

## 10: The Scriptures, the Most Valuable Library

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### Temple Symbolism

Unto Adam, and ... his wife, did I, the LORD God, make coats of skins, and clothed them. (Moses 4:27; Gen 3:21)

OR garments or tunics

LORD God = Jehovah Elohim = he who creates Gods

Some ancient traditions say these garments were made of sheepskin and God himself showed them how animal sacrifice was to be performed. The coats or garments of skin are a token of death and a promise of life. (JMB 275)

*Endow, endue*: to invest, to clothe; to furnish with a gift

The Hebrew word for “coats” is used to describe the knee- or ankle-length garment Jacob made for Joseph, and garments worn by priests. (Ex 28:40).

### 1. How to get assurance the gospel is true (GAS)

“I talked to [a man] about the gospel. ... When we finished, that good man ... said to me, ‘I would give all that I possess to have the assurance that you have. ...’ I said, ‘... you don’t have to give all that you possess. ... All you have to do is to search the scriptures prayerfully. Go where they may be explained to you. Seek the truth, and the beauty of the truth will appeal to you, and ... you can know as I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the Living God.’

### 2. Our precious library from God (GAS)

We may not possess a library of two or three thousand volumes, but we may possess at small cost a priceless library that has cost the best blood that has ever been in this world.

The Lord has made it possible for us to have, enjoy, and understand the scriptures and to have his word that has been given down through the ages for the salvation of his children.

The scriptures “have been referred to ... as letters from our Heavenly Father. They may be so received, at least they are his advice and his counsel to all the children of men given to them that they may know how to take advantage of their opportunities, that their lives may not be spent in vain.

### 3. Philosophies of men (GAS)

We find more comfort in these sacred records than in all the philosophies of the ages, as given to us by the wisdom of men.

We talk about the philosophies of men and hold them up sometimes as a pretty picture, but when they conflict with the teachings of our Heavenly Father as contained in Holy Writ, they are valueless. They will never lead anybody into eternal happiness, nor help him to find a place in the kingdom of our Heavenly Father.

### 4. Purpose of scriptures (GAS)

The Lord ... has given us the information that we need to adjust our lives and to prepare ourselves that no matter what may transpire we will be on the Lord’s side of the line.

This [D&C] preface ... is the admonition of the Father. ... It is the loving advice of a tender parent who knows what we require.

“I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph ... and gave him commandments. ... Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises ... shall all be fulfilled. ... I the Lord have spoken ... and ... my word ... shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.” (D&C 1:17, 37–39)

### 5. Family scripture reading (GAS)

“Search the scriptures;” read them prayerfully and faithfully, teach them in your homes; call your families around you and inspire in them a faith in the living God, by reading those things that have been revealed. They are the most precious of all the libraries in all the world.

Keep this library where you can find it, and where your children will find it, and then have enough interest in [their] eternal salvation ... that you will find ways and means to interest them in what these books contain, that they may know how precious they are in the sight of their Heavenly Father.

### 6. Which versions of the scriptures do you use?

Print, Audio (mp3, cd), Internet, eBook:

**What has helped you make scripture time meaningful?**

### 7. What are we to search the scriptures for?

<sup>39</sup> Search the scriptures; for in them ye [Jews] think ye have eternal life: and they ... testify of me.<sup>40</sup> And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. (Jn 5:39–40)

<sup>11</sup> They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.<sup>12</sup> Therefore many of them believed. (Acts 17:11–12)

<sup>2</sup> They had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God. (Alma 17:2)

### 8. Multiple translations and interpretations

<sup>30</sup> Philip ... heard him read ... [Isaiah], and said, Understandest thou what thou readeest? <sup>31</sup> And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? (Acts 8:30–31)

**Multiple translations:** foreign language or another English one

**Multiple accounts:** Creation, conversion of Alma and Paul.

**Multiple interpretations or explanations**

### 9. How does scripture time become study?

Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom, seek learning even by study and also by faith; (D&C 88:118; 109:7)

<sup>1</sup> You shall let your time be devoted to the studying of the scriptures, and to preaching ... and to performing your labors ... until after ... the next conference; and then it shall be made known what you shall do. (D&C 26:1)

### 10. Study purpose

If my study purpose differs from the purpose of the scriptures, am I “looking beyond the mark”?

<sup>14</sup> The Jews ... despised the words of plainness, ... and sought for things that they could not understand. ... Because of their blindness, which ... came by looking beyond the mark ... God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they cannot understand, because they desired it. (Jacob 4:14)

### Why is the Book of Mormon a history not a lesson manual?

**Purpose:** To teach wisdom (how to act; how to come unto Christ) not truth (knowledge of past, present, future).

Those who seek to know and do God’s will (wisdom) become worthy and able to enter into God’s presence where he will see the past, present, and future (truth).

