

September 21–27: Isaiah 13–14; 22; 24–30; 35, “A Marvellous Work and a Wonder”

Much of this reading assignment relates to our time—the Restoration of the gospel, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and preparation for Christ’s Second Coming.

State of the World Before the Restoration

Isaiah explains that the people in the last days aren’t interested in the truth; instead, they would rather be taught principles that are easy to live by.

Isa 30:8-13

8 ¶ Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever:

9 That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord:

10 Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speaking unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:

11 Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

12 Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon:

13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.

Why do the people refuse to hear “the law of the Lord”?

(speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits
cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us)

James E. Faust

"Isaiah spoke of a people who did not care to listen to their prophets and seers, who were urged, 'Say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.'

"Many modern professors of human behavior advocate as a cure to an afflicted conscience that we simply ignore the unwanted messages. They suggest that we change the standard to fit the circumstances so that there is no longer a conflict, thus easing the conscience. The followers of the divine Christ cannot subscribe to this evil and perverse philosophy with impunity. For the troubled conscience in conflict with right and wrong, the only permanent help is to change the behavior and follow a repentant path." (CR, Oct 1986)

What happens when people refuse to hear the truth and instead choose “smooth things”?

(Because ye despise this word
breach ready to fall... whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant)

Truth Restored – The Book of Mormon

We will receive words from two civilizations that have been “brought down.”

Isa 29:1-4

1 Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.

2 Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

3 And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.

4 And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.

What city is Isaiah referring to when he calls it “Ariel”?

(the city where David dwelt)

What civilization do you think Isaiah is referring to when he says, “it shall be unto me as Ariel”?

LeGrand Richards

"I would like to read a little portion, commencing with the first part of the twenty-ninth chapter [of Isaiah], 'Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt!' (Now that was Jerusalem, another name for it.)...

"Isaiah goes from that point on to see the destruction of another great center, and he says this: “And it shall be unto me as Ariel.'In other words, he saw the destruction of another great center like the destruction of Jerusalem. No one in this world could have told where that other center was until the Book of Mormon came forth. Then Isaiah goes forth with what he saw with respect to this other group of people. He said, 'And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.'" (CR, April 1976)

How does the Book of Mormon fulfill Isaiah’s prophecy that a people would speak “out of the ground”?

Mark E. Petersen

“An ancient nation which lived in America actually was destroyed suddenly, just as Isaiah foretold. Its population numbered in the millions. These people

once had been righteous and had prophets among them who kept a sacred history engraved on metal plates. Before their final destruction, one of their prophets buried that record in the ground in a stone container for safekeeping. Hence, when this book was found, translated, and published in modern times, that early nation literally spoke out of the ground just as Isaiah said it would.” (CR, Oct. 1977)

Isaiah tells us more about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

Isa 29:10-14

10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered

11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

13 ¶ Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

Why was a “marvellous work and a wonder” needed among the Lord’s people?

(LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep... the seers hath he covered
their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men)

Neal A. Maxwell

“The coming forth of the Book of Mormon is a marvelous episode not only in Church history but also in human history. You and I owe many people for their roles in bringing us the Book of Mormon, a book filled with plain and precious salvational truths which came forth by ‘the gift and power of God’ (Book of Mormon title page). Through the labors and sacrifices of many, the ‘marvellous work and a wonder’ foreseen by Isaiah restored vital truths which had been lost to mankind for centuries! We can best express our gratitude by reading and applying the teachings of the Book of Mormon.” (“By the Gift and Power of God,” Ensign, Jan. 1997)

Isa 29:15-20

15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

16 Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter’s clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed

say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

17 Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?

18 ¶ And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

19 The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

20 For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off:

What work will the Lord do that will expose those who seek to hide their works in darkness?

(in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness)

Orson Pratt

"Thus they have been distracted and their minds crazed, comparatively speaking; yet they were anxious beyond measure to know the will of God. This book, when it came forth, was to set them in the right track. 'The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord.' In what way? 'Because,' says [Isaiah], 'they who erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they who murmured shall learn doctrine.' However much you may have erred, because you have been taught by the precepts of men... and no voice of inspiration in your midst; however much you may have groped in outer darkness, yet if you have been meek before the Lord, you will come to understanding when this book makes its appearance." (JD 18:155)

Preparing for Christ's Second Coming

The fullness of the gospel has been restored, and the Book of Mormon has come forth. Now comes the work of preparing for Christ's Second Coming.

Isa 27:6,12

6 He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

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.

How do these verses describe the gathering and growth of Israel in the latter days?

(Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit
ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel)

Bruce R. McConkie

“The Lord’s promise is: ‘Ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.’

“That is to say—Israel shall be gathered one by one, family by family, unto the stakes of Zion established in all parts of the earth so that the whole earth shall be blessed with the fruits of the gospel.

