

3 Ne. 12–15: Sermon at the Temple

Monte F. Shelley

Quotes

- Blessed are the flexible for they shall not get bent out of shape.
- Blessed are they who can laugh at themselves, for they shall never cease to be amused.
- Blessed are the forgetful for they forgive easily and shall die with a clear conscience.
- Blessed are the young, for they shall inherit the national debt.
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst, for they are sticking to their diet.

Lucky “Guess”: storm, hurricane, earthquake, volcano, tsunami (Joseph had no experience with the type of storm described.)

Nibley: “There was thick darkness. ... The inhabitants could feel the vapor of darkness. ... Neither could there be fire kindled ... so great were the mists of darkness.” ... God “did send down fire.” This suggests volcanic activity triggered by earthquakes. The darkness and suffocation are caused by earthquake dust, volcanic ash, steam, and hot gases that take the place of air. (TBM vol 3, ch 83)

Nibley: The Book of Mormon “furnishes convincing evidence that the person who wrote it must have had personal experience of a major ... quake or else have had access to authentic accounts of such.” (Since Cumorah, 269)

Mormon had such personal experience, Joseph Smith did not.

⁵There arose a great storm ... ⁶a great ... tempest; and ... terrible thunder, insomuch that it did shake the whole earth. ... ⁷And there were exceedingly sharp lightnings. ... ⁸And the city of Zarahemla did take fire. ⁹And the city of Moroni did sink into ... the sea. ... ¹⁰And the earth was carried up upon the city of Moronihah, [and] ... there became a great mountain. ... ¹²The whole face of the land was changed, because of the tempest ... whirlwinds, ... thunderings ... lightnings, and the exceedingly great quaking of the whole earth; (3 Ne 8:5–12)

1. Destruction at time of crucifixion (01/04/34)

¹In the [34th] year, in the first month, on the fourth day ... there arose a great storm. ... ²³For the space of three days ... there was no light seen. ... ^{9:1}There was a voice heard among all the inhabitants ... crying: ... ¹³O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they, will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you? ... ¹⁶Ye shall offer up ... no more ... sacrifices. ... ¹⁷In me is the law of Moses fulfilled. ... (8:1, 23; 9:1, 13, 16–17)

Death, destruction, 3 days of darkness [while Jesus was buried], all hear a voice (3 Ne 9–10) at Passover (Mar/April).

“The Nephites began to reckon their time from ... when the sign was given, or from the coming of Christ” (3 Ne 2:8). Jesus would have been 1 year old at the end of the first year, and 33 at the end of the 33rd year. Some believe this is evidence that Jesus was born as well as died at Passover (Mar/Apr), and he died when he turned 33. Others disagree. Evidences and arguments for several positions can be found in a free ebook, *When was Jesus Born, Baptized, and Buried—A Review of LDS and Non-LDS Educate Guesses* by Monte F. Shelley (www.sviewp.com).

¹²It was the more righteous part of the people ... who received the prophets and stoned them not; and ... who had not shed the blood of the saints, who were spared. (10:12)

Cities were destroyed because of “wickedness ... abominations ... blood of the prophets and the saints” (3 Ne 9:7–11).

2. When and where did Christ appear to the Nephites?

^{10:18}In the ending of the [34th] year ... soon after the ascension of Christ into heaven he did truly manifest himself unto them. ... ^{15:1}Ye have heard the things which I taught *before I ascended* to my Father.

When did Christ ascend to his Father?

Jesus taught apostles for 40 days after resurrection before “he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.” (Acts 1:1–11)

^{11:1}A great *multitude* gathered together ... round about the *temple*. ... ^{17:25}They were in number about [2,500] souls; and they did consist of *men, women, and children*.

Why were so many people gathered at the temple?

Pentecost (50 days), **tabernacles** (6 mos), and **Passover** (1 yr) were times of gathering at the temple. Pentecost would be the “soon after the ascension,” but the following Passover would be “in the ending of the 34th year.”

Pentecost/Shavuot: 50th day after Passover. Celebrated giving of the law of Moses and 10 commandments on Sinai when Lord came down in smoke and appeared to Moses. It was a day for remembering great spiritual manifestations. (Welch, 27–33)

3. Gifts of the Spirit (D&C 46:13–14)

¹³To some it is given by the Holy Ghost *to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, and that he was *crucified for the sins* of the world. ¹⁴To others it is given to “*believe on their words*, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful.

In a Sunday School class at BYU, we were discussing these verses. Many RMs said they knew Jesus is the Christ. One young lady said she did not *know*, but she felt she had the second gift: to believe on their words. The RMs encouraged her to lean on their testimonies until she got her own. I then said, the 14a footnote refers 3 Ne 12:2 which reads as follows.

¹Blessed are ye if ye shall believe in me and be baptized, after that ye have seen me and know that I am. ²... More blessed are they who shall believe in your words because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me, and that ye know that I am. (3 Ne 12:1)

How did they know? By their physical senses (see, hear, touch).

¹They saw a Man descending out of heaven. ... ⁹He ... spake ... saying: ¹⁰Behold, **I am Jesus Christ**. ... ¹⁴Come ... unto me, that ye may ... feel the prints of the nails in my hands and ... feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and ... of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world. ... ¹⁵[They] did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he. (3 Ne 11:1–15)

I then suggested that everyone in the class probably believed in the words of those like Peter, Paul, Joseph and others who had seen, heard, and touched the resurrected Christ. We believed in their words because the Holy Ghost confirmed them.

