

Section IV: Understanding Isaiah

Isaiah Introduction, Chapter 1

(Version 1.00)

Understanding Isaiah Introduction:

Importance of Isaiah

Prophecies of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times

(15-1) Introduction

Isaiah was not only a prophet but also a seer. “A seer,” said Ammon, “is greater than a prophet,” for a “seer is a revelator and a prophet also” (Mosiah 8:15–16). Ammon continued: “A seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things shall come to light” (Mosiah 8:17).

Isaiah was one of the mightiest seers of all time. Undoubtedly he was one of those the Prophet Joseph Smith had in mind when he said: “Search the revelations of God; study the prophecies, and rejoice that God grants unto the world Seers and Prophets. They are they who saw the mysteries of godliness; they saw the flood before it came; they saw angels ascending and descending upon a ladder that reached from earth to heaven; they saw the stone cut out of the mountain, which filled the whole earth; they saw the son of God come from the regions of bliss and dwell with men on earth; they saw the deliverer come out of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob; they saw the glory of the Lord when he showed the transfiguration of the earth on the mount; they saw every mountain laid low and every valley exalted when the Lord was taking vengeance upon the wicked; they saw truth spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven in the last days, before the Lord came the second time to gather his elect; they saw the end of wickedness on earth, and the Sabbath of creation crowned with peace; they saw the end of the glorious thousand years, when Satan was loosed for a little season; they saw the day of judgment when all men received according to their works, and they saw the heaven and the earth flee away to make room for the city of God, when the righteous receive an inheritance in eternity. And, fellow sojourners upon earth, it is your privilege to purify yourselves and come up to the same glory, and see for yourselves, and know yourselves.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 12–13.)

A clear and dramatic shift in emphasis takes place in Isaiah 24. There, Isaiah’s seership becomes profoundly evident as he looks forward in time to the final dispensation.

When you consider the scope of Isaiah’s vision and its application for all generations of men, it is not surprising that Jesus Himself said, “Great are the words of Isaiah” and commanded that we should “search these things diligently” (3 Nephi 23:1).

Did you notice Joseph Smith's final statement in the quotation above? He said, "It is your privilege to ... see for yourselves, and know for yourselves" all the things the seers have seen. One way to do that is by carefully studying the writings of the seers. Strive to see what Isaiah saw as you study this very significant part of his words.

3 Nephi 23

1 And now, behold, I say unto you, that ye ought to search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah.

2 For surely he spake as touching all things concerning my people which are of the house of Israel; therefore it must needs be that he must speak also to the Gentiles.

3 And all things that he spake have been and shall be, even according to the words which he spake.

2 Nephi 6

4 And now, behold, I would speak unto you concerning things which are, and which are to come; wherefore, I will read you the words of Isaiah. And they are the words which my brother has desired that I should speak unto you. And I speak unto you for your sakes, that ye may learn and glorify the name of your God.

5 And now, the words which I shall read are they which Isaiah spake concerning all the house of Israel; wherefore, they may be likened unto you, for ye are of the house of Israel. And there are many things which have been spoken by Isaiah which may be likened unto you, because ye are of the house of Israel.

3 Nephi 20

10 And it came to pass that when they had all given glory unto Jesus, he said unto them: Behold now I finish the commandment which the Father hath commanded me concerning this people, who are a remnant of the house of Israel.

11 Ye remember that I spake unto you, and said that when the words of Isaiah should be fulfilled—behold they are written, ye have them before you, therefore search them—

12 And verily, verily, I say unto you, that when they shall be fulfilled then is the fulfilling of the covenant which the Father hath made unto his people, O house of Israel.

13 And then shall the remnants, which shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth, be gathered in from the east and from the west, and from the south and from the north; and they shall be brought to the knowledge of the Lord their God, who hath redeemed them.

14 And the Father hath commanded me that I should give unto you this land, for your inheritance.

Understanding Isaiah: Enrichment

(E-1) The Importance of Isaiah's Writings

Isaiah's name means "Jehovah saves" or "the Lord is salvation." His life and teachings proclaim the message of Christ and the way of salvation Christ provided. John wrote that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10). Using that statement as a criterion to evaluate, we must classify Isaiah among the greatest of the prophets, because he powerfully and eloquently testified of Christ and His work.

The Savior Himself affirmed the importance of Isaiah's writings when, in His visit to the Nephites, He commanded them to search diligently the words of Isaiah (see 3 Nephi 20:11). The Lord said, "Great are the words of Isaiah. For surely he spake as touching all things concerning my people which are of the house of Israel" (3 Nephi 23:1–2). The words Jacob spoke to his people can also be applied to us. Jacob said, "There are many things which have been spoken by Isaiah which may be likened unto you, because ye are of the house of Israel" (2 Nephi 6:5). We also are of the house of Israel.

The writings of Isaiah are quoted extensively in other scripture. In fact, Isaiah is quoted in other scriptures more often than any other prophet. There are sixty-six chapters in the book of Isaiah, making a total of 1,292 verses. The prophets in the Book of Mormon quoted 414 of those verses (32 percent of the book of Isaiah). They paraphrased at least another 34 verses (3 percent). The Nephite prophets considered Isaiah's writings to be of such great worth that they put approximately 35 percent of the book of Isaiah in the valuable space they had on the plates. The writers of the New Testament had a similar respect for Isaiah's teachings and prophecies. In the New Testament, Isaiah is quoted at least fifty-seven times.

In latter-day revelation there is a similar emphasis on the words of Isaiah. The Doctrine and Covenants makes approximately one hundred references to Isaiah's writings by quoting, paraphrasing, or interpreting his teachings. The close connection between Isaiah's words and those of the Doctrine and Covenants is apparent in Doctrine and Covenants 113, which contains inspired interpretations of chapters 11 and 52 of Isaiah. The key to understanding Isaiah 65 is in Doctrine and Covenants 101; Doctrine and Covenants 133 opens up an understanding of Isaiah 35, 51, 63, and 64. Numerous examples of Isaiah's phraseology can be found in the Doctrine and Covenants; compare Doctrine and Covenants 133:3, 15, 27, 40–53, 67–70 with Isaiah 52:10, 12; 51:10; 64:1–4; 63:1–9; 50:2–3, 11.

