

While Isaiah 53 deals almost exclusively with the Messiah's mortal ministry, chapter 54 looks towards the Millennium. Isaiah is a millennialist. If he is not speaking of the Second Coming or the destruction of the wicked, the glory of the Millennium is his next most likely topic.

Accordingly, the theme of Isaiah 54 is that the House of Israel, or the people of the Lord, will be redeemed from every pain, problem, fear, terror, disgrace, oppression, hardship, or reproach. In the Millennium, the Lord will more than make up for any previous suffering.

Jeffrey R. Holland

By chapter's end, the relationship between the Lord and his children of covenant is seen fully and poetically. Consider this summary of God's promises and Israel's millennial hope:

Verses	Husband Provides Wife
1-3	Children
4-8	Love
9-10	Commitment
11-12	Material Comfort
13-17	Protection for the Family

(Adapted from *Christ And The New Covenant*, p. 291)

Isaiah 54:1 more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife

"And then shall that which is written come to pass: Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.' (3 Ne. 22:1)

"Ten years ago, I was a single woman and when I saw other families I longed to have my own. The long-awaited marriage seemed as though it would never arrive. All my brothers and sisters were married and I worried for myself. The days passed and one day while I was pondering and reading I came across this passage in 3rd Nephi. These words touched my soul so deep that tears ran down my cheeks.

"While reading this scripture I felt a great peace and comfort. However, I didn't understand. 'Why?' So I knelt down to ask my Heavenly Father, 'What does this mean?' A few days later, I met a widowed man who in his marriage had two beautiful daughters, one 10 years old, and the other 8 years old.

"A year later he proposed to me and we were married in the Mexico City Temple. That was the beginning of a marvelous time in my life. At the present time I am happily married and have five children. My husband has been called to serve as a stake president and is a faithful and loving man. My life changed and now I understand what this scripture meant for me. Our Heavenly Father in His wisdom answers our prayers through the scriptures. How thankful I am for the Book of Mormon. Every day I read the scriptures and feel the power of the words." (*LDS Church News*, 1997, 06/14/97)

Thomas S. Monson

There are many women in the Relief Society who are not married. Death, divorce, and indeed lack of opportunity to marry have in many instances made it necessary for a woman to stand alone. In reality, she need not stand alone, for a loving Heavenly Father will be by her side to give direction to her life and provide peace and assurance in those quiet moments where loneliness is found and where compassion is needed.

President Joseph Fielding Smith, in speaking to the single sisters who have never had the opportunity to marry, promised: "If in your hearts you feel that the gospel is true, and would under proper conditions receive these ordinances and sealing blessings in the temple of the Lord; and that is your faith and your hope and your desire, and that does not come to you now; the Lord will make it up, and you shall be blessed-for *no blessing shall be withheld*." ("The Mighty Strength of the Relief Society," *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 96)

Joseph Smith

All your losses will be made up to you in the resurrection, provided you continue faithful. By the vision of the Almighty I have seen it. (*History of the Church*, 5:362).

Isaiah 54:2 Enlarge the place of thy tent...strengthen thy stakes

Ezra Taft Benson

To members, the term stake is a symbolic expression. Picture in your mind a great tent held up by cords extended to many stakes that are firmly secured in the ground. The prophet Isaiah likened latter-day Zion to a great tent

encompassing the earth. That tent was supported by cords fastened to stakes. (See 3 Nephi 22:2; Isaiah 54:2.) Those stakes, of course, are various geographical organizations spread out over the earth. Presently Israel is being gathered to the various stakes of Zion. (*Come unto Christ*, p. 101.)

In revelation the Lord states: "For Zion must increase in beauty and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you, Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments" (D&C 82:14). Here the Lord declares a great purpose of a stake: to be a beautiful emblem for all the world to see. The phrase "put on her beautiful garments" refers, of course, to the inner sanctity that must be attained by every member who calls himself or herself a Saint. Zion is "the pure in heart" (D&C 97:21). (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.149-150)

Jeffrey R. Holland

The large movement of Israel's conversion, gathering, and return to the lands of her inheritance will require strong, enlarged stakes in Zion. Growth will be "on the right hand and on the left," with Gentile cities (probably left desolate by the wrath "poured out without mixture upon the whole earth" DC 115:6) inhabited by the children of the covenant. It is from this imagery of Israel's wilderness tent/tabernacle with its cords, curtains, borders, and stakes that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints draws its use of the word stake for the name of its basic ecclesiastical unit. (*Christ And The New Covenant*, p. 289 - 290)

Isaiah 54:3 thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles

As part of Israel's rebellion from the Lord, they incurred a particular curse: "thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein" (Deut 28:30). "Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor... ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them" (Amos 5:11). Because of rebellion, the cities of Israel would be inhabited by the Gentiles.

