

## Introduction

During the second day of His three-day ministry, the Savior endorsed and expounded on the prophecies of Isaiah and Malachi. He observed the extent of Isaiah's prophecies as touching on "all things concerning my people which are of the house of Israel" (3 Nephi 23:2). Jesus Christ personally examined the scriptural record for accuracy and caused that the fulfillment of Samuel's prophesy of the Resurrection and the words of Malachi be included (see 3 Nephi 24:1; 26:1–2). Malachi's words declare the blessings associated with the law of tithing and the role the prophet Elijah would have during the last days in preparation for the Second Coming.

The Lord commanded each of us to search the scriptures and the prophets (see 3 Nephi 23:5). The Savior declared it is wisdom that "these scriptures . . . should be given unto future generations" (3 Nephi 26:2). Every Latter-day Saint has a duty to diligently search the scriptures. Consider what it means to diligently search the scriptures and the prophets rather than merely reading them.

## Commentary

### 3 Nephi 23:1. "Great Are the Words of Isaiah"

- The Savior taught that the breadth of Isaiah's prophecies covered "all things concerning my people" (3 Nephi 23:2)—a remarkable magnitude of God's dealings. The Savior endorsed Isaiah's prophecies by declaring, "Great are the words of Isaiah" (3 Nephi 23:1). Chapter 22 of 3 Nephi is the last of over 20 Isaiah chapters quoted in the Book of Mormon. Notice that the Savior particularly directed His listeners to *search* the writings of the prophet Isaiah (see 3 Nephi 23:1). It is not surprising that Isaiah is quoted heavily in the Book of Mormon and in other scripture.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, emphasized the unique and important role of the prophecies of Isaiah and why the Lord preserved his words:

"Isaiah is the most quoted prophet in the New Testament. The Lord Himself quoted Isaiah seven times, the Apostles forty times more. In addition there are ninety partial quotes or paraphrases of Isaiah's words.

"Isaiah is the most quoted prophet in the Doctrine and Covenants. Sixty-six quotations from thirty-one chapters of Isaiah attest to the singular importance of this great prophet.

"All of this confirms that the Lord had a purpose in preserving Isaiah's words" (*Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled* [1991], 280).

- Note:* For additional background on Isaiah and suggestions on how to study and understand his writings, see commentary for 1 Nephi 20–21 (p. 43) and for 2 Nephi 12–16 (p. 73).

### 3 Nephi 23:1–5. Search the Scriptures

- The Lord commands His Saints to search the scriptures rather than merely read them. When people *search* the scriptures they carefully examine them in an effort to discover something, or they explore thoroughly by serious inquiry and inspection. *Searching* the scriptures also indicates that we *meditate* (see Joshua 1:8), *study* (see 2 Timothy 3:15; D&C 26:1), *heed* (see 1 Nephi 15:25), and *ponder* (see 2 Nephi 4:15). In addition to the scriptures, the Savior commanded us to search the words of the prophets (see 3 Nephi 23:5).



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#### 3 NEPHI 23:1–5

*What did the Lord say about Isaiah's writings? What value is there in searching the scriptures and the prophets?*

- The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) encouraged the Saints to search the scriptures in order to receive an independent witness of the truth and to obtain direct instructions from God: "Search the Scriptures—search the revelations which we publish, and ask your Heavenly Father, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, to manifest the truth unto you, and if you do it with

an eye single to His glory, nothing doubting, He will answer you by the power of His Holy Spirit. You will then know for yourselves and not for another. You will not then be dependent on man for the knowledge of God; nor will there be any room for speculation. No; for when men receive their instruction from Him that made them, they know how He will save them. Then again we say: Search the Scriptures, search the Prophets, and learn what portion of them belongs to you” (*History of the Church*, 1:282).

- Although searching the scriptures may be difficult at first, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) promised that those who seriously study the scriptures will be enlightened and their spirits lifted: “I am grateful for the emphasis on reading the scriptures. I hope that for you this will become something far more enjoyable than a duty; that, rather, it will become a love affair with the word of God. I promise you that as you read, your minds will be enlightened and your spirits will be lifted. At first it may seem tedious, but that will change into a wondrous experience with thoughts and words of things divine” (“The Light within You,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 99).

- President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency said that if we rush too quickly while reading the scriptures we are not allowing the Holy Ghost to tutor us:

“The Holy Ghost will guide what we say if we study and ponder the scriptures every day. The words of the scriptures invite the Holy Spirit. . . . With daily study of the scriptures, we can count on this blessing. . . .

“We treasure the word of God not only by reading the words of the scriptures but by studying them. We may be nourished more by pondering a few words, allowing the Holy Ghost to make them treasures to us, than by passing quickly and superficially over whole chapters of scripture” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 114–15; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 83–84).

