

ISAIAH AND THE MESSIAH

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In the solemn chamber of the upper room, shortly before He descended to the agony of Gethsemane, Jesus washed His disciples' feet, administered the sacrament to them, and offered the great Intercessory Prayer on their behalf (see John 13:4-11; 17:1-26; Luke 22:19-20). As the Savior petitioned the Father on that sacred occasion, He also instructed His disciples with these words, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Ever since that poignant plea to the Father, followers of Christ have understood that coming to know Him is requisite for all who hope to enjoy the blessings of eternal life.

Earlier in His mortal ministry, the Savior spoke of one of the ways we can come to know Him. "Search the scriptures," He commanded, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life:

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and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).¹ Later, as the resurrected Savior spoke to the descendants of Lehi gathered at the temple in Bountiful, He used a similar imperative to identify an Old Testament prophet He felt deserved our special attention. "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" (3 Nephi 23:1). Those familiar with Isaiah's teachings recognize that the ancient prophet's remarkable witness of Christ likely helped qualify his writings for this divine endorsement. While many of the Old Testament prophets spoke of the Savior, Isaiah's teachings concerning both the Mortal and Millennial Messiah are arguably the most prolific, detailed, and inspiring.² Through them, we can come to know Christ better.

THE MORTAL MESSIAH

In the meridian of time, the Jews maintained a great messianic hope and expectation. Years of captivity and political oppression at the hands of Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans had caused them to yearn for the powerful, conquering Messiah who would put an end to suffering, restore the covenant people, and reign in equity and peace. While many prophets spoke of this Millennial Messiah, Isaiah taught clearly of another Messiah who also must come—a Mortal Messiah, who would come to earth and quietly complete a more essential mission, a mission to conquer something far greater than political

1. In Greek, the tense of the verb *know* in this passage suggests to "know continually." Thus, knowing God and Christ in the way that leads to eternal life is not to be a one-time confession of faith but a lifelong effort.

2. Elder Bruce R. McConkie gave another endorsement to the writings of Isaiah when he described Isaiah as "the prototype, pattern, and model for all the prophets" ("The Doctrinal Restoration," in *The Joseph Smith Translation: The Restoration of Plain and Precious Things*, ed. Monte Nyman and Robert L. Millet [Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 1985], 17).

kingdoms—sin and death. Isaiah's writings teach clearly about the Mortal Messiah's beginnings, ministry, and mission.

BEGINNINGS

When Isaiah declared the word of the Lord to wicked King Ahaz of Judah, he spoke of a sign that foreshadowed the birth of the Mortal Messiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). The name or title *Immanuel* literally means "God is with us" and precisely describes Jesus of Nazareth—our God, born to the virgin Mary, who came in the flesh and dwelt among us (see Matthew 1:18–25; 1 Nephi 11:13–20).³

Later, in one of the prophetic "servant songs,"⁴ Isaiah used

3. Many have felt that this prophecy is dualistic, referring not only to the birth of Jesus Christ but also to the birth of a future son of Isaiah (e.g., Isaiah 8:1–4), King Ahaz, or some other person, soon to be born to a young woman. See Donald W. Parry, Jay A. Parry, and Tina M. Peterson, *Understanding Isaiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998), 72–76; Victor L. Ludlow, *Isaiah: Prophet, Seer, and Poet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 143–45; see also Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, trans. Rev. James Martin, 2 vols. (1890; reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1965), 1:216–20.

This conclusion is based on two facts: (1) The Hebrew term translated in this passage as "virgin" can refer not only to a woman who has "never known a man," such as Mary, but also more broadly to any young maiden of child-bearing age, and (2) This prophecy was given to Ahaz as a sign of the impending demise of the kings of Israel or Ephraim and Syria who were threatening him—an event that happened many centuries before the birth of Christ. In the context of this entire prophecy, the message to Ahaz was that by the time the soon-to-be-born child would be old enough to make decisions (see Isaiah 7:15–16), the threatening Syro-Ephraimite coalition (see 7:1–6) would no longer exist. Thus, this first child, whose birth would come shortly before the destruction of Judah's enemies and testify that "God was with them," was a type and foreshadowing of the birth of Jesus who would conquer sin and death.

4. Scattered throughout Isaiah's writings are a series of passages that are collectively called the "servant songs" (e.g., Isaiah 42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–9; 52:13–15; 53:1–12). These passages all speak of a servant or servants who, though they may suffer and/or appear insignificant, will yet do a great work for the people. The servant(s) has been identified with a number of different people including

beautiful imagery to further describe the Messiah's mortal beginnings. "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground" (Isaiah 53:2). Certainly Jesus of Nazareth fits the imagery. He did not spring forth suddenly as a "mighty oak," but rather as a "tender plant," born in a tiny and uncelebrated nation to a poor and common couple in the humblest of circumstances. Moreover, just as one would not expect to find a "root" in dry ground, Christ's origin generally was unanticipated, for He came from Nazareth, an obscure village of no particular fame or consequence (see John 1:45-46), and from a people who some feel had become spiritually barren.⁵

The Mortal Messiah's physical appearance would be equally unassuming. "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isaiah 53:2). He would look like an ordinary man. Thus, men would have to recognize Him for His message and not His visage. Most would not.

The question of why Christ came in such humble and obscure circumstances is thought provoking. Considering His position in the Godhead, could not Jesus have arranged to be born into mortality in comfortable, even luxurious, circumstances? Could not He have ensured that His days would be spent in a palace living like a king? Could not He have arranged to be born exceptionally handsome and charismatic so people would naturally accept Him? Yet He did not. In his epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle Paul offered one reason why. He explained: "Forasmuch then as the children

the prophet Isaiah himself, the nation of Israel as a whole, the benevolent conqueror Cyrus, the Prophet Joseph Smith, and most especially Jesus Christ. If in these passages Isaiah did indeed have other individuals in mind in addition to Jesus Christ, then he is likely viewing those other individuals as a type for the Messiah.

5. Parry, et al., *Understanding Isaiah*, 473; Ludlow, *Isaiah*, 448.

are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. . . . For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:14-18; see also Alma 7:10-12).

MINISTRY

Isaiah taught precisely how the Messiah would minister in mortality. He prophesied that Christ would be elect, have God's Spirit, bring forth truth, light, and judgment to the "isles" (or the scattered covenant people⁶) and the Gentiles, give sight to the blind, and set prisoners free (see Isaiah 42:1-4, 6; see also 49:6-11). Yet as He did so, He would "not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street" (42:2). In fact, in outward appearance His ministry would be of such a small stir that He would not break even a fragile "reed," although it may already be "bruised," nor extinguish a candle "flax" or wick, even though it was only "smoking" or smouldering (42:3). The imagery of this prophecy also points to His careful concern for those to whom He ministered. He came not to crush or abuse the tender, weak, ill, humble, and penitent, but rather to heal and help them. To those gathered at the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus quoted Isaiah to reinforce this nurturing aspect of His ministry and to identify Himself as the Messiah. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me," He declared, "because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the

6. Typically the term *isles*—meaning a habitable spot, island, or country—is used by Isaiah to refer to the scattered covenant people (see 1 Nephi 21:1; Isaiah 49:1).

meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (61:1-2).

The Mortal Messiah would also be well prepared and effective, Isaiah taught, like a "polished shaft," and His words would be mighty, like a "sharp sword"; yet as He worked in His ministry, He would be "hid" from most of the world in the "shadow of [God's] hand" and like an arrow "in his quiver" (49:2). Consequently, rather than being recognized, accepted, and "esteemed," the Mortal Messiah would be "despised and rejected of men" (53:3). They would turn their backs on Him to hide their "faces from him" and view Him as one deservedly "stricken" and "smitten of God" (53:3-4). He would be "oppressed" and "afflicted" yet refuse to deliver or defend Himself (53:7). He would give His "back to the smiters" and His "cheeks to them that plucked off the hair" and would not hide His "face from shame and spitting" (50:6). He would be "taken from prison" and denied justice, with no apparent friend or posterity to "declare his generation" (53:8).⁷ Eventually, He would make His "grave with the wicked" (53:9; see Luke 23:32-33) and yet be buried "with the rich" (Isaiah 53:9; see Matthew 27:57-60).

