

I Am He That Comforteth You (Isaiah 51:12)

Isaiah 51 continues with the themes we have discussed in previous chapters: the Lord keeps His covenant promises to Israel despite her betrayal. Even though Israel is banished from her promised land for a time, the Lord promises that He will bring her inhabitants back again, and add more “children” to her number as a result of the Gentiles joining in the covenant family. Israel questions how it is that the Lord could remember her and hold to His covenant “marriage” with her when she has been adulterous, but the Lord maintains that He has not “divorced” her, but rather, allowed her to be chastened and formed in the “furnace of affliction” (see Isa. 48:10, 49:14-16, 17-23, 50:1).

If Israel did not dare to believe these hopeful promises for her own sake, the Lord urges her to remember that the promises were originally made to Abraham and Sarah, known for their righteousness. Even as the Lord promised to make of them a great nation — and did so — He will keep the promises to their posterity in their behalf. Descendants of Abraham and Sarah inherit the promises because the Lord swore to remember their posterity forever (see 2 Ne. 29:14).

There is another reason to look to Abraham and Sarah, the “quarry” from whom we are hewn: they exercised complete faith in the Lord and embraced the promises the Lord had made to them, even though they did not see them fulfilled in their lifetime (see Heb. 11:13). The Lord urges us to do likewise: to exercise faith in the seemingly impossible or inconceivable:

King James Bible	Book of Mormon 2 Nephi 8	Complete Jewish Bible
51:1 Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.		“Listen to me, you pursuers of justice, you who seek ADONAI: consider the rock from which you were cut, the quarry from which you were dug —
51:2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.		consider Avraham your father an Sarah, who gave birth to you; in that I called him when he was only one person, then blessed him and made him many.
51:3 For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.		For ADONAI will comfort Tzion, will comfort all her ruined places, will make her desert like ‘Eden, her ‘Aravah like the garden of ADONAI. Joy and gladness will be there, thanksgiving and the sound of music.

The Lord counsels Israel to look to the “rock” from which they were hewn or cut, and refers to Abraham. But, Abraham looked to the “Rock” who is Jehovah, or Jesus Christ, for his strength, and if we follow Abraham’s example, as these verses counsel us to do, we will fix our gaze upon the Savior.

King James Bible	Book of Mormon 2 Nephi 8	Complete Jewish Bible
51:4 Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.	. . . a light for the people.	Pay attention to me, my people! My nation, listen to me! For Torah will go out from me; I will calm them with my justice as a light for the peoples.
51:5 My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.	. . . mine arm	My righteousness is at hand, my salvation goes out, my arms will judge the peoples, The coastlands are putting their hope in me, trusting in my arm.
51:6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.		Raise your eyes toward the skies, look at the earth below. The skies will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like clothing. Those living on it will die like flies; but my salvation will be forever, and my justice will never end.
51:7 Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.	. . . in whose heart I have written my law	Listen to me, you who know justice, you people who have my Torah in your heart: don't be afraid of people's taunts, don't be upset by their insults.
51:8 For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation.		For the moth will eat them up like clothing, the worm will eat them like wool; but my justice will be forever, and my salvation for all generations.

The things that seem most permanent to man — the heavens and the earth — are transient and insubstantial when compared to the Lord, who created them. They will change and die, even as the people of the earth do, but the Lord's salvation, justice and righteousness will endure forever.

The psalmist shared a similar testimony: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee" (Ps. 102:25-28).

The righteousness and justice of the Lord are witnessed by the faithfulness with which He keeps to His covenants. When compared to Him, why do we fear man, and their mocking insults and disapproval? Why do we depart from the Law of the Lord, or the covenants, in order to seek the approval of man?

These laws of God should be written on our hearts, and the Lord will judge us by them. They are not situational; the children of covenant are expected to live by them whether they are at ease in their native lands, or in captivity, as was Daniel. Jeremiah prophesied of a day when the Lord’s people would truly know Him, cling to Him as their Savior and Redeemer — and honor His laws. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband to them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:31-34).

In regard to our fear of man and our concern over their judgement or disapproval of our adherence to our covenants, or our stand in defense of the Lord, Joseph Smith was promised (as are we): “Therefore, hold on thy way, and the priesthood shall remain with thee; for their bounds are set, they cannot pass. Thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; therefore, fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever” (D&C 122:9).

