
ISAIAH 11-12

(With brief notes on chapters 9-10 by way of introduction)

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David A. LeFevre

MESSIAH COMES (9)

THE SON BECOMES THE KING (9:1-7)

9:1 **afterward did more grievously afflict her.** The northern kingdom was first “lightly afflicted” by being placed under tribute but then was greatly afflicted by being carried away captive in 721 B.C.

9:2 **seen a great light.** The same regions that were conquered by the Assyrians would later be blessed with the presence of Christ.

9:6 **unto us a child is born.** This is the birth of the king, the light coming among them, the one who will break the burdensome yoke placed on Israel by the oppressor.

9:6 **the government shall be upon his shoulder.** Symbolized by large keys literally placed on the shoulder of the king at his coronation, or referring to the robe of his office placed on his shoulders at that time.

9:6 **Wonderful Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.** Christ is given four names that contrast with that of Isaiah’s

son (8:1). There should be no comma between “wonderful” and “counselor.”

9:7 **no end.** Christ’s kingdom will be eternal, not temporary like mortal kings.

9:7 **the Lord of hosts will perform this.** He will not come into power by the hand of men but in a miraculous, God-driven way.

JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL (9:8-21)

9:12 **they shall devour Israel.** Isaiah taught that Israel’s neighbors would turn against them and devour them.

9:12 **his hand is stretched out still.** Another instance of this metaphor that is clearly judgmental, since the hand is stretched out in anger (more in 9:17, 9:21, and 10:4).

9:15 **he is the head . . . he is the tail.** Referring to the words of verse 15, Isaiah is clear that the leaders of the kingdom and the false prophets are those that will be cut off, for it is these people who have led them astray and the cause of the destruction.

ASSYRIA TYPE OF SECOND COMING (10)

ASSYRIA AN INSTRUMENT IN GOD’S HANDS (10:1-11)

10:2 **turn aside the needy.** The prophet outlines the many sins which are the cause of the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel in verses 1-4, focusing

on their lack of care for the struggling and suffering among them.

10:5 **O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger.** Assyria became a tool in the Lord’s hand in punishing the wickedness of the people.

10:9 ***Calno/Carchmish/Hamath***. This verse lists some of the major cities conquered by Assyria as they marched toward and finally conquered Israel and nearly conquered Judah.

DESTRUCTION OF ASSYRIA A TYPE OF THE SECOND COMING (10:12-19)

10:12 ***I will punish...Assyria***. Though the Lord would use Assyria for his purposes, he would also hold them accountable for their own evils.

10:15 ***Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth***. The tool cannot speak out against the one using it; even so, Assyria cannot speak out against the Lord when he brings his judgment against them.

10:17 ***burn and devour***. The destruction of the Assyrian cities are representative of the destruction that will come upon the wicked at the last days, which will be done by fire.

10:19 ***that a child may write them***. The destruction will be so complete that even a small child can count the number of remaining trees in the forest.

REMNANT SHALL RETURN (10:20-27)

10:20 ***but shall stay upon the Lord***. A remnant will eventually learn to rely not on man but on God.

10:21 ***The remnant shall return***. A repeating theme in Isaiah, and one that has dual fulfillment in ancient days as the remnant of Judah did return after the Babylonian captivity and in our day as the remnant is being gathered throughout the earth and brought into the tribes of Israel through gospel covenants.

10:27 ***his burden shall be taken away***. Assyria is representative of the power of the world. It will be taken away and the yoke of slavery and tribute destroyed.

ASSYRIA MARCHES ON JERUSALEM (10:28-34)

10:28 ***He is come to Aiath***. When the Assyrians attacked Judah, they went through the kingdom, capturing towns and villages along the way, confiscating supplies and encamping at strategic locations ("laid up his carriages" in verse 28). These verses describe that march and conquest, coming ever closer to Jerusalem.

10:33 ***the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough***. Before they can destroy Jerusalem, the Assyrian army would be stopped by the Lord.

