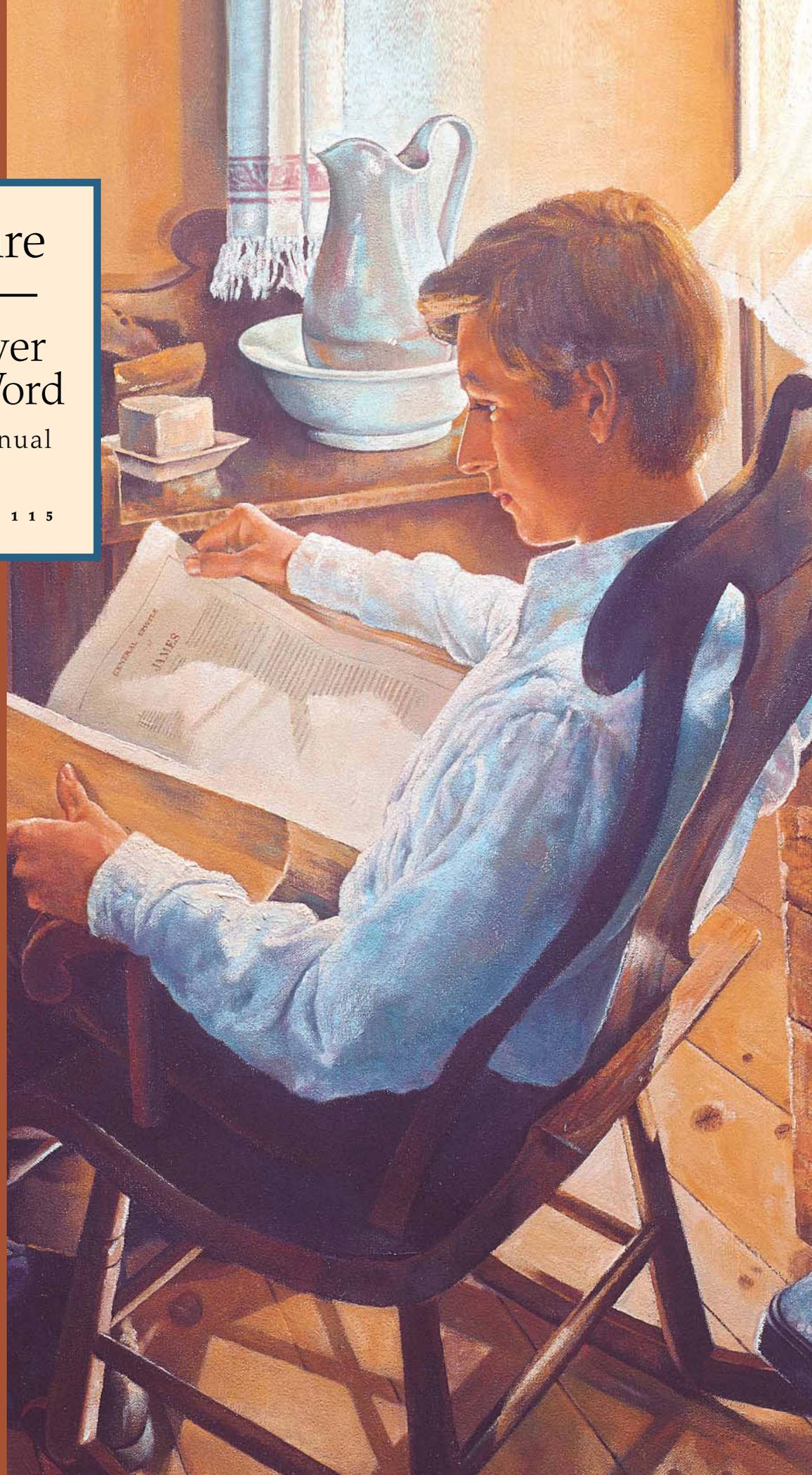


Scripture  
Study—  
The Power  
of the Word  
Teacher Manual

RELIGION 115



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# Scripture Study—The Power of the Word

## Teacher Manual

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Religion 115

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Church Educational System

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# Contents

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<b>Preface</b> .....	v
<b>Lesson 1</b> What Is Scripture? .....	1
<b>Lesson 2</b> The Standard Works .....	3
<b>Lesson 3</b> Why Study the Scriptures? .....	8
<b>Lesson 4</b> Basic Components of Scripture Study .....	11
<b>Lesson 5</b> Techniques of Effective Scripture Study .....	14
<b>Lesson 6</b> Marking Scripture .....	18
<b>Lesson 7</b> Study Aids in the LDS Scriptures .....	21
<b>Lesson 8</b> Prophets Interpret Scripture .....	25
<b>Lesson 9</b> Using Scripture to Understand Scripture .....	27
<b>Lesson 10</b> Studying Scripture in Context .....	30
<b>Lesson 11</b> Bridging the Cultural Gap .....	33
<b>Lesson 12</b> Literary Styles of Scripture .....	37
<b>Lesson 13</b> Scriptural Use of Symbolism .....	40
<b>Lesson 14</b> Using Scriptures to Meet Personal Needs .....	44
<b>Lesson 15</b> Jesus Christ—The Central Focus of All Scripture .....	48
<b>Appendix</b> Examples of Symbols Used in Scriptures .....	52
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	56



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# Preface

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This manual is for teaching Religion 115. The student manual for this course is the standard works of the Church.

The purpose of this course is to teach students how to read and understand the scriptures. The hope is that this will encourage students to study the scriptures and feel more capable of learning and applying the truths they contain.

President Gordon B. Hinckley stated:

“I am grateful for emphasis on reading the scriptures. I hope that for you this will become something far more enjoyable than a duty; that, rather, it will become a love affair with the word of God. I promise you that as you read, your minds will be enlightened and your spirits will be lifted. At first it may seem tedious, but that will change into a wondrous experience with thoughts and words of things divine” (“The Light within You,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 99).

This teacher manual includes fifteen lessons to be taught during a semester or a quarter block. You will need to preview the lessons to determine how much time you should spend on each one.

The format of the teacher manual is as follows:

## Teaching Objective

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The teaching objective is a brief statement that identifies the purpose of the lesson and what students should learn.

## Themes

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The themes are the central ideas of each lesson.

## Teaching Ideas

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The teaching ideas section contains a variety of suggestions for lesson preparation and presentation.

## Supplementary Study Sources

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The sources listed provide additional material to help you better understand particular themes.

## Suggested Student Study

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This material gives ideas to help students review a lesson and prepare for future lessons.



### Teaching Objective

Canonized scripture is a collection of divine revelations given by the Lord to His prophets for the edification of mankind.

### Themes

1. The Lord gave a definition of scripture.
2. Living prophets give us additional scripture.
3. The standard works are the official body of written scripture for the Church.
4. Scripture becomes part of the standard works through the process of canonization.
5. Prophets may refine scripture.

### Teaching Ideas

#### 1. The Lord gave a definition of scripture.

- Discuss with students Doctrine and Covenants 68:3–4 and 2 Peter 1:21. Note the following doctrinal clarification by President Harold B. Lee:

“In another great revelation he [the Lord] explained something else that we would have the Saints remember today. Where are you going to go to hear and find out what the Lord wants you to do today? The Lord declared again:

“‘And this is the ensample unto them [he is talking now to those who are leaders of the Church], that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost.

“‘And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.’ (D&C 68:3–4.)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, 167; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 126).

#### 2. Living prophets give us additional scripture.

- Help students understand that nowhere in the Bible is there valid indication that the Lord did not intend to continue to reveal His mind and will to man. Note the Prophet Joseph Smith’s answers to questions regarding this principle:

“‘Is there anything in the Bible which licenses you to believe in revelation now-a-days?’

“‘Is there anything that does not authorize us to believe so? If there is, we have, as yet, not been able to find it.

“... ‘Is not the canon of the Scriptures full?’

“If it is, there is a great defect in the book, or else it would have said so” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 121).

For further insight, evaluate Revelation 22:18–19; Hebrews 1:1–2; 2 Timothy 3:16; JST, Luke 16:16; Amos 3:7.

- Discuss Articles of Faith 1:9 to help students understand the importance of a living prophet. As evidence of the importance of a prophet, refer to Doctrine and Covenants 137–38 and Official Declaration 2.
- The following statement could be discussed: President J. Reuben Clark Jr., who was a Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “Only the President of the Church . . . has the right to receive revelations for the Church, either new or amendatory, or to give authoritative interpretations of scriptures that shall be binding on the Church, or change in any way the existing doctrines of the Church. He is God’s sole mouthpiece on earth” (“When Are the Writings,” 12).
- Read, mark, and discuss Doctrine and Covenants 1:14, 24, 38; 21:1–5.

#### 3. The standard works are the official body of written scripture for the Church.

- Without going into detail about each book, explain that the standard works of the Church are comprised of the Holy Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.
- Show the importance of standards and their use in all walks of life. Helpful illustrations may be drawn from sports, science, and industry.
- Using one or both of the following statements from Elder Harold B. Lee, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, discuss why the scriptures are called the standard works:

“How do we measure whether or not one’s teachings are true or false? If anyone teaches beyond what the scriptures teach, we may put it down as speculation except one man who has the right to bring forth any new doctrine—that is the one man who holds the keys—the prophet, seer, and revelator who presides in that high place. And no one else. If anyone presumes to bring forth what he claims to be new doctrine you may know that it is purely his own opinion and you label it as such regardless of his position in the Church. If it contradicts something

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that is in the scriptures, you may label it immediately that it is false. That is why we call the scriptures our four Standard Church Works. They are the standards by which we measure all doctrine and if anything is taught which is contrary to that which is in the scriptures, it is false. It is just that simple" ("Viewpoint of a Giant," 6).

"All that we teach in this Church ought to be couched in the scriptures. It ought to be found in the scriptures. We ought to choose our texts from the scriptures. If we want to measure truth, we should measure it by the four standard works, regardless of who writes it. If it is not in the standard works, we may well assume that it is speculation, man's own personal opinion; and if it contradicts what is in the scriptures, it is not true. This is the standard by which we measure all truth" ("Using the Scriptures in Our Church Assignments," *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1969, 13).

#### 4. Scripture becomes part of the standard works through the process of canonization.

- Explain the meaning of *canon*, and describe the process by which scripture is canonized.

"A word of Greek origin, originally meaning 'a rod for testing straightness,' now used to denote the authoritative collection of the sacred books used by the true believers in Christ" (Bible Dictionary, "canon," 630–31).

In the Church, *canon* refers to the authoritative collection of sacred books of scripture, known as the standard works, formally adopted and accepted by the Church and considered binding upon members in matters of faith and doctrine.

The process is illustrated by the action taken in the April 1976 general conference under the direction of President N. Eldon Tanner, in which two revelations were added to the Pearl of Great Price. Conducting the business of the conference, President Tanner said:

"President Kimball has asked me to read a very important resolution for your sustaining vote.

"'At a meeting of the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve held in the Salt Lake Temple on March 25, 1976, approval was given to add to the Pearl of Great Price the following two revelations:

"'First, a vision of the celestial kingdom given to Joseph Smith . . . ; and second, a vision given to President Joseph F. Smith . . . showing the visit of the Lord Jesus Christ in the spirit world. . . .'

"It is proposed that we sustain and approve this action and adopt these revelations as part of the standard works of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"All those in favor manifest it. Those opposed, if any, by the same sign" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 29; or *Ensign*, May 1976, 19). In 1979 these two revelations were moved to the Doctrine and Covenants and became sections 137 and 138.

#### 5. Prophets may refine scripture.

- Discuss the following statements:

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained:

"Of course there have been changes and corrections. Anyone who has done even limited research knows that. When properly reviewed, such corrections become a testimony for, not against, the truth of the books.

"The Prophet Joseph Smith was an unschooled farm boy. To read some of his early letters in the original shows him to be somewhat unpolished in spelling and grammar and in expression.

"That the revelations came through him in any form of literary refinement is nothing short of a miracle. That some perfecting should continue strengthens my respect for them.

"Now, I add with emphasis that such changes have been basically minor refinements in grammar, expression, punctuation, clarification. Nothing fundamental has been altered" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 137; or *Ensign*, May 1974, 94).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: "From the days of the first dispensation it has been the practice of the Lord's people to make selections from the scriptural utterances of those who are appointed to lead the Church and to publish these selections as formal and official scripture. All should be accepted and believed by all who call themselves Saints. But the revelations, visions, prophecies, and narrations selected and published for official use are thereby made binding upon the people in a particular and special sense. They become part of the standard works of the Church. They become the standards, the measuring rods, by which doctrine and procedure are determined" ("A New Commandment: Save Thyself and Thy Kindred," *Ensign*, Aug. 1976, 7).

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## Supplementary Study Sources

None suggested.

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## Suggested Student Study

- In preparation for the next lesson, ask students to list one or two unique doctrinal contributions of each of the standard works.

### Teaching Objective

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Each of the standard works provides a unique contribution to the body of canonized scripture.

### Themes

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1. The Bible is a collection of ancient scriptural records of the house of Israel who lived in the Middle East.
2. The Book of Mormon is a record of God's dealings with a remnant of the house of Israel in ancient America.
3. The Doctrine and Covenants is a body of modern scripture.
4. The Pearl of Great Price is a collection of prophetic writings relating to various dispensations.

### Teaching Ideas

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#### 1. The Bible is a collection of ancient scriptural records of the house of Israel who lived in the Middle East.

■ A knowledge of the meaning of the word *Bible* will help students know how the Bible came to be. Ask your class for a definition, and then share the following insights from Elder James E. Talmage, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“In present usage, the term *Holy Bible* designates the collection of sacred writings otherwise known as the Hebrew Scriptures, containing an account of the dealings of God with the human family; which account is confined wholly, except in the record of antediluvian events, to the eastern hemisphere. The word *Bible*, though singular in form, is the English representative of a Greek plural, *Biblia*, signifying literally *books*. . . . It is to be noted that the idea of a collection of books predominates in all early usages of the word *Bible*; the scriptures were, as they are, composed of the special writings of many authors, widely separated in time; and, from the harmony and unity prevailing throughout these diverse productions, strong evidence of their authenticity may be adduced” (*Articles of Faith*, 237).

■ The LDS Bible Dictionary provides much information about the coming forth of the Bible (“Bible,” 622–25). Have students refer to their Bible Dictionary and answer the following questions:

1. How long did it take for the Bible to come into existence?

2. What are some of the differences between the Old and New Testaments?
3. What does testament mean?
4. What are the major divisions in the Old Testament?
5. What is the Septuagint?
6. How are the books in the New Testament arranged?
7. What role did the following men play in bringing forth the English Bible?
  - a. John Wycliffe
  - b. William Tindale
  - c. Henry VIII
  - d. Miles Coverdale
8. What were the names of some of the more important early versions of the New Testament?
9. Identify and give the significance of some of the early Bible versions (Great Bible, Genevan Bible, Breeches Bible).
10. What is important about the year 1611?
11. What is known about the history of the process used for collecting and recognizing the books in the Bible as a sacred authority?
12. By application of certain tests the books now contained in the Bible have been preserved. List these tests (or rules).

■ Divide the class into groups and have each group develop a list of the Bible's contributions.

■ Read and discuss the following statement by President Ezra Taft Benson:

“I love the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments. It is a source of great truth. It teaches us about the life and ministry of the Master. From its pages we learn of the hand of God in directing the affairs of His people from the very beginning of the earth's history. It would be difficult to underestimate the impact the Bible has had on the history of the world. Its pages have blessed the lives of generations. . . .

“ . . . That sacred and holy book has been of inestimable worth to the children of men. In fact, it was a passage from the Bible that inspired the Prophet Joseph Smith to go to a grove of trees near his home and kneel in prayer. What followed was the glorious vision that commenced the restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the earth. That vision also began the process of bringing forth new scripture to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Bible in bearing witness to a wicked world that Jesus is the Christ and that God lives and loves His children and is still intimately involved in their salvation and exaltation” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 100–101; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 78).

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## 2. The Book of Mormon is a record of God's dealings with a remnant of the house of Isarel in ancient America.

- Review the introductory pages of the Book of Mormon. These first pages include the title page, information about the origin of the Book of Mormon, and the testimonies of the witnesses. You will also find information about the different plates that make up the Book of Mormon.

- Share the following insights from President Gordon B. Hinckley concerning the Book of Mormon:

"Its appeal is as timeless as truth, as universal as mankind. It is the only book that contains within it covers a promise that by divine power the reader may know with certainty of its truth.

"Its origin is miraculous; when the story of that origin is first told to one unfamiliar with it, it is almost unbelievable. But the book is here to be felt and handled and read. No one can dispute its presence.

"All efforts to account for its origin, other than the account given by Joseph Smith, have been shown to lack substance. It is a record of ancient America. It is the scripture of the New World, as certainly as the Bible is the scripture of the Old. . . .

"Its narrative is a chronicle of nations long since gone. But in its descriptions of the problems of today's society, it is as current as the morning newspaper and much more definitive, inspired, and inspiring concerning the solutions to those problems.

"I know of no other writing that sets forth with such clarity the tragic consequences to societies that follow courses contrary to the commandments of God. . . .

"No other written testament so clearly illustrates the fact that when men and nations walk in the fear of God and in obedience to his commandments, they prosper and grow, but when they disregard him and his word, there comes a decay which, unless arrested by righteousness, leads to impotence and death. The Book of Mormon is an affirmation of the Old Testament proverb, 'Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.' (Prov. 14:34.)

"While the Book of Mormon speaks with power about the issues that affect our modern society, the great and stirring burden of its message is a testimony, vibrant and true, that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah. The book bears witness of him who walked the dusty roads of Palestine healing the sick and teaching the doctrines of salvation; who died upon the cross of Calvary; who on the third day came forth from the tomb, appearing to many; and who, as a resurrected being, visited the people of the Western Hemisphere" ("The Power of the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, June 1988, 4–5).

- The Book of Mormon is of monumental importance to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Ezra Taft Benson asked that Church members make this scripture a central focus of their study. Share the following three reasons President Benson gave for why Latter-day Saints should continually study this book throughout their lives:

"The *first* is that the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion. This was the Prophet Joseph Smith's statement. He testified that 'the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion' (*History of the Church*, 4:461). A keystone is the central stone in an arch. It holds all the other stones in place, and if removed, the arch crumbles.

"There are three ways in which the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion. It is the keystone in our witness of Christ. It is the keystone of our doctrine. It is the keystone of testimony.

"The Book of Mormon is the keystone in our witness of Jesus Christ, who is Himself the cornerstone of everything we do. It bears witness of His reality with power and clarity. Unlike the Bible, which passed through generations of copyists, translators, and corrupt religionists who tampered with the text, the Book of Mormon came from writer to reader in just one inspired step of translation. Therefore, its testimony of the Master is clear, undiluted, and full of power. But it does even more. Much of the Christian world today rejects the divinity of the Savior. They question His miraculous birth, His perfect life, and the reality of His glorious resurrection. The Book of Mormon teaches in plain and unmistakable terms about the truth of all of those. It also provides the most complete explanation of the doctrine of the Atonement. Truly, this divinely inspired book is a keystone in bearing witness to the world that Jesus is the Christ (see title page of the Book of Mormon).

"The Book of Mormon is also the keystone of the doctrine of the Resurrection. . . . The Lord Himself has stated that the Book of Mormon contains the 'fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ' (D&C 20:9). That does not mean it contains every teaching, every doctrine ever revealed. Rather, it means that in the Book of Mormon we will find the fulness of those doctrines required for our salvation. And they are taught plainly and simply so that even children can learn the ways of salvation and exaltation. The Book of Mormon offers so much that broadens our understandings of the doctrines of salvation. Without it, much of what is taught in other scriptures would not be nearly so plain and precious.

"Finally, the Book of Mormon is the keystone of testimony. Just as the arch crumbles if the keystone is removed, so does all the Church stand or fall with the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. . . .

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“The *second* great reason why we must make the Book of Mormon a center focus of study is that it was written for our day. The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us. Mormon wrote near the end of the Nephite civilization. Under the inspiration of God, who sees all things from the beginning, he abridged centuries of records, choosing the stories, speeches, and events that would be most helpful to us.

“Each of the major writers of the Book of Mormon testified that he wrote for future generations. . . .

“If they saw our day and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, ‘Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?’

“And there is example after example of how that question will be answered. For example, in the Book of Mormon we find a pattern for preparing for the Second Coming. A major portion of the book centers on the few decades just prior to Christ’s coming to America. By careful study of that time period, we can determine why some were destroyed in the terrible judgments that preceded His coming and what brought others to stand at the temple in the land of Bountiful and thrust their hands into the wounds of His hands and feet.

“From the Book of Mormon we learn how disciples of Christ live in times of war. From the Book of Mormon we see the evils of secret combinations portrayed in graphic and chilling reality. In the Book of Mormon we find lessons for dealing with persecution and apostasy. We learn much about how to do missionary work. And more than anywhere else, we see in the Book of Mormon the dangers of materialism and setting our hearts on the things of the world. Can anyone doubt that this book was meant for us and that in it we find great power, great comfort, and great protection?

