

SEPTEMBER 19-25, 2022

Isaiah 40–49

“COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE”

Summary: *Isaiah 40. Isaiah speaks about the Messiah—Prepare ye the way of the Lord—He will feed His flock like a shepherd—Israel’s God is incomparably great.*

Isaiah 41. To Israel the Lord says, Ye are my servants; I will preserve you—Idols are nothing—One will bring good tidings to Jerusalem.

Isaiah 42. Isaiah speaks about the Messiah—The Lord will bring His law and His justice, be a light to the Gentiles, and free the prisoners—Praise the Lord.

Isaiah 43. To Israel the Lord says, I am your God; I will gather your descendants; beside me there is no Savior; you are my witnesses.

Isaiah 44. The Lord’s Spirit will be poured out on the descendants of Israel—Idols of wood are as fuel for a fire—The Lord will gather, bless, and redeem Israel and rebuild Jerusalem.

Isaiah 45. Cyrus will free the captives of Israel from Babylon—Come unto Jehovah (Christ) and be saved—To Him every knee will bow and every tongue will take an oath.

Isaiah 46 Idols are not to be compared with the Lord—He alone is God and will save Israel.

Isaiah 47. Babylon and Chaldea will be destroyed for their iniquities—No one will save them.

Isaiah 48. The Lord reveals His purposes to Israel—Israel has been chosen in the furnace of affliction and is to depart from Babylon—Compare 1 Nephi 20.

Isaiah 49. The Messiah will be a light to the Gentiles and will free the prisoners—Israel will be gathered with power in the last days—Kings will be the nursing fathers of Israel—Compare 1 Nephi 21.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What would a Temple lifestyle include?

“In Jewish law, since animals are part of creation, man must bear responsibility for them. Thus, the Torah demands that compassion and kindness be shown toward animals, both in routine dealings and in ritual matters. Thus, the dietary laws which remain to this day a distinctive feature of religious observance specify clearly which animals may be eaten and how they are to be prepared for food.”
“Although animal slaughter is permitted to

provide food for man it must be done humanely. The Jewish method of slaughter, which is painless and instantaneous, is (known by the rules of) *shehitah*.” “Whatever the reasons for the commandments, it is clear that a person who observes them carefully will constantly be aware of the presence of God in his life. Indeed, the benediction with which the observance of most commandments is to be prefaced explicitly points to its being in conformity with God’s will. Judaism insists on belief, faith and good deeds (which are also called *mitzvot*); but by themselves they

are not enough. The actual observance of the *mitzvot*, notwithstanding the fact that it may occasionally cause inconvenience, is a prime doctrine of Judaism”

(**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) The prime factor of religious observance for the Jews is keeping the Sabbath day holy. They feel that Sabbath observance identifies them over all other peoples.

What latent memories of the coming Millennial Messiah are still around?

The other day at the Western (Wailing) Wall, I was reading (**Isaiah 22:21-25**) to the gathered guests around me. The verses included “Temple” words referring to sash, nail in a sure place, etc. It was a festive “Bar Mitzvah” day; there was a pleasant spirit as I let the scriptures speak for themselves, offering pauses and voice inflections that allowed key words to explain themselves. A young man, an Orthodox Jew who was observing and listening to us, began to say that Isaiah could not be understood in English, that we were interpreting it incorrectly. Even though we were not reading about a “virgin birth,” he said that there are different meanings for “virgin.” I thought, what made him refer to the virgin when we were reading something completely different? Was the spirit telling him something that the conscious mind did not want to accept? My guests smiled as they noticed his objection to our sensing the Savior’s qualities. I gently responded to him in Hebrew. The meaning is the same in either language! Remember, there are two things necessary to understand the scriptures – the learning of the Jews and the Holy Spirit that reveals subtleties. This lesson deals with so many qualities of the Lord that it would be impractical to comment on each one. One beautiful attribute is his being, his body that he gave for us. Could Isaiah have been suggesting that everything around us can remind us of him? Perhaps even “body language” refers to him. The Lord was

