prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth” (D&C 29:8); therefore, “labor ye, labor ye in my vineyard for the last time—for the last time call upon the inhabitants of the earth” (D&C 43:28–29; cf. 133:4–5).

The scriptures address the problem of distinguishing true and false prophecies (Matt. 7:15–20; TP/S, p. 365). The Old Testament criterion, “If the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken” (Deut. 18:22), is of course not always a practicable test for the prophet’s contemporaries to discern the validity of the call and message.

Joseph Smith noted that “a prophet is a prophet only when he is acting as such” (TP/S, p. 278), and Brigham Young taught that the responsibility of discernment lies with individual members of the Church (JD 9:150). When Nephi’s brothers wanted to know the truth of his prophecies, he told them that the Lord says, “If ye will not harden your hearts, and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely these things shall be made known unto you” (1 Ne. 15:11). These modes of evaluating a prophet’s teachings are still valid. Jesus promised his disciples, “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...and he will shew you things to come” (John 16:13). These prophetic gifts of the Holy Ghost have been restored and are available to all worthy individuals.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (1 Cor. 12:3). Indeed, the spirit of prophecy was, and is, “the testimony of Jesus” (Rev. 19:10). Moroni promised all who will believe and partake of the spiritual gifts available that the truthfulness of spiritual things can be ascertained through serious intent, study, reflection, and prayer: “And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moro. 10:3–5; 1 Ne. 10:17–19; Moro. 7:12–18; D&C 9). The validity and value of prophetic teachings, past and present, may thus be known.

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PROPHECY IN BIBLICAL TIMES

From Adam (Moses 6:8) to John the Revelator, the Lord has revealed his word to prophets: “The Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7; cf. Num. 12:6–8; Jer. 23:18). Prophecy refers to God’s word received by prophets acting as authorized intermediaries between God and humans.

The Lord called men from the course of their normal lives to be prophets and revealed his word in various ways: by face-to-face encounters, his voice alone, divine messengers, dreams, and inspiration. Often prophets received the Lord’s word through symbolic object lessons, visions of councils in heaven and scenes of judgment, and views of past, present, and future events, and hence, they were also called “foretellers” and “forth-tellers.” Occasionally expressed poetically, biblical prophecy is rich in imagery, metaphor, symbolism, allusion, and other literary figures. Besides the prophecies in the Bible, others from the biblical period are preserved in the Pearl of Great Price, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants.

Biblical prophets acted frequently as mediators of covenants. Prophets such as Adam, Enoch, Noah, the brother of Jared, Abraham, and Moses acted as agents through whom the Lord established his covenants among men and women. These prophets proclaimed the gospel and called their contemporaries to repent and join in a covenantal relationship with the Lord, providing inspired descriptions of future blessings and cursings that depended on obedience to the conditions of the covenants. Prophets who followed, such as Lehi, Ether, Isaiah, Jeremiah, King Benjamin, and John the Baptist, renewed the covenant and warned the covenant people, in varying states of apostasy, that they must repent and keep their covenantal obligations or face the consequences of disobedience—judgment, destruction, and scattering.

Biblical prophets often addressed the present by looking into the future, and prophecies of destruction were balanced by those of hope. Prophets foresaw apostasy and restoration, the scattering and gathering of Israel, the coming of Jesus Christ and his atonement (Jacob 4:4; Mosiah 13:33; D&C 20:26), and times of tribulation preceding his return (Acts 3:21). Along with their indictments of covenant Israel, many prophets delivered oracles directed to foreign nations, affirming the universal scope of their message (Amos 9:7). Most
prophets in biblical times directed their unpopular message of repentance toward individuals or the community, thus placing the prophet in opposition to the prevailing social, political, and religious values, practices, and institutions of his time and place. Some prophets were killed or persecuted by those whose beliefs and behavior they condemned.

From the beginning, the Lord has set no limit on his ability to send prophets at his discretion. “And I do this that I may prove unto many that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever; . . . and because that I have spoken one word ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever” (2 Ne. 29:9). Biblical prophecy did not end with MALACHI but continued with the coming of John the Baptist (Matt. 13:57; Luke 7:39; 1 Ne. 10:4). In addition, the prophetic tradition continued in the Western Hemisphere until the destruction of the Nephites around A.D. 400. Joel prophesied the future restoration of prophecy: “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28). The fulfillment of this prophecy was acknowledged by PETER on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16–18) and again by the angel MORONI to the Prophet Joseph Smith (JS—H 1:41).

Latter-day scriptures cite, interpret, and allude to ancient prophecy, emphasizing its relevance to the restored Church. For example, important prophecies not in the biblical canon, such as those of JOSEPH OF EGYPT (2 Ne. 3) and ZENOS (Jacob 5), are preserved in the Book of Mormon. NEPHI I (e.g., 1 Ne. 20–22; 2 Ne. 11–24), JACOB (2 Ne. 7–8), ABINADAP (Mosiah 14–15), and CHRIST (3 Ne. 20–25) cite Isaiah extensively and provide inspired interpretation (see ISAIAH: TEXTS IN THE BOOK OF MORMON). In the Doctrine and Covenants, Joseph Smith addressed specific questions about Isaiah 11 (D&C 113) and the book of Revelation (D&C 77) and through revelation confirmed the fulfillment of several biblical prophecies in the latter days, including Daniel’s vision of “the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands” as the restoration of the gospel (D&C 65:2) and the coming of ELIJAH in Malachi 4:5–6 by his appearance in the KIRTLAND TEMPLE in 1836 (D&C 110).

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PROPHECY IN THE BOOK OF MORMON
The Book of Mormon reports prophecies made during a thousand-year period concerning the future of the Nephites and Lamanites, the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, his visit to the Western Hemisphere, the future restoration of the gospel to the Gentiles, and related events of the LAST DAYS. While this record includes the fulfillment of some prophecies, Latter-day Saints see fulfillment of other prophecies in the restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith and expect yet others to be fulfilled in the future.

Messianic prophecies include the number of years until Jesus’ birth (1 Ne. 10:4; Hel. 14:2), conditions surrounding his birth (1 Ne. 11:13–21), his mother’s identity (Mosiah 3:8), the manner and location of his baptism by John the Baptist (1 Ne. 10:7–10), his miracles and teachings (1 Ne. 11:28–31), and his atonement, resurrection, and second coming. PROPHETS foretold details concerning Christ’s crucifixion and his atoning sacrifice, one stating that “blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people” (Mosiah 3:7). Furthermore, he would rise on the third day (2 Ne. 25:13) and appear to many (Alma 16:20). SAMUEL THE LAMANITE prophesied specific signs of Christ’s birth and death to be experienced among BOOK OF MORMON PEOPLES (Hel. 14).

During his visit to the Americas, the risen Jesus attested to the authenticity of these prophecies by stating that “the scriptures concerning my coming are fulfilled” (3 Ne. 9:16). Later, he reminded NEPHI I of a prophecy of his resurrection, the fulfillment of which had not been recorded. The details were promptly added to Nephite records (3 Ne. 23:6–13; cf. Hel. 14:25).

The Book of Mormon relates the fulfillment of other prophecies foretelling events among Book of Mormon peoples. Besides many Messianic prophecies, examples include ALMA prophesying that the Nephites, dwindling in unbelief, would eventually become extinct (Alma 45:9–14; Morm. 6:11–