

SIGNS OF CHRIST'S BIRTH REVEALED

(2 Nephi 11:58-88)

V58-60 continues the thought from the last verse of the preceding chapter, and forms a segue into the next section. It states Christ, after his resurrection, will show himself to the Nephites, thus introducing the message of v. 61-77. And, he will give them the Law, which supercedes the Law of Moses, ending the thought of v 57.

V61-77 Nephi parallels the appearance of Christ to the Nephites with Christ's appearance to the Jews discussed in the previous chapter.

Nephi foresees many generations pass away under war and conflict (v. 60), and then the Messiah will be born. Signs will be given to the Nephites indicating the Messiah's birth and death and resurrection. The signs given concerning his death will be terrible for the wicked (v. 61-64) because massive natural disasters will destroy them (v. 65-69)

Nephi laments over the destruction he foresees on his people, but he confesses that God is just in doing so because of their wickedness (v. 70-71). He then states the righteous will not be wiped out in the destruction on the wicked (v. 72), but will survive it to see the resurrected Christ. When he appears to them he will heal them both physically and spiritually. The result will be four generations of peace (v. 73).

But, after these four generations of peace, the Nephites will rebel and suffer complete destruction (v. 74-76). This quick destruction comes when the Lord gives up struggling with man to get him to repent (v. 77). This judgment paraphrases Genesis 6:3, which is on the wicked just before Noah's flood.

V78-79 Nephi now turns his attention away from natural Israel, the subject of the preceding 25:1-26:11, and addresses the Gentiles. Just as the Jews and the Nephites must be convinced Jesus is the Christ, so must the Gentiles (v. 78). As per Genesis 15, promises made to Abraham, "it must needs be that the Gentiles be convinced also." This will be accomplished by the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles, whom have faith (v. 78-79). While the Jews and Nephites both enjoy personal appearances of Jesus Christ, the Gentiles do not receive such a blessing because they are not covenant Israel. As such, the Lord will manifest Himself to the Gentiles via the Holy Spirit, (see 1 Nephi 3:13-15, 3 Nephi 7:21-22 and John 16:7). Joseph Smith was that lineage of natural Israel as per 2 Nephi 2:25-30.

V80-88 Verses 80-88 start out Nephi's selective quotation of Isaiah 29. The quotation of Isaiah 29 is interrupted by a long parenthetical statement (v. 89-115), which sets the context for Nephi's subsequent usage of Isaiah 29:6-24.

What Nephi does is liken Isaiah 29:3-5 to the Nephites here in v. 80-88, and then he likens Isaiah. 29:6-24 to the Gentiles in v. 116-160. As the original context of Isaiah 29 is that of natural Israel, Nephi has to explain his a contextual usage, and that is what v. 89-115 is doing.