“His work includes the building up of Zion in the last days. He has commissioned us to do that work for him. The foundations of Zion have already been laid.... When she is perfected, it will be as it was with Zion of old—the Lord will come and dwell with his people.” (CR, April 1977)

Isaiah describes how the righteous will be guided to “the mountain of the Lord.”

Isa 30:28-30

28 And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err.

29 Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel.

30 And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.

What does “the mountain of the Lord” represent in this passage?

Janette Hales Beckham

“Just as the early pioneers sacrificed to make their way to the Rocky Mountains, modern pioneers... are also on the trail to a mountain—‘the mountain of the Lord’s house.’ That’s the way the prophet Isaiah referred to latter-day temples, where we make sacred covenants with our Heavenly Father. It is the most important destination we have here on earth.” (CR, April 1997)

Isaiah 13:2-5

2 Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.

3 I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness.

4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.

5 They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the LORD, and the

weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.

Those who love the Lord and His work will help with the gathering of Israel.

Isa 27:1-6

1 In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

2 In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine.

3 I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

4 Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.

5 Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.

6 He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

What does the Lord promise to those who labor in His vineyard and strive to establish Zion?

(I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day
let him take hold of my strength)

Wilford Woodruff

“Chapter after chapter [Isaiah] goes on to declare that Zion's strength is in the Lord Almighty; and his strength is with her because of her faithfulness and integrity. If the elders of Israel had the vision of their minds opened to see Zion in her beauty and glory, they would have no time to sin or do evil; but they would rise up in the strength of the Lord God of Israel and accomplish all that he requires at their hands. Zion is yet in her weakness, but the little one shall become thousands, and the small one a great nation.”
(JD, 11:248)

The Lord describes how He will help those who labor in His vineyard.

Isa 28:10-13

10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

12 To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

13 But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

How do we come to know the things of God and understand His will?

(precept upon precept; line upon line, here a little, and there a little)

Charles W. Penrose

"This everlasting Gospel which we have received is the tree of life that shall flourish forever. And the same power which has revealed faith, repentance, baptism, and the laying on of hands, and the holy Priesthood, and has made known unto us the plan for the redemption of the living and the dead,.... and has inspired us to our works up to the present time, is still ready to communicate line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, that we may be ready for every emergency, prepared for every event in the work of our God as it rolls forward on the earth." (JD, 22:68)

Isa 30:18-21

18 ¶ And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.

19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

20 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:

21 And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

What does the Lord provide to help us stay on the path toward Him?

(the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction,
yet shall not thy teachers be removed
thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it)

Marion D. Hanks

““And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”

“We have the same promise, that if we will listen to the law of the Lord, if we will see through the eyes of the seer, if we will hear the words of the prophets when they testify to us right things, if we will listen to the oracles-past and present-to wise teachers, humble parents, honest friends; if we will listen to the voice of the Spirit, to the still, small voice, then we will learn the right way and to walk in it.” (BYU Speeches of the Year - 1964, pg. 5)

Destruction of the Wicked

Before the Second Coming, the earth will witness the destruction of the wicked.

Isa 24:1-6

1 Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his 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 taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

3 The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word.

4 The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.

5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

Why are the earth and its inhabitants defiled?

(they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant)

Joseph Fielding Smith

“It is because of the breaking of covenants, especially the new and everlasting covenant - which is the fulness of the Gospel as it has been revealed - that the world is to be consumed by fire and few men left. Since this punishment is to come at the time of the cleansing of the earth when Christ comes again, should not Latter-day Saints take heed unto themselves? We have been given the new and everlasting covenant, and all who are guilty of this offense will aid in bringing to pass this destruction in which they will find themselves swept from the earth when the great and dreadful day of the Lord shall come.” (The Progress of Man, pg. 488 – 489)

Isa 13:1,6-11

1 The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.

6 ¶ Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

7 Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:

8 And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.

9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to

lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

10 For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

11 And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

What does the Lord say the wicked have done to bring His judgment upon them?

I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible)

Orson Pratt

"The Old Testament speaks of the day of the Lord, when the sun will be darkened, when the moon and the stars will refuse to shine, when the Lord will punish the wicked for their wickedness, when sinners will be swept from the face of the earth, and when there will be none but the righteous left.... But very few, however, of the inhabitants of our globe have taken into consideration the great preparatory work for this grand change; they have not searched the Scriptures in regard to how this work is to be accomplished, and who the persons will be who will be ready and prepared to abide that day." (JD, 17:307)

Christ's Millennial Reign

Once all this work and preparation is complete, the Lord will begin His millennial reign.

Isa 35:5-10

1 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:

10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

How will the Lord's reign transform the earth and the lives of its inhabitants?

Isa 25:6-9

6 ¶ And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

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.

8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.

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.

What blessings does the Lord have in store for His people during His earthly reign?

(he will destroy... the veil that is spread over all nations
He will swallow up death in victory
this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us)

Revelation 21:4

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.

Isa 26:1-4

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 bulwarks.

2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

4 Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength: