Isaiah 61-62: The captives are released (61.1-3), anointed, in conjunction with an exchange of fallen symbols for perfect things (61.3). The righteous eat and drink (61.6, 62.8-9), and they are clothed (61.10), receive a “new name” (62.2), and a crown (62.3), as they “spring forth before all nations” (61.11), a symbol of everlasting seed. **These symbols and ideas tell us how the redemptive work takes place in a temple context.** All of these things take place in the midst of a fertility reference, “Thou shalt be called Hephzibah and thy land Beulah.” This reference can be directly tied into the sacred nature of the Holy of Holies as the place where the cherubim embrace. (For more on this idea, see: Eugene Seach, [A Great Mystery: The Secret of the Jerusalem Temple](#), Gorgias Press, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> The ruins were made when Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B.C.E., well over a century before this prophecy, and from the poet’s perspective these ruins are “ancient,” from “times long past.” Alter, p. 827.

<sup>31</sup> This is a hyperbolic flourish: the people dispossessed of their land will now hold on to it with doubled security. The phrase might also refer to a second taking-possession of the land after the first one in Joshua’s conquest. Alter, p. 827.

<sup>32</sup> In these verses, the former mourners of Zion (Isa. 61.3) are now the redeemed of the Lord and sing thanks to him for his blessings. **The motifs of a wedding and the temple ceremony are a part of their rejoicing:** clothed in garments, robes, and wedding attire, Israel and the Lord are ready to enter into their marriage covenant. This symbolism echoes the writings of Isaiah’s contemporary prophet, Hosea, and calls to mind the “wedding feast” to be held at Christ’s second coming. (Matt. 22; see D&C 33:17-18; 65:3; 133:10-19.) Ludlow, p. 506-507.

<sup>33</sup> Were this crown... resting upon the Lord’s head and not in His hand and palm, the description would not be fitting, for this crown was wrought out in time and is a work of God to be seen by all of God’s creation. “The whole history of salvation,” says Delitzsch, “is a history of the taking of the kingdom, and the perfection of the kingdom by Jehovah; in other words, the history of the working out of this crown.” Perhaps the symbolism also suggests that the Church is the Lord’s bride, for “a good wife is the crown of her husband” (Prov. 12.4). The figure is admirably adapted to express the object of love and affection. So Paul speaks of believers (Phil. 4.1, 1 Thess. 2.19). Young, *The Book of Isaiah, Volume 3*, p. 468-469.

<sup>34</sup> The name is Hephzibah (חֶפְצִי-בָהּ)– “My desire is in her” (Isa. 62.4). The land is called Beulah (בְּעוּלָה)– “The One Bedded.” One cannot escape the reality of the fertility images here, especially in light of Isa. 62.5, “As a youth

- r. The Lord sets watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem (Isa. 62.6), and swears by his right hand that the new grain and new wine will no longer be food for her enemies (Isa. 62.8), rather, Zion will partake of the new grain and wine in Yahweh's sacred courts (Isa. 62.9). The Saints are then instructed to pass through the gates and come into the holy city (Isa. 62.10). The city will be called "The One Sought Out, The City Unforsaken" (Isa. 62.12).<sup>35</sup>

### The Divine Warrior: Isaiah 63.1-6

1. The day of vengeance (Isa. 63.1-6).
  - a. Who is this coming from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? (Isa. 63.1).
  - b. Red in apparel, having tread the winepress... "I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments" (Isa. 63.3).
  - c. "I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to aid" (Isa. 63.5).

### A Lament to God: Isaiah 63.7-64.11

Victor Ludlow<sup>36</sup> sees a pattern in this lament, what he calls "Isaiah's Intercessory Prayer for Israel." He explains:

Isaiah speaks for all Israel to the Lord and prays for her final redemption. Isaiah's prayer contains five elements in a loose chiasmic pattern:

- A. A petition to the Lord to remember Israel (63:15-17)
  - B. A statement on the consequences of Israel's sins (63:18-19)
    - C. A hope that the Lord will make his power known (64:1-5a)
  - B'. A statement on Israel's sinfulness (64:5b-7)
- A'. A petition that the Lord will forget his anger against Israel (64:8-12)
  1. The great acts of God are remembered (Isa. 63.7-14).<sup>37</sup>
    - a. God's *hesed* is remembered by the Saints (Isa. 63.7).
    - b. "In their affliction he was afflicted" (Isa. 63.9).<sup>38</sup>

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espouses a maiden, Your sons shall espouse you; And as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, So will your God rejoice over you" (JPS translation), *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 907.

