

Lesson 36 - The Glory of Zion Will Be a Defense

Isaiah 1–6

To encourage us to avoid the evils of the world by standing in holy places and to help them draw strength from Isaiah's willingness to serve.

My lessons take a different path than the Gospel Doctrine lesson manual. The lesson outline looks closer at the doctrinal topics included in the lesson purpose and scripture block. The lessons are designed to challenge mature, active Latter-Day Saints who have a solid Gospel foundation and are looking for insights into the scriptures that will broaden their faith and understanding.

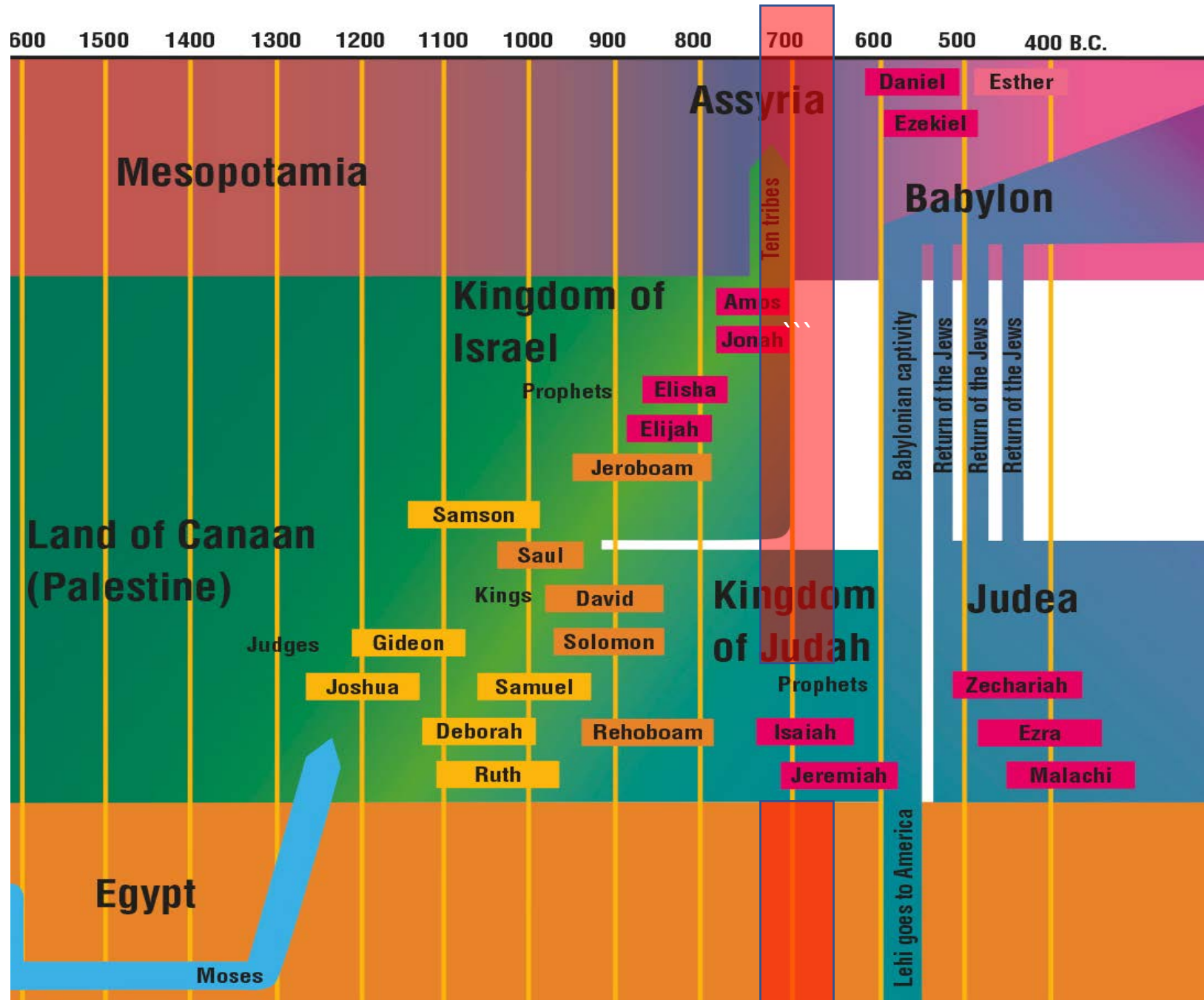
If you are interested in downloading the PowerPoint file, links to source material or reading posts about improving Gospel Doctrine class preparation, delivery and engagement, you can join my Facebook Group and have full access to the content posted there. The link is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/188904648521022/>