4. Some differences with Matthew’s version

Audience: Disciples (Mt 5:1) vs. disciples and 2,500

Mt 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread. (^{13:10} omitted)

Mt 5:14 light of the world (^{12:14} light of this people)

^{13:25}“Jesus ... looked upon the twelve ... and said ... ^{14:1}He turned again to the multitude ... saying ...”

Context and JST → preparing apostles for missionary work

Culture: No mention of Pharisees, scribes, publicans, or Gentiles. Refers to “uttermost senine” not “farthing.”

Time: law of Moses “till all be” vs “hath all been fulfilled”;
Mt 5:24 “gift to the altar” (omitted)

Translation: Mt 5:22 “without a cause” (omitted);
Mt 6:30 “O ye of little faith” / 13:30 “if ye are not of little faith”;
Added verses (12:29–30)

Outline of 3 Nephi 11–18 (day 1)

* Based on John W. Welch, *The Sermon at the Temple ...*, 34–84.

Would you like to hear Jesus explain the temple endowment?
This sermon was given at the temple to temple going people. It discusses temple themes. Could the counsel to *ask, seek, knock* refer to a temple event where one knocks and something opens?

1. Heard voice three times. Third time they did open their ears and cast their eyes to heaven. 11:3–6
2. God introduced his messenger/angel. Hear him. 11:7
3. Messenger/angel in a white robe descends with message from heaven. 11:8
4. Silence because “they durst not open their mouths” 11:8
5. Introduction: “I am Jesus Christ” 11:10
6. People “fell to the earth” 11:12 (prostration)
7. All saw and felt the wounds in his side, hands, and feet 11:14–15
8. Hosanna shout and falling again 11:17
9. Ordained twelve to the priesthood (baptize, give Holy Ghost)
 - a. Explained baptism (like washings in OT) **immersion pools**
 - b. Assure the absence of evil (no contention, cast out devil)
 - c. Witnesses: God, Jesus, Holy Ghost 11:35–36
 - d. Teaching his gospel/doctrine: faith, repentance, baptism
10. Give heed to the words of these twelve 12:1
11. Blessings promised (beatitudes) to the true and faithful
12. People invited to become the salt of the earth 12:13 (enter covenant D&C 101:39) with a warning 12:13 to covenant breakers.
13. Be a light in the darkness and create good works 12:14–16
14. Explain new laws that fulfill the law and the prophets 12:17–18
15. Obedience and sacrifice 12:19–20 (animal sacrifice → broken heart and contrite spirit 9:19) **Sacrament (make holy): broken bread (willing to take name, remember, keep commandments), crushed wine (do remember; thy will be done) ALTAR**
16. Not kill → no anger or ridicule of brothers 12:21–24
17. Reconcile before proceeding 12:23–26
18. Chastity (no adultery → not lust) 12:27–30
19. Covenant marriages not dissolved except for fornication 12:32–33
20. Oaths sworn by saying yes or no. 12:33–37
21. Love enemies. 12:37–47 Good not evil speaking or doing, D&C 42:27
22. Transition to higher order (be perfect) 12:48
23. Giving to the poor, 13:1–4 law of gospel D&C 104:18
24. Order of prayer. 13:5–15 Lord’s prayer was a group prayer.
25. Fasting, washing, anointing 13:16–18
26. **Consecration** (serve God not **Mammon** 13:19–24).
27. Food, drink, and clothing promised to twelve disciples. 13:25–34
Clothing (GR endowing) disciples 13:25, 29–31 “tarry ... until ye be endued GR clothed or invested with power from on high” Lk 24:49
28. Preparing for judgment. 14:1–5 Judged as we judge or measure, mote-beam, repent. No fault finding 88:124
29. Secrecy required 14:6, JST Mt 7:10–11
30. Ask, Seek, Knock, and it shall be opened 14:7–8
31. Seeking a gift from the Father 14:9–11
32. Other people (golden rule) 14:12
33. Enter through narrow opening 14:14
34. Bearing the fruit of the tree of life 14:15–20
35. Entering into the presence of the Lord → make, understand, and keep covenants 14:21–27
36. Lecture on prophecies to be fulfilled. 15:1–16:20

37. Ponder what you have heard and ask to understand 17:3
38. Healing of the sick, washing feet. 17:5–9 (prayer roll)
39. **Parents and children.** 14:11–25 (Behold your little ones.)
40. Sacrament to remember covenant and new name Mos 5:8–12
41. Continued worthiness required. Watch, pray, meet 18:15–33
42. Conferring the power to give the Holy Ghost 18:36–37
43. Cloud overshadowed them and Jesus ascended 18:38–39.

