

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

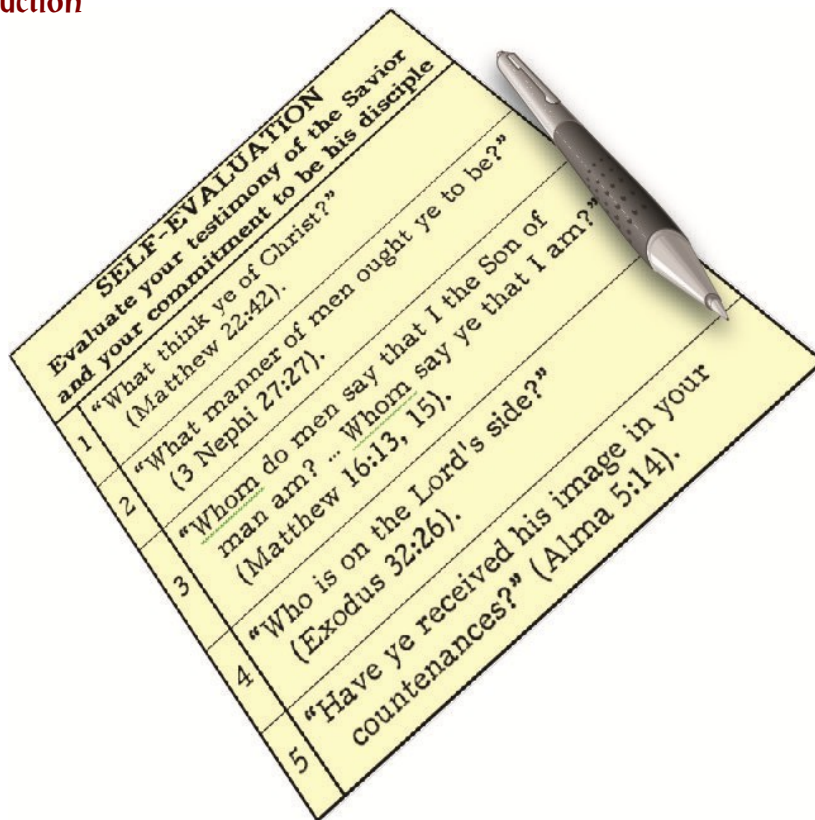
Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

24 October 2010

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Lesson 38: "Beside Me There Is No Saviour," (Isaiah 40–49)

Introduction



Lesson Highlights

- Isaiah teaches that the Savior is incomparable.
- Isaiah describes the Savior's incomparable qualities.
- The world (Babylon) competes with the Savior for our devotion.
- Isaiah describes the mission of latter-day Israel.

The questions above have something in common—all of them are questions from the scriptures that help us evaluate our testimony of the Savior and our commitment to be his disciples. There are many questions like these in the scriptures. Part of this lesson focuses on scriptural questions that emphasize the greatness of the Savior, who is incomparable in his devotion to his people.

Isaiah teaches that the Savior is incomparable.

Through Isaiah, the Lord repeatedly asked a certain question in different ways. That question is asked in each of the following verses:

- **Isaiah 40:18** - "To whom then will ye liken God?"
- **Isaiah 44:8** - "Is there a God beside me?"
- **Isaiah 46:5** - "To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me?"

The preceding questions are similar in that they all teach that the Savior is greater than any person or thing we could compare him to. Our god is truly incomparable. Think of your responses to these questions. Consider how they are answered in the book of Isaiah. Note that in each verse below that the Lord was speaking to idolatrous people who manufactured their own false gods of silver and gold.

- **Isaiah 43:11** - "Beside me there is no saviour."
- **Isaiah 44:6** - "Beside me there is no God."
- **Isaiah 45:5, 6, 14, 18, 21–22** - "There is no God beside me".
- **Isaiah 46:9** - "I am God, and there is none like me."

Think about why these questions and answers are repeated so many times in the book of Isaiah and how they are relevant to our day.

A study of this lesson will help us understand that Jesus Christ is incomparable in his devotion to his people and that he has a great work for us to do.

Next Week

#39 "How Beautiful upon the Mountains" (Isaiah 50–53)

"I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me"
—Isaiah 46:9

Elder Neal A. Maxwell:

"Our capacity as Church members to love and to forgive will be freshly and severely tested as battered and bruised souls come into the Church in ever-larger numbers. Some come in from the cold shivering. Others are breathless, having caught what was for them the last train out of Babylon. Their own continued process of repentance will be much aided if they see, all about them, more regular emphasis in the lives of the rest of us on faith unto repentance." (Not My Will, But Thine, p74)

Isaiah describes the Savior's incomparable qualities.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that we need "a correct idea of [God's] character, perfections and attributes" in order to have faith in Him (Lectures on Faith [1985], 38).

Isaiah gives many beautiful descriptions of the Savior's character and attributes. Read the passages listed below with the following questions in mind: Which attribute of the Savior is mentioned in the passage? How does knowing of this attribute help increase our faith in the Savior?

- **Isaiah 40:13-14** - No one counsels or instructs him.
- **Isaiah 40:28-31** - He is never weary; he strengthens us.

