

Book of Mormon Class Summary  
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2 Ne 11-30—The Writings of Isaiah!

***“Be Converted & Healed”***

Imagine living at the time of the American Revolution, which began in 1619, almost exactly 400 years ago. How would you describe today's world? It's culture? Politics? Religion? Technology? Values?

Now, imagine 2800 years from now. If the world were still standing, what might it look like? It's culture, technology, religion, values? How might you describe something so foreign to you?

Isaiah lived over 2800 years ago, yet he saw and prophesied about our day—the last days. Imagine trying to describe today's world, 2800 years ago! This is one reason Isaiah is so challenging to understand. He also wrote with great symbolism and poetry, which can be difficult for our modern-day minds to interpret.

Yet, the Savior Himself, in His ministry to the Nephites, quoted from and has even commanded *us* to “search” the words of Isaiah: “And now, behold, I say unto you, that ye ought to search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah.” (3 Ne. 23:1)

*Are we obeying this commandment? Do we diligently seek the words of Isaiah? How can we more fully understand them and apply them to our life?*

The following suggestions might help.

**1) Understand Isaiah—the Man & the Prophet**

Having a little background on Isaiah can help. Isaiah was prophet in Jerusalem for forty years, from 740-701 B.C. His ministry spanned several political regimes, and he had great political and religious influence during the reign of Hezekiah. In fact, he was his chief advisor.

“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” (*Bible Dictionary*). According to tradition, Isaiah died by being “sawn asunder” during the reign of Manasseh (*BD*). Truly, Isaiah was a valiant prophet who sealed his testimony with his life.

As one author said, “Never perhaps has there been another prophet like Isaiah, who stood with his head in the clouds and his feet on the solid earth, with his heart in the

things of eternity and with mouth and hand in the things of time, with his spirit in the eternal counsel of God and his body in a very definite moment of history.” (G.L. Robinson, *The Book of Isaiah*, p. 22)

## **2) Using “The Testimony of Three”**

Who are the three main authors of the small plates of Nephi in the Book of Mormon? Obviously, Nephi is the first. Jacob would easily be the second, and the third? Isaiah. In fact, of the 143 pages in the small plates, these three prophets wrote 135 of them!

Nephi, Jacob, and Isaiah, had something else in common besides their writings. All three of them had “verily” seen the “Redeemer” (2 Ne 11:1-3), even face-to-face. What greater testimony can we have than of these three prophets who had each seen the Savior, Jesus Christ?

Truly, the words of Nephi and Jacob help us understand the words of Isaiah, and together, their “witness of three” testifies to the truthfulness of these things. How blessed we are to have these scriptures at our fingertips! “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.” (Bible Dictionary, “Isaiah”)

*What can you do to better understand the words of Isaiah by using the words of Nephi and Jacob? Do you see and feel the witness that all three bore of their Savior, Jesus Christ? How does this impact your testimony?*

## **3) Understand Isaiah as a Whole & a Type—For their day, for our day**

One way to comprehend Isaiah more completely is to read his words as a whole. In fact, I suggest reading the chapter headings or listening to these chapters on audio. Doing so, for me, has helped me see the bigger picture—that Isaiah is testifying of Jesus Christ, and that in these chapters he speaks of three main times: 1) his day and people, 2) the Nephites/Lamanites’ day and people, and 3) our day and people.

Furthermore, it’s helpful to remember that each of these prophecies is a *type* for the others. Isaiah saw that all three of these civilizations would rise and fall in like manner. We can learn from the past as well as from the predictions for our future: every warning, teaching, prophecy is for our day, too.

