



Type: Book Chapter

Getting through Isaiah with the Help of the Nephite Prophetic View

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Source: *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*

Editor(s): Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch

Published: Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies,
1998

Page(s): 19–45



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Getting through Isaiah with the Help of the Nephite Prophetic View

John W. Welch

Nephi's prophetic view foresaw the future in four distinct stages, and each time he quoted a section from Isaiah it was because it contained words relevant to one of those stages.



Getting through Isaiah is not easy. Virtually all readers of the Book of Mormon get bogged down at the end of 1 Nephi, and many simply ignore the Isaiah chapters in 2 Nephi. Yet it is hard to imagine comprehending the full message of the Book of Mormon without grasping the main concepts taught by Isaiah. To put Isaiah's historical prominence and stature somewhat into perspective, it helps readers of the Book of Mormon to realize that he lived about as many years before Nephi and Jacob as Joseph Smith lived before the present day. In many ways, Isaiah was "the Prophet" in ancient Israel, and so it is no surprise that his revelations set much of the stage for the religious and social outlook of Lehi and the Nephite prophets who followed him.

Of all the writers of the Book of Mormon, Nephi and Jacob were the most prone to quote or paraphrase Isaiah. Because of the great interest Nephi and Jacob had in reading and citing Isaiah, the more we perceive how these two prophets understood and used Isaiah, the better off we will be in getting through the words of Isaiah quoted in the Book of Mormon. One key to comprehending how Nephi and Jacob understood and used Isaiah is to grasp the basic "prophetic worldview" that is found repeatedly in the Book of Mormon, particularly on the small plates of Nephi. Because most of the Isaiah materials that are quoted in the Book of

Mormon (namely, Isaiah 2–14, 29, and 48–51) are included by Nephi and Jacob as they state and explain their prophetic worldview, tuning in to that worldview greatly helps modern readers in orienting and guiding themselves through the Isaiah chapters in the Book of Mormon.

Accordingly, this paper first asks, How did the Nephite prophets understand the future? It then shows that the answers to that question explain why and how the Nephite prophets used certain texts of Isaiah as they did. Specifically, we will see that the prophetic writings of Nephi and Jacob consistently chart the main events of the future by casting world history into four distinct stages. They selected, used, and interpreted certain Isaiah texts because those texts served within a particular prophetic view.

The Nephite Prophetic View in 1 Nephi 11–14

The four stages or phases in the Nephite prophetic view are visible in several texts, but never more clearly than in Nephi's vision in 1 Nephi 11–14, which divides naturally into four sections that correspond to chapters 11, 12, 13, and 14. This influential text seems to have set the basic prophetic frame of reference for the Nephites who followed Nephi.

In general, the pattern begins with revelations that look forward to the coming of Jesus Christ to the Jews in Jerusalem—the easily recognized and well-known theme of the condescension of God in 1 Nephi 11. Here and elsewhere, the first stage of Nephite prophecy begins with the prophet foretelling how and when Jesus would come down in the flesh, as God, to preach and to work miracles in the midst of the Jews, and how the Jews would reject him and, through priestcraft, crucify him. In connection with this stage, the Nephite prophets also explain that the suffering of the Messiah would bring about the atonement and the resurrection,

but that his rejection would further spell disaster and dispersion for the Jews and would complete the scattering of Israel.

In the second phase of the Nephite prophetic view, the Book of Mormon prophets turn their attention to scattered Israel—those scattered both before and after the coming of Christ. Thus, in 1 Nephi 12, Nephi describes the conditions of Lehi's posterity after they scatter abroad and eventually dwindle in unbelief and darkness. In this phase, the Nephite prophets typically explain how all Israel, dispersed among the lands of the earth, would languish in disbelief, be subjected to conflict, and grow in spiritual darkness and wickedness. Although they would be scourged for having fought against the Son of God or for having rejected their covenants, the house of Israel would not be forgotten by God. He would remember the covenants he had made to their forefathers, and he would remember his covenant people wherever they might be scattered, even in the most remote areas of the world. For obvious reasons, the Nephite prophets took a special personal interest in the Lord's promises that he would remember the house of Israel even upon "the isles of the sea" (2 Nephi 10:8).

The third stage in Nephi's formative text comes in 1 Nephi 13. This stage envisions the day of the Gentiles, or the working of the Lord through the non-Israelite nations. In an unexpected turn of irony, God would begin to reconstitute the house of Israel by commencing a great and marvelous work among the godless. In wondrous and miraculous ways, the Gentiles would become the conveyors of the word of God, nursing fathers and nursing mothers through whom the gathering and rebuilding of Israel would begin. The Gentiles would be the medium through which the ancient stock would be preserved as the words and records of ancient Israel come forth "out of the dust" and "out of obscurity" (2 Nephi 26:16; 27:29). While that day of the Gentiles would

be crucial, it would not be the final, everlasting day. Eventually the fruit of this day would begin to turn bitter, setting the stage for the ultimate conflict between good and evil.