MESSIAH, MILLENNIUM, AND GATHERING (11)

As mentioned before, chapters 7-12 form a natural unit, the most autobiographical section of the book. The two chapters in this lesson conclude that section. More specifically, chapter 11 is a direct continuation of chapters 9 and 10, picking up the concept of the Messiah discussed especially in 9:6-7 but continued all through those chapters with the judgment falling on Israel and Judah and in turn upon Assyria, which does not recognize God's hand in their successes and instead vaunts itself (10:12-15) and goes beyond what the Lord has decreed (10:5-11). That combined with their wicked treatment of all people brings judgment on the instrument of God's judgment.

But with that judgment comes a promise, captured in the name of Isaiah's first son first mentioned in 7:3: "The remnant shall return" (10:21-22). The concept of a

remnant of Israel, introduced in chapter 10, figures prominently in the rest of the book.

Even as Ahaz' rejection of the Lord brought punishment on him and his people (8:6-8), so when the Messiah comes, he will undo those mistakes and punishments with gathering and restoration.

The Savior and his prophets will hold up the truth and gather those who love the Lord and his righteousness together from all throughout the earth, even as the great peace of the millennial day is ushered in by the personal coming of the King.

When Moroni first appeared to Joseph Smith, "he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, saying that it was about to be fulfilled" (Joseph Smith-History 1:40). While much of the chapter yet remains in the future, D&C 113 helps us see how some of it may have already been fulfilled.

THE STEM OF JESSE (11:1-5)

Chapter 10 ends with the metaphor of trees getting cut down, the forests representing the pride and loftiness of the world (10:18-19, 33-34; also 6:11-13 for Israel as trees cut down). That metaphor leads into the first verses of chapter 11, with the stump and branch. The branch coming from the stump represents new growth from a nearly dead tree, a miraculous event. The person represented by the symbolism is endowed by the Spirit of the Lord.

1 And there will come forth a shoot out of the stump of Jesse,
and a Branch out of his roots will bear fruit;

2 And the Spirit of the LORD will rest upon him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,

the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

3 And he will delight in the fear of the LORD;

and he will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
nor decide by what he hears with his ears;

4 but with righteousness he will judge the poor,
And decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

but he will smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips will he slay the wicked.

5 And righteousness will be the sash of his loins
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

COMMENTARY

11:1 **a rod out of the stem of Jesse**. Or, “a shoot will sprout from the stump of Jesse” (NAB). The tree has been cut down, leaving just a stump. But the stump is not dead, and a shoot comes out of it. Compare 6:13 where “substance,” while not the same word as “stem” here, can also mean “stump.”

D&C 113:3 asks, “What is the rod...that should come of the Stem of Jesse?” The answer (D&C 113:4) is a servant of Christ who is a descendent of Jesse [the tribe of Judah] and Ephraim [Joseph], “on whom there is laid much power.” Some have suggested that this refers to Joseph Smith himself (Ogden and Skinner, 2:216), but it may also refer to another yet-future prophet (Parry, *Understanding*, 116-117).

In the poetic parallelism of Isaiah, it could also be the same person as the Branch (below), since “rod” (shoot) and “branch” would match, as would “stem” (stump) and “roots.”

11:1 **the stem of Jesse**. Or, “the stump of Jesse” (NIV, JPS, NAB). The tree that has been cut down is the house of David. D&C 113:1 asks, “Who is the Stem of Jesse” in these verses. The Prophet’s answer: “It is Christ” (D&C 113:2), the new David, son of Jesse.

11:1 **a Branch shall grow out of his roots**. As the King James translators indicated by capitalizing the word, and according to other commentators, the “Branch” refers to Christ (Parry, *Understanding*, 117). The term “branch” is used elsewhere in the OT to refer to the Messiah (Jeremiah 23:5-6; 33:15; Daniel 11:7; Zechariah 3:8-9; 6:12).

Interestingly, Matthew 2:23 may refer to this verse. It says, “He shall be called a Nazarene.” The Greek is *Nazōraios*, which may come from the Hebrew *nošri*. The Hebrew word translated “Branch” here is *nēšêr*, which shares the same root with *nošri* (Ogden and Skinner, 2:215).

