

**“And it shall be said in that day, Lo this is our God;
We have waited for him, and he will save us:
this is the Lord; we have waited for him,
we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”** (Isa. 25:9)

“They Have Broken the Everlasting Covenant” (Isa. 24:5)

“Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?” (Isa.40:21). The Lord asks this “great question” through the prophet Isaiah, and the question continues to reverberate through the ages, as the children of God still wander, confused by the mists of darkness that surround them, and as they fall prey to the silken traps that Satan and his followers lay out for them.

But we don’t *have* to wander in confusion and dismay. The Plan has been laid out for us before we ever came to earth. We had a part in ratifying it, and prophets throughout the ages have been inspired to repeat it to us in spoken word and written letter.

Isaiah repeats the Plan over and over again in his writings. He explains the nature of the ancient covenant, and warns his people that if they stray from the covenant, they will be chastised, smitten, and scattered. But, he also promises that the Good Shepherd, the Beloved Bridegroom, is faithful to His part of the covenant, and that after the chastening, He will redeem and restore His people once again to their lands of promise. They must wait for Him, watch for Him, repent, and partake of the atonement, and in the end, they will find peace and salvation.

Despite the specific and detailed prophecies, so many of the children of Israel are lost. Ancient Israel, for the most part, let go of their faith, and lost their identity. Most people who live today are completely unaware of *the new and everlasting covenant*, and those who have heard of it, do not see the necessity of embracing it. Many who profess to follow God have created Him in their own image, and their standards are based upon a worldly view, rather than upon those carved in stone by the finger of God.

The covenant is so important that Nephi quotes the Lord as saying: “I am God, and . . . I covenanted with Abraham that I would remember his seed forever” (2Ne. 29:14). God is remembering, but for the most part, His children are not. Do we understand the importance of the ancient covenant, and of the covenants that the Lord is renewing with us today? Do we understand that *covenant* comprises all that is sacred about God’s work, that *covenant* is the Plan, is the purpose of the Atonement, and the reason for the restoration of the Church as we know it as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

In this week’s Isaiah assignment, the Lord gives the reason for the scattering of Israel: “because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant” (Isa. 24:5). This emphasis on the covenant should inspire us to study about it, pray about it, and ponder our commitment to *the new and everlasting covenant* that comprises all covenants we make with the Lord. It should also encourage us to share the importance of *the new and everlasting covenant* with all of God’s children throughout the world.

UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH 24:1-12	COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE
1. Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.	1. Look! Adonai is stripping and destroying the land, turning it upside down and scattering its inhabitants -
2. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with the master; as with the maid so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor.	2. cohen and commoner, slave and master, maid and mistress, buyer and seller, lender and borrower, creditor and debtor.
3. The land shall be completely laid waste, and completely plundered: for the Lord hath spoken this word.	3. The land will be completely stripped, completely plundered, for Adonai has spoken this word.
4. The earth mourneth and withereth away, the world languisheth and withereth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.	4. The land fades and withers, the world wilts and withers, the exalted of the land languish.
5. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.	5. The land lies defiled under its inhabitants; because they have transgressed the teachings, changed the law and broken the everlasting covenant.
6. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are held guilty, therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.	6. Therefore a curse is devouring the land, and its inhabitants are punished for their guilt. It is why those living there waste away, and the people left are few.
7. The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merry hearted do sigh.	7. The new wine fails, the vines wilt, all the revelers sigh,
8. The mirth of timbrel ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.	8. The happy sound of tambourines ceases, the shouts of merrymakers are stilled, the joy of the lyre ends.
9. They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.	9. They no longer sing as they drink their wine, strong liquor tastes bitter to those drinking it.
10. The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in.	10. The city of chaos is shattered, every house closed up; no one can enter.
11. There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is removed.	11. In the streets they are crying over the wine; all joy has faded, cheer has left the land.
12. In the city, desolation remains, and the gate is crushed to ruins.	12. In the city, only desolation, its gates are battered beyond repair.

The Parry brothers give the following introduction to chapters 24-25:

Isaiah teaches us of the great apostasy, when earth's inhabitants made three major errors: they 'transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, [and broke] the everlasting covenant' (24:5). Because of this great apostasy from God's truth and his plan of happiness, God has wasted, turned upside down, emptied, and utterly spoiled the earth. Furthermore, the earth mourns, fades away, languishes, is defiled, and a curse devours it (24:1-6); because of the apostasy, God has scattered and burned the earth's inhabitants so that the few who do remain do not experience happiness - 'all joy is darkened' (24:11).

