

**“And They Shall Call Them, The Holy People, The Redeemed of The Lord”** Isa. 62:12

Jesus was accustomed to attending synagogue from the time of his youth, as were all Jewish men. Once a young man turned 12-13, he became “a Son of the Law,” and was entitled to handle and read from the precious Torah. This rite of passage is often acknowledged today through a “Bar Mitzvah” (Son of the Commandment, or Son of the Law).

Each Sabbath day, the ruler of the synagogue would appoint a handful of participants to read sections from the Law, and also from the Prophets. Each would read a few verses, and then share a commentary or insight upon that which he had read. There was no special ordination required for these instructors; they were lay members, much the same as Latter-day Saints who participate in Sabbath services and classes. When a renowned Rabbi or teacher was visiting a synagogue, it was common that he would particularly be invited to participate in the reading and instruction, and the synagogue would be filled to capacity by those who were eager to hear what he might have to say. Such was the case for Jesus in the beginning days of His ministry, when He attended His hometown synagogue in Nazareth (Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 304-316).

We can imagine the conflicting emotions of those present when Jesus “stood up for to read” (Luke 4:16). Some, who had known Him all of His life, wondered “Is not this Joseph’s son?” (Luke 4:22) Others had followed Him to Nazareth, intrigued by His words and wanting to know more (Luke 4:14). There must have been a sort of breathless anticipation as the scroll was handed to Him to read, and to comment upon, as was the custom. Undoubtedly, the scroll was opened and prepared, marked at Isaiah, chapter 61, perfectly coinciding with the announcement that He was about to make:

1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me;  
because 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;

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

Jesus read the first two verses from Isaiah 61, with some variation (as recorded in the New Testament):

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor;  
he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted,  
to preach deliverance to the captives,  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty them that are bruised.

To preach the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18-19).

It was the custom for the reader to “targum” the scriptural passage, or give an explanation or interpretation after he finished the reading. Jesus set the Nazarenes on edge, when after reading the passage from Isaiah, He declared “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:21). They knew

that this prophecy was about the Messiah, “the Anointed One,” and they understood that Jesus was testifying that the prophecy applied to Himself, — and they were outraged. They sought to throw Him off a cliff, killing Him in accordance with the Law of Moses’ penalty for blasphemy.

Despite their furious response to His declaration, Jesus was, indeed, the Messiah Isaiah had prophesied of. In fact, as Jehovah, Jesus had dictated these very words to the prophet. They proclaim the mission of the Messiah to 1) preach the gospel to the poor, or the meek, 2) to bind up, or heal the broken-hearted, 3) to liberate the captives on both sides of the veil, 4) to comfort those that mourn, 5) to give sight to the blind, 6) and to proclaim Himself as Lord.

In His first Sermon at the Mount, Jesus continued the pattern set forth in Isaiah 61, by beginning with these words: “Blessed are the poor in spirit; 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” (Matt. 5:3-5). The tone of the voice would have been very familiar to those who had loved their scriptures; for it was the same voice that had spoken through Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and all of the holy prophets.

According to Luke, Jesus did not include the line from verse 2 of “proclaim[ing] . . . the day of vengeance,” when he read the verse in Nazareth. The “day of vengeance” applies to the Second Coming, and was therefore not appropriate to the audience and application that Jesus gave that day amongst His friends and relatives. However, the Lord did address the latter-day aspect of the “day of vengeance” prophecy when He ministered to the Nephites. He said: “For it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that at that day whosoever will not repent and come unto my Beloved Son, them will I cut off from among my people, O house of Israel; and I will execute vengeance and fury upon them, even as upon the heathen, such as they have not heard” (3 Ne. 21:20-21).

Apart from the first verses just discussed, chapters 61-62 of Isaiah continue to direct our focus on the latter-days and the Millennium, when Israel will finally have accomplished her tribulations, and be gathered and healed under the ministrations of the Savior and His appointed stewards in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

3 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.

Israel will be gathered home once again to the land(s) of their inheritance (see 3 Ne. 20:29). They will receive the fulness of the gospel, and believe in their Redeemer and Lord, Jesus Christ. When that occurs, they will receive all of the blessings of the gospel, including temple ordinances and sealings. Within temple walls, they will receive “the oil of joy,” and the “garment of praise.” These symbols have additional meanings, of course. Oil (olive) was often used anciently as a healing agent, and is also associated with the Holy Ghost. In addition, Jesus performed the Atonement in the Garden of Gethsemane, which means “Olive Press.” His blood gushed out like oil from the olives under the extreme weight and burden He bore as He made Himself one with His people. This gift of His Atonement, wherein we are “washed in his blood” (see JST Rev. 1:6) is akin to being anointed with the “oil of joy” at the understanding that our mourning, suffering and guilt can be washed away because of His atonement.

