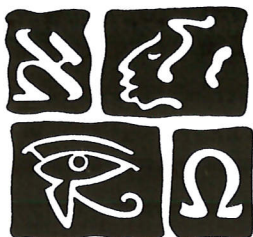




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Donald W. Parry

Isaiah in the Book of Mormon

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Summary:

Donald Parry notes that nearly one-third of Isaiah is quoted in the Book of Mormon, and he lists twelve reasons given in the Book of Mormon for studying Isaiah. The Isaiah texts in the Book of Mormon are valuable for purposes of textual criticism because they come from the plates of brass, our oldest manuscript. Parry makes a few textual comparisons of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon and the Bible, demonstrating the greater clarity of the Book of Mormon Isaiah. Nephi's people had difficulty understanding Isaiah because they did not understand the manner of prophesying among the Jews. Parry discusses individual symbols from Isaiah and from Erwin Goodenough's model of vertical and horizontal Judaism.

Transcript
Book of Mormon, Isaiah

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Isaiah in the Book of Mormon

Donald W. Parry

Today our discussion will center on Isaiah the prophet. I have set two goals. Number one, I wish to set forth the keys to understanding Isaiah, as provided by Nephi in 2 Nephi 25. Goal number two, I would like to speak concerning the significance of the Isaiah text found in the Book of Mormon.

Almost one third of the book of Isaiah is quoted in the Book of Mormon. Of the 1292 verses found in the book of Isaiah, approximately 425 are quoted in the Book of Mormon. Approximately one half of the 425 verses, or 229 verses, are quoted differently in the Book of Mormon than they are found in the King James Version. Several chapters and verses of the Book of Mormon provide explanations and commentaries of Isaiah's writings. So we will be discussing these things.

First, I would like to introduce Isaiah, the prophet and the man. The name *Isaiah* means "Jehovah is salvation," or "the Lord is salvation." It is a Hebrew name. The ancient Hebrews would have recognized his name, *Yesha 'yahu*, as meaning "Jehovah is salvation." They wouldn't have thought of it as a foreign name as we do in the West.

We know very little about the life of Isaiah, but I will relate the things that we are quite certain of. Many scholars believe that Isaiah ministered between the years 740 through 700 B.C.; that is a forty-year ministry as a prophet. According to the superscription, which is Isaiah 1:1, Isaiah prophesied under four kings of Judah: King Uzziah of Judah, King Jotham, King Ahaz, and King Hezekiah. His prophetic ministry began near the end of the reign of King Uzziah and was completed midway through King Hezekiah's reign.

We have no mention of Isaiah's mother. His father was called Amoz. We do not know anything about Amoz—his occupation, where he was raised, and so forth. Isaiah was married. His wife was called simply "the prophetess." That might mean that his wife was the wife of a prophet, but I believe it means that she had a testimony of Jesus, because the definition of a prophet and prophetess is given to us by John the revelator, and it means one who has a testimony of Jesus. So his wife is called a prophetess. We know that Isaiah had two sons. The first one's name was Shearjashub, and the name of the second son was Maher-shalal-hash-baz. Both sons served as types of Israel. The names of the two sons have something to do with Israel and prophecy.

In Isaiah chapter seven and chapter eight, Isaiah was a type of Heavenly Father. His wife, the prophetess, was a type of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

And the second son was a type of Jesus himself. According to an apocryphal source and several early apostolic fathers, Isaiah became a martyr for the faith. According to a source, he prophesied concerning the deeds of wicked King Manasseh, who asked Isaiah to retract the prophecies. Isaiah would not do so, so Manasseh had Isaiah placed in the trunk of a hollow tree and had him sawn in two. We may have a reference to this in Hebrews 11:37.

As I mentioned at the beginning, the Book of Mormon quotes approximately one-third of the book of Isaiah. Why such emphasis on the book of Isaiah to the neglect of other Old Testament prophets? The Book of Mormon provides twelve reasons why we should study Isaiah and for the emphasis that our church places on Isaiah.

Reason #1. We study Isaiah because he spoke concerning the scattering and the gathering of the Jews and the house of Israel. I quote from the Book of Mormon: "And I did rehearse unto them the words of Isaiah, who spake concerning the restoration of the Jews, or of the house of Israel; and after they were restored they should be no more confounded, neither should they be scattered again" (1 Nephi 15:20).

Reason #2. We study Isaiah because he spoke concerning things which are and things which are to come. "And now, behold, I would speak unto you concerning things which are, and which are to come; wherefore, I will read you the words of Isaiah" (2 Nephi 6:4).

Reason #3. We study the writings of Isaiah so that we may learn and glorify the name of God. The Book of Mormon states, "I will read you the words of Isaiah. . . . And I speak unto you for your sakes that ye may learn and glorify the name of your God" (2 Nephi 6:4).

Reason #4. We study the writings of Isaiah so that Isaiah's words may be likened unto us. I have three quotations from the Book of Mormon regarding likening the words of Isaiah unto us, the house of Israel of this dispensation. I will refer to two of these three quotations:

"wherefore they, [Isaiah's words] may be likened unto you, for ye are of the house of Israel. And there are many things which have been spoken by Isaiah which may be likened unto you, because ye are of the house of Israel" (2 Nephi 6:5).

Second quotation: "And now I, Nephi, write more of the words of Isaiah. . . . For I will liken his words unto my people" (2 Nephi 11:2).

Reason #5. We study the words of Isaiah because they make us rejoice. "And now I write some of the words of Isaiah, that whoso of my people who shall see these words may lift up their hearts and rejoice for all men" (2

Nephi 11:8).

