



# UNIT 5

## LIKE A BESIEGED CITY

Isaiah 1:7-10

*Isaiah predicted the overthrow of ancient Israel resulting in only a few remaining souls. Isaiah's prophecy to ancient Israel is also a prediction of what will happen in our day. See how Isaiah's prophecies have multiple fulfillments throughout time.*



## SECTION 1: THE OVERTHROW OF A NATION

*The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young.*

~ Moses (Deuteronomy 28:49-50)

**A**n awful prediction of the overthrow of our lands haunts those who understand Isaiah's prophecies. Isaiah predicts this through the story of the invasion that happens in the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel. Isaiah has little to say about the conquered northern kingdom other than to say it happened. But he goes into depth about the southern invasion. Isaiah 36-39 details how the city of Jerusalem is besieged after the Assyrians sweep through the countryside. The story of this besieging is how Isaiah predicts what will happen in our day. This is one of the keys to understanding Isaiah's prophecies—to understand that his predictions have multiple fulfillments, and how he uses historical precedent to predict future events.

### #1—MULTIPLE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

**I**saiah mission included prophesying to a people millennia later who speak a different language, have a difference history, tradition, belief system, and culture. To fulfill this assignment, Isaiah used historical precedent—things that happened in his day or before—to predict future events. He also predicts some events that will be fulfilled more than once. This is how his writings touch “all things concerning my people which are of the house of Israel; therefore it must needs be that he must speak also to the Gentiles” (3 Nephi 23:2).

Isaiah predicts things that happened after his day all the way to ours. So we see remnants of his prophecies fulfilled in the records of history. Yet his vision also encompasses an entire end-time scenario occurring prior to the Lord's second coming. Even though many of those written events already happened, he uses them as predictions of future end-time events as well.

The follow pages contain some examples of multiple fulfillments of prophecy.



**MOSES SAVES ISRAEL—A HISTORICAL PRECEDENT**

One of the most prominent stories related by Isaiah is the salvation of the house of Israelite by Moses as he parted the water and led Israel across the Red Sea. It is true that this is not a prediction by Isaiah regarding Moses, for it happened prior to Isaiah's day by nearly 600 years. But it does become a prominent backdrop familiar to ancient and modern Israel to portray a similar event that will happen some day in the future.

*Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over? Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy and holiness shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.*

*Isaiah 51:9-11*



In ancient days when the house of Israel was held captive by the Egyptians as slaves, God saved his people through the most miraculous means. Moses, a prophet of God, physically delivered Israel from their taskmasters. We have not yet seen the end-time fulfillment of this prediction, but Isaiah saw it happen again prior to the Lord's coming. Joseph Smith also predicted this coming event. There will be both a physical and spiritual need to redeem the house of Israel in the end days.

*Behold I say unto you, that the redemption of Zion must needs come by power; therefore, I will raise up unto my people a man who shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel; for ye are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham; and ye must needs be led out of bondage by power, and with a stretched out arm. And as your Fathers were led at the first even so shall the redemption of Zion be.*

*D&C 103:15-18*

## A VIRGIN BEARS THE CHILD IMMANUEL—MULTIPLE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

Isaiah was charged by the Lord to confront Ahaz, the rebellious king of Judah. During their confrontation, Isaiah invited Ahaz to ask for a “sign” that he may know the truth of Isaiah’s prophecies, yet Ahaz refuses. “I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord,” he declared. Disappointed and likely frustrated by Ahaz’ response, Isaiah delivered a sign to Ahaz anyway.

*Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall be eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and to choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.”*

*Isaiah 7:13-16*

This prophetic declaration has at least three fulfillments through the generations of Israel.

### **THE DIVINE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST**

Many assert this prediction from Isaiah was a sign of Jesus being born in the meridian of time, and so it is. Matthew wrote concerning an angel that visited Joseph, the espoused husband to Mary:

*Behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a vision, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.*

*Now this took place, that all things might be fulfilled, which were spoken of the Lord, by the prophets, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, (which, being interpreted, is, God with us).*

*Matthew 1:20-23*



## THE DIVINE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

Though this prophecy did foreshadow the birth of our Savior, what kind of sign would it have been to Ahaz? A sign usually is given to an individual to help them believe God's words, or to affirm God's words. Yet a sign that would not come to fulfillment for another 800 years is hardly a sign to Ahaz.

