

# CHAPTER 10

## 2 Nephi 11–16


### Introduction

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote of the difficulty encountered by many readers of the Book of Mormon:

“Most [readers] readily understand the narrative of the Book of Mormon.

“Then, just as you settle in to move comfortably along, you will meet a barrier. . . . Interspersed in the narrative, are chapters reciting the prophecies of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. They loom as a barrier, like a roadblock or a checkpoint beyond which the casual reader, one with idle curiosity, generally will not go.

“You, too, may be tempted to stop there, but do not do it! Do not stop reading! Move forward through those difficult-to-understand chapters of Old Testament prophecy, even if you understand very little of it. Move on, if all you do is skim and merely glean an impression here and there. Move on, if all you do is look at the words” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 76; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 61).

Both Nephi and Jacob specifically declared that Isaiah’s writings are to be “likened” to ourselves (1 Nephi 19:23 ; 2 Nephi 6:5). However, even Nephi’s people, who lived less than 100 years after Isaiah, found his writings difficult (see 2 Nephi 25:1–4). Remember that when Jesus Christ came personally to the Nephites in America He taught “great are the words of Isaiah” and instructed the Nephites that they “ought to search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently” (3 Nephi 23:1; see commentary for 1 Nephi 20–21 on p. 43.)

The following commentary will help you with the context, the dualistic nature, and the symbolism of Isaiah’s writings. Because of space limitations in the Book of Mormon footnotes, much of the footnote information concerning Isaiah is only in the Bible footnotes and was not repeated in the Book of Mormon footnotes. Therefore, to study 2 Nephi 12–24 and help in your understanding of Isaiah, use the LDS Bible footnotes for Isaiah 2–14. You should be diligent in trying to understand Isaiah’s words and seek the Spirit to guide you. If you have some difficulty, do not be discouraged. Over a period of time through study

and prayer, the Lord will bless you and you will come to understand the writings of Isaiah.

### Commentary

#### 2 Nephi 11:1–3. Nephi, Jacob, and Isaiah—Three Special Witnesses

• Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote of the significance of the testimonies of these three great prophets:

“The Lord’s manner of teaching and affirming, especially when it involves a covenant, has always provided more than one testimony. His admonition has always been that ‘in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.’ Indeed, when the Book of Mormon was to come forth through the inspired hand of the Prophet Joseph Smith, it was prophesied that ‘three shall . . . be shown [the plates] by the power of God. . . . And in the mouth of three witnesses shall these things be established. . . .

“Those three witnesses were to be Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. . . .

“In keeping with this same covenantal principle, it is interesting to note that there were three earlier witnesses—special witnesses—not only of the divine origins of the Book of Mormon but also of Divinity himself. These early witnesses were Nephi, Jacob, and Isaiah, and it is not by coincidence that their testimonies appear so conspicuously at the beginning of this ancient record. . . .

“. . . What *is* known is that most of the ‘greater views’ of the gospel found in the teachings of the small plates of Nephi come from the personal declarations of these three great prophetic witnesses of the premortal Jesus Christ—Nephi, Jacob, and Isaiah. These three doctrinal and visionary voices make clear at the very outset of the Book of Mormon why it is ‘another testament of Jesus Christ.’ . . .

“One could argue convincingly that the primary purpose for recording, preserving, and then translating the small plates of Nephi was to bring forth to the dispensation of the fulness of times the testimony of these three witnesses. Their writings constitute a full 135 of the [143] pages from the small plates. By the time one has read Nephi, Jacob, and Isaiah in these

first pages, a strong foundation has been laid for what Nephi called ‘the doctrine of Christ’ (*Christ and the New Covenant* [1997], 33–35).

