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## Isaiah 29 and the Book of Mormon

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# Isaiah 29 and the Book of Mormon

Robert A. Cloward

*Nephi likened Isaiah 29 to his own circumstances, formulating  
an original prophecy that gave the old scripture new  
significance and saw fulfillment in the Book of Mormon.*



Even among Latter-day Saints for whom most of Isaiah's writings remain obscure, phrases from chapter 29 are familiar. This is the chapter of "a marvellous work and a wonder"<sup>1</sup> (verse 14); "a book that is sealed," delivered to "one that is learned" (verse 11); and of a voice "out of the dust" (verse 4). It speaks of people who "draw near [to the Lord] with their mouth . . . but have removed their heart far from [him]" (verse 13); and of those who "seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord"; or who "make a man an offender for a word" (verse 21). In the doctrinal and devotional writings of this dispensation, no chapter of Isaiah is more often cited.<sup>2</sup> The words of Isaiah 29 speak truths about the marvelous work of God, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and the foreknowledge by ancient prophets of the transcendent role of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Before examining how and where this chapter appears in the Book of Mormon, it is vital to study it in its biblical context; then it will become clear how Book of Mormon writers applied Isaiah's words to truths they understood about themselves. This process, which Nephi and Jacob call "likening," was in part their justification for using Isaiah's words (see 1 Nephi 19:23–24; 22:8; 2 Nephi 6:5; 11:2, 8). Not only did they delight in "likening" scripture to themselves, they urged this process upon later readers as well. Their "likening" of Isaiah 29 provides a most interesting illustration of how this is done.

## What Does Isaiah 29 Say?

After a series of burdens and woes on foreign nations in chapters 13–23, Isaiah speaks of the fate and future of Israel and Judah in chapters 24–35. Throughout these chapters, he prophesies the dire consequences of evil on the house of Israel in the short term and eventual blessings for the repentant in the long term.<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 29 includes both short-term woe and eventual rejoicing.

### Isaiah 29:1–2

The chapter begins with a woe pronounced by the Lord upon “Ariel.” References in verse 1 to the killing of sacrifices, and especially to “the city where David dwelt,” make it clear that the Hebrew word “Ariel” refers to Jerusalem. Its fourfold repetition in verses 1–2 indicates that Jerusalem is the prophetic focus of Isaiah 29.

Various etymologies have been suggested for “Ariel.”<sup>4</sup> The best clue to its meaning is its context in Ezekiel 43:15–16, where the King James Version (KJV) translates it “altar.” A heavenly messenger is speaking of the hearth of Jerusalem’s temple altar—the top portion where the actual burning of sacrifices took place. This explains the ominous climax of the woe in Isaiah 29:2: “It shall be unto me as Ariel.” “It” refers to the city, and the meaning of the verse, punning on “Ariel,” is “I [the Lord] will distress Ariel [Jerusalem], . . . and it [the city] shall be unto me as Ariel [an altar hearth or place of hot burning].”<sup>5</sup> The Lord thus announces that the holy city of Jerusalem, whose people have profaned their temple and polluted their sacrifices, will herself be burned as his own sacrifice.<sup>6</sup>

### Isaiah 29:3–6

Following the pronouncement of the woe, the Lord reveals how his impending sacrifice will be made. Addressing

Jerusalem directly, he declares in verse 3, "I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee." Siege was the dreaded horror of ancient warfare. It usually ended in slaughter and conflagration. Verses 5 and 7 refer to the multitude of nations that will accomplish Jerusalem's devastation, but the Lord himself takes responsibility for the siege. It is his retribution. He will send thunder, earthquake, great noise, storm, tempest, and finally, "the flame of devouring fire" (verse 6).

The result: Jerusalem and her people shall be "brought down" (verse 4). Isaiah uses this verb for figurative expressions of humiliation or abasement, like the felling of haughty trees (see Isaiah 10:33), the flattening of mountains (see Isaiah 40:4), or the humbling of men (see Isaiah 2:9; 5:15). In Isaiah 25:12, speaking to proud Moab, he says, "And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust." Similar language in Isaiah 26:5 describes the Lord's ability to humble "the lofty city." In Isaiah 29, the Lord announces that Jerusalem will suffer this fate. The city will be besieged, burned, and brought down to the ground.

Jerusalem's voice shall cease to be the voice of the living. Rather, it shall "speak out of the ground"; it "shall be low out of the dust" (verse 4). "Be low" translates the Hebrew verb meaning "to prostrate or bow oneself." Dust was the source of Adam's body (see Genesis 2:7; 3:19), and the dust often associated with abject humiliation in life is the same to which mankind bows in death.<sup>7</sup>

The image of a voice from the dead is first found in Genesis 4:10, where Abel's spilled blood cries from the ground to the Lord for vengeance. In Mosaic ritual, the blood of sacrifices was poured on the ground and covered

with dust (see Leviticus 17:10–14; Deuteronomy 15:23; compare Ezekiel 24:7). When death was unwarranted, as in the case of Abel, the blood of the victim continued to speak for him, as if he were still alive.

The voice from Jerusalem's dust is said by the Lord to be "as of one that hath a familiar spirit" (verse 4). The string of English words "one that hath a familiar spirit" translates just one Hebrew word, which means "ghost."<sup>8</sup> Hence, Jerusalem will whisper out of the dust with a ghostly voice. Isaiah chastises those who advocate communicating with familiar spirits and heeding wizards who "peep" (the same Hebrew verb as "whisper"), saying, "should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?" (Isaiah 8:19; see also 2 Chronicles 33:6; Isaiah 19:3.)

Not just Jerusalem is to be brought to dust. Continuing the theme of destruction, the Lord applies the figure of "dust" and a parallel "chaff" in Isaiah 29:5 to Jerusalem's "strangers" and "terrible ones"—her enemies.<sup>9</sup> Their fate follows.

### **Isaiah 29:7–8**

Though the destruction of Jerusalem will be a fierce and deadly reality, the Lord promises that in a turn of events, the multitude of nations that fight against Ariel or mount Zion will become "as a dream of a night vision" (verse 7). For Isaiah, "Zion" is another epithet for Jerusalem,<sup>10</sup> whose inhabitants verse 10 identifies as the dreamers. Their former terrible enemies will vanish as if they had been a dream. The very existence of these enemies is compared to dream-state food and drink, which neither fill the stomach nor quench the thirst (verse 8).

### **Isaiah 29:9–12**

The Lord again addresses Jerusalem's people in verse 9. Jerusalem staggers and cries out as if drunk, but not from

wine or strong drink.<sup>11</sup> Isaiah adds, “For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep” (verse 10). Indeed, the Lord has closed their eyes. This is the fourth of a series of poetic images of Jerusalem’s downfall that began in verse 4. First the city was besieged and brought down to the dust, its voice like a ghost from the dead; then its inhabitants dreamed; then they staggered in a drunken-like stupor; and now they are in a “deep sleep.” Not only has the Lord closed the eyes of the people, but he has also “covered” their prophets, their rulers, and their seers (verse 10).

Verse 11 follows directly from verse 10. In a fifth and culminating image, Isaiah states that Jerusalem’s vision<sup>12</sup> is as obscured as the words of a sealed book. The Lord has made “the vision of all” so inaccessible that it is like words that cannot be read. English “learned” and “not learned” in the KJV (verses 11–12) translate a Hebrew idiom meaning literally “to know a book” or “to know writing,” that is, “to be able to read.” If the words are presented to one who can read, he will demur because the book is sealed; if to one who cannot read, he will say he cannot. The obscured vision or sealed book represents the eliminated words of Jerusalem’s “covered” prophets, rulers, and seers.

### **Isaiah 29:13–16**

In a sweeping statement of intent, and announcing the reason for his retribution upon Jerusalem, the Lord declares that “this people,” the Jews, are hypocrites, and their worship is a fraud. His people have removed their hearts far from him (verse 13). Their wisdom and understanding will perish (verse 14). Hypocrites indeed, they have sought to hide their counsels from him. They have done their works in the dark (verse 15). The Lord labels their hypocrisy a “turning of things upside down.”<sup>13</sup> It will be as worthless “as the potter’s clay” (verse 16). In a biting pair of rhetorical

questions in verse 16, he, the Potter, renounces their puerile declarations of independence. It is his turn to work. The works of mercy and righteousness that they did not do, he will now do, and in such a unique and powerful way that his will be “a marvellous work and a wonder” (verse 14).

### **Isaiah 29:17–24**

In verse 17, a third rhetorical question heralds the Lord’s marvelous work: “Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?” “Lebanon” is not literal here. The Lord is speaking about pride. He too will turn things upside down, as if Lebanon, renowned for tall cedar forests, were to become a fruit orchard, or a fruit orchard were to become a forest. With this metaphor of reversal, the Lord declares his intent to reshape and transform all of the misshapen foregoing scene.

In an impressive list, rippling open like a fan, the Lord describes his work:

1. “In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book” (verse 18). In verses 11–12, the vision of all was like a sealed book, unread. Eventually, divine words will be heard by the deaf!
2. “The eyes of the blind shall see . . . out of darkness” (verse 18). Previous images of eyes closed in death, in dreaming, in sleep, and in drunken stupor are now replaced by seeing eyes, even the seeing eyes of the blind!
3. “The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord.”
4. “And the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel” (verse 19). Certainly the time of destruction

and distress will be forgotten in the day of the Lord's blessings.

5. "The terrible one is brought to nought" (verse 20). In verse 5, "terrible ones" referred to Jerusalem's enemies. Now they will be nothing.<sup>14</sup>
6. "And the scorner is consumed" (verse 20). Isaiah 28:14 spoke of the scornful rulers of Jerusalem; no longer will they rule.<sup>15</sup>
7. "All that watch for iniquity are cut off" (verse 20).<sup>16</sup>
8. "The house of Jacob . . . shall not now be ashamed,"
9. "Neither shall his face now wax pale" (verse 22). Israel will no longer be afraid.
10. "When [Jacob] seeth his children, the work of [the Lord's] hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify [the Lord's] name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel" (verse 23).
11. "They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding" (verse 24). In verse 14, the understanding of the prudent was hid. Now, in his turning of things upside down, the One whose understanding they foolishly denied will mercifully grant understanding to them.
12. "And they that murmured shall learn doctrine" (verse 24).

Isaiah 29 is not a long chapter. Its message is clear: The Lord announces the destruction of Jerusalem and the death of her people as his response to pride and hypocritical worship. Then he foretells the miraculous era when he will revive and restore Jerusalem and the house of Jacob, calling this restoration "a marvellous work and a wonder."



## Fulfillment of the Prophecies of Isaiah 29

Identifying the fulfillment of Isaiah 29 begins with the image of Jerusalem under siege. In 701 B.C., late in Isaiah's lifetime, Jerusalem was besieged by the Assyrian armies of Sennacherib (see Isaiah 36–37; compare 2 Kings 18:13–19:37), but this attack did not end in fiery destruction. The Lord acknowledged the pleadings and humble repentance of King Hezekiah by plaguing the Assyrians so that 185,000 of them died in one night (see Isaiah 37:36; 2 Kings 19:35).