Furthermore, Isaiah taught the following: “Through a series of remarkable revelations, Isaiah learned about the Savior’s birth and Second Coming, the

conditions on the earth in the last days, the peace and joy that will come in the Millennium, and the ultimate failure of the adversary. These revelations, written according to 'the manner of prophesying among the Jews' (2 Nephi 25:1), also told of coming events in Isaiah's day. Although the revelations help us understand conditions in Isaiah's day, [we can also] focus on their latter-day significance. We can read them with full confidence that they contain messages for us in the last days—messages of warning, peace, and hope." (*BOM Teacher's Manual*)

#### **4) Study Isaiah with "The spirit of prophecy" (2 Ne 11-24)**

If we are to understand the words of Isaiah, then we must do as the Savior has commanded and "search" "diligently." We must do more than read. We must search, and we must do more than search. We must search *diligently*.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie has said:

"In the final analysis there is no way, absolutely none, to understand any scripture except to have the same spirit of prophecy that rested upon the one who uttered the truth in its original form. Scripture comes from God by the power of the Holy Ghost. It does not originate with man. It means only what the Holy Ghost thinks it means. To interpret it, we must be enlightened by the power of the Holy Spirit. It takes a prophet to understand a prophet, and every faithful member of the Church should have 'the testimony of Jesus' which 'is the spirit of prophecy.' (Rev. 19:10) 'The words of Isaiah,' Nephi said, 'are plain unto all those that are filled with the spirit of prophecy.' (2 Ne. 25:4) This is the sum and substance of the whole matter and an end to all controversy where discovering the mind and will of the Lord is concerned." (*"10 Keys to Understanding Isaiah," Ensign, Oct 1973, pp. 80-83*)

Truly, the words of Isaiah can only be understood through the "spirit of prophecy." *How can we obtain this?* Once again, through personal revelation, revealed by the power and presence of the Holy Ghost.

"Obtaining the spirit of prophecy, that is, obtaining personal revelation through the Holy Ghost, is an essential feature of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, and is generally experienced beyond the application of the basic principles of the gospel. Its dependence upon the spiritual growth and worthiness of the person receiving it renders its full treatment unnecessary here. Let it suffice to say that the Prophet Joseph Smith described the workings of the Holy Ghost upon the mind as "strokes of pure intelligence flowing into you," while Doctrine and Covenants 9:8 depicts the action of the Holy Ghost as a burning in the bosom which serves to confirm whether a thing is right and true. In the same light, Paul maintains that the things of God are known only by the Spirit of God, and that for mortals to comprehend the words written or uttered under the influence of the Holy Ghost, they too must

be touched by and possess that same Spirit (1 Cor 2:10-16). Although less dramatic in its operation, the spirit of prophecy may be compared to the gift of tongues and to that of the interpretation of tongues. Both are gifts of the same Spirit, the prophet exercising the first for our sake, and we the second if we would avail ourselves of it." (*Avraham Gileadi, Isaiah: Four Latter-Day Keys to an Anxiety Book, in Isaiah and the Prophets, p. 120.*)

### **5) "Devote yourself to Hard, Conscientious Study..."**

"Read, ponder, and pray—verse by verse, thought by thought, passage by passage, chapter by chapter! As Isaiah himself asks: 'Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine?' His answer: 'they that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little, and there a little.' (Isa. 28:9-10)" (*Bruce R. McConkie, "10 Keys to Understanding Isaiah," Ensign, Oct 1973, pp. 80-83*)

*How devoted are we to "hard, conscientious study" of Isaiah? Will we allow ourselves to be taught these powerful truths, line upon line and precept upon precept?*

### **In conclusion...**

It is my prayer that we will each seek the spirit of prophecy, that we will pray with all our might to be taught and to comprehend the powerful words of Isaiah, to understand and to apply them to our own lives. I know that these are truly the words of God, and that as we obey His commandment to learn the words of Isaiah, our eyes will be opened, our ears will hear, and our hearts will know the truthfulness they hold. As the events of the last days unfold, we will be comforted, knowing that we are His, and He will not, indeed cannot, forsake His people. We will see His will be done, and know that, with Him, all will be well. We shall not fear; with Jesus Christ as our Savior, Redeemer, and Lord, we shall conquer eternally.

### **Ponder This**

- 1) Seek the "spirit of prophecy" by praying and seeking to be filled with the Holy Ghost.
- 2) Listen to these chapters or read through the chapter summaries, to gain the larger picture of what Isaiah is trying to teach.
- 3) How can you apply the suggestions in this lesson as you "diligently study" Isaiah?
- 4) What do Isaiah's words say to you? How can they apply to your life? What can they help you do?

