

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

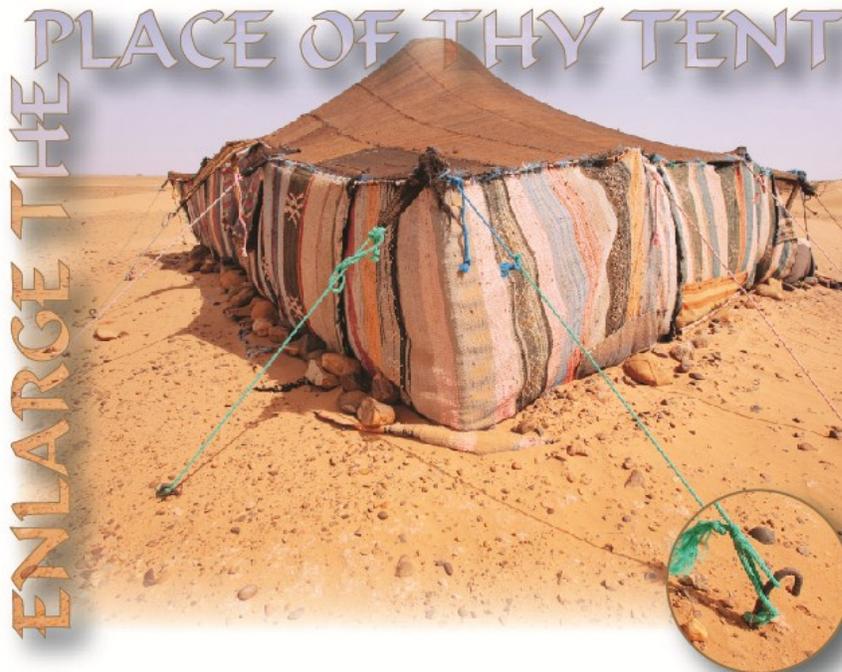
Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

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Lesson 40: "Enlarge the Place of Thy Tent," (Isaiah 54–56; 63–65)

Introduction



The typical tent needs stakes. If the tent were not supported by stakes, it would collapse. In Isaiah 54:2 the tent mentioned represents The Church of Jesus Christ. Consider what the tent stakes represent.

President Ezra Taft Benson said: *"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 prophets likened latter-day Zion to a great tent encompassing the earth. That tent was supported by cords fastened to stakes. Those stakes, of course, are various geographical organizations spread out over the earth. Presently, Israel is being gathered to the various stakes of Zion"* (Ensign, Jan. 1991, 2).

The first stakes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were organized in Kirtland, Ohio, and in Clay County, Missouri, in 1834. As the Church grew, more stakes were added as commanded by the Lord (D&C 101:20-21). Today there are hundreds of stakes located throughout the world. It is our responsibility to strengthen the stakes of Zion and prepare for the Second Coming and the Millennium.

This lesson focuses on ways in which we can strengthen the stakes of Zion. It also discusses Isaiah's powerful teachings about the Second Coming and the Millennium.

"Lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes" (Isaiah 54:2)

Isaiah 54:2 - The phrase "Enlarge the place of thy tent" means that the Lord wants Church members to share the gospel with many

people so it can cover the earth. Isaiah prophesied that in the latter days, the Church would grow rapidly and many people throughout the

world would be converted to the truth [Isaiah 54:3].

Isaiah 54:3 – Additional counsel is given regarding the tent, or the Church.

Lesson Highlights

- "Lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes"
- "With great mercies will I gather thee"
- The Millennium will be a time of peace and joy.

A study of this lesson will help encourage us to strengthen the stakes of Zion and prepare for the Second Coming and the Millennium.

Next Week

#41 "I Have Made Thee This Day ... an Iron Pillar" (Jeremiah 1–2; 15; 20; 26; 36–38)

For I have consecrated the land of Kirtland in mine own due time for the benefit of the saints of the Most High, and for a stake to Zion.

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 82:13-14

President Joseph Fielding Smith: *"The Lord has said through his servants that during the millennium those who have passed beyond and have attained the resurrection will reveal in person to those who are still in mortality all the information which is required to complete the work of these who have passed from this life. Then the dead will have the privilege of making known the things they desire and are entitled to receive. In this way no soul will be neglected and the work of the Lord will be perfected."*

(Doctrines of Salvation, 3:65)

If we choose to follow this counsel we would do the following:

| Isaiah's Counsel | What We Can Do |
|---|---|
| Stretch the tent curtains and lengthen the cords. | Serve as full-time missionaries; share the gospel with friends and neighbors. |
| Strengthen the tent stakes. | Strengthen our local stakes |

“With great mercies will I gather thee” (Isaiah 54:7)

Isaiah 54:4-10 - Although Israel was scattered for many years, the Lord promised that he would gather her to the true Church in the last days. Isaiah 54:4-10 (cited above) - We learn that the Lord will be protective, forgiving and merciful.

Isaiah 54:13-14, 17 - Specific blessings the Lord promised his righteous servants include: instruction and peace for the children; freedom from oppression, fear and terror; protection from any weapon formed against them.

