

Comments on Doctrine & Covenants 113

This section deals with two obscure passages in the book of Isaiah. For a more detailed discussion, see the comments on the relevant chapters of the book of Isaiah.

It is likely the questions asked were motivated by the persecution the Church was experiencing, perhaps with some hoping there would be divine intervention against their adversaries.

1 WHO is the stem of Jesse spoken of in the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th verses of the 11th chapter of Isaiah? 2 Verily thus saith the Lord: It is Christ.

3 What is the rod spoken of in the first verse of the 11th chapter of Isaiah, that should come of the Stem of Jesse? 4 Behold, thus saith the Lord: It is a servant in the hands of Christ, who is partly a descendant of Jesse as well as of Ephraim, or of the house of Joseph, on whom there is laid much power.

5 What is the root of Jesse spoken of in the 10th verse of the 11th chapter? 6 Behold, thus saith the Lord, it is a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days.

v1-6 These verses discuss the symbolic tree from Isa. 11:1. The KJV for this verse is:

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots

The Jewish Publication Society (JPS) translation renders it:

But a shoot shall grow out of the stump of Jesse,
A twig shall sprout from his stock.

The context for Isa. 11:1 comes from Isa. 10:32-34 where the king of Assyria is presented as wreaking havoc on Jerusalem's neighbors and ultimately upon Jerusalem herself. Jerusalem and her people are compared to a forest that it cut down. Hence the symbolism of the rod/shoot growing out of the stem/stump. Jesse was the father of David, king of Israel, thus the reference here is to the Davidic king, and kingdom of Judah, bring brought to and end. However, from this Davidic lineage future rulers of will arise.

Verses 1-2 indicate the stem/stump is Christ. Verses 3-4 state the rod/shoot is a servant of Christ whom is mainly lineage of Ephraim, which we would take to be referring to Joseph Smith, cf. JS-H 1:40. Verses 5-6 say the root/stock is mainly of the lineage of Jesse, and therefore of David, and he has a right to the Priesthood via lineage. This character is probably the Latter-day David as the descriptors given in v. 6 match very well with those from Isa. 1:10, and Ezek. 37:21-25.

The text does not identify who the branch/twig is, but that is probably referring to the lineage of David established and ruling during the Millennium.

7 Questions by Elias Higbee: what is meant by the command in Isaiah, 52d chapter, 1st verse, which saith: Put on thy strength, O Zion--and what people had Isaiah reference to? 8 He had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of priesthood to bring again Zion, and the redemption of Israel; and to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the priesthood, which she, Zion, has a right to by lineage; also to return to that power which she had lost.

9 what are we to understand by Zion loosing herself from the bands of her neck; 2d verse? 10 We are to understand that the scattered remnants are exhorted to return to the Lord from whence they have fallen; which if they do, the promise of the Lord is that he will speak to them, or give them revelation. See the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses. The bands of her neck are the curses of God upon her, or the remnants of Israel in their scattered condition among the Gentiles.

v7-10 This section of text deal with Isa. 52:1-2 where Zion is portrayed as a woman standing up out of slavery and squalor and becoming beautiful and powerful. The symbolism draws heavily on imagery developed earlier in the book of Isaiah where Zion and Babylon are typified by women. Zion, who is to be the bride of the Lord, has been playing the role of harlot and the Lord therefore rejects her. The result is she is abandoned and sold into slavery. Meanwhile, the mistress Babylon is exalted by the world. However, on the Day of the Lord He will return and reverse the positions of the women. Zion will be redeemed by the Lord and Babylon will be thrust into squalor. Verse 8 indicates that the strength of Zion is the Priesthood, that Zion has a right to it by lineage, thereby indicating that the target audience is natural Israel, which is presently scattered. Verse 10 refers to the scattering as being a curse, which identifies a classical covenant derived from Lev. 26:33-39.

Historical Material pertaining to Doctrine and Covenants 113

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Excerpt from History of the Church

January, 1838.—A new year dawned upon the Church in Kirtland in all the bitterness of the spirit of apostate mobocracy; which continued to rage and grow hotter and hotter, until Elder Rigdon and myself were obliged to flee from its deadly influence, as did the Apostles and Prophets of old, and as Jesus said, "when they persecute you in one city, flee to another." On the evening of the 12th of January, about ten o'clock, we left Kirtland, on horseback, to escape mob violence, which was about to burst upon us under the color of legal process to cover the hellish designs of our enemies, and to save themselves from the just judgment of the law.