### 3 Nephi 23:6–13. Importance of an Accurate Scriptural Record

- The accuracy and completeness of the scriptural record is vital since we rely on it to gain our understanding of God and His plan for us. Verses

6–13 in 3 Nephi 23 include the fulfillment of Samuel’s prophecies about the Resurrection that had previously been missing and that the Savior asked to be included in the record.



### 3 Nephi 24:1. “The Words Which the Father Had Given unto Malachi”

- The importance of Malachi’s prophecies was emphasized by the Savior, who quoted a portion of His words to the people in America as directed by the Father (see 3 Nephi 24:1). Who was the prophet Malachi? Malachi was an Old Testament prophet who wrote and prophesied at approximately 430 B.C. *Malachi* means “my messenger,” and the first part of his prophecy “is addressed to the priesthood, reproofing them for their neglect of service to God. The second part (2:10–4:6) is addressed to the people, speaking against marriage outside the covenant, divorces from wives within the covenant, and neglect of tithe paying. . . . The faithful are encouraged to remain so, with the assurance that the Lord is mindful of them, and the disobedient shall fail in the day of the Lord’s coming” (Bible Dictionary, “Malachi,” 728). The latter part of Malachi’s message declares the blessings that come from obeying the law of tithing and the special role the prophet Elijah would play in the last days in preparation for the Second Coming (see 3 Nephi 24–25).

### 3 Nephi 24:1. The Lord “Shall Suddenly Come to His Temple”

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that one “reason for repeated reading of the scriptures is that many of the prophecies and

doctrinal passages in the scriptures have multiple meanings” and “multiple fulfillments” (“Scripture Reading and Revelation,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1995, 8). Such is the case with the phrase “the Lord . . . shall suddenly come to his temple” (3 Nephi 24:1). It was partially fulfilled when the Lord appeared in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836, at the beginning of this dispensation (see D&C 110:1–10); it is partially fulfilled each time the Savior comes to any of His temples; it will also be partially fulfilled as part of the Second Coming when the earth will be cleansed from wickedness and become a celestial abode (see D&C 88:25). Hence, the earth will be appropriately referred to as a temple of the Lord.

### 3 Nephi 24:2. A Refiner’s Fire and Fuller’s Soap

- Malachi employed powerful symbolism by describing the Messiah’s coming “like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap” (3 Nephi 24:2). A *refiner* is “a man who separates the precious metals from the dross with which in nature they are usually found mixed. Part of the process consists in the application of great heat, in order to bring the mass into a fluid state, hence the term ‘refiner’s fire’” (Bible Dictionary, “Refiner,” 760).

The Savior is like a refiner. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: “His mission is to cleanse, purify, and refine the human soul so that it can return to his Father’s kingdom in purity, free from dross. (3 Ne. 27:19–21.) His cleansing power ‘is like a refiner’s fire, . . . And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver’ in that great day when he comes to judge the world. (Mal. 3:2–3; 3 Ne. 24:2–3; D.&C. 128:24)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 624).

A *fuller*’s “work was to cleanse garments and whiten them” through the use of soap (Bible Dictionary, “Fullers,” 676). The Atonement of Jesus Christ acts like “fuller’s soap” to cleanse us from our sins and prepare us to stand pure and spotless before the judgment seat.

### 3 Nephi 24:5. Those Who Oppress Widows and the Fatherless

- God holds us accountable for our neglect of the widows and the fatherless. President Thomas S.

Monson expressed how important widows are to the Lord and our need to minister to them:

“The word *widow* appears to have had a most significant meaning to our Lord. He cautioned his disciples to beware of the example of the scribes, who feigned righteousness by their long apparel and their lengthy prayers, but who devoured the houses of widows [see Luke 20:46–47]. . . .

“And to the Prophet Joseph Smith he directed, ‘The storehouse shall be kept by the consecrations of the church; and widows and orphans shall be provided for, as also the poor’ [D&C 83:6]. . . .

“There may exist an actual need for food, clothing, even shelter. Such can be supplied. Almost always there remains [a widow in need]. . . .

“Let us remember that after the funeral flowers fade, the well-wishes of friends become memories, and the prayers offered and words spoken dim in the corridors of the mind. Those who grieve frequently find themselves alone. Missed is the laughter of children, the commotion of teenagers, and the tender, loving concern of a departed companion. The clock ticks more loudly, time passes more slowly, and four walls do indeed a prison make” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 90–91; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 70).