Reason #6. We study the writings of Isaiah because he saw the Lord. Also, Isaiah's words were centered upon Jesus. "And now I, Nephi, write more of the words of Isaiah, . . . for he verily saw my Redeemer, even as I have seen him" (2 Nephi 11:2). Not only did Nephi see the Lord, but his brother, Jacob, also saw the Lord.

Reason #7. We study the writings of Isaiah for our profit and learning. "I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah; for I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning" (1 Nephi 19:23).

Reason #8. We study the writings of Isaiah because we are commanded to. "Behold," says the Lord, "they [the words of Isaiah], are written; ye have them before you, therefore search them" (3 Nephi 20:11).

Also the Lord stated, "And now, behold, I say unto you that ye ought to search these things." First he says you ought to study Isaiah and then he says, "Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah" (3 Nephi 23:1). Finally in Mormon chapter 8 we find this command, "Search the prophesies of Isaiah" (Mormon 8:23).

Reason #9. We study the writings of Isaiah because he spoke touching all things concerning the house of Israel. "For surely he [Isaiah] spake as touching 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).

Another quote: "And now, the words which I shall read are they which Isaiah spake concerning all the house of Israel" (2 Nephi 6:5).

Now, did Isaiah know that he was speaking concerning the house of Israel? In the superscription, verse one of chapter one, it states that the vision of Isaiah deals chiefly with Judah and Jerusalem. According to a scholar, "Without a doubt, chapter one, verse one is meant to be taken as a superscription for the entire book, with all its sixty-six chapters."

For instance I want to give examples of how he spoke concerning the house of Israel; he prophesied regarding the future temple of Jerusalem, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the prophet Joseph Smith, the two latter-day prophets who would prophesy in the streets of Jerusalem, the gathering of the Jews and Israel, the first coming of Jesus, the second coming of Jesus, the atonement of Jesus, the earthly ministry of Jesus, items regarding the restoration, the judgments that would come upon the world in the last days, a future temple to be built in Egypt, the signs of the times, items

regarding the millennium, the true manner of fasting, and many other items regarding the house of Israel.

Reason #10. We study the writings of Isaiah because his prophecies are true and will be fulfilled. According to the Lord, "And all things that he [Isaiah] spake have been and shall be, even according to the words which he spake" (3 Nephi 23:3).

Reason #11. We study the writings of Isaiah because he spoke concerning the judgments of God, the judgements that would come upon the nations in the last days. "I have made mention unto my children [this is Nephi] concerning the judgements of God which hath come to pass among the Jews, unto my children according to all that which Isaiah hath spoken" (3 Nephi 25:6).

Reason #12. And finally we study the writings of Isaiah because they are of great worth. "Wherefore, they [Isaiah's prophecies] are of worth unto the children of men; . . . for I know that they shall be of great worth unto them in the last days" (2 Nephi 25:8).

Another quote: Jesus says "For great are the words of Isaiah" (3 Nephi 23:1).

Now, if the Book of Mormon contains so many passages of Isaiah, how do these passages compare with ancient texts—ancient manuscripts that contain the book of Isaiah (the Isaiah chapters that are drawn from the brass plates of Laban)? The Isaiah chapters found in our Book of Mormon represent the earliest-known extant chapters of Isaiah. This is critical to the scholarly world, to have the oldest manuscripts; and they are found in our Book of Mormon.

The chapters predate by centuries other known texts of Isaiah, including the Hebrew Bible called the Masoretic text, the Septuagint, the Greek translation, the Dead Sea Scroll manuscript of Isaiah, the Theodosian, the Syriac, the Targum's, the Vulgate, the Old Latin, the Sahetic (?spelling), the Coptic-Ethiopic, the Arabic, and Armenian texts of the Bible. The Book of Mormon Isaiah is older than all of those.

In my opinion, the Isaiah chapters represented in the Book of Mormon are the most accurate and exact sections of Isaiah in existence. I have compared them with the Hebrew Bible, which is a very old manuscript; I have compared them with the Dead Sea Scrolls manuscripts. This opinion is formed due to the fact that the Isaiah text of the Book of Mormon provides additions, deletions, and changes to the Isaiah text in these other manuscripts.

It should be stated that the well-known expression of Joseph Smith that

the Book of Mormon is "the most correct on earth" is equally applicable to the Isaiah chapters found within the covers of the Book of Mormon.

I have provided, on the overhead, a chart which demonstrates some of the significant changes found in the book of Isaiah (see figure 1). I have juxtaposed the King James Version of the Bible with the Book of Mormon Isaiah text, so that you can easily and readily ascertain the additions, deletions, and changes found in the Book of Mormon text of Isaiah. This is just a sampling.

Let's look at two or three of the samples. Isaiah 6:8 is quoted in 2 Nephi 16:8. The King James Version says "but understand not"; the Book of Mormon says, "they understood not." How is this significant? It clarifies that *the people* did not understand, not Isaiah.

Another example (third example down): Isaiah 2:12 is quoted in 2 Nephi 12:12. The King James Version says, "Day of the Lord of Hosts"; the Book of Mormon says, "Day of the Lord of Hosts soon cometh." That addition indicates that the day of the Lord of Hosts, the Second Coming, will come soon. That is very significant.

Isaiah 14:2 (the fifth example down) is quoted in 2 Nephi 24:2. The King James Version doesn't have this phrase. It is nonexistent. The Book of Mormon states, "Yea, from far unto the ends of the earth; and they shall return to their lands of promise." This added phrase is not found in any of the ancient texts. Yet, it is found here, and it reflects the true reading of Isaiah. This is a very significant addition.