About a century after Isaiah's death, the city was again besieged, this time by Babylonian armies in 597 B.C. Although they did not destroy the city, the Babylonians carried many of the leading Jews away into captivity and set King Zedekiah on Jerusalem's throne (see 2 Kings 24:10–17). Zedekiah "did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord" and also "rebelled against the king of Babylon" (2 Kings 24:19–20). Second Kings 25 reports the Babylonian response in words strikingly reminiscent of Isaiah's prophecy:

And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, *against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about. And the city was besieged. . . .* And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: *And he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.* (2 Kings 25:1–2a, 8–10; emphasis added)<sup>17</sup>

This time, no righteousness stood between Judah and her “terrible ones.” Judah’s inhabitants had ignored the warnings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lehi, Zephaniah, and “many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed” (1 Nephi 1:4). In 587 B.C. the fiery destruction became a fact. The Lord gave his people into the hand of the Babylonians, and Jerusalem became as an altar hearth unto him, or “as Ariel.”<sup>18</sup>

Given the direct correlation of Isaiah’s prophecy in 29:1–4, 6 with the 587 B.C. destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon, his prophecy in 29:5, 7–8 can be matched with the vanquishing of Babylon’s power by the Medes and Persians (see Isaiah 13–14, 21, 41, 43–48). In 536 B.C., Cyrus the Great of Persia allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple (see Isaiah 44:28; 45:1; compare 2 Chronicles 36:22–23; Ezra 1, 3), but evidently this was not the restoration Isaiah prophesied in 29:14, 17–24. The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Malachi indicate that, for the most part, Jerusalem’s prophets, rulers, and seers were still “covered” during the sixth through the fourth centuries B.C., and “the vision of all” was still like the words of a sealed book.

Scripture reveals that the same sleep of apostasy prevailed in New Testament times. During his Galilean ministry, Jesus Christ declared to certain scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem that Isaiah had prophesied *their* hypocrisy in Isaiah 29:13 (see Matthew 15:7–9; Mark 7:6–7). Similarly, Paul, speaking of God’s people Israel in the first century A.D., used the phrase “the spirit of slumber” (compare “deep sleep” in Isaiah 29:10) to observe that Isaiah had prophesied *their* lack of vision, as compared to that of the gentiles (see Romans 11:8).<sup>19</sup> These passages imply that despite their return from Babylon, the Jews of the New Testament era were still in the state of blindness and stupor that Isaiah had foreseen.

During the last week of his life, the Savior prophesied a new destruction of Jerusalem (see Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:12–21). In A.D. 70, Roman armies besieged the city and burned it, eerily replaying the previous destruction by the Babylonians. In A.D. 135, Jerusalem was again ravaged by the Romans. This time, Jews were banished from the city's precincts on penalty of death.<sup>20</sup> In their turn, true to Isaiah's prophecy that "all the nations that fight against Ariel" would be "like small dust" and "as chaff that passeth away" (Isaiah 29:5, 8), the Romans eventually declined and became "as a dream of a night vision" (Isaiah 29:7).

Recognizing the fulfillment of the woe and destruction verses of Isaiah 29 is straightforward. What about the remainder of the chapter? Isaiah identifies Jerusalem and her people as the prophetic focus of chapter 29. A comparison of their latter-day condition with the twelve aspects of the Lord's "marvellous work and a wonder," listed above for Isaiah 29:17–24, reveals that most of these prophecies have not yet been fulfilled. The Lord promised a reversal of Jerusalem's physical and spiritual destruction, but today the hearts of Jerusalem's people are still far removed from him. Their fear toward him is still taught by the precept of men. He has not yet made them the work of his hands so that they "sanctify the Holy One of Jacob" and "fear the God of Israel," the Great Jehovah, Jesus Christ (Isaiah 29:23).

Isaiah lamented in Isaiah 29:11 that the vision of Jerusalem's people had become *as* the words of a sealed book. No specific book is mentioned. Isaiah's concern was the lost vision of his people, not books. His expression is symbolic—a simile, one of many similes and metaphors in Isaiah 29. Isaiah's symbolic sealed book is still sealed today. Jerusalem's vision has not yet been opened. Her people that erred in spirit have not yet come to understanding, and

they that murmured have not yet learned doctrine (see verse 24).

It was Nephi who made Isaiah's symbolic book into a literal book. Nephi likened the symbolic book in Isaiah's simile to a literal, specific record the Lord had commanded him to write on gold plates. Nephi also foretold the latter-day role of his record in restoring vision, understanding, and doctrine to the house of Israel. To understand how this would occur, readers must turn to the Book of Mormon.

### **Isaiah 29 in the Book of Mormon**

In 2 Nephi 12–24, Nephi copied from the brass plates onto his small plates, apparently verbatim, all of Isaiah 2–14. He introduced this section by saying, “And now I, Nephi, write more of the words of Isaiah, for my soul delighteth in his words” (2 Nephi 11:2) and, “I write some of the words of Isaiah, that whoso of my people shall see these words may lift up their hearts and rejoice for all men” (2 Nephi 11:8). Nephi also announced that he intended to liken these words to his people. Quoting and likening are not the same. He intended first to quote, then to liken.

After the lengthy quotation, the text indicates a clear break at 2 Nephi 25:1. There, Nephi begins his “own prophecy,”<sup>21</sup> so designated in 2 Nephi 25:7 and comprising six chapters, 2 Nephi 25–30. Nephi's “own prophecy” is easily definable in the text.<sup>22</sup> It has a distinct introduction in 2 Nephi 25:1–8 and a distinct end statement in 2 Nephi 30:18. The body of the prophecy contains two major sections. The first, in 2 Nephi 25:9–20, speaks of the Lord's dealings with the Jews, and the second, in 2 Nephi 25:21–30:18, broadens into his dealings with the Nephites, Lamanites, and gentiles, and the role of the Book of Mormon in the last days.

## 2 Nephi 25:1–8

In verse 1, Nephi reannounces his intent (compare 2 Nephi 11:8). He will now “speak somewhat concerning the words which [he has] written, which have been spoken by the mouth of Isaiah.” Referring to his quotation of Isaiah 2–14, he says Isaiah’s words are “hard for many of [his] people to understand” (verse 1). Nephi’s “own prophecy” will be “according to [his] plainness; in the which [he knows] that no man can err” (verse 7).

In his “own prophecy,” Nephi uses many words and themes from the quoted chapters. He also uses words and themes from other chapters of Isaiah, including words that sound like Isaiah 29 in 2 Nephi 25:17; 26:3, 6, 15–18; 27:1–7, 15, 17, 19, 25–35; 28:9, 14, 16, 20, 31; 29:1. He attributes none of these to Isaiah. In fact, he repeatedly claims the words as his own or attributes them to the Lord.<sup>23</sup>

Nephi announces his intention to “confine the words unto mine own people” (verses 7–8; compare with “my beloved brethren” in 2 Nephi 26:23), but his audience also includes those who suppose Isaiah to be of no worth (verse 8). Nephi’s “own prophecy” they will understand, and it will be of worth to them.

## 2 Nephi 25:9–20

These twelve verses comprise the first section of Nephi’s prophecy. This section is Nephi’s commentary on Isaiah 29. In his introduction, he makes an important clarification about it: “I have made mention unto my children concerning the judgments of God, which hath come to pass among the Jews, unto my children, according to all that which Isaiah hath spoken, and I do not write them” (verse 6). In other words, he does not intend to quote Isaiah’s prophecies about the Jews’ destruction, as he earlier quoted Isaiah

2–14. He does give their meaning, however, in the form of commentary. These twelve verses are Nephi’s recital of what Isaiah 29 means.

Nephi begins in verses 9–10 with the Jews’ iniquity, their rejection of the prophets, and their destruction and captivity at the hand of the Babylonians. In verse 11, he prophesies the Jews’ return to Jerusalem, but he makes clear that this is not their ultimate restoration. In verses 12–13, he notes that they will continue to have wars and rumors of wars, and when the Only Begotten of the Father comes among them, they will reject and crucify him. Then, according to verses 14–15, Jerusalem will be destroyed again, and the Jews will be scattered among all nations. Nephi adds a woe on those who fight against the people of the Messiah’s church, and he observes that Babylon will be destroyed. So far, with a few added details, this section recognizably follows Isaiah 29.

In verse 16, Nephi begins a transition from destruction to the promises of restoration. He states that the scattering and scourging of the Jews will continue from generation to generation until they are “persuaded to believe in Christ, the Son of God, and the atonement.” This corresponds to the promise in Isaiah 29:23. Nephi continues that when the Jews “worship the Father in [Christ’s] name, with pure hearts and clean hands, and look not forward any more for another Messiah, then, at that time, the day will come that it must needs be expedient that they should believe these things” (verse 16). In verse 17, he summarizes: “Wherefore, he [the Lord] will proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men” (compare Isaiah 29:14). Nephi’s “marvelous work and a wonder” has to do with “these things” in verse 16, but his explanation of this does not appear until the second section of his prophecy.

The second section (2 Nephi 25:21–30:18), particularly in chapters 26 and 27, contains the majority of the words that sound like those of Isaiah 29, but Nephi changes their meaning. The connection between Isaiah 29 and Jerusalem’s destruction could not have been clearer in anyone’s mind than in Nephi’s,<sup>24</sup> but when Nephi wrote the words, “after the Lord God shall have camped against them round about, and shall have laid siege against them with a mount, and raised forts against them” (2 Nephi 26:15), “them” did not refer to the people of Jerusalem. The word “Ariel,” a key to the meaning of Isaiah’s chapter, is not found in the Book of Mormon. Nephi is not quoting from Isaiah 29 here. He is using words like those of Isaiah 29, but reinterpreting them and claiming them as his own. This is the process he calls “likening.”<sup>25</sup>

To summarize, Isaiah 29 is not found in the Book of Mormon where readers usually look, that is, in 2 Nephi 27. The intent and meaning of Isaiah 29 are found in 2 Nephi 25:9–20. This first section of Nephi’s “own prophecy” deals with Jerusalem and the Jews, just as Isaiah 29 does. Usually when looking for Isaiah in the Book of Mormon, readers look for Isaiah’s actual words. Many words of Isaiah 29 do appear in the second section of Nephi’s “own prophecy,” but Nephi has given the words new meaning. He is no longer speaking of Jerusalem. He has likened the words of Isaiah 29 to his own people and to the gentiles.<sup>26</sup>

### **Nephi’s Likening of the Words of Isaiah 29**

Much longer than the first, the second section (2 Nephi 25:21–30:18) of Nephi’s “own prophecy” covers several topics that converge on a single theme: the role of the Book of Mormon in bringing people to Christ. This theme was introduced in 2 Nephi 25:16–18, where Nephi states that the Lord will bring “his [the Lord’s] words” to the Jews when

they are ready for “these things.” It is clear from 2 Nephi 25:21 that “these things” are Nephi’s writings.

In verses 16–17, Nephi associates his writings with the marvelous work and wonder, but he also links them with a prophecy that “the Lord will set his hand again the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state” (verse 17). This wording is from Isaiah 11:11, but Nephi knows a significant difference. Second Nephi 25:17 says simply “his people,” meaning the Jews. Isaiah 11:11 says “*the remnant of his people*” (emphasis added), among whom Nephi includes his own seed.<sup>27</sup> Nephi has begun to liken. The Book of Mormon, he prophesies, will play a role in restoring the Jews a second time from their lost and fallen state. But more broadly, he is about to reveal how it will restore his own people as well.

### **2 Nephi 25:21–26:11, with Words Likened from Isaiah 29:4, 6**

Nephi begins the second section of his “own prophecy” by shifting away from the theme of Jerusalem and the Jews. He cites in verse 21 a promise made to the patriarch Joseph (his own ancestor) that Joseph’s seed “should never perish as long as the earth should stand.” He further prophesies that his own writings will be preserved and handed down among the Nephites from generation to generation. Nephi knows that his people will be stiffnecked, and he urges them not to deny the Christ, of whom his words testify (see 2 Nephi 25:28–29). Nevertheless, he prophesies that they will cast out the prophets and the saints and will stone and slay them, and “the cry of the blood of the saints shall ascend up to God from the ground against them” (2 Nephi 26:3). Consequently, the wicked among Nephi’s people will be visited with all manner of destruction—with “thunderings, and lightnings, and earthquakes, and all manner of destructions, for the fire of the anger of the Lord shall be



kindled against them, and they shall be as stubble” (2 Nephi 26:6). Although their Messiah will visit them and bring healing and peace to the righteous (see 2 Nephi 26:1–9), not many generations will pass after the Messiah’s coming before Nephi’s people will choose darkness and reap destruction (see 2 Nephi 26:10).