The prophet Nephi said that Isaiah spoke many things that were hard for his people to understand (see 2 Nephi 25:1). The same is true of people today. Even among the Saints who have the gift of the Holy Ghost there are many who understand very little of what Isaiah taught. Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote:

"If, as many suppose, Isaiah ranks with the most difficult of the prophets to understand, his words are also among the most important for us to know and ponder. ...

"... His prophetic words can and should shine brightly in the heart of every member of the Church." ("Ten Keys to Understanding Isaiah," *Ensign*, Oct. 1973, p. 80.)

Nephi studied, expounded upon, and loved the writings of Isaiah (see 2 Nephi 11:8; 12–24; 25:1–5). Concerning our need to understand Isaiah as Nephi did, Elder McConkie said: "It just

may be that my salvation (and yours also!) does in fact depend upon our ability to understand the writings of Isaiah as fully and truly as Nephi understood them” (“Ten Keys to Understanding Isaiah,” p. 78).

Elder McConkie explained that if we desire to go where Isaiah and Nephi have gone, then we must believe, think, know, teach, and live as they did. Certainly the writings of Isaiah deserve our careful and prayerful study. They can be understood by those who sincerely desire to do so.

Interpretation and Understanding of Isaiah

2 Nephi 25

1 Now I, Nephi, do speak somewhat concerning the words which I have written, which have been spoken by the mouth of Isaiah. For behold, Isaiah spake many things which were hard for many of my people to understand; for they know not concerning the manner of prophesying among the Jews.

2 For I, Nephi, have not taught them many things concerning the manner of the Jews; for their works were works of darkness, and their doings were doings of abominations.

3 Wherefore, I write unto my people, unto all those that shall receive hereafter these things which I write, that they may know the judgments of God, that they come upon all nations, according to the word which he hath spoken.

4 Wherefore, hearken, O my people, which are of the house of Israel, and give ear unto my words; for because the words of Isaiah are not plain unto you, nevertheless they are plain unto all those that are filled with the spirit of prophecy. But I give unto you a prophecy, according to the spirit which is in me; wherefore I shall prophesy according to the plainness which hath been with me from the time that I came out from Jerusalem with my father; for behold, my soul delighteth in plainness unto my people, that they may learn.

5 Yea, and my soul delighteth in the words of Isaiah, for I came out from Jerusalem, and mine eyes hath beheld the things of the Jews, and I know that the Jews do understand the things of the prophets, and there is none other people that understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews like unto them, save it be that they are taught after the manner of the things of the Jews.

6 But behold, I, Nephi, have not taught my children after the manner of the Jews; but behold, I, of myself, have dwelt at Jerusalem, wherefore I know concerning the regions round about; and I have made mention unto my children concerning the judgments of God, which hath come to pass among the Jews, unto my children, according to all that which Isaiah hath spoken, and I do not write them.

7 But behold, I proceed with mine own prophecy, according to my plainness; in the which I know that no man can err; nevertheless, in the days that the prophecies of Isaiah shall be fulfilled men shall know of a surety, at the times when they shall come to pass.

8 Wherefore, they are of worth unto the children of men, and he that supposeth that they are not, unto them will I speak particularly, and confine the words unto mine own people; for I know that they shall be of great worth unto them in the last days; for in that day shall they understand them; wherefore, for their good have I written them.

9 And as one generation hath been destroyed among the Jews because of iniquity, even so have they been destroyed from generation to generation according to their iniquities; and never hath any of them been destroyed save it were foretold them by the prophets of the Lord.

(E-3) Pay the Price in Study and Effort

Isaiah's writings could properly be called an advanced level of scripture. He seldom explained his doctrine but assumed that the reader already had a knowledge of the gospel and the Lord's plan of salvation. Isaiah's book is written in a poetic, literary style that makes extensive use of symbolism to communicate to those who are spiritually mature.

Isaiah's words are similar to the parables of Jesus in their manner of teaching. When Jesus' disciples asked Him why He taught in parables, He said: "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them [the people in general] it is not given. ... Therefore I speak to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. ... For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart. ... But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear." (Matthew 13:11, 13, 15–16.)

Many of the people of Jesus' time were spiritually immature and unprepared to receive the doctrines He taught. Through parables He was able to teach the more spiritually mature and at the same time veil His teachings from those who were not prepared to understand or follow them. In that manner He kept many from being condemned for having a knowledge of principles they were unable to live (see Alma 12:9–11; Jacob 4:14). A similar charge in teaching was given to Isaiah (see Isaiah 6:9–10). For this reason, Isaiah also veiled his teachings in language that preserved his teachings for those who would understand with their heart. Spiritually speaking, Isaiah's writings are meat, not milk (see 1 Corinthians 3:1–3; Hebrews 5:13–14; Isaiah 28:9). It requires spiritual maturity to understand them.

When the Lord commanded the Nephites to study Isaiah's words, He told them how to study those words. He said, "*Search* these things *diligently*" (3 Nephi 23:1; emphasis added). It is not sufficient to merely read Isaiah's writings. To come to an understanding of the book of Isaiah, one must diligently study and search by prayerfully pondering Isaiah's teachings, analyzing them, and relating them to other scriptures. Individual phrases and verses must be studied carefully in the broad context of the gospel and the prophecies of the latter days.

(E-4) Have the "Spirit of Prophecy"

Nephi taught that the words of Isaiah “are plain unto all those that are filled with the spirit of prophecy” (2 Nephi 25:4). The “testimony of Jesus [which comes by the power of the Holy Ghost] is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10). The spirit of prophecy, however, is far more than just a belief that Jesus lives. It includes an understanding that Jesus is the literal Son of God. It includes a correct knowledge of His purpose in coming into mortality and of the significance and nature of His mission. It includes an understanding of the gospel plan for His children, particularly those who spiritually become His sons and daughters through the covenant of baptism. All of this comes through the power of the Holy Ghost. The prophet Isaiah wrote under the influence of the spirit of prophecy. His writings must be interpreted under the influence of that same spirit. Those who desire to understand Isaiah should learn of Christ and seek the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Peter made it clear that since prophets deliver their message through inspiration from the Holy Ghost, a correct understanding of their message must come from the same source (see 2 Peter 1:20–21; D&C 50:17–22). The Book of Mormon teaches the way to obtain the spirit of prophecy. Righteous people who are serving the Lord and seeking to do His will can obtain the spirit of prophecy by searching the scriptures diligently and giving themselves “to much prayer, and fasting” (Alma 17:3). The Lord will give knowledge to those who prepare themselves and sincerely seek it.

The Prophet Joseph Smith once said, “God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 149). This truth, of course, also applies to gaining an understanding of the writings of Isaiah.

(E-5) Understand the Manner of Prophesying of the Jews

One reason the prophet Nephi gave for his people being unable to understand the writings of Isaiah was that they “[knew] not concerning the manner of prophesying among the Jews” (2 Nephi 25:1). This manner of prophesying includes several elements.

Imagery and figurative language. Isaiah used in his writing images and figures of speech that were well understood by the Hebrew people. For those with other backgrounds, understanding the Hebrew manner of writing is often difficult. Isaiah did not intend for every word he used to be interpreted in its most literal sense. He made constant use of metaphors, similes, analogies, parables, types, and shadows. The following are some examples:

[For example,] in Isaiah 1:1 the prophet said that he was speaking about Judah and Jerusalem, yet in Isaiah 1:10 he said, “Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; . . . ye people of Gomorrah.” He could not literally be speaking to Sodom and Gomorrah, for they were destroyed in the time of Abraham because of their wickedness (see Genesis 19:24–25). Isaiah used the names *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* to tell Judah even more forcefully that they were very wicked and were close to being destroyed, just as Sodom and Gomorrah had been.

Dualism and esoteric terms. As is often the case in prophetic declarations, some of Isaiah’s writings have a dual meaning. That is, they can apply to more than one situation or may be

fulfilled at more than one time. He also at times combined dualistic phrases with terms that were intended for or understood by only a certain group. Such *esoteric language* brings to mind religious concepts that only those who have the proper religious background readily understand without further explanation. For example, refers to the “mountain of the Lord’s house” being “established in the top of the mountains.” President Harold B. Lee said that the phrase “mountain of the Lord’s house” referred to both “a place as well as a definition of a righteous people” (“The Way to Eternal Life,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1971, p. 15). The establishment of the “mountain of the Lord’s house in the top of the mountains” has been fulfilled by the coming of the pioneers to establish the Church and temple in the tops of the mountains in Utah (see Lee, “The Way to Eternal Life,” p. 15) and will be further fulfilled [in future events]. It applies generally to those places where God’s power and authority reside and where He communicates with His people. The phrase “all nations shall flow unto it” (Isaiah 2:2) can refer both to the early gathering of the Saints to the valleys of the mountains in Utah and also to the general gathering of Saints to Zion. The term *Zion* (v. 3), as well, has several applications. It refers to the New Jerusalem in America, the Jerusalem of Judah, and also the Lord’s people or their places of gathering in all parts of the world. By using such terms as these, Isaiah conveys profound spiritual meaning to those who understand the special significance of his language.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters, Isaiah wrote of the gathering of Israel and their eventual triumph over Babylon. This figure is an excellent example of dualism. *Babylon* is used to refer both to the nation of Babylon as it existed at the time of Isaiah and also to the wickedness of the world and the dominions of Satan in the world, which the nation of Babylon epitomized. In his writings about Babylon in these chapters, Isaiah used concepts that applied to the future fall of Babylon (as a nation and as the symbol of the world), to the triumph of Israel, and to the pre-mortal overthrow of Lucifer and his hosts (see Isaiah 14:4–23). His words are not only dualistic but esoteric as well, for only those who understand the Lord’s plan of salvation can grasp the full message Isaiah presented. Many of Isaiah’s chapters are dualistic in the sense that the message fulfilled in Isaiah’s time is a type or shadow of events to take place in the last days.

This richness of language and meaning seems to be what Nephi meant when he spoke of the manner of prophesying among the Jews. There is frequent reference to the law of Moses and extensive use of imagery, figurative language, and phrases that have dualistic and esoteric meanings. Though modern readers cannot fully grasp the culture and times of ancient Israel, understanding the methods Isaiah used to convey his meaning can give the reader a far greater understanding of Isaiah.

(E-7) Learn of the Judgments of God and the Fulfillment of His Prophecies

The Lord is consistent in His dealings with His children in all ages of the world. “God doth not walk in crooked paths, neither doth he turn to the right hand nor to the left, neither doth he vary from that which he hath said, therefore his paths are straight, and his course is one eternal round” (D&C 3:2). This consistency is of the greatest importance to His children as they seek to work out their salvation. It is also very helpful to them in seeking to understand and follow the counsel He gives through His prophets. To understand Isaiah’s writings, one should know of the Lord’s teachings and workings given through other prophets. Blessings and cursings came to the people

of Isaiah's time according to the same principles that have been set down in any age of the world. As one learns of the patterns of actions that cause people to withdraw from God and of the actions that bring down the Lord's wrath upon them, the warnings and pronouncements of Isaiah can be better understood. That which was condemned by Isaiah is treated similarly by the Lord in all ages. The Lord's message in all dispensations is that there are laws upon which all consequences are based. To know the Lord's laws provides a framework from which to interpret the writings of Isaiah or any other prophet.

The Lord has revealed to many prophets the grand panorama of the earth's history. By learning of what they have written, it is possible to see where Isaiah's writings fit into the Lord's overall plan. For example, a greater understanding of Isaiah's writings can be gained by looking at them in the light of the allegory of Zenos about the olive trees (see Jacob 5). In the allegory a delineation of the history and destiny of the house of Israel is given. With a knowledge of the scatterings, nurturings, gatherings, and ultimate destiny of Israel, as taught by Zenos and cited by Jacob, Isaiah's writings can be viewed from the proper perspective. Frequently the prophecies of one prophet help one to properly view the prophecies and writings of another. Nephi prophesied that "in the days that the prophecies of Isaiah shall be fulfilled men shall know of a surety, at the times when they shall come to pass ... for ... they shall be of great worth unto them in the last days; for in that day shall they understand them" (2 Nephi 25:7-8). One can look for the fulfillment of many of Isaiah's words in the events that are transpiring in this dispensation. Nephi knew that those who saw Isaiah's prophecies come to pass could understand them (see, for example, Isaiah 29).

