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## Heavenly Visions and Prophetic Calls in Isaiah 6 (2 Nephi 16), the Book of Mormon, and the Revelation of John

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# Heavenly Visions and Prophetic Calls in Isaiah 6 (2 Nephi 16), the Book of Mormon, and the Revelation of John

Stephen D. Ricks

*Isaiah's call, which involved a vision of God on his throne, a heavenly book, songs of praise, a commission, protests, and reassurances, compares instructively to the calls of Lehi and John.*



From writing room table to the high throne of heaven, from the beginning of time to the end of the world, the visions of Isaiah, Lehi, and John the Revelator span the cosmos. Of all the prophets of ancient Israel or of the early church, none come as warmly recommended in the Book of Mormon as are Isaiah and John, the apostle of the Lamb. Nephi<sub>3</sub> records the risen Lord as saying, “Great are the words of Isaiah” (see 3 Nephi 23:1), and an angel affirmed to Nephi that the things that the apostle John should write “are just and true” (1 Nephi 14:23).

The writings of Isaiah and many parts of the Book of Mormon pronounce prophecies of judgment and hope on Israel. In the Bible, Isaiah’s message is echoed in the Revelation of John, which provides hope for the people of the Lord but pronounces judgment on Babylon, or the world. This paper, illustrated with Christian religious art from the medieval and early Renaissance eras, considers common elements of these heavenly visions and prophetic calls as recorded in the writings of Isaiah, in the Book of Mormon, and in the book of Revelation.

Isaiah’s call to be a prophet in Isaiah 6 and Lehi’s call in 1 Nephi 1—experiences that are echoed by John in Revelation 1–5—contain basic elements of “call narratives”: (1) a historical introduction that provides the setting of the vision; (2) the divine confrontation between the prophet and God or another holy being; (3) the prophet’s reaction to the

presence of God or to the holy being and the things he has heard; (4) the “throne-theophany,” an experience in which the prophet sees the throne of God; (5) the receipt of a heavenly book; (6) the *qeduššāh*, a heavenly song in praise of God; (7) the receipt of the prophetic commission; (8) the prophet’s objection or protest; and (9) the reassurance from God that the call is divine.<sup>1</sup> Isaiah’s call contains elements that are also found in the calls of other Book of Mormon and biblical prophets. We will discuss these elements in relation to the account of Isaiah’s call (as recorded not only in Isaiah 6, but also in 2 Nephi 16 in the Book of Mormon), other Book of Mormon prophets’ calls (specifically that of Lehi), and the account of John’s call in the book of Revelation.

## Prophetic Call Narratives

### 1. Historical Introduction

The historical introduction provides the reader with information about the circumstances—such as the time, place, and setting—of the prophet’s vision and call and may also contain biographical information about the prophet. The record of Isaiah’s call in Isaiah 6 and 2 Nephi 16 indicates the specific time period and gives clues about the physical location: Isaiah’s prophetic call takes place in the “year that king Uzziah died” (2 Nephi 16:1, parallel to Isaiah 6:1), and the experience may have occurred in the temple, possibly within the Holy of Holies. For instance, Isaiah indicates that he saw “the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train *filled the temple*” (2 Nephi 16:1, parallel to Isaiah 6:1). It has been suggested that the train of the robe represents the veil of the temple.<sup>2</sup> The account also explains that “the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke” (2 Nephi 16:4, parallel to Isaiah 6:4). “The post of the door” and “the

house” indicate that Isaiah was within a structure, and “the post of the door” seems to refer specifically to the doorway of the Holy of Holies.<sup>3</sup> The account also refers to what appears to be a religious sacrificial altar or, more likely, the incense altar within the temple:<sup>4</sup> “Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar*” (2 Nephi 16:6, parallel to Isaiah 6:6).

Lehi’s call is set historically “in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah,” when “there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed” (1 Nephi 1:4). Nephi records that Lehi received his throne-theophany while “upon his bed” in “his own house at Jerusalem” (1 Nephi 1:7).