Although this prophecy of Isaiah speaks of many apostasies that have occurred during the history of the earth, it speaks especially of the period preceding the restoration of the gospel - an apostasy that continues to this day amongst most of the world's people. In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord quoted Isaiah 24:5: "For they have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant." The Lord then explained, 'They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god.' Because of these things, and 'knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth,' the Lord 'called upon . . . Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments' (D&C 1:15-17). The calamity to which the Lord refers comprises the second half of this section. The great cause of the destruction preceding the Second Coming is the wickedness that grows from apostasy. (*Understanding Isaiah* 212-13).

The Lord called Joseph Smith to be His instrument in restoring His Church and gospel to mankind. What had been named as the error of Isaiah's people was repeated again about the state of the people of our day. Joseph taught that the purpose for gathering in any dispensation was for the building of temples where God "could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation" (*History of the Church*, 5:422-427). These ordinances and covenants are the foundation upon which we build an eternal life.

Isaiah prophesied that there would be a wholesale "turning out" of people from the land, including people from all walks of life, and all levels of society (24:2). None would be spared. He specifically named the priests, who deserved special condemnation, as they should have been the guardians of the ordinances and covenants. Throughout the history of Israel, the priests were condemned for their greed, apathy and slothfulness over their sacred duties. Even after the Babylonian conquest, and the return to Jerusalem and rebuilding of the temple, by the time of Jesus, the high priest(s) were corrupting their office.

We, as Latter-day Saints, and the Priesthood holders, specifically, are now the guardians of the sacred laws, ordinances and covenants of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. How are we doing in fulfilling our stewardship in this regard? Do we "change" the laws, ordinances or covenants in any way?

President Kimball condemned religious leaders of any faith who transgress laws or change ordinances:

The term *priest* is here used to denote all religious leaders of any faith. Isaiah said: 'The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.' (*Isa. 24:5*.) From among the discordant voices we are shocked at those of many priests who encourage the

defilement of men and wink at the eroding trends and who deny the omniscience of God. Certainly these men should be holding firm, yet some yield to popular clamor.

I give some quotes from the press: ‘Many churchmen are reluctant to give a definite yes or no to marijuana.’ ‘It depends upon circumstances.’ (*Time*, August 16, 1968.)

They have developed ‘situation ethics,’ which seem to cover all sins. Other religious leaders are saying: ‘... precise rules of Christian conduct should not necessarily apply to problems of sexuality.’ (London—British Council of Churches.)

In contrast hear the strong voice of a prophet. Peter prophesied: ‘But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. ...’ ‘And many shall follow their pernicious ways. ...’ (2 Pet. 2:1–2.) (In Conference Report, Apr. 1971, p. 9.)

Victor Ludlow adds this insight:

The ‘most exalted people on earth’ could be those who exalt themselves and thus become the proud or haughty (v. 4, KJV). They might also be the ancient Israelites or members of Christ’s latter-day church who have been called and ordained to great callings but who ‘languish’ and fail to fulfill their stewardship. Whoever they are, their primary sin is that they have changed the teachings, laws, and covenants of the Lord (v.5). Each gospel principle, commandment, and ordinance was designed by God to help his children grow spiritually. Isaiah emphasizes that their changes have occurred upon three levels of the gospel: the knowledge level (teachings, instruction, or understanding), the action level (laws, commandments, or guidelines), and the contractual level (covenants, ordinances, or promises). In other words, complete apostasy among the people necessitates the Lord’s curse upon the whole earth. These people must suffer until only a few of them remain upon the earth (*IPSP*, 242).

“The Earth is Defiled Under the Inhabitants Thereof” (Isa. 24:5)

The earth suffers because of the transgressions of the people who live upon her. Enoch wept when he “looked upon the earth,” and heard her cry:

Wo, wo is me, the mother of men; I am pained, I am weary because of the wickedness of my children. When shall I rest, and be cleansed from the filthiness which is gone forth out of me? When will my Creator sanctify me, that I may rest, and righteousness for a season abide upon my face? (Moses 7:48-49)

Isaiah declares “therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are held guilty, therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left” (Isa. 24:6). The Topical Guide outlines some of the curses that the earth has endured because of men’s guilt:

- Cursed with thorns and thistles (Gen. 3:17; Moses 4:23-24)
- Cursed that it would not bear fruit for the wicked (1 Ne. 17:35)
- The Americas cursed to the wicked (2 Ne. 1:7)
- Cursed with “slippery-ness” (Hel. 13:18)
- Cursed for its purpose if there is no welding link between generations (D&C 128:18)
- Cursed with famine, lack of rain various times throughout Israelite history

The “burning” that Isaiah refers to in the previous verse has application to various timelines: conquering armies would burn crops and homes as they vanquished the Israelites throughout history, but the “burning” also pertains to the cleansing of the earth that will occur with the coming of the Lord, when the earth is burned by His glory. Malachi referred to the Second Coming with this question: “But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap” (Mal. 3:2)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie and the Parry brothers answer Malachi’s question with the following explanation:

few men left. So few will remain after the destruction of the wicked that a child will be able to number them (10:19), individuals will be accounted more precious than fine gold (13:12), and ‘many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant’ (5:9; 6:11-12). Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: ‘In the coming day when the vineyard of the Lord is burned, some few will abide the day, but the masses of men will be destroyed. Only those who are quickened, as were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, shall be able to abide the day of burning.’¹ (*Understanding Isaiah*, 216).

UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH 24:13-23	COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE
13. When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as when an olive tree is beaten, or as when gleanings are left over after the grape harvest is done.	13. Around the earth, among the peoples, it will be as when beating an olive tree, as when gleanings are left over after the harvest.
14. They shall lift up their voice, they shall cry aloud for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry shrilly from the sea.	14. They will lift their voices, singing for joy, shouting from the west to honor Adonai.
15. Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the region of light, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea.	15. So in the east, honor Adonai; in the coastlands, honor the name of Adonai, the God of Isra’el.
16. From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even “Glory to the righteous One.”	16. From the farthest part of the earth we have heard them sing, “Glory to the Righteous One!”

The above verses are again fulfilled in multiple time periods. Following the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests, few Israelites were left. Isaiah likens this to the olives that are left on a tree after the beating at harvest time. There are few who cling to the covenant, then and now (as Elder McConkie warned in the previous paragraph), and few who will survive the Second Coming of the Lord. Those who *are* left praise God, and acknowledge His hand in their deliverance; they have survived because of their commitment and consecration to the laws, ordinances and covenants of the gospel.

Note that “surviving” does not necessarily translate as escaping death. Surely Abinadi, and many righteous saints, gave their mortal lives for their testimonies, but spiritually survived the second death by keeping their covenants. This gives yet another layer of interpretation of the “beating” of the olive tree: there are righteous amongst the wicked who also endure the awful consequences that have brought forth the prophesied beating under the Lord’s hand.

¹ *New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 645

“The Earth Shall Reel To and Fro” (Isa. 24:20)

UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH	COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE
<p>16. But I said, I waste away, I waste away, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea with treachery have the treacherous dealers dealt very treacherously!</p>	<p>16. But, I say, I'm wasting away, I am wasting away! Woe to me! Traitors betray! Oh how the traitors betray and betray!</p>
<p>17. Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitants of the earth.</p>	<p>17. Terror, pit and trap are upon you, you who are living on earth.</p>
<p>18. And it shall come to pass, that he who flees from the noise of the fear, shall fall into the pit: and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.</p>	<p>18. He who flees at the sound of terror will fall into the pit. He who climbs up out of the pit will be caught in the trap. For the windows above have been opened, and the earth's foundations shake.</p>
<p>19. The earth is utterly broken down. the earth is cleaned dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.</p>	<p>19. The earth cracks and breaks open, the earth crumbles to pieces, the earth trembles and totters.</p>
<p>20. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.</p>	<p>20. The earth staggers to and fro like a drunk, sways back and forth like a watchman's shelter; its transgression weighs heavy upon it; it will fall indent rise again.</p>
<p>21. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.</p>	<p>21. When that day comes, Adonai will punish the armies of the high heaven on high, and the kings of the earth here on earth.</p>
<p>22. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.</p>	<p>22. They will be assembled like prisoners in a dungeon and shut up in prison to be punished many years.</p>
<p>23. Then the moon shall be confounded, and sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.</p>	<p>23. Then the moon will be confused and sun ashamed, for Adonai-Tzva'ot will rule on Mount Tziyon and in Yerushalayim, with his glory manifest to the rulers of his people.</p>

As previously stated, the earth is burdened by the guilt of the men who dwell upon her. She has swallowed up their iniquities in the blood spilt throughout generations. Under this weight, Isaiah prophesies that the earth will break down, be moved, and reel to and fro. Modern revelation affirms Isaiah's prophecy and warns:

For not many days hence and the earth shall tremble and reel to and fro as a drunken man; and the sun shall hide his face, and shall refuse to give light; and the moon shall be bathed in blood; and the stars shall become exceedingly angry, and shall cast themselves down as a fig that falleth from off of a fig-tree.

And after your testimony cometh wrath and indignation upon the people.

For after your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes, that shall cause groaning in the midst of her, and men shall fall upon the ground and shall not be able to stand.

And also cometh the testimony of the voice of thunderings, and the voice of lightnings, and the voice of tempests, and the voice of the waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds (D&C 88:87-91).

