

SEPTEMBER 5-11, 2022

# Isaiah 1–12

“GOD IS MY SALVATION”

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**Summary:** *Isaiah 1. 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.*

*Isaiah 2. Isaiah sees the latter-day temple, gathering of Israel, and millennial judgment and peace—The proud and wicked will be brought low at the Second Coming—Compare 2 Nephi 12.*

*Isaiah 3. Judah and Jerusalem will be punished for their disobedience—The Lord pleads for and judges His people—The daughters of Zion are cursed and tormented for their worldliness—Compare 2 Nephi 13.*

*Isaiah 4. Zion and her daughters will be redeemed and cleansed in the millennial day—Compare 2 Nephi 14.*

*Isaiah 5. The Lord’s vineyard (Israel) will become desolate, and His people will be scattered—Woes will come upon them in their apostate and scattered state—The Lord will lift an ensign and gather Israel—Compare 2 Nephi 15.*

*Isaiah 6. Isaiah sees the Lord—His sins are forgiven—He is called to prophesy—He prophesies of the Jews’ rejection of Christ’s teachings—A remnant will return—Compare 2 Nephi 16.*

*Isaiah 7. Ephraim and Syria wage war against Judah—Christ will be born of a virgin—Compare 2 Nephi 17.*

*Isaiah 8. Christ will be as a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense—Seek the Lord, not muttering wizards—Turn to the law and to the testimony for guidance—Compare 2 Nephi 18.*

*Isaiah 9. Isaiah speaks about the Messiah—The people in darkness will see a great Light—Unto us a Child is born—He will be the Prince of Peace and reign on David’s throne—Compare 2 Nephi 19.*

*Isaiah 10. The destruction of Assyria is a type of the destruction of the wicked at the Second Coming—Few people will be left after the Lord comes again—The remnant of Jacob will return in that day—Compare 2 Nephi 20.*

*Isaiah 11. The stem of Jesse (Christ) will judge in righteousness—The knowledge about God will cover the earth in the Millennium—The Lord will raise an ensign and gather Israel—Compare 2 Nephi 21.*

*Isaiah 12. In the millennial day, all men will praise the Lord—He will dwell among them—Compare 2 Nephi 22.*

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## Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

### How can I better understand the writings of Isaiah?

As a reminder, the preface to these lesson supplements is included the first two verses of the Book of Mormon. Therein the Prophet Nephi

gave us the key to understanding the scriptures. We need the “learning of the Jews” along with the “knowledge of the mysteries of God.” In this case, the “mysteries” are simply the subtle, God-given instructions understood by the gift of the Holy Ghost. The imagery of Isaiah can

best be understood by knowing his political, cultural, and geographic environment. He testifies of the Messiah through everything around him since the Messiah is in all things. "He that ascended on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth, Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which, it was made. As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made; As also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made; And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand. And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space— The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things.

**(Doctrine and Covenants 88:6-13)**

### **What statements about Isaiah come from Jewish sources?**

"Of all Israel's prophets since Moses, none sorrowed for his people like Isaiah ben Amoz. As a loving father reprimands his disobedient children, Isaiah warned them of their sins and the punishment that would inevitably follow, while he dreamed dreams of hope, peace, sanctity, and justice that would someday come to Israel." "Isaiah was born in Jerusalem (c. eighth century B.C.E.), and he soon became familiar with its street life and inhabitants. He watched crowds of Jews swarm into the Holy Temple to sacrifice their fattened sheep, goats, and bulls. Yet

at the same time, some openly disobeyed many of God's commandments. They had become hypocritical. Judges dispensed their verdicts according to the bribes they received; men set their hearts on horses and chariots and put their trust in military power; women dressed in gaudy clothing and haughtily paraded through the streets; the wealthy evicted the poor from their tiny plots of land and taxed them heavily; some people, influenced by foreign customs, bowed down to stone and wooden images and sought the advice of soothsayers and witches." "In 740 B.C.E., moved and disturbed by what he had witnessed, Isaiah began his long mission of rebuking, comforting, and restoring his people to their destined role of being "a light unto the nations." His advice was often ridiculed and ignored, but he nevertheless continued."