(E-9) Use the Book of Mormon

"The Book of Mormon is the world's greatest commentary on the book of Isaiah" (McConkie, "Ten Keys to Understanding Isaiah," p. 81). The Book of Mormon prophets loved the writings of Isaiah and quoted from them often. Large blocks of material are found in the Book of Mormon with inspired commentary and explanations. The Book of Mormon prophets obtained this material from the brass plates, which were written before 600 B.C. The Isaiah material in the Book of Mormon is, therefore, the oldest and most accurate available and provides commentary by prophets who, in some cases, had the same historical and cultural background as Isaiah had. The Lord Himself swore to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and, thus, to the truthfulness of Isaiah's writings that are found therein (see D&C 17:6).

Commentary:

The Spirit of Prophecy, The Book of Mormon, and understanding the macro last-day timeline are the big three as far as understanding Isaiah... The rest are all secondary, and frankly will only add bells and whistles- history lessons and cool "man you sound smart!" soundbites, but don't actually add any additional intelligence, points of reference, etc.

Helaman 4:23

23 And because of their iniquity the church had begun to dwindle; and they began to disbelieve in the spirit of prophecy and in the spirit of revelation; and the judgments of God did stare them in the face.

Doctrine and Covenants 11:25

25 Deny not the spirit of revelation, nor the spirit of prophecy, for wo unto him that denieth these things

Steamboat Dream 1 - In early February 1844, four months prior to his death, Joseph Smith had a dream, which he related to Wilford Woodruff, Willard Richards, and W. W. Phelps. He stated:

*"I was standing on a peninsula, in the midst of a vast body of water where there appeared to be a large harbor or pier built out for boats to come to. I was surrounded by my friends, and while looking at this harbor I saw a steamboat approaching the harbor. There were bridges on the pier for persons to cross, and there came up a wind and drove the steamboat under one of the bridges and upset it. I ran up to the boat, expecting the persons would all drown; and wishing to do something to assist them, I put my hand against the side of the boat, and with one surge I shoved it under the bridge and righted it up, and then told them to take care of themselves. But it was not long before I saw them starting out into the channel or main body of the water again. The storms were raging and the waters rough. **I said to my friends that if they did not understand the signs of the times and the spirit of prophecy, they would be apt to be lost.** It was but a few moments after when we saw the waves break over the boat, and she soon foundered and went down with all on board."*

-Joseph Smith (Steamboat Dream)

Now, it is not certain that the Prophet always reveals those secrets unto the people. It may happen in many instances, that the Lord will reveal unto his servants the Prophets many things that are to come, and yet leave those who are not enlightened by the Spirit of Prophecy to wait until those things transpire before they are apprised of them.

- George A. Smith (The Privilege of the Saints, Etc. JD 10:66)

"The book of Isaiah contains numerous prophecies that seem to have multiple fulfillments...The fact that many of these prophecies can have multiple meanings underscores the importance of our seeking revelation from the Holy Ghost to help us interpret them. As Nephi says, the words of Isaiah 'are plain unto all those that are filled with the spirit of prophecy' (2 Ne. 25:4)."

-Elder Dallin Oaks (Ensign, Jan. 1995, "Scripture Reading & Revelation")

“Others have their eyes closed upon the prophecies of the ancient Prophets; and not only that, but they are void of the spirit of prophecy themselves. When a man has this, though he may appeal to ancient Prophets to get understanding on some subjects he does not clearly understand, yet, as he has the spirit of prophecy in himself, he will not be in darkness; he will have a knowledge of the signs of the times; he will have a knowledge of the house of Israel, and of Zion, of the ten tribes, and of many things and purposes and events that are to take place on the earth; and he will see coming events, and can say such an event will take place, and after that another, and then another; and after that the trumpet shall sound, and after that certain things will take place, and then another trump shall sound, &c., &c.; and he will have his eye fixed on the signs of the times, and that day will not overtake him unawares; but upon the nations it will come as a thief...” (Journal of Discourses 7:189-190)

The day is at hand, the morning has broken, the sun of the Gospel has arisen in the eastern horizon, and is beginning to shine with a degree of splendor. The time is near—how near, no man knoweth: the day and the hour when the Son of Man shall come is a secret. In a revelation given to this Church, it is said that no man shall know until he comes; therefore we cannot expect to know the day nor the hour; but we know it is near at hand, and what a consolation it is. There may be men that will know within a year—that will have revelation to say within one or two years when the Lord shall appear. I do not know that there is anything against this. (Journal of Discourses vol. 8, pp. 44-52)

-Elder Orson Pratt

If we have the Spirit of Revelation, obtained as a gift through the Holy Ghost by obedience and diligence in studying God’s word, then the macro last-day timeline will become clearer and clearer... With a view of these events, and an understanding of the scriptures, when we read Isaiah we will be equipped with all the tools we need to be able to place what we are reading into the proper context, between the right points of reference etc. and thus we will be able to understand clearly the words of Isaiah.

Isaiah Chapter One

The people of Israel are apostate, rebellious, and corrupt; only a few remain faithful—The people’s sacrifices and feasts are rejected—They are called upon to repent and work righteousness—Zion will be redeemed in the day of restoration.

1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto danger, they are gone away backward.

5 Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

7 Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

(13-2) Isaiah 1:1. "The Vision of Isaiah"

Great prophetic insight to the problems of the world in which he lived and into the challenges of the future came about through the revelation ("vision") the prophet Isaiah received.

(13-3) Isaiah 1:1–9. Rebellion against the Lord

"Israel's rebellion is evidence of the highest degree of sin" (Sidney B. Sperry, *The Spirit of the Old Testament*, p. 175). Jehovah had nourished and brought them up as children (in Egypt and the wilderness), and now in their adulthood (in the promised land) they had turned against the Lord. Their affliction is like wounds or sores that have not healed. The totality of their rebellion is illustrated by the references to head and heart, to the whole person from foot to head. In other words, the spiritual cancer had infested the whole body of Israel. *Little spiritual health was left* in the nation. That was why the land would be left utterly desolate.