- **Isaiah 40:12, Isaiah 40:21-22, Isaiah 40:26; Isaiah 45:12, 18** - He planned and created the universe and knows every part of it.
- **Isaiah 41:17-18** - He hears us when we are in trouble and blesses us abundantly.
- **Isaiah 42:1, Isaiah 42:4** - He will not fail or be discouraged until his purposes are fulfilled.
- **Isaiah 42:16** - He lights and straightens the way for his people who are lost.
- **Isaiah 43:1-4** - He will help his people through their trials.
- **Isaiah 43:25-26; Isaiah 44:21-23** - He blots out our sins and remembers them no more.
- **Isaiah 44:2-4** - He pours out his Spirit on our families like water on dry ground.
- **Isaiah 46:3-4** - He carries his people from birth to old age.
- **Isaiah 49:14-16** - He will never forget us. We are "graven" in the palms of his hands.

Think about how your testimony has been strengthened by any of these attributes of the Savior.

The world (Babylon) competes with the Savior for our devotion.

Isaiah 47 Chapter heading and verse 1—indicate that these prophecies are directed to Babylon and Chaldea. Babylon was a powerful city of the ancient world that was destroyed for its wickedness. In the scriptures, Babylon is often also used as a symbol for the wickedness of the world. In Isaiah 47, Isaiah warned that Babylon would be destroyed because of its wickedness. These warnings can also be applied to the eventual destruction of the world and its wickedness. The following passages teach about the results of seeking after the wicked ways of the world.

- **Isaiah 47:1, Isaiah 47:5** - The world will be brought down to the dust and become silent and dark.
 - **Isaiah 47:7-9** - Despite the world's thoughts that it is invincible, it will be destroyed and lose the things of greatest value, symbolized by the loss of husband and children.
 - **Isaiah 47:10-11** - Because the world declares that it is greater than God, desolation will come upon it.
- Isaiah 47:8, Isaiah 47:10**—One false claim of Babylon (the world) that is the same as the Savior's true declaration about himself is "I am,

and none else [is] beside me." The world's offers of rewards, in comparison to what the Savior offers, are worthless counterfeits. Even so, many people give their devotion to the world instead of to the Savior. It is part of our responsibility as followers of the Savior to help others see what the Savior offers—through our example as well as our teaching. **Isaiah 48:17-18** - The Lord promised great blessings to those who seek him rather than the world. These promises make us feel blessed and peaceful about following the Savior with all our hearts.

Isaiah describes the mission of latter-day Israel.

Isaiah 49 contains many prophecies about the mission of latter-day Israel. These prophecies can help us understand the important work the Lord has for each of us to do.

While studying some of the passages listed below, con-

sider the answer to this question: What does this passage teach about our responsibilities in these latter days? Note that many of the prophecies apply both to the work of the Savior and to the work of his servants, the house of Israel [Isaiah 49:3].)

- **Isaiah 49:1, Isaiah 49:5** - "The Lord hath called me from the womb." We were called from birth to fulfill the Lord's work in the last days; see also Jeremiah 1:5.
- **Isaiah 49:2** - "He hath made my mouth like a

sharp sword.” This image suggests speaking powerful words of truth—the words of the Lord; see also D&C 6:2.

- **Isaiah 49:2** “*In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me.*” The Lord has protected us and prepared us for our great responsibilities; see also D&C 86:9.
- **Isaiah 49:2** “*He hath ... made me a polished shaft.*” Arrows with polished shafts will fly straight and true. We have been polished and prepared by the Lord to fly straight and true wherever he sends us.

- **Isaiah 49:6** “*Thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*” The Lord has asked his servants to raise up and restore the remnant of Israel and to be a light to the Gentiles. In this way we can help bring salvation to the ends of the earth; see also D&C 86:8-11.

“But thou hast not called upon me”

Some of us occasionally feel that the Lord has forsaken us. We feel the Lord has withdrawn from us. In referring to that situation, President Kimball stated the like-

ly cause and what we can do to feel close to him again. (Also see Isaiah 43:22-26; Mosiah 5:13.)

President Spencer W. Kimball said: “*I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns*” (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 135).

“Therefore, blessed are ye if ye continue in my goodness, a light unto the Gentiles, and through this priesthood, a savior unto my people Israel. The Lord hath said it.”

—D&C 86:11

Conclusion

We are blessed to live in this great latter day when we rejoice in the blessings of the Lord and see the prophecies of Isaiah being fulfilled. Great events have yet to occur as we approach the time of the Second Coming. Will we be ready? Are we willing to turn away from Babylon and fully dedicate ourselves to the Lord? If we follow the Lord in obedience “then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea” (Isaiah 48:18). Do we want the temporary glitter of Babylon or the eternal peace found in Zion? As Joshua stated so boldly, “choose you this day whom ye will serve” (Joshua 24:15).

Additional Teaching

Symbols used by Isaiah

Blindness—Isaiah repeatedly used blindness as a symbol of wickedness and spiritual ignorance (Isaiah 29:10, 18; 32:3; 42:6-7, 16-18; 43:8; 44:9). As you ponder these verses, remember

that the Savior often proclaimed that he was the Light of the World (John 8:12).

Water—Isaiah repeatedly used images of water (Isaiah 12:3; 32:2; 41:17-18; 43:19-20; 44:3-4; 48:18, 21; 49:10). Con-

sider how the Savior’s teaching that he is the source of living water helps you understand these passages? (See John 4:7-14.)

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- What are some experiences that have strengthened your testimony of any of the incomparable attributes of the Savior?
- How can you better follow the Savior and avoid the temptations of the world?
- How can we more fully open our spiritual eyes to the Light of the