**Purpose:** To help us return to God’s presence (come nearer unto Christ) by making, understanding, and keeping covenants. The Book of Mormon repeatedly shows choices (obey/duty or not) and consequences (blessing, curse). Truth is often taught to help make, understand, and keep covenants.

## 11. Where do questions come from?

- As you read.
- Preparation for lesson or talk (church, family)
- Circumstances: Which church is right?
- Problems: personal, family, friend
- Different accounts or interpretations
- Temple and covenants: As contained in the scriptures
- Truth or wisdom questions
- Help people make, understand and keep covenants
- How to get nearer to God
- How does this apply to me and my current circumstances?
- What do the words mean as contained in the scriptures?
- What did the Hebrew and Greek words mean?

## 12. How do answers come to my mind and heart?

“I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost. ... This is the spirit of revelation.” (D&C 8:2–3)

**Questions precede answers:** Joseph’s questions from 12 to 14

**Heart: Feel that it is right or no such feelings**

<sup>8</sup> If it is right ... you shall feel that it is right.<sup>9</sup> But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings. (D&C 9:8)

We often use feelings to make decisions like which food menu item do I want, or which solution to a problem should we select. We “feel it is right” when we finally remember a name, but we have “no such feelings” as we consider other names.

**Joseph** didn’t feel the teachings, actions, and practices matched the scriptures. Instead of feeling one was right, he had “no such feelings” and feelings of confusion or uncertainty about what to do. Each time these feelings were revelations to keep looking.

**Carried to your heart:** Joseph’s experience with James 1:5 The Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts ... of men. (2 Ne 33:1)

**Mind: Promptings:** Joseph was prompted to ask God

<sup>3</sup> Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. ... Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do. ... <sup>5</sup> The Holy Ghost ... will show unto you all things what ye should do. (2 Ne 32:3, 5)

**Mind: Brought to your remembrance**

The Holy Ghost ... shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (Jn 14:26)

**Joseph** remembered scriptures, different interpretations, and was repeatedly prompted to pray after reading James 1:5.

**M. Russell Ballard** told new mission presidents that we need to get the scriptures into the missionaries so the spirit can bring it to their remembrance.

## 13. Ponder the words of Christ (read, heard, Holy Ghost)

**Nephi:** After I had desired to know the things that my father had seen, and believing that the Lord was able to make them known unto me, as I sat pondering in mine heart I was caught away in the Spirit of the Lord ... (1 Ne 11:1)

**Joseph:** While we meditated upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings and they were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about. (D&C 76:19)

**Marion G. Romney:** Pondering is, in my feeling, a form of prayer. (“Magnifying One’s Calling ...,” *Ensign*, Jul 1973, 89)

**Puzzle or study it out in your mind**

<sup>8</sup> Study it out in your mind; then ... ask me if it be right. (D&C 9:8)

**Joseph F. Smith:** I sat in my room pondering over the scriptures; <sup>2</sup> And reflecting upon the great atoning sacrifice... <sup>5</sup> While I was thus engaged, my mind reverted to the writings of the apostle Peter, <sup>6</sup> ... and as I read I was greatly impressed,... <sup>11</sup> As I pondered over these things which are written, the eyes of my understanding were opened, and the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, and I saw the hosts of the dead. ... <sup>25</sup> I marveled, ... <sup>28</sup> And I wondered at the words of Peter... <sup>29</sup> And as I wondered, my eyes were opened, and my understanding quickened. (D&C 138:1–29)

## 14. Lost in translation

We each know 3 English languages: TV, scripture, technical  
“Every time I read the scriptures, I am translating the written word into my own inner or mental language. More is lost in my own translation than when the scriptures were translated from one written language to another.”

**Translate** “I wist not whence they were” (Josh. 2:4) to TV English

**Translate** “I am proud of my son” into Scripture English.

How does our interpretation of Jesus “fasted forty days” (Mt 4:2) differ from that of a Muslim?

Muslims fast during the entire month of Ramadan each year.

However, for a Muslim, fasting means no eating, drinking, smoking, sex, bad words or bad thoughts from dawn to sunset.

**Scripture English:** Which italicized words make sense to a teen?

they go down *quick* into the pit (Num 16:30)  
[Saul] hid ... among the *stuff* (1 Sam 10:22)  
the *mean* man boweth down (Isa 2:9)  
carry ... treasures upon the *bunches* of camels (Isa 30:6)  
when they *wanted* wine (John 2:3)  
he set *meat* before them (Acts 16:34)  
him that weareth the *gay* clothing (James 2:3)  
*quit* yourselves like men and fight (1 Sam 4:9)  
[Joseph’s brothers] *made ready* the present *against* Joseph came at noon (Gen 43:25)

## 15. Translations can be inspired of God or Satan

Every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God. ... <sup>17</sup> But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ ... and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil; (Moro 7:13, 17)

One returned missionary said he hated reading the scriptures because almost every page seemed to say he was a wicked sinner.