5. Blessed are ... = Happy or fortunate are (SOED/HEB/GR)

Entrance requirements: “the conditions that must be fulfilled to gain entrance to the holy of holies” (Strecker in Welch, 45)

Blessed are (the / they)	For (theirs is / they shall)
give heed to apostles	baptism of water and spirit
believe ... baptized	Holy Ghost, remission of sins
poor in spirit who come unto me	the kingdom of heaven
that mourn	be comforted by Spirit & us?
meek gentle, courteous, kind	inherit the earth
hunger&thirst after righteousness	be filled with the Holy Ghost
merciful law: debts, trespasses	obtain mercy
pure in heart	see God
peacemakers	called the children of God
persecuted for my name’s sake	the kingdom of heaven
when men shall revile you ...	great reward in heaven

Study words as contained in the scriptures. Not TV English

- a. **Poor in spirit** = humble, dependent on God
Opposite = filled with spirit, or proud, rich
Alma: poor were poor in heart. Luke parallels with rich.
Poor → lack money. Poor in spirit → lack spirit
- b. **Mourn** due to sins, afflictions and injustices, mourn with others
Opp. = curse God and die, ignore needs of others
Alma’s people in bondage (Mos. 24:13)
“Willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort,” (Mos. 18:9)
- c. **Meek** = gentle, courteous, kind, forgiving, not easily provoked, grateful, submissive to God’s will without murmuring
Opp. = proud, unkind, murmur, hard hearted, easily provoked
GR **praus** = **gentle, humble, considerate, meek** in the older favorable sense. (Bauer).
Gentle, mild, forgiving, kind, benevolent (LDS footnotes)
In Spanish, **manso**=meek, tame, peaceful, gentle, and **amansar** (**hacer manso**) = to meek or make meek, to tame (an animal). Some animals (e.g., lamb) are meek by nature, while others (e.g., horse) are tamed or made meek. **A tame or meek horse is gentle, not easily provoked, submissive to rider, It is still powerful, and will do brave things as guided by a rider.**
OED **1.** Gentle, courteous, kind. Of a social superior: **merciful, compassionate, indulgent.** **Obs. 2.** Humble, submissive
“I told them: ‘I am meek and lowly in heart,’ and will personify Jesus for a moment ... and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Woe unto you, ye doctors; woe unto you, ye lawyers; woe unto you, ye scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites!’ But you cannot find the place where I ever went that I **found fault** with their food, their drink, their house, their lodgings; no, never; and this is what is meant by the **meekness and lowliness** of Jesus.” (TPJS, 270, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, 210-11)
- d. **Hunger and thirst** = seek diligently to know and do God’s will
Opp. = do own will without looking to God (Liahona)

- e. **Merciful** = forgive debts, trespasses, sins of others
Opp. = demand justice, hold grudges as did Merchant of Venus
Law; Joseph forgave WW Phelps (see my D&C #28 lesson)
Forgive debts/trespasses of others to be forgiven ourselves.
- f. **Pure in heart** = willing to keep commandments, no desire to do evil, temple worthy and temple going
Opp. = break commandments, desire evil, not temple worthy
Nibley: Jewish priests were washed, anointed, and put on priesthood clothes before officiating in the temple. Jewish and Egyptian temple priests had to immerse (baptize) themselves and put on clean clothes before entering the temple. Outer cleanliness symbolized inner cleanliness/purity. (*Message*, 135–152) “The commonly expressed goal and object of visiting the temple is ‘to see the god’” (*Message* 441)
Clean hands and a pure heart entitled one to “ascend into the hill of the LORD,” i.e., the temple (Ps 24:3–4). The pure in heart may see God in the temple. (D&C 67:10–13; 93:1; 97:15–17; 109:5)
²³ Moses ... sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God. (D&C 84:20)
¹⁵ Inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it; ¹⁶ Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God. (D&C 97:15)
See God: like Joseph, like Lehi in a dream, like seeing hand of God; “the eyes of my understanding were opened, ... and I saw ...” (D&C 138:11)
⁴⁵ The earth ... sun ... moon ... and stars ... ⁴⁷ are kingdoms, and any man who hath seen any or the least of these hath seen God moving in his majesty and power. ... ⁴⁹ The day shall come when you shall comprehend even God, being quickened in him and by him. Then shall ye know that ye have seen me, that I am, and that I am the true light that is in you, and that you are in me; otherwise ye could not abound, (D&C 88:45, 47, 49)
Bruce R. McConkie: “We have the power—and it is our privilege—so to live, that becoming pure in heart, we shall see the face of God while we yet dwell as mortals in a world of sin and sorrow. This is the crowning blessing of mortality. It is offered by that God who is no respecter of persons to all the faithful in his kingdom. ‘Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am.’ (D&C 93:1.)” (*CR*, Oct. 1977, p. 52)
- g. **Peacemakers** → Heal (atone) or reconcile relationships between: (a) self and others, (b) people, or (c) man and God; invite and entice one to come or return to Christ.
- h. **Persecuted for righteousness’ or my name’s sake**
“One reason that [persecution] is described as *blessed* is that it provides the greatest opportunity to triumph over hate and fear and to love one’s enemies; love of one’s enemies is also the last point the Lord made before the injunction to be perfect. Perhaps it is the final spiritual frontier.” (Thomas)

6. Thou shalt not kill → anger, unkind feelings (12:21–25)

²² Whosoever is angry ^{IST omits “without a cause”} with his brother shall be in danger of his judgment ^{GR subject to condemnation}. And ... whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. ²³ Therefore, if ye shall come unto me ... and rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee—²⁴ Go ... unto thy brother, and first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come unto me.

“If thou bring thy gift to the altar” (Mt 5:23).

Unkind feelings, ridicule [later: *curse=evil speaking*]

²⁵ Agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him, lest at any time he shall get thee, and thou shalt be cast into prison.

²⁵ <Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court> (NIV Mt 5:25)

Adversary here refers to an opponent in a lawsuit. (Ogden 193)

Reconcile → be a peacemaker (make peace with man then God).