<sup>35</sup> These words help to encourage a deeper level of understanding Isaiah 60-62. These chapters might apply to (1) the Jews returning from Babylon in 538 BCE, (2) The Savior Jesus Christ's first coming to his people, or even (3) the events surrounding The Second Coming. Many of the ideas expressed in Isa. 60-62 also reflect the glory of the Nephite nation after the Savior's visit to them, at least for the first couple hundred years after his visit ([4 Nephi 1.1-25](#)). For God's faithful children, Isaiah's words can also refer to the temple (both ancient and modern) and its ordinances and blessings.

<sup>36</sup> Ludlow, p. 516.

<sup>37</sup> Before outlining the complaint and the request for divine aid, the prayer calls God's kind deeds to mind. It is because God acted successfully and graciously in the past that the nation expects that God will intervene now. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 908.

<sup>38</sup> God is portrayed as experiencing pain when his children disobey him. See Alma 7.11-12.



- c. "They rebelled and vexed his holy spirit" (Isa. 63.10).
2. The complaint and request for help (Isa. 63.15-64.11).
  - a. "Look down from heaven!" (Isa. 63.15), "Why hast thou made us to err from thy ways?" (Isa. 63.17).<sup>39</sup>
  - b. "Thy people of holiness have possessed it (the temple, which was destroyed in 586 and rebuilt in 516 BCE) but a little while, our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary" (Isa. 63.18).<sup>40</sup>
  - c. "Oh that thou would rend the heavens, that thou would come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence!" (Isa. 64.1).<sup>41</sup>
  - d. "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither... seen... what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him!" (Isa. 64.4).
  - e. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isa. 64.6).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> In the KJV we read that the people here (Isa. 63.17) blame God for their disobedience. However, Joseph Smith clarified this verse in his translation: "O Lord, why has thou suffered us to err from thy ways, and to harden our heart from thy fear?" Instead of the Lord "making" the Israelites to sin and "hardening" their hearts, he "suffered" or allowed the Israelites to sin and harden their own hearts. The Lord does not cause anyone to stray from righteousness, but he does allow people to sin according to their own will.

<sup>40</sup> The way this verse reads, it seems to be that it was written prior to 516 BCE. Attempts to date these passages have been made by many scholars. As Orlinsky and Snaith explain, "Attempts have been made to date particular sections of these 56-66 chapters. Eissfeldt allocates Isaiah 56-66 as a whole to the years 520-516 B.C., but places Isaiah 57.1-13 before 587 B.C.; 63.7-64.12 soon after 587 B.C.; 66.1-4 before 538 B.C.; and 65 to the period 400-200 B.C. With this compare Volz, who places 56.1-8; 57.14-21; 58.1-14; 59.9 f.; 61 in the period 500-400 B.C.; 56.9-57.13 as pre-exilic; 63.7-64.12 in c. 585 B.C.; 66.1 f. as c. 520 B.C.; 63.1-6 as 500-400 B.C.; and 65 and 66.3-42 as after 331 B.C. G. W. Anderson (1959) writes of the whole of 56-66 as a collection possibly spanning the whole period 586-400 B.C. with now and then, as in 58, an echo of the authentic voice of pre-exilic prophecy. One of the criteria of judgment running through most of these attempts at dating the eleven chapters is to be seen in the remark of Skinner who says 1) that 63.7-64.11 must have been written before the building of Zerubbabel's temple in 520-516 B.C. If we are to hold that 56-66 is a unity, then it must all have been written earlier than 520 B.C. If the rest of 56-66 cannot be conceived as being earlier than 520 B.C. then 56-66 is not a unity. The problem is: Where are these eleven chapters to be fitted in to an accepted historical framework?" Harry Orlinsky and Norman Snaith, *Studies on the Second Part of the Book of Isaiah*, Brill, 1967, p. 220-221.

<sup>41</sup> See D&C 133.40.

<sup>42</sup> Isaiah knows that his own generation is unworthy of the Lord's power and presence. He recognizes that any wicked generation does not witness the Lord's glorious powers. Instead, they give themselves over to the power of sin. Ludlow, p. 518. This verse (Isa. 64.6) can also be read as mankind's acknowledgment that we are nothing compared to God, that we do not merit anything, rather, we "receive" God's grace and salvation as we make and keep our covenants to him. Jerome put it this way: "Whatever righteousness that we who are unclean in ourselves appear to possess may be compared with the rag ... "And we fall," Isaiah continues, "like leaves from a tree, which are then dispersed by the wind on account of our iniquities." It must be borne in mind here that the righteousness that is in the law will be called unclean in comparison with the purity of the gospel. For what was previously glorified is no longer glorified, due to the surpassing glory of the latter. Hence, the apostle Paul, who fulfilled everything according to the righteousness that is in the law, says that he considered everything as loss, or dung, in order to gain Christ, on account of the magnificent knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so that he may not be found having the righteousness in him that is from the law but the righteousness from God that comes through faith in Christ. For there is a righteous person who dies in his righteousness if, after receiving the truth of the gospel, he chooses to use legal shadows and to pursue righteousness in a manner that is not righteous. Elliot, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, p. 261.

- f. “Thou hast hid thy face from us... because of our iniquities. **But now, O Lord, thou art our father,**<sup>43</sup> we are the clay, and thou our potter... Be not wroth... O Lord... see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people!” (Isa. 64.7-9).
- g. They lament that the temple has been destroyed (Isa. 64.10-12).

### Isaiah 65-66: Blessing and Destruction

1. The faithful and apostates within Israel are addressed (Isa. 65.1-16).
  - a. These verses denote a polarization among this people.<sup>44</sup>
  - b. “And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down in” (Isa. 65.10).<sup>45</sup>
  - c. “My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty” (Isa. 65.13).
2. The Renewal of Creation (Isa. 65.17-25).

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<sup>43</sup> Many commentators see the fatherhood of God as a metaphor. It is used this way as well in the Book of Mormon, where the covenant saints are the “sons and daughters” of Jesus Christ ([Mosiah 5.7](#)). Yet, as Latter-day Saints, we also see the literal nature of God’s fatherhood, in the sense that Heavenly Father is the father of his mortal children here on earth. Westermann sees this idea in myth, but not in the Bible, when he says, “The reason why the designation of God as father is so rare in the Old Testament is that, in the world in which Israel was set, the physical fatherhood of the gods was a basic feature of thinking in terms of myth. The Old Testament will have none of this. Man is not God's child, but his creature. God is never designated as father before the post-exilic period, and even then it is only on the odd occasion.” Westermann, p. 393. Despite Westermann’s assertions, Paul does use this term to describe his hearers when he writes, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” ([Romans 8.14-17](#)). Now it must be granted that Paul is speaking of those born again in the covenant as King Benjamin uses the term (see Mosiah 5), but modern prophets have also stated that [man is a creation as well as a son of God](#). The terms Paul and King Benjamin are using relate to us become children of Christ through covenant (see also [John 1.12](#) where it states that “as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the Sons of God).

<sup>44</sup> Gileadi explains: “A polarization of peoples takes place as Jehovah’s coming to the earth draws near. Although the number of wicked people increases and the number of righteous decreases, the degree of wickedness of the wicked is in part offset by the degree of righteousness of the righteous as there is more evil to overcome that serves as a test of their covenantal loyalty. Being the espoused wife that proves unfaithful, Jehovah’s “nation/people” who currently claim allegiance to him largely apostatize while Jehovah’s servants minister to the wife whom Jehovah remarries (vv 8-9; Isaiah 49:22-23; 54:1, 4-8; 62:1-7). Although Jehovah makes himself “available” and “accessible” to all his people at the time his servant fulfills his mission (Isaiah 50:10; 52:7, 15; 55:4-7), most spurn the servant and by so doing spurn Jehovah. While the righteous among them “inquire” of him, “seek” him, and “invoke” his name (Isaiah 41:25; 51:1; 55:6), the wicked fail to do so (Isaiah 9:13; 42:24; 64:7). Instead of adopting Jehovah’s “way,” they assume they know of themselves. Defiant toward his hand of deliverance (Isaiah 45:9-11; 50:2, 9; 59:1-2), they become subject to his hand of punishment (Isaiah 5:25; 10:5; 26:11).” Gileadi, [Isaiahexplained](#). Accessed 9.11.2022.