This sequence sounds familiar: rejection of the Lord, overwhelming wickedness and prophet-killing, blood crying from the ground, the Lord’s retributive response, the Messiah’s coming, the returning of wickedness, further destruction. Although the time frame for the destruction is different, the sequence applies to the Nephites just as it applied to the Jews in Isaiah 29; therefore, Nephi likens Isaiah’s prophecy to his people.

### **2 Nephi 26:12–13**

Nephi next introduces a new people into his likening—the gentiles. Intent on his overarching theme, he asserts in verse 12, “It must needs be that the Gentiles be convinced also that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God.”

### **2 Nephi 26:14–15a, with Words Likened from Isaiah 29:3**

Verse 14 signals a new time frame—the last days, when the Lord will bring forth Nephi’s writings. In verse 15, Nephi foresees his people’s clash with the gentiles. The context is very different from that of Isaiah 29:1–3. Nephi likens the destruction of Jerusalem to the destruction of his people. The fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy began in 587 B.C., while Nephi’s prophecy would not be fulfilled until after the gentiles have discovered the Western Hemisphere.<sup>28</sup>

Nephi’s likening is a symbolic extension of the destruction of Jerusalem. Nephi had come from Jerusalem, and his

people are the descendants of Jerusalem's people. Jerusalem's downfall can be likened to God's punishment of any Israelites anywhere. Nephi sees Jerusalem's destruction, and later restoration, as a type of the whole covenant of the Lord with Abraham, which, though abandoned for a time by the house of Israel, will be restored to them in the latter days (see also 1 Nephi 15:17–18).<sup>29</sup>

**2 Nephi 26:15b–17, with Words Likened from Isaiah 29:4, 11**

Isaiah spoke of the total destruction of Jerusalem, even to the dust of death, so that if her people speak at all, they whisper like ghosts. Nephi knows that the dead of his own people will actually speak from the ground—their writings will be preserved and revealed. He says of the “familiar spirit,” or ghost, of the Nephites who wrote before their destruction, “The Lord God will give unto him power, that he may whisper concerning them, even as it were out of the ground” (verse 16). Nephi's likening makes real Isaiah's symbol of the speaking dead. He uses Isaiah's words, converts them to a literal application, and adds more according to his own prophetic understanding.

**2 Nephi 26:18–19, with Words Likened from Isaiah 29:5**

Isaiah spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem's “terrible ones,” the Babylonians (and later the Romans). In verse 18, Nephi prophesies that the “terrible ones” of the destroyed of his own people will likewise be “as chaff that passeth away.” Nephi likens in this case because he knows the wicked gentiles will be vulnerable to the curse cited by Lehi on those who are brought to the Americas but who reject the Lord and abound in iniquity (see 2 Nephi 1:5–7; compare Ether 2:7–12).

## 2 Nephi 26:20–33

Nephi elaborates on the pride of the gentiles in the last days. He contrasts their wickedness with the concept of “Zion.” In Isaiah 29:8, “mount Zion” meant Jerusalem. Here, Nephi uses “Zion” symbolically for the principles of righteousness (verses 29–33).<sup>30</sup>

The description of the gentiles’ rejection of Zion in verses 20–33 includes no long passages from Isaiah 29, but it does employ shared themes throughout. In verse 20, putting down the power of God bespeaks Isaiah 29:16, and preaching with their own wisdom recalls Isaiah 29:10–14. The secret combinations spoken of in verses 22–24 hark back to Isaiah 29:15. Casting people out of the synagogue, found in verse 26, reminds the reader of “turn[ing] aside the just” in Isaiah 29:21. The whole message of verses 24 through 33—free salvation based on the merciful love of God—is the essence of the redemption theme in Isaiah 29:22–24.

Nephi also weaves in themes from Isaiah 2–14, as he announced he would do in 2 Nephi 25:1. Verse 20 of 2 Nephi 26 alludes to Isaiah’s contrast of a “sanctuary” versus “a stone of stumbling” from Isaiah 8:14, or for Nephi, churches of righteousness versus the gentile churches of pride.<sup>31</sup> Verse 20 also integrates the phrase “grind upon the face of the poor,” adapted from Isaiah 3:15. Verse 23 speaks of darkness, where “the Lord God worketh not,” reminiscent of Isaiah 9:2. From a passage of Isaiah not found in chapters 2–14, Nephi uses Isaiah’s words but attributes them to the Lord in 2 Nephi 26:25 (compare Isaiah 55:1).

## 2 Nephi 27:1–5, with Words Likened from Isaiah 29:6–10

In Isaiah 29:6–10, the prophet included multiple images of the downfall of the Jews. Nephi takes a different turn in verse 1, declaring that in the last days—the days of the

gentiles—“all the nations of the Gentiles and also the Jews, both those who shall come upon this land and those who shall be upon other lands, yea, even upon all the lands of the earth, behold, they will be drunken with iniquity and all manner of abominations” (compare Isaiah 29:9). He warns that they all will be visited with the same kinds of destruction Isaiah prophesied for the Jews.

Here, Nephi likens in a broad sense, knowing that wickedness always leads to destruction. He also knows, from the writings of Zenos, that the day will come when the whole earth will be engulfed in wickedness and apostasy, but the enemies of Zion will eventually be destroyed (see Jacob 5:30, 39, 65–66, 69, 73–75).

### **2 Nephi 27:6–35, with Words Likened from Isaiah 29:11–24**

Very different from the wording of Isaiah 29:11, 2 Nephi 27:6 announces: “The Lord God shall bring forth unto you the words of a book.” Isaiah’s sealed book represented the obscurity of his people’s vision, a negative image. In Nephi’s prophecy, his partly sealed and partly unsealed book is always positive. From the first mention of it, Nephi’s book is the future hope for his people. Isaiah’s book is symbolic. Nephi’s book is literal, real, tangible. Unlike those of Isaiah’s, the words of Nephi’s book, at least those of the unsealed part, are read; then the book itself is sealed up again until the day when the words of the sealed part will also be read, by the power of Christ, from the housetops (verse 11).

In chapter 27, Nephi adds a wealth of prophetic detail not found in Isaiah—about events that will occur thousands of years after his time. Nephi’s book will not be shown to the world because “the Lord God hath said that the words of the faithful should speak as if it were from the dead” (verse 13), but it will be shown to three witnesses and then

to a few others, as seemeth the Lord good (see verses 12–14). Part of the book will not be sealed (see verse 15), and the Lord God will deliver the words of this part first to a man who is not learned (see verses 9 and 15), rather than men delivering the words first to a learned man, as in Isaiah 29. Unlike Isaiah 29, the man who is not learned will deliver the words to a second man, a go-between, who will show them to a learned man (see verse 15). The learned man will demand that the book, not just its words, be brought to him “because of the glory of the world and to get gain” (verses 15–16). After the request of the learned man is denied, the Lord will command the man who is not learned to read the words (see verses 19–20), unlike Isaiah 29, where neither one reads the words.

Verses 25–35 are rich with words that sound like Isaiah 29:13–24, but “this people” in verses 25–26 refers to the gentiles, while in Isaiah 29:13–14 the same phrase referred to the Jews. Nephi prophesies that the Book of Mormon will come forth through the gentiles to accomplish the Lord’s marvelous work. Nephi likens Isaiah’s words to his own people in this section because he rejoices in the Lord’s promise that his word will be preserved and brought forth through the gentiles to his descendants. Eventually, the same book will have a significant role in restoring the Jews to the knowledge of God and in restoring them a second time to the land of their inheritance.

Isaiah may also have known of what Nephi saw—the whispering of Nephite words out of the dust. Isaiah’s vision of God’s future dealings with the whole house of Israel was unparalleled. Isaiah may have been aware of the Lord’s prophecy to Enoch: “And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten” (Moses 7:62; com-

pare D&C 128:19). He was probably aware of the prophecy of the patriarch Joseph, which Lehi quoted from the brass plates, which said that Joseph's seed would speak to their descendants out of the dust: "And they shall cry from the dust; yea, even repentance unto their brethren, even after many generations have gone by them" (2 Nephi 3:19–20; compare 2 Nephi 25:21). But Isaiah did not elaborate about the Nephites and their book. Nephi did.

Isaiah may have known the specifics about the three witnesses and other selected witnesses to the Book of Mormon, about the sealed and unsealed portions of that particular book, and about the three men—one who was not learned, one who was learned, and one go-between. It was Nephi, however, not Isaiah, who wrote about these things.

Once Nephi had likened the words of Isaiah 29 to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the Nephites accepted this likening as the standard interpretation of Isaiah's words for them, and they passed that interpretation down from generation to generation. At the end of his contribution to the Book of Mormon, Nephi wrote: "I speak unto you as the voice of one crying from the dust: Farewell until that great day shall come" (2 Nephi 33:13). In the final portions of the Book of Mormon, Moroni referred twice at length to Nephi's version of Isaiah 29:

Search the prophecies of Isaiah. . . . [T]hose saints who have gone before me, who have possessed this land, shall cry, yea, even from the dust will they cry unto the Lord; and as the Lord liveth he will remember the covenant which he hath made with them . . . ; for out of the earth shall they come, . . . and it shall come even as if one should speak from the dead. And it shall come in a day when the blood of saints shall cry unto the Lord, . . . in a day when there shall be heard of fires, and tempests, and vapors of smoke in foreign lands; And there shall also be

heard of wars, rumors of wars, and earthquakes in divers places. (Mormon 8:23, 26–27, 29–30)

I exhort you to remember these things; . . . ye shall see me at the bar of God; and the Lord God will say unto you: Did I not declare my words unto you, which were written by this man, like as one crying from the dead, yea, even as one speaking out of the dust? (Moroni 10:27)

Moroni later introduced Nephi's likened version of Isaiah 29 to the latter-day dispensation when he appeared in 1823 to the Prophet Joseph Smith (see details below).

## **2 Nephi 28:1–2**

Nephi bears testimony that the Spirit has guided his words thus far (see verse 1). He reminds his readers that the Book of Mormon will be of great worth unto the children of men and especially unto his seed, “a remnant of the house of Israel” (verse 2) in the days of their antagonists, the gentiles.

## **2 Nephi 28:3–32, with Words Likened from Isaiah 29:11, 13, 15, 21**

Using fewer of Isaiah's words than he did in 2 Nephi 27, Nephi nevertheless continues to liken in chapter 28. Isaiah spoke of those among the Jews whose heart was far from the Lord (see Isaiah 29:13); of those who “seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark” (Isaiah 29:15); of those whose fear toward the Lord “is taught by the precept of men” (Isaiah 29:13); and of those who “turn aside the just for a thing of nought” (Isaiah 29:21). Each of these concepts finds place in Nephi's warnings to the gentile churches of the last days (see, respectively, 2 Nephi 28:9, 20; 28:9; 28:14, 31; and 28:16). These

churches deny the Holy One of Israel (see verse 5) and, by teaching with their learning, deny also the Holy Ghost (see verse 4), but “the blood of the saints shall cry from the ground against them” (verse 10; compare Isaiah 29:4).<sup>32</sup>

The Lord’s response to the cry from the ground is his judgment upon the wicked, a theme that recalls Isaiah 29:18–21. Nephi likens a phrase from Isaiah 29:18, “in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book,” to the role of the Book of Mormon in the final judgment of all peoples. Earlier, in 2 Nephi 25:3, he had announced that his “own prophecy” would speak of judgments to those who would receive his writings—2 Nephi 25:18 states that the Book of Mormon will judge the Jews; 2 Nephi 25:21–22 says the same of the Nephites and Lamanites; 2 Nephi 28:23 reveals that the gentiles will be judged according to their works, but 2 Nephi 29:11 clarifies that the works of all men are written in “the books,” books that are “sealed” for the time of judgment. As in Isaiah’s sealed-book image, ignored prophetic words are closed up by the Lord, to be opened someday as a testimony against the heedless.