These promises are important if we are to have peace, happiness, joy, and progress. All of Heavenly Father's children are invited to find refuge by gathering with the Saints.

The following passages from Isaiah describe groups of

The Millennium will be a time of peace and joy.

Throughout his writings, Isaiah testified that although there would be struggles, temptations, and suffering in this world, good would overcome evil in the end, and for the righteous, the future would be full of joy. Isaiah prayed fervently for the Second Coming of the Savior, which would bring retribution for the wicked and great rejoicing for the righteous (see Isaiah 64).

To strengthen the stake in which we live we can: develop personal spiritual strength, influence our families and friends to do the same, serve our member and nonmember neighbors, and accept calls from priesthood leaders to serve in the Church.

D&C 115:5-6 - Stakes bless people's lives by being a defense and a refuge from the storm.

The stakes of Zion are places of defense and refuge for

us as we gather together for mutual spiritual strength, uplift and support each other in times of trial, influence each other for good, and uphold high standards of decency and conduct.

people whom the Lord wants to come to him and find safety in the gospel:

- **Isaiah 55:1-3** - All who thirst. The thirst referred to in these verses is a spiritual thirst. When we try to satisfy spiritual thirst by spending money and effort on temporal things, we are left completely unsatisfied. (see **2 Nephi 9:50-51**; **3 Nephi 20:8**)

Our spiritual thirst can be truly satisfied only when we covenant with the Lord, the source of living waters, and enjoy the companionship of the Spirit.

- **Isaiah 55:6-7** - The wicked who will repent. The promise extended to those who repent is one of mercy and pardon.

- **Isaiah 56:3, 5-8** - Strangers who do not know the Lord. To be accepted by the Lord, the strangers must demonstrate their love for him, serve him, keep the Sabbath holy, and covenant with the Lord.

These passages teach that the mercy of the Lord is extended to all who repent fully.

These passages also teach that we should view all of Heavenly Father's children as part of the Lord's family to be gathered in with us.

Isaiah 55:10-13 - Isaiah wrote that God's word can nourish our souls much like rain and snow nourish seeds.

Alma 32:28, 41 - God's word nourishes our souls and causes them to grow, expand and be filled with understanding.

ah's record present a beautiful picture of the Millennium, the thousand-year period of peace that will be ushered in by the Savior's Second Coming.

Isaiah 65:17-25 - records conditions that will exist during the Millennium. (see also Isaiah 11:6-9.)

Isaiah 65:17 - The Lord will create new heavens and a new earth.

The closing chapters of Isai-

Isaiah 65:18-19 - There will be great joy and no more weeping for the Lord's people.

Isaiah 65:20 - People will not die young; they will live to be 100 years old.

Isaiah 65:21-23 - People will enjoy the fruits of their own labors.

Isaiah 65:24 - Prayers will be answered immediately.

Isaiah 65:25 - There will be no enmity among beasts.

Isaiah 63:7-9 teaches about the infinite goodness and love of the Lord—he bestowed goodness upon them, accorded mercies, became their Savior, suffered their afflictions, saved them, redeemed them, and carried them.

Consider the ways in which the Savior has shown you “the multitude of his loving kindnesses”.

Conclusion

As we strengthen the stakes of Zion and share the gospel with the world, the riches of eternity await us. We can look forward to the Second Coming of the Savior and the peace and joy that will exist during the Millennium. The prophecies of Isaiah encourage us to remember that it is a privilege to serve the Lord and that he blesses his disciples.

The true law of the fast

Isaiah 58:3-7 - In Isaiah 58 we learn the elements of a true fast.

One element of a true fast is giving a generous fast offering. **President Spencer W. Kimball** said, “*I think that when we are affluent, as many of us are, that we ought to be very, very generous ... and give, instead of the amount we saved by our two meals of fasting, perhaps much, much more—ten times more where we are in a position to do it*” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 184).

Blessings promised for living the law of the fast in Isaiah 58 include the following:

- We become stronger in resisting temptation (**Isaiah 58:6**).

- Our burdens are lightened (**Isaiah 58:6**).
- Our physical and spiritual health are improved (**Isaiah 58:8**).
- We become humble and prepared to communicate with the Lord (**Isaiah 58:9**).
- We assist the poor and the needy (**Isaiah 58:10**).
- We receive continual guidance from the Lord (**Isaiah 58:11**).
- We have our souls satisfied in drought and become “like a spring of water, whose waters fail not” (**Isaiah 58:11**).

Isaiah Chapter 58— “*This chapter is a priestly sermon in which the Lord, through Isaiah, sets forth the true law of the fast. It is the most thorough treatise on the subject found anywhere in the scriptures. Unless we as a people are applying the law of fast correctly, the Lord will not hear our prayers nor acknowledge our fasting with the sought-after blessings.*”

(Isaiah: The Times of Fulfillment, Ivan D. Sanderson, p 575)

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- Record your thoughts on the prophecies of Isaiah. What do they mean in your life?
- How can you help strengthen your stake and prepare for the great events which have been prophesied?