Isaiah prophesied not only of how the Mortal Messiah would minister but also of where. In speaking of the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali, the prophet declared: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in

7. The phrase "who shall declare his generation" is enigmatic. Some view it as a statement that the Messiah would die without posterity. Others see it as a statement that there would be none to defend Christ during his trial. Abinadi used the phrase to introduce a discussion of who can be considered the children of Christ (Mosiah 15:10-13). He testified that the prophets and all sincere disciples are Christ's heirs.

the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isaiah 9:2).⁸

The imagery in this prophecy can be understood on two levels. First, in a spiritual sense, it beautifully describes what Christ would accomplish, for He would bring light to those who stumble in the darkness of error, sin, and apostasy, as well as hope to those who live in fear of death.

Second, in a physical sense, it seems to indicate the region in which the Savior would labor. The lands of Zebulun and Naphthali include the area of Galilee where Jesus delivered most of His teachings and performed most of His public ministry. Villages such as Nazareth, Cana, Magdala, Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, as well as the Mount of Beatitudes, are all in this region. Moreover, a good portion of the region of Galilee where Jesus ministered, particularly around the Sea of Galilee, is covered in black basalt, unlike the majority of the Holy Land, which is blanketed in light-colored limestone. Houses in villages like Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida were built primarily from this black igneous stone, giving them a dark appearance both inside and out. It can be said that these people literally walked in a land of "darkness." Likewise, because this region sat at the junction of important ancient roads traveling through the fertile crescent, it was a military target, often conquered by invading forces. Consequently, the occupants lived under threat of attack, truly in the shadow of death. Thus, in addition to its spiritual message, this prophecy literally can be seen to promise that the Messiah would manifest Himself to those people living in the region of

8. This passage and many other messianic passages in Isaiah (e.g., Isaiah 52:14; 53:4-9) employs the "prophetic perfect" tense, speaking of things that are to come as if they had already been fulfilled (see Mosiah 16:6).

Galilee who walked in darkness and dwelled in the fear of death.

MISSION

Isaiah understood that the Mortal Messiah would need to come in humble circumstances and endure rejection and suffering in order to accomplish His primary mission of working the infinite Atonement. He explained that the Messiah's "visage" would be "marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isaiah 52:14; see also D&C 122:8) so that thereby He could "sprinkle many nations" (Isaiah 52:15). In certain types of sacrificial rites under the Mosaic law, the priest was to "sprinkle" the blood of the sacrificial animals as part of the purification and cleansing process (e.g., Leviticus 4:6, 17; 5:9; 14:7, 16, 27; 16:14). Thus, the imagery of Isaiah teaches that the marring or suffering of the Messiah would purify and cleanse the nations.⁹ In so doing, the Mortal Messiah ultimately would conquer sin, death, and Satan, and men would rejoice in the victory, declaring: "Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden," "the staff of his shoulder," and "the rod of his oppressor" (Isaiah 9:4).

Isaiah also explained the vicarious nature of Christ's atoning suffering. Using the prophetic perfect tense, he testified that the Messiah "hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed " (Isaiah 53:4-5). Isaiah further testified that "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (53:6), and "for the transgression of [God's] people was he stricken" (53:8). He understood that through

9. The verb *sprinkle* is changed to *gather* in the JST of Isaiah 52:15, still suggesting that the Messiah's suffering would bless and restore His people.

such vicarious suffering the Messiah would make "intercession for the transgressors" (53:12) and "justify many" (53:11).

In a prophecy warning of an imminent attack upon Jerusalem (see Isaiah 22:1-25),¹⁰ Isaiah suggested that some of the Messiah's suffering would occur through crucifixion. In the prophecy, he spoke of a "servant"¹¹ named Eliakim, whom he casts as a type for the Messiah. Eliakim was to receive the "government," be a "father" to the people (22:20-21), and possess the "key of the house of David," with power to open so that none can shut and close so that none can open (22:22; see also 2 Nephi 9:41).¹² Most significantly, Eliakim was to be fastened "as a nail in a sure place," and all the "glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue" was to hang upon him (Isaiah 22:23-24). The imagery points to Christ's being nailed to the cross and lifted up, thereby blessing all his Father's children.¹³ Isaiah continued to explain that upon Eliakim would be hung "all vessels of small quantity, from the

10. This prophecy likely refers to the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians recorded in Isaiah 36-37. It is remarkable in that the prophecy which speaks of the conquest of the people and the capture of Shebna (see 22:1-19) is not completely fulfilled. True, the Assyrians do besiege Jerusalem, but by the time they arrive King Hezekiah and his people are trusting in the Lord and hearkening to the words of Isaiah. Consequently, the Lord intervenes and delivers them by destroying the Assyrian army. Thus, this event represents one of the few times when, after a prophet has warned of impending destruction because of wickedness, the people repent and avoid the destruction (see Jonah 3).

