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Notes on Vocabulary in Isaiah 2-11, 13-14, 29, 48-54

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Notes on Vocabulary in Isaiah 2–11, 13–14, 29, 48–54

Donald W. Parry and Janet L. Garrard Willis

This glossary explains the archaic or perhaps unfamiliar English words or usages found in the English translation of the Isaiah texts in the Book of Mormon.



Isaiah 2

- 2 *mountain of the Lord's house* = the temple
- 4 *plowshares* = blades for plows
pruninghooks = blades on long handles used for pruning trees
- 6 *be replenished from the east* = take wisdom from apostate religious systems from the East
soothsayers = persons who attempt to predict the future
please themselves = shake hands with, make a covenant with
- 9 *mean man* = a common man
- 11 *haughtiness* = pride
- 15 *fenced wall* = a wall around a city
- 16 *Tarshish* = place unknown, "ships of Tarshish" may represent wealth and economic prosperity
- 18 *abolish* = destroy
- 20 *moles* = blind rodents that live underground
- 21 *clefts of the rocks* = crevices or caves
- 22 *cease ye from man* = stop depending on mortal man
wherein is he to be accounted of? = how much is he worth?

Isaiah 3

- 1 *the stay* = HEB: the protector
the staff = HEB: support, walking stick
the whole stay of bread and the whole stay of water = in context probably refers to the whole quantity of physical support, as well as spiritual support

whole stay of bread and whole stay of water = (?) in context, probably refers to the whole quantity of physical support, as well as the spiritual support mentioned earlier in the verse.

- 2 *prudent* = wise
ancient = elderly
- 3 *captain of fifty* = military commander
cunning artificer = skilled craftsman
eloquent orator = person gifted with public speaking ability
- 5 *proudly* = disrespectfully
base = vile, vulgar
- 9 *shew of their countenance* = the look on their face
- 10 *eat the fruit of their doings* = enjoy the consequences of their righteous living
- 11 *the reward of his hands shall be given him* = he will suffer the consequences of his actions
- 14 *spoil of the poor* = property taken from the poor
- 16 *wanton* = flirtatious, seductive
mincing = taking short rapid steps (to make their ankle jewelry tinkle)
- 17 *discover their secret parts* = expose them, put them to shame
- 18 *cauls* = HEB: headbands
round tires = jewelry or ornaments shaped like a crescent moon
mufflers = HEB: veils
- 19 *mufflers* = HEB: veils
- 22 *mantles* = loose, sleeveless piece of clothing worn over hair and other clothes
wimples = cloaks
crisping pins = purses
- 23 *glasses* = see-through garments
vails = shawls
- 24 *rent* = a torn rag (Alma 46 also uses this word to mean a torn piece of cloth)
stomacher = a robe

sackcloth = coarse cloth

burning = branding (a mark of slavery)

26 *lament* = cry or mourn

desolate = empty or cleaned out; specifically a reference to Jerusalem

Isaiah 4

1 *reproach* = disgrace, stigma of being unmarried and childless

2 *branch of the Lord* = the Lord's people

5 *cloud and smoke by day* = elements connected with the presence of God

shining of flaming fire by night = presence of God

defence = protection

6 *tabernacle* = in historical context, a holy yet temporary place of shelter, often a tent

covert = shelter

Isaiah 5

2 *fenced it* = put a wall around

winepress = machine used to press grapes into wine

3 *betwixt* = between

5 *eaten up* = animals will graze on it

trodden down = trampled

6 *digged* = hoed or weeded

briers = thorny plants

7 *judgment* = justice

a cry = a cry of distress

8 *join house to house* = to want and to steal other people's property (Micah 2:2) or to obtain property through legal but unethical means

10 *bath* = Hebrew unit for measuring liquid

homer = Hebrew unit of capacity; about 11.5 bushels or 100 gallons

ephah = Hebrew unit for measuring dry goods; just over a bushel

- 12 *viol* = lyre
tabret = tambourine
pipe = a flute
- 13 *famished* = starving
- 14 *pomp* = extravagance, noise, uproar
- 17 *waste places* = ruins
strangers = foreigners
- 18 *draw iniquity with cords of vanity* = are too proud to cut themselves loose from their sins
draw . . . sin as it were with a cart rope = pull around large burdens of sin as animals pull a loaded cart (compare 2 Nephi 28:22, awful chains)
- 19 *counsel* = advice
- 23 *justify the wicked for reward* = acquit the guilty man for a bribe
take away the righteousness of the righteous = take away the good man's legal rights, cheat him
- 24 *fire devoureth the stubble* = fire destroys the wicked as if they were dry stalks left over after the harvest
chaff = the worthless material left over after harvesting wheat
- 25 *carcases* = dead bodies; variation of carcasses
- 26 *ensign* = a banner, a flag
hiss = whistle
- 27 *girdle of their loins* = HEB: waistcloth
latchet of their shoes = shoe fastener
- 28 *bows bent* = bows strung and ready
hoofs . . . like flint = hard hooves
wheels like a whirlwind = wheels spinning around like a tornado

Isaiah 6

- 1 *train* = the hem or skirt of his garment
- 2 *seraphims* = angelic beings that serve in Jehovah's heavenly court
twain = two

- 4 *posts of the door moved* = HEB: foundations of the thresholds trembled
- 5 *undone* = HEB: cut off; become overwhelmed with the immensity of one's personal sins
purged = removed through washing
- 10 *make the heart of this people fat* = harden their hearts
- 13 *teil tree* = linden tree; tree of fine, white grain
substance = stump

Isaiah 7

- 2 *confederate* = united in league with
Ephraim = here this refers to all of the northern Israel
- 3 *conduit* = canal or tunnel
in the highway of the fuller's field = by way of the launderer's field near the stream below the pool of Siloam
- 4 *tails of these smoking firebrands* = the two kings have little fire left; smoldering stumps of firebrands (smoldering wood)
- 6 *vex* = disturb
breach = make a hole in by continual attacks
- 8 *threescore and five years* = 65 years
- 12 *tempt* = test or try
- 14 *virgin* = pure young woman
- 16 *abhorrest* = hate
- 18 *hiss for the fly* = whistle up a tormentor; that is, signal the opposing forces
- 20 *shave with a razor that is hired* = the land will be depopulated by a foreign invader
- 21 *nourish a young cow, and two sheep* = only a few self-sustaining survivors will remain
- 23 *silverlings* = small piece of silver
- 25 *mattock* = a tool used for chopping and digging, a hoe

Isaiah 8

- 1 *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* = Isaiah's son, whose name means "speedy-spoil-quick-booty"

- 3 *the prophetess* = Isaiah's wife
4 *spoil* = riches taken in war, booty
6 *waters of Shiloah* = a spring of water in Jerusalem which symbolizes Jesus Christ
Rezin and Remaliah's son = the kings of Syria and Israel, who are united against Judah
9 *associate yourselves* = form alliances
gird yourselves = arm yourselves, prepare for war
10 *nought* = nothing; variation of naught
11 *with a strong hand* = with power
13 *let him be your fear* = be reverent and humble before God
14 *sanctuary* = temple
stone of stumbling, rock of offence = dismay and suffering for unbelievers
gin = trap
snare = trap
16 *bind up the testimony* = tie the scroll and seal it with wax
18 *are for signs* = their names are symbolic; his sons' names mean "God is with us" (Immanuel), "speedy-spoil-quick-booty" (Maher-shalal-hash-baz) and "a remnant shall return" (Shear-jashub)
19 *them that have familiar spirits* = sorcerers who commune with the dead
wizards that peep and mutter = sorcerers
for the living to the dead = for the living on behalf of the dead
20 *law* = scripture
testimony = value of the scripture
21 *hardly bestead* = hard pressed, beset by troubles or enemies, in a plight
fret = worry

Isaiah 9

- 1 *vexation* = trouble, or period of distress
2 *darkness* = apostasy and captivity
great light = Christ

- they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death* = those who have disbelieved
- 4 *yoke of his burden* = weight of his troubles
staff of his shoulder = taskmaster's staff used to smite slaves—a symbol of oppression
rod of his oppressor = bondage
- 7 *zeal* = impassioned eagerness
- 8 *lighted upon* = come to, fallen on
- 10 *hewn stones* = stones shaped with a tool
sycomores = fig trees
cedars = generally denotes cedar trees of Lebanon
- 12 *before* = in the east
behind = in the west
- 14 *rush* = stiff, grass-like plant
- 17 *hypocrite* = someone who claims to believe a certain set of beliefs, but does not follow them
folly = foolishness
- 18 *thickets* = dense groups of shrubs, small trees, or brush

Isaiah 10

- 1 *grievousness* = oppressive decrees
- 3 *day of visitation* = day of judgment
- 5 *indignation* = extreme anger
- 6 *tread* = to stomp or walk upon
mire = filth or refuse or deep mud
- 10 *idols* = object of worship
graven images = artistic representation of an animate creature, such as a painting or statue
- 13 *prudent* = wise, having good judgment
bounds = boundaries, frontiers
- 16 *fat ones* = those with abundance
- 18 *standardbearer* = a person that carries a banner; frequently the banner is political in nature and carried during warfare
- 20 *remnant* = portion that remains
smote = struck

