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David Rolph Seely

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Author(s) David Rolph Seely

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Abstract Review of *Isaiah Decoded: Ascending the Ladder to
Heaven* (2002), by Avraham Gileadi.

EXPLORING THE ISAIAH CODE: ASCENDING THE SEVEN STEPS ON THE STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

David Rolph Seely

David Rolph Seely (PhD, University of Michigan) is a professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University.

The message of the book of Isaiah is simple. It can be summarized in one word: Repent. Isaiah invited the children of Israel in his own day and in the future to repent of their sins through the atonement of the Messiah and recommit themselves to live the covenants they had entered into with the Holy One of Israel. In order to motivate the children of the covenant to repent, Isaiah described the consequences of their behavior: blessings for the obedient and curses for the disobedient. Throughout his writings, Isaiah described for ancients and moderns alike the course of events that would unfold in the future, including destruction and restoration, scattering and gathering, the coming of the Messiah as the Suffering Servant and then as the Millennial King, and ultimate judgment leading to salvation or damnation.

Ideally, a reader could access and implement Isaiah's message simply by reading and studying the sublime poetry in the sixty-six chapters of his writings. The power of his prophecies and the persuasiveness of his poetry should interest us and move us to do what the Lord would have us do—repent and turn to the Lord and his ways. The

Review of Avraham Gileadi. *Isaiah Decoded: Ascending the Ladder to Heaven*. Escondido, CA: Hebraeus, 2002. xviii + 365 pp. \$26.95.

importance of the writings of Isaiah for Latter-day Saints was further emphasized by the Savior when he commanded us to study Isaiah: “And now, behold, I say unto you, that ye ought to search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah” (3 Nephi 23:1). And so Latter-day Saints are left with the commandment to study Isaiah, but at the same time they do not know quite how to go about it.

Commentaries

Isaiah’s writings are difficult for many reasons. Even in Nephi’s time his people had encountered difficulties in reading and understanding Isaiah: “For behold, Isaiah spake many things which were hard for many of my people to understand; for they know not concerning the manner of prophesying among the Jews” (2 Nephi 25:1). In order to help their people better understand Isaiah’s writings, Nephi, Jacob, Abinadi, the Savior, and others left detailed interpretations of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon. Further, the New Testament and the Doctrine and Covenants contain many passages from Isaiah that include some interpretation, and modern prophets, beginning with Joseph Smith, have made a host of statements about Isaiah. But these inspired writings have not proven adequate for the Saints to understand Isaiah—hence the plethora of Latter-day Saint commentaries on Isaiah and his writings. These commentaries are often published every four years to coincide with the Sunday School course of study and come in all shapes and sizes and with a variety of approaches. Some are scholarly, some are more popular, and some are a mixture of the two. The most common approach is to use a variety of quotations from ancient and modern prophets and General Authorities to explain each passage. Another approach is to use the writings of Isaiah as a springboard to discuss gospel topics. Gileadi’s work is distinctive in that it is a “holistic approach”—it attempts to read and understand passages in Isaiah in light of their relationship to the writings of Isaiah as a whole.

Avraham Gileadi is apparently the most prolific Latter-day Saint Isaiah scholar. He has set about to help the Saints understand Isaiah’s

teachings. His latest book, *Isaiah Decoded: Ascending the Ladder to Heaven*, is the seventh major work he has written on Isaiah.¹ In this book he emphasizes how to go about applying Isaiah's teachings to our lives.

To those who are not already acquainted with Gileadi, his story is a fascinating one.² Avraham Gileadi was born in the Netherlands during World War II to a non-Latter-day Saint family who immigrated to New Zealand after the war. After spending some time as a musician, Gileadi turned back to his Catholic roots. In 1968, following a period of religious activity and introspection, he decided to leave New Zealand and move to Israel, where he eventually studied at a rabbinical school. He learned Hebrew and Jewish exegesis. Eventually he converted to Judaism as a believer in Jesus as the Messiah and became a citizen of Israel. In Israel, Gileadi found a Book of Mormon and was converted and baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1973 he came to Brigham Young University to study; he also taught Hebrew for several years and was employed working on the footnotes for the 1979 Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible. In 1981 Gileadi received his PhD at BYU in ancient studies, having written his dissertation on the book of Isaiah.

