
2 Nephi 25 — Nephi's Exposition — Plainness, Six Hundred Years, the Name of Christ, Grace After All We Can Do

Nephi resumes his voice after the Isaiah block, exegetes Isaiah, explicitly names Christ, articulates the BoM's most-cited grace verse, c. 559–545 BC.

Nephi's interpretive-resumption. The chapter is the BoM's most editorially-self-conscious text — Nephi explicitly states method, audience, commitments, Christological-conviction, pastoral-purpose. Four load-bearing texts: v. 4's *I delight in plainness*; v. 19's *six hundred years* + the name Jesus Christ (first explicit use); v. 20's *no other name... whereby man can be saved* (Acts 4:12 in 559 BC); v. 23's *saved by grace, after all we can do* — the BoM's most-debated grace verse.

Ten Insights

1. **Isaiah hard, plainness for the people (vv. 1, 4).** Isaiah's difficulty is cultural-genre-specific, not intrinsic. Knowing the *manner of prophesying among the Jews* makes Isaiah accessible.
2. **Spirit of prophecy unlocks Isaiah (v. 4).** Same text; different readers; opposite clarity. Moroni 10:4–5 in single-verse form.
3. **Written for future readers (v. 8).** Nephi knows he writes for latter-day readers — the disciple is in the chapter's intended audience.
4. **Babylonian return prophesied (vv. 10–12).** Independent BoM-attestation of post-exilic return; Jer. 29:10 parallel.
5. **Latter-day-Jewish conversion (v. 16).** Many generations of scattering, then conversion to Christ. Rom. 11:25–27 doctrine in BoM voice.
6. **Marvelous Work named (v. 17).** *Pele' va-pele'* — Isa. 29:14 cited. The BoM's signature self-designation.
7. **Six hundred years (v. 19).** Load-bearing chronological anchor — Lehi departs c. 600 BC; Christ born c. 1 BC; fulfilled at 3 Ne. 1:13.
8. **First Jesus Christ naming (v. 19).** *His name shall be Jesus Christ, the Son of God* — angel-revealed name; same source as Lk. 1:31.
9. **No other name (v. 20).** Acts 4:12 in 559 BC. Christological-exclusivism is BoM-prophetic, not just apostolic. Moses-typology cited (brazen serpent + rock).
10. **Grace after all we can do (v. 23).** Most-debated grace verse. Surrounding context (Christocentric, Atonement-saturated) supports grace-emphasizing reading — grace operates alongside labor, not after labor exhausts.

Cross-References

Ex. 17:6 (water from rock — cited v. 20); Num. 21:8–9 (brazen serpent — cited v. 20); Deut. 6:4–5 (Shema — cited v. 29); Deut. 18:15–19 (Prophet like Moses); 2 Sam. 22 (David's song); Ps. 22 (Suffering Servant); Ps. 110 (priest-king); Isa. 11:11 (set hand again the second time); Isa. 29:14 (Marvelous work — cited v. 17); Isa. 40:5 (glory revealed); Isa. 49 (Servant); Isa. 50–53 (Servant Songs); Isa. 55:1 (come buy without money); Jer. 29:10 (70 years); Jer. 31:31–34 (new covenant); Ezek. 36:26–27 (new heart); Dan. 9:24–27 (70 weeks); Mal. 3:1 (messenger); Matt. 1:21 (Jesus — direct fulfillment of v. 19); Matt. 11:21–24 (Chorazin); Matt. 28:18–20 (Great Commission); Lk. 1:31 (angel reveals Jesus' name); Lk. 4:18 (Spirit upon me); Jn. 3:14 (lifted up like serpent — cited indirectly v. 20); Jn. 5:39 (scriptures testify); Acts 3:22 (Prophet like Moses); Acts 4:12 (no other name — direct parallel to v. 20); Rom. 3:21–28 (justified by faith); Rom. 11:25–27 (blindness — direct parallel to v. 16); 1 Cor. 10:4 (Rock was Christ); Gal. 2:16 (justified by faith); Gal. 3:24 (law as schoolmaster — direct parallel to v. 25); Eph. 2:8–9 (by grace, not of works — direct parallel to v. 23); Heb. 13:8 (same yesterday); Jas. 2:14–26 (faith without works); 1 Pet. 1:18–19 (precious blood); 1 Ne. 10:4 (600 years); 1 Ne. 11 (Mary, condescension); 1 Ne. 13:25–29 (plain and precious removed); 1 Ne. 19:6 (editorial errancy confessed); 1 Ne. 19:10–17 (Brass Plates Christology); 1 Ne. 19:23 (liken); 2 Ne. 2 (Lehi on Atonement); 2 Ne. 6 (Jacob's temple sermon); 2 Ne. 9 (Jacob's Atonement exposition); 2 Ne. 22 (Song of Salvation); 2 Ne. 26 (Cumorah, universal invitation — sequel); 2 Ne. 27 (sealed book); 2 Ne. 31 (doctrine of Christ); 2 Ne. 33 (Nephi's farewell); Mosiah 3:8 (Jesus Christ, Son of God — direct parallel to v. 19); Mosiah 13:33–35 (Moses spake of Christ); Mosiah 15:1–9 (Father and Son); Alma 7:10–13 (mortal Christ); Alma 33:19 (brazen serpent — direct parallel to v. 20); Alma 34 (great and last sacrifice); Alma 42 (justice and mercy); Hel. 5:9–12 (rock of our Redeemer); 3 Ne. 1:13 (sign of birth — direct fulfillment of v. 19); 3 Ne. 9 (Christ identifies); 3 Ne. 11 (Christ's appearance); 3 Ne. 27:7 (church called by name of Christ); Eth. 3:14 (Father and Son); Moroni 6:4 (relying alone on merits); Moroni 7 (charity); Moroni 10:32 (come unto Christ); D&C 6:36 (look unto me — direct parallel to v. 26); D&C 18:11 (suffered for all); D&C 19:16–19 (atonement); D&C 20 (church organization); D&C 76 (visions of glory); D&C 88:6 (light of Christ); D&C 110:3–4 (Christ identifies); JS—H 1:11–20 (First Vision); JS—H 1:34 (BoM described); Articles of Faith 1, 3, 8.