Despite the promises, Israel fears that the Lord will turn away from her as a just consequence for her sins. In previous verses, Israel questioned whether the Lord would forget her as an adulterous bride (Isa. 49:14-16). In a similar voice of wavering faith, Israel challenges the Lord to “awake” and perform miracles in her behalf as He has done in the past, delivering her from Egypt:

King James Bible	Book of Mormon 2 Ne 8	Complete Jewish Bible
51:9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?	. . . Art thou not he . . .	Awake! Awake! Arm of ADONAI, clothe yourself with strength! Awake, as in days of old, as in ancient generations! Wasn't it you who hacked Rahav to pieces, you who pierced the sea monster?
51:10 Art thou not it that hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?	. . . Art thou not he who hath . . .	Wasn't it you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; you who made the sea bottom a road for the redeemed to cross?

These pleas demonstrate Israel’s lack of knowledge and understanding. No wonder the Lord repeatedly stated that He had told all things from the beginning (see Isa. 40:21), but the people had closed their eyes and their ears (see Isa. 6:9-10). They saw only in fragments; here, their challenges echo the age-old demand of “show me a miracle, and then I will believe.” God had shown them miracles aplenty, including the recent miracle of delivering Hezekiah’s people from the Assyrians, but miracles do not

convert. It was this very lack of true faith and understanding that caused them to be taken into captivity by the Babylonians; well had Isaiah prophesied: “Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge” (Isa. 5:13).

For further information as to the identity of Rahab, see Ezekiel 29:3, which links “the great dragon” to Egypt and its Pharaoh.

King James Bible	Book of Mormon 2 Ne 8	Complete Jewish Bible
51:11 Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.	. . . everlasting joy and holiness shall be upon their heads . . .	Those ransomed by ADONAI will return and come with singing to Tziyon; on their heads will be everlasting joy. They will acquire gladness and joy, while sorrow and sighing will flee.
51:12 I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;	I am he; yea, I am he that comforteth you. Behold, who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of man, who shall die, and of the son of man, who shall be made like unto grass?	I, yes I, am the one who comforts you! Why are you afraid of a man, who must die; of a human being, who will wither like grass?
51:13 And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?		You have forgotten ADONAI, your maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth. Instead, you are in constant fear all day because of the oppressor’s rage, as he prepares to destroy! But where is the oppressor’s rage?
51:14 The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail.		The captive will soon be set free; he will not die and go down to Sh’ol; on the contrary, his food supply will be secure.
51:15 But I am the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts is his name.	But I am the Lord thy God, whose waves roared; the Lord of Hosts is my name.	For I am ADONAI your god, who stirs up the sea, who makes its waves roar — ADONAI-Tzva’ot is my name.
51:16 And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.	. . . and say unto Zion, Behold, thou art my people.	I have put my words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of my hand, in order to plant the skies [anew] and to say to Tziyon, “You are my people.”

The Israelites were terrified of the conquering armies that surrounded them. They tried to make political alliances, but these failed them. Despite the Lord's deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrians, the people would not rely on the Lord for their protection and safety. The preceding verses ring with pathos as the Lord declares "I AM, I am he that comforteth you . . . why are you so afraid?" The Lord knew that each empire would fall to a succeeding conqueror, and questioned "where is the oppressor" in that context. He tried to convince His people that the men that formed the armies would "go the way of all the earth," and be forgotten, but the people had reversed the truth of things, and had forgotten the Lord while they tried to placate man.

In an earlier chapter, Isaiah compared the final appraisal of the king of Babylon to the final appraisal of Satan. Both were "oppressors" who "made the world a wilderness," but when the veil is removed, all will see them as they really are. At that time, people will "narrow their eyes . . . and look upon [them] and say, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?" (see Isa. 14:15-20).

In time, no one will remember which king ruled which empire, but the outcome for Israel as God's covenant people is assured: they will inherit their lands again, the Lord will loose them from their captivity (literal and spiritual, and on both sides of the veil), and has kept them "in the shadow of [His] hand that he might "plant the heavens" with them. Their eventual destiny as covenant Israel is to become kings and queens, priests and priestesses, and gods in the hereafter, peopling earths under the direction of, and in the name of Elohim, the Father, and Jehovah, the Son.

