1 Nephi Chapter 21

Author(s): Alan C. Miner
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Chapter 21
{Original 1830 Chapter VI – continued}
(Compare Isaiah 49) [Added in 1920]

The Lord continues to speak to the covenant house of Israel scattered abroad.
The Lord’s Covenant Servant Was Preordained

1 And again

HARKEN

O ye house of Israel

All ye that are broken off

aa

and are driven out [or are part of the dispersion]

because of the wickedness

of the pastors [or the leaders]

of My people

[A]

yea

LISTEN

All ye that are broken off

[B] that are scattered abroad

[C]

O ye house of Israel

[A]

LISTEN

O ye ______________ isles

bb

unto me [the Lord's servant]

[C]

and

HARKEN

[B] O ye [covenant] people from far [like Lehi's family in the Americas]

[see the note at the end of the chapter about this first part of verse 1]

[A]

[He] the Lord hath called me

cc

from the womb [or foreordained me] [see v. 5]

[B] From the bowels of my mother

[A]

hath

He [the Lord] hath made mention

of my name

2 And

He [the Lord] hath made my mouth like a sharp sword [simile]

dd

In the shadow [protection] of His [the Lord's] hand [metaphor]

He [the Lord] hid me

[A] and

He [the Lord] hath made me a polished shaft [metaphor]

[B] in the protection of His [the Lord's] quiver [metaphor]

[C]

He [the Lord] hid me

[That is, the Lord has made me an effective weapon against falsehood, and held me for the appropriate time.]

[Par. aa – Extended alternating parallelism] [Par. cc – Simple chiastic or inverted parallelism]
[Par. bb – Extended alternating parallelism] [Par. dd – Extended alternating parallelism with simile & metaphor]

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3 And the Lord said unto me: Thou art My servant O Israel, My servant in whom I will be glorified [because you will yet fulfill your covenant calling].

The Suffering Covenant Servant

4 Then His servant said: I have labored in vain [A] and I have spent my strength for naught [nothing] [A] that is, though I have performed my labors, all God's covenant promises in his Plan of Salvation have not been fulfilled.

[A] Surely my judgment is with the Lord [ff] and my work is with My God [A] that is, I will look to the Lord for his judgement about the work.

5 And now saith the Lord that Formed Me from the Womb that I should be His servant to bring Jacob again to Him though Israel be NOT gathered yet I [His servant] be glorious in the eyes of the Lord and My God shall be my strength [gg]

[In essence, Don't worry! Your part in the whole Plan of Salvation was preordained. When the covenant promises are all fulfilled it will be in power and glory.] The Covenant House of Israel Will Be Restored

6 And the Lord said unto me:

[Par. ee – Simple synonymous parallelism] [Heb. oo – Metaphor / Idiom] [Par. ff – Simple synonymous parallelism] [Par. gg – Circular repetition “be”]
It is a light thing. [It is not enough, even though it is great]

[A] that thou shouldst be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob

[A] and [thou shouldst be] My servant to restore the preserved of Israel [the remnant]

[Note: See the covenant oath account of the “preserved” remnant of Joseph’s coat (Alma 46:23-24).]

[Duality—“the Servant” has the meaning of Christ, but it also means the covenant leaders of the house of Israel—Joseph, Ephraim . . . Nephi, Mormon, Moroni . . . Joseph Smith, etc.]

I [the Lord] will also give thee [I will also give you the assignment to be] for A Light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be My Salvation Unto the Ends of the Earth

[That is, the work of the redemption of the house of Israel and the light of the gospel shall reach to all men.]

7 [A] Thus saith The Lord

[A] The Redeemer of Israel

[A] His [Israel’s] Holy One

[B] to him whom man [or the wicked man] despiseth

[B] to him whom the [wicked] nation abhorreth

[B] to [the servant] of rulers

[That is, to the prophet servant of a people who are looked down on by the wicked nations of the world]

[A] Kings shall see [your works] [or rulers of nations]

[B] and [shall] arise [out of respect for Israel]

[A] Princes [shall see your works] also

[B] and [shall] worship [or bow down] [duality-covenant]

because of The Lord That Is Faithful

8 Thus saith The Lord

[A] In an acceptable time [especially in the latter-days]

[B] have I [the Lord] heard thee

O isles of the sea [or distant continents, especially the Americas]

[Par. hh – Simple synonymous parallelism] [Par. jj – Circular repetition “the Lord”]

[Heb. 02 – Multiple metaphorical names] [Par. kk – Simple synonymous parallelism] [Par. ii – Simple synonymous parallelism]
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[1 Nephi 21]

[A] and in a day of salvation
[B] have I [the Lord] helped thee

[C] and I [the Lord] will preserve thee
[C] and I [the Lord] will give thee

My servant for a covenant of the people

[D] to establish the earth
[D] to cause to inherit the desolate heritages
[that is, to establish Zion]

9 That thou mayest say to the prisoners [that sit in spiritual darkness] mm

Go forth [out of darkness into the light]

[That thou mayest say] to them that sit in darkness

* Show yourselves to the light

They shall feed in the [high] ways
and their pastures shall be in ALL high places

[They will be nourished by the covenant way. They will partake of the covenant ordinances.]