In a school for ministers, a protestant man learned to interpret and criticize the Bible. He became disturbed by his thoughts about the Garden of Eden story. If God were all-knowing, he would have put a hedge around the tree to prevent Adam and Eve from partaking of the fruit and he would have known where they were hiding. If he were a loving God, he would have given them a second chance. If he were just, he would not have cursed their innocent descendents. If he were all-powerful, he would not let disease, natural disasters, war, or evil men kill innocent people.

“We are disturbed not by what happens to us [or what we read], but by our thoughts about what happens to us [or what we read]”

## 16. Concept clarification or Word Usage

- a. **What is my focus or frame?**  
(a) Book of Mormon (as contained in scriptures), TV English, or Academic; (b) improve or prove, (c) Wisdom (how to act?) or Truth (knowledge of past, present, future)
- b. **What word(s) should I study?**  
Temple or covenant words (Menu may come from people, but *should* comes from Holy Ghost.)
- c. **What else could it mean?**  
Etymology, dictionary, other languages (Hebrew, Greek)
- d. **How are the words actually used?**  
Key examples, frequency distribution, neighborhood
- e. **How do the pieces seem to fit?**  
(ponder, study it out in your mind, puzzle it)  
Look for contrasts, patterns, opposition (antonym)
- f. **What do the words mean to me, now?**  
my definition, how could I test it?
- g. **What difference does this make to me?**

## 17. Example: Fourth Article of Faith

<sup>3</sup>We believe that through the atonement of Christ all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel. <sup>4</sup>We believe that these ordinances are ... (Wentworth Let.)

4 We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first ...

SOED *ordain* [OFr. order]

1. Put in order, arrange, make ready, prepare,
2. Set or keep in proper order; regulate, direct, conduct

SOED *ordinance* [OFr. Ordain]

2. Disposition (of things or matters) according to rule; order;
4. Action of ordering or regulating; control, disposal;
5. Authoritative direction how to act; system of government or discipline;
7. A practice prescribed, esp. a religious or ceremonial observance (e.g., sacrament)

In the handout for lesson 8 is a table showing the parts of a covenant. Author, Blessings, Curses, Duties, Entering the covenant, and Remember. Notice how faith, repentance, baptism, the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end relate to covenants.

**Faith (hear and obey)** → enough trust in God (able to deliver His part: Author, Blessings and Curses) to be willing to make a covenant (to do our part)

**Repent** → do our Duties (stop worshiping other gods, stop hurting others, keep commandments, Remember covenant)

**Baptism** → make covenant (Enter)

**Holy Ghost** → know what to do or how to act to fulfill our duties as we move from the gate to the tree of life

**Endure to the End** → until we enter into God's presence

## 18. Computer Resources for

Internet scriptures: <http://scriptures.lds.org>

Mobile apps: <http://mobile.lds.org>

Audio: <http://www.lds.org/media-library/audio?lang=eng>

Conference references to scriptures: <http://scriptures.byu.edu>

Windows desktop scriptures: <http://ldsview.byu.edu>

Scriptures + other texts: <http://wordcruncher.com>

Other Bible translations: <http://www.blueletterbible.org/>

Seminary manuals: <http://seminary.lds.org/eng/>

Institute manuals: <http://institute.lds.org/courses/>

Maxwell Institute (FARMS) materials: <http://mi.byu.edu>

Baja geography model: <http://www.achoiceand.com/home>

## Quotes

**Dallin H. Oaks:** A scripture is not limited to *what it meant when it was written* but may also include *what that scripture means to a reader today*. Even more, scripture reading may also lead to current revelation on *whatever else the Lord wishes to communicate to the reader at that time*. ... By this means, we obtain access to what our Heavenly Father would have us *know and do in our personal lives today*. That is one reason Latter-day Saints believe in *daily* scripture reading. (*Ensign*, Jan. 1995, 7-9)

**Dallin H. Oaks:** As a result of [continuing revelation], when we read a scripture, we do not just ask ourselves, 'What does it mean?' We ask ourselves, 'What does it mean to me at this time and this circumstance?' (BYU Devotional, 1995)

**Ezra Taft Benson:** The Book of Mormon ... was *written for our day*. ... 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?' (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 6).

**Bruce R. McConkie:** I sometimes think that one of the best-kept secrets of the kingdom is that the *scriptures open the door to the receipt of revelation* (*Doctrines of the Restoration*, 243).

## TV English translations of italicized words.

they go down *alive* into the pit  
[Saul] hid ... among the *baggage*  
the *ordinary* man boweth down  
carry ... treasures upon the *humps* of camels  
when they *lacked* wine  
he set *food* before them  
him that weareth the *splendid* clothing  
*behave* yourselves like men and fight  
[Joseph's brothers] *prepared* the present *before* Joseph came  
at noon