

ISAIAH 2, 3, 4 & 5

Nephi Quoting Isaiah 2-5 in II Nephi 8:17-100 –
(Nephi in 550s BC looking back at Isaiah in the 730s BC)

THE SETTING FOR NEPHI'S WORDS

- In 1 Kings 14:15-16, In Jeroboam's time (about 930 BC), **Ahijah of Shiloh** declared this prophecy foretelling the deportation of Israel by Assyria:

For **the Lord shall smite Israel** [the ten tribes in the northern kingdom with its capital at Samaria] as a reed is shaken in the water, and **he shall root up Israel out of this good land**, which he gave to their fathers, **and shall scatter them beyond the river**, because they have made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger. **And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam**, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.

- In II Nephi 1:1 to 3:23, **Lehi gave his final prophecy and exhortation** in which he said Jerusalem had been destroyed (II Nephi 1:4-5), then **he died** (II Nephi 3:23). Jerusalem was

destroyed in 586 BC, so Lehi's final prophecy would have been sometime after that event.

- In **II Nephi 4:7-11**, **Nephi fled to the “the land of Nephi”** with Sam, Jacob, Joseph, Nephi's sisters & Zoram. Sometime later, we will learn that the land of Nephi was located in the **southern highlands**.
- In **II Nephi 4:27-28**, Nephi reluctantly accepted his role as **king**, making the Nephite civilization a monarchy from 570 BC until 91 BC.
- **II Nephi 4:51: 560 BC** is the first time the Nephites & Lamanites were populous enough to call any conflict between them a **“war.”**

NEPHI QUOTES ISAIAH IN II NEPHI 8

Chronology:

- In II Nephi 4:51, after not saying much for ten years, Nephi tells us about the Nephite civilization & ends this chapter by saying there were “wars” & it was about **560 BC**.
- Back in the Old World, Cyrus assumed control of the Persian Empire in **559 BC**.

- Jacob's sermon occurred **sometime after 560 BC & before 545 BC** (II Nephi 4:51 & Jacob 1:1).

One thing I failed to mention last week was **II Nephi 7:42**, which is one of the most important verses in the Book of Mormon, Jacob said:

And remember after ye are reconciled unto God, that **it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved.**

II Nephi 8:1-16 is Nephi's introduction to Isaiah's words in Isaiah 2. This is his "**My Soul Delighteth**" Soliloquy:

And now, I, Nephi, write more of the words of **Isaiah**; for **my soul delighteth in his words**. For I will liken his words unto my people; and I will send them forth unto all my children: for **he verily saw my Redeemer**, even as I have seen him. And my brother Jacob also, has seen him as I have seen him . . . Wherefore, by the words of three, God hath said, I will establish my word . . .

- Behold, my soul delighteth in proving unto my people **the truth of the coming of Christ**. For, for this end hath the law of Moses been given . . .
- And also, my soul delighteth in **the covenants of the Lord** which he hath made to our fathers.
- Yea, my soul delighteth in **his grace, and his justice, and power, and mercy**, in the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death.
- And my soul delighteth in **proving unto my people, that save Christ should come, all men must perish**.

For if there be **no Christ**, there be no God; and if there be **no God, we are not**, for there could have been no creation. **But there is a God, and he is Christ; and he cometh in the fullness of his own time.**

And now I write some of the words of **Isaiah**, that whoso of my people shall see these words, **may lift up their hearts and rejoice for all men**. Now, **these are the words; and ye may liken them unto you, and unto all men**
[End of II Nephi 8:1-16]

NEPHI QUOTES ISAIAH 2 IN II NEPHI 8:17-38

Nephi is writing II Nephi 8 sometime **after 560 BC & before 545 BC** (II Nephi 4:51 & Jacob 1:1).

After 16 verses, **Nephi starts quoting Isaiah 2.**

Isaiah was called to prophetic ministry in 742 BC (last yr. of Uzziah's very successful 52-year reign). So Isaiah 6 occurred in 742 BC. This was a time of great crisis.