Though no specific date or setting is given in Revelation, John describes his own call to write letters to “the seven churches which are in Asia” (Revelation 1:11) as taking place when he was “in the Spirit on the Lord’s day” (Revelation 1:10). The account also mentions his being “in the isle that is called Patmos” (Revelation 1:9).

## 2. Divine Confrontation

When a prophet is in the presence of a heavenly being, it is called “divine confrontation.” The divine confrontation in Isaiah occurs during the throne-theophany itself. Isaiah records, “I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple” (2 Nephi 16:1, parallel to Isaiah 6:1). He also describes seeing “seraphim” attending the Lord (see 2 Nephi 16:2, parallel to Isaiah 6:2). The divine confrontation usually involves the prophet’s being presented to the council of heaven, and it often includes a reference to fire, which signifies the divine glory of God.<sup>5</sup> Isaiah’s account implies that he saw the fire

in his description of the smoke filling the house and possibly the “live coal” from the altar (2 Nephi 16:6, parallel to Isaiah 6:6). The smoke surrounds the heavenly messenger (often the Lord himself), making it possible for the mortal prophet’s eye to endure the holy being’s glory.<sup>6</sup>

Like the fire that preceded the children of Israel in the wilderness, a pillar of fire is also associated with Lehi’s divine confrontation: “There came a pillar of fire and dwelt upon a rock before him; and he saw and heard much” (1 Nephi 1:6).<sup>7</sup> Shortly thereafter, Lehi experienced the throne-theophany: “And being thus overcome with the Spirit, he was carried away in a vision, even that he saw the heavens open, and he thought he saw God sitting upon his throne” (1 Nephi 1:8). Lehi also saw “One descending out of the midst of heaven, and he beheld that his luster was above that of the sun at noon-day. And he also saw twelve others following him, and their brightness did exceed that of the stars in the firmament” (1 Nephi 1:9–10).<sup>8</sup>

John experienced the divine confrontation when, being “in the Spirit,” he heard behind him “a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” (Revelation 1:10–11). Turning around to “see the voice,” he saw “seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man” (Revelation 1:12–13).

### **3. Reaction**

In their visions, the prophets view God in his glory and learn of the nothingness of man and of the imminent destruction of the wicked. The effect of the divine confrontation and the knowledge conveyed in the visionary experience is both physical and emotional. In most accounts, besides being “astonished” and “overcome,” the prophet is also physically weak or loses consciousness. Lehi, because of his vision of God’s glory and of the

imminent judgment on Jerusalem, “did quake and tremble exceedingly. . . . [A]nd he cast himself upon his bed, being overcome with the Spirit and the things which he had seen” (1 Nephi 1:6–7).

John reacted as did the prophet Ezekiel upon receiving his heavenly visitation: after seeing “one like unto the Son of Man,” John “fell at his feet as dead.” The Lord then “laid his right hand” upon John and commanded him to “Fear not” (Revelation 1:17; compare Daniel 10:7, 9).

Isaiah, overwhelmed by the majesty of the vision of God’s glory and feeling his own nothingness, cried out, “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts” (2 Nephi 16:5, parallel to Isaiah 6:5). The angel reassured Isaiah by promising him forgiveness of his sins: “Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand . . . ; And he laid it upon my mouth, and said: Lo, this has touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged” (2 Nephi 16:6, parallel to Isaiah 6:6).<sup>9</sup> This act may have also served to prepare Isaiah for the calling he was about to receive.

#### 4. Throne-Theophany

One of the most stressed parts of each prophet’s call narrative is the receipt of the “throne-theophany,” the experience in which the prophet sees the throne of God and sometimes even God himself sitting upon it, usually amidst the worshipping host of heaven. For example, the account of Lehi’s throne-theophany records that God on his throne was “surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God” (1 Nephi 1:8).

The throne-theophany is such a powerful and significant experience and is so well described by prophets like

Ezekiel and John that many artists have attempted to capture the scene. As with most artwork, the accounts of throne-theophany are rich in symbolic elements. Throughout the remainder of this section, we will discuss examples of these artistic expressions, which help viewers imagine the power and glory of God manifested to his prophets.