“The *third* reason why the Book of Mormon is of such value to Latter-day Saints is given in the same statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith cited previously. He said, ‘I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book’ (*History of the Church*, 4:461). That is the third reason for studying the book. It helps us draw nearer to God. Is there not something deep in our hearts that longs to draw nearer to God, to be more like Him in our daily walk, to feel His presence with us constantly? If so, then the Book of Mormon will help us do so more than any other book.

“It is not just that the Book of Mormon teaches us truth, though it indeed does that. It is not just that the Book of Mormon bears testimony of Christ,

though it indeed does that, too. But there is something more. There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. The scriptures are called ‘the words of life’ (D&C 84:85), and nowhere is that more true than it is of the Book of Mormon. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 4–6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 5–7).

■ President Benson mentioned that each of the major writers in the Book of Mormon wrote for future generations. Refer to the following scriptures for further insight: 2 Nephi 25:21; Jacob 1:3; Enos 1:15–16; Jarom 1:2; Mormon 7:1; 8:34–35.

### **3. The Doctrine and Covenants is a body of modern scripture.**

■ Have students read the Explanatory Introduction found at the beginning of the Doctrine and Covenants, and discuss the following questions:

1. What is the Doctrine and Covenants?
2. Who is it for?
3. Why is the Doctrine and Covenants unique?
4. Whose voice is heard throughout the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants?
5. What conditions led to the coming forth of the Doctrine and Covenants?
6. What are some of the major teachings of the Doctrine and Covenants?
7. Whose testimonies are found in the Explanatory Introduction?

■ Discuss the following statement from President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“The Doctrine and Covenants is unique among our books of scripture. It is the constitution of the Church. . . .

“. . . The Doctrine and Covenants is a conduit for the expressions of the Lord to His people.

“The variety of matters the book deals with is amazing. They include principles and procedures concerning the governance of the Church. Unique and remarkable rules of health, with promises both physical and spiritual, are set forth. The covenant of the eternal priesthood is described in a manner not found elsewhere in scripture. The privileges and blessings—and the limitations and opportunities—of the three degrees of glory are announced, building on Paul’s brief mention of a glory of the sun, and of the moon, and of the stars. Repentance is proclaimed in language clear and compelling. The correct mode of baptism is given. The nature of the Godhead, which has troubled theologians for centuries, is described in language understandable to all. The Lord’s law of

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finance is pronounced, mandating how funds for the operation of the Church are to be acquired and disbursed. Work for the dead is revealed to bless the sons and daughters of God of all generations. . . .

"I love the language of the book. I love the tone of its words. I marvel at the clarity and strength of its statements, of its doctrinal expositions and prophetic promises. . . .

"It is my testimony, written with solemnity and great appreciation, that this remarkable book, dealing with so many matters of interest and concern to us, sets forth 'the order and will of God' to this generation. Ours is the opportunity to read it, ponder it, and enjoy its words of counsel and promise" ("The Order and Will of God," *Ensign*, Jan. 1989, 2–5).

- Discuss the Lord's preface, section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants, and the appendix, section 133. Identify some of the major themes of the Doctrine and Covenants from these two sections.

- Share the following statement of President Ezra Taft Benson:

"Excluding the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants is by far the greatest external witness and evidence which we have from the Lord that the Book of Mormon is true. . . .

"The Doctrine and Covenants is the binding link between the Book of Mormon and the continuing work of the Restoration through the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors.

"In the Doctrine and Covenants we learn of temple work, eternal families, the degrees of glory, Church organization, and many other great truths of the Restoration. . . .

". . . The Doctrine and Covenants brings men to Christ's kingdom, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 'the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth' [D&C 1:30]. I know that.

"The Book of Mormon is the 'keystone' of our religion, and the Doctrine and Covenants is the capstone, with continuing latter-day revelation" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 105; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 83).

- Discuss how the Doctrine and Covenants is the capstone of our religion.

#### **4. The Pearl of Great Price is a collection of prophetic writings relating to various dispensations.**

- Have class members refer to the Introductory Note at the beginning of the Pearl of Great Price, and then ask these questions:

1. What role did Elder Franklin D. Richards play in bringing forth this standard work?
2. When did the Pearl of Great Price become one of the standard works of the Church?

3. What are the different books or extracts found in the Pearl of Great Price?

- List and discuss some of the contributions the Pearl of Great Price makes to our understanding of the gospel. Note the following examples:

1. Information on Satan and the type of being he is
2. The plan of salvation as revealed to Adam
3. The nature and order of the cosmos
4. First Vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith
5. Second Coming of the Savior

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## Supplementary Study Sources

- Bruce R. McConkie, "The Bible, a Sealed Book," in *Supplement, a Symposium on the New Testament*, 1984, 1–6; several keys teaching how to understand and use the Bible.

- Lenet H. Read, "How the Bible Came to Be," *Ensign*, Jan. 1982, 36–42; Feb. 1982, 32–37; Mar. 1982, 14–18; Apr. 1982, 42–48; the history and development of the Old and New Testaments.

- *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* (Rel. 324 and 325), 1–2.

- James R. Clark, "Our Pearl of Great Price: From Mission Pamphlet to Standard Work," *Ensign*, Aug. 1976, 12–17; a brief history of the coming forth of the Pearl of Great Price.

- Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1990, 47–51; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 36–38; the importance of the standard works and what can be learned from them.

- Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 73–77; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 59–61; the Book of Mormon, its importance, and how an individual can qualify to know that it is true.

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## Suggested Student Study

- This lesson contains many questions about the origin and significance of the standard works. You may want to use them as a review of this lesson.

- In preparation for the next lesson, encourage students to study the standard works daily. The following statement from Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, might be helpful in encouraging students to read the scriptures:

"Now in our day we have the standard works of the Church. We have the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. There are in these four books a total of 1579 chapters. I think it would not be too much to say that we could with propriety, day in and day out, consistently, read three chapters in one or the other

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of these works; and if we pursued such a course, we would read all of the Gospels in less than a month. We would read the entire New Testament in three months. We would read the Old Testament in ten months, and the whole Bible in thirteen months. We would go through the Book of Mormon in two

and two-thirds months, the Doctrine and Covenants in a month and a half, and the Pearl of Great Price in five days. Taken altogether, we would read all the standard works in less than eighteen months and be ready to start over again" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1959, 51).

### Teaching Objective

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Regular scripture study brings many blessings.

### Themes

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1. The scriptures serve many purposes for mankind.
2. The scriptures promise great blessings to those who follow the teachings found therein.
3. The prophets of this dispensation describe many benefits that come to those who study and love the scriptures.
4. Through scripture study students may hear the voice of the Lord.

### Teaching Ideas

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#### 1. The scriptures serve many purposes for mankind.

▪ Review the section of the Topical Guide entitled “scriptures, value of.” Have students list the various reasons why a member of the Church should read and study the scriptures.

#### 2. The scriptures promise great blessings to those who follow the teachings found therein.

▪ Create a worksheet with the following scripture references on it, and have students look up the passages and summarize the promised blessings associated with scripture study mentioned in the passages. Then have students mark and annotate the passages if they desire. Stress that the Lord keeps His promises (see D&C 1:37–38; 82:10).

1. Joshua 1:8
2. Psalm 119:105
3. Luke 24:27–32
4. 1 Nephi 1:12
5. 1 Nephi 15:24
6. 2 Nephi 32:3
7. Jacob 2:8
8. Alma 17:2
9. Helaman 15:7–8
10. Doctrine and Covenants 11:21–22

#### 3. The prophets of this dispensation describe many benefits that come to those who study and love the scriptures.

▪ Review with students the following teachings of the prophets relative to the blessings gained from a

diligent study of the word of God. You may choose to create a handout listing selected passages for discussion.

President Ezra Taft Benson said: “More than at any time in our history, brothers and sisters, we have need for greater spirituality. The way to develop greater spirituality is to feast on the words of Christ as revealed in the scriptures” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1984, 7; or *Ensign*, May 1984, 7).

President Spencer W. Kimball said: “The years have taught me that if we will energetically pursue this worthy personal goal [of scripture study] in a determined and conscientious manner, we shall indeed find answers to our problems and peace in our hearts. We shall experience the Holy Ghost broadening our understanding, find new insights, witness an unfolding pattern of all scripture; and the doctrines of the Lord shall come to have more meaning to us than we ever thought possible. As a consequence, we shall have greater wisdom with which to guide ourselves and our families, so that we may serve as a light and source of strength to our nonmember friends with whom we have an obligation to share the gospel” (“Always a Convert Church,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1975, 2–3).

President Kimball also taught: “I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns. I find myself loving more intensely those whom I must love with all my heart and mind and strength, and loving them more, I find it easier to abide their counsel” (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 135).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

“I think that people who study the scriptures get a dimension to their life that nobody else gets and that can’t be gained in any way except by studying the scriptures.

“There’s an increase in faith and a desire to do what’s right and a feeling of inspiration and understanding that comes to people who study the gospel—meaning particularly the Standard Works—and who ponder the principles, that can’t come in any other way” (in David Croft, “Spare Time’s Rare to Apostle,” *Church News*, 24 Jan. 1976, 4).

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most

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correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (*History of the Church*, 4:461).

President Marion G. Romney, who was a Counselor in the First Presidency, testified: "I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase; mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to the counsel of their parents. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 90; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 67).

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: "Now remember, brethren and sisters, if you treasure up the word of the Lord, if you study these revelations, not merely those that are in the Doctrine and Covenants, but those that are in all the standard works of the Church, and you put into practice the commandments that are here found, you will not be deceived in these perilous times, but you shall have the spirit of discernment and you shall know the truth and shall know falsehood, for you shall have power to know the spirits of men and to understand the Spirit of the Lord" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1931, 17–18).

President Joseph F. Smith taught: "That which characterizes above all else the inspiration and divinity of the Scriptures is the spirit in which they are written and the spiritual wealth they convey to those who faithfully and conscientiously read them. Our attitude, therefore, toward the Scriptures should be in harmony with the purposes for which they were written. They are intended to enlarge man's spiritual endowments and to reveal and intensify the bond of relationship between him and his God. The Bible, as all other books of Holy Writ, to be appreciated must be studied by those spiritually inclined and who are in quest of spiritual truths" ("Reason and the Scriptures," *Juvenile Instructor*, Apr. 1912, 204).

#### **4. Through scripture study students may hear the voice of the Lord.**

▪ Read and discuss Doctrine and Covenants 18:34–36. Referring to this passage, Elder S. Dilworth Young, who was a member of the Seventy, explained: "When I read a verse . . . I am hearing the voice of

the Lord as well as reading his words, if I hear by the Spirit" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1963, 74).

The following story by Elder Carlos E. Asay, who was a member of the Seventy, may help you make application of this principle:

"Some years ago I supervised a young man who was having difficulty in understanding and appreciating his church assignment. I tried very hard to point out the importance of his duties. I also appealed to his sense of honor. The conversation seemed to have little effect upon my listener. Finally, after some inner strugglings, I asked: 'What will it take to convince you that you must successfully complete your calling?' He did not answer. So I added: 'Are you waiting to see a burning bush? to receive an angelic visitation? or to hear a voice directly from heaven?'

"His response was immediate: 'That's what I need. I need to hear the voice of God.'

"At first I wondered if the young man was serious. However, the look on his face and the tone of his voice convinced me that he was. I then invited him to read with me this scripture: 'And I, Jesus Christ, your Lord and your God, have spoken it.

"These words are not of men nor of man, but of me; wherefore, you shall testify they are of me and not of man;

"For it is my voice which speaketh them unto you; for they are given by my Spirit unto you, and by my power you can read them one to another; and save it were by my power you could not have them;

"Wherefore, you can testify that you have heard my voice, and know my words.' (D&C 18:33–36.)

"My associate began to understand that the scriptures are the will, the mind, the word, and the voice of the Lord. (See D&C 68:4.)

"I encouraged the young man to look to God through the scriptures. I requested that he regard his daily study period as a personal interview with the Lord. And I made the promise that he would find purpose and enthusiasm for his calling—if he was faithful in his reading and pondering of the scriptures" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1978, 78–79; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 52–53).

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## **Supplementary Study Sources**

▪ Howard W. Hunter, in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 91–93; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 64–65; the blessings of daily scripture study.

▪ Ezra Taft Benson, "The Power of the Word," *Ensign*, May 1986, 79–82; blessings that come to those who immerse themselves in the scriptures.

▪ Spencer W. Kimball, "How Rare a Possession—The Scriptures," *Ensign*, July 1985, 2–5; why Latter-day Saints should study the scriptures.

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- Robert J. Matthews, “What Do the Scriptures Say about the Scriptures?” *Ensign*, May 1973, 22–24; what scripture writers said about the value, purpose, and benefits of the scriptures.
  - “*Hold to the Rod*,” video presentation 6, “All That Will Hear” (34:24); the role of scripture study in receiving personal revelation—hearing the voice of the Lord.
  - “*Hold to the Rod*,” video presentation 11, “A Lamp unto My Feet” (32:20); how the scriptures are used to provide direction in life.

- “*Hold to the Rod*,” video presentation 12, “Look to God and Live” (40:30); the scriptures as a tool to help students come to a knowledge of God.

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## Suggested Student Study

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- Invite students to confidentially outline some goals for their personal scripture study based on the promises extended from the Lord to those who study the scriptures.

### Teaching Objective

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Through study and prayer the scriptures can be understood by the power of the Holy Ghost.

### Themes

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1. The scriptures are our fundamental source for study.
2. Seek the Spirit in studying the scriptures.
3. Pray for understanding and learn to listen to the Lord's answers.
4. It is necessary to search the scriptures diligently to understand them.
5. Pondering and meditation are essential ingredients of fruitful scripture study.

### Teaching Ideas

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#### 1. The scriptures are our fundamental source for study.

- Read and discuss the following statements:

President Ezra Taft Benson said: "Always remember, there is no satisfactory substitute for the scriptures and the words of the living prophets. These should be your original sources. Read and ponder more what the Lord said, and less about what others have written concerning what the Lord said" (*The Gospel Teacher*, 5).

President Marion G. Romney, who was a Counselor in the First Presidency, said: "I don't know much about the gospel other than what I've learned from the standard works. When I drink from a spring I like to get the water where it comes out of the ground, not down the stream after the cattle have waded in it. . . . I appreciate other people's interpretation, but when it comes to the gospel we ought to be acquainted with what the Lord says and we ought to read it" (untitled address at CES coordinators convention, 13 Apr. 1973, 4).

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "The reading of our scriptures, for me, is not at the pursuit of scholarship. Rather, it is a love affair with the work of the Lord and that of his prophets. . . .

"I do not concern myself much with reading long commentary volumes designed to enlarge at length upon that which is found in the scriptures. Rather, I prefer to dwell with the source, tasting of the unadulterated waters of the foundation of truth—the word of God as he gave it and as it has been

recorded in the books we accept as scripture. . . .

Through reading the scriptures, we can gain the assurance of the Spirit that that which we read has come of God for the enlightenment, blessing, and joy of his children" ("Feasting upon the Scriptures," *Ensign*, Dec. 1985, 45).

#### 2. Seek the Spirit in studying the scriptures.

- The scriptures can be comprehended only by help from God through His Spirit. The Apostle Paul clearly understood this principle and taught it to the Corinthian Saints. Work through the analysis of 1 Corinthians 2:9–16 (found on the next page) with your students and help them understand how the Spirit is indispensable in gaining a true understanding of the scriptures.

- Help students understand the need to discover the mind and will of the Lord as they study the scriptures. Share with them the key to doing this, as discussed by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"Scripture comes from God by the power of the Holy Ghost. It does not originate with man. It means only what the Holy Ghost thinks it means. To interpret it, we must be enlightened by the power of the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1:20–21.) It takes a prophet to understand a prophet, and every faithful member of the Church should have 'the testimony of Jesus' which 'is the spirit of prophecy.' (Rev. 19:10.) 'The words of Isaiah,' Nephi said, '. . . are plain unto all those that are filled with the spirit of prophecy.' (2 Ne. 25:4.) This is the sum and substance of the whole matter and an end to all controversy where discovering the mind and will of the Lord is concerned" ("Ten Keys to Understanding Isaiah," *Ensign*, Oct. 1973, 83).

- Help students understand that personal worthiness is a prerequisite to having the Spirit of the Lord with them as they study. Refer them to Helaman 4:24.

- Note the effect the Spirit of the Lord can have on a person's scripture study by reviewing with the class the experience that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had, recorded in Joseph Smith—History 1:72–74.

#### 3. Pray for understanding and learn to listen to the Lord's answers.

- Prayer must be a part of our scripture study if we are to comprehend the things of God. Discuss these thoughts given by Elder Howard W. Hunter, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"There is nothing more helpful than prayer to open our understanding of the scriptures. Through

1 Corinthians 2

We cannot comprehend, in our present state, the greatness of the glories and blessings that God will give to those who love Him.

Whom does "we" refer to? (see 1 Corinthians 1:1-2).

The words of God are to be taught by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Who teaches the things of God?

A man enlightened by the Spirit of God can judge the things of God. One without that Spirit is not prepared to judge one who has it.

See Isaiah 40:13-14; 55:8-9.

What does it mean to have the mind of Christ? (see D&C 11:13-14; 68:3-4).

9 But as it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

How the things of God are known (see also D&C 76:10)

See footnote 11c.

Note how willing God is to reveal things to us (see also D&C 76:5-10).

We must use spiritual methods to evaluate spiritual things.

The man who is still in his "natural," worldly, sinful state

The natural man considers the things of the Spirit to be foolish because he cannot feel or understand them from his point of view (see Mosiah 3:19).

prayer we can attune our minds to seek the answers to our searchings. The Lord said: 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you' (Luke 11:9). Herein is Christ's reassurance that if we will ask, seek, and knock, the Holy Spirit will guide our understanding if we are ready and eager to receive" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 91; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 64).

■ Share with students the following explanation of listening related by Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"Many years ago John Burroughs, a naturalist, one summer evening was walking through a crowded park. Above the sounds of city life he heard the song of a bird.

"He stopped and listened! Those with him had not heard it. He looked around. No one else had noticed it.

"It bothered him that everyone should miss something so beautiful.

"He took a coin from his pocket and flipped it into the air. It struck the pavement with a ring, no louder than the song of the bird. Everyone turned; they could hear that!

"It is difficult to separate from all the sounds of city traffic the song of a bird. But you can hear it. You can hear it plainly if you train yourself to listen for it. . . .

"It is difficult to separate from the confusion of life that quiet voice of inspiration. Unless you attune yourself, you will miss it. . . .

". . . You can train yourself to hear what you want to hear, to see and feel what you desire, but it takes some conditioning. . . .

"I have come to know that inspiration comes more as a feeling than as a sound.

"Young people, stay in condition to respond to inspiration. . . .

"The Lord has a way of pouring pure intelligence into our minds to prompt us, to guide us, to teach us, to warn us. You can know the things you need to know *instantly!* Learn to receive inspiration. . . .

"It is good to learn when you are young that spiritual things cannot be forced. . . .

"Some answers will come from reading the scriptures, some from hearing speakers. . . .

"You can learn now, in your youth, to be led by the Holy Ghost.

"As an Apostle I listen now to the same inspiration, coming from the same source, in the same way, that I listened to as a boy. The signal is much clearer now. . . .

"Young people, carry a prayer in your heart always. Let sleep come every night with your mind centered in prayer.

"Keep the Word of Wisdom.

"Read the scriptures.

"Listen to your parents and to the leaders of the Church.

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“Stay away from places and things that common sense tells you will interfere with inspiration.

“Develop your spiritual capacities.

“Learn to tune out the static and the interference.

“Avoid the substitutes and the counterfeits!

“Learn to be inspired and directed by the Holy Ghost” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 27–30; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 19–21).

- Help students understand that as they pray, study the scriptures, and keep the commandments they will come to recognize the voice of the Lord as He speaks to them. Have students explain how 1 Kings 19:11–12 might relate to them today.

#### 4. It is necessary to search the scriptures diligently to understand them.

- Use the following statements to point out to students that the Lord requires more than just reading the scriptures.

The Lord commanded us to “search the scriptures” (John 5:39). President Marion G. Romney taught that the word *search* “means to inquire into, study, and examine for the purpose of discovering the meaning of. Searching implies more than just reading or even memorizing” (“Search the Scriptures,” *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1958, 26).

In Doctrine and Covenants 1:37 the Lord stressed the importance of searching when he declared, “Search these commandments.” Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, who was a member of the Seventy, explained: “One of my favorite passages is found in the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants—this marvelous section, this marvelous book—where both the testimony of the divinity of this work and instruction are given. In verse 37 the Lord said, ‘Search these commandments.’ [I’ve come to a new understanding about that since I’ve learned a little Spanish. It isn’t just search. In Spanish, it’s the command form. It means, you *search*. It isn’t optional. I believe that is the meaning the Lord had—that he really wanted us to search—not only to read.] ‘Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled.’ We are under injunction to search the scriptures” (*Teaching the Word*, 9).