<sup>45</sup> **Sharon**, the coastal plain from Jaffa to Haifa, a very fertile area **marking the western extreme of the land of Israel**. **Achor**, a valley near Jericho, a desolate area **marking the land's eastern extreme**. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 912.

- a. “I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind... I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy” (Isa. 65.17-18).<sup>46</sup>
- b. “No more shall there be infants alive but a few days, or the aged who do not live out their years; those who die young shall be a hundred years old, and those who fail to reach a hundred shall be accursed.” (Isa. 65.20, Gileadi translation).<sup>47</sup>
- c. They shall build houses, they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them... they shall not labor in vain... before they call, I will answer, and while they are speaking, I will hear... (Isa. 65.21-24).
  - i. There will still be those on the earth that do not worship the Lord.<sup>48</sup>
- d. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together... the lion shall eat straw like the bullock (Isa. 65.25).<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> The new heavens and new earth spoken of by Isaiah and in [D&C] section 101, have no reference to the new heavens and earths which will come after the close of the Millennium when the earth shall become as a sea of glass. The new heavens and earth here spoken of will come at the beginning of the Millennium. It is the change spoken of in the tenth Article of Faith. The Lord definitely fixes the time when this change will come and all corruptible things be removed. It is in the day when enmity shall cease on the earth and love shall take the place of hate even among the beasts and fowl as well as with mankind. It shall be a day when there shall be no sorrow for there shall be no death. Men on the earth will still be mortal, but a change shall come over them so that they will have power over sickness, disease and death. Death shall all but be banished from the earth, for men shall live until they are the age of a tree or one hundred years old, (See Sec. 63:50-51), and then shall die at the age of man, but this death shall come in the twinkling of an eye and mortality shall give way to immortality suddenly. There shall **be no graves**, and the **righteous shall be caught up to a glorious resurrection**. In that day the resurrected Saints will work hand in hand with the mortal Saints on the earth. It is the purpose of the Lord during that thousand years to have the ordinance work performed for all the dead who are entitled to receive it. It is the time of restoration and perfection, when all things pertaining to the Salvation of man will be fulfilled. Mortals must perform in the Temples the ordinance work which pertains to this mortal life. All who are raised in the resurrection also belong to another life, and therefore cannot be baptized, confirmed, ordained, endowed, or sealed for themselves, since all of these ordinances belong to this mortal sphere. Those who have passed through the resurrection will come with the needed records so that those in the flesh, or mortality, can perform the work for their dead. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946-1949], 2:216 – 217.

<sup>47</sup> So during the Millennium there will be no death. Children will not die. Disease will be banished. This is part of the restoration. But that child, when it has reached a certain age, the age of a tree, a hundred years we read in Isaiah, will be changed like that. It will die when it is old. It will pass from the mortal to the immortal state, suddenly and so they will not need to make graves... Joseph Fielding Smith, *Signs of the Times* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1952], 37.

<sup>48</sup> Joseph Smith explains, “There will be wicked men on the earth during the thousand years. The heathen nations who will not come up to worship will be visited with the judgments of God, and must eventually be destroyed from the earth.” *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.268.