Isaiah records, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up" (2 Nephi 16:1, parallel to Isaiah 6:1). Figure 1, an eleventh-century illustration of the vision of Isaiah, from the cathedral in Reichenau, Germany, depicts the Lord seated high on his throne, surrounded by a



Figure 1. Vision of Isaiah (11th century; Reichenau, Germany)

*mandorla* (an almond- or lozenge-shaped ornament). His feet are on the round orb of the sun, signifying his glory and transcendence. As recorded in 2 Nephi 16:2 (parallel to Isaiah 6:2), the Lord is also surrounded by angels with six wings—two covering the face, two covering the feet, and two with which to fly—who say to each other: “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (2 Nephi 16:3, parallel to Isaiah 6:3). Note the angel in the lower left corner holding what appears to be a live coal.

Isaiah’s description of the vision also influenced John’s description of his vision of the heavenly temple: John records, “After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me. . . . And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne” (Revelation 4:1–2).

Of the three accounts examined in this chapter, John’s account of his throne-theophany contains the most detail about the symbolic elements he saw. A twelfth-century illustration from the Bible in the Bamberg Cathedral in Germany (see figure 2) depicts John’s description of the exalted Lord sitting in glory upon a throne. Again, the Lord is surrounded by a *mandorla*. Around the throne are a man and three beasts—an eagle, a calf, and a lion—representing the four evangelists. Beneath the throne of heaven are twelve of the twenty-four elders, “clothed in white raiment [i.e., the garments of righteousness]; and they [have] on their heads crowns of gold” (Revelation 4:4). They also hold up horns that represent “seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God” (Revelation 4:5). The Lord’s feet rest upon a globe representing the glory of the cosmos, and beneath the globe is the “sea of glass like unto crystal” (Revelation 4:6). According to ancient style, this sea of glass is considered a person and has a face. The



color scheme of this painting is striking: the Lord's throne and the *mandorla* are filled with blue; the green symbolizes the green lushness of the earth. The account in Revelation contains an element that is also found in the description of Ezekiel's vision—four creatures that were “full of eyes” (Revelation 4:6; compare Ezekiel 1:5, 18).

Accounts describing these visions of the throne of God, along with other scripture, have given us much understanding about the relationship between God's kingdom in



Figure 2. *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (The Revelation of John) by Gertrud Schiller

heaven and his kingdom on earth. God's glory emanates over the earth from heaven, his temple. The basic Israelite conception of the world and God's dominion over the universe is given its finest expression in three places in the Old Testament: in the book's beginning, with the creation account in Genesis 1; near the middle of the book, in Psalm 24; and at its end, in Malachi 3.

Genesis 1 gives an account of the firmament separating the waters above the earth from the waters beneath the earth. Figure 3 shows the throne of heaven and the waters above located over the world and separated from the earth by a firmament. The waters below are also separated by a firmament. The firmament above is also equipped with "windows" (Hebrew *arubbāh*, plural *arubbôt*), which may also be rendered (as it is in the illustration in figure 3) "sluiceways" or "floodgates." In a world in which the waters of chaos are held at bay only by the firmament above the earth and the firmament beneath one's feet, it is no wonder that the great flood in Noah's day began when all "the fountains of the great deep [were] broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (Genesis 7:11).

From this passage in Genesis 1 and other passages in the Old Testament, we learn that the sequence of creation includes separating the waters from the dry land. The first firm places to emerge from the ocean are the mountains, after which comes the rest of the earth. The description in Genesis 1 is pertinent to our discussion of Isaiah's prophetic mission because, according to Jewish tradition, Jerusalem was the first dry land to have risen from the waters of chaos at the time of creation (see figure 3). We read in the Jewish *Midrash Tanhuma*:

Just as the navel is found at the center of a human being, so the Land of Israel is found at the center of the world. . . . Jerusalem is at the center of the Land of Israel,