In the Millennium, the tables are turned. Israel will be able to dwell in a house he didn't build; Jacob will dwell in a city made by strangers. Indeed, all the curses for breaking the law (Deut. 28) will be reversed, and all the blessings for obedience will be bestowed.

Isaiah 54:4 thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth

Early in her history, Israel had played the harlot with the idolatrous gods of the heathen. Certainly, this is part of the shame of her youth. At the time the Lord said, "under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot. Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God" (Jer 2:20-22). Nevertheless, in spite of her marked iniquity, the Lord has promised both individually and as a nation that he will forget the shame of her youth, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa 1:18).

"Scriptures are written in general to give guidance and information regarding our relationship to Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost. Scriptures also offer specific guidance and information when we pray for personal comfort and support.

"I recall a particular time when 3 Nephi 22:4 brought me to my knees in tears over an answer to a prayer that I had previously been diligently seeking.

"I had only recently become baptized, when I was beset by distress over thinking about my sinful past. Truly I had been rejoicing over the promise of forgiveness following repentance and baptism, yet, now I agonized for nearly two weeks over past sins.

"I found that my despair had taken hold of me, so I decided to spend a day fasting and reading the Book of Mormon.

"I was enjoying reading the attendant lamentations and explanations that were so offered by the verses. When I came to verse 4 of 3 Nephi, chapter 22, the general quality of the reading became very personal regarding my obsession over past sins.

"As I continued reading to the end of the chapter, my sobbing increased, and for a few brief moments my mind comprehended the Savior's personal forgiveness of me. A great peace came over me and the descriptions of the Savior's relationship to the past, present and future of Zion took on their literal and prophetic value." (Catherine Cinelli, *Church News*, 01/20/96)

Isaiah 54:5 For thy maker, thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name

In the language of the scriptures, the Lord of Hosts is the bridegroom and his bride is the House of Israel. In spite of one of the rockiest engagements imaginable, the bridegroom never gave up on his unworthy bride. It is a marriage which could have been realized long ago but will only be consummated in the Millennium when the bride will finally be ready. Then will the bridegroom be the husband who will show her "everlasting kindness," wiping away all tears from her eyes (See Rev 21:2-4).

Jeffrey R. Holland

Even though there has been barrenness and sometimes unfaithfulness, yet will the husband (Christ) reclaim and redeem his bride (Israel). The imagery of Jehovah as bridegroom and Israel as bride is among the most commonly used metaphors in scripture, being used by the Lord and his prophets to describe the relationship between Deity and the children of the covenant. (*Christ And The New Covenant*, p. 290)

Isaiah 54:7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee

Jeffrey R. Holland

Compassion and mercy always return and prevail in a most reassuring way. The mountains and the hills may disappear. The water of the great seas may dry up. The least likely things in the world may happen, but the Lord's kindness and peace will never be taken from his covenant people. He has sworn with a heavenly oath that he will not be wroth with them forever. (*Christ And The New Covenant*, p. 290)

Isaiah 54:11 I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires

"My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed' (Isa. 54:10; 3 Ne. 22:10) and 'Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires' (3 Ne. 22:11; see also Isa. 54:11).

"Such scriptural language rivets my attention. In the midst of a troubling world, the foundations I rely on come by my covenants with the Lord. They are indeed like sapphires and are treasures beyond price. Through them I have eternal link to my loved ones and to God. They are the restored principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ which are available to righteous women and men alike through the power of the holy priesthood of God. They

include baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, the sacrament, and temple covenants. These are the ways given to us and freely chosen by us to vouchsafe our eternal lives." (Aileen H. Clyde, "Covenant of Love," *Ensign*, May 1995, 28)

Parley P. Pratt

To set forth more fully the building of the city [of Jerusalem], and the materials of which it will be built, we quote Isaiah 54:11, to the end of the chapter: (quotes Isaiah 54:11-17)

From these verses we learn something of the beauty of their city, and of the materials of which it is composed. Their stones of fair colors, their foundations of sapphires, their windows of agates, their gates of carbuncles, and all their borders of pleasant stones, are well calculated to beautify the place of his sanctuary, and to make the place of his feet glorious, as well as to give a lustre and magnificence to the whole city, of which the Gentiles, with all their boasted wealth and grandeur, can form but a faint idea; and then to mark, in the same description, the knowledge, as well as the peace and security, of all the inhabitants while they who gather together against them to battle are sure to fall for their sake; surely this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; surely this is a delightful city. (*A Voice of Warning* [New York City: Eastern States Mission [189-?], 101 - 102.)

Isaiah 54:13 all thy children shall be taught of the Lord

Gordon B. Hinckley

"All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isaiah 54:13). You mothers, read to your children. Read the scriptures to your children. You may not think they understand. They won't understand everything you read. But they will develop within themselves a feeling, an attitude, a spirit that will be wonderful. And I don't hesitate to promise you that the day will come, if you nurture your children and love and teach in righteousness, you will get on your knees with tears in your eyes and thank the Lord for His blessing to you. (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, "Motherhood")

Anne G. Wirthlin

[Sister Wirthlin quoted 3 Ne. 22:7,10,13] These words of the Savior are the theme for Primary...to teach children the gospel of Jesus Christ and help them learn to live it. As we witness the unfolding events of the last days, we cannot doubt that in this scripture the Lord is speaking directly to us. We are Israel of

the latter days...Peace that endures is not dependent upon outside forces that are beyond our control...The Lord's words...give comfort to righteous parents who teach their children of Him. They speak to us at a time when peace in the hearts of children can seem but an elusive dream. But the Savior has assured us that it can be a reality if we teach our children. Primary supports parents in this important responsibility." (*Ensign*, May 1998, p. 9)

Isaiah 54:13 great shall be the peace of thy children

Gordon B. Hinckley

This is the commandment which the Lord has given: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isa. 54:13). You are their parents. You are their fathers and mothers. You are their trainers and teachers. Yours is the great opportunity and the great responsibility to bring up your children in faith and truth. I promise you that when they are gone and on their way, you will get on your knees and thank the Lord for His goodness to you. I could not wish for you a greater thing. There will be no greater thing than for you to look upon your children and see goodness, and peace, and virtue, and kindness, and love, as well as accomplishment. (*Ensign*, Sept. 1998, 77)

Gordon B. Hinckley

Now to you single mothers, whatever the cause of your present situation, our hearts reach out to you. We know that many of you live in loneliness, insecurity, worry, and fear. For most of you there is never enough money. Your constant, brooding worry is anxiety for your children and their futures. Many of you find yourselves in circumstances where you have to work and leave your children largely to their own devices. But if when they are very small there is much of affection, there is shown much of love, there is prayer together, then there will more likely be peace in the hearts and strength in the character of your children. Teach them the ways of the Lord. Declared Isaiah, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isa. 54:13).

The more surely you rear your children in the ways of the gospel of Jesus Christ, with love and high expectation, the more likely that there will be peace in their lives.

Set an example for them. That will mean more than all the teaching you can give them. Do not [page 100] overindulge them. Let them grow up with respect for and understanding of the meaning of labor, of working and

contributing to the home and its surroundings, with some way of earning some of their own expense money. Let your sons save for missions, and encourage them to prepare themselves, not only financially, but spiritually and in an attitude to go out to serve the Lord without selfishness of any kind. I do not hesitate to promise that if you will do so, you will have reason to count your blessings. ("Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 99-100)

Isaiah 54:15 Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me

For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. (Zech. 14:2-3)

Isaiah 54:16 I have created the smith that bloweth... that bringeth forth an instrument for his work

Gerald N. Lund

Speaking through Isaiah in a passage that was later quoted by the Savior to the Nephites, the Lord said, "Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work" (Isa. 54:16; 3 Ne. 22:16). Joseph was surely the smith who forged the instrument by which the Lord's people continue to prepare individually and collectively for the Savior's return-and that instrument is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ("A Prophet for the Fulness of Times," *Ensign*, Jan. 1997, 54)

Isaiah 54:17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper

Joseph Smith

No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done. (*History of the Church*, 4:540)

Ezra Taft Benson

We live in a time when the devil is on the loose and is working among the Saints to thwart and tear down the work of God. But he will not succeed. Individuals may fall and there may be those who betray sacred covenants, but the kingdom of God will roll forward until it reaches its decreed destiny to fill the entire earth.

I carry in my calendar book a passage of scripture that I sometimes use to remind myself and others about the eventual outcome of efforts to destroy the Church: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall revile against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." (3 Nephi 22:17.)

The Lord has prospered this work and will continue to do so. He is close to His servants, even within whispering distance of heaven. (*Come Unto Christ*, p. 22-3)

Boyd K. Packer

On one occasion when I, along with President Benson, was the subject of a great deal of criticism by the local and national media, he sent me a card which read: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall revile against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." (3 Nephi 22:17.)

I was greatly strengthened by the message. (*That All May Be Edified*, p. 250)