11. The use of the title "servant" in this passage points again to the servant of the "servant songs" (see note 4 above).

12. The possessor of the key has the right to admit or exclude any he chooses from entrance into the king's house. This perhaps is similar to the imagery used by Jacob to explain Christ's role in admitting people into the kingdom of heaven (see 2 Nephi 9:41).

13. The name *Eliakim* itself is messianic, literally meaning "God shall cause to arise," or "lift up." The name is prophetic in that it bespeaks Eliakim's being lifted to a higher station in King Hezekiah's administration and foreshadows the "lifting up" of Christ on the cross, at the Resurrection, and ultimately to exaltation.

vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons" (22:24). Eliakim would carry these burdens until "the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed," at which time "the burden that was upon [Him] shall be cut off" (22:25). The vessels in this imagery perhaps refer to the pain and sins of the Father's children that Christ suffered and bore until He could proclaim, "It is finished" (John 19:30).¹⁴

Isaiah likewise illustrated the cleansing power of Christ's atonement with stirring imagery, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). The imagery of scarlet and wool reminds us of our great hope that eventually we may be washed "white through the blood of the Lamb" (Alma 13:11; see Revelation 7:14; 1 Nephi 12:10–11).

Perhaps most significantly, Isaiah spoke of what happens to us when we accept Christ and make His atonement effective in our lives. He declared: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed" (Isaiah 53:10).¹⁵ In other words, when we do those things that allow the suffering of Christ to atone for our sins, we become the seed or children of Christ, being spiritually begotten of Him, and joint heirs to the kingdom of God (e.g., Mosiah 4:1–3; 5:1–7; see also Romans 8:16–17). Abinadi used Isaiah's words to teach this principle to the wicked priests of King Noah. After quoting this passage to them, he explained "that whosoever has

14. Some view the vessels as a type for Eliakim's family members, great and small, who will seek honor by virtue of being related to Eliakim, who will let them all down when he himself is removed (e.g., Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary*, 403; Ludlow, *Isaiah*, 235).

15. The pronoun *thou* in this passage is interpreted by some to refer to God the Father, or Jesus Himself, rather than the reader. In any case, the end message is the same.

heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord—I say unto you, that all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins, I say unto you, that these are his seed, or they are the heirs of the kingdom of God" (Mosiah 15:11). Abinadi further testified that "these are they whose sins [Christ] has borne; these are they for whom he has died, to redeem them from their transgressions. And now, are they not his seed?" (Mosiah 15:12).

Isaiah also taught of the essential role of the Resurrection as a part of Christ's mission. In a comparison of Jehovah to the false gods that many of his day worshiped, he touched upon the vital link between the resurrection of the Messiah and that of all humankind. He declared: "They [the false gods] are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise" (Isaiah 26:14). In contrast, Isaiah testified, Jehovah promises, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my [the Messiah's] dead body shall they arise" (26:19).

THE MILLENNIAL MESSIAH

Just as Isaiah was certain that the Messiah would be resurrected, he also knew that Christ would return to the earth in power and glory to usher in the millennial era. Without the benefit of historical hindsight, Isaiah's prophecies of the Millennial Messiah are not as easy to interpret as those dealing with the Mortal Messiah. Still, from his writings we can gather some answers to important questions such as: What will the Millennial Messiah do when He returns? What effect will His return have on the world? How can we prepare for His return?

WHAT WILL THE MILLENNIAL MESSIAH DO?