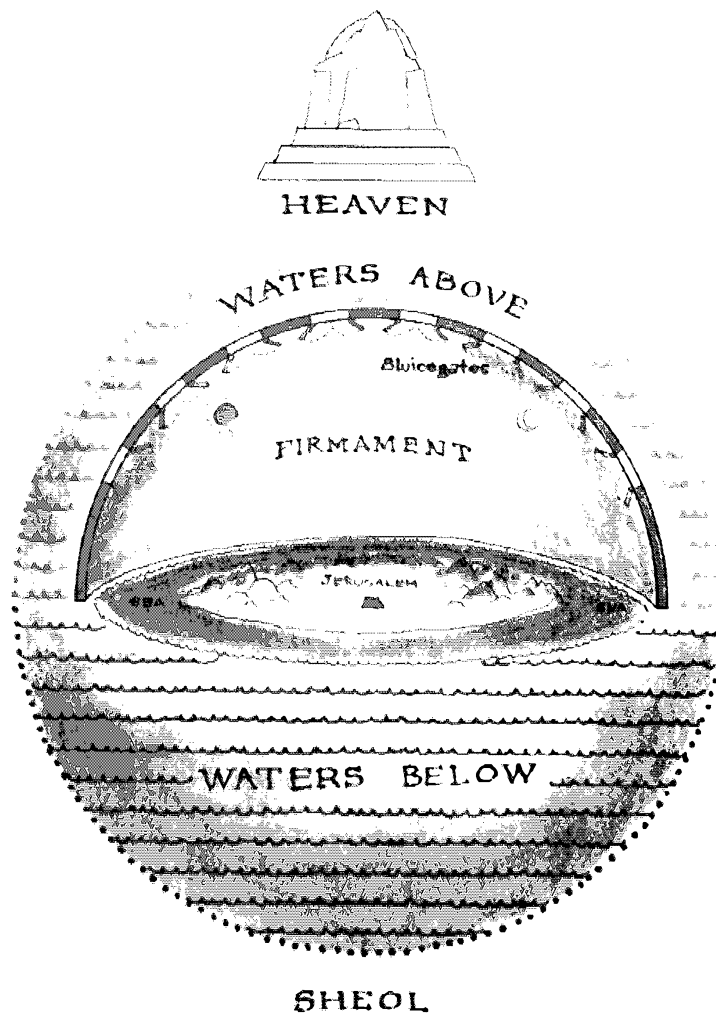


Figure 3. Throne of heaven and waters separated from earth by firmament

the Temple is at the center of Jerusalem, the Holy of Holies is at the center of the Temple, the Ark is at the center of the Holy of Holies and the Foundation Stone is in front of the Ark, which point is the foundation of the world.<sup>10</sup>

Thus it is not surprising to read in Psalm 24 (which may contain the world's first recorded temple recommend questionnaire)<sup>11</sup> the verse stating, "For he hath founded it [the temple in Jerusalem] upon the seas, and established it upon the floods" (Psalm 24:2).

As a final note on the earth's relationship to the heavens, we should consider the motif in the book of Isaiah of heaven as a house or tent over the earth. This is a common theme in ancient societies. The prophet Isaiah explains, "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (Isaiah 40:22). And in Isaiah 44:24, he concludes, "Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself." In figure 4, from the National Library in Paris, a cosmic tent is spread over the sacred tree of life. This connection may be reminiscent of the Arabs of the desert who constantly travel with a central tent post that represents the tree of life.<sup>12</sup> When the tent is pitched, this tree of life is set up first, then the tent is spread out from it, symbolizing the creation—or re-creation—of the universe.<sup>13</sup>

## **5. Presentation of a Heavenly Book**

One common feature of many call narratives is the mention of a heavenly book or scroll from which the prophet is instructed to read. The book apparently contains judgments and teachings that the prophet should preach.<sup>14</sup> Although Isaiah's account in Isaiah 6 of his vision does not mention a heavenly book, we learn that he takes one later (see Isaiah 8:1; 30:8), and he is specifically instructed what to write and teach to the people. About Lehi's experience, Nephi records, "the first came and stood before my father, and gave unto him a book, and bade him that he should read. And . . . as he read, he was filled with the Spirit of the Lord. And he read, saying: Wo, wo, unto Jerusalem, for I have seen thine abominations! Yea, and many things did my father read

