1 Nephi Chapter 20

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Chapter 20
{Original 1830 Chapter VI – continued}  [Added in 1920]

(Compare Isaiah 48)

[Note: The following chapter and all other chapters or quotations from the prophet Isaiah will have simple commentary inserted within the text similar to or adapted from the format of Isaiah Made Easier (1994, 2009) by David J. Ridges, with his personal permission. Because Isaiah is covenant oriented, my own textual headings will alert the reader to covenant understanding in addition to the key highlighted and underlined verses]

The Lord speaks to the House of Israel scattered abroad
(or more specifically here to the remnant of the tribe of Joseph, which Lehi’s family represented).
The Duplicity of Ancient Covenant Israel
(Of Such, the Brass Plates Bear Record)

1 Hearken
and Hear this

O House of Jacob [or more specifically here the tribe of Joseph]  \[\text{[P= which]}\]
who are called _______ by the [covenant] Name of Israel  01

and [who] are come forth out of the waters of Judah  02
[or out of the 
  waters of baptism]  \[\text{["phrase" added in 1840]}\]

who swear [or make covenants]  03
by _______ The Name of the Lord

and [who] make mention of [or pray to and talk about] The God of Israel  aa

yet they swear NOT / in truth
NOR

[do

they swear] / in righteousness  03

[In other words they claim to be the Lord’s people but they break covenants and don’t live the gospel.]

2 Nevertheless they ______ call themselves of the Holy City [or claim to be the Lord’s people]
but they do NOT stay themselves [or rely] upon _______ The God of Israel (AL)

Who Is the Lord of Hosts

yea the Lord of Hosts is His Name  bb

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[Heb. 01 – Calling one by a “name”]
[Heb. 02 – Separated compound preposition]
[Par. aa – Simple synonymous couplet]
[Par. bb – Simple inverse parallelism]
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[Note: In his writing style as exemplified above, Isaiah’s use of couplets can be seen very clearly. Most often he uses a couplet with simple synonymous parallelism, but he also uses couplets with alternating parallelism and even simple chiastic parallelism. To these couplets he adds slight variations or combinations. I have chosen to illustrate these couplets by “coupling” them together, rather than always footnoting them in the usual way.]

From the Beginning, Israel Was Given Proof of the Lord
(The Brass Plates Testify of This)

[Note: In what follows, Isaiah reminds Israel that there is no lack of obvious evidence that the true God exists.]

3 Behold [the Lord] have declared [the former] things or prophecies from the beginning and they went forth out of My mouth

[Par. cc – Circular repetition “I the Lord”]
[Heb. 03 – Metonymy “my mouth”]

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4 And [the Lord] did it because I knew that thou art obstinate

And [the Lord] knew thy neck is an iron sinew

[Heb. 04 – Idiom “neck is an iron sinew”]

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5 And [the Lord] have even from the beginning declared to thee [the prophesied events]

Before it [or the prophesied events] came to pass

And [the Lord] showed them [to] thee [by My prophets who have SEEN the future]

And [the Lord] showed them for fear lest thou shouldst say mine idol hath done them and my graven image [hath done them] and my molten image hath commanded them

[In other words, through My prophets I have prophesied to thee. I have shown you my power through prophecies so you couldn’t claim your idols have power.]
6 Thou hast heard and seen ALL this [these evidences] [*P= changed to seen and heard – why?]
and will ye NOT declare them? [or acknowledge them?]
and [will ye NOT acknowledge]
that I [the Lord] have *showed thee
new things from this time

[and that] I [the Lord] have *showed thee

and thou didst NOT know them?

[That is, I have shown you “new” things – “hidden” things that you couldn’t have known in advance. And you can’t even admit this?]

7 They [the prophesied events] are created now [or happening now]
and NOT from the beginning

even before the day when

thou hearest them NOT
they were declared unto thee

lest thou shouldst say
Behold I knew them

[That is, nobody could have guessed the fulfillment of these prophesied events back in the beginning when the prophecies were given. These prophecies were made even back when there was no clue that the prophesied events would take place. Otherwise you would have claimed you knew about the events also.]

8 Yea and thou hearest NOT
yea [and] thou knewest NOT

yea [when] thine ear was NOT opened

[In essence, from the beginning you not only failed to understand, but refused to listen.]

for I [the Lord] KNEW that thou wouldst deal very treacherously
and I [the Lord] KNEW that thou wast called a transgressor from the womb

[In other words, I the Lord knew from your infancy that you Israelites would be rebellious.]
[1 Nephi 20]

The Lord Will Purify Covenant Israel with Affliction

9 Nevertheless

for My [covenant] Name's sake [or because I am called the God of Israel] [added in 1837]
will
I [the Lord] defer mine anger
[Note* Apostrophes were not used in the 1611 KJV Bible]
and for My praise [or that I might merit your honor]
will
I [the Lord] refrain from thee
that I [the Lord] CUT thee NOT off

[In other words, I will not destroy Israel - or the tribe of Joseph – completely.]

[Note: The word “cut” alludes to the ancient covenant ceremony, where an animal was cut in two and those making the covenant passed through the cut parts, symbolizing the gravity of breaking the covenant.—see Raymond Treat]

10 For behold

I [the Lord] have refined thee [Israel] [implying a purification process with heat]
I [the Lord] have chosen thee [or I will make thee] in the furnace of affliction

[In other words (using the prophetic perfect tense where future events are spoken of in the past tense to confirm that they will happen), the Lord says to Israel: “I will purify you in the refiner's fire.”]