<sup>49</sup> **Characterizing Jehovah’s millennial reign is universal harmony among men and beasts** (Isaiah 11:6-9; 32:16-20; 54:13-14). While injustices and oppression were the norm when Babylon ruled (Isaiah 14:5-6; 47:6; 51:21-23), **now all predatory activity has an end**. With the departure of those who “forget my holy mountain” (vv 11-12), Jehovah’s people who return to Zion inherit it and enjoy everlasting peace (Isaiah 27:13; 57:13b; 60:17-18). In Jehovah’s holy mountain the righteous of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people find a true and permanent home (Isaiah 11:11-12; 56:7-8; 60:3-11). [Isaiahexplained](#), accessed 9.11.2022. Bruce R. McConkie interprets Isaiah 65.25 to mean that everyone will be vegetarians in that day, “Implicit in this pronouncement is the fact that man and all forms of life will be vegetarians in the coming day; the eating of meat will cease, because, for one thing,

3. The Temple and Sacrifice (Isa. 66.1-4).
  - a. "What is this house that you build for me?" (Isa. 66.1).<sup>50</sup> These verses may reflect the tension between two groups of Jews returning from the Exile in 520 BC: The visionaries and the powerful priests of the temple cult.
  - b. The prophet is calling out the hypocrisy of the people. Isaiah 66.3 presents four lines in which a legitimate action is paired with an illegitimate one (kill an ox – slew a man, sacrifice a lamb – cut a dog's neck, offer an oblation – offer swine's blood, burn incense – bless an idol). The prophet condemns people who participate in legitimate or even sacred actions but also commit sins, whether by acting immorally toward other human beings or by practicing idolatrous rites in addition to worshipping the true God. The prophet fights not only outright apostasy but also pious hypocrisy. (See also Isaiah 1.10-20; 29.13; 58.1-14).
4. Deliverance and Destruction (Isa. 66.5-18).
  - a. "Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake... they shall be ashamed!" (Isa. 66.5).<sup>51</sup>

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death as we know it ceases." Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man*, Deseret Book, 1982, p. 658.

<sup>50</sup> Paul Hanson sees this reflecting a great division between the visionary men of Isaiah's day and those in power who want to build the temple. He explains, "Already the visionaries have opposed the cultic practices and attitudes of the majority party, calling them defiled and aimed at inaugurating the eschaton on the basis of human initiative, and have posited an eschatological view of salvation inaugurated and achieved by Yahweh alone. In 520, the year of our present oracle, the battle comes to a head as the temple building gets under way. In the face of a claim that completion of the priestly temple program would be followed by the eschaton, the visionaries cry out in protest, reiterating their sentences of judgment against a defiled cult and restating their vision of Yahweh's act on their behalf. Within the context of this struggle in the year 520 the protest in Isaiah 66:1-2 finds its elucidation: in a grandeur reminiscent of Second Isaiah, Yahweh points to the heavens and the earth which are his throne and footstool and then asks, "**What is this house which you (plural) would build for me?**" Then in contrast to those who propose to build the temple, Yahweh singles out the one whom he accepts, "the humble, who is broken in spirit and trembles at my word," which, as 66:5 indicates, refers to the oppressed minority faithful to the prophetic tradition. **In no uncertain terms, the God of this oracle rejects the temple of the hierocratic party, bringing to a climax a century-long struggle between two concepts of salvation, that nurtured by a visionary tradition which placed sole emphasis on the great imminent acts of Yahweh and that promulgated by the temple priests which emphasized cultic orthopraxy.** For in marshaling this visionary perspective in their resistance to the temple program, the disciples of Second Isaiah are reiterating a position dating back to the Davidic monarchy when Nathan, after having been commissioned by Yahweh, goes to the king and asks: "Would you build me a house to dwell in?" [2 Sam 7:5b]). His query is echoed in the query of Yahweh in Isaiah 66.1: "What is this house which you would build for me?" It seems possible that the allusion to the Nathan incident is intended as corroboration from ancient tradition for the prophetic group's attack. Between those two prophetic words against the temple from the tenth and the sixth centuries lies a long history of tension between prophet and temple cult." Hanson, *The Dawn of the Apocalyptic*, p. 178-179.

