

1 Nephi 20 — Isaiah 48: The Refining Furnace and the Command to Depart

The first sustained Isaiah block in the BOM; the refining-furnace doctrine; the come out of Babylon command; Nephi reads exilic Isaiah to a household that just came out.

Ten Insights

1. **Form without substance is fraud.** V. 1 — *they swear not in truth nor in righteousness.* 2 Tim. 3:5's *form of godliness* in 700 BC. **Covenant fraud is worse than covenant absence.**
2. **Out of the waters of Judah.** V. 1 — *u-mimme yehudah.* Genealogical address: *seed of Judah.* The Lehtes are Judahite; Isaiah addresses them directly.
3. **Prevenient prophecy as monotheist proof.** Vv. 3–8 — the central polemical argument of Isa. 40–48: the Lord *foretells* and *fulfills*; idols do neither. **Personal prophecy fulfilled is the disciple's experimental verification.**
4. **Iron sinew, brow of brass.** V. 4 — the anatomical metaphor. *Oref* = will; *metzach* = resolve. Iron neck = will incapable of bending; brazen brow = resolve impervious to shame. **Nephi is showing his brothers their own face in Isaiah's mirror.**
5. **For my name's sake — covenant self-anchored.** V. 9 — *lema'an sh'mi.* The Lord defers His anger not because Israel deserves it but because the covenant is anchored in *Him*. **The disciple's failure does not unravel the covenant.**
6. **Refined in the furnace of affliction.** V. 10 — *kur oni.* Egypt-typology furnace (Deut. 4:20). **Choice and refinement coincide in the crucible.** The disciple in suffering is being chosen, not rejected. Verse 10 inverts the prosperity gospel before any prosperity gospel exists.
7. **Alpha and Omega in the Brass Plates.** V. 12 — *I am the first and the last.* Christ's self-naming in Rev. 1:8, 17; 22:13 is the Brass Plates' Isaiah. **The Christological identification is in the Brass Plates six centuries early.**
8. **Trinitarian-collegial sending.** V. 16 — *the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me.* The Lord God sends; the Spirit sends; the sent one speaks. **One of the few OT passages where trinitarian grammar surfaces.**
9. **Divine pathos — O that thou hadst hearkened.** V. 18 — the counterfactual-wishful particle *lu*. The Lord grieves over what could have been (cf. Deut. 5:29; Matt. 23:37; Moses 7:28–37). **The Lord can be disappointed.** Free will is real.
10. **Come out of Babylon as continuous practice.** V. 20 — *tze'u mi-Bavel.* Same verb as Abraham's *lekh-lekha* (Gen. 12:1). Picked up by Paul (2 Cor. 6:17), John (Rev. 18:4), Joseph Smith (D&C 133:5, 14). **The disciple is always being called out.**

Chiastic Structure

- A Hear, O house of Jacob — covenant address (vv. 1–2)
- B Prevenient prophecy (vv. 3–8)
- C For my name's sake — covenant self-anchored (vv. 9, 11)
- D REFINING IN THE FURNACE OF AFFLICTION (v. 10)
- C' I will not give my glory unto another (v. 11)
- B' First and last — Christological self-naming (v. 12)
- E Trinitarian-collegial sending (v. 16)
- F O that thou hadst hearkened — divine pathos (vv. 18–19)
- G GO FORTH OF BABYLON (v. 20)
- H New Exodus — waters from the rock (v. 21)
- A' No peace to the wicked — covenant closing (v. 22)

Cross-References

Gen. 12:1 (*lekh-lekha*); Num. 20:11; 24:7; Deut. 4:20 (iron furnace); 5:29; 1 Kgs. 8:51; Ps. 46:4; Isa. 41:4, 21–24; 43:9–13; 44:6–8; 45:1, 21; 46:9–10; Isa. 50:11; 57:21; 66:12; Ezek. 20:9, 14, 22, 44; Matt. 23:37; Lk. 19:42; Jn. 17:5; 1 Cor. 10:4 (rock was Christ); 2 Cor. 6:17; 2 Tim. 3:5; Heb. 12:5–11; Rev. 1:8, 17; 22:13; Rev. 18:4; Moses 7:28–37; 1 Ne. 13:25–29 (plain and precious); 1 Ne. 19:23 (*liken*); 2 Ne. 1:13; Alma 41:10 (wickedness never was happiness); D&C 133:5, 14.

Apocryphal Correlations

Baruch 4–5 — the clearest extra-canonical Isa. 40–48 echo: return-from-exile hymn-sequence. **Wisdom of Solomon 11:9–10** — the *furnace of affliction* in Wisdom-tradition register. **Sirach 2:1–6** — *gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity*. **4 Maccabees 7:1–3** — the pilot in the storm; refinement through trial. **2 Baruch 78–86** — the Letter of Baruch to the nine-and-a-half tribes; *be ye not partakers of their sin*. **Pss. of Solomon 17:21–35** — Davidic Messiah gathers Israel from dispersion. **1 Enoch 1:7–9** — cosmic *coming forth*; call of the elect. **Tobit 13:9–18** — exile’s Jerusalem hymn anticipating return.

Personal Application

Three practices follow. First, let affliction be re-labeled as refinement. V. 10’s kur oni is the disciple’s most important re-frame for suffering. The Lord chooses in the furnace. The disciple who is suffering is being chosen, not rejected. Second, come out of Babylon as continuous practice. The departure is daily — every interior Babylon (habit, attachment, contemptuous opinion) is under the v. 20 command. Third, honor the divine pathos. Your obedience is a gift to the Lord. He longs for it. Let v. 18 change your prayer.