The “garment of praise” likely cross-references to the many verses that instruct Israel to “Awake, and put on thy beautiful garments” (Isa 52:1, D&C 82:14, Moroni 10:31, etc.). The Lord gifted Israel with “beautiful garments” pertaining to the priesthood at the foot of Mount Sinai with the formation of the tabernacle, which later became the temple. It had been the intention of the Lord that all of His people should become kings and priests (and queens and priestesses), but they were not ready to accept His invitation (see Ex. 19:6, 20:19). Therefore, most of Israel did not have, or wear, their beautiful priesthood garments. In addition, with the destruction and captivity of the people, the temple was destroyed, and the descendants of Aaron did not wear their priestly robes, as they did not believe they had anywhere to officiate.

Isaiah foresaw a day when all people, from all nations, would enter into the temple, and be accepted by the Lord (Isa. 56:5-7). In that time — our day — all who are worthy to enter into temple covenants will be given “beautiful garments” of the priesthood to wear in order to officiate before the Lord, and also to wear as a covering to remind them of the precious Atonement of the Savior. The promises contained in Isaiah 61 are clearly focused on the latter-days.

The term “trees of righteousness” may refer to the “pillars of the temple” in John’s Revelation, wherein the Lord promises that for those that “overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name” (Rev. 3:12).

The promise of “going no more out” is inherent in the term “the planting of the Lord” (Isa. 61:3). This terminology is first seen in Isaiah, chapter 5, where the Lord refers to the men of Judah as His “pleasant plant” that did not bring forth the desired fruit (Isa. 5:7). As a result, the plants were pulled up, some to be burned, and some to be dispersed throughout the earth (see Isa. 5 and Jacob 5). Now, in Isaiah 61:3, we see the plants having taken root, and grown to “trees of righteousness.”

Note that all of these accomplishments bring glory to the Lord (Isa. 61:3). It is of the utmost importance that all remember that it is through His mercy, and His Atonement, that all is made possible — and not by any merits of our own. “No unclean thing can dwell with God” (1 Ne. 10:21), and despite our best efforts, we all fall short. The work of our salvation and redemption is His work, and all glory be given to Him and to the Father.

4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations,  
and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,  
and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

Jesus explained these verses in His sermon to the Nephites: “And I will remember the covenant which I have made with my people; and I have covenanted with them that I would gather them together in mine own due time, that I would give unto them again the land of their fathers for their inheritance, which is the land of Jerusalem, which is the promised land unto them forever, saith the Father” (3 Ne. 20:29).

Speaking of the Gentiles, the Lord continued: “And they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem” (3 Ne. 21:23).

The Gentiles, or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will assist in building both the ancient Jerusalem when it is renewed, and also the New Jerusalem on this continent. As it pertains to the ancient city, Jerusalem lay “desolate [for] many generations,” but will become the gathering place for the tribe of Judah, to whom Isaiah addresses much of his prophecy and vision.

The “flocks” that the “strangers” or Gentiles will feed are symbolic of the children of Israel. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints nourish and tend to the flocks of Israel when they share the gospel of Jesus Christ, perform temple work for deceased ancestors, and perform individual missions wherein the Kingdom of God is strengthened. They spread the “seed” of the word of God (see Alma 32), thereby becoming “plowmen” and “vinedressers” as they continue to tend and care for the tender plants that will become the “planting of the Lord” or “trees of righteousness” referred to in verse 3.

6 But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord:  
men shall call you the Ministers of our God:  
ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles,  
and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

Once again, the promised restoration of the fulness of the priesthood and temple blessings are available to all who accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. Although Israel had only one family (Aaron) from one tribe (Levi) who could officiate in the ancient tabernacle and temple, all worthy male members can become “Priests of the Lord” or “Ministers of our God” in these latter days. Abraham had been promised that through his priesthood, all the families of the earth would be blessed (see Abr. 2:11). Specifically, the Lord had told Abraham that “thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations” (Abr. 2:9; emphasis added). While this had not actually occurred because of rebellion and unbelief, now the Lord promises that Abraham’s posterity will receive — and honor — the priesthood, which they receive, not directly through Abraham, as was their right, but through the ministrations of the Gentiles, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Hence, “ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles,” which is the fulness of the gospel with all of its attendant blessings.