<sup>51</sup> Paul Hanson works to show that this is an example of two groups vying for control in Jerusalem when the Jews return to rebuild the temple in 520 BC. God is honoring the visionary men of the First Temple, but those in control of the temple represent a different theological perspective, one that will be reflecting in the popular, temple-controlled Judaism of Jesus' day. Hanson sees this internal struggle of these two groups, but admits that he doesn't have irrefutable proof. He says, "For the internal structure common to these several oracles betrays a common communal origin, **a common struggle between the hierocratic party and the visionary group for control of the restoration cult.** Naturally **we are not able to advance irrefutable proof** that each of these oracles belongs to the same community struggle as it unfolded over a period of some thirty years. However, when the cumulative evidence from prosodic analysis, form criticism, and the study of the development of ideas all points to a common

- b. “That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations” (Isa. 66.11).<sup>52</sup>
- 5. The Lord recognizes those who return to Him (Isa. 66.18-21).
  - a. “I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory, and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles” (Isa. 66.19)<sup>53</sup>
- 6. Reward and Punishment (Isa. 66.22-24).
  - a. After worshipping (Isa. 66.22-23), the righteous will pass by the Valley of Gei Hinnom, immediately south of the Temple Mount, and there they will see the burning corpses of those who rebelled against God. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 916.<sup>54</sup>

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matrix, sobriety recommends that both speculative hypothesis from tenuous outside evidence and atomistic interpretation which isolates the passage from all historical context be eschewed in favor of the contextual-typological approach which we have chosen.” Paul Hanson, [The Dawn of the Apocalyptic The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology](#), Fortress Press, 1984, p. 172. It is for this reason that Hanson dates Isaiah 66 “with confidence” to about 520 BC, something that should not trouble Latter-day Saints, as this chapter is not contained in the Book of Mormon. I (Mike Day) am open to a ‘middle-road’ approach to the “problem” of Second and Trito Isaiah. By this I mean that I am open to Isaiah being completed into its current 66 chapter format after Nephi leaves Jerusalem, as none of 3<sup>rd</sup> Isaiah is contained on the Plates of Brass and only a few selected passages of “Second Isaiah” are on the Plates of Brass. A middle approach would allow room for scholarship as well as faith, and admit that perhaps Nephi had access to less than all 66 chapters, while also allowing for parts of “Second Isaiah” to exist prior to the exile. More work needs to be done by Latter-day Saint scholars exploring these ideas.

<sup>52</sup> The metaphor of nursing infants builds on the birth imagery of the previous passage. The received text reads *shod*, “spoils,” but this is certainly a scribal bowdlerization of *shad*, “breast,” just as in Isaiah 60.16. Alter, p. 2706/5277 electronic version.

<sup>53</sup> I will . . . send from them survivors to the nations. In Second Isaiah, there is a vision of acceptance of proselytes. This prophecy at the end goes a step further, imagining that those among the nations who have finally seen God’s glory wish to be sent out to the far reaches of the known earth, **as far as North Africa (Lud) and Greece (Javan) to bring the good news of YHWH’s universal dominion**. This comes close to the project of a mission of conversion in Acts and in the Pauline Epistles. Alter, 2706 electronic version, emphasis added.

<sup>54</sup> **When Jehovah removes the veil of mortality in the millennial age** (Isaiah 25:7-8), **people’s vision extends to things beyond their current experience**. The spirits of persons in the Perdition category will be visible in the Pit of Dissolution: “Tophet has been prepared of old, [a hearth] indeed, made ready for rulers; broad and deep is its fire pit and ample its pyre; Jehovah’s breath burns within it like a river of lava” (Isaiah 30:33; cf. 14:15; 38:18). Their de-creation—as the “worms” and “fire” consume those who die this second death (Revelation 21:8)—remains a solemn warning to all humanity. Gileadi, [Isaiahexplained](#), Accessed 9.11.2022. **And they shall go out and see/the corpses of the people who rebelled against Me**. This gloating—a sense implied by the verb “to see” followed in the Hebrew, as here, by the preposition that means “in”—over the corpses of God’s enemies, whether they are Judahite paganizers or those of the nations who resisted God’s word, **is hardly an edifying note on which to conclude the Book of Isaiah**, as various commentators have noted. When these verses were taken up as the prophetic reading or *haftarah* for the sabbath that falls on the new moon, verse 23 was repeated after verse 24, in part to stress the conjunction of sabbath and new moon but probably also to conclude the reading on an upbeat. Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary*.