- Read and discuss with your students Ezra 7:10.

#### 5. Pondering and meditation are essential ingredients of fruitful scripture study.

- Emphasize the importance of increasing our efforts if we really want to understand God’s message in the scriptures.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “The things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man! if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the

darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity—thou must commune with God” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 137).

- Share the following experience Elder Boyd K. Packer had with pondering the scriptures. He was reading 2 Timothy 3:1–7, where Paul described the evil that would exist in the last days. Elder Packer related:

“While studying one day, I read to that point and sat pondering about all the evidence that now confirms every element in that prophecy. There was a mood of very deep gloom and foreboding, a very ominous feeling of frustration, almost futility. I glanced down the page, and one word stood out, not accidentally I think. I read it eagerly and then discovered that the apostle who had prophesied all of that trouble had included in the same discourse the immunization against all of it [see 2 Timothy 3:13–17]. . . .

“ . . . The word that stood out on the page—*scriptures*” (*Teach the Scriptures*, 5).

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## Supplementary Study Sources

- Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 115–19; or *Ensign*, July 1973, 89–91; rules to follow in magnifying priesthood callings, and some components that are necessary to understand the scriptures.
- “*Hold to the Rod*,” video presentation 3, “Search the Scriptures: RSVP” (16:30); practical helps for reading the scriptures for understanding.

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## Suggested Student Study

- List some of the things you learned in this lesson that will help you in your own personal scripture study.
  - The following test will help you evaluate your understanding of the information presented in this lesson. Indicate in the space provided whether each statement is true or false.
1. False Perhaps the most profitable approach to scripture study involves the use of commentary works on the scriptures so you can learn from what scholars have said in their analysis and interpretation.
  2. True An exclusively rational approach to scripture study is inferior to one that exercises our spiritual faculties and emphasizes spiritual methods.
  3. True The term *ponder*, with reference to scripture study, emphasizes serious contemplative thought similar to prayer and meditation.
  4. False There is not much difference between reading the scriptures and searching the scriptures.

### Teaching Objective

Effective scripture study can be achieved by using a variety of study methods.

### Themes

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1. A period of time should be regularly scheduled for scripture study.
2. Many methods can be used to improve our understanding of the scriptures and application of their teachings:
  - a. Substitute the antecedents and synonyms
  - b. Watch for definitions
  - c. Ask questions
  - d. Substitute your own name
  - e. Memorize verses
  - f. Stress the modifiers and connecting words
  - g. Look for patterns
  - h. Follow author annotations

### Teaching Ideas

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#### 1. A period of time should be regularly scheduled for scripture study.

- Share the counsel of Elder Howard W. Hunter, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, concerning when we should study the scriptures and how long we should study them:

“Many find that the best time to study is in the morning after a night’s rest has cleared the mind of the many cares that interrupt thought. Others prefer to study in the quiet hours after the work and worries of the day are over and brushed aside, thus ending the day with a peace and tranquillity that comes by communion with the scriptures.

“Perhaps what is more important than the hour of the day is that a regular time be set aside for study. It would be ideal if an hour could be spent each day; but if that much cannot be had, a half hour on a regular basis would result in substantial accomplishment. A quarter of an hour is little time, but it is surprising how much enlightenment and knowledge can be acquired in a subject so meaningful. The important thing is to allow nothing else to ever interfere with our study. . . .

“ . . . It is better to have a set amount of time to give scriptural study each day than to have a set amount of chapters to read. Sometimes we find that the study of a single verse will occupy the whole time” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 91–92; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 64).

#### 2. Many methods can be used to improve our understanding of the scriptures and application of their teachings.

##### a. Substitute the antecedents and synonyms

- Substitute the antecedent for pronouns or the original word for synonyms. An antecedent is the word a pronoun refers to. When we say, “John hit the ball, and it went over the fence,” *ball* is the antecedent of *it*. In Doctrine and Covenants 1:37, “these commandments” is the antecedent of *they* and *them*. In many scriptural passages, the meaning can be clarified by substituting the antecedent for pronouns or the original word for synonyms the writer used. Have students read 1 Nephi 2:21–23 and supply all the antecedents. How did they do? Read the scripture to them:

“And inasmuch as thy [Nephi’s] brethren [Laman and Lemuel] shall rebel against thee [Nephi], they [Laman and Lemuel] shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.

“And inasmuch as thou [Nephi] shalt keep my [the Lord’s] commandments, thou [Nephi] shalt be a ruler and a teacher over thy [Nephi’s] brethren [Laman and Lemuel].

“For behold, in that day that they [Laman and Lemuel and, by extension, their descendants the Lamanites] shall rebel against me [the Lord], I [the Lord] will curse them [Laman and Lemuel and their seed] even with a sore curse, and they [Laman and Lemuel and the Lamanites] shall have no power over thy [Nephi’s] seed [the Nephites] except they [the Nephites] shall rebel against me [the Lord] also.”

The last two instances of the word *they* in this passage illustrate the kind of clarification this technique can provide. In the first case the antecedent is the Lamanites; in the second case it is the Nephites.

- A synonym is a word that has a similar meaning to that of another word. Have students consider 2 Nephi 3:12. Notice that there are several phrases that could be difficult to understand if the reader is not careful. By careful reading, however, students could substitute a more common word for the word that is not as familiar. Using synonyms, verse 12 would read as follows (the antecedents are left out):

“Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins [the Nephites] shall write; and the fruit of the loins of Judah [Jews] shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins [Nephites], and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah [Jews], shall grow together.”

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You can readily see that the writing of the Nephites and the Jews would someday come together. In other words, the Book of Mormon and Bible would come together. By substituting for the antecedents and synonyms, the passage would read like this:

“Wherefore, the Nephites shall write; and the Jews shall write; and the Book of Mormon, which shall be written by the Nephites, and also the Bible, which shall be written by the Jews, shall grow together.”

*b. Watch for definitions*

■ Help students understand the need to watch for definitions by discussing the following ideas:

We often assume that every word or phrase has only one meaning, not realizing that the Lord and His prophets sometimes use words or phrases in different ways. When a unique definition for a word or phrase is used, it is as though an equal sign had been inserted into the text. For example, read Doctrine and Covenants 97:21. Here we are told that Zion equals the pure in heart. This definition, in turn, contributes to our understanding of another passage, such as “Blessed are the pure in heart [Zion]: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8).

Another example is Nephi’s statement that some men “trample under their feet” the God of Israel. Read 1 Nephi 19:7. Ask students, “Do you trample God under your feet?” They will probably say no, thinking that this question asks if they were violently opposed to God. But in that same verse Nephi defines what he means. He gives us this equivalent: trampling God underfoot means to “set him at naught, and hearken not to the voice of his counsels.” When we understand that definition, the effect of the passage changes.

One last example shows how important it is to find the definitions for words in a specific passage. Read with the class Doctrine and Covenants 10:55. Notice that the Lord seems to make a startling statement: “Therefore, whosoever belongeth to my church need not fear, for such shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.” Obviously, many members of the Church are not yet worthy of salvation, but the statement seems to include all members of record. The problem is that we try to interpret that verse using the definition we generally apply to the word *church*. A few verses later, the Lord explains what he means by the word: “Whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church” (v. 67). If we use this meaning, that *church* equals those who have repented and come to God, the statement in verse 55 makes more sense. Of course, this meaning is not applicable to every occurrence of the word *church* in the scriptures.

*c. Ask questions*

■ Indicate to the class that they should continually strive for insight into the scriptures. They should ask

themselves questions as they read. For example, ask, “Why this word?” or “Why this phrase?” Read Doctrine and Covenants 76:25–29 with students and ask these questions:

1. What was the rank of the angel spoken of?
2. Why was he thrust down? What does *thrust* indicate?
3. What was his name before he was called Perdition?
4. How did the heavens respond when Lucifer was cast down?
5. What position did Satan want? Why?
6. How did Satan plan to achieve his objective?
7. How did the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon come to experience this vision of Satan?
8. Why are two exclamation points used in verse 27?

■ As we search the scriptures, we should strive to find understanding (see 3 Nephi 10:14) and application (see 1 Nephi 19:23). Review with students the following questions that could be asked while studying the scriptures:

1. Who is speaking?
2. Who is the message directed to?
3. What is the message?
4. When and where did the events take place?
5. What are some of the key words and phrases?
6. What do they mean?
7. What is taught about Christ or the plan of salvation?

Invite students to read Helaman 11:1–18. As they read, have them look for answers to as many of the questions given above as they can. Notice the increased understanding that comes.

*d. Substitute your own name*

■ Substituting your name is a way of likening the scripture unto yourself. Have students insert their own name for the name of the person being addressed in Doctrine and Covenants 30:1. It would read this way:  
“Behold, I say unto you, [*your name*,] that you have feared man and have not relied on me for strength as you ought.”

■ A variation of this technique would be to use *I* or *me*. Invite your students to read the sacrament prayers, found in Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79, and substitute these two words in the appropriate places.

*e. Memorize verses*

■ Refer to the following insight from President Ezra Taft Benson as you lead students in a discussion of the value of scripture memorization:

“It is our privilege to store our memories with good and great thoughts and bring them out on the stage of our minds at will. When the Lord faced His three great temptations in the wilderness, He immediately rebutted the devil with appropriate

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scripture which He had stored in His memory” (“Think on Christ,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1984, 11).

■ Memorized scripture brings spiritual power. Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught:

“There is a power that can change lives in the specific words recorded in the standard works. That power is weakened when we paraphrase or alter the actual wording. I therefore suggest that you encourage students to cite scripture content with precision. All you do to encourage students to memorize selected scriptures accurately will bring to bear in their lives the power of their content” (“Four Fundamentals for Those Who Teach and Inspire Youth,” in *Old Testament Symposium Speeches*, 1987, 5).

■ Elder Scott also said: “I suggest that you memorize scriptures that touch your heart and fill your soul with understanding. When scriptures are used as the Lord has caused them to be recorded, they have intrinsic power that is not communicated when paraphrased. Sometimes when there is a significant need in my life, I review mentally scriptures that have given me strength. There is great solace, direction, and power that flow from the scriptures, especially the words of the Lord” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1999, 112; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 87–88).

■ President Spencer W. Kimball challenged the priesthood holders of the Church to memorize the Articles of Faith. He also told how he memorized them as a young boy:

“I am wondering how many of you know the Articles of Faith? How many of you big men, as well as the little men? Do you know them? Have you repeated them? You are always prepared with a sermon when you know the Articles of Faith. And they are basic, aren’t they? I’d think it would be a wonderful thing if all the boys, as they learn them, would learn them word-perfect. That means that you don’t miss and you don’t forget.

“Shall I tell you how I did it? . . . I used to milk cows. I typed with two fingers, and I would type out these Articles of Faith on little cards and put them down in the corral right by me when I sat on the one-legged stool and milked the cows. And I repeated them over, I guess 20 million times. I don’t know. But at any rate, I have claimed that I could say the Articles of Faith now after these many, many years and could say them word-perfect. And I think it has been most valuable to me. Will you do that, my fine young men?” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1975, 119; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, 79).

f. *Stress the modifiers and connecting words*

■ Modifiers are used to add color or emotion. In scriptural passages they are often overlooked. Note with students how eliminating the modifiers affects this well-known passage in Doctrine and Covenants

121:39: “We have learned by . . . experience that it is the nature and disposition of . . . men, as soon as they get . . . authority, . . . they will . . . exercise . . . dominion.”

By contrast, see how emphasizing the modifiers in the following passages brings out the meaning:

“Blessed are the *poor* in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3; italics added).  
“But when ye pray, use not *vain* repetitions” (Matthew 6:7; italics added).

Ask students to quickly count the number of *fs* in this statement: “Finished files are the result of years of scientific study and plenty of frugal planning.” Most people immediately say four. They are surprised to be told there are seven. Why? because the eye automatically skips over the three *ofs*. We do the same thing when we read the scriptures. We ignore the small words that connect the ideas in a passage. As the students read, help them understand the significance of the following words: *and, but, again, therefore, now, behold, verily, because, if, then, inasmuch, thus, even, so*. Being aware of these words and the ways they signal relationships between ideas can bring a new level of understanding.

Carefully read Isaiah 58:13–14 with students. Notice that it shows a cause-and-effect relationship signaled by the *if* and *then* used to begin the verses.

Refer the students to Doctrine and Covenants 46:7–8. Note the way the word *wherefore* at the beginning of verse 8 ties the warning in that verse back to the message of verse 7.

g. *Look for patterns*

■ As we go through life, it is important to have correct patterns to follow. Without following a right pattern our lives have no direction and may be filled with misery. The scriptures give a marvelous promise about patterns. “I will give unto you a pattern in all things, that ye may not be deceived; for Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving” (D&C 52:14).

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, gave a definition of a pattern: “A pattern is a guide for copying, a design, a plan, a diagram or model to be followed in making things, a composite of traits or features characteristic of an individual” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 23–24; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 20).

The gospel of Jesus Christ is God’s pattern for righteous living and eternal life. The scriptures are filled with numerous patterns. There are patterns of prayer, repentance, gaining a testimony, building faith, judging, building temples, receiving revelation, ascendance of a prophet, and the list goes on and on. Satan even has his patterns, which when gleaned from the scriptures can help us avoid falling into the gulf of sin.

A careful student of the scriptures observes how the Lord tutors His prophets, chastens His people, or

deals with the wicked. This process often reveals a pattern. These patterns have meaningful applications in our lives just as they did in people’s lives recorded in scripture.

Have students search for patterns in the scriptures. From the students’ search, write a list of patterns on the chalkboard. Ask the class what they learned from this technique of scripture study.

The following is a list of scripture blocks that reveal a pattern. From these scriptures, choose the patterns that best illustrate this scripture technique and will be most meaningful to your students.

Scripture	Pattern
1. Alma 32:28–43	Building faith and testimony
2. Moroni 7:16–17	The way to judge
3. Alma 30	The way of an anti-Christ
4. 1 Samuel 17	Characteristics of faith
5. D&C 9	Revelation

*h. Follow author annotations*

Often in the standard works a prophet, translator, or abridger of plates (such as Mormon) breaks into the story line to offer commentary. Sometimes the commentary appears at the conclusion of a story. These gems of annotation offer clarity and greater understanding of the scriptures. It is as if the prophet were saying, “Just in case you have not gleaned the point, here it is.”

Often this type of commentary is expressed in key phrases, such as “thus we see” or “and so it is.”

The following scriptures illustrate when scripture writers gave annotation on scripture: 1 Samuel

12:14–15; Alma 30:60; Helaman 12:1. Allow students to look through their scriptures, particularly the Book of Mormon, to see if they can discover other author annotations.

## Supplementary Study Sources

- “*Hold to the Rod*,” video presentation 3, “Search the Scriptures: RSVP” (16:30).
- “*Hold to the Rod*,” video presentation 4, “Feast upon the Word” (21:50).

## Suggested Student Study

- Prepare a student handout of the following chart and ask your students to use the techniques mentioned. Have them report back next class period.

Method	Scripture References
Substitute the antecedents	Mormon 7:9
Stress the modifiers	D&C 121:46
Watch for definitions	Mosiah 3:19
Observe the connecting words	3 Nephi 12:3–11
Ask questions	Moroni 10:4–5
Substitute your own name	D&C 93:41–43
Look for patterns (revelation)	D&C 9
Follow author annotations	Helaman 12:1

### Teaching Objective

Meaningful marking of the scriptures enhances gospel understanding and comprehension.

### Themes

1. Why mark your scriptures?
2. There are various methods of marking scripture.
  - a. Meaningful marking
  - b. Annotating scripture
  - c. Cross-referencing
  - d. Scripture lists

### Teaching Ideas

#### 1. Why mark your scriptures?

■ The scriptures are tools that help us achieve eternal life. Like any tool, they must be used. Those who are well acquainted with the tools of their trade and use them properly are on their way to becoming master craftsmen. Those who do the same with the scriptures are well on their way to understanding the gospel. Scripture marking is a most helpful way to utilize some of the scriptural tools that God has given us.

Share the following advice from Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, regarding underlining scriptures:

“There are a number of plans for underlining scriptures. They vary somewhat and should suit the individual. The important thing is to underline them and make marginal notes of some kind so you can find them again.

“I almost never read a borrowed book. I don’t like to read borrowed books because I don’t want to read a book without underlining things I want to remember. Since one doesn’t underline someone else’s book, I feel that if a book is worth reading, it is worth owning. The exception, of course, is in the library, and there a longer process of taking notes is necessary.

“So underline your books and make your notes while you’re thinking about it. I don’t know how many hours I’ve spent going back to try to locate something I could have found very quickly if I had regularly followed this procedure. I do much better now than I did before” (*Teach Ye Diligently*, 166).

■ Ask students to suggest reasons why it is important for them to mark their scriptures. The following list could be written on the board and then enlarged with the help of the students.

#### Purposes of Marking Scripture

1. To emphasize
2. To find quickly
3. To make the scriptures personal
4. To teach more easily from the scriptures

■ Discuss the following statement:

“As used in the sense of marking the scriptures, the word *mark* means ‘to designate, set apart, identify, distinguish’ or ‘to indicate, express, or show by a mark or symbol.’ In a general sense, anything added to the printed scripture is considered a mark. Such marks might take the form of lines, circles, letters, numbers, symbols, or anything else tending to designate or distinguish” (Daniel H. Ludlow, *Marking the Scriptures*, 15).

#### 2. There are various methods of marking scripture.

##### a. Meaningful marking

■ Make a transparency of the scripture marking of Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–70 (found on the following page) and share it with students.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–70 deals with members of the Church who gain exaltation in the celestial kingdom (bracketed). Here the Savior explains the requirements to become exalted (underlining), as well as the promises (numbering). Verse 57 is boxed to highlight priesthood designations.

The example from Doctrine and Covenants 76 is provided to show some of the methods of scripture marking. Point out that individuals must develop their own method of marking that will best help them to understand the scriptures.

##### b. Annotating scripture

■ To annotate a passage of scripture is to make an explanatory comment about a particular passage. The examples found on the next page could be used to help students see the importance of annotating their scriptures.

Help students understand that the annotations can come from studying the teachings of the prophets in our day (see Isaiah 18:1–2), or by the inspiration that comes to them as they study, or from the observation of others (see 2 Nephi 5:5–7, 11).

##### c. Cross-referencing

■ Cross-referencing a scripture is a way of connecting two or more scriptures together. Usually there is a

Doctrine and Covenants 76

49 And we heard the voice, saying: "Write the vision, for lo, this is the end of the vision of the sufferings of the ungodly.

50 And again we bear record—for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ concerning them who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just—

51 They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given—

52 That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power;

53 And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.

54 They are they who are the church of the Firstborn.

55 They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things—

56 They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory;

57 And are priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son.

58 Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God—

59 Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

60 And they shall overcome all things.

61 Wherefore, let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God, who shall subdue all enemies under his feet.

62 These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever.

63 These are they whom he shall bring with him, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven to reign on the earth over his people.

64 These are they who shall have part in the first resurrection.

65 These are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just.

66 These are they who are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all.

67 These are they who have come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of Enoch, and of the Firstborn.

68 These are they whose names are written in heaven, where God and Christ are the judge of all.

69 These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood.

70 These are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all, whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical.

71 And again, we saw the terrestrial world, and behold and lo, these are they who are of the terrestrial,

Isaiah 18:1-2

"Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia:

2 That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!

2 Nephi 5:5-7

5 And it came to pass that the Lord did warn me, that I, Nephi, should depart from them and flee into the wilderness, and all those who would go with me.

6 Wherefore, it came to pass that I, Nephi, did take my family, and also Zoram and his family, and Sam,

The land is America (see Joseph Fielding Smith, in Conference Report, Apr. 1966, 14).

Missionaries

The Lord takes His prophet out of their midst. Thus, they lose—

1. The priesthood
2. Records
3. Revelation
4. Right to saving ordinances
5. Membership in the Church of Jesus Christ

Nephi describes his society.

mine elder brother and his family, and Jacob and Joseph, my younger brethren, and also my sisters, and all those who would go with me. And all those who would go with me were those who believed in the warnings and the revelations of God; wherefore, they did hearken unto my words.

7 And we did take our tents and whatsoever things were possible for us, and did journey in the wilderness for the space of many days. And after we had journeyed for the space of many days we did pitch our tents.

2 Nephi 5:11

11 And the Lord was with us; and we did prosper exceedingly; for we did sow seed, and we did reap again in abundance. And we began to raise flocks, and herds, and animals of every kind.

relationship or a common idea between the scriptures that you wish to connect.