## 2 Nephi 11:4. The “Typifying” of Jesus Christ

- At times, Isaiah wrote using symbols or types. Nephi spoke of the importance of understanding that all things typify Jesus Christ. The word *typify* means “to represent by an image, form, model, or resemblance” (*Noah Webster’s First Edition of an American Dictionary of the English Language, 1828* [1967]). These things serve as a reminder or an emblem of Christ. The scriptures constantly bear witness of and teach about Jesus Christ. Some examples of types include the sacrifice of a male lamb without blemish, which was a “similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father” (Moses 5:7; see also Leviticus 1:3–5). The symbols of the sacrament bread and wine represent or typify the atoning sacrifice (see Moroni 4:3; 5:2). These reminders of the Lord and His saving mission for mankind are designed to instruct us and help us draw closer to the Lord our Redeemer.

### 2 NEPHI 11:4–7

*Nephi declared that his soul delighted in proving “the truth of the coming of Christ” (v. 4). Identify some of the things Nephi delighted in.*

## 2 Nephi 11:5. “Deliverance from Death”

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, concerning the promise of immortality offered through the Atonement of Jesus Christ:

“I wonder if we fully appreciate the enormous significance of our belief in a literal, universal resurrection. The assurance of immortality is fundamental to our faith. The Prophet Joseph Smith declared:

“The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only

appendages to it’ (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 121).

“Of all things in that glorious ministry, why did the Prophet Joseph Smith use the testimony of the Savior’s death, burial, and Resurrection as the fundamental principle of our religion, saying that ‘all other things . . . are only appendages to it’? The answer is found in the fact that the Savior’s Resurrection is central to what the prophets have called ‘the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death’ (2 Nephi 11:5)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2000, 17; or *Ensign*, May 2000, 15).



## 2 Nephi 12–16. Isaiah in the Book of Mormon

- Second Nephi chapters 12–24 contain quotations from the brass plates’ version of the book of Isaiah (compare Isaiah 2–14). Nephi included these chapters to add another witness of the revelations that were given to him about the future of his people and the reality of Jesus Christ. Even though his people were a branch of Israel broken off and transplanted elsewhere, Nephi used the writings of Isaiah to show how the merciful plan of the Lord extends to them as well. Nephi felt that those who read these prophecies would “lift up their hearts and rejoice for all men” (2 Nephi 11:8; see also v. 2).

Repeating what he and his brother Jacob had previously taught, Nephi encouraged us to “liken” the words of Isaiah to ourselves (see 1 Nephi 19:23<sup>📖</sup>; 2 Nephi 6:5; 11:8). We liken the scriptures to ourselves by recognizing similarities between the events recorded in the scriptures and events that occur in our lives. We also liken the scriptures to ourselves by identifying principles that the scriptures teach. Those principles can guide our decisions.

Isaiah wrote a little over 100 years before Nephi’s time (740–700 B.C.). While the writings seem quite distant from our day, for Nephi and Jacob, they were closer than the revelations and prophecies of Joseph Smith are for modern readers. Isaiah’s inspired prophecies

of Israel’s scattering and the Lord’s merciful plan to redeem His people influenced Nephi to include major portions to support his own written testimony and prophecies of the Messiah. These Isaiah portions underscore four major themes: (1) the judgments of God and needed repentance, (2) the covenants of God and His promises to the house of Israel, (3) Christ’s first and second coming, and (4) major events relating to the latter days.

- The Bible Dictionary observes that quotations from the prophet Isaiah appear in the standard works:

“Isaiah is the most quoted of all the prophets, being more frequently quoted by Jesus, Paul, Peter, and John (in his Revelation) than any other [Old Testament] prophet. Likewise the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants quote from Isaiah more than from any other prophet. The Lord told the Nephites that ‘great are the words of Isaiah,’ and that all things Isaiah spoke of the house of Israel and of the gentiles would be fulfilled (3 Ne. 23:1–3). . . .

“The reader today has no greater written commentary and guide to understanding Isaiah than the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. As one understands these works better he will understand Isaiah better, and as one understands Isaiah better, he more fully comprehends the mission of the Savior, and the meaning of the covenant that was placed upon Abraham and his seed by which all the families of the earth would be blessed” (“Isaiah,” 707; see commentary for 1 Nephi 20–21 on p. 43).

**2 Nephi 12:1. “Concerning Judah and Jerusalem”**

- Isaiah saw and spoke of the future of Judah and Jerusalem and their final destiny. His words quoted in the Book of Mormon, however, also address all the house of Israel (see 2 Nephi 6:5; 3 Nephi 23:1–2).

**2 NEPHI 12:2**

*Why is the phrase “top of the mountains” significant? What are some of the high places where the Lord visited and taught His prophets?*

**2 Nephi 12:2. “The Mountain of the Lord’s House”**

- A significant part of what Isaiah saw will begin to be fulfilled (“shall come to pass”) in a time period focusing upon another location in the earth, namely the latter-day Zion of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Elder LeGrand Richards (1886–1983) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of the fulfillment of this prophecy:

“Isaiah saw the mountain of the Lord’s house established in the top of the mountains in the latter days. . . .

“How literally that has been fulfilled, in my way of thinking, in this very house of the God of Jacob right here on this block! This temple, more than any other building of which we have any record, has brought people from every land to learn of his ways and walk in his paths” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 143; or *Ensign*, June 1971, 98).



Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles expanded the meaning of the phrase “top of the mountains” in reference to temples: “All of the holy temples of our God in the latter days shall be built in the mountains of the Lord, for his mountains—whether the land itself is a hill, a valley, or a plain—are the places where he comes, personally and by the power of his Spirit, to commune with his people” (*The Millennial Messiah* [1982], 275).

- America, as a prophesied location of “the mountain of the Lord’s house” (2 Nephi 12:2), has been a land of

immigration from its earliest discovery and settlement. Isaiah prophesied that “all nations shall flow unto it” (2 Nephi 12:2). The great immigrations from Europe during the 19th century, and continuing from all parts of the world today, peopled and blessed the land, its institutions, and the Church. Many Latter-day Saints trace their ancestry to this movement of people from the old world to the new. In addition, people from around the world, both members and nonmembers of the Lord’s Church, continue to visit the area of the Salt Lake Temple and the headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Many members of the Church attend general conference sessions semiannually in Salt Lake City, Utah, while others in various nations around the world view and listen to conference by means of modern communication systems.

### 2 Nephi 12:3. “Out of Zion Shall Go Forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem”

• President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained the meaning of the law going out of Zion and the word from Jerusalem:

“Jerusalem of old . . . shall become a holy city where the Lord shall dwell and from whence he shall send forth his word unto all people. Likewise, on this continent [America], the city of Zion, New Jerusalem, shall be built, and from it the law of God shall also go forth. . . .



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“. . . These two cities, one in the land of Zion and one in Palestine, are to become capitals for the kingdom of God during the millennium” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 3:69–71).

• The phrase “out of Zion shall go forth the law” (2 Nephi 12:3) is an excellent example of how prophecies can have more than one application. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) remarked:

“As I contemplate this marvelous structure adjacent to the temple [the Conference Center], there comes to mind the great prophetic utterance of Isaiah:

“‘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, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.’ . . .

“I believe that prophecy applies to the historic and wonderful Salt Lake Temple. But I believe also that it is related to this magnificent hall. For it is from this pulpit that the law of God shall go forth, together with the word and testimony of the Lord” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 89; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 69).

### 2 Nephi 12:4. Time of Peace

• Elder Dallin H. Oaks spoke of the peace that will finally come to the earth after the Lord’s Second Coming. He also identified the reason why there will be no peace prior to that time: “Many take comfort from the Old Testament prophecy that nations will ‘beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks’ (Micah 4:3). But this prophecy only applies to that time of peace which follows the time when the God of Jacob ‘will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths’ (4:2). For now, we have wars and conflicts, and everywhere they are rooted in violations of the commandments of God” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1990, 92; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 72).