In contrast to the Mortal Messiah's humble and quiet ministry, when the Millennial Messiah appears He will make "bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isaiah 52:10).¹⁶ So dramatic will be His advent that it will be as if "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (40:4-5).¹⁷

The prophet Malachi referred to the millennial return of Christ as both a "great and dreadful day" (Malachi 4:5). Isaiah taught that when the Lord returns He will come with "vengeance" for the wicked and salvation for those who "have waited for" or remained faithful to the Lord (Isaiah 35:4; 33:2;¹⁸ see also 61:2¹⁹). Thus that day will indeed be full of dread for the wicked but a time of rejoicing for the faithful. Through Isaiah, Jehovah warned the wicked, "My servants [the faithful] shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall

16. The term *arm* as used in this imagery can have two connotations. Typically in Isaiah, when the Lord stretches out, puts on, bares, or reveals His "arm," it is to punish the wicked (e.g., Isaiah 48:14). However, Nephi felt that he may also "bare his arm" to bring "his covenants and his gospel unto those who are of the house of Israel" (1 Nephi 22:11).

17. Some see this as a prophecy of literal geographical changes to occur on the earth when Christ returns; others view it as a metaphor for the changes in society and humankind that will prevail. Perhaps it is dualistic.

18. In this reference, the term *arm* refers to the vengeance of the Lord to be poured out on the enemies of the faithful. See note 17 above.

19. The second half of this passage, which speaks of "vengeance," was not quoted by Jesus to those gathered at the synagogue in Nazareth (see Luke 4:18-19). Ludlow suggests this is because the portion of the passage dealing with vengeance was to be fulfilled by the Millennial Messiah, while that portion quoted by Jesus dealt with the Mortal Messiah's ministry which He was then revealing (see Ludlow, *Isaiah*, 503-4).

drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit" (65:13-14).

Isaiah used poignant language and imagery to describe the punishment of the wicked in the millennial day. He declared that the Lord "shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isaiah 11:4). "The Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire" (30:27; see also 9:5; 10:16-19; 13:6-22; 33:10-12, 14; 66:15-16).²⁰ In that "day of the Lord,"²¹ the "proud and lofty" will be humbled as they frantically try to hide both themselves and their sins from the "glory of his majesty" (2:12, 21; see also 1:28-31; 25:11). As the Messiah comes from Edom, He will have His garments dyed red from the blood of the wicked He has "trodden in the winepress" (63:3; see also vv. 1-6).²² The Edomites were descendants of Esau and were traditionally regarded as enemies of Israel and Judah (e.g., Numbers 20:14-21; Judges 11:17; Jeremiah 49:7-22). Moreover, *Edom* literally means "red." Thus, Isaiah seems to use the play on words and the imagery to warn that enemies of covenant people will not escape the

20. Isaiah 10 and 13 prophesy of the destruction of Assyria and Babylon respectively, both of which can be viewed as a type for the destruction of the wicked when Christ returns at the beginning of the millennial era.

21. The phrase "day of the Lord" as it is used by Isaiah can refer to any day in which the Lord pours out punishment or reward on His people. For example, the "day" the Lord sent Assyria to conquer the kingdom of Israel (see 2 Kings 17; see also Isaiah 8:6-8), or Babylon to conquer the kingdom of Judah (see 2 Kings 25) can both be viewed as a "day of the Lord." All such days are types for that day when the Millennial Messiah will return and destroy the wicked and redeem the righteous.

22. Edom lies east of Jerusalem, thus supporting the notion that Messiah will appear out of the east (see Isaiah 59:19).

Messiah's wrath. Ultimately He will remove the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of His fury that He had once caused Israel to drink, and He will declare to them, "Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: but I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee" (Isaiah 51:22-23).

Not only will the enemies of Israel be destroyed in the terrible day, but the wicked within the covenant people will also be punished. Isaiah referred to these rebellious people as the "daughters of Zion" (Isaiah 3:16) who, rather than virtuously preparing for the coming of the bridegroom, or the Millennial Messiah, prostitute themselves. Rather than seeking beauty in modesty and devotion, they adorn themselves in all manners of worldly embellishments to attract other lovers (see 3:18-23). Rather than maintaining the faith and fidelity necessary to find everlasting joy through the Lord's covenant, they wantonly seek for pleasure in promiscuity and debauchery.

Isaiah warned that in the day of the Lord all the temporal, vain, and worldly adornments with which these lascivious "daughters of Zion" hope to beautify themselves in an effort to attract adulterous (idolatrous) lovers will be taken away, leaving them disgusting and loathsome, rather than tempting and alluring (see 3:18-24): "And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty" (3:24). In their humbled and contemptible state, they will sit like slaves at the gates of the city and wail, but to no avail, for the lovers they sought will have fallen "by the sword," and those remaining would not take these foul and filthy daughters under any conditions (3:25; see 3:26-4:1).