Use cross-references to clarify ambiguous passages, such as the following:

1. Matthew 21:22—3 Nephi 18:20
2. Matthew 16:27—D&C 88:96-98
3. Isaiah 61:1—D&C 138:18

Use cross-references to add insights to the narrative account:

1. Matthew 17:1-3—D&C 63:20-21
2. Matthew 13:18-2—D&C 86
3. 1 Corinthians 15:38-42—D&C 76

Use cross-references for scripture chaining. For example, the Doctrine and Covenants is often referred to as the "warning voice" because this theme is repeated throughout. You could illustrate this by

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“chaining” or connecting several scriptures together. Start with Doctrine and Covenants 1:4 and write the next reference you want to turn to in the margin. Continue this process until you come to the last scripture you want to use. In the margin by this last scripture, you would write Doctrine and Covenants 1:4. Thus, the chain is complete. Mark the following scriptures in the manner explained above: Doctrine and Covenants 1:4; 38:41; 63:37, 58; 84:114–15; 88:81; 109:38–46; conclude by writing Doctrine and Covenants 1:4 in the margin by 109:38–46.

You could also do a scripture chain on the lost books in the Old Testament by using the following scriptures: Joshua 10:13; 1 Kings 11:41; 1 Chronicles 29:29; 2 Chronicles 9:29; 12:15; 20:34 (then Joshua 10:13).

#### *d. Scripture lists*

■ Developing a scripture list can be an effective learning technique. Select one or more of the following examples to review in class and create a scripture list for each one:

1. Qualities of an elect lady (see D&C 25)
2. The fruits of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22–26)
3. The qualities of charity (see Moroni 7:45–48)
4. The components of the whole armor of God (see Ephesians 6:13–18; D&C 27:15–18)
5. The gifts of the Spirit (see D&C 46)
6. The elements of proper fasting (see Isaiah 58:3–12)

The preceding examples are lists with all of the elements located in one area of the scriptures. There are two other kinds of lists. One is a scattered list; that is, the items are not found all in one place. Examples would be the signs of the times and the signs of the true church.

The second kind of scripture list is an implied list. For example, note that in Ephesians 5:23–28 the Apostle Paul gave his stirring counsel that the relationship between Christ and the Church should serve as the model for the relationship between husband and wife. Though he does not discuss in

detail what this relationship means, Paul implies that certain qualities and obligations apply. His list could be outlined something like this:

#### **What did Christ do for the Church?**

1. He gave His life to save her.
2. He set a perfect example for her to follow.
3. He taught her the principles of salvation.
4. He used His power to bless her.

#### **How does the Church respond to Christ?**

1. By looking to Him as the leader and presiding authority.
2. By following His example.
3. By using His teaching to find joy.
4. By looking to His power and authority for direction and blessings.

By comparing the husband to Christ and the wife to the Church, we can gain significant insights as to how a husband and wife should relate to one another.

## Supplementary Study Sources

■ Daniel H. Ludlow, Luene L. Ludlow, and Michelle Ludlow, “Taking Note: Marking the Footnotes in the New LDS Edition of the Bible,” *New Era*, June 1981, 14–18: ways of marking the footnotes and making them even more helpful.

## Suggested Student Study

■ Ask students to familiarize themselves with the appendix in the Bible.

# Study Aids in the Latter-day Saint Editions of the Scriptures

Lesson 7

## Teaching Objective

The study aids available in the Latter-day Saint editions of the standard works provide invaluable assistance in understanding the scriptures.

## Themes

1. The LDS scriptures contain significant study aids.
  - a. Chapter headings and section introductions
  - b. Footnotes
  - c. Joseph Smith Translation
  - d. Topical Guide
  - e. Index to the triple combination
  - f. Bible Dictionary
  - g. Bible Maps and Photographs
  - h. Church History Chronology, Maps, and Photographs
  - i. Pronouncing Guide (Book of Mormon)
  - j. Italicized words in the Bible
2. The study aids help us increase our understanding of the scriptures.

## Teaching Ideas

### 1. The LDS scriptures contain significant study aids.

- Explain to students that in 1979 the Church published a Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible in English. Included in this edition were numerous helps to make a study of the scriptures more meaningful and rewarding. Share the following testimony by Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "This work . . . will one day emerge as a signal inspired event of our generation. Because of it, we shall raise up generations of Latter-day Saints who will know the gospel and know the Lord" (*Bruce R. McConkie, Apostle* [address at the funeral of Elder Bruce R. McConkie, 23 Apr. 1985], 4).

#### a. Chapter headings and section introductions

- Invite students to turn to the chapter heading of Genesis 3 in the Bible.

Explain that chapter headings emphasize the main points of each chapter; they are particularly informative and often present doctrinal insights.

Note the following examples.

Genesis

### CHAPTER 3

*The Serpent (Lucifer) deceives Eve—She and then Adam partake of the forbidden fruit—Her Seed (Christ) shall bruise the Serpent's head—Role of woman, and of man—Adam and Eve cast out of the Garden of Eden—Adam presides—Eve becomes the mother of all living.*

- Have students examine a section heading in the Doctrine and Covenants. Explain that background information is given first, followed by a synopsis of the content. For example:

Doctrine and Covenants

### SECTION 29

*Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, in the presence of six elders, at Fayette, New York, September 1830. HC 1: 111–115 This revelation was given some days prior to the conference beginning September 26, 1830.*

*1–8, Christ gathers his elect; 9–11, His coming ushers in the Millennium; 12–13, The Twelve shall judge all Israel; 14–21, Signs, plagues, and desolations will precede the Second Coming; 22–28, The last resurrection and final judgment follow the Millennium; 29–35, All things are spiritual unto the Lord; 36–39, The devil and his hosts were cast out of heaven to tempt man; 40–45, Fall and atonement bring salvation; 46–50, Little children are redeemed through the atonement.*

- Have students answer the following questions by looking up the headings for the chapters and sections cited:
  1. Who performed the marriage for Adam and Eve? (see Genesis 2).
  2. What battle will usher in the Second Coming? (see Ezekiel 38).
  3. Who created all things? (see John 1).
  4. Who are the fierce-looking beasts John saw? (see Revelation 13).
  5. Where will the Jews be gathered? (see 2 Nephi 9).
  6. When will the Jaredite writings be revealed? (see Ether 4).
  7. Who was Jesse Gause? (see D&C 81).
  8. Which eyewitness to the martyrdom of Joseph Smith wrote Doctrine and Covenants 135?
  9. What records were kept by Adam's seed? (see Moses 6).
  10. How did Abraham learn about the sun, moon, and stars? (see Abraham 3).

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### *b. Footnotes*

- Ask students to turn to a page of your choice in the Bible. Share with them the many advantages of the footnote system in the LDS scriptures. Point out that each verse is independently footnoted and is in alphabetical sequence. The first footnote in each verse is marked with the letter *a*, the second footnote for the same verse is marked *b*, and so on.
- Show examples of footnotes that point to the Bible Dictionary (BD) or Topical Guide (TG), give key Hebrew (HEB) and Greek (GR) meanings, give modern synonyms for archaic or obscure words in the King James Version (IE, OR), and present insights from the Joseph Smith Translation (JST).
- The following examples provide students an opportunity to practice using the study aids.
  1. In Doctrine and Covenants 84:85, what is meant by the phrase, “Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say”? The footnote will refer you to Matthew 10:19 and Luke 12:11, where the phrase is footnoted and explained as meaning “Do not be anxiously concerned.”
  2. What is the meaning in Hebrew of the word translated as “created” in Genesis 1:1? (“Shaped, fashioned, created.”)
  3. Did Nebuchadnezzar remember or forget his dream that Daniel interpreted? (see Daniel 2:4–5*a*). (He remembered it.)
  4. What is “pulse”? (see Daniel 1:12). (“Foods made of seeds, grains, etc.”)
  5. What is the stick of Judah? Why is it called a stick? (see Ezekiel 37:16*a*). (The Hebrew word used is *Etz*, which means “wood.” “Wooden writing tablets were in common use in Babylon in Ezekiel’s day.”)

### *c. Joseph Smith Translation*

- Share with students the information about the Joseph Smith Translation found in the LDS Bible Dictionary (“Joseph Smith Translation,” 717). Explain that although not all passages from the JST are included in the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible, more than six hundred verses are. Verses or passages that are too long to be included as footnotes have been placed in the Bible appendix.
- For an example of JST contributions, have students refer to Amos 7:3*a*; Matthew 4:1*b*; John 4:24*a*; Acts 3:17*a*.

### *d. Topical Guide*

- By using the Topical Guide, students can search over 750 gospel topics more deeply. Help them to understand that this guide contains scriptural references from all the standard works and that it may serve as a concordance or an index.

- Ask each class member to choose a subject they would like to discuss when they are asked to speak in Church. Have them use the Topical Guide to determine scripture references they could use in their preparation.
- Invite students to turn to the Topical Guide and note the wealth of information concerning Christ that is available from the fifty-eight entries under “Jesus Christ.”

### *e. Index to the triple combination*

- Explain that the index in the triple combination is a combined index for the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price, and it gives numerous references from each. It is similar to, but not exactly like, the Topical Guide found in the Bible. The index gives a short summary of each reference, while the Topical Guide gives an exact quote for each scripture reference mentioned. The index covers the triple combination only, while the Topical Guide covers all the standard works. One very helpful feature of the index is that it identifies people or places that have the same name by using superscript numbers to differentiate between them.  
Have your class turn to the first page of the index and determine the number of men named Aaron and who they each were. Note too that by searching for key words in the index, students can quickly locate scripture references.

### *f. Bible Dictionary*

- Walk students through the Bible Dictionary. Explain that it contains 1,285 biblical topics prepared from a Latter-day Saint point of view. Share several specific topics, and then point out the following sections:
  1. Chronological tables (“chronology,” 635–45).
  2. Harmony of the gospels (“Gospels, harmony of,” 684–96).
  3. Analysis of Paul’s letters (“Pauline epistles,” 743–49).
  4. Old Testament quotations found in the New Testament (“quotations,” 756–59).
  5. Weights and measures (“weights and measures,” 788–89).

### *g. Bible Maps and Photographs*

- In 1999 the Church added a new section of maps and photographs to the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Bible. Indexes and helps for both the photographs and maps are grouped together at the beginning of the section. The color maps and photographs themselves appear together at the end. (*Note:* If your copy of the scriptures does not include the updated maps and photographs, these can be purchased separately and inserted.)  
Have students look at several photographs from the Maps and Photographs section at the back of the

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Bible and determine what each shows. The photographs in this section depict sites from Bible history. Ask the students to find a photo of the Temple of Herod (no. 9). Refer them to the description of the temple under the “Photographs of Scriptural Sites” heading at the front of the section. Ask them to name three important events that took place at this temple.

Have students turn to the “Maps and Index of Place-Names” heading. The first page of this subsection explains map features. Refer students to the second paragraph for an explanation of how to use the index of place-names. Show them the index, beginning on the next page. The index lists the names of places alphabetically and includes coordinates for locating them on the maps.

Some of the individual maps are accompanied by notes and scripture references related to locations on those maps. Have the students turn to map 12 and the accompanying page of notes. Ask them to find the temple and to identify two events that took place there during the life of Jesus Christ (see note 9).

#### *h. Church History Chronology, Maps, and Photographs*

- In 1999 the Church also added new maps and photographs to the triple combination. These features are similar to the corresponding ones in the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Bible. (*Note:* If your copy of the scriptures does not include the updated maps and photographs, these can be purchased separately and inserted.) This section also includes a chronology of Church history events. Have the students turn to this section and find what year and month Joseph Smith completed his translation of the Book of Mormon. Have them turn to map 2 and locate the Joseph Smith Sr. log home. Ask: What important event occurred at this location? (see note 1).

#### *i. Pronouncing Guide (Book of Mormon)*

- The pronouncing guide at the end of the Book of Mormon provides a standard for the pronunciation of Book of Mormon names. Have students become familiar with this guide.

#### *j. Italicized words in the Bible*

- Point out to students the meaning of italicized words in the Bible. Explain that italicized words are words inserted by the translator to render a correct English reading. When translated from Greek or Hebrew, a direct translation to the English language was not always possible. Therefore it was necessary to insert words in order for the scriptures to be grammatically correct.

## **2. The study aids help us increase our understanding of the scriptures.**

- Share the following story from Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve

Apostles. It illustrates the worth of the study aids in the new publication of the standard works.

“I remember when the new triple combination was introduced to the Brethren. Elder McConkie made the presentation. He held up a book and read from the flyleaf, ‘To Bruce R. McConkie.’ It was signed ‘Amelia’ and dated the day he entered the mission home. He said, ‘I have carried these scriptures all over the world. I’ve used them extensively. They have been bound three times. I can tell you the location on the page for many of the scriptures in that book.’ He then added, ‘But I’m not going to use that book anymore. It does not have the precious teaching aids and powerful tools to enhance study and understanding that are in this new volume.’ I was really impressed by that. The next day I had occasion to go into his office. He has a large desk, and there he sat, book in hand, with ruler and red pencil marking the new edition of the scriptures. Well, if someone who knows the scriptures as well as he does finds it worthwhile to use the new edition, I have resolved to do likewise” (“Spiritual Communication,” in *Principles of the Gospel in Practice*, Sperry Symposium 1985, 18–19).

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## Supplementary Study Sources

- Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 73–77; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 51–53: the development of the new editions of the LDS scriptures.
- Robert J. Matthews, “Using the New Bible Dictionary in the LDS Edition,” *Ensign*, June 1982, 47–50; the significance of the Bible Dictionary and how best to use it.
- Boyd K. Packer, “Using the New Scriptures,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1985, 49–53; how to use the new Latter-day Saint editions of the scriptures.
- Bruce T. Harper, “The Church Publishes a New Triple Combination,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1981, 8–19; how to use the various study aids.

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## Suggested Student Study

- At the conclusion of this lesson, give students the following quiz. You may want them to work together to complete it. They will need to use the scripture-study aids.
1. Answer the following questions about baptism:
    - a. What does the word *baptism* mean?
    - b. What evidence is there that baptism was practiced before the time of Christ?
    - c. What does baptism symbolize?
    - d. What are four purposes of baptism?

- 
2. Below are several words with scripture references where the words can be found. Determine the meaning of each word. Notice how increased understanding of these terms brings added meaning to the passages involved.
    - a. Incontinent (see 2 Timothy 3:3)
    - b. Quick (see Hebrews 4:12)
    - c. Meet (see Genesis 2:18)
    - d. Kine (see Amos 4:1)
    - b. What is palsy? (see Matthew 4:24).
    - c. Where is the region of Decapolis? (see map section).
    - d. What are some meanings of the Greek word for *meek*? (see Matthew 5:5).
    - e. What are some other meanings of the word *blessed*? (see Matthew 5:3).
    - f. What does the Book of Mormon add to our understanding of Matthew 5:3?
  3. Where would you look to find scriptural information about the following topics? List some of the scripture references cited.
    - a. Last days \_\_\_\_\_
    - b. Prophecy \_\_\_\_\_
    - c. Revelation \_\_\_\_\_
    - d. Lost scriptures \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Turn to Matthew 4–5 and answer the following questions by reading the verses and referring to the footnotes:
    - a. Why were some of the people in Galilee healed? (see Matthew 4:23).
  5. Read 1 Nephi 8 and then, with the use of your footnotes, discover all you can about the tree Lehi saw in vision. Identify the meaning of the river of water, the rod of iron, the mist of darkness, and the great and spacious building.
  6. Where in the scriptures could you read about Antionah or Josiah Butterfield?
  7. Identify the different states the Saints traveled through in their westward migration from New York to the Great Salt Lake.

### Teaching Objective

Prophetic commentary on the standard works helps unlock the scriptures by providing a greater and clearer understanding of scripture.

### Themes

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1. Prophetic commentary on the scriptures is of great value.
2. There are various sources of prophetic commentary.

### Teaching Ideas

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#### 1. Prophetic commentary on the scriptures is of great value.

- One of the roles of the living prophets is to explain to us the meaning of what prophets of past ages said. Discuss 2 Peter 1:20–21 with students.
- Discuss the following statement from Elder Marion G. Romney, then an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in which he emphasized the importance of prophetic interpretation of scripture: “Another fundamental to bear in mind in our search is that the manifestations of the Father’s will to this generation did not cease with what is written in the Doctrine and Covenants. He has not left us unguided to jangle over the interpretations of those revelations, nor does he leave us ignorant of his will on current issues. He has given us living prophets to interpret those revelations and to declare to us his will on present problems” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1945, 89).
- Discuss the following statements, pointing out that the prophets will always be in harmony with the scriptures:

Elder Marriner W. Merrill, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “The Bible is a good thing, the Book of Mormon is a good thing, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants is a good thing. They are the words of the Lord. But I say that the living oracles of the Church are worth more than all of them. If we could have but one of them, give me the living oracles of the Priesthood for my guidance. Of course, it is proper and a good thing to have it all, because the living oracles of the Church work in harmony with what is written, and their counsel will not come in conflict with the words of the Lord in former ages. But the conditions of mankind change. The counsel that was suitable for

the Saints forty years ago may not be so suitable today. Hence the importance of having in our midst the living oracles of God to guide us day by day in the performance of our labors” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1897, 6).

Elder Anthony W. Ivins, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: “It is not enough that we become acquainted somewhat with the cardinal principles of the gospel. It is not enough that we understand only the dispensation in which we live. But we must go back to the beginning we must understand the written word of the Lord as we have it in these sacred books, even from the beginning until the day in which we live. We must understand the harmony that exists between all these gospel dispensations, and then we will begin to understand how admirably our work fits in the time, and the place, and the manner in which the Lord has decreed that it should come about. The work that He has decreed, that He has accomplished is all in harmony with the words of the prophets which have been spoken since the beginning” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1908, 15).

#### 2. There are various sources of prophetic commentary.

- Following are several examples that may be used to illustrate prophetic interpretation of scriptures. Divide the class into groups and give each group source material that contains prophetic commentary about the scriptures. Have students list and then explain to the class the insights they find. Source material could include conference addresses, *Church News*, and messages of the First Presidency from the *Ensign*.

*Matthew 13:24–30.* The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “We learn by this parable [of the tares], not only the setting up of the Kingdom in the days of the Savior, which is represented by the good seed, which produced fruit, but also the corruptions of the Church, which are represented by the tares, which were sown by the enemy, which His disciples would fain have plucked up, or cleansed the Church of, if their views had been favored by the Savior. But He, knowing all things, says, Not so. As much as to say, your views are not correct, the Church is in its infancy, and if you take this rash step, you will destroy the wheat, or the Church, with the tares; therefore it is better to let them grow together until the harvest, or the end of the world, which means the destruction of the wicked, which is not yet fulfilled” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 97–98).

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*Abraham 3:22–23.* “God showed unto Abraham ‘the intelligences that were organized before the world was’; and by ‘intelligences’ we are to understand personal ‘spirits’ (Abraham 3:22, 23)” (“The Father and the Son: A Doctrinal Exposition by the First Presidency and the Twelve,” in James R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 5:26; see also James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 466).

*Acts 10:34–35.* President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: “Peter said: ‘. . . God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted’ by him (Acts 10:34–35), which means that the Lord will pour out his Spirit upon the faithful so they will know of themselves of the truths of this religion” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 5; or *Ensign*, June 1971, 4).

*Doctrine and Covenants 29:17.* President Spencer W. Kimball said: “The Lord teaches that he cannot forgive people *in* their sins; he can only save them *from* their abandoned sins. The Lord clearly says, ‘My blood shall not cleanse them if they hear me

not.’ (D&C 29:17.) *Hear* in this instance means to accept and abide his teachings” (“The Gospel of Repentance,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1982, 5).

*Moses 7:62.* President Ezra Taft Benson taught: “The Book of Mormon is the instrument that God designed to ‘sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out [His] elect.’ (Moses 7:62)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 3; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 4).

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## Supplementary Study Sources

- Ezra Taft Benson, “Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet,” in *Speeches of the Year, 1980*, 26–30.

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## Suggested Student Study

- Invite students to begin annotating their scriptures with authoritative doctrinal interpretations.

# Using Scripture to Understand Scripture

## Teaching Objective

The four standard works testify of each other and work as one to declare the saving truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## Themes

1. The scriptures always work together.
2. Clustering scriptures together is important to improve understanding.
3. Scriptures interpret scriptures.
4. Scriptures have a similar phraseology.

## Teaching Ideas

### 1. The scriptures always work together.

- Have students suggest several passages of scripture that are repeated in more than one of the standard works. (For biblical examples, students could refer to the topic “quotations” in the Bible Dictionary, where a list is given of where New Testament writers were clearly influenced by Old Testament scriptures.) Discuss and give examples of how prophets in all ages have quoted from each other and used examples from each other.
- Share the major ideas of the following quotations taken from the writings of Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Whatever the combination of individuals—Enoch, Moses, Nephi, Alma, Paul, Moroni, or Joseph—the link between them is clear. Each separate strand of prophetic utterance, though interwoven into a pattern of divine design, can be followed back to a single source, a loving Father whose central and grand declared purpose is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. (Moses 1:39.) All that Divinity does is, in fact, focused solely upon that which is ‘for the benefit of the world.’ (2 Nephi 26:24.) Has not the Psalmist said, ‘We are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand’? (Psalm 95:7.) God has no distracting hobbies. While one’s eye is to be single to His glory, we must remember that His glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (*Plain and Precious Things*, 27).