Joseph F. Smith: Be reconciled with each other. Do not go to the courts of the church nor to the courts of the land for litigation. Settle your own troubles, and difficulties; ... there is only one way in which a difficulty existing between man and man can be truly settled, and that is when they get together and settle it between them. The courts cannot settle troubles between me and my brother. (CR, Oct 1916, 7–8; Ogden 193–4)

Richard G. Scott: The inspiring influence of the Holy Spirit can be overcome or masked by strong emotions, such as anger, hate, passion, fear, or pride. When such influences are present, it is like trying to savor the delicate flavor of a grape while eating a jalapeño pepper. Both flavors are present, but one completely overpowers the other. In like manner, strong emotions overcome the delicate promptings of the Holy Spirit. (“To Acquire Spiritual Guidance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 8)

7. Thou shalt not commit Adultery → lust (12:27–30)

²⁸ Whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery already in his heart.

What if the church excommunicated members for feeling attracted to someone who was not his or her spouse? Most if not all would be excommunicated. Action not attraction is a sin.

For many people, the word *gay* refers to one who is attracted to people of the same gender. Can someone who is gay be a member, go on a mission, and have a temple recommend? Yes, if sexual attraction has not led to sexual relations.

(www.mormonnewsroom.org/official-statement/same-gender-attraction)

Dr. Maxwell Maltz: “Experimental and clinical psychologists have proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the human nervous system cannot tell the difference between an ‘actual’ experience and an experience imagined vividly and in detail.” (quoted by Larry E. Dahl, *Ensign*, Feb 1991, 7)

Day dream and fantasizing refer to vivid imagining. In sports, vividly imagination is used as a form or mental practice.

When a missionary asked Harold B Lee what to do about bad thoughts, he said, “You can’t keep bird from flying over your head, but can keep it from nest.” Just as the Holy Spirit tries to plant good seeds in our hearts and minds, the evil spirit tries to plant bad seeds or thoughts. We feed and water thoughts by spending time thinking about them positively (fantasizing) or negatively (feeling guilty). Bad thoughts do not grow into sin when we turn our minds away and focus on good thoughts.

8. Keep oaths → not swear, but use yes or no (12:33–37)

<Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.> (NIV Mt 5:37)

9. Eye for an eye → not resist evil (12:38–42)

³⁸ It is written, an eye for an eye ... ³⁹ But I say ... that ye shall not resist evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; ⁴⁰ And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; ⁴¹ And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Eye for an eye → a legal standard for just punishment. One could not demand two eyes for one, or kill 10 people for every death. Instead of death or losing an eye, one could pay an equivalent amount to the victim as restitution or for a ransom (Ex 21:30).

“The specific reference to the right cheek implies that one is slapped with the back of the hand, an action that was particularly degrading to a Jew. One’s recourse... in case of insult more than injury ... would [be] to take legal action to gain recompense and vindication. According to the Mishnah the penalty for such damage was twice as severe. Therefore, in Matthew the one on the receiving end foregoes his right to legal action. (Robert Guelich. *A Foundation for Understanding the Sermon on the Mount*. 1982, 221-2)

The backhanded slap was insulting because it included the implication that the person slapped was inferior. The open-handed slap was among equals. Thus the person turns the cheek to indicate equality even as they eschew retaliation.

Go the second mile!

You will never be paid more than you are worth until you are worth more than you are paid.

10. Love neighbor, hate enemies → love enemies (12:43–45)

“The first-century use of *neighbor* had narrowed in its reference from that of Leviticus 19:18. Whereas neighbor meant fellow member of the covenant community, an “Israelite,” in the Old Testament context in contrast to the non-Israelite, the rabbinic discussions contain many examples of the struggles with the casuistic implications of *neighbor*. Qumran had clearly limited the designation to members of their community ...” (Robert Guelich. *A Foundation for Understanding the Sermon on the Mount*. 1982, 225).

⁴³ Love your enemies ... ⁴⁴ bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you; ⁴⁵ That ye may be ^{GR become} the children of your Father who is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good.

Bless → say good words; *Curse* → say bad or unkind words;
Enemy → not a friend or who treats you unkindly

Enemy [L. in+amicus= not a friend; Span. *enemigo*= not amigo] One who has toward me OR toward whom I have unkind feelings (anger, hate), thoughts (despise= look down on), words (curse, revile), actions (mistreats, persecute, despitefully use)

Bless = say good/kind words in Greek (eu+logeō → eulogy) and Spanish (bien+decir).

Curse = say bad/unkind words in Greek (kata+logeō) and Spanish (mal + decir)

Does this verse mean that I need to say kind words (bless) to those who say unkind or disrespectful things (curse) to me? After studying this verse, I felt prompted to say kind things to my children when they were disrespectful to me. For example, when they got mad and said, “I hate you,” I responded, “I love you too.”

Do good, pray for

Essenes (Qumran): “Love all that He [God] has chosen and hate all that He has rejected.” (Skinner, 346)

“To the Jews their neighbors were the members of the congregation of Israel; the Gentiles and all who opposed the Jewish people not only failed to qualify as neighbors, but were, in fact, enemies.” (McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah* 3:178.)

