

THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • JANUARY 2002

ENSIGN



Our First
Testament of
Jesus Christ,
pp. 30–60

Teaming Up
for Youth, p. 7

Christ Creating the World, by Robert Barrett



*"He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom,
and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding" (Jer. 51:15).*

ENSIGN

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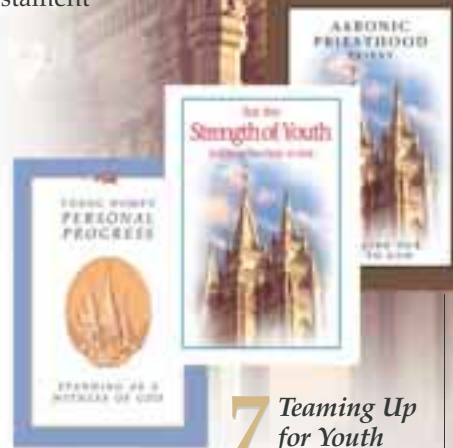


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Overpowering THE GOLIATHS IN OUR LIVES



BY PRESIDENT
GORDON B. HINCKLEY

Some years ago I spoke to the young men of the Church about overcoming the Goliaths in their lives. I would like to apply that same theme to all of us, for few of us do not have at least one Goliath to contend with. As we study the Old Testament this year, we will come to realize that the story of David and Goliath is a wonderful example of what we can learn from the pages of this great book of scripture. I recount only a portion of the story, for I am confident you are already familiar with it. It is the story of David, the son of Jesse.

As you recall, the army of Israel under the leadership of King Saul was engaged in a deadly war with the army of the Philistines. One army poised on one hill, the other on an opposite hill, with a valley in between. Now, the Philistines had among their number a great giant of a man named Goliath of Gath. His height was six cubits and a span. If I have figured correctly, that would put him somewhere in the neighborhood of nine feet tall. What a basketball center he might have made!

Clad in his armor, he came down to the valley and called out to the army of Israel:

"Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

"If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then

will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.

"... I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together" (1 Sam. 17:8–10).

When Saul and the army of Israel looked at this giant and heard his chilling challenge, they were frightened because they had no one of their own of such stature.

Now, while all of this was going on, Jesse, David's father, asked his young son to take some food to his three brothers in the army. When he arrived at the battleground, Goliath came out again, issuing the same challenge, which David heard. There was fear throughout the army of Israel. David, who was no more than a boy, said to the king (and I paraphrase his language): "King, why are you so afraid of this giant? I will go and fight him."

Saul replied, "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he [is] a man of war [trained] from his youth" (1 Sam. 17:33).

DAVID ARMED WITH FAITH

David then persuaded Saul to let him try. He told the king of how he had fought with a lion and a bear to save his father's sheep and concluded by saying that the Lord would deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine. Saul, possibly thinking that one more life lost would not be serious among the great losses





There are Goliaths all around us—people and institutions that control attractive but evil things that may challenge and weaken and destroy us. We need not fear if we have the slingshot of truth in our hands.

ILLUSTRATED BY CARY HENRIE

they had already sustained, said to David, “Go, and the Lord be with thee” (1 Sam. 17:37).

Saul then placed armor on David until the boy could scarcely walk. David said to the king, “I cannot wear this,” and he took the armor off.

He then “took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd’s bag which he had . . . ; and his sling was in his hand” (1 Sam. 17:40).

This stripling of a boy, with only a sling and five stones, and without any armor other than the armor of faith, went down into the valley to face Goliath.

GOLIATH ARMED WITH SWORD, SPEAR, AND SHIELD

“And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

“And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?”

And Goliath swore at David, saying, “Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.”

Then David spoke these great words: “Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

“This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel” (see 1 Sam. 17:42–46).

That was brave talk for a boy who stood against a nine-foot giant.

In anger Goliath came at him. Then David, running toward the giant, “put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in

his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth" (1 Sam. 17:49).

EVIL GIANTS IN OUR LIVES

I would like to apply this story to our lives. There are Goliaths all around us, hulking giants with evil intent to destroy. These are not nine-foot-tall men, but they are people and institutions that control attractive but evil things that may challenge and weaken and destroy us. Included in these are beer and other liquors and tobacco. Those who market these products would like to enslave you into their use. There are illegal drugs of various kinds which, I am told, are relatively easy to obtain. For those who peddle them this is a multibillion-dollar industry, a giant web of evil.

There is pornography, seductive and interesting and inviting. It has become a giant industry, producing magazines, films, and other materials. It is available on the Internet and, if you allow, it will intrude into your home via your television. It is designed to take your money and lead you toward activities that utterly destroy.

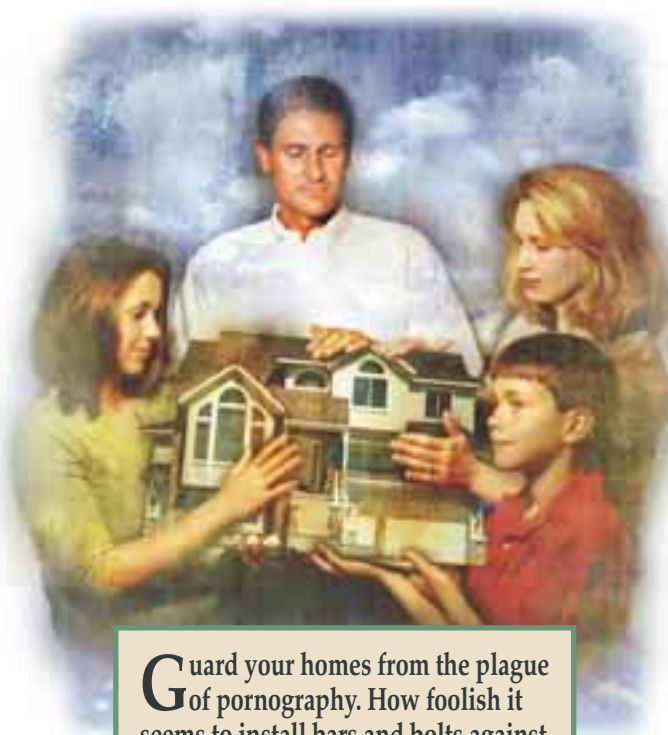
The giants who are behind these efforts are formidable and skillful. They have gained vast experience in the war they are carrying on. They would like to ensnare you.

It is almost impossible to entirely avoid exposure to their products. You see these materials on all sides. But you need not fear if you have the slingshot of truth in your hands. You have been counseled and taught and advised. You have the stones of virtue and honor and integrity to use against these enemies who would like to conquer you. When they challenge you, you can hit them "between the eyes," to use a figurative expression. You can triumph over them by disciplining yourself to avoid them. You can say to the whole lot of them as David said to Goliath, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but

I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied."

Victory will be yours. There is not a person in this Church who needs to succumb to any of these forces. You are a child of God. You have His power within you to sustain you. You have the right to call upon God to protect you. Do not let Goliath frighten you. Stand your ground and hold your place, and you will be triumphant. As the years pass, you will look back with satisfaction upon the battles you have won in your individual lives.

When temptation comes your way, name that boastful, deceitful giant "Goliath!" and do with it as David did to the Philistine of Gath. I humbly pray that God will bless each of you.



Guard your homes from the plague of pornography. How foolish it seems to install bars and bolts against thieves and molesters while more insidious intruders stealthily enter and despoil.

GUARD YOUR HOMES

Let me give you a parable. A man built a beautiful home and furnished it with the very best of carpets, furniture, appliances, all that money could buy. Within its walls he kept his fine automobiles and his expensive jewelry. Then, fearful of intruders who might enter and rob him, he had installed expensive dead-bolt locks so that he had to use a key to get out as well as to get in. He put bars on the windows and doors and was like a prisoner looking out of his own home, as one might do out of a jail. He installed costly electronic surveillance devices to turn on lights and set off sirens should any unwelcome in-

truder enter. He landscaped largely without trees or shrubbery so there would be no place for a thief to hide. And he smugly said to himself, "Now I am secure."

But what he did not realize is that neither bars nor dead bolts, neither lights nor sirens nor anything of the kind would have the slightest effect on intruders of another variety who could destroy his life and the lives of his family. He found himself to be his own prisoner, locked in a cell of despair and misery. He

allowed the Goliaths of his life to overpower him.

I know it is an old subject and one that has been dealt with much. But I repeat it again: *Guard your homes*. How foolish it seems to install bars and bolts and electronic devices against thieves and molesters while more insidious intruders stealthily enter and despoil.

Avoid pornography as you would a plague. I recall an assignment some years back to restore the blessings of a man who had been excommunicated from the Church because of his sin. He came to my office with his wife. I spoke with them individually. I asked him how it all began. He held a responsible position in the Church. He was likewise a professional man with high responsibility in the community.

His trouble began, he said, when he picked up a pornographic magazine to read on the plane. It intrigued him. It appealed to him. He found himself buying more of these things. Then he sought out movies which titillated him and excited him. Knowing his wife would be a party to none of this, he went alone. He found occasion to leave town and go to other cities where he could more easily indulge his desires. He then found excuses to stay late at his office and asked his secretary to stay with him. One thing led to another until he succumbed.

With tears rolling down his cheeks, he sat across the desk from me and cursed the day he had read that first magazine. He spoke of his love for the wife who had forgiven him and remained true to him. He spoke of his love for his children, who had been shamed and embarrassed by his actions. He told of the hell through which he had walked from the time of his excommunication. He spoke of his love for the Church and his desire to enjoy again its full blessings.

In the presence of his wife, I placed my hands upon his head and in the authority of the holy priesthood restored his priesthood, his temple endowment, his temple sealing, and all other blessings which he had formerly held. This strong man sobbed like a baby under my hands while his wife, with her hand in his, wept like a child.

At the conclusion of that blessing, they embraced one another and he asked her to forgive him. She said she had forgiven him and that she loved him and always would.

They were happy when they left, happier than they had been in years. And I was happy too. But I thought of the terrible price he had paid and of the price he had exacted of his family through his foolishness and transgression.

GUARD AGAINST YOUR GOLIATHS

Unfortunately, there is not always that kind of happy ending. In many cases there is divorce with

bitterness and rancor. What was once love has turned to hate. Children's lives are blighted. Hopes become as ashes. So often there is only misery and loneliness and regret.

Brethren and sisters, keep your affections within marriage. Regard as your most precious possession in time or eternity the person with whom you joined hands over the altar in the house of the Lord and to whom you pledged your love and loyalty and affection for time and all eternity. Your companion, your children, and you yourself will then know and feel a security far greater than any that can be bought with hardware and gadgetry.

God bless you, that the watch-care of the Lord may be over you, that you may stay close to Him and be deserving of His preserving hand, that you may overpower the Goliaths in your lives. □

Gospel topics: temptation, pornography, courage, forgiveness

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

Preparation

After studying this message you may want to re-view 1 Samuel 17:1–54. Think about how the power of the gospel has helped you overcome the “Goliaths” in your life. Prayerfully choose one or two statements from President Hinckley you feel will most benefit those you teach. Then think about and choose a teaching method or activity for each statement that is appropriate for the ages and circumstances of the family members. A few examples of how this may be done are listed below.

Suggestions for Teaching

1. Invite family members to briefly tell what they know about the story of David and Goliath. As you discuss the story, you may want to show how tall Goliath was (about nine feet; see 1 Sam. 17:4), or discuss how to use a slingshot (see 1 Sam. 17:49).

2. President Hinckley said, “There are ‘Goliaths’ all around us . . . with evil intent to destroy.” You could show the picture on page 4 and discuss ways virtue, honor, and integrity could be used to overpower the temptations of the devil.

3. President Hinckley said, “Guard your homes.” Ask family members to tell of ways people try to make their homes safe. How did the man in the parable on pages 5–6 try to make his house safe? How can we make our homes safe from the influences of the world and Satan?

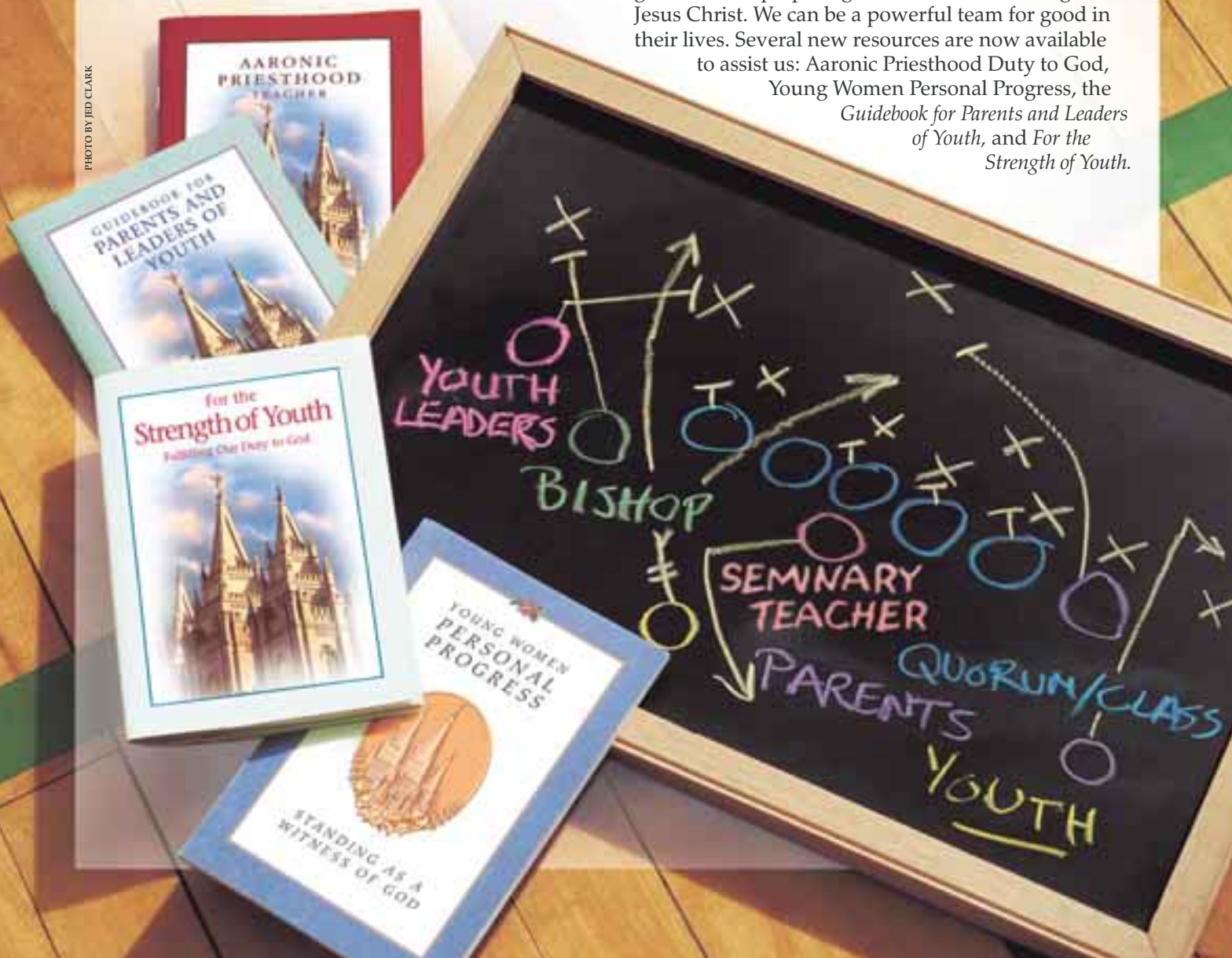
4. Bear testimony that it is important to stay close to the Lord so that He may preserve us from the “Goliaths” around us.

TEAMING UP *for Youth*

Parents and youth leaders now have several newly inspired tools to guide young men and women to come unto Christ.

We are their parents and Church leaders. They are the youth of Zion, a royal generation (see 1 Pet. 2:9). They rely on us to teach and lead them in the ways of righteousness. We are anxious that they will be true to the faith and lead their generation in preparing for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. We can be a powerful team for good in their lives. Several new resources are now available to assist us: Aaronic Priesthood Duty to God, Young Women Personal Progress, the *Guidebook for Parents and Leaders of Youth*, and *For the Strength of Youth*.

PHOTO BY JED CLARK



AARONIC PRIESTHOOD DUTY TO GOD

"In years to come, as young men advance in the Aaronic Priesthood and are ordained elders," says Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "I see them coming to their elders quorum president with their Duty to God certificates in hand, saying, 'I'm ready to serve the Lord.'"

"We want to help young men come to Christ," adds Elder F. Melvin Hammond, Young Men general president. "The main emphasis is to develop their spirituality. It is not simply an activity program. We hope that every young man will come to appreciate the true depth of the priesthood."

The prophet Alma's words reinforce the new emphasis: "And now my beloved brethren, I have said these things unto you that I might awaken you to a sense of your duty to God, that ye may walk blameless before him, that ye may walk after the holy order of God" (Alma 7:22).

The Duty to God award requirements have been designed to help young men prepare for the Melchizedek Priesthood, the temple endowment, a full-time mission, marriage, and fatherhood. The new emphasis replaces the Duty to God program the Church has sponsored for almost 50 years and is separate from the On My Honor award.

The guidelines for Duty to God may be found in three guidebooks available at no charge, one for deacons (item no. 36412), one for teachers (36413), and one for priests (36414). Three achievement certificates may be earned, and if a young man qualifies for all three certificates, he becomes eligible to receive the new Duty to God award. The requirements include the completion of (1) priesthood duties and standards, including the living of ideals from *For the Strength of Youth*, (2) family activities, (3) quorum activities, (4) personal goals, (5) a service project, and (6) keeping a journal.

The *priesthood duties* consist of such personal spiritual habits as prayer, scripture reading, meeting attendance, tithing payment, and fulfilling basic

priesthood responsibilities such as sacrament assignments and home teaching. Living these standards helps young men be worthy of priesthood advancement and temple attendance.

The *family activities* have been organized to strongly encourage young men to serve in the home and thus prepare for fatherhood. For example, deacons are to prepare two family meals, teachers are to prepare and use a simplified budget, and priests are to submit the name of an ancestor for temple work. "We've tried to develop the requirements

based on the maturity of the young men," says Elder Hammond.

Quorum activity requirements help prepare a young man to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and serve a full-time mission.

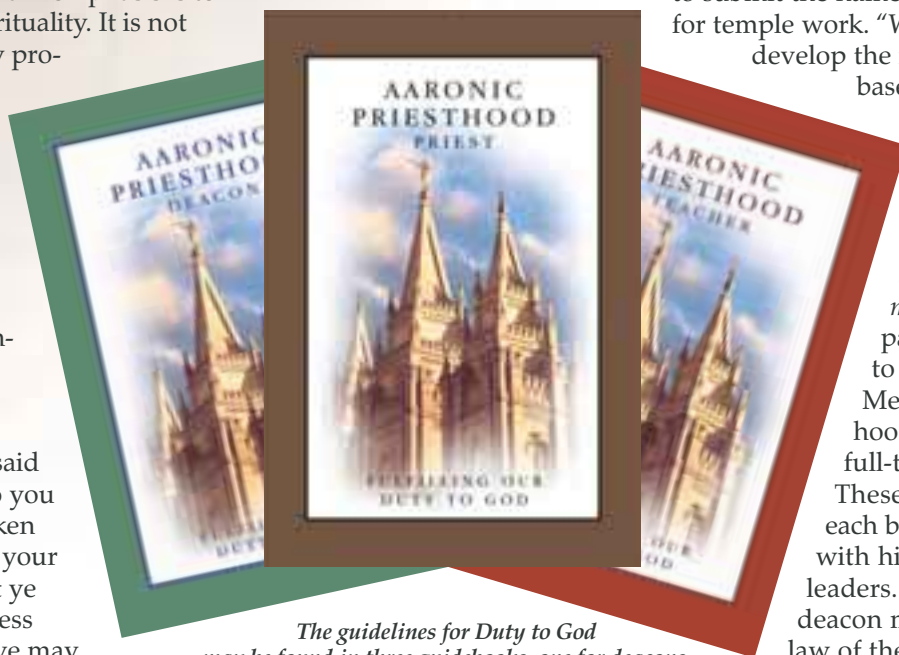
These goals involve each boy in discussions with his priesthood leaders. For example, a deacon must explain the law of the fast, a teacher must describe how to be a good home teacher, and

a priest must expound the meaning of the oath and covenant of the priesthood to a priesthood leader.

Each young man is also to set and accomplish eight or more *personal goals* in each of the following four categories: (1) spiritual development; (2) physical development; (3) educational, personal, and career development; and (4) citizenship and social development, for a total of 32 goals every two years. Each guidebook contains dozens of ideas to help in setting these goals. Young men are to discuss their interests and goals with parents and a priesthood leader and record them in their guidebooks.

Each young man is also to complete quorum and Duty to God *service projects*. Duty to God projects are to be done every two years—deacons for at least 10 hours, teachers for 20 hours, and priests for 30 hours—before earning each certificate. Service done for the Eagle Scout Award or similar awards may also be counted toward earning the Duty to God award.

The last assignment in each guidebook is for the young man to record his spiritual impressions and feelings.



The guidelines for Duty to God may be found in three guidebooks, one for deacons, one for teachers, and one for priests.



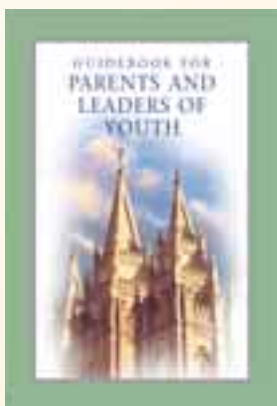
AARONIC PRIESTHOOD AND SCOUTING

Elder Hammond emphasizes: "Our effort was to find something that would be compatible with priesthood principles and also with Scouting. Duty to God embraces Scouting, which is wonderful for our young men. I see no conflict at all between Duty to God and Scouting. Duty to God focuses more on the spiritual—bringing young men to Christ. Scouting is primarily an activity program with some spirituality as well. They are complementary to one another."

Priesthood and Scouting leaders are encouraged to preserve and strengthen Scouting by blending the two programs. One way this can be done is to allow

the completion of Scouting requirements to fulfill personal goals in Aaronic Priesthood Duty to God. For example, the activities a young man does to earn the physical fitness merit badge can also be used to fulfill a physical development goal in Duty to God. "Most young men going through the Scouting program," adds Elder Hammond, "get their awards by the time they are 14–15 years old. After that, it becomes more difficult to excite young men about Scouting. Duty to God will help bridge that gap." The First Presidency has said, "We desire all young men to strive to earn the Eagle Scout [or similar awards where Scouting is approved and available] and Duty to God Awards."¹

THE TEAM PLAN OF ACTION



Coaches of sports teams often provide players with a notebook containing diagrams of how to succeed. It is called a playbook. Team members study it and look to it for a plan of action. To help parents and leaders of youth understand the programs affecting young people, the First Presidency has provided us with a playbook—the *Guidebook for Parents and*

Leaders of Youth (36415; no charge).

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: "I hope parents and leaders will understand that the young men and young women for whom they have responsibility have been prepared to come to earth at this particular time for a sacred and glorious purpose. I hope they will do what they need to do to help the youth accomplish that purpose."

Parents will be particularly interested in the "Responsibilities of Parents" section and the detailed explanations of the other new publications being provided to their youth.

Youth leaders should review the "Responsibilities of Leaders" section as well as the new instructions on Mutual and on teaching leadership principles to youth.

Like any team, parents and leaders of youth need to be unified. The *Guidebook for Parents and Leaders of Youth* is a resource that helps parents, bishoprics, stake Aaronic

Priesthood committees, stake and ward Young Men and Young Women presidencies, and seminary teachers and leaders execute the game plan with precision and power. □



YOUNG WOMEN PERSONAL PROGRESS

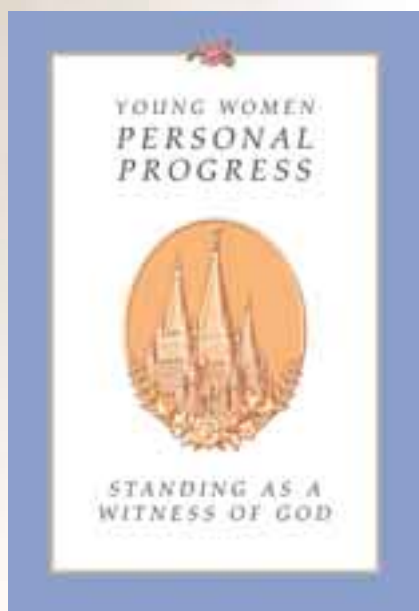
Elder Ballard has also said: "Young women who earn their Young Womanhood Recognition award will be better prepared to serve in the Relief Society. It will help them prepare for their future roles as a faithful woman, wife, mother, and leader in God's kingdom."

"This is not a new program," says Sister Margaret D. Nadauld, Young Women general president. "It is simply a revision. We wanted to make Personal Progress easier to understand, more inclusive of parents, and less expensive to operate." The following list summarizes what has changed.

- The pace of progression through the goals is now controlled by the desire of the individual instead of by age or class advancement.
- Parental involvement is directly emphasized.
- To earn the Personal Progress certificate and medallion a young woman now needs to (1) live the standards of *For the Strength of Youth* and (2) complete six value experiences and one ten-hour project for each of the seven values.
- Goal setting is more flexible. Each young woman now has three specifically required experiences and three elective experiences for each value; others are flexible.
- Young women may now keep track of their progress with a new record sheet and emblem stickers in back of the book as well as having places for the initials of parents or leaders.
- The three age-group pendants have been discontinued. The Young Womanhood Recognition Certificate and Young Womanhood medallion continue to be used. The image in the medallion has been changed from the silhouette of a young woman to the spires of a temple.
- The size and length of the book have been reduced. It and a companion journal are now furnished at no charge.

One of the first changes young women will notice is that four words have been added to the Young Women theme. The insertion of the phrase "strengthen home and family" reflects a desire to encourage young women to use their influence for good to bless their families and prepare for their future roles.

As each young woman opens her new Personal Progress book (36035) she will immediately see what



her parents and leaders hope will be guides along her journey to eternal happiness: a copy of "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles," a line drawing on transparent paper of the Salt Lake Temple gently framing a picture

Personal Progress helps young women understand and apply the seven Young Women values and prepares them for their roles as women.



of the Savior, and a copy of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World." "We believe that the ultimate goal of every young woman should be to come unto Christ through the temple. This is why the book has been designed this way," says Sister Nadauld.

A quick glance at the new requirements reveals this primary objective. A different picture of the Savior introduces each value, and the specified value experiences help young women come unto Him. For example, one "faith" value experience is for a young woman to write her feelings about faith and prayer. One of the "divine nature" value experiences is to memorize the sacrament prayers and think about what it means to take upon us the name of Christ.

Value projects help young women practice the gospel principles taught through the value experiences. For example, an "individual worth" project invites young women to help improve the living situation of someone in need, and a "good works" project is to volunteer in the community by gathering items for a humanitarian need. The final requirement



in Personal Progress is to record one's testimony of the Savior.

"Personal Progress has been structured to help young women understand and apply the seven [Young Women] values and aim them toward Relief Society as they prepare for the role of womanhood," Sister Nadauld adds.

One of the more dramatic changes in Personal Progress is that the Young Womanhood Recognition award may be earned according to the pace set by individual young women. "The beauty of this is that while they are enthusiastic, we just let them do it. Then when they have completed the Personal Progress requirements we can ask them to mentor another young woman under the direction of the Young Women presidency. It is also suggested that a young woman could complete additional value experiences

and projects, compile her personal history, and read the Book of Mormon."

According to the revised guidelines, a young woman's interests and goals outside of Young Women may be used to fulfill Personal Progress requirements. These could include but are not limited to school projects and seminary participation. "But she needs to plan this before she does the seminary or school project," Sister Nadauld adds.

"We have enhanced the sections on understanding the scriptures," says Sister Nadauld. "When a young woman does all the value experiences and value projects, it gives her a depth of understanding of the gospel." One such "knowledge" value experience requires that a young woman spend time studying and memorizing passages from all four standard works.

MUTUAL: WHERE YOUTH GET READY FOR ACTION

When players dash onto the playing field for a game, unless there have been regular and useful practice sessions to prepare them, they will not perform well. These sessions, held at the same time and place each week, are where players learn how to apply instructions coaches have introduced for the upcoming game.

Mutual is as important to our youth in preparing for life as a practice is to the players on a team. It gives youth an opportunity to meet in a social setting, apply gospel principles taught on Sunday, strengthen their testimonies, give service, develop wholesome relationships and communication skills, and reach out to less-active youth. "If Mutual is not properly in place," says Elder Cecil O. Samuelson Jr. of the Presidency of the Seventy, "our efforts are more likely to fail."

The new Mutual guidelines provided in the *Guidebook for Parents and Leaders of Youth* emphasize the following:

1. Mutual functions under the direction of the bishopric and is overseen by Young Men and Young Women presidencies.

2. It is to be convened at the same time and place on the same day of each week unless travel or other restrictions preclude it.

3. Opening exercises should be held each meeting.

4. Some Mutual activities that involve the entire family could be held.

5. The activities should help each young man and woman accomplish goals and earn the awards offered in the achievement programs of the Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women.

6. Combined Young Men and Young Women activities are normally held once per month.

7. Each Mutual may also include time each week for practice or social activities, including sports and games for young men and women together. *The Activity Book* (31455; U.S. \$3.00) contains more than 300 activity ideas that reinforce priesthood purposes and Young Women values.

8. A new feature of Mutual is a theme to be sent from Church headquarters each year.

Imagine the confusion and frustration players would feel on the field if they never or rarely practiced. Our youth need and deserve well-planned, practical, and spiritual activities that prepare them for the game situations they will face during life's journey as they strive to come unto Christ. □





Parents and leaders of youth play a crucial role in helping them remain true and faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

PARENTS AND YOUTH LEADERS WORKING TOGETHER

Parental participation in these programs is now being stressed. “If parents will get involved in Duty to God with their sons, it will mean a great deal to their development,” says Elder Hammond.

“We are putting more emphasis on parental involvement,” says Sister Nadauld. “Young Women leaders understand that we’re here to assist parents, to be another voice for truth.”

We as parents can play a crucial role in helping them succeed by:

- Reading and pondering the *Guidebook for Parents and Leaders of Youth*.
- Obtaining and studying the Aaronic Priesthood Duty to God and Young Women Personal Progress materials.
- Meeting with Aaronic Priesthood or Young Women leaders, when invited, accompanied by our children.
- Working with our children in selecting the goals or value experience and projects they want to accomplish.
- Encouraging our children ages 14–18 to enroll in seminary.
- Holding regular discussions with each of our children.
- Showing love, trust, and confidence in them.
- Offering help and encouragement by asking about their goals.
- Acknowledging their work by signing our initials in the appropriate places each time a goal is completed.
- Attending events when our children are recognized.



Elder Hales reminds us: “It is important that the youth know who they are—sons and daughters of God. It is important that they know what they are trying to achieve in life—that is, to return back into the presence of their Heavenly Father with their families. Because the youth are so blessed, it is also important that they learn and do their duty to God.”