Who are the “host of the high ones” that the Lord will punish at that time? Victor Ludlow made the following statement:

The ‘hosts of heaven’ that the Lord punishes are most likely the original followers of Satan who were cast out of God’s presence. They will suffer with the spirits of the wicked who lived on this earth. Yet after a time, the spirits of this earth will be remembered and ‘visited’ (KJV) by messengers teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ (see D&C 138) (*IPSP*, 245).

Perhaps these “hosts of the high ones” has a broader application to any who are in position of leadership, but are prideful and fail to bow the knee to God, to accept His covenants, and care for the humble and lowly amongst them. But even they, according to Isaiah - and modern revelation - will be visited and released from their pit of judgement after they have served their sentence (see 1 Pet. 3:19; D&C 138:8).

Verses 22-23 clearly have reference to the Millennium, when the presence of the Lord will be the light that rests upon His people, and even the sun and moon will be ashamed by comparison to their Creator. Elder Orson Pratt said: “the moon will be confounded and the sun will be ashamed because the brilliance which attends Christ in His return to earth will be a ‘superior light,’ one which will make all else seem dark by comparison” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 20:12).

John the Revelator wrote:

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine it it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev. 21:23).

Victor Ludlow adds the following synopsis for chapter 24:

In chapter 24, Isaiah answers many questions about God’s judgments upon this earth and its inhabitants. He foretells primarily *what* will happen (vs. 1-3, 7-12, 17-23), although he also describes to *whom* the judgments will come (v. 2), *where* they will come (vs. 17, 21-22), and *why* they will come to both the wicked (vs. 4-6) and the righteous (vs. 13-16). One important question Isaiah does not answer is *when* they will occur.

From Isaiah’s time and perspective, he could be describing any one of three important periods in the earth’s history. First, the earthquakes, the helplessness of the people, and a visiting of the spirits in prison might describe the disaster in the Americas at the time of Christ’s crucifixion and his visit to the spirit world (see 3 Ne. 8-9); D&C:138). Second, similar events will affect this earth prior to Christ’s second coming, and many spirits will be ‘remembered’ and rise up from the dead (see D&C 45:33; 88:89; 63:49). Third, at the end of the Millennium, there will be a great cleansing of the earth prior to the last reuniting of spirits to their bodies, the resurrection of the unjust (D&C 76:71-112; 88:99-102). The earth will then be celestial, a body of light that will cause the sun to be ‘abashed’ and the moon (which is lit by the sun) to be ‘ashamed’ (v. 23; compare D&C 29:22-25; 130:7; 77:1-2) (*IPSP*, 246).

A Song of Praise

As he contemplates his vision, Isaiah breaks forth in a “praise song” included in chapter 25. The Institute Old Testament student manual clarifies that:

Though he spoke of great destruction and judgments, Isaiah was filled not with despair but with joy. Here he burst into a hymn of exultation because the Lord would finally come and reign in Zion and Jerusalem (see Isaiah 24:23).

UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH 25:1-5	COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE
1. O Lord thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.	1. Adonai, you are my God, I exalt you, I praise your name. For you have accomplished marvels, fulfilled ancient plans faithfully and truly.
2. For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defended city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.	2. For you have made a city a heap of stones turned a fortified city into rubble, made the foreigners' fortress a city that will never be rebuilt.
3. Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.	3. Therefore mighty peoples glorify you, the city of ruthless nations fears you.
4. For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.	4. For you have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in distress shelter from the storm, shade from the heat - for the blast of the ruthless was like a storm that could destroy a wall.
5. Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud; the song of the terrible ones shall be brought low.	5. Like desert heat, you subdue the foreigners' uproar; like heat subdued by a cloud's shadow, the song of the ruthless dies away.

In referring to the Lord’s “counsels of old,” Isaiah states that the Lord is faithful and true. Perhaps he is referring to the Lord’s faithfulness to the covenants made with Abraham and other patriarchs (and matriarchs). It is in fulfillment of the covenant that the Lord chastened - and continues to chasten - His children, that they may all come to be safely gathered in. Although there were (and are) many times when Israel seemed weak in comparison to her conquering neighbors, Israel is preserved while Babylon and other enemies fade away.