The Hebrew word **עַלְמָה** | *äl-mä'* is translated in the King James' version as "virgin" but actually means *maiden who is of marriageable age* or *a youthful spouse newly married*. Though Isaiah may have signified a virgin, to Ahaz it likely meant a new bride he had recently married. Many scholars believe this prophecy was actually predicting the birth of Ahaz' son, Hezekiah, who later became a savior for his people during his day.



## THE DIVINE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

The entire book of Isaiah is one grand vision of an end-time prophesy predicting the judgments of God upon a wicked covenant-breaking people and their eventual salvation from captivity. Joseph Smith was asked about the interpretation of the scriptures in Isaiah 11, "What is the rood of Jesse spoken of in the 10th verse of the 11th chapter?"

He answered, "Behold, thus saith the Lord, it is a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days" (D&C 113:5-6).

### NOTES:

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**FREED BY CYRUS: PREDICTING A FUTURE LIBERATOR OF JUDAH**

One very clear prediction by Isaiah is the prophecy regarding Cyrus, a future Persian king, and the liberation of captive Judah from Babylon.

*Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself. That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof; that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*

Isaiah 44:24-28

Cyrus is the only named given by Isaiah of a future character that was not a contemporary or someone in Isaiah's history. Cyrus was born about 200 years after Isaiah, and rose to eventually overthrow the great city of Babylon. There is no dispute that this prophecy refers to Cyrus the Great. After coming to the throne of Persia and subduing the Medes, he provided a way for the captive Jews to return home and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. This is a literal fulfillment of Isaiah's words, "Saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." Isaiah continues his prophecy:

*Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron; and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.*

Isaiah 45:1-3

Yet this is not simply a prophesy about Cyrus the Great who delivered the Jews out of captivity. We know this because of a few factors in Isaiah's writings.

- First, Cyrus delivered the Jews, but Isaiah's message is for the whole of Israel, not just the Jews. Cyrus did not deliver the entire house of Israel.
- Second, Isaiah's entire vision is a composite of one end-time scenario that will happen prior to the Lord's second coming, and therefore the prophecy of Cyrus must represent a type of an end-time leaders.
- Third, we can see by word-links throughout Isaiah's writings that he intends this reference to mean a righteous end-time servant of God.

If you look at the phrase, "Thus saith the Lord to his **anointed** (מָשִׁיחַ | mā-shē'-āḥ), to Cyrus," and do a word-link search in Hebrew of the word "anointed," you find another use of that word in reference to another individual.

61:1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath **anointed** (מָשַׁח | mā-shāḥ) me to preach good tidings unto the 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.

This scripture is specifically attributed to Jesus Christ, and was quoted by him as he read in the synagogue at Nazareth. After reading this and the subsequent verse, he sat down and said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21).

So, Cyrus and Jesus are linked, but not the same individual. Isaiah is drawing characteristics from ancient leaders.



## A COMPOSIT END-TIME SERVANT

Each of these examples—and each of the individuals that Isaiah predicts or names in his book—fulfill multiple purposes. Just as they predict the coming of individuals like Cyrus and Jesus Christ, they also predict the coming of an end-time servant that will finally gather the lost tribes of Israel. Avraham Gileadi describes the use of these various individuals as a composite of one end-time servant.

*Let us also say we discover that Isaiah prophesies profusely about Israel's end-time restoration, in which God's servant and son releases people from bondage, unites Israel's tribes, conquers enemies, and so forth. But because Isaiah limits himself to using types from the past to predict the end-time, where would he find the type of just one person in the past doing all those things? None exists. In that case, Isaiah creates composites of types, in which a single end-time leader accomplishes what several leaders did in the past. When restoring God's people, moreover, God's servant and son not only does what they did, he also exemplifies their character traits. That is why Isaiah depicts him as a composite of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Hezekiah, and Cyrus.<sup>1</sup>*

## NOTES:

## SECTION 2: A VERY SMALL REMNANT

*And [Abraham] looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.*

~ Moses (Genesis 19:34)

**B**ecause of the rebellion of the sons of Israel, an alien force invades the lands of the covenant people. We may pacify our own conscience by believing Isaiah is talking about the invasion and eventual fall of ancient Israel due to their rebellion from God. Yet, Remember that Isaiah's writings reflect a prophecy of the end-times. That means that he is speaking about a future covenant people, not the ancient Israelites.