“One of the striking findings for the student of the scriptures is the frequency with which the same truth, the same idea, the same insight, the same concept appears (and often with exactly the same

words) in various books of the scripture. This is true not only with major doctrines, but also with very minor things that witness to the fact that the doctrines and truths that reappear come from the same Source. No wonder the prophets are consistent with each other.

“That they so abundantly agree with each other is no small point in attesting to the divinity of the various books of the scriptures. Where the prophets deal with the same subject, they are consistent. . . .

“The scriptures form a seamless structure of truths, even though the truths were given in different places and different dispensations” (*Things As They Really Are*, 84–85).

- Give some examples of scriptures that seem to be original, but are actually quotations from former scriptures. Help students understand that God is the author of all scripture and that His prophets stand together as witnesses of a common message. A few examples are cited below:

1. D&C 133:48—Isaiah 63:2
2. D&C 89:20—Isaiah 40:31
3. Hebrews 1:5—Psalm 2:7
4. Hebrews 1:7—Psalm 104:4
5. Hebrews 1:8–9—Psalm 45:6–7
6. D&C 58:45—Deuteronomy 33:17

- Show that in many cases one prophet will point out the fulfillment of a prophecy made by another prophet.

Prophecy	Record of Fulfillment
Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:22–23
Hosea 11:1	Matthew 2:14–15
Isaiah 9:1–2	Matthew 4:13–16
Isaiah 53:12	Mark 15:28
Isaiah 61:1	Luke 4:16–21
Psalm 41:9	John 13:18–30
Psalm 22:18	John 19:24

### 2. Clustering scriptures together is important to improve understanding.

- Use the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell to teach students what it means to cluster the scriptures together:

“Cluster your scriptures together so that the Old Testament scripture on a particular topic is related by you to a scripture in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the New Testament, and to the utterances of living prophets. The scriptures of the Church need

each other, just as the members of the Church do. And they help each other, just as members of the Church do.

“Sometimes I fear that we teach the scriptures in isolation from each other, when in fact, if you will make multiple use of them and follow this clustering method, you will not only make the teaching moment more significant but you will also be witnessing to the congruency and relevance of all the scriptures. You will find, as one would expect, a powerful conceptual consistency that flows throughout all the scriptures, sometimes even verbatim language, because they come from the same source” (“The Old Testament: Relevancy Within Antiquity,” in *A Symposium on the Old Testament*, 8–9).

- The following charts give examples of clustering the scriptures. These are not meant to be all-inclusive, but they serve to show the knowledge that can come from using all the standard works to explore a doctrinal topic. As you read these references with your students, have them cross-reference them.

### Christ’s Suffering during the Atonement

Luke 22:44	He sweat great drops of blood.
D&C 19:16–19	Jesus Christ suffered these things for all. This suffering caused Him to tremble because of pain, to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit.
D&C 18:11	Christ suffered death in the flesh; He suffered the pains of all men.
Mosiah 3:7	He suffered more than man can suffer. Blood came from every pore.
Isaiah 53:5	He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.

### The Law of Moses and Christ

Galatians 3:24	The law was a schoolmaster to bring people to Christ.
2 Nephi 11:4	The law of Moses was given to prove the truth of the coming of Christ.
2 Nephi 25:24–26	The law of Moses was given to help men believe in Christ.
Jacob 4:4–5	The law of Moses pointed to Christ.
Alma 25:16	The law of Moses served to strengthen faith in Christ.
Alma 34:14	The whole meaning of the law was to point to the sacrifice of the Son of God.

### 3. Scriptures interpret scriptures.

- Often the interpretation of a passage of scripture is given somewhere else in the scriptures. For example, read with students Matthew 13:3–9, where Jesus relates the parable of the sower. Have them find the interpretation of the parable that is given later on in the same chapter (see vv. 19–23). You may want to refer students to the accounts of the same parable found in Mark 4 and Luke 8:1–18. Have them refer to the footnotes (especially JST helps) for more information. Note that slight variations are found in the three accounts.
- Modern scriptures often give keys that unlock the meaning of difficult biblical passages. Have class members study the scriptures in the following chart, which serve as examples of how latter-day scriptures expand our understanding of various biblical scriptures:

#### Unlock the Bible

Genesis 2:7	D&C 88:15	Definition of soul
Isaiah 11:1–5, 10	D&C 113:1–6	Stem, rod, and root are identified
Isaiah 52:7–10	Mosiah 15:13–18	Publishers of peace are identified
Matthew 13:24–30	D&C 86:1–7	Further clarification of the meaning of the parable of the wheat and the tares
Revelation	D&C 77	Answers questions concerning the book of Revelation

### 4. Scriptures have a similar phraseology.

- Ask students how being familiar with scriptural phraseology could help them understand a passage of scripture. Help students see that there are numerous scripture passages that reflect phrases of other passages. Many of them are tied together with footnotes, but many are not. When trying to understand a particular phrase, it could be helpful to use the Topical Guide or index to find the same phrase or a closely related one in another place. Comparing two statements in their context can lead to greater understanding of the original passage. Latter-day scriptures are often especially helpful in shedding light on biblical passages. For example, have the students refer to Isaiah 24:5 and then Doctrine and Covenants 1:12–15. Refer them also to Isaiah 24:20 and Doctrine and Covenants 88:87–96.

- Refer students to examples of New Testament language found in the Book of Mormon by referring to the following chart. Note that the Book of Mormon opens wide the door of our understanding of these New Testament passages.

<b>New Testament Language Found in the Book of Mormon</b>		
John 10:14–16	Other sheep	3 Nephi 15:16–24
Romans 11:16–24	The olive tree	Jacob 5
Revelation 3:12	New Jerusalem	Ether 13
John 1:29	The Lamb of God	1 Nephi 13:40
Matthew 5	The Beatitudes	3 Nephi 12

## Supplementary Study Sources

None suggested.

## Suggested Student Study

- How do 2 Nephi 29:6–14 and Mormon 7:8–9 illustrate the way that the scriptures work together?
- Select a subject from the Topical Guide. Then cluster several scriptures together to help you understand the selected topic. Try to use all four standard works.

### Teaching Objective

We understand the scriptures better when we study them in their context.

### Themes

1. It is important to place scripture in proper context.
2. There are levels of context.
3. Avoid wresting the scriptures.

### Teaching Ideas

#### 1. It is important to place scripture in proper context.

- The word *context* comes from the Latin *contextus* or *contexere*, meaning “to weave together.” Therefore, words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and even larger works, such as chapters and books, can be part of a whole just as a fabric is composed of individual threads woven together. Therefore, the meaning of an individual portion of text must be understood in relation to the work as a whole, such as a word in its sentence, a sentence in its paragraph, and so on. The primary purpose of considering context, then, is to derive the correct meaning and intent of the author. By relying on isolated passages without giving due consideration to their context, misunderstandings and misinterpretations may result. In religion, using a passage of scripture irrespective of its context for the purpose of proving a preconceived idea is called proof-texting.

Provide students with a simple demonstration of scriptural context. An example of context influencing the meaning of a passage is the different situations in which Jesus used the simple proverb

“With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you.” List the following three references on the chalkboard and have students determine the subject matter from the surrounding context of the passage:

1. Matthew 7:2 (judging)
2. Mark 4:24 (see vv. 21–25; heeding the teachings of Christ)
3. Luke 6:38 (giving)

#### 2. There are levels of context.

- In written texts there are levels of context that should be considered. The three levels that are important in scripture study are the immediate setting, the context of a chapter or book, and the context within the gospel.

*Immediate Setting.* Consider the immediate setting of the word, phrase, sentence or passage. For example, have students read the definition of the word *hell* in the Bible Dictionary. Then discuss how understanding the historical significance of *Gehenna* helps them understand the meaning of the word *hell* in Matthew 5:22, 29–30 and other passages referred to.

It is important that students of the scriptures understand to whom the message is being directed. Statements that apply to one person or group often do not apply in the same way to others. The passages in the chart at the bottom of this page illustrate this concept. Note the misunderstanding that could result if everyone thought each passage applied universally.

*Chapter or Book Content.* Consider the broader context of a chapter within its own book.

Students of the scriptures must assume that individual books of scripture by authors inspired by the Holy Ghost not only have purpose but logical and coherent organization. Therefore, passages within the book should be studied and understood in the context of the complete book. For example,

Reference	Directed To	Incorrect Message	Intended Message
3 Nephi 13:25	The twelve Nephite disciples	No one should worry about providing for life’s necessities.	They should devote their full time to the Lord.
1 Corinthians 7:25–38; JST, 1 Corinthians 7:29	Those called to the ministry	It is better to be unmarried than to be married.	It is easier or better for missionaries if they are single.
Matthew 28:19	The eleven Apostles	Any follower of Christ may baptize.	Only those with authority can baptize.

Paul's statements in Romans 3:28 and Galatians 2:16 say that man is justified by faith, not by the "deeds" or "works" of "the law." Careful study of both books by the same author, however, indicates that when Paul used the phrase "the law," in many instances he was referring to the law of Moses, as contrasted with the gospel of Jesus Christ. He did not condemn obedience to the principles and ordinances of the gospel but he went to great length to explain that obedience to the statutes of the law of Moses or to the gospel in general was insufficient to gain salvation without the mediation and power of Jesus Christ. You may want to give examples of other concepts that can only be properly understood in the context of the complete book by a given author.

*Gospel Content.* Consider the context within the gospel as a whole.

Church leaders have repeatedly advised members to study all four standard works. Our leaders have implemented a four-year course of study of these volumes. One of the purposes of this program is to acquaint the Saints with the complete body of scripture. We are also encouraged to study in depth all of the relevant passages on a given subject so that we can have access to all the Lord has revealed on the subject. Many doctrines and passages of scripture can be correctly understood only in the context of the total gospel picture, much like a single piece of a picture puzzle takes on meaning only in the context of the completed puzzle. Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, counseled seminary students:

"The scriptures do not set forth these doctrinal subjects in a comprehensive, organized list of rules, like the Internal Revenue Code or [Robert's] Rules of Order. For the most part, the scriptural teachings on the various doctrines of the gospel must be gleaned from a number of sources, each containing a less than complete account of the subject. . . .

"If we were left to gain a complete understanding of a gospel principle from what is mentioned in only one account, for example in the Old Testament, we could well misunderstand in part and stumble, even as many sincere followers of Christ did during the period we call the apostasy. This required the restoration of the gospel in our own dispensation. With that restoration came the Book of Mormon, another witness of Christ, and an outpouring of revelations addressed to the needs of our day. . . .

"An accurate and complete understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ requires us to use all of the scriptures available to us. This explains why the Lord has commanded us to 'search the scriptures' (John 5:39). It also helps us understand why it is dangerous to rest a firm conclusion as to a point of doctrine on a reading of only one passage of scripture" ("Studying the Scriptures," 5–6).

- Through scripture chaining, demonstrate how the following difficult scriptures can be properly interpreted in light of the gospel context as a whole:

Difficult Scripture	Scripture Chaining
Ephesians 2:8–9	2 Nephi 25:23; D&C 59:2; 93:11–14; 2 Nephi 10:24–25; Mosiah 4:8–10; John 15:1–11; Ephesians 2:8–9
John 1:18	JST, John 1:18–19; JST, 1 John 4:12; D&C 67:11–12; Daniel 10:5–10; Moses 1:11; D&C 84:21–22; John 1:18
Matthew 21:22	3 Nephi 18:20; Mormon 9:21; D&C 88:64; Matthew 21:21–22

Cross-references (provided in the footnotes and Topical Guide) are one of the best aids to putting given principles in context of the gospel as a whole. President Thomas S. Monson, a Counselor in the First Presidency, stressed the value of the Topical Guide and cross-references in a Churchwide satellite fireside in 1985:

"Let me illustrate how the new Topical Guide can be a blessing to each Latter-day Saint in his gospel study. Some years ago, President Harold B. Lee opened one of our auxiliary organization manuals and read to me a reference wherein the author had speculated concerning the meaning of a passage quoted from the New Testament. President Lee said, 'If only the author had known his Doctrine and Covenants, he would have known what the Lord had to say at a later time to clarify the biblical account.' Now there is no need for such confusion, for the cross-references in the Topical Guide are designed to solve such problems. Certainty has replaced doubt. Knowledge has overcome speculation" ("Come, Learn of Me," *Ensign*, Dec. 1985, 47–48).

### 3. Avoid wresting the scriptures.

- Dictionaries usually define the word *wrest* to mean to twist, force, or divert to an unnatural or improper use. To wrest the scriptures is to twist them or force an incorrect interpretation on them. In the following statement, Elder Marion G. Romney, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, pointed out the distinction between wresting and searching the scriptures:

"The word *search* [in the scriptures] means to inquire into, study, and examine for the purpose of discovering the meaning of. Searching implies more than just reading or even memorizing.

"When Jesus told the Jews to 'search the scriptures,' he was talking to men who prided

themselves on their acquaintance with the scriptures. They had spent their lives reading and memorizing them. They could and did quote reams and reams of scripture in support of their apostate rules and rituals. They had wholly failed, however, to discover the true message of the scriptures. . . .

"This incident from the life and teachings of Jesus [John 5:39] graphically distinguishes between searching and wresting the scriptures and reveals the awful consequences of wresting them. Searching them for the purpose of discovering what they teach as enjoined by Jesus is a far cry from hunting through them for the purpose of finding passages which can be pressed into service to support a predetermined conclusion. 'Behold,' said Alma, 'the scriptures are before you; if ye will wrest them it shall be to your own destruction.' (Alma 13:20)" ("Search the Scriptures," *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1958, 26).

Numerous passages of scripture warn us against false doctrine (sometimes spoken of as "leaven"), perverting the right way of the Lord, the traditions of men, the precepts of men, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, private interpretation, trifling with the scriptures, and wresting the scriptures. Below are a few passages on this subject. You may want to select several to read, discuss, and mark with your class. You may locate additional references in the Topical Guide under the headings mentioned.

### **Wresting the scriptures**

2 Peter 3:16  
Alma 13:20–23  
Alma 41:1, 9  
Doctrine and Covenants 10:63

### **Perverting the right way of the Lord**

2 Nephi 28:15  
Alma 30:22, 60  
Moroni 8:16

### **Teaching for doctrine the commandments of men**

Matthew 15:9  
Colossians 2:22  
Titus 1:14

Within the scriptures themselves there are a number of examples of wresting or perverting the scriptures. Following are several passages you may

find helpful in illustrating how the scriptures have been wrested and the consequences that result:

1. *Jacob 2:22–3:5*. People justified immorality on the basis of practices in the Old Testament. Note that Jacob makes it clear in *Jacob 2:34; 3:1–5* that the commandment to practice monogamy was given to father Lehi; therefore they were ignoring the teachings of the living prophet in favor of the teachings of past prophets.
2. *Mosiah 12:20–21*. The priests of Noah used a quotation from *Isaiah 52:7–10* to justify rejection of Abinadi because, in their view, he did not fit *Isaiah's* description of a messenger of the Lord. Abinadi accused them of "perverting" the way of the Lord (see *Mosiah 12:25–27*).
3. *Alma 12:20–21*. Antionah used *Genesis 3:22–24* about cherubim and the flaming sword to question the Resurrection.
4. *Matthew 4:6*. Satan used *Psalms 91:11–12* to tempt Jesus.
5. *Matthew 15:5; Mark 7:11*. Pharisees encouraged the violation of the fifth commandment to honor parents by giving the support money to the temple and calling it a gift, or *Corban*.

■ Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, encouraged us to be involved in the breadth of the gospel in the following analogy:

"The gospel might be likened to the keyboard of a piano—a full keyboard with a selection of keys on which one who is trained can play a variety without limits; a ballad to express love, a march to rally, a melody to soothe, and a hymn to inspire; an endless variety to suit every mood and satisfy every need.

"How shortsighted it is, then, to choose a single key and endlessly tap out the monotony of a single note, or even two or three notes, when the full keyboard of limitless harmony can be played" (in *Conference Report*, Oct. 1971, 9; or *Ensign*, Dec. 1971, 41).

## **Supplementary Study Sources**

■ Bruce R. McConkie, "Ten Keys to Understanding *Isaiah*," *Ensign*, Oct. 1973, 78–83; a general pattern for studying scripture in context.

## **Suggested Student Study**

None suggested.

### Teaching Objective

Examining the standard works in terms of the cultural setting they originated in assists in bridging the cultural gap.

### Themes

1. We must seek to understand the time and place where scripture originated.
2. Understanding culture will help in comprehending scriptures.
3. There are ways to improve your understanding of cultural influences on scriptures.

### Teaching Ideas

#### 1. We must seek to understand the time and place where scripture originated.

■ Explain to students that in their scripture study they should try to “go to” the time and place the writing originated. The standard works contain writings of many prophets who lived in different cultures spanning thousands of years. Each scripture writer wrote as he was directed by the Holy Ghost, yet the writings were clothed in the influence of the imagery and culture of the writer. To understand their writings we should mentally “step into their world” as much as possible to see things as they saw them.

The prophet Nephi wrote, “There is none other people that understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews like unto them, save it be that they are taught after the manner of the things of the Jews” (2 Nephi 25:5). This principle also applies to the writings of people from other cultures. It is especially important, however, to understand the ancient Jewish culture because so much of our scriptures originated in that culture. Even the modern scriptures often quote from and use phrases and terms that stem from Jewish culture.

One writer, explaining the oriental nature of the Bible, said, “It is easy for Occidentals to overlook the fact that the Scriptures had their origin in the East, and that each one of the writers was actually an Oriental. Since this is so, in a very real sense the Bible may be said to be an Oriental Book. But many are quite apt to read into the Scriptures Western manners and customs, instead of interpreting them from the Eastern point of view. . . .

“ . . . Many passages of Scripture that are hard for the Westerner to understand, are readily explained by a knowledge of the customs and manners of Bible lands” (Fred H. Wight, *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands*, 7).

■ Read the following statement from an individual who lived among the people of biblical lands: “Modes, customs, usages, all that you can set down to the score of the national, the social, or the conventional, are precisely as different from yours as the east is different from the west. They sit when you stand; they lie when you sit; they do to the head what you do to the feet; they use fire when you use water; you shave the beard, they shave the head; you move the hat, they touch the breast; you use the lips in salutation, they touch the forehead and the cheek; your house looks outwards, their house looks inwards; you go *out* to take a walk, they go *up* to enjoy the fresh air; you drain your land, they sigh for water; you bring your daughters out, they keep their wives and daughters in; your ladies go barefaced through the streets, their ladies are always covered” (W. Graham, *The Jordan and the Rhine*, in James M. Freeman, *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, 5).

#### 2. Understanding culture will help in comprehending scriptures.

■ Use the following examples to show that it is important to have some understanding of the culture the scriptures came from:

“Let him *which is on the housetop* not come down to take any thing out of his house” (Matthew 24:17; italics added).

“And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and *walked upon the roof of the king’s house*” (2 Samuel 11:2; italics added).

Normally, a Westerner’s house is not built with a roof that is designed to be walked upon. In biblical lands, however, houses are built with the intention that much activity would take place on people’s roofs. Roofs in biblical lands were commonly flat and were used for sleeping (see 1 Samuel 9:25–26), storage (see Joshua 2:6), gathering in times of excitement (see Isaiah 22:1), public proclamations (see Matthew 10:27; Luke 12:3), and places of worship and prayer (see Zephaniah 1:5; Acts 10:9). Commonly there were two staircases leading to the roof—one from within the house and one from the street. It would not be uncommon for someone such

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as David to be walking on his roof in the evening or for someone to be upon the roof at the time of a crisis.

“Now Peter sat *without in the palace*: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

“But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

“And when he was gone *out into the porch*, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth” (Matthew 26:69–71; italics added).

Oriental houses of more than one room are built with the rooms separated by a courtyard. Added rooms are built around the courtyard. The oriental house fronts inward toward the courtyard rather than outward toward the street. When a person is in the courtyard, they are really within the house, but not in the rooms of the house.

Often there are cisterns in the courtyard (see 2 Samuel 17:18–19), and it is common for fires to be kindled there (see John 18:15–18).

### 3. There are ways to improve your understanding of the cultural influences on scriptures.

- There are many things students can do to better understand the aspects of the scriptures that are related to culture, especially in their study of the Bible. Share with students the suggestions that follow, and discuss the numerous scriptural examples contained under each suggestion.

*Study the internal commentary and insights about culture that are found in the scriptures.*

Sometimes there are scriptural explanations of words or events that give insight into the thinking or practices of people in the scriptures. An example is found in the account of Boaz purchasing Naomi’s parcel of land. In Ruth 4:8 it is said that Boaz “drew off his shoe.” Verse 7 gives the reason he did that. The transfer of property ownership was confirmed by the exchange of a shoe. This is a fitting symbol of such an act since the owner of a piece of property has the right to tread upon it with his shoe.

