

10: The Scriptures, the Most Valuable Library

Monte F. Shelley

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). According to tradition, Adam's garment was preserved and passed down through line of righteous patriarchs. (JMB 275)

Thus "coats of skin" and white garments symbolize the atonement that makes garments white in the blood of the lamb

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.'

Like father of King Lamoni.

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.

Most did not have personal scriptures. Lehi had to send sons to get brass plates.

How did Abinidi study and memorize the scriptures? Priest.

Rabbinical schools started after Lehi left.

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) Listen to on way to work, mission language
- Internet
- eBook: On cell phone → with me always.

What has helped you make scripture time meaningful?

7. What are we to search the scriptures for?

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

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

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

For what? → question

Find a quote (if it costs me nothing)

Topical study

How

Now: quote without context

8. Multiple translations and interpretations

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

Philip's answer different from that of Scribes and Pharisees.

"All you have to do is to search the scriptures prayerfully. Go where they may be explained to you." (GAS)

Multiple translations: foreign language or another English one

Mission or Foreign language

Griggs: Read KJV and one other for class reading

Blueletterbible: Diff Greek text (20%)

Catholic translation was from Latin not Hebrew and Greek

Multiple accounts: Creation, conversion of Alma and Paul.

- Creation: Gen, Moses, Abraham, Temple
- JS Story: started investigating churches at age 12

Seeing different temple movies helps us focus on the important common message, not the irrelevant (e.g., hair color).

Multiple interpretations or explanations

CCR *Think Independently*, contrasts Restored Gospel to philosophies of men

3D images can be seen more than one way.

Reading or hearing only one interpretation may lead one to believe or see only one possibility. Reading or hearing different interpretations gives different perspectives and contrasts that provoke questions. This led to Joseph's first vision.

If two people always agree, one is not necessary.

People translate or interpret the scriptures differently. In classes it is wise to "let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all" (D&C 88:118).

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)

¹ 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)

Difference between reading and study? Questions

Questions lead to revelations (1st Vision, D&C, ...)

CCR: What if you had an hour with the prophet, what would you ask? One couple shared a table with President Kimball and had no questions.

10. Study purpose

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

¹⁴ 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)

Target: Goliath had "a target of brass between his shoulders." (1 Sam 17:6)

SOED *target* 1. A light round shield. 2. A shield-like structure, marked with concentric circles, set up to be aimed at. (1757)

SOED *mark*, n. II. 3. A target to be aimed at.

SOED *marksman* 1. One skilled in aiming at a mark.

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

Mormon could have selected quotes or stories from their records to prepare lessons on different topics such as prayer, faith, repentance, atonement, etc.

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?

Questions are related to our purpose.

- As you read.
- Preparation for lesson or talk (church, family)
- Circumstances: Which church is right?
- Problems: personal, family, friend (bro of Jared not pray for 3 years)
- Different accounts or interpretations
- Temple and covenants: As contained in the scriptures
- Truth or wisdom questions
- Help people make, understand and keep covenants

CCR As much missionary work with members as non-members to help people to come unto Christ

- How to get nearer to God

Question + Random location

General questions: Meaning? Apply? What should I do?

Pres. Sommerfeldt's Binder on scripture study.

- 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?

CCR and others shared insights from Heb/Grk → I wanted to

Griggs: Strong's, bigger dictionaries

LDS View

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

As Joseph investigated churches, he pondered or asked questions about their teachings, ministers, and practices. He pondered questions: "which was right" & "which should I join."

Heart: Feel that it is right or no such feelings

⁸ If it is right ... you shall feel that it is right. ⁹ 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

³ 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. ... ⁵ 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.

My story: A man can be “led by an evil spirit not knowing”

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

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

Oliver was trying to translate the written word to his language. We do this each time we read the scriptures. Without closing our eyes or kneeling down, we can ask questions like, what does this mean, what else could it mean, and how does it apply. Sometimes we will feel promptings to look in a dictionary or elsewhere in the scriptures.