Finally (the next example down), Isaiah 14:25 is quoted in 2 Nephi 24:25. The King James Version reads, "that I will *break* the Assyrian." (this is the Lord). The Book of Mormon reads, "that I will *bring* the Assyrian." The significant alteration: the Lord will bring the Assyrian into his land, not break the Assyrian. We could multiply these changes, but this is a sampling of how correct the Book of Mormon Isaiah is, as opposed to ancient manuscripts and the King James Version.

Let's read now from 2 Nephi 25:1-2. Nephi provided keys to understanding the writings of Isaiah.

"Now I, Nephi, do speak somewhat concerning the words which I have written, which have been spoken by the mouth of Isaiah. For behold, Isaiah spake many things which were hard for many of my people to understand; for they know not concerning the manner of prophesying among the Jews.

"For I, Nephi, have not taught them many things concerning the manner of the Jews; for their works were works of darkness, and their doings were doings of abominations."

Figure 1

Book of Mormon Isaiah Compared with the KJV Isaiah

The Isaiah chapters that are drawn from the brass plates of Laban represent the earliest known extant chapters of Isaiah. The chapters predate by centuries other known texts of Isaiah, including the Masoretic text, the Septuagint, the DSS manuscripts of Isaiah, Aquila, Symmachus, Theodosian, Syriac, Targums, Vulgate, Old Latin, Sahidic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Armenian texts of the Bible. In my opinion, the Isaianic chapters represented in the Book of Mormon are the most accurate and exact sections of Isaiah in existence. This opinion is formed due to the fact that the Isaiah text of the Book of Mormon provides a number of elucidatory additions, deletions, and changes to the Isaiah text of the Hebrew Bible. It should be stated that the well-known expression of Joseph Smith that the Book of Mormon is "the most correct of any book on earth" is equally applicable to the Isaiah chapters found within the covers of the Book of Mormon. The chart demonstrates some of the significant changes found in the Book of Mormon Isaiah. I have juxtaposed the KJV of the Bible with the Book of Mormon Isaiah texts so that the reader can easily and readily ascertain the additions, deletions, and changes found in the Book of Mormon text of Isaiah.

Chapter	King James Version	Book of Mormon	Significant Alterations
Isa 6:8 2 Ne 16:8	"but understand not"	"they understood not"	Clarifies that the people did not understand, <i>not</i> Isaiah
Isa 2:2 2 Ne 12:2	"that the mountain of the Lord's house"	"when the mountain of the Lord's house"	the change infers a time
Isa 2:12 2 Ne 12:12	"day of the Lord of Hosts"	"day of the Lord of Hosts soon cometh"	indicates day will come soon
Isa 13:4 2 Ne 23:4	"a multitude"	"the multitude"	a definite rather than indefinite multitude
Isa 14:2 2 Ne 24:2	nonexistent	"yea, from far unto the ends of the earth; and they shall return to their lands of promise"	significant explanatory addition not found in the KJV
Isa 14:25 2 Ne 24:25	"That I will break the Assyrian"	"That I will bring the Assyrian"	Lord will bring Assyrian into his land, <i>not</i> break the Assyrian
Isa 29:7 2 Ne 27:3	"nations that fight against Ariel"	"nations that fight against Zion"	Ariel is referred to as Zion
Isa 48:1 1 Ne 20:1	"or out of waters of Judah"	"out of waters of Judah, or out of the waters of baptism"	the addition completes an extended synonymous parallelism in this verse. Also explains the meaning of "waters of Judah"
Isa 48:2 1 Ne 20:2	"stay themselves upon the God of Israel"	"they do not stay themselves upon the God of Israel"	presents the opposite meaning with the negation "not"

This answers why the Jews were not able to understand Isaiah, and it gives us clues as to how we should understand Isaiah. How should we understand Isaiah? We must know the manner of prophesying among the Jews.

If you were to read carefully verses 1–8 of the same chapter you would find these quotes that are similar that are threaded throughout the first eight verses. They know not concerning the manner of prophesying among the Jews (verse one); the manner of the Jews (verse two); the things of the Jews (verse five); the things of the prophets (verse five); the things which were spoken unto the Jews (verse six); the manner of the things of the Jews (verse six); the manner of the Jews (verse eight). If we are to understand Isaiah, we must understand the things of the prophets, or the manner of prophesying among the Jews.

I have studied this and I have tried to determine what are the things of the Jews? What are the things of the prophets? What is Nephi speaking of here? And I think there is a key. A famous Jewish scholar by the name of Irwin Goodenough wrote a multivolume work on the symbols of the Jews which are found in Greco-Roman Jewry, and he talked about two approaches to the things of the Jews.

One approach is **horizontal**—horizontal is people, and other people, and other people: people interacting with people; that's horizontal; it's the social levels, socio-religious maybe. The other approach is **vertical**. It's man here and God up here: vertical approach.

First, I am going to talk about the horizontal approach, things that people can understand to the partial exclusion of God, maybe. People may not believe in God but will still understand these horizontal, mechanical techniques. So I am going to point out four techniques that are mechanical. They are partly spiritual, but they can be understood by a secularist.

Number one is the poetic parallelism. The prevalent poetic form of the book of Isaiah is not the ode, the lamentation, nor the psalm, but the parallelism. Whole chapters of Isaiah and entire literary pericopes are oftentimes composed of scores of individual parallelisms. Poetic parallelisms may be defined as words, phrases, or sentences which correspond, compare, or contrast one with another, or are found to be in repetition one with another. They usually consist of two simple lines, line two being a repetition, an echo, or a symmetrical counterpart of line one. Parallelisms rarely feature rhymes of assonance or consonance. Rather, they present a harmonious agreement of two expressions.