Joseph F. Smith: Do you love these slanderers, these liars, these defamers, these persecutors of the innocent and of the unoffending—do you love them? [several voices, No, no.] I can scarcely blame you. But that is not according to the law of God. I want to tell you how I feel towards them. I love them so much that if I had it in my power to annihilate them from the earth I would not harm a hair of their heads—not one hair of their heads. ... If I could possibly make them better men, convert them from the error of their ways I would do it, God being my helper. ... I would not throw a straw in their way to prosperity and happiness, but so far as possible I would hedge up their headlong and downward course to destruction, and yet I detest and abominate their infamous actions and their wicked course. That is how I feel towards them, and that is how much I love them, and if this is not the love that Jesus desired us to have for our enemies, tell me what kind of love we should have for them? I do not love them so that I would take them into my bosom, or invite them to associate with my family, or that I would give my daughters to their embraces, nor my sons to their counsels. I do not love them so well that I would invite them to the councils of the Priesthood, and the ordinances of the House of God, to scoff and jeer at sacred things which they do not understand, nor would I share with them the inheritance that God, my Father, has given me in Zion; I do not love them well enough for this, and I do not believe that God ever designed that I should; but I love them so much that I would not hurt them, I would do them good, I would tell the truth about them, I would benefit them if it was in my power, and I would keep them to the utmost of my ability from doing harm to themselves and to their neighbors. I love them that much; but I do not love them with that affection with which I love my wife, my brother, my sister or my friend. There is a difference between the love we should bear towards our enemies and that we should bear towards our friends. [JD 23:284–5]

11. Be perfect (12:48)

⁴⁸ Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Mt 5:48)

GR τελιος complete, finished, fully developed

GR *Perfect* was a word used in temple rituals meaning to receive ordinances needed to come before God for gift or endowment.

“We often think perfection is defined as ‘flawless’ or ‘sinless.’” Only Christ qualifies. “Yet the scriptures say that ‘Noah was a just man and perfect’ (Gen 6:9); Job was ‘perfect and upright’ (Job 1:1); and Seth was ‘a perfect man’ (D&C 107:43).

Apparently the scriptural definition of perfection is different from our usual one. In the Bible three Hebrew words and two Greek words are translated into King James English as ‘perfect.’ ... None of these five words means ‘flawless’ or ‘sinless.’ They are otherwise rendered as ‘whole,’ ‘upright,’ ‘undefiled,’ ‘just,’ or ‘complete.’” (Ogden/Skinner, 203)

12. No vain repetitions (13:7)

⁷When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen, for they think that they shall be heard for their *much speaking*.

<Do not keep on babbling like pagans.> (NIV Mt 6:7)

Do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do. (RSV Mt 6:7).

GR βαταλογεω = babble, speak without thinking (Bauer)

Repetition: Sacrament prayer, baptism prayer

Jesus “prayed the third time, saying the same words” (Mt 26:44).

²⁸ If ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need ... behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing (Alma 34:28).

[13:1-6 give alms secretly without reward]

Many Zoramites repeated same prayer in same meeting.

Repetitions within the same prayer.

Elijah and Priests of Baal “called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us.” (1 Kg 18:26)

“All with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.” (Acts 19:34)

Old Middle Eastern prayer book: “O God, O God, O God, O God! O Lord, O Lord, O Lord, O Lord! O Living, O Immortal! O Living, O Immortal! O Living, O Immortal! O Living, O Immortal! O Creator of the heavens and the earth! O thou who are endowed with majesty and authority! O wonderful,” etc.

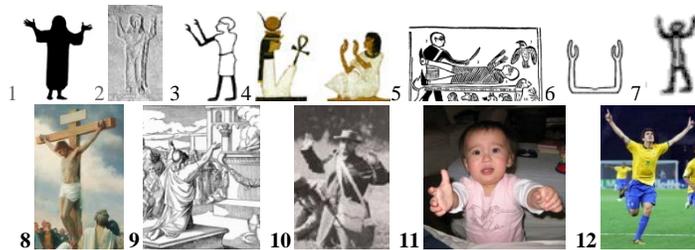
(Burder, Oriental Customs, #931 in James M. Freeman, Manners and Customs of the Biblei, #645 p. 340)

13. Lord’s Prayer = model for group prayer (13:9–15)

After this manner therefore pray ye:

Group prayer. Circle. Arms raised.

“From the earliest Christian times, the Lord’s prayer was ‘basically a prayer used by a group,’ and several early Christian texts document the use of sacred group prayers with the participants standing in a circle around Jesus at the center. The Lord’s prayer was undoubtedly intended as a pattern or model for group prayers.” (Welch, 63)



1-2: Orant/s; 3-5: *dua* or *tua*; 5: ☩ = *ankh*; 6: *ka*; 7: *qa*; 9: Solomon

1-2: Orans=supplication/pleading, common in ancient religions

3-5: *dua* or *tua*=pray, praise, worship, adoration, entreat;

5: ☩ = *ankh*=life; 6: *ka*= submission, supplication

7: *qa*= to be high, rejoice

“The cross is a symbol ... of the tree of life (1 Pet. 2:24). ... Ritually, the early Christians prayed in the ‘cruciform’ position, with their hands raised, ‘stretched out towards the Lord.’ This ‘extension,’ they said, ‘is the upright cross.’” (Welch, 76)

Nibley: “‘That magnificent gesture’ of raising both hands high above the head with which those in the prayer circle began their prayer was ... a natural gesture both of supplication and submission. It was specifically a conscious imitation of the crucifixion.... The Lord on the cross called upon the Father. ...

It recalls the cry of distress of David in Psalms 54:2: “Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.” (“Early Christian Prayer Circle,” <http://mi.byu.edu>)

“When the Jews pray in a synagogue, they form a prayer circle (Minyan). It usually consists of at least ten participants. There is a tradition that if there are only nine persons, the prayer circle can be completed with an agreement that the presence of the Lord or the Spirit of the Lord is with them.” (Rona NT #09)

Rejoice: Overcome the world.