- stay upon* = remain faithful to
22 *consumption* = destruction
26 *scourge* = a devastating disease or event
27 *anointing* = refers to the coming of the Savior; HEB: oil
33 *lop the bough* = cut off large branches of a tree that may
be fit for use but are pruned so that the rest of the
tree will be healthy
haughty = proud and overbearing

Isaiah 11

- 1 *rod* = new growth or shoot of a plant
3 *reprove* = correct others
4 *rod of his mouth* = his (just) word
5 *girdle* = innermost piece of clothing
reins = waist
8 *hole of the asp* = home of a poisonous snake
cockatrice = poisonous snake
10 *ensign* = banner, flag
13 *vex* = irritate or bother greatly
14 *fly upon* = come down on; attack the western slopes that
were Philistine territory
spoil = plunder
15 *tongue of the Egyptian sea* = narrow strip of land extend-
ing into the Red Sea
seven streams = the Lord will split the river into seven
parts
dryshod = without getting their shoes wet

Isaiah 13

- 3 *sanctified ones* = "sanctified ones" and "saints" are
synonymously translated from either of two He-
brew words in the Old Testament
4 *tumultuous* = full of commotion or uproar
mustereth = gathers together, calls up for military duty
8 *a woman that travaileth* = a woman in childbirth
9 *wrath* = extreme anger

- 11 *arrogancy* = pride
haughtiness of the terrible = HEB: pride of the tyrants or oppressors
- 12 *a man* = a mortal
- 14 *chased roe* = hunted deer
sheep that no man taketh up = unshepherded, abandoned sheep
- 15 *thrust* = pierced or stabbed
- 16 *dashed* = smashed by hurling against something hard, destroyed
spoiled = plundered
ravished = raped, defiled
- 18 *fruit of the womb* = children
- 20 *make their fold* = enclose and tend sheep during the night
- 21 *doleful creature* = HEB: wild beasts that live in the desert
satyrs = HEB: he-goats, or demons
- 22 *houses* = HEB: palaces, meaning the abandoned palaces of destroyed Babylon
wild beasts of the islands = hyenas
dragons = jackals or wild dogs

Isaiah 14

- 1 *strangers* = non-Israelites
joined with = will be preached to, be converted
cleave = join with
- 4 *proverb* = a satirical song
golden = HEB: proud
- 5 *sceptre* = one of the symbols of a king's power
- 6 *a continual stroke* = constant blows
hindereth = slows or stops
- 8 *fir* = HEB: cypress tree
laid down = in death
feller = tree cutter
- 11 *pomp* = vanity
viols = fiddles or violin-like instruments
- 13 *sides of the north* = in the farthest north

- 16 *narrowly look upon thee* = HEB: squint at you
18 *his own house* = his family tomb
19 *an abominable branch* = a rejected branch
raiment = clothing
the stones of the pit = the very bottom
trodden = walked upon
20 *renowned* = remembered by future generations
23 *bittern* = nocturnal wading bird, heron
besom = broom
24 *purposed* = intended
27 *disannul* = cancel or destroy
29 *out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice* = from a
less-poisonous or nonpoisonous snake will come a
poisonous snake
serpent's root = HEB: the bottom of a snake
cockatrice = venomous snake
(Or, from a less or nonpoisonous snake comes a poi-
sonous snake)
30 *root* = posterity
31 *dissolved* = destroyed

Isaiah 29

- 1 *Ariel* = hearth of God or the temple; another name for
Jerusalem
3 *camp against thee round about* = surround you
4 *thy speech shall whisper out of the dust* = your testimony
will come to the living after you are dead (compare
Moroni 10:27)
familiar spirit = ghost
5 *chaff* = the worthless material left over after harvesting
wheat
6 *tempest* = storm
7 *munition* = something that serves as a defense
as a dream of a night vision = passing vision or dream
10 *closed your eyes* = given you spiritual blindness
13 *people draw near . . . removed their heart far from me* = the
people claim to love God, but their actions show

- that they do not
fear = regard or reverence for
- 14 *perish* = die out
prudent = wise
- 15 *seek deep* = try with much effort
works are in the dark = they hide their actions
- 16 *shall be esteemed . . . he had no understanding?* = their
works will testify of who made them
- 17 *esteemed* = valued, regarded
- 18 *the blind shall see out of obscurity* = will lose their spiritual
blindness
- 19 *meek* = humble before God
- 21 *snare* = trap
the gate = place of public transactions
a thing of nought = something that has no worth
- 22 *wax* = grow, become
- 23 *fear* = regard or reverence for
- 24 *erred* = made mistakes