Every evil thing in which they trusted and hoped to find pleasure will be lost or turned against them.²³

In contrast, those of the "daughters of Zion" who have been faithful, called the "branch of the Lord" by Isaiah, will find the return of the Messiah to be a great day indeed. "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning" (Isaiah 4:2-4; see 1:25). The Messiah will then rule over the righteous remnant "with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever" (9:7; see 2:4; 11:4; 16:5; 32:1-2). He will "wipe away the tears from off all [their] faces" (25:8), "feed his flock like a shepherd," gather them "with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (40:11). He will "give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (61:3). The Messiah will then care for His people like a vineyard, watering and protecting them and causing them "to take root" and to "blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (27:6; see also 5:1-7; 62:4, 8). Isaiah taught that this time of nurturing, blessing, and rejoicing will be long-lasting in comparison to the destruction of the wicked that precedes it, for Messiah's vengeance will be accomplished in a "day,"

23. This prophecy is perhaps dualistic in that it can apply to the conquest and captivity of the apostate covenant people anciently by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, etc., all of which serve as a type for the captivity and destruction that will occur to a latter-day apostate people when the Messiah comes.

but His "recompenses" to the righteous will continue a "year" (34:8; see also 61:2; 63:4).

WHAT EFFECT WILL THE COMING OF THE MILLENNIAL MESSIAH HAVE ON THE WORLD?

The inhabitants of the world will eventually recognize and worship the Messiah as the "everlasting light" (Isaiah 60:19-20; see also 66:23). "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (11:9). "Every knee shall bow" and "every tongue shall swear" (45:23; see also D&C 88:104),²⁴ declaring, "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" (Isaiah 25:9).

The once spiritually barren will bring forth faithful children in the millennial day. So many will be gathered to the covenant people that they will need to "enlarge the place of [their] tent[s]" and "stretch forth the curtains of [their] habitations" (Isaiah 54:2). As the covenant people try to accommodate the multitude of the faithful that will join them, they will exclaim, "The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. . . . Who hath begotten me these? . . . Who hath brought up these? . . . Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?" (49:20-21). This multitude that is to gather will consist not only of once scattered Israel (see 35:10; 27:12-13) but also those who previously were not part of the covenant. Even Gentiles, "stranger[s]," and "eunuch[s]" shall be given access to the Lord's house or His temple, where they will be made "joyful" and receive a "place and a name better than of sons and of daughters" (56:3, 5, 7; see 14:1-3; 66:12, 19).²⁵

A change in the values of society as a whole will accompany

24. While this passage is often given a judgment day setting (e.g., D&C 76:110; Mosiah 27:31), D&C 88:104 suggests a millennial day setting as well.

25. The phrase "a place and a name" is more literally translated "a hand and a

the millennial reign of the Messiah. The "wilderness" (desolate and barren people) will produce fruit (saved souls), and these will be as valued as the forests (riches of the world) once were (see Isaiah 32:15-16; see also 29:17).²⁶ The churlish and vile will be exposed, "the rash shall understand knowledge," and "stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly" (32:4; see also vv. 5-7). Peace will prevail among all life. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw

name," which perhaps more accurately reflects temple imagery for endowed members.

The KJV of Isaiah 14:2 reads, "And the people shall take them [the strangers or Gentiles], and bring them to their place: and *the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids*" (emphasis added). In contrast, the Book of Mormon version reads, "And the people shall take them and bring them to their place; yea, from far unto the ends of the earth; and they shall return to their lands of promise. And the house of Israel shall possess them, and *the land of the Lord shall be for servants and handmaids*" (2 Nephi 24:2; emphasis added). The Book of Mormon version clarifies that the Gentiles will serve the Lord in the land along with "Jacob," rather than, as the KJV may be read to imply, the Gentiles will be servants of Jacob.

Isaiah teaches that not only will the Gentiles be part of the covenant people in the millennial day, but they will also play a significant role in the restoration of the gospel, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and the gathering of scattered Israel in preparation for the advent of the Millennial Messiah (Isaiah 29; 49:22-23; 60:16; 1 Nephi 22:4-9; 2 Nephi 6:6-15; 27).