11 For Mine own sake [or because I love you]

yee For Mine own sake will
I [the Lord] _______do this [this refining and purifying]

for how should I / [O / ^?] ^I [the Lord] will NOT suffer My Name to be polluted
and I [the Lord] will NOT give My glory unto another

[That is, I will not allow My covenant name or Priesthood (Abr. 1:18) to be made unholy by not keeping My own covenant promises. Thus, I will remain true to the covenants I have made with you.]

The Lord Governs All Things
The Lord Has Always Spoken to Israel by Covenant

12 Hearken unto Me O Jacob

and [Hearken unto Me O] Israel My called [or to whom I have given a covenant calling]

for I Am _____ He [your Jehovah, your Christ, your Messiah] ff
and I Am _____ The First [deleted]
and I Am also The Last [I Am the Firstborn, and the Eternal God]

[Par. ff – Repetition 3 times.]
13 **Mine hand** hath also laid the foundation of the earth
And **My right hand** hath spanned [or governed] the heavens

*I am the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and I have done this through the covenant power of the Priesthood* [P = called]

[And by that covenant power] I call unto them [or I call unto the house of Israel]
And [because of that power] they stand up together [Israel - stand up and listen!]

[Note: This is an allusion to the covenant ceremonies that happened in the temple at Jerusalem.]

14 **All ye assemble** yourselves
and **All ye hear**

Who* among them [or who among Israel's idols] hath declared these things [these prophecies] unto them [or unto Israel]?

[Answer – NOT Israel’s idols]

[He] the Lord hath loved him [the faithful covenant servant—Israel]
yea and He will fulfill His covenant word
which He hath declared by them [the faithful covenant servants of Israel]

and He will do His pleasure on Babylon
and His arm shall come upon the Chaldeans

[In other words, these powerful people of Babylon, who symbolize all those who are temporally and spiritually depraved, will be destroyed.]
[1 Nephi 20]

[Note: The Lord’s covenant servant now speaks on behalf of the Lord.]

16 Come ye [Israel] near unto me [the Lord’s servant] for I have NOT spoken in secret FROM THE BEGINNING From the time that it was declared have I spoken and [He] the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent me

17 And thus saith The Lord Thy Redeemer [Christ] The Holy One of Israel I have sent him [my servant] I The Lord Thy God [note: *Who Teacheth Thee to Profit* by My word] [note: *Who Leadeth Thee by the Way Thou Shouldst Go*] hath done it

Obedience to the Lord’s Servant Brings Covenant Blessings
The Same as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

18 O that thou [Israel] hadst hearkened to My commandments Then had thy peace been as a river [continually flowing] jj and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea [constant]

[Note: This couplet above could have been directed at Laman & Lemuel. Remember what Lehi said to Laman when he named the river Laman—that through Christ he might have peace flowing constantly into his life—see 1 Ne 2:9.]

19 Thy seed also had been [or would have been] as the sand [or grains of sand] kk

The offspring of thy bowels [would have been]

[In other words, if you would be faithful to your covenants you would have the same covenant blessings as promised to father Abraham and Jacob.]
**[1 Nephi 20]**

His [Jacob's—Israel's] covenant name should NOT have been cut off NOR [should have been] destroyed from before Me

[That is, the house of Israel could have had it very good, and avoided such great destruction.]

20

**Go ye forth of Babylon** [Stop following wicked Babylon!]

**Flee ye from the Chaldeans** [Flee from unrighteousness]

With a voice of singing

**Declare ye** [that is, declare my servant's message]

**Tell** [ye] this [message]

**Utter** [ye] this [message] to the end of the earth [or to all men]

[Note the use of the figure of speech called "omission" in the previous verse. It makes the reader focus on the verse because of the parts [in brackets] that are omitted but should be a part of the sequence of lines.]

**Say ye**

[He] the Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob [Israel]

and they [Israel] thirsted NOT when the children of Israel were brought out of bondage in Egypt

He [the Lord or the Lord's servant] led them through the deserts

He [the Lord or the Lord's servant] caused [A] the waters to flow [B] out of the rock for them

[In other words, just look what the Lord has done for the children of Israel!]

22 **And notwithstanding**

He [the Lord] hath done ALL this

[And notwithstanding]

He the Lord hath done ALL this and GREATer also there is NO peace saith the Lord

[Par. LL – Synonymous list of commands with no “and”s]
[Par. mm – Like beginnings]
[Par. nn – Simple chiastic or inverted parallelism]
Note: The following statistical observations concerning the Book of Mormon Isaiah passages and their King James Version counterparts are instructive.

A. Of the 372 verses in the twenty chapters of Isaiah found in the Book of Mormon, differences are found in 165 verses (44% of the verses).

B. Thirty-eight percent of the altered verses contain substantive changes (62 verses).

C. Only one of the 20 Isaiah chapters in the Book of Mormon contains no differences—2 Ne. 21/ Isaiah 11.

D. 2 Nephi 22 / Isaiah 12 contain only one different word. In verse two the Book of Mormon version records "he also has become my salvation," whereas in the King James version we read "he also is become my salvation." This innocuous change of tense does not alter the meaning of the passage.

E. A total of 348 textual changes are found in the 165 altered verses.

F. The differences between the Book of Mormon and King James Isaiah texts are in the form of either additions, deletions, or modifications to the original text of the Book of Mormon translation of the original records. Of these, 28% (104 verses) are additions, 30% (112 verses) are deletions and 42% (156 verses) are modifications. (H. Clay Gorton, The Legacy of the Brass Plates of Laban, p. 32)