As he did in 2 Nephi 26:20–33, in chapter 28 Nephi weaves together allusions to and phraseology from many chapters in Isaiah. Some are taken from Isaiah 2–14. He returns to the theme of pride in 2 Nephi 28:9, 12–15 (compare Isaiah 2:11–17) and the theme of the proud harming the poor in verse 13 (compare Isaiah 3:15). In verse 17, Nephi uses the Book of Mormon version of Isaiah 2:9 (see 2 Nephi 12:9) to portray the theme of the people’s unwillingness to repent. The fall of the “abominable” in verses 18–23 is likened from Isaiah 14:19 (see the context in Isaiah 14:4–23), including the concept of being brought “down to hell” in verse 21, from Isaiah 14:15. The eight “wo” statements of verses 16–32, with the lengthening out of the Lord’s arm in



verse 32, are patterned after the five woes of Isaiah 5:8–23, with the Lord’s hand stretched forth in Isaiah 5:25.

From elsewhere in Isaiah, Nephi takes “eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die” from Isaiah 22:13 (compare 2 Nephi 28:7–8); “I am the Lord’s” from Isaiah 44:5 (compare 2 Nephi 28:3); and “precept upon precept; line upon line” from Isaiah 28:10, 13 (compare 2 Nephi 28:30). Nephi’s “own prophecy” displays his total mastery of Isaiah’s concepts and doctrines. No one with cursory knowledge could have written this. Because he knows them intimately, Nephi can integrate Isaiah’s complex teachings into his likening in such a way that they become “plain.”

### **2 Nephi 29:1, with Words Likened from Isaiah 29:14**

Before continuing with the gentiles, Nephi repeats what he earlier said in 2 Nephi 25:17. He juxtaposes in a single verse the themes of a marvelous work and a wonder, from Isaiah 29:14, and the Lord’s setting his hand the second time, from Isaiah 11:11.<sup>33</sup> There is intentional structure here. In effect, 2 Nephi 25:17 and 29:1 could be called “thematic link verses” between the messages of Isaiah chapter 29 and Isaiah chapter 11. Nephi’s “own prophecy” begins with Isaiah 29 themes in 2 Nephi 25:9–20 and ends with Isaiah 11 themes in 2 Nephi 30:9, 11–15. The two thematic link verses are in between.

Themes from Isaiah 11 abound in the second section of Nephi’s “own prophecy.” The remnant of the house of Israel (see Isaiah 11:11, 16) has already been mentioned, but Isaiah’s root of Jesse in the last days (see Isaiah 11:10), commonly identified as Joseph Smith,<sup>34</sup> is also foreseen by Nephi in 2 Nephi 27:9, 12, 15, 19 as the man who is not learned, to whom the Lord will deliver the Book of Mormon in the last days. In 2 Nephi 27:20–35, Nephi even quotes a long instruction that the Lord will later give to Joseph

Smith. Moreover, Nephi's whole emphasis on the gentiles in 2 Nephi 26–30, which is not found in Isaiah 29, draws on Isaiah 11:10, as does his prophecy of the restoration of the gospel, which Isaiah calls "an ensign" to which the gentiles seek (compare Isaiah 10:12, where "nations" is translated from the same Hebrew word as "gentiles" in Isaiah 11:10).<sup>35</sup> Isaiah 11:11 locates part of the remnant on "the islands of the sea," to which Nephi refers in 2 Nephi 29:7 and with which the Nephites identified themselves (see 2 Nephi 10:20–21). Isaiah 11:12 speaks of the assembling of the outcasts of Israel and the gathering of the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.<sup>36</sup> Isaiah 11:13 prophesies the reconciliation of Ephraim and Judah.<sup>37</sup> Isaiah 11:3–5 speaks of the day of judgment. Isaiah 11:6–9 foretells the millennium, when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." All of these themes appear in the second section of Nephi's "own prophecy." Even as he uses words from Isaiah 29, Nephi is developing themes from Isaiah 11. Of the many Isaiah chapters incorporated into Nephi's likening, none is more pervasive than Isaiah 11. The second section of Nephi's "own prophecy" could be called Nephi's explanation of the fulfillment of Isaiah 11.

**2 Nephi 29:2–14, with Words Likened from Isaiah 29:5, 7, 22–23**

Nephi speaks specifically of the wicked gentiles' rejection of his words: "A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible" (verse 3). Then he recapitulates that the house of Israel will be gathered to the lands of their possessions and that the Lord's word will also be gathered in one. The Lord will show those who fight against his word and his people that "[He is] God, and that [He] covenanted with Abraham that [He] would remember his

seed forever” (verse 14). In 2 Nephi 29, themes from Isaiah 29:5, 7, and 22–23 have again been broadened in concept and application.

### **2 Nephi 30:1–18, with Words Likened from Isaiah 29:13**

Nephi concludes the second section of his prophecy with the reassurance that “as many of the Gentiles as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord; and as many of the Jews as will not repent shall be cast off” (verse 2). The Lord’s judgment criterion is the grand theme of the whole second section—those who “repent and believe in his Son, who is the Holy One of Israel” will be part of his covenant (verse 2). Nephi prophesies that many gentiles will believe the words of his book and will carry them to his seed, restoring them to the knowledge of Christ and his gospel and convincing them that they are “descendants of the Jews,” so that they will rejoice and become a delightful people (verses 3–6). The Jews, too, will be gathered, and those among them who believe in Christ will also become delightful (see verse 7).

In verse 8, the climax of Nephi’s “own prophecy,” again recalling Isaiah 11:11, Nephi prophesies, “And it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall commence his work among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, to bring about the restoration of his people upon the earth.” Thereafter, in verses 9–15, Nephi adds many words like those of Isaiah 11:4–9, culminating his linkage of Isaiah chapters 29 and 11. As Isaiah did in Isaiah 11:4, Nephi speaks of righteous judgment upon the poor and the meek in 2 Nephi 30:9. Isaiah 29:19 also singled out the poor and the meek in the judgment. Nephi declares that the Lord “shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked” (verse 9). This language echoes

Isaiah 29:20, where “the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed.” As Isaiah did in Isaiah 11:6–9, Nephi announces the glorious millennial day, when “Satan shall have power over the hearts of the children of men no more, for a long time” (2 Nephi 30:18). This is the promised return of the errant hearts that were far removed from the Lord (compare Isaiah 29:13).

Thus, Isaiah’s “marvellous work and a wonder” becomes fully Nephi’s. Isaiah prophesied that the Lord would turn aright all that the wicked Jews of Isaiah’s day had turned upside down. In his “own prophecy,” Nephi reveals how, in the last days, the Lord will bring the gentiles, then the descendants of the Nephites and Lamanites, and finally the Jews to their Messiah and Redeemer, all through the instrumentality of the Book of Mormon. What a marvelous prophecy it is!

### **Fulfillment of Nephi’s Likening of Isaiah 29 in 2 Nephi 25–30**

The words of Isaiah 29 figure in the events of the restoration from Joseph Smith’s earliest visionary experience. He asked the Father and the Son in the spring of 1820 which church he should join. The reply—

I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.” (JS–H 1:19)

The churches of Joseph Smith’s inquiry were the gentile churches of America, whose pride and lack of the Spirit are

detailed in 2 Nephi 26:20–27:5, who deny the power of God, as 2 Nephi 28:5 says, and whose hearts, lips, and doctrines are described by Nephi in 2 Nephi 27:25. They were not the Jews, whose hearts, lips, and doctrines are described in Isaiah 29:13 and in the aforementioned New Testament citations. Therefore, the Savior, in speaking to the Prophet Joseph, was not quoting Isaiah in the traditional sense. He was using a likening similar to Nephi's. In fact, the Savior's words were the very instruction Nephi had prophesied that the Lord would give to the man who was not learned (see 2 Nephi 27:24–25).

Words like those of Isaiah 29 also figure in Joseph Smith's second visionary experience. When Moroni appeared to him repeatedly on the night of 21–22 September 1823, Moroni cited many scriptures about coming events. The account of this vision in Joseph Smith—History 1:27–47 says that after Moroni announced the purpose of his visit and the location and significance of the gold plates, "he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament" (JS–H 1:36). The account then specifies Malachi 3–4, Isaiah 11, Acts 3:22–23, and Joel 2:28–32. Moroni said Isaiah 11 "was about to be fulfilled" (JS–H 1:40), and "the fulness of the Gentiles was soon to come in" (JS–H 1:41).

Joseph Smith said Moroni "quoted many other passages of scripture, and offered many explanations which cannot be mentioned here" (JS–H 1:41). The "many other passages" included citations with words like those in Isaiah 29, as evidenced by another account of Moroni's visit,<sup>38</sup> which appears in the fourth of Oliver Cowdery's series of eight letters to William W. Phelps, published in the *Messenger and Advocate* beginning in October 1834.<sup>39</sup> Oliver Cowdery says Moroni declared that he had come "that the scriptures might be fulfilled."<sup>40</sup> To which scriptures did he refer? Moroni first cited 1 Corinthians 1:27–29, concerning the

foolish things of the world confounding the mighty, but then he continued:

Therefore, says the Lord, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder; the wisdom of their wise shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid; for according to his covenant which he made with his ancient saints, his people, the house of Israel must come to a knowledge of the gospel, and own that Messiah whom their fathers rejected, and with them the fulness of the gentiles be gathered in to rejoice in one fold under one Shepherd.<sup>41</sup>

The Isaiah 29:14 words are forthright, and the promise to the house of Israel agrees with Nephi's understanding of Isaiah 29 in the first section of his "own prophecy" (see especially 2 Nephi 25:17–18). But Moroni's concern for the gentiles is a focus of the second section of Nephi's "own prophecy" and of Isaiah 11:10, 12, not of Isaiah 29.

Oliver Cowdery says Moroni went on to announce that the prophecies could not occur until "certain preparatory things are accomplished," among them the choosing of Joseph Smith by the Lord "as an instrument in his hand to bring to light that which shall perform his act, his strange act, and bring to pass a marvelous work and a wonder."<sup>42</sup> The angel again used words like Isaiah 29 but themes from Isaiah 11.

Moroni continued:

Wherever the sound shall go it shall cause the ears of men to tingle, and wherever it shall be proclaimed, the pure in heart shall rejoice, while those who draw near to God with their mouths, and honor him with their lips, while their hearts are far from him, will seek its overthrow, and the destruction of those by whose hands it is carried.<sup>43</sup>

This Isaiah 29:13 allusion would have recalled to Joseph Smith's mind the prophesied instruction he received in the First Vision.

After giving "a general account of the promises made to the fathers" and "a history of the aborig[i]nes of this country," saying they were literal descendants of Abraham, Moroni told Joseph Smith he would have the privilege, if obedient, to translate the history of these people by means of the Urim and Thummim.

"Yet," said he [Moroni], "the scripture must be fulfilled before it [the history] is translated, which says that the words of a book, which were sealed, were presented to the learned; for thus has God determined to leave men without excuse, and show to the meek that his arm is <not> short[e]ned that it cannot save."