1. In chronological order, Gileadi's books are (1) *The Apocalyptic Book of Isaiah: A New Translation with Interpretative Key* (Provo: UT: Hebraeus, 1982); (2) *The Book of Isaiah: A New Translation with Interpretive Keys from the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988); (3) *The Last Days: Types and Shadows from the Bible and the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991), reprinted in a new edition with foreword by Hugh Nibley (Orem, UT: Book of Mormon Research Foundation, 1998); (4) *The Literary Message of Isaiah* (New York: Hebraeus, 1994); (5) *The End from the Beginning: The Apocalyptic Vision of Isaiah* (Cave Junction, OR: Hebraeus, 1997)—a simplified presentation of Isaiah's key themes, literary structures, types, covenant theology, main characters, and patterns of end time prophecy as presented comprehensively in *The Literary Message of Isaiah* (4 above); (6) *Analytical Commentary of Isaiah* (Escondido, CA: Hebraeus, 2001)—twenty-four cassettes in two folders with study guides, translation, and Gileadi's verse-by-verse commentary of the book of Isaiah; and (7) *Isaiah Decoded: Ascending the Ladder to Heaven* (Escondido, CA: Hebraeus, 2002). In addition, Gileadi edited a Festschrift in honor of his mentor R. K. Harrison, *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988).

2. A very brief autobiographical statement appears as the preface in *The Book of Isaiah: A New Translation*, xiii–xvi.

In the course of his studies, Gileadi was able to go to the Toronto School of Theology to study with R. K. Harrison—a renowned conservative biblical scholar. Harrison was a staunch advocate of the unity of the book of Isaiah—a view significant for Latter-day Saints. Much of the scholarly world believes that Isaiah was written by two, three, or more authors in different places and at different times. Since portions from both First and Second Isaiah appear in the Book of Mormon, Latter-day Saints tend to believe in the unity of Isaiah.³ Harrison introduced Gileadi to the work of William Brownlee, who had found a powerful argument for the unity of Isaiah in a two-part division of the book of Isaiah—each division containing seven categories of parallel subject matter.⁴ In his dissertation, Gileadi used Brownlee’s idea of the unity of Isaiah as a central feature called the “bifid structure of the book of Isaiah.”⁵ Thus Gileadi’s approach to Isaiah is a holistic one. Presuming the unity of Isaiah, he seeks to interpret each passage within the whole of the writings of Isaiah.

At one point in his studies, Gileadi was challenged by his teacher Hugh Nibley to make a new translation of Isaiah and to attempt to interpret Isaiah the way the scriptures do. For example, Nephi in his writings gave us several keys to reading and understanding Isaiah. First, in 2 Nephi 25 he tells us to know and use “the manner of prophesying among the Jews” (2 Nephi 25:1, 5). Then he tells us that the writings of Isaiah are plain to “all those that are filled with the spirit of prophecy” (2 Nephi 25:4), and finally, he tells us that Isaiah’s prophecies will become clear when they are fulfilled (2 Nephi 25:7). Elsewhere, Nephi instructs us to interpret Isaiah both spiritually and temporally (1 Nephi 22:1–3) and, perhaps most important, to “liken” the teachings of Isaiah to ourselves (1 Nephi 19:23; 2 Nephi 11:2, 8). Throughout his work, Gileadi has attempted to implement each of

3. For a Latter-day Saint discussion of the authorship of Isaiah, see Victor L. Ludlow, *Isaiah: Prophet, Seer, and Poet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 541–48.

4. William H. Brownlee, *The Meaning of the Qumrân Scrolls for the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

5. Avraham Gileadi, “A Holistic Structure of the Book of Isaiah” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1981), 11.

these keys. In particular Gileadi tries to read Isaiah according to the “manner of the things of the Jews,” in part because he has had formal training in such interpretation. He describes his methodology thus:

Since then, over the course of the years I have devoted to studying Isaiah, I have discovered many literary features, each of which helps explain Isaiah’s theological message. During this time, I formulated a holistic methodology I find equally effective in the book of Isaiah, the Book of Mormon, and other scriptural texts. This methodology consists of, first, structural analysis, which examines blocks of material, such as chapters, groups of chapters, and overarching ideas, as well as forms of speech, poems, chiasms, and parallelisms; second, typological analysis, which examines patterns, types, cycles, phenomena, and contexts; and third, rhetorical analysis, which examines language, definitions, terms, motifs, code names, linking ideas, and imagery. This three-fold method, which lends itself naturally to the study of the scriptures, incorporates the manner of the Jews without limiting itself to it.⁶

This approach is followed in each of Gileadi’s different works on Isaiah.