Organize pieces by similarities (sides, shapes, colors)

Where or how does this fit? Look for connections

Joseph F. Smith: I sat in my room pondering over the scriptures;

² And reflecting upon the great atoning sacrifice... ⁵ While I was thus engaged, my mind reverted to the writings of the apostle Peter, ⁶ ... and as I read I was greatly impressed,... ¹¹ 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. ... ²⁵ I marveled, ... ²⁸ And I wondered at the words of Peter... ²⁹ 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

The native language of most young people is TV English mixed with the local dialect where they live. They understand and use words as they are used in movies and national TV programs. As young Christians read and discuss scriptures, they learn Scripture English. In a university or trade, students learn Technical or Academic English consisting of technical words (jargon) correctly understood only by those who have learned the language of that trade or field of study. For example, the word *mean* has a different meaning in TV English, in Scripture English, and in the Academic English of a statistician.

“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.

“I did not know where they came from.”

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

“My son in whom I am well pleased.” (I am pleased with ...)

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 wareth 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)

TV English translations of italicized words. (AT END)

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 wareth the *splendid* clothing
behave yourselves like men and fight
[Joseph’s brothers] *prepared* the present *before* Joseph came at noon

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. ... ¹⁷ 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.

(Templeton)

“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]” (Katie, viii).

16. Concept clarification or Word Usage

- 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)
- What word(s) should I study?**
Temple or covenant words (Menu may come from people, but *should* comes from Holy Ghost.)
- What else could it mean?**
Etymology, dictionary, other languages (Hebrew, Greek)
- How are the words actually used?**
Key examples, frequency distribution, neighborhood
- How do the pieces seem to fit?**
(ponder, study it out in your mind, puzzle it)
Look for contrasts, patterns, opposition (antonym)
- What do the words mean to me, now?**
my definition, how could I test it?
- What difference does this make to me?**

17. Example: Fourth Article of Faith

³We believe that through the atonement of Christ all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel. ⁴We 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]

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

SOED *ordinance* [OFr. Ordain]

- Disposition (of things or matters) according to rule; order;
- Action of ordering or regulating; control, disposal;
- Authoritative direction how to act; system of government or discipline;
- 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 and other meanings of ordinances.

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.achoiceiland.com/home>

Conclusion

Read Dallin H. Oaks quotes

A conclusion is the place I got tired of thinking.

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

Sources:

- GAS = George Albert Smith, chapter 8 of lesson manual
- Alonzo L. Gaskill, *Sacred Symbols: Finding Meaning in Rites, Rituals, & Ordinances*, 2011
- For more on revelation, see BofM #3. (www.sviewp.com)

19. How do ancient and modern temples compare?

a. Faith in Christ/Jehovah

b. Washings and anointings

Mikveh/Baptism: tomb (death of natural man and desires, symbol of Christ's death; ascend out of water → rebirth, resurrection) and womb (born again spiritually, willing to submit as a child; water, blood, spirit).

Washing the body or clothes → cleansing the spirit

Anointing sense organs → blessing of the Holy Spirit on and through those organs (thoughts, words, perceptions, hearing) to protect and inspire. (**Olive oil** → Spirit, Gethsemane and atonement)

Anointing priests → setting apart to function in temple as a representative of Jehovah

New name → responsibilities by birth or covenant (parents provide, protect; child honor/respect); names given at birth, adoption, new ruler (king gave Daniel a new name), new status or person (Abram to Abraham)

Laying on of hands → transfer heart, might, mind, strength of God

I will lay my hand upon you by the hand of my servant Sidney Rigdon, and you shall receive my Spirit, the Holy Ghost, even the Comforter, which shall teach you the peaceable things of the kingdom; (D&C 36:2)

c. Clothing (uniform)

Scout uniforms, sports uniforms, military uniforms

Temple uniforms (equality before God, team, work, authority, called to serve others as representatives of God). God is no respecter of persons.

