

March 4-10, 2024

2 Nephi 20–25

“WE REJOICE IN CHRIST”

Summary: *2 Nephi 20. The destruction of Assyria is a type of the destruction of the wicked at the Second Coming—Few people will be left after the Lord comes again—The remnant of Jacob will return in that day—Compare Isaiah 10. About 559–545 B.C.*

2 Nephi 21. The stem of Jesse (Christ) will judge in righteousness—The knowledge of God will cover the earth in the Millennium—The Lord will raise an ensign and gather Israel—Compare Isaiah 11. About 559–545 B.C.

2 Nephi 22. In the millennial day all men will praise the Lord—About 559–545 B.C. He will dwell among them—Compare Isaiah 12.

2 Nephi 23. The destruction of Babylon is a type of the destruction at the Second Coming—It will be a day of wrath and vengeance—Babylon (the world) will fall forever—Compare Isaiah 13. About 559–545 B.C.

2 Nephi 24. Israel will be gathered and will enjoy millennial rest—Lucifer was cast out of heaven for rebellion—Israel will triumph over Babylon (the world)—Compare Isaiah 14. About 559–545 B.C.

2 Nephi 25. Nephi glories in plainness—Isaiah’s prophecies will be understood in the last days—The Jews will return from Babylon, crucify the Messiah, and be scattered and scourged—They will be restored when they believe in the Messiah—He will first come six hundred years after Lehi left Jerusalem—The Nephites keep the law of Moses and believe in Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel. About 559–545 B.C.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How does the Book of Mormon help prepare me to understand the last days?

In these chapters of the Book of Mormon, an image is used called “the king of Assyria” who may conquer the whole world, but he and his “type” do not reign for such a long time. (**Isaiah 10:5–27**). These ‘wanna-be’ conquerors of the world ultimately die, (**Isaiah 10:16–18, 24–26; 14:24–27; 30:30–32; 31:8–9**). Isaiah describes them as a composite of types, adding the term “king of Babylon,” who styles himself as God-like and who promotes Babylon’s idolatrous creed or ideology. (**Isaiah 14:3–21; 47:1–8**). In the end, God’s elect prevail. Jesus taught “What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul? Or what shall a man give exchange for his

soul?” (**Matthew 16:26**) as a prediction of what would occur at the end of the world. Indeed, just such an entity or person attempts to conquer the world by force. God’s plan for eliminating the wicked, causes “utter destruction upon the whole earth.” (**Isaiah 10:23; 13:5**)

How did Isaiah and other prophets foresee the Latter-day restoration?

“And there shall come forth a ROD out of the STEM of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his ROOTS.” (**2 Nephi 21:1**) (emphasis added). In the 113th section of the Doctrine and Covenants the meaning is explained that Jesus the Messiah is referred to as the STEM, and two servants of the Lord are from two lineages, Joseph, and Judah. One, the ROOT, will receive the “Keys of the Kingdom,” for the “gathering of my

people in the latter-days,” and the “Priesthood. The prophet Joseph Smith fulfills this. The other, the ROD, also from two lineages, “on whom is laid much power.” That servant has not yet come forth. “What is the root of Jesse spoken of in the 10th verse of the 11th chapter? Behold, thus saith the Lord, it is a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days.” (Doctrine and Covenants 113:5-6) We know by scripture that Joseph Smith was descended from ancient Joseph, (2 Nephi 3:6, 8-9, 13, 15) and received the keys of the gathering of Israel from Moses and Elijah. (Doctrine and Covenants 110) In addition to being a “Joseph through Ephraim,” there is a Judah connection, through Lucy Mack, his mother’s lineage. From the publication “Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought,” we find this quote: “Bathsheba Bigler was promised by Joseph Smith, Sr., in 1839 that she would have “a son who shall be mighty, for he shall be a prophet and seer.” Bathsheba later married George A. Smith, nephew of Joseph Sr. He became an apostle, as did their son John Henry Smith. Their grandson George Albert Smith became eighth president of the church. In 1845 Jenetta Richards was promised by Uncle John Smith that her children would “grow up around thee like healthful plants; one shall chase a thousand and two put 10,000 to flight, for the enemy shall not prevail over the saints in the last days. And Abigail Abbott was told “one of thy posterity named after the name of his father and after the name of his great-grandfather who was a descendant of the tribe of Judah and of the household of David, shall be a mighty warrior and be led on

to avenge the blood of the Prophets and Patriarchs. (Blessing given to Abigail Abbott by William Smith, 23 June 1845, Schroeder Collection)

What do Jews say about a Latter-day Joseph?

