

“And now I write some of the words of Isaiah, that whoso of my people shall see these words may lift up their head and rejoice.” 2 Nephi 11:8

Introduction

When we come to know the true nature of God our faith can increase, our joy can expand and our eye can be single to the glory of God. Isaiah 40-49 represent a beautiful testimony of Isaiah’s understanding of the nature of God magnificently presented in symbolic language, metaphor, and poetry. We learn from the *Lectures of Faith*

that three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation. First the idea that [God] actually exists. Secondly, a *correct* idea of [God’s] character, perfections, and attributes. Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which [one] is pursuing is according to [God’s] will. ((*Lectures of Faith*, compiled by N.B. Lundwall (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City), p. 33.))

Isaiah was one whose faith had been made perfect by knowledge. Alma teaches us that “if a man knoweth a thing he hath no cause to believe, for he knoweth it” (Alma 32:18). We know that Isaiah had communion with the great Jehovah for Isaiah 6 gives us a description of his purging introduction to the Creator of heaven and earth:

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and [the hems of his robe] ((The underlying Hebrew word *shulav* is best translated as “the hems of his robe.” See Donald W. Parry, Jay A. Parry, Tina M. Peterson, *Understanding Isaiah* (Deseret Book: Salt Lake City, 1998), pp. 62-63. The hem of a robe is beautifully symbolic. For example, Boaz protectively covers Ruth with the hem of his robe as a sign that he will be her redeemer (Ruth 3, esp. v. 9). A suffering woman, afflicted for years by an issue of blood is instantly healed by the virtue and righteousness of the One who would bleed for her and all of God’s children, her redeemer Jesus Christ, when she reaches out in the thronging crowd to touch the hem of His robe (see Mark 5:24-34). The Hebrew word *shul* (hem of a robe) is often used in context of the priestly robes of those officiating in sacred temple services.)) filled the temple. Then said I, woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. (Isaiah 6:1, 5-8)

As a prophet who had communed with the Eternal God, Isaiah could speak as one who knew the character, perfections, and attributes of God. That is why Isaiah is a pearl of great price unto us as we seek to more fully know our God whom we worship. Nephi concurs:

And now I, Nephi, write more of the words of Isaiah, for my soul delighteth in his words. For I will liken his words unto my people, and I will send them forth unto all my children, for he verily saw my Redeemer, even as I have seen him. And my brother, Jacob, also has seen him as I have seen him; wherefore, I will send their words forth unto my children to prove unto them that my words are true. Wherefore, by the words of three, God hath said, I will establish my word. Nevertheless, God sendeth more witnesses, and he proveth all his words. Behold, my soul delighteth in proving unto my people the truth of the coming of Christ; for, for this end hath the law of Moses been given; and all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of

him. (2 Nephi 11:2-4)

Another reason that Nephi quoted so liberally from Isaiah is that “we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26). The words of Isaiah guided Nephi and his people to know Christ. And so it is with us as well. The words of Isaiah have been preserved and transmitted unto us over the years and generations. His witness of the living God, his testimony of the attributes and perfections of the Great Jehovah live as we read, ponder, and act in faith upon those truths. As we plant the seed of faith and water and nourish it with all diligence by acting upon the truths revealed in the Holy Scriptures the path will open for us to one day know with a perfect comprehension, as Isaiah knew, that the Lord is God, our Savior and Redeemer. Until then we will move forward in our growing faith. Let us now feed our faith in God the Eternal Father through the testimony of Isaiah.

Character, Attributes, and Perfections of God from the Testimony of Isaiah

There Is No God but God

We can have complete and ultimate faith in God the Eternal Father. There is no other God with whom He competes for the faith and righteousness of humanity. ((This concept, taught repeatedly throughout Isaiah is not entirely unlike the Muslim *shahida*, which is the statement of testimony uttered before two authorized witnesses to be admitted into the Islamic faith. It says, *la illah illallah wa muhammed rasul allah* (“There is no God but God and Mohammed is his prophet”).)) There is no idol crafted by human hands that has any power over the Master craftsman Himself. When we turn to the one and only true God, our hearts’ most fervent desires are heard and answered with a blessing upon our head.

I, *even I, am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour. (Isaiah 43:11)

Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared *it?* ye *are* even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, *there is* no God; I know not *any*. (Isaiah 44:8)

I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else, *there is* no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none beside me. I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else. (Isaiah 45:5-6)

Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye *that are* escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god *that* cannot save. Tell ye, and bring *them* near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? *who* hath told it from that time? *have* not I the LORD? and *there is* no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; *there is* none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else. (Isaiah 45:20-22)

God Is a Refiner

We are upon this earth under the wise direction of an all-knowing Father who desires that we grow and progress in our joy and righteousness. However, we must be tested, tried, and purged to be like Him in order that we might experience a fullness of joy as He has. Thus God is with us in the journey of purging and refining—fire purges out the dross and fire cleanses the inner soul and fire is the Spirit of God which we can have always if we but remember Him. ((This is the great sacrament promise: If we always remember Christ we will always have the Spirit to be with us. If we always have the Spirit with us we will have the continual effects of the fire of the Holy Ghost purging our sin from our souls. This is a most simple yet entirely marvelous blessing and promise.))