Isaiah 48

- 2 *holy city* = Jerusalem, HEB: consecrated city
stay themselves = rely upon, HEB: are sustained by
- 3 *shewed* = showed, HEB: made them understand
- 4 *obstinate* = stubborn
thy neck is an iron sinew = you are stiff-necked or proud
brow brass = metaphor for pride
- 5 *molten image* = metal idol used for worship
graven image = carved idol
- 8 *treacherously* = unfaithfully, or in a dishonest manner
transgressor = HEB: apostate or rebel
- 9 *defer mine anger* = hold back or put off anger
- 10 *refined thee* = HEB: made [you] pure, purged you
furnace of affliction = purifying heat of trial
- 11 *polluted* = HEB: defiled, stained
- 13 *spanned* = stretched across the whole of, spread out
- 14 *do his pleasure* = Cyrus will do his desire, or wish

- 18 *then had thy peace been as a river* = HEB: your welfare or peace would have flowed and prospered
thy righteousness as the waves of the sea = [implied] your righteousness would have been constant
- 19 *Thy seed also had been as the sand* = you would have had many descendants
offspring of thy bowels = your descendants
- 20 *utter* = HEB: proclaim

Isaiah 49

- 2 *shaft* = body of an arrow
quiver = container used for carrying arrows
- 4 *for nought* = for nothing, in vain
- 6 *give thee for a light to the Gentiles* = use you for an example or missionary to the foreigners
- 7 *abhorreth* = hate or despise
- 8 *inherit the desolate heritages* = built up that which has been wasted (compare Isaiah 61:4)
an acceptable time = a favorable time
- 9 *feed in the ways* = sheep grazing along the way
high places = barren hills
- 10 *smite* = strike, destroy
- 15 *sucking child* = a nursing baby
- 16 *walls* = HEB: walls of protection
graven = carved, engraved
- 19 *swallowed thee up* = conquered you
- 20 *strait* = tight or narrow
- 25 *terrible* = HEB: tyrant, unrighteous leader

Isaiah 50

- 1 *bill* = HEB: scroll or evidence of
iniquities = sins
- 2 *shortened* = impaired
rebuke = HEB: chiding, reprimand
- 4 *in season* = at an appropriate time

- 6 *smiters* = HEB: strikers, people who hit
 7 *confounded* = disgraced
 8 *contend* = fight
 9 *wax old* = grow old, decay
 11 *kindle* = build, start
compass yourselves about = are surrounded by

Isaiah 51

- 1 *Hearken* = hear and follow
whence ye are hewn = from which you are cut
 6 *vanish away* = HEB: be dispersed
wax old = decay
abolished = done away with, destroyed
 7 *revilings* = insults
 10 *ransomed* = HEB: redeemed or delivered
 17 *dregs* = sediment remaining at the bottom of a cup of wine; last remaining, unwanted part of something

Isaiah 52

- 2 *arise, and sit down* = arise from the dust and sit down in dignity, being redeemed
bands of thy neck = bonds, chains, or fetters used to restrain a captive
 4 *sojourn* = HEB: reside
 7 *tidings* = news
publisheth = HEB: makes heard
 8 *bring again Zion* = HEB: return to Zion, or restore Zion
 10 *made bare* = show strength
 11 *unclean* = unholy
vessels = HEB: instruments
 12 *your rereward* = your rear guard, person guarding your back
 13 *prudently* = wisely
extolled = HEB: uplifted, glorified
 14 *astonied* = astonished

visage = face, appearance

marred = HEB: disfigured

- 15 *so shall he sprinkle many nations* = so shall many nations
marvel at him

Isaiah 53

2 *comeliness* = HEB: glory or beauty

3 *acquainted with grief* = familiar with grief

esteemed = HEB: valued

4 *borne* = HEB: carried

5 *chastisement of our peace* = punishment that brings us
peace

stripes = wounds caused by a whip or similar object

7 *dumb* = silent

8 *declare his generation* = speak concerning his descendants

10 *pleased* = HEB: had a purpose for

11 *see of the travail of* = HEB: see the fruit of his pain

12 *intercession* = an act in behalf of

Isaiah 54

1 *barren* = women who cannot have children

travail with child = experience childbirth

2 *habitations* = homes

4 *confounded* = perplexed, confused

reproach = HEB: shame

6 *when thou wast refused* = HEB: because you were despised

9 *wroth* = angry

11 *stones* = HEB: building stones

12 *carbuncles* = red precious stones

16 *waster* = destroyer