“You have nothing in this world more precious than your children,” President Gordon B. Hinckley has told us. “When you grow old, when your hair turns white and your body grows weary, when you are prone to sit in a rocker and meditate on the things of your life, nothing will be so important as the question of how your children have turned out.”² As parents and youth leaders, we can make a tremendous difference in the lives of our youth. “They are our sons and daughters,” says President Hinckley. “I hope, I pray, I plead that they will continue on the [right] path.”³ □

Gospel topics: youth, Aaronic Priesthood, Young Women, parenting

NOTES

1. First Presidency letter, 28 Sept. 2001.
2. “Your Greatest Challenge, Mother,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 98.
3. “Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 50.

FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH PAMPHLET—UPDATED



The Ensign spoke with Elder Cecil O. Samuelson Jr., executive director of the Priesthood Department, about the changes made in the re-released *For the Strength of Youth* (item no. 36550; no charge).

Question: Why has the Church revised this resource?

Answer: The youth today are stronger than they have ever been. But we live in an increasingly difficult and complex world. Our youth have many tough decisions before them. It is hoped that the new *For the Strength of Youth* will give them an even clearer sense of what they need to do and what they need to think about to live the kind of life that our Heavenly Father wants.

I also think that over the years our young people have come to understand the “whats” without much attention to the “whys.” I think it helps for our youth to understand why. In addition, it gives our youth many wonderful tools to frankly explain the “whys” to their friends.

Not long ago I had a conversation with some young women about the new standard of no more than one set of earrings. Our discussion centered on the plan of salvation and why we have a body. There was a neighbor girl present who was struggling to understand why the Church had taken this stand. I asked her, “Do you think it’s because President Hinckley is old-fashioned?” She was a little embarrassed but answered yes. We talked about why we come to earth, why we have a body, and how important our bodies are. She then said, “I can see why moral cleanliness is so important to you.”

Q: What has been added to the revised edition?

A: New material has been added that focuses on what President Hinckley is saying. Both “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles” and “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” have been included. The inclusion of these documents not only communicates that their messages are important but also emphasizes that we have living prophets to guide us.

There is a new First Presidency message. Scripture verses and scripture study references have also been added, and there are seven new topics: Agency and Accountability; Gratitude; Education; Family; Tithes and Offerings; Service to Others; and Go Forward with Faith. There is a contents page for ease in finding and referring to topics.

Q: Why is relying upon the Holy Ghost being emphasized?

A: I don’t think this important, unchanging doctrine has ever been discounted, but too many of our young people are underutilizing the

power of the Holy Ghost to purify their lives. We should all rely more on the Spirit and live so that the Spirit can influence us.

Q: How much does the new *For the Strength of Youth* deal with real-life issues and situations?

A: It is a doctrinal document, but it is also very practical. It is hoped that youth will not only want to learn what the standards are but will want to apply the sensible ideas given to help them keep the standards. It is not intended that these ideas be unduly prescriptive, but youth should carefully consider how to apply the doctrine. For example, under “Dress and Appearance” we say, “Someday you will receive your endowment in the temple. Your dress and behavior should help you prepare for that sacred time.” It is hoped that by making this suggestion youth will be guided and strengthened as they decide what clothing to purchase and wear.

As another example, under “Entertainment and the Media” there is no specific mention of any rating system. This is not to be interpreted that the Church approves of R-rated or any other inappropriate

movies. It is simply a recognition that there is increasingly great risk in tying ourselves to any rating system. Those that have been historically safe to use are not so anymore. Rating systems are constantly in a state of flux. Second, the rating system used in the United States does not apply to all parts of the world. As an international church, our people need to be taught principles they can apply no matter where they live.

There has been a general coarsening of media standards throughout the world. In my home there are many shows on television that we simply do not watch. In writing the new section on media, it was decided to give the youth something that allows them to make the judgments for themselves.

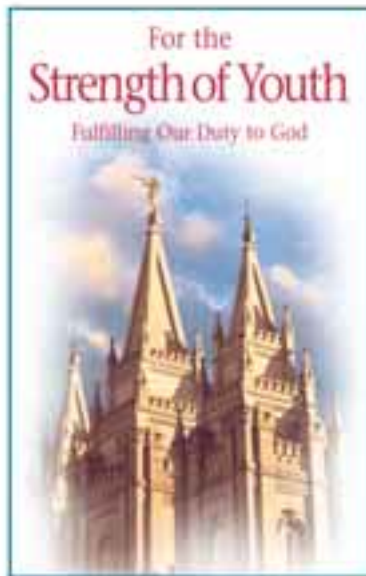
Q: How would you describe the overall tone or feeling of the guidelines?

A: The gospel of Jesus Christ is a positive message. Sometimes young people

think the Church is always focusing on what they can’t do. What we want to point out are the happy and wholesome aspects of life, that if we’re involved in doing things that bring true happiness, true progress, we will be much less likely to get caught up in the harmful and distracting aspects of life.

We have tried to phrase the standards in ways that are more encouraging. There are more “do’s” than “don’ts.” For example, in the section on the Sabbath day, you won’t find a list of forbidden activities. What you will find are statements of principle, explanations of the blessings available through obedience, and suggestions for activities that would be appropriate.

These guidelines are consistent with the tremendous emphasis the Church is putting on the family. It is very clear that the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles want more attention given to the youth, and they want it done in a way that supports the efforts of parents. □



*From the example of the 11th President of the Church, we learn
to turn to the Lord and the scriptures for answers.*

BY BRECK ENGLAND

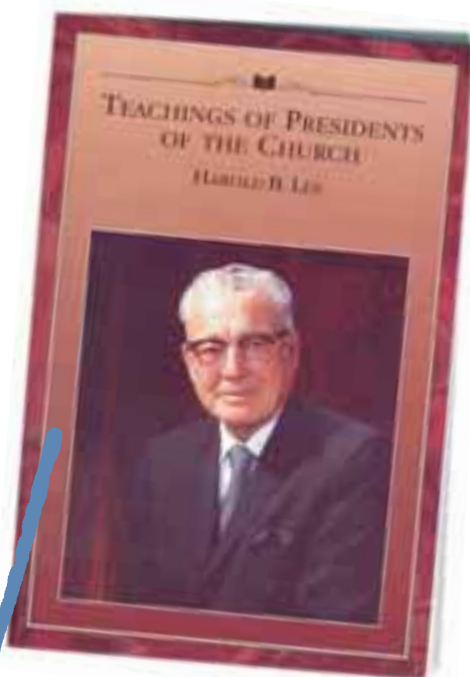
In April 1970 President Harold B. Lee watched with the rest of the world as *Apollo 13*, crippled by an accidental explosion, attempted to return from the moon carrying three astronauts. “The whole world, it seemed, prayed for one significant result: the safe return to earth of three brave men,” he observed, and then drew an important gospel lesson. “The safety of those three now depended . . . upon the implicit obedience . . . to every instruction from the technicians . . . or the [spacecraft] could have missed the earth by thousands of miles.”

A master teacher, President Lee immediately saw the parallel between this dramatic event and the importance of listening to and obeying our Heavenly Father in order to return to His presence. He said, “Only if *you* are willing to listen and obey, as did the astronauts on . . . [Apollo 13], can you and all your households be guided to ultimate safety and security in the Lord’s own way.”¹ This emphasis on following the

strait and narrow path as a means to eternal life was one of President Lee’s significant themes; guiding others along that path was his life’s work.

As the 11th President of the Church, President Lee served for only 17 months—from July 1972 to December 1973—but his influence extended far beyond that short span. He supervised the initial Church general welfare program in the 1930s, served as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve for 31 years, and directed a massive correlation effort in the 1960s designed to bring all Church departments, auxiliaries, and agencies under the priesthood as a means to strengthen and support the family and the home as they work toward the divine goal of eternal life. Through it all, he became renowned as a student of the scriptures and a teacher of the gospel.

The teachings of Harold B. Lee are the Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society curriculum for the year 2002, the third in the series *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*.



Right: President Harold B. Lee and President Spencer W. Kimball share a moment together after a Church gathering.

Harold B.

M A S T E R T E A C H E R





Young Harold B. Lee (second from right) played basketball at Oneida Stake Academy in Preston, Idaho (below).

LISTENING FOR THE SPIRIT

Harold Bingham Lee was born on 28 March 1899 in Clifton, Idaho, the son of Samuel Marion and Louisa Emeline Bingham Lee. Clifton was a farming community with one store and a dirt road in a valley blessed with clean air and pure water. Perhaps the peace of this land helped the young boy attune his ear to the still, small voice that would guide him throughout his life. He tended the family garden and orchard, milked cows, and learned to play the piano.²

Because his father was a bishop, young Harold first witnessed Church welfare at work. "Then as now, the bishop was responsible for the care of those in need," wrote President Gordon B. Hinckley, a longtime friend. "Bishop Lee ran his own storehouse, the commodities coming from his own pantry. In the night, the family would see him take a sack of flour, they knew not where, because confidences concerning those in trouble were to be strictly observed."³

Young Harold learned what it meant to listen to the voice of the Lord from an experience he had with his father. "I think maybe I was around ten or eleven years of age, . . . trying to spend the day busying myself until my father was ready to go home. Over the fence from our place were some tumbledown sheds that would attract a curious boy, and I was adventurous. I started to climb through the fence, and I heard a voice . . . calling me by name and saying, 'Don't go over there!' I turned to look at my father to see if he were talking to me, but he was way up at the other end of the field. There was no person in sight. I realized then, as a child, that there were persons beyond my sight, for I had definitely heard a voice. Since then, when I hear or read stories of the Prophet Joseph Smith, I too have known what it means to hear a voice."⁴

Harold went to high school at the Oneida Stake Academy operated by the Church in Preston, Idaho, 15 miles from Clifton. Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) from nearby Whitney, who became the 13th President of the Church, was a classmate. Here Harold played

the trombone in the school band. After graduation, he studied at the Albion State Normal School in Albion, Idaho, to become a schoolteacher, began teaching at age 17, and at 18 became principal of the district school in Oxford, Idaho. At 21 he served in the Western States Mission, where he presided over the Denver Conference. While laboring there, he met Fern Lucinda Tanner, a sister missionary from Salt Lake City who "was regarded by her associates as bright, beautiful, and as a scripturalist of unusual ability."⁵ Upon his return from his mission, he courted her, eventually selling his trombone to buy her an engagement ring. They were married in the Salt Lake Temple on 14 November 1923. Soon two daughters were born, Maurine and Helen.

The family made their home in Salt Lake City, where he taught school and worked odd jobs. "I sold Nash automobiles one summer," he recalled, "and later worked for the grocery department of ZCMI, and for the Bennett Gas and Oil Company."⁶

Finally he became a salesman for the Foundation Press, a publisher of inspirational books. He resigned from school teaching to manage sales throughout the West.

In the early 1930s, Harold B. Lee served as a Salt Lake City commissioner. He gained a reputation as an efficient and economical administrator, cutting expenditures while improving public services his first year in office.⁷

WORKING FOR THE SAINTS

Called as president of the Pioneer Stake in Salt Lake City at the age of 31, President Lee became the youngest stake president at that time. It was 1930. A worldwide economic depression had begun, and more than 4,800 of the 7,300 members of the Pioneer Stake were on relief. President Lee spent long hours seeking the Lord's help to know what to do. Harkening to the voice of inspiration, he set up a stake storehouse modeled after his father's ward storehouse in Clifton. He did more, providing the unemployed with work projects such as caring for a large stake garden and building a stake gymnasium.⁸

Impressed with President Lee's leadership and faced with economic desperation throughout the Church, the First Presidency asked him one morning in 1935 to lead a new welfare movement to, as he recalled, "help to put the Church in a position where it could take care of its own needy."

He immediately turned to the Lord for direction. "After that morning I rode in my car . . . up to the head of City Creek Canyon into what was then called Rotary Park; and there, all by myself, I offered one of



the most humble prayers of my life. . . .

"As I knelt down, my petition was, 'What kind of an organization should be set up in order to accomplish what the Presidency has assigned?' And there came to me on that glorious morning one of the most heavenly realizations of the power of the priesthood of God. It was as though something were saying to me, 'There is no new organization necessary to take care of the needs of this people. All that is necessary is to put the priesthood of God to work. There is nothing else that you need as a substitute.'"⁹

Soon stake farms were established, factories and storehouses built, and needy Church members put to work under the direction of the priesthood—all a direct result of the understanding communicated by the voice of the Spirit to President Lee.

A WITNESS FOR CHRIST

On 6 April 1941, after five years leading the welfare program, Harold B. Lee was called as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. Speaking of the "deep gospel sermons" he gave as an Apostle, his daughter Helen Lee Goates recalls that "he was not flowery; he was direct. Obedience and the scriptures were hallmarks. He had amazing transparency; he allowed us to look into his heart, to know what his feelings were. He shared himself. His sermons were a beautiful combination of scriptures and stories to illustrate his text. He never talked about the insignificant."¹⁰

In the scriptures he found the resources he needed to guide others. "All that we teach in this Church," he taught, "ought to be couched in the scriptures. . . . We ought to choose our texts from the scriptures. If we want to measure truth, we should measure it by the four standard works, regardless of who writes it."¹¹

For years as an Apostle, Elder Lee met with newly called missionaries in the upper room of the Salt Lake Temple to answer their questions. Thousands recall these meetings and his reliance on the scriptures. At the end of these sessions, he would say, "I want you to notice that all the answers I have given have been given from out of the scriptures. I wouldn't dare attempt to make an answer to your questions anywhere else but from the scriptures or from the statements of a President of the Church."¹²

LEADING THE FAMILY

At home Harold B. Lee lived by his own dictum of later years: "The most important of the Lord's work



As president of Salt Lake's Pioneer Stake from 1930 to 1935, Harold B. Lee set up a bishops' storehouse (shown above in 1933) designed to help care for the needy.

you will ever do will be within the walls of your own homes."¹³ When his daughters asked him gospel questions, he responded, "Get out your scriptures, girls, and let's see what the Lord says about it." He would then teach them directly from the scriptures. Daughter Helen remembers, "He taught us that the scriptures were where we turn first for our answers."¹⁴

Of family prayers Helen remembers, "Our nightly ritual would begin with the four of us kneeling together in prayer in the living room, and then Daddy would take one of us in each of his arms and carry us to our bed so we wouldn't have to walk across the cold floor."¹⁵

To a great extent the serenity of the Lee home was the result of Fern's dedication. Daughter Helen recalls: "Father was active, a decision maker. Mother felt she should maintain peace. He was very public, so she made an oasis from all that at home. Here he found peace and rest from cares. There was a spirit of love and quietness largely due to Mother's influence." But there was plenty of fun too. "Father memorized piano marches. We children marched around the living room while he played 'Midnight Fire Alarm,' and we'd watch the piano shake as he played with great gusto."¹⁶

STRENGTHENING THE PRIESTHOOD

In the 1960s President David O. McKay directed Elder Lee to conduct a great "correlation" of Church programs around the simple principles of obedience to God and the sacredness of home and family. The correlation effort touched every member and prepared the Church for both explosive worldwide



Elder Harold B. Lee plays the piano at a Christmas party in 1943 for fellow members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: Elders Mark E. Petersen (left), Matthew Cowley, Spencer W. Kimball, and Ezra Taft Benson. Below: President Lee reading the scriptures, which he loved and used to guide his life.

growth and the increasing erosion of family life—the two great challenges facing the Church in our times. “Said in a very generalized way,” Elder Lee observed, “correlation means . . . to place the priesthood of God where the Lord said it was to be—as the center and core of the Church and kingdom of God—and to see that the Latter-day Saint homes also have their place in the divine plan of saving souls.”¹⁷

The correlation program led by Elder Lee produced a new priesthood home teaching program, new scripture-centered curriculum, closer supervision of youth programs by the priesthood, and new Church magazines under the editorship of general priesthood authorities. The priesthood quorums and auxiliaries of the Church were directed to focus

on strengthening the individuals and families of the Church. In 1965 homes were fortified by a revitalized family home evening program, which was first established in 1915.

LEARNING FROM TRIALS

Elder Lee accomplished this monumental labor at a time of great personal sorrow. His own beloved family was struck by death when his wife, Fern Tanner Lee, was taken in 1962. Three years later, while he was on assignment in the Pacific, his daughter Maurine died suddenly at the age of 40. In his general conference address after the death of his daughter, he said: “As I advance in years, I begin to understand in some small measure how the Master must have felt [in Gethsemane]. In the loneliness of a distant hotel room 2,500 miles away, you, too, may one day cry out from the depths of your soul . . . ‘O dear God, don’t let her die! I need her; her family needs her.’” But it was not to be, and Elder Lee reflected, “God grant that you and I may learn obedience to God’s will, if necessary by the things which we suffer.”¹⁸

These trials brought Elder Harold B. Lee a new closeness to the Lord. “Don’t be afraid of the testing and trials of life,” he taught to an area conference in Munich, Germany, years later. “Sometimes when you are going through the most severe tests, you will be nearer to God than you have any idea.”¹⁹ His own heart was soothed when he married again, to Freda Joan Jensen.

TESTIFYING AS CHURCH PRESIDENT

In 1970 Elder Harold B. Lee became First Counselor to President Joseph Fielding Smith, and on 7 July 1972 he became the President of the Church. When asked what would be his message to the Church as President, he answered characteristically: “Keep the commandments of God, for therein lies the safety of the Church and the safety of the individual. . . . There could be nothing that I could say that would be a more powerful or important message today.”²⁰

President Lee took seriously and personally the goal to bring the light of the gospel to all. Marjorie Pay Hinckley, wife of



LEARN TO TALK TO GOD



"The most important thing you can do is to learn to talk to God. Talk to Him as you would talk to your father, for He is your Father, and He wants you to talk to Him. He wants you to cultivate ears to listen, when He gives you the impressions of the Spirit to tell you what to do. If you learn to give heed to the sudden ideas which come to your minds, you will find those things coming through in the very hour of your need. If you will cultivate an ear to hear these promptings, you will have learned to walk by the spirit of revelation."

**President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973),
Teachings of Presidents of the Church:
Harold B. Lee (2000), 55.**

President Gordon B. Hinckley, remembers what happened on one occasion when she and her husband were with President and Sister Lee in England: "It had been a full day: two sessions of a conference and a fire-side at night. When we got back to the hotel about 9:30, we were bone-weary and hungry. We went into the hotel dining room to get a little something to eat. The day was over—we could relax. At least, that is what I thought. The next thing I knew, the waitress had her pencil poised to write down our order. President Lee looked up at her and said, 'What church do you belong to?' The day was not over for him. He had embarked on a proselyting exercise. Before the meal was over he had learned all about this young woman. She had lost her husband and was lonely and afraid. She had promised to see the missionaries and learn more. It was a beautiful thing to see the president of the Church practice what he had been preaching all that day."²¹

As President of the Church, he took his message and testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ across the continents, traveling thousands of miles in the British Isles, Europe, Mexico, and the Middle East. He presided over the first area conferences in Mexico City and in Munich, Germany. He visited Jerusalem and delighted in walking in the footsteps of the Savior. "In 1972 we walked together in the Holy Land," recalled President Hinckley. "On that sacred occasion, when moonlight filtered through the leaves of the olive trees [at the Garden Tomb], he whom we sustained as prophet spoke in humble, quiet testimony. We felt something of heaven and I saw that night President Harold B. Lee as a man of true humility, with the faith of a child, standing in the stature of a prophet who bore witness of the living reality of the Lord Jesus Christ."²²

After only 538 days as President of the Church, President Lee died from sudden heart failure at age 74. His passing stunned the Latter-day Saints, who had anticipated that he would enjoy a long and fruitful administration.

President Lee's life was one constantly marked by seeking and heeding the voice of the Lord Jesus

Christ. As the Lord's prophet, he had pleaded with the Saints and all mankind to do the same, to follow the instructions of the Lord as the astronauts on the crippled *Apollo 13* had followed the instructions of their flight controllers.

All Latter-day Saint families will be blessed as they ponder the principles and doctrines of the gospel as presented in the new personal study guide *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee*. Using the scriptures as his standard, this prophet of God taught with power of "the wondrously conceived plan upon obedience to which the salvation of every soul depends."²³ □

Breck England is a member of the Canyon Park Ward, Bountiful Utah Central Stake.

Gospel topics: prophets, scriptures, welfare, correlation

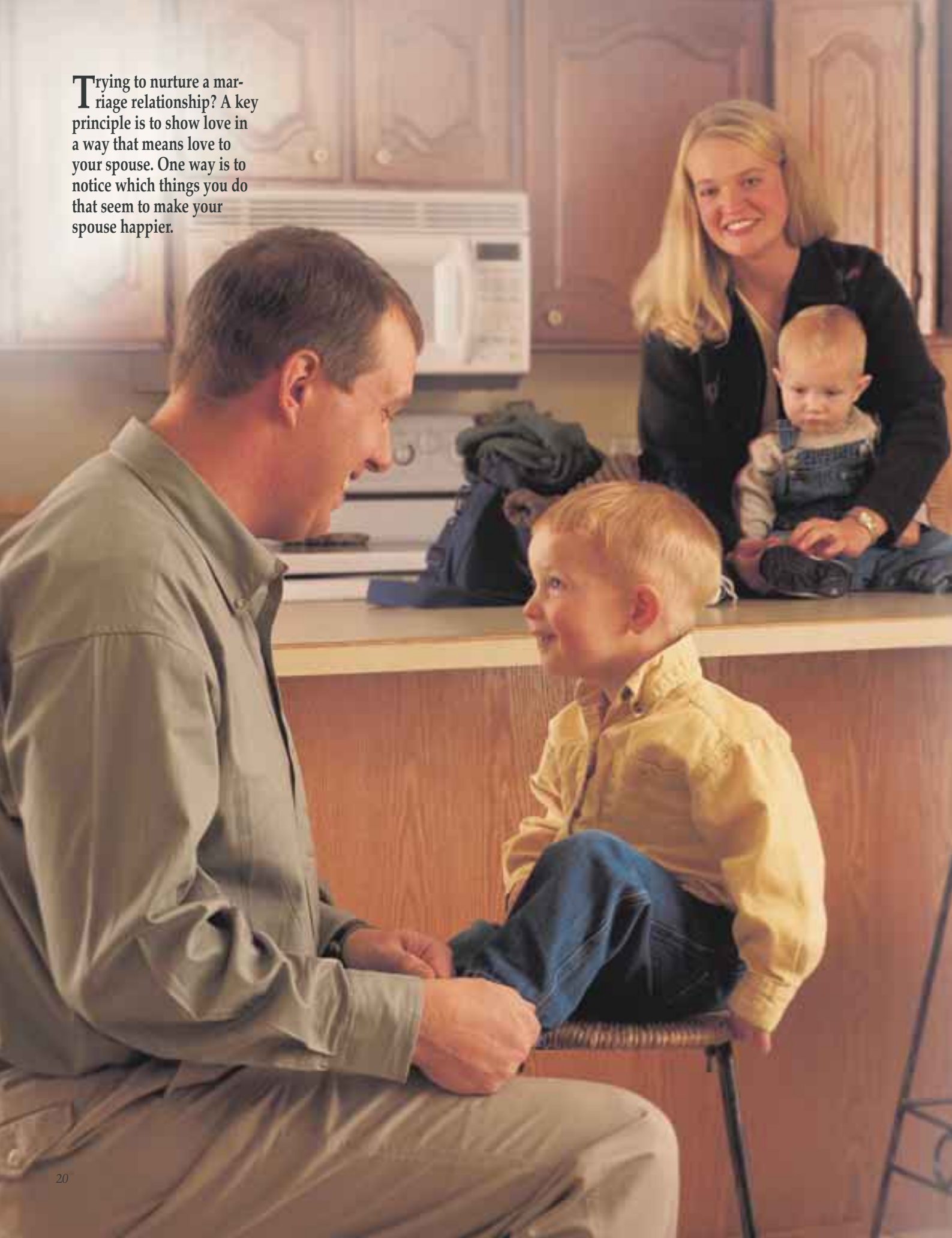
NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* (2000), 2.
2. See L. Brent Goates, *Harold B. Lee: Prophet & Seer* (1985) 37, 46.
3. As quoted in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, xiv.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 47.
5. Gordon B. Hinckley, as quoted in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, xv.
6. As quoted in Goates, *Harold B. Lee*, 86.
7. See Goates, *Harold B. Lee*, 106–14.
8. See Goates, *Harold B. Lee*, 94, 101–2.
9. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 165–66.
10. Interview with Helen Lee Goates, Salt Lake City, 9 Dec. 1998.
11. "Using the Scriptures in Our Church Assignments," *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1969, 13.
12. *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1996), 153–54.
13. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 134.
14. As quoted in Goates, *Harold B. Lee*, 122.
15. As quoted in Goates, *Harold B. Lee*, 117.
16. Interview with Helen Lee Goates.
17. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 149.
18. In Conference Report, Oct. 1965, 130–31.
19. In Conference Report, Munich Germany Area Conference, 1973, 114.
20. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 35.
21. As quoted in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 153.
22. As quoted in Goates, *Harold B. Lee*, 601.
23. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, 2.

More on this topic: See Gordon B. Hinckley, "President Harold B. Lee: An Appreciation," *Ensign*, Nov. 1972, 2–11; Gordon B. Hinckley, "Harold Bingham Lee: Humility, Benevolence, Loyalty," *Ensign*, Feb. 1974, 88–90; Spencer W. Kimball, "A Giant of a Man," *Ensign*, Feb. 1974, 86–87; "Speaking for Himself—President Lee's Stories," *Ensign*, Feb. 1974, 15–21.

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Trying to nurture a marriage relationship? A key principle is to show love in a way that means love to your spouse. One way is to notice which things you do that seem to make your spouse happier.



TO LOVE AND CARE *for Each Other*

BY KARL R. WHITE

Principles drawn from “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” can help us meet common challenges in marriage.

My experience over 25 years of counseling couples has shown that those who are willing to put *loving* and *caring* for a spouse above stubborn self-interest can resolve whatever challenges they face in marriage. “Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other,” declares “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102). In harmony with this counsel, I have found many principles that will invariably help couples who apply them sincerely and prayerfully. Here are five of the most important.

1. The Lord can help us overcome marital challenges.

Heavenly Father wants marriages to succeed. Sometimes when couples have stress in their relationship, they begin to slack off on such things as scripture study and praying together. They may become so self-centered and focused on their own pains and troubles that they are reluctant to reach out for help, even from Heavenly Father. Yet this is the time when His help is needed most. I have learned that when couples kneel together and vocally ask Heavenly Father for help with their problems, their hearts soften. If they truly listen, answers will come. Divine assistance is available, and couples who genuinely seek it receive extra help.

2. We must work on ourselves first.

As I visited with Frank and Susan (not their real names), each seemed anxious to show me that the reason they needed help in their marriage was the

unwillingness of the other to make some important changes. After reviewing some of the strengths and roadblocks in their marriage, I told them we would learn together some techniques to help them with challenges like problem solving. “But I’ll have to be honest with you—the bottom line is what we might call ‘heart.’ Unless your heart is in the right place, unless your attitude is humble and teachable and you have a willingness to work on what *you* need to work on personally, we won’t see much real progress.”

Their first homework assignment was to list three things each would be personally willing to work on for the sake of the marriage. They each listed at least one way to reach out to the other: “Help get the children ready for church,” or “Give him a hug when he comes home from work.” As we discussed their plans for personal change, realistic hope for improvement in the marriage began to grow. Frank and Susan were learning that each partner must be willing to work on personal areas of needed improvement without waiting for the other to go first.

3. Mutual forgiveness is essential to happiness in marriage.

We all make mistakes and need forgiveness, but pride often gets in the way; we don’t like to admit we’re wrong. We need to swallow that pride and say, “I’m sorry,” then try to do better. When a spouse apologizes and tries to do better, we need to accept the apology and forget about the past. If a husband or wife still isn’t perfect and stumbles while trying to break old habits or embrace change, we can try not to judge or criticize.

Forgiveness is in part a conscious decision we make, but it also can include a process of spiritual healing. One

LIVING WORTHY OF ETERNAL MARRIAGE



"An eternal bond doesn't just happen as a result of sealing covenants

we make in the temple. How we conduct ourselves in this life will determine what we will be in all the eternities to come.

To receive the blessings of the sealing that our Heavenly Father has given to us, we have to keep the commandments and conduct ourselves in such a way that our families will want to live with us in the eternities. The family relationships we have here on this earth are important, but they are much more important for their effect on our families for generations in mortality and throughout all eternity."

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Eternal Family," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 65.

couple came for counseling because a husband had been unfaithful to his wife. The wife's hurt was deep, and though he seemed genuinely repentant and contrite, she resisted the need to forgive him, venting her feelings of anger during several sessions (see D&C 42:25; 64:9–10). I encouraged them to pray about this problem and asked her to pray for help in understanding and forgiving. One day when they came in, the atmosphere of tension had changed. I asked what had happened, and she said, "The bitterness is gone. I'm not sure how, but spiritually something has happened. I've been able to forgive him, and I know it's because the Lord has helped me." Her ability to forgive changed the relationship. While additional work with them was needed, the spiritual healing which had occurred provided a foundation to build on.

4. We can show love in a way that means love to a spouse.

The challenge is to identify things that show love *from your spouse's point of view*, then do them. How can you identify them? One way is to notice the things you do which seem to make him or her happier. Sometimes it is a good idea simply to ask.

What you are doing out of love may not be understood that way by your partner. A husband might believe a good way to show love is to take a second job so his wife and children can enjoy more of the material comforts or privileges of life. But his wife may be thinking, *He's never home. He must not love me because he never spends any time here.* It is all too easy for children to come to the same conclusion. It may be that what his wife *really* wants is to have him with her more often rather than obtaining more possessions. Candid, open discussion can help resolve these situations where there is doubt about expressions of love or when they seem to be lacking.

If you are one who sometimes feels shorted on love, remember that behavior which is rewarded tends to be repeated. A number of years ago, teachers in the public schools where I lived were encouraged to "catch students doing something right" and compliment them. If students are rewarded this way, they tend to repeat that behavior in the future. It is important for couples to practice this same principle. If it bothers you that your husband won't put his dirty clothes in the hamper or that your

wife doesn't put tools away in the right place, don't criticize or demean. Share your concern, explain nicely how a change would make your life easier, then catch him or her doing something right. When he puts his clothes in the hamper or she puts the tool back in its place, let your spouse know you appreciate it, even if he or she does not do the right thing as often as you would like. Chances are, the behavior will be repeated.

5. Small changes add up.

Sometimes couples get discouraged when improvement doesn't come as rapidly as they would like. When this happens, I often share a story about a rite of passage for me when I was growing up on the farm: the first time Dad let me plow the field. When he came to see how I was doing and found that my first two rows looked like crooked snakes, he smiled knowingly and said, "Let me show you how to get a straight line. Pick a post or tree at the other end of the field—something that isn't going to move—put it right over the smokestack on top of the tractor, and keep it there." It worked, and with a bit of fine-tuning I also found that adjusting my course a few degrees in the beginning made a huge difference by the time I arrived at the far end of the field.