I want to note and emphasize that there are approximately (when I counted recently) 1,150 parallelisms in the book of Isaiah, over 1,000 little

poetic forms. Every chapter except the historical chapters in the writings of Isaiah (chapters 36, 37, 38, and 39—the four historical chapters) is composed of little poems, poetic pieces, two lines each. So, I would like to introduce four examples for you.

If you look on the overhead you will find I am showing four parallelisms from the Book of Mormon (see figure 2). Let's look at the four briefly, and remember there are 1,150 examples of these poems in the book of Isaiah. If you do not understand this form of poetry, I do not think you fully understand the book of Isaiah.

Number one: Hear, O heavens
and give ear O earth. Isaiah 1:2

Notice we have two lines that are parallel. To *hear* is to *give ear*. This is a Hebrew form; to give ear is to hear. Listen, heavens and earth; both are part of the cosmos; they are synonymous in a certain way.

Number two. The ox knoweth his owner
and the ass his master's crib. Isaiah 1:3

The parallel terms here are *ox* and *ass*; both are animals. And *owner* and *master's crib* are also parallel.

Number three: Israel doth not know,
my people doth not consider. Isaiah 1:3

What is parallel here? *Israel* is one and the same as *my people*; *Israel* is God's people. *Doth, doth*—these are both found on the same repetition; *not* and *not*, and *know* and *consider* are parallel.

Number four: They have forsaken the Lord,
they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger.
Isaiah 1:4

Another little parallel form; *they* and *they* are parallel repetition; notice how the Lord's name is repeated. In the first line, he is called *the Lord*; in the second line, he is called *the Holy One of Israel*.

Mechanical form number two, regarding understanding the things of the prophets. There are five prophetic speech forms or revelatory speech forms; all are attested in the book of Isaiah. These indicate prophetic authority and prerogative. These are little statements, or idioms, or phrases, or expressions used by Isaiah and other prophets, which only the prophets are permitted to use with authority. They had names: for instance, the messenger formula. If you will look at the overhead (see figure 3).

The messenger formula is, "*Thus saith the Lord.*" That is a prophetic term. That is a term that prophets use that other secular occupations are not permitted to use with authority. This formula is attested forty-six times in

Figure 2

Parallelisms from the Book of Isaiah

Hear, O heavens,
and give ear, O earth (Isaiah 1:2)

The ox knoweth his owner,
and the ass his master's crib (Isaiah 1:3)

Israel doth not know,
my people doth not consider (Isaiah 1:3)

they have forsaken the LORD,
they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger (Isaiah 1:4)

Figure 3

Revelatory Forms in the Book of Isaiah

The following five prophetic speech forms are indicative of prophetic authority and prerogative.

1. Messenger Formula—"Thus saith the Lord." The formula introduces oracular language, and hence is often found at the beginning of a pericope or section. Either God or a prophet is the speaker of the messenger formula. Its purpose is to indicate the origin and authority of the revelation.

2. Proclamation Formula—"Hearken unto me" or "hear the word of the Lord." Similar to the messenger formula, the proclamation formula is often found at the beginning of a revelation or announcement. It is used as an emphatic summons to hear the word of the Lord.

3. Oath Formula—"As the Lord liveth." The declaration is added to a testimony to accentuate the words of the speaker.

4. Woe Oracle—An accusation form usually found as part of a judgment speech. The characteristic woe oracle consists of the accusation, the addressee, the intent of the accusation, and the promise of judgment.

5. Revelation Formula—"Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah."

the writings of Isaiah. It introduces oracular language and hence is often found at the beginning of a pericope or section. Either God or a prophet is the speaker of the messenger formula. Its purpose is to indicate the origin and authority of the revelation. Isaiah is packed with these little formulaic expressions, and if you can pick them out and say, "Oh, thus saith the Lord," and, "What is this and why?" that will help you to understand Isaiah.

The **proclamation formula** is, "*Hearken unto me*" or "*Hear the word of the Lord.*" This is something that prophets use.

The **oath formula**: "*As the Lord liveth.*" The declaration is added to a testimony to accentuate the words of the speaker.

The **woe oracle** is used several times in the book of Isaiah. It is an accusation form usually found as part of a judgment speech. The characteristic woe oracle consists of the accusation, the addressee, the intent of the accusation, and the promise of judgment.

Finally, the **revelation formula** found in Isaiah: "*Then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah,*" etc.

Number three of the mechanical forms, the horizontal ideas–types of prophesy in the book of Isaiah. We'll look at some of these and I will give you one or two of these from the book of Isaiah.

There is the *conditional prophesy*. Please note on the overhead, I've listed these types of prophesies; there are six (see figure 4). The *unconditional prophesy*: no stipulations are attached to the prophesy; the prophesy is absolute.

Some prophesies have a *single fulfillment*, the assignment of a single outcome or accomplishment to the prophesy.

Some prophesies have a *multiple fulfillment*, the assignment of two or more legitimate accomplishments of a prophesy. For instance, in Isaiah 2:2 we have a prophesy that is famous and well known to the Latter-day Saints; "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains." This prophesy of Isaiah has a dual fulfillment. One, it represents the Salt Lake Temple; this is the Salt Lake Temple here. Two, when you read verse two with verse one, it also represents the future temple of Jerusalem. So here is an example of a prophesy spoken by Isaiah that will have multiple fulfillment.