11:2 **the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him**. This is not the typical gift of the Holy Ghost that we enjoy today, but a special gift of the Spirit relating to the Messiah’s mission. “The Spirit of the Lord is connected to the anointing of kings (1 Sam. 16:13; 2 Sam. 23:2-3), including the Messiah (42:1; 59:21; 61:1). The Spirit of the Lord magnifies persons for special tasks (63:10-11; Ex. 31:2-3; Num. 11:17; 27:19; Judg. 6:34; 1 Sam. 16:13)” (Parry, *Understanding*, 117). Compare also Matthew 3:16 (and John 1:33, with D&C 93:15), where the Spirit descending and resting on Jesus is a witness of his mission.

11:2 **wisdom and understanding**. With the Spirit first in his life, the Messiah enjoys three particular gifts in v. 2, which lead to his three actions in vv. 3-5 (a total of seven items, potentially signifying “that the Messiah was to be perfectly endowed by the Spirit with everything requisite to his kingly task”; Grogan, 544). The first gift is wisdom and understanding, by which he can govern and rule. In 10:13, the king of Assyria boasts that his conquests are “by my wisdom.” With the Messiah, it is the Spirit that gives him wisdom and great understanding.

11:2 **counsel and might**. The second gift is counsel and might, a reference to military powers and abilities (see 36:5 where the same words are translated “counsel and

strength for war”). Compare to 9:6, where the Messiah is the wonderful counseling and the mighty God.

11:2 **knowledge**. The third gift of the Spirit is knowledge and fear of the Lord. “Knowledge is truth grasped and applied to life” (Motyer, 122). Jesus had a perfect knowledge that allowed him to act in perfect harmony with the Father’s will (John 14:10).

11:3 **shall make him of quick understanding**. Or, “He will delight” (NASB and NIV) or, “He shall sense the truth” (JPS).

11:2 **the fear of the Lord**. The Spirit that the Messiah possesses brings him a perfect fear of the Lord. Jesus doesn’t fear God as we might, for he did not sin, but he does have the spirit of fear that he might understand us and through his Atonement lead us to the Father (also v. 3). Fear “motivates obedience” and “moulds [*sic.*] conduct” (Motyer, 122).

11:3 **not judge after the sight of his eyes/the hearing of his ears**. Unlike mortal man, the Messiah does not judge other men based on appearances—what he sees or hears—for our senses can be deceived. We can be assured that his judgment and punishment are perfect.

11:4 **with righteousness shall he judge**. In the Sermon on the Mount in the JST, the Lord taught, “Judge not unrighteously, that ye be not judged; but judge righteous judgment” (JST Matthew 7:1). To judge with righteousness is to do so fairly and with justness in all circumstances.

11:4 **reprove with equity for the meek**. Or, “decide with fairness for the afflicted” (NIV). He does not reprove the meek, who have suffered enough, but does make sure that they are treated fairly—with equity.

11:4 **smite the earth with the rod of his mouth**. “Rod” could be translated staff, club, or scepter and parallels the next phrase that he slays the wicked with “the breath of his lips.” Like the image of Revelation 19:15, 21, where a “sharp sword” comes from the Lord’s mouth to “smite the nations,” this means that the Lord speaks and is immediately obeyed (compare Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29), unlike mortals who must inflict punishment with a physical rod or staff. No one will question the fairness of his judgment and the destruction that it brings, because his justice is righteous and perfect.

11:5 **righteousness/faithfulness**. Even the Messiah’s clothing represents his righteousness and his faithfulness. That his girdle (belt or sash) are about his “loins” and “reins” (often kidneys but in this case

probably waist or hips) represents his readiness to do righteousness and be faithful, similar to the idea of girding up your loins in scripture to do work (Grogan, 545). The Parrys see temple symbolism here (Parry, *Understanding*, 118). Verses 5-9 are not only quoted in 2 Nephi 21 (with the whole chapter) but by themselves in 2 Nephi 30:11-15.

GLORIOUS CONDITIONS OF THE MILLENNIUM (11:6-9)

As a result of the Spirit resting on the Messiah and his righteous judgment of the wicked and the poor and meek, great changes happen. These images are millennial in nature but are also cosmic—that is, the very nature of the earth will be transformed by virtue of the Messiah’s presence and righteousness. There is also the sense of a return to the Garden of Eden, similar to the Tenth Article of Faith that states, “the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.” The ‘renewal’ refers to the earth’s initial state at creation.

