

Rel A 304 Reading Questions for Tuesday, September 26

Dallin H. Oaks, “Scripture Reading and Revelation,” *Ensign*, January 1995, 6–9.
Isaiah 1–5

All right everyone, it’s time to start Isaiah! Of course, you just read all of Isaiah for the quick read assignment, but now we’re doing our slow read, and the hope this time is to pick up on a lot more of the details as we go through the book. We’re also switching from primarily using the class translation to primarily using the King James Version. I’ll assume you’re looking at the KJV when I ask questions, and a copy of the book of Isaiah from the Church’s official edition of the scriptures is included in the course packet if that’s helpful to use (mark it up!). If you found the class translation helpful and want to refer to that as you re-read Isaiah this time, the course packet also includes a KJV/class translation combination with each set side by side in parallel columns. So whether you’re using your own scriptures or something from the course packet, it’s time for some serious Isaiah awesomness!

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As an intro to our study of Isaiah, we’re going to start with this counsel from President Oaks about studying the scriptures.

1. According to President Oaks, what makes Latter-day Saints different from most other Christians in the way we read and use the Bible and other scriptures?
2. How is it that each person’s scriptures can function as a Urim and Thummim? (If you are unfamiliar with the term “Urim and Thummim,” see <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/gs/urim-and-thummim>.)
3. Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that some prophecies in the scriptures can have “an initial and partial fulfillment” in one time period, and also “a second and grander completion” in another time period. Nephi also said that prophecies can have “both temporal and spiritual” meanings (see 1 Nephi 22:3). President Oaks also pointed out that a prophecy can be given to us in more than one set of words. What is an example of a prophecy that has more than one fulfillment, application, or form? (You can use an example from the article or think of one of your own.)

4. There are many commentaries you can find on scripture, from comprehensive books to brief interpretations in a lesson or article. President Oaks compares the relationship of scripture and commentaries to the relationship between food and *what?* His point is that the latter cannot substitute for the former.

Editorial Heading (Isaiah 1:1)

The first verse of the book of Isaiah is an editorial heading identifying the book's author, genre, and time setting.



Wicked Judah Invited to Repent (1:2–31)

Isaiah chapter 1 fits thematically with the chapters that follow, but it also provides an interesting collection of themes from the entire book of Isaiah and it shares several specific connections with Isaiah 66 (the last chapter). Many scholars propose that whoever edited the final version of the book added chapter 1 as a sort of introduction to the entire work. Interestingly, when Nephi quotes his big block of Isaiah chapters in 2 Nephi 12–24, he starts with what we call Isaiah chapter 2, so it's possible that Isaiah 2 was the beginning of the book in the version Nephi had, and then, as the scholars propose, chapter 1 was written after Nephi had already left with the brass plates. Regardless of who wrote chapter 1, it contains inspired and powerful lessons.

5. Starting in Isaiah 1, you're going to frequently see the word "judgment" in the King James Version. Verse 17 commands the prophet's audience to "seek judgment," verse 21 laments that Jerusalem is no longer "full of judgment," and verse 27 says that Jerusalem can only be redeemed if the people exercise "judgment." This can sound strange to us as modern readers because we're often told that we *shouldn't* judge others (e.g., Matthew 7:1). Here's the trick: the English word "judgment" often meant something different when the KJV was translated than what it means today. In the Latter-day Saint edition of

the Bible, look at the footnotes attached to the word “judgment” in Isaiah 1:17, 21, and 27. What is the modern term for what the KJV was saying?

The Abrahamic Covenant Fulfilled (2:1–4)

6. Isaiah 2:1–4 opens with a glorious depiction of what the world will be like when the Abrahamic covenant is finally fulfilled. What will things be like religiously? What will things be like politically/socially?

Judgment against Judah’s Arrogance (2:5–22)

Starting in Isaiah 2:5, Isaiah switches from describing an ideal future to condemning his not-so-perfect present. By starting with the end in mind, Isaiah can say, “Can you see what a wonderful world it would be if we were all keeping our covenants and sharing the gospel with everyone else? But instead you’re doing all this bad stuff and making the world worse!”

Judgment against Judah’s Leaders (3:1–15)

Isaiah 3 continues the message of Isaiah 2. The prophet warns Judah’s elite that their crimes will lead to destruction and a complete overturning of Judah’s existing social order. First, he condemns Judah’s wealthy and politically powerful men.

7. Those with political and economic power in Judah are condemned for “eat[ing] up the vineyard” of, exploiting “the spoil” of, and “grinding the faces” of what segment of society?

Judgment against Judah’s Wealthy Women (3:16–4:1)

Here we switch from the powerful men to condemning Judah’s wealthy women, who are flaunting their wealth at the expense of the poor.

Promise that a Remnant Will Survive (4:2–6)

Isaiah 4:2–6 takes a short break from the doom and gloom to contrast all that with how nice things will be after the Lord has come against the wicked in judgment. This will be a pattern with Isaiah: don’t go too long on how bad things are without pausing to see the good.

8. After the Lord comes in judgment, those “that are escaped of Israel” and “they that are left in Zion” after the destruction shall be “called” what? This tells us that the remnant will be righteous, not wicked.

The Song of the Unfruitful Vineyard (5:1–7)

9. In Isaiah’s famous Song of the Vineyard (Isaiah 5:1–7), how well did the owner of the vineyard take care of his vineyard? How did the grapes turn out? What does Isaiah say the vineyard represents?

Woes and Consequences Pronounced (5:8–25)

Jehovah Will Call a Foreign Army to Invade Judah (5:26–30)