Commentary:

With dualism we understand that Isaiah spoke of Old Jerusalem/Judah/Israel (history lesson) as well as the New Jerusalem/Ephraim/America (prophecy); for the remainder of Understanding Isaiah this knowledge will be assumed and we will focus on the "prophecy" for that is what is most important. With that in mind, Israel can refer to either America and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, depending on context, sometimes it can even be talking about both. Did the Lord nourish and bring up the United States of America in the wilderness (unknown, hostile environment)? Yes. Did the Lord do the same thing with the early church in America? Yes. Here is a case where both clearly apply, both being history lessons. The warning or "prophecy" here is that once the United States of America and the Church reach adulthood in the promised land they will turn against the Lord. This is a pattern repeated many times in the Book of Mormon (known as "the pride cycle" by many) with the Jaredite nation as well as the Nephite nation.

"There is one principle I would like to have the Latter-day Saints perfectly understand—that is, of blessings and cursings. For instance, we read that war, pestilence, plagues, famine, etc., will be visited upon the inhabitants of the earth; but if distress through the judgments of God comes upon this people, it will be because the majority have turned away from the Lord. Let the majority of the people turn away from the Holy Commandments which the Lord has delivered to us, and cease to hold the balance of power in the Church, and we may expect the judgments of God to come upon us; but while six-tenths or three-fourths of this people will keep the commandments of God, the curse and judgments of the Almighty will never come upon them, though we will have trials of various kinds, and the elements to contend with—natural and spiritual elements. While this people will strive to serve God according to the best of their abilities, they will fare better, have more to eat and to wear, have better houses to live in, better associations, and enjoy themselves better than the wicked ever do or ever will do."

- **Brigham Young** (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 10, p. 335, June 26, 1864)

"And when the spirit of persecution, the spirit of hatred, of wrath, and malice ceases in the world against this people, it will be the time that this people have apostatized and joined hands with the wicked..."

- **President Brigham Young** (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 112)

HOW ZION MAY ESCAPE THE LORD'S SCOURGE.

"Nevertheless, Zion shall escape if she observe to do all things whatsoever I have commanded her. But if she observe not to do whatsoever I have commanded her, I will visit her according to all her works, with sore affliction, with pestilence, with plague, with sword, with vengeance, with devouring fire."

This way of escape, insuring the protection of the Lord, is a very simple one. Unfortunately, many of the people of Zion have refused to take advantage of this promise. As I observe conditions among the people I cannot see how we are going to escape when the judgments are to pass over the nations, which are promised in this revelation and in others which I cannot take time to read. Because of our disobedience and our failure to keep the commandments of the Lord, the righteous, as in times past, may be called upon to suffer with the unrighteous among us."

- **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (Doctrines of Salvation, Volume 3, p.31-32)

Rebellion Against God: A Sign of the Times.

"In this land, as well as in other lands, men have forgotten God. They are not worshipping him with all their might, mind, and strength. They are not worshipping him at all. I am speaking now

of the general run of mankind. Instead of keeping his commandments they are violating them...This rebellion against God - for that is what it is - is not confined to those who do not profess religion or even to belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, for the evil has crept within the borders of the Church itself, and there are many who call themselves Latter-day Saints who are guilty of these offenses.”

- **Joseph Fielding Smith** (Doctrines of Salvation Vol 3 Pg 25)

*By and by we find the people departing from the principles of truth, from the laws of the Gospel, repudiating the fear of God, grieving his Holy Spirit **and incurring his displeasure.***

-**President John Taylor** (JoD 17:33)

Doctrine and Covenants 101

47 And while they were yet laying the foundation thereof, they began to say among themselves: And what need hath my lord of this tower?

48 And consulted for a long time, saying among themselves: What need hath my lord of this tower, seeing this is a time of peace?

49 Might not this money be given to the exchangers? For there is no need of these things.

50 And while they were at variance one with another they became very slothful, and they hearkened not unto the commandments of their lord.

51 And the enemy came by night, and broke down the hedge; and the servants of the nobleman arose and were affrighted, and fled; and the enemy destroyed their works, and broke down the olive trees.

This is the Parable of the Nobleman and His Olive Trees, which we have already covered in a previous section. Now that one has a correct understanding of that parable, is it not now easy to see what Isaiah is teaching here? What points of reference? Where we are in the macro last-day timeline? Israel became slothful, neglected Zion, the New Jerusalem, and decided a “better use of money”, and because of that the destroyer came and made the land desolate- exactly what Isaiah is preaching/prophesying. Obviously understanding Zenos’ Olive Tree Allegory one can correctly place these events as well- directly before the servant is sent, and “the few” are gathered.

Jacob 5

48 And it came to pass that *the servant* said unto his master: Is it not the loftiness of thy vineyard—have not the branches thereof overcome the roots which are good? And because the branches have overcome the roots thereof, behold they grew faster than the strength of the roots, taking strength unto themselves. Behold, I say, is not this the cause that the trees of thy vineyard have become corrupted?

49 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said unto the servant: Let us go to and hew down the trees of the vineyard and cast them into the fire, that they shall not cumber the ground of my vineyard, for I have done all. What could I have done more for my vineyard?

50 But, behold, *the servant* said unto the Lord of the vineyard: Spare it a little longer.

51 And the Lord said: Yea, I will spare it a little longer, for it grieveth me that I should lose the trees of my vineyard.

57 And the Lord of the vineyard said unto *the servant*: Pluck not the wild branches from the trees, save it be those which are most bitter; and in them ye shall graft according to that which I have said.

58 And we will nourish again the trees of the vineyard, and we will trim up the branches thereof; and we will pluck from the trees those branches which are ripened, that must perish, and cast them into the fire.

61 Wherefore, go to, and call servants, that we may labor diligently with our might in the vineyard, that we may prepare the way, that I may bring forth again the natural fruit, which natural fruit is good and the most precious above all other fruit.

62 Wherefore, let us go to and labor with our might this last time, for behold the end draweth nigh, and this is for the last time that I shall prune my vineyard.

70 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard sent *his servant; and the servant* went and did as the Lord had commanded him, and brought other servants; *and they were few*.

71 And the Lord of the vineyard said unto them: Go to, and labor in the vineyard, with your might. For behold, this is the last time that I shall nourish my vineyard; for the end is nigh at hand, and the season speedily cometh; and if ye labor with your might with me ye shall have joy in the fruit which I shall lay up unto myself against the time which will soon come.