**(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**

### **What was the political background at Isaiah's time?**

"The 12 tribes of Israel had split into two factions after King Solomon's death. Two hundred years later, the kingdom of Israel was about to be destroyed by Assyria, and the kingdom of Judah was facing serious decline. Isaiah's first crisis came when the rulers of Syria and Israel tried to force Ahaz, king of Judah, to join them in an alliance against Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria. Isaiah counseled the king to be confident and calm, but Ahaz paid no attention to him and sent urgent tributes to Assyria. By appealing to Tiglath-Pileser for help, the king had invited disaster at the hands of his rescuer." "After the death of Ahaz, Judah was ruled by his son Hezekiah. Although he brought a temporary revival of the worship of God to Judah, he was convinced by his advisers to rebel against Judah's oppressors. In 701 B.C.E., Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, captured Judah's fortified cities and proceeded to surround Jerusalem. Isaiah told Hezekiah that God had sent

Sennacherib as a rod to punish Israel but promised that “he shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields nor cast a hank against it” (**Isaiah 37:33**). A sudden plague overtook the Assyrian army and they returned hastily to their own land. Isaiah’s words had been fulfilled and the Holy City was saved.” “Only part of the biblical Book of Isaiah consists of his statesmanlike advice and shrewd political insight. Much of the rest is devoted to the inner state of the Jewish nation and is written in beautiful poetry and descriptive prose. In stark contrast to the disasters and violence of his time, Isaiah describes a glorious age, the coming of “the day of the Lord.” After the evil are punished, “it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people” (**Isaiah 11:11**). With the coming of the Messiah, Jews will come home to Jerusalem, the everlasting city. “He that scattered Israel will gather him as a shepherd his flock” (**Isaiah 31:9**). They will love God more than themselves. “The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day” (**Isaiah 2:11**). The whole world will be inspired by Israel’s example, and there will be peace, when “nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (**Isaiah 2:4**).” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

### **How does Isaiah’s Israel parallel the world today?**

“Assyria and Babylon have long since turned to dust, and their stone idols have been forgotten by Israel. Yet man still worships material things, technology, the produce of his own hands. He fights wars more terrible than ever and hungers for power. Isaiah insists that man will be complete only when he tries to change himself morally, when he learns “to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for

the widow” (**Isaiah 1:17**). Thus, almost 3,000 years after he lived, the teachings of Isaiah, watchdog of the nation’s conscience, still have great meaning and value for mankind.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) With great meaning for mankind nowadays, modern prophets repeat Isaiah’s teaching to stand in holy places. Consider the following aspects of Jewish life and how they compare to the life of a Latter-day Saint: Daily, religious Jews pray for holiness, in Hebrew, *Kedushah*. “. . . holiness, the additions to the third benediction of the Amidah chanted by the hazzan and the congregation during those services (*Shaharith, Musaf, Minhah* and *Ne’ilah*, but not *Ma’ariv*) in which the *Amidah* is recited both silently and aloud. The most important part of the *Kedushah* is the recitation of three biblical verses: (**Isaiah 6:3**) (“Holy, Holy, Holy” (*kadosh*) is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory”) plus (**Ezekiel 3:12**) and (**Psalms 146:10**). The words which introduce each biblical verse vary according to the service and according to the liturgical tradition of the congregation.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

### **How can “Holy Places” help our sense of restoration?**

“Foremost among the Jewish holy places is the Western Wall, the only visible remaining part of the destroyed Temple of antiquity. Prayer services are held at the Wall daily from sunrise to sunset, and thousands of people come there for prayer or meditation. Other Jewish holy places in Israel include the graves of biblical figures, famous rabbis and pious men. Visiting holy graves has long been a Jewish tradition, and some graves have become the focus of pilgrimages.” “Christian holy places are centered around the life of Jesus, his birthplace in Bethlehem (the Church of the Nativity), his crucifixion in Jerusalem (the Church of the Holy Sepulcher), and places where he traveled and preached in Nazareth and

the Galilee, such as Capernaum and the Mount of Beatitudes.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Through recent studies and spiritual insights, identification of places where sacred events occurred have been more accurately defined. Being in those places and reading the accounts that happened there have a profound and enriching effect on visitors.

