

OCTOBER 3-9, 2022

Isaiah 58–66

“THE REDEEMER SHALL COME TO ZION”

Summary: *Isaiah 58. Isaiah speaks as the Messiah—He will have the tongue of the learned—He will give His back to the smiters—He will not be confounded—Compare 2 Nephi 7.*

Isaiah 59. In the last days, the Lord will comfort Zion and gather Israel—The redeemed will come to Zion amid great joy—Compare 2 Nephi 8.

Isaiah 60. In the last days, Zion will return, and Israel will be redeemed—The Messiah will deal prudently and be exalted.

Isaiah -61. Isaiah speaks about the Messiah—His humiliation and sufferings are described—He makes His soul an offering for sin and makes intercession for the transgressors—Compare Mosiah 14.

Isaiah 62. In the last days, Zion and her stakes will be established, and Israel will be gathered in mercy and tenderness—Israel will triumph—Compare 3 Nephi 22.

Isaiah 63. Come and drink; salvation is free—The Lord will make an everlasting covenant with Israel—Seek the Lord while He is near.

Isaiah 64. The people of the Lord pray for the Second Coming and for the salvation that will then be theirs.

Isaiah 65. Ancient Israel was rejected for rejecting the Lord—The Lord’s people will rejoice and triumph during the Millennium.

Isaiah 66. At the Second Coming, Israel, as a nation, will be born in a day; the wicked will be destroyed; and the Gentiles will hear the gospel.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How does an identity loss of God and Satan affect me?

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.

What has replaced temptation and persuasion?

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.) Consider, that mankind is not alone, there is a power of God that persuade to do good and a power of Satan to do bad. Choice triumphs!

How would it be to live in the same city as the Lord?

An image of heavenly living may be found in the pattern of someday living in the “City of our Lord” with Him. The imagery of dwelling places such as tents with their poles (stakes) and curtains may represent the organized facilities and order of heaven. “The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” (Isaiah 60:14) “And he spake also concerning the house of Israel, and the Jerusalem from whence Lehi should come—after it should be destroyed it should be built up again, a holy city unto the Lord; wherefore, it could not be a new Jerusalem for it had been in a time of old; but it should be built up again, and become a holy city of the Lord; and it should be built unto the house of Israel.” (Ether 13:5) It seems that the “camp” of Israel was organized in a “City of the Lord” which was likened to the “House of the Lord.” The families were on the outside; the priests (Levites) were next. They surrounded the holiest place (the Ark) where the Lord’s prophet communed with God. It may be likened to the terms telestial, terrestrial and celestial. “...it seems, the

ancient Israelites were commanded to build a sanctuary so that God may dwell amongst them (Exodus 25:8). The Tabernacle became the place to which sacrifices were brought in times of joy and in times of sadness. It became the place to which Moses retired when he wanted to communicate with God. When the Children of Israel camped in the desert, the Tabernacle was erected at the very center of the camp; when they moved, the Tabernacle was taken apart, and was moved with them. Physically and spiritually, it was the central object for the Children of Israel and it was through the Tabernacle that they felt their connection with God.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

What are other scriptural definitions that liken “City of the Lord?”

“The tabernacle, sometimes called the temple, was a very ornate though portable building, which the children of Israel carried with them in the wilderness. It was to this temple that Hannah went to pray and where Samuel ministered. It was the duty of the Levites to take care of this building and keep it in order. They took it apart, carried it and all that pertained to it from place to place as they journeyed in the wilderness, and then set it up again when a new camp was made.” (Doctrines of Salvation, Joseph Fielding Smith, Vol.3, Pg.112) Even in the Book of Mormon, such an organized camp could be imagined as a special holy convocation was being held. “And it came to pass that when they came up to the temple, they pitched their tents round about, every man according to his family, consisting of his wife, and his sons, and his daughters, and their sons, and their daughters, from the eldest down to the youngest, every family being separate one from another. And they pitched their tents round about the temple, every man having his tent with the door thereof towards the temple, that thereby they might remain in their tents and hear the words which king Benjamin should speak unto them;” (Mosiah 2:5-6) It is easy to imagine that ancient Israel lived this way as a preparatory exercise of living with God. “Balaam’s eyes opened ..., he stood on a lofty summit overlooking the camp of the People of Israel in the plain below...Balaam