IN II NEPHI 8 (ISAIAH 2), WE'RE GOING TO JUMP BACKWARD IN TIME:

• **FROM 550s BC IN NEW WORLD (NEPHI)**

• **TO 730s BC IN OLD WORLD (ISAIAH)**

REVIEW OF HISTORY LEADING UP TO 742 BC:

- Isaiah lived in the small southern nation of **Judah**.
- From **800 to 745 BC**, because Assyria was caught up in its own internal conflict, Israel & Judah experienced a time of **unprecedented peace, prosperity and dominance** over their neighbors:
 - Israel was ruled by **Jeroboam II** for 41 years!
 - Judah was ruled by **Uzziah** for 52 years!

- In the 760s & 750s, **Amos & Hosea** had gone to Israel, with its capital at Samaria, to warn them of impending doom.
- **Isaiah** knew Israel was doomed (Isaiah 7:8 & 9:8-21).
- **Uzziah** became king of Judah when he was 16 years old (II Chron. 26:1), and he reigned for 52 years:
 - In 750 BC, Uzziah sinned and burned incense in the Temple. Yahweh struck him with leprosy!
 - Uzziah didn't make public appearances for the last 8 years of his reign.
 - His son, Jotham, became his spokesman and co-regent until Uzziah's death in 742 BC.

Judah's Kings:

- **Uzziah** ruled for 52 years starting at 8 years of age.
- **Jotham** was co-regent with his father for 8 years, then reigned solo for 8 more years.
- **Ahaz** was 20 years old & had just started as king.

- **Hezekiah** – righteous king of Judah

Most of Isaiah's ministry to Judah was during the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah.

- In **745 BC**, ruthless Tiglath-pileser led a civil war & assassinated the royal family of Assyria.
- **Isaiah was called to prophetic ministry in 742 BC** (last yr. of Uzziah's very successful 52-year reign). So **Isaiah 6 occurred in 742 BC**. This was a time of great crisis.
 - **Assyria** was a menacing giant & an instrument of cruelty under Tiglath-pileser.
 - **Syria** was bigger than Judah.
 - **Israel** was led by a wicked king & bigger than Judah.



- This was **during the Assyrian Crisis**, in which their Samaria, Israel kept their sovereignty until 722 BC, when they were exiled.
- **Isaiah** was a prophet under these kings of Judah: **Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah**, and possibly a few years into **Manasseh's** reign.
- **Second Kings 15:29** describes **Tiglath-pileser's (Pul's) first capture, deportation and scattering of a large part of Israel's population (in northern Israel)** as King Pekah of Israel reigned

in the capital of Samaria. The capital would not be deported until 19 years later in 722 BC.



- **King Pekah of Samaria, Israel** was an upstart king who had assassinated his predecessor and hated the Assyrian Empire's oppression. He

formed a coalition with Askelon and Gaza and **King Rezin of Damascus, Syria** in an attempt to overthrow the Assyrians.

- **Ahaz and his people were terrified** by this threat from Pekah of Israel. The first seven chapters of Isaiah were delivered by Isaiah to King Jotham and King Ahaz to guide them during this critical time in Judah's history (the Assyrian Crisis).
- Ahaz was 20 years old when he assumed the throne of Judah:

II Kings 16:

- 1 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign.
- 2 Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did *not* that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God, like David his father.
- 3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the

heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel.

- 4 And **he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places**, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

II Chronicles 28:

- 1 Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; but he did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord, like David his father;
- 2 **For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalam.**
- 3 Moreover he burnt incense **in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen** whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. [SW of Jerusalem, Ammonites had done this & offered their children to their god, Moloch.]

- During the reign of Ahaz (735-715 BC), **Judah was threatened by an alliance between:**
 - **Syria** (a medium-sized country), and
 - **Israel** (a small country, but bigger than Judah).
- This “Syro-Ephraimite Alliance” **wanted to overthrow Assyria**, which was an empire led by Tiglath-pileser.
- These two kings wanted to force Judah to join their alliance against Assyria.
 - **Syria** was led by **King Rezin** and
 - **Israel** was led by **King Pekah.**

II Kings 16:

- 5 Then **Rezin** king of Syria, and **Pekah** son of **Remaliah** king of Israel, came up to **Jerusalem to war**; and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him.
- Pekah attacked Judah with a vengeance (2 Kings 15:37 and Isaiah 7:1). **If Pekah and Rezin could remove Ahaz from the throne, this would end the lineage of the house of David sitting on the throne as God had promised King David back in 2 Samuel 7!**
 - So, **the Syro-Ephraimite War of 734 BC** was an attempt to **conquer Judah and dethrone Ahaz.**
 - Syria & Israel had killed 120,000 of his soldiers in one day (II Chron.28:6)!
 - They had also deported 200,000 citizens of Judah (II Chron. 28:8)!