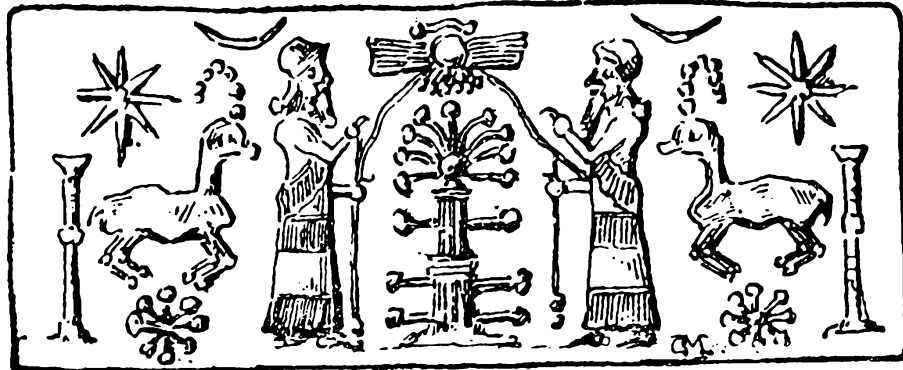


Figure 4. Cosmic tent spread over the sacred tree of life

concerning Jerusalem—that it should be destroyed, and the inhabitants thereof” (1 Nephi 1:11–13; compare Ezekiel 2:9–10). John also saw in vision “a book . . . sealed with seven seals” (Revelation 5:1) and was commanded to “Go and take the little book . . . and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey” (Revelation 10:8–9).

## 6. The *Qeḏuṣṣāh*, or Heavenly Song in Praise of God

The *qeḏuṣṣāh*, or song in praise of God, is another element that is missing in the accounts of Isaiah’s call narrative but is present in Lehi’s and John’s. Following the marvelous manifestations of God’s greatness witnessed during the throne-theophany, Lehi is moved to praise the Lord’s power and might. Nephi records, “And it came to pass that when my father had read and seen many great and marvelous things, he did exclaim many things unto the Lord; such as: Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! Thy throne is high in the heavens, and thy power, and goodness, and mercy are over all the inhabitants of the

earth; and, because thou art merciful, thou wilt not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish!" (1 Nephi 1:14). Isaiah does witness the seraphim praising the Lord, saying, "Holy, holy, holy,<sup>15</sup> is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (2 Nephi 16:3, parallel to Isaiah 6:2–3),<sup>16</sup> but there is no record of a *qeduššāh*. The passage in Revelation 4:8 repeats the same phrase glorifying God: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come,"<sup>17</sup> but several passages in John's account go on to describe the host of heaven praising, blessing, and honoring the Lord (see, for example, Revelation 4:9; 5:12–14; 11:17).

## 7. The Prophet Receives a Prophetic Commission

The height of the call narrative is the prophet's receipt of the command to speak forth boldly to the people. This command is his prophetic commission. It was a major responsibility of both Israel's prophets and Book of Mormon prophets, having themselves been warned, to warn the people of imminent destruction of the wicked. Much as Christ volunteered in the premortal council for his earthly mission, Isaiah volunteers for his call: "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said: Here am I; send me" (2 Nephi 16:8, parallel to Isaiah 6:8). Then comes the formal call: "And [God] said: Go and tell this people—Hear ye indeed, but they understood not; and see ye indeed, but they perceived not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes—lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted and be healed" (2 Nephi 16:9–10, parallel to Isaiah 6:9–10).

John's prophetic commission appears in Revelation 1:19, where he is told, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." Later, after John digests the book given him by an angel, he is commanded, "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (Revelation 10:11).

Nephi's account of Lehi's vision obscures Lehi's formal call to prophesy, but Nephi records that his father did accept the call: "after the Lord had shown so many marvelous things unto my father, Lehi, yea, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, behold he went forth among the people, and began to prophesy and to declare unto them concerning the things which he had both seen and heard . . . and also the things which he read in the book" (1 Nephi 1:18–19).