Moses testified: "When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. 32:8). Israel is "the apple of God's eye" and He has had plans for the eternal destiny of His covenant family since before the foundations of the earth (Zech. 2:8; Deut. 32:10).

When Israel is redeemed, "sorrow and mourning shall flee away." John confirms these promises with his own: he saw the "new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And [he] heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:2-4).

The next verses in Isaiah shift the focus from the hope of the far-distant future to the more immediate consequences of the Babylonian captivity. The impact of that conquest — or the consequences of sin — is likened to drinking from "the cup of the Lord's fury."

We learn more about "the cup" in Ezekiel, where the Lord likens Samaria (Israel, Northern Kingdom) and Jerusalem (Southern Kingdom, Judah) to two married women who become adulterous whores through their idolatry. "[Samaria] played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbors . . . Thus she committed her whoredoms with them, with all them that were the chosen men of Assyria, and with all on whom she doted: with all their idols she defiled herself . . . wherefore I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers, into the hand of the Assyrians, upon whom she doted. These discovered her nakedness: they took her sons and her daughters, and slew her with the sword: and she became famous among women; for they had executed judgment upon her" (Ezek. 23:4-7).

Ezekiel continues: “And when her sister [Jerusalem] saw this, she was more corrupt in her inordinate love than she [Samaria], and in her whoredoms more than her sister in her whoredoms . . . And she increased her whoredoms: for when she saw men portrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion, girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity: And as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea. And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them . . . Therefore, O [Jerusalem] thus saith the Lord God; Behold I will raise up thy lovers against thee, from whom thy mind is alienated, and I will bring them against thee on every side; the Babylonians, and all the Chaldeans . . . and all the Assyrians with them . . . and they shall come against thee with chariots, wagons, and wheels, and with an assembly of people . . . and they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire” (Ezek. 23:11-25).

Ezekiel then proceeds to introduce “the cup” of consequence: “I will do these things unto thee, because thou hast gone a whoring after the heathen, and because thou art polluted with their idols. thou hast walked in the way of thy sister [Samaria]; therefore will I give her cup into thine hand. Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou shalt drink of thy sister’s [Samaria’s] cup deep and large: thou shalt be laughed to scorn and had in derision; it containeth much. Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow with the cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy sister Samaria. Thou shalt even drink it and suck it out, and thou shalt break the sherds thereof, and pluck off thine own breasts: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD (Ezek. 23: 30-34).

The psalmist added further details about “the cup”: “For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them” (Ps. 75:8).

There is particular emphasis on the “dregs,” of the cup, the sediment at the bottom, which would be the strongest concentration of the brew, and therefore, the most bitter.

Justice demands that each of us drink from the cup of our own making; a cup made up of the bitterness, the shame and guilt of our failures and sins (see Mosiah 3:26). The following verses in Isaiah will refer to it as “the cup of trembling,” because this is the natural reaction to partaking of it. Exeziel described in the verses above that drinking from the cup causes astonishment and desolation . . . and this is surely the response that the Savior had ***when He removed the cup of justice from our hands, and drank from it Himself*** (see Matt. 26).

“Thus saith thy Lord, the Lord and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people; behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again.” (Isaiah 51:22).

Justice demands that the cup be drained; He will drain it. The rejected, the despised, the betrayed (Isa. 53), the faithful Husband, His bowels filled with compassion and mercy – He will drink the cup for us.

Jesus asked His disciples in the Garden, just prior to His arrest: “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11)

“For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit - and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink - Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.” (D&C 19:16-19)

KingJames Bible	Book of Mormon 2 Ne 8	Complete Jewish Bible
51:17 Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.	. . . the cup of trembling wrung out —	Awake! Awake! Stand up, Yerushalayim! At ADONAI's hand you drank the cup of his fury; you have drained to the dregs the goblet of drunkenness.
51:21 Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine:	. . . and not with wine . . .	Therefore, please hear this in your affiliation, you who are drunk, but not with wine;
51:22 Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:		this is what your Lord ADONAI says, your God, who defends his people: “Here, I have removed from your hand the cup of drunkenness, the goblet of my fury. You will never drink it again.
51:23 But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.		I will put it in the hands of your tormentors. who said to you, ‘Bend down, so we can trample you.’ and you flattened your back on the ground like a street for them to walk on.