*Use the Bible Dictionary.*

The Bible Dictionary is a great help in understanding many aspects of biblical culture. Words you are not familiar with often have significant meaning, which you can discover through use of your Bible Dictionary. The Bible Dictionary contains a wealth of information regarding people, places, and things encountered in the Bible. A number of tables have also been provided that offer analysis and synthesis.

1. Several offerings relating to the law of sacrifice are mentioned in the scriptures (such as trespass

offerings, peace offerings, and sin offerings). If you look up any one of these terms in the Bible Dictionary you will be directed to the word *sacrifices*, where a thorough treatment of each of the offerings is provided.

2. Reference is made in Acts 1:12 to a “sabbath day’s journey.” Look up the phrase in the Bible Dictionary.
3. Another valuable source of information is found under the heading “chronology” in the Bible Dictionary. Review the tables found there that relate the Old Testament history to secular history.

*Study the historical context and setting of scripture passages.*

To know the historical background and setting where scriptural events took place is very helpful in understanding certain passages. An example of this is the story of the return of the Jews from their Babylonian captivity. Jeremiah prophesied of the captivity (see Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10), Isaiah prophetically described the role Cyrus would play in the return of the Jews (see Isaiah 44:24–28), the books of Ezra and Chronicles describe Cyrus’s reaction to Isaiah’s prophecy as well as the return of the Jews to their homeland (see 2 Chronicles 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–2:1), and finally, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah tell of the building up of the temple and walls of Jerusalem after the return of the Jews.

To understand the message of these scripture writers you need to gain some understanding of the historical facts concerning the overthrow of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and the succession of the Persian empire to the Babylonian kingdom (see Bible Dictionary, “Assyria and Babylonia,” 615–16).

To gain a proper perspective of the early Book of Mormon chapters, it is also necessary to know something of the events leading up to the overthrow of the kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians (see 1 Nephi 1:4; 2 Kings 24–25).

*Study the cultures that influenced the people in the scriptures.*

The Lord taught Abraham in preparation for his sojourn in Egypt (see Abraham 3:15). A knowledge of the Egyptian culture can help us understand Abraham’s life and experiences among the Egyptian people.

The same is true for Joseph, Moses, and others. The people of the Bible interacted with and were influenced continuously by the great empires and cultures around them. The children of Israel were powerfully influenced by the Canaanites, Egyptians, Moabites, Syrians, Ammonites, and others. The kingdom of Israel was taken captive into Assyria. The kingdom of Judah was taken captive into Babylon, where the prophetic ministries of Ezekiel

and Daniel took place. Jesus was born into a culture totally dominated by the Roman empire and greatly influenced by both the Greeks and the Romans.

Joseph Smith did his work in the nineteenth-century American culture and the Doctrine and Covenants contains numerous references to aspects of that culture. Much insight into the scriptures can be gained by learning of the manners and customs of people who surrounded and interacted with God's people and their prophets. (For example, see Bible Dictionary, "Egypt," 660–61; "Moab," 733; "Syria," 778; "Ammon, Ammonites," 607; "Roman Empire," 763–64; "Greece," 697; "Hellenists," 700).

*Study the geography, climates, and seasons of scriptural lands.*

Often figures of speech in the scriptures are drawn from the environment. The following examples illustrate this fact and underscore the value of familiarity with the environmental factors that have influenced the scriptures.

1. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14).

Palestine is a land of many hills and it was typical in Bible times for cities to be built on the tops of hills rather than in valleys because they did not then take up precious farm land. Such cities, when lighted at night, could be seen from great distances.

2. "He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red" (Matthew 16:2).

"The red sunset . . . indicates the presence of east wind, and is a sign that a season of warm weather may be expected" (G. M. Mackie, *Bible Manners and Customs*, 26).

3. "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh" (Matthew 24:32).

"The fig-tree comes into foliage later than the almond, apricot, and peach trees, and when its tender leaves are unsheathed, and expand and deepen in colour, it is a sign that summer days are at hand" (Mackie, *Bible Manners and Customs*, 51).

4. "They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand" (Habakkuk 1:9).

"The east wind is the usual breeze by night, and as such is cool and dry; but when it prevails also during the day, or for several days at a time, it becomes exceedingly hot and oppressive" (Mackie, *Bible Manners and Customs*, 25).

Because of the effect of the east wind, it became a symbol of oppression and destruction.

*Use the footnotes in the LDS edition of the scriptures.*

As was discussed in lesson 7, the footnotes in the LDS scriptures clarify meanings and give helps with language, idioms, and so forth. A few examples of clarifications of culture and related items are found with the following references. Turn to them and notice the added insights that the footnotes give.

1. Exodus 23:19b; 34:26b—seething
2. Deuteronomy 6:8b; 6:9a—phylacteries and mezuzot
3. Deuteronomy 16:21a—fertility idols
4. Deuteronomy 21:23a—hanging a body
5. Matthew 18:28a—an hundred pence
6. Doctrine and Covenants 46:6a—confirmation meetings

*Relate items in the scriptures to your own frame of reference.*

Read the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:23–35 as an example. When you know the relationship between a talent and a penny (pence), the parable becomes much more meaningful. Although the value of a talent varied during biblical times and there were different types of talents (such as attic silver, Hebrew silver, and gold), a comparison of the debts can still be made. The Roman attic talent comprised six thousand denarii (pence). Sometimes the word *talent* simply referred to a large amount of money, without reference to amount.

Figuratively, ten thousand talents would mean an impossible debt. If the parable is taken literally, the unmerciful servant's debt would have been 60 million pence, whereas his fellow servant owed him one hundred pence. The debt owed by the unmerciful servant was six hundred thousand times larger than the debt owed him. If the penny is considered as a day's wages (see Matthew 20:2), the fellow servant owed the equivalent of a little over three month's wages and the unmerciful servant owed nearly 165,000 years of wages.

## Supplementary Study Source

- Stephen Ricks and Shirley Smith Ricks, "Jewish Religious Education in the Meridian of Time," *Ensign*, Oct. 1987, 60–62; insights into the educational systems that existed in the Jewish home and community.
- Richard D. Draper, "Home Life at the Time of Christ," *Ensign*, Sept. 1987, 56–59; social practices, customs, and settings associated with ancient near eastern homes at the time of Christ.

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## Suggested Student Study

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- In the gospel of Mark we read that “the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him [Jesus], how they might destroy him” (Mark 3:6). Read the commentary on the terms “Herodians” and “Pharisees” in the Bible Dictionary. How does a knowledge of the nature of these two groups and their differences show more clearly the extent Jesus was opposed in His ministry?
- Isaiah 1:1 says the message was directed to “Judah and Jerusalem,” yet verse 10 says, “Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom . . . , ye people of Gomorrah.” The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had been destroyed by God long before Isaiah’s time. Refer to the following scriptures. With a knowledge of the conditions of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah before they were destroyed and of the people of Judah at Isaiah’s time, explain Isaiah 1:10.

Similarly, explain the meaning of Revelation 11:8 when it refers to “the great city . . . where also our Lord was crucified [Jerusalem]” as Sodom and Egypt (see also Genesis 13:13; 18:20; Isaiah 3:8–9; Jeremiah 23:14).

- Ezekiel 37:15–20 speaks of the records of Judah and Joseph and calls them “sticks,” but Isaiah and Jeremiah use the term “roll” to refer to records (see Isaiah 8:1; Jeremiah 36). Based on Ezekiel’s situation when he wrote this chapter, explain why he used “stick” instead of “roll” (see Ezekiel 1:1; Ezekiel 37:16a; Bible Dictionary, “Chebar,” 632; “Nebuchadnezzar,” 737–38).
- If Jesus was born in Bethlehem (see Luke 2:4, 11), why does Alma 7:10 say that he would be born “at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers”? (see Bible Dictionary, “Bethlehem,” 621).

### Teaching Objective

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Scripture writers used styles of language to add beauty, power, and life to their messages.

### Themes

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1. There is value and purpose for literary forms in scripture.
2. There are various types of literary forms in scripture.

### Teaching Ideas

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#### 1. There is value and purpose for literary forms in scripture.

■ Scripture writers used many literary forms in their construction of scripture. Figures of speech are literary forms frequently used. Figures of speech are the uses of language to achieve special effects or meanings. In seeking to understand the scriptures, it is important to recognize figures of speech.

Scripture writers often used figures of speech to add beauty, power, and life to their messages. Some used these devices to veil the meaning from the reader; still others saw the figures as a means of exaggeration or comparison. Explain to students why figures of speech were used.

■ Point out to students why there are so many literary styles in the scriptures. Explain that scripture writers were left to express the inspiration and revelation they received in the best language and with the best skill they had. Therefore, there is a wide variety of literary styles in scripture.

#### 2. There are various types of literary forms in scripture.

■ Explain and demonstrate that the scriptures contain many different kinds of literary forms and language usage, some of which are described below.

■ *Prose*. Most of the standard works are written in prose. Prose, in its broadest sense, is applied to all forms of written or spoken expression that do not have a regular rhythmic pattern. Prose has logical order, and its ideas are connected rather than merely listed. Prose style varies from one writer to another. It has a variety of expressions through diction and sentence structure.

Prose can be demonstrated with a reading from Genesis 1:1–5. Notice the logical order of ideas and the manner in which they are connected. One thought builds upon another.

■ *Poetry*. Poetry is a rhythmic expression of words. It comes in many forms and can be found throughout each of the standard works. In the scriptures, however, poetry is not set in poetic format and is, therefore, not always easy to recognize. “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger” (Proverbs 15:1) might not seem poetic to the reader, but it is a form of poetry, called parallelism. There are a number of forms of poetry found in the scriptures, but the most common form is parallelism.

Parallelism is a form of poetry without metric rhyme or rhythm. Parallelism is more concerned with the rhythm of thoughts than with rhyme of sounds or words. While there are various types of parallelism, the most common are those that *repeat* the same thoughts but in different words, those that show *contrast*, and those that *amplify* the original thought.

#### 1. Repeat

- a. “Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine” (Joel 1:5; italics added).
- b. “Wo unto him that *spurneth* at the *doings* of the Lord; yea, wo unto him that shall *deny* the Christ and his *works!*” (3 Nephi 29:5; italics added).
- c. “And then shall they *weep* because of their *iniquities*; then shall they *lament* because they *persecuted* their king” (D&C 45:53; italics added).

#### 2. Contrast

- a. “A *soft answer* turneth away *wrath*: but *grievous words* stir up *anger*” (Proverbs 15:1; italics added).
- b. “A time to be *born*, and a time to *die*; a time to *plant*, and a time to *pluck up* that which is planted” (Ecclesiastes 3:2; italics added).

#### 3. Amplify

- a. “Behold, the Lord maketh the *earth empty*, and maketh *it waste*, and turneth *it upside down*, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof” (Isaiah 24:1; italics added).
- b. “For, said he, I have *repented of my sins*, and have been *redeemed of the Lord*; behold I am *born of the Spirit*” (Mosiah 27:24; italics added).
- c. “The *earth has travailed* and brought forth her strength; And *truth is established in her bowels*; And the *heavens have smiled upon her*; And she is clothed with the *glory of her God*; For he stands in

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the midst of his people” (D&C 84:101; italics added).

When we understand that there is a relationship (repetition, contrast, or amplification) of thoughts between lines of scripture in a passage, we can view the passage as one thought and thereby better discern the intended meaning of the passage.

▪ *Simile*. A simile is a comparison between two things, usually introduced by the words *as* or *like*. For example, “For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven” (Malachi 4:1). The purpose of a simile is to liken attributes between two dissimilar things. One important value of a simile is the economy of language. It communicates much in few words. (Similes could be taught in detail here or in lesson 13.)

Similes are very common throughout scripture. Some examples are found in Psalm 1:3; 1 Peter 2:25; Luke 13:21. Have the students mark the similes and identify the comparisons. Ask students what they learned from each comparison.

▪ *Metaphor*. A metaphor is an implied comparison of two things. For example, “Ye are the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). The purpose of a metaphor is to be emphatic, brief, and interesting. (Metaphors could be taught in detail here or in lesson 13.)

Examples of metaphors in the scriptures are found in Deuteronomy 32:4; John 10:11; 15:1; 2 Nephi 9:41; Doctrine and Covenants 76:85. Have students identify the metaphors. Ask them what the implied meaning of each metaphor is.

▪ *Hyperbole*. A hyperbole is a deliberate exaggeration for emphasis. It is an overstatement. For example, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24).

Read with the class the following hyperboles. Discuss the exaggeration and the intended meaning.

1. “And if thy *right eye offend thee, pluck it out*, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell” (Matthew 5:29; italics added).
2. “Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; *the cities are great and walled up to heaven*; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there” (Deuteronomy 1:28; italics added).

▪ *Idiom*. Idioms are words or phrases that have meaning in their cultural setting but are nonsensical when taken literally.

Idioms can be confusing for someone who is not familiar with a culture or language. “Hit the road,” “knock on wood,” “get the lead out,” and “sleep on it” are just a few of the idioms used in Western culture. Just imagine how senseless these

expressions sound to someone who is not familiar with this culture.

Understanding the intended meaning of an idiom is worthy of study. An excellent source to study is the footnotes. The Latter-day Saint editions of the scriptures offer very useful commentary on most idioms. Also, a careful reading of the idiom in context of the chapter and book will offer additional insight. Another means would be to study the author’s culture.

The following are idioms that the class could read and discuss. It would be a useful exercise to have students rewrite some of these idioms to render a clearer understanding.

1. “My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and *I am escaped with the skin of my teeth*” (Job 19:20; italics added).
2. “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to *break bread*, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7; italics added).
3. “And it came to pass that when he had said these words he could say no more, and *he gave up the ghost*” (Jacob 7:20; italics added).

Ask the students for examples of idioms currently in use.

▪ *Personification*. Personification is when ideas, animals, or objects are given human traits. For example, “For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; *her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened*” (D&C 82:14; italics added). In this case, Zion is given the female gender.

Using the following scriptural passages, have the students identify what is being personified and how personification increases the understanding:

1. “And he said, What hast thou done? *the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground*” (Genesis 4:10; italics added).
2. “*They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera*” (Judges 5:20; italics added).
3. “But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the *earth keep silence before him*” (Habakkuk 2:20; italics added).

▪ *Parables*. A parable is an illustrative story answering a question or pointing out a moral or lesson. The word *parable* is a Greek word and refers to setting two things side by side for comparison. Parables were often used to veil the meaning of what was being taught. Thus, those who were not ready to live or understand the principle saw the parable only as a nice story.

When Jesus was asked why he spoke in parables, He said that some were prepared and willing to receive the “mysteries of the kingdom” and others were not (see Luke 8:10). The following statement

by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, is helpful in understanding the use of parables. He said parables “may serve as illustrations of gospel principles; they may dramatize, graphically and persuasively, some gospel truths; but it is not their purpose to reveal doctrine, or, standing alone, to guide men along the course leading to eternal life. Parables can only be understood, in their full and complete meaning, after one knows the doctrines about which they speak” (*Mortal Messiah*, 2:241).

From Elder McConkie’s statement, what guidelines can be used to better understand parables?

## Supplementary Study Sources

- “Hebrew Literary Styles,” in *Old Testament: Genesis–2 Samuel* (Rel. 301 student manual), 302–6; various types of parallelism, imagery as figurative language, and use of dualism in Hebrew writings.

## Suggested Student Study

- There are many examples of parallelism in the book of Proverbs. Have your students review Proverbs 3 and identify several of them.
- You might want to give students copies of the following lists and have them match each reference with the figure of speech it uses.

### Figure of Speech and Definition

- A. *Simile*: A comparison by resemblance—a declaration that one thing is like another.
- B. *Metaphor*: An implied comparison—a declaration where one thing is said to be another because of a likeness or analogous relationship between them.
- C. *Hyperbole*: A deliberate exaggeration used for emphasis.
- D. *Personification*: When nonhuman things are given human attributes, such as when inanimate objects are spoken of as functioning with human intelligence.

### Scripture Reference

1. — Deuteronomy 1:28
2. — Matthew 26:26
3. — Matthew 9:36
4. — Isaiah 14:8
5. — 2 Samuel 1:23
6. — Joseph Smith—History 1:32
7. — Matthew 5:13
8. — Psalm 1:4

(Answers)

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|------|------|
| 1. C | 5. C |
| 2. B | 6. A |
| 3. A | 7. B |
| 4. D | 8. A |

### Teaching Objective

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Understanding the scriptural use of symbolism enables us to more fully comprehend and appreciate the Lord's message to us in the scriptures.

### Themes

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1. What is the value of teaching with symbols?
2. When to look for symbolism.
3. There are keys to understanding scriptural symbolism.

### Teaching Ideas

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#### 1. What is the value of teaching with symbols?

■ Learning to understand the symbols and imagery used in the scriptures enables us to more fully comprehend and appreciate the Lord's message. Refer to the statements that follow, discussing with students some of the reasons that symbolism is so widely employed in the scriptures:

*Abstract concepts can best be taught symbolically.* Most abstract concepts are hard to grasp without some kind of an association as a learning aid. For example, the principle of faith is difficult to understand on the basis of a definition only. If, however, the principle of faith is associated with something in the realm of our experience, it can be better understood. For example, when Alma was teaching the Zoramites he compared exercising faith in the word of God to the planting of a seed (see Alma 32:28–43). In a similar way, the Lord compared His taking upon Himself the sins of the world to a man being stained as he trod grapes in a wine vat (see D&C 133:48).

*Symbols can be timeless, culture-free, and language-free.* When such things as plants, animals, or manifestations in nature are used to teach principles, they can be used without reference to a particular language, time, or people and can bridge the barriers of communication that often exist between ages or cultures. The use of a wave of the sea to represent a person whose faith is not firm (see James 1:6 for example) can communicate the same message to any people at any time. When Helaman spoke to his sons he told them, "Remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation" (Helaman 5:12; italics

added). This symbol paints a clear picture of what is needed to be secure and stable, no matter what age or what culture people belong to.

*Because of the visual nature of a symbol, it will generally be remembered longer than a description or explanation of the same concept without the symbol.* Moroni wrote upon part of his coat the words, "In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children" (Alma 46:12; see also vv. 11–13, 21, 36). He used this as a flag, and it became the symbol of liberty for the Nephite nation. Replicas were hoisted up on every tower in the land.

*Symbols can be used to reveal or conceal spiritual truths, depending upon the spiritual maturity of the individual.* The Savior, for example, spoke to the people in parables because there were those among His hearers who were neither willing nor prepared to accept His teachings.

*Use of symbolism contributes to an attitude of searching on the part of the student of the scriptures.* A person who understands that there is more than just the obvious in scriptural passages will be inclined to search, ponder, probe, and pray about them to more fully comprehend and appreciate their prophetic message.

#### 2. When to look for symbolism.

■ Ask students, "How do I know when to take a scripture as symbolic and when to think of it as literal?"

Help students understand that it is not always easy to determine when a passage should be taken symbolically or literally; in fact, many passages have both a literal and a symbolic meaning. However, there are clues.

Notice key words or phrases that imply symbolism—words or phrases such as *like*, *likened*, *as*, *as it were*, and *like unto*. These are called similes and are common throughout scripture. Have students look at Matthew 13:31, 33, 44 and mark the words or phrases that are being compared.

Look for symbolism when something being discussed seems unnatural or even impossible:

*Joel 2:8.* "When they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded."

*Revelation 1:16.* "Out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword."

*Revelation 12:3.* "Behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns."

There is much that is natural that is also symbolic. When something is described or outlined very

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specifically, look for symbolism even though the passage may also be literal.

To illustrate this, select passages in Exodus 25–30 that deal with the planning of the tabernacle. Another example is the ordinances of the gospel that are outlined very specifically to represent important gospel teachings and concepts.

### 3. There are keys to understanding scriptural symbolism.

- Share the following guidelines to help students better understand symbolism in the scriptures. You may want to read and discuss the scripture references.

*Determine if the scriptures give the interpretation of the symbol.* Revelation 1:12, 16 speaks of seven candlesticks and seven stars as part of a vision John saw. In verse 20 these symbols are explained. The candlesticks represent the seven churches (branches of the Church) in John's area at the time of the revelation, and the seven stars represent the "angels" (JST says "servants") or priesthood leaders of those seven branches (see also Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). Doctrine and Covenants 77 gives many other helps in understanding the teachings and symbols of the book of Revelation.

Sometimes the scriptures tell of angels explaining symbols to the prophets, or the prophets tell what the Spirit of the Lord helped them understand about the symbols. Nephi, for example, received instruction about the symbols in the vision of the tree of life that both he and his father saw. Read 1 Nephi 8:2–35 to get an account of Lehi's vision. Nephi sought and obtained a vision of the same things (see 1 Nephi 11:3–9). Later an angel interpreted the symbols in the vision. Read 1 Nephi 11:21–25, 36; 12:16–18 for this explanation. Read also 1 Nephi 15:21–30, where Nephi explained elements of the dream to his brethren.

