

# Gospel Doctrine # 40: "Enlarge the Place of Thy Tent" (Isaiah 54–56; 63–65)

**Lesson Goal:** To encourage us to strengthen the stakes of Zion and prepare for the Second Coming and the Millennium.

## **Points to consider when reading Isaiah:**

1. When you finish reading the Book of Mormon, you have read 1/3 of the book of Isaiah.
2. Most of Isaiah centers around these three concepts:
  - Learn about **covenants**
  - Look for **latter-day connections**
  - Find the **witness of Christ and the Second Coming**
3. Be aware of the **placement of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon**. What is the purpose for placing it within these chapters?
4. The prophets who included **Isaiah sections in the Book of Mormon** are **Nephi, Jacob, and Abinadi**. The **fourth speaker is Jesus Christ himself**, speaking the exact words of Isaiah. Think about the three prophets who were natives to the land and how they could understand the culture and words of Isaiah. We often struggle, but they are there to help us.
5. Read the **words of Isaiah** in the two scriptures below to help you understand their importance:

**1 Nephi 19:22-23:** ". . . I, Nephi, did teach my brethren these things; and it came to pass that I did read many things to them, which were engraven upon the plates of brass, **that they might know concerning the doings of the Lord in other lands**, among people of old. And I did read many things unto them which were written in the books of Moses; but that I might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer, **I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah**; for I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning.

**3 Nephi 23:1-2:** And now, behold, I say unto you, that **ye ought to search these things**. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that **ye search these things diligently**; for **great are the words of Isaiah**. For surely he spake as touching all things concerning my people which are of the house of Israel; therefore it must needs be that he must speak also to the Gentiles.

## **Subjects addressed in the last chapters of Isaiah:**

- Isaiah 54:** The Lord promises the glory of Zion in the last days and gives encouragement to the people.  
**Isaiah 55:** The Lord invites all people to partake of the gospel and testifies that his plan will be fulfilled.  
**Isaiah 56-57:** The Lord promises blessings to all the righteous.  
**Isaiah 58:** The Lord testifies that righteous deeds, such as fasting, will be rewarded.  
**Isaiah 59-60:** Transformation of Israel from spiritual death to eternal life  
**Isaiah 61-62:** Isaiah prophesies concerning the blessings of Zion  
**Isaiah 63:** The Second Coming  
**Isaiah 64:** Israel prays for the Second Coming and her Salvation  
**Isaiah 65:** The Lord's people will rejoice and triumph during the Millennium  
**Isaiah 66:** At the Second Coming, nation Israel shall be born, wicked destroyed, Gentiles hear the gospel  
**Isaiah 59-66:** The great blessings of a Zion society, a millennial reign, a new heaven new earth in the last days

## **1. "Lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes" (Isaiah 54:2)**

**President Ezra Taft Benson:** "To members, the term *stake* is a symbolic expression. Picture in your mind a great tent held up by cords extended to many **stakes** that are firmly secured in the ground.

"The prophets likened latter-day Zion to a great tent encompassing the earth. **That tent was supported by cords fastened to stakes**. Those stakes, of course, are various geographical organizations spread out over the earth. Presently, Israel is being gathered to the various stakes of Zion" ("Strengthen Thy Stakes," *Ensign*, Jan. 1991, 2).

**Joseph Smith:** "The time is soon coming, when no man will have any **peace but in Zion and her stakes**." (TPJS, 161)

**D&C 115:5-6:** Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations; And that **the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes**, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth.

**President Ezra Taft Benson:** "**Stakes are a defense for the Saints from enemies both seen and unseen**. The defense is provided **through priesthood channels** that strengthen testimony and promote family solidarity and individual righteousness." (Teachings of ETB, 150).

## 2. “With great mercies will I gather thee” (Isaiah 54:7)

**Isaiah 55:1-3:** “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which* is not bread? and your labour for *that which* satisfieth not? **hearken diligently** unto me, and eat ye *that which* is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David.”

**2 Ne. 9: 50-51:** “Come, my brethren, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore, do not spend money for that which is of no worth, nor your labor for that which cannot satisfy. **Hearken diligently** unto me, and remember the words which I have spoken; and come unto the Holy One of Israel, and feast upon that **which perisheth not, neither can be corrupted**, and let your soul delight in fatness.”

**Elder Marion G. Romney** explained what price is required: “When earth life is over and things appear in their true perspective, we shall more clearly see and realize what the Lord and his prophets have repeatedly told us, **that the fruits of the gospel are the only objectives worthy of life’s full efforts**. Their possessor obtains true wealth—wealth in the Lord’s view of values. . . .

