

Ir-BoM-9
My Soul Delighteth in the Words of Isaiah
(2 Nephi 11-25)
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(Nephi blesses us with a major key to understanding Isaiah, the rest of the Bible, and even temple symbolism)

I. Isaiah speaks of Christ's marvelous redemption .

A. "So people who shall see these words might lift up their hearts and rejoice for all men." [Now knowing that **all men can be saved**].

B. Christ will offer and make available His "Great and eternal plan of deliverance from death" (2 Ne. 11:5).

II. Nephi then gives a great key **to understanding the Bible, including Isaiah.**

A. "My soul delighteth in proving unto my people the truth of the coming of Christ. **For all things given by God unto man from the beginning of the earth are a typifying of him**" (2 Nephi 11:4. Some words deleted for simplicity).

1. I personally testify that this scripture holds a great key to understanding the Bible, Isaiah, and even sacred temple symbolism.

Through my studies of literature, I had come to understand that "types" were events, persons, or things which usually come before something more important in the future. Such "types" give clues to what is coming.

2. When I read Nephi's statement in the Book of Mormon, I was astonished to realize he was saying **that nearly all things God had given** to man from the beginning of the earth **in some way bore witness of Jesus the Christ**¹. As I continued my study of the Book of Mormon, I found other prophets testifying of this same truth. For example, "and many... types and shadows [meaning foreshadowings] showed [God] unto [the Israelites] concerning [Christ's] coming" (Mosiah 3:15).

All these witnesses awakened in me a great desire to read the Bible seeking those things which taught beforehand of the Savior's life and of His works of salvation.

Reading the Bible with this approach greatly heightened my understanding of it, and eventually of all scripture. **I will always be grateful to Nephi and the Book of Mormon for teaching me how to read for the deepest level of meaning in the scriptures.** (I later learned that the devices of "types and foreshadowings" found in literature were actually adopted from their usage in the Bible.)

I also found enrichment to my understanding of temple ceremony. **For the symbolism God gave from the very beginning is still used in our sacred ordinances today.**

By adopting Nephi's approach of searching more earnestly for the witnesses of Christ, both the Book of Mormon and Bible have truly "grown together" for me, each using the same symbols, and thus shedding light upon each other.

Now my soul also "delights" in the scriptures, and all other things which testify of Jesus the Christ. This includes His masterful works --- including those in these last days.

III. After Nephi tells his people that the scriptures hold hidden witnesses of Christ through "types," he then quotes some of Isaiah's prophecies which contain such witnesses.

A. That is, Isaiah used the birth of Hezekiah, a religious reformer, as a prophecy of Jesus' future birth (See 2 Ne. 17:1-16).

B. The Lord also used "types" in His dealings with nations, of which Isaiah writes.

1. Isaiah had prophesied Israel would go into captivity to Assyria and to Babylon, due to wickedness (2 Ne. 13).

2. These events had dual purposes. The fall to Assyria and Babylon was also a "foreshadowing" of what would happen to Israel after Jesus Christ came and was rejected.

3. The result of the rejection of Christ was removal from Judea by the Romans. Thus Israel would be fully scattered, and **Christ's Gospel would be taken over by the Gentiles.** After the Gentiles also fell into apostasy, they would be termed a new "Babylon."

4. Isaiah and others prophesied that in the Last Days, some of Israel would return from under the influence of this new Babylon (2 Ne. 20:12-27).

IV. The prophecies of Isaiah and all Old Testament prophets were **purposely hidden** in difficult symbolism.

A. **"Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes" (2 Ne. 16:10).**

B. This spiritual blindness actually contributed to Israel's fall into apostasy, allowing a Gentile based religious group to inherit Israel's spiritual riches for a time.

C. Later, the Gentile churches would also stumble due to the same difficult symbolism.

D. Thus the Lord's deliberate plan came to pass: Christ's teachings and ordinances would be given first to Israel, then to the Gentiles, and then come back to Israel in the Last Days [though Gentiles can also inherit]. **Thus the Lord shows He is no respecter of persons!**

V. Nephi explains that only by understanding the way of writing among the Jews [usage of dual meanings, types and shadows] can anyone truly understand the scriptures (2 Ne. 25:1-6).

A. So Nephi used plainness to explain what Isaiah had taught (2 Nephi 25:7-30).

B. By quoting and making plain Isaiah's passages, Nephi is able to comfort the Nephites with knowledge their descendants will eventually be blessed through the redemption of Jesus Christ and through the Last Days re-gathering of Israel.

1. Jacob had previously revealed Nephites' descendants would fall away.

a. "It has been shown me that many of our children shall perish in the flesh because of unbelief," (2 Ne. 10:2)

C. Isaiah's promises gave future hope for descendants of the Nephites.

a. "nevertheless, God will be merciful unto many; and our children shall be restored, that they may come to that which will give them the true knowledge of their Redeemer."

D. So when Nephi "likens" Isaiah's prophecies to his people, **he does so because Isaiah's prophecies actually are prophecies of their future descendants** (11:2).

E. The Nephites are also comforted knowing that after Christ's true Latter-day church is restored, Judgments will come upon the wicked and the Savior will usher in His great time of Peace and Joy for all the righteous (2 Nephi 14:2-6).

VI. One great reason Isaiah's words are recorded by Nephi is because the records which the Nephites make (The Book of Mormon) **will help bring about this future Return.**

A. This is because the Book of Mormon would make plain the misunderstood prophecies of the Bible.

B. Isaiah even tells **who** shall help bring about this Last Days Return.

1. It is the prophet Joseph Smith who will bring forth the Nephite records to make their witness (See 2 Nephi 21:1 and D&C 113).

C. Because Isaiah and other prophets wrote prophecies with dual meaning, sometimes it is difficult to understand of whom Isaiah is speaking. There are some evidences both the "stem" and "root" of Jesse speak of Christ. And they do! However, Joseph Smith is in the pattern of Christ. So this is a prophecy with dual meaning. It speaks of Christ but also of Joseph Smith who will act in the pattern set by Christ.

D. The Nephite records (The Book of Mormon) will be a major instrument in helping prepare those of the last days for Christ's Second Coming (See 2 Nephi 21: 10).

1. The Root of Jesse will erect an Ensign; Gentiles will seek it.

2. God will overcome the waters which separate the nations, permitting Israel (including Ephraim and Manasseh) to be gathered to their Promised Lands. (See verses 15-16).

3. **It is through the development of great ships and airplanes that have conquered the great seas that divide the continents and islands. Today Israel can be easily gathered from any nation on earth to its particular promised lands!**

VII. Isaiah makes beautiful promises of Christ's Second Coming, and comforts us all.

A. He will come in Power: "And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (2 Ne. 21:4).

2. **The righteous will rejoice that the Earth is now ruled by a Perfect Judge.**

"And [God] shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; **and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.**

"But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" (2 Nephi 21:3).

3. What a joyous time it will indeed be when a fully righteous, all-knowing Judge will rule the earth!

¹ Jesus even says that He created all things to bear record of Himself (Moses 6:63). This means more than their existence bears witness of a creator, but also that in some way they teach of Him, such as the sun by shedding its light abroad upon all men teaches of the Light coming upon all through Jesus Christ.