For me, there are several lessons for life in my plowing experience. First, our kind Father in Heaven will not hastily condemn us for our mistakes; He will lovingly help us correct our course. Second, it helps to steer by something that is steadfast and true, like scriptures and the words of living prophets. Third, making minor corrections leads to major improvements over time. I tell couples I work with, "If you are following correct principles and if you keep doing it, things will improve. Slow progress doesn't mean there's no progress." As husband and wife adhere to those principles, they gain greater happiness and fulfillment as a couple, along with individual growth and spiritual development. □

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Gospel topics: marriage, charity, love, forgiveness

More on this topic: See Barbara Workman, "Love, Laughter, and Spirituality in Marriage," *Ensign*, July 1992, 7; Dee W. Hadley, "The Daily Dozen of Marriage," *Ensign*, Mar. 1990, 34; Dean L. Larsen, "Enriching Marriage," *Ensign*, Mar. 1985, 20.

Visit www.lds.org or see Church magazines on CD.

A photograph of three young boys in school uniforms. The boy in the center, wearing a red sweater vest, holds an open book and has a large white question mark superimposed over it. He has a thoughtful expression. The boy on the left, with blonde hair, looks on with a serious expression. The boy on the right, with red hair, has a surprised or questioning expression. The title 'Asking Questions First' is overlaid on the image in red and green text.

Asking Questions First

Try this adjustment to your teaching and see if it doesn't enrich your family or classroom discussions.

BY ROBERT G. JONES

Jason slowly read out loud his assigned verses from 2 Nephi 9. His Sunday School teacher, Sister Johnson, then asked, "What are the two deaths that happen to everyone?" An uncomfortable tension filled the air. Sister Johnson looked nervous and a little embarrassed that no one was responding to her question, even when the answer was right there in the verses they had just read.



I have visited many classes as a stake teacher improvement coordinator. I have seen the pattern described above repeated in many of the classes, as well as in the teaching in my own home.

What has become clear is that if we as parents or teachers will ask a question about the scripture verses or other material *before* having them read, our family or class members will be more likely to give appropriate answers, and more interesting discussions will result. This is because they knew what to look for as they read. For example, by asking “How could a fig tree be like a hypocrite?” *before* students read Matthew 21:17–22, they will be able to focus on finding and thinking about the answer as they read.

Some of our lesson manuals suggest that we first explain, then read, then ask a question. The explanations given in the manuals are designed to help prepare students to read the scriptures by introducing or summarizing a gospel topic for them. For example, one manual reads: “Explain that it is sometimes difficult to accept the idea that we need to love ourselves. We may think that we should love other people but not ourselves. We might wonder how we can love ourselves without being conceited. . . . Explain that the Savior himself told us that we should love ourselves. Have a class member read Matthew 22:36–39. [The teacher then asks:] What do these verses tell us about loving ourselves?” (*Young Women Manual* 3 [1994], 145).

Another acceptable way to use these kinds of lesson suggestions would be to ask, “What do these verses tell us about loving ourselves?” *before* giving any explanations or reading Matthew 22:36–39. Asking the question in this manner encourages students to freely share their own explanations about the meaning of the verses. After listening to and discussing their ideas, you will then probably want to offer the explanation

provided in the manual.

As teachers in my stake began using this skill, they shared with me their excitement. A common expression was, “My students really participated today. The discussions were great.” One teacher said, “I noticed that more students volunteered to answer the questions. Their comments gave more information than I would have given in the explanations. In fact, all I needed to do was summarize their explanations.” Another teacher said that the entire feeling in the class changed because class members were participating as much as she was. One teacher explained, “I felt like I was facilitat-

ing learning rather than dispensing information.”

A pleasing result for many teachers was the level of enthusiasm during the lesson. They found that students were more interested in learning and felt the presence of the Spirit more strongly. One teacher reported, “As I continued to ask the questions first, students began discovering the information on their own.”

Asking the question first can also work with pictures. Some lesson manuals recommend that teachers show class members a picture and then explain what it means. For example, “Display picture 3-34, Mormon Abiding the Plates. Explain that Heavenly Father called a prophet named Mormon to gather all the histories of his people, copy the most important parts, and write them on thin sheets of gold. . . . These were called gold plates” (*Primary 3: Choose the Right B* [1994], 70). Another approach would be to try asking questions that help students discover what is in the picture before offering any explanation, such as:

“What do you see in the picture?”

“How many people are in the picture?”

“What are the people doing?”

“Why are they doing it?”

“How might the person in the picture feel?”

“How would you feel if you were in the picture?”

Asking a question before a class member reads a particular statement by a Church President also works well. In the books used in the Melchizedek Priesthood quorums and Relief Society, the questions at the back of each chapter can be used to help students search for answers as they read. For example, after asking, “What is agency?” (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* [2000], 16) a teacher could direct the class to look for the answer on pages 13–15. Once they have found the explanatory quote from President Harold B. Lee, discussion on the topic might

EFFECTIVE TEACHING NEEDED



President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, *Teach Ye Diligently* (1991), 3–4.

“The Church moves forward sustained by the power of the teaching that is accomplished.”

occur or you could ask, “Why is opposition necessary in the exercise of our agency?” and then send class members back to the book for additional ideas from the quotation.

As participants search or look for information in the scriptures or other books, remember that people may understand gospel principles at different levels. In classes some are new to the Church or do not remember what they have been taught, and children are young and learning. Others have studied much and have significant experience with the scriptures. All of us can learn from each other. The role of a parent or teacher is much like an orchestra conductor who is there to keep order and give general direction and instruction. An orchestra conductor, however, does not produce the music. A good gospel teacher uses effective questions as a conductor uses a baton.

Parents and Church teachers will find wonderful results when asking questions first. A discussion using this skill might go like this when teaching the principle of forgiveness using D&C 64:9–10.

Discussion leader: Who does the Lord require or expect us to forgive and why should we forgive? Please look for answers as you now silently read D&C 64:9–10.

Following silent reading by others, discussion leader asks: Who does the Lord require or expect us to forgive? And why should we forgive? How many of you found answers? Who would like to tell us what you found?

The discussion leader then calls on several to report what they found. The discussion leader may then want to ask additional questions that help others understand the meaning and apply a gospel principle from what they have read.

I recently visited an adult Gospel Doctrine teacher with whom I had shared this skill. I asked how the class was going. The teacher said he wished he had tried this approach years earlier. Although he had much experience in teaching, he said that for the first time class members were really becoming involved in the scriptures. He said, “When I have my class search the scriptures, they each have a personal experience with the verses.”

The role of a teacher is much like an orchestra conductor. A good gospel teacher uses effective questions as a conductor uses a baton.

Not only has this simple skill changed him as a teacher, he says that his class members have also changed. He reported that more of them are bringing scriptures to class because “they know we are going to be searching for answers.” And one father in his class told him that he had used this method at home. He reported that his children really enjoyed looking for answers in their family scripture

study and family home evening. Sometimes a simple adjustment can bring about a profound change. □

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Gospel topics: teaching, student participation, scripture study

More on this topic: See Jonn D. Claybaugh and Amber Barlow Dahl, “Increasing Participation in Lessons,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2001, 32–36; Dallin H. Oaks, “Gospel Teaching,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 78–80; Jeffrey R. Holland, “A Teacher Come from God,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 25–27.



CRASH

*The pilot said we had an emergency.
I asked myself, "Am I ready to meet my
Heavenly Father?"*



BY ELDER PITA FOLIAKI HOPOATE
Area Authority Seventy

As a young boy on the island of Tongatapu in Tonga, I often climbed the coconut trees on our plantation and watched the planes take off and land on the grass airfield nearby. Perched atop these exceedingly tall trees, I longed to climb on one of those planes someday and fly off to faraway places like Niuatoputapu, one of the northernmost islands, about 375 miles away.

I had my chance to fly to Niuatoputapu in April 1983. I was a mission president and had flown to many places between islands on a five-passenger plane to attend zone conferences. Since I often sat next to the pilot on flights between islands, we had become friends. So when he invited me to be a passenger on the first flight there, I remembered my childhood dreams and said *yes*. What a treat it would be to take my wife,

Lani, along as well. What a blessing it would be to the members and missionaries on that little-visited island to hold a missionary conference there.

OBEYING THE SPIRIT

We were expecting our seventh baby in June, but Lani was healthy and feeling fine. She was absolutely delighted with the idea of coming with me. As the day of the flight approached, Lani became more and more excited to go to a place she had never been before; however, I began to resist the idea



LANDING



of her coming with me. I had no particular reason really. I just did not have a good feeling about it. Lani was puzzled when I asked her if she would remain at home, but she agreed and didn't complain.

Instead, at the last minute I took my counselor, Sione Schaumkel. We boarded the five-seater plane with three other passengers: Paula Vivili, a police officer; Dr. Tauhelangi Kefu, of the Ministry of Health; and a woman from the U.S. Peace Corps. President Schaumkel and I were assigned the two rear seats, Paula Vivili and the Peace Corps volunteer were in front of us, and Dr. Kefu sat by the pilot in the cockpit.

After three hours in the cramped quarters of this small plane, we were delighted to see the island of Niuatoputapu appear on the horizon. Our joy was brief, however, since the pilot seemed to be having trouble getting all the landing gear to come down. We flew over the little airport on the island at a considerable altitude, circled around the neighboring island of Tafahi, and came back toward the airport at the same altitude. The pilot, however, made no effort to land the plane, and we flew right over the island of Niuatoputapu. We realized we were on our way back home.

By now we were feeling a bit uneasy. Our fear increased when the pilot announced there was an emergency, and he had to jettison all the excess fuel. He took the plane up, turned off the engines, and released the fuel as the plane lost altitude. Then he started up the engines again and pulled the plane

out of the dive. The execution of this maneuver left us breathless and somewhat shaken as we continued on. As we continued to fly south, the islands of Vava'u came into view and one of the passengers begged the pilot to land there. "The small airport isn't equipped for emergency landings," the pilot said.

"LEAN FORWARD AND DUCK!"

No one talked much after that. As for me, I asked myself, "Am I ready to meet my Heavenly Father?" Since I was in the tail section of the plane, which was farthest from the door, I knew President Schaumkel and I would be last to escape in a crash. During these moments I saw my life pass before me from the beginning. I was grateful Lani and our unborn baby were safe at home. As I prayed, I began to feel a definite sensation of peace that dispelled all my fears and anxieties. I felt so reassured that I said to President Schaumkel, "Be comforted. Nothing serious will happen to us."

It seemed forever before we saw the island of our home—Tongatapu. We flew low over the Fua'amotu airport control tower so the people could confirm what we feared—the front wheel of the landing gear was jammed. Below, we could see fire engines, an ambulance, policemen, and soldiers from the Defense Force. People crowded onto the field. We knew we were in big trouble.

We made our final turn and descended to the small grassy field. The back wheels touched firmly

I saw my life pass before me from the beginning. As I prayed, I began to feel a definite sensation of peace that dispelled my fears.



INSPIRATION



"The Holy Ghost communicates with the spirit through the mind more than through the physical senses. This guidance comes as thoughts, as feelings, through impressions and promptings. It is not always easy to describe inspiration. The scriptures teach us that we may 'feel' the words of spiritual communication more than hear them, and see with spiritual rather than with mortal eyes."

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Revelation in a Changing World," Ensign, Nov. 1989, 14.

down onto the grass. With no front wheels, the pilot carefully brought the nose of the aircraft down. I shouted to President Schaumkel, "Lean forward and duck!" We both bent forward at the same time, with our heads against the seats in front of us. In the very instant its nose touched the grass, the plane somersaulted and crashed violently upside down with the wheels in the air. The plane skidded forward, tail section first. The screeching of metal and cries of the passengers filled the air. President Schaumkel and I remained conscious throughout.

A WAY PROVIDED

When the plane stopped skidding, I noticed that the window on President Schaumkel's side had popped out. It was only about the size of a car window, but it would be big enough for us to crawl out. We unbuckled our seat belts and scrambled out in a matter of seconds. The plane was twisted, but we had not been seriously hurt. Could my sweet Lani have been hurt or killed? Could this crash have caused our baby to come early or die? I felt we had been saved by divine means.

We climbed out of the plane on the side of the runway on the opposite side of the crowd. Still in our clean white shirts and ties, we were standing near the tall elephant grass at the edge of the field. No one could really see us, nor had anyone seen us escape from the plane. We walked around the plane. Again, no one seemed to pay any attention to us. Rescuers were struggling to open the only door to the little plane, which was jammed shut. Gratefully there had been no fire, or perhaps none of us would have survived.

As the rescuers worked to free our fellow passengers, we made our way to the hospital vehicles. When we climbed into the back of the ambulance, the attending nurse told us to clear out. Being obedient, we quietly got out, walked around, and climbed into the front seat. We watched the rescue and contemplated, with much gratitude, our miraculous escape. We were worried about the others, including my friend, the pilot.

At last they pried the front door open. The pilot, Dr. Kefu, and the Peace Corps volunteer were alive but injured. Paula Vivili was dead.

UNNOTICED AND UNRUFFLED

"Where are the other two passengers?" the rescuers yelled. "There were two more passengers!"

I said to the nurse, "Tell the rescuers the two passengers they are looking for are sitting right here."

The nurse whirled around and looked at us: "Were you on this flight?" she asked.

"Yes," I said. "That's why we got into the ambulance in the first place."

Embarrassed but happy, she came up and kissed our cheeks in the typical Tongan greeting, then ran out to tell the others we were safe.

Well-wishers surrounded us immediately, people of all ranks, including cabinet ministers. They kissed us and fussed over us, asking, "How

could it be that you should have survived without injury?" The people were profoundly moved by the discovery that we had escaped unhurt, unnoticed, and unruffled. Official investigators from New Zealand were amazed that the tail section we sat in had not broken off upon impact. As people talked about the disaster, they were curious, and it became a means of opening doors for preaching the gospel. It was a testimony to us and the people of the Lord's care for us.

LESSONS LEARNED

This experience increased my faith and gratitude to my Heavenly Father for His protection and the preservation of my life. I am thankful for the promptings of the Spirit to me that my wife should not come with me on this flight and that she had faith enough to listen to me and believe. Perhaps things would have been different if Lani had been in the plane crash with me. Not only was our seventh child born healthy, but we eventually had an eighth child. My faith has increased steadily as I have learned that living the gospel brings peace, which is especially appreciated at times of difficulty, such as this plane crash. □

Elder Pita Foliaki Hopoate is an Area Authority Seventy in the Pacific Islands Area.

Gospel topics: inspiration, prayer, missionary



STUDYING AND TEACHING THE

Old Testament

*All of us need better understanding of the eternal plan of happiness.
The Old Testament has a great deal to offer as our teacher.*



BY ELDER HENRY B. EYRING
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

What every person wants is happiness. And what we will want for the rest of this life and for eternity is happiness. Many of us may not know much of what happiness is or how to get it. And we may not understand much about misery or its causes. But we have had tastes of both happiness and misery. We know the difference, and we prefer happiness.

God's great plan of happiness leads away from misery. We do not need to be convinced that a plan of happiness is a good thing. But all of us need better understanding of what it takes to follow the plan, and most of us need increased confidence that we can. Because all of us want happiness today and always will, when we feel those needs being met, we will come back to those experiences, and we will begin to practice what will bring us the capacity to endure to the end.

You might well wonder whether the Old Testament is a likely text to help us find the way of happiness. Why would we spend so much time with books which seem so far removed from the circumstances and the challenges we face? A great teacher gave me a key to that puzzle.

READ 2 NEPHI 25–33

President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), a counselor in the First Presidency, spoke on this subject 23 years ago and entitled his talk “The Message of the Old Testament.” I have read it many times and know his words are true. He said, “I do not think there is a more simple or clear and relevant explanation of the Old Testament message than the one written in chapters 25 through 33 of 2 Nephi. It would seem to me that a careful, prayerful study of these chapters would be a requirement for anyone who wanted to understand and teach the message of the Old Testament. In these chapters Nephi sifted out the important from the unimportant. He also explained how these teachings are important to us who live in the latter days” (in *A Symposium on the Old Testament* [address to religious educators, Brigham Young University, 16 Aug. 1979], 5).

President Romney then read these words from the 25th chapter of 2 Nephi:

“For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.

“And, notwithstanding we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled.

“For, for this end was the law given; wherefore the



Go to the scriptures like a child, willing to be taught, and you will be. Go like a wise man or woman, and you won't come away the wiser.

law hath become dead unto us, and we are made alive in Christ because of our faith; yet we keep the law because of the commandments" (2 Ne. 25:23–25).

If you study those nine short chapters of 2 Nephi commended to you by President Romney—and my purpose and prayer is that you will—you will find in them a lament for those who choose not to receive the words of God offered through His prophets. I have two reasons for wanting you to read those laments. First, they will comfort you on those days when those around you seem not to receive the words God offers them through you. It helps to know that such great prophets as Nephi and Isaiah had such days, many of them. And second, Nephi gives the reason why his words would not be received. In his description of failure there is the shadow of the way to success. That is often true in stories of scriptural tragedy when they are written by prophets. And so the recurring cycles of spiritual decline and recovery in the Old Testament can be hopeful and instructive.

For example, in the 27th chapter, the fifth verse, Nephi laments over people whose hardness of heart he foresees in the day of the Gentiles:

"For behold, the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep. For behold, ye have closed your eyes, and ye have rejected the prophets; and your rulers, and the seers hath he covered because of your iniquity."

Later, in the 29th chapter, verse 8, he even foresees those who will reject his own words, which he knows were given him by the Savior. He gives the rebuke he knows the Lord will give in that day, words only a seer could know:

"Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word? Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And when the two nations shall run together the testimony of the two nations shall run together also."

RECEIVING THE WORD OF GOD

Nephi's words make clear both the difficulty of teaching the word of God and its importance. Those who do not receive the words of God, which we are to teach, will be judged by them. President Romney has offered us help in that sacred task of teaching. I confirm his promise.

First in your preparation to teach, you must go to search the scriptures and not to wrest them. President

Romney taught that great difference in the way we can approach the scriptures: "Searching them . . . as enjoined by Jesus is a far cry from hunting through them for the purpose of finding passages which can be pressed into service to support predetermined conclusions" (in *Symposium*, 2). Go to the scriptures like a child, willing to be taught, and you will be. Go like a wise man or woman, and you won't come away the wiser.

Second, you will be taught more easily as you approach the scriptures if you search with a question and with a determination to act on the answer. We can receive what seems to us new truth when we go back to the same scripture with new questions. I went to those chapters of 2 Nephi with this question: How can I study or teach from the Old Testament in a way that makes it more likely that my students or I will find happiness now while we are together, and later when they or I may face unknown trials alone?

As I studied 2 Nephi, I tried to follow both parts of this counsel. I read the chapters carefully, repeatedly, line by line and word by word. I looked for patterns, truths that Nephi repeated, ideas he restated more than once. I found a pattern. I will share it with you in the hope that it will encourage you to search for yourself. What I found has been useful to me. It may be to you. My hope is that you will search the scriptures with a desire to be taught what you should do.

For me, there seemed to be a repeated message in the teaching of Nephi, which gave me an answer to my question. It is this: The words of God given by prophets will only be received by those with the spirit of prophecy, a gift of the Spirit, which both follows from and confirms the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Nephi makes clear first that what we need now and will need later is something he calls the spirit of prophecy. Here is the fourth verse of the 25th chapter of 2 Nephi:

"Wherefore, hearken, O my people, which are of the house of Israel, and give ear unto my words; for because the words of Isaiah are not plain unto you, nevertheless they are plain unto all those that are filled with the spirit of prophecy."

Then he speaks again of prophecy in the 26th verse, but here he makes clear its relation to the testimony of Jesus. We will find the words of prophets plain when we have the spirit of prophecy, and that will depend on our testimony of Jesus Christ. Notice how Nephi used that fact:



PHOTO BY JED CLARK

Nephi makes plain that the spirit of prophecy and the testimony of Jesus are gifts that must be sought in prayer.



It will not be enough for us to know that the words are true or even to understand them plainly. We must obey, or the conviction of truth will fade and the meaning will become obscure.

"And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins."

Then Nephi went on to teach that to receive the words of prophets we must obey them. It will not be enough for us to know that the words are true or even to understand them plainly. We must obey, or the conviction of truth will fade and the meaning will become obscure. Notice the 30th verse of the 28th chapter:

"For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have."

Then, as if Nephi knows how hard the road ahead may be for us, he describes what it will take to endure. It will take the courage and the fortitude that comes only to those whose testimony of Jesus Christ has led them to obey to the point that they are filled with hope and charity sufficient for the journey. Note the requirement and the promise in the 20th verse of the 31st chapter:

"Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life."

Nephi makes plain that the spirit of prophecy and the testimony of Jesus are gifts which must be sought in prayer. And it is clear that he does not exempt himself. Note what he says in the fourth verse of the 32nd chapter:

"Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.

"For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do."

Then in the eighth verse Nephi extends the instruction to pray:

"And now, my beloved brethren, I perceive that ye ponder still in your hearts; and it grieveth me that I must speak concerning this thing. For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray.

"But behold I say unto you that ye must pray always, and not faint; that ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul" (2 Ne. 32:8–9).

Now, after warning us that we must pray, Nephi teaches us by his example. In the fourth verse of the 33rd chapter:

"And I know that the Lord God will consecrate my prayers for the gain of my people. And the words which I have written in weakness will be made strong unto them; for it persuadeth them to do good; it maketh known unto them of their fathers; and it speaketh of Jesus, and persuadeth them to believe in him, and to endure to the end, which is life eternal."

For me, there emerged at least the beginning of an answer to my question.

You will remember that my question was: How can I study or teach from the Old Testament in a way that makes it more likely that my students or I will find happiness now while we are together, and later when they or I may face unknown trials alone? My answer: My students and I will receive the words of the prophets when they and I have the spirit of prophecy and the testimony of Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost will tell them and me what to do. When we obey, we will have more light given us. When we disobey, the light will in time be withdrawn. Prayer will be our ally. And even in this difficult life we can find peace which living the gospel brings and the hope of eternal life in the world to come, the greatest of all the gifts of God. That is how my students and I will find the happiness we seek, now and later.

I encourage you once again to go in search of answers to other questions. President Romney said that Nephi could teach us what is important in the Old Testament. For instance, Nephi teaches that God sends prophets to warn of destruction. He makes plain that it is love for the people and for God that leads him and other prophets to speak so bluntly of sin. He speaks of his own human struggles. Surely those themes are a beginning of the answer to the question you might ask: "What will be of most worth to my students and me in what we study from the Old Testament?"

FOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDYING AND TEACHING THE OLD TESTAMENT

Now let me give you the lessons I have learned from following the counsel of President Romney.

First, I would be more eager to be taught. I would listen to others, as if I believed the Spirit could teach me through their words. I would go to every class I could, expecting to learn from whoever was called to

teach me. I would read and ponder the materials I was given. I would read the scriptures. I would plead in prayer to be taught from on high. Now there are practical limits to the time I could spend, but no limits on how determined to be taught I could be.

Second, I would think more often and more carefully about the Savior and His mission. So much of the Old Testament can be taught as dramatic stories, fascinating customs, and beautiful literary forms. But I will sense a greater happiness, a deeper appreciation when I study or teach of times when prophets spoke of Jehovah and when the people received the words and turned toward Him. I would sense sorrow when the people turned away from the promised Savior of mankind and toward misery. I can make you a promise if you do that: the Spirit will come and you will sense less of the sordid wickedness of the people, of their abominations, and more of the love of their God, who warned them against iniquity and idolatry, who begged them to come to Him, and who, even in their wickedness and misery, kept reaching after them.

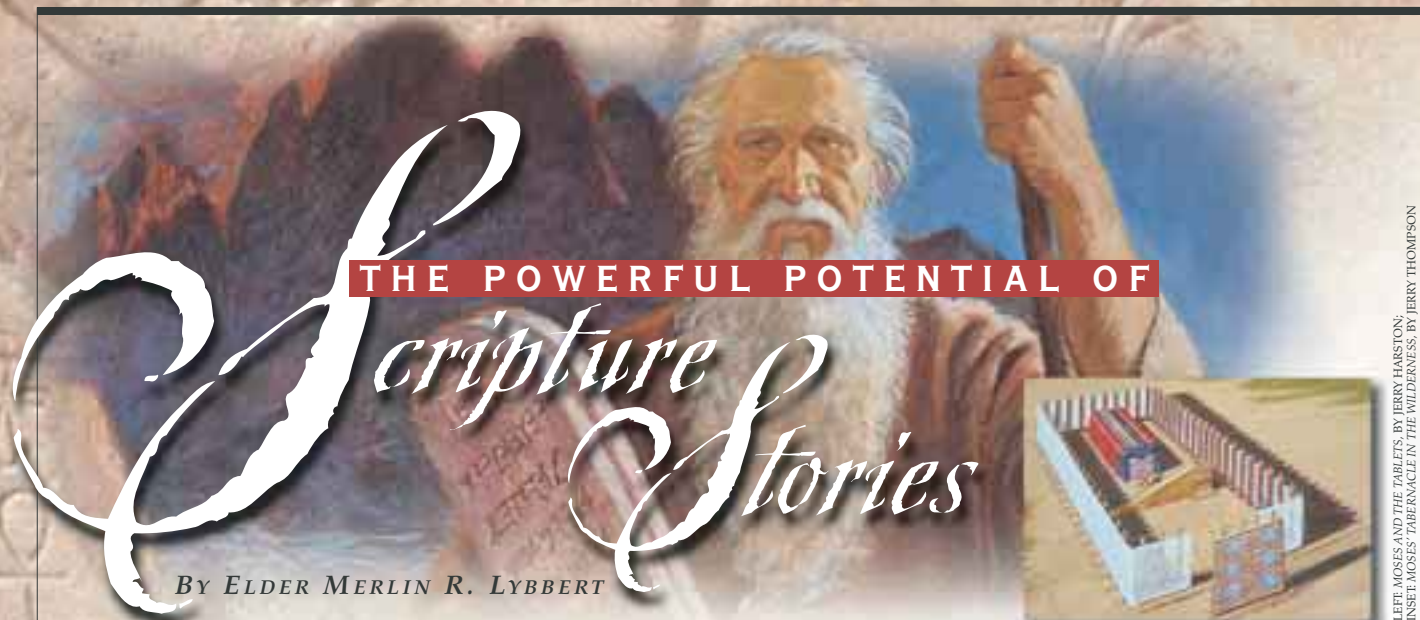
Third, I would put more effort into coming to know prophets as personally as I could. I would read in the book of Abraham and the book of Moses not only for doctrines but to know their hearts. I would try to feel what Job felt and what Jeremiah felt. I would work and pray to know the character and the trials of the prophets. I can make you a promise because I have tried it. I have tried to be with Nephi at the end of his ministry. I read those chapters in 2 Nephi over and over. I did it to learn how to teach the Old Testament. But I got more. I came to love him as I had never done before. When I see him in some future time and place, he will see more affection in my eyes, and more admiration.

And last, I would more carefully invite the Holy Ghost as my companion. Others wouldn't see much of what I do, since so much would be in private, but they would sense the change in me as the Spirit softened my nature. They would notice it in my being a little more patient, a little more interested in them, a little less likely to argue or belittle, a little more likely to smile. And they would notice not only that I seemed more happy but that they are more happy when they are around me. The Holy Ghost will teach us all things we should do to please God and thus take happiness with us.

I bless you that you might, in this year of studying and teaching the Old Testament, be drawn closer to Him. I bless you that you may have assurance that the Savior loves you and is concerned for you, that in the years ahead you may taste the sweet fruit of knowing that He appreciates your efforts to study and teach from the Old Testament. □

From a talk to Church Educational System educators at Brigham Young University on 10 August 1999.

Gospel topics: scripture study, Old Testament, teaching, Holy Ghost



THE POWERFUL POTENTIAL OF

Scripture Stories

BY ELDER MERLIN R. LYBBERT



Moses built a tabernacle in the desert.

One might ask why the doctrines and principles of the gospel are scattered through some 2,500 pages of scripture instead of systematically arranged by topic in a more concise text. To the human mind, such a text would seem to provide for a far greater economy of space and study, as well as added clarity. In His wisdom, however, the Lord has chosen to reveal His eternal truths through the interesting and memorable historical and personal accounts of the writers of the scriptures. This method of teaching powerfully presents and preserves the doctrines and principles of the gospel in the following ways.

Scripture stories pique our interest. Brimming with human interest, the stories of truth contained in the scriptures stimulate our imagination and draw us toward the gospel as no other work of literature can.

Our Heavenly Father's dealings with His children, both the weak and the strong, are depicted for our profit and learning.

Scripture stories show us how to apply gospel principles. Accounts of real people and events have the power to bring abstract concepts to life. In a variety of settings, the men and women of the scriptures repeatedly demonstrate the application—and misapplication—of every principle of the gospel, including the blessings or problems that follow.

Scripture stories can both tug at our emotions and challenge our intellect. If we read the scriptures with only the attention and thought we might devote to a popular novel, we will fail to appreciate the richness available in our sacred volumes. We are admonished to search them, which suggests a thorough examination of their teachings.

Our searching must involve both mind and spirit if we are to draw the intended messages. As we do so, the eternal principles interwoven with the factual accounts are revealed.

Scripture stories help us remember the principles they illustrate. Associating gospel teachings with vibrant people and events helps us better internalize and recall those teachings. These stories are valuable teaching aids whenever we instruct in the home or in the classroom.

Scripture stories often contain "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" that can be identified only by those who diligently and sincerely search, ponder, and pray, spiritually preparing themselves to receive those principles.

For example, when we read of the tabernacle and its furnishings that Moses and the children of Israel were commanded to build in the desert in Exodus 25–27, it may seem pointless or tedious. However, when we ponder the symbolism of each aspect of the tabernacle and compare it to our temple covenants and ordinances, a new journey of spiritual discovery may occur.

The Lord has preserved and brought forth for us a marvelous treasure of inspired messages, wrapped in historical narrative. But this gift will have little value if we leave it on the shelf and do not study, appreciate, and apply its teachings in our lives. The Lord expects us to make a determined effort to study the scriptures—to understand, absorb, and delight in the truths they contain. As we study the lives of the people of the Old Testament, we will come to love them for their example and teachings, and we will be better prepared to teach others. If we are sincere and prayerful and strive to be worthy, our quest for greater gospel knowledge will be aided by the promptings of the Spirit. Our consistent efforts to mine the stories of the scriptures will bring us increased strength and resolve to be faithful and true. □

Elder Merlin R. Lybbert, who recently passed away, was a former member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

Gospel topics: scripture study, teaching, revelation

The following three articles are the first in a series featuring stories from the Old Testament. We hope they will be useful for scripture study in our homes and Church classrooms this year.

LEFT: MOSES AND THE TABLETS, BY JERRY HARSTON; INSET: MOSES' TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS, BY JERRY THOMPSON

Mortality

THE CHOICE THAT BEGAN

*The Fall was a glorious necessity
to open the doorway toward eternal life.*



BY ELDER JESS L. CHRISTENSEN
Area Authority Seventy

I am amazed at the great love and courage my wonderful companion has shown during the birth of our children. I am in awe that the pain and sickness accompanying their birth was soon forgotten, making way for the joy and happiness of having a baby in our home. I have wondered how much Adam and Eve knew about such things as they made the choice to partake of the forbidden fruit, the choice that began what has been called act 2 in the “grand three-act play”¹ we call the great plan of happiness. God the Father, Jehovah, Adam, Eve, and Lucifer were the players. The Garden of Eden was the scene of this interlude between act 1, the premortal life, and act 2, mortality.