### 3 NEPHI 24:8–12

*What blessings are promised to those who pay their tithing?*

### 3 Nephi 24:8–12. Tithes and Offerings

- Those who live the law of tithing show their faith in God. Obedience to this law brings the blessings stated in 3 Nephi 24:10–12. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared five reasons why every member of the Church, in any kind of circumstance, should obey the law of tithing:

“I . . . suggest five reasons why all of us, rich or poor, longtime member or newest convert, should faithfully pay our tithes and offerings.

“First, do so for the sake of your children. . . . Teach your children that many of the blessings of the Church are available to them because you and they give tithes and offerings to the Church. . . .

“Second, pay your tithing to rightfully claim the blessings promised those who do so. . . .

“Third, pay your tithing as a declaration that possession of material goods and the accumulation of worldly wealth are *not* the uppermost goals of your existence. . . .

“Fourth, pay your tithes and offerings out of honesty and integrity because they are God’s rightful due. . . .

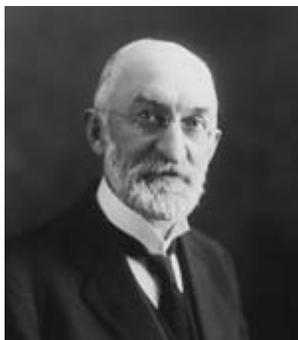


“This leads to a fifth reason to pay our tithes and offerings. We should pay them as a personal expression of love to a generous and merciful Father in Heaven. Through His grace, God has dealt bread to the hungry and clothing to the poor. At various times in our lives, that will include all of us, either temporally or

spiritually” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2001, 39–41; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 33–35).

- President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) described one of the blessings we can receive from paying tithing: “The promise following obedience to this principle is that the windows of heaven would be open and blessings would be poured out that we would hardly be able to contain. The opening of the windows of heaven, of course, means revelation from God to him who is willing thus to sacrifice” (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1996], 206).

- President Heber J. Grant (1856–1945) testified that God will bless those who obey the law of tithing with increased wisdom: “I bear witness—and I know that the witness I bear is true—that the men and the women who have been absolutely honest with



God, who have paid their tithing . . . , God has given them wisdom whereby they have been able to utilize the remaining nine-tenths, and it has been of greater value to them, and they have accomplished more with it than they would if they had not been honest with the Lord” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1912, 30).

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks addressed the statement some people give when faced with whether or not they will be obedient to the commandment to pay tithing:

“Some people say, ‘I can’t afford to pay tithing.’ Those who place their faith in the Lord’s promises say, ‘I can’t afford not to pay tithing.’

“Some time ago I was speaking to a meeting of Church leaders in a country outside of North America. As I spoke about tithing, I found myself saying something I had not intended to say. I told them the Lord was grieved that only a small fraction of the members in their nations relied on the Lord’s promises and paid a full tithing. I warned that the Lord would withhold material and spiritual blessings when his covenant children were not keeping this vital commandment.

“I hope those leaders taught that principle to the members of the stakes and districts in their countries. The law of tithing and the promise of blessings to those who live it apply to the people of the Lord in every nation. I hope our members will qualify for the blessings of the Lord by paying a full tithing” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 44; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 34).

### 3 Nephi 24:16–18. “I Make Up My Jewels”

- How do we become one of the Lord’s jewels? A jewel is a precious stone measured by its intrinsic and extrinsic value in the marketplace. Malachi and other prophets used the imagery of jewels symbolically to refer to people who “feared the Lord”—those who show respect for Him, keep His ordinances, and have their names in “a book of remembrance” (3 Nephi 24:16–18; see also D&C 60:4; 101:3; Exodus 28:15–21). Thus, to become one of the Lord’s jewels, you must faithfully keep the covenants associated with every ordinance regardless of worldly pressure. By doing this you show that you love the Lord, and your name will be recorded in the book of remembrance.

### 3 Nephi 25:1. “Neither Root Nor Branch”

• What does it mean that the “proud . . . and all that do wickedly” will be burned and left without either root or branch? (3 Nephi 25:1). This phrase refers to the theme of 3 Nephi 25. Consider your *roots* to be your parents or ancestors and your *branches* to be your children or posterity. To be united with our roots and branches, we must receive temple ordinances. The Lord said He would send Elijah before the Second Coming to restore priesthood keys that would allow families to be complete—both roots and branches. In 1836 the sealing power was restored, and it provides the way for families to be eternally linked (see D&C 110:14–16; 128:18). However, the proud and the wicked will be burned up and left without either root (ancestors) or branch (posterity), leaving them cut off from their family and the sealing blessings.