## **8. The Prophet Objects or Protests**

Another common element in call narratives is for the prophet, once he has received the daunting commission to act as a representative of God's court, to address the Lord and the council, often in what seems to be an objection or protest or a request for reassurance. In response to the apparent difficulty of his call, Isaiah questions, "Lord, how long?" The Lord answers that Isaiah should serve as a prophet "until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate; And the Lord have removed men far away, for there shall be a great forsaking in the midst of the land" (2 Nephi 16:11–12, parallel to Isaiah 6:11–12), thus confirming rather than dispelling the prophet's fears. No such objection occurs in Lehi's or John's account, although John's weeping before the council may be seen as such an outburst (see Revelation 5:4).

## 9. The Prophet Is Reassured

While the prophetic writings are tracts of judgment against a wayward Israel, they also express hope for the future. The Book of Mormon expresses a hope of reconstitution and return for a remnant of Israel. Isaiah maintains hope for a chastened though numerically diminished Israel to return to their Zion: "But yet [in the land] there shall be a tenth, and they shall return, . . . the holy seed shall be the substance thereof" (2 Nephi 16:13, parallel to Isaiah 6:13). The latter phrase is also rendered "the holy seed is its stock."<sup>18</sup> Gerhard Hasel states that

on the basis of Job 14:7–9 it may be gathered that it was common knowledge that the root stock which was left in the ground at the felling of a tree was able to sprout again and thus bring forth new life. The felling of the tree certainly meant its destruction, but not the destruction of the life in the root stock. The root stock is thus the seat of new life.<sup>19</sup>

The idea of the holy seed sprouting leads to ideas found later in Isaiah that provide the structure for subsequent revelations about the new heaven and new earth: Isaiah records, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" (Isaiah 61:10). This is certainly an image of hope and reassurance.

Once again, Nephi's writing makes no explicit reference to the Lord's reassurance to Lehi of the restoration of Israel, but we understand from later passages that convey Lehi's teachings to his children that this reassurance was in fact given (see 1 Nephi 1:16, 19). Lehi later received the Lord's blessing for the work he had performed: "For behold, it



came to pass that the Lord spake unto my father, yea, even in a dream, and said unto him: Blessed art thou Lehi, because of the things which thou hast done; and because thou hast been faithful and declared unto this people the things which I commanded thee" (1 Nephi 2:1). Lehi's writing also says, "thou wilt not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish" (1 Nephi 1:14), a statement that shows that Lehi was reassured of the Lord.

John also apparently received a reassurance. Initially, when he "wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon" (Revelation 5:4), an angel approached him and told him to "Weep not: behold, [Christ] hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Revelation 5:5). John was then assured that the time would come when the wicked would be destroyed and the Lord would reign over the righteous in the city of Jerusalem: "the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Revelation 21:8), but "that great city, the holy Jerusalem," will descend "out of heaven from God" and shall shine with "the glory of God" (Revelation 21:10–11).

### **The Lord's Long-Term Perspective: Hope for Israel**

Several chapters of Isaiah, including the final materials in Isaiah 55–66, describe a condition of restoration and redemption. So does the final part of the book of Revelation. A passage in the last chapter of Revelation is reminiscent of Lehi's dream of the tree of life as it is recorded in 1 Nephi 8:

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the

Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.  
(Revelation 22:1–2)

This scene is illustrated in the *Beatus* commentary on the Apocalypse. In figure 5, the stream of water originates from the throne of God. On either side of the stream stands a tree of life. In Revelation we also read, “And to her [Zion] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Revelation 19:8). Just as the fine linen of the bride Zion stands as a metaphor for the righteous deeds of the saints, so are her ornaments symbols of the spiritual fidelity and holy conduct of those in the churches who “overcometh” the wickedness of the world (compare Revelation 2:7; see also Revelation 12:11). The overall message is one of healing, cleansing, and rebirth.