Following his dissertation, Gileadi began to write primarily for Latter-day Saint audiences in order to help them better understand and appreciate the writings of Isaiah. His first work, *The Apocalyptic Book of Isaiah*, presents several of his keys to understanding Isaiah. His second book, *The Book of Isaiah*, is largely a repeat of the ideas of the first book with an expanded recognition of the role of the Book of Mormon in interpreting Isaiah. In his third book, *The Last Days*, Gileadi sets out to inspire the Saints who are living in the latter days when Isaiah’s prophecies are being fulfilled to better live the teachings of Isaiah. This book consists of four essays arranged according to the common themes of the prophetic books in the Bible: apostasy, restoration, judgment, and salvation. In Nibley-like style,⁷ Gileadi first addresses apostasy in “Twelve

6. Gileadi, *Book of Isaiah: A New Translation*, xvi.

7. See Gileadi, *Last Days*, 7.

Diatribes of Modern Israel” in which he points out the parallels between twelve forms of idolatry known in ancient Israel and the behavioral patterns of many Latter-day Saints. This essay, originally published in the Festschrift in honor of Hugh Nibley, had the effect of offending many who were attached to some of those things Gileadi points out as idolatry—violence and sex, rock music, organized sports, mammon, and pharisaism. On the other hand, this essay attracted many from conservative and ultraconservative backgrounds to follow Gileadi. The second essay, “The Great and Marvelous Work Yet to Come Forth,” addressed the restoration; the third, “Gentiles of the House of Israel,” the theme of judgment; and the fourth, “Priesthood, Patriarchy, and Proxy Salvation,” the theme of salvation.

In terms of his biblical scholarship, Gileadi’s fourth book, *The Literary Message of Isaiah*, is his masterwork.⁸ In this massive volume, Gileadi puts forth his translation of Isaiah with a close and comprehensive review and explanation of the whole of Isaiah using his threefold method of interpretation: structural, typological, and rhetorical. While this book was written, advertised, and sold to a wide scholarly audience, Gileadi does not hesitate to quote the Book of Mormon in his text—which must have been somewhat of a surprise to some of the Christian scholars who bought the book from advertisements found in academic book catalogs.

In his fifth book, *The End from the Beginning*, Gileadi presents a simplified version of *The Literary Message of Isaiah* for a nonscholarly audience. In the interim Gileadi edited a Festschrift in honor of his teacher R. K. Harrison, *Israel’s Apostasy and Restoration*, and produced a set of cassette tapes, *Analytical Commentary of Isaiah*, which includes Gileadi’s translation of Isaiah, his study guides, and his verse-by-verse commentary on the book of Isaiah.

This, then, is Gileadi’s seventh work specifically on Isaiah. It bears a provocative title: *Isaiah Decoded: Ascending the Ladder to Heaven*. The title is a loaded one for several reasons. First, Isaiah is always a catchword for readers; second, the word *Code* or *Decoded* has in re-

8. David Rolph Seely, review of *The Literary Message of Isaiah*, by Avraham Gileadi, *FARMS Review of Books* 8/1 (1996): 69–79.

cent years been associated with the sensational claims of the so-called Bible Code and its detractors' counterclaims and is currently linked with the book *The Da Vinci Code*. And who could resist the subtitle *Ascending the Ladder to Heaven*? In spite of its sensational allusions, the title reflects the practical aim of the book: to make the message of Isaiah intelligible—so that the readers can repent of their sins—and through repentance ascend to heaven. In this work Gileadi emphasizes Nephi's key of "likening" Isaiah to ourselves and his key of recognizing the truthfulness of Isaiah's prophecies in the day that they are fulfilled. Once again this is his attempt to get his readers to pay attention to the central message of Isaiah and repent.

Gileadi describes the aim of the book:

A problem many scholars face, myself included, is that they spend years researching and publishing things nobody sees except the academic community among which they publish. For example, my life's work in scriptural analysis—called *The Literary Message of Isaiah*—though considered by leading American scholars to be a major breakthrough and at the cutting edge of Bible studies, was published in a scholarly style that is hard for the average person to read.

This book, then, attempts to put into plain terms a complex but amazing message by a prophet-poet of extraordinary talent. I believe that no one else comes close to Isaiah in conveying a message so relevant to the times in which we live and to our divine destiny as children of God. (pp. xvii–xviii)

The metaphor of the ascent to heaven is an accurate representation of the plan of salvation as described in the scriptures. The purpose of the plan of salvation is to allow God's children to come to earth and to exercise their agency in choosing to follow either God or Satan. Based on their use of agency, they then ascend back to heaven to reenter the presence of God, or they descend to a lesser glory to inherit a place outside the presence of God.