72 And it came to pass that the servants did go and labor with their might; and the Lord of the vineyard labored also with them; and they did obey the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard in all things.

Many other places in the Book of Mormon point specifically to these points of reference, specifically to “the few”:

2 Nephi 28

14 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; nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err because they are taught by the precepts of men.

1 Nephi 14

12 And it came to pass that I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, *and its numbers were few*, because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters; nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon

all the face of the earth; *and their dominions upon the face of the earth were small*, because of the wickedness of the great whore whom I saw.

Mormon 8

36 And I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts; *and there are none save a few only* who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envying, and strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquities; and your churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts.

37 For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.

38 O ye pollutions, ye hypocrites, ye teachers, who sell yourselves for that which will canker, why have ye polluted *the holy church of God*? Why are ye ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ? Why do ye not think that greater is the value of an endless happiness than that misery which never dies—because of the praise of the world?

39 Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not?

3 Nephi 7

7 And they did cause a great contention in the land, insomuch that the more righteous part of the people had nearly all become wicked; *yea, there were but few righteous men among them*.

Back to Isaiah:

8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9 Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us *a very small remnant*, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

(13-5) Isaiah 1:8. What Is a “Cottage in a Vineyard”?

When the vineyard and the cucumber crops were ready to harvest, small booths, or huts, were built in the fields so the owner or his servants could watch over the harvest and protect it from thieves or animals. These huts were generally crudely made and hastily erected. After the harvest, they were abandoned and quickly became dilapidated and forlorn relics of the harvest. “The daughter of Zion” was to be like that—once proud and useful, but now, through her own spiritual neglect, an empty and forlorn relic. (See Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 1:55–56.)

Commentary:

So once again, we have imagery of desolation, the few/remnant of righteous, and the unfruitfulness of Israel, specifically here mentioned “the daughter(s) of Zion”... Another application of the “daughters of Zion being unfruitful” would be the falling fertility rates of the daughters of Zion, which we can clearly point to as objective realities of our time.

Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because there was not found a single righteous person within (Genesis 18:26-33). Isaiah says here that there will come a point of time in “Israel” (i.e., America and the Church), where if it wasn’t for a few righteous people (a remnant) that America would become even as Sodom and Gomorrah.

1 Nephi 14

7 For the time cometh, saith the Lamb of God, that I will work a great and a marvelous work among the children of men; a work which shall be everlasting, either on the one hand or on the other—either to the convincing of them unto peace and life eternal, or unto the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds unto their being brought down into captivity, *and also into destruction, both temporally and spiritually*, according to the captivity of the devil, of which I have spoken.

2 Nephi 30

10 For the time speedily cometh that the Lord God shall cause a great division among the people, and the wicked will he destroy; and he will spare his people, *yea, even if it so be that he must destroy the wicked by fire.*

Helaman 13

13 But blessed are they who will repent, for them will I spare. *But behold, if it were not for the righteous who are in this great city, behold, I would cause that fire should come down out of heaven and destroy it.*

14 But behold, *it is for the righteous’ sake that it is spared.* But behold, the time cometh, saith the Lord, *that when ye shall cast out the righteous from among you, then shall ye be ripe for destruction;* yea, wo be unto this great city, because of the wickedness and abominations which are in her.

The Lord warns that if the gentiles do not repent after the marvelous work and a wonder moves forward, that the Lord will destroy them “even by fire”, which was the same way in which He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

Back to Isaiah:

10 Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

(13-7) Isaiah 1:10–15. The Hypocrisy of Insincere Worship

These verses do not mean that the Lord rejected the law of Moses, particularly the performances and ordinances of the law. The condemnation here is of the hypocritical fulfillment of the Mosaic offerings and feasts. Israel misused these religious activities because they fulfilled only the outward requirements and did not worship with full purpose of heart, turning their worship toward the Savior. (See Joseph Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 58–59; Young, Book of Isaiah, 1:61–62). To refer to the people of Israel as Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 10) vividly depicts how deeply the people had sunk into sin and depravity.

Commentary:

Here, once again, Israel's duality is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. We don't practice the law of Moses (i.e., Mosaic Law) but we do perform ordinances of the law which include offerings and feasts. In what ways can our "sacrifices" become "vain oblations"? The answer, once again, is "priestcraft".

1 Samuel 15

22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

So many times prophets warn about the dangers of selfishness—the inordinate and excessive concern with self. The distance between constant self-pleasing and self-worship is shorter than we think. Stubborn selfishness is actually rebellion against God, because, warned Samuel, “stubbornness is as ... idolatry.” (1 Sam. 15:23.)

Selfishness is much more than an ordinary problem because it activates all the cardinal sins! It is the detonator in the breaking of the Ten Commandments...

The selfish individual thus seeks to please not God, but himself.

- **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** (Put Off the Natural Man, and Come Off Conqueror, Oct 1990)

2 Nephi 26

29 He commandeth that there shall be no priestcrafts; for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion.

30 Behold, the Lord hath forbidden this thing; wherefore, the Lord God hath given a commandment that all men should have charity, which charity is love. And except they should have charity they were nothing. Wherefore, if they should have charity they would not suffer the laborer in Zion to perish.

31 But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money they shall perish.

We can start to clearly see the connections being made here, between being selfish, “might not this money better be spent?”, priestcraft, rebellion (verse 5), and now all our actions and “praise” to the Lord are in fact vain, or meaningless- just as King Saul’s sacrifice done in disobedience was likewise counted unto him for evil.

Saints misuse religious activities such as the Sacrament when they fulfill only the outward requirements and do not worship with full purpose of heart. In verse 13 we find that it gets so bad that even the temple becomes tainted. One only has to accidentally stumble on the dark side of the web to see members tainting the temple. This ties directly into the exact same points of reference:

Doctrine and Covenants 112

23 Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face.

24 Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation; and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord.

25 And upon *my house* shall it begin, and from *my house* shall it go forth, saith the Lord;

26 First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, *and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house*, saith the Lord.