Last Week's Lesson Challenge

Last week's lesson challenge was to consider what it means to have a living prophet. What obligation do we have to listen to a living prophet? How can a living prophet help us in our daily lives? How can a living prophet help us strive for exaltation?

Would anyone wish to share their thoughts at this time?

Isaiah



Lesson 36: The Glory of Zion Will Be a Defense

Lesson 37: “Thou Hast Done Wonderful Things”

Lesson 38: “Beside Me There Is No Saviour”

Lesson 39: “How Beautiful upon the Mountains”

Lesson 40: “Enlarge the Place of Thy Tent”

Today’s lesson is the first of five lessons that will discuss the Book of Isaiah.

Given that the Church’s leadership has chosen to devote 5 out of 48 lessons to the a single Old Testament book, **what should we learn about the importance that is placed on the Book of Isaiah?**

Should we be more knowledgeable about what the Book of Isaiah can teach us?

“Isaiah is by every standard the messianic prophet of the Old Testament and as such is the most penetrating prophetic voice in that record.” —Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (quoted from *“Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon”*)

A Prophet’s Prophet - In scripture, Isaiah is the most frequently quoted of all the ancient prophets.

- Thirty-two percent of the book of Isaiah is quoted in the Book of Mormon; another three percent is paraphrased.
- The Savior quotes Isaiah in the New Testament at least 7 times and the Apostles quote Isaiah at least 40 times.
- The Doctrine and Covenants makes at least 100 references to the writings of Isaiah; sections 113 and 133 offer interpretations and clarifications of some of Isaiah’s prophecies.
- Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith on September 21, 1823, and quoted Isaiah chapter 11, “saying that it was about to be fulfilled.”

Now that you know how important Isaiah's prophecies and writings are to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, do you feel a little guilty that you've been avoiding reading and studying them all your life.

If you are interested in enhancing your study of Isaiah, I recommend five resources that you should study to begin to understand Isaiah's teaching. You can click on the links and it will take you to the article or lesson.

Chapter 7: Isaiah: Four Latter-day Keys to an Ancient Book

<https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/isaiah-and-prophets-inspired-voices-old-testament/isaiah-four-latter-day-keys-ancient-book>

“Great Are the Words of Isaiah” by Hugh W. Nibley

<https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/sperry-symposium-classics-old-testament/great-are-words-isaiah>

Lesson 9 - “My Soul Delighteth in the Words of Isaiah”

<https://www.lds.org/manual/book-of-mormon-gospel-doctrine-teachers-manual/lesson-9?lang=eng>

Understanding Isaiah and Other Challenging Scriptures

<https://www.lds.org/church/news/elder-oaks-addresses-seminary-students-on-old-testament-course?lang=eng>

Understanding Isaiah

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-student-manual-kings-malachi/enrichment-e?lang=eng>

Ten Keys to Understanding Isaiah By Elder Bruce R. McConkie Of the Council of the Twelve

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/1973/10/ten-keys-to-understanding-isaiah?lang=eng>

Isaiah

Son of Amoz, a prophet in Jerusalem during 40 years, 740–701 B.C. He had great religious and political influence during the reign of Hezekiah, whose chief advisor he was.

Isaiah is the most quoted of all the prophets, being more frequently quoted by Jesus, Paul, Peter, and John (in his Revelation) than any other Old Testament prophet.