Isaiah was talking about the future covenant people of God, the modern-day house of Israel. We are that covenant people that Isaiah referenced. It is our nation and our people who have made a modern-day covenant with God. Isaiah is predicting that our nation and our covenant people will be subjugated to the oppression of a coming tyrant. "And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 19:4). As part of that prediction, the Isaiah says there will be great devastation, where only a few will survive. "Yet in it there shall be a tenth, and they shall return" (Isaiah 6:13). We call these few survivors the "remnant."

### #1—ZION BESIEGED

**I**saiah says, "The daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city" (Isaiah 1:8). The imagery of a besieged city brings to mind the siege upon Jerusalem during the reign of King Hezekiah (see Isaiah 36-37).

Rabshakeh, the servant of the Assyrian, brashly stood before the men of Judah and claimed that God had sent him against Jerusalem. Just as the Assyrians threatened the holy city of God, so in the last days will the holy people of God be besieged again, Jerusalem in the ancient ancestral lands and Zion in the new world. And though the adversary may seem threatening and oppressive, the Lord will intervene.

The word "besieged" is a Hebrew word נִצָּר | nā-tsār'. Though translated as "besiege" in the King James' version of the Bible, it comes from the root word meaning *to guard* and can also mean *to keep* or *preserve*.

Isaiah writes, "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. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt **keep** (נִצָּר | nā-tsār') him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

The context of this word here gives us an idea that when Isaiah uses it in Isaiah 1:8, the "besieged" city is one that is kept or preserved.

#### EXAMPLES OF THE LORD'S INTERVENTION

- Moses 7:13 — Enoch and his word
- Genesis 6 — Noah and the arc
- Exodus 9-10 — Moses and Pharaoh
- Joshua 6 — Joshua and Jericho
- 1 Samuel 17 — David and Goliath
- 1 Kings 17:3-6 — Elijah fed by birds
- 1 Kings 18 — Elijah and the altar
- Isaiah 36-37 — Hezekiah and Judah
- Ezra 1:1-2 — Cyrus frees the Jews



As it was anciently, so it will be in the future. Despite overwhelming odds, God will preserve his people. It will not be the great strength of men or nations that will win the contest against the adversary. It will be the miraculous power of God. We have seen evidences of God's miraculous saving power throughout history just as when Enoch diverted the rivers and moved the mountains to preserve his people or in the epic story of David and Goliath.

**SOME USES OF נָצַר | NÄ-TSÄR'**

- Isaiah 1:8 — “Besieged”
- Isaiah 26:1-3 — “Keep”
- Isaiah 42:6-7 — “Keep”
- Isaiah 49:3-9 — “Preserve”



**QUESTIONS TO PONDER**

1. When the Assyrians besieged Jerusalem, what did King Hezekiah do to intervene for his people?
2. How did the Lord preserve the people from falling into the hands of the Assyrians?
3. What does this story symbolize or predict in coming days?

**NOTES**

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## #2—A SMALL REMNANT REMAINS

Isaiah says that a “very small remnant” will survive the invading conquest. This remnant is the only thing that kept ancient Israel from being completely annihilated. “Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah” (Isaiah 1:9). In end days, humanity may be so scarce in parts of the world that it may seem like a wasteland, just as Sodom and Gomorrah were. Fortunately, Isaiah predicts that some will survive.

Looking at the Hebrew can help us better understand what Isaiah means.

- **Left:** יָתַר | yā-thār’ means *to be left behind*. It is used a handful of times within Isaiah, all referring to a remnant that is left after war or tribulations have waned.

There is one exception referring to a prediction Isaiah gives to Hezekiah regarding his posterity where nothing will be left after his seed are carried captive into Babylon (see Isaiah 39:6).

## SOME USES OF יָתַר | YĀ-THĀR’

- Isaiah 1:8 — “Be left”
- Isaiah 4:3 — “Remaineth”
- Isaiah 7:22 — “Be left”
- Isaiah 30:17 — “Be left”
- Isaiah 39:6 — “Be left”

- **Remnant:** שָׂרִיד | sā-rēd’ is only used once in Isaiah, translated as “remnant.” This word means *a survivor, fugitive, or one who escaped*. It comes from a root word meaning *to puncture*, with a figurative idea of something barely slipping out to escape or survive. This word is found in Isaiah 1:9, “Except the Lord had left unto us a very small **remnant**...”