The fourth stage (found in 1 Nephi 14, the final chapter of Nephi's vision), discloses the events and conditions that will prevail at the end of times. In the end, God will be victorious over the powers of evil. The great and abominable kingdom of the devil, the harlot of all the earth, will be made to drink blood, and all punishments that are due and owing to the evil ones will be exacted. In this day, righteousness will be established and peace and harmony will eventually prevail, with the covenant people being armed "with the power of God in great glory" (1 Nephi 14:14).

This four-staged pattern comprises the Nephite prophetic view. Over and over in the writings on the small plates of Nephi, these four elements provide the outline for Nephite prophecy. In short, the four phases cover

1. Christ's coming;
2. his rejection and the scattering of the Jews;
3. the day of the Gentiles; and
4. the restoration of Israel and the ultimate victory of good over evil.

Before addressing the roles played by the Isaiah texts in connection with this pattern, it is important to realize the significance of this prophetic view to the Nephites. This set of four specific stages of expectation for the future was more than just a social perspective or a political outlook: it constituted a full worldview that shaped and controlled other interpretations and opinions about various scriptures, religious questions, personal and group identity, and the very purpose of life among the Nephites. To the righteous Nephites, this sequence of truths and values explained the big questions of their group's existence: where they as a

people had come from, why they had left the Old World, what they were doing in a remote corner of the world, and where their extraordinary journey would eventually take them and their posterity. Thus, this prophetic expectation constituted a richly developed and actualized worldview, not merely an abstract hypothesis.

Moreover, this worldview saw the world particularly from the viewpoint of the Nephites. Its specific formulation seems to have originated in the vision shared by Lehi and Nephi, especially in the writings of Nephi. Because Lehi and Nephi saw the same vision (see 1 Nephi 11:3; 14:29), many elements in Lehi's dream (see 1 Nephi 8, 10) are also present in Nephi's prophecy (see 1 Nephi 11–14).¹ But Nephi's explanation is more systematic and more definitive than Lehi's, for Nephi sought and obtained specific information about the chronological and historical meaning of the things he and his father were shown. Thus it appears that the Nephite prophetic view crystallized when Nephi wrote his seminal text now found in 1 Nephi 11–14. That prophetic view significantly centered on Nephite concerns (such as whether God would remember people scattered upon the islands of the sea), and thus it did not focus in any detail on several themes that figure much more saliently in the modern LDS worldview. For instance, the Nephite prophets were greatly concerned about the first coming of Christ; they had less concern about his second coming; indeed, the early Nephites were still looking forward to and mustering faith in Jesus' first advent, and even that event was so remote and incomprehensible from their frame of reference that people who prophesied of the distant first coming of Christ were regularly accused of blasphemy and false prophecy (see, for example, Jacob 7:7; Mosiah 17:7–8; Alma 14:5). While all true prophets testify of the same ultimate realities, each works from his own distinctive perspective.

The four-part pattern established in Nephi's main vision in 1 Nephi 11–14 constitutes the basic outline for most of the other prophetic texts in the small plates. Three of those texts, namely, 1 Nephi 19–22, 2 Nephi 6–10, and 2 Nephi 12–30, extensively involve the writings of Isaiah. In fact, they contain almost all the Isaiah materials quoted in the Book of Mormon. By understanding these three Nephite texts, one will be a long way toward the goal of understanding the use of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon.

The Role of Isaiah in Nephi's View in 1 Nephi 19–22

The last four chapters of 1 Nephi deal with the future of Nephi's people in their new land of promise. Their topics follow in order the same four stages found in 1 Nephi 11–14 and described above.

First, chapter 19 clearly discusses Christ's coming. For example, Nephi prophesies: "And the world, because of their iniquity, shall judge him to be a thing of naught; wherefore they scourge him, and he suffereth it; and they smite him, and he suffereth it. Yea, they spit upon him, and he suffereth it, because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men" (1 Nephi 19:9). Throughout the chapter are found the elements of stage one, which describes the coming of Christ, his mission, his suffering, his rejection, and its consequences.

Second, in 1 Nephi 20, Nephi quotes Isaiah 48. This chapter describes the rejection of Christ by the Jews and their scattering, the elements of stage two. The text begins by affirming that Israel is in apostasy: "They swear not in truth nor in righteousness" (verse 1) and "do not stay themselves upon the God of Israel" (verse 2) because of their stiffneckedness (verse 4), even after having been shown the

truth. Nevertheless, Isaiah says, God will “defer [his] anger” for His name’s sake (verse 9) and refrain from cutting Israel off, but will refine them in a “furnace of affliction” (verse 10) and lead them “through the deserts” (verse 21). Although the promise still stands that Israel will come forth out of the world (see verse 20), the chapter ends by seeing no peace for the wicked (see verse 22). When one reads Isaiah 48 in connection with stage two of the Nephite worldview, one readily sees many points of contact between the two. Indeed, as a modern reader stands in Nephi’s place and strives to see things through Nephi’s eyes, it becomes quite evident why Nephi would have found in Isaiah a soul mate and how he would have seized upon many words and phrases in Isaiah 48 as having a direct bearing upon the themes of stage two in his worldview.