A part of the book was sealed, and was not to be opened yet. The sealed part, said he, contains the same revelation which was given to John upon the isle of Patmos, and when the people of the Lord are prepared, and found worthy, then it will be unfolded unto them.<sup>44</sup>

The question arises whether "the scripture" to which Moroni refers is from Isaiah 29 or 2 Nephi 27. Oliver Cowdery's account is subject to the weaknesses of non-eyewitness sources, but it should be examined at face value. Note that he says Moroni gave "a history of the aborig[i]nes of this country," introducing the Book of Mormon. However, Moroni also said that sealed words were presented to the learned. Neither Isaiah nor Nephi said that.<sup>45</sup> Like Moroni, both sources mention the meek (see Isaiah 29:19 and 2 Nephi 27:30), but only the Book of Mormon differentiates sealed and unsealed *parts* of a book (see 2 Nephi 27:7–11, 14–22). The Book of Mormon, not the book of Isaiah, speaks specifically about the coming forth of the words of John, establishing that after the contents of the unsealed part go

forth, the sealed part will be read from the housetops (see 2 Nephi 27:11; Ether 4:16–17). Thus, if only the Bible were available, as was the case when Joseph Smith heard Moroni's words, the conclusion would be that "the scripture" to be fulfilled was from Isaiah 29. This was, in fact, the Prophet Joseph's conclusion. But since the Book of Mormon is now translated, the details of Moroni's statements show that the source of "the scripture" was much more likely 2 Nephi 27.

Oliver Cowdery next says Moroni gave specific instructions, indicating that even the bringing forth of the unsealed portion of the book was to be done with an eye single to the glory of God. Centuries earlier, as a mortal, Moroni had prophesied this detail (see Mormon 8:15).

In his eighth letter, Oliver Cowdery comments on Moroni's meeting with Joseph Smith at the Hill Cumorah on 22 September 1823. When Joseph attempted to get the plates for their monetary value, Oliver Cowdery notes that the Prophet was shown a vision of the power of Satan. Moroni had also foreseen this (see Mormon 8:14). The angel sternly warned Joseph Smith, using words from Isaiah 29:11–14 but with a Book of Mormon interpretation:

These things are sacred, and must be kept so, for the promise of the Lord concerning them must be fulfilled. No man can obtain them if his heart is impure, because they contain that which is sacred; and besides, should they be entrusted in unholy hands the knowledge could not come to the world, because they cannot be interpreted by the learning of this generation; consequently, they would be considered of no worth, only as precious metal. Therefore, remember, that they are to be translated by the gift and power of God. By them will the Lord work a great and a marvelous work: the wisdom of the wise shall become as nought, and the understanding of the



prudent shall be hid, and because the power of God shall be displayed those who profess to know the truth but walk in deceit, shall tremble with anger; but with signs and with wonders, with gifts and with healings, with the manifestations of the power of God, and with the Holy Ghost, shall the hearts of the faithful be comforted.<sup>46</sup>

And further:

Your name shall be known among the nations, for the work which the Lord will perform by your hands shall cause the righteous to rejoice and the wicked to rage: with the one it shall be had in honor, and with the other in reproach; yet, with these it shall be a terror because of the great and marvelous work which shall follow the coming forth of this fulness of the gospel.<sup>47</sup>

Like the Savior in the First Vision, Moroni was not quoting Isaiah in the traditional sense. He too was using a likening similar to Nephi's.

Moroni attached Nephi's "marvelous work and a wonder" to the call of Joseph Smith and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.<sup>48</sup> It was to have an even wider application. In February 1829, the Lord prefaced a revelation to Joseph Smith for his father, who was visiting him in Harmony, Pennsylvania: "Now behold, a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men" (D&C 4:1). Although he certainly had reference to the Book of Mormon, which appeared a year later, in 1830, the content of the revelation suggests that the Lord was using the phrase "a marvelous work" for the whole of his work in the latter-day restoration.<sup>49</sup>

The framework for a comprehensive fulfillment of 2 Nephi 25–30 is the latter days, yet the fulfillment of these prophecies is often attributed to Isaiah 29. Earlier, it was noted that there was no published Book of Mormon at the time of Joseph Smith's early visions, and there exists no

record that the Savior or Moroni attributed their words in these visions to Isaiah or to Nephi.<sup>50</sup> Naturally, Joseph Smith compared what he learned in the visions to the Bible<sup>51</sup> and attributed the Isaiah-like words to Isaiah. This has been the common attribution in the Church ever since.

Nephi's likening in 2 Nephi 27:9–10 and 15–20 is the source of the prophecy of the Martin Harris interview with Professor Charles Anthon of Columbia College. It is interesting to consider when and how the fulfillment of this prophecy was first attributed to Isaiah 29:11–12. When Moroni said "the scripture must be fulfilled before it [the history] is translated," he was probably speaking of "the scripture" in 2 Nephi 27. Relevant details about the learned man and the go-between and about the book and the words, often assumed biblical, are only found in Nephi's "own prophecy." A review of historical events and sources can shed further light on why the Isaiah attribution was made.<sup>52</sup>

From the moment Joseph Smith removed the gold plates from the Hill Cumorah in the early morning hours of 22 September 1827, he was hounded by persecutors in his Manchester, New York, environs. It was clear that the translation of the record could not progress unless he moved away from the meddling. With a gift of fifty dollars from Martin Harris, Joseph left for Harmony, Pennsylvania, the home of his wife's parents, where he had met Emma while boarding there in October 1825 during his employment with Josiah Stowell.<sup>53</sup> Despite some difficulties,<sup>54</sup> Joseph Smith began the process of translation in Harmony. Emma and her brother Reuben served as scribes,<sup>55</sup> and Joseph translated a few pages during the months of December 1827 through February 1828.<sup>56</sup>

In February 1828, Martin Harris arrived in Harmony. In *History of the Church*, the account of Harris's trip from Harmony to New York is brief, and based for the most part on

his report upon his return. After recounting Professor Anthon's assessment, which included an affidavit that "they [the Book of Mormon characters] were true characters, and that the translation of such of them as had been translated was also correct,"<sup>57</sup> Martin Harris said Professor Anthon asked how and where he had obtained them. When Harris told him, the following exchange ensued:

He then said to me, "Let me see that certificate." I accordingly took it out of my pocket and gave it to him, when he took it and tore it to pieces, saying, that there was no such thing now as ministering of angels, and that if I would bring the plates to him, he would translate them. I informed him that part of the plates were sealed, and that I was forbidden to bring them. He replied, "I cannot read a sealed book."<sup>58</sup>

Additional details can be found in the Prophet's 1832 history, from the first six pages of his "Letterbook 1":

[O]n the 22d day of Sept of this same year I obtained the plates and ~~the~~ in December following we mooved to Susquehana by the assistance of a man by the name of Martin Haris who became convinced of the visions and gave me fifty Dollars to bear my expences and because of his faith and this rightheous deed the Lord appeared unto him in a vision and shewed unto him his marvilous work which he was about to do and <he> imediately came to Su[s]quehanna and said the Lord had shown him that he must go to new York City with some of the c[h]aracters so we proceeded to cobby some of them and he took his Journy to the Eastern Cittys and to the Learned <saying> read this I pray thee and the learned said I cannot but if he would bring the plates they would read it but the Lord had fo<r>bid it and he returned to me and gave them to <me to> translate and I said ~~I said~~ [I] cannot for I am not learned but the Lord had prepared

~~spectticke~~ spectacles for to read the Book therefore I commenced translating the characters and thus the Prop[h]icy of Is[*ia*]ah was fulfilled which is written in the 29 chapter concerning the book[.]<sup>59</sup>

This account states that Martin Harris was told by the Lord in vision to take characters from the plates to the East.<sup>60</sup> Although the Prophet's description of Martin Harris's vision uses the phrase "his marvilous work which he was about to do," it is not stated that Martin knew when he journeyed to the East in February 1828 that the result would be a fulfillment of scripture. It may be assumed that Joseph Smith either knew or suspected that the journey had relevance to what Moroni had told him. If Joseph Smith had not by this time told Martin Harris the details of his advance tutoring by Moroni, Harris's vision would constitute an interesting orchestration of events by the Lord to accomplish the fulfillment of Nephi's prophecy.

In later recollections, Martin Harris stated that he did *not* know that he was fulfilling scriptural prophecy. There are at least two reports of this. One is from William Pilkington, who was thirteen years old when he boarded with the Martin Harris Jr. family in Cache County, Utah, for a year and a half beginning in October 1874. Martin Harris Sr., the Book of Mormon witness, was living with his son Martin at the time and died at Clarkston the year after William Pilkington's arrival. Pilkington later wrote in a sworn affidavit:

He told me it was he who took some of the copied characters, along with the interpretation "which Joseph Smith had made through the gift and power of God" to Professor Charles Anthon . . . and thus the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, which will be found in the 29th chapter and 11 verse, but I did not know that I was fulfilling it at the time.<sup>61</sup>

Anthony Metcalf, who also interviewed Martin Harris in Utah, made a similar statement, with interesting additions. He wrote:

Harris told me about his trip to New York and what Prof. Anthon told him. He (Anthon) said the characters were translated correctly. After Harris had told the professor how the plates had been found, the professor said that it was his opinion that he (Harris) was being duped by sharpers, and advised Harris to take care of himself. I asked him if he knew what the prophet Isaiah had said about that event. He said, "No," but that Joseph Smith had shown that chapter to him after his return.<sup>62</sup>

Whether or not the outcome of Martin Harris's journey was uncertain to Joseph Smith at its outset, it was apparently clear to the Prophet after Martin returned. The entry in Joseph Smith's 1832 history, cited above, implies that for the Prophet, a remarkable connection with Isaiah became obvious in Professor Anthon's words. Within a few years, the Isaiah connection was being spread as a proselytizing testimonial for the new scripture, and the Harris/Anthon interview became a matter of importance in recitals of the facts of the restoration.<sup>63</sup>

It is not surprising that Isaiah rather than Nephi continues to be cited even though 2 Nephi 27 is the source of the prophecy of the interview. It has been important for many Church members to find evidences for the Book of Mormon's truthfulness in the Bible. Furthermore, after Martin Harris returned from the East, convinced of the authenticity of Joseph Smith's work, and Joseph showed "that chapter [Isaiah 29]" to him,<sup>64</sup> more than a year passed before the Book of Mormon translation revealed Nephi's prophecy.<sup>65</sup> Joseph Smith must have been fascinated to encounter the details of the Harris/Anthon interview in written form on the ancient plates.

## **JST Isaiah 29 and Nephi's "Own Prophecy"**

After the Book of Mormon was published and the Church organized, Joseph Smith commenced the new translation of the Bible now called the Joseph Smith Translation (JST). The date he began this work is not certain, but it could have been as early as the summer of 1830.<sup>66</sup> The manuscripts of the JST provide eloquent witness of the importance of Nephi's likening and of its relationship to Isaiah's original vision.

The Prophet did not translate the Bible in the order of the chapters as they appear in the King James Version. Although he started with Genesis, he shifted to the New Testament before returning to finish the Old Testament. His work on Isaiah was part of the final section of the translation, which consisted of Genesis 24 through Malachi, and the changes were recorded in Sidney Rigdon's handwriting on the manuscript now referred to as Old Testament Manuscript 3 (OT 3).<sup>67</sup> Although it covered most of the Old Testament, this section was completed in just five months, from 2 February to 2 July 1833.<sup>68</sup> It was "rather hurriedly done and did not receive as thorough a review as did the New Testament."<sup>69</sup> For the most part, the notation system developed to speed up the New Testament translation was used—words or phrases were written, accompanied by chapter and verse numbers to indicate where they were to be inserted into the biblical text.<sup>70</sup> Relatively few verses were written out in their entirety.