### 2 Nephi 12:5–9. “O House of Jacob”

• The “house of Jacob” refers to the descendants of this great patriarch who had gained the covenant name of Israel through personal righteousness. However, both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel fell, though at different times, because they replaced God with apostate worship. They were “replenished from the east” (2 Nephi 12:6) or, according to Isaiah 2:6 footnote *a*, they were “filled, supplied with teachings, alien beliefs” of false gods, “like the Philistines.” In other words, they forsook the gospel of the Lord for teachings and priorities from the world. Their hearts were set on riches and wickedness, and their worship turned to idols.

### 2 Nephi 12:9. The Mean Man and the Great Man

• The phrase “the mean [ordinary or common] man boweth not down, and the great man humbleth himself

not” (2 Nephi 12:9) indicates that from the lowest to the highest in society, none were humble enough to accept God.

### **2 Nephi 12:11–22. “The Lofty Looks of Man”**

- People of all nations who are “proud and lofty” shall be “brought low” (2 Nephi 12:12) and their “lofty looks” (2 Nephi 12:11) shall cease, for at the day of the Lord—the Second Coming—His glory will smite them. Verses 13–22 describe some of the status symbols of the day, including commodities acquired by the most wealthy, the high mountains and hills of false worship and apostate religion, the manmade defenses of towers and walls, and beautiful crafts or pleasure ships. In summary, the haughty and proud will fall, and their worldly treasures shall crumble away in the presence of the Lord’s coming (see 3 Nephi 25:1; Malachi 4:1).

- President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency suggested that learning to be humble is essential preparation for the great day of the Second Coming of the Lord, when the Savior will be exalted among the nations:

“I began to read in 2 Nephi 12 and thought: ‘The Lord is speaking to me. What is it He wants to tell me directly?’ Then I came to a verse in the Isaiah passages that jumped out as if it were already underlined: ‘And it shall come to pass that the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day’ (2 Ne. 12:11).

“This is describing a day when the Savior will come, a day we all look for and want our students to prepare for. This scripture says that in that day, all of us who thought we were special and wonderful will seem smaller, and the Lord will be exalted. We will see better who He is, how much we love Him, and how humble we should be. . . .

“. . . I understood why Isaiah told me it would be helpful to foresee the day when the Lord would be exalted and to know how much I depend upon Him. We need Him, and the faith we have in Him makes us see Him as great and exalted and ourselves as small and dependent” (“The Book of Mormon Will Change Your Life,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2004, 10–11).

### **2 Nephi 13:1–15. Punishment of Judah and Jerusalem**

- In 2 Nephi 13, Nephi quoted Isaiah’s description of the eventual fall of Judah and Jerusalem and the wicked Gentiles in the last days. The foretold destructions did come to the house of Jacob, prefiguring the destructions at the Second Coming.

#### **2 Nephi 13:1. “The Stay and the Staff”**

- The necessities of bread and water will dwindle during the siege. “The stay and the staff” described in 2 Nephi 13:1 foreshadows a spiritual famine of those who reject the Lord, who is “the whole staff of bread”—the bread of life—and “the whole stay of water”—the living water.

#### **2 Nephi 13:2–3. “Mighty Man . . . Eloquent Orator”**

- All men in Judah and Jerusalem, regardless of their status in society (11 categories are mentioned in 2 Nephi 13:2–3), will be brought into captivity.

#### **2 Nephi 13:4. “Babes Shall Rule over Them”**

- The untrained and young who had no status in society will be appointed to rule in captivity over those listed in 2 Nephi 13:2–3.

#### **2 Nephi 13:6. “Thou Hast Clothing”**

- The people are so poor and desperate due to devastation and anarchy that even one with clothing would qualify as a leader.

#### **2 Nephi 13:7. “I Will Not Be a Healer; . . . Make Me Not a Ruler”**

- Even the one nominated to lead because of his clothing will be powerless to alleviate the hunger and suffering.