In verse 14 the Lord takes specific aim at our Fast and Testimony meetings and our holiday worship (i.e., Christmas, Easter etc.). In verse 15 he says that the members of the Church have blood on their hands. What blood could the Lord be referring to here? The answer is given in the Book of Mormon by Captain Moroni in Alma 60:2-14. Moroni lays out the best explanation for the importance of doing missionary work found in the Book of Mormon. “Behold, [do you members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints] suppose that ye could sit upon your

thrones, and because of the exceeding goodness of God ye could do nothing and He would deliver you? Behold, if you have supposed this, ye have supposed in vain. Do ye supposed that, because so many of your brethren have been killed [spiritually] it is because of their wickedness? I say unto you, if ye have supposed this ye have supposed in vain; for I say unto you, There are many who have fallen...and behold it is to your condemnation.”

Doctrine and Covenants 101

12 And in that day *all who are found upon the watch-tower*, or in other words, all mine Israel, shall be saved.

Ezekiel 33

1 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman:

3 If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;

4 Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.

6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; *but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.*

7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; *but his blood will I require at thine hand.*

9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

Matthew 24

52 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, *to give them meat in due season?*

53 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

54 And verily, I say unto you, He shall make him ruler over all his goods.

55 But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and shall appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

56 And thus cometh the end of the wicked according to the prophecy of Moses, saying, They should be cut off from among the people. But the end of the earth is not yet, but by and by.

Doctrine and Covenants 88

81 Behold, *I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor.*

82 Therefore, they are left without excuse, and their sins are upon their own heads.

83 He that seeketh me early shall find me, and shall not be forsaken.

84 Therefore, tarry ye, and labor diligently, that you may be perfected in your ministry to go forth among the Gentiles for the last time, as many as the mouth of the Lord shall name, to bind up the law and seal up the testimony, and to prepare the saints for the hour of judgment which is to come;

85 That their souls may escape the wrath of God, the desolation of abomination which awaits the wicked, both in this world and in the world to come. Verily, I say unto you, let those who are not the first elders continue in the vineyard until the mouth of the Lord shall call them, *for their time is not yet come; their garments are not clean from the blood of this generation.*

Jacob 1

19 And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own *heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments*, and we would not be found spotless at the last day.

Our hands are full of blood because we as Saints are either practicing priestcraft, and/or we are not being watchmen. The Lord is returning for the watchmen, those whose garments are clean from the blood of this generation.

Back to Isaiah:

16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

(13-8) Isaiah 1:16–20. Call to Repentance, Promise of Forgiveness

In the midst of a scathing denunciation of the house of Israel, the Lord reminded them that they could be saved as a nation if they would truly repent. This scripture is often used to encourage individuals to repent and seek forgiveness, but it was originally given to a nation, not a person. President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote:

“This is not an individual promise, but one to a rebellious nation. No matter how many prophets the Lord sent to Israel and Judah, and how many times he pleaded with them, all through their history they were rebellious.

“Here we find a promise that if they would return to the Lord, their past sins would be forgotten, and he would again receive them as his people and bless them abundantly, and they should continue to be his covenant people.” (Answers to Gospel Questions, 2:180.)

Nephi, however, said that he took the words of Isaiah and “did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” (1 Nephi 19:23). Certainly this beautiful promise, though originally given to [Judah and] Israel as a nation, can be “likened” to [Ephraim and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints].

Commentary:

The Lord made a similar declaration to Saints as he did to Israel in the past in D&C 84:54-58:

“54 And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received—

55 Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation.

56 And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all.

57 And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written—

58 That they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father’s kingdom; otherwise there remaineth a scourge and judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion.”

Also, Isaiah verse 18 is a scripture mastery.

Back to Isaiah:

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Commentary:

This exact same promise is a running theme in the Book of Mormon, “Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land; and inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from my presence.” (2 Nep. 4:4) It appears repeatedly throughout the Book of Mormon. The Lord, speaking to the Saints, gave the same promise once again in D&C 64:34-36: “Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days. And the rebellious shall be cut off out of the land of Zion, and shall be sent away, and shall not inherit the land. For, verily I say that the rebellious are not of the blood of Ephraim, wherefore they shall be plucked out.”

The chapter heading for D&C 64 states, “He that is tithed will not be burned at the Lord’s coming; the Saints are warned against debt.” Pay your tithing, live within your means!

The entirety of 3 Nephi 24 also ties directly into this as well- the abolishment of priestcraft, the law of consecration, the willing and obedient- those that feared the Lord- will be gathered and will eat the good of the land of Zion and shall be spared “the sword”, etc. This is echoed in Doctrine and Covenants 45 as well, in which the Lord says that the wicked will “take up the sword, one against another”, and further:

68 And it shall come to pass among the wicked, that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor must needs flee unto Zion for safety.

69 And there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven; and it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another.

70 And it shall be said among the wicked: Let us not go up to battle against Zion, for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible; wherefore we cannot stand.

71 And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations, and shall come to Zion, singing with songs of everlasting joy

Back to Isaiah:

21 How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

22 Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:

23 Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

Commentary:

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints once full of judgment with righteousness lodged in it, now has tares in its midst. The Lord taught about this future time period of the church in the last days when he taught the parable of the wheat and the tares (Doctrine and Covenants 86). Joseph Smith further explained that each one of the Lord's parables "the Kingdom of heaven shall be likened unto" dealt with the church at different stages in the last days as it progressed towards the Second Coming; Parable of the Sower, Parable of the Tares, Parable of the Mustard Seed. The Lord says that even though the Church will become rich (temporally with silver), that silver will become worthless (i.e., "vain", because of priestcrafts) and you Saints once pure wine are now mixed with water. The latter is given in another parable taught by the Savior in which he said "ye are the salt of the earth" if salt loses its savor it is good for nothing (Matthew 5:13-14). The only way for salt to lose its savor is by mixture (losing purity). The Lord then describes the heirs of the Church becoming rebellious, making companions of thieves, that everyone loves gifts/things and their desires are that of temporal rewards. One only has to check out "LDS" Youtubers, podcasters, book writers, etc. to find this fulfilled literally to a T. Those engaged in this priestcraft are thieves and they only "make companions" with other thieves, for they love the vain things of the world.

There is also a condition of rampant fatherless in Israel, with widows and single motherhood being found everywhere... And the Elders of Israel who should be preaching the doctrines that would save these women in this condition (i.e., "the patriarchal order") are instead thieves; they grind the faces of the poor and only worry about themselves.

Back to Isaiah:

24 Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies:

25 And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:

26 And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.

27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.