Our Father *who* art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Hallow: to make holy, sanctify, consecrate—hold in reverence
GR Let thy name be sanctified

¹⁰ Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Agency implies that people must choose to do God’s will.

Mt 6:10 “Thy kingdom come.” Omitted. Perhaps because Jesus established his church and, therefore, the kingdom had come.

Mt 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread. (This NT counsel was given to disciples/apostles who were not to take purse or script)

¹¹ And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

GR debts, offenses, faults, or sins

¹² And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Temptation: Greek and Semitic words → trial/test & temptation

JST Mt 6:14 And *suffer* us not to be led into temptation

Syriac: Do not let us enter into temptation

“Do not permit us to enter into temptation” OR “do not lead us into temptation, but lead us some other way” (Both?)

GR but protect us from the evil one [AND/OR evil]

Syriac and Arabic : “from the evil one” (MEE 128)

Whosoever breaketh this commandment suffereth himself to be led into temptation. (3 Ne 18:25)

¹³ For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

¹⁴ For, if ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you; ¹⁵ But if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Should we pray for forgiveness or to be forgiving?

14. Seek the kingdom of God (13:31–34)

Here Jesus was speaking to his twelve ... (3 Ne. 13:25–34).

In 14:1, he turned and began to speak to the multitude again.

Take no thought <or *do not worry*>, saying, What shall we eat? or ... drink? ... But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

JST Matt. 6:38 *Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness ...*

Build up kingdom → increase members (mission/genealogy)

Establish righteousness → perfect the saints

Ezra Taft Benson: When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities. We should put God ahead of *everyone else* in our lives. (*Ensign*, May 1988, 4)

³⁴ Take therefore **no thought* for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient is the day unto the evil thereof.

* Don't worry about or be overly anxious about.

Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do but gets you nowhere.

NIV ... do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

"Do not be unduly anxious about the morrow, for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself; sufficient to the day are the *problems (or troubles)* thereof." (Thomas)

15. Hints for final judgment (14:1–5)

¹ Judge not, that ye be not judged. ² For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete <or *use*>, it shall be measured to you again. ... ⁴ Or how wilt thou say to thy brother: Let me pull the mote [or *speck*] out of thine eye ... ⁵ Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye.

³⁶ Be ... merciful, as your Father ... is merciful. ³⁷ Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn ^{GR pronounce guilty} not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. (Lk 6)

Principles of final judgment before bar of God. (Welch, 70)

Does this refer to judging things, self, or other people?

What types of judgments are referred to?

guilt (law), worthiness (church), good or evil, like or dislike, should (not) do, (not) want, right or wrong for another to do

Judgment in Mt 7 = GR *krima* (crime): condemnation, fault finding, a judge's decision about guilt and punishment.

Measures: (business dealings) <Differing> weights, and ... measures ... are alike abomination to the LORD. (Dt 25:14) Thou shalt not have ... <differing> measures. ... *But* thou shalt have ... a perfect and just measure. (Prov 20:10)

Mote ... *beam* → do not 'should' on others; fix self not others; "Cease to find fault one with another" (D&C 88:124)

What righteous judgments can we each make?

¹ Judge not {unrighteously}, that ye be not judged: {but judge righteous judgment.} (JST Mt 7:1)

We are to judge (1) who to follow by their fruits (beware of false prophets), (2) who not to give pearls to (dogs, swine), (3) what to believe and do (invites and entices to do good—Moro 7), (4) who to report to bishop or 'law of the land' (D&C 42:79–93), (5) how the golden rule applies each day.

What is required to make righteous judgments of others?

(a) Stewardship (judge in land or Israel), (b) know the law, (c) know both sides, (d) revelation (know heart, God's will), (e) no conflict of interest, (f) no bribes, (g) no respecter of persons

N. Eldon Tanner: Samuel attempted to choose a new king based on "outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." "The reason ... that we cannot judge [others] is obvious. We cannot see what is in the heart. We do not know motives, although we impute motives to every action we see. They may be pure while we think they are improper. It is not possible to judge another fairly unless you know his desires, his faith, and his goals. ... How can we, with all our weaknesses and frailties, dare to arrogate to ourselves the position of a judge? At best, man can judge only what he sees; he cannot judge the heart or the intention, or begin to judge the potential of his neighbor. When we try to judge people, which we should not do, we have a great tendency to look for and take pride in finding weaknesses and faults, such as vanity, dishonesty, immorality, and intrigue. As a result, we see only the worst side of those being judged." (*Ensign*, July 1972, 35)

Would I refuse to enter heaven if Jesus let a bad person in?

Pharisees thought it was wrong for Jesus to eat with publicans and sinners (Mt 9:10–11). Peter did not eat with gentiles when Pharisees were around (Gal 2:11–12). The angry brother of the prodigal son refused to enter his father's house for the welcome home feast (Lk 15:28).

Would I refuse to enter God's presence if Christ let me see who was already there? Would I stay out if I saw an unforgiven or bad parent, sibling, spouse, neighbor, criminal, or enemy?

16. Golden Rule="the law and the prophets" (14:12; Mt 7:12)

Therefore, *all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them*, for this is the law and the prophets.

<do to others what you would have them do to you> (NIV Mt 7) 'What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others.'

"Therefore" refers to asking for and giving good gifts to kids.

Law and prophets means the 1st five books of the Old Testament and the writings of Old Testament prophets.

