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# 2 NEPHI 6 – 11

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Book of Mormon, Adult Institute Class, Monday, 28 Sep 2009

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## INTRODUCTION

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After Nephi finished recording Lehi's final blessings and his own deeply personal psalm, he next took the time to record a sermon given by his younger brother, Jacob. The approximate date was forty years Lehi left Jerusalem (about 555 B.C., from 2 Nephi 5:34). Jacob's sermon, which was given over a two-day period, consisted of citing just over two chapters of Isaiah and offering commentary. The main part of the sermon, 2 Nephi 9, was described by BYU scholar Robert Matthews as the greatest doctrinal exposition on the Atonement ever given.

## 2 NEPHI 6: JACOB BEGINS HIS SERMON

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To begin his sermon, Jacob outlines his charge from Nephi, quotes two verses from Isaiah, explains them, then launches into a lengthy Isaiah quotation that carries over into chapters 7 and 8.

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### 6:1-5 JACOB'S CHARGE

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Jacob was asked by Nephi to teach his people about certain words of Isaiah and liken them to his people. These verses explain this charge.

**6:2 *ordained after the manner of his holy order.*** The holy order of God is the Melchizedek priesthood (see D&C 107:3-4 and JST Genesis 14 (additions after the KJV chapter ends). He was no doubt ordained by either Lehi, his father (who held the Melchizedek Priesthood, according to Joseph Smith [*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 181] or his brother, Nephi.

***I have spoken unto you exceedingly many things.*** This is not Jacob's first sermon. So why did Nephi choose to make the effort to give it place on his plates—especially immediately after explaining that these plates were for those things which were “pleasing unto God” (2 Nephi 5:32)? Clearly Nephi felt that Jacob's words carried great power—which they do indeed.

**6:3 *the words of my father...all things which are written.*** Jacob's words come mainly from two sources: his father's words and the teachings on the brass plates. There is a great correlation between Jacob's sermon, especially 2 Nephi 9, and the blessing that Lehi gave to Jacob in 2 Nephi 2.

**6:4 *things which are, and which are to come.*** Jacob looked at the scriptures he will present as having a dual fulfillment—his own day and a day in the future. This is often the case with prophetic writings, but especially Isaiah: they have multiple fulfillments.

**The words which my brother has desired that I should speak.** Nephi gave Jacob this assignment directly, even directing the topic he was to address.

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### 6:6-15 JACOB QUOTES AND COMMENTS ON ISAIAH 49:22-23

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The footnote for verse 6 notes links it to Isaiah 49:22-26, which is true of you also include 2 Nephi 6:17-18. But Jacob quoted two verses from Isaiah 49, then discussed them for several verses, then quoted two more. In total during his sermon, Jacob quoted Isaiah 49:22-26, Isaiah 50:1-11, Isaiah 51:1-23, and Isaiah 52:1-2. Why two whole chapters plus the four preceding verses and the two verses following? It's important to remember that Jacob's source, the brass plates, did not have chapters and verses. It probably did have breaks in the text however, giving indications of section breaks. The plates Joseph Smith translated apparently had such breaks, since Joseph Smith would indicate the start of a new chapter or book to his scribe before he began translating the text. We have no texts of Isaiah as old as that on the brass plates, but the oldest text we do have (the Great Isaiah scroll, or 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) shows clear breaks at the starting and stopping places Jacob uses. Additionally, the end of chapter 51 and the first part of 52 has no break, so if he was reading from that scroll, he would have very naturally carried on reading into chapter 52. Just to be specific, between Isaiah 49:22 and 52:2, there are twelve major paragraph breaks (and several more minor breaks, including one after 52:2), dividing the content into thought segments that correspond to these sections of our modern Isaiah:

- 49:22-26
- 50:1-3
- 50:4-11
- 51:1-3
- 51:4-6a
- 51:6b
- 51:7-8
- 51:9-11
- 51:12-13
- 51:14
- 51:15-16
- 51:17 – 52:6

Here is the text in the Book of Mormon. The quotes presented here and below are marked as compared to the KJV, with deletions marked by ~~strikeout~~ and additions by **bold**. The text is also formatted to make the poetry more visible.

6 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.

7 And kings shall be thy nursing fathers,  
and their queens thy nursing mothers:

they shall bow down to thee with their ~~face~~ **faces** toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

6:6 The translation of this verse from Isaiah 49:22 is identical to the KJV. This verse was also quoted by Nephi in 1 Nephi 21:22, also with no changes from the KJV. The verse discusses how The Lord

will set up his standard (a flag for an army or large group to follow) and gather scattered Israel in the arms and on the shoulders of the Gentiles.

6:7 The translation of this verse is identical to Isaiah 49:23 in the KJV, with one small exception: “faces” instead of “face” (“bow down to thee with their faces”). Here kings are foster (a better translation than “nursing”) fathers and queens nursing mothers. The Gentiles were the conquerors of Israel before, but now they shall be bowing down and metaphorically licking up the dust of Israel, and those who patiently waited for God will no longer be ashamed.

After reading these two verses, it is as if Jacob intends to keep reading—as he will do shortly—but feels the need to pause and explain a few things first.

6:8 ***the Lord has shown me.*** Lehi knew by revelation that Jerusalem had been destroyed (2 Nephi 1:4). Jacob explained that he also had such knowledge firsthand from the Lord. Having never lived in Jerusalem or even seen it in life, such a revelation must have had a different feel than what Lehi surely felt when the destruction he prophesied came to pass. Verse 9 mentions that at least some of the information came through an angelic appearance.

6:9 ***the Lord has shown unto me that they should return.*** The vision wasn’t limited to the destruction of Jerusalem, but included the return, which began with Zerubbabel in about 536 B.C. (see Ezra 1).

***the Holy One of Israel, should manifest himself...they should scourge him and crucify him.*** Jumping ahead almost 600 years, Jacob, like Nephi, saw the mortal ministry of the Savior and his crucifixion. This understanding is key to his interpretation of Isaiah in chapters 9 and 10.

6:10-11 ***they shall be smitten and afflicted...driven to and fro.*** After rejecting Jesus as Messiah as a people, Jacob saw the Jews being smitten and scattered. The timing is important for Jacob’s message: though he knows Jews are carried away captive from Jerusalem in his day (v. 8), he sees the most brutal punishment—the ‘final’ scattering—to be after the time of Jesus’ mortal ministry.

6:11 ***they shall be gathered together again.*** Jacob saw the first return of the Jews (v. 9), so this is the great gathering in the last days.

6:12 ***blessed are the Gentiles.*** Tying his comments back to the Isaiah verses just quoted, Jacob recognized the Lord using the Gentiles to fulfill his covenants. The Gentiles are blessed if they stay away from “that great and abominable church”; Lehi’s dream impacted even Jacob’s vocabulary.

6:13 ***they that fight against Zion.*** Those licking up the dust (v. 7; Isaiah 49:23) are described as those that fight against Zion and her covenant people.

***the people of the Lord are they who wait for him.*** To “wait” in Hebrew is to look for, hope, and expect. Faith, patience, and action are all signs of those waiting for his return. Similar language is found in Psalm 25:2-3, where it reads, “O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.”

6:15 ***shall be destroyed.*** Those who are not found ‘waiting’ for the Lord will be destroyed by various devastations.

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## 2 NEPHI 6:16 – 8:25 JACOB QUOTED ISAIAH 49:24 – 52:2

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After that brief aside, Jacob turned back to the brass plates and quoted straight through more than two chapters of Isaiah. He started where he left off in Isaiah 49—he quoted 49:22-23 in 2 Nephi 6:6-7, so he picked up here in Isaiah 49:24 and carries through until Isaiah 52:2. The overall messages of this passage are: 1) a look at Jesus mortal ministry and suffering; and, 2) The gathering of Israel in the last days.

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### 6:16-18 (ISAIAH 49:24-26)

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16 **For** shall the prey be taken from the mighty,  
or the lawful captive delivered?  
17 But thus saith the LORD,  
Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away,  
and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered:  
for **the Mighty God shall deliver his covenant people.**

**For thus saith the Lord:**

I will contend with ~~him~~ **them**  
that contendeth with thee—~~and I will save thy children.~~

18 And I will feed them that oppress thee  
with their own flesh;  
and they shall be drunken  
with their own blood, as with sweet wine:

and all flesh shall know that  
I the LORD  
am thy Saviour  
and thy Redeemer,  
the mighty One of Jacob.

6:16-17 **the prey...the lawful captives.** This refers to scattered Israel, God's covenant people in their sins and wickedness. In a war situation, the people captured in a conquest should be taken and not delivered. But God's promise is that even though that is how it works among men, we can count on him delivering us from this bondage and suffering.

6:18 **all flesh shall know.** Because of the Lord's goodness to Israel in the last days and the seeming impossibility of the situation, the whole world will recognize God's hand in their deliverance.

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### 7:1-3 (ISAIAH 50:1-3)

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This section introduces the metaphor of a marriage relationship between Israel and the Lord. He is the faithful husband, Israel the wandering spouse.

1 **Yea, for thus saith the LORD,**  
**Have I put thee away,**  
**or have I cast thee off forever?**

**For** thus said the Lord:  
Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement?  
    **To** whom I have I put **thee** away,  
or **to** which of my creditors **have I sold you?** ~~is it~~  
    **Yea**, to whom I have sold you?

Behold, for your iniquities  
    have ye sold yourselves,  
and for your transgressions  
    is your mother put away.

2 Wherefore, when I came,  
    ~~was~~ there **was** no man;  
when I called,  
    **yea**, ~~was~~ there **was** none to answer.

**O house of Israel,**  
is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem,  
or have I no power to deliver?

Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea,  
I make ~~the~~ **their** rivers a wilderness  
**and** their fish ~~stinketh~~ **to stink** because ~~there is no water~~ **the waters are dried up,**  
and ~~dieth for~~ **they die because of** thirst.

3 I clothe the heavens  
    with blackness,  
and I make sackcloth  
    their covering.

7:1 **Have I put thee away.** Divorce was conducted anciently by a husband putting away a wife. A father could also find himself needing to sell his children to pay a debt. Yet in this situation, God is making it clear that it is Israel who has put themselves away by their iniquities, not him. He is faithful to the marriage covenant, and he has no debts or creditors that could take us away from him.

7:2 **there was no man...none to answer.** Patiently, the Lord calls to us through his own voice and the voice of his servants, but all too often, we do not listen or respond.

7:2-3 This is a reminder of God's powers over this world—if he can do all these things, can he not deliver his people?

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7:4-11 (ISAIAH 50:4-11)

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Verses 4-9 are one of five 'servant songs' in Isaiah (others are Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-7; 52:13-15; and 53:1-12). These songs reflect more the humility of the mortal life of the Savior than other passage, which reflect his power and greatness, especially after the second coming. Since Nephi and Jacob both had seen visions of Jesus' mortal ministry, that they would quote this servant song makes

sense. In these verses, the servant stands in contrast to the sins of Israel just discussed: where no man would listen, the servant receives the Lord's word; where Israel doubted God's love, the servant is confident of his help; Israel suffered for their iniquities, and the servant suffers because of his obedience; the Lord accused Israel of sin, but the servant is innocent of all charges.

4 The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned,  
that I should know how to speak a word in season ~~to him that is~~ **unto thee,**  
**O house of Israel.**  
**When ye are** weary,  
he ~~wakeneth~~ **waketh** morning by morning.  
He ~~wakeneth~~ **waketh** mine ear to hear as the learned.

5 The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear,  
and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

6 I gave my back  
to the ~~smite~~ **smiter,**  
and my cheeks  
to them that plucked off the hair:  
I hid not my face  
from shame and spitting.

7 For the Lord GOD will help me;  
therefore shall I not be confounded.  
Therefore have I set my face like a flint,  
and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

8 ~~He~~ **And the Lord** is near,  
~~that~~ **and he** justifieth me.

Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand together.  
Who is mine adversary?  
Let him come near ~~to~~ me,  
**and I will smite him with the strength of my mouth.**

9 ~~Behold,~~ **For** the Lord GOD will help me.  
**And all they** who ~~is he that~~ shall condemn me,  
~~to,~~ **behold, all** they ~~all~~ shall wax old as a garment,  
**and** the moth shall eat them up.

10 Who is among you that feareth the LORD,  
that obeyeth the voice of his servant,  
that walketh in darkness,  
and hath no light? ~~let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.~~

11 Behold all ye that kindle a fire,  
that compass yourselves about with sparks:  
walk in the light of your fire  
and in the sparks ~~that~~ **which** ye have kindled.

This shall ye have of mine hand—ye shall lie down in sorrow.

7:4 **the tongue of the learned.** Jesus often demonstrated amazing wisdom and knowledge of God's word, as did his faithful disciples after the resurrection.

7:5 **I was not rebellious.** Jesus obeyed God's commandments perfectly.

7:6 **smiter...hair...shame...spitting.** Jesus suffered all these things during his life, yet he remained true to his mission from the Father.

7:7 **God will help me.** Jesus was the model of trust in the Lord, and an example to us of how to have that same relationship with him. He will support us and stand by us as we are faithful to him. This is repeated in verse 9.

7:10-11 Not part of the servant song, these two verses contrast two types of people: those who fear the Lord and are obedient, and those who attempt to rely on themselves and their own power ("kindle a fire...compass yourselves about with sparks") instead of God.

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### 8:1-8 (ISAIAH 51:1-8)

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Continuing the thought from the end of the previous chapter, the Lord invites us to follow his commandments, remember his covenants, and receive the blessings he has promised the obedient.

1 Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ~~ye that seek the LORD:~~

Look unto the rock **from** whence ye are hewn,  
and to the hole of the pit **from** whence ye are digged.

2 Look unto Abraham your father,  
and unto Sarah, **she** that bare you:  
for I called him alone,  
and blessed him, ~~and increased him.~~

3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion,  
he will comfort all her waste places;  
and he will make her wilderness like Eden,  
and her desert like the garden of the LORD.  
Joy and gladness shall be found therein,  
thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

4 Hearken unto me, my people;  
and give ear unto me, O my nation;  
for a law shall proceed from me,  
and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.

5 My righteousness is near;  
my salvation is gone forth,  
and mine arms shall judge the people.

The isles shall wait upon me,  
and on mine arm shall they trust.

6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens,  
and look upon the earth beneath;

for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke,  
and the earth shall wax old like a garment;  
and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner.  
But my salvation shall be forever,  
and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

7 Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness,  
the people in whose heart is **I have written** my law,  
fear ye not the reproach of men,  
neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

8 For the moth shall eat them up like a garment,  
and the worm shall eat them like wool.  
But my righteousness shall be forever,  
and my salvation from generation to generation.

8:1-2 **rock...pit...Abraham...Sarah**. Though the rock metaphor is often symbolic of Jesus, in this case, Isaiah seems to be making the comparison to Abraham and Sarah—the foundation of the house of Israel. The covenants made with Abraham apply to all their descendents and we can look to them both as examples of faithfulness.

8:3 **the Lord shall comfort Zion**. There is both a physical and spiritual restoration of the house of Israel. The waste places, destroyed from war and neglect, will be miraculously restored. But joy, gladness, and thanksgiving will also be there as they recognize the grace of God in the results.

8:4 **Hearken...and give ear**. The Lord calls us to listen and obey to his words.

8:5 **righteousness...salvation...mine arms**. These are great names for the Savior, and all reflect his mission and attributes—be our example, live a perfect life, be our salvation from the presence of God, and judge the world.

8:6 **my salvation shall be forever**. Though those who trust in the flesh will “vanish away” and “wax old,” those who follow the Lord will have eternal life.

8:7 **in whose heart I have written my law**. A converted person doesn’t just obey perfectly, but obeys out of a perfect heart. When the will of God is reflected in our feelings, desires, and thoughts, we have submitted ourselves fully to him.

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### 8:9-16 (ISAIAH 51:9-16)

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Like people sleeping, the Lord calls us to rise up and follow after his righteousness. His power will be shown to the world, and he will overcome all challenges to redeem his people.

9 Awake, awake!  
Put on strength, O arm of the LORD;  
awake as in the ancient days,~~in the generations of old.~~

Art thou not ~~it~~ **he** that hath cut Rahab,  
and wounded the dragon?  
10 Art thou not ~~it which~~ **he who** hath dried the sea,

the waters of the great deep;  
that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?

11 Therefore, the redeemed of the LORD shall return,  
and come with singing unto Zion;  
and everlasting joy **and holiness**  
shall be upon their ~~head~~ **heads**;  
**and** they shall obtain gladness and joy;  
~~and~~ sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

12 I **am he**;  
**yea, even** I am he  
that comforteth you.

**Behold**, who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man ~~that~~  
**who** shall die,  
and of the son of man, ~~which~~  
**who** shall be made **as like unto** grass;

13 And forgettest the LORD thy maker,  
that hath stretched forth the heavens,  
and laid the foundations of the earth,

and hast feared continually every day,  
because of the fury of the oppressor,  
as if he were ready to destroy?  
And where is the fury of the oppressor?

14 The captive exile hasteneth  
that he may be loosed,  
and that he should not die in the pit,  
nor that his bread should fail.

15 But I am the LORD thy God, ~~that divided the sea,~~  
whose waves roared;  
the LORD of hosts is ~~his~~ **my** name.

16 And I have put my words in thy mouth,  
and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand,  
that I may plant the heavens  
and lay the foundations of the earth,  
and say unto Zion,  
**Behold**, thou art my people.