II Chronicles 28 (speaking of Ahaz of Judah):

- 5 Wherefore **the Lord his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria**; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus. **And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter.**
- 6 For **Pekah** the son of Remaliah **slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand in one day**, which were all valiant men; because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers.
- 7 And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the governor of the house, and Elkanah that was next to the king.
- 8 **And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.**

- Ahaz & Judah were terrified!!!
- Despite Isaiah's advice, in 734 BC a frightened Ahaz begged Tiglath of Assyria for help against the Syro-Ephraimite alliance. This made **Judah** a puppet or vassal state or tributary of Assyria.

II Kings 16:

- 7 So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son; come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.
 - 8 And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria.
- **Isaiah** was a prophet to Judah sent to guide them through this perilous time. He lived in Jerusalem. He repeatedly told Ahaz not to trust in, or enter into, alliances with any country!

- **Tiglath conquered Syria and killed Rezin.**

II Kings 16:

9 And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him; for **the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.**

- **Ahaz went north to Damascus to celebrate this victory with Tiglath. Ahaz stayed to worship Tiglath's god!**

II Kings 16:

10 **And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus;** and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof.

The **basic message of all OT prophets** prior to the 586 BC exile was:

1. **You've broken the Mosaic covenant**, so **repent** of your idolatry, social injustice, religious ritualism.
2. No repentance? Then **judgment!**
3. Yet there is **hope beyond the judgment for a glorious future restoration** of Judah & Israel. We would call this "**Zion.**"

The **first three chapters of Isaiah** are the **Covenant Lawsuit** in which the above **three-part message** is once again conveyed by Isaiah to Ahaz of Judah!

ISAIAH 1-3

THE COVENANT LAWSUIT

Isaiah does *not* talk about his *calling* to be a prophet until chapter 6.

In 734 BC, he had a much more important *emergency* to discuss with the king of Judah!

NOTE: THINK HOW THIS APPLIED TO THE NEPHITES & HOW IT APPLIES TO US TODAY!

ISAIAH 1 – THE SINS OF JUDAH

Isaiah 1-3 – In this **courtroom**:

- Yahweh is the **judge** (Isaiah 3:13)
- Heaven & earth are called upon as **witnesses** (1:2).
- Isaiah is the chief **prosecutor** (1:1-3).

Isaiah 1:2-3 - Though we might not notice, God is nurturing and bringing up his people. Rebellion is a common sin among his people.

Right off the bat in Isaiah 1, Isaiah launches a blistering verbal attack against Judah for their repeated violation of the **Mosaic Covenant** they made at Sinai in 1,446 BC.

In Isaiah 1:3, **Isaiah the prosecutor** declares:

- Yahweh states that he raised children, but they have rebelled against him. Worse than that, **his children no longer even know him.**
- In verse 3, Yahweh tells Judah even a dumb donkey knows his master's crib, **but Israel does not know!**
- In verse 4, God tells them **they have ruptured the relationship & forsaken Yahweh** (spurned the Holy One of Israel), similar to a divorce. They have turned their back on him (You never turn your back on a king!). It calls the nation of Judah “children that are corrupters.”

Isaiah 1:4-9 – **Pride:** The people had been guilty of hardheartedness. They were “corrupters” who had “forsaken the Lord.” He calls them “Sodom & Gomorrah.” They were ripe for destruction. **They would have been destroyed by now, except for a small remnant who were still faithful.**

Isaiah 1:10-15 – **Religious Ritualism:** The people were guilty of **empty, meaningless worship.**

Isaiah 1:16-17 – **Repent:** This is where the Restoration has primarily drawn its meaning of the word “**repentance**”: **cease to do evil; learn to do well.**

Isaiah 1:18 – **Let Us Reason Together:** The God who created us **condescends to reason with us** as well. He invites us to converse with him, to give him our reasons. He is a personal and relatable God who wants his people to seek a relationship with their Creator.