A notable exception is Isaiah 29. OT 3 includes nearly five pages of changes for this chapter. In the 1828 KJV that Joseph Smith used for the translation,<sup>71</sup> every verse in chapter 29 except verses 1 and 7 is marked for correction.<sup>72</sup> Isaiah 29 is twice as long in the JST as in the KJV.

Why did the Prophet single out Isaiah 29 for such comprehensive revision? Two intriguing discoveries about the source of the changes provide the answer. First, Joseph Smith used the Book of Mormon for his translation of Isaiah 29.<sup>73</sup> Second, the switch from the normal source, the 1828 KJV, to the Book of Mormon does not occur at the beginning of the chapter, but after verse 7. From verse 8 to the end of Isaiah 29, Joseph Smith replaced Isaiah's prophecy with Nephi's.<sup>74</sup>

Before discussing the implications of these discoveries, the evidence for them must be examined, based on descriptions of the original sources—Joseph Smith's KJV (1828); the first edition of the Book of Mormon (1830); and the OT 3 manuscript's Isaiah section (1833).<sup>75</sup>

### **JST Isaiah 29:1–7**

The following observations tie the first seven verses of JST Isaiah 29 to the KJV:

1. Changes for the early verses are based on KJV wording, and internal error corrections in OT 3 move its text in the direction of the KJV. This is evident in the verses written out in their entirety (verses 2–4) and the verses only partially written out (verses 1, 5, 6). For example, the opening words of verse 1 are written, “Wo to Ariel, to Ar”; then they are lined through, suggesting that the KJV text of that verse was considered even though the verse was left unchanged. The KJV pun in verse 2, “it shall be unto me as Ariel” (Jerusalem shall be like an altar hearth), is changed into an introduction for verse 3: “thus hath the Lord said unto me, it shall be unto Ariel, [here, a verse number “3”] That I the Lord will camp against her round about.” Verse 3 in the manuscript begins with “That I”; then it has a “w,” overwritten as “t” to continue “the Lord will camp against”; then a dark ink

smudge (a form of erasure), overwritten as “her” to continue “her round about.” The two overwrites correct the JST in the direction of the KJV verse “And I will camp against thee”—the “w” corresponds to KJV “will,” changed to “the,” and the smudge erasure corresponds to KJV “thee” (illegible in the smudge), changed to “her.”

2. KJV verse numbers accompany the Prophet’s changes for verses 1–6, showing that he and Sidney Rigdon were correlating JST verse content to the KJV. (Since no change is indicated for verse 7, no number is written for that verse.)

3. Changes for the early verses in OT 3 do not correspond to the 1830 Book of Mormon. For example, both OT 3 and the KJV read “as of one that hath a familiar spirit” for Isaiah 29:4 (emphasis added), whereas 2 Nephi 26:16 reads “as one that hath a familiar spirit.” The JST “of” was probably dictated from the KJV.

4. Topically, the early verses coincide with the KJV, while Nephi’s prophecy is different. For example, the city Ariel is the focus of verses 2–4 in the JST, just as in the KJV. The JST does not mention the focus of 2 Nephi 26:14—Nephi’s seed and the seed of his brethren. Also absent in the JST are the elaborations in 2 Nephi 26:15–18—the prophecy that “the words of the righteous shall be written, and the prayers of the faithful shall be heard, and all those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not be forgotten”; the prophecy that the Lord will give power to the familiar spirit of the destroyed Nephites and Lamanites to whisper concerning their seed; and the warning about the sins and iniquities of the days of the gentiles (see 2 Nephi 26:19–27:1).

5. Verses 5 and 6 in OT 3 use the word and phrase insertion notation mentioned above. For verse 5, only the word “her” is written, and for verse 6, only the phrase “for they shall.” Joseph Smith’s Bible indicates insertion points for these words in the KJV text with an inked circle around



“thy” in verse 5 and a line through “Thou shalt” in verse 6.<sup>76</sup> The absence of verse 7 in OT 3 implies that this verse was to remain unchanged from the KJV. Thus, the JST maintains the KJV concept of the fate of “the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel [the city],” not the Book of Mormon concept of the fate of “all the nations that fight against Zion [the principles of righteousness].”

### **JST Isaiah 29:8–32**

The following observations tie JST Isaiah 29:8–32 to the Book of Mormon:

1. Beginning with verse 8, the entire text for the remainder of Isaiah 29 is written out in OT 3. The content corresponds to 2 Nephi 27:3b–35 in the 1830 Book of Mormon. For example, JST Isaiah 29:8 is equivalent to 2 Nephi 27:3b in all but two words—both of them “who” replacing “which.” This verse differs radically from KJV Isaiah 29:8. Verses 9 and 10 are exactly the same in OT 3 and 2 Nephi 27:4–5, and together they are quite different from the KJV. Where KJV Isaiah 29:11–12 would be expected, OT 3 includes all the content of 2 Nephi 27:6–24, not found in the KJV (see JST Isaiah 29:11–25). This is the clearest evidence for the source switch. Included in the JST are all of the unique Book of Mormon details about the man who is learned and the man who is not learned, the part that is sealed and the part that is not sealed, and the three witnesses plus a few others who will view the book. All the remainder of JST Isaiah 29, corresponding to KJV Isaiah 29:13–24, continues to parallel the content of the Book of Mormon, not the KJV (see JST Isaiah 29:26–32).

2. KJV verse numbers do not continue to the end of chapter 29 in OT 3. After the number for verse 8, the remainder of the text is interrupted only by “9 verse” written before

the content for verse 9, “10” written before the content for verse 10, and a long dash after each of these two verses. A number 11 is placed near the beginning of the content for that verse, but the number looks like an afterthought—small, between the levels of two horizontal text lines, and uncharacteristically to the left in the margin. Three subsequent pages of replacement content are not labeled with verse numbers.

3. Idiosyncrasies in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon also appear in OT 3. For example, in 2 Nephi 27:9, the grammatical error “they which” in “he shall deliver the words of the book, which are the words of they which have slumbered in the dust; and he shall deliver these words unto another” also appears in OT 3. “They” has been lined through and corrected between lines to “those”.<sup>77</sup> In 2 Nephi 27:11, the grammatical error “hath” in “all things shall be revealed unto the children of men which ever hath been among the children of men” also appears in OT 3. The “th” in “hath” has been lined through and corrected interlineally to “ve”.<sup>78</sup>

4. Several internal error corrections in OT 3 move its text in the direction of the 1830 Book of Mormon. For example, at JST Isaiah 29:24, “the” is written above the line with a caret between “read” and “words” to correct “when thou hast read words which I have commanded thee” in the direction of 2 Nephi 27:21. For the same verse, “Touch not things” is corrected in the direction of the Book of Mormon’s “Touch not the things” by the smudge erasure of “things,” the placement of “the” beneath the smudge, then the rewriting of “things.” At JST Isaiah 29:29, “thus” is lined through to correct “thus saith the Lord of hosts” in the direction of 2 Nephi 27:28 “saith the Lord of Hosts.”

5. Sidney Rigdon’s handwriting, though usually very legible, is in these verses noticeably neater and more consistent

in letter formation, word spacing, and slant. This could result from straight copying of an existing text.

There is no question that Joseph Smith—and the Lord—took the JST very seriously.<sup>79</sup> Those living in the latter days are blessed to have it. In pondering the Prophet's changes, JST readers are left to draw their own conclusions on why each was made, since he left no systematic commentary to explain them. With that in mind, the significance of Joseph Smith's treatment of Isaiah 29 should be assessed.

First, the Prophet confirmed that KJV Isaiah 29 and 2 Nephi 26–27 are different and independent texts. He consciously used part of each. If he had understood the Book of Mormon to preserve a more complete and correct text of Isaiah 29 from the brass plates, he would likely have substituted for chapter 29 *all* of the Book of Mormon version.<sup>80</sup>

Second, Joseph Smith confirmed the focus that has been discussed here for Isaiah's original prophecy. He retained all the references to Jerusalem in the first seven verses. If he had understood Isaiah to prophesy that the Nephites and Lamanites would be brought down and would "speak out of the ground" and "whisper out of the dust," he would likely have copied 2 Nephi 26:15–16 into the JST. Not only did he not do that, but, by changing eight instances of first person "thee," "thy," and "thou" in verses 3–5 to "her" and "she," he *strengthened* the identification of Jerusalem as the one brought down.

Third, the JST confirms that Isaiah prophesied the destruction of all nations that fight against Ariel. Joseph Smith left that concept in verses 5 and 7. Had he understood Isaiah to prophesy that "all the nations of the Gentiles and also the Jews, both those who shall come upon this land [the Western Hemisphere] and those who shall be upon other lands, yea, even upon all the lands of the earth" would be "drunken with iniquity and all manner of abominations,"

he could readily have copied 2 Nephi 27:1 into the JST. He could have changed the city "Ariel" to the abstract concept of Zion in verse 7 as Nephi did. Not only did he not do that, he *strengthened* the reference to Jerusalem's strangers and terrible ones (her enemies) by changing "thou" to "they" in verse 6 to make that verse refer to the enemies, as do verses 5 and 7, rather than to Jerusalem, as in the KJV.

Fourth, Joseph Smith chose to give the inspired translation of two-thirds of Isaiah 29 an application more apropos to the latter days.<sup>81</sup> By copying Nephi's words into the JST from verse 8 to the end, Joseph Smith likened Isaiah 29 to his own dispensation.<sup>82</sup>

### **Seeing the Scriptures As One**

So we come full circle. Isaiah foresaw both the fate and the future restoration of Jerusalem and her people. Nephi, who was also of Israel, likened Isaiah's words to his people in a new prophecy, showing how Nephite writings would advance the Lord's work in the latter days. Book of Mormon prophets perpetuated Nephi's likening among their people until the time of Moroni. Then, the Savior and the resurrected Moroni taught the significance of Nephi's likening for this dispensation to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith, in turn, replaced Isaiah's words in his inspired translation of the Bible with his new understanding of how they had been likened to him and to the Lord's latter-day work.

In this process, Isaiah's sealed book was reinterpreted as Nephi's gold plates and as Joseph Smith's Book of Mormon. Isaiah's dust of death was reinterpreted as Nephi's source of renewed life and as Joseph Smith's Cumorah. Isaiah's "learned" and "not learned," both denied access to spiritual vision, became Nephi's future translator, Joseph the seer, and his foil, Professor Charles Anthon. This is the

process of likening. Prophets do it readily. Students of the scriptures are urged to liken as well. When readers in any era are moved upon by the Holy Ghost, there is no impropriety in their giving old scripture new meaning for their lives. As readers do this, the Lord can reveal new truths to them and enlarge their understanding.

By 1833, Joseph Smith, Nephi, and Isaiah all rejoiced that the Book of Mormon was beginning to cause the eyes of the spiritually blind to “see out of obscurity and out of darkness” (2 Nephi 27:29). Eventually, as the Lord said, “They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine” (2 Nephi 27:35). Latter-day readers have begun to see and will yet know the fulness of the Lord’s marvelous work and a wonder—the ultimate fulfillment of both Isaiah’s and Nephi’s prophecies.

## Notes

1. All direct quotes in this study preserve variant or erroneous spellings from original sources, e.g., “marvellous.”

2. Monte S. Nyman makes this observation in his *Great Are the Words of Isaiah* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 101, apparently based on data in his Appendix B, 259–81. The same observation is supported in the published sermons and writings of Joseph Smith by data found in the appendix of Grant Underwood, “Joseph Smith’s Use of the Old Testament,” in *The Old Testament and the Latter-day Saints*, Sperry Symposium 1986 (Orem, Utah: Randall, 1986), 399–411.