Elder Jeffrey R. Holland spoke of this idea: “Elijah restored the sealing powers whereby ordinances that were sealed on earth were also sealed in heaven. . . . Without that link no family ties would exist in the eternities, and indeed the family of man would have been left in eternity with ‘neither root [ancestors] nor branch [descendants]’” (*Christ and the New Covenant* [1997], 297–98).

### 3 Nephi 25:2. “Calves in the Stall”

• For an explanation of “calves in the stall,” see commentary for 1 Nephi 22:24 (p. 47).

#### **3 NEPHI 25:5–6**

*Who is to come before “the great and dreadful day,” and what will he do?*

### 3 Nephi 25:5–6. Elijah Shall Turn Hearts

• On his first visit on the evening of September 21, 1823, the angel Moroni quoted the prophecy from Malachi 4:5–6  to the Prophet Joseph Smith “with a little variation from the way it reads” (Joseph Smith—History 1:36–39; see also D&C 2). This prophecy was fulfilled on April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple when Elijah appeared and restored the priesthood keys to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (see D&C 110:13–16). From this first visit to the end of his ministry, the Prophet Joseph Smith continually mentioned Malachi’s prophecy and the mission of Elijah.

In addition to the prophetic explanation he gave in Doctrine and Covenants 128:17–18, the Prophet Joseph Smith also taught: “Elijah was the last Prophet that held the keys of the Priesthood, and who will, before the last dispensation, restore the authority and deliver the keys of the Priesthood, in order that all the ordinances may be attended to in righteousness. It is true that the Savior had authority and power to bestow this blessing; but the sons of Levi were too prejudiced. ‘And I will send Elijah the Prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord,’ etc., etc. Why send Elijah? Because he holds the keys of the authority to administer in all the ordinances of the Priesthood; and without the authority is given, the ordinances could not be administered in righteousness” (*History of the Church*, 4:211).

• The Prophet Joseph Smith also explained the meaning of the word *turn* and its application in our lives:

“The word *turn* here [in Malachi 4:5–6] should be translated *bind*, or seal. But what is the object of this important mission? or how is it to be fulfilled? The keys are to be delivered, the spirit of Elijah is to come, the Gospel to be established, the Saints of God gathered, Zion built up, and the Saints to come up as saviors on Mount Zion.

“But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations and sealing powers upon their heads, in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them that they may come forth in the first

resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them; and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah” (*History of the Church*, 6:184).

### 3 Nephi 26:2. “These Scriptures, Which Ye Had Not with You”

- Jesus Christ emphasized the importance of accurate scriptural records. In addition to the fulfillment of the prophecies of Samuel the Lamanite being added to the scriptural record (see 3 Nephi 23:7–13), the Savior followed the command of the Father to give the people in America “scriptures, which ye had not” (3 Nephi 26:2). He quoted the writings of Malachi, an Old Testament prophet who lived nearly 200 years after Lehi left Jerusalem. Malachi’s teachings would not have been on the plates of brass since he lived 200 years after Lehi left Jerusalem.



### 3 Nephi 26:6–12. If They Believe, Then Greater Things Will Be Made Manifest

- President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught that before obtaining greater manifestations or additional scripture we must read and believe what has already been revealed: “I have had many people ask me through the years, ‘When do you think we will get the balance of the Book of Mormon records?’ And I have said, ‘How many in the congregation would like to read the sealed portion of the plates?’ And almost

always there is a 100-percent response. And then I ask the same congregation, ‘How many of you have read the part that has been opened to us?’ And there are many who have not read the Book of Mormon, the unsealed portion. We are quite often looking for the spectacular, the unobtainable. I have found many people who want to live the higher laws when they do not live the lower laws” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 531–32).

### 3 Nephi 26:19. “They Taught, and Did Minister One to Another”

- This is the pattern in the Lord’s Church in every dispensation: His covenant people teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom and minister to one another in the fellowship of gospel bonds, for the Lord’s people comprise one great family.

## Points to Ponder

- How much time and effort do you spend each week reading the scriptures in the standard works? How much of that time and effort do you think qualifies as “searching”?
- In what ways have you turned your heart to your fathers? What more can you do to assist in family history and temple work?

## Suggested Assignments

- Develop a plan that will enable you to regularly *search* the scriptures and the most recent conference addresses from the current prophets.
- List the blessings mentioned in 3 Nephi 24:8–12 that have been fulfilled in your life or that you have seen fulfilled in others as a result of living the law of tithing. Write a brief paragraph explaining the purpose and blessings that come from faithfully obeying the law of tithing. Share your observation with someone.
- Collect and organize the names of some of your deceased ancestors for submission to the temple. Arrange to have the temple ordinance work done for them. If possible, participate in completing this temple work.