#### **2 Nephi 13:8. “Jerusalem Is Ruined”**

- About 587 B.C. the city of Jerusalem fell and Judah was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (see Bible Dictionary, “Chronology: Kings of Judah and Israel,” capture of Jerusalem, 639). The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the Jews to various parts of the world in A.D. 70 (see Bible

Dictionary, “Chronology: Jewish History,” 645), and again in A.D. 132–35. Surely they had, as Isaiah said, “rewarded evil unto themselves” (2 Nephi 13:9).

### 2 Nephi 13:9. “The Show of Their Countenance”

- Righteousness and wickedness affect both attitude and appearance. President Brigham Young (1801–77) said, “Those who have got the forgiveness of their sins have countenances that look bright, and they will shine with the intelligence of heaven” (“Speech,” *Times and Seasons*, July 1, 1845, 956).



President David O. McKay (1873–1970) taught: “No man can disobey the word of God and not suffer for so doing. No sin, however secret, can escape retribution. True, you may lie and not be detected; you may violate virtue without it being known by

any who would scandalize you; yet you cannot escape the judgment that follows such transgression. The lie is lodged in the recesses of your mind, an impairment of your character that will reflect sometime, somehow in your countenance or bearing” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1951, 8).

Jeremiah wrote that the people had become so sinful that they lost their ability to blush (see Jeremiah 6:15).

### 2 Nephi 13:12. “Cause Thee to Err”

- President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) interpreted 2 Nephi 13:12: “And so today, the undermining of the home and family is on the increase, with the devil anxiously working to displace the father as the head of the home and create rebellion among the children. The Book of Mormon describes this condition when it states ‘And my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them.’ And then these words follow—and consider these words seriously when you think of those political leaders who are promoting birth control and abortion: ‘O my people, they who lead thee cause thee to err and destroy the way of thy paths.’ (2 Ne. 13:12.)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 21).

### 2 Nephi 13:16–24. “Daughters of Zion”

- President Joseph Fielding Smith explained who the phrase “daughters of Zion” was referring to and what these verses in 2 Nephi 13 said about them: “The standards expressed by the General Authorities of the Church are that women, as well as men, should dress modestly. They are taught proper deportment and modesty at all times. It is, in my judgment, a sad reflection on the ‘daughters of Zion’ when they dress immodestly. Moreover, this remark pertains to the men as well as to the women. The Lord gave commandments to ancient Israel that both men and women should cover their bodies and observe the law of chastity at all times” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957–66], 5:174; see also footnotes for Isaiah 3:16–26).

### 2 Nephi 14. Zion Shall Be Redeemed

- The millennial day will bring the redemption of Zion and the cleansing of her daughters.

### 2 Nephi 14:1. “Seven Women . . . One Man”

- A great number of the men will be killed in battle or taken captive, leaving the women with the destitution of being both widows and childless.

### 2 Nephi 14:2. In That Day

- In Hebrew the term *branch* often symbolized the Messiah (see Jeremiah 23:5–6). It can also refer to righteous groups of the house of Israel who have been cleansed and redeemed (see Isaiah 60:21; 2 Nephi 3:5; 10:1; Jacob 2:25).

“Escaped of Israel” (2 Nephi 14:2) refers to members of the house of Israel who, through personal righteousness, escaped the judgments that came upon the wicked.

### 2 Nephi 15. A Song of the Lord’s Vineyard

- The terrible darkness and apostasy described in 2 Nephi 15:1–25 will abound prior to the destruction of the wicked. During this same time, however, Isaiah also prophesied that the Lord will gather His people and provide hope (see vv. 26–30). Elder Bruce R. McConkie portrayed the circumstances described in 2 Nephi 15 using words modern readers may understand:

“The vision of the future is not all sweetness and light and peace. All that is yet to be shall go forward in the midst of greater evils and perils and desolations than have been known on earth at any time.

“As the Saints prepare to meet their God, so those who are carnal and sensual and devilish prepare to face their doom.

“As the meek among men make their calling and election sure, so those who worship the God of this world sink ever lower and lower into the depths of depravity and despair.

“Amid tears of sorrow—our hearts heavy with forebodings—we see evil and crime and carnality covering the earth. . . .