For my name’s sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake, *even* for mine own sake, will I do *it*: for how should *my name* be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another. (Isaiah 48:9-11)

I, *even* I, *am* he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. (Isaiah 43:25)

I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done *it*: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel. (Isaiah 44:22-23)

God Is Eternal

God is from everlasting to everlasting. He is the Great I Am. He is the Ever-Existing who defines the boundaries of reality by His very life which has no end.

Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I *am* he; I *am* the first, I also *am* the last. (Isaiah 48:12)

God Does Not Speak In Secret

We learn from many prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord that God does all things for the loving benefit of His children. We hear Amos, a contemporary of Isaiah, testify:

Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret ((The underlying Hebrew word *sod* is quite meaningful. It is used in several significant contexts in the OT, which refer to “council,” “counsel,” and “an intimate circle of familiar friends who engage in friendly, confidential speech.” These ideas support and enlighten our understanding of prophetic work. See Brown, Driver & Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Clarendon Press: Oxford), p. 691.)) unto his servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7)

Nephi joins his testimony to that of Amos when he exclaims in the language of one who knew God for he had exercised faith in the true characteristics, attributes and perfections of God:

For behold, my beloved brethren, I say unto you that the Lord God worketh not in darkness. He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world; for he loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him. Wherefore, he commandeth none that they shall not partake of his salvation. Behold, doth he cry unto any, saying: Depart from me? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but he saith: Come unto me all ye ends of the earth, buy milk and honey, without money and without price. ((Milk and honey are respectively the nourishing and sweet things of life. Together they serve as reoccurring symbols of the universal atonement of Jesus Christ, given freely, and without price. Thus, God has freely invited all to the banquet at the sacred altar/table of the sacrament where the milk and honey of the atonement are imparted to all those who use their moral agency to respond to the invitation.)) Behold, hath he commanded any that they should depart out of the synagogues, or out of the houses of worship? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. Hath he commanded any that they should not partake of his salvation? Behold I say unto you, Nay; but he hath given it free for all men; and he hath commanded his people that they should persuade all men to repentance.

Behold, hath the Lord commanded any that they should not partake of his goodness? Behold I say unto you, Nay; but all men are privileged the one like unto the other, and none are forbidden. (2 Nephi 26:23-28)

Isaiah’s testimony makes a third witness for this true attribute of God’s character.

Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there *am* I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me. (Isaiah 48:16)

God is a Servant

The greatest of all is of necessity the humblest of all. He who suffered the greatest of all pain, He who descended below all things, He who has suffered all can comprehend all and thus be the Perfect Servant succoring our every need for healing and renewal.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. (Isaiah 42:1-4)

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53)

God Is a Redeemer

God is the Great Redeemer who saves us in our deepest suffering and from our most encompassing bondages. He has bought us with a price, even the price of His life paid by His sacred blood.

But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. ((There is a real power and significance in names that has been greatly lost in our modern society (but well captured in our sacred temple services). According to the ancient Israelite mindset, names conveyed the essence of an individual character and/or life mission. Additionally, the one who names another receives the sacred responsibility of stewardship for the individual they named. Thus parents naming their children at once gained stewardship for their children as well as identified a characteristic attribute of their child. That God has named us indicates in the most loving form that He as a Father has bound Himself to us in the most solemn stewardship. And he never fails in His stewardship. He has named us; we are His precious treasure. And what does He call us? How does He beckon to us? He calls us in the name of Christ, for it is that name that we should take upon ourselves; it is that name through which we must be identified. And if we are truly called Christ it is because we have become like Him through the transforming power of His everlasting atonement.)) (Isaiah 43:1)

Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne *by me* from the belly, which are carried from the womb...I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver *you*. (Isaiah 46:3-4)

God Is the Great Teacher

The greatest teachers are those who show by example how to learn. Christ was the most humble of all God’s children. He gave His will entirely to His Father. By so doing He opened up the depths of His soul to learn, grow, and progress. Through His example, Christ taught us the greatest lesson of all—humble submission to the Creator of heaven and earth. If we can open the depths of our soul to God the Father in sincere and humble submission there is not one thing the Lord cannot teach us.

Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; *I am* the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way *that* thou shouldest go. (Isaiah 48:17)

God Is a Shepherd

Similar to a teacher is the loving service of a shepherd. It is the shepherd that guides to the pure waters of refreshing truth where we bathe in the light and glory of God’s love. It is the shepherd that feeds the flock with the good things of the earth. With all of the tenderness of a shepherd, God leads us to the waters of salvation and the banquet of rejoicing.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young. (Isaiah 40:11)

That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that *are* in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures *shall be* in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. (Isaiah 49:9-10)

God Is a Restorer

Life is not without its losses. At times the most beautiful and sacred things we had ever known seem lost forever as if we are doomed to a life of darkness and despair. Yet our Eternal God “who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance” ((Isaiah 40:12. The gift of God.)) knows all that we

need and all of the righteous yearnings of our heart. He has the power to restore all that once was lost, to turn the night to day, sorrow to rejoicing, pain to healing, and death to life.

Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where *had* they *been*? Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in *their* arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon *their* shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with *their* face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me. (Isaiah 49:21-23)

God Is Our Savior

God’s great work is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of all mankind. Indeed, this is the greatest work of love ever known. It is a work of salvation—saving us from our sins, our fears, our weaknesses, our pains, and our temptations. If we allow Him, God will save us with a salvation that defies death and hell.

For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. (Isaiah 43:3)

But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. (Isaiah 45:17)

And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD *am* thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. (Isaiah 49:26)

God Speaks the Truth

There is no darkness in God for He is full of light which is the pure essence of truth (see D&C 93).

I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right. (Isaiah 45:19)

God Is a Deliverer

Nephi once prayed in anguish and earnest sincerity to be delivered from evil and temptation. His words, together with those of Isaiah, serve as a powerful double witness to the goodness of God in making our paths straight that we might flee from our enemies. ((A careful comparison between these two marvelous writers (Nephi and Isaiah) will display a congruency of thought and testimony. Nephi truly loved the words of Isaiah; it is as though they were kindred spirits in testimony and expression.))

O Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine escape before mine enemies! Wilt thou make my path straight before me! Wilt thou not place a stumbling block in my way—but that thou wouldst clear my way before me, and hedge not up my way, but the ways of mine enemy. (2 Nephi 4:33)

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. (Isaiah 45:2)

That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that *are* in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures *shall be* in all high places. (Isaiah 49:9)

The LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, *and* them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. (Isaiah 42:6-7)

God Invites All To Salvation; He Opens the Pathway

The love of God is given freely without price or payment. So is salvation; it is an open invitation for all who courageously exercise moral agency to have faith in the living God and believe His promises. Those who exercise such agency unto faith will find that their faith is transformed into perfect knowledge (see Alma 32) as the Lord opens the way for them.

I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right. (Isaiah 45:19)

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*. (Isaiah 40:3-5)

And I will bring the blind by a way *that* they knew not; I will lead them in paths *that* they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. (Isaiah 42:16)

The LORD...maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters. (Isaiah 43:16)

God Gives Comfort and Mercy

The purity of God’s love fills the immensity of space—it knows no bounds. This love speaks to our souls in soothing sensations of comfort and mercy, filling the cracks and fissures of our broken soul with healing wax. ((Wax is another symbol of the atonement. Just as wax can be applied to cracked earthen vessels so that they are once again whole, so too our souls are cracked through sin and then made whole again by the wax of the atonement. Wax is also a symbol of light. Interestingly, bees make both wax and honey, another symbol of the atonement. The bee, also known as Deseret, is known for its untiring industry. Does God sleep or tire in His mighty work of salvation?))

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine. (Isaiah 43:1)

Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of *my* hands; thy walls *are* continually before me. (Isaiah 49:13,

15-16)

God Speaks With Perfect Foreknowledge

He who is Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent can tell us all truths long before they come to pass. He prepares His people with the foreknowledge of truth. His words are available for all who have ears to hear.

I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. (Isaiah 42:8-9)

Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; *I am* God, and *there is* none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. (Isaiah 46:9-10)

I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did *them* suddenly, and they came to pass... I have even from the beginning declared *it* to thee; before it came to pass I shewed *it* thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them. (Isaiah 48:3, 5)

God Fulfills His Covenants

God is a Man of truth and integrity. His word stands for the eternities. His promises are real. He does not forget the prayers of the righteous. His covenants endure.

Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages. (Isaiah 49:8)

God Is the Creator

The testimony of many prophets has attested to this truth. Isaiah is particularly gifted in expressing the scope of God's never ending creations on our behalf.

Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein. (Isaiah 42:5)

Fear not: for I *am* with thee...*Even* every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. (Isaiah 43:5, 7)

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open,

and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it... Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, *even* my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded... For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I *am* the LORD; and *there is* none else. (Isaiah 45:8, 11-12, 18)

Emmanuel (God Is With Us)

Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness... *When* the poor and needy seek water, and *there is* none, *and* their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, *I* the God of Israel will not forsake them. (Isaiah 40:10, 17)

I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles. (Isaiah 42:6)

When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour... Fear not: for I *am* with thee. (Isaiah 43:2-3, 5)

Conclusion

When we ponder Isaiah’s pure and comprehensive testimony of God’s attributes, characteristics, and perfections our faith will grow as a tree of life nourished by the river of salvation. That tree of faith will be planted as if in the Garden of Eden, watered by the natural mists of light and love from Heavenly Father. Our tree—our soul—will grow in that nourishing environment as we draw closer to the Lord and ever nearer to a perfect knowledge of Him. And on that bright day when our faith becomes dormant as our knowledge is fully perfected, at that moment when we are brought back into a fullness of His burning presence, we will be able to pluck the pure white fruit of the tree of life and eat with a fullness of joy.