“I conceive the blessings of the gospel to be of such inestimable worth that the price for them must be very exacting, and if I correctly understand what the Lord has said on the subject, it is. **The price**, however, is within the reach of us all, because it is not to be paid in money nor in any of this world’s goods **but in righteous living**. What is required is **wholehearted devotion to the gospel** and unreserved allegiance to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

**“A half-hearted performance is not enough. We must be willing to sacrifice everything. Through self-discipline and devotion we must demonstrate to the Lord that we are willing to serve him under all circumstances. When we have done this, we shall receive an assurance that we shall have eternal life in the world to come. Then we shall have peace in this world.”** (Conference Report, Oct. 1949, 39, 43–44.)

**Isaiah 56: 3-5:** Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, **Behold, I am a dry tree**. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that **keep my sabbaths**, and choose *the things* that please me, and take hold of my covenant; **Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.**

**Monte S. Nyman:** “These verses seem to clearly describe the times of the Gentiles when those who are not of Israel will be given the opportunity to come and be numbered with Israel. **The strangers are those not of Israel who represent the gentile nations where the gospel is restored**. The eunuchs, literally those who could not produce offspring, may refer to those who have no posterity in the Church and no other relatives who will join; **yet they will become the sons or daughters of Jesus Christ.**” (*Great Are The Words of Isaiah*, 218).

**Isaiah 55:8-9:** For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**John Taylor** said of this passage: “We know in part, and see in part, and comprehend in part; and many of the things of God are hid from our view, both things that are past, things that are present, and things that are to come. . . forgetting that no man knows the things of God but by the Spirit of God; forgetting that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; forgetting that **no man in and of himself is competent to unravel the designs and know the purposes of Jehovah**, whether in relation to the past, present or future; and hence, forgetting this, they fall into all kinds of blunders; they blunder over things that are contained in the Scriptures, some of which are a representation of the follies and weaknesses of men, and some of them perhaps may be the wisdom and intelligence of God, that are as far above their wisdom and intelligence as the heavens are above the earth” (*JD*, 1:368).

**Isaiah 55:10-13:** “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: **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. **For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace:** the mountains and the hills shall **break forth before you into singing**, and **all the trees of the field shall clap their hands**. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, **for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.**”

### 3. The Millennium will be a time of peace and joy.

The closing chapters of Isaiah's record present a beautiful picture of the Millennium, the thousand-year period of peace that will be ushered in by the Savior's Second Coming. These conditions will exist during the Millennium:

a. The Lord **will create new heavens and a new earth.**

**Isaiah 65:17:** For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind

b. There will be **great joy** and no more weeping for the Lord's people

**Isaiah 65:18-19:** But be ye glad and rejoice for ever [in that] which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

c. **People will not die young;** they will live to be 100 years old.

**Isaiah 65:20:** There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner *being* an hundred years old shall be accursed.

d. People will **enjoy the fruits of their own labors.**

**Isaiah 65:21-23:** And they shall build houses, and inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree *are* the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for **they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord**, and their offspring with them.

e. **Prayers will be answered immediately.**

**Isaiah 65:24:** And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

f. There will be **no enmity among beasts.**

**Isaiah 65:25:** The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust *shall be* the serpent's meat. **They shall not hurt nor destroy** in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.

**Elder Bruce R. McConkie:** "The millennium is the age of renewal and regeneration when the Lord will 'create new heavens and a new earth.' So sweeping will be the changes, so radical the differences in the order of things, that the former heavens and earth 'shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.' (Isa. 65:17.) It will be a 'day of transfiguration,' a day 'when the earth shall be transfigured' (D. & C. 63:20-21), a day when the continents and islands shall again 'become one land,' when the mountains and valleys will no longer be found (D. & C. 133:22-24), when **all things will return to their state of paradisiacal glory**" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 495).

**When Christ comes, he will come with power and drama and fire:**

**D&C 133:41-44:** . . . for the presence of the Lord shall be **as the melting fire that burneth**, and as the fire which causeth the waters to boil. O Lord, thou shalt come down to make thy name known to thine adversaries, and **all nations shall tremble at thy presence**-- When thou doest terrible things, things they look not for; Yea, when thou comest down, and the mountains flow down at thy presence, thou shalt meet him who rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, who remem-bereth thee in thy ways.

**In fact, his return to the earth will be among the most dramatic events in recorded history:**

**D&C 133:49-51:** And so great shall be the glory of his presence that **the sun shall hide his face in shame**, and the **moon shall withhold its light**, and the **stars shall be hurled from their places**. And his voice shall be heard: I have trodden the wine-press alone, and have brought judgment upon all people; and none were with me. And I have trampled them in my fury, and I did tread upon them in mine anger, **and their blood have I sprinkled upon my garments**, and stained all my raiment; for this was the day of vengeance which was in my heart.