Isaiah 1:19-23 – **Social Injustice:** God’s sad lament over **social injustice in Jerusalem:**

“How is the faithful city become a harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross . . . princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves. Everyone loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards; **they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.**”

Isaiah 1:24-31 – **Judgment:** There will come a time when **he will finally remove his “adversaries,”** those who attempt to thwart his divine purposes. God will purify his people and burn away the dross or impurities. **When God’s kingdom comes, it will be redeemed by judgment, and people will be converted by the righteousness of his people.**

Finally, in Isaiah 1:30-31 God speaks of **his blessing for the faithful,** among whom the fire of God’s Spirit will burn brightly.

ISAIAH 2 & 3:

ISAIAH TELLS JUDAH THERE IS HOPE FOR ZION (FUTURE RESTORATION)

In Isaiah 2, the prophet tells Judah and Jerusalem that

“in the last days . . . **the mountain of the Lord’s house** shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills, **and all nations shall flow unto it.**”

Isaiah told Judah there was hope that, in the last days, Judah would once again be restored to a right relationship with Yahweh!

TWO VIEWS ABOUT ZION AMONG CHRISTIANS

No. 1 - Amillennialism (A *Figurative* Interpretation)

What the Restoration calls “Zion,” other Christians refer to as the “Messianic Age”:

- Some Christians **consider this “Messianic Age” to be more symbolic**, thinking that Christ will rule from heaven (**amillennialists**), and
- Other Christians have a **more literal interpretation, thinking that Christ will rule over a literal kingdom on earth (premillennial dispensationalists and the Restoration)**.

So, some Christians refer to Isaiah 2, 3 and 4:2-6 as a future “**Messianic Age**,” a more **symbolic interpretation** in which Jesus will rule from heaven and **the promises given to the children of Israel will be transferred to Christians** in the latter days.

No. 2 - Premillennial Dispensationalism (A Literal Interpretation)

Christians who have **a premillennial dispensationalist view** agree with **the Restoration on a more *literal* interpretation** in which Jesus will return to rule over an earthly kingdom in an actual physical location for 1,000 years called the Millennium (Revelation 20).

This includes a belief **that the literal descendants of Israel** who have been scattered among all nations will come to **believe** in Christ as Savior and Lord, be **gathered in** from all parts of the world, and will help to **establish** God's kingdom on earth. All nations in the world will then be invited to enter into his kingdom.

In keeping with this, Isaiah 65 and 66 say Israel will once again occupy the promised land in the Old World and be superior to all nations. **Amillennialists call this a "Messianic Age," and the Restoration calls this "Zion."** See Isaiah 11:10-12 for another example.

To this premillennial dispensationalist view, **the Restoration adds** the idea that there will also be a gathering of believers in **a "New Jerusalem" on the American continent** (see Ether 6:8-12 for example).

The **Jewish people** look forward to what they call **"Israel's redemption"** when a human king they call the Messiah (not Jesus) will lead Israel to victory over its enemies.

A lot of what amillennialist Christians, dispensationalist Christians, Restoration Christians and the Jewish people believe about this final kingdom arises from **their differing interpretations of the book of Isaiah!**

Isaiah Then Returns to His Indictment of Judah & Their Many Sins (Isa. 2:5-3:27)

In Isaiah 2:5-22, **Isaiah continues to list the many sins of Judah.** He continues his indictment of Judah through chapter 3. **THINK HOW THIS MIGHT APPLY TO THE NEPHITES & TO US TODAY!**

Isaiah 2:

- V. 5 – Ye have all gone astray to wickedness!
- V. 6 – The Lord has forsaken you.
- V. 7 – Your land is full of gold, horses & chariots.
- V. 8 – Your land is full of idols.
- V. 9 – You are proud.
- V. 10 – The lord will smite you.
- V. 11 – You will be humbled, & the Lord will be exalted.
- V. 12-17 – The proud will be brought low.
- V. 18 – Idols will be destroyed.