Jews, feel that Prophets and Prophecy have ended, yet they have an expectation of prophets returning, such as a Latter-day Joseph, Son of Joseph, and a Latter-day David (as well as Elijah and Moses) (and others). The Jewish tradition of a latter-day “Joseph son of Joseph” is so significant to the “gathering” that I will repeat it. When the Chief Rabbi, Avraham HaKohen Kook (1865-1935) was appointed in Palestine in the 1920's, he was asked if the Jews could now build the Temple (destroyed since year 70 A.D.). His response was that the priestly rights were gone and referred to the great 12th century rabbi Moses Maimonides (1138-1204). Maimonides said, in effect, “We are waiting for a Messiah Ben-Joseph, to him will be given the keys of the gathering of Israel, he will restore Temple worship.” In Jewish Biblical tradition, Mashiach ben Yoseph, also known as Mashiach bar/ben Ephraim, is a Jewish messiah from the tribe of Ephraim and a descendant of Joseph. (Schochet, Rabbi Prof. Dr. Jacob Immanuel. "Moshiach ben Yossef")

How did Isaiah foresee a “Davidic descendant” as part of the Latter-day restoration?

“What is the rod spoken of in the first verse of the 11th chapter of Isaiah, that should come of the Stem of Jesse? Behold, thus saith the Lord: It is a servant in the hands of Christ, who is partly a descendant of Jesse as well as of Ephraim, or of the house of Joseph, on whom there is laid much power.” (Doctrine and Covenants 113:3-4) To better recognize the Davidic line, let us go back in time. Jesse’s youngest son was named David. In obscurity during his childhood, he was

ordained as the king of Israel. Yet he continued to be a shepherd; surely, he was a good shepherd. Born at Bethlehem he was promised by God that his seed would bring the King of Kings, the Messiah—also to be known as the Good Shepherd. “I am the good shepherd: The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” (John 10:11) The ancient David proved himself politically, militarily, and spiritually. Despite his sinfulness later in his life, Israelis still sing about the old David, King of Israel, awaiting a new Davidic descendant. Virtually every *Bar Mitzvah* celebration is enhanced by singing to the Jewish lad being honored, “*David, Melech Israel*.” He is treated as an expected David, one that should come in latter-days, out of obscurity, to reestablish a righteous kingdom. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints feel that the Davidic prophecies began to be fulfilled when the Davidic kingdom was partially restored in the meridian of time with the coming of Jesus of Nazareth. They do expect the rest of the fulfillment to come later.

How can I recognize the latter-day David when he arrives?

In considering the words of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea, the Jewish expectation of a latter-day David seems to include a person similar to the ancient David in addition to the Davidic Messiah, the King of Kings. He may also come out of obscurity. “But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.” (Jeremiah 30:9) “And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.” (Ezekiel 34:24) “Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.” (Hosea 3:5) As ancient events are a

kind of pattern for the future, the latter-day David may be like the ancient David. He probably will prove himself politically, militarily, and spiritually. The people may then want to proclaim him a King. However, he will not likely accept that kingship. Although honored as a prince or a noble person, he will introduce and bear witness of the LORD, the King of Kings, who came to earth in the meridian of time and will return in these latter days.

How do several scriptures refer to the “Stem?”

Three scriptures, (Isaiah 11, 2 Nephi 21, and Doctrine and Covenants 113) refer to the “Stem.” “Who is the Stem of Jesse spoken of in the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th verses of the 11th chapter of Isaiah? Verily thus saith the Lord: It is Christ. (Doctrine and Covenants 113:1-2) Using an olive tree as the object of comparison leads us to remember that olive trees are in a sense, non-deciduous, they are evergreen and do not lose their leaves in winter. They have no “trunk.” They are the ROOT, (more of the olive tree is below the ground than above). The root grows into the STEMS, that give the fruit. The shoots or RODS come from the below-ground roots. Eventually they intertwine into the above-ground roots. The Prophet Joseph Smith is revealing that the Messiah and His two servants are keys to the restoration of all things. As one of these servants is still unknown, there is a strong reasoning that the restoration is still going on, it is in the hands of the Messiah, the STEM and His servants, the ROOT and the ROD.