SETTING THE STAGE

Act 1 included a council, or “war in heaven” (see Rev. 12:7–9), when Lucifer promised the impossible, to “redeem all mankind,” and demanded the Father’s “honor” (see Moses 4:1). Jesus Christ was the Father’s “Beloved and Chosen from the beginning” and promised to enact the Father’s plan (see Moses 4:2). We exercised our agency and chose to follow the Savior. Then Lucifer was “cast down, with all who put up their heads for him.”²

God the Father was the mastermind and primary character in this interlude scene. Through His Son, He created the earth and the Garden of Eden.

Adam was the first man, the premortal Michael (see D&C 27:11), “who helped create the earth—a glorious, superb individual. Eve was his equal—a full, powerfully contributing partner.”³ Adam and Eve were placed in a

garden, Adam being “formed from the dust of the ground” and Eve being created from his side, and they became husband and wife (see Moses 3:7, 22–24).

The Father commanded them to multiply and replenish the earth and not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but added, “Nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Moses 3:17). Thus the stage was set for the exercise of agency and the possibility of mortality.

CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES

Lucifer was also in the beginning. He “sought to destroy the agency of man, . . . [and being] the



Under the direction of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ taught Adam and Eve concerning the plan of God, gave them commandments, and provided them with “coats of skins” before sending them from the Garden of Eden.

father of all lies” (Moses 4:3–4) entered the garden to deceive our first parents. He first talked with Adam, but Adam did not yield. Lucifer then tried “also to beguile Eve” (Moses 4:6). He questioned her: “Yea, hath God said—Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Moses 4:7). Challenging one’s recollection of a past event can often create doubt. But Eve stood firm. Lucifer’s first stratagem failed.

“Ye shall not surely die,” protested Lucifer, directly contradicting the word of the Lord (Moses 4:10; see also D&C 29:41–42). “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Moses 4:11). Lucifer spoke a partial truth mixed with a falsehood. If Eve were to partake of

the fruit, her eyes would indeed be opened “as gods” and she would begin to know good and evil; yet the notion that eating the fruit could immediately make Eve as the gods was a clever deception. The purpose of life can be fulfilled only when we have time to prepare to meet God and learn good and evil by our own experience (see Alma 12:22–26; D&C 29:39).

At Lucifer’s suggestion, Eve began to notice that the forbidden fruit was good for food, or delicious, and pleasant to the eyes. Lucifer “knows well how to catch the eye and arouse the desire of the customer.”⁴ Eve then chose to partake of the forbidden fruit. She subsequently encouraged Adam to partake (see Moses 4:12). Adam concluded that God’s command to remain with his wife (see Moses 4:18) was more important than His command to abstain from the fruit. Thus in the face of this enticement, “Adam fell that men might be” (2 Ne. 2:25).

Their choices, like ours, were not without consequences. Lucifer’s power to “bruise [the] heel” of the seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, would be fleeting, for the Savior would have power to “bruise [his] head”⁵ (see Moses 4:21). Just as light banishes darkness, the Savior will overcome Lucifer, and by His power we may also overcome. For Eve, the Lord would “greatly multiply [her] sorrow and [her] conception. In sorrow [meaning labor or pain, she would] bring forth children” (Moses 4:22). “By divine design,” she would be a mother and would be “primarily responsible for the nurture of their children.”⁶ For Adam, the ground would be “cursed . . . for [his] sake.” It would bring forth “thorns also, and thistles,” and “by the sweat of [his] face [he would eat] bread” (see Moses 4:23–25). “By divine design, fathers . . . are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. . . . Fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners.”⁷ Adam and Eve were then banished from this most beautiful of gardens, and mortality, or act 2, began. However, they were taught concerning the plan of God and given commandments. They did not leave without protection and promises, for God provided them with “coats of skins” (Moses 4:27) to cover their nakedness. These coverings represent the protection—both spiritual and physical—that we can enjoy as we follow our Father’s teachings.

When Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden and found themselves outside of God’s presence, they were anxious to return. They used their agency to call upon the name of the Lord, to worship the Lord their God by offering sacrifices, and to bless His name (see Moses 5:4–5, 12).

THE FALL AND THE ATONEMENT

Three of the most essential events in the history of mankind are the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement. "The enabling essence of the plan [of salvation] is the atonement of Jesus Christ," said Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "We should try to comprehend the meaning of the Atonement. Before we can comprehend it, though, we must understand the fall of Adam."⁸ As Latter-day Saints, we believe that Adam and Eve's choice to partake of the forbidden fruit was ultimately a good thing—an essential act for our growth.

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught: "When Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden, they did not have to die. They could have been there to this day. They could have continued on for countless ages. There was no death then. But it would have been a terrific calamity if they had refrained from taking the fruit of that tree, for they would have stayed in the Garden of Eden and we would not be here; nobody would be here except Adam and Eve. So Adam and Eve partook."⁹

Many questions have been asked: How much did Adam and Eve really understand about consequences of eating the forbidden fruit? Why was the message of Satan so tempting to Eve but not to Adam? Was there no other way? These are perplexing questions because we know so little about Adam and Eve's thoughts and feelings in the garden. Therefore, we should not worry about what the scriptures and living prophets have chosen not to explain. The important thing is to know that the Lord's will was accomplished. Adam and Eve kept the first commandment to multiply and replenish the earth. Their bodies were changed, and mortality, parenthood, and eventual death came upon them. Eternal family relationships became possible. The Fall was a "glorious necessity to open the doorway toward eternal life," said Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.¹⁰ As a result, we have been blessed with the opportunity to come to this earth.

Other blessings have come to us through the Fall. Elder Nelson has said: "It activated two closely coupled additional gifts from God, nearly as precious as life itself—agency and accountability. We became 'free to choose liberty and eternal life . . . or to choose captivity and death' (2 Ne. 2:27). Freedom of choice cannot be exercised without accountability for choices made (see D&C 101:78; 134:1)."¹¹

We have been placed here by a Heavenly Father who loves and trusts us. He wants us to use our agency to grow and progress in this laboratory we call earth.

THE FALL AND JOY

As my wife and I have watched our children grow and develop, we have been thrilled with so many of their choices. We have been amazed at the love and courage of our daughters and daughters-in-law as they have given birth to precious little spirits who have come from the presence of our Heavenly Father. With each birth I have been reminded that without the Fall, we would not experience birth, pain, sorrow, sickness, health, joy, love, and death—in other words, we could never find eternal happiness. And without the great atoning sacrifice of our Savior, we would never be able to overcome death or have the privilege of repenting for the remission of our sins. Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to return to the Father and find exaltation with our families. He is our Savior, our friend, our Spiritual Father through the Atonement, our Redeemer from the Fall, our very life and light, and the living Son of our living Father in Heaven.

An understanding of the choice that began mortality is crucial to understanding the Father's glorious plan. We who have chosen to follow the Savior in act 1 will be greatly blessed if we choose to do what is right and wisely use the agency we have been given in act 2. □

Elder Jess L. Christensen was recently released as an Area Authority Seventy serving in the Utah North Area.

Gospel topics: agency, the Fall, Jesus Christ, Satan

NOTES

1. See Boyd K. Packer, *The Plan and the Plan, Church Educational System fireside for College-Age Young Adults*, 7 May 1995, 2.
2. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 357.
3. Richard G. Scott, "The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 74.
4. James E. Talmage, "A Greeting to Missionaries," *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1913, 173.
5. See James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 43.
6. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
7. *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
8. "Constancy amid Change," *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 33.
9. In Conference Report, Apr. 1967, 122.
10. "The Great Plan of Happiness," *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 73.
11. *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 34.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Most Ensign articles can be used for family home evening discussions. The following questions are for that purpose or for personal reflection:

1. Why was it necessary for Adam and Eve to have a choice? (see 2 Ne. 2:15–16).
2. What difference did their choice to partake of the fruit make for us? (see 2 Ne. 2:22–26).
3. How have some of your recent choices helped lead you toward either liberty or captivity? (see 2 Ne. 2:27–29).

Rebekah

BY CYNTHIA L. HALLEN

The story of Rebekah's betrothal to Isaac can teach us principles for establishing eternal covenant relationships.

The Lord cares deeply about the preparation for marriage of His sons and daughters. Although wedding customs vary in different nations, cultures, and situations, President Gordon B. Hinckley has counseled us to select our marriage companions “carefully and wisely.”¹ As is evident in this story, the Lord blesses those who desire to build an eternal family.

Though Rebekah did not know she was serving a man who would lead her to her future husband, her generous hospitality showed a spirit of charity that is ideal for marriage.

DETAIL FROM REBEKAH AT THE WELL, BY MICHAEL DEAS

"I WILL DRAW WATER FOR THY CAMELS"

Abraham recognized the Lord had a plan for him and his family because the Lord had promised, "I will make of thee a great nation, . . . and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:2–3). An essential part of fulfilling that plan was to find a righteous wife for his son Isaac. Having faith in the word of the Lord (see Gen. 24:7), Abraham entrusted this matter to Eliezer, the "eldest servant of his house" (Gen. 15:2; 24:2). Even when his servant questioned how this might be accomplished (see Gen. 24:5), Abraham assured him the Lord would guide him to success (see Gen. 24:7, 40).

As Eliezer approached the city of Nahor in Haran, he prayerfully submitted a plan to the Lord for identifying an appropriate young woman (see Gen. 24:12–14, 42–44). He proposed that whoever would kindly agree to get water from the well for himself and his animals would be the right person for Isaac. Rebekah came "with her pitcher upon her shoulder" (Gen. 24:15).

Abraham's servant had prayed for a maiden who would bring a dowry of kindness to the Abrahamic family (see Gen. 24:14). At the well he met a personification of Christlike charity and consideration. She was not only a dutiful daughter who diligently performed the daily work of retrieving water for family and their livestock, she was also willing to perform this arduous task for a stranger (see Gen. 24:18–20). She did not know she was serving a man who would lead her to her future husband, yet upon his request she extended both water and generous hospitality, saying, "We have both straw and provender [food for animals] enough, and room to lodge in" (Gen. 24:23–25). She served selflessly, reminding us that one of the best presents each partner can bring to the wedding altar is the gift of charity.

"THE THING PROCEEDETH FROM THE LORD"

In response to her generosity, and knowing that the Lord had answered his prayer, the servant of Abraham placed some jewelry upon Rebekah (see Gen. 24:22). She might have understood this gesture to indicate this man wanted her to marry someone, for in ancient Hebrew custom, when a man wished to enter into a betrothal commitment, he would enlist a friend or legal representative to present gifts to the hoped-for bride.² Rebekah "ran, and told them of her mother's house these things" (Gen. 24:28).

Abraham's servant followed her, and upon meeting her family he explained his matrimonial errand (see Gen. 24:33–49). They listened and were touched by the Spirit of the Lord (see Gen. 24:50–51). "When Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth" (Gen. 24:52).

But would Rebekah want to go? "Wilt thou go with

this man?" her family asked. The scripture simply records her trusting reply, "I will go" (Gen. 24:58; see also 1 Ne. 3:7). Rebekah was ready when called to build the Lord's kingdom as a wife and mother.

The faith of Abraham, his servant, and Rebekah and her family remind us that faith in God is essential in all things, including finding a spouse and preparing for marriage and family life.

"JEWELS OF GOLD, AND RAIMENT"

It was customary for the bridegroom to also give gifts to the bride's family. Thus the servant of Abraham gave Rebekah's "brother and to her mother precious things" (Gen. 24:53). The acceptance of gifts by Rebekah and her family confirmed the betrothal and commitment to the proposed union. Betrothed couples then entered an engagement period, when they were to demonstrate a commitment to their betrothal covenant through honesty and self-control. Similarly, the proven ability of a potential marriage partner today to keep baptismal, priesthood, or temple covenants shows that that person is honorable before God and others.

"SHE TOOK A VAIL"

After a long journey, Eliezer, Rebekah, and those who traveled with them arrived in the land of Canaan to meet Isaac. Rebekah had a character trait that showed her readiness for a covenant marriage: "When she saw Isaac, . . . she took a vail, and covered herself" (Gen. 24:64–65). It was common for unmarried women in Rebekah's day to go about in public with their faces unveiled. So when Rebekah put on a veil, it was a sign of her virtue, reverence, humility, and modesty and showed respect for her future spouse. Similarly, those who enter marriage today—both men and women—need the qualities of character Rebekah showed in this simple but dignified act.

THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD

Rebekah's charity, faith in God, commitment to covenants, and virtue enabled her to consecrate her life to the Lord and His plan. Her example can help guide us toward marriage within the Lord's covenant and can also be applied to preparing for the coming of the great "Bridegroom," the Lord Jesus Christ, at His Second Coming (see D&C 133:10).³

For example, of charity the Savior taught that "whosoever shall give to drink . . . a cup of cold water" to others will "in no wise" lose their reward (Matt. 10:42).

The Lord counseled, "Be faithful, praying always, having your lamps trimmed and burning, and oil with you, that you may be ready at the coming of the Bridegroom" (D&C 33:17). We help to prepare our

lamps by exercising faith in God in our daily decisions.

The Psalmist asked, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" Answering, he wrote, "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully" (Ps. 24:3–4; emphasis added). Commitment to sacred covenants is requisite for abiding His presence at His coming when every knee shall bow in humble reverence before the Savior (see Isa. 45:23).

In choosing goodness, Rebekah became an example of charity, faith in God, commitment, and reverence. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has counseled: "If you are single and haven't identified a solid prospect for celestial marriage, live for it. Pray for it. Expect it in the timetable of the Lord. Do not compromise your standards in any way that would rule out that blessing on this or the other side of the veil."⁴ Further, Rebekah's story

encourages us to "awake and arise and go forth to meet the Bridegroom. . . . Prepare yourselves for the great day of the Lord" (D&C 133:10). □

Cynthia L. Hallen is a member of the Grove Creek Eighth Ward, Pleasant Grove Utah Grove Creek Stake.

Gospel topics: marriage preparation, Second Coming, faith, charity, covenants, humility

NOTES

1. "Living Worthy of the Girl You Will Someday Marry," *Ensign*, May 1998, 51.

2. The prophet Isaiah has compared the bestowal of gifts and the adorning of special clothing on a bride to the putting on salvation (see Isa. 61:10) and the gathering of Israel (see Isa. 49:18).

3. The preparedness of a bride for marriage is symbolic of the preparation and holiness of the New Jerusalem (see Rev. 21:2).

4. "Receive the Temple Blessings," *Ensign*, May 1999, 27.

More on this topic: See Richard G. Scott, "Receive the Temple Blessings," *Ensign*, May 1999, 25–27; Richard K. Hart, "The Marriage Metaphor," *Ensign*, Jan. 1995, 22–27; Marlin K. Jensen, "A Union of Love and Understanding," *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 46–51. Visit www.lds.org or see Church magazines on CD.

In a simple but significant act, Rebekah covered her face with a veil as a sign of her virtue, reverence, humility, modesty, and respect for her future spouse.



ILLUSTRATED BY DEL PARSON



Jacob & Esau

BY DAVID H. MADSEN

The story of these rival twins reminds us of the importance of resolving conflicts in family relationships.

Rivals for much of their lives, Esau and Jacob were fraternal twins who competed for spiritual blessings, land, money, and family preeminence. Parental feelings regarding the bestowal of the birthright blessing widened the distance between them. Their story is one of intense feelings and bitter rivalry, yet it has a joyous resolution. It prompts us to evaluate our own family relationships and suggests some ways we may attempt to resolve any lingering unkind feelings.

"TWO NATIONS ARE IN THY WOMB"

The conflict between Esau and Jacob was evident even in their mother's womb. Rebekah, who after almost 20 years of marriage had not been able to conceive, felt a great struggle in her body and "went to enquire of the Lord" (Gen. 25:22). Our Father in Heaven, who knew us all before we were born, answered: "Two nations are in thy womb, . . . and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23). The order of their birth is important because the firstborn son received the right to inherit (1) the position of head of the family, (2) priesthood authority, and (3) a double portion of his parents' estate (see Bible Dictionary, "Birthright" and "Firstborn," 625, 675). Esau was born first, but in the womb Jacob "took hold on Esau's heel" (Gen 25:26).

The boys grew, each pursuing different occupations. Esau chose hunting and agriculture, while Jacob preferred the breeding and tending of animals.

Esau focused more on the things of the world, while Jacob was a "plain man" (Gen. 25:27), or, as the Bible footnote explains, he was "whole, complete, perfect, simple," suggesting that he was upright before the Lord. Isaac loved the companionship of Esau, and Rebekah favored Jacob (see Gen. 25:28).

THE BIRTHRIGHT BLESSING

Arriving home one day from a hunting expedition, a famished Esau longed for his brother's food. "Feed me, I pray thee," Esau pled (Gen. 25:30). Jacob agreed, but for a price: his brother's birthright. The scripture says, "Esau despised his birthright" (Gen. 25:34). Further evidence of his wayward nature can be noted several years later when, contrary to the commandment, he married a woman outside of the covenant, whose beliefs were not in harmony with the teachings of God. The Apostle Paul called Esau a "profane person" (see Heb. 12:16).

When Isaac became about 130 years old, and his sons more than 70,¹ the time was right for the bestowal of the birthright blessing. Rebekah felt the blessing should not go to Esau, that he would not perform in it as he should, and, remembering God's word that "the elder shall serve the younger," implemented a plan to ensure that her worthy son, Jacob, would receive it (see Gen. 27:6–10). Yet Jacob was hesitant to participate in the plan, so his mother replied, "Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice" (Gen. 27:13). Thus, by pretending to be his brother, Jacob received the birthright blessing from his father



Esau ran to meet Jacob in an expression of sincere brotherly affection. He had buried his resentment and forgotten all his injuries.

that his brother had promised him years earlier. Isaac affirmed that the blessing rightfully belonged to Jacob when he told Esau, "Yea, and he shall be blessed" (Gen. 27:33). Further, Isaac indicated in Esau's blessing that Esau would serve Jacob (see Gen. 27:40).

When Esau learned that Isaac had given the blessing to Jacob, he "lifted up his voice, and wept" (Gen. 27:38), suggesting he had no intention of keeping his earlier promise. The scripture says that Esau "hated" his brother and vowed to "slay" him (Gen. 27:41). Any rift that may have existed between them was now a chasm. As a consequence, Rebekah counseled Jacob to leave the area, feeling that with the passage of time Esau's anger might subside. Isaac and Rebekah also wanted Jacob to marry righteously (see Gen. 27:46; 28:1). So at about age 77 (see note 1), Jacob and Esau parted, a separation that lasted about 20 years (see Gen. 31:41).

THE REUNION

In time Jacob married and prospered in Haran as a laborer for his uncle Laban, while Esau's household moved to the nearby land of Seir, also called Edom. Then, in a visit from an angel of the Lord, Jacob was commanded to return to his birthright land (see Gen. 31:11–13). Supposing that his brother's former frame of mind still prevailed, Jacob sent messengers to Esau with a friendly greeting. They returned with word that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 armed men (see Gen. 32:6). "Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed" (Gen. 32:7). Since God had given the direction, Jacob appealed to Him in fervent prayer for protection. Jacob then instructed his servants to divide over 550 of his animals into many groups and to drive them in a staggered formation toward Esau. Each servant of Jacob presented his group of animals as a separate gift—gift piling upon gift. Jacob hoped this manner of presentation would soften his brother's heart (see Gen. 32:13–21).

As Esau drew close, Jacob went out with his wives and children to meet his brother, bowing seven times as he went—a sign of respect for his older brother. None of this was lost on Esau, who "ran to meet" Jacob (Gen. 33:4). "How sincere and genuine is this conduct of Esau," writes a commentator, "and at the same time how magnanimous! He had buried all his resentment, and forgotten all his injuries; and receives his brother with the strongest demonstrations, not only of forgiveness, but of fraternal affection."¹ Esau "embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept" (Gen. 33:4). They conversed about Jacob's beautiful family, and then Esau returned Jacob's gifts (see Gen. 33:9). But Jacob insisted, so Esau relented, for according to custom, the acceptance of the gift signified a reliable friendship had been formed.

Despite their past, they now knew they could be friends. And though Esau's path in life would never be Jacob's, and Jacob's would not be Esau's, the scripture notes they later came together to bury their father (see Gen. 35:29).

RECONCILIATION THROUGH CHRIST

This story may be rightly focused on the waywardness of Esau. Persons who desire righteousness will be spiritually blessed, while those who put aside their heavenly birthright "have given up something of eternal value in order to satisfy a momentary hunger for the things of the world."³

However, this is also a story about forgiveness and family reconciliation. "If I were to teach the principle of generosity in human relationships, how marvelous to share with people . . . the relationship of Jacob and Esau,"⁴ said Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Just as Jacob and Esau needed time apart, so might we occasionally need time to calm our feelings and reflect on the importance of our family relationships. Yet time and separation alone will not bring resolution. If we are prayerful, the Lord will help us know when the time is right for reconciliation, and we can follow the example of these brothers. How sweet that moment of sincere reconciliation can be! Our Savior will help us. He is the great Mediator, and He is able to soften hearts and heal wounds. He knows how to bring people to a unity of heart and mind. His example of marvelous generosity to us through His Atonement can help inspire forgiveness in our souls. □

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Gospel topics: forgiveness, Jesus Christ, Old Testament

NOTES

1. To arrive at the age of Isaac and Jacob, we have to start with Jacob's son Joseph, who was 30 years old when he became a ruler in Egypt (see Gen. 41:46). Joseph was 39 (allowing for seven years of plenty and two years of famine; see Gen. 41:29–30; 45:6) when Jacob settled in Egypt at age 130 (see Gen. 47:9).

Therefore, Jacob was about 91 when Joseph was born (subtracting Joseph's 39 years from Jacob's 130 years). Jacob was about 77 when he parted from Esau, because Joseph was born 14 years after Jacob left home (see Gen. 30:25–31; 31:41). Since Jacob was born when Isaac was 60 (see Gen. 25:20, 26) and was about 77 at the time of the birthright blessing, Isaac was about 137.

2. Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible . . . with a Commentary and Critical Notes*, 6 vols. (1973), 1:205.

3. Dallin H. Oaks, "Spirituality," *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 61.

4. "Teaching Opportunities from the Old Testament," *Ensign*, Apr. 1981, 59.

More on this topic: See "The Letter I Never Sent," *Ensign*, Aug. 1994, 22–25; Maxine Murdock, "I Have a Question," *Ensign*, June 1994, 60–61; Theodore M. Burton, "To Forgive Is Divine," *Ensign*, May 1983, 70–72.

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THE BOOK OF MORMON
A GUIDE FOR THE

Old Testament



BY ELDER GARY J. COLEMAN
Of the Seventy

The Old Testament can be better understood and believed by gleaning further light and truth from the pages of the Book of Mormon, our second witness for some of the events, themes, prophecies, and teachings of the Old Testament. The prophet Mormon certified this idea and explained our Heavenly Father's intent in bringing to light the Book of Mormon: "For behold, this [the Book of Mormon] is written for the intent that ye may believe that [the Bible]; and if ye believe that [the Bible] ye will believe this [the Book of Mormon]" (Morm. 7:9).

OLD TESTAMENT EVENTS

The Book of Mormon offers clarifying facts about and insights into a number of stories of the Old Testament and often "likens" or applies principles from them. For example, without Lehi's discourse in 2 Nephi 2, we would understand much less about the Fall. Mormon's observation that Satan "put it into the hearts of the people to build a tower sufficiently high that they might get to heaven" (Hel. 6:28) sweeps away much confusion of the biblical account. Jacob's teaching that Abraham's offering of his son Isaac is "a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son" (Jacob 4:5) allows us to confidently ponder the Atonement as we carefully study the detail of this story. For readers of the conquest of Palestine by Joshua and the children of Israel who wonder how God could sanction this

action, Nephi clearly teaches that the Canaanites were a grossly wicked people, ripe for destruction, who had rejected the word of God (see 1 Ne. 17:32–38). Nephi's application of a principle from this story of conquest encourages us to consider: "Behold, the Lord esteemeth all flesh in one; he that is righteous is favored of the Lord" (1 Ne. 17:35). Readers of the Old Testament would be wise to consult "the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion" as a resource to their study (History of the Church, 4:46). The chart on the following page summarizes many specific Old Testament events that are better understood after searching the Book of Mormon.

OLD TESTAMENT THEMES

An oft-repeated idea in the Old Testament is God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their posterity. When God confirmed this covenant with Jacob, He said, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Gen. 32:28). Thereafter, Jacob's descendants became known as the children or house of Israel (see Bible Dictionary, "Israel," 708).

The Book of Mormon was written to show us "what great things the Lord has done for [our] fathers; and that [we] may know the covenants of the Lord" (Book of Mormon title page, paragraph 2). The "fathers" mentioned here refer to Adam, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Joseph, Lehi, Nephi, Jacob, King Benjamin, King Mosiah, Alma, and many others. They were of the house of Israel and were under the same covenants with God as members of the Church are today. The



OLD TESTAMENT EVENTS & RELATED BOOK OF MORMON REFERENCES

OLD TESTAMENT EVENT	OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCE	RELATED BOOK OF MORMON REFERENCE
The Creation of the earth and mankind	Gen. 1–2; Moses 2–3	2 Ne. 2:11–15; Jacob 2:21; Mosiah 4:9; Morm. 9:17
The Fall of Adam and Eve	Gen. 3; Moses 4	2 Ne. 2:14–25; Alma 12:20–24
Cain and secret combinations	Gen. 4; Moses 5:18–32	Hel. 6:26–30; Ether 8:15–16
Noah and the Flood	Gen. 7	Alma 10:22; Ether 6:7
The Tower of Babel	Gen. 11	Hel. 6:28; Ether 1:33–43
Melchizedek and Abraham	Gen. 14:18–20	Alma 13:14–19
Abraham circumcises his household	Gen. 15; Lev. 12	Moro. 8:8
Moses and the parting of the Red Sea	Ex. 14	1 Ne. 4:2–3; 1 Ne. 17:23–27; Mosiah 7:19
Moses brings forth water from a rock in the wilderness	Ex. 17; Num. 20	1 Ne. 17:29; 2 Ne. 25:20
Moses receives the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai	Ex. 19–20	Mosiah 12:33–36
Moses is transfigured	Ex. 34:29–35	Mosiah 13:5
Moses and the brazen serpent	Num. 21	1 Ne. 17:41–42; 2 Ne. 25:20; Alma 33:19–21; Hel. 8:14–15
What happened to Moses at the end of his ministry	Deut. 34	Alma 45:19
The conquest of the promised land by Joshua and the children of Israel	Josh. 1–10	1 Ne. 17:32–38
David marries many wives	1 Sam. 25:42–43; 2 Sam. 5:13; 11:27	Jacob 2:23–31; 4:14–18
Solomon marries many wives	1 Kgs. 11:1–3	Jacob 2:23–31; 4:14–18
Jeremiah cast into prison	Jer. 37	1 Ne. 7:14
Destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonians	Jer. 52:12–15; 2 Kgs. 24–25	1 Ne. 1:4, 13; 1 Ne. 7:13–15; 2 Ne. 1:4; 6:8; Omni 1:15–18; Hel. 8:20
Isaiah sees Jesus Christ	Isa. 6	2 Ne. 11:2

family of Jacob, whether in Old Testament or Book of Mormon lands, were the preachers of righteousness who have laid before us in the scriptures the doctrine of Christ, even faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Adam, Moses, Isaiah, Nephi, Mormon, Moroni, and many others have written in great detail and clarity of the eternal gospel and its beginning from the foundation of the earth. They wrote and testified of the Creation, the Fall, Lucifer, the redemption of all mankind through the Holy Messiah, salvation by grace, and the resurrection of the dead.

Another major emphasis of the Old Testament is the scattering and gathering of the house of

Israel. Here again the Book of Mormon offers invaluable perspectives. One of the sons of Jacob (Israel) was Joseph, who was sold into Egypt. Joseph became a leader in the court of Pharaoh (see Gen. 37–41). To Joseph were born two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen. 41:50–52). The descendants of these two sons are “the fruitful bough” of the house of Israel “whose branches run over the wall” (Gen. 49:22), meaning they were scattered across the earth. As the Book of Mormon account opens, we are introduced to Lehi, “a descendant of Manasseh, who was the son of Joseph who was sold into Egypt” (Alma 10:3).

The story of Lehi and his family in the Book of Mormon is a record of a scattered remnant of the house of Israel. Yet the Book of Mormon introduces all of scattered Israel to the Restoration and latter-day prophets who preach the same gospel of Christ taught by ancient prophets. When the resurrected Christ spoke of the doctrine of the gathering of a covenant people to the Saints in the land of Bountiful (see 3 Ne. 20:25–31), He reminded them of the ancient covenant He, as Jehovah, had made with Abraham some 2,000 years before (see Gen. 12:1–3; 17:19–21; 22:18), to gather scattered Israel. In plainness and simplicity, the Book of Mormon testifies that the intent of all scripture is to invite Israel home. This is done in all ages through the great process of missionary work.

A third significant subject presented in the Old Testament is the role of prophets. Prophets are called by God in all ages. Their duty is to teach the everlasting gospel, to cry repentance. They invite all to come to Christ and be saved in the kingdom of God. Whether from the watchtowers of the Old Testament (see Isa. 52:8; Jer. 6:17; Ezek. 3:17), those of the Book of Mormon (see Mosiah 2:8; Hel. 7:10–14), or today’s pulpits alive with latter-day testimony, prophets speak and the message of salvation is given. The Book of Mormon helps us understand how Old Testament prophets held the keys and authority of God and

conducted their labors in preparing families for exaltation through the great plan of God (see JST, Gen. 14:25–40, Bible appendix; Alma 13:1–21). Righteous priesthood holders administer the gospel of Jesus Christ and establish the Church in every dispensation.

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES

Old Testament and Book of Mormon peoples wanted to know of future events. Book of Mormon prophet Jacob observed, “For I know that ye [his people] have searched much, many of you, to know of things to come” (2 Ne. 9:4). Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah, and Malachi all noted their people’s fascination with soothsayers, astrologers, and divination (see Isa. 8:19; Jer. 27:9; Ezek. 12:24; Micah 5:12; Mal. 3:5). But their prophets wanted them to know about the Lord’s future work, particularly concerning the coming of Christ in the flesh, the last days, the Second Coming, and the Millennium. Both the Old Testament and Book of Mormon are filled with prophecies which overlap and help illuminate each other. Book of Mormon prophets frequently turned to Old Testament passages, even directly quoting from them, to teach of the future. The following chart summarizes where a student of Old Testament prophecy can turn in the Book of Mormon for further help.