10 They shall NOT hunger NOR thirst [They shall not hunger or thirst for the word of God] **

NEITHER shall the heat NOR the sun smite them [The Lord will now bless rather than punish]

For He That Hath Mercy on Them / shall lead them
even by the springs of water / shall He guide them

11 And I [the Lord] will make ALL My mountains a way
and [ALL] My high ways shall be exalted

[In other words, the Lord will facilitate this gathering. The terms “mountains” and “exalted” allude to the temple.]

[Par. LL – Duplicate alternating]
[Par. mm -- Simple synonymous parallelism]
[Par. nn -- Simple synonymous parallelism]
[Par. oo -- “NOT” “NOR” “NEITHER”]
[Par.. ** -- Word Pairs (hunger-thirst, heat-sun)]

[Heb. 03 – Metaphor “mountains” / temples]
12 And then [in the days _______ of this gathering] O house of Israel

Behold these [gathering] children of Israel shall come from far

and Lo [look, see, behold] these from the north _______ shall come [omission] rr

*and these from the east _______ shall come [omission] rr

and these from the west _______ shall come

and these from the land of Sinim [the south] _______ shall come

13 Sing O heavens and Be joyful O earth

for the feet of those who are in the east [gathered Israel] [?] tt

shall be [joyfully] established [in Zion] [?] on the earth

and break forth into singing O mountains [which reach _______ into the heavens] [?]

[Note* The phrase “from the east” is omitted in verse 12, and then supplied in verse 13. Because verse 13 begins with a “distribution” line parallelism (heavens/earth), I have taken the liberty to finish the verse in the same manner.

for they shall be smitten NO more
for [He] the Lord hath comforted His people
and [He the Lord] will have mercy upon His afflicted

[Thus, the Lord will eventually redeem Israel.]

The Lord Will Not Forget Israel--His Covenant Children

14 But behold Zion [or Israel] hath said uu

[A] The Lord hath forsaken me [abandoned]

[A] and My Lord hath forgotten me [wicked Israel’s complaint]

but[behold] He [the Lord] will___ *show _______ you [*P = shew]

[A] that He [the Lord] hath NOT forsaken you

[A] or forgotten you

[Par. qq -- Distribution – also working out] [Par. rr -- Omission ? “these from the east”] [Par. uu -- Repeated simple synonymous parallelism]
For can a woman forget her sucking child? [Idiom—mother]

That she should NOT have compassion on the son of her womb?

Yea they may forget [Me] [Zion may break their covenants with the Lord] yet will I [the Lord] NOT forget thee O house of Israel

Behold I [the Lord] have graven thee upon the palms of My hands [a covenant sign]

Thy [temple] walls are continually before Me [the temple = a place of sacrificial covenants]

[That is, the Lord will keep His covenant promises to Israel - and to Joseph. The Lord is continually reminded of His covenant sacrifice to fulfill the work of the Father.]

Thy children shall make haste against thy destroyers

and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee

[In other words, Israel will overcome their enemies and Israel's enemies will flee from them.]

Lift up thine eyes round about

and behold [the future perspective]

[In essence, the Lord will show you Israel, especially the complainers, what will happen in the future.]

ALL these [shall] gather themselves together

and they [thy descendants] shall come to thee [Zion will be restored despite the naysayers]

And as I [the Lord] live saith the Lord [a covenant simile oath]

thou [Israel] shalt surely clothe thee with them ALL as with an ornament

and [thou] [Israel] shalt surely bind them on even as [with] a bride

[That is, as a bride puts on her finest clothing for the occasion of the marriage covenant, Israel will have her finest descendants covenant with the Lord in the last days.]
Gathered Israel Will Fill the Lands of Their Inheritance

19 For thy waste [places] and thy desolate places and the land of thy destruction [symbols of broken covenants] shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants and they [former enemies] that swallowed thee up shall be far away

[In other words, the promised land that was once destroyed will now be rebuilt, and will have so many people of Israel gathering to it that there seemingly won't be room. The inhabitants of the promised land will once again live in peace, and will prosper in the land.]