Jeremiah adds further detail to the Lord giving the cup into the hands of those who afflicted Israel: “For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them. Then took I the cup at the LORD’s hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the LORD had sent me (Jer. 25:15-17). Jeremiah is then instructed to begin by giving the cup into the hand of Jerusalem, and then to all of the kings of all the nations.

For those who will not repent and accept of the atonement of the Savior, Alma taught: “But, behold, an awful death cometh upon the wicked; for they die as to things pertaining to things of righteousness; for they are unclean, and no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of God; but they are cast out, and consigned to partake of the fruits of their labors or their works, which have been evil; and they drink the dregs of a bitter cup” (Alma 40:26).

Awake! and stand up! are two imperative commands given to Jerusalem; Israel must remember who she is and Who she belongs to. When she remembers her sacred role as a light and a witness to the world, she will arise from the captivity she has sold herself into, and stand to lead by her example.

The next verses in Isaiah 51 caused a great deal of confusion before we had the blessing of modern revelation to interpret them. At face value, the verses are a lament that Israel has no “sons” to lead and guide her. This indicates both that the children did not honor or understand the covenant bonds of their forefathers, and also that there is no priesthood leadership. This hearkens back to Isaiah 50:2 “When I came, there was no man; when I called, there was none to answer.” It is a case of “the blind leading the blind,” as those who should lead have “fainted in the streets”:

King James Bible	Book of Mormon 2 Ne 8	Complete Jewish Bible
51:18 There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up.	. . . And none to guide her . . .	There is no one to guide her among all the sons she has borne. Not one of all the children she raised is taking her by the hand.
51:19 These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee?	These two sons are come unto thee, who shall be sorry for thee — thy desolation and destruction, and the famine and the sword — and by whom shall I comfort thee?	These two disasters have overcome you — yet who will grieve with you? — plunder and destruction, famine and sword; by whom can I comfort you?
51:20 Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of fury of the LORD, the rebuke of God.	Thy sons have fainted, save these two; they lie at the head of all the streets . . .	Your children lie helpless at every street corner, like an antelope trapped in a net; they are full of ADONAI’s fury, the rebuke of your God.

“These two things” is translated as “these two sons” in the Book of Mormon, and “these two disasters” in the Complete Jewish Bible. Joseph Smith translated them in the Inspired Version, or JST as “these two sons” (these corrections are not shown in the footnotes section). It is the interpretation of the verse as “these two sons” that clarifies the prophecy and points forward to the latter days, as the Lord directs two prophets of the Latter-day Church to help Israel, and prepare for His second coming.

The CES *Old Testament Student Manual* adds the following insight about “the two sons who fainted”: “The text of 2 Nephi 8:19-20 taken from the brass plates suggests that the two sons may be the two witnesses of Revelation 11:1-6 who will keep the armies from defeating the Jews (see also D&C 77:15)” (191-200). “One question that arises as one studies the prophetic picture is, How could a nation as tiny as modern Israel stand against the combined armies of the world? The answer lies in an understanding of the role of two important participants in these great events. John the Revelator gave the most detailed picture of these two participants. They are called the ‘two witnesses,’ the ‘two olive trees’ and the ‘two candlesticks’ (Rev. 11:3-4). Latter-day revelation teaches that they are ‘two prophets . . . raised up to the Jewish nation’ who will ‘prophesy to [them] after they are gathered and have built. . . Jerusalem’ (D&C 77:15). (291-95).

John wrote: “The holy city shall the Gentiles tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of

the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

“And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

“And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

“And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies behold them” (Rev. 11:2-12)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: “These two shall be followers of that humble man, Joseph Smith, through whom the Lord of Heaven restored the fulness of his everlasting gospel in this final dispensation of grace. No doubt they will be members of the Council of the Twelve or of the First Presidency of the Church. Their prophetic ministry to rebellious Jewry shall be the same in length as was our Lord's personal ministry among their rebellious forebears. The two olive trees, and the two candlesticks [are] symbols of the two witnesses; meaning, perhaps, that as olive trees, they shall provide oil for the lamps of those who go forth to meet the Bridegroom; . . . and that as lamp stands they shall reflect to men that light which comes from Him who is the Light of the World.