OLD TESTAMENT TEACHINGS & RELATED BOOK OF MORMON REFERENCES

OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING	OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCE	RELATED BOOK OF MORMON REFERENCE
Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament, is Jesus Christ	Gen. 4:4; 7:1; 12:1; 28:13; Ex. 3:4–6; 14:30	1 Ne. 17:30; 2 Ne. 10:2–3; Moro. 10:34
Ancient patriarchs entered the rest of God	Gen. 4–5, 11–12	Alma 13:1–20
The Ten Commandments	Ex. 20	Mosiah 13:12–26
God gives power over the weather to some of His prophets	1 Kgs. 17:1	Hel. 10:4–11; 11:4–5
Moses and many other Old Testament prophets taught of Christ	Deut. 18:15–19; five books of Moses; writings of Isaiah and Jeremiah	3 Ne. 20:23–24; Hel. 8:11–22; Mosiah 13:33–35
The purpose of the law of Moses was to lead people to Christ	Ex. 20–Lev. 27	Jacob 4:4–6; 2 Ne. 25:23–30; Mosiah 3:14; 13:27–35; Alma 25:15–16; 34:10–14; 3 Ne. 9:17; 12:17; 15:2–9

OLD TESTAMENT TEACHINGS

There is no wide-ranging explanatory discussion of the plan of God in the Old Testament. Yet Book of Mormon prophets, who had much of the Old Testament on the plates of brass (see 1 Ne. 5:10–16),

were well acquainted with the plan of God. How beautifully Jacob and Alma outline the central and saving role of the Savior in the plan! (see 2 Ne. 9:1–26; Alma 12:32–34). In fact, one of the roles of the Book of Mormon is to add to the Old Testament many



JOSEPH SMITH RECEIVING THE PLATES BY KENNETH RILEY

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES & RELATED BOOK OF MORMON REFERENCES

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY	OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCE	RELATED BOOK OF MORMON REFERENCE
Through Abraham's seed would come a blessing for all nations	Gen. 12:3	1 Ne. 15:18; 3 Ne. 20:25–27
God would raise up two prophets: Moses and Joseph Smith	JST, Gen. 50:24–38	2 Ne. 3:3–22
The Bible and the Book of Mormon would become one in the hand of the Lord	JST, Gen. 50:24–38; Ezek. 37:15–17	1 Ne. 13:39–40; 2 Ne. 3:11–12; 29:8–14
Jesus Christ would be rejected by the Jews	Ps. 118:22–23	Jacob 4:14–18
Prophecies of the latter days, Isaiah's day, Christ's day, and the Millennium	Isa. 2–24	2 Ne. 12–27:2 (a quote of Isaiah's writings from the plates of brass)
The words of the Book of Mormon will help gather Israel	Isa. 5:26	2 Ne. 29:2–3
The gathering of Israel in the last days	Isa. 11:4–12	2 Ne. 25:17; 29:1; 30:3–18
God will teach His people "line upon line"	Isa. 28:9–13	2 Ne. 28:29–31
The coming forth of the Book of Mormon	Isa. 29	2 Ne. 26:15–17; 27:2–35; 28:9–16; 3 Ne. 21:9
A prophet would prepare the way for Christ	Isa. 40:3	1 Ne. 10:7–8
Scattered Israel will be gathered by the power of Christ in the last days	Isa. 48–49	1 Ne. 20–22 (a quote of Isaiah's writings from the plates of brass)
The Gentiles will help gather Israel in the last days	Isa. 49:22–26	2 Ne. 6
Christ would suffer for His people	Isa. 50–52:2	2 Ne. 7–8
Israel will be redeemed in the last days through prophets and missionary work; Christ shall reign upon the earth	Isa. 52	1 Ne. 22:10–12; Mosiah 12:21–24; 15:13–19, 29–31; 3 Ne. 16:11–20; 3 Ne. 20:30–45; 3 Ne. 21:8, 26–29
Christ would suffer for the sins of the world	Isa. 53	Mosiah 14:1–15:12
Israel will be gathered in mercy and tenderness in the last days	Isa. 54	3 Ne. 22
Christ will make an everlasting covenant with all who will come to Him	Isa. 55:1–3	2 Ne. 26:24–28; Moro. 10:31–32
God will fight Israel's battles in the last days	Micah 4:11–13; Micah 5:8–15	3 Ne. 16:7–15; 20:16–21; 21:12–21
The wicked will be destroyed at the Second Coming when Christ will judge the nations	Mal. 3–4	3 Ne. 24:1–26:2 (a quote of Malachi's writings)

precious insights into the great plan, particularly concerning Christ, who is Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament (see 1 Ne. 17:30). The primary intent of ancient American prophets was to testify to future generations that “we knew of Christ, and we had a hope of his glory many hundreds of years before his coming; and not only we ourselves had a hope of his glory, but also all the holy prophets which were before us” (Jacob 4:4). The prophet Nephi said, “My soul delighteth in proving unto my people the truth of the coming of Christ; for, for this end hath the law of Moses been given; and all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him” (2 Ne. 11:4). Nephi taught his people of Christ, primarily through the use of the types and symbols he found in the Old Testament. The following chart shows examples of teachings and symbols, some of which are given limited review in the Old Testament but are amplified in the Book of Mormon.

CONCLUSION

The scriptures have come from God through the inspired minds of those who spoke and wrote of eternal truths. Members of the Church today are children of the covenant, the people blessed of the

Lord to have a fulness of the gospel and to have made sacred covenants with the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. Ours is a life in the kingdom of God on earth, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Yet it is eternal life in the kingdom of God in heaven that our Savior continually invites us to obtain by following His righteous example. Thanks be to God the Father for the sacred records which testify of the great plan of happiness. The work, sacrifice, endurance, faith, hope, and joy of all the holy prophets—those in the Old Testament and in the Book of Mormon—were centered in the blessed Atonement of the Son of God. He is the Mediator and grantor of the blessings of the covenant between the people of God and our Heavenly Father. The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ is an essential study aid for more fully understanding the message of the Old Testament, our first and most enduring witness of Christ. □

Gospel topics: scripture study, Old Testament, Book of Mormon, symbols of Christ

More on this topic: See Victor L. Ludlow, “Unlocking Old Testament Prophecy,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1990, 58–63; Robert L. Millett, “The Plates of Brass: A Witness of Christ,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1988, 26–29; Glenn L. Pearson, “The Book of Mormon as a Witness of the Old Testament,” *Ensign*, June 1986, 14–18.



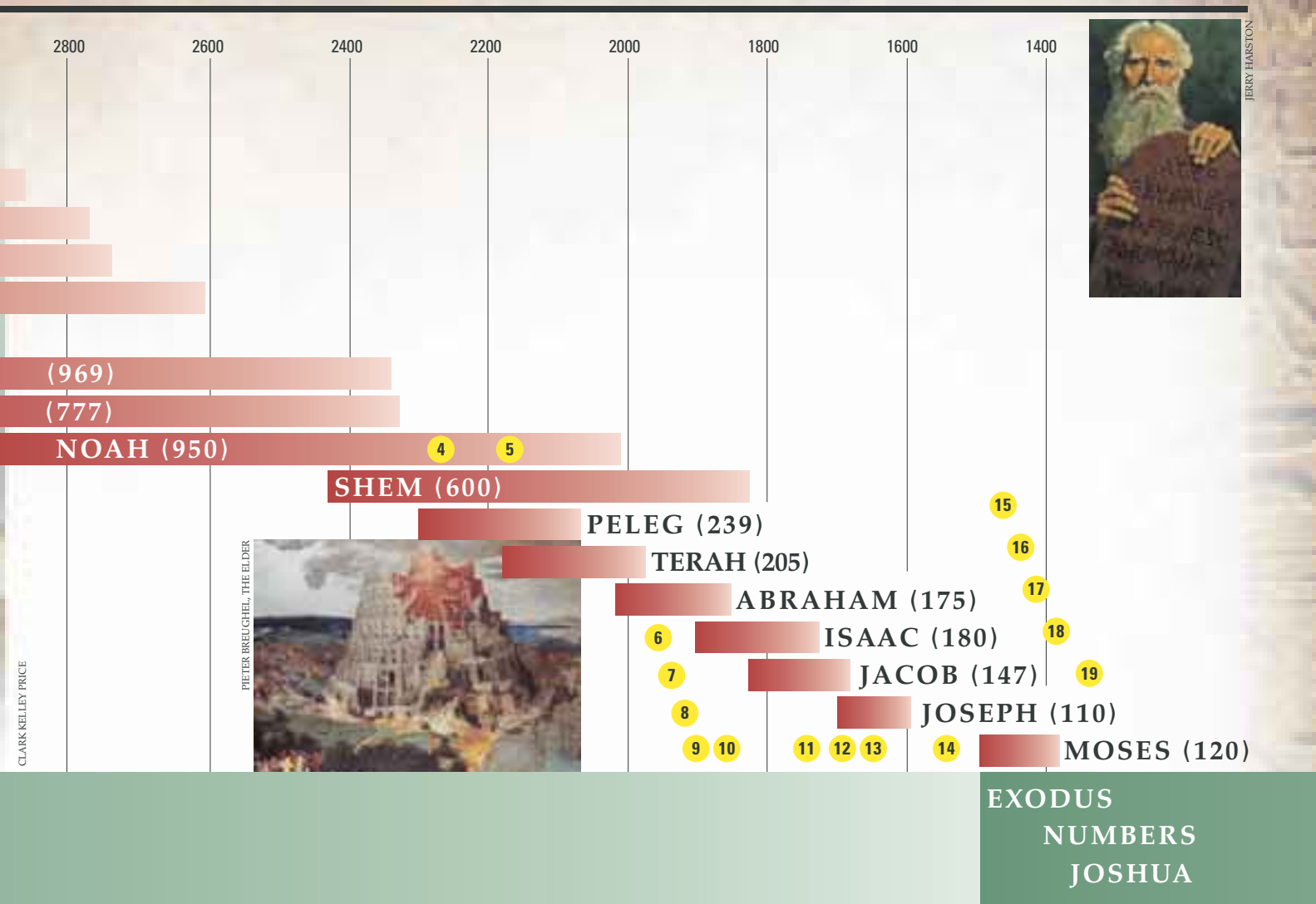
SYMBOLS OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY & RELATED BOOK OF MORMON REFERENCES

SYMBOLS OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY	OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCE	RELATED BOOK OF MORMON REFERENCE
Sacrifices pointed to Christ	Gen. 4	2 Ne. 2:7; 3 Ne. 9:19–20
Melchizedek	Ps. 110:4	Alma 13:2, 14–16
Abraham and Isaac	Gen. 22	Jacob 4:5
The Passover lamb	Ex. 12	Alma 34:10–14
The blood of the covenant	Ex. 24:8	Mosiah 3:18
Water from a rock	Num. 20	2 Ne. 25:20
Brazen serpent	Num. 21	2 Ne. 25:20



CHART 1
From Adam to Moses
(dates are approximate)

Event	Scripture	Description	Event	Scripture	Description
1	Gen. 4:1–16; Moses 5:16–41	Cain kills his younger brother Abel out of jealousy and greed (see Bible Dictionary [BD], “Abel” and “Cain,” 600, 628).	6	Gen. 11:27–12:9; Abr. 1–2:20	Abraham journeys to Canaan and receives his divine call and covenant (see BD, “Abraham” and “Abraham, Covenant of,” 601–2).
2	D&C 107:53–57	Adam gathers his righteous posterity and blesses them three years before his death (see BD, “Patriarch,” 742).	7	JST, Gen. 14:25–40; Alma 13:14–19	Melchizedek and his city of Salem are taken into heaven, or translated (see BD, “Melchizedek,” “Salem,” and “Shem,” 730, 768, 773).
3	Gen. 5:24; Moses 7:18–23, 68–69	Enoch and the city of Zion live in righteousness for 365 years and are taken into heaven, or translated (see BD, “Enoch” and “Zion,” 665, 792–93).	8	Gen. 18:16–19:29	The Lord destroys the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire from heaven (see BD, “Gomorrah,” 682).
4	Gen. 6–8; Moses 8	Noah and his family are saved from the Flood, which baptizes and cleanses the earth because of the wickedness of the people (see BD, “Ark” and “Noah,” 613, 738–39).	9	Gen. 23	Sarah, Abraham’s wife, dies and is buried at Hebron (see BD, “Hebron” and “Sarah,” 699, 769).
5	Gen. 11:1–9; Hel. 6:28; Ether 1	Tower of Babel is built, languages are confounded, and the Jaredites leave for America (see BD, “Babylon,” 618).	10	Gen. 25:19–28	Isaac and Rebekah have twin sons, Esau and Jacob (see BD, “Birthright,” “Edom,” “Esau,” and “Jacob,” 625, 660, 667, 708–9).
			11	Gen. 28:10–35:29	Jacob marries, has 12 sons and a daughter born to him, and establishes a covenant with God (see BD, “Abraham, Covenant of,” 602).



JERRY HARSTON

PIETER BREUGHEL, THE ELDER



Event Scripture

- 12 Gen. 37
- 13 Gen. 42:1–47:12
- 14 Ex. 1–2
- 15 Ex. 3–4
- 16 Ex. 5–14
- 17 Ex. 19–40

Description

Joseph's brothers sell him into Egypt because of jealousy over his visions and his natural right to the birthright blessing (see BD, "Joseph," 716–17).

Jacob and his family move to Egypt and settle in the land of Goshen (see BD, "Egypt" and "Goshen," 660–61, 682).

Descendants of Jacob (Israelites) are in bondage in Egypt (see BD, "Egypt," 660–61).

Moses is called to lead the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt (see BD, "Burning Bush," "Moses," and "Pharaoh," 627, 734–35, 750).

The Lord saves the Israelites from the Egyptians during their exodus (see BD, "Exodus, Book of," 668).

Moses and the Israelites receive the law of Moses from God at Mount Sinai and build the temple-tabernacle (see BD, "Ark of the Covenant," "Commandments, The Ten," "Law of Moses," "Sinai," and "Tabernacle," 613–14, 648, 722–23, 775, 778–80; Bible Map 2 (1999 edition)).

Event Scripture

- 18 Num. 10–32
- 19 Josh. 1–12
- 20 Ether 1–2
- 21 Ether 3
- 22 Ether 6
- 23 Ether 8:4–19
- 24 Ether 9:14–22
- 25 Ether 9:30–35

Description

The Israelites reject the true report of the spies and journey in the wilderness for 40 years (see BD, "Caleb" and "Wilderness of the Exodus," 628, 789; Bible Map 2).

Israel enters and conquers the promised land (see BD, "Joshua" and "Joshua, Book of," 717–18; Bible Map 2).

Jaredites' language is not confounded, and the Lord commands them to leave for America at the time of the Tower of Babel.

The brother of Jared sees Jesus Christ.

Jaredites arrive in America.

Akish forms secret combinations.

Emer is anointed king and sees Jesus Christ.

Great famine and poisonous snakes cause the people to be humble before the Lord.

1500

1450

1400

1350

1300

MOSES (120) years old

JOSHUA (110)

26

JUDGES 27 28
(Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah/
Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon,

CHART 2

From Moses to Solomon

(dates are approximate)

Historical Books

EXODUS

NUMBERS JOSHUA

JUDGES

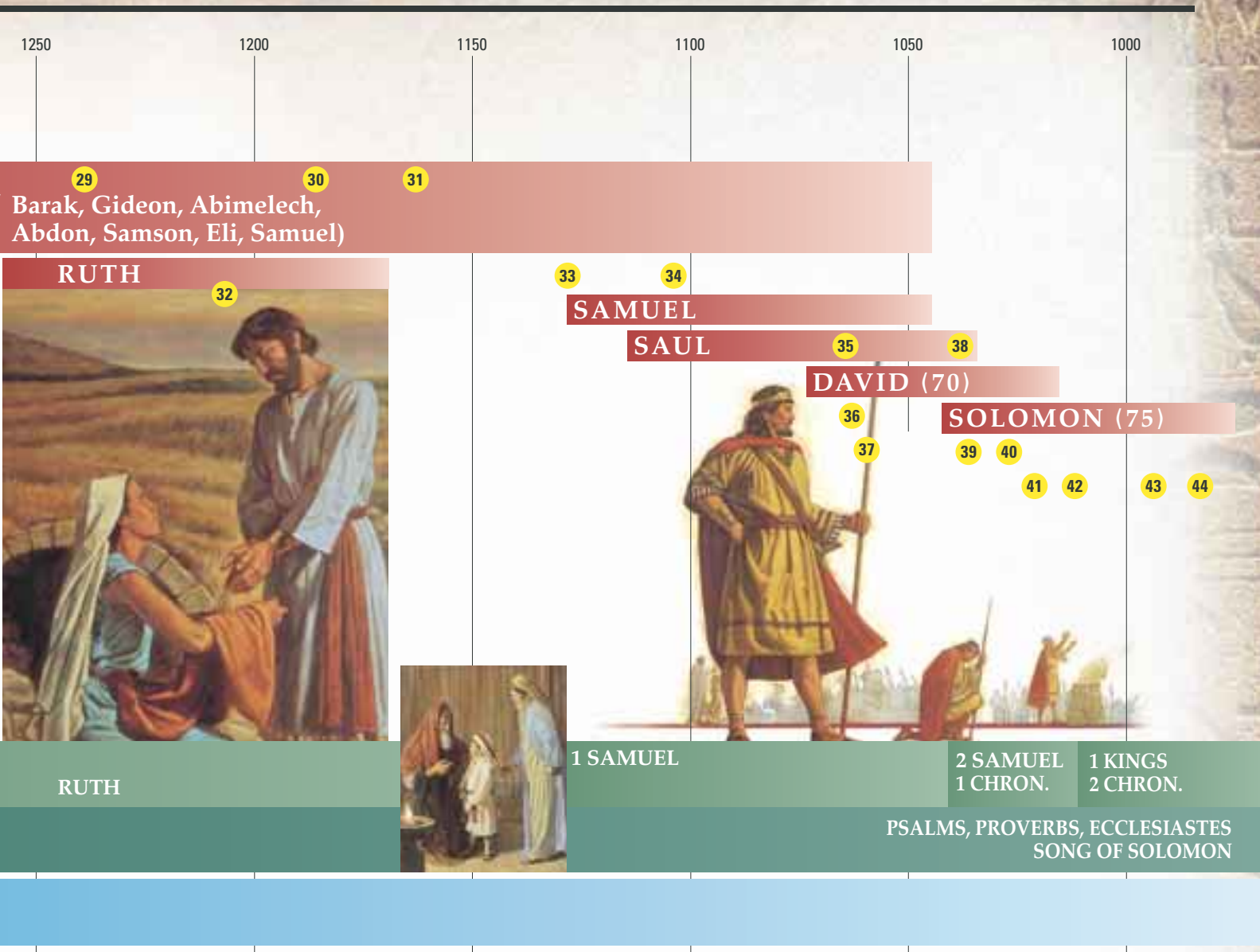
Prophetic Books

LEVITICUS, DEUTERONOMY

JAREDITES IN AMERICA

Event Scripture Description

- 26 Josh. 13–21 Joshua divides the land among the tribes (see BD, "Palestine," 740; Bible Map 3).
- 27 Judg. 3:12–30 Ehud slays Eglon, king of Moab, and judges Israel for 80 years (see BD, "Ehud," "Judges, The," "Judges, Book of," and "Moab," 661, 719–20, 733).
- 28 Judg. 4–5 Jael slays Sisera, captain of the Canaanite armies, and Deborah and Barak judge Israel for 40 years (see BD, "Barak," "Canaan," "Deborah," and "Jael," 619, 629, 655, 709).
- 29 Judg. 6–8 Gideon defeats the Midianites with a small army and judges Israel for 40 years (see BD, "Gideon" and "Midianites," 680, 732).
- 30 Judg. 11–12 Jephthah defeats the Ammonites and judges Israel for six years (see BD, "Ammon" and "Jephthah," 607, 711).
- 31 Judg. 13–15 Samson begins to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines and judges Israel for 20 years (see BD, "Nazirite," "Philistines," and "Samson," 737, 751, 768).
- 32 Ruth 1–4 Ruth marries her kinsman Boaz (see BD, "Boaz," "Levirate Marriage," and "Ruth," 626, 724, 764).

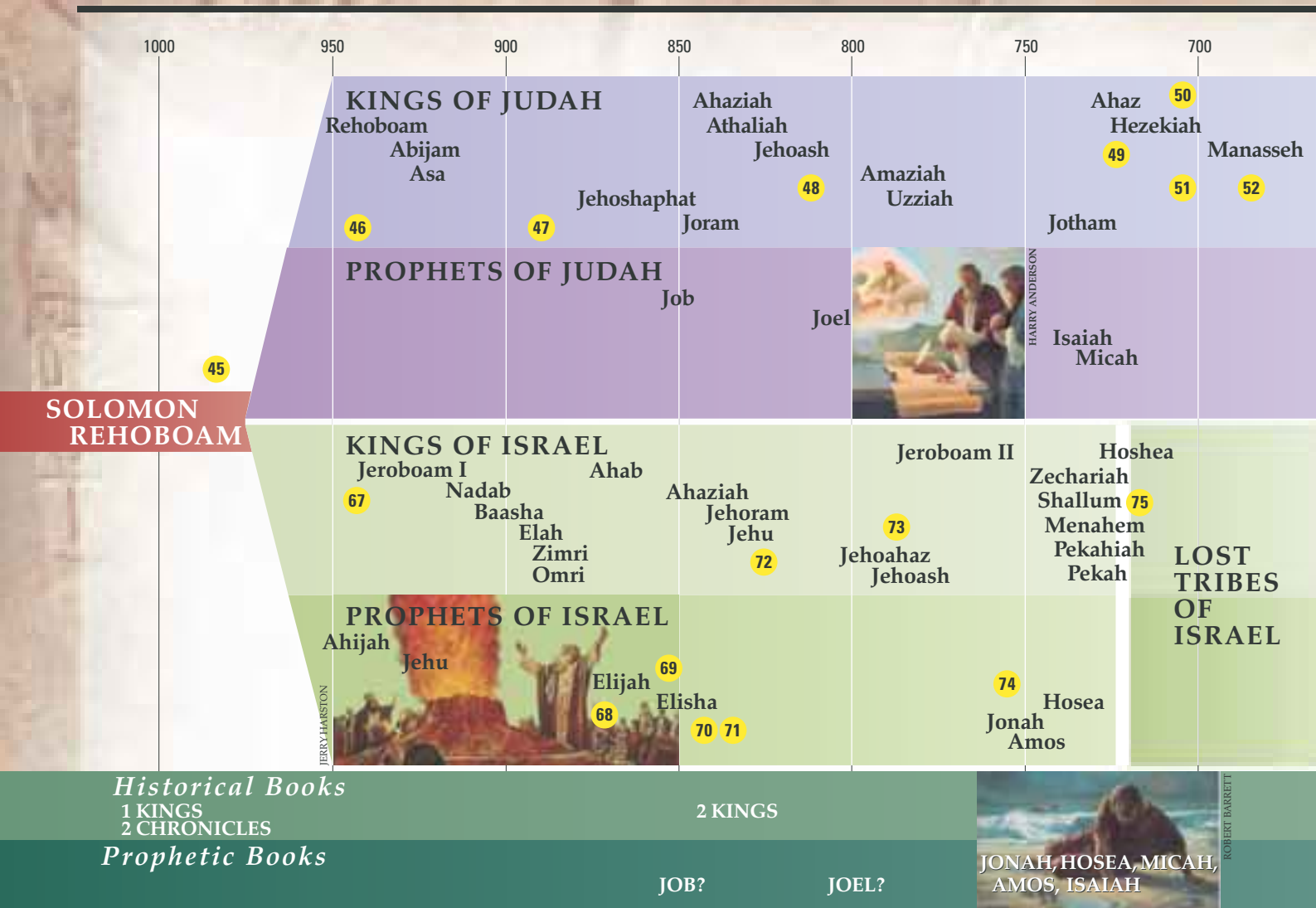


Event Scripture Description

- 33** 1 Sam. 1-3 Elkanah and Hannah consecrate their son, Samuel, to the Lord and to serve in the tabernacle with Eli, the high priest (see BD, "Hannah" and "Samuel," 698, 768-69).
- 34** 1 Sam. 8-10 The Israelites ask Samuel for a king, and Saul is anointed king (see BD, "Samuel" and "Saul," 768-69).
- 35** 1 Sam. 13-16 Saul disobeys the Lord, and Samuel anoints David to be the future king (see BD, "David," 653-54).
- 36** 1 Sam. 17 David slays Goliath (see BD, "Goliath," 682).
- 37** 1 Sam. 24, 26 David spares the life of King Saul even though Saul is trying to kill him (see BD, "Anoint," 609).
- 38** 1 Sam. 31 King Saul and his son Jonathan are slain in battle with the Philistines (see BD, "Jonathan," 716).
- 39** 2 Sam. 5, 8-10 David expands the conquests and political borders of Israel and makes Jerusalem the capital of Israel (see BD, "David," "Jerusalem," and "Palestine," 653-54, 712, 740; Bible Map 4).

Event Scripture Description

- 40** 2 Sam. 11-12 David places Uriah in battlefront so he will be killed, and marries Bathsheba. The prophet Nathan delivers the Lord's rebuke (see BD, "Nathan," 737).
- 41** 2 Sam. 15-18 Absalom tries to take the kingdom from his father, David, and is slain (see BD, "Absalom" and "Joab," 602, 713).
- 42** 1 Kgs. 1-2 Solomon becomes king despite a rebellion by his brother Adonijah (see BD, "Adonijah" and "Solomon," 604, 775).
- 43** 1 Kgs. 5-8 Solomon builds and dedicates the temple at Jerusalem (see BD, "Temple of Solomon," 782-83).
- 44** 1 Kgs. 11 Solomon turns his heart to the worship of false gods through his marriages.



JAREDITES IN AMERICA

KINGDOM OF JUDAH

Event	Scripture	Description
45	1 Kgs. 12	After Solomon's death, Rehoboam becomes king. Part of his kingdom rebels, leaving him to rule over the kingdom of Judah (see BD, "Jew," "Judah, Kingdom of," and "Rehoboam," 713, 718–19, 760).
46	1 Kgs. 14:25–26	Shishak, pharaoh of Egypt, plunders the temple at Jerusalem during the days of King Rehoboam (see BD, "Pharaoh" and "Shishak," 750, 774).
47	2 Chr. 14–16	Asa seeks God's help and defeats the kingdom of Ethiopia (see BD, "Asa" and "Ethiopia," 614, 667).
48	2 Kgs. 11–12	Jehoash (Joash), with the help of Jehoiada the high priest, restores Jehovah worship and repairs the temple at Jerusalem (see BD, "Jehoiada," 710).
49	2 Kgs. 16	Ahaz makes an alliance with Assyria, contrary to Isaiah's prophetic counsel (see BD, "Ahaz," "Isaiah," and "Tiglath-pileser," 605, 707, 785).
50	2 Kgs. 18–20; Isa. 37–39	Isaiah advises King Hezekiah in his battle against the Assyrians (see BD, "Hezekiah," "Isaiah," and "Sennacherib," 702, 707, 771).
51	2 Kgs. 19:35–36; Isa. 37:36–37	An angel of God slays 185,000 Assyrians, saving the kingdom of Judah from being carried away like the kingdom of Israel (see BD, "Assyria," 615).

Event	Scripture	Description
52	2 Kgs. 21:1–18	Manasseh kills the Lord's prophets, including Isaiah, and practices great wickedness (see BD, "Manasseh" and "Molech," 728, 733).
53	2 Kgs. 22:1–23:28	Josiah restores the temple and reads the scriptures to the people (see BD, "High Places" and "Josiah," 702, 718).
54	2 Kgs. 23: 29–37	Pharaoh Necho and the Egyptians rule over Judah until defeated by Babylonians (see BD, "Necho" and "Pharaoh," 738, 750).
55	Jer. 37–38	Nebuchadnezzar rules over Judah; Jeremiah is imprisoned (see BD, "Jeremiah" and "Nebuchadnezzar," 711, 737–38).
56	2 Chr. 36:11–12; 1 Ne. 1–2	Jeremiah and others preach in Jerusalem. Lehi leaves for America.
57	2 Kgs. 24:1; Jer. 46:2; Dan. 1:1–6	First group of Jews carried away captive by Babylonians (see BD, "Daniel," 652–53).
58	2 Kgs. 24:10–16; Ezek. 1:1–3	Second group of Jews carried away captive by Babylonians (see BD, "Dispersion" and "Ezekiel," 658, 668–69).
59	2 Kgs. 25; Jer. 39	Third group carried away captive; Jerusalem destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians (see BD, "Captivities of the Israelites," "Diaspora," and "Zedekiah," 631, 657, 792; Bible Map 6).

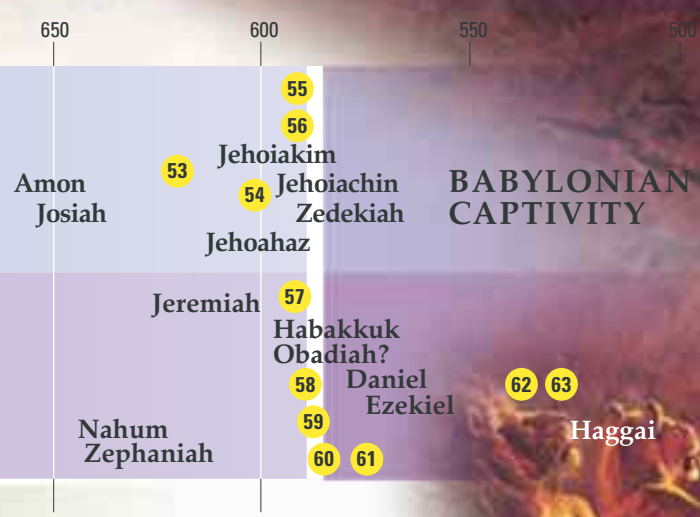


CHART 3
From Solomon to Malachi
 (dates are approximate)



ROBERT BARRETT

**EZRA
ESTHER
NEHEMIAH**

**ZEPHANIAH, HABAKKUK, OBADIAH, ZECHARIAH,
NAHUM?, JEREMIAH, DANIEL, EZEKIEL, HAGGAI, MALACHI**

NEPHITES/LAMANITES
 77 78 79 80 81

Event	Scripture	Description
60	Jer. 39:1–7; Omni 1:15; Mosiah 25:2; Hel. 8:21	Mulek leaves for America.
61	Dan. 2, 7–12; Ezek. 1–3, 33–48	Ezekiel and Daniel receive visions of their people, Christ, and the last days while living in captivity (see BD, “Abomination of Desolation,” “Daniel,” “Daniel, Book of,” and “Ezekiel,” 601, 652–53, 668–69).
62	2 Chr. 36: 22–23; Ezra 1	Cyrus, king of Persia, conquers Babylonians and allows Jews to return to Jerusalem (see BD, “Cyrus” and “Persia,” 651, 749; Bible Map 7).
63	Ezra 2–6	Zerubbabel, a prince of Judah, and returning Jews rebuild the temple at Jerusalem (see BD, “Temple of Zerubbabel” and “Zerubbabel,” 783–84, 792).
64	Esth. 1–8	Esther’s courage saves the Jews in Persia from extermination (see BD, “Ahasuerus,” “Esther, Book of,” and “Haman,” 605, 667, 698).
65	Neh. 2–6	Wall of Jerusalem is rebuilt (see BD, “Jerusalem,” “Nehemiah,” and “Sanballat,” 712, 738, 769).
66	Neh. 8–10	Ezra reads the law to his people and encourages marriage within the covenant (see BD, “Artaxerxes,” “Ezra,” and “Scribe,” 614, 669, 770).

KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

Event	Scripture	Description
67	1 Kgs. 11–14	Jeroboam rules over the kingdom of Israel and sets up false gods in Dan and Bethel, contrary to the counsel of the prophet Ahijah (see BD, “Ahijah,” “Israel, Kingdom of,” and “Jeroboam,” 605, 708, 712).
68	1 Kgs. 17	Elijah confronts Ahab and Jezebel, king and queen of Israel. He challenges the wicked priests of Baal on Mount Carmel (see BD, “Ahab,” “Elijah,” and “Jezebel,” 605, 664, 713).
69	2 Kgs. 2:1–18	Elijah is taken into heaven, and his prophetic mantle is given to Elisha (see BD, “Angels” and “Elisha,” 608, 664).
70	2 Kgs. 5	Elisha tells Naaman the Syrian how he may be healed (see BD, “Naaman” and “Syria,” 736, 778).
71	2 Kgs. 6:1–23	Horses and chariots of fire protect Elisha from the Syrian army (see BD, “Angels,” “Dothan,” and “Syria,” 608, 658, 778).
72	2 Kgs. 9–10	Jehu destroys Baal worship throughout Israel (see BD, “Baal,” 617–18).
73	2 Kgs. 14:8–16	Israel under King Jehoash defeats Judah in battle and plunders the temple at Jerusalem.
74	2 Kgs. 14:25; Jonah 1–4	Jonah reluctantly preaches to the people of Nineveh, and they repent (see BD, “Jonah” and “Nineveh,” 716, 738).
75	2 Kgs. 15:1–31; 17	Israelites under King Hoshea are carried away captive by the Assyrians and become the oft-called lost ten tribes (see BD, “Assyria,” “Captivities of Israelites,” and “Israel, Kingdom of,” 615–16, 631, 708; Bible Map 5).

BOOK OF MORMON

76	Ether 11:1–13	Prophets warn of the destruction of the Jaredite nation unless they repent.
77	1 Ne. 18: 23–25	Lehi and family arrive in America.
78	2 Ne. 5	Nephites separate from the Lamanites.
79	Jacob 1:9	Nephi dies.
80	Jacob 7:27	Jacob gives records to Enos.
81	Enos 1:25; Jarom 1:1	An aged Enos prepares to give records to his son Jarom.



ENJOYING THE

Old Testament

*Feeling intimidated by the book's size and complexity?
Take courage with these ideas.*

BY TIMOTHY L. CARVER

Have you ever had to complete a project so large that you didn't even know where to begin? Maybe it was writing a research paper, overhauling the engine of a car, building a house, earning a degree, or taking on a new Church calling. It can be overwhelming! This is the way some people feel about reading the Old Testament. A few challenges in this daunting task are:

1. Length. The Latter-day Saint publication of the King James Version of the Old Testament is 1,184 pages long. Think about it—1,184 pages! Many of us rarely read a book so long.

2. Language. The Church uses the King James Version of the Bible for English-speaking members. It was beautifully written by translators who believed that Jesus is the Christ. It was written, however, using words and grammar from the 17th century! It takes practice to get used to this way of writing.

3. Time, Place, and Culture. The people of the Old Testament lived a long time ago, in a place most of us have never been, and in settings very different from modern times.

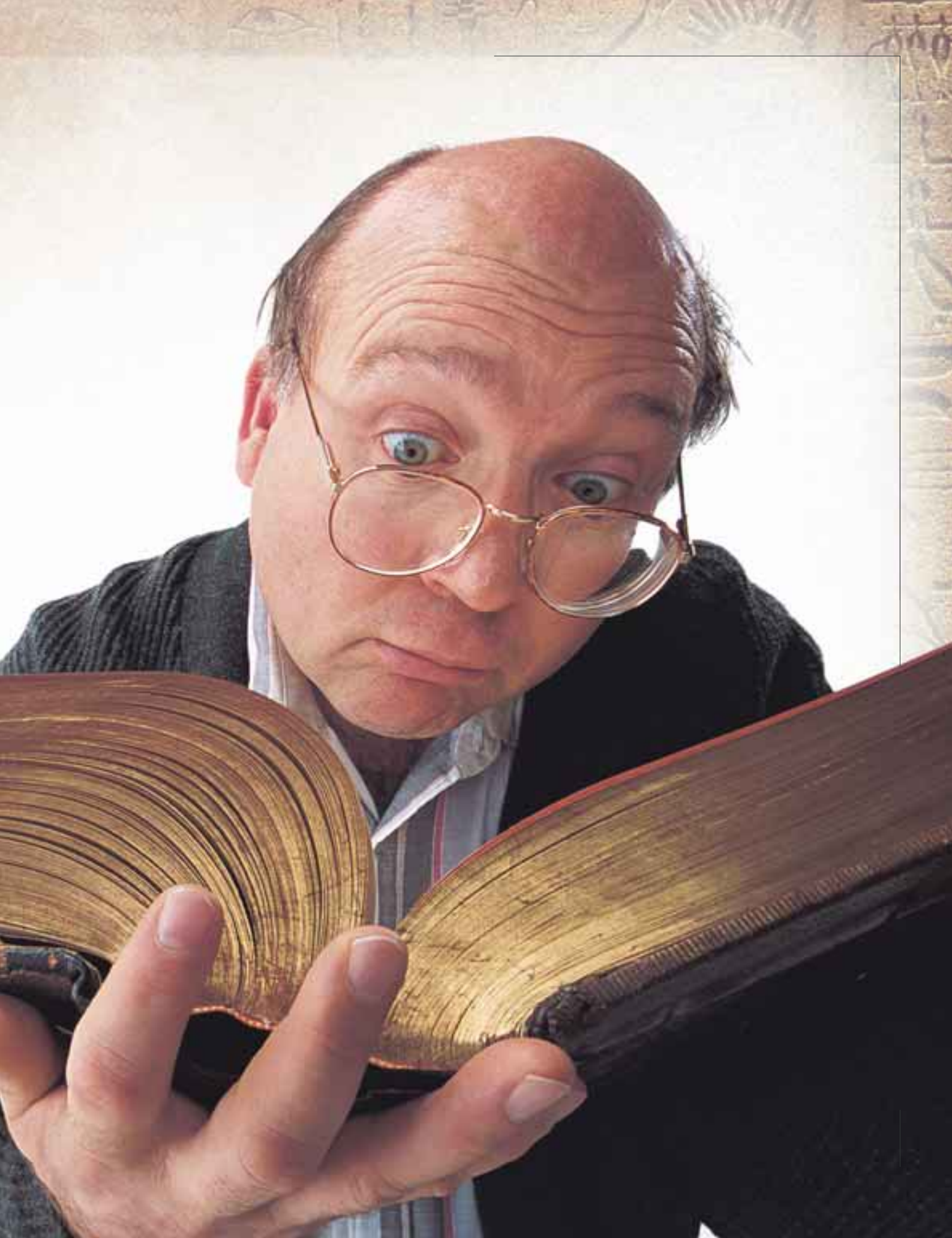
4. Complexity. Some parts of the Old Testament are difficult to understand. Sometimes the Joseph Smith Translation (JST), other scripture references, and statements from living prophets can help us

with these difficult parts. Other times we must wait until the Lord gives additional understanding.

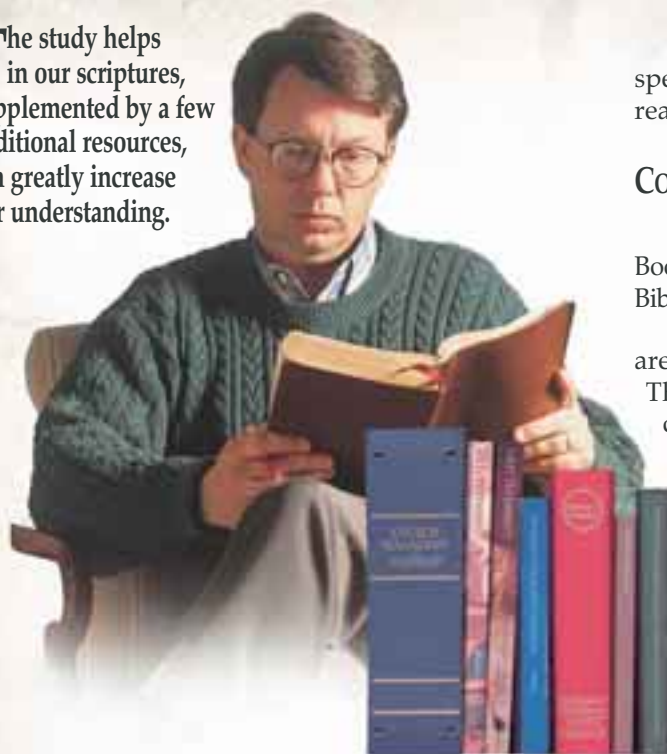
Because of these challenges, perhaps you decided long ago that the Old Testament just wasn't for you. Not so! Church leaders feel so strongly about this scripture that the curriculum for Primary, Sunday School, and seminary has been built around it for an

entire year! Our leaders also quote from it, often at general conference.

With some basic information about the Old Testament, some simple suggestions for scripture reading, and consistent effort, you can make the reading of the Old Testament an uplifting and enjoyable experience.



The study helps in our scriptures, supplemented by a few additional resources, can greatly increase our understanding.



SEEK THE SPIRIT

First and always, seek assistance from Heavenly Father in prayer. President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) has said: “There is nothing more helpful than prayer to open our understanding of the scriptures. Through prayer we can attune our minds to seek the answers to our searchings. The Lord said: ‘Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you’ (Luke 11:9). Herein is Christ’s reassurance that if we will ask, seek, and knock, the Holy Spirit will guide our understanding if we are ready and eager to receive” (“Reading the Scriptures,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 64). I have learned not to study the scriptures without first asking for help from Heavenly Father. I know He desires to help us. He wants us to understand, but we must ask.

CHOOSE A SPECIFIC TIME TO READ

Second, people who read the scriptures regularly and consistently do so because they follow a personal plan to get it done. President Hunter taught: “Perhaps what is more important than the hour of the day is that a *regular time be set aside* for study . . . A half hour on a regular basis would result in substantial accomplishment. A quarter of an hour is little time, but it is surprising how much enlightenment and knowledge can be acquired in a subject so meaningful. The important thing is to allow nothing else to ever interfere with our study” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 64; emphasis added). Rather than trying to find an “open spot” each day for your scripture reading, set aside a

specific time each day and you will find yourself reading much more consistently.

CONSIDER HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT IS ORGANIZED

Third, find the page “The Names and Order of All the Books of the Old and New Testament” in the front of the Bible. Consider marking the following on that page:

1. The books of Genesis through Deuteronomy are historical books, sometimes called “the law.” They are also called the “five books of Moses” because Moses wrote or spoke much of what is in them. These books tell us of the history of the earth as the Lord revealed it to Moses. Genesis begins with the Creation of the world and Adam and Eve. Deuteronomy finishes at the end of Moses’ life.
2. The books from Joshua through Esther are also historical books and tell the continuing history of the children of Israel for about 600 years after Moses and are often called “the history.” They are generally placed in chronological order.

3. The books of Job through Song of Solomon contain teachings, psalms, and proverbs and are known as “the poetry” or “the writings.”

4. The books of Isaiah through Malachi are the teachings of “the prophets” from about 800 to 400 B.C. They are not in historical order.

You will also find at the bottom of the page a listing of the contents of the appendix. You can use the Topical Guide to search more than 750 subjects for scripture references from all the standard works. The Bible Dictionary contains 1,285 biblical topics prepared from the Latter-day Saint perspective. The Joseph Smith Translation portion of the appendix contains the Prophet Joseph Smith’s changes that are too long to include in the footnotes. The Gazetteer lists place-names shown on the maps by letter and number. These study helps are provided to assist you in getting the most out of your scripture study.

USE THE SCRIPTURE STUDY HELPS

Fourth, I have come to rely on the wonderful resources in our scriptures. For example, before reading a chapter, get a basic understanding of what is in it by reading the **chapter heading**.

After the Prophet Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon, one of the first things the Lord instructed him to do was to make numerous corrections to the Bible. These corrections are called the **Joseph Smith Translation (JST)**. Many of the JST changes are printed in the footnotes and on the last pages (797–813) of the 1979 Latter-day Saint publication of the Bible. These changes can often completely alter

the meaning of a verse. For example, in Moses' confrontation with Pharaoh, the King James Version says that "the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh" (Ex. 9:12). The JST changes this mistake to "And Pharaoh hardened his heart, and he hearkened not unto them" (footnote 12a).

The footnotes also offer **word and phrase helps**. For example:

HEB: This means there is an alternate translation of the original Hebrew word. For example, the Bible says, "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth" (Gen. 6:6). But in footnote 6a we find that an alternate Hebrew translation for "repent" is "to be sorry" or "have compassion."

IE ("that is"): This gives a simpler explanation of a difficult word or phrase. For example, the Bible tells us Goliath wore "greaves of brass" (1 Sam. 17:6). Footnote 6a helps us understand that *greaves* means shin armor.

OR: This gives us an easier word for an archaic English word. For example, footnote 4a in 1 Samuel 24:4 tells us that *skirt* is an archaic word for hem, corner, or border.

Maps can help us visualize the distances and locations of significant sites and journeys. A new set of **maps and pictures** has been recently placed in the scriptures. If we want to add them to an older set of scriptures, they may be purchased through the Church Distribution Center (compact, regular, and large, item nos. 36086, 36087, and 36088, U.S. \$1.00).

DECIDE TO READ FOR UNDERSTANDING

Fifth, have you ever skipped over words, phrases, or verses you didn't understand because you just wanted to get through a certain amount of reading? President Hunter has advised: "It is better to have a set amount of time to give scriptural study each day than to have a set amount of chapters to read. Sometimes we find that the study of a single verse will occupy the whole time" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 64). The Lord has commanded us to "search the scriptures" (John 5:39)—not just skim them. In scripture reading, patience is a virtue! Tell yourself that *how much you gain from and enjoy your reading* is far more important than *how many pages you read*.

GATHER A FEW ADDITIONAL STUDY RESOURCES

What is a cockatrice? Who was Dagon? What is corn? (You may be surprised!) What did the prophet Isaiah mean when he prophesied that 10 acres of vineyard would yield one

bath? Helpful explanations can be found in the **Bible Dictionary** at the back of our Bible.

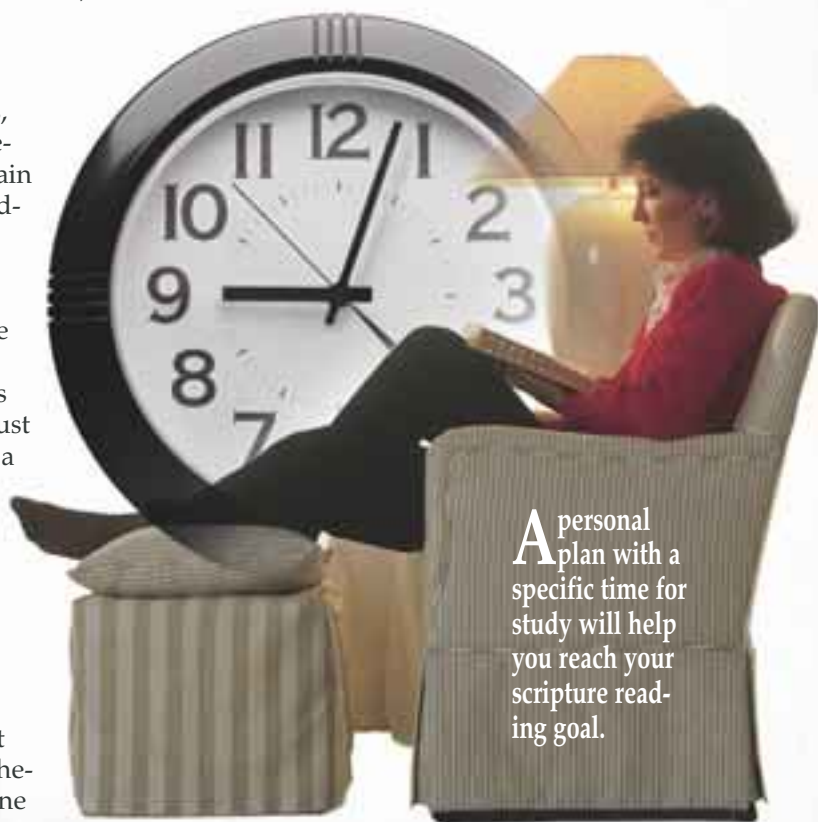
Another great help is an **English-language dictionary**. Not all difficult words in the Bible are defined in the footnotes or Bible Dictionary. Do you know what "woe" or "verily" mean? (Prepare for another surprise!)

As I look back on nearly 30 years of scripture study, one of my most enjoyable experiences was when I determined to study the Old Testament 30 minutes a day. That year I selected the **Old Testament institute student manuals** (32489 and 32498; U.S. \$3.25 and \$3.75) as my study assistants. The manuals are easy to read, and I was amazed at how often an explanation or picture answered my question.

A **time line** provides a historical overview and helps place the people and events we are reading about in order. The time line found on page 50 in this issue of the *Ensign* and the chart "Chronology Tables" on pages 635–45 of the Bible Dictionary will be useful.

READ SELECTIVELY

Sixth, as wonderful as the Old Testament is, all of its pages are not of equal value. Most people enjoy reading the story of David and Goliath more than reading Moses' numbering of children of Israel. As you read a chapter heading, ask yourself: (1) What can I learn from



A personal plan with a specific time for study will help you reach your scripture reading goal.

MUCH-NEEDED NOURISHMENT

this chapter? (2) How might this chapter benefit me? (3) Will I learn something about Jesus Christ? (4) Do I feel spiritually prompted to carefully study this chapter? Consider seeking inspiration to understand difficult portions of your reading.

START AT THE TRUE BEGINNING

Seventh, begin your study of the Old Testament in the Pearl of Great Price! If we do not, we miss the flood of inspiration and doctrine in the book of Moses, the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis 1:1 through Genesis 6:13. Once we have finished reading the book of Moses, we can turn to Genesis 6:14 and continue our reading.

SEARCH FOR DOCTRINES AND PRINCIPLES

Eighth, use a different style of reading when you approach the Old Testament. Alex J. Morrison, a professional golf instructor, told of several experiences he had playing golf with baseball legend Babe Ruth. The Babe outmatched him in size and strength, yet Morrison consistently hit the ball straighter and farther. Morrison finally pointed out to Babe Ruth that he was trying to hit a golf ball the same way he hit a baseball. Babe asked the pro to teach him. Morrison agreed, and with practice Babe improved his golf game significantly (see *A New Way to Better Golf* [1931], 15–16).

Scripture reading is a different “swing” from reading a newspaper or novel. The most important parts of the scriptures are not details or storylines, but the doctrines and principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ within the stories.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has counseled: “As you seek spiritual knowledge, search for principles. Carefully separate them from the detail used to explain them. Principles are concentrated truth, packaged for application to a wide variety of circumstances. It is worth great effort to organize the truth we gather to simple statements of principle” (“Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 86).

What are doctrines and principles? Just as there are laws and truths that govern the physical world (gravity, motion, and so forth), there are fundamental laws and truths that govern the spiritual world, which we call doctrines and principles. As we are empowered by a correct understanding and application of physical laws and truths, we can gain power in spiritual matters by a correct understanding and



“Our spirits should never be deprived of the much-needed spiritual nourishment which comes from scripture study. Without this spiritual food our spirits become starved and weakened to temptation.”

Elder L. Lionel Kendrick of the Seventy, “Search the Scriptures,” *Ensign*, May 1993, 14.

application of fundamental principles and doctrines.

Let’s consider the example of the story of David and Goliath. On the surface it is a story of a young boy defeating a giant, but if we are searching for doctrines and principles, we will find:

1. There is a living God in Israel.
2. God is more powerful than any man or army.
3. We should trust in the arm of God and not trust in our own wisdom.
4. Those who trust in God will be supported by Him.

It takes a little practice, but those who learn to look for doctrines and

principles will find not only greater “distance in their swing,” but greater enjoyment in their scripture reading because they are learning much more.

A PROPHET’S PROMISE

Few people become proficient at anything by practicing only occasionally. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said: “The treasures of both secular and spiritual knowledge are hidden ones—but hidden from those who do not properly search and strive to find them. Spiritual knowledge is not available merely for the asking; even prayers are not enough. It takes persistence and dedication” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 389–90).

Take courage. Set your goal and develop a habit of scripture study. Work at it. A better understanding of the Old Testament will greatly enhance your understanding of Heavenly Father’s plan. President Gordon B. Hinckley has given us this promise: “I am grateful for emphasis on reading the scriptures. I hope that for you this will become something far more enjoyable than a duty; that, rather, it will become a love affair with the word of God. I promise you that as you read, your minds will be enlightened and your spirits will be lifted. At first it may seem tedious, but that will change into a wondrous experience with thoughts and words of things divine” (“The Light within You,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 99). □

Timothy L. Carver is a member of the Lincoln Ward, Layton Hills Utah Stake.

Gospel topics: scripture study, Old Testament

More on this topic: See Dallin H. Oaks, “Bible Stories and Personal Protection,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 37–40; Bruce T. Harper, “Daily Scripture Study,” *Ensign*, June 1984, 31–33; F. Craig Sunbury, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1975, 38–39.

Visit www.lds.org or see Church magazines on CD.

THE GIFT

of the Blue Lace Curtain

BY LIBBY FRECH KLIMLEY

I determined not to let my terminal cancer set back the work my husband and I were doing with the homeless. We had to find a way.

In 1995 I moved from Pennsylvania to Tennessee to be closer to my sons, daughter-in-law, and grandchild. Divorced six years, I was looking forward to being a giddy grandma, writing my personal history, and catching up on family history. My boxes weren't even unpacked when I was called to serve on the Nashville stake public affairs committee. My first assignment was to find a community service project. As a writer and photographer, I was grateful for the calling. Years earlier I had promised the Lord that I'd go where He wanted me to go and do what He wanted me to do. Since I was already personally committed to using my talents in helping the homeless, I was thrilled when I read in the newspaper about a community media event, "Walk for the Homeless," designed to heighten awareness and show ways to help the homeless. I met with the coordinator, Ray Klimley, and decided it would be a good project to propose for our stake.

After I received approval from stake leaders, I worked with Ray for the next seven months. I photographed the positive side of the homeless: Bobby

sitting in a waiting room sketching large and colorful pictures that looked like complex dreams, and Joe and Mike leaning against a post, joking with each other and laughing. Ray wanted to present the side most people don't see about homelessness. We gave our presentations to corporations, schools, and churches so that they would join our "Walk for the Homeless."

Several months later, Ray and I were married.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Saturday, 18 October 1997, was bright and sunny, the leaves nearly in their prime color. Ray and I were planning to eat our breakfast on the screened-in porch. I twisted slightly while straining to push the patio door open. Then I felt what seemed like a lightning bolt. My body was actually lowering itself slightly onto my hips. I was shrinking—like Alice in Wonderland, but there was no white rabbit or a grinning Cheshire Cat! From that moment, I could not place any weight on my right leg.

Moving to my bed, I prayed, *What is wrong with me?* My family doctor couldn't see me for another week.

But would it make any difference? My son brought me a pair of crutches.

By 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, I was in pain and exhausted. To be more comfortable, I got off the bed and started to undress when a very strong feeling came over me. *Don't*. Why? I wondered. Again, I started to undress. *Don't*. The feeling became even stronger. I stood there for a moment. I recognized the special feeling—as if someone was talking to me. I obeyed, not understanding why but knowing from experience that these strong impressions were never wrong!

I carefully got back on the bed and placed the little pillow under my right knee to bend it slightly for more comfort. I took deep breaths to relax. And then, in a flash of pain, I screamed. Ray came rushing into the house. I cried, "Call 911! My leg just broke—all by itself!"

"IT'S PROBABLY CANCER"

The ride to the hospital was bumpy and longer than I had expected. "I will be frank," the emergency room doctor stated, "a break like this, especially in the femur—the strongest bone in your body—doesn't just happen. Something serious has to be going on—and it's probably cancer. After we see the X-rays and test results, we'll have more answers."

It was 2:00 A.M. before I was finally as comfortable as I could be. I concentrated on gathering all my faith. Lying in the silence of the dimly lit room, I felt peaceful, yet I thought, *I need direction and must remain calm, above all. Not just for Ray, but for my family too.* From the strong feelings earlier, I knew I was not alone.

The next day was busy with taxing tests. The X-ray showed a severed vertebrae in addition to my broken leg. Surgery to repair the breaks was scheduled for 6:30 P.M.

After surgery, I awoke for a moment. "Everything went fine," my doctor said. Happiness filled me, knowing I was still alive. It reconfirmed my strong feelings that my earthly mission was not yet completed.

HOPE FROM THE HOMELESS

As I lay on the hospital bed, I renewed my determination to help Ray. I thought, *We have been married only*

JOY IN LIFE



"We have so much freedom, so many opportunities to develop our unique personalities and talents, our individual memories, our personalized contributions. . . . You are one of the noblest of God's creations. His intent is that your life be gloriously beautiful regardless of your circumstances. As you are grateful and obedient, you can become all that God intends you to be. Sadness, disappointment, and severe challenge are *events* in life, not *life itself*. . . . Your joy in life depends upon your trust in Heavenly Father and His holy Son, your conviction that their plan of happiness truly can bring you joy. . . . When you are willing to let your heart and your mind be centered in His will, when you ask to be led by the Spirit to do His will, you are assured of the greatest happiness along the way and the most fulfilling attainment from this mortal experience."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Finding Joy in Life," *Ensign*, May 1996, 25.

a year. I must stay strong. I won't let this setback stop us.

I was still on harsh chemo treatments on 23 March 1998, when Ray and I began a nonprofit organization to find jobs for the homeless so they could earn money to get off the streets.

A few weeks later, Ray pulled me aside and said, "I want you to meet Pops." I hobbled over to a railroad tie in the parking lot on which sat a fragile, elderly man with a wonderful wide smile.

"How is your chemo coming along?" he asked.

While shaking his frail hand, I told him how the chemo was going.

Then he offered, "Mine has

a few side effects, too."

I just looked at him, stunned. This dear old man had cancer and lived on the streets! I felt so humbled and grateful to Heavenly Father for my situation. I went home at night to a warm bed. Where did Pops go?

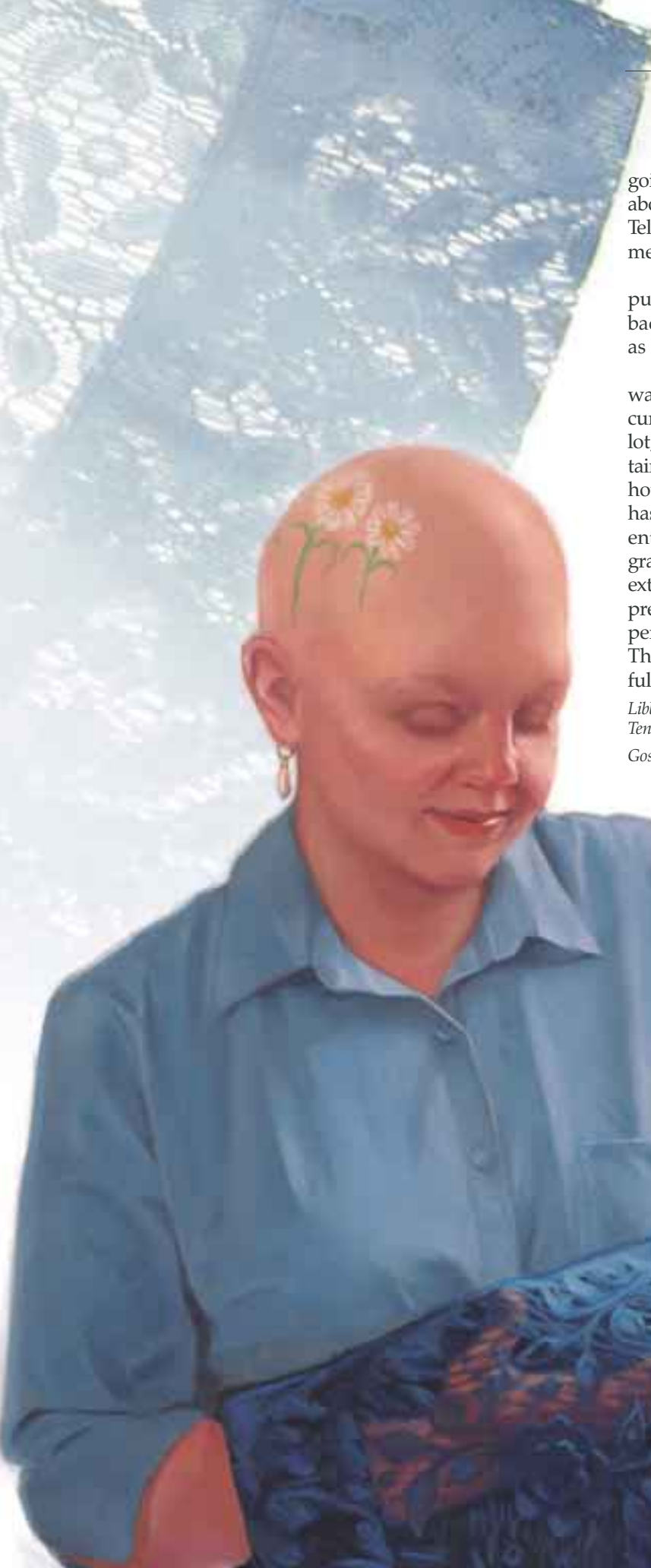
I draw strength from homeless people. Most people think that all homeless are on alcohol or drugs. Many are. Many are not. With the right opportunities, many can work and have a better life. Helping them get work has brought me some of the happiest times of my life. I can see in their eyes how their self-worth rises and rings the bell sounding "somebody still needs me."

I rarely missed a day of work, but usually, after four hours, I grew terribly weak from the chemo. Mary Jean, another volunteer who came in several afternoons to take my place, was an answer to our prayers. When she couldn't come, Ray simply locked the door to our tiny office and went out to visit with the homeless while I rested on a piece of foam under my desk. After an hour or so of sleep, I was able to go back to work. Ray knew what needed to be done to help the one-third of the homeless who desired to return to mainstream society. His dream was working.

"GIVE THIS TO MISS LIBBY"

My broken leg had left me with a limp, and I used a cane. I went hairless for months but tried to have fun with it by adding stickers and having friends draw pictures with paints on my head. People loved it. Sharing my pain eased the burden.

I believe that the homeless realized that I too was



going through a trial and therefore understood a little about them. They asked Ray, "How's Miss Libby today? Tell her I'm praying for her!" The homeless people gave me a great gift—their faith and prayers for me!