- V. 19 – They will hide in the holes, rocks & caves.
- V. 20 – They will throw their idols away.
- V. 21 – They will fear the Lord & his majesty will smite.
- V. 22 – Cease ye from man.

Isaiah 3 (predictive prophecy – How does this apply to the Nephites & to us?):

- V. 1 – **God will take away the staff of bread & stay of water.**
- V. 2-4 – **Children will rule** over mighty adults.
- V. 5 – All people will be **oppressed.**
- V. 6-9 – **Judah & Jerusalem will be ruined & fallen – they will choose leaders by this criterion: whether they have food & clothing or not.** Their countenances will belie the fact that they've sinned as Sodom did.
- V. 10-14 – The Lord will stand in **judgment** of his people: They are **ruled by women and children.**
- V. 14 – To **the princes** . . . **you have eaten up the vineyard,** & the spoil of the poor is in your house.
- V. 15 – God will say to the princes: **Ye beat and grind the faces of the poor.**

- V. 17 – **The daughters of Zion are haughty** – the Lord will smite them with a scab & discover their secrets.
- V. 18-23 – In that day, **the Lord will take away their sources of pride.**
- V. 24 – Instead of a sweet smell there will be a **stink**; instead of well-set hair, **baldness**; instead of a girdle, a **sackcloth**; **burning** instead of beauty.
- V. 25 – Thy **men will fall by the sword.**
- V. 26 – The gates of Jerusalem & Judah will be **desolate** and lament and mourn.
- V. 27 – **Male Scarcity, Based on Jewish OT View that it is a Reproach to Be Unmarried:** In that day seven women will take hold of one man and say “**Let us be called by your name to take away our reproach.**” Apparently, there will be a depopulation of men due to war that is disastrous. Some will be so desperate that they suggest polygamy is the solution to that problem. But the only way celibacy could be seen as a reproach is if we all had the same view that Jews did in the OT about remaining single.

That is the end of the list of sins in the Covenant Lawsuit (found in chapters 1-3).

Isaiah 4

(Hope in Zion – a future restoration)

Most scholars think all six verses (5 in the IV) of chapter 4 should be in chapter 3. There shouldn't be a chapter 4 that separates 4 from 3.

Isaiah 3:27 starts with this phrase:

“In that day . . . seven women shall take hold of one man . . . let us be called by thy name . . .”

Isaiah 4:1 says:

“In that day . . . shall ‘**the branch**’ of the Lord be beautiful and glorious,

What Day? (see chapter 3 above)

- When God will take away bread & water.
- When children rule
- When they will choose leaders by who has clothing
- When princes have eaten the vineyard & ground the faces of the poor.
- When the daughters of Zion will be brought low
- When men will fall by the sword
- When seven women take hold of one man – let us be called by thy name.

Jesus Shall Be Beautiful & Glorious

- 4:1 – “In that day” (meaning in that calamitous time chapter 3 has been talking about) . . . **Here it is describing Jesus** through the metaphors of:
 - A **branch** of the Lord that is beautiful & glorious,
 - A **fruit** that is excellent & comely to those who are escaped from Israel.

Those Written Among the Living Will Be In Zion

- 4:2 – “**They that are left in Zion**, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be **called holy**, even everyone that is **written among the living in Jerusalem.**”

Revelation 3:5:

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of **the book of life**, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

The Spirit of Judgment & Burning: Purge the Filth

- **4:3-5 – Jesus will:**

- **v. 3 -- wash away & purge “filth” (sin) of everyone who is “written among the living in Jerusalem”:**
 - by the spirit of judgment, and
 - by the spirit of burning.

A Defense for Zion: Cloud by Day & Fire at Night

- **v. 4 -- raise a defense for Zion in the form of:**
 - “a cloud and smoke by day” and
 - “the shining of a flaming fire by night.”

Tabernacle: Protection from Heat & Rain

- **v. 5 – raise a tabernacle for:**
 - a shadow from heat in the day, and
 - a place of refuge &
 - a covert from storm & rain.