The task of Israel’s prophets was to warn and to comfort. The formal calling of these prophets—Isaiah, Lehi, and John (a prophet and apostle of the New Israel)—came in “glorious” (2 Nephi 1:24) visions of God and his greatness in the heavens, of God’s sovereignty and transcendence over the cosmos. In these callings, each prophet received instruction about what to preach: he must issue both the Lord’s warnings and the hope of redemption and restoration.

Recording these calls serves a great purpose in the prophet’s mission. The formal account of the call, though secondary to the call itself, establishes in the minds of the people the prophet’s authority and his extraordinary standing with the Lord. As one commentator affirms, “the call narratives . . . [are] open proclamations of the prophet’s claim to be Yahweh’s agent at work in Israel.”<sup>20</sup> The call

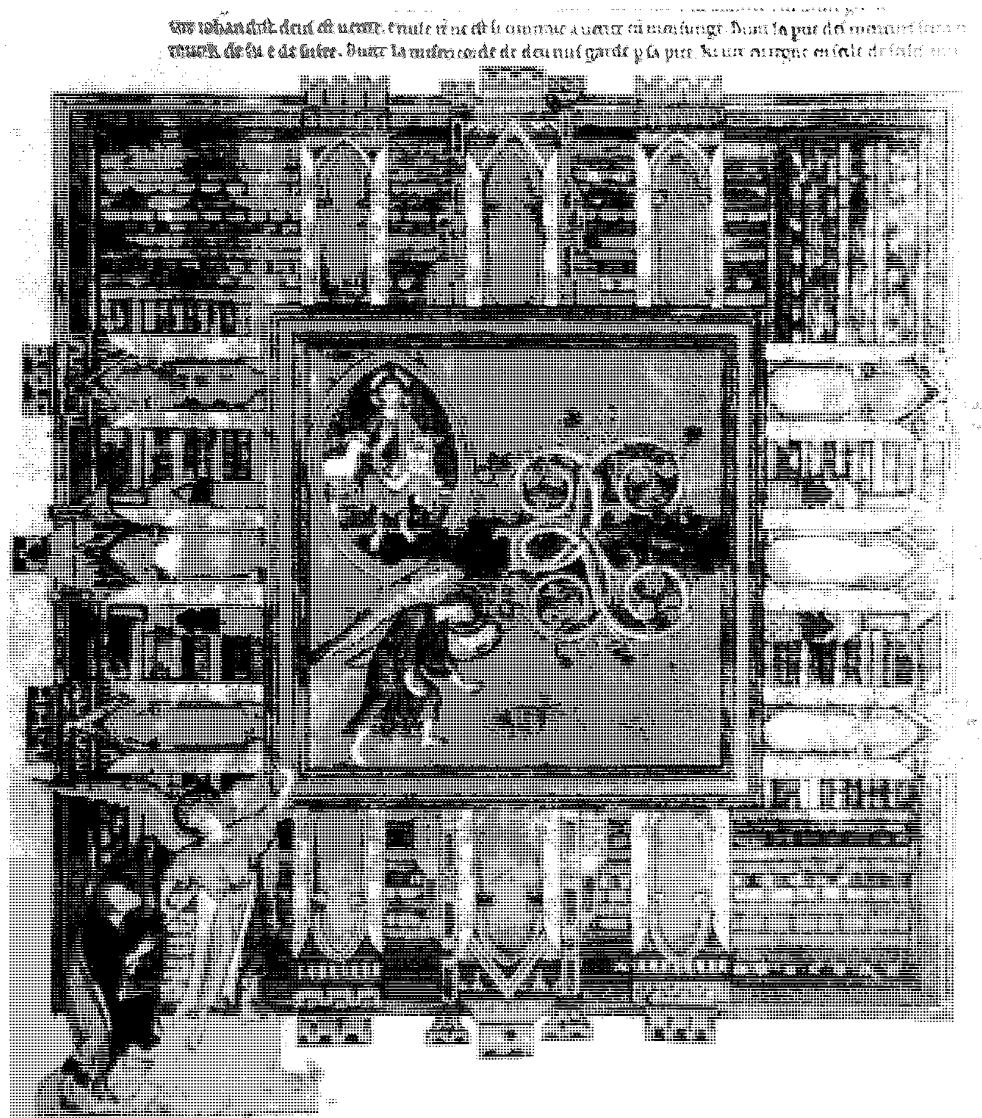


Figure 5. Stream of water originating from the throne of God

narrative not only portrays the “essence and function of the prophetic office,” but it also gives insight into the nature of the call to be a prophet of God.<sup>21</sup> The prophet’s glorious yet often unpleasant mission is to pronounce judgment on the wicked of the world and to preach hope to a chastened Israel.