### **What has Israel done to preserve the past and in a sense restore it?**

“The Islamic religion’s holy sites are mainly in Jerusalem in a group of buildings known in Arabic as *Haram al-Sharif*, erected after the Arab conquest of Jerusalem on the platform of the Temple Mount. Here are located the two famous mosques, the Dome of the Rock, and the al-Aqsa Mosque, both built before 700 C.E.” “Other religions also have holy places in the Land of Israel. The Samaritans revere Mount Gerizim, where they believe the Akedah took place and the Temple site should be. The Druze consider the grave of Jethro (Moses’ father-in-law) to be holy, and his grave (called *Nabi Shu’ayb*) (in Tiberias) is the focus of Druze pilgrimages. The Baha’i temple in Haifa represents still another religion in Israel and is the burial spot of the Bahai leader Mirza Ali Muhammad.” “The history of the Holy Land has been marked by numerous “holy wars” fought by different religions struggling for control of their holy places. The wars between Christians and Muslims during the Crusades are outstanding examples. In 1949, a United States resolution called for the internationalization of Jerusalem; however, this resolution was accepted by neither party to the Arab-Israel dispute. At the end of the Israel War of Independence, most of the holy places in Erez Israel were held by Jordan, and access was denied to Jews. Following the Six-Day War of June 1967 and the reunification of Jerusalem, all the holy sites in the Land of Israel came under

Israeli administration, and freedom of access was guaranteed to all religions. The Israel government resolved to safeguard all sacred sites and gave the head of each religious community management of its own holy places.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

### **What are popular concepts of “good and Evil?”**

As discussed in the first few lessons, the concept of God and Satan has basically disappeared from modern Judaism. That, of course, would be Satan’s main goal. Yet the concepts of good and evil are still basic to Jewish life. “Basic to Judaism is the firm belief that all of life is good. The Bible proclaims: “And God saw all that He had made and found it very good” (**Genesis 1:31**). Yet how can we fit catastrophe, pain, moral evil, and sin into God’s design of Creation? The earlier books of the Bible deal very little with the problem of the existence of evil. In the later books, however, questions concerning the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous become familiar. The question appears in Jeremiah, in Isaiah, Job and Psalms, and various answers have been given by *talmudists* and philosophers.” “The rabbis of the Talmud taught that as good derives from God who is merciful and loving, so does evil. This also removes any idea of separate gods. The rabbis say that just as a man blesses God for the good bestowed upon him, so must he bless Him for evil. To the vexing problem of the seemingly unjust distribution of good and evil the replies are varied. One answer is that it is beyond the understanding of man’s mind.” “Another opinion states that the righteous, suffering in this world, might be receiving punishments for the sins of their ancestors, while the wicked may be prospering because of *zekhut avot*, (the merit of pious ancestors). The most widespread explanation is that the righteous receive their punishment for any

small transgression so they can then enjoy their full reward in the world to come. The wicked are rewarded in this world for the slightest good deed but in the next world they will reap the full measure of punishment they deserve. The sufferings of the righteous are also a sort of test, "afflictions of love" which develop in them patience and complete faith. The Book of Job and other biblical sources support this view. Evil initiated by man

himself is considered the product of his evil inclination, the *yezer ha-ra* (evil influence), a distinct part of man's nature. Yet, it is within man's power to restrain and redirect his evil inclination with the guidance of Torah and its teachings, the only proven antidote. This self-control enables man to serve God with both his good and evil inclinations, helping him to live a good life, and to grow in holiness."  
**(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**