Third, in chapter 21, Nephi goes on to quote Isaiah 49. This chapter contains several passages that pertain directly to the central theme of Nephi’s stage three, the day of the Gentiles. For example, a key verse reads, “Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders” (1 Nephi 21:22). In addition, this chapter calls for Israel to “listen, O isles” (verse 1), tells how a servant will be raised up “for a light to the Gentiles” (verse 6), that “kings shall see and arise” (verse 7) while messengers will be sent “to them that sit in darkness” (verse 9), and that the Lord will comfort and not forget his people (see verses 13 and 15). These and several other elements in Isaiah 49 relate and apply directly to Nephi’s stage three.

Finally, Nephi concludes his prophecy in 1 Nephi 22 by discussing the restoration of Israel and the victory of God over evil, declaring that there will be “one shepherd” who will “reign in dominion, and might, and power, and great glory” (1 Nephi 22:24–25; see also verse 26). This theme was

already introduced, at the end of 1 Nephi 21 (which quotes Isaiah 49). There Isaiah prophesies that Israel will be restored, and that they who oppress the righteous “shall be drunken with their own blood,” and that “all flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am thy Savior” (1 Nephi 21:26). Isaiah 49 served Nephi’s purposes not only by declaring stage three, but also by leading directly into his concluding comments on stage four in 1 Nephi 22.

The Role of Isaiah in Jacob’s View in 2 Nephi 6–10

The second Nephite text that uses Isaiah in conjunction with the Nephite prophetic view is Jacob’s covenant speech in 2 Nephi 6–10. This speech is built around the theme, “Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, . . . and they shall bring thy sons in their arms” (2 Nephi 6:6), which will usher in the victorious day of the Lord. After summarizing the basic Nephite prophetic view, Jacob uses two chapters from Isaiah to establish and expound upon stage four of that view, which deals with the theme of the day of the Lord.

Jacob begins his speech by summarizing the four stages in seven verses. First, he states, “Nevertheless, the Lord . . . has shown unto me that the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, should manifest himself unto them in the flesh; and after he should manifest himself they should scourge him and crucify him, according to the words of the angel who spake it unto me” (2 Nephi 6:9)—stage one.

In the next verse, he turns immediately to the fact that because “they [the Jews] have hardened their hearts and stiffened their necks . . . , the judgments of the Holy One of Israel shall come upon them” (2 Nephi 6:10)—stage two.

Jacob then promises that “nevertheless, the Lord will be merciful unto them [the Jews]. . . . And blessed are the Gentiles

. . . and the people of the Lord . . . who wait for him” (2 Nephi 6:11–13)—themes regarding stage three, the day of the Gentiles.

He concludes his overview by prophesying that “the Messiah will set himself again the second time to recover them . . . unto the destruction of their enemies. . . . And they shall know that the Lord is God, the Holy One of Israel” (2 Nephi 6:14–15)—in other words, stage four.

At this point in stage four (at the end of 2 Nephi 6), Jacob begins quoting the last verses of Isaiah 49, the same text that Nephi had used to introduce stage four in 1 Nephi 21; then Jacob continues on, quoting Isaiah 50 and 51. He turns to these texts to reinforce the points he had made in chapter 6, especially regarding stage four, for in Isaiah 50, God declares his “power to deliver” (Isaiah 50:2, parallel to 2 Nephi 7:2) and to help (see Isaiah 50:9, parallel to 2 Nephi 7:9) those who obey “the voice of his servant” (Isaiah 50:10, parallel to 2 Nephi 7:10), but those who walk in the light of their own fire “shall lie down in sorrow” (Isaiah 50:11, parallel to 2 Nephi 7:11). In Isaiah 51, which is thoroughly relevant to stage four, a law proceeds forth from God, who makes a judgment (see Isaiah 51:4, parallel to 2 Nephi 8:4), the righteous awake and “the dragon” is wounded (Isaiah 51:9, parallel to 2 Nephi 8:9), the redeemed return singing unto Zion with everlasting joy (see Isaiah 51:11, parallel to 2 Nephi 8:11), and the fury of the oppressor is gone (see Isaiah 51:13, parallel to 2 Nephi 8:13).