Symbolic action is prophesy. This is a fascinating low prophetic form, an action or nonverbal performance that looks forward in time to a future event or thing. Isaiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets would perform an action in

Figure 4

Types of Prophecy in the Book of Isaiah

- 1) **Conditional prophecy**—The prophecy is not absolute, but contains a condition or stipulation.
- 2) **Unconditional prophecy**—No conditions or stipulations are attached to the prophecy.
- 3) **Single fulfillment**—The assignment to a specific prediction of but one legitimate accomplishment.
- 4) **Multiple fulfillment**—Additional legitimate interpretations placed upon a prophecy.
- 5) **Symbolic action as prophecy**—A material (nonverbal) medium of communication that prefigures a situation that is yet future and not presently existing.
- 6) **Type**—A predictive symbol of truth which finds antitypical meaning (fulfillment) in a later historic occurrence or event.

which they would not utter anything at first, and people would say, "What is that action you are performing; why are you doing this?" And the prophet would then demonstrate the meaning of the prophecy.

For example, Isaiah 20:2, "At the same time spake the Lord by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot." So Isaiah was told by the Lord to remove his clothing except, I think, for a cloth worn by slaves, to cover his modesty (to make him modest). And he removed his sandals. And the Lord said, continuing, "Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years [around Jerusalem] for a sign and a wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia.

"So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot."

The meaning of this prophecy is that the Assyrian's would come down, overrun the Egyptians and the Ethiopians, and they would be carried away like slaves (i.e. uncovered, without sandals and uncovered). So this was a symbolic action that was a prophecy.

And finally number 6—a *Type*. The book of Isaiah is full of types. A type is defined as a prefiguration that finds anti-typical fulfillment in a future thing or event.

Number 4 of the mechanical approaches to the book of Isaiah—symbols. If we do not understand symbolic language I think, if we do not understand this approach of the ancient prophets, we will be at a loss, a partial loss when we try to read Isaiah. I have counted approximately 1600 different symbols in Isaiah. I have listed them on a sheet. This is how they appear, one symbol each. One thousand six hundred symbols—many of the symbols are used more than once. They may be used up to 10–20 times. There are thousands of symbols used in the book of Isaiah. Probably not one verse would go past without a symbol being used in it. To understand Isaiah you must understand symbolic language.

I will provide, briefly, some examples. I have identified the symbols into twenty-one major categories, and then provided a sampling of the symbols found in each of these categories:

Persons. He uses persons as symbols.

Actions.

He uses *human anatomy*. For instance, arms, heart, eyes, face, beard, belly, breath, bones, cheeks, ear, feet, and finger. These are all symbols used in Isaiah.

He uses *animals and insects*.

He uses *objects*, both sacred and common.

He uses *ecclesiastical offices* as symbols.

He uses *occupations*. For instance, he speaks concerning a carpenter, creditors, fisherman, a harvestman, a key, officers, a seller, and a servant as symbols.

He uses *places*. We will mention places in a few moments.

He uses *plants* as symbols.

Elements—rocks and minerals.

He uses *foods*.

Numbers.

Celestial orbs and things.

He uses things dealing with *time*.

He uses *colors*.

He speaks concerning *atmospheric conditions*—a storm, an earthquake, a flood, hail, tempests, wind and whirlwinds as symbols.

He list several items dealing with *social status*.

He uses *armor*.

Geography. For example, he speaks concerning a brook, a river, cities, the deep, the desert, dry ground, field, highways, a hill, and a mountain as symbols.

Names and titles of God.

And finally *architectural* items. He speaks of a gate, of a foundation, of a house, a wall, of a pillar, of a watchtower, windows, and other items.

Joseph Fielding McConkie wrote, "Symbols are the most articulate of all languages. Indeed, symbols are the universal tongue. Symbols bring color and strength to language, while deepening and enriching our understanding.

Symbols enable us to give conceptual form to ideas and emotions that may otherwise defy the power of words. They take us beyond words and grant us eloquence in the expression of feelings."

Also, for many within the Church, symbolism is a dead language. The difficulties of interpretation and the barriers posed by scriptural language have discouraged some Saints from feasting upon the inspired word. How many times have you heard of someone who is reading the Book of Mormon, and they get to the Isaiah chapters and they pass over it because it is full of symbolic language; it's tough language. It has prophetic speech forms; it has types of prophecy and symbolism.

Back to the quote, "But those hungering for this greater substance have turned to the scriptures and commenced to learn the language of revelation. They have discovered to be fluent in the language of the spirit is to be fluent in the language of symbolism."

I would like to remind you that every ordinance that is conducted in our church is packed with symbolic items. Almost everything in the temple is related to symbolic items also.

Would you please read 2 Nephi 25:4. "Wherefore, hearken, O my people, which are of the house of Israel, and give ear unto my words; for because the words of Isaiah are not plain unto you, nevertheless they are plain unto all those that are filled with the spirit of prophecy. But I give unto you a prophecy, according to the spirit which is in me; wherefore I shall prophesy according to the plainness which hath been with me from the time that I came out from Jerusalem with my father; for behold, my soul delighteth in plainness unto my people, that they may learn."

Nephi provides for us a second way to understand Isaiah. This is a spiritual way. This is the vertical way that Goodenough was speaking about. The previous ways were all horizontal/mechanical. This is spiritual. This is where a lot of people will get off the boat and they will miss Isaiah because they are not spiritual, because they do not have the spirit of prophecy.

I'll read one phrase out of 2 Nephi 25:4, "Because the words of Isaiah are not plain unto you, nevertheless they are plain unto all those filled with the spirit of prophecy." What is the spirit of prophecy? It is a true testimony of Jesus, says the Revelator, chapter 19. If you have a testimony of Jesus, meaning not just a belief, but actions to accompany the belief, then that will aid you in understanding Isaiah. That is not enough, but that will aid you. And that is more important, I put much more weight on this, than the previous mechanical items that we just went through.