6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard will lie down with the kid;

and the calf and the young lion [will graze] together;
and a little child will lead them.

7 And the cow and the bear will feed;
their young ones will lie down together;
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

8 And the nursing babe will play on the hole of the
cobra,
and the toddler will put his hand in the viper’s den.

9 They will not hurt nor destroy in all my holy
mountain;
For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD,
as the waters cover the sea.

COMMENTARY

11:6 **The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb**. The animosities of the mortal world will be overcome during the Millennium, represented by carnivorous animals living in peace with their prey. The Hebrew word translated “dwell” is *gār*, (root *gûr*) is the warm reception of a stranger in your midst. It’s as if the lamb says to the wolf, ‘Come in and welcome to my home!’ (Motyer, 124). The Book of Mormon clarifies that the things in verses 6-9 happen after the Second Coming (2 Nephi 30:12, “*And then shall the wolf...*”; italics added).

Some note that the images here could be metaphorical; aggressive kingdoms will peacefully co-exist with weaker, peaceful ones, because of the changes to the world made by the Messiah (Oswalt, 1:282).

11:6 and the fatling together. This is probably a mistranslation or scribal corruption. The word “fatling” breaks up the structure of two animals and a verb in the previous examples. Several scholars propose that it should be a close word that would mean grazing or being fattened (Oswalt, 1:277; see also Parry, *Understanding*, 119). That would make the structure that former predators now live, sleep, and eat with their prey, and a child leads them all about.

11:6 a little child shall lead them. Besides the clear reference to peace that the image of a child leading around great wild beasts produces, it also follows up on themes presented in chapters 7-11—children are signs of the Lord’s love and care (and judgment) while the great kings and leaders of the earth are merely instruments in his hands.

11:7 the lion shall eat straw. In the day of this prophecy, no more will predators kill their prey but will instead eat plants; compare Genesis 1:30 where all animals eat “every green herb for meat [food].” See also D&C 101:26.

11:8 child shall play on the hold of the asp. An “asp” is probably a cobra, a very deadly snake, but now even a child will have no fear of the creature. This and the “cockatrice” (probably a viper) do no harm to small children, evoking the opposite image of the snake in Genesis 3 who beguiles the child-like Eve into eating the forbidden fruit and removing the enmity put between them in the garden (Genesis 3:15).

11:9 in all my holy mountain. The entire earth will become like the temple because the Lord will be personally present.

11:9 for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. The word “for” in this phrase is the explanatory link between the observed behaviors of nature and how it happens—every part of the earth knows God, “as the waters cover the sea” (or, “to the fullness of its capacity” (Motyer, 125). That God-filled earth keeps all animosity at bay and heals all enmity. Compare 2 Nephi 30:15-18 where Nephi teaches that “all things shall be made known unto the children of men.”

This is “the ideal age as manifested in Israel’s relationship to other nations” (JPS, 808). After the transitional verses in 10-11, the gathering of the scattered outcasts is depicted. This gathering, as far-reaching as it is, is done only by the power of the Lord, for nothing else could accomplish it.

10 And in that day there will be a root of Jesse, which stands for an ensign of the people;

to it will the nations seek,
and his place of rest will be glorious.

11 And it will come to pass in that day, that the LORD will set his hand again the second time to purchase the remnant of his people,

who remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush,
and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath,
and from the islands of the sea.

12 And he will raise an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

13 The envy of Ephraim will depart, and those hostile to Judah will be cut off;

Ephraim will not envy Judah,
and Judah will not be hostile towards Ephraim.

14 But they will fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines to the west,
and together plunder the peoples of the east;

they will lay their hands upon Edom and Moab,
and the children of Ammon will obey them.

15 And the LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea,
and with scorching wind he will wave his hand over the river,

and will smite it in the seven streams, so that men may cross with sandals.

16 And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant of his people, which will be left;

as there was for Israel in the day that they came from the land of Egypt.