“These prophets will have power to pronounce great judgments upon the earth (see Rev. 11:5-6). They shall have power like Elijah who called down fire from heaven to consume his enemies, and who sealed the heavens that it rained not in all Israel for the space of three and a half years (1 Kings 17 and 18; 2 Kings 1), and like Moses by whose word blood and plagues lay heavily upon the Egyptians. (Ex. 7, 8, 9, and 10.)” (McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:509-510.)

“Their miraculous power seems to be the force preventing Gog and his army from succeeding in annihilating Israel. Elder Parley P. Pratt wrote a pamphlet, approved for publication by the Prophet Joseph Smith, in which he said: ‘John, in the eleventh chapter of Revelation, gives us many more particulars concerning this same event. He informs us that after the city and temple are rebuilt by the Jews, the Gentiles will tread it under foot forty and two months, during which time there will be two prophets continually prophesying and working mighty miracles. And it seems that the Gentile army shall be hindered from utterly destroying and overthrowing the city, while these two prophets continue” (*A Voice of Warning*, 33, as quoted in *CES Old Testament Manual* 291-95).

“Isaiah called these prophets ‘two sons’ and said they were the only hope of deliverance for Israel because they would be ‘full of the fury of the Lord’ (JST Isa. 51:19-20).

“John showed that eventually the two prophets would be killed, and their death would put Israel in a most critical situation. The two witnesses will be captured and killed by the opposing army, and their

bodies will be left in the streets of Jerusalem for ‘three days and an half’ as the forces of evil engage in a great celebration over their death (Revelation 11:9; see also Revelation 11:7-8, 10)” (McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:510).

“During the ‘three days and an half’ that the prophets lie dead in the streets, the army will ravage the city of Jerusalem and the remaining population of Israel (Revelation 11:9). Elder Pratt explained: ‘But after a struggle of three years and a half, they [Gog’s army] will at length succeed in destroying these two prophets and then overrunning much of the city; they will send gifts to each other because of the death of the two prophets, and in the meantime will not allow their dead bodies to be put in graves, but will suffer them to lie in the streets of Jerusalem three days and a half, during which time the armies of the Gentiles, consisting of many kindreds, tongues, and nations, passing through the city, plundering the Jews, will see their dead bodies lying in the street.’” (A *Voice of Warning*, 33 as quoted in CES Old Testament Manual, 291-95).

The tone of the message shifts to one of command when we turn to Isaiah, chapter 52. Awake! Awake! Put on thy strength! Put on thy beautiful garments! Shake thyself from the dust! Arise! Arise and sit down! Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck!

It is of note that Jacob, in his sermon to the Nephites, includes the first two verses of 52 with chapter 51, and ends quoting there to give his commentary. The first three verses of chapter 52 are given particular weight by how many times they are quoted — and who quotes them — in the Book of Mormon. Jacob quotes them in 2 Nephi 8, as stated previously, the Savior quotes them in His sermon to the Nephites (3 Ne. 20:36-38), and Moroni quotes them with his closing testimony (Moroni 10:31).

King James Bible	Book of Mormon 2 Ne 8	Complete Jewish Bible
52:1 Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.	2 Ne. 8:24	Awake! Awake, Tziyon! Clothe yourself with your strength! Dress in your splendid garments, Yerushalayim, the holy city! For the uncircumcised and the unclean will enter you no more.
52:2 Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.	2Ne 8:25	Shake off the dust! Arise! Be enthroned, Yerushalayim! Loosen the chains on your neck, captive daughter of Tziyon!
52:3 For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.		For thus says ADONAI: “You were sold for nothing, and you will be redeemed without money.”

We have the advantage for interpreting these verses in that Elias Higbee inquired of Joseph Smith what these verses meant. Joseph recorded the answers in D&C 113:7-10:

“What is meant by the command in Isaiah, 52nd chapter, 1st verse which saith: Put on thy strength, O Zion — and what people had Isaiah reference to? (Answer) He had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of priesthood to bring again Zion, and the redemption of

Israel; and to put on her strength is, to put on the authority of the priesthood, which she, Zion, has a right to by lineage, also to return to that power which she had lost.

“What are we to understand by Zion loosing herself from the bands of her neck; 2d verse? (Answer) We are to understand that the scattered remnants are exhorted to return to the Lord from whence they have fallen; which if they do, the promise of the Lord is that he will speak to them, or give them revelation. See the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses. The bands of her neck are the curses of God upon her, or the remnants of Israel in their scattered condition among the Gentiles.”