The theme of ascending to heaven is found in many religious traditions. Based on the scriptural and extrabiblical stories of Enoch,

Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, the three major religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all preserved texts and traditions that describe the ascent to heaven and often the descent to the underworld as well. These texts often describe and prescribe how an adherent is to go about making the ascent—both before and after death.

Gileadi considers the metaphor of “ascending to heaven” an apt one for Latter-day Saints—as freeing our spirits “for that flight to heaven which God has invited every one of us to make” (p. 5). He states that his model of ascent is derived from Isaiah but closely follows the ideas of Jewish mysticism found in the Kabbalah, which often attempted to systematically understand the world and to achieve the goal of returning to the presence of God. Gileadi explains: “A key character trait kabbalists attribute to God—‘crown’—parallels Isaiah’s key theme of ‘exaltation,’ expressing God’s essential nature and humanity’s divine potential” (p. 40). He further notes that one of the models of the kabbalists is the tree of life, which depicts God with his attributes at the top and his children created four levels below him. Progress is made by ascending through the levels—like climbing a ladder—as one absorbs the character traits pertaining to each level (p. 40). Isaiah, according to Gileadi, has a more refined model than the kabbalists. Isaiah’s model includes a “reverse kabbalist model—a ‘Tree of Death’—ending in ‘ruin,’ ‘disinheritance,’ ‘punishment,’ ‘suffering,’ and ‘humiliation’” (p. 41). Thus Gileadi discusses both the possible ascent to heaven and the possible descent to spiritual destruction and death.

In *Isaiah Decoded*, Gileadi identifies seven levels (or categories) as rungs on a ladder ascending toward God, who sits at the top. Each of the levels or rungs represents a set of spiritual characteristics, and the idea is that people ascend or descend as they attain these characteristics and gain either salvation or damnation. So true salvation, and ultimately exaltation, results when people repent of their sins, perfect themselves, and ascend to heaven, or the reverse: continue in their sins and rebellion and descend toward hell. Gileadi’s levels are as follow:

Isaiah's Ladder to Heaven

Spiritual Level	Characteristics
The God of Israel	King of Zion
Seraphim	God's Angelic Messengers
Sons and Daughters	God's Sons/Servants, Proxy Deliverers
Zion/Jerusalem	God's Covenant People
Jacob/Israel	Believers in a Creator-God
Babylon	Rebels and Worshipers of Idols
King of Assyria/Babylon	Archtyrant, Candidate for Perdition (see pp. vii–x, 24)

Actually, these categories are derived from Gileadi's study of the bifid—or parallel—structure of the book of Isaiah, which is based on seven parallel themes that are chiasmically arranged in each of the two halves of the book of Isaiah. The bifid structure of Isaiah can be simply illustrated as follows:

Themes	Chapters in Isaiah
1. Ruin and Rebirth	1–5//34–35
2. Rebellion and Compliance	6–8//36–40
3. Punishment and Deliverance	9–12//41:1–46:13b
4. Humiliation and Exaltation	13–23//46:13c–47:15
5. Suffering and Salvation	24–27//48–54
6. Disloyalty and Loyalty	28–31//55–59
7. Disinheritance and Inheritance	32–33//60–66 (p. 18)

One can readily see that the seven themes consist of pairs of opposites or reversals such as ruin and rebirth, humiliation and exaltation, suffering and salvation, and disinheritance and inheritance. The idea is that Isaiah arranged his material in such a way that he teaches about salvation and invites God's children to come to salvation through a series of choices between opposites. From these themes in Isaiah's writings, Gileadi has extracted his seven spiritual levels.

Gileadi thus postulates seven rungs of a ladder to heaven. The book consists of nine chapters: an introduction, a conclusion, and seven chapters devoted to the description and discussion of the spiritual characteristics of each level on the ladder and the journey of ascent or descent. According to Gileadi, Isaiah describes each of these levels with types—either nations (such as Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Israel, and Zion) or individuals (such as Adam and Eve, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah)—that adopted the spiritual characteristics of each level. These types then provide models for those seeking to ascend or descend. The nations such as Babylon and Zion represent both places and peoples as well as a set of accompanying values that identify them.