8:9 **Awake, awake!** This phrase is repeated three times in these passages. This first one is a call from the people for the Lord to awake and show his power. But the other two times, the phrase is a call from the Lord to his people to awake. That re-use of the phrase demonstrates that he is not asleep, but us, for he turns it back and uses it twice to call us to join him in his great work.

8:9-10 **Rahab...the dragon.** Ancient beasts that are types of creatures man could not defeat, but God can, just as he dried up the sea for the children of Israel to escape from Egypt.

8:11 **the redeemed of the Lord shall return.** Just as they did in the days of Moses, so in the last days shall those brought out of bondage and slavery return to the Lord and his covenants and obtain blessings and joy.

8:12 **I am he.** The repetition, enhanced in the Book of Mormon, draws us back to the source of our joy and redemption.

8:12-15 We must not trust in man, who is mortal and whose power fades away like grass in the hot sun, but trust in the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth.

8:16 **thou art my people.** The beautiful imagery of this verse shows the tender love God has for his people—he covers them from the sun in the shadow of his hand, and created the heavens and the earth just for their benefit.

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8:17-25 (ISAIAH 51:17 – 52:2)

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The final section of Jacob's quotation of Isaiah is where the Lord twice calls on his people to awaken from their spiritual slumber and turn from their sins. They have the promise of two sons—prophets—that will help them in a desperate time.

17 Awake, awake,  
stand up, O Jerusalem,  
which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD  
the cup of his fury—  
thou hast drunken the dregs  
of the cup of trembling, ~~and wrung them out—~~

18 ~~There is~~ **And** none to guide her  
among all the sons ~~whom~~  
she hath brought forth;  
~~neither is there any~~ that taketh her by the hand,  
of all the sons ~~that~~  
she hath brought up.

19 These two ~~things~~ **sons** are come unto thee,  
who shall be sorry for thee—  
**thy** desolation and destruction,  
and the famine and the sword—  
**and** by whom shall I comfort thee?

20 Thy sons have fainted, **save these two**;  
they lie at the head of all the streets;  
as a wild bull in a net,  
they are full of the fury of the LORD,  
the rebuke of thy God.

21 Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted,

and drunken, ~~but~~ **and** not with wine:

22 Thus saith thy Lord,  
the LORD and thy God ~~that~~  
pleadeth the cause of his people;

behold, I have taken out of thine hand  
the cup of trembling, ~~even~~  
the dregs of the cup of my fury;  
thou shalt no more drink it again:

23 But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; ~~which~~  
**who** have said to thy soul: Bow down, that we may go over—  
and thou hast laid thy body as the ground  
and as the street to them that went over.

24 Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion;  
put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city;

for henceforth there shall no more come into thee  
the uncircumcised  
and the unclean.

25 Shake thyself from the dust;  
arise, ~~and~~ sit down, O Jerusalem;  
loose thyself from the bands of thy neck,  
O captive daughter of Zion.

8:17 ***thou hast drunken the dregs.*** Israel has known the punishments of the Lord, brought on by their disobedience and sin.

8:19 ***These two sons are come unto thee.*** This ties directly to Revelation 11:3-12, and has its fulfillment in the last days. But in the spirit of likening scripture to themselves, I have to wonder if Jacob saw another fulfillment of this in his and Nephi's preaching to their people? There is an allusion to this in Nephi's words in 2 Nephi 11:2-3.

8:22-23 These verses reflect the judgment of God upon his people. Jehovah pleads their cause before God, and because of his Atonement, the fury of God is removed from his people. Those who inflicted punishments on Israel will receive the punishment that would be due Israel, if they had not repented and relied on the grace of the Savior.

8:24-25 These two verses are from Isaiah 52:1-2, but as mentioned above, continue the thought from chapter 51 and thus belong together.

8:24 ***put on thy strength.*** Joseph Smith was asked the meaning of this phrase by Elias Higbee. The inspired response is in D&C 113:8 – "He [Isaiah] had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of priesthood to bring again Zion, and the redemption of Israel; and to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the priesthood, which she, Zion, has a right to by lineage, also to return to that power which she had lost."

8:25 ***loose thyself from the bands of thy neck***. In the same section, the Prophet interpreted this phrase as well: “We are to understand that the scattered remnants are exhorted to return to the Lord from whence they have fallen; which if they do, the promise of the Lord is that he will speak to them, or give them revelation. See the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses. The bands of her neck are the curses of God upon her, or the remnants of Israel in their scattered condition among the Gentiles” (D&C 113:10).

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## 2 NEPHI 9: JACOB TEACHES THE ATONEMENT

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After quoting Isaiah at length, Jacob gave actually two talks—chapter 9 one day, and chapter 10 the next. 2 Nephi 9 is one of, if not the, greatest discourse on the Atonement in the scriptures.

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### 9:1-6 DEATH AND RESURRECTION

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9:1 ***know concerning the covenants of the Lord***. At the beginning (2 Nephi 6:4), Jacob explained that he was reading Isaiah to them so they would understand what which is and that which is to come. Now he expands that thought by saying he read Isaiah so they may understand the covenants between the Lord and the house of Israel—because the covenants are the driving force behind what is and what is to come.

9:3 ***that ye may rejoice, and lift up your heads forever***. Jacob did not want to weigh his listeners or us down with the burden of our sins, but show us how we can relieve ourselves of that burden through the Atonement of Christ and thus rejoice forever. See comment by [Elder Jeffrey R. Holland](#), *Institute Manual*, 65.

9:4 ***ye have searched much***. One of the first signs of someone seeking to follow the Lord is their willingness and diligence to read and study the scriptures, pondering and praying for understanding.

9:4 ***in our bodies we shall see God***. Death is obvious to us all in this mortal state. But by a testimony of the Spirit, we can also know that we shall live again and stand in God’s presence. The doctrine of the resurrection was taught from the beginning (see Moses 5:10) and is always a part of the message of the prophets.

9:6 ***death...fall...transgression***. There is no way to understand or appreciate the Atonement without first understanding the Fall.

***cut off from the presence of the Lord***. The Fall brought about two types of death (see verse 10), both physical death (the body) and spiritual death (cut off from the presence of the Lord). The Atonement overcomes both. See quote from “[The Living Christ](#),” *Institute Manual*, 65, and [James E. Faust](#), 65-66.

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### 9:7-14 THE GREAT PLAN OF OUR GOD

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9:7 ***an infinite atonement***. Jesus’ atonement was infinite in that it impacted all of heavenly Father’s creations, covered all the effects of the Fall, and is effective in the past, present, and future. Thus prophets before his coming could speak of it as an accomplished fact, and those of us looking back can still call upon that act for our salvation. See [Elder Russell M. Nelson](#), *Institute Manual*, 66.

9:8-9 **that angel who fell...the devil.** The Bible Dictionary informs us that the word “devil” means, in Hebrew, the ‘spoiler’ (BD, 656-657). Since his rebellion in pre-Earth life, Lucifer has as his goal to spoil God’s work. But prophets through all the ages have assured that he will not be successful. Here Jacob teaches that it is because of the infinite atonement and the resurrection that we are not subject to the devil. Without Jesus, we would be not be resurrected and would thus be subject to the power of the devil.

9:10 **death and hell.** Jacob captured both of the effects of the fall here. Death is the separation of our spirits from our bodies, or “the death of the body.” Hell is the separation of our spirits from the presence of God, or “the death of the spirit.”

9:11-12 Using language similar to Jacob here, in Revelation, Jesus revealed himself to John as the one with the keys to death and hell (Revelation 1:18), and in the end uses those keys to open up the prisons that are death and hell, free the people therein, judge them, and then destroy death and hell forever (Revelation 20:13-14).

9:13-14 **how great the plan of our God.** God’s plan is to restore our bodies to our spirits, make us immortal and our bodies incorruptible, and give us a perfect knowledge of our sins and guilt or our enjoyment and righteousness, which prepares us for the next step: judgment.

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#### 9:15-18 JUDGMENT

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9:15 **then cometh the judgment.** Being resurrected and given a perfect knowledge of our acts, we are prepared to stand before God and be judged, that we might receive our eternal reward.

9:16 Jacob is emphatic that the “righteous shall be righteous still” and the “filthy shall be filthy still.” Amulek (Alma 34:34) and Mormon (Mormon 9:13-14) use similar language, perhaps from reading Jacob’s words here. Note that the division is between the righteous and those who “are the devil and his angels.” In other words, the “filthy” Jacob is speaking of are those who were cast out in the pre-existence and those who choose to fully follow Satan in this life, what D&C 76:32 calls “the sons of perdition.”

9:18 **endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it.** Jacob hearkened back to Lehi’s vision again, making reference to the large and spacious building mocking the righteous. Those who endure such mocking will find “their joy shall be full forever.” On crosses, see Elder Neal A. Maxwell, Institute Manual, 67.