*Look at the symbol in context.* A particular symbol may be used to represent different concepts. An example of this is the metal iron. At various times it is used to represent that which is firm, unyielding, or hard to penetrate (see Leviticus 26:19; Deuteronomy 28:23; Ezekiel 4:3; Revelation 9:9), severe affliction or oppression (see Deuteronomy 4:20; 28:48; 1 Kings 8:51; Psalm 107:10; Jeremiah 11:4; 28:14; 1 Nephi 13:5), strength (see Deuteronomy 33:25; Daniel 2:40–42; 7:7; Micah 4:13; D&C 123:8), permanence, endurance (see Job 19:24; Jeremiah 17:1), pride or stubbornness (see Isaiah 48:4; 1 Nephi 20:4), and dross, or that which is of lesser worth (see Isaiah 60:17; Ezekiel 22:18).

Symbols may also be used to represent closely related concepts at different times. For example, blood represents life (see Genesis 9:4), atonement (see D&C 27:2; Moses 6:60), sin (2 Nephi 9:44), and that which is

mortal or earthly (see 1 Corinthians 15:50). The context is important in determining the meaning of a symbol.

*Look to the teachings of modern prophets.* In their commentary on the scriptures, the prophets at times give insights that are not found in the scriptures themselves. For example, Joseph Smith compared the writings of the prophet Daniel (see Daniel 7) and John (see Revelation 4–5) and said, "Daniel did not see an actual bear or a lion, but the images or figures of those beasts. The translation should have been rendered 'image' instead of 'beast,' in every instance where beasts are mentioned by the [Old Testament] prophets. But John saw the actual beast in heaven, showing to John that beasts did actually exist there, and not to represent figures of things on the earth" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 291).

*Let the nature of the object used as a symbol contribute to an understanding of its spiritual meaning.* In John's account of his vision of heaven he mentioned seeing four beasts, each of which had "six wings" and which were "full of eyes" (Revelation 4:8). The Doctrine and Covenants explains that this is figurative: "Their eyes are a representation of light and knowledge, that is, they are full of knowledge; and their wings are a representation of power, to move, to act, etc." (D&C 77:4). This explanation is consistent with the nature of the symbols used. With our eyes we receive light by which we see and gain knowledge. The wings of a bird enable it to move beyond the limitations that hold men on the earth.

These two examples are typical of other symbols used in the scriptures. Symbols were not selected arbitrarily by the prophets. The natural characteristics and use of things determined the symbolic use that might be made with them in teaching.

*Use the study aids in the scriptures.* The study aids in the LDS edition of the scriptures were prepared under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. They contain valuable references and explanations as well as interpretive helps. For example, the heading for Ezekiel 37 identifies the servant "David," mentioned in the chapter, who will rule latter-day Israel, as the Messiah. Another example is the "palmerworm" and "cankerworm" in Joel 1:4a; "the invading or conquering armies are compared to four varieties (or stages of growth) of locusts."

*Broaden your understanding of the gospel, and evaluate possible interpretations in terms of the overall gospel scheme.* You must understand the underlying spiritual truths before you can understand the symbols that relate to those truths. If people do not understand the Atonement of Christ and its relationship to the laws of justice and mercy they will not be able to recognize the meanings attached to the various aspects of the law of sacrifice and offerings in the law of Moses.

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The scriptures are interrelated; the words, phrases, and concepts in one passage will often be found in another passage with similar meaning. It is important, therefore, to study the scriptures and other words of the prophets continually so that passages of scripture and prophetic teachings will constantly be “interacting” in your mind. The reference in Revelation 2:27 to ruling with a “rod of iron,” for example, is much more easily understood when it is coupled with an understanding of the visions Lehi and Nephi had of the tree of life. Nephi explained that the “rod of iron . . . was the word of God” (1 Nephi 11:25).

The gospel is consistent. Truth does not contradict truth. All correct interpretations of symbols and figures in the scriptures will harmonize with true gospel teachings. This principle can be a monitor for symbolic interpretation. An example of this is found in John’s revelation. John referred to a woman who was to bear a child and a dragon that was ready to devour the child when it was delivered. “She brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron” (Revelation 12:5). The woman is symbolic of the Church of God, consistent with the recurring scriptural theme of the bride (covenant people) and bridegroom (Christ). The man child is symbolic of the millennial kingdom of God.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “Among Biblical scholars of the world, the man child is presumed to be Christ, a speculative conclusion which, though seemingly persuasive, is refuted by the obvious fact that the Church did not bring forth Christ; he is the Creator of the Church. Among Latter-day Saint scriptural exegetes, it is not uncommon to say that the man child is the priesthood, a seemingly persuasive speculation, which again however must be rejected by the same line of reasoning. The Church did not bring forth the priesthood, but the priesthood is the power that brought the Church into being” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:516).

*Meditate, ponder, and pray about the scriptures and the symbols they contain.* Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: “All scripture comes by the power of the Holy Ghost . . . and must and can be interpreted only by the same power. . . . None can comprehend the true meaning of the scriptures except by revelation from the same Revelator who revealed them in the first instance, who is the Holy Ghost” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:356). If you truly want to understand the scriptures and the symbols employed by the Lord therein, you will make the effort to seek instruction from the Lord through His Spirit (see D&C 136:32–33). The Savior delights to enlighten our minds and reveal His mysteries to those who serve Him (see D&C 76:5–10).

The following statement from the Prophet Joseph Smith could be discussed:

“Whenever God gives a vision of an image, or beast, or figure of any kind, He always holds Himself responsible to give a revelation or interpretation of the meaning thereof, otherwise we are not responsible or accountable for our belief in it. Don’t be afraid of being damned for not knowing the meaning of a vision or figure, if God has not given a revelation or interpretation of the subject” (*Teachings*, 291).

*Look for Christ in scriptural symbols.* You may want to only briefly mention this concept, inasmuch as lesson 15 deals with this key.

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## Supplementary Study Sources

- Gerald N. Lund, “Understanding Scriptural Symbols,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1986, 22–27; six guidelines to help in dealing with the figurative language in the scriptures.
- George A. Horton Jr., *Keys to Successful Scripture Study*, 182–92; helps in interpreting symbolic language.
- *Old Testament Media*, presentation 12, “Scripture Symbolism” (item 53058).
- Appendix, “Examples of Symbols Used in Scriptures” (see p. 52 of this manual).

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## Suggested Student Study

- Below are listed several terms and symbolic uses of these terms. For each term listed, students should find at least one passage of scripture where the term is used with the figurative meaning listed. Students will need to use the Topical Guide, Bible Dictionary, index to the triple combination, a concordance, or other references for help.

1. *Colors*
  - Purple or scarlet: Royalty
  - Black: Calamity, affliction
2. *Body Parts*
  - Shoulders: Carrying, bearing
  - Heart: The inner man, feelings
  - Loins: Source of children, offspring
3. *Creatures*
  - Serpent: Evil, deceiver
  - Lion: Power, royalty
  - Locust: Devastation, destruction
4. *Clothing*
  - Being clothed signifies possessing a quality or being in a certain condition
  - Clothed in righteousness: Worthy
  - Clothed in shame: Guilty
  - Clothed in sackcloth: Humility, sorrow

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5. *Food*
    - Milk: Prosperity
    - Fruit: Results, consequences
  6. *Minerals*
    - Clay: Fragility (weak or easily broken)
    - Silver: Of significant value, but less than gold
  7. *Natural Elements*
    - Fire: Purification by the Holy Ghost, destruction of corruption
    - Winds: Tribulation, opposition
  8. *Objects*
    - Yoke: Captivity, burdens
    - Keys: Authority
  9. *Places*
    - Zion: The righteous
    - Sodom and Gomorrah: The wicked
  10. *Ordinances*
    - Baptism: Cleansing
    - Marriage: Covenant relationship with God
  11. *Actions*
    - Laying on of hands: Conveying power or authority
    - Washing feet: Humility, cleansing from the influence of the world
  12. *Numbers*
    - One: Unity—that which is of primary importance
    - Three: Godhead, presidency
  13. *Nature*
    - Grass: Frailty
    - Sand: Vastness, huge numbers

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# Using Scriptures to Meet Personal Needs

Lesson 14

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## Teaching Objective

The scriptures provide answers to personal challenges and needs.

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## Themes

1. There is power in the word of God.
2. The scriptures provide answers to our questions.
3. The scriptures provide patterns and models as a guide for daily living.
4. Comfort can be drawn from the scriptures in facing tests, trials, and temptations.

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## Teaching Ideas

### 1. There is power in the word of God.

- Share the following counsel from President Ezra Taft Benson:

“We live in a day of great challenge. We live in that time of which the Lord spoke when he said, ‘Peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion.’ (D&C 1:35.) . . . Satan is waging war against the members of the Church who have testimonies and are trying to keep the commandments. And while many of our members are remaining faithful and strong, some are wavering. Some are falling. . . .

“ . . . This is an answer to the great challenge of our time. The word of God, as found in the scriptures, in the words of living prophets, and in personal revelation, has the power to fortify the Saints and arm them with the Spirit so they can resist evil, hold fast to the good, and find joy in this life. . . .

“ . . . President Harold B. Lee told the regional representatives:

“We are convinced that our members are hungry for the gospel, undiluted, with its abundant truths and insights. . . . There are those who have seemed to forget that the most powerful weapons the Lord has given us against all that is evil are His own declarations, the plain simple doctrines of salvation as found in the scriptures. . . .

“ . . . One of the most important things you can do . . . is to immerse yourselves in the scriptures. Search them diligently. Feast upon the words of Christ. Learn the doctrine. Master the principles that are found therein. There are few other efforts that will bring greater dividends to your calling. There are few other ways to gain greater inspiration as you serve.

“ . . . When individual members and families immerse themselves in the scriptures regularly and consistently, these other areas of activity [missions, temple marriage, sacrament meeting attendance] will automatically come. Testimonies will increase. Commitment will be strengthened. Families will be fortified. Personal revelation will flow. . . .

“Success in righteousness, the power to avoid deception and resist temptation, guidance in our daily lives, healing of the soul—these are but a few of the promises the Lord has given to those who will come to His word. . . .

“ . . . I urge you to recommit yourselves to a study of the scriptures. Immerse yourselves in them daily so you will have the power of the Spirit to attend you” (“The Power of the Word,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 79–82).

- Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “How grateful we are for the scriptures, which contain the Lord’s instructions to His children. They help us to better understand the course he has designed as a sure guide to lead us through this period of our mortal probation (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 110; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 90).

- Explain that Book of Mormon prophets knew that the word of God “had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just” (Alma 31:5). They also knew that the word “had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else.” Therefore, they strived to preach the word to all. Those who listened had their lives changed forever. We too must come to experience the power of God in our lives.

- Discuss the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “There isn’t a major problem we face that we can’t be immunized against if we know the revelations” (*Teach the Scriptures*, 7).

### 2. The scriptures provide answers to our questions.

- Discuss the importance of the following statement by President Harold B. Lee:

“I say that we need to teach our people to find their answers in the scriptures. If only each of us would be wise enough to say that we aren’t able to answer any question unless we can find a doctrinal answer in the scriptures! . . . the unfortunate thing is that so many of us are not reading the scriptures. We do not know what is in them, and therefore we speculate about the things that we ought to have

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found in the scriptures themselves" ("Find the Answers in the Scriptures," *Ensign*, Dec. 1972, 3).

▪ Share the following explanation of how the scriptures can help answer our questions, by Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"The scriptures can also help us obtain answers to highly specific personal questions. It is obvious, of course, that the scriptures do not contain a comprehensive list of specific answers to every question we could ask about a particular subject. The scriptures are not like a telephone book or an encyclopedia.

"We often hear it said that the scriptures have the answers to all of our questions. Why is this so? It is not that the scriptures contain a specific answer to every question—even to every doctrinal question. We have continuing revelation in our Church because the scriptures do *not* have a specific answer to every possible question. We say that the scriptures contain the answers to every question because the scriptures can *lead* us to every answer.

"... The reading of the scriptures will help us obtain a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They will also put us in a position where we can obtain inspiration to answer any doctrinal or personal question, whether or not that question directly concerns the subject we are studying in the scriptures. That is a grand truth not understood by many. To state it again, even though the scriptures contain no words to answer our specific personal question, a prayerful study of the scriptures will help us obtain such answers. This is because scripture study will make us susceptible to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which, as the scriptures say, will 'guide [us] into all truth' (John 16:13), and by whose power we can 'know the truth of all things' (Moroni 10:5).

"We may also find that a specific verse of scripture that was spoken for quite a different purpose in an entirely different age will, under the interpretive influence of the Holy Ghost, give us a very personal message adapted to our personal needs today" ("Studying the Scriptures," 19–21).

▪ In harmony with these observations by Elder Oaks, another principle of scriptural guidance should be considered. It involves the process of treasuring up the words of life in our minds that they might be called to remembrance by the Spirit of God when we need them.

Speaking to the elders of the Church regarding their duty to teach the gospel to the world, the Lord said, "Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say; but treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man" (D&C 84:85). This admonition has

many additional applications in daily living. By constantly running the words of holy writ through our minds we learn to love and assimilate certain passages that "speak" to our hearts and minds. Those things may spring into our consciousness at some unexpected time and provide direction, comfort, understanding, or warning.

▪ Invite students to help you make a list of some of the current problems that mankind faces. Select one problem and give students time in class to research it, or give them a home assignment to find teachings from the scriptures that could help solve the problem if they were followed. Have students share and discuss their findings.

### 3. The scriptures provide patterns and models as a guide for daily living.

▪ Marvelous men and women—such as Joseph, Moses, Daniel, Ruth, Job, Nephi, Alma, Captain Moroni, and Joseph Smith—show us how to conduct our lives. Draw from students some of the strengths exemplified by the following Saints. How do they serve as a pattern in helping us?

1. Joseph (morally clean)
2. Moses (humility, meekness)
3. Daniel (courage)
4. Ruth (loyalty)
5. Job (patience)
6. Nephi (obedience)
7. Alma (repentance)
8. Captain Moroni (freedom)
9. Joseph Smith (endurance)

▪ Help students understand that they can draw strength from the lives of the Saints as recorded in scripture to meet their personal needs. Read and discuss the Bible Dictionary entries on Daniel, David, Esther, Jeremiah, Job, Joseph, Paul, and Peter.

▪ Draw stories from the lives of the prophets and leading authorities in this dispensation to illustrate positive role models.

### 4. Comfort can be drawn from the scriptures in facing tests, trials, and temptations.

▪ Discuss how Paul handled the lonely circumstances of being in prison and knowing that his life must end soon (see 2 Timothy 4:6). Perhaps some would give up during such trying times, but not Paul. He had full confidence that he had lived a good life and that his reward in the life to come would be glorious (see vv. 7–8). To help endure such a challenging time Paul wrote Timothy to come to him and bring some things, including Paul's cloak, the books, "but especially the parchments" (v. 13). The parchments were probably copies of scripture.

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▪ Read or tell the following story by Elder Marion D. Hanks, who was a member of the Seventy:

“A man came to Temple Square one day and stood outside the office door, wanting to come in. I knew as I saw him that he had a desperate need, and I’ll confess, to my sorrow, that my first thought was that the need probably was economic. We have many occasions there to be blessed with such opportunities. Well, I looked at him just a little bit suspiciously, and then going to the door, I invited him in and saw immediately in his face that the need he had had little to do with economics. He had a kind of glaze over his eyes that comes with a deep shattering shock.

“He was a non-member of the Church, married to a fine Primary president. This lady and he were the parents of a beautiful daughter, age eleven. This man’s parents lived in the eastern part of the country, and the family had decided in a little council, a sweet and fine thing as he discussed it, that the best Christmas present they could give his parents was to send Daddy to see them, because it had been so long, and it being Christmas time, the best gift they could receive was a visit from their only son. So he had, although, reluctantly, accepted this commission and had gone to see his parents. While there he had received word from people at home that his wife had been in an automobile accident. The little girl had been killed. Through fire that followed, her body had been destroyed.

“This was, of course, a terrible shock to him. He was on his way home, and had several hours layover in Salt Lake, and had come to the Temple Square trying to find peace. He sat across the desk from me, and I tried to teach him. I have seldom been more frustrated because I didn’t get by that shock at all. I talked of eternity; I talked of resurrection; I talked of the faith we need, of the strength and sustaining influence of the Lord, and nothing registered—nothing at all. I began to get desperate. He sat, ill at ease, and getting ready to move, and I began to pray. My prayer, and I have repeated it so many times under similar circumstances, was, ‘Lord, help me now.’ ‘Lord, help me now.’ And for a reason I am sure of, and you will accept I suppose, I opened this book—perhaps I should have done it much sooner without the stimulus of the inspiration, but hadn’t—to these words out of the eleventh chapter of the Book of Alma:

“‘The spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, . . .’ (Alma 11:43.)

“I turned to Alma 40, and read a little more of the resurrection, that ‘. . . even a hair of our heads would not be lost; . . .’ (See Alma 40:23.) For the first time I saw the break come. I found as we talked that the thing that disturbed him most was that this beautiful little girl—and I have little girls; I know about how a father would feel, at least I think I can imagine—the thing

that bothered him most was that he could not even see her again, that the beauty and perfection of her little life was gone, and he had no real hope for anything more. But he sat and listened, and the simple therapy was repeated. We read it as the word of the Lord. He accepted it as such. He sat in one of those little alcoves near the door and read it over and over for a long time. When I took him to the airport, the glaze in his eye was gone. He had wept, perhaps for the first time. He had talked and seemed reachable, and we had discussed the principles I had tried to talk of before.

“A few months later I heard his voice at the counter. I hadn’t heard a thing from him since our first meeting. He was standing there with two rather rough looking men. They turned out to be his wife’s brothers, born in the Church. He had a copy of the Book of Mormon opened to Alma 11 and was reading to them those wonderful words, testifying of their truth, telling them that in his search through the record he had found it to be the word of God. He bought a book for them and sent them home to read, these men who had been born into the faith.

“I thought then and have thought since many times of the statement that one who will not read is no better off than one who cannot” (*Seeking “Thick” Things*, 5–6).

▪ Jesus drew strength from the scriptures. Shortly after His baptism the Spirit led Him into the wilderness to be with God (see JST, Matthew 4:1). After Jesus had fasted forty days and forty nights the devil tried to tempt Him to use His godly powers inappropriately and worship Satan. Read Matthew 4:1–10 with the class and help them discover how Jesus used the scriptures to resist temptation.

▪ Nephi also drew strength from the scriptures. In 1 Nephi 17 the Lord commanded Nephi to build a ship. He wrote, “When my brethren saw that I was about to build a ship, they began to murmur against me, saying: Our brother is a fool” (v. 17). Nephi became sorrowful and his brothers took courage in this and persisted in trying to persuade him to return to Jerusalem. But Nephi began to quote scriptures to them. This gave him power and strength to resist the discouraging words of his brothers.

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## Supplementary Study Sources

▪ “*Hold to the Rod*,” video presentation 7, “The Power of the Word” (38:10).

▪ “*Hold to the Rod*,” video presentation 1, “Hold to the Rod” (20:00); the New Testament really works.

▪ Ezra Taft Benson, “The Power of the Word,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 79–82; how the scriptures can fortify us against evil and bring the power of the Spirit into our lives.

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- “If You Really Loved Me, You’d . . .,” *Improvement Era*, Sept. 1970, 51; a letter from a girl to her boyfriend, after rejecting his advances, telling him how the scriptures helped her gain strength.
  - Harold B. Lee, “Find the Answers in the Scriptures,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1972, 2–3; the scriptures and the statements of the Presidents of the Church are the sources we should turn to for answers to our questions.

## Suggested Student Study

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- The scriptures bring us to Christ. As we come to Him, we realize that through Him and His word we

can find the solutions to our problems. Consider Alma 7:11–12. Why can Christ offer us the solutions to our problems?

- In this lesson you studied how Jesus used the scriptures to resist temptation. Throughout His mortal existence the scriptures played an integral role in helping Him fulfill His earthly purpose. They will do the same for us. For other examples of Jesus using the scriptures, read Luke 4:16–21; 24:13–32; 3 Nephi 23:7–14.
- Nephi declared, “Hear ye the words of the prophet . . . and liken them unto yourselves” (1 Nephi 19:24). How can we liken the scriptures unto ourselves?

# Jesus Christ—The Central Focus of All Scripture

## Lesson 15

### Teaching Objective

All scripture is given to testify of Christ and to center our attention on His work and mission.

### Themes

1. Christ should be the focus of our scripture study.
2. The scriptures testify of Christ's mission.
3. All prophets testify of Christ.
4. All things given of God typify Christ.

### Teaching Ideas

#### 1. Christ should be the focus of our scripture study.

Discuss with students the importance of centering their scripture study on Jesus Christ. While there are many interesting topics to study in the scriptures, there is nothing more significant than learning of the Savior and what He does for mankind. Emphasize to students that if they want to achieve this focus, the library of scripture is the best source to learn about the Savior.