Each of these seven levels represents one of the major types developed by Isaiah. The lowest level is characterized by those who accept the values of Satan, and the top is that of God. In the lowest level, the kings of Assyria and Babylon represent people who have accepted and cultivated the values of the adversary as described in Isaiah 14—where the king of Babylon is compared with Lucifer, who, because of his pride and rebellion against God, was cast down and eventually destroyed. Satan and the kings thus espouse the values readily adopted by the world: pride, wealth, corruption, and conquest. Isaiah teaches that when the people accept the values of these archtyrants they become, like Satan, candidates for perdition and descend to his level.

In the next level, Babylon, as a place and a people, is the type for rebellion and idolatry and represents the wicked people of the world. The next higher level represents those who accept a creator-god and begin the ascent to heaven. The middle level, Zion/Jerusalem, represents those who have entered into a covenant with the Lord, accept the Messiah, and further reject the values of the world. The faithful then ascend to the level of sons and daughters of God, following the Savior by standing in as proxy “saviors” for their fellow children of God. The second highest level is called the seraphim level, in which, like the angels described in Isaiah’s vision of God on his throne in Isaiah 6, the faithful are prepared to minister in the presence of God. The final level is that of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, who through his mortal ministry provided a dramatic model for those attempting to ascend to heaven.

At the same time he discusses the ascent through the spiritual levels, Gileadi also shows how the various types used by Isaiah to illustrate each level are manifested both anciently and in modern times. He then specifically develops his ideas of the meaning of Isaiah's prophecies and their fulfillment for those living in the latter days. Gileadi argues that Isaiah's prophecies often had ancient fulfillment, which served as "a sure pattern of the future" (pp. 25–27). For instance, Babylon and Zion are terms used for ancient Babylon and Israel but represent future places, peoples, and values. The political entities of Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt represent ancient superpowers that are code words for modern superpowers. America, according to Gileadi, is a composite of the ancient types of Egypt and Israel, and its people are faced with the choice of accepting either the worldly values epitomized by ancient Egypt or the values of Zion as epitomized by the covenant people Israel (pp. 56–65).

The various levels described by Gileadi represent major types found in Isaiah. For Gileadi, the description of the progression toward the celestial kingdom as the ascent to heaven also seems doctrinally sound. It is not always so apparent to me, however, that Isaiah invariably makes a clear distinction between the different levels—for instance, between Jacob/Israel, Zion/Jerusalem, and sons/daughters. And many of the types—such as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and Christ—typify several different levels at the same time. At the point that these categories were introduced (pp. 17–24), it might have been helpful to have included a list of the major passages in Isaiah where these types are discussed so that a reader could go to the text itself to test the types and levels. Like all models, this one can be very useful if one remembers that reality is often more complex than a chart. For example, most of us have found spiritual progress from several of Gileadi's different levels in different areas of our lives and can learn about ourselves in two or three different levels of the chart at the same time. In addition, some of us may have characteristics of the Zion/Jerusalem level and the sons/servant level while still struggling with elements of the Babylon level.

There are many marvelous insights throughout this book. Three examples will suffice. Gileadi's understanding of Isaiah's teachings on

creation is excellent. Isaiah teaches that creation is not just an event of the past but a process that continues throughout the plan of redemption, and that creation is both temporal as well as spiritual. Gileadi recognizes and describes how creation goes on at each of the spiritual levels: God brings a new creation out of the chaos left behind by the archtyrant—typified by the king of Assyria or Babylon—on the first level (pp. 43–46); God’s children accept him as the creator at the beginning of their spiritual ascent in the Jacob/Israel level (pp. 109–10); a new heaven and earth are created at the beginning of the millennium as a fulfillment of the promises made through the covenant to Zion/Jerusalem (pp. 162–67); and on the level of sons/servants, God’s children are re-created into “new Adams and Eves” (pp. 208–13). Gileadi also presents a thoughtful discussion, based on Isaiah, of the role of the feminine as a counterpart to the male in creation and in giving birth both physically and spiritually (pp. 213–19). Gileadi shows how creation and re-creation is a cyclical process that occurs at every level of the spiritual ladder (pp. 273–75).

Gileadi’s exposition of the types in Isaiah is also quite instructive. Throughout his discussion, Gileadi presents a host of figures from the past as types of the different spiritual levels as well as types of future prophetic figures. Types become powerful when a reader can identify himself or herself with a real person from the past—such as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, or Isaiah—and can consciously begin to model behavior and values from their lives and experiences. Of particular note is Gileadi’s description of Isaiah’s prophetic calling in which Isaiah ascends to the level of the seraphim and sees God (Isaiah 6). Gileadi effectively demonstrates that Isaiah—a mortal—has begun to assimilate the traits of the seraphim in this vision (pp. 222–23). For example, like the seraphim, Isaiah stood in God’s council. Throughout his ministry Isaiah had cosmic visions such as those enjoyed by those who live in the heavens. Isaiah, like the seraphim, witnessed God’s glory. And finally, just as the seraph cleansed Isaiah’s lips with the hot coal from the altar, spiritually healing him, Isaiah dramatically healed Hezekiah and throughout his ministry declared the forgiveness of sins. From the example of Isaiah following the type of the seraphim, Gileadi ef-

fectively shows how typology works in Isaiah and invites us each to model those types that help us ascend to heaven.