In 2 Nephi 9, Jacob continues his development of the themes of stage four, as he discusses the rejoicing that will occur when the Jews “shall be restored to the true church and fold of God” (verse 2). He then gives his famous extended discourse on God’s ultimate victory over sin and death and on the glorious resurrection and day of the Lord’s judgment. Whereas Isaiah 50 and 51 seem to prophesy primarily

that the righteous will prevail in this world, Jacob extends Isaiah's field of vision to include not only the dragon of wicked oppression but the ultimate enemies, death and hell.

Jacob concludes his covenant speech in 2 Nephi 10 by briefly revisiting all four of the basic stages: He assures his people that they are "this righteous branch" (2 Nephi 10:1), preserved even though others will reject Christ when he will come among them (see verse 3). Those who reject Christ will thus be "scattered among all nations" (verse 6), but they will be remembered and gathered "from the isles of the sea" (verse 8). This promise of restoration deftly brings Jacob back to the point where he began, with the kings of the gentiles being his people's "nursing fathers" (verse 9; see also verse 18) so that the righteous may inherit this land (see verse 19). Although Jacob covers all four phases in giving his audience a basic frame of reference, he spends most of his time in this speech focusing on stage four, which he elaborates with the aid of Isaiah's writings.

The Role of Isaiah in Nephi's View in 2 Nephi 25–30

Nephi's extensive quotation of the prophecies of Isaiah 2–14 appears in 2 Nephi 12–24; these Isaiah chapters are then interpreted by Nephi in 2 Nephi 25–30. In this block of texts, Nephi begins by quoting thirteen chapters of Isaiah in one continuous stretch. He does this to supply Isaiah as a third witness to the things that he and Jacob have said (see 2 Nephi 11:3). After quoting those chapters, Nephi draws individual words and phrases from Isaiah 2–14 to corroborate and substantiate his now familiar four-phased prophetic view as he follows the pattern again in 2 Nephi 25–30.

First, Nephi begins again at the standard Nephite point of departure: "Behold, they will crucify him; and after he is

laid in a sepulchre for the space of three days he shall rise from the dead, with healing in his wings” (2 Nephi 25:13). Most of chapter 25 deals with Christ.

Second, after discussing the scattering of the Jews (see 2 Nephi 25:14–16), Nephi explains in chapter 26 how Lehi’s posterity will be afflicted with internal contention (see 2 Nephi 26:1–7) and will eventually be smitten by the Gentiles (see 2 Nephi 26:8–15). Here Nephi draws expressly on words and phrases from Isaiah 5:24–30, which he quoted in 2 Nephi 15, regarding earthquakes, blood, anger, pain, sorrow, and burning as stubble. In this section, Nephi also quotes or paraphrases Isaiah 3:15 (see 2 Nephi 26:20); 29:3–5 (see 2 Nephi 26:15–18); 52:3; and 55:1 (see 2 Nephi 26:25).

Third, the theme of the day of the Gentiles is treated extensively from the end of 2 Nephi 26–27. In these chapters Nephi talks about the conditions during the days of the Gentiles, the convincing of the Gentiles that Jesus is the Christ, the stumbling of the Gentiles (see 2 Nephi 26:20), and the latter-day coming forth of the book from the dust (see 2 Nephi 27:6–19). In this iteration of stage three, Nephi draws heavily on Isaiah 29 (see 2 Nephi 27:2–4, 7, 12, 15, 25–34), and also on passages from Isaiah 2:12; 3:15 (see 2 Nephi 28:12–13); 8:14 (see 2 Nephi 26:20); 9:16 (see 2 Nephi 26:20); and 10:25 (see 2 Nephi 28:16).

Finally, the opening of the sealed book (see 2 Nephi 27:11) will commence the day of woe and judgment upon the wicked (see 2 Nephi 27:27, 31), leading to the fall of the great and abominable enemy of God (see 2 Nephi 28:18). But the words of the Lord shall be gathered into one, as will all his faithful (see 2 Nephi 29:14), and “the wolf [shall] dwell with the lamb” (2 Nephi 30:12) and “Satan shall have power over the hearts of the children of men no more” (2 Nephi 30:18). Here, in this stage four, Nephi quotes heavily from Isaiah 11 and also from several other verses in

Isaiah 2–14. For example, Nephi’s words in 2 Nephi 29:1–2 about the Lord setting his hand a second time and an ensign being raised come from Isaiah 11:10–11, and Nephi’s lesson that God shall “judge the poor” in righteousness (2 Nephi 30:9) comes straight from Isaiah 11:4. Isaiah 14:19 talks of an “abominable branch,” a phrase that likely resonated in Nephi’s mind as he wrote his expression “great and abominable” (2 Nephi 28:18).

Much more could be said about these four stages of the Nephite prophetic view and the ways in which that view governed or influenced how the Nephites read their sacred texts (such as those of Zenos and Zenock, in addition to Isaiah’s) and how they understood their religious heritage and tradition. For example, one could show how, in teaching Zenos’ allegory of the olive tree, Jacob places that prophecy into this prophetic framework [in Jacob 4–6; see table 3]. Many more details about these Isaiah texts are discussed in other chapters in this volume, but the concept is illustrated clearly enough by the texts of 1 Nephi 19–22, 2 Nephi 6–10, and 2 Nephi 12–30 that one may see how that prophetic view gives structure to the use of Isaiah by Nephi and Jacob.