We continued our travels during the night, and at eight o'clock on the morning of the 13th, arrived among the brethren in Norton Township, Medina county, Ohio, a distance of sixty miles from Kirtland. Here we tarried about thirty-six hours, when our families arrived; and on the 16th we pursued our journey with our families, in covered wagons towards the city of Far West, in Missouri. We passed through Dayton and Eaton, in Ohio, and Dublin, Indiana; in the latter place we tarried nine days, and refreshed ourselves.

About January 16, 1838, being destitute of money to pursue my journey, I said to Brother Brigham Young: "You are one of the Twelve who have charge of the kingdom in all the world; I believe I shall throw myself upon you, and look to you for counsel in this case." Brother Young thought I was not earnest, but I told him I was. Brother Brigham then said, "If you will take my counsel it will be that you rest yourself, and be assured you shall have money in plenty to pursue your journey."

There was a brother living in the place who had tried for some time to sell his farm but could not; he asked counsel of Brother Young concerning his property; Brother Young told him that if he would do right, and obey counsel, he should have an opportunity

to sell. In about three days Brother Tomlinson came to Brother Brigham and said he had an offer for his place; Brother Brigham told him that this was the manifestation of the hand of the Lord to deliver Brother Joseph Smith from his present necessities. Brother Brigham's promise was soon verified, and I got three hundred dollars from Brother Tomlinson, which enabled me to pursue my journey.

The weather was extremely cold, we were obliged to secrete ourselves in our wagons, sometimes, to elude the grasp of our pursuers, who continued their pursuit of us more than two hundred miles from Kirtland, armed with pistols and guns, seeking our lives. They frequently crossed our track, twice they were in the houses where we stopped, once we tarried all night in the same house with them, with only a partition between us and them; and heard their oaths and imprecations, and threats concerning us, if they could catch us; and late in the evening they came in to our room and examined us, but decided we were not the men. At other times we passed them in the streets, and gazed upon them, and they on us, but they knew us not. One Lyons was one of our pursuers.

I parted with Brother Rigdon at Dublin, and traveling different routes we met at Terre Haute, where, after resting, we separated again, and I pursued my journey, crossing the Mississippi river at Quincy, Illinois.

[...]

When I had arrived within one hundred and twenty miles of Far West, the brethren met me with teams and money to help me forward; and when eight miles from the city, we were met by an escort, viz., Thomas B. Marsh and others, who received us with open arms; and on the 13th of March, with my family and some others I put up at Brother Barnard's for the night. Here we were met by another escort of the brethren from the town, who came to make us welcome to their little Zion.

On the 14th of March, as we were about entering Far West, many of the brethren came out to meet us, who also with open arms welcomed us to their bosoms. We were immediately received under the hospitable roof of Brother George W. Harris, who treated us with all possible kindness, and we refreshed ourselves with much satisfaction, after our long and tedious journey, the brethren bringing in such things as we had need of for our comfort and convenience.

After being here two or three days, my brother Samuel arrived with his family.

Shortly after his arrival, while walking with him and certain other brethren, the following sentiments occurred to my mind:

The Political Motto of the Church of Latter-day Saints.

The Constitution of our country formed by the Fathers of liberty. Peace and good order in society. Love to God, and good will to man. All good and wholesome laws, virtue and truth above all things, and aristarchy [i.e., government by the best], live for ever! But woe to tyrants, mobs, aristocracy, anarchy, and toryism, and all those who invent or seek out unrighteous and vexatious law suits, under the pretext and color of law, or office, either religious or political. Exalt the standard of Democracy! Down with that of priestcraft, and let all the people say Amen! that the blood of our fathers may not cry from the ground against us. Sacred is the memory of that blood which bought for us our liberty.

Joseph Smith, Jun.,

Thomas B. Marsh,

David W. Patten,

Brigham Young,

Samuel H. Smith,

George M. Hinkle,

John Corrill,

George W. Robinson.

The Prophet's Answers to Questions on Scripture.

[text of D&C 113]

[\(Joseph Smith, Jr., History of the Church, volume 3, chapter 1, pages 1-10\)](#)

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