26. Some see Isaiah 29:17 as a prophecy that the Book of Mormon will come forth at a time when Palestine as a whole or Lebanon's great forests of cedar have been replaced by fruit-bearing plants. See, for example, Monte S. Nyman, *Great Are the Words of Isaiah* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 114; Parry, et al., *Understanding Isaiah*, 272. The imagery may also be interpreted to indicate a change of values and perceptions among humankind. As a result of the marvelous work and a wonder (see 2 Nephi 27:26), the forests of Lebanon—a type for the pride and worldliness of people (see Isaiah 2:12-13; 9:9-10)—will be replaced by fruitful fields—a type for covenant productive people of the Lord (e.g., Isaiah 27:6; 37:31; see also 5:1-7). At that day, these fruitful fields will be valued and esteemed just as much as the forests once were (see Isaiah 32:15).

like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain" (11:6-9). Rather than destroying, all will unite to rebuild waste and desolate places (see 61:4-5). Men will convert their instruments of destruction into tools for production as they "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks" (2:4). So great will be their love for one another and their abhorrence of violence, that they will not only cease fighting but even cease learning of war all together (see 2:4).

Sickness will also be removed (see Isaiah 33:24; see also 35:3, 5-6),²⁷ and none will die prematurely (see 65:20; see also D&C 101:30). The people shall dwell in happiness. Their "bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the Lord shall be known" (Isaiah 66:14).

HOW CAN WE PREPARE FOR THE MILLENNIAL MESSIAH?

After describing the devouring fire that will consume the wicked at the coming of the Millennial Messiah, Isaiah asked an important question, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Isaiah 33:14; see also Malachi 3:2). The question of who will be prepared for the second coming of Christ weighs heavily upon all who "wait upon the Lord" (Isaiah 40:31).²⁸ Isaiah offered some answers to those who ponder the question. He testified that those who "turn from transgression" will see the "Redeemer . . . come to Zion" (59:20). Thus, he taught that those striving to live lives pleasing to God will

27. Some see these passages as purely figurative, but a literal interpretation may also be intended in light of Isaiah's teaching that death apparently will not come prematurely (see Isaiah 65:20).

28. The Hebrew of the word translated as "wait" in this verse means to expect or look patiently for something or someone.

enjoy witnessing the millennial reign of the Messiah. He declared that the people so privileged to "see the king in his beauty" will include those who both walk and "speak uprightly" (33:17; see also v. 15).

Accordingly, the millennial Saints will practice their faith not only with their lips but also with their actions. For example, these individuals will not succumb to pride and materialism but rather will refuse to enrich themselves by oppressing others or by taking bribes (see 33:15). So determined will they be to abide in peace and virtue that not only will they refuse to cause hurt or practice wickedness but will even stop their "ears from hearing of blood" and shut their "eyes from seeing evil" (33:15). Thus, not only will such individuals eschew participating in violent or immoral behavior, but they will also find no pleasure or entertainment in viewing or hearing about such sins in the media or elsewhere. Moreover, these individuals will be anxious to participate in temple worship in order to learn of God's ways and "walk in his paths" (2:3). They will further know in that day that the "glory" of Jehovah will be available to all and that all may enter the house of the Lord and participate in sacred ordinances (see 66:19-21). His description makes one yearn to be part of that wonderful era. Latter-day Saints must understand that to be prepared and worthy to be part of such a millennial people, they must strive to live like millennial individuals now.

CONCLUSION

Isaiah knew and loved the Messiah. The prophet understood the ministry and mission of the Mortal Messiah who would come in meek and lowly station, teach in the area of Galilee, suffer in Gethsemane, die at Golgotha, be resurrected, and ultimately complete the infinite Atonement. The prophet looked forward to the millennial day when the Messiah would

return to bring wickedness to an end, gather and reward the righteous, and usher in an era of peace. He taught the latter-day people to faithfully prepare for that great and dreadful day. He testified that those privileged to dwell with the Millennial Messiah will have turned from sin, overcome pride and worldliness, abandoned both the practice and the delight in violent and immoral behavior, and that they will seek to participate in temple ordinances. Those who carefully and prayerfully study this prophet's teachings will be better prepared to enjoy these blessings of the millennial era, better come to know Christ, and thereby better qualify for eternal life.