blessed the nation, predicting its victory over Edom and Moab...Balaam, seeing Israel's tents arranged in such a way that each family was assured of its privacy, praised the nation he had come to curse, with the words: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy dwelling places, O Israel!" (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr. - Numbers 24:5)

Is it possible that the areas of responsibility and assigned living were "staked" out, that there were stakes, poles or standards that identified the living areas?

How was color and decoration used in the Biblical Temple?

"The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, "The Israelites shall camp each with his standard under the banners of their ancestral house" (Numbers 2:2). The standards borne by the 12 tribes served the same purpose as heraldic devices. Their colors and emblems were: *Reuben* red; emblem mandrakes. *Simeon* green; emblem the town of Shechem. *Levi* white, black and red; emblem the *Urim* and *Thummim* (Deuteronomy 33:9). *Judah* azure; emblem a lion. *Issachar* black; emblem a strong-boned ass or sun and moon. *Zebulun* white; emblem a ship. *Dan* sapphire; emblem a tent or a lion. *Naphtali* rose; emblem a hind. *Asher* aquamarine; emblem an olive-tree. *Ephraim* and *Manasseh* black, embroidered with a picture of Egypt; emblem: *Ephraim*, a bullock and *Manasseh*, a wild ox. *Benjamin* 12 colors; emblem a wolf."

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) In the ancient days, the inner two courtyards were draped or had curtains draped between the stakes or poles and cords so that the sanctity and dignity of the priestly area and the Lord's habitation were maintained. "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken." (Isaiah 33:20)

How are some other ways the Temple was used?

"The Bible uses a variety of Hebrew terms when speaking of the place where God and

Israel communed: *Mishkan* (Dwelling) (God's dwelling place among the people of Israel). *Mishkan ha-Edut* (The dwelling place of the Testimony) (the place where the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments were kept). *Ohel Mo'ed* (Tent of Meeting) (where God reveals Himself to Israel). It should be noted that the words *Mishkan* and *Ohel* are synonyms. In the Bible they are both used to denote the Tabernacle. *Mikdash* (Sanctuary) or the (Holy Place;) and especially *Kodesh ha-Kodashim*, (Holy of Holies) the most holy place within the Tabernacle. Some traditional commentators and many critical scholars believe that these terms may refer to more than one place." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) In the latter-days, an organizational unit called "Stakes of Zion" may have the similar purpose in reminding us to live in dignity and sacredness and commune with God as a community. "Until the day cometh when there is found no more room for them; and then I have other places which I will appoint unto them, and they shall be called stakes, for the curtains or the strength of Zion." (Doctrine & Covenants 101:21)

How does fasting with prayer draw us closer to our God?

Obviously, the descendants of Abraham are scattered throughout the world. Isaiah spoke numerous times of the scattering as well as the gathering or return of the covenant descendants. That gathering has physical as well as spiritual meaning. Just as we were sent from God to experience life and exercise our God-given attributes, so do we have the opportunity to return to Him. Isaiah also taught disciplines that would draw us nearer to God and thereby make our return more certain. Fasting and prayers draw us nearer to Him. The most religious Jews have the regular practice of fasting at the beginning of every biblical month (never on a Sabbath except Yom Kippur). "The purpose of the fast days in the Jewish calendar, such as *Tish'ah Be'Av* and the Day of Atonement is mainly educational and spiritual. *Tish'ah Be'Av* strengthens the Jews' identification with the Jewish People by remembering the catastrophe of the destruction of the Temples.