Conclusion

With these examples of the stages of the Nephite prophetic view in mind, I offer a few concluding observations. As a practical recommendation, I would hope that a reader who gets lost in the middle of an Isaiah text in the Book of Mormon might stop and ask, “Which of the four stages in the Nephite prophetic view does this passage support or substantiate?” By answering that question, the reader will generally be able to understand why the passage was inserted by the Nephite writers into their text and how the Isaiah

text is relevant to the Nephite message at hand. Each segment of material quoted from Isaiah almost always pertains, at least in broad terms, to one of the four Nephite themes: the coming of Christ, the scattering of Israel, the restoring of Israel through the Gentiles, or God's ultimate victory over evil. (Table 1 describes how each chapter of the book of Isaiah quoted in the Book of Mormon relates to these four themes.) Each Isaiah segment that is quoted, except for Isaiah 7:1–9 (which prophesies that Syria will not capture Jerusalem) and Isaiah 48:3–8 (which explains why God reveals the future to obstinate people), can be fairly easily classified under at least one of the four main headings. The possibility that a scripture may have multiple meanings and the fact that two themes may partially overlap allows some room for interpretation and ambiguity in this process of classification, but for the most part, these problems are small and generally unproblematic for those readers who are trying to grasp Isaiah's general message.

Moreover, as an evaluative observation, I would hope that readers might pause and realize how impressive it is that Isaiah's words were not just quoted arbitrarily in the Book of Mormon. Chapters like Isaiah 48 and 49 are quoted purposefully and intelligently within the guiding sequence and framework of the Nephite prophetic view. (Table 2 lists the themes of each of the four stages of the Nephite prophetic view and the Isaiah passages pertinent to each of those themes.) To accomplish this meaningful integration of the complex Isaiah texts into the literary context of the Book of Mormon, Nephi and Jacob needed to be thoroughly conversant with the writings of Isaiah as well as fully immersed in the Nephite worldview. Such an impressive feat of meaningful integration and extensive utilization of Isaiah required much more than a casual or random association of one text with the other.

The presence of this underlying consistency in the Nephite texts should not be particularly surprising to us. Indeed, the Nephite prophets claimed that all prophets prophesied essentially the same word of Christ (see Jacob 4:13). Thus, the Nephite prophets all sought to convey essentially the same vision and the same story. The same main themes come through again and again, but they are told in different ways and approached through different settings and purposes. (Table 3 shows how and where the Nephite prophetic view appears in at least six texts on the small plates of Nephi in addition to Jacob 4–6.) Accordingly, although all four stages are present in each of the prophetic texts in the small plates, equal time and attention are not given to each stage in each passage. For example, in 2 Nephi, Jacob emphasizes stage four (in 2 Nephi 7–9), while Nephi spends more time on stage three (in 2 Nephi 26–29). Still, all four phases are present in each of these cases.

The Nephite prophetic view supplies modern readers with the big picture in understanding Isaiah. The lines and images in the prophetic poetry of Isaiah are like puzzle pieces in a large jigsaw puzzle, and the Nephite prophetic view is the picture on the box. With that picture, we can put the puzzle of Isaiah's words together.

I have always been amazed at Nephi's claim that he saw Isaiah as being "plain" (2 Nephi 25:4), an astonishing assertion to most people who knock their heads and hearts against these rich but difficult texts. But now, in light of the Nephite prophetic view, the meaning that Nephi saw in these Isaiah texts truly does become plainer and clearer. As Nephi states, "They are plain unto all those that are filled with the spirit of prophecy" (2 Nephi 25:4), by which one can conclude that he means to include all those who share and comprehend the spirit and understanding of the Nephite prophetic view.

Note

1. See “Connections between the Visions of Lehi and Nephi,” FARMS Update, *Insights* (July 1993): 2. Nephi’s and Lehi’s visions both embrace the same prophetic elements, but while Lehi’s dream is intimate and symbolic, focusing on his family, Nephi’s dream is collective and historic, applying to all humankind. Nephi and Lehi view the same elements with different perspectives and purposes.