ISAIAH 5

The Song of the Vineyard

(v. 7 tells us the Vineyard = Israel, the People of God)

- Isaiah 5 is sometimes called **“The Song of the Vineyard.”** (i.e., the Song of Israel).
- In **Isaiah 3:14**, the prophet referred to a “vineyard” saying **the rich princes had “eaten up the vineyard.”** In **chapter 5**, Yahweh explains the vineyard metaphor in greater detail. **God verbally attacks these people who took everything for themselves.** They are consumers & consumption is their theme in life.
- In **5:2**, we’re told **how carefully and lovingly the Lord has cultivated his vineyard (Israel):** he fenced it, threw out stones, planted “the choicest vine,” and built a tower in the midst of it and made a winepress, **but it “brought forth wild grapes.”** Note: Israel did *not* obey & fulfill it’s mission to bless the families of the earth.

- In **5:3**, God is speaking in v. 3-6: Yahweh calls for the “inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah” to **“judge I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard (Israel).”**

- In **5:4**, God **demands an accounting** of his grapes, the people of Israel. **He is calling on Israel to judge themselves:**

“What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes.”

- In **5:5-6**, God tells us what he will do to his vineyard, but it is obvious here that God is angry:
 - He will **“take away the hedge** thereof, and it shall be eaten up.”
 - He will **“break down the wall** thereof, and it shall be trodden down.”
 - He will **lay the vineyard waste**: it won’t be pruned, or digged, but there will come briers and thorns, & he will command the clouds not to rain upon it.

- 5:7:

For **the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel [the people of God]**, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; **and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.**

THE SIX WOES

FIRST WOE

Woe to Those Looking for Endless Acquisitions!

5:8-10 – First Woe: Woe to those for whom acquiring property was an endless process and for whom there was never enough (i.e., aren't content to just make a living):

Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there can be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth . . . **many houses shall be desolate, and great and fair cities without inhabitant.** Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath [8 gallons of wine], and the seed of a homer [one bushel of seed] shall yield an ephah [half a bushel].

Note: We will spend our time and energy toiling on more and more acquisitions, but what will it produce? These **vain pursuits** will produce:

- Empty houses (v. 9), and
- A poor harvest (v. 10).

SECOND WOE

Woe to Those Who Have “Checked Out” of Life & Are Absent!

5:11-12 - Second Woe: Woe to those who rise up early “to follow strong drink” and “that continue until night, and wine inflame them!”

Woe to them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, and that continue until night, and wine inflame them! “And the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts; **but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.**”

Note:

Our affluence affords us the opportunity to simply ignore the needs of the world and withdraw into a world of pleasure and act like God is not actively holding up or supporting his creation.

We live in a world today when people turn to many different sources to numb pain and forget the dreariness of their lives:

drugs, alcohol, food, media, soap operas, Facebook, video games, etc. We often use these things as a source of comfort & sometimes as a form of escape.

Starting those things early in the morning & continuing until night, day after day, indicates that we have withdrawn and are absent from life.

We can't afford to withdraw or check out. God has placed us in this time and place **to perform a ministry for Him**. **"They regard not the work of the Lord"** (v. 12)!

5:13:

Therefore, **my people are gone into captivity because they have no knowledge**; and **their honorable men are famished**, and their multitude dried up with thirst.

Note Regarding This Second Woe:

- First, we're *captive* to those meaningless pursuits. In other words, we're addicted!
- Second, our honorable men will have no wisdom to offer us in our great hour of need.

5:14-16 – Continuing this second woe, the most explicit description of Israel's future doom is stated in Isaiah 5:14 in the prophetic tense as if it had already happened:

Therefore **hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure**; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, **shall descend into it**. And the **mean man** shall be brought down, and the **mighty man** shall be humbled, and the eyes of **the lofty** shall be humbled. **But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted** in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.

Note: Today, we observe “hell enlarging herself and opening her mouth” as we slowly, perhaps imperceptibly, descend like the proverbial “slow-boiling frog” into the depths of it. However, the Lord of hosts will be *exalted* by judgment and righteousness.

THIRD WOE

Woe to Those Whose Iniquity Is So Great That It's Like Hauling a Cart!

5:18:

Woe unto them that draw [pull] iniquity with 'cords of vanity', and sin as it were with a cart rope.

To help you understand this, the metaphor is drawing or *pulling* a cart that represents our sin. It is **our "vanity"** that keeps us connected to those sins, very much like a cart rope.

5:19 – Continuing this third "Woe to them . . ."