Commentary:

This is why having a functioning understanding of the macro last-day timeline is precious in understanding Isaiah. We understand that Joseph Smith will return, we understand that "angels

and men will be coworkers” in the Redemption of Zion and building of New Jerusalem, etc. so when the Lord says “I will restore thy judges *as at the first*, and thy counsellors *as at the beginning*” what do we think he is referring to? We are talking about the return of Joseph Smith Jr. and those faithful brethren that surrounded him! And *afterward*, meaning *after their return*, thou shalt be called “the city of righteousness, the faithful city, Zion, the New Jerusalem”!

Finishing Isaiah Chapter One:

28 And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed.

29 For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.

30 For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.

31 And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.

Commentary:

The Lord said in D&C 112:23-26 that he will first start at His Church when he says “I will turn my hand upon *thee*”- he is talking about the Church itself. This is the day when the wheat shall be separated from the tares. The Lord says he will then bind the tares (i.e., transgressors in the church) with the sinners of the world together and he promises them that they will “both burn together.” He also says in that day the big identifier of those who forsook the Lord in his own church would be those who have desired the oaks and their own personal gardens. The footnote is terebinth trees which were used in idol worship. Meaning, the main identifier is idolatry of things made by man’s hands (e.g., cell phones, tablets etc.).

"Though in the Outward Church Below"

Though in the outward Church below

Both wheat and tares together grow,

Ere long will Jesus weed the crop

And pluck the tares in anger up . . .

We seem alike when here we meet;

Strangers may think we are all wheat;

But to the Lord's all-searching eyes,

Each heart appears without disguise.

*The tares are spared for various ends,
Some for the sake of praying friends,
Others the Lord against their will,
Employs, his counsels to fulfill.
But though they grow so tall and strong,
His plan will not require them long;
In harvest, when he saves his own,
The tares shall into hell be thrown.*

(Hymns, No. 102.)

“What will become of the Latter-day Saints? When the judgments shall have ceased, which will be visited first on the house of the Lord, they who remain will spread forth, increase and multiply; and they will build upon this continent a great and magnificent city, called Zion, or the New Jerusalem. And they will build a Temple within that city, upon which a cloud will rest by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; and upon all the assemblies of the people of Zion the Lord will create this glorious appendage, and will shed forth his loving kindness. This is the destiny of Zion, as foreseen by Isaiah and David, and many of the Prophets who have predicted concerning her.

Says one, I will wait to see if God will do these things. But peradventure, while waiting, you may be cut asunder, and your portion appointed among the unbelievers, where there are weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Woe unto them who wait to see if God will really fulfill the prophecies of his servants, and who repent not of their sins! But, blessed are they who repent as soon as they hear the sound of the message, and who turn unto the Lord their God with all their hearts, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, which bears record of the Father and the Son, and they shall be prepared for the dispensation of his providences, and hail his coming with great joy. The people of the antediluvian world waited one day too long; they waited until the flood came, when it was too late, and they were swept away, eight persons only escaping.

The Savior, speaking of his second coming, said—“As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” Did the Lord raise up a Prophet and warn the antediluvians by new revelation? He did: and he did the same in the case of the people in the days of Lot. Will he do the same prior to his second coming? He will. He is doing it by means of his Gospel; revealed

for the purpose of saving all who receive it, who gather to a place of safety, as Noah and those who believed his message did.

But the day will come when the Lord will not spare any who remain in Babylon; that will be, however, when this prophecy of Isaiah is completely fulfilled—"I will gather them from the east, and from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by name." All this is to take place in the very dispensation in which the angel should bring the Gospel, which is the dispensation of the fullness of times. The Apostle Paul also refers to the same great event, in the following language: "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him." It is the purpose of God then, not to confine the gathering to earthly Saints alone. "What," says one, "are immortal beings coming down from heaven to live on this earth?" Certainly, and thus fulfill numerous prophecies in the Scriptures; one of which is, "They shall reign on the earth." Who are these persons? They are they whom John heard singing in heaven about it. They said, "Thou hast redeemed us out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." What a glorious song! While we are singing about going to heaven, all heavenly beings are singing about coming back to earth to live and to reign. Why? Because this is their inheritance, they have been made worthy through the blood of the lamb, and their Redeemer will be their King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and to his dominion there shall be no end. When this takes place, then will be fulfilled the saying, that all things which are in Christ, both in heaven and on earth, shall be gathered together. The wicked, too, shall be gathered, but in bundles ready for the burning.

Marvel not, therefore, Latter-day Saints, that you have been exalted out from among the Gentile nations! Marvel not that the Lord has said to the North, give up, and to the south, keep not back, bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth! Marvel not at the Savior's parable of the gathering of all kinds of fish and bringing them to the shore! By and by, angels will come among the Latter-day Saints who have been gathered from the nations, and they will pluck out one here, and another there, putting them into their place. The separation of the fish will take place; the bad will be cast away, while the good will be reserved in vessels for the Master's use."

- Orson Pratt (Prophecies of Joseph Smith, Etc. JD 18:222)

The Thief of Eternal Life

"Procrastination, as it may be applied to gospel principles, is the thief of eternal life, which is life in the presence of the Father and the Son. There are many among us, even members of the Church, who feel that there is no need for haste in the observance of gospel principles and the keeping of the commandments.

Nephi wrote of the people of the last days: "Yea, and there shall be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us.

"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; and do all these things, for tomorrow 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"

Do not think that this was said of the world, or even the "stranger . . . within our gates." It is said of members of the Church. Moreover, Nephi warns us that in the last days there will be many who will follow Satan. I could go on and read more from Second Nephi, but I am going to give you the chapter and verse so when you go home, get out your Book of Mormon and read Second Nephi, Chapter 28, verses 20-29

We are living in the last days. Have we not heard individuals talk as Nephi said they would? Are there not many who excuse themselves and lull themselves to sleep in "carnal security" thinking that the Lord will overlook their little sins? Are there not those among us who are denying the power of the devil, and who deny that there is a devil? Do they not "spiritualize" the torments of hell and say there is no hell? Have you not heard these things taught? In this manner, Satan is raging in the hearts of the people, and members of the Church do not entirely escape his cunning sophistries!"

- President Joseph Fielding Smith (1969–A:121, Procrastination Is the Thief of Eternal Life)