Having the testimony of Jesus: the spirit of prophecy, having the Holy

Ghost with you, understanding Jesus, his goals, missions, attributes, his personality, what he is like—that is part of the testimony of Jesus, building faith upon the true Jesus and his true nature, having a body of flesh and bones.

The opposite of the spirit of prophecy is found in 2 Nephi 25:2. If your works are works of darkness, and your doings are doings of abomination, you will never understand Isaiah.

Now, I would like to recall the complaint of Laman and Lemuel who believed that Lehi had taught things that were “hard to be understood.” These things are hard; we don’t understand Father. Nephi asks them, “Have ye inquired of the Lord?” Then he provided the formula for understanding the prophetic word. “If ye will not harden your hearts and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely these things shall be made known unto you” (1 Nephi 15:11). That is similarly with the book of Isaiah. If we ask in faith, and we have a testimony of Jesus, and we believe, and our hearts are not hard, then we will understand Isaiah.

We will now read 2 Nephi 25:6. “But behold, I, Nephi, have not taught my children after the manner of the Jews; but behold, I, of myself, have dwelt at Jerusalem, wherefore I know concerning the regions round about; and I have made mention unto my children concerning the judgments of God, which hath come to pass among the Jews, unto my children, according to all that which Isaiah hath spoken, and I do not write them.”

There’s a phrase here that I think has been overlooked in the past. How do we understand Isaiah? This is key number three given to us by Nephi, “But behold, I, of myself have dwelt at Jerusalem, wherefore I know concerning the regions round about.” Nephi knew about the regions. This verse prompted me to look at the geographical place names listed in the book of Isaiah.

I would like to refer you to the overhead (see figure 5), where I would like you to notice that in the book of Isaiah, there are 108 different geographical place names, and yet most of Isaiah is for our time, for our era. So how can we use these old place names and understand Isaiah better? Many of the place names appear more than once, making the total number appearing in the book of Isaiah approximately 432.

I’d like to provide two or three examples; the term *Assyria* is found approximately thirty-four times in the book of Isaiah; *Assyrian* eight times; *Assyrians* two times. What about Assyria? The great Assyrian empire of biblical days, with its appalling, cruel monarch and its seemingly invincible armies, is a type of the warring nations of the latter days who will fight

Figure 5

Geographical Place Names Listed in the Book of Isaiah

Achor	Ethiopia	Medeba
Aiath	Ethiopians	Medes.
Ammon	Galilee	Media
Anathoth	Gallim	Michmash
Arabia	Geba	Moab
Ariel	Gebim	Naphtali
Armenia	Gibeah	Nebo
Arpad	Gomorraah	Nimrim
Arphad	Gozan	Nineveh
Aroer	Hamath	Nob
Ashdod	Hanes	Noph
Assyria	Haran	Oreb
Assyrian.	Hephzi—bah	Palestina
Assyrians	Heshbon	Pathros
Babylon	Horonaim	Perazim
Babylonian	Idumea	Rephaim
Bajith	Israel	Rezeph
Bashan	Ivah	Samaria
Beerelim	Jahaz	Seir
Bozrah	Javan	Sheba
Calno	Jazer	Shiloah
Canaan	Jerusalem	Shinar
Carchemish	Jerusalem's.	Sibmah
Carmel	Jesurun	Sinim
Chaldea	Jordan	Sodom
Chaldeans	Judah	Syria
Chaldees	Kedar	Syrian
Chittim	Kir	Syrians
Damascus	Kir-hareseth	Tarshish
Dedan(im)	Kir-harsh	Telassar
Dinom	Lachish	Tema
Eden	Laish	Topheth
Edom	Libna	Tubal
Eglaim	Lud	Tyre
Egypt	Midian	Zebulun
Egyptian	Migron	Zidon
Egyptians	Lebanon	Zion
Elam	Luhith	Zoan
Elealeh	Madmenah	Zoar
Ephraim		

against Israel.

So when we read about Assyria in the book of Isaiah, we are in essence reading about the warring nations of today. We can liken that ancient Assyria to the warring nations of today, the wicked, warring nations. However, although they, the Assyrians, succeeded in deporting the northern tribes of Israel from the Israelite homeland (remember the Assyrians came down, I believe in 722 or 721 B.C. and they hauled away the ten tribes) the God of Israel will prevail against the modern Assyrian nations. And I'm not trying to attach any modern nations to ancient Assyria. God will prevail against modern Assyria and they will be burned, "as thorns and briars," says Isaiah (Isaiah 9:18). So we can liken ancient Assyria to modern Assyria. And when Isaiah speaks of ancient Assyria, perhaps in some occasions we can insert *modern Assyria*, or *warring nations*, and liken both prophecies unto us. Those would be dual fulfillment prophecies.

How about *Babylon*? Concerning Babylon, Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote, "In prophetic imagery, Babylon is the world with all its carnality and wickedness. It is every evil and wicked and ungodly thing in our whole social structure. Conditions in the world today are as they were in ancient Babylon. What then is more natural than for the prophets, including Isaiah, aware of the sins and evils and final destruction of Babylon, to use her as a symbol of that which now is and which soon will be."

Thus, the destruction and fall of ancient Babylon typifies the judgments and destructions which will fall upon the world during the events of the last days. *Babylon* is a term used by Isaiah thirteen times; he also uses the term *Babylonian*. We, therefore, can study his geographical terms in symbolic context to understand more of his word—a hint, an illusion given to us by Nephi in the Book of Mormon.