3. Isaiah 24 opens the series of chapters with the foreboding announcement that the Lord will empty the earth and make it waste. He will turn it upside down and scatter abroad its inhabitants. Chapters 28–33 contain a series of six woe pronouncements: 28:1; 29:1, 15; 30:1; 31:1; and 33:1. Shorter messages of hope are interspersed, and the culmination of the section is a promise of millennial rejoicing in chapter 35.

4. Suggested translations for "Ariel" include "lion (or lioness) of God," "altar of God," or even "Arishalem" (an early equivalent of Jerusalem?), with the name of the deity Shalem replaced by El. It could also derive from a corrupt spelling of "harel," meaning "mountain of El." Any thorough Bible dictionary or critical commentary on Isaiah will detail the meanderings for this term. See for example Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: The English Text, with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1965–72), 2:304–5; R. B. Y. Scott, "The Book of Isaiah," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1951–57), 5:323; W. Harold Mare, "Ariel," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:377–8.

5. Some suggest that the Hebrew text be read with "it" feminine, clarifying the antecedent relationship, although the wordplay does not require this. See *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977), footnote *sub loc.*

6. Isaiah speaks of the Lord's contempt for Jerusalem's polluted and hypocritical sacrifices in Isaiah 1:11–15; 43:22–24; 65:3; and 66:3–4. The image of the Lord making the city into his own symbolic sacrifice is repeated in Isaiah 34:5–8.

7. The book of Job, in which the man Job is brought down low, nigh unto death, illustrates biblical usage of the poetic figures of ground and dust. Job and his friends associate dust with death in Job 7:21; 10:9; 17:16; 20:11; 21:26; 34:15; 40:13, and dust or the ground with mourning and oppression in Job 1:20; 2:12–13; 7:5; 16:13, 15; 30:19; 42:6. Isaiah applies these figures to Jerusalem in Isaiah 2:10; 3:26; 5:24; 34:9; and 51:23. The theme of the dead or oppressed rising or speaking from the dust is repeated in Isaiah 26:19; 51:17, compare verse 23; 52:1–15.

8. The same Hebrew word can also refer to a wizard or witch acting as a medium through whom a ghost is consulted. The implication is always necromancy or seeking instruction from the dead. Consulting familiar spirits was strongly condemned by the Lord. The penalty was, at best, banishment, and, at worst, death by stoning (see Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27;

Deuteronomy 18:11). When the deranged King Saul received no response from the Lord and longed for help from the departed Samuel, he sought a medium with a familiar spirit, contrary to his own edict of death for wizards and witches in Israel (see 1 Samuel 28:3–25; 1 Chronicles 10:13). The witch of Endor agreed to the séance and claimed to bring up Samuel’s ghost. Interestingly, the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (JST) links contact with the dead to words “ascending out of the earth.” In the JST, the witch’s inquiry to Saul was, “*The word of whom shall I bring up unto thee?*” and Saul’s reply was “Bring me up *the word of Samuel.*” Subsequently, “when the woman saw *the words of Samuel*, she cried with a loud voice; and the woman spake unto Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid; for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw *the words of Samuel ascending out of the earth.* And she said, I saw Samuel also” (JST 1 Samuel 28:11–13, emphasis added).

9. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel all use the plural epithet “terrible [ones],” with occasional parallel “strangers,” to refer to the enemies of Jerusalem and its environs, usually the Babylonians (Isaiah 13:11; 25:3, 5; 49:24–25; Jeremiah 15:21; Ezekiel 28:7; 30:11; 31:12; 32:12).

10. In the days of Enoch, the Lord called his people “Zion” because of their righteousness (Moses 7:18; compare D&C 97:21). Judah’s historians called Jerusalem “Zion” (2 Samuel 5:6–7; 1 Kings 8:1; 1 Chronicles 11:4–5; 2 Chronicles 5:2). Isaiah and later prophets used “Zion,” “mount Zion,” “the daughter of Zion,” and like terms, for Jerusalem (e.g., Isaiah 1:27; 10:32; 30:19; 31:4–5; 33:20), probably because it had been idealized as the city of God (see, for example, Psalm 87).

11. By contrast, in Isaiah’s woe on Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom of Israel) in Isaiah 28 (see especially verse 7), the Lord decries drunkenness that *does* result from strong drink. The Isaiah 29 image of the wineless drunkenness of Jerusalem before the Lord helps the city is repeated in Isaiah 51:21 (compare 2 Nephi 8:21).

12. The dual force of the English word *vision*, meaning “sight” as well as “revelation,” renders well the corresponding Hebrew word, based on a poetic root “to see.” A related form gives us “seer,” as in Isaiah 29:10.

13. Isaiah 5:20 also speaks of the wrongful turning of things upside down, in that case “calling evil good, and good evil.”

14. The singular “terrible one” in Isaiah 29:20 (and its parallel singular, “scorner”) could refer to Satan, the ultimate enemy of Jerusalem and the antithesis of the Lord of Hosts.

15. See the previous note. Perhaps “the scorner,” as Satan, could be considered the symbolic ruler of Jerusalem during its time of destruction.

16. The Hebrew means “to be alert or wakeful” for iniquity. Isaiah’s three examples in Isaiah 29:21 are (1) making a man an offender for a word, (2) entrapping judges, and (3) condemning good people for trivial cause.

17. The Lord similarly described the 587 B.C. siege of Jerusalem to Ezekiel (see Ezekiel 4:1–2).

18. For a succinct review of the Assyrian and Babylonian sieges of Jerusalem, see John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 285–8, 327, 329–30; or Siegfried Herrmann, *A History of Israel in Old Testament Times*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 257–9, 278–80, 282–5.

19. Romans 11:8 is actually a conflate quote of Deuteronomy 29:3–4 with the added phrase from Isaiah. Paul also cited Isaiah 29:16 in Romans 9:20–21 and Isaiah 29:14 in 1 Corinthians 1:19. For an exhaustive list of New Testament Isaiah citations, see Gleason L. Archer and Gregory C. Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 92–135.

20. On the Roman quash of the First and Second Jewish Revolts, see Flavius Josephus, *De Bello Judaico*, Books 4–6 (English translation *Josephus, The Jewish War*, ed. Gaalya Cornfeld [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1982], 263–452), and Eusebius Pamphili, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Book 4 (English translation *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, trans. G. A. Williamson [New York: Dorset, 1984], 157–8), respectively. For a



synopsis, see A. R. C. Leaney, *The Jewish and Christian World, 200 BC to AD 200*, Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World, 200 BC to AD 200, vol. 7 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 115–25.

21. The prophecy could also be called Nephi's "plain prophecy," but he uses "plain" again in 2 Nephi 31:2–3 to characterize his explanation of the doctrine of Christ in that chapter.

22. The first edition of the Book of Mormon (1830), with topical chapters, generally longer than in the current editions, divides Nephi's "own prophecy" into just two: Chapter XI, equivalent to 2 Nephi 25–27, and Chapter XII, equivalent to 2 Nephi 28–30.

23. Nephi claims Isaiah-like words as his own in 2 Nephi 25:1–4, 7–8, 13, 20, 28; 26:14; 28:1, 6; 30:1, 3. He attributes Isaiah-like words to the Lord in ways that Isaiah does not in 2 Nephi 26:18; 27:28; 29:1.

24. Nephi, his father Lehi, and his brother Jacob each received a divine witness of Jerusalem's destruction (see 1 Nephi 19:20; 2 Nephi 1:4; 6:8).

25. Other prophets have often likened scriptural words to new contexts for their own purposes. President Spencer W. Kimball used the criteria the Lord gave Moses in Leviticus 26:2–4 for meriting rain in the land of Canaan to urge Sabbath observance and other commandment-keeping during the 1977 drought in the Western United States. Citing the scripture, President Kimball said, "This applies to you and me" (*Conference Report* [April 1977]: 5–6). Elder Bruce R. McConkie called the words of earlier scriptural writers "my own words" in his eloquent final testimony of the Savior (*Conference Report* [April 1985]: 9). In an extended allegory, Joseph Smith likened the Savior's parables in Matthew 13 to the expanding kingdom of God in the latter days (see "To the Elders of the Church of the Latter Day Saints," *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2/3 [December 1835]: 225–30; reprinted in Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932–51], 2:264–72).

26. It is sometimes claimed that words that are *not* like Isaiah 29 in 2 Nephi 26:15–27:35 come from the brass plates text of Isaiah or restore plain and precious things taken from Isaiah’s writings (see 1 Nephi 13:20–41). These approaches are misdirected for these chapters. Nephi is not quoting here. Both the new words and the Isaiah-like words are Nephi’s. They are part of his “own prophecy.” Similarly misdirected are claims that Nephi is paraphrasing Isaiah 29 in 2 Nephi 26:15–27:35. He is doing exactly the opposite. “Paraphrase” gives new words for the same meaning. “Likening” gives new meaning for the same words.

27. The term “remnant” pervades biblical and Book of Mormon scripture. Passages showing the Nephite understanding include 1 Nephi 13:34; 2 Nephi 28:2 (compare 2 Nephi 25:4–5); and 2 Nephi 30:3–4). Isaianic usage is illustrated in Isaiah 1:9; 10:20–23; 11:16; and 46:3.

28. Comparison with 2 Nephi 26:9–11 shows that this destruction is not the slaughter of the Nephite civilization in the fourth century A.D. (see Mormon 6). The gentiles didn’t begin to arrive in the Western Hemisphere until more than a thousand years later. Their devastation of so many of Lehi’s descendants is the focus of 2 Nephi 26:15–19 (see also 1 Nephi 13:34; 15:17; 2 Nephi 1:10–11).

29. On Nephite awareness of the scattering and the restoration, see John W. Welch, “Getting through Isaiah with the Help of the Nephite Prophetic View,” in this volume.

30. See note 10. For a concise statement on the symbolic usage of “Zion,” see A. D. Sorensen, “Zion,” in *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 4:1624–6.

31. David Rolph Seely identifies pride as the main theme of Isaiah 2–14 in “Nephi’s Usage of Isaiah 2–14 in 2 Nephi 12–30,” in this volume.

32. Second Nephi 28:10, like 2 Nephi 26:3, uses the concept of a voice from the ground to portray the vindication of the wrongfully slain, showing that Nephi recognized the Genesis 4:10 implications of Isaiah 29:4. Moroni uses the same concept in Ether 8:24.

33. The “second time” phrase on the gathering, from Isaiah 11:11, appears to be very important to Nephi. He refers to it in 2 Nephi 6:14; 21:11; 25:17; and 29:1. His brother Jacob also refers to it in Jacob 6:2. Doctrine and Covenants 137:6 gives the prophecy a latter-day fulfillment, according to the understanding of Joseph Smith.

34. Such identifications are discussed in interpretive commentaries on Isaiah 11, including Duane S. Crowther, *Prophets and Prophecies of the Old Testament* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1966), 354–6; Victor L. Ludlow, *Isaiah: Prophet, Seer, and Poet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 167–78; Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 339–40; Monte S. Nyman, *An Ensign to All People: The Sacred Message and Mission of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 18–20; Nyman, “Great Are the Words,” 61–4, 71–7; Sidney B. Sperry, *The Voice of Israel’s Prophets* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1952), 33–8.

35. See previous note; also see Ellis T. Rasmussen, *A Latter-day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993), 512; and Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Press, 1975), 134–48.

36. The assembling of the outcasts of Israel includes the recovery of the latter-day Nephites and Lamanites to belief in Christ by means of the Book of Mormon.

37. The conversion of the Jews by the Book of Mormon is part of the fulfillment of this prophecy, since “Ephraim” can represent Joseph’s descendants, the book’s writers. In Doctrine and Covenants 27:5, the Lord refers to the Book of Mormon as “the stick of Ephraim.”