Apocryphal Correlations

Sirach 24:33. *I will yet pour out doctrine as prophecy* — direct preservation-doctrine parallel to vv. 21–22.

4 Ezra 14:23–48. Ezra commissioned to write 94 books — 24 for the public, 70 for the wise — direct plainness-for-the-people parallel.

Wisdom of Solomon 6:12–25. Wisdom plainly given to those who seek — direct vv. 4–7 plainness parallel.

Psalms of Solomon 17:21–46. Davidic Messiah named in pre-Christian Jewish prayer — closest pre-Christian parallel to vv. 19–20.

1QSb (Qumran Rule of Blessings) 5:20–29. Blessing for Anointed One — pre-Christian Jewish parallel.

Pesher Habakkuk (1QpHab) 7:1–5. *God made known to the Teacher of Righteousness all the mysteries* — direct spirit-of-prophecy parallel.

Targum Jonathan on Isa. 53. Aramaic messianic gloss on Suffering Servant — pre-Christian Jewish reading.

Damascus Document (CD) 6:11. *Until the rise of him who teaches righteousness at the end of days* — direct vv. 16–18 parallel.

Hebrew Word Studies

peshat (פֶּשֶׁט, **plain-literal sense**) — vv. 4, 7. First of four traditional Jewish hermeneutical modes (PaRDeS). Nephi privileges peshat as foundation.

Yeshua ha-Mashiach (יֵשׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ, **Jesus the Messiah**) — v. 19. The angel-revealed name. *Yeshua* = Yahweh-saves. *Mashiach* = Anointed. Three titles in one verse.

shesh me'ot shanim (שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנִים, **six hundred years**) — v. 19. Load-bearing chronological anchor. Lehi c. 600 BC → Christ c. 1 BC. Fulfilled at 3 Ne. 1:13.

chesed (חֶסֶד, **grace / covenant-loyalty**) — v. 23. NT *charis* = OT *chesed*. Grace as covenant-loyal divine-action toward the disciple.

damah (דָּמָה, **to liken**) — Background to v. 8. Nephi's liken-hermeneutic from 1 Ne. 19:23; disciple stands under text as party, not spectator.

Q'dosh Yisrael (קָדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל, **the Holy One of Israel**) — v. 29. Nephi's signature title (38× in BoM). Christ is the Holy One of Israel — OT-Lord and NT-Christ are one Person.

Personal Application

Three practices. First, read Isaiah by knowing the manner of prophesying among the Jews. Invest in learning Isaiah's cultural-historical context. Isaiah-difficulty is your homework-invitation, not your intellectual-failure. Second, integrate labor and grace. Each morning, name today's labor (what you will do) and today's grace (what Christ will do that you cannot). Both operative; neither replaces the other. Third, practice the five Christological-verbs daily (v. 26). Talk of Christ, rejoice in Christ, preach of Christ, prophesy of Christ, write of Christ. The five together are the disciple's daily-life formula.