

# TECHNICOLO R



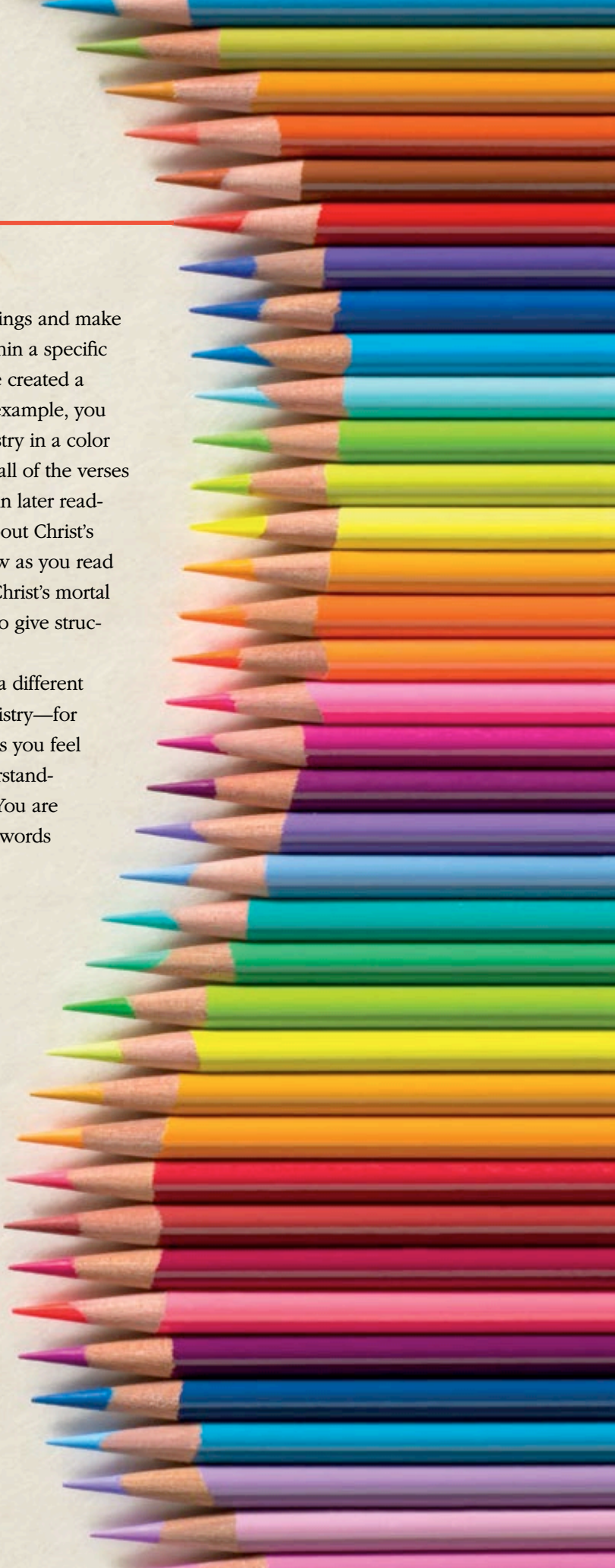
*Jesus commanded us to search the words of Isaiah (see 3 Nephi 23:1). Following is one suggestion on how we can do this—identify themes in Isaiah and mark each one in a different color.*

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hen it comes to the scriptures, we love the stories because they make the scriptures easier to understand. The Book of Mormon, for example, is filled with stories of epic proportion covering more than two thousand years. They tell of cycles of war and peace, of conflicts between prophets and anti-Christ, and of consequences of good and evil.

But when it comes to the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament—even though it is filled with far-reaching prophecies, such as those regarding the mortal ministry of Jesus Christ and His Second Coming—its lack of a story line, coupled with Isaiah's use of symbolism and his poetic writing style, leaves many readers struggling to understand it.



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## Marking Themes

There is, however, a way to give structure to Isaiah's writings and make them easier to understand—mark the verses you feel fit within a specific theme in one color. Once you have done this, you will have created a thread of color linking verses on one topic into a unit. For example, you could highlight prophecies about Jesus Christ's mortal ministry in a color of your choosing—perhaps red. Don't worry about finding all of the verses that may contain this theme. This is a gradual process, and in later readings of Isaiah you may discover other verses you feel are about Christ's mortal ministry. Simply mark the verses you find in red. Now as you read the thread of verses marked in red, your understanding of Christ's mortal ministry will blossom. Repeating this pattern will continue to give structure to the book of Isaiah.

Next, highlight prophecies of Christ's Second Coming in a different color from the one you used in marking Christ's mortal ministry—for example, blue. Read through Isaiah again, looking for verses you feel are about Christ's Second Coming. Don't worry about understanding all of the verses you read as you search for this theme. You are simply reading to create a thread of color that links Isaiah's words about Christ's Second Coming together in a unit.

Two other prominent themes in Isaiah are the gathering of Israel and the Restoration of the gospel. Using different colors, follow the same process to mark these two themes that you used for Christ's mortal ministry and the Second Coming. As you progress in your "precept upon precept" study of Isaiah (see Isaiah 28:10), you may discover additional themes you would like to mark.

You will be blessed as you take the time to immerse yourself in the writings of Isaiah, but it requires commitment. Gradually you will become comfortable with Isaiah's poetic Hebrew writing style. You will begin to see order and structure within this great book of scripture. You will feel the witness of the Holy Ghost bearing testimony to you that Isaiah's words are true (see 1 Nephi 15:11).



## SAMPLES OF MARKED THEMES

### 1. Prophecies about Jesus Christ's Mortal Ministry

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14; see also 9:6; 11:1–2; 53; 61:1–3).