Isaiah states that the Lord is a strength and refuge to the poor and the needy, echoing the Savior’s own words in the Sermon on the Mount, a sermon wherein His followers were invited to come into covenant:

Blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God (Matt. 5:1-9)

UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH 25:6-12	COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE
6. And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a fest of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.	6. On this mountain Adonai-Tzva'ot will make for all peoples a feast of rich rood and superb wines, delicious, rich food and superb, elegant wines.
7. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people and the veil that is spread over all nations.	7. On this mountain he will destroy the veil which covers the face of all peoples, the veil enshrouding all the nations.
8. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of the people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.	8. He will swallow up death forever, Adonai Elohim will wipe away the tears from every face, and he will remove from all the earth the disgrace his people suffer, for Adonai has spoken.
9. And it shall be said in that day, Lo this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.	9. On that day the will say, "See! This is our God! We waited for him to save us. This is Adonai; we put our hope in him. We are full of joy, so glad he saved us!"
10. For in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest, And Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.	10. For on this mountain the had of Adonai will rest. But Mo'av will be trampled down where they are, like straw trampled into a pile of manure.
11. And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim; and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands.	11. They will spread out their hands in Mo'av, like a swimmer using his hands to tread water; but their pride will be humbled and sunk, no matter how clever the strokes of their hands.
12. And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground even to the dust.	12. Your high, fortified wall he will level, strike to the ground, lay in the dust.

Isaiah rejoices as he sees the Millennial Day (verses 6-9), when the faithful greet the Lord for whom they have waited, and when He sets all to rights “in this mountain.” While temples will dot the earth, the earth itself will become a veritable temple under the watchful eye of the Lord, who will wipe away tears from off all faces, and heal the earth from her pains (see Moses 7:61-65). This is the Day for which all the saints throughout the ages have yearned: when the Lord will come to rule and reign, and the earth and her people will be at rest.

The Institute manual explains:

The Second Coming will be a time of great rejoicing that follows “much tribulation” (D&C 58:3-4). A great “feast of fat things” (Isaiah 25:6) will also attend the Lord’s return, meaning that men will feast upon the fruits of the gospel until they are full (compare D&C 58:8). The Lord’s coming will help to dispel “the veil that is spread over all nations” (Isaiah 25:7). This veil may be the “dark veil of unbelief” (Alma 19:6; see also Ether 4:15) which characterizes those of the latter days who reject the gospel. Or, it could be a more literal “veil of darkness,” such as that described in Moses 7:61 when the heavens shall be darkened and “shall shake, and also the earth.” But great joy will also follow, for the time will come when “the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces” (Isaiah 25:8). This figure is used twice in the book of Revelation (Revelation 7:17; 21:4) and obviously represents a millennial condition.

The Parry brothers add the following from *Understanding Isaiah*:

feast of fat things, a feast of wines. By teaching the gospel to the earth’s inhabitants, our missionaries invite people to come to this feast, also called ‘the supper of the Lord’ (D&C 58:11), the ‘supper of the house of the Lord’ (D&C 58:9), and the ‘marriage supper of the Lamb’ (Rev. 19:9). ‘All nations’ are invited - ‘first, the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble’ - but when these reject the invitation to the feast, the Lord’s representatives will invite the poor and the humble. Only those who have received the ordinances of the temple and who are truly the humble followers of Christ will be able to partake of the feast. This feast will take place at our near the time of the Second Coming (D&C 58:9-11; Rev. 19:7-8; Matt. 22:2-14; Luke 14:16-24).

fat things full of marrow. The feast, like the sacramental emblems, reminds us of Christ’s atonement, for *fat things* and *wines* recall sacrificial offerings (Lev. 3:3-16); these things imply abundance and bounty. The phrase *wines on the lees well refined* speaks of ‘wine that remains upon its settlings until it is well matured. It is then poured off and strained to provide the best wine possible,’² since only the very best will be served at the Lord’s feast (227).

“Trust Ye in the Lord Forever” (Isa. 26:4)

The Parry brothers give the following introduction for chapter 26:

Isaiah, through revelation, composed a song for us to sing in ‘the land of Judah.’ The words of the song are about the city of Jerusalem, described as a ‘strong city’ that is protected by God himself. Unlike the cities of the biblical world, Zion will not have regular walls that surround and protect it, because God himself will be her protection (26:1-6).

Isaiah 26:7-18 is a prayer about the way the Lord sends judgments upon the wicked. The prayer is perhaps uttered by Israel, our ancestors, or ourselves in the near future.

² Hailey, *Commentary on Isaiah*, 206

The Lord responds to this prayer in Isaiah 26:19-21, promising the righteous that they will be safe during the destruction of the wicked and gives a promise of the resurrection. These words bring us great comfort in a world with so many negative occurrences and influences in our lives and in our communities (*Understanding Isaiah, 229*).

UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH 26	COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE
1. In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and ramparts.	1. On that day this song will be sung in the land of Y'udah: "We have a strong city! He has built walls and ramparts for our safety.
2. Open ye your gates, that the righteous nation which kept the truth may enter in.	2. Open the gates! Let the righteous nation enter, a nation that keeps faith!
3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind rests on thee; because he trusteth in thee.	3. A person whose desire rests on you you preserve in perfect peace, because he trusts in you.
4. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength:	4. Trust in Adonai forever, because in Yah Adonai is a Rock of Ages."
5. For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.	5. For he has humbled those in high places, levelling the lofty city, levelling it to the ground, laying it in the dust,
6. The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.	6. It is trampled underfoot by the feet of the poor, by the footsteps of the needy.

In the Millennium, Jerusalem will open her gates to a "righteous nation" that is comprised of the remnant that is left of Israel, plus a host of people who have joined Israel's ranks through receiving the new and everlasting covenant. They who have "kept the truth" of their covenants will find "perfect peace" within the strong city that the Lord will build for His people.

John saw a similar vision, as he recorded:

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying,
Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them,
and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;
and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying,
neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away (Rev. 21:2-4).

Modern revelation tells us that there will be two spiritual centers from which the Lord will govern His people:

And he shall utter his voice out of Zion,

and he shall speak from Jerusalem,
and his voice shall be heard among all people (D&C 133:21).

In order to clarify the difference between Jerusalem and New Jerusalem, Moroni explained:

Behold, Ether saw the days of Christ,
and he spake concerning a New Jerusalem upon this land.

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 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 -

And that a New Jerusalem should be built up upon this land, unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph, for which things there has been a type.

For as Joseph brought his father down into the land of Egypt, even so he died there; wherefore the Lord brought a remnant of the seed of Joseph out of the land of Jerusalem, that he might be merciful unto the seed of Joseph that they should perish not, even as he was merciful unto the father of Joseph that he should perish not.

Wherefore, the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built upon this land; and it shall be a land of their inheritance; and they shall build up a holy city unto the Lord, like unto the Jerusalem of old; and they shall no more be confounded, until the end come when the earth shall pass away.

And there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and they shall be like unto the old save the old have passed away, and all things have become new.

And then cometh the New Jerusalem; and blessed are they who dwell therein, for it is they whose garments are white through the blood of the Lamb; and they are they who are numbered among the remnant of the seed of Joseph, who were of the house of Israel.

And then also cometh the Jerusalem of old; and the inhabitants thereof, blessed are they, for they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb; and they are they who were scattered and gathered in from the four quarters of the earth, and from the north countries and are partakers of the fulfilling of the covenant which God made with their father, Abraham (Ether 13:4-11).

UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH 26	COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE
7. The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost make level the path of the just.	7. The way of the righteous is level; Righteous One, you smooth the path for the righteous.
8. Yea, in the way of thy judgements, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.	8. Following the way of your judgments, we put our hope in you. The desire of all our soul is to remember you and your name.
9. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.	9. My soul desires you at night, my spirit in me seeks you at dawn; for when your judgments are here on earth, the people in the world learn what righteousness is
10. Let favor be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.	10. Even if pity is shown to the wicked, he still doesn't learn what righteousness is. In a land of uprightness will still act wrongly and fail to see the majesty of Adonai.
11. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.	11. Adonai, you raised your hand, but they still didn't see. Yet with shame they will see your zeal for the people. Yes, fire will destroy your enemies.
12. Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.	12. Adonai, you will grant us peace; because all we have done you have done for us.
13. O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name	13. Adonai our God, other lords besides you have ruled us, but only you do we invoke by name.
14. They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.	14. The dead will not live again, the ghosts will not rise again; for you punished and destroyed them.
15. Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hast extended all the boundaries of the land.	15. You enlarged the nation, Adonai, you enlarged the nation; and thus you glorified yourself; you extended all the frontiers of the country.
16. Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.	16. Adonai, when they were troubled, they sought you. When you chastened them, they poured out a silent prayer.
17. Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O Lord.	17. As a pregnant woman about to give birth cries out and writhes in her labor pains, so we have been at your presence, Adonai -

UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH 26	COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE
18. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.	18. We have been pregnant and been in pain. But we, as it were have given birth to wind; we have not brought salvation to the land, and those inhabiting the world have not come to life.
19. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for your dew is as the dew of the morning, and the earth shall cast out the dead.	19. Your dead will live, my corpse will rise; awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust; for your dew is like the morning dew, and the earth will bring ghosts to life.
20. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors behind thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation pass over.	20. Come, my people, enter your rooms, and shut your doors behind you. Hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past.
21. For behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.	21. For see! Adonai emerges from his place to punish those on earth for their sin. Then the earth will reveal the blood shed on it and no longer conceal its slain.

Those who maintain a covenant relationship with the Lord “desire” communion with him night and day; and maintain a “remembrance” of Him throughout times of ease and times of trial (vs 8-9). They lament when the wicked do not recognize the hand of the Lord in all things, and accept His gospel.