COMMENTARY

11:10 **And in that day.** Verses 10-11 are different from the rest of the chapter, written in prose form, not poetry. They tie together the description of the Messiah and the consequences of his attributes and actions in verses 1-9 (using similar words, like “root of Jesse”) with the message of the gathering of the remnant in verse 12-16 (using words like “ensign”). The gathering of 12-16 is also an action of the Messiah, a continuation of vv. 6-9.

The phrase “in that day” (also at the beginning of v. 11) is an eschatological one, linking this text to the last days and God’s final efforts with mortal mankind.

11:10 **a root of Jesse.** In verse 1, the Messiah is the Branch growing out of the stump of Jesse, indicating he is the new David, for only David was the son of Jesse (some see “the use of *Jesse* as an attempt to downplay the house of David...the promise of one who could create a royal house from a peasant family”; Oswalt, 278-279). Here, however, the Messiah is also the root of Jesse, meaning he came before him and was at the very foundation of the house and family (Motyer, 121). See D&C 113:5-6 which explains that this root, like the rod in v. 1, is a servant of the Lord, who is the stump and branch. This could make it apply to Jesus himself or to one or more of his servants (or both!); many LDS scholars see the root as a symbol of Joseph Smith (Parry, *Understanding*, 120; Ludlow, 170-174).

In Luke 20:41-44, Jesus posed a question to the scribes who had come try and catch him in his words. “How say they that Christ is David’s son? And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?” This is the paradox of Isaiah 11:1 and 10. The Messiah is both the root of Jesse and the descendent of Jesse; he is present at both ends of the family line. Only Jesus can fit that description.

11:10 **which shall stand.** Not just a future tense but a continuous action: ‘which shall keep standing.’

11:10 **an ensign of the people.** The root of Jesse will be a standard bearer, signaling to the world where to go, how to act, what to do, etc. The standard or ensign is the gospel covenant (D&C 45:9). This is the opposite experience and outcome of the Lord’s other raising of an ensign, where Israel’s enemies are called to apply God’s judgment to his people (5:26-30).

11:10 **to it shall the Gentiles seek.** Compare to 2:2-4 where the nations (Gentiles) flow up to Jerusalem to be taught and make covenants.

11:10 **his rest shall be glorious.** Or, “his place of rest will be glorious.” The word used (*mēnuḥātuō*) can mean security or home (Ruth 1:9, especially JPS and NAB); where the ark of the covenant comes to rest (Numbers 10:33); or the promised land (Deuteronomy 12:9; Psalm 95:11). The term anticipates the gathering of the next verses and promises that the home/resting place/gathering place of the Lord for his people will be glorious, abundant, and full of rich blessings (Motyer, 125). D&C 84:23-25 teaches that this “rest” is “the fullness of his glory,” even “the face of God.”

11:11 **set his hand again the second time.** The first time was to bring the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt by the hand of Moses. (Some would point to the first return from Babylon instead, e.g., Ludow, 174, but the metaphors of gathering here indicate events coming out of Egypt, not Babylonmkj.) This second time will be equally miraculous and stunning, though different, because instead of moving a single group of people from one land to another, they will gather from the four corners of the earth to the exalted Jerusalem. Compare Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 14.

The use of “hand” here also marks the change in tone in Isaiah from the outstretched hand of judgment in chapters 9-10 to the hand that will with care and tenderness gather his people in 11-12 (and beyond).

11:11 **recover the remnant.** The word “recover” here also has the meaning of purchasing or redeeming (which means to purchase in behalf of another). The remnant is purchased by Christ through the Atonement, his blood being the currency (Acts 20:28). “Anyone can destroy, but who can give life again? This is God’s work” (Oswalt, 1:287).

11:11 **the remnant.** Not all of Israel will be gathered but only a portion, the *šē‘ār* (think of Isaiah’s son’s name), which in his call he learned could be merely one-tenth (6:13).

11:11

Assyria/Egypt/Pathros/Cush/Elam/Shinar/Hamath/islands. These are the lands surrounding Israel:

- East: Assyria, Elam (east of Babylon), Shinar (Babylon/Chaldea)
- West: islands or coastlands
- North: Hamath (Aram or Syria)

- South: Egypt, Pathros (upper Egypt), Cush (Ethiopia)

In other words, the remnant will be gathered from all directions and from all the places where Israel has been scattered, no matter where that is in the world.