The writings of Isaiah deal with events of his day as well as events beyond his time, some of which have already come to pass and others are yet to be. The bulk of Isaiah's prophecies deal with the coming of the Redeemer, both in His first appearance ("For unto us a child is born," 9:6) and as the Great King at the last day, as the God of Israel. A major theme is that God requires righteousness of His people, and until they obey Him they will be smitten and scattered by their enemies. But in the end, Israel will be restored; the barren land will be made fruitful and able to support a large population; and the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, will dwell in the midst of His people, who will be called Zion.

A major difficulty in understanding the book of Isaiah is his extensive use of symbolism, as well as his prophetic foresight and literary style; these take many local themes (which begin in his own day) and extend them to a latter-day fulfillment or application. Consequently, some prophecies are probably fulfilled more than one time and have more than one application.

We are going to begin looking at verses from Isaiah. Part of what makes Isaiah difficult to understand is the King James Version (KJV) interpretation. Biblical scholars in the early 1600's (the first edition of the KJV was published in 1611) had limited access to translations at that time. In the last century, numbers of early Biblical texts have been found (such as the Dead Sea Scrolls) which has given modern scholars more information on the early Bible books. In addition, there is more known about translating early texts today.

If you wish to better understand Isaiah's writings, it is suggested that you use the New International Version, or NIV. The following clarifies what the NIV is.

*The **New International Version (NIV)** is an English translation of the Bible first published in 1978 by Biblical (formerly the International Bible Society). The NIV was published to meet the need for a modern translation done by Bible scholars using the earliest, highest quality manuscripts available. Of equal importance was that the Bible be expressed in broadly understood modern English. A team of 15 biblical scholars, representing a variety of denominations, worked from the oldest copies of reliable texts, variously written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Each section was subjected to multiple translations and revisions, and those assessed in detail to produce the best option. Everyday Bible readers were used to provide feedback on ease of understanding and comprehensibility. The NIV was updated in 1984 and 2011.*

Care should be taken to use the Spirit to help you discern whether you believe the NIV translation is in line with Church teachings.

Isaiah 1:2-9. Rebellion against the Lord

“Israel’s rebellion is evidence of the highest degree of sin” (Sidney B. Sperry, *The Spirit of the Old Testament*, p. 175). Jehovah had nourished and brought them up as children (in Egypt and the wilderness), and now in their adulthood (in the promised land) they had turned against the Lord. Their affliction is like wounds or sores that have not healed. The totality of their rebellion is illustrated by the references to head and heart, to the whole person from foot to head. In other words, the spiritual cancer had infested the whole body of Israel. Little spiritual health was left in the nation. That was why the land would be left utterly desolate.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-student-manual-kings-malachi/chapter-13?lang=eng>

Isaiah 1:2-9 KJV

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

5 ¶ Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

7 Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9 Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

Isaiah 1:2-9 NIV

2 Hear me, you heavens! Listen, earth! For the Lord has spoken: "I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me.

3 The ox knows its master, the donkey its owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."

4 Woe to the sinful nation, a people whose guilt is great, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the Lord; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him.

5 Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted.

6 From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness— only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with olive oil.

7 Your country is desolate, your cities burned with fire; your fields are being stripped by foreigners right before you, laid waste as when overthrown by strangers.

8 Daughter Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a hut in a cucumber field, like a city under siege.

9 Unless the Lord Almighty had left us some survivors, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.

Isaiah 4:1. “Take Away Our Reproach” - This phrase suggests that the condition mentioned in verse 1 is caused by the scarcity of men, a result of the devastation of war mentioned in Isaiah 3:25–26. The conditions under which these women would accept this marriage (“eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel”) are contrary to the Lord’s order of marriage. To be unmarried and childless in ancient Israel was a disgrace. So terrible would conditions in those times be that women would offer to share a husband with others and expect no material support from him, if they could claim they were married to him.

Isaiah 4:4. “Washed ... Purged ... Burning” - This passage describes the purification of Zion in preparation for the establishment of God’s kingdom in the last days (see also Isaiah 4:4a). Through chastisement and various judgments, Israel will finally be purged of wickedness and turn back to God.