Apron: (kitchen→work; fertility & work of multiplying)

Clothes symbolize soul (white → washed white in the blood of the Lamb). White clothes are an outer symbol for an inner purity made possible through Christ's atonement. They represent worthiness to enter into the presence of God

²¹ At that day that ye cannot be saved; for there can no man be saved except his garments are washed white; yea, his garments must be purified until they are cleansed from all stain, through the blood of him of whom it has been spoken by our fathers, who should come to redeem his people from their sins. (Alma 5:21)

Change of clothing: change of status (street clothes to white → newness of person, preparation to serve; separated from old ways); Mt. of Transfiguration (change from fallen to exalted position; become like God). Priesthood robes → authority, power (becoming more Christlike until prepared to

converse with the Lord through the veil and then enter His presence),

Initiation: put off the natural man and become a saint; separation from the world and worldly allegiances

d. Altars

Sacrifice in obedience (faith, baptism, washings) by priests representing Christ before entering the house of the Lord (temple)

Washings, anointing, garment (Aaron's sons)

Sacrament (points back to Christ's sacrifice) replaced sacrifice (pointed forward to Christ's sacrifice)

All sacrifices made (as if) at the altar (place of sacrifice). Now we sacrifice the natural man as we offer the sacrifice of a **broken heart** (vs. hard heart; broken bread [body]; broken soil → seeds grow; humble/teachable; seek to know God's will) and a **contrite spirit** (crushed → Gethsemane; wine/water; willing to submit to Father as did Christ; willing to do God's will).

Altars → Christ's atoning sacrifice, Christ's presence, the throne of God. The incense altar before the veil represented prayers ascending to heaven for others by a priest representing Christ as a mediator. Praying for others at an altar → one saves oneself as we seek to help others by mourning with those that mourn and comforting those in need of comfort.

e. Creation story and symbols

LORD God = Jehovah (YaHWeH) Elohim = He who creates Gods.

Who and why we should worship

Beautify; sameness or variety, stars or teamwork; disunity or unity

Creation of earth is like creation of saint from a natural man (separate light and dark, water, spirit required to bear fruit, mountains or temples). The key of creation is obedience to God.

To become like God, we too must desire and create good and beauty. Evil came into the world through disobedience

f. Story and symbols of the fall of Adam

This story is primarily to teach us about ourselves for we are to consider ourselves as if we were Adam and Eve. We are children of God with the agency to obey or disobey his commandments. The consequences of disobedience is separation from God. Thus we need a Savior and others to invite, entice, and help us return.

Adam and Eve were not only to abstain from the forbidden fruit, but also not to touch it. They could not keep both commandments (avoid the forbidden fruit, multiply and replenish), but we can.

Satan entices us to disobey God's commandments which are portrayed as restrictions.

g. Prayers before the veil

Prayer circle → mourn with those that mourn (Gaskill)

Christ in Gethsemane prayed for us and took on our infirmities and sins so he could mourn with and comfort us.

Speaking with the Lord through the veil.
Brother of Jared

Prayer with Uplifted Hands: “In the setting of the ancient tabernacle and temple, the sacred gesture of lifting up the hands often accompanied the act of prayer. (1 Kgs 8:22–23; Ps. 28:2; 141:2). ... [It] is associated with the atonement ... [Those who] lift their hands to heaven ... show God that their hands are pure (Ps. 24:4), that is, made pure through the atonement, and they expect an answer to their prayers. (S&S 32) (OT #16)

¹⁹ Can ye look up to God at that day with a pure heart and clean hands? I say unto you, can you look up, having the image of God engraven upon your countenances? (Al 5:19)

Prayer with uplifted hands → look up showing hands, heart, countenance (face)

h. Entering into the presence of God

Which uniform? (all-white priest uniform)

Coming from Holy of Holies and putting on High Priest uniform → Christ coming from the presence of God as an immortal and putting on mortal body to become the Great High Priest.

Taking off High Priest uniform and putting on all-white priest uniform → becoming immortal like angels

20. Elijah (GAS)

We