That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, **that we may see it**; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, **that we may know it!**

To help us understand this better, this is where **God's people become cynical. They don't believe. They challenge God to prove it!** Okay, let him return. Let him judge us. Show us that what you are saying is true!

See “areasonstobelieve.org”:

- **Why is God hidden? Why doesn't he make himself more apparent or obvious to us? Why doesn't he stamp “Made by God” on every molecule in the universe? Why doesn't he erect a giant neon cross in the sky to point us all to Jesus?**
- Arminian view: We are free agents. God will not do anything that might interfere with that agency. To do that, he has to keep some degree of “epistemic distance” from us.

God's Hiddenness

THE FOURTH WOE

Woe to Those Who Lie About Ethics!

5:20:

“**Woe** unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

See “areasonstobelieve.org”:

Are there **objective moral values** in the world, and does the existence of those values do anything to establish that God exists? **What do atheists say?**

1. “**Naturalists**” say there is **no such thing** as an objective right and wrong (e.g., Richard Dawkins says “morality is an illusion,” yet he says it’s “wrong” for . . .
2. “**Atheistic moral Platonists**” say there is objective morality, **but it exists entirely on its own, with no help from a god.**
3. “**Moral relativism**”: Right & wrong **varies by person and culture.**

THE FIFTH WOE

Woe to Those Who Declare Their Independence or Autonomy From God!

Isaiah 5:21:

“Woe unto the **wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!”**

1 Corinthians 3:19:

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God

Proverbs 3:7:

Be not wise in thine own eyes; fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

Proverbs 12:15:

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

Proverbs 26:12:

Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him.

THE SIXTH & FINAL WOE

Woe to Excessive Drinkers & Those Who Pervert Justice For Money!

5:22-23:

“**Woe** unto **the mighty to drink wine**, and men of strength to mingle strong drink, **which justify the wicked for reward**, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!”

II Nephi 12:10-26:

10 And **there shall also be many which shall say, Eat, drink, and be merry;** nevertheless, fear God, **he will justify in committing a little sin:** yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; **there is no harm in this.**

- 11 And do all these things, for to-morrow we die; and **if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God.**
- 12 Yea, and **there shall be many which shall teach after this manner, false, and vain, and foolish doctrines,** and shall be **puffed up** in their hearts, and shall **seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord**; and their works shall be in the dark; and the blood of the saints shall cry from the ground against them.
- 13 Yea, they have all gone out of the way; **they have become corrupted.**
- 14 Because of **pride**, and because of **false teachers**, and **false doctrine**, **their churches have become corrupted**; and their churches are lifted up; because of pride, they are puffed up.
- 15 **They rob the poor**, because of their **fine sanctuaries**; they rob the poor, because of their **fine clothing**; and **they persecute the meek**, and the poor in heart; because in their pride, they are puffed up.

- 16 They wear stiff necks and high heads; yea, and because of **pride**, and **wickedness**, and **abominations**, and **whoredoms**, **they have all gone astray, save it be a few, who are the humble followers of Christ;**
- 17 Nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances **they do err, because they are taught by the precepts of men.**
- 18 **O the wise, and the learned, and the rich, that are puffed up** in the pride of their hearts, and all those who **preach false doctrines**, and all those who commit whoredoms, and **pervert the right way of the Lord; WO, WO, WO** be unto them, saith the Lord God Almighty, for **they shall be thrust down to hell.**
- 19 **Wo unto them that turn aside the just for a thing of nought, and revile against that which is good, and say that it is of no worth:**
- 20 For the day shall come that **the Lord God will speedily visit the inhabitants of the earth;** and in that day that they are fully ripe in iniquity, they shall perish.

- 21 But behold, **if the inhabitants of the earth shall repent** of their wickedness and abominations, **they shall not be destroyed**, saith the Lord of hosts.
- 22 But behold, **that great and abominable church, the whore of all the earth, must tumble** to the earth; and great must be the fall thereof:
- 23 For **the kingdom of the devil must shake**, and they which belong to it **must needs be stirred up unto repentance, or the devil will grasp them** with his everlasting chains, **and they be stirred up to anger and perish:**
- 24 For behold, **at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men**, and stir them up to anger against that which is good;
- 25 And **others will he pacify**, and lull them **away into carnal security**, that they will say, All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well;
- 26 And **thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.**

TWO JUDGMENT SPEECHES

5:24:

Therefore as the fire **devoureth** the stubble, and the flame **consumeth** the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall **go up as dust; because they have:**

1. **cast away the law** of the lord of hosts, and
2. **despised the word** of the Holy one of Israel.”