Table 1

The Isaiah Chapters in the Book of Mormon Classified by the Four Stages of the Nephite Prophetic View

- Isaiah 2–4 (parallel to 2 Nephi 12–14), *stage 4*—Speaks concerning the day of the Lord, the law going forth, the vanquishing of evil, and the defeat of the mighty men of war.
- Isaiah 5 (parallel to 2 Nephi 15), *stage 2*—“My people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge” (v. 13, parallel to 2 Nephi 15:3), but “for all this his anger is not turned away” (v. 25); and *stage 3*, “And he will lift up an ensign to the nations” (v. 26).
- Isaiah 6 (parallel to 2 Nephi 16), *stage 3*—How long the people will remain in darkness (see v. 11), as the Lord has “removed men far away” (v. 12).
- Isaiah 7 (parallel to 2 Nephi 17), *stage 1*—“A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (v. 7:14), but the land will become desolate, with briars and thorns (see 7:23).
- Isaiah 8 (parallel to 2 Nephi 18), *stage 3*—“Give ear, all ye of far countries” (v. 9), “I should not walk in the way of this people” (v. 11) but “let [the Lord of Hosts] be your fear” (v. 13). They will “be driven to darkness” (v. 22).
- Isaiah 9 (parallel to 2 Nephi 19), *stage 1*—But those of the nations “that walked in darkness have seen a great light” (v. 2), “for unto us a child is born” (v. 6).

- Isaiah 10–14 (parallel to 2 Nephi 20–24), *stage 4*—“The remnant shall return” (10:21), the Lord will judge, and “the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb” (11:6); God will set his hand a “second time to recover the remnant of his people” (11:11), and all will praise God’s name in that day (see 12:4); Babylon, on the other hand, will be destroyed in the day of “wrath and fierce anger” (13:9), and Lucifer will be “cut down” (14:12); people will say that “the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it” (14:32).
- Isaiah 48 (parallel to 1 Nephi 20), *stage 2*—Israel will be in apostasy because of stiffneckedness (vv. 2–4); they are to be refined in a “furnace of affliction” (v. 10); there is no peace for the wicked (see v. 22).
- Isaiah 49 (parallel to 1 Nephi 21), *stage 3*—God will lift up his hand to the Gentiles (see v. 22), those on the isles of the sea will hear (see v. 1), and messengers will be sent “to them that are in darkness” (v. 9).
- Isaiah 50 (parallel to 2 Nephi 7), *stage 4*—God’s power to deliver and to help; the wicked to be destroyed.
- Isaiah 51 (parallel to 2 Nephi 8), *stage 4*—Law and judgment come forth from God, the righteous awake, and the dragon is wounded (see v. 9); the redeemed have “everlasting joy” (v. 11).
- Isaiah 52, *stage 4*—“The Lord shall bring again Zion” (v. 8) and will redeem Jerusalem (see v. 9); all the world will see the salvation of the Lord (see v. 10).
- Isaiah 53 (Mosiah 14), quoted by Abinadi, relates to *stage 1*—The suffering and death of Christ (see vv. 2–4); he is “taken from prison” and bruised (vv. 8–10), to make “intercession for the transgressors” (v. 12).
- Isaiah 54 (3 Nephi 22), quoted by the resurrected Christ, relates to *stage 3*—Speaks of God’s “everlasting kindness” (v. 8) and assurance that he will remember his people and that “no weapon . . . formed against [them] will prosper” (v. 17).

Table 2

**The Four Stages of the Nephite Prophetic View
Supported by the Isaiah Texts in the Book of Mormon**

The following table takes the four stages of the Nephite prophetic view and arranges each Isaiah passage in the Book of Mormon under one of those stages.

Stage 1. The coming of Jesus Christ among the Jews and his rejection because of priestcrafts.

Isaiah	
7:10–16	a sign is given of the birth of Immanuel (see also 1 Nephi 11:13–18), but the land will be forsaken
7:17–25	the land of Judah will be desolate, filled with briers
8:1–8	“as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah” (v. 6), they will be overrun
8:9–10	those who counsel against God will come to naught
8:11–18	the Lord will be a “sanctuary” for some, but “a stone of stumbling” for others (v. 14); “I will look for [the Lord]” (v. 17)
9:1–7	a “great light” has shined, “for unto us a son is given” (v. 6)
9:8–17	but the proud will be devoured, for they do not seek the Lord; their leaders “cause them to err” (v. 16; see also 2 Nephi 10:5; Isaiah 3:12), and they that follow them are destroyed (cf. 2 Nephi 10:6)
48:12–22	“I am he,” “the first [and] the last” (v. 12); God “hath sent me, . . . thy Redeemer” (v. 16–17); if thou “hadst hearkened to my commandments” “then had thy peace been as a river” (v. 18); “the Lord hath redeemed his servant” (v. 20)
53:1–12	“He is despised and rejected of men” (v. 3); “he hath borne our griefs” (v. 4), and is smitten, afflicted, judged, killed as an offering for sin; he intercedes for the transgressors

Stage 2. Jews will be scattered and smitten, will suffer in contention and darkness, but the Lord will not forget them.