Returning to the allegory of Jehovah as the Bridegroom and Israel as the bride, we see in these verses the call of the Lord for His wife to “wake up!” and to remember who she is, and her covenant relationship to Him. At the time of betrothal, bridegrooms presented their future brides with gifts of wedding finery that she would wear for the marriage. This was often fabric to be constructed into clothing, and also coins that would be sewn into a headband with a veil attached. Many rabbis teach that the betrothal of Jehovah to Israel took place at Sinai. There, she accepted His Law as one of His gifts, and He also presented her with temple clothing. This is akin to the “beautiful garments” the Lord is urging His bride to put on.

This command to “Awake! and put on thy beautiful garments” is repeated in the Old and New Testaments, the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. To be repeated that many times, it must carry great significance. Moroni used it in his last testimony, and added an important addendum: “And awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled” (Moroni 10:31; see also Ne. 8:24; D&C 82:14; 3 Ne. 20:36).

This instruction to “put on [the] beautiful garments . . . that the covenants may be fulfilled,” can’t help but remind us of the betrothal and the hope for the future wedding. The Bridegroom is ready, indeed, and He is waiting for the bride! This point is confirmed by John, who wrote: “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints” (Rev. 19:7-8). One can almost hear the words — *at last!* — in connection to the bride’s readiness for marriage in John’s words, and there is no question that John measures her readiness by her having arrayed herself in the wedding clothing.

President Spencer W. Kimball wrote: “The time of Christ’s return is affected by our conduct. I’ve known people who have been promised in their patriarchal blessings that they would live to see the temple built and some of them are dying and haven’t seen the temple built. Do you know why? In my estimation, the Lord’s timetable is directed a good deal by us. We speed up the clock or we slow the hands down, and we turn them back by our activities, and our procrastination” (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 441-42).

Verse 2 tells Jerusalem (the bride, or Israel) to “arise” or stand up, and then to “sit down.” The Complete Jewish Bible translates it as “Arise! and be enthroned.” Captive slaves sat in the dust, but Israel, as the bride of Christ, when she is redeemed, is to sit on a throne beside Him. The commonly-used phrase of today: “Remember who you are!” best captures the meaning. Once the bride remembers her calling, her mission and purpose, the “uncircumcised and unclean” will no more enter her, according to verse 1. This phrase is extremely intimate, referencing the earlier accusations of adultery. Using this kind of analogy impresses the meaning in a deeply-emotional way, but we can as easily interpret it as “what we

take in” to our minds, through our eyes, or into our hearts can corrupt us, destroying our cleanliness before the Lord.

According to verse 3, Israel had “sold [herself] for nought, [and would] be redeemed without money.” Anything we give ourselves to in place of the Savior will eventually be seen as of little value if it has taken us away from the relationship He invites us to enjoy with Him. Taken literally, the Jews had “sold themselves” when they entered into alliances with Babylon, and invited them into their country, but we, likewise, “sell ourselves” to various people and things. Esau “sold his birthright” for a “mess of pottage,” but in reality, he had sold it far earlier when he married outside of the covenant and disappointed his parents and the Lord. “Esau despised his birthright,” the scriptures reveal (see Gen. 25:34), and so have the covenant people throughout time.

Rarely does money actually change hands in these transactions, although it is true that one can sell one’s soul for money. But money cannot actually buy a soul back; only the blood of the Savior’s atonement can do that, explaining the phrase in verse 3 that “ye shall be redeemed without money.” Peter explained: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet. 1:18-20).

It is Christ’s sacrifice and Christ’s blood that redeems the bride, or Israel, His people. Isaiah 49 describes this link as stronger than a nursing mother’s for her child. “I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands,” the Savior reminds us (Isa. 49:16). Indeed, it is not the Lord who forgets the bond, but the wandering bride. This theme is constantly repeated throughout scripture, and so it is that He has to give the instruction to “Awake!” . . . and often, to “Remember!”

In the following verses of chapter 52, the Lord states that His people will come to recognize Him when He “makes bare his holy arm,” and reveals Himself in His glory to them. At that time, He states, “my people shall know my name . . . and they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.” It is almost as if we can see Him standing before them, even as Joseph did before his brethren in Egypt, as the scales drop from their eyes and they suddenly *see* - see that He is there, that He has been there all along, and that He has ever been working for their good.