5:25:

Therefore is **the anger of the Lord kindled against his people**, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them; and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. **For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.**

FOREIGN INVASION: AN ENSIGN TO THE NATIONS

God will call for foreign armies to descend on his people. For Israel, this was Assyria. For Judah, this was Babylon, Persia & Greece. These armies will react instantly to God's call & bring judgment.

- **“The nations from far”** seem to be **Assyria** in Isaiah's day and **Babylon** for a later generation of Judah. Yahweh will *hiss unto them* and *they will come swiftly*. They won't be weary or stumble or slumber. Their arrows will be sharp & bows bent.
- These “nations from far” **will roar like young lions “and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry away safe, and none shall deliver.”**
 - Assyria will take Israel into exile.
 - Babylon will take Judah into exile.

5:26:

And **he will lift up an ensign to the nations** from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth; and, behold, **they shall come with speed swiftly.**

5:27:

None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken.

5:28:

Whose arrows shall be sharp, and all their bows bent, and their horses' hooves shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind; their roaring shall be like a lion.

5:29:

They shall roar like young lions; yea, they shall roar, and **lay hold of the prey,** and shall carry away safe, and none shall deliver.

5:30:

And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea; and if they look unto the land, **behold darkness and sorrow;** and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.



For Next Week: Study II Nephi 9 along with:

- Isaiah 6
- Isaiah 7
- Isaiah 8
- Isaiah 9
- Isaiah 10
- Isaiah 11
- Isaiah 12

Ahaz had a massive problem on his hands: Syria and Israel wanted to overthrow Assyria. They wanted to **force Judah to join them**.

Ahaz refused to join Syria and Israel in fighting against the larger, ruthless Assyrian Empire (Isaiah had told Ahaz not to join in this alliance *against* Assyria and not to become an *ally* of Assyria either – just **remain neutral**).

So, the **Syro-Ephraimite War of 734 BC** was an attempt to **conquer Judah and dethrone Ahaz**.

- Syria & Israel had killed 120,000 of his soldiers in one day!

- They had also deported 200,000 citizens of Judah!
- Ahaz was terrified.

Against Isaiah's inspired counsel, **Ahaz formed an alliance with Tiglath of Assyria.** Tiglath promptly decimated Syria and Israel, thus making Judah a tributary or puppet of Assyria. That was 734 BC.

In **725 BC**, Shalmaneser of Assyria laid siege to the capital city of **Samaria** for three years.

In **722 BC**, Shalmaneser died and his son, **Sargon II** **then scattered the last inhabitants of the northern kingdom of Israel to the eastern half of the Assyrian Empire.**

This all happened to **Israel** as Ahaz and the inhabitants of Judah were stunned by the ruthlessness of the Assyrians.

Read 2 Chronicles 28 and 2 Kings 16 to learn more about Ahaz.

- In 725 BC, Assyria had deported much of Israel and began its **siege of Samaria**, the capital of Israel!
- In 722 BC, **Samaria fell** to the Assyrians (Isaiah's 20th year as a prophet).
- **The Book of Isaiah:**
 - This is the **historical setting** for **Isaiah 1 to 39**.
 - In **Isaiah 40**, it changes to talking about the future Jewish exiles 150 years later who would be ruled by Babylon & Persia (that would not start until 586 BC).
- That is why 20th century scholars thought there had to be a **Deutero-Isaiah** who lived 150 years after

Isaiah, the son of Amoz. They even talked about “three Isaiahs.” **But our church believes that would be impossible because Nephi had in his possession the later chapters of Isaiah that a 2nd Isaiah was supposed to have written!**

- Recently, OT scholars have revised their position considerably: the three-Isaiah view has been abandoned. Scholars now say the book of Isaiah developed slowly **over four centuries** in numerous small stages, constantly being edited.