- 3:1–4:1 the stay will be taken away from Judah; Jerusalem will be ruined; proud men and women will fall
- 5:1–25 “What could I have done more [for] my vineyard?” (v. 4); “my people are gone into captivity” (v. 13); the anger of the Lord is against his people, but he will still lift up an ensign for them (see v. 25–26)
- 6:1–12 how long will they not understand? until the land is “utterly desolate” (v. 11)
- 8:18–22 those with no light in them will be driven to darkness
- 9:18–21 “no man shall spare his brother” (v. 19); all will be against each other (see also 1 Nephi 12:21); but the Lord’s “hand is stretched out still” (v. 21)
- 48:1–2 Judah will not swear by the Lord in righteousness
- 48:9–11 God will refine Judah in the fire of affliction
- 50:1–11 Even though none answered when the Lord came, he will not put Israel away; he did not turn away when he was rejected; but those who kindle a fire other than the light of the Lord will stay in darkness and sorrow

Stage 3. In the day of the Gentiles, a remnant will be summoned and gathered again.

- 5:26–30 he will “lift up an ensign to the nations” (v. 26); “they shall come with speed” (v. 26)
- 6:13 a portion will return
- 10:20–23 the remnant of Israel will return
- 11:10–16 an ensign will stand for the Gentiles; the Lord will recover the remnant a second time from the islands of the sea and from all the nations
- 49:1–26 the islands hearken; the Gentiles will see and arise “to restore the preserved of Israel,” from afar (v. 6); the Lord will not forget his people (see v. 15); God will lift up his hand to the Gentiles (see v. 22), and their kings and queens will help Israel, and all flesh will know that the Lord is the Redeemer
- 51:1–23 the Lord will comfort his people (see v. 3); the isles will wait upon the Lord (see v. 5), and the redeemed of the

drunk the dregs of trembling (v. 16); and God pleads the cause of his people (see v. 23)

54:1-17 God will keep his covenant of kindness; he will be called "the God of the whole earth" (v. 5); he calls Israel to enlarge the tent and strengthen the stakes (see v. 2); the posterity of Israel will "inherit the Gentiles" (v. 3) and "remember the reproach" no more (v. 4)

Stage 4. In the day of God's judgment, the wicked will be destroyed and God's righteousness will be victorious.

2:6-9, 11 idolatry in the land will be destroyed
2:12-22 the lofty "shall be brought low" (v. 12)
10:1-19 in the day of visitation, God will punish the wicked and will "burn and devour [them] in one day" (v. 17)
10:24-34 the Lord will "stir up a scourge" (v. 26) and lop off the haughty bough with terror (see v. 33)
13:1-22 "the day of the Lord is at hand" (v. 6); he will destroy the sinners and cause arrogance to cease (see v. 11); God will destroy the wicked speedily
14:9-28 "Hell . . . is moved" (v. 9); Lucifer is fallen, cast out like an "abominable branch" (v. 19)
2:1-5 the Lord's house and peace will be established
2:10-11 "the Lord alone shall be exalted" (v. 11)
4:2-6 the branch of the Lord will be beautiful; a tabernacle will be in Jerusalem, "cloud . . . by day" and a "fire by night"
11:1-9 "a rod [will grow] out of the stem of Jesse" (v. 1) and will judge the earth with righteousness; the wolf and the lamb shall dwell in peace, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord" (v. 9)
12:1-6 righteous will be comforted; "God is my salvation"; "with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation"
14:1-8 "the Lord will have mercy" and choose Israel, and they will return to their lands (v. 1); "The whole earth is at rest" (v. 7)
14:29-32 Zion is established
52:1-15 "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace" (v. 7); all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of God when he "shall bring again Zion" (v. 8)

Table 3
The Nephite Prophetic World View

Stage 1. The Coming of Jesus Christ	1 Nephi 11–14	1 Nephi 19–21	1 Nephi 22	2 Nephi 6–10	2 Nephi 25	2 Nephi 26–30	Jacob 4–6
at Jerusalem	11:13			6:8	25:11		
600 years after Lehi left Jerusalem		19:8			25:19		
after the return from captivity				6:8	25:11		
his name Jesus Christ, the Son of God					25:19		
born to Mary of Nazareth	11:13–21						
will come	11:13–21	19:8		6:9	25:12		4:11
in the flesh				6:9	25:12		
with love	11:22	19:9					4:10
many worship him	11:24						
baptism by the prophet	11:27						
minister with power and glory	11:28	19:13					4:11
will suffer		19:9, 12					

will be cast out	11:28					
perform miracles	11:31					
be judged and rejected	11:32	19:9	22:5	25:12		4:15
scourged		19:9		6:9		
smitten, spat on		19:9				
will die on the cross	11:33	19:10		6:9	25:13	4:14
sign of his death especially to those of the house of Israel		19:10-12				26:3
fulfill law				25:24, 27		
atonement, infinite atonement for all mankind	11:33					4:11-12
resurrection				25:16		
twelve rejected by house of Israel	11:34-35			25:13-14	26:1	4:11-12
all who reject the twelve will fall	11:36					
wo unto them that fight against God and the people of his church				25:14		
they perish who cast out the prophets and slay the saints					26:3	
the tree began to decay						5:3