When using word-links, this word—שָׂרִיד | sā-rēd’—may not link to all other uses of the word “remnant,” since this is its only use. All other uses of the word “remnant” in Isaiah come from the root word שָׂאָר | shā-ār’ and שְׂאֵרִית | she-ā-rēth’, a completely different Hebrew word.

- **Remnant:** שָׂאָר | shā-ār’ and שְׂאֵרִית | she-ā-rēth’ come both derive from a primitive root word meaning *to swell up, or be redundant*. These nouns mean *the residue or to left over*. You can see the idea of this word has a different connotation than שָׂרִיד | sā-rēd’ above. Though it can mean those who have survived, it may carry a different symbolic meaning, sometimes positive and sometimes negative.

SOME USES OF שָׂאָר | SHĀ-ĀR’  
AND שְׂאֵרִית | SHE-Ā-RĒTH’

- Isaiah 10:18-23 — “Rest,” “Remnant” of Israel
- Isaiah 11:10-16 — “Remnant” of various people
- Isaiah 14:18-30 — “Remnant” of Babylon Isaiah 15:9, 16:13-14 — “Remnant” of Moab
- Isaiah 28:5-6 — “Residue” of Israel
- Isaiah 37:30-35 — “Remnant” of Jerusalem
- Isaiah 46:3-4 — “Remnant” of the house of Israel

שָׂרִיד | sā-rēd’ may represent individuals who righteously stood their ground and were refined through their trial, surviving because of true grit and the grace of God. It may be similar to those in Jerusalem who survived the besieging of the Assyrian army. They stood true to God and he miraculously delivered them (see Isaiah 37:36).

On the other hand, שָׂאָר | shā-ār’ and שְׂאֵרִית | she-ā-rēth’ may represent those who simply survived the end-time tribulations. It may not signify that they survived because of their righteous sacrifices, but because of the grace of God. It is these “captive exiles” who seek to be freed and turn back to God (see Isaiah 51:14). These are the people who will return after being refined as silver through their tribulations.



### QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- 1. After reading the scriptures in this section, how would you interpret the symbolism Isaiah is using?
- 2. What story does this tell about the “remnant” of Israel?
- 3. What are the characteristics of those Isaiah refers to as the remnant?
- 4. How do you prepare yourself to help this remnant?

### NOTES

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## #3—SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Isaiah calls upon the leaders and people of Israel to hear his voice. Yet he uses a very startling comparison to do so. “Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah,” he says (Isaiah 1:10).

Jehovah compares the spiritual state of his covenant children to the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah. “The show of their countenance doth witness against them; and doth declare their sin to be even as Sodom, they cannot hide it. Woe unto their souls! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves” (Isaiah 3:9-10).

What was the sin of Sodom and the iniquity of Gomorrah? Our traditions and histories suggest homosexuality and lusts of the flesh were the downfall of the twin cities. Ezekiel provides intriguing insight into the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah that expands our understanding.

Speaking to the errant nation of Judah and the people of Jerusalem, he proclaimed:

*Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me; therefore I took them away, as I saw good.*

*Ezekiel 16:49-50*

Last among the list of sins in Ezekiel’s record was the “abominations,” which likely indicate those wonton lusts and sexual perversions. First on the list was pride. Second, an idleness with their abundance. Not only were they idle, they also would not seek after nor help the poor and needy.

Though sexual expression outside the laws of God are pervasive in our time just as in ancient days, this is not the only sin that became the catalyst for judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah. Perhaps it was a tipping point, yet it is intriguing that in the Lord’s statement to Ezekiel, pride topped the list.

## SCRIPTURE REVIEW

- Genesis 13:11 — Lot settles in Sodom
- Genesis 18-19 — God destroys Sodom

## REFERENCES TO SODOM

- Isaiah 13:19-22
- Jeremiah 23:9-14
- Lamentations 4
- Ezekiel 16:49-50
- Amos 4
- Matthew 10:5-15 (see also Mark 6:7-11 and Luke 10:1-12)
- Matthew 11:20-24
- 2 Peter 2





### QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. What are the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah?
2. How do the actions of our society today mirror those of the ancient cities?
3. What does the Lord's comparison of Israel's leaders and people to Sodom and Gomorrah say about our current spiritual state?

### NOTES

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