**But when he comes, when the cataclysmic events described here are over and he descends to reign among his people and to heal the ravages of mortality, what will his people speak of?**

**D&C 133:52:** They shall mention the **loving kindness of their Lord**, and all that he has bestowed upon them according to **his goodness**, and according to **his loving kindness**, forever and ever.

**These chapters in Isaiah testify of that loving kindness. And since we will speak of it then, why not now?**

## 4. The true law of the fast (Isaiah 58:3–12)

**President Spencer W. Kimball:** "I think that when we are affluent, as many of us are, that we ought to be very, very generous ... and give, instead of the amount we saved by our two meals of fasting, perhaps much, much more—ten times more where we are in a position to do it" (Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 184).

### Blessings for living the law of the fast are promised in Isaiah 58:

- a. We become **stronger in resisting temptation** (Isaiah 58:6).
- b. Our **burdens are lightened** (Isaiah 58:6).
- c. Our **physical and spiritual health are improved** (Isaiah 58:8).
- d. We **become humble** and prepared to communicate with the Lord (Isaiah 58:9).
- e. We **assist the poor and the needy** (Isaiah 58:10).
- f. We **receive continual guidance from the Lord** (Isaiah 58:11).
- g. We **have our souls satisfied** in drought and become "like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isaiah 58:11).

**Victor L. Ludlow:** "Fasting should not be a time of pain and sorrow, but one of joy and rejoicing. Based on my experience and the testimonies of others, the following suggestions will improve the spiritual rewards of fasting:

1. **Plan ahead.** Prepare your schedule so to start the fast properly on Saturday, and yourself spiritually.
2. **Have a particular purpose or goal in mind** as you begin the fast. Perhaps you desire answers to doctrinal questions, help in solving a problem, or inspiration in serving others. Select one goal to concentrate on.
3. **Start the fast with a private vocal prayer** while you are alone on your knees. Remember, fasting without prayer is simply starving, and the Lord does not command us to starve ourselves.
4. **Keep the Spirit.** Use Saturday evening as part of your fast period. Keep activities uplifting.
5. **Fast a full twenty-four hours.** In case of health problems, fast according to your own limitations.
6. **Prepare to reach your goal:** study the scriptures, draft possible solutions to problems, talk with your family and home teachers, write in your journal, etc.
7. **Attend all your church meetings on Sunday.**
8. **Pay a full fast offering** as determined by what you feel you should contribute to help the poor and needy.
9. Just before concluding your fast, **set aside twenty or thirty minutes to ponder, meditate**, sort out possible solutions to a problem. etc. Read Moroni 10, especially the first five verses, for helpful counsel.
10. **End the fast with a private prayer** and be sure to take time to listen for answers" (*Isaiah: Prophet, Seer, Poet*, 490).

## THREE SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR ENLIGHTENMENT

**1) LDS.org ► Scriptures ► Holy Bible ► Old Testament ► Isaiah ► Chapter #** (At the beginning of each chapter on the right-hand side of the page, you have choices: "LISTEN, PRINT, etc." Click on LISTEN to hear the scriptures read to you.)

### 2) Glorious Sunday Viewing that will Open Isaiah to your Hearts:

These discussions of Isaiah aired in 2006 on BYUTV, Channel 21.

Faculty members from the BYU Religious Education department discuss the writings and teachings of the book of Isaiah in this 30-part series. Each half-hour episode covers several chapters from the Book of Isaiah.

### HOW TO FIND THESE ISAIAH EPISODES:

Google: **BYUTV Insights into Isaiah**

- Choose "BYUTV Insights into Isaiah"
- Click on "List View" and choose the chapters you want to study

**End your study by listening to the last discussion listed, entitled, "My Soul Delighteth in His Words" as the four BYU professors explain the appearance and significance of Isaiah in The Book of Mormon**

### 3) Study and learn the placement of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon:

<u>ISAIAH</u>	<u>BOOK OF MORMON</u>
Isaiah 2-----	2 Nephi 12
Isaiah 3-----	2 Nephi 13
Isaiah 4-----	2 Nephi 14
Isaiah 5-----	2 Nephi 15
Isaiah 6-----	2 Nephi 1
Isaiah 7-----	2 Nephi 17
Isaiah 8-----	2 Nephi 18
Isaiah 9-----	2 Nephi 19
Isaiah 10-----	2 Nephi 20
Isaiah 11-----	2 Nephi 21

<u>ISAIAH</u>	<u>BOOK OF MORMON</u>
Isaiah 12-----	2 Nephi 22
Isaiah 13-----	2 Nephi 23
Isaiah 14-----	2 Nephi 24
Isaiah 48-----	1 Nephi 20
Isaiah 49-----	1 Nephi 21
Isaiah 50-----	2 Nephi 7
Isaiah 51-----	2 Nephi 8
Isaiah 52-----	3 Nephi 20
Isaiah 53-----	Mosiah 14
Isaiah 54-----	3 Nephi 22