The fast of Yom Kippur comes to remind us how we have used our bodies to disobey God's will and to hurt our fellow man. Both the prophets and the rabbis stressed that mere fasting without repentance for our bad deeds is valueless." "The tenth of the Hebrew month of *Tishrei* is *Yom Kippur*, a day of fasting and prayer for all Israel, a day which has been significant to Jews throughout the ages. The Day of Atonement is the last of the Ten Days of Penitence which begin with *Rosh Ha-Shanah* and is the climax of the repentance and soul-searching incumbent on every Jew during this period."

What is fasting for me?

"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...on fast days one neither eats nor drinks. On major fasts, other prohibitions are washing, wearing leather shoes, using ointments or perfumes, and other physical pleasures. There are special prayers, and the Torah is read in the synagogue. Yom Kippur and Tishah be-Av are observed from sunset to sunset. All other fasts are from sunrise to sunset...When a natural or human disaster threatens or strikes a whole community, a public fast is proclaimed. In biblical times, fasting served to beseech the Almighty to end a famine or to lighten the oppression of foreign rulers." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Anciently, sacrifices in the temple were rituals that taught the principle of atonement. The blood of the first-born, unblemished animal became a symbol of the blood of the "First Born Lamb of God." Perhaps to emphasize the principle of bringing Him into our lives, the children of Israel were instructed to refrain from eating any blood.

What is the sacredness of blood?

"The absolute prohibition to consume blood is one of the few laws in the Bible that is commanded not only to Jews but to all men (**Genesis 9:4**). It is thus a more universal law than the Ten Commandments. The reason given for the prohibition is that "the blood is the life; and thou shalt not eat the life with the flesh." (**Deuteronomy 12:23**, and elsewhere)

...The dietary laws, the laws of *kashrut*, command us to drain and remove all the blood from cattle, beasts, and fowl." "In the dietary laws, too, salt is important. Before meat can be cooked, the blood must be removed, which is done by sprinkling coarse salt on it and leaving it for an hour. Salt has the property of attracting liquids and when, at the end of the hour, the meat is thoroughly washed, it is blood-free and ready for cooking."

(**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) In that sense, even the color of blood (red) remains symbolic for Jews. "...there are Ashkenazim who attempt to protect their toddlers from harm by tying a red ribbon around their wrists." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Anciently, the sacrifice of a rare, red calf, mentioned in the Book of **Numbers 19:1-9**, was for purification from sin. "(The) Red Heifer-the animal whose ashes were used in the ritual purification ceremony, cleansing those made impure by contact with a human corpse or grave. In biblical times, the heifer was first slaughtered outside the Israelite camp and then burned. Its ashes were kept in a pure place and, when needed, were mixed with clear spring water...(for)... the ritually impure person..." "The Bible is very specific about the kind of cow to be used. It had to be in perfect physical condition—"a red heifer, faultless, containing no blemish and which has never been yoked" The rabbis interpreted "faultless" to mean perfect in color also, ruling that even two non-red hairs in its hide were enough to disqualify it. Obviously, such an animal was very rare and apparently the ceremony was performed only a very few times in all of ancient Jewish history."

"Perhaps the strangest feature of the law of the red heifer is that, although the impure were cleansed by its ashes, all those who helped to perform the ceremony were rendered unclean by it and had themselves to be purified afterwards. Thus, the red heifer was an agent of both purity and impurity. This paradox has puzzled the rabbis and the law remains one of the few in the Torah for which no rational explanation can be found."

(**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

Someday, when the sacred teachings given in latter-day temples (the Lord's Houses) can be given to all of God's children, we will be able

to enlarge the place of the Lord's House and live in "The City of the Lord"—a millennial expectation! There is a tiny, yet prolific flower in Israel that we have come to know to be the

"Lily of the field." It is a deeply red anemone. Its springtime decoration of Israel is a reminder of His springtime redemption for all people.