Please read 2 Nephi 25:7. "But behold, I proceed with mine own prophecy, according to my plainness; in the which I know that no man can err; nevertheless, in the days that 'the prophecies of Isaiah shall be fulfilled men shall know of a surety, at the times when they shall come to pass.'" This is amazing. This is clue number four from Nephi. How do we understand Isaiah? In the days that his prophecy shall be fulfilled, men and women shall know of a surety at the times when they shall come to pass. This is another clue to understanding Isaiah and his prophetic ministry. Nephi specifically identifies the last days as the time when the prophecies will be fulfilled.

I would like to give you one example of many prophecies in the book of Isaiah that are being fulfilled right now—that we can understand and look to them and say, "Yes, these are being fulfilled in our day." We can, therefore, understand these portions of the book of Isaiah.

This prophecy is the invitation for the inhabitants of the world to leave Babylon (or the world) and to flee to Zion. This is happening right now.

“Go ye forth of Babylon, free ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, the Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob.” (Meaning the people of Israel.)

“And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out” (Isaiah 48:20–21).

Also, “Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence; touch no unclean thing, go ye out of the midst of her, be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord” (Isaiah 52:11). (A phrase dealing with the temple.) Further, “O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain” (Isaiah 40:9). (Here’s a symbol—the mountain symbolizes the temple).

One scholar has written, “Zion, or Lady Zion: Zion in the scriptures is depicted as a woman, Zion in the Church and the house of Israel—woman. Jehovah is the husband; he is the bridegroom; Zion is the wife and the bride. At times, according to Isaiah and other prophets, Zion (or the bride to be) has committed harlotry or spiritual adultery. They have forsaken the true God, Jehovah, and chased after false God’s—adultery. Zion or Lady Zion is being prepared for the return of her children. Zion, the residence of the true God, is portrayed with an eye to Babylon—the residence of the false god. The one is built up for her numerous children—the other is destroyed while her husband and children flee. Babylon with its false gods is doomed and Zion is about to be rebuilt and repopulated.

“Israel’s journey to Zion will be a new Exodus/conquest, i.e. their coming out of Egypt, out of the world, their going up to the promised land. That is what is happening now. A new participation in the defeat of chaos.”

“ ‘O, Zion, that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into the mountain,’ stands in antithesis to ‘Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground.’ Zion will go up to the mountain where the temple is; Babylon will go down and sit in the dust.

“From Isaiah 44:24 to Isaiah 55, Zion is in the foreground. Babylon, as mere image, provides depth to the portrait of Zion. Isaiah 45:14–25 speaks of the rebuilding of Zion in contrast to the ruin of Babylon in chapter 47. In chapter 46 the gods (the false gods) are carried away from a doomed Babylon, whereas Jehovah carries Israel to safety. Zion receives back her husband Jehovah and her children in 49 and 50. Babylon loses both in chapter 47. The concluding chapters 54 and 55 are exclusively about Zion, emphasis on the good.

“A reminder of the centrality in the place of worship of Jehovah. Dominion is conceived spacially. Babylon is the land of the servitude to non-

Gods; and Zion is the land of servitude to Jehovah. Israel, therefore, must leave Babylon and go to Zion."

I have looked at Isaiah 49 and I have noticed there is a dialogue between Lady Zion (or Zion) and the Lord. I have asked Camille to read part of this dialogue. She will read Lady Zion and I will read the part of the Lord.

"The Lord hath forgotten me."

"Can a woman forget her sucking child? Indeed, she may forget, but I will not forget you. I have engraven you upon the palms of my hands. Anyway, your children are making haste. Lift up your eyes and look around you. See all of these children gathering themselves and coming unto you. You, Lady Zion, will clothe yourself with them, as with an ornament, and bind them on you as a bride does. You have lost your children, but these will be your children."

"Who hath begotten these new children seeing that I have lost my other children and am desolate and captive; and moving to and fro upon the earth. Who hath raised these children? I was left alone. All of these children, where have they been?"

"Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up a sign to the people, and they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders. Kings and Queens will be like fathers and mothers to you. And you will know that I am the Lord."

"Can one be rescued from captivity?"

"Yes, even the captives can be rescued. In fact, I will personally struggle against those who contend with you, and I will save your children." Thank you, Camille.

This is an example of prophecies of Isaiah that are being fulfilled today. How do we understand Isaiah? By the prophecies that are being fulfilled. We will understand Isaiah when the prophecies are fulfilled.

Finally, Jesus Christ was the focus of Isaiah's message. Isaiah's writings are truly Christocentric—Christ centered, Jesus Christ centered. Placing Jesus Christ squarely in the center of his message, Isaiah writes about the first coming of Jesus. He also writes about the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. Isaiah 53 is probably the greatest Messianic prophecy about Jesus in existence. Isaiah writes about the second coming of Jesus and the Millennial reign of Jesus. He sets forth the judgments, goals, divine mission, covenants, and attributes of the Lord.

According to Monte Nyman, of the 425 verses of Isaiah that are quoted in the Book of Mormon, 391 of those 425 verses deal with the ministry and attributes of Jesus. So what portions of Isaiah are found in the Book of Mormon? In part, portions that tell us about Jesus and his ministry. 1 Nephi 19:23 "That I might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah." So why did Nephi include things about Isaiah and Jacob and Jesus? So that we might be more fully persuaded to believe in Jesus our Redeemer.