“We see evil forces everywhere uniting to destroy the family, to ridicule morality and decency, to glorify all that is lewd and base. . . . Satan reigns in the hearts of men; it is the great day of his power.

“But amid it all, the work of the Lord rolls on. . . .

“Amid it all, there are revelations and visions and prophecies. There are gifts and signs and miracles. There is a rich outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God.

“Amid it all believing souls . . . prepare themselves to dwell with God and Christ and holy beings in the eternal kingdom.

“Is it any wonder that we both rejoice and tremble at what lies ahead?

“Truly the world is and will be in commotion, but the Zion of God will be unmoved. The wicked and ungodly shall be swept from the Church, and the little stone will continue to grow until it fills the whole earth” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 99; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 72–73).

### 2 Nephi 15:18, 20–21. Warnings against Sin

- In 2 Nephi 15:18 the effects of sin are compared to “a cart rope.” People guilty of sin are like those who “are tied to their sins like beasts to their burdens [or oxen to their carts]” (Isaiah 5:18c).

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) described how sin is like a burden: “If I were to ask you what is the heaviest burden one may have to bear in this life, what

would you answer? The heaviest burden that one has to bear in this life is the burden of sin” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 177; or *Ensign*, July 1973, 122).

President James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the First Presidency described the importance of clearly seeing and choosing right from wrong: “The gap between what is popular and what is righteous is widening. As prophesied by Isaiah, many today ‘call evil good, and good evil’ [Isaiah 5:20]. Revelations from the prophets of God are not like offerings at the cafeteria, some to be selected and others disregarded” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2003, 21; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 22).

### 2 Nephi 15:26. “Lift Up an Ensign to the Nations”

- In the latter days the Lord will raise an ensign to gather and protect righteous Israel as the desolation of the wicked begins. The gathering of Israel will be a necessary precursor to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, accompanied by the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ among all nations of the earth.

- President Joseph Fielding Smith defined the meaning of the ensign spoken of by Isaiah: “Over 125 years ago, in the little town of Fayette, Seneca County, New York, the Lord set up an ensign to the nations. It was in fulfillment of the prediction made by the Prophet Isaiah, which I have read [Isaiah 11:11–12]. That ensign was the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which was established for the last time, never again to be destroyed or given to other people [see Daniel 2:44]. It was the greatest event the world has seen since the day that the Redeemer was lifted upon the cross and worked out the infinite and eternal atonement. It meant more to mankind than anything else that has occurred since that day” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:254–55).



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### 2 Nephi 15:27–29. Horses’ Hoofs like Flint, Wheels like a Whirlwind, Roaring like a Lion

- Elder LeGrand Richards (1886–1983) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles suggested possible symbolism for the Isaiah verses in 2 Nephi 15:27–29; he directed

our attention to the great missionary labor taking place in our time:

“In fixing the time of the great gathering, Isaiah seemed to indicate that it would take place in the day of the railroad train and the airplane. . . .

“Since there were neither trains nor airplanes in that day, Isaiah could hardly have mentioned them by name. However, he seems to have described them in unmistakable words. How better could ‘their horses’ hoofs be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind’ than in the modern train? How better could ‘their roaring . . . be like a lion’ than in the roar of the airplane? Trains and airplanes do not stop for night. Therefore, was not Isaiah justified in saying: ‘none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken?’ With this manner of transportation the Lord can really ‘hiss unto them from the end of the earth,’ that ‘they shall come with speed swiftly.’ Indicating that Isaiah must have foreseen the airplane, he stated: ‘Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?’ (Isaiah 60:8.)” (*Israel! Do You Know?* [1954], 182).