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#### 9:19-27 PRAISE FOR GOD AND HIS PLAN

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9:19 **the greatness and mercy of our God.** In the next verses, Jacob erupts in praise for the amazing grace God extends to us by delivering us from death, hell, and eternal torment.

9:21 **the pains of every living creature.** Jesus’ atonement covers not just sins, but pains of all kinds. As Isaiah said, “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it” (Isaiah 25:8). John wrote similarly: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 21:4). And of course, Alma 7 is the seminal text on this topic, which we will cover at a future date.

9:23-24 **repent, and be baptized.** This universal requirement is given by God, or we cannot be saved. Covenants are fundamental to our salvation, and baptism is the first covenant in our eternal progression. Nephi speaks of this extensively in 2 Nephi 31.

9:25-26 **no law...no punishment...no condemnation.** Joseph Smith learned that “all who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; Also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom; For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts. And I also beheld that children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven” (D&C 137:7-9).

9:27 **him that has the law given...like unto us.** We who have the gospel laid before us by scriptures and prophets are left without excuse.

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### 9:28-39 TO BE CARNALLY MINDED IS DEATH

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Jacob outlined several ways that we who know God’s plan can fail. These include:

- To be learned and think we are wise (28), though it is good to be learned if we hearken (listen and obey) to God (29).
- To be rich and despise the poor, and make treasure our god (30).
- To be deaf and not hear the words of the Lord (31).
- To be blind and not see (32).
- To be “uncircumcised of heart” (33), meaning to not take God’s covenants into our hearts (see Romans 2:27-29 and Acts 7:51).
- To be a liar (34).
- To be a “murderer who deliberately killeth” (35).
- To commit whoredoms (36).
- To worship idols (37).
- To die in our sins (38).

9:39 Jacob summed it all up by calling on us to “remember the awfulness in transgressing” the laws of God, and then uttered the marvelous phrase: “Remember, to be carnally-minded is death, and to be spiritually-minded is life eternal.” King Benjamin later will offer a similarly memorable summary: “I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin;...but this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what he have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not” (Mosiah 4:29-30).

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### 9:40-46 PREPARE FOR THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

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9:40 **words of truth are hard.** At least to the unrighteous; compare 1 Nephi 16:2.

9:41 **he employeth no servant there.** See President James E. Faust and Elder Neal A. Maxwell, *Institute Manual*, 69-70.

9:42 **cast these things away.** Unless we put off and make unimportant all but God’s will in our lives, “he will not open the door” to us.

9:44 **I take off my garments, and I shake them before you.** Like Jacob, we have an obligation to tell others of God’s plan, that we might be “clean from the blood of this wicked generation” (D&C 88:75).

9:46 **Prepare your souls for that glorious day.** It will be glorious if we are prepared. If we are not, it will be “awful” and we will cry out, “I know my guilt”!

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#### 9:47-49 SACRED KNOWLEDGE BASED ON RIGHTEOUSNESS

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9:48 **I would speak unto of holiness.** The closer we are to God and the better we keep his commandments, the more he can reveal to us. Ever wonder why we hear the same things over and over again in General Conference? If we as a people were holy, the words of our leaders would rise to match our holiness.

9:49 **my soul abhorreth sin.** Jacob set a good standard for us to strive for.

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#### 9:50-51 QUOTES/PARAPHRASES ISAIAH 55:1-2

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Jacob slipped one more Isaiah quote in before he was done, this one perhaps more a paraphrase than a quote (because the last part sounds like commentary from Jacob), from Isaiah 55:1-2.

1 ~~He~~ **Come, my brethren,** every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ~~ye,~~ buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Wherefore do ~~ye~~ **not** spend money for that which is ~~not bread of no worth, and nor~~ your labour for that which ~~satisfieth not~~ **cannot satisfy.** Hearken diligently unto me, and ~~eat ye that which is good~~ **remember the words which I have spoken; and come unto the Holy One of Israel, and feast upon that which perisheth not, neither can be corrupted,** and let your soul delight ~~itself~~ in fatness.

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#### 9:52-54 CONCLUDING REMARKS

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9:52 **pray unto him continually.** See 2 Nephi 32:8-9.

9:53 **our seed shall not utterly be destroyed.** Another indication that Nephites are still among us!