7 For your shame ye shall have double;  
and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion:  
therefore in their land they shall possess the double:  
everlasting joy shall be unto them.

The “birthright” portion was a double-inheritance; therefore, Israel receives double in recompense of evil, and double in inheritance and joy in their redemption.

8 For I the Lord love judgment,  
I hate robbery for burnt offering;  
and I will direct their work in truth,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles,  
and their offspring among the people:  
all that see them shall acknowledge them,  
that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.

These verses have reference to the hand-in-hand familial relationship of Israel and the Gentiles. The Gentiles have the “good news” of the gospel through Israel, who were the guardians of the scriptures (or Law), and through whom Jesus Christ has come (specifically here, the tribe of Judah). Israel is entitled to numerous blessings as a result of the covenant made with Abraham. But, Israel did not honor her birthright, or love her God, and fell away in corruption, thereby losing her identity and remembrance of the covenant. The Gentiles, who come by the knowledge of Christ and His gospel not as natural inheritors, but through adoption, show their love and understanding of the gift they have received by turning their hearts to Israel, and in assisting Israel to return to the knowledge of the Lord, and of the ancient promises made to her. It is essential that the Gentiles “see [and] acknowledge [Israel], that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed” (vs 9). Each is entirely dependent upon the other and cannot be saved alone. There can be no “elbowing-aside” to come into the presence of the Father; the Gentiles figuratively carry Israel upon their backs and in their arms, for only through adoption into the family of Israel can the Gentiles gain their own inheritance, and only through the Gentiles can Israel come to a knowledge of their Redeemer as Jesus Christ.

10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God;  
for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments,  
and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

The symbolic representation of Christ as the Bridegroom is woven throughout the scriptures to illustrate the deep and intimate form of relationship the Savior wishes to have with each one of us. Verse 10 cross-references with Revelation 19:7-8, where the Bride of Christ shows her readiness by clothing herself in the beautiful garments He presented to her at the time of the “betrothal” at Mt Sinai, or at the time of covenant-making for any individual. The “garments of salvation,” and “the robe of righteousness” correlate to John’s vision, where the fine, white linen worn by the bride represented “the righteousness of [the] saints” (Rev. 19:8). While worthiness is required to wear the sacred clothing, it is important to note that the clothing also represents the protection — and even the Atonement of— the Savior. The bride “rejoices in the Lord” when she wears the clothing; it is a symbol of His love and embrace of her.

11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud,  
and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth;  
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

1 For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace,  
and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest,  
until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness,  
and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

The Lord does “not hold [His] peace,” nor is He quiet in His heaven. His work is going forward, and through it, “His arm is revealed.” Modern revelation sheds light upon these verses: “That through your administration they may receive the word, and through their administration the word may go forth unto the ends of the earth, unto the Gentiles first, and then, behold, and lo, they shall turn unto the Jews. And then cometh the day when the arm of the Lord shall be revealed in power in convincing the nations, the heathen nations, the house of Joseph, of the gospel of their salvation. For it shall come to pass in that day, that every man shall hear the fullness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language, through those who are ordained unto this power, by the administration of the Comforter, shed forth upon them for the revelation of Jesus Christ” (D&C 90:9-11).

The Lord will “cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations” — how can that prophecy be fulfilled? Is it not through the example and steadiness of the Lord’s people, as they stand firmly for truth and righteousness in the midst of dark confusion? While they may be mocked and persecuted, their witness will stand as a light, and their testimony will linger long after they have borne it.

2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory:  
and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.

3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord,  
and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken;  
neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate:  
but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah:  
for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee:  
and as a bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride,  
so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

Israel has been the forlorn and forsaken — or at least, she has perceived that to be her truth (see Isa. 49:14). The reality is that the Lord has always had His eye upon her, and been working for her redemption and salvation. When this work is accomplished, and Israel is at last gathered home, redeemed and renewed, the Gentile nations will wonder, and give her praise. She will no longer be a “hiss and a byword” (see 1 Ne. 19:14), but rather will be seen as the Lord’s “Beloved,” His peculiar treasure (see Ex. 19:5), glorified as “a royal diadem in the hand of God,” through whom He would accomplish His work and bring glory unto Himself.