One gentleman came up to Ray and carefully pulled something obviously precious to him from his backpack. "Give this to Miss Libby," he quietly said, as he handed Ray a beautiful blue lace curtain panel.

I am still deeply touched by this unselfish act. He was gone before Ray could get his story. Was the lace curtain his mother's? His wife's? Obviously it meant a lot, since he carried it with him. Now this blue lace curtain is my memento from more than 8,000 volunteer hours of helping the homeless. Even with cancer, my life has been, and still is, a wonderful life! As I use my talents and trials in positive ways, joy is my reward. I'm grateful for every day of life, which now includes four extra years beyond the six months my doctor had first predicted. I've learned adversities can be a learning experience, an adventure, and an opportunity for growth. This keeps me on the correct path to wisdom and, hopefully, eternal life. □

Libby Frech Klimley is a member of the West Nashville Ward, Franklin Tennessee Stake.

Gospel topics: illness, compassionate service, optimism, courage

I drew strength from the homeless. After my chemotherapy, we had fun painting designs on my bald head. One gave me a treasured blue lace curtain as a gift.



THE RELIEF SOCIETY GENERAL PRESIDENCY

“For Such a Time

We have been given the tools we need to fortify ourselves, our homes, and our families “for such a time as this” (Esther 4:14).

Not long ago a Relief Society instructor asked her class members to share a challenge they were worried about. Some were concerned about their children, others about failing health, and yet others about financial stress or other difficulties. After a number of sisters had participated in the discussion, a young woman in her early 20s raised her hand and said: “I have lived in this ward all my life, and these women who have been my teachers are now my great friends. When I see all of the challenges they have had in their lives, I can’t help but wonder if I will make it and if I will be able to deal with the challenges that come my way. Am I going to make it?”

Though our lives are different, we can each expect to face challenges and to encounter disappointment and even disillusionment. Where are the answers to our challenges and concerns to be found?

Sister Mary Ellen W. Smoot, Relief Society general president, has said that “in this monumental time in history . . . , everyone wants to find answers that will make a difference in their lives. As Relief Society sisters, we can help all of God’s children to see that answers are found where they always have been: in scriptures, in prophets’ teachings, and in obedience to both” (*Sweet Is the Work* [2000], 56).

Indeed, help with our challenges, our worries, and our everyday problems and concerns can be found in obedience to the teachings of prophets ancient and modern. Is it any wonder, then, that Nephi read the writings of Isaiah to his family? “I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning,” he explained (1 Ne. 19:23). Because there is safety in likening teachings of prophets unto ourselves, we, the Relief Society general presidency, desire all sisters in the Church to prayerfully search the scriptures and the counsel of latter-day leaders and to apply those truths in their lives.

Beginning in January 2002, the Visiting Teaching Messages found in each nonconference issue of the

Ensign and *Liahona* will have a new format to aid sisters in this gospel study. Each message for this year is based on a theme drawn from the Relief Society declaration (see Mary Ellen W. Smoot, “Rejoice, Daughters of Zion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 92–93). Each message will include relevant scriptures, selected statements from Church leaders, and questions designed to prompt a discussion about the topic. As Relief Society sisters worldwide visit with one another, we will have the opportunity to consider a theme of importance to every sister and then to discuss it based upon what we learn from the scriptures and the teachings of worthy servants of God.

WHY VISITING TEACHING?

Why do we go visiting teaching? Since people are so busy today, requiring a visit may sometimes seem challenging.

The answer to this question is simple. When we desired “to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people,” we were baptized. Through baptism, we also indicated that we were “willing to bear one another’s burdens” and “to mourn with those that mourn; . . . comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and . . . stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:8–9).

Visiting teaching is a way to help us care for and about each other. It is a way for us to develop the characteristics of a follower of Jesus Christ. It is a way to make sure that no one in the Lord’s kingdom is alone.

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) said that Relief Society “is of the first importance. It has not only to deal



as

This”

with the necessities of the poor, the sick and the needy, but a part of its duty—and the larger part, too—is to look after the spiritual welfare and salvation of the mothers and daughters of Zion” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 185).

Through visiting teaching, we provide both spiritual and temporal watch-care. Sharing a message as a central part of that watch-care—especially a message grounded in the scriptures and teachings from Church leaders—can bring the Spirit of the Lord into the lives and homes of those we visit.

USING THE VISITING TEACHING MESSAGES

The four components of the new Visiting Teaching Message—the basic theme or principle; related scriptures; teachings from prophets, apostles, and other Church leaders; and questions to promote discussion and help us discover personal relevance—can work together to provide a visiting teaching experience that will help us teach and strengthen one another.

Without question, the most effective teaching is accomplished when both the teacher and the learner



are involved and when they learn from each other. Sisters will be nourished by the good word of God, and our testimonies will be strengthened as we discuss what we feel when we read the scriptures and the words of Church leaders and when we apply these teachings.

Rather than reading others' stories and experiences related to the theme, we can, when appropriate, share our own experiences and discuss how these insights apply in our lives. We can invite those we visit to do the same. We can ask the discussion questions of ourselves and, if appropriate, of those we teach.

POWER IN THE WORD OF THE LORD

Have you ever felt a particular scripture speak directly to your heart and help answer a current problem or question? Have you ever felt the Spirit as you learned a precious truth from the scriptures or a prophet of God? Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said that "the scriptures not only witness the truth about Christ and his relevance for mankind, but are, in a sense, like a songbook. There are many melodies that need to be sung and heard. . . . Only through personal involvement with the scriptures can we find the particular scriptural songs to meet our needs. . . . We must—ourselves—open the songbook and hear the music" (*A Time to Choose* [1972], 52).

As we share our feelings and insights about the material found in the Visiting Teaching Messages, we will find personal revelation in the words of latter-day prophets and prophets of old. The scriptures are constant and eternal. The same is true of teachings from our modern prophets, for as the Lord declared, "Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38).

As sisters study the scriptures and insights from Church leaders together, we hope several things happen.

First and most importantly, the Holy Ghost will come into the homes of our sisters with even greater power. We would like to have experiences like the Savior's disciples when they asked, "Did not our heart burn within us, . . . while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32).

Second, our vision of our relationship with Heavenly Father will increase, for it is impossible to study holy writ on a regular basis without coming to understand more clearly who we are. We will be reminded that "because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called . . . his daughters; . . . ye are born of him and have become . . . his daughters" (Mosiah 5:7).

Third, as mothers, grandmothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and aunts are strengthened, families will be strengthened. As we feel the Spirit and come to see that gospel study increases our ability to receive personal

revelation, we will better know how to bring up our "children in truth and light" (D&C 93:40).

Fourth, we will find solutions to our own and our families' problems, because as we "feast upon

the words of Christ," they will tell us all things that we should do (2 Nephi 32:3). We are not alone. The Lord will guide us if we seek Him diligently.

Fifth, we will feel greater peace and strength and comfort, for the Lord has promised to be on our right hand and on our left, and He has promised that His Spirit will be in our hearts and His angels will be round about us to bear us up (see D&C 84:88).

Sixth, our testimony of the Savior and our understanding of the power of the Atonement will increase. We will "come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, . . . that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ. . . . Then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ" (Moro. 10:32–33).

Seventh, sisters will stay on the path that leads back to our Heavenly Father, where we may be raised to "dwell at the right hand of God, in a state of never-ending happiness" (Alma 28:12).

As Relief Society visiting teachers study and testify of gospel truths, the cumulative outcome of this worldwide gospel study will be glorious. Through the word of the Lord, every sister, every family, and ultimately every person will be fortified.

THE CHALLENGE

This new format represents a marvelous opportunity to readjust our vision of visiting teaching. May we use this opportunity of personal contact with the sisters of the Church to build caring relationships and teach the word of God. As He said, "These words are not of men, . . . but of me; . . . for they are given by my Spirit unto you, and by my power you can read them one to another" (D&C 18:34–35).

May we recommit ourselves to teach and edify our sisters and rejoice in the opportunity we are blessed with: "And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom" (D&C 88:77).

How will we make it through life's difficulties, as the young Relief Society sister asked? We will heed the teachings of our Church leaders and hearken to the voice of the Lord communicated to us when we pray and feast upon the scriptures.

As visiting teachers, may we all go forward with renewed conviction to take care of each other and to be instruments in bringing the word and Spirit of the Lord into the homes of our sisters. □

Gospel topics: visiting teaching, sisterhood

Understanding Our Divine Nature

Read the following with the sisters you visit, and discuss the questions, scriptures, and teachings from our Church leaders. Share your experiences and testimony, and invite those you teach to do the same.

PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST, SECOND COUNSELOR IN THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

"The new declaration of the Relief Society begins, 'We are beloved spirit daughters of God.' To be a daughter of God means that you are the offspring of Deity, literal descendants of a Divine Father, inheriting godly attributes and potential. To be a daughter of God also means that you have been born again, changed from a 'carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness' [Mosiah 27:25]. . . . Being a daughter of God means that if you seek it, you can find your true identity. You will know who you are" ("What It Means to Be a Daughter of God," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 100, 102).

MOSIAH 5:7

"And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you;

"After man had been placed on the earth, was woman created; and only then was the work pronounced complete and good."

for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters."

D&C 138:38–39

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) saw in vision Jesus Christ's visit to the spirit world while His body lay in the tomb: "Among the great and mighty ones who were assembled in this vast congregation of the righteous were Father Adam, the Ancient of Days and father of all,

"And our glorious Mother Eve, with many of her faithful daughters who had lived through the ages and worshiped the true and living God."

PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

"Woman is God's supreme creation. Only after the earth had been formed, after the day had been separated from the night, after the waters had been divided from the land, after vegetation and animal life had been created, and after man had been placed on the earth, was woman created;

and only then was the work pronounced complete and good.

"Of all the creations of the Almighty, there is none more beautiful, none more inspiring than a lovely daughter of God who walks in virtue with an understanding of why she should do so, who honors and respects her body as a thing sacred and divine, who cultivates her mind and constantly enlarges the horizon of her understanding, who nurtures her spirit with everlasting truth" ("Our Responsibility to Our Young Women," *Ensign*, Sept. 1988, 11).

"Live up to the great and magnificent inheritance which the Lord God, your Father in Heaven, has provided for you. Rise above the dust of the world. Know that you are daughters of God, children with a divine birthright. Walk in the sun with your heads high, knowing that you are loved and honored, that you are a part of his kingdom, and that there is for you a great work to be done which cannot be left to others" ("Live Up to Your Inheritance," *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 84).

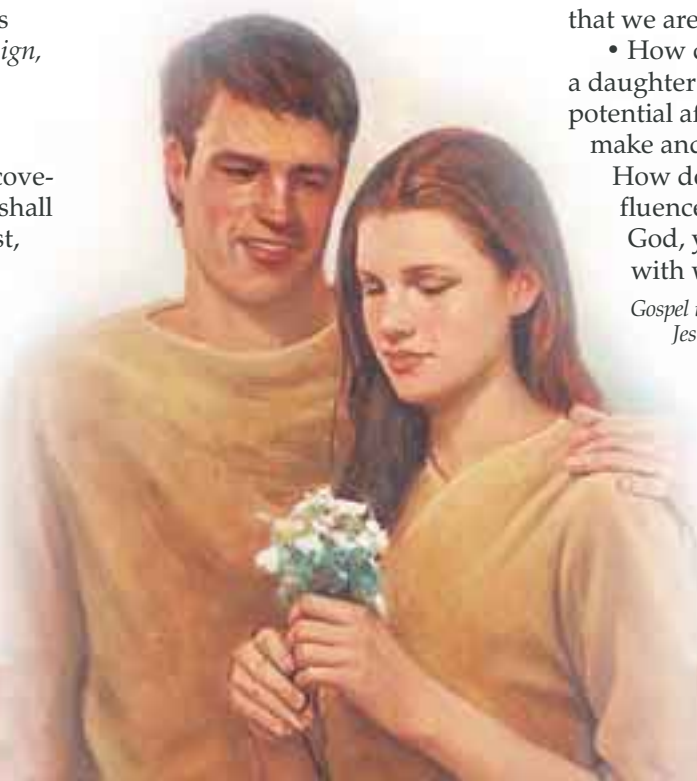
QUESTIONS

- What could cause us to forget that we are daughters of God?

- How does knowing you are a daughter of God with divine potential affect the decisions you make and the way you live?

How does this knowledge influence the way you relate to God, your family, and others with whom you associate? ☐

Gospel topics: divine nature, women, Jesus Christ



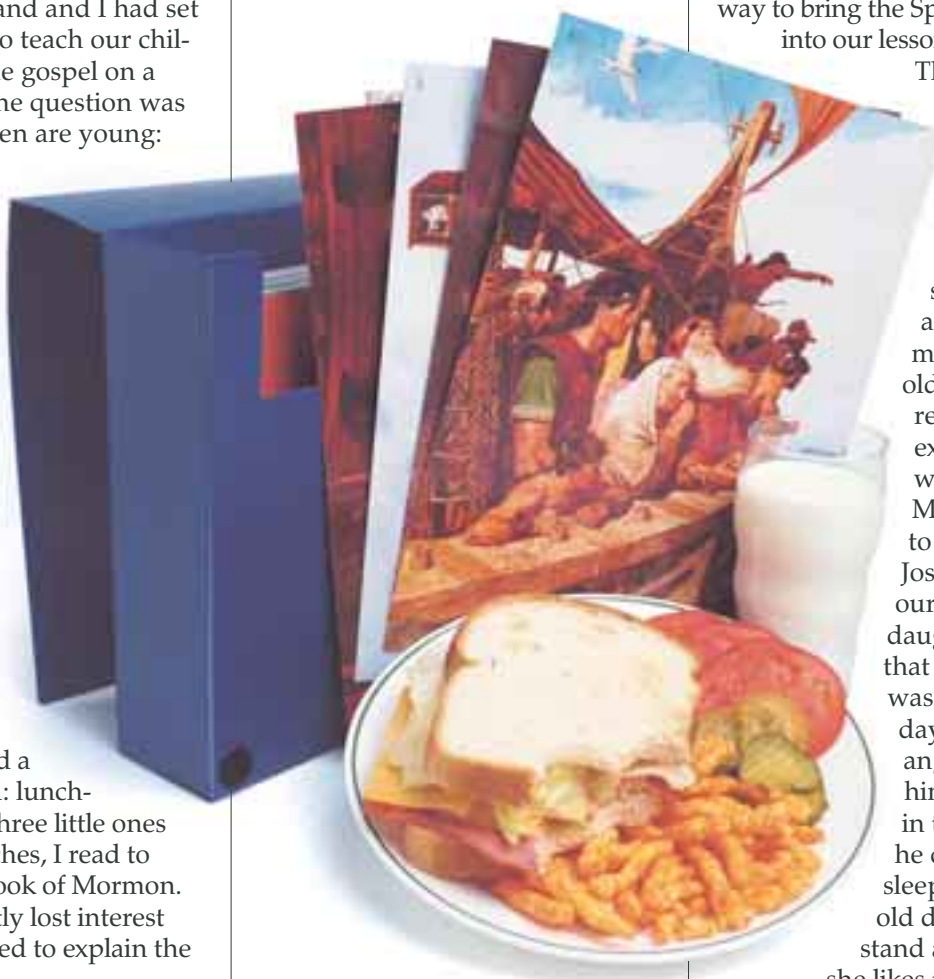
Lunch Lessons

My husband and I had set a goal to teach our children the gospel on a daily basis, but the question was how? Our children are young: two preschoolers and one in kindergarten. I tried scheduling time in the morning for a gospel lesson, but that always seemed to get pushed aside for housework, errands, or projects. We also tried to discuss the gospel just before bedtime, but we were usually too tired.

Finally I found a time that worked: lunchtime. While my three little ones ate their sandwiches, I read to them from the Book of Mormon. Yet they frequently lost interest even though I tried to explain the verses.

Our answer finally came when we discovered a wonderful resource available through the Church's Distribution Centers—the Gospel Art Picture Kit (item no. 34730; U.S. \$25.00) which we began using during lunchtime. This was the perfect combination! The pictures, which focus on scripture stories in the Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon, and Church history, gave our children something to look at. The simplified story with corresponding scripture references on the back of each picture gave me a ready-made lesson.

We started with the first



picture in the Book of Mormon section, which I showed to them as they ate. I told them the story from the back and then read a verse or two out of the scriptures. They loved it! They even asked me questions about details in the pictures.

After each short discussion, I reinforced the story in their minds by asking them questions about it. We talked about ways they could apply the scripture story in their own lives. I then bore my testimony to them of the truthfulness of what I was teaching them. I knew that along with reading the scriptures, this was another sure

way to bring the Spirit of the Lord into our lessons.

The following day, before we looked at a new picture, we reviewed the previous day's story. I was amazed at how much my two older children retained. For example, when we reviewed Moroni's visit to the Prophet Joseph Smith, our four-year-old daughter told me that Joseph Smith was tired the next day because the angel came to see him three times in the night, and he didn't get any sleep. My two-year-old doesn't understand as much, but she likes to look at the

pictures and can repeat names and events. She frequently tells me, "I make Jesus happy," so I believe the Spirit is in our lessons and knowledge is being stored in her mind and heart.

Using pictures from the Gospel Art Picture Kit during lunchtime has been an easy way for us to study the scriptures consistently. Now on days when I forget or think we're too busy, it's my children who say, "Mom, don't forget the scripture story," or "Mom, do another one. We want to learn more."—**Roselyn Sant, Wasilla Third Ward, Wasilla Alaska Stake**



Tracking New Year's Goals

Setting goals and striving to achieve them at times can seem to be an insurmountable task. Often we procrastinate setting goals until we feel we are more committed or “the time is right.” But it doesn’t have to be that way. Our family has discovered an easier way to set and achieve goals. We record our progress on a New Year’s goal poster.

1. *We reserve the first family home evening of the year for setting goals.* It helps to teach the importance of prayer in selecting goals. By taking time to pray and ponder about our goals, we are able to focus on what will most benefit our family. Then we have a short lesson on the importance of goals, types of goals, how to choose a goal by focusing on what is realistic and most important, and how to achieve goals.

2. *We list our goals on a poster.* To establish the goals we want to achieve, we list them on posters made of construction paper. Posterboard, cardstock, and other materials work well too. Then we spread magazines that we have saved, including Church magazines, on the table. With scissors and glue handy, we cut out pictures and

words that represent the goals we are planning to work on throughout the year and paste them on the poster. Each poster is labeled with a family member’s name and the year. Then we help our children understand the importance of choosing goals in four different categories: spiritual, educational, physical, and temporal.

3. *We display our posters in a prominent area.* After we finish the posters, we take turns showing them to each other. Then we hang the posters in a prominent place in our rooms. The posted goals are a daily visual reminder of what we plan to achieve. As we reach our goals, we cross them off. The first year we made goal posters, we were surprised when we reached all our goals.

Each December we review the goals we have accomplished for that year and save the posters in our books of remembrance. My husband and I began this goal-setting tradition during our first year of marriage. When we saw the successful results of our efforts, we decided to continue the tradition, especially when children came into our home.

Listing our goals on a poster allows us to review our commitment on a daily or weekly basis. Making goal posters at the beginning of every new year is an eagerly anticipated event for our family that has helped us successfully set and achieve worthwhile goals.—**Janalee Merrell Watkins, Maeser First Ward, Vernal Utah Maeser Stake**



Where Could We Baptize?

By Ramiro Ruiz Ceja

While serving in the Bolivia Cochabamba Mission, my companion and I were assigned to labor in Villamontes (now part of the Bolivia Santa Cruz Mission). This remote village lies in the southeastern corner of Bolivia. The closest town is 90 kilometers (56 miles) away. Because Villamontes did not have a baptismal font, we performed baptisms in the nearby Pilcomayo River.

Our labors were meeting with some success, and we were having quite a few baptisms in the river. It seemed a good location until we began to hear rumors about piranhas. Standing waist-deep in water infested with carnivorous fish did not sound like something we wanted to do, but we didn't have another place to perform these important ordinances. We ignored the rumors until a Church member actually caught one of the fish and showed it to us. The piranha's sharp teeth alarmed us. Still, the Lord's work must go forward, and we trusted in Him to protect us.

We needed His protection at our next baptism because seasonal rains had caused the river to rise to treacherous levels, clogging it with logs, sticks, and other debris. We were convinced we had to find another place to baptize.

After days of looking, we finally decided to perform a baptism in a member's cistern—a small water tank. The cistern was so small we wondered if two people would fit into it. But both the convert and the priesthood holder climbed in, and the convert was baptized by immersion.

We had another baptism the

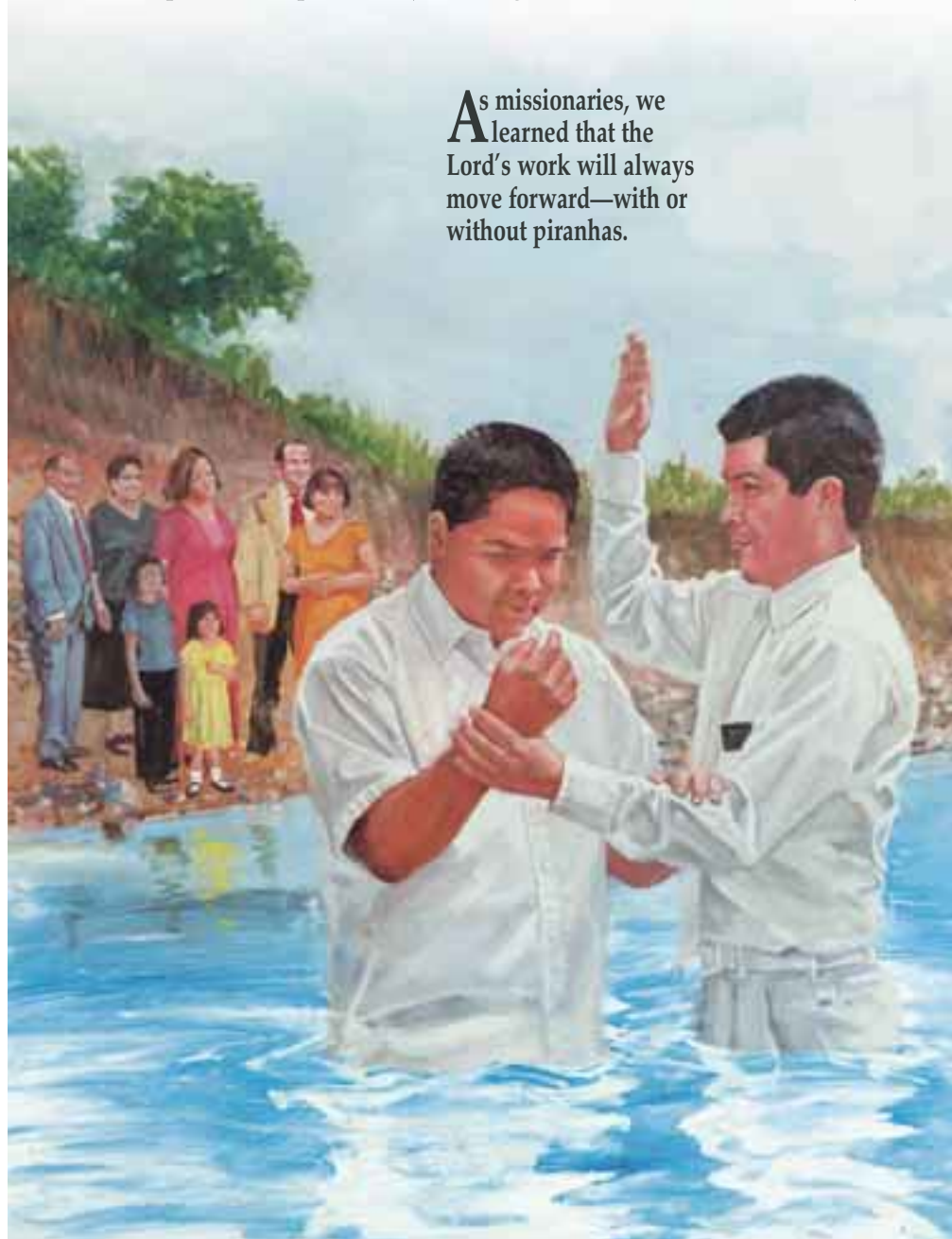
following week, and the cistern was no longer available. So we performed the baptism in a small concrete tub. Again both the convert and the priesthood holder stepped into the tiny makeshift font. The boy being baptized had to kneel down to be immersed.

After the baptism, we started thinking about where we could have future baptisms. The problem

was urgent because three more people were scheduled for baptism the following Sunday. Fortunately, a district conference was going to be held in Yacuiba, and the meetinghouse there had a baptismal font. We traveled there for the baptismal service.

At the service, our mission president told us that because of the growth of the Church in

As missionaries, we learned that the Lord's work will always move forward—with or without piranhas.



Villamontes, that small village would receive a baptismal font. We were overjoyed.

Our experiences in Villamontes taught us that when we work hard, the Lord always provides a way for us to accomplish what He has asked. The Lord's work will always move forward—with or without piranhas. □

Ramiro Ruiz Ceja is a member of the BYU—Idaho 44th Ward, BYU—Idaho Third Stake.

Gospel topics: missionary work, faith, courage, work

Cookies for Buddy

By Tracine Hales Parkinson

Whenever I think of service, I remember the rewarding experience I had as a Laurel adviser in Arlington, Virginia.

Buddy was a kind elderly man who lived in a tiny apartment in the basement of our Arlington duplex. Actually his name was Howard Rose, but he insisted that we call him Buddy. I knew that Buddy's vision was severely impaired, so before I went to the store or post office I would ask him if he needed anything. Still, most of the time he walked to the market himself to buy what he needed.

At this time, my husband was attending medical school, and during his third and fourth years he was on call or studying late many nights. If my husband was on call at the hospital on trash day, Buddy saw to it that our trash was taken out. I taught school during the day, and each afternoon when I came home I would find our mail neatly stacked in front of our door. I never felt frightened on those nights when my husband was

at the hospital, because I figured I could just shout for Buddy.

In the spring Buddy would plant a glorious flower garden outside our duplex. He was quick to give compliments, and I never saw him unhappy.

I mentioned Buddy often in the lessons I gave to my Laurel class. He was someone I admired, someone I considered to be a good Samaritan.

One Friday night I attended a party the girls had planned. As part of the evening's activities, they wanted to make cookies to take to a couple of Laurels who had become less active.

As the 14 Laurels and I cut and baked cookies, it became readily apparent that we would have an abundance left over. Then I heard the words, "Hey, let's take some cookies to Buddy!" Who had said it? Ann? Heather? It didn't matter, because all the girls gave instant approval to the idea. I was startled and pleased by their spontaneous decision.

As we traveled in our cars to make the deliveries, I wondered if the rain that was now pouring outside might deter the girls, but it did not. After visiting the two less-active girls, we headed for Buddy's apartment. As we approached the door, someone said that we ought to sing something, and another suggested the song "I Am a Child of God." We squeezed onto the stairs outside Buddy's little apartment, and Cori, the class president, knocked on the door.

Buddy was more than a little surprised when he opened the door. The girls started singing, "I am a child of God, and he has sent me here . . ." When they were finished I could see tears in Buddy's eyes.

Having spotted me as he peered at the group through

thick glasses, he asked, "Who are all these pretty girls?"

I explained that these were some young women from our church.

Cori handed him a plate of cookies, and Buddy just beamed. Several days later he told me they were the best cookies he had ever eaten.

Some time after this, my husband and I moved away from Arlington. Later, a Christmas card I sent to Buddy came back to me with the word *deceased* stamped in big black letters across the front. My heart skipped a beat. It was hard to think of Buddy being gone. Yet to this day I remember the warm feeling we shared as a Laurel class when, through a small act of service, we thanked a noble man for his example of kindness and charity. □

Tracine Hales Parkinson is a member of the Guantánamo Bay Branch, Jamaica Kingston Mission.

Gospel topics: service, kindness, Young Women, music

Why Was My Life Preserved?

By María MacPherson

As I looked back on my earliest experiences growing up in Cuba, one memory always stood out. I could vividly picture my beloved little brother Raúl being sick. I could see my mother caring for him, periodically crying desperately, and my grandmother frantically seeking help. I could see the whole family bending over his bed, weeping. I always seemed to witness my brother's pain and my family's tears from some high perch. For some reason, that scene remained in my

memory, but I never talked about it.

When I was 10 years old, my mother died, leaving five children. I grieved over her death, but it was even more painful to watch as my brothers and sisters and I were split up. No one wanted to take all five of us, so each set of grandparents took two children, and my father's sister took my youngest brother, Orlando. Because of my rebelliousness, I was eventually sent to a school for orphans, where I grew up sad, alone, and bitter.

When I turned 16 I began looking for my brothers and sisters. I found only three of them because Orlando had moved with my aunt to the United States. Then, not long after I had located Raúl, he was electrocuted while learning to work as an electrician.

Shaken by the loss, I confided to my grandmother my memory of Raúl's sickness. My grandmother asked, "What are you talking about? Raúl was not ill. That was you. One night you became so sick the doctor gave you up for dead. We were in despair and wept over your bed. We have never known why your heart started beating again."

I was so shocked I didn't ask my grandmother for more information, but questions about the meaning of life began to torment me: Why had my life been preserved? What was I to do? What did it all mean?

Ten years later, I moved to the United States. There I found Orlando. But I had yet to find the answers to my questions. I began seeking answers in various churches. Though each contributed bits and pieces, none of them had all the answers I needed. I prayed that God would help me come to know the truth.

Then one day in the spring of

1986, Latter-day Saint missionaries came to my house. They answered every question I had. And when I studied the Book of Mormon, I was moved to tears by the testimony I gained of its truthfulness. I was baptized in July. A little more than a year later, I arranged for Raúl's vicarious baptism in the temple. Then he and I were sealed to our parents forever.

Finding the gospel has changed my life. Surrounded by my brothers and sisters in the gospel, I have never felt lonely since. I understand that my life has a purpose and that, as long as we rely on the Lord, pain can teach and strengthen us.

I find joy in the expectation that members of my family are waiting for me beyond the veil of mortality. I know that someday my spirit will leave my body again. But I know that because of Jesus Christ my spirit and my body will one day be forever reunited, and I can live with Him and with my family eternally. □

María MacPherson is a member of the Elkhorn Ward, Milwaukee Wisconsin Stake.

Gospel topics: family, conversion

Prepared by Our Bus Friends

By Dallin J. Phillips

I was glad to be offered a job as a bus driver during my final quarter at the university I was attending before moving on to graduate school. My enthusiasm diminished, however, when I was told that the passengers with whom I would be spending three hours a day were mentally disabled. I had never spent much time with mentally disabled

people, so even though I accepted the job, I felt anxious.

As it turned out, the job was truly delightful. My wife often rode with me, and we fell in love with our new bus friends. We gained a whole new appreciation for the mentally disabled. They were courteous, punctual, and responsible. Their days were filled with smiles, hugs, and pride for the work they were doing.