The Golden Rule is a rewording of the 2nd great commandment.

Marvin J. Ashton: "How can you tell if someone is converted to Jesus Christ?" After a long class discussion the teacher said: "The best and most clear indicator that we are progressing spiritually and coming unto Christ is the way we treat other people." The way we treat the members of our families, our friends, those with whom we work each day is as important as are some of the more noticeable gospel principles we sometimes emphasize." (*Ensign*, May 1992, 20)

17. Strait gate, narrow way (14:13–14)

Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. [in this life]

“The words *strait* and *narrow* mean about the same thing: constricted, tight. The juxtaposition of the synonyms is a familiar ancient Hebrew literary technique.” (Ogden 221)

Gates= baptism, temple marriage

If you were to die now, to which kingdom would you go? 70% telestial. (Odds, xi)

When people did not open the door, a missionary said through the mail slot “We’re the Mormons!” to make them accountable. His companion said, “If that is all it takes ... the Church could just run one international commercial for about a week and send everyone to hell.” (Odds 74)

“The great plan of happiness ... would not be called the eternal plan of salvation/happiness/redemption/mercy... if its primary effect was the damnation of the vast majority of God’s offspring. ... And the assumption that our mother in heaven would idly sit back and allow such a guaranteed flop to eternally strip her of any interaction with her spirit offspring is equally unfathomable. ... Those of us who shouted for joy ... felt that the odds were in our favor. ... If the Father had informed us that ‘there’s good news and bad news’ ... ‘The good news is there is a Plan, but the bad news is *most* of you are not going to make it back...’ surely we would not have felt reason to rejoice.” (Odds, 17–18)

Bruce R. McConkie: “Far more of our Father’s children will be exalted than we think!” “Who can count the number of saved beings in eternity? Our God, who is victorious in all battles against the forces of evil, will surely be victorious in the numbers of his children who will be saved.” (Odds, 21)

Bruce R. McConkie: “Millions of children ... have died before ... the age of accountability, and ... they shall have eternal life. ... Billions of spirits will come to earth during the Millennium, when Satan is bound. ... They will grow up without sin unto salvation.” (Odds 28) (D&C 45:58)

Joseph Fielding Smith: Mentally handicapped (Odds, 32)

Wilford Woodruff and Lorenzo Snow: “There will be very few, if any, [in the spirit world] who will not accept the gospel.” (Odds 37)

18. False prophets (14:15–16)

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know ^{GR recognize,} _{detect} them by their fruits.

Pharisees judged Jesus not by his works, but by their traditions or interpretations of the Law and judged him to be a sinner/criminal and were ready to cast the first stone!

J. Reuben Clark, Jr.: “The ravening wolves are amongst us, from our own membership, and they, more than any others, are clothed in sheep’s clothing, because they wear the habiliments of the priesthood; they are they [who are] distorting the truth. We should be careful of them.” (CR, Apr. 1949, 163; Ezra Taft Benson, CR Apr 1969)

19. Entering into the presence of the Lord (14:21–24)

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ^{his presence}; but he that doeth the will of my Father. ... Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord, have we not ... in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore, whoso heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock.

HEB “know” → have covenant with (Amos 3:2)

New law replaces old; testament=covenant; make and keep

⁴¹ The way for man is narrow, ... and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God ^{HEB YHWH Elohim=he who creates Gods} is his name. ⁴² And whoso knocketh, to him will he open; ... and they... who are puffed up because of their learning... wisdom, and ... riches—yea, they are they whom he despiseth; and save they shall cast these things away, and consider themselves fools before God, and come down in the depths of humility, he will not open unto them. (2 Ne 9:41–42)

20. “I am he that gave the law” (15:5–6, 9)

⁵ I am he that gave the law, and ... covenanted with my people Israel; therefore, the law in me is fulfilled, ... therefore it hath an end. ⁶ Behold, I do not destroy the prophets, for as many as have not been fulfilled in me ... shall all be fulfilled. ... ⁹ Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end ... for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life.

SOED *fulfil*: 3. To make complete; to supply what is lacking; 4. To carry out

21. Questions

- Could a 23 year old young man have written this book?
- How do these things apply to me now in my circumstances?
- As I read these chapters, how do I feel?
- Do they invite and entice me to love God, and do good?
- As I read, do I “remember how merciful the Lord hath been, and ponder it in [my] heart” and ask God if it is true?

Conclusion

Leave enough time for conclusion!

This Sermon at the Temple or Sermon on the Mount is to guide each of us to become like Christ so we can return to His presence. It was not given for us to use as a club to beat on family, neighbors, or ourselves who fail to interpret and follow it according to our interpretation.

Read Russell M. Nelson quote

Mirror: Papaderos, a Greek philosopher and teacher, ended a lecture asking, “Are there any questions?” ... I asked. “Dr. Papaderos, what is the meaning of life?” The usual laughter followed. ... Papaderos held up his hand and stilled the room and looked at me for a long time. ...

“I will answer your question.” Taking his wallet out of his hip pocket, he fished ... out a very small round mirror, about the size of a quarter ... [and said]: “When I was a small child, during the war, ... I found the broken pieces of a mirror [from a wrecked] German motorcycle. ... I kept only the largest piece. This one. And by scratching it on a stone I made it round. I began to play with it as a toy and became fascinated ... that I could reflect light into dark places where the sun would never shine—in deep holes and crevices and dark closets. It became a game for me to get light into the most inaccessible places I could find. ... I kept the little mirror. ... As I became a man, I grew to understand that this was ... a metaphor for what I might do with my life. ... I am not the light or the source of light. But light—truth, understanding, knowledge—is there, and it will only shine in many dark places if I reflect it. I am a fragment of a mirror whose whole design and shape I do not know. Nevertheless, with what I have I can reflect light into the dark places of this world—into the black places in the hearts of men—and change some things in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise. ... This is the meaning of my life.”