Isaiah 4:5–6. Zion to Be a Place of Refuge - In Doctrine and Covenants 45:66–72, the sacred and protected status of “Zion” for the gathered Israel in the latter days is described. Doctrine and Covenants 105:31–32 speaks of how the glory of Zion shall be her defense. Isaiah compared the protecting divine influence with that experienced by Moses. Elder Orson Pratt suggested that the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy would be literal:

“The time is to come when God will meet with all the congregation of his Saints, and to show his approval, and that he does love them, he will work a miracle by covering them in the cloud of his glory. I do not mean something that is invisible, but I mean that same order of things which once existed on the earth so far as the tabernacle of Moses was concerned, which was carried in the midst of the children of Israel as they journeyed in the wilderness. ... But in the latter days there will be people so pure in Mount Zion, with a house established upon the tops of the mountains, that God will manifest himself, not only in their Temple and upon all their assemblies, with a visible cloud during the day, but when the night shall come, if they shall be assembled for worship, God will meet with them by his pillar of fire; and when they retire to their habitations, behold each habitation will be lighted up by the glory of God,—a pillar of flaming fire by night.

“Did you ever hear of any city that was thus favored and blessed since the day that Isaiah delivered this prophecy? No, it is a latter-day work, one that God must consummate in the latter times when he begins to reveal himself, and show forth his power among the nations.”
(In *Journal of Discourses*, 16:82.)

[Isaiah 4:1-6](#) KJV

1 And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.

2 In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

3 And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:

4 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

5 And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.

6 And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

Isaiah 4:1-6 NIV

1 In that day seven women will take hold of one man and say, "We will eat our own food and provide our own clothes; only let us be called by your name. Take away our disgrace!"

2 In that day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel.

3 Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem.

4 The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire.

5 Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over everything the glory will be a canopy.

6 It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.

Isaiah 5:26–30. “He Will Lift Up an Ensign to the Nations” in the Latter Days

The gathering of Israel in haste and with means not known in Isaiah’s day is portrayed in the conclusion of this chapter. Elder LeGrand Richards provided this modern-day application of the prophet’s words:

“Since there were neither trains nor airplanes in that day, Isaiah could hardly have mentioned them by name. However, he seems to have described them in unmistakable words. How better could ‘their horses’ hoofs be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind’ than in the modern train? How better could ‘their roaring ... be like a lion’ than in the roar of the airplane? Trains and airplanes do not stop for night. Therefore, was not Isaiah justified in saying: ‘none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken’? With this manner of transportation the Lord can really ‘hiss unto them from the end of the earth,’ that ‘they shall come with speed swiftly.’” (Israel! Do You Know?, p. 182.)

[Isaiah 5:26-30](#) KJV

26 ¶ And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly:

27 None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken:

28 Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind:

29 Their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it.

30 And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

Isaiah 5:26-30 NIV

26 He lifts up a banner for the distant nations, he whistles for those at the ends of the earth. Here they come, swiftly and speedily!

27 Not one of them grows tired or stumbles, not one slumbers or sleeps; not a belt is loosened at the waist, not a sandal strap is broken.

28 Their arrows are sharp, all their bows are strung; their horses' hooves seem like flint, their chariot wheels like a whirlwind.

29 Their roar is like that of the lion, they roar like young lions; they growl as they seize their prey and carry it off with no one to rescue.

30 In that day they will roar over it like the roaring of the sea. And if one looks at the land, there is only darkness and distress; even the sun will be darkened by clouds.

This Week's Lesson Challenge

There is no doubt that Isaiah is difficult to understand. It was written in a language form that we don't practice today which makes understanding Isaiah's word imagery even harder to comprehend. **Using the New International Version, or NIV, can help to clarify what Isaiah wrote, but its not a substitute for prayer, study and asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance.**

As we continue to study Isaiah for four more lessons and then study Jeremiah and Ezekiel, spend time each day studying small parts of Isaiah, read the NIV version and then pray for guidance, understanding and enlightenment. The exercise will be difficult, but if you persevere, understanding the words of Isaiah will open up a new level of Gospel knowledge that you never had before.

Few valuable things come easy in this life. Understanding Isaiah is a valuable thing to have.