called from the womb, a perfect body with features like eyes, ears, mouth, tongue, neck, heart, shoulder, hands, arms, belly, leg, knee, and foot. “Lift up your eyes on high,” (**Isaiah 40:26**); “To open the blind eyes,” (**Isaiah 42:7**); “Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears...” (**Isaiah 43:8**); “Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not” (**Isaiah 42:20**); “...thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass,” (**Isaiah 48:4**); “...for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (**Isaiah 40:5**); “...the hand of the LORD hath done this...” (**Isaiah 41:20**); “Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see” (**Isaiah 42:18**); “...for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand” (**Isaiah 44:18**); “...Thou hast heard, see all this...” (**Isaiah 48:6**); “Kings shall see...” (**Isaiah 49:7**); “And they shall be made perfect notwithstanding their blindness,” (**JST Isaiah 42:20**); “...formed me from the womb...glorious in the eyes of the LORD,” (**Isaiah 49:5**); “Lift up thine eyes round about,” (**Isaiah 49:18**); “...say again in thine ears,” (**Isaiah 49:20**); “...for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (**Isaiah 40:5**); “...the word is gone out of my mouth...every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” (**Isaiah 45:23**); “I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them...and they came to pass” (**Isaiah 48:3**); “...my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me,” (**Isaiah 49:2**); “...their tongue faileth...” (**Isaiah 41:17**); “...yet he laid it not to heart” (**Isaiah 42:25**); “...considereth in his heart...” (**Isaiah 44:19**); “...a deceived heart...my right hand...” (**Isaiah 44:20**); “thou didst not lay these things to thy heart,” (**Isaiah 47:7**); “Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children,” (**Isaiah 49:21**); “...He hath no hands...” (**Isaiah 45:9**); “...and concerning the work of my hands...”

(Isaiah 45:11); "...my hands, have stretched out the heavens..." (Isaiah 45:12); "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands..." (Isaiah 49:16); "...make bare the leg, uncover the thigh..." (Isaiah 47:2); "...the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him:" (Isaiah 40:10); "...he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom..." (Isaiah 40:11); "...his arm shall be on the Chaldeans..." (Isaiah 48:14); "...with the strength of his arms..." (Isaiah 44:12); "I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders" (Isaiah 49:22); "...with his feet." (Isaiah 41:3); "And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet;" (Isaiah 49:23); "...called him to his foot," (Isaiah 41:2) This constant use of body language can be seen as a metaphor of the "Body of Christ." "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Corinthians 12:27)

What special day is dedicated to the Lord?

"The Hebrew name for the Sabbath is *Shabbat*, which derives from a root meaning to cease or desist. It gets this name because the Bible tells us that on the seventh day of Creation, God "*shavat mi-kol melakhto*"— He "ceased" or "desisted" from all His work (i.e., of Creation). It is from this that the supreme importance of the Sabbath derives; observance of the Sabbath is an act of testimony to the fact that God created the world." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) Observance for religious Jews includes personal improvement and improving life around them. "The yearning for the Messiah underlies the...teaching that the mystical task of the Jewish people is to correct the imperfection in the world— the

existence of evil and impurity. This can be done through devout prayer and strict observance of the precepts of the *Torah*. Only then will the Messiah come."

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) In Judaism, a daily prayer (*Amidah*) asks for forgiveness. "Mercy and forgiveness, says the *Talmud*, are distinguishing characteristics of Abraham and his seed, and these characteristics motivated God to choose Israel as His people." "Fasting is an act of repentance or of supplication seeking divine forgiveness or the prevention of disaster. Public fasts also commemorate catastrophic events in Jewish history." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How do I show that my spirit and body are dedicated to the Lord?