38. Collections of various accounts of the visits of Moroni and other heavenly messengers to Joseph Smith are found in Milton V. Backman Jr., *Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration* (Orem, Utah: Grandin, 1983), 33–56; Paul R. Cheesman, *The Keystone of Mormonism: Little Known Truths about the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), 1–31; H. Donl Peterson, “Moroni: Joseph Smith’s Teacher,” in *Regional Studies in Latter-day*

*Saint Church History: New York*, ed. Larry C. Porter, Milton V. Backman Jr., and Susan Easton Black (Provo, Utah: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1992), 49–70.

39. In the preface to the first letter of this series, Oliver Cowdery says his letters are intended to give “a full history of the rise of church of the Latter Day Saints, and the most interesting parts of its progress, to the present time [September 7, 1834]” (*Messenger and Advocate*, 1/1 [October 1834]: 13). He adds, “That our narrative may be correct, and particularly the introduction, it is proper to inform our patrons [the readers of the *Messenger and Advocate*], that our brother J. SMITH jr. has offered to assist us. Indeed, there are many items connected with the fore part of this subject that render his labor indispensable.” Oliver Cowdery’s eight letters were copied into Joseph Smith’s “large journal” and republished in the *Times and Seasons*, November 1840–May 1841, and elsewhere, most recently in Dean C. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 1:26–96. Subsequent citations from the letters herein follow Jessee’s edition.

40. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:52.

41. *Ibid.*, 1:52–3.

42. *Ibid.*, 1:53.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*, 1:53–4. The theme of a sealed book is found in Revelation 5 (compare D&C 77:6–7) as well as in Isaiah 29.

45. Isaiah said, speaking of the words of a symbolic book, that they are delivered to “one that is learned” (Isaiah 29:11), but neither learned nor unlearned can read them. Nephi said, speaking of the words of a literal book, and using a phrase more like Moroni’s, that they are presented to “the learned” (2 Nephi 27:15), but he goes on to say (in 2 Nephi 27:19–20) that the Lord *tells* “him that is not learned” to read them (Moroni says “translate” them).

46. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:88.

47. *Ibid.*, 1:90.

48. The Three Witnesses would later testify that “this work”—the Book of Mormon—was “*marvelous* in our eyes” (“The

Testimony of Three Witnesses,” Book of Mormon front matter, emphasis added).

49. Illustrating the wider application, the Lord again spoke of the “marvelous work” in April 1829 after Oliver Cowdery had begun to serve as Joseph Smith’s scribe (see D&C 6:1); to various associates of the Prophet in May and June 1829 in connection with their part in the work (see D&C 11:1; 12:1; 14:1); and to David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery in conjunction with their call in June 1829 to search out the first Twelve of the latter-day dispensation (see D&C 18:44).

50. Nephi may have personally visited Joseph Smith before the Book of Mormon was translated, but his words to the Prophet are not known. A probable scribal error substituted Nephi’s name for Moroni’s in some early publications, including the 1851 edition of the Pearl of Great Price (see Cheesman, *The Keystone of Mormonism*, 27–31), but other statements that Nephi appeared to the Prophet are found in George Q. Cannon, *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1885–86), 3:47; John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, 17:374; 21:161–4; and Orson Pratt to John Christensen, 11 March 1876, Orson Pratt Letter Book, Church Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter, LDS Church Archives), cited in H. Donl Peterson, *Moroni: Ancient Prophet, Modern Messenger* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon, 1983), 131. On an alleged statement in Thomas Bullock’s journal, see Cheesman, *The Keystone*, 6.

51. Joseph Smith observed that for Moroni’s citation from Malachi 3–4, the angel quoted it “with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles” (JS–H 1:36) and for the verses of Acts 3:22–23, “precisely as they stand in our New Testament” (JS–H 1:40).

52. Commentary and sources on the Harris/Anthon interview are found in Backman, *Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration*, 57–68, 79–83; Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 84–90; Ariel L. Crowley, “The Anthon Transcript: An Evidence for the

Truth of the Prophet's Account of the Origin of the Book of Mormon," *Improvement Era* 45 (1942): 14–5, 58–60, 76–80, 124–5, 150–1, 182–3; Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1977), 74–9; Stanley B. Kimball, "The Anthon Transcript: People, Primary Sources, and Problems," *Brigham Young University Studies* 10 (spring 1970): 325–52; Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: The Book of Mormon; Evidence of Divine Power in the "Coming Forth" of the Book of Mormon*, vol. 1, special 4th ed. (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing, 1967), 1:155–71, 414–22; "Martin Harris' Visit with Charles Anthon: Collected Documents on the Anthon Transcript and 'Shorthand Egyptian,'" (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1990); Larry C. Porter, "A Study of the Origins of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816–1831" (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1971), 138–44; B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 1:99–109.

53. See Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:17–9.

54. Joseph Smith and his wife Emma were not allowed to live in her parents' home when Joseph refused to show his father-in-law the plates. See Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 85–6.

55. See Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon*, 73.

56. See Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:19.

57. *Ibid.*, 20.

58. *Ibid.*

59. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:9. This account is all the more significant since the 1832 history is Joseph Smith's only journal that contains his own handwriting. Much of the material quoted here is in the Prophet's handwriting in the original. For background information on the 1832 history, see Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:1, 3; and *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 3–4. The latter includes photofacsimiles of the original holograph on pages 9–14.

60. The Prophet's mother recalled that Martin Harris had told Joseph Smith he would come to Harmony as soon as Joseph

had had sufficient time to copy and translate some of the characters. She also said Joseph Smith and Martin Harris had agreed that Harris was to take the characters and translation to the East and stop in at all the professed linguists along the way to give them an opportunity to display their talents in translating them. See Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Preston Nibley (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954), 119. This could refer, however, to an agreement made in Harmony, or she could have confused the timing of the agreement.

61. William Pilkington Affidavit, 3 April 1934, Archives, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 2. On Pilkington's acquaintance with Martin Harris generally, see William Pilkington, "A Biography of William Pilkington Jr.. written By Himself," LDS Church Archives.

62. A. Metcalf, *Ten Years before the Mast* (Malad, Idaho: by the author, 1888), 71, cited in Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 219 n. 31.

63. See the discussion in Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 89, and 219 n. 33. Later inquiries to Professor Anthon by both the curious and the anti-Mormon resulted in attempts to distance himself from what he considered an embarrassing association with Mormonism. He denied giving Martin Harris a certificate in an 1834 letter to E. D. Howe, reprinted in Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, Ohio: by the author, 1834), 269–72, but contradicted himself in an 1841 letter to Rev. Thomas W. Coit, reprinted in John A. Clark, *Gleanings by the Way* (Philadelphia: W. J. & J. K. Simon, 1842), 233–8, saying that he did write a certificate to the effect that the marks on the paper [shown him by the farmer] appeared to be an imitation of various alphabetical characters that had no meaning at all connected with them. His 1841 letter says no one had ever requested a written statement from him about the meeting, further contradicting the Howe letter. The two letters are reprinted in Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:102–7, with observations on the contradictions.

64. We assume here that Joseph Smith showed Martin Harris the Isaiah 29 passage as soon as Harris returned to Harmony

from New York, although no historical source clearly states this.

65. The translation initiated shortly after Martin Harris's return, for which he acted as scribe, produced the 116 foolscap pages that were subsequently lost (see D&C 3, 10). Several months passed before the Urim and Thummim and the plates were returned to the Prophet by Moroni. Mother Smith says Joseph Smith got the Urim and Thummim back on 22 September 1828 (see Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 134), and the translation that included 2 Nephi was not made until after Oliver Cowdery became the Prophet's scribe on 7 April 1829 (see Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:32–3).

66. On the historical chronology of Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible, see Robert J. Matthews, "A Plainer Translation": *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, A History and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 21–39.

67. *Ibid.*, 78–80.

68. *Ibid.*, 79, 96.

69. *Ibid.*, 86.

70. *Ibid.*, 59–60, 75, 79–81. Matthews discusses the insertion notation and explains the need for access to both Joseph Smith's Bible and the corresponding JST manuscript for understanding its interpretation.

71. *Ibid.*, 56–60.

72. This and all subsequent statements on the contents of the JST manuscripts and Joseph Smith's 1828 KJV Bible are based on an examination of the microfilm copy at the LDS Church Archives, catalogued as "Inspired Version of the Bible manuscript, ca. 1830–1833." The original Bible and manuscripts are in the possession of Library—Archives, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Missouri.

73. Royal Skousen, personal communication, 29 October, 1994. In his "Textual Variants in the Isaiah Quotations in the Book of Mormon," in this volume, Skousen lists this as one of the findings of his ongoing Book of Mormon Critical Text Project. See also an earlier perspective in Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development*, 2nd ed. (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1995), 94–102.



74. It is not clear whether Joseph Smith dictated this material or had Sidney Rigdon copy it directly out of the Book of Mormon. Textual evidence does not support one theory to the exclusion of the other. In fact, some combination may have occurred. The two men could have been looking at the Book of Mormon while Joseph Smith read aloud and Sidney Rigdon wrote, or the words could have been dictated by Joseph Smith from the Book of Mormon and then visually compared by Sidney Rigdon with the written text.

75. Neither the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon nor the Isaiah 29 section of OT 3 is fully versified. To facilitate the discussion, portions of them will be cited using chapter and verse numbers from current published editions.

76. The italicized words “*shall be*” in KJV Isaiah 29:5 are also lined through in Joseph Smith’s Bible, but no replacement is indicated in OT 3.

77. “Those who” appears in recent editions of both the Book of Mormon and the JST.

78. “Have” appears in recent editions of the Book of Mormon.

79. In the introduction to the revelation now known as Doctrine and Covenants 71, received 1 December 1831, Joseph Smith referred to the Bible translation as “this branch of my, <calling>” (“calling” was inserted in the manuscript of the revelation) (Joseph Smith, “History of the Church, A-1,” manuscript [1839], 174, in Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:369; compare Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:238). The Lord’s concern with the translation is seen in its important role in the unfolding revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants. See Robert L. Millet, “From Translations to Revelations: Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible and the Doctrine and Covenants,” in Porter, Backman, and Black, eds., *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: New York*, 215–34; and Larry E. Dahl, “The Joseph Smith Translation and the Doctrine and Covenants,” in *Plain and Precious Truths Restored: The Doctrinal and Historical Significance of the Joseph Smith Translation*, ed. Robert L. Millet and Robert J. Matthews (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995), 104–33.

80. It is interesting to consider why Joseph Smith did not copy the full text of Isaiah 2–14 from the Book of Mormon into the JST. The changes in OT 3 for Isaiah 2–14 generally use the word and phrase insertion notation. Joseph Smith obviously saw Nephi’s detailed prophecies in 2 Nephi 27 in a different light than the less extensive dissimilarities between 2 Nephi 12–24 and KJV Isaiah 2–14.

81. Speaking of the Prophet’s translation of the New Testament, but just as applicable to Isaiah 29, the Lord taught Joseph Smith that one purpose of the JST was to prepare us for things to come (see D&C 42:56–58, 60–61).

82. The replacement of Isaiah 29:8–24 with 2 Nephi 27:3b–35 in the JST could fit the third of the four categories Robert J. Matthews proposes for types of changes in the JST. He describes the third category as follows: “Portions [of the JST] may consist of inspired commentary by the Prophet Joseph Smith, enlarged, elaborated, and even adapted to a latter-day situation. This may be similar to what Nephi meant by ‘likening’ the scriptures to himself and his people in their particular circumstance” (Matthews, *A Plainer Translation*, 253). In the case of JST Isaiah 29, the replacement process itself, in addition to the chapter content, was commentary.