### 2. Christ's Second Coming and Millennial Reign

"Who is this that cometh . . . traveling in the greatness of his strength? . . ."

"Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?"

"I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me" (Isaiah 63:1–3; see also 12–14; 34; 63–66).

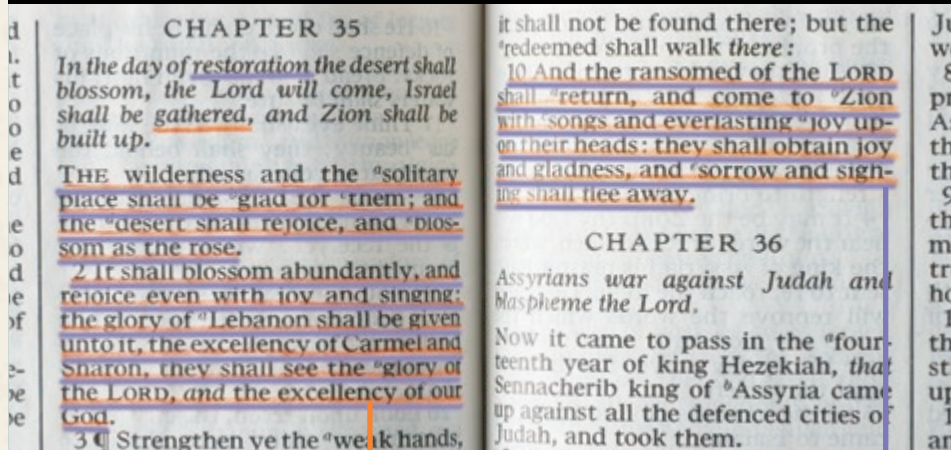


## STUDY AIDS

The following sources can help you as you study Isaiah (all of them are also available online):

1. Chapter headings
2. Footnotes
3. Bible Dictionary
4. Topical Guide or Guide to the Scriptures
5. Book of Mormon (especially 2 Nephi)
6. *Old Testament Student Manual: 1 Kings–Malachi*, 3rd ed. (Church Educational System manual, 2003), 131–210.
7. *Book of Mormon Student Manual* (2009), 43–46, 72–91.
8. James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (1890).
9. Bruce R. McConkie, "Ten Keys to Understanding Isaiah," *Ensign*, Oct. 1973, 78–83.

**Some verses can have more than one theme and be marked with more than one color. These verses simply show the complex relationship of themes in Isaiah.**



### 3. Gathering of Israel

"The remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, . . . shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

"The remnant shall return. . . ."

"For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return" (Isaiah 10:20–22; see also 5:26; 11:11; 54:7).

### 4. Restoration of the Gospel

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isaiah 2:2; see also 11:12; 29:14; 49:20–22).





## THE SAVIOR AND OTHERS QUOTED ISAIAH

- In scripture, Isaiah is the most frequently quoted of all the ancient prophets.
- Because Isaiah lived about 100 years before Lehi left Jerusalem, the writings of Isaiah were on the brass plates that Lehi's family carried with them (see 1 Nephi 4–5).
- The Book of Mormon quotes more than 400 verses (32 percent) of Isaiah and paraphrases more than 30 verses (3 percent). Nephi and other prophets often interpret passages of Isaiah.
- In the New Testament, Isaiah is quoted 137 times—at least 7 times by Jesus Christ and at least 40 times by the Apostles.
- Isaiah is quoted 106 times in the Doctrine and Covenants. Section 113 interprets Isaiah 11 and 52; section 101 holds the key to understanding Isaiah 65; and section 133 helps to clarify Isaiah 35, 51, 63, and 64.
- Moroni appeared as an angel to Joseph Smith on September 21, 1823, and quoted Isaiah chapter 11, "saying that it was about to be fulfilled" (Joseph Smith—History 1:40).

## NEPHI'S KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH

One of our greatest resources for understanding Isaiah is the Book of Mormon, particularly Nephi's writings. He wrote, "For I know that [Isaiah's prophecies] shall be of great worth unto them in the last days" (2 Nephi 25:8). Here are some of Nephi's keys to understanding Isaiah:

1. Liken the words of Isaiah to yourself (see 2 Nephi 11:8).
2. Understand "the manner of prophesying among the Jews" (2 Nephi 25:1).
3. Study with the spirit of prophecy (see 2 Nephi 25:4), which is the testimony of Jesus (see Revelation 19:10).
4. Know concerning the regions of the Holy Land (see 2 Nephi 25:6).
5. Live in the days that the prophecies are fulfilled (see 2 Nephi 25:7).

## THREE LITERARY FORMS TO LOOK FOR

- **Poetic Parallelism:** About 1,100 examples of poetic parallelism are found in Isaiah's writings.<sup>1</sup> The first line features words that are paralleled by words in a following line. The two lines rarely rhyme but rather present two parallel expressions. For example: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (Isaiah 9:6).
- **Dualism:** When a symbol has a dual meaning—one fulfilled in its current context as well as in a past or future

context—it is called dualism or a type and shadow. For example, Isaiah wrote: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). Isaiah's faithful response to the Lord's call echoes, or is a type and shadow of, the Savior's response when asked by His Father in the pre-mortal council to be our Redeemer (see Abraham 3:27).

- **Symbolic Language:** Isaiah often used symbols in his writing. For example, the plural phrase "daughters of Zion" often refers to cities and villages in Israel, but the singular "daughter of Zion" refers to Jerusalem. "Daughters of Zion" can also refer to future generations of the house of Israel and is another example of dualism.

### NOTE

1. See Donald W. Parry, Jay A. Parry, and Tina M. Peterson, *Understanding Isaiah* (1998), 603.