11:12 ***an ensign to the nations.*** The ensign/standard/signal pole was the banner that was held up to rally an army to gather to a location for battle. We see the “ensign” as being the restored gospel today, the message of salvation combined with the authority of the Lord, that gathers those who hear the message of truth and wish to join the army of the Lord from all nations (lands of the Gentiles).

11:12 ***the outcasts of Israel.*** Or, “the banished ones of Israel” (NASB). These are the people who have been cast out of their lands and banished to the lands listed in v. 11.

11:12 ***the four corners of the earth.*** “Corner” can also be edge or border, pointing to the ancient view of the earth as a flat place with edges, all of which was self-contained in the firmament or covering that separated the heavens from the earth.

11:13 ***envy also of Ephraim/adversaries of Judah.*** Ephraim or the northern kingdom of Israel was jealous of Judah with her temple to Yahweh (at least from Judah’s perspective!). Judah had many adversaries but Israel was a consistent one for much of the time since the death of Solomon. Isaiah prophecies that the adversarial relationship between the two kingdoms will end with the gathering of the remnant.

11:14 ***fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines.*** Or, “swoop down on the slopes of the Philistines” (NASB; NIV). Not that Israel and Judah will be carried by the

Philistines, as the KJV translation might indicate, but rather that the combined armies of Israel and Judah will sweep down from the hills of Judea (“Shephelah”) to the western coasts of the Philistines and defeat them. Many see this metaphor as not a literal battle but as the gathered people ‘overcoming’ their former enemies by taking the gospel message to them (Motyer, 126).

11:14 ***Edom/Moab/Ammon.*** The returned remnant of Israel and Judah will also sweep east and subjugate their perennial enemies in that quarter as well.

11:15 ***the tongue of the Egyptian sea.*** Or, “the gulf of the Egyptian sea” (NIV). This refers to the Nile delta, where the Israelites lived and escaped from in the Exodus. The allusion is to the parting of the sea in that first gathering under Moses, where Moses’ hand was the means the Lord used to part the waters and let them cross over on dry land (Exodus 14:21-22).

11:15 ***shake his hand over the river.*** “The river” is nearly always the Euphrates in the OT, which it is here. In a miraculous way, the Lord will take the mighty Euphrates River, home to great civilizations like Babylon and Assyria, and split it into seven (a number representing divine perfection and harkening back to creation itself) smaller streams, so that a person can, without even getting his sandals wet, walk across what was once an impassable, wide river.

11:16 ***an highway.*** Not just an obscure road but a raised highway, well-built and maintained. But this is not the work of man, as the rest of the verse indicates; it will be miraculously provided as when Israel came out of Egypt. See D&C 133:21-31 for similar language.

11:16 ***like as it was to Israel.*** Since the gathering includes “the nations” (v. 12), it becomes like it was in the days of Israel but broader and grander.

GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD (12)

After declaring God’s judgment and mercy through the saving of the remnant, Isaiah and the people conclude with a song of triumph, praise, and thanksgiving. We see other songs in the Old Testament after a great victory, such the Song of Deborah after their victory in battle (Judges 5). In this case, the new Exodus metaphor aligns this song especially with the Songs of the Sea that Moses and Miriam sang in Exodus 15 after the Lord brought his people through the sea and delivered them from Egypt.

Some see two songs here, with the first one (verses 1-2) in the first person and the second one (verses 3-6) in the

second person plural (Parry, *Understanding*, 126). The pronouns certainly do change but it’s unclear if that indicates two separate songs or one song with, say, a soloist then joined by a choir. For another similar song, see D&C 84:99-102.

This song also looks back to and pulls themes from chapter 6, concluding the unit begun there. Verses 1-2, for example, echo Isaiah’s own experience in 6:1-7 and call out to a male individual. The praise of the remnant contrasts the wickedness of the people in Isaiah’s day (6:5). Then he concludes with a call to a female

individual, allowing the song to apply to all. The main message is thanksgiving for the salvation the Lord has given, how his anger was turned and is now a comfort.