How will Jesus’ Millennial Reign be a new Paradise?

“Jehovah’s coming to reign on the earth will see an entire transformation of the earth and its inhabitants. Those who survive the destruction of the wicked that marks the end of the world will live in conditions perhaps similar to ones seen in

near-death experiences of heaven, although admittedly it is heaven's lower levels that are most often seen. The millennial age will be joyous: "Jehovah is comforting Zion, bringing solace to all her ruins; he is making her wilderness like Eden, her desert as the garden of Jehovah. Joyful rejoicing takes place there, thanksgiving with the voice of song" (*Isaiah 51:3*). Harmony will prevail among men and beasts (*Isaiah 11:6-9*)." (*Isaiah Explained, Avraham Gileadi, Chapter 10*)

What more can I anticipate about the Gathering and Reunion of the family of Israel?

We recognize how "historical prophecy" seems to repeat itself. In Biblical times around 924 B.C. E., Israel's ten northern tribes separated from the southern tribes of Judah and then disappeared after being taken to Mesopotamia about 200 years later. Those "two houses of Israel" have never reunited. However, as King David brought together the northern and southern tribes (*2 Samuel 5:1-5*), consider Isaiah's prediction that an end-time David, a descendant of ancient David, God's servant, will "raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore Israel" (*Isaiah 49:6*). At that time, all of Israel's tribes return from dispersion to their promised lands in an exodus from the four directions of the earth (*Isaiah 11:10-16; 43:1-8; 49:9-12, 22; Hosea 3:5*). Ezekiel also predicts: "Behold, I will take the people of Israel from among the heathen where they have gone, and I will gather them on every side and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be a king to them all. And they shall no more be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all . . . And they shall dwell in the land I gave Jacob my servant, in which your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they and their children and their children's children forever. And my servant David

shall be their prince forever. (*Ezekiel 37:21-22, 25*).

What can I do to prepare for this ultimate gathering and the Lord's return?

As descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob we must attain the spiritual elevation of our ancestors as a people, able to walk and talk with God and able to host heavenly beings. Isaiah predicts that will indeed happen. Being worthy to follow God's end-time servants, we will be a nation of God's people and compared to known history we will be "born in a day," God's Judgment Day. (*Isaiah 66:7-9*) We must think like and thus prepare for the coming of our Savior to reign on the earth (*Isaiah 52:8-12; 59:18-20*). "Jehovah's coming to reign on the earth will see an entire transformation of the earth and its inhabitants. Those who survive the destruction of the wicked that marks the end of the world will live . . . The millennial age will be joyous: "Jehovah is comforting Zion . . . Harmony will prevail among men and beasts (*Isaiah 11:6-9*)." (*Isaiah Explained, Avraham Gileadi, Chapter 10*) "And in that day thou shalt say: O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; He also has become my salvation. Therefore, with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." " . . . Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." (*Isaiah 12:1-3, 6*).

Where do I go to learn and prepare for this glorious time?

An integral part of understanding Isaiah's messages and his layering of prophecies-within-prophecies is his use of symbols and imageries. Other Prophets have done and still do this. In addition to literal meanings, is an example; the term

“mountain” can mean “nation.” In that sense, “(Babylon) I will make thee a burnt mountain.” (**Jeremiah 51:25**) However, the image of a “stone cut out of a mountain without hands,” “. . . became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” (**Daniel 2:35, 45**). Remember, the House of the Lord, the Temple, centers on the altar of atonement, anciently the altar had to be uncut, natural stone, formed by no man’s hands – because it represents His atonement for us. HE did it for us. Using a synonymous parallel, Isaiah establishes the image of a “mountain” for all nations and people (**Isaiah 13:4; 64:1–3**). Just as “mountains” and “hills” may mean “nations” or “kingdoms,” Isaiah, uses “forests” and “trees” that may mean “cities” and “people.” After all, still in Hebrew, a tree is likened to a person with a spirit. We are comfortable with the terms

tree of knowledge and tree of life. Isaiah extends that imagery with those who rebuild are “called oaks of righteousness, planted by Jehovah for his glory” (**Isaiah 61:3–4**). The ushering in of the millennial age will be a time of great joy for God’s people, for those who prove loyal until Jehovah comes on earth to reign: “And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore, with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” “Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.” (**Isaiah 12:1–3, 6**).