9:54 **on the morrow.** The first session of the conference concluded, but Jacob had some additional remarks that he saved for the second day. Sometimes it is good to sense that your audience has been filled, give them time to digest it, and then give them more later, as Jesus did when he appeared to the Nephites (see 3 Nephi 18-19).

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## 2 NEPHI 10: JACOB’S CONCLUDING REMARKS

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Coming back the next day, Jacob concluded his talk by saying more about the “righteous branch” that is the descendents of Lehi, and more about the great plan of God.

10:1-2 ***our children shall be restored.*** Though some would fall away, Jacob knew by revelation that through the mercies of God, many of the Nephite descendants would be part of the great gathering the Lord would bring about in the last days.

10:3 ***Christ...this should be his name.*** What word Jacob used is interesting to consider. “Christ” is the English form of the Greek word *Christos*, which is equivalent to the Hebrew “Messiah,” meaning ‘anointed one.’ If Jacob was speaking Hebrew, then Messiah would have been a good translation. But Christ is more familiar to modern readers because of the New Testament, so whatever Jacob said, perhaps it made the most sense to translate it with a term we would readily recognize. Regardless, this is the first mention of this word in the Book of Mormon, though it and the full name Jesus Christ (first mentioned in 2 Nephi 25:19) are commonly found throughout the text. This is one of the great things of the Book of Mormon, a clear knowledge of many details of Jesus’ life and teachings long before he was born, knowledge that was lost or more obscure with their Old World counterparts.

10:7 ***they shall be restored.*** From the prophetic vantage point of 555 B.C., the restoration of the Jews and their full acceptance of Jesus as Messiah were tied together. In our day, we may see the restoration of the Jews as just taking place in Israel, something that is well under way without a significant change in their beliefs toward Jesus. But the restoration of which Jacob speaks is to a worldwide Israel, and the gathering is happening every day through the preaching of the gospel by members and missionaries in all countries. As time marches on, the prophetic vision will come to pass, and the full restoration of the house of Israel to the fold of God will be fully linked to their acceptance of the Savior and his Atonement. Indeed, the work we do in the temples is also part of that restoration. See [Elder Russell M. Nelson](#), *Institute Manual*, 71.

10:8-10 Jacob returns to the theme he discussed in 6:12.

10:10-13 ***this land.*** Most see this fulfilled in the freedom of the United States. But perhaps Jacob’s vision took in more than just this country. Certainly the seed of Joseph appears to be all through North and South America, and to a great degree, the freedoms of the United States are generally extended throughout both continents, allowing the gospel to be spread and flourish in those lands.

10:14 ***I, the Lord, the king of heaven, will be their king.*** We obey our earthly leaders but look to Jesus who rules in the heavens now and one day will rule on Earth.

10:16 ***he that fighteth against Zion...the whore.*** Compare to Revelation 17.

10:19 ***unto thy seed, and them who shall be numbered among thy seed.*** Others will join with the Nephites and be called the people of God.

10:20 ***remember him.*** It is great to have a knowledge of God’s plan, and the responsibility that comes with it is to remember him—an active verb which Jacob defines as “lay aside our sins.”

10:20 ***led to a better land.*** The party of Lehi suffered coming to the Promised Land, but recognize the hand of God in the blessing of being saved from destruction in Jerusalem and have this great land available to them and their seed.

10:23 ***free to act for yourselves.*** The gift of agency is one of God’s greatest gifts to us, for no matter what our circumstances or situation, we are always free to choose.

10:24 **only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved.** Grace is a core doctrine of the Book of Mormon, taught by every prophet and inspired writer. We must strive to be righteous and keep our covenants, but we can never save ourselves.

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## 2 NEPHI 11: “MY SOUL DELIGHTETH”

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Nephi concluded Jacob’s remarks and transitioned to a lengthy Isaiah quotation of his own with this chapter. He waxes poetic briefly but also explains why he likes Isaiah so much.

11:2 **my soul delighteth in his words.** Nephi uses this phrase five times, showing that his soul delights in:

- The words of Isaiah (2).
- Proving the truth of the coming of Christ (4).
- The covenants of the Lord (5).
- The grace of God (5).
- Proving to his people that we would all perish without Christ (6).

11:3 **I have seen him.** Nephi and Jacob are both witnesses of the Lord—ancient apostles, as it were. He quotes Isaiah because Isaiah has also seen him, and together they fulfill the Lord’s law of witnesses.

11:8 **lift up their hearts and rejoice.** Another reason Nephi loves Isaiah—reading Isaiah causes him and his people to rejoice! May it so be with us.

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