Hephzi-bah means “My desire is in her,” while “Beulah” means “Married wife” (see footnotes, vs 4). These terms have many layers of meaning; there is a pathos of regret and hope as we view Israel as “My desire is in her.” What has been the desire of the Lord for Israel? How can she best shine as His Bride? If she will not do these things of her own will and volition, the Lord creates circumstances through which she learns perspective, and at last comes to see Him as her Loving Lord and Husband to whom she does indeed, wish to be married. It is the work that Jesus Christ works within His bride that is the greatest miracle, and the illustration of the compass and destiny of every human soul.

Joseph Smith added that the meaning of the term “thy land shall be married” is that the land will be united into one land mass. The Doctrine and Covenants explains: “Wherefore, prepare ye for the coming of the Bridegroom; go ye, go ye out to meet him. For behold, he shall stand upon the mount of Olivet, and upon the mighty ocean, even the great deep, and upon the islands of the sea, and upon the land of Zion. And he shall utter his voice out of Zion, and he shall speak from Jerusalem, and his voice shall be heard among all people; And it shall be a voice as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, which shall break down the mountains, and the valleys shall not be found. He shall command the great deep, and it shall be driven back into the north countries, and the islands shall become one land; And the land of Jerusalem and the land of Zion shall be turned back into their place, and the earth shall be like as it was in the days before it was divided. And the Lord, even the Savior, shall stand in the midst of his people, and shall reign over all flesh” (D&C 133:19-25).

6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem,  
which shall never hold their peace day nor night:  
ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence,

7 And give him no rest, till he establish,  
and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Whereas the Lord had accused his watchmen of being “slumbering dogs” that were “ignorant” and “blind” (see Isa. 56:10), in the latter-days, the Lord provides watchmen who “never hold their peace day nor night.” This we see in our present First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, as our leaders teach and testify of Jesus Christ and His gospel. They cannot be bribed to look aside, or to prophesy falsely as ancient prophets did (see Jer. 14:14). Despite the political environment, true watchmen stand up for the will of the Lord. Elder Nelson illustrates this in his article in the August 2015 *Ensign*. He said: “Wherever we go, you and I as disciples of the Lord bear a solemn responsibility to proclaim the will of God to all people. And one of the more demanding opportunities of our time is to stand up for the truth regarding the sacred nature of marriage . . . social and political pressures to change marriage laws have resulted in practices contrary to God’s will regarding the eternal nature and purposes of marriage. Man simply cannot make moral what God has declared to be immoral. Sin even if legalized by man, is still sin in the eyes of God . . . we cannot condone efforts to change divine doctrine. It is not for man to change” (*Ensign*, August 2015, p. 34).

Verse 7 emphasizes the fact that His watchmen are not to rest until “Jerusalem is a praise in the earth.” This speaks of the Millennial Day when Jerusalem will be at peace and exalted as “the Lord’s city,” where He will have “His throne” (see Jer. 3:17). “For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (2 Ne. 12:3). President Joseph Fielding Smith explained the meaning of the law going out of Zion and the word from Jerusalem: “Jerusalem of old . . . shall become a holy city where the Lord shall dwell and from whence he shall send forth his word unto all people. Likewise, on this continent [America], the city of Zion, New Jerusalem, shall be built, and from it the law of God shall also go forth . . . These two cities, one in the land of Zion and one in Palestine, are to become capitals for the kingdom of God during the millennium” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:69-71).

8 The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength,  
Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies;  
and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast labored:

9 But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord;  
and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.

10 Go through, go through the gates;  
prepare ye the way of the people;  
cast up, cast up the highway;  
gather out the stones: lift up a standard for the people.

11 Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world,  
Say ye to the daughter of Zion,  
Behold, thy salvation cometh;  
behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

12 And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord:  
and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

These last verses of chapter 62 are words of love and promise sung by the Lord Jehovah to His bride. Again and again, the Lord, Himself, witnesses that the greatest miracle of all time will be the salvation and redemption of Israel. He has “sworn by his right hand” that she shall be at rest in the land of promise, where she will grow her crops and feast upon them at the time of harvest. No enemy will benefit from them, as in times past, when the land was left empty of her inhabitants.

The way will be opened for Israel’s return: even as her escape from Egypt was miraculously accomplished, so shall it be in the latter-days, when the “highway of holiness” (see Isa. 35:8) is cast up for her to travel on. “Lift up a standard” — or the “ensign” — for the people of Israel to gather to, and remove the stones that block the path of her journey. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with the fulness of the priesthood and restored Gospel, is the ensign and the bridge by which Israel will find her way home to the Lord. Together, the Gentiles, as the adopted, and Israel, as the birthright, become “The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord.”