Stage 2. The Scattering of the Jews							
	1 Nephi 11-14	1 Nephi 19-21	1 Nephi 22	2 Nephi 6-10	2 Nephi 25	2 Nephi 26-30	Jacob 4-6
scourged, destroyed	11:36	19:13		6:10	25:14-16		
scattered, confounded			22:3, 4				
because they:							
• fight against the twelve in pride	11:36						
• are proud and wicked						26:4	
• fight against God and the people of his church					25:14	26:3	
• turn hearts aside		19:13-14					
• harden hearts and stiffen necks		20:4		6:10			4:14
• do iniquities and harden their hearts			22:5		25:12		
• looking beyond the mark they stumble							4:14
multitude in the promised land as sand of sea, thy seed as the sand	12:1	20:19					
God led them through the deserts		20:21					

wars and contentions	12:2-3	25:12	26:2
I knew you would deal treacherously	20:8		
depths swallow and buildings fall on them, signs of death			26:4-6
he will remember the isles of the sea, gather	19:16, 21:1		
all the earth shall see the salvation of the Lord	19:17		
for I am he, all ye assemble	20:12, 14		
Christ to appear in New World	12:4-6		26:1, 9
righteous perish not			26:8
twelve disciples in New World and four righteous generations	12:7-12		26:9
destruction of Nephites			
• by Lamanites	12:13-23		26:10
• in darkness	12:23	21:9	26:10
• no peace unto wicked	20:22		
Lord will not suffer the Gentiles to destroy the seed of Lehi	13:31		

Stage 3. The Day of the Gentiles							
	1 Nephi 11-14	1 Nephi 19-21	1 Nephi 22	2 Nephi 6-10	2 Nephi 25	2 Nephi 26-30	Jacob 4-6
Many Gentile nations and kingdoms and church of the devil	13:1-10					27:1	
many churches and the methods of the devil						26:20-33	
Israel scattered among Gentile nations			22:3-4		25:15-16		
Gentiles come to smite the Lamanites	13:11-15					26:15	
our seed brought low in dust						26:15	
dwindle in unbelief						26:17	
by the Gentiles shall our seed be scattered			22:7				
one Gentile group delivered from nations	13:16-19						
raise up a mighty nation among the Gentiles even upon face of this land		21:6	22:7				
wild branches grafted in							5:7

the Gentiles must be convinced				26:12
convincing them of the true Messiah	13:41		25:18	
book to come forth	13:20–29			26:16, 27:6
standard set up		21:22	22:6	29:3
restore the preserved of Israel; for a light to the Gentiles		21:6		25:17
marvelous work among Gentiles	14:7		22:8	25:17 27:6–35
of worth to the Gentiles and also to all Israel			22:9	28:2
kings shall see and arise		21:7		
false teachings in the latter days, wo to Gentiles				28:3–32
after Gentiles stumble and Lamanites smitten, Lord is merciful to bring forth the gospel to last and first	13:30–42	21:10		26:20
first and last		20:12		5:63
O isles I have heard thee I have helped thee and I will preserve thee		21:8		

Stage 4. The Reestablishment of Israel and the Judgment of the World

	1 Nephi 11-14	1 Nephi 19-21	1 Nephi 22	2 Nephi 6-10	2 Nephi 25	2 Nephi 26-30	Jacob 4-6
numbered among seed	14:1					30:2	
gathered from afar		21:12					
gathered together			22:12				
confounded no more	14:2						
smitten no more		21:13				30:3	
out of darkness			22:12			30:6	
I will not forget thee		21:15					
Father will fulfill covenants	14:17				25:21	28:1	
all the children back		21:18-22				30:8	
Gentiles bring them back		21:22-23					
Gentiles will forget the Jews						29:5	
all people commanded to write						29:11-13	
words shall judge them					25:18, 22		
they that oppress the righteous shall be drunken with own blood		21:26					

blood of great and abominable upon their own head, drunken with own blood		22:13		27:3
pit digged by great and abominable	14:3		22:14	
only two churches	14:10			30:10
all that fight against Zion shall be destroyed		22:14, 22-23		27:3
wars on all earth	14:15			
wicked burn as stubble		22:15		
wicked destroyed by fire				30:10 5:77, 6:3
righteous shall not perish		22:19, 24		30:10-11
prophet like Moses is Holy One of Israel		22:21		
Christ is the Holy One of Israel			25:29	
all people shall dwell safely in the Holy One		22:28		30:12-15
all flesh shall know that I am thy Savior, Redeemer	21:26	22:12		
no other Messiah or name			25:23-27	
all things shall be made known				30:16-18