Wearing white clothing, specifically robes and the *tallith* (prayer garment) denotes the desire to be pure and spotless from the sins of generations around them. "In *Ashkenazi*, (Western Jewish) tradition it is not just the bride who wears white on her wedding day. The groom, too, stands under the canopy wearing his white kitel, or robe, over his wedding finery. The day of their marriage is a solemn one for the bride and groom. They pray that their past sins will be forgiven and they can start their life together afresh. The white of their clothing symbolizes the purity and the forgiveness of sin for which they are hoping. For this reason a similar garment is used to clothe the dead for burial. The kitel therefore also serves to remind the wearer of how brief life is, and of the necessity for atonement." "The exercise of mercy is an obligation for all Jews. By this it is meant that they act with compassion and forgiveness towards all mankind, and perform deeds of charity and kindness. This quality is an essential characteristic of God who is known as *Rahum* ("Merciful") and, in accordance with the tradition which sets as man's goal the imitation of God: "As He is merciful, so be you merciful." Just as God is bound by His covenant of mercy with His people, so is

the Jew bound by specific commandments to act mercifully to the oppressed, the alien, the orphan, the widow, and indeed, every living creature.” “One of the most important theological doctrines of both the Bible and the Talmud is that if a sinner repents his bad deeds, God will forgive him. Repentance consists of several stages—firstly the sinner must reflect on his actions and realize that he has indeed done the wrong thing. He must then make up his mind never to do it again and confess his sin. This confession is not made to any other human being but is made by the sinner directly to God. On this basis the two confessions *Ashamnu* and *Al-Het* were introduced into the prayers for the Day of Atonement which is a special occasion for repentance and forgiveness. However, even when a sinner has done all these things, his repentance is still not final until he has been exposed to the same temptation and withstood it. Of course, he should not deliberately put himself on that spot again.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

How does clothing modesty show Holiness to the Lord?

To separate themselves from the “worldliness” around them, religious Jews have traditionally dressed in distinctive, modest clothing. There are signs in the religious neighborhoods in Israel asking every passerby to be modestly clothed. Those with shorts or skimpy clothes may get a dishpan of soapy water thrown at them from balconies above. Beware! “Our first fashion record is the Bible, which describes common, priestly, and royal dress . . . The *Talmud* stresses that “a man’s dignity is seen in his costume.” A scholar must be spotless and neat . . . From ancient times Jewish women were known for their modesty. Their hair was always covered, their dresses plain and white. Fine clothing was worn on Sabbath and holidays, simple clothing on weekdays.” “A walk through the streets of almost any city today in Israel, reveals a colorful mixture of old and new—a

challenge to the amateur detective, who can amuse himself by deducing the origin of each passing stranger according to his dress. The clues are not far to seek. Many elderly North African men still wear their traditional long simple gowns; many Indian women still wear their loose-fitting colorful silk pantaloons, capes and shawls and many Ethiopian women and men don bright regal-like African attire on special occasions.” “On Sabbath and holidays, the *shtreimel* (Fur hat) covers many venerable heads. It is usually accompanied by traditional garb—a silk gold-and-black striped gown, a broad white belt, white socks, and black buckled shoes. With practice, the eager observer learns to identify the members of each hasidic sect by its distinctive garb and headgear. Indeed, the kippa alone can indicate its wearer’s origins: Georgian migrants wear four-sided floral-embroidered kippot; certain groups in *Me’ah She’arim* (Orthodox neighborhood) wear pointed white ones; the graduates of certain long-established yeshivot always wear black cotton ones; while the students of the more modern Zionist-oriented yeshivot favor a *kippah serugah* (crocheted kipa) in bright colors.” “In contrast to all these, is the native Israeli who gives away his identity by his brand-new Levis, his designer shirt, and his cellular telephone. In the early years of the state, Israelis did not pay too much attention to fashion. In fact, it was very rare that a man wore a tie and jacket, or a woman wore a dress and high heel. All that has changed. In the 1990s, there is a better chance of feeling underdressed rather than overdressed. Israelis, both young and old, have generally shunned the traditional casual wear of their parents for a more trendy, upbeat, and metropolitan look. Tel Aviv’s trendy Sheinkin Street is Israel’s answer to Greenwich Village and is home to Israel’s latest fashion trends and tastes.”

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))