Isaiah provides sixty-one names and titles of God in his book. The names and titles are found approximately 708 times in the book of Isaiah. If you average this out you will find one of the names or titles of God once every 1.9 verses in the book of Isaiah. I want to just point out, for example, the names and titles of God which point to the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. God is the Creator; he is the Everlasting Father; the God of the whole earth; the Holy One; the Holy One of Jacob; the Holy One of Israel; Lord God of Israel; Lord is Our King; Lord your Redeemer; Lord your Holy One (or in Hebrew it may read "Lord your Temple One"); He is the Redeemer (Isaiah uses this so clearly—Jehovah is the Redeemer, i.e. Jesus is the Redeemer). Thirteen times Isaiah refers to God as the Redeemer; he is the Redeemer of Israel; he is the Servant; he is the Savior. Nine times Isaiah calls Jehovah Savior. This is not New Testament language only. He is the Shepherd, and there are other names and titles that we could refer to. The book of Isaiah is Christocentric; it is about Jesus; it is about the last days; it is about the house of Israel.

I also bear testimony that Joseph Smith was a prophet, is a prophet of this dispensation. I testify that the Book of Mormon presents Isaiah in a clear, concise manner. Both are keys to understanding Isaiah, also, the clearest text, or clearest manuscript, of the book of Isaiah. Lastly, I testify that Jesus is the Christ; he is the Son of God. He will return again as Isaiah prophesied. I bear this testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Figure 6

Names of Deity in the Book of Isaiah

Almighty (1)	Light of Israel (1) (10:17)
Beloved (1)	Light to the Gentiles (42:6)
Counselor (1) (9:6)	Lord (378) (1:4)
Creator (2) (40:28)	Lord the Creator (1)
Everlasting Father (1) (9:6)	Lord God (21)
Everlasting God (1) (40:28)	Lord God of Hosts (5)
Everlasting Light (2)	Lord Jehovah (2)
First and Last (3) (41:4)	Lord God of Israel (4)
God (71)	Lord is our King (1)
God of Israel/Jacob (11)	Lord of hosts (58)
God of the whole earth (1) (54:5)	Lord our God (2)
God of truth (2)	Lord the God of David (1)
God the Lord (1)	Lord thy God (8)
Great Light (1) (9:1-3)	Lord thy Maker
Holy One (4)	Lord thy/your Redeemer (5)
Holy One of Jacob (1)	Lord your Holy One (1)
Holy One of Israel (25) (1:24)	Maker (5)
Husband (1) (54:5)	Mighty One of Israel/Jacob (4)
I am God (6)	Maker (5)
I am the Lord (8)	Mighty God (2) (9:6)
Immanuel (2) (7:14)	Prince of Peace (2) (9:6)
Israel's God (1)	Redeemer (13) (41:14; 43:14)
I the Lord (9)	Redeemer of Israel (1)
Jehovah (2)	Servant (3) (42:1; 50:10)
Judge, the Lord is our Judge (1) (33:22)	Savior (9) (43:11)
King (2) (6:5)	Shepherd (2) (40:11)
King of Jacob/Israel (2)	Stem of Jesse (1) (11:1)
Lawgiver, the Lord is our Lawgiver (1) (33:22)	Sure Foundation (1) (28:16)
Light (1)	Well-beloved or Beloved (3)
	Wonderful (1) (9:6)

Figure 7

Isaiah Quotations and Paraphrases in the Book of Mormon

Direct quotations:

Isaiah 48-49	1 Nephi 20-21
Isaiah 2-14	2 Nephi 12-24
Isaiah 52:8-10	3 Nephi 16:18-20
Isaiah 54	3 Nephi 22:1-17

Paraphrases:

Isaiah 40:3	1 Nephi 10:8
Isaiah 52:7	1 Nephi 13:47
Isaiah 29:14	1 Nephi 14:7
Isaiah 45:18	1 Nephi 17:36
Isaiah 49:22	1 Nephi 22:6
Isaiah 49:22-23 and 29:14	1 Nephi 22:8
Isaiah 52:10	1 Nephi 22:10-11
Isaiah 49:22-23	2 Nephi 6:6b-7
Isaiah 29:6	2 Nephi 6:15
Isaiah 49:24-52:2	2 Nephi 6:16-8:25
Isaiah 55:1-2	2 Nephi 9:50-51
Isaiah 11:11 and 29:14	2 Nephi 25:17
Isaiah 29:3-5	2 Nephi 26:15-16, 18
Isaiah 55:1	2 Nephi 26:25
Isaiah 29:6-10	2 Nephi 27:2-5
Isaiah 29:4, 11	2 Nephi 27:6-9
Isaiah 29:13-24	2 Nephi 27:25-35
Isaiah 29:13b, 15	2 Nephi 28:9
Isaiah 29:21	2 Nephi 28:16a
Isaiah 28:10, 13	2 Nephi 28:30a
Isaiah 9:12-13	2 Nephi 28:32
Isaiah 29:14, 11:11	2 Nephi 29:1; cf. 25:11
Isaiah 11:4-9	2 Nephi 30:9, 12-15
Isaiah 52:7-10	Mosiah 12:21-24
Isaiah 53	Mosiah 14:1-12
Isaiah 53:10	Mosiah 15:10
Isaiah 52:7	Mosiah 15:14-18
Isaiah 52:8-10	Mosiah 15:29-31
Isaiah 52:8-10	3 Nephi 20:32-35
Isaiah 52:1-3, 6-7, 11-15	3 Nephi 20:36b-46
Isaiah 52:15b	3 Nephi 21:8b
Isaiah 52:12	3 Nephi 21:29
Isaiah 52:1, 54:2	Moroni 10:31