And then he took his small mirror and ... caught the bright rays of daylight streaming through the window and reflected them onto my face and onto my hands folded on the desk. (Robert Fulghum, *It Was On Fire When I Lay Down On It*)

Hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do. (3 Ne 18:24)

May we come unto Christ, follow him, and reflect His light in the hearts of those around us.

Quotes

Bruce R. McConkie: “All faithful Latter-day Saints—those who chart their course toward eternal life, receive the ordinances of salvation, and strive with all their hearts to be true to their covenants—will gain eternal life. Even though they are certainly not perfect when they die, if they have sought to stay on course, in covenant, in harmony with the mind and will of God, they will be saved in the highest heaven. ... We ought to have hope, [and] we [need] to be positive and optimistic about attaining that glory.” (Odds, 20)

Russell M. Nelson: “My heart goes out to conscientious Saints who, because of their shortcomings, allow feelings of depression to rob them of happiness in life. We all need to remember; men are that they might have joy—not guilt trips.” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 86)

Gordon B. Hinckley: “We are the creatures of our thinking. We can talk ourselves into defeat or we can talk ourselves into victory ... Don’t partake of the spirit of our times. Look for the good and build on it. Don’t be a ‘pickle sucker.’” (*Odds*, 83)

David O. McKay: The context of that scripture [judge not] plainly indicates that the sin the Savior is condemning is the disposition to look unfavorably on the character and actions of others, which leads almost invariably to the pronouncing of rash, unjust, judgments upon them. Very often these judgments are formed on insufficient evidence and after superficial observations, and people who form them and express them in the presence of children put poison into those children’s minds. Parents who speak at the table against the bishopric, against a teacher, stake president, or any other [Church] officer ... are, unwittingly, perhaps, but most assuredly, lessening in their children’s minds the respect and confidence in Church authorities. (*Gospel Ideals*, 415)

Neal A. Maxwell: “One of the ironies which is fostered, at times innocently, in the Church, is the feeling we have that the spirit of the law is superior to the letter of the law because for some reason it seems more permissive or less apt to offend others. The reverse is true. The spirit of the law is superior because it demands more of us than the letter of the law. The spirit of the law insists that we do more than merely comply superficially. It means, too, that we must give attention to the things that matter most *and still not leave the others undone*” (*For the Power Is in Them*, 46–47).

NOTE: The yellow shading shows what is NOT on the handout that I use in class. The handout makes it possible to share information while only briefly referring to it in class. The handout and any other supplements for the lesson are at www.sviewp.com.

Sources:

- Odds = Alonzo L. Gaskill, *Odds Are, You're Going to Be Exalted: Evidence That the Plan of Salvation Works*
- Welch = John W. Welch, *The Sermon at the Temple*
- Ogden/Skinner = D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, *Verse by Verse: The Four Gospels*.
- Message = Hugh Nibley, *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*
- Thomas = Cathrine Thomas, chap. 15 in *Studies in Scripture, vol. 5: The Gospels*
- MEE = Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*

GENERAL

- BMRC = Dennis Largey, *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*
- TBM = Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 4 vols.
- OM = Original Manuscript
- PM = Printer's Manuscript
- CR = Conference Report
- LDS View = This computer program with the scriptures in 11 languages was sold in the Church Distribution Center as *Scriptures on CDM*. It can now be downloaded with the scriptures in up to 30 languages (<http://ldsview.byu.edu>). At <http://WordCruncher.com>, you can download WordCruncher and Webster's 1844 Dictionary (2nd Edition). If LDS View was downloaded first, WordCruncher will let you see the English scriptures and when you click on an English word, you can see Webster's 1844 definition.
- Other Bible Translations are at www.blueletterbible.org/

BAJA model

- Baja = www.achoiceand.com

MESOAMERICAN model

- Sorenson = John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*.
- *Reexploring* = John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, <http://mi.byu.edu>
- Poulsen = bomgeography.poulsen11.org/bomdirections.html

Hebraisms

- Par-Heb = Donald W. Parry, "Hebraisms and Other Ancient Peculiarities," <http://mi.byu.edu>
- Tved-Heb = John Tvedtnes, "The Hebrew Background of the Book of Mormon," chapter 8 in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*; <http://mi.byu.edu>

Other sources

- BD = *Bible Dictionary* (in English LDS Scriptures).
- GS = *Guide to the Scriptures* (in electronic LDS Scriptures)
- I-BofM = New Testament Institute manual, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus & his Apostles*, institute.lds.org
- KJV King James Version of the Bible.
- NIV = New International Version of the Bible
- TPJS = *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*
- SOED = Shorter Oxford English Dictionary
- OED = Oxford English Dictionary
- BDB = *Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*

- Bauer = Walter Bauer, *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*
- EJ = *Encyclopedia Judaica*
- Rona = Daniel Rona, www.israelrevealed.com/comp-sup-r.htm,
- MM = Meridian Magazine, Gospel Doctrine, www.ldsmag.com
- beardall2000.com/gospdoct.shtml;
- www.gospeldoctrine.com