The following statement by Elder Howard W. Hunter, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, might help the class understand this point: "I am grateful for the library of scripture through which a greater knowledge of Jesus Christ can be learned by devoted study. I am grateful that in addition to the Old and New Testaments, the Lord, through prophets of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has added other revealed scripture as additional witnesses for Christ—the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price—all of which I know to be the word of God. These bear witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 93; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 65).

Read John 17:3. Point out that to have eternal life an individual must come to know the Father and the Son. John 5:39 explains how we come to know the Father and the Son—we must search the scriptures (see also JST, Luke 11:53).

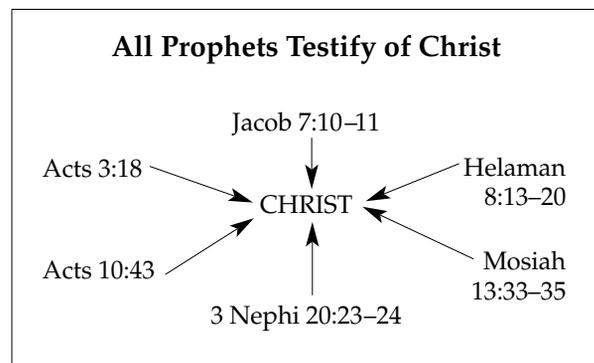
#### 2. The scriptures testify of Christ's mission.

As students study the scriptures, alert them to be watchful of Christ's mission to mankind. Make the following points concerning the Savior's mission:

1. He set up the kingdom of God on earth (see Ephesians 4:11–16; 3 Nephi 12:1; Mark 3:13–19).
  2. He taught the plan of salvation (see 3 Nephi 11:31–40; Matthew 4:23–24; Mosiah 3:5–6; Acts 10:34–43).
  3. He worked out the Atonement for mankind (see John 3:16–17; Matthew 26–27; 2 Nephi 10:25; Alma 7:11; Articles of Faith 1:3).
  4. He commenced the work for the dead (see 1 Peter 3:18–19; 4:6; Moses 7:38–39; D&C 76:73; 138:29–35).
- Have students compile a list of scriptures from each of the standard works defining the mission of Jesus Christ. You might want to divide the class into groups and have students search the Topical Guide under "Jesus Christ, mission of," for insights into the Savior's mission.

#### 3. All prophets testify of Christ.

Draw the following illustration on the board, and discuss and mark the references with the class. Students should come to understand that prophets in all ages have testified of Christ.



Have class members turn to the heading "Jesus Christ" in the Topical Guide; point out to them that there are a multitude of references to the Savior listed under fifty-seven subcategories. Review the topics with students so they can see the many aspects of the nature and work of Christ that are covered. Point out that there are far more references under the heading "Jesus Christ" than under any other topic listed. This is one indication that the fundamental theme of all scripture is Jesus Christ.

#### 4. All things given of God typify Christ.

Read and discuss 2 Nephi 11:4 and Moses 6:63. Help students understand that all things bear record of the Savior.

■ To further develop the concept that all things typify Christ, refer to the following categories:

1. *The law of Moses testifies of Christ.*

The whole purpose of the law of Moses—with its teachings, rites, and ordinances—was to point the children of Israel to Christ and His Atonement. In studying any aspect of the law of Moses, you should look for teachings and representations of the Savior. If you understand the life and work of the Savior, you can better understand the law of Moses, which was designed to testify of Christ and lead people to Him. Read Galatians 3:24; Jacob 4:4–6; Alma 34:13–15, which teach these concepts.

2. *The gospel ordinances testify of Christ.*

*Animal sacrifice.* Adam was commanded to offer sacrifices unto the Lord and was told that it was in “similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father” (Moses 5:7). This practice was continued among the covenant people until after the ministry of Christ, when it was replaced with the ordinance of the sacrament. Study the comparison of passages on page 50 of this manual. It shows that the ordinance of sacrifice was in similitude of the sacrifice of the Son of God. Mark and cross-reference these passages in your own scriptures.

*The sacrament.* The ordinance of the sacrament instituted by the Lord at His last supper is a continual reminder to the Saints of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. It also provides an opportunity for us to renew often the covenant we made to follow His example and keep His commandments. It points back in time to the Atonement, whereas the ordinance of sacrifice anciently pointed forward to the Atonement.

Passover → Jesus Christ ← Sacrament

Read, mark, and cross-reference 1 Corinthians 11:23–29 and 3 Nephi 18:1–11.

*Baptism.* Study Paul’s discussion in Romans 6:3–11 of the relationship between the burial and Resurrection of the Savior and the covenant the Saints make when they are baptized.

3. *Individuals and places testify of Christ.*

*Melchizedek, king of Salem.* The name *Melchizedek* means “king of righteousness” or “my king is righteous.” Paul referred to Melchizedek as the “King of righteousness” and the “King of peace” (Hebrews 7:1–2). Melchizedek became great because he followed Jehovah—the premortal Christ. Jesus Christ is the great king of righteousness and peace (see Jeremiah 23:5–6; Isaiah 9:6–7) of whom Melchizedek was a “type.”

*Joseph, sold into Egypt, later saved Israel.* There are numerous similarities between Joseph and Christ; thus, Joseph’s life was in many ways a “type” or foreshadowing of the life and ministry

of the Savior. A few of the many parallels are as follows:

- a. Joseph was loved by his father “more than all his children” (Genesis 37:3). Jesus is the “beloved Son” of the Father (Matthew 3:17).
- b. Both Joseph and Jesus were betrayed by their brethren and sold (see Genesis 37:26–27; Matthew 26:14–16).
- c. Joseph was falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife (see Genesis 39:13–18), and Jesus was falsely accused before the Sanhedrin (see Matthew 26:57–66).
- d. Both were saviors to Israel. Joseph saved his father’s family from starvation and death by providing them with bread (see Genesis 45:4–7). Jesus, who is “the bread of life” (John 6:35), gave Himself to save Israel from spiritual death.
- e. Joseph’s brothers bowed to him in fulfillment of his prophetic dream (see Genesis 37:5–8; 43:26). Eventually all will bow before Christ and acknowledge His sovereignty (D&C 76:110).

*Joshua led Israel into the promised land.* It is significant that Joshua, not Moses, led Israel into the promised land. The English form of the Hebrew name *Yehoshua* or *Joshua* is “Jesus.” Just as Joshua (Jesus) led the Israelites into their land of promise, so also does Jesus bring faithful Israel into their eternal promised inheritance.

*David, king of Israel.* The name *David* means, “beloved.” In Old Testament times, David was the king of Israel at its zenith. His reign was but a foreshadowing of the reign of Jesus, the “Beloved Son” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17) of the Father. Jesus will come again and, as the second “David,” will reign on the throne of Israel forever (see Ezekiel 37:24–25; Isaiah 9:6–7).

*Bethlehem.* The name *Bethlehem* means “house of bread.” In fulfillment of ancient prophecy, Jesus, who is the “bread of life” (John 6:35, 48), was born in Bethlehem (see Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:4–6; Luke 2:15–16).

4. *Objects in the scriptures testify of Christ.*

*The Liahona.* The Book of Mormon teaches that just as the Liahona led the company of Lehi to the promised land, so also the word of Christ will lead the Lord’s children to the kingdom of heaven. Read Alma’s explanation of the symbolism of the Liahona in Alma 37:38–46.

5. *Manifestations in nature testify of Christ.*

*Light and darkness.* When Jesus, who is the “light of the world” (John 8:12), came into the world, the sign in America of His birth was a day, a night, and a day without darkness (see Nephi 1:15, 19). When the “light of the world” died, there was thick darkness both in Jerusalem and America (see Matthew 27:45; 3 Nephi 8:19–23).

*The Lord supplied water from a rock.* As the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness after their

Ordinance of Sacrifice

Jesus Christ

Leviticus 1

Luke 1

3 If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish:

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Hebrews 4

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Moses 5

D&C 93

5 And he gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord.

21 And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn;

Exodus 12

John 19

46 In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof.

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

Leviticus 1

Luke 22

11 And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar.

44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Mosiah 3

7 And lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people.

D&C 38:4

I am Christ, and in mine own name, by the virtue of the blood which I have spilt, have I pleaded before the Father for them.

Exodus 12

Matthew 26

8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

26 ¶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

exodus from Egypt, they were in need of water. Moses smote a rock and water came forth to save them from dying of thirst. This physical event was in the likeness of a spiritual reality and bears testimony of the saving power of the Lord. Review the scriptures in the chart below, which shows the parallels.

Physical Events in Moses' Day	Salvation Provided by Jesus Christ
1. Israel wandered in the wilderness of Sin (see Exodus 17:1).	1. Mankind is wandering in a world of sin (see D&C 84:49).
2. They were in need of water to sustain physical life (see Exodus 17:1–3).	2. Mankind needs the "living water" from Christ that leads to everlasting life (see John 4:14).
3. Moses smote a rock, which brought forth water and saved them from death (see Exodus 17:5–6; 1 Nephi 17:29).	3. The Lord is the "rock" upon which all must build (see Helaman 5:12). He was smitten in Gethsemane and on Calvary to save us from spiritual death (see Isaiah 53:4–5; Matthew 26:31).

## Supplementary Study Sources

- Dallin H. Oaks, in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 75–80; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 65–68; answers the question, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matthew 22:42).
- Ezra Taft Benson, "Think on Christ," *Ensign*, Mar. 1989, 2–4; the impact that our thoughts have upon our character and how asking the Lord, "What wilt thou have me to do?" can influence our lives.
- Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 97–99; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 84–85; the Church as a whole can "Come unto Christ."
- Dallin H. Oaks, in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 75–79; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 63–66; Jesus Christ is both the "light" and the "life" of the world.
- George A. Horton Jr., *Keys to Successful Scripture Study*, 11–19; the scriptures are Christ-centered.
- Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Gospel Symbolism*, 1–11; all things testify of Christ.
- Lenet Hadley Read, "All Things Testify of Him: Understanding Symbolism in the Scriptures," *Ensign*, Jan. 1981, 4–7; there are several scriptural symbols that testify of Jesus Christ.

## Suggested Student Study

The following exercises could be used as student assignments or as items for further in-class study.

- Explain how each of the following items in the scriptures testify of Christ and His work or are representative of Him. The passages in parentheses will help in understanding the prophetic message of the scriptures they accompany.
  1. The sacrament—see Matthew 26:26; 3 Nephi 18:1–11 (Moroni 6:6)
  2. Manna—see Exodus 16:4, 14–15, 31, 35 (John 6:30–35)
  3. The vine—see John 15:1–8
  4. Jonah and the whale—see Jonah 1:11–17 (Matthew 12:40; D&C 20:23)
  5. Adam—see 1 Corinthians 15:45 (Moses 1:34; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 47)
  6. High priests—see Hebrews 5:1–3 (Hebrews 4:14; 9:23–28)
  7. The Lamb—see Exodus 12:3–7 (Isaiah 53:7; John 1:36; 1 Peter 1:19–20; Revelation 13:8)
- One of the greatest similitudes of the Savior found in the Old Testament is the story of Abraham offering his son Isaac as a sacrifice (see Jacob 4:5). Review Genesis 22:1–14 and identify the parallel between each incident listed about Abraham and Isaac in the following chart and the corresponding event from the life of Christ:

Abraham and Isaac	Jesus Christ
A. Isaac was to have his blood shed (see Genesis 22:10).	see John 19:34; Luke 22:44
B. Isaac carried the wood for the sacrifice (see Genesis 22:6).	see John 19:17
C. The sacrifice took place in the land of Moriah, or Jerusalem (see Genesis 22:2; 2 Chronicles 3:1).	see Mark 15:22
D. Isaac was Abraham's only covenant son (see Genesis 22:2)	see John 3:16
E. Abraham loved God and was willing to sacrifice his son (see Genesis 22:12).	see John 3:16
F. Isaac did not resist; he was a willing sacrifice (see Genesis 22:9).	see Luke 22:42

(Answers)

- A. Jesus' blood was shed.
- B. Christ carried the cross.
- C. The sacrifice of Christ took place at Jerusalem.
- D. Jesus is the Only Begotten Son of God.
- E. God loved the world and willingly sacrificed His son.
- F. Christ was willing to do the will of the Father.

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# Examples of Symbols Used in Scriptures

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## Appendix

The scriptures abound in symbols. As mentioned in chapter 11, the natural function or condition of an object is a key to what that object might symbolize. Remember also that an item may symbolize one thing in one context and something else when used in another context.

Following are several examples, listed by category, of symbols used in the scriptures. The items used as symbols are listed with examples of what they symbolize. Scriptures are then quoted to illustrate the use of each symbol. Read each passage to understand them in their proper context.

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### Actions

- **Bowing the head.** Humility.  
“And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord” (Genesis 24:26).  
“And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance” (Genesis 43:28).  
See also Genesis 24:48; Exodus 4:31; 12:27; 34:8; 1 Chronicles 29:20; 2 Chronicles 20:18; 29:30; Nehemiah 8:6.
- **Tearing one’s clothing.** Grief, anguish, contrition of heart.  
“And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days” (Genesis 37:34).  
“When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry” (Esther 4:1).  
See also Genesis 37:29; Judges 11:35; 2 Samuel 3:31; 13:19.

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### Animals

- **Lamb.** Submissiveness.  
“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth” (Isaiah 53:7).  
“And now, I would ask of you, my beloved brethren, wherein the Lamb of God did fulfill all righteousness in being baptized by water?  
“. . . he humbleth himself before the Father, and witnesseth unto the Father that he would be obedient unto him in keeping his commandments” (2 Nephi 31:6–7).

- **Horse.** War, conquest.  
“And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace” (Zechariah 9:10).  
“And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. . . .  
“And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. . . .  
“And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth” (Revelation 6:2, 4, 8).  
“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war” (Revelation 19:11).
- **Oxen.** Work, service, steadiness, endurance.  
“For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward” (1 Timothy 5:18).  
“And he made a molten sea. . . .  
“It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea was set above upon them” (1 Kings 7:23, 25).  
“Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox” (Proverbs 14:4).

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### Body Parts

- **Head.** Power of government or directing authority.  
“The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” (1 Corinthians 11:3).  
“And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church” (Colossians 1:18).
- **Arm.** Power, strength, ability.  
“But the Lord, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear” (2 Kings 17:36).

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“Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand”  
(Psalm 89:13).

“I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh. . . .  
Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh  
flesh his arm” (2 Nephi 4:34).

▪ **Bowed Knee.** Humility.

“Unto me every knee shall bow” (Isaiah 45:23).

“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every  
knee shall bow to me” (Romans 14:11).

## Clothing

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▪ **Robe.** Righteousness.

“I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my  
judgment was as a robe and a diadem” (Job 29:14).

“He hath covered me with the robe of  
righteousness” (Isaiah 61:10).

“The righteous shall have a perfect knowledge  
of their enjoyment, and their righteousness, being  
clothed with purity, yea, even with the robe of  
righteousness” (2 Nephi 9:14).

▪ **Girdle.** Strength. Being girdled implies being  
endowed with the ability to perform or maintain.

“And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,  
and faithfulness the girdle of his reins” (Isaiah 11:5).

“And I will clothe him with thy robe, and  
strengthen him with thy girdle” (Isaiah 22:21).

“For thou hast girded me with strength to battle”  
(2 Samuel 22:40).

See also 1 Samuel 2:4; Psalms 18:32, 39;  
65:5–6; 93:1.

▪ **Nakedness.** Guilt, shame, uncleanness.

“Wherefore, we shall have a perfect knowledge  
of all our guilt, and our uncleanness, and our  
nakedness; and the righteous shall have a perfect  
knowledge of their enjoyment, and their  
righteousness, being clothed with purity, yea, even  
with the robe of righteousness” (2 Nephi 9:14).

“At the same time spake the Lord by Isaiah the  
son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth  
from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy  
foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

“And the Lord said, Like as my servant Isaiah  
hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a  
sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia;

“So shall the king of Assyria lead away the  
Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives,  
young and old, naked and barefoot, even with  
their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt”  
(Isaiah 20:2–4).

## Colors

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▪ **White.** Purity, righteousness.

“Many shall be purified, and made white”  
(Daniel 12:10).

“They are righteous forever; . . . their garments  
are made white” (1 Nephi 12:10).

See also Revelation 3:4–5; Mormon 9:6.

▪ **Red.** Sin, atonement.

“Though your sins . . . be red like crimson, they  
shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

“And the Lord shall be red in his apparel”  
(D&C 133:48; Isaiah 63:2).

▪ **Red.** War, death, suffering.

“The shield of his mighty men is made red”  
(Nahum 2:3).

“There went out another horse that was red: and  
power was given to him that sat thereon to take  
peace from the earth, and that they should kill one  
another” (Revelation 6:4).

▪ **Green.** Life, well-being.

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures”  
(Psalm 23:1–2).

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and  
whose hope the Lord is.

“For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters,  
and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and  
shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall  
be green” (Jeremiah 17:7–8).

## Food

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▪ **Bread.** Means of sustaining life (physical or  
spiritual).

“I am the living bread which came down from  
heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for  
ever” (John 6:51).

“Yea, he saith: Come unto me and ye shall partake  
of the fruit of the tree of life; yea, ye shall eat and drink  
of the bread and the waters of life freely” (Alma 5:34).

▪ **Salt.** Incorruptibility, enduring or preserving  
quality.

“It is a covenant of salt for ever before the Lord  
unto thee and to thy seed with thee” (Numbers 18:19).

“And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt  
thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the  
salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from  
thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt  
offer salt” (Leviticus 2:13).

“Ye are the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13).

See also D&C 101:39–40; 3 Nephi 12:13.

## Minerals

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▪ **Gold.** Glory, great worth.

“They [twenty-four elders] had on their heads  
crowns of gold” (Revelation 4:4).

“For thou preventest him with the blessings of  
goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his  
head” (Psalm 21:3).

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“And the building of the wall of it [the great city Jerusalem] was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. . . .

“And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass” (Revelation 21:10, 18, 21).

See also D&C 110:2; 137:4.

▪ **Brass.** Strength, durability.

“His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron” (Job 40:18).

“Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass” (Micah 4:13).

▪ **Brass—polished or refined.** Glory.

“And they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass” (Ezekiel 1:7).

“His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass” (Daniel 10:6).

“And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace” (Revelation 1:15).

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## Numbers

▪ **Seven.** Whole or complete, fulness.

“And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins” (Leviticus 26:21).

“And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Luke 17:4).

See also Leviticus 4:17; Joshua 6:4; 2 Kings 5:14; Luke 11:26; Revelation 15:1.

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## Objects

▪ **Altar.** Worship, sacrifice, covenants, or God’s house where covenants are made.

“In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord” (Isaiah 19:19).

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

“Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matthew 5:23–24).

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held” (Revelation 6:9).

See also Alma 17:4; Psalm 118:27; Isaiah 56:7; 60:7; Revelation 8:3; D&C 135:7.

▪ **Crown.** Rulership, exaltation.

“And he brought forth the king’s son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king” (2 Kings 11:12).

“And those who receive it in faith, and work righteousness, shall receive a crown of eternal life” (D&C 20:14).

“Then shall he be crowned with the crown of his glory, to sit on the throne of his power to reign forever and ever” (D&C 76:108).

See also 1 Corinthians 9:25; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4; Revelation 2:10; 4:4; D&C 29:12–13; 66:12; 81:6.

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## Objects in Nature

▪ **Rock.** Firmness, solidity—and thus, the revelation of Christ and His gospel.

“Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

“I am Messiah, the King of Zion, the Rock of Heaven” (Moses 7:53).

“And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:4).

“My rock, which is my gospel” (D&C 11:24).

See also 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 31:2–3; Matthew 7:24–25; Luke 6:48; 2 Nephi 28:28; Jacob 7:25; Helaman 5:12; 3 Nephi 11:39–40; 18:12–13; D&C 6:34; 10:69.

▪ **Water.** Cleansing, purification, symbol of the gospel message.

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean” (Ezekiel 36:25).

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:26).

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst” (John 4:14).

See also John 7:37; Numbers 8:7; 19:19–20; Leviticus 15:13.

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## Ordinances

▪ **Baptism.** Burial and resurrection, birth.

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Romans 6:4–6).

“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation

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of God, who hath raised him from the dead”  
(Colossians 2:12).

See also D&C 128:12–13.

▪ **Anointing with oil.** Consecrate, sanctify, imbue with the Holy Spirit and its powers.

“And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest’s office”  
(Exodus 28:41).

“Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up” (James 5:14–15).

See also Exodus 30:30; 40:9–11; 1 Samuel 9:16; 16:13; Psalm 23:5.

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## Places

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▪ **Babylon.** Sin, worldliness.

“All the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, for I am the Lord of Hosts; and I will not spare any that remain in Babylon” (D&C 64:24).

“They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall” (D&C 1:16).

“Go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon” (D&C 133:14).

(See also Isaiah 48:20; Zechariah 2:7; Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2; D&C 35:11; 86:3.)

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