Finally, Gileadi's discussion of Jesus Christ as the Savior is thought-provoking (pp. 294–306). He explores through the writings of Isaiah how Christ was the Savior and the sacrificial victim and how he, as the Davidic king, the Firstborn Son, and the sacrificial victim, becomes what Gileadi calls the Suffering Savior. Gileadi effectively points out that at various levels of spiritual progression, descent is sometimes necessary for ascent. This is especially demonstrated in the case of Jesus Christ, who had to descend below death and to the underworld in order to ascend above all things. Most important, Gileadi shows how Christ as the sacrificial victim fulfilled the functions of proxy salvation and thus became the Savior of the world. Through following the model of Christ, we can contribute to the salvation of others by preaching the gospel and by doing ordinances for the dead.

While the book makes a good read from cover to cover, it is difficult to navigate its many waters without indexes. The value of this book as a reference tool would be greatly enhanced with the inclusion of a detailed index of the themes—such as the one that appeared in *The Literary Message of Isaiah*—and a scripture index showing how Gileadi reads and interprets various passages of Isaiah. Using a scripture index, a person could read the book as a running commentary on the many passages quoted and cited. It might also be useful to have a short appendix consolidating all the various charts found throughout the book. There are no footnotes in this work, and while this makes the book more reader-friendly to the intended lay audience, a short reader's bibliography would be helpful to those who wish to continue study of the many allusions to biblical and Near Eastern scholarship sprinkled throughout the book.

Isaiah Decoded: Ascending the Ladder to Heaven is an invigorating book full of interesting things. There is something here for nearly everyone. In conjunction with the description of the ascent to heaven and the fulfillment of Isaiah's types and prophecies, there are references to encryptions of the name of Jesus in the Bible (pp. 8–9), parallels between Isaiah's types and fairy-tale archetypes (pp. 121–23),

the figurative representations of God's servant(s) (pp. 236–42), the quest for the Holy Grail as the collective memory of the ascent to heaven (pp. 256–58), and the tabernacle and the Great Pyramid of Giza as a type of the ladder of heaven (pp. 333–38). In addition, there are significant discussions of the role of America in Isaiah's prophecies (pp. 61–65), how modern society practices idolatry as a form of Baalism (pp. 91–102), the migration and gathering of the ten tribes (pp. 112–18), matriarchal roles of the ideal woman (pp. 216–18), Isaiah's prophecies of the second coming (pp. 215–19), Jewish expectations of the Messiah (pp. 235–36), Isaiah's teaching about Jesus Christ as the Father and the Son (pp. 283–90), and the family as a microcosm of covenantal love (pp. 355–56). In short, this book can provide a delightful conversation on many significant issues.

As with all books of this breadth and magnitude, a reader should bring his or her critical skills to bear on the contents. One must be willing to measure Gileadi's interpretation against the text of Isaiah itself and to consider several other prophetic interpretations of important issues, such as the various fulfillments of prophecy and the Davidic Messiah. Nephi's observation that "in the days that the prophecies of Isaiah shall be fulfilled men shall know of a surety, at the times when they shall come to pass" (2 Nephi 25:7) is a good warning that we might not always completely understand everything—and that there still might be some surprises ahead. There are many doctrinal implications imbedded in Gileadi's interpretations that must be considered and pondered. But one does not need to agree with everything he writes for this to be a stimulating and valuable book.

Gileadi's latest book, *Isaiah Decoded*, is an eloquent invitation to come to the writings of Isaiah and to repent. This book is a worthy aid to be read alongside the writings of Isaiah. It will both clarify Isaiah's message and inspire the reader to begin to apply Isaiah's teachings in his or her ascent to heaven. Gileadi has succeeded in bringing the teachings of Isaiah to the average reader in an interesting and readable format that can aid us in "likening" these things to ourselves. In short, this book can help us all to see that we must repent—and it can help us to do so. And this is, after all, the main point of Isaiah's prophecies.