ISRAEL'S SONG OF SALVATION (12:1-16)

1 And in that day you will say,

O LORD, I will give thanks to you.
Though you were angry with me,
your anger is turned away,
and you comfort me.

2 Behold, God is my salvation;
I will trust, and not be afraid;
for the LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.

3 With joy you will draw water out of the springs of
salvation.

4 And in that day will you say,

Give thanks to the LORD,
call upon his name,

declare his deeds among the people,
bring to remembrance that his name is exalted.

5 Sing unto the LORD, for he has done glorious things—
this is known in all the earth.

6 Cry out and sing for joy, O inhabitants of Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

COMMENTARY

12:1 **in that day**. Returning to the wording of vv. 10-11 and pointing toward the great day of the Lord, the song is one that will be sung when the Lord has worked his plan and completed all he has promised to do.

12:1 **thine anger is turned away**. After several statements of God's anger in previous chapters, now finally his destroying hand is stayed and his anger is abated, resulting in comfort from the Lord and praise from the people. "Reconciliation is not our willingness to have God but God's willingness to have us" (Motyer, 128). Compare to Exodus 12:12-13, 23, when the anger of the Lord (represented by the death of the firstborn) is turned away from Israel because of the blood painted on their doorposts. See D&C 61:20. The question naturally arises—how is his anger turned away? Isaiah's full answer doesn't come until chapters 40-55 (especially chapter 53), but for now the prophet looks to God in trust for salvation (v. 2).

12:2 **God is my salvation**. God has saved his people from all their enemies and established them in peace and comfort in the promised land. God doesn't just give salvation, he *is* salvation for his people.

12:2 **I will trust**. Or, 'I shall have faith' (NJB). This is what the prophet was trying to get Ahaz to declare in chapters 7-8 but was unsuccessful—Ahaz feared instead. Now the entire people cry out their faith and trust.

12:2 **JEHOVAH**. Only four times is the name "Jehovah" in the scriptures (see the footnote), though the Hebrew word *YHWH* appears thousands of times, usually written out in English as "LORD."

12:2 **my strength and my son/my salvation**. The last part of this verse is a direct quote from Exodus 15:2, Moses' song of triumph and praise, tying the two songs even more closely together.

12:3 **with joy shall ye draw water**. The living water of Christ is freely available to all, bringing joy to everyone who drinks. It is also another Exodus reference, both the water through which Israel passed and the water the Lord provided for them in the parched desert (Exodus 17).

Starting here, the voice changes from first person (vv. 1-2) to second person plural—"you," the community of the faithful, the remnant saved, and the nations brought to the Lord with them.

12:4 **Praise the Lord**. Because of his great works in behalf of his people, they will praise him constantly, pray to him with thanksgiving, and proclaim his great deeds the world over. Compare Psalms 105:1 and 148:13, which have very similar wording.

12:4 **call upon his name**. We typically see this as a call to prayer, but it can also mean to proclaim his name (Motyer, 130; compare Exodus 34:5-6). This meaning works well with the rest of v. 4 and the whole song—the singers are declaring to the world the great things the Lord has done.

12:5 **Sing unto the Lord**. The praises extend to music, which is perhaps the most sublime way to worship the Lord.

12:6 **Cry out and shout**. Unable to contain their happiness, the inhabitants of Zion will even shout their praises of the Lord.

12:6 **the Holy One of Israel**. Isaiah's preferred name for the Lord come out strongly in the concluding phrase of the song.

12:6 **in the midst of thee**. In these days, God will be personally among his people—Immanuel. Here the pronoun is feminine singular, “balancing the masculine of verse 1” (Motyer, 128). It may echo back to Miriam’s

song in the last half of Exodus 15, but it is certainly a fitting reference to daughter Zion, a theme Isaiah develops in many later chapters.

REFERENCES

AT – Author’s translation
JPS – Jewish Publication Society (also called Tanakh)
JST – Joseph Smith Translation
KJV – King James Version
LXX – Septuagint (Greek Old Testament)
MT – Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

NAB – New American Bible
NASB – New American Standard Bible
NIV – New International Version
NJB – New Jerusalem Bible
NLT – New Living Translation
RSV – Revised Standard Version

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