20 The children [or these latter-day converts to the true gospel] whom thou shalt have after thou hast lost the other [children] /\ the first children

21 Then shalt thou Israel say in thine heart Who hath begotten me these? [or Where in the world did all these Israelites come from?]

And Who hath brought up these? [these children of Israel]

[Par. ccc -- Repetition – emphasizing “places”] [Par. fff – Extended alternating parallelism] [Par. ddd – Simple chiastic or inverse parallelism] [Heb. 06 – Use of “and” meaning “but”] [Par. eee -- Chiastic or inverse parallelism] [Heb. 07 – Idiom “to and fro”] [Heb.. 05 – Metaphor “ears”]
Thus saith the Lord God

[1 Nephi 21]

The True Gospel to Be Restored among the Gentiles

The Lord now answers the question, "Where did all these people of Israel come from?"

22 Behold I will lift up Mine hand to the Gentiles [a covenant sign]

and I will set up My standard [the covenant gospel of Christ]

to the people

and they shall bring thy sons in their arms

and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders

And their kings shall be thy nursing fathers

and their queens shall be thy nursing mothers

[Note: For example, remember Nephi's vision [see 1 Ne 13:12]—that is, remember the man (Columbus) among the Gentiles that will be wrought upon by the Spirit of God to come to the promised land unto our seed—the seed of Joseph? Well, Kings and Queens will sponsor him.]

they shall bow down to thee [they--the leaders of nations] with their face towards the earth

and they shall bow down to thee [they--the leaders of nations] and lick up the dust of thy feet [be symbolically submissive]

[The tables will be turned in the last days.]

and thou shalt KNOW [* enallage]

that I Am the Lord for they shall NOT be ashamed [disappointed]

that wait for [or trust in] Me

[Par. ggg – Simple alternating parallelism] [Par. jji – Simple synonymous parallelism]

[Par. hhh – Simple alternating parallelism] [Heb. 08 – Idiom]

[Par. iii – Simple alternating parallelism]
God Will Preserve Covenant Israel

[Question]

24 [A] for shall the prey [Israel] be taken from the mighty? [their enemies]

[B] or [shall] the lawful captives be delivered?

[That is, will the Lord's covenant people - the House of Israel be delivered?]

[Answer]

25 [C] But thus saith the Lord

[A'] even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away

[B'] and the prey of the terrible [tyrannical regimes] shall be delivered [or set free]

[A] for I [the Lord] will contend with him that contendeth with thee [Israel]

[B] and I [the Lord] will save thy children from him that saveth them NOT

26 [A] And I [the Lord] will feed them that oppress thee [Israel's enemies] with their own flesh

[B] They shall be drunken with their own blood as with sweet wine

[In other words, Israel's enemies will turn against each other and not be satisfied until every drop of blood is shed.]

and ALL flesh shall KNOW [the evidence and power will be without dispute]

I The Lord Am Thy Savior
and Thy Redeemer
The Mighty One of Jacob

{Original 1830 Chapter Break—end of Chapter VI}
[1 Nephi 21]

(Note: What follows below (especially the first part of verse 1) is not contained in the KJV Bible. It is possibly a legitimate part of the Brass Plates that was purposefully deleted by the Jewish scribes attempting to cover up the wickedness of the religious leaders of Israel; or it is possibly an addition made by the Book of Mormon abridgers, writing to the people in modern times, to clarify Isaiah’s message. As with many parallelistic writings, if we take the liberty of supplying omitted phrases, the whole passage can be seen in multiple different parallelistic ways.

For example, 1 Nephi 21:1 can be seen as a series of four extended alternating forms (which are marked accordingly in orange brackets).

The words “Hearken / Listen / Listen / Hearken” (highlighted in yellow) can also be viewed as a simple inverse parallelism.

By taking just the first three elements highlighted in gray ([A] [B] [C]) and coupling them with the matching reverse three elements ([C] [B] [A]) we can see a chiastic structure.

(Adapted from the ideas of H Clay Gorton, The Legacy of the Brass Plates of Laban, p. 60-61)

(Note: According to John Tvedtnes, the ideas contained in the first verse of Isaiah 49 (1 Nephi 21:1) are also found in Jeremiah 10:21; 23:1-4; and Ezekiel 34:5-8. (John A. Tvedtnes, “The Isaiah Variants in the Book of Mormon,” FARMS, p. 73))