## Notes

The author wishes to express appreciation to Michael Lyon, John W. Welch, and Jessica Taylor for assisting in the preparation of this piece.

1. See Blake Thomas Ostler, "The Throne-Theophany and Prophetic Commission in 1 Nephi: A Form-Critical Analysis," *BYU Studies* 26/4 (1986): 67–95, esp. 69–70. See also John W. Welch, "The Calling of a Prophet," in *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation* (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1988), 35–54.

2. See Victor L. Ludlow, *Isaiah: Prophet, Seer, and Poet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 128.

3. See *ibid.*, 129, 130.

4. See *ibid.*, 131.

5. See Welch, "The Calling of a Prophet," 39–43.

6. George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, eds., *The Smaller Plates of Nephi*, vol. 1 of *Commentary on the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1955), 338. Compare Ezekiel 10:4.

7. See also the discussion of this aspect of Lehi's visionary experience in Welch, "The Calling of a Prophet," 39.

8. See also *ibid.*, 42–3.

9. For additional examples of a man being forgiven of his sins before receiving a calling from the Lord, see Enos 1:5; Doctrine and Covenants 36:1; and Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 1:6.

10. *Midrash Tanhuma, Kedoshim* 10, cited in Arthur Hertzberg, *Judaism* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), 143.

11. See Donald W. Parry, "Temple Worship and a Possible Reference to a Prayer Circle in Psalm 24," *BYU Studies* 32/4 (1992): 57–62.

12. See Robert Eisler, *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt* (Munich, Germany: Oskar Beck, 1910), 2:592.

13. See Hugh W. Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 145.

14. The order of the giving of the heavenly book and the commission to preach is uncertain. Ezekiel's commission to preach directly followed his chariot vision but occurred just before the giving of the book: "And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them" (Ezekiel 3:4). See also Welch, "The Calling of a Prophet," 43-4.

15. On the *trisagion* (possibly *disagion*, a topic of debate), see Norman Walker, "Origin of the Thrice-Holy," *New Testament Studies* (1958-59): 132-3; Norman Walker, "Disagion Versus Trisagion," *New Testament Studies* 7 (1960-61): 170-1; B. M. Leiser, "The Trisagion," *New Testament Studies* 6 (1959-60): 261-3.

16. This compares with the *qeduššāh* in Ezekiel 3:12 and with the *Thanksgiving Hymns* of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the period of formative Judaism. See David Flusser, "Sanktus und Gloria," in *Abraham Unser Vater: Juden und Christen im Gespräch über die Bibel: Festschrift für Otto Michel zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Otto Betz, Martin Hengel, and Peter Schmidt (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 129-52, especially pp. 131-8; J. Ellbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Hildesheim, Germany: Olms, 1962), 61-7, 520-2, 586-7.

17. Gerhard Hasel renders the phrase "a holy seed is its stock" in *The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* (Berrien Springs, Mo.: Andrews University Press, 1974), 244. John D. W. Watts renders the phrase as "the seed of the holy (will be) its monument" in *Isaiah 1-33* (Waco, Texas: Word, 1985), 68.

18. Hasel, *The Remnant*, 244. Hasel uses *stock* and *stump* interchangeably; see Hasel, *The Remnant*, 238.

19. *Ibid.*, 244-5. For other scriptural symbols regarding the seed, see Alma 32:28, 39; 33:23. For those regarding the regeneration of a tree stump, see Jacob 5.

20. Norman Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 77 (December 1965): 317.

21. Ostler, "Throne-Theophany," 68.