Verses 17-18 allude to Israel as a pregnant woman, who instead of bringing forth a child, brought forth wind. Covenant people are meant to share the covenant, and to bring more to the covenant fold. Israel, as an adulterous wife (see Hosea), went after other gods, who are dead (vs 13-14), and now mourns over her lack of fruitfulness (much more to come on this topic in later Isaiah chapters). However, much to her surprise, the Lord Himself has “increased the nation” by bringing her adopted children through the Gentiles (vs. 15).

The intimate Husband/Bride metaphor continues in the admonition to “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors behind thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation pass over” (compare to Isaiah 54). The safest place for the Lord’s people is in His “chamber,” or the temple.

The Parry brothers add:

26:20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers. The Lord invites us to enter our chambers while he destroys the wicked (‘until the indignation pass over’). *Chambers* may refer to our homes and inner chambers, where we offer our prayers to our Father (Matt. 6:6); it may refer to the Lord’s temples, where the righteous seek refuge from the world, or *chambers* may refer to the Lord himself, who is our ‘refuge from the storm’ (25:4).

shut thy doors behind thee. Contrasting the open gates of verse two, before the appearance of the Lord, Isaiah counsels the Lord’s people to shut their doors. The shut doors recall the Passover, when the people of Israel remained within their homes while the angel destroyed Egypt’s firstborn (Ex. 12:21-27); they

also recall Noah's family, shut in the ark until the destructive floods had passed (Gen. 7:1, 16) (*Understanding Isaiah*, 237-38).

"Ye Shall Be Gathered One by One O Ye Children of Israel" (Isa. 27:12)

Chapter 27 continues the praise motif, and returns to the vineyard theme originally introduced in Isaiah 5. In Isaiah 5, the Lord despairs over the fact that His vineyard (Israel), which should have brought forth the best grapes due to its location, root and stock, has in fact brought forth wild grapes. He proclaims that the vineyard will be laid waste and trodden down, and that He will no longer cause rain to fall upon it (5:4-6).

The covenant itself provided the best soil, roots and stock for Israel, as it does today. Those who enter into covenant with the Lord partake of the Living Water of the Savior's atonement, a source of continual nourishment. This nourishment should contribute to the bringing forth of much fruit: roots and branches of our own individual family trees, but also the links of many families to the larger family covenant tree of Israel. But the ancient vines were condemned as wild, withered or barren.

The conditions of Chapter 5 are completely reversed in Chapter 27, which looks forward to the Millennial Day when all will "sing about a vineyard of delight" (vs 2), where the Lord "will water it every moment . . . and guard it night and day" (vs. 3). The Lord reassures in vs. 4 that "fury is not in me" and that those who will, can "make peace" with Him (vs. 5). He reminds Israel that "when the boughs are withered, they shall be broken off" and burned (vs. 11), a caution that His justice is still at work even in the midst of His mercy.

Isaiah prophesies that "In days to come Jacob will take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (vs 6). Isaiah further explains that it will be seen and known that Israel's iniquity is purged and that she is bringing forth fruit when she destroys all of the altars and images that she has erected to her false gods (vs. 9). Those who are in a covenant relationship with the Lord can have no other masters or lords.

President Spencer W. Kimball gave a hallmark talk entitled "The False Gods we Worship" that addresses the tendency we have to put other gods before the Lord:

The Brethren constantly cry out against that which is intolerable in the sight of the Lord: against pollution of mind, body, and our surroundings; against vulgarity, stealing, lying, pride, and blasphemy; against fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and all other abuses of the sacred power to create; against murder and all that is like unto it; against all manner of desecration. That such a cry should be necessary among a people so blessed is amazing to me. And that such things should be found even among the Saints to some degree is scarcely believable, for these are a people who are in possession of many gifts of the Spirit, who have knowledge that puts the eternities into perspective, who have been shown the way to eternal life. Sadly, however, we find that to be shown the way is not necessarily to walk in it, and many have not been able to continue in faith. These have submitted themselves in one degree or another to the enticings of Satan and his servants and joined with those of "the world" in lives of ever-deepening idolatry (*Ensign*, June 1976).

UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH 27	COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE
1. In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the fleeing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.	1. On that day Adonai, with his great, strong, relentless sword, will punish Livyatan the fleeing serpent, the twisting serpent Livyatan; he will slay the sea monster.
2. In that day sing ye about a vineyard of delight.	2. On that day, a pleasant vineyard - sing about it!
3. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will guard it night and day.	3. "I, Adonai, guard it. Moment by moment I water it. So that no harm will come to it, I guard it night and day.
4. Fury is not in me; who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them. I would burn them together.	4. I have no anger in me. If it gives me briars and thorns, then, as in war, I will trample it down and burn it up at once;
5. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.	5. unless it takes hold of my strength, in order to make peace with me, yes, to make peace with me."
6. In days to come Jacob will take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.	6. The time is coming when Yaakov will take root; Isra'el will bud and flower and fill the whole world with a harvest.
7. Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him?	7. Adonai will not strike Israel, as he did others who struck Israel; he will not kill them, as he did the others.
8. By warfare and exile you contend with him, he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.	8. Your controversy with her is fully resolved by sending her into exile. He removes her with a rough gust of wind on a day when it's blowing from the east.
9. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.	9. So the iniquity of Ya'akov is atoned or by this, and removing his sin produces this result: he chops up all the altar stones like chalk - sacred poles and sun-pillars stand no more.
10. Yet the defended city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.	10. For the fortified city is alone, abandoned and deserted, like the desert. Calves graze and lie down there, stripping its branches bare.

UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH 27	COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE
<p>11. When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off; the women come and set them on fire. For it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favor.</p>	<p>11. When its harvest dries up, it is broken off; women come and set it on fire. For this is a people without understanding, Therefore he who made them will not pity them, he who formed them will show no mercy.</p>
<p>12. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.</p>	<p>12. On that day Adonai will beat out the grain between the Euphrates River and Vadi of Egypt; and you will be gathered, one by one, people of Isra'el!</p>
<p>13. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.</p>	<p>13. On that day a great shofar will sound. Those lost in the land of Ashur will come, also those scattered through the land of Egypt; and they will worship Adonai on the holy mountain in Yerushalayim.</p>

President Kimball taught that those who fall into idolatry did so under the enticing of Satan and servants (see former quote). Isaiah prophesied that the Lord would “punish” and “slay” the serpent, or dragon, who is also Satan.

President George Q. Cannon explained:

We talk about Satan being bound. Satan will be bound by the power of God; but he will be bound also by the determination of the people of God not to listen to him, not to be governed by him. The Lord will not bind him and take his power from the earth while there are men and women willing to be governed by him. That is contrary to the plan of salvation. To deprive men of their agency is contrary to the purposes of our God. ...

Satan only gains power over man through man’s exercise of his own agency; and when Satan shall be bound, as the Lord says he will be for a thousand years, one of the great powers that will help bring this to pass will be man’s agency. The Lord has never forced men against their will to obey Him. He never will do so. If Satan, therefore, has power with man, it is because man yields to his influence. ...

The time is not far distant when great judgments will be poured out upon the wicked inhabitants of the earth. Every Prophet who has looked forward to our day has seen and predicted that the wicked would be destroyed. Their destruction means the destruction of Satan’s power. The righteous will be left, and because of their righteousness the Lord will have mercy upon them; they, exercising their agency in the right direction, will bring down His blessings upon them to such an extent that Satan will be bound.” (*Gospel Truth*, 1:86–87; see also 2 Ne.30:18; Ether 8:26) .)

The CES Old Testament student manual explains that:

When Israel is restored, she “shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit” (Isaiah 27:6). That fruit is the gospel of peace (see vv. 5–6). At the same time the Lord “shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, ... and he shall slay the dragon” (v. 1). Both dragon and serpent are scriptural terms for Satan, the common enemy of God and all mankind (see Revelation 12:9). Thus, *leviathan* probably includes not only Satan personally but all who serve him. In other words, what Isaiah saw is the necessary destruction of Babylon, or the world, before Zion can be fully established. Here again, as in chapter 26, Isaiah is so taken with the joy of that future day that he couches his words in a hymn of praise.

Chapter 27 ends with the great promise that the Lord will gather His people “one by one” and bring them back from all of the areas in which they have been scattered or held captive. The “outcasts” shall return to worship the Lord in truth in His holy temple. This is one of the great promises of the covenant: that the Lord will number and gather His people and bring them back to His fold. We, as Latter-day Saints have made a covenant that we will be instruments in performing this work (see Hymn *Dear to the Heart of the Shepherd*).

Jeremiah proclaimed that the latter-day gathering of Israel will be a far greater miracle than was the deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Jer. 23:7-8). *That* deliverance was but a shadow and type of what was to come. Israel has been long dispersed, but *now* is the time of her gathering, in accordance with all of the covenants and promises that God has made throughout time. All of this has been told and foretold, and should be “written on our hearts” (Jer. 31:33). No wonder Israel will exclaim in that day, as Isaiah foretold:

Lo this is our God; we have waited for him,
and he will save us:
this is the Lord; we have waited for him,
we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation (Isa. 25:9).