No wonder that every knee will bow, and every tongue confess when our hearts and minds finally see and understand the role He has played in our lives — forever.

As they are about to depart for Babylon, the Lord stands near with reassurances of love and comfort, and also with the warning that they are not to “touch the unclean thing!” Do not let Babylon enter within you, although you will dwell within Babylon. He wants His people to be clean and pure when He calls them forth to leave Babylon’s environs, uncontaminated by the worldly philosophies and sinful behaviors, particularly so that they can “bear the vessels of the Lord.”

It is of particular note that Jesus, Himself, quoted most of these verses in His sermon to the Nephites, explaining them as He did so. After partaking of the sacrament with them, and thus reminding them of that eternal bond, He told them that He was there to fulfill the covenants made with Abraham, and also to fulfill the covenant between Himself and the Father. He then explained to them that because they were of the House of Israel, they were a part of the covenant, and therefore would inherit the promises therein, including the reception of the fulness of the gospel, and the gathering of all of Israel to their promised lands (see 3 Ne. 20).

King James Bible	Book of Mormon 3 Ne	Complete Jewish Bible
52:4 For thus saith the Lord GOD, my people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.		For thus says <i>Adonai ELOHIM</i> : “Long ago my people went down to Egypt to live there as aliens, and Ashur oppressed them for no reason.
52:5 Now therefore, what have I here, saith he LORD, that my people is taken away for night? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.		So now, what should I do here,” asks <i>ADONAI</i> , “since my people were carried off for nothing? Their oppressors are howling,” says <i>ADONAI</i> , “and my name is always being insulted, daily.
52.:6 Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.	20:39 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that my people shall know my name; yea, in that day they shall know that I am he that doth speak.	Therefore my people will know my name; therefore on that day they will know that I, the one speaking — here I am!”
52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!	20:40 And then shall they say: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings unto them, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings unto them of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion: Thy God reigneth!	How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, proclaiming <i>shalom</i> , bringing good news of good things, announcing salvation, and saying to Tziyon, “Your God is King!”
52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.	20:32 Then shall their watchmen lift up their voice, and with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye. Then will the Father gather them together again, and give unto them Jerusalem for the land of their inheritance.	Listen! Your watchmen are raising their voices, shouting for joy together. For they will see, before their own eyes, <i>ADONAI</i> returning to Tziyon.
52:9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.	20:34 Then shall they break forth into joy — Sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Father hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.	Break out into joy! Sing together, you ruins of Yerushalayim! For <i>ADONAI</i> has comforted his people, he has redeemed Yerushalayim!

King James Bible	Book of Mormon 3 Ne	Complete Jewish Bible
52:10 The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.	20:35 The Father hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Father; and the Father and I are one.	<i>ADONAI has bared his holy arm in the sight of every nation, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.</i>
52:11 Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.	20:41 And then shall a cry go forth: Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch not that which is unclean; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.	Leave! Leave! Get out of there! Don't touch anything unclean! Get out from inside it, and be clean, you who carry <i>ADONAI's</i> temple equipment.
52:12 For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward.	20:42 For ye shall not go out with haste nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel shall be your rearward.	You need not leave in haste, you do not have to flee; for <i>ADONAI</i> will go ahead of you, and the God of Israel will also be behind you.

Jesus explained that these verses especially pertained to the restoration of the Gospel, and to the gathering of Israel (2 Ne. 20). Therefore, we know that they especially pertain to us of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Missionaries and members of the Church are they who are spoken of as having “beautiful feet” when they are used to go forth and proclaim the Restoration, and to share with Zion that “thy God reigneth!”

Yes, He has told us “all things,” including the fact that Israel, specifically, would forget their identity as His covenant bride, and that they would no longer know or realize that their God *does* reign and live, and is working in their behalf to keep covenants that He made long ago. The watchmen and the people will shout together with joy when they realize this glorious truth: that He is there, that He has never left us, and that He has made it possible for our redemption by drinking the cup of bitterness in our behalf, and by shedding His blood to redeem us from captivity. “I am He that comforteth you!” He has proclaimed, “Behold, it is I!” (Isa. 51:12, 52:6).