### 2 NEPHI 16:1–13

*In what ways does Isaiah’s calling mirror the calling of prophets today? Why is the calling of a prophet significant?*

#### 2 Nephi 16:1. Who Was King Uzziah?

- Uzziah was the tenth king in the southern kingdom of Judah. He began to rule at age 16 when his father, Amaziah, was killed by conspirators in about 767 B.C. Uzziah sought for and followed the counsel of the prophet Zechariah. While he followed the ways of righteousness, the Lord prospered him (see 2 Kings 15:34; 2 Chronicles 26:5). He led the kingdom of Judah in several successful military campaigns against local enemies. He strengthened the walls of Jerusalem. He supported agriculture. He raised the kingdom of Judah to a condition of prosperity that it had not known since the death of Solomon. Toward the end of his life, as an unauthorized servant of the Lord, Uzziah tried to offer

incense on the altar in the temple, at which time he was struck with leprosy (see 2 Chronicles 26:19). His leprosy stayed with him until his death in about 742 B.C. (see Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, ed. R. K. Harrison and others [1988], 1322–23).

#### 2 Nephi 16. Isaiah’s Calling to Prophecy

- Isaiah described his call to be a prophet of the Lord to all of Israel in symbolic language, using images and terms that his readers could identify with. His call included a vision of Jehovah (see 2 Nephi 16:1), the ministering of angels (see 2 Nephi 16:2–3, 6–7), recognition of his mortal weakness in contrast with the glory of Jehovah (see 2 Nephi 16:5), and acceptance of the call after a cleansing and strengthening spiritual experience (see 2 Nephi 16:6–8).

#### 2 Nephi 16:2. Seraphim

- “*Seraphs* are angels who reside in the presence of God, giving continual glory, honor, and adoration to him. . . .

“In Hebrew the plural of seraph is *seraphim*. . . . The fact that these holy beings were shown to him as having wings was simply to symbolize their ‘power, to move, to act, etc.’ as was the case also in visions others had received. (D. & C. 77:4.)” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 702–3). The basic meaning in Hebrew for *seraph* is “to burn,” perhaps to indicate the purified state necessary to be in God’s presence.

#### 2 Nephi 16:4. “The House Was Filled with Smoke”

- “The posts of the door moved . . . , and the house was filled with smoke” (2 Nephi 16:4). The shaking and the smoke are symbols of the presence of the Lord (see Revelation 15:8).

#### 2 Nephi 16:9–12. “Hear Ye Indeed, but They Understood Not”

- Isaiah was commissioned to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ even though the people were “hard of hearing” and failed to “see” the truth of the gospel. He was advised that his preaching to a wayward people would generally not be received. Their hearts would “fatten” against the truth and their ears would be



“heavy,” not willing to accept the gospel as preached in clarity. Isaiah was not commissioned to make the people resistant to the truth; rather, he was advised of the difficulty of his mission. Even so, in answer to Isaiah’s query of “how long?” (2 Nephi 16:11), the Lord answered that the people should have the opportunity to accept the gospel until “the land be utterly desolate.” The Lord will graciously continue His mission of salvation through His servants “so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved” (Moroni 7:36).

### 2 Nephi 16:13. Holy Seed

- The use of *tenth* in 2 Nephi 16:13 represents a remnant of the house of Israel.
- “Holy seed” refers to the faithful remnant that will regenerate new life out of scattered Israel like new branches growing from the stump of a tree that has been cut down.



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## Points to Ponder

- If the great work of the latter days is setting up an ensign to the nations and bringing the gospel to them (see 2 Nephi 15:26), how can you best fulfill your role as a Latter-day Saint?

## Suggested Assignments

- Read 2 Nephi 12:1–4; 15:26–27; and Elder Bruce R. McConkie’s teachings in the commentary for 2 Nephi 15 (pp. 77–78) and President Joseph Fielding Smith’s statement in the commentary for 2 Nephi 15:26 (p. 78). Write a paragraph about how the Lord’s work in restoring the gospel in the latter days has personally blessed you.
- Isaiah was told that he would be preaching to a people who would hear his words but not understand them. Read 2 Nephi 16:9–12. Ponder and pray about how you can improve in regularly “hearing” the words of the prophets. Then write a plan you can follow that will help you understand and apply their words.