

Old Testament 40
Enlarge the Place of Thy Tent
(Isaiah 54-56; 61-65)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Isaiah tells us, though once cast off, we have a vital role in preparing for the Second Coming. And he reminds us Christ's Love for us is enormous!)

I. Just as John the Baptist prepared for Christ's first coming as Bridegroom, so we are expected to prepare others for His Second Coming.

A. Israel was once as a bride barren and forsaken, but we are now beloved and fruitful!

“Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bare; break forth into singing.... **For more are the children of the desolate** than the children of the married wife...: (Is. 54:1).”

“For thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of hosts is his name: ...For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth (Isaiah 54:4-6).”

B. As seed of Rachel, who was more barren at first, Latter-day Israel is becoming the most Fruitful to Christ.

B. His love will now endure forever.

“For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee... But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee... (Isaiah 54:7-8).”

“For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed...”

“I will make thy windows of agates... and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

“And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established:

“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 54:10, 12-14, 17).

C. **Now loved, we are to enlarge His Tent and gather into it all His People.**

“Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes (Is. 54:2).”

D. As His People, we are to do the same work the Savior did.

“The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

“**To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God;** to comfort all that mourn;

“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. (Isaiah 61:1-3).”

E. The Lord will make our work successful.

“For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited (Is. 54:3).”

“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it (Isaiah 55:11).”

II. While His call is in particular to the descendants of Israel, **all who will hearken will be invited into His tents.**

“Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant: . . . The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather *others* to him, beside those that are gathered unto him (Isaiah 56:6, 8).”

III. To spiritually prepare ourselves and others for the Second Coming may be the most important thing we can do.

A. Throughout the centuries, men have looked for the Second Coming. The actual time has not been disclosed. Many felt it would occur in their time. The apostles expected it in their time (2 Peter 3:13-14). It is claimed that because of Halley’s Comet which came in the Middle Ages, churches in Russia cancelled Easter Services, expecting it would be that very weekend; [It was seen as a “sign in the heavens”]. Some Latter-day Saint pioneers after reaching the Valley felt Christ’s coming was so imminent they lost motivation to develop the desert. Brigham Young told them “Go out and plant trees!”

B. **The fact that it has not occurred in the past when people expected it, does not mean it is not likely to occur in our age, but *more likely!* We must not be like little children on a long trip who continually ask, “Are we there yet?” “Are we there yet?” and when repeatedly told “not yet,” *have fallen asleep when the time comes.***

C. **Perhaps the biggest reason the Lord did not reveal when the Second Coming would occur is so that all people would remain on guard, always seeking to be prepared. In our Latter-days, we should especially be “always prepared.” (And that doesn’t mean just having food storage).**

IV. Christ will return! His Coming will be a time of great wrath, or of great peace, depending upon us!

A. For some it will come as a time of wrath.

“I have trodden the winepress. . . . I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury: and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments. . . . For the day of vengeance is in mine heart (Isaiah 63:3-4).”

“The Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword

will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many (Isaiah 66:15-16).”

- B. For some it will be a time of joy, though mixed with grief for those destroyed. “Who is this that cometh... with dyed garments ...? [who] is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save (Isaiah 63:1)”
- C. Those who have been working to prepare for His Coming will be blessed. “And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations ... to my holy mountain Jerusalem, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord.
And I will also take of them for priests ... (Isaiah 66:20-21).”

V. His Bride will rejoice and all injustices will be overcome.

- A. “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord... for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness ... as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels (Isaiah 61:10).”
- B. “Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name’s sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed (Isaiah 66:5).”

VI. At His Coming He will bring about many wonderful new works.

A, “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

“Be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy ... and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying (Isaiah 65:17-19).”

“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me ... so shall your seed and your name remain.... from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord (Isaiah 66:22-23).”

VII. The impact of understanding Isaiah should be life changing!

As I was preparing to serve my first mission, to Ireland, I was aware that I should re-read the *Book of Mormon*. But for some reason I was also motivated to re-read “Isaiah,” and to work on more fully understanding it. While I had made many advances in understanding Isaiah in the past, I knew I had not fully conquered it. So, that became a major goal before my mission.

Obviously, reading the *Book of Mormon* did help in my preparations. But so did reading “Isaiah.” I was surprised and thankful at how much courage it instilled in me as I realized how many of his writings spoke of our great responsibility to take the gospel to the world. We were the very ones the Lord had prepared to do this great work! Not only did greater awareness of Isaiah’s messages help me, but I was able to use his messages to help other missionaries when I arrived in the mission field.

I testify that studying Isaiah’s writings more carefully and prayerfully will reveal to us our Latter-day work, strengthen us to do it, and eventually lead to Eternal blessings.