We also sensed a deep spiritual quality in their lives. It was easy to feel Christlike love among these people. Even when we did not feel good about ourselves, they accepted us in such a way that it lifted our spirits. They were very attuned to the needs and feelings of each other and of all those around them.

I recall the day when one of the passengers, Ranae, was particularly sad because of some events that had occurred at her school and work. She was the first to board the bus and, in a silent and somewhat disheartened mood, took her place near the rear. As each person got on the bus, they showed to Ranae their love and concern. By the time the bus was loaded, everyone had gathered around Ranae, and within minutes there was nothing but laughter, including from Ranae.

The night before my last day driving the bus, my wife and I had dinner with our close friends Steve and Myrna. Steve had driven the bus for me on occasion and was to take my place. Much of our dinner discussion centered on the people who rode the bus. We talked of their goodness and Christlike characteristics. We concluded that parents of the mentally disabled, though faced with many challenges, must often feel grateful for the unexpected blessings their children can bring to their lives.

The next morning I made my early-morning run on the bus and then returned home. As I entered our apartment my wife told me that it was time to go to the hospital for the birth of our second child. I was surprised because the baby wasn't due for another month.

All went well with the delivery, but it soon became apparent that our doctor was concerned. Shortly thereafter we were told that our newborn son had Down syndrome. Rather than despair or grieve, we thought of our conversation the night before and took

comfort in our own words.

Later our doctor told us that he felt we had not dealt with our son's disability and were denying the problem. He told his staff that he expected us to be utterly overwhelmed at some point. He did not realize, until later, the preparation we had received through my bus-driving job. Eventually he had us visit parents of children with Down syndrome.

Some might call it chance that I spent the summer with a group of mentally disabled people who became my friends. My wife and I feel, however, that

through this episode the Lord prepared our hearts so that we did not experience fear or sorrow when we had a special child of our own. We have maintained our relationship with these bus friends for more than 20 years through Special Olympics and other events. My wife and I are grateful for the preparation we were given to have this son. Ours has been a journey of appreciation and joy. □

Dallin J. Phillips is a member of the North Logan Second Ward, North Logan Utah Green Canyon Stake.

Gospel topics: disabilities, love, service, family

My experience driving a bus for a group of mentally disabled people prepared my wife and me for what was to come.



PHOTO BY JENNIE FORD VAUGHN



In 1970 Pat and Bobbie Steele (left) drove for three days to be sealed in the temple nearest their home. Today they and their posterity (right) need drive only a few minutes to enjoy the blessings of the temple in their hometown of Birmingham.

Saints in Birmingham, Alabama

After the Pat and Bobbie Steele family of the Birmingham Alabama Stake joined the Church in the 1960s, they were determined to be sealed in the temple. But each time the family planned a trip to the Salt Lake Temple—which was then the closest to their home—Pat was called away on business.

Finally, the Steeles decided they would make the trip to Salt Lake even if it meant losing Pat's job. "I went into my boss's office and turned in my keys," remembers Pat. "I told him that if this job was going to keep me from the temple then I would have to quit. My boss then picked up the phone, called personnel, and told them I was to have two weeks off with pay, no questions asked." After driving across the country for three days, the Steele family was sealed in the Salt Lake Temple in 1970.



This kind of faith and dedication among Church members in Alabama was rewarded when a temple was dedicated in their state in September 2000. Since the Birmingham Alabama Temple was opened, patronage has been so high that the temple, which was originally open for 7 sessions a week, now offers 11 sessions.

"The numbers of current temple recommend holders is at an all-time

Primary children of the Birmingham stake's Gadsden Ward join their teacher, Christa Nelson, for a Primary Christmas party.

high, probably due to the excitement stemming from the completion of the temple," says Douglas S. Bennett, president of the Birmingham stake. "This includes dramatic increases in first-time recommend holders coupled with a reawakening of previously endowed members returning to the house of the Lord.

Our youth love to participate in baptismal trips to the temple. We anticipate continued growth and look forward to continued blessings associated with the presence of a temple in Alabama."

The Church was not always so strong in this southern state. Missionary work began here as early as 1839, but most early converts traveled west to join the main body of Saints. New emphasis was given to missionary work in Alabama in the late 1800s, and for years Church membership here grew very slowly.

Stake member Gladys Nunnally, whose parents were baptized in 1926, remembers the early days of the Church in the Birmingham area. "Members met in the homes of different families. Meeting attendance ranged from 6 to 16,"

she says. Numbers stayed comparatively small until the early 1960s, she says, when nearby Fort McClellan reopened. The Church began to grow locally with the help of a steady stream of military families. Organized in 1975, the Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM ALABAMA STAKE

Organized:	1975
Members:	3,300
Units:	4 wards, 8 branches
Temple:	Birmingham Alabama

stake, Alabama's second, has now swelled to some 3,300 members.

In spite of the growth of the stake in recent years, members say they still think of each other as one big family. "I'm grateful for this stake because I know everyone will pull together when times are hard," says Kathy Glenn. "If I ever have a problem, I know that if my family cannot help, members of the stake will." —**Jennie Ford Vaughn, Anniston Ward, Birmingham Alabama Stake**



PHOTO BY CHARLES WALKER



PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHAUN STAHL, CHURCH NEWS

The recently renovated John Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio, is the site where the Prophet Joseph Smith received 15 revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants. President Hinckley dedicated the home in October.

President Hinckley Dedicates John Johnson Home

Calling it “a place which will have the mark of immortality in the history of this people,” President Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated the John Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio, on 28 October. The home, a historic site located on the Church-owned Johnson farm, was recently restored, as closely as possible, to how it appeared when Joseph and Emma Smith lived there in the early 1830s.

“So long as this Church lasts, so long as it goes across the earth, so long as its history is written and known, the John Johnson home will have a prominent place in that history,” President Hinckley said in his remarks at the dedication ceremony, held in a Church meetinghouse near the farm. The meeting was also broadcast to other Church units in the area.

The Prophet Joseph Smith lived in the Johnson home, located 25 miles from Kirtland, Ohio, for about one year beginning in September 1831. During this period, Joseph received 15 revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants, including section 1, which became the book’s preface. At the home in February 1832, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon beheld a vision of the Son of God on the right hand of the Father. This vision, along with revealed doctrine about the three degrees of glory, is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76. It was also while living in the Johnson home that Joseph Smith completed a significant portion of his translation of the Bible.

“The power of God that was expressed here and known here . . . has gone over the earth, and we have scarcely seen the

beginning of it, my brothers and sisters,” said President Hinckley. “It will go forward, and whereas there are 11 million [Church members] now, there will be uncounted millions.”

Although this period was marked by many marvelous revelations, it was also a time of severe persecution. On a cold night in March 1832, a mob dragged Joseph and Sidney from

their beds, beat them, tried to poison them, then poured hot tar and feathers on their bodies. Joseph and Emma’s infant son, exposed to the cold when the mob entered the home, died five days later.

In his dedicatory prayer, President Hinckley said, “We dedicate and consecrate the John Johnson home as a place sacred unto Thee and unto us, as a place in which Thou didst reveal Thyself with Thy Beloved Son, as a place in which the Prophet lived and translated the Bible, as well as brought forth under the direction of Thy Son many revelations, and as a place where he suffered so terribly. . .

“May this home continue now as a reminder to our people from far and near who may come to visit us, that Thou dost live; that Thou dost speak; that Thy Son lives and dost speak; and that a Prophet has recorded the things which Thou hast spoken on these premises and held them sacred unto us who live in this favored time.” □



President and Sister Hinckley and Elder and Sister Haight (rear) tour the home with Kirtland Visitors' Center director David Brown (left) and former Kirtland stake president Timothy Headrick.



Church Humanitarian Service director Garry Flake, Kenneth Behring, Area Authority Seventy Elder Jose E. Boza (standing behind wheelchair), and El Salvadoran first lady Lourdes Maria Rodriguez present a wheelchair to a young recipient and his father.

Hundred of Wheelchairs Donated in Central America

In October the Church, in cooperation with philanthropist and Wheelchair Foundation founder Kenneth Behring, donated 1,500 wheelchairs to those in need in El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

El Salvador's first lady, Lourdes Maria Rodriguez; Honduran president Carlos Roberto Flores and first lady Mary Flake de Flores; and then Nicaraguan president Arnoldo Alemán and first lady Maria Fernanda Flores de Alemán attended ceremonies announcing the donations in their countries. Local Church leaders and Humanitarian Service representatives also attended.

A small number of wheelchairs were presented during each ceremony. In Nicaragua a girl stepped forward to place in a wheelchair her younger brother, whom she had carried around throughout his entire life.

In El Salvador a young man spoke of how his new wheelchair will allow him to go back to school. In Honduras a Catholic nun who has served others for nearly 50 years told how a wheelchair will allow her to continue to serve.

In addition to thanking the Church for the wheelchairs, the first lady of El Salvador also recognized the Church for its prompt and efficient assistance following earthquakes in her country earlier this year. The first lady of Nicaragua thanked the Church for its help during a recent drought in her nation. The president of Honduras stated that the Church has "always been there for Honduras. Now, they are partnering with Mr. Behring to bless the lives of many people that have not had the privilege of being mobile. This donation will help people to be more self-reliant." □

New Genealogy Workbooks Make Research Easier

The Church's Family History Library released in October two publications to help people in their family history research: an introductory workbook called *How Do I Start My Family History?* (item no. 32916; no charge) and a research guide titled *Denmark: Finding Records of Your Ancestors, Part A* (36577; U.S. \$3.25).

How Do I Start My Family History? helps those just beginning to gather and organize their family's genealogy. Users will find simple instructions, examples, and removable pedigree and family group worksheets to help them record what they already know about their families.

Denmark: Finding Records of Your Ancestors, Part A is the first of what will be a series of publications designed to help those who have already gathered some information and recorded it on pedigree and family group forms and are ready to search public records. Additional guides in the *Finding Records of Your Ancestors* series for the British Isles, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland are now being prepared for publication. Other guides will follow, offering

research assistance for African-Americans, American Indians, and Pacific Islanders.

Finding Records of Your Ancestors guides are geared toward people who have little genealogical experience and may not have time to do extensive research. For example, *Denmark, Part A* outlines the steps and tools needed to find one's Danish ancestors. Users will learn where to start, how to find and use Danish records, and which unique elements to look for in the records.

The guide explains different types of records in Denmark and instructs the user on when and how to use specific records. A real-life case study allows readers to see for themselves how the research process works. Expert



search tips, maps, historical time lines, and background on Danish naming customs are included. In addition to outlining a strategy for getting started, the guide offers instructions on more advanced research, including addresses and Web sites for more information.

Both publications are available at Church distribution centers or on the Internet at www.familysearch.org. □



Hundreds of thousands of Christmas lights adorning Temple Square and nearby areas will also burn brightly during the 2002 Olympic Winter Games to welcome visitors to Salt Lake City.

Being a Good Host to Visitors during Games

BY RACHEL L. DAHL

When the world turns its attention to Salt Lake City in February for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games, the Church will be ready to host visitors who come to Church sites and events.

"President [Gordon B.] Hinckley said the important thing for the Church to do is play the role of good host," says Bruce Olsen, Church public affairs director, speaking of those visitors who will seek out historical and cultural attractions in Salt Lake City.

Part of being a good host means responding to requests for assistance from the Salt Lake Organizing Committee (SLOC) for the Olympic Winter Games of 2002. In addition, the Church has

encouraged members to volunteer during the Olympics and has planned its own musical performances, tours of Church sites, and artistic exhibits for those who are interested.

In response to SLOC's request, the Church is donating the use of a large open-air parking lot that will be transformed into the Olympic medals plaza. Medals ceremonies will take place at this site, two blocks west of Temple Square. Also in response to SLOC's request, the Church has scheduled special Tabernacle Choir performances for the Cultural Olympiad—the Olympic Games' official cultural events of international appeal.

The Tabernacle Choir will perform with various

guest artists in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on each of the four Saturday nights during the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games. (The Paralympic Games, for those with disabilities,

are also organized by the International Olympic Committee.) The world-renowned guest artists will include opera star Frederica von Stade, clarinetist Richard Stoltzman, a cappella ensemble king'singers, and percussionist Evelyn Glennie. On Sunday mornings after the concerts, the choir's weekly broadcast, *Music and the Spoken Word*, will be followed by a 45-minute concert with the previous night's guest artist.

The Church is also sponsoring its own musical event called *Light of the World: A Celebration of Life*, a theatrical spectacular to be performed in the Conference Center from 7–23 February. *Light of the World* has reference to the Savior and to the light within all people. The spectacular features a cast of 1,500 musicians, dancers, and actors, performing with the 370-voice Tabernacle Choir and the Orchestra at Temple Square. Five Latter-day Saint composers wrote



Temple Square's recently remodeled interactive visitors' centers will help guests who are interested in learning more about the gospel.

the music for the production, which portrays universal values such as courage, endurance, and faith. Visual effects in *Light of the World* will complement the grandeur of the Olympics.

Local Church sites will also be ready to welcome visitors. Hundreds of thousands of lights and other decorations normally on display only during the Christmas season will be left in place to adorn Temple Square during the Olympics. Temple Square's recently remodeled interactive visitors' centers will help interested guests learn more about the gospel.

In the Joseph Smith Memorial Building, a conference room will be used as a media center where media representatives can ask questions and look at Church materials. The Church's official Web site, www.lds.org, will continue to offer its media link to news stories about the Church, complete with sound bites and video clips.

The Family History Library, a magnet for people wishing to research their ancestry, will have extended hours and volunteer staffers to accommodate more patrons. A remodeled orientation room has displays representing various ethnicities and cultures. New resources, such as 160 new computers, laptop workstations, Internet access, and accessibility for disabled persons, make the library more user friendly.

The Museum of Church History and Art will feature four exhibits during the Olympics: *A Covenant Restored: Foundations of The Church*

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; World Views: Latter-day Saint Artists Look at Life; Families and Faith: The Fabrics of Latter-day Saint Life; and That in Me Ye Might Have Peace: Messages of Hope from the Scriptures. These exhibits are designed to appeal to visitors from around the world.

From January through May, Brigham Young University's Museum of Art will host a world-class museum exhibit called *Lure of the West: Treasures from the Smithsonian Art Museum*. The exhibit will showcase majestic western landscapes by artists Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran and depictions of Native Americans by George Catlin and other celebrated western artists.

To help serve Olympic visitors, Church members have been asked to volunteer as tour guides at Welfare Square, the Humanitarian Center, the Family History Library, Brigham Young University, the Conference Center, and Temple Square. Members' talents will also be utilized as they participate in performances scheduled in the Conference Center, the Salt Lake Tabernacle, and the Assembly Hall. BYU has canceled classes during part of the Olympics so that its students and faculty, many of whom are bilingual, may volunteer at or otherwise participate in the games.

At SLOC's request, local Latter-day Saint families, along with families of other faiths, will host in their homes the families of participating athletes. □

Rachel L. Dahl is a member of the BYU 44th Ward, BYU Sixth Stake.

APPOINTMENTS

Following are temple presidents and matrons recently called to serve in temples of areas served by the *Ensign* (United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand):

Allan and Roma Lee Alder Sandstone Ward Hermiston Oregon Stake	Columbia River Washington Temple
Bruce and Phyllis Belnap Clearwater Ward St. Petersburg Florida Stake	Orlando Florida Temple
William and Kathleen Campbell East Coast Bays Ward Auckland New Zealand Harbour Stake	Hamilton New Zealand Temple
Gene and Sandra Carroll Johns Creek Ward Roswell Georgia Stake	Atlanta Georgia Temple
Don and Lora Dee Christensen Serene Ward Las Vegas Nevada Warm Springs Stake	Las Vegas Nevada Temple
Gordon and Myrna Conger Bellevue Sixth Ward Bellevue Washington Stake	Seattle Washington Temple
Paul and Dorothy Hatch Glendora First Ward Glendora California Stake	Los Angeles California Temple
George and Edna Jones Chichester Ward Portsmouth England Stake	London England Temple
Glenn and Julina Lung Kaimuki Ward, Honolulu Hawaii Stake	Laie Hawaii Temple
Grant and Linda Marsh Greenwood Village Ward Denver Colorado Stake	Denver Colorado Temple
L. David and Nedra Muir Green Valley 14th Ward St. George Utah Green Valley Stake	St. George Utah Temple
Glenn and Susanne Peterson Southlake Ward Colleyville Texas Stake	Dallas Texas Temple
Jay and Jena Vee Smith Oak Hills Fourth Ward Provo Utah Oak Hills Stake	Provo Utah Temple
George and Carilee Weight Springville Ward Cedar Mill Oregon Stake	Portland Oregon Temple

Following are directors and their companions recently called to serve at Church visitors' centers and historic sites:

Paul and Phyllis Ashton Tustin Second Ward Orange California Stake	Hamilton New Zealand Temple Visitors' Center
Gordon and Rella Christensen Mapleton First Ward Mapleton Utah Stake	Los Angeles California Temple Visitors' Center
Phillip and Elizabeth Christensen Lakeview Ward Bountiful Utah Central Stake	Mormon Handcart Visitors' Center at Martin's Cove

Leon and Marilyn Davies
Bountiful 54th Ward
Bountiful Utah Heights Stake

Mormon Trail Center
at Historic Winter Quarters

Richard and Barbara Fox
Monument Park 12th Ward
Salt Lake Monument Park North Stake

Hill Cumorah Visitors' Center

Del and Carol Garner
Raft River Ward
Declo Idaho Stake

Liberty Jail Historic Site

David and Deslyn Grant
Ensign First Ward
Salt Lake Ensign Stake

Mesa Arizona Temple Visitors' Center

Loren and Leona Grover
Rexburg Fourth Ward
Rexburg Idaho East Stake

Idaho Falls Idaho Temple Visitors' Center

Joseph and Ann Park
Monument Park 19th Ward
Salt Lake Monument Park North Stake

Illinois Nauvoo Mission & Visitors' Center

Milton and Rhea Wille
Elyria Ward
Cleveland Ohio Stake

Mexico City D.F. Mexico Temple
Visitors' Center

Richard and Shelly Williams
Silver Creek Ward
Park City Utah Stake

Park City Family Tree Center

In the Spotlight

FOUR MEMBERS ELECTED TO FRENCH POLYNESIAN PARLIAMENT

Four Church members were recently elected to the French Polynesian Parliament. Temauri Foster of the Makemo Tuamotu District, Tarita Sinjoux of the Faaa Tahiti Stake, Hinano Tetuanui of the Papeari Tahiti Stake, and Arsène Tuairau of the Papeete Tahiti Stake are now serving in the 49-member parliament.

LATTER-DAY SAINT RECEIVES ADOPTION AWARD

Curt Dahl, creative director for Church-owned Bonneville Communications, was honored by a U.S. congressional group on 22 October for his efforts

in promoting adoption.

Brother Dahl, an adoptive father himself, received the Angels in Adoption award for creating and producing a series of public service announcements promoting adoption as a positive choice for unwed birth mothers. The commercials are sponsored by LDS Family Services.

Angels in Adoption awards are given annually by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, a bipartisan organization whose 153 members seek to improve adoption policy and practice.

Brother Dahl is a member of the Crescent 17th Ward, Sandy Utah Crescent West Stake.

RETURNED MISSIONARY IS SEATTLE MARINERS SCOUT

Ted Heid, director of Pacific Rim scouting for the Seattle Mariners, says his career benefited from counsel he received during his mission to Japan from 1976 to 1978.

Brother Heid, a member of the Cactus Ward, Glendale Arizona North Stake, has kept up his Japanese language skills since his mission president, Shozo Suzuki, challenged him to continue to pray in Japanese every day.

"I followed that counsel and accepted that chal-

lenge," Brother Heid says. "And I think it was very important in my ability to hang on to the language for so many years, even when I didn't have an opportunity to use it on a daily basis. It turned out to be important in getting this position [with the Mariners]."

While scouting Japan for the Mariners, Brother Heid helped sign sensational hitting outfielder Ichiro Suzuki. Brother Heid has been director of Pacific Rim scouting since November 2000.
—Gary Libman, Altadena, California

Comment

Plan of Salvation Chart

In the September 2001 issue we especially enjoyed the article "Teaching Our Children the Plan of Salvation" and plan to incorporate many of its ideas in teaching our three small children. In a diagram on page 36, the line representing the Final Judgment is placed before the line representing the Resurrection, suggesting that the Final Judgment occurs before the Resurrection. After studying several scripture passages and reading other Church curriculum materials, we believe that such a suggestion would be incorrect. Could you please help us better understand this matter?

The Calta Family
Chino, California

The diagram on page 36 does not accurately portray what the scriptures and living prophets teach on this matter.

The scriptures frequently speak of a day when all mankind will stand before God to be judged according to their works prior to inheriting a kingdom of glory. This time has become known as the Final Judgment. The scriptures also speak of two other significant times of judgment: (1) Death. When the spirit leaves the mortal body, a judgment assigns each person to a state of happiness or a state of misery (see Alma 40:11–14); (2) The Second Coming. When Christ comes to earth in great glory, He will divide the wicked from the righteous (see Mal. 4:1–2). It is also accurate to consider every day a day of

judgment, for as Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "The Final Judgment is not just an evaluation of a sum total of good and evil acts—what we have done. It is an acknowledgment of the final effect of our acts and thoughts—what we have become" ("The Challenge to Become," Ensign, Nov. 2000, 32).

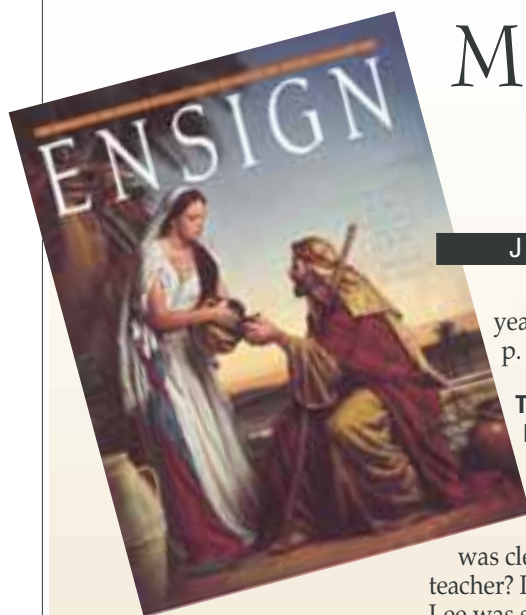
The Prophet Jacob taught that "when all men shall have passed from this first death unto life, inasmuch as they have become immortal, they must appear before the judgment seat of the Holy One of Israel; and then cometh the judgment. . . . And . . . they who are righteous shall be righteous still, and they who are filthy shall be filthy still" (2 Ne. 9:15–16).

Editors

"Life-Fitting" Articles

As I read the September 2001 issue of the Ensign, I was thrilled to see how "life-fitting" this issue was for me at the time. The articles "Live in Thanksgiving Daily," "Sacrament Meeting and the Sacrament," "Loving My Wayward Child," "Peace on Earth," "Teaching Our Children the Plan of Salvation," and excerpts from First Presidency addresses in the News of the Church section were among the messages I cherish.

Thank you for the prayerfully selected and compiled material of the Ensign. I am so grateful for this blessing in my life.
Brian K. Smith
Taylorsville, Utah



Making the Most of This Issue

J A N U A R Y 2 0 0 2

year. Learn more on p. 69.

The Touch of a Master Teacher

Have you ever learned from someone who

was clearly a master teacher? President Harold B. Lee was such a man, and this year you will have the opportunity to learn from him in Melchizedek Priesthood or Relief Society lessons. For a brief look at his life, see p. 14.

To Love and Care for Each Other

Want to build a stronger relationship with your husband or wife? Five suggestions based on concepts in "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" offer valuable help. See p. 20.

Helping Them Get the Point

Ever asked a question in family home evening or in a Church class that no one wanted to answer? Try adjusting your teaching style with the suggestion

on p. 23. It will make a difference!

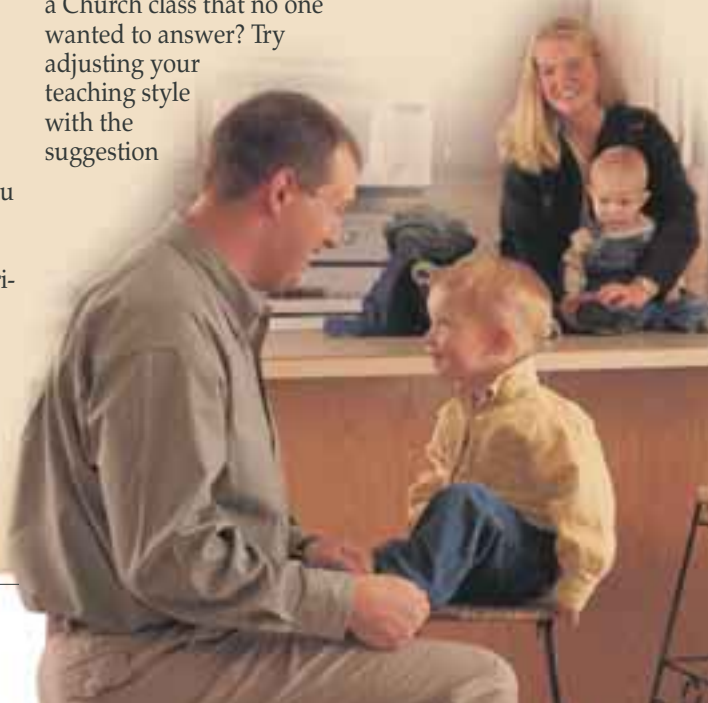
How to Enjoy the Old Testament

You can find and enjoy countless lessons for daily living in the first and oldest



testament of Jesus Christ. Several articles in this month's *Ensign* suggest some possibilities:

- Learn from Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles how the Old Testament can help you find the way of happiness, p. 30.
- Tap into the power of Old Testament stories, pp. 35–44.



• Discover how the Book of Mormon can help your Old Testament study, p. 45.

• Tie together thousands of years of Old Testament history, pp. 50–55.

• Follow a few simple suggestions to take the stress out of starting to read the Old Testament, p. 56.

Home Teachers and Visiting Teachers

Find the monthly messages on pp. 2 and 67.

Did You Know?

This year's Visiting Teaching Messages have a new format focusing on the scriptures and the inspired teachings of Church leaders. The new format also encourages more sharing of personal experiences. For ideas on how visiting teaching can lend spiritual strength to everyone involved, see "For Such a Time as This," p. 64.

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Strengthening Your Family

• Teach your family to respect and appreciate people who have disabilities as you read and discuss "Prepared by Our Bus Friends," p. 72. Or start a discussion about how adversity can actually bless our lives by reading "Why Was My Life Preserved?" p. 71.

• While you're feeding your children at lunchtime, you can feed their spirits too. Learn how scripture stories from the Gospel Art Picture Kit provide ready-made lessons for times like these, p. 68.

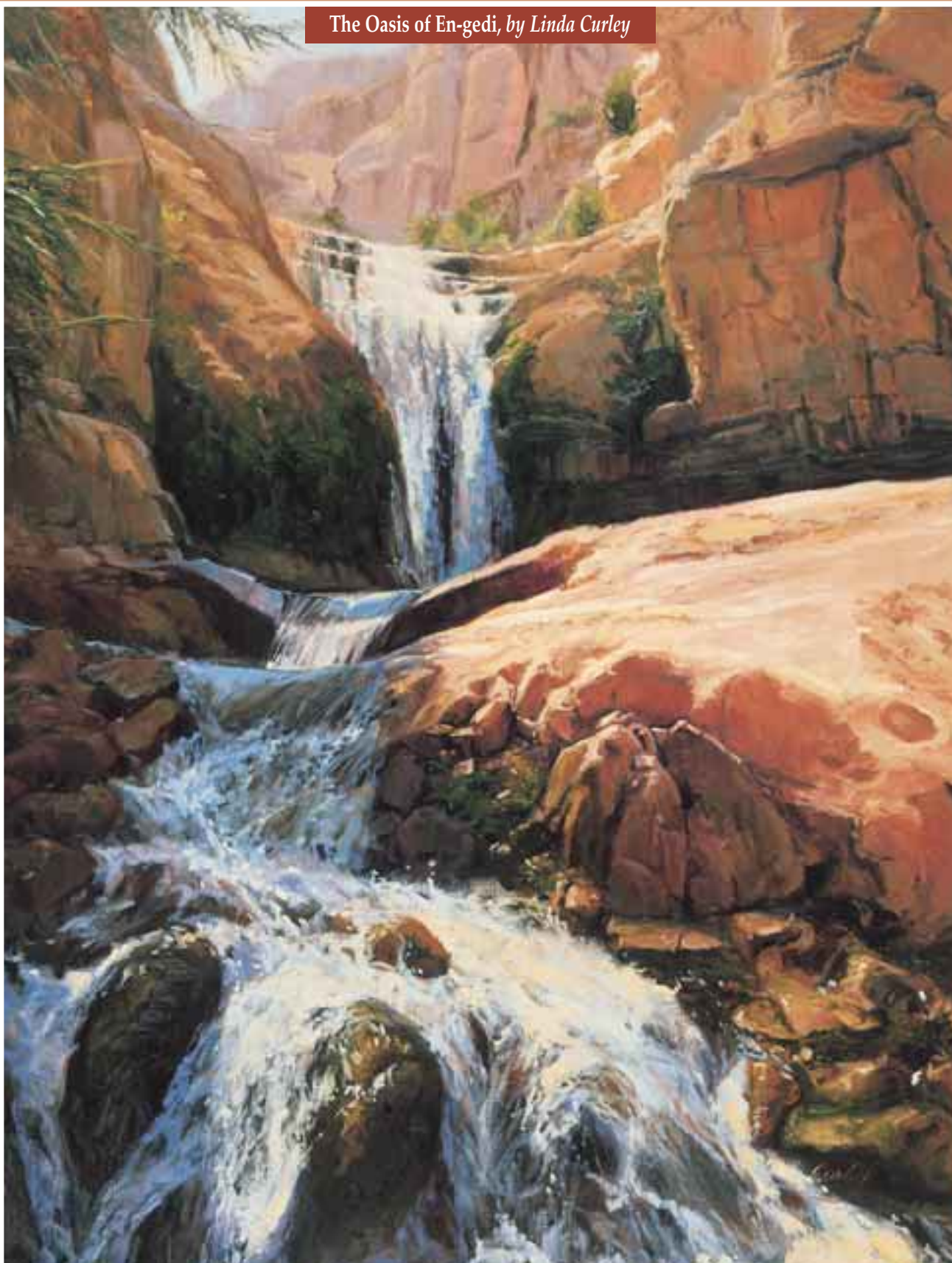
For Parents and Leaders of Youth

If you are a parent or a youth leader, the changes in Aaronic Priesthood Duty to God and Young Women Personal Progress involve you too. To find out how parents and leaders can team up to help youth achieve their spiritual objectives, see p. 7.

Eyes on the Goal

Are you looking for an effective way to set and achieve goals in 2002? One family makes posters to help them remember theirs throughout the

The Oasis of En-gedi, by Linda Curley



"And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats" (1 Sam. 24:1–2).



*“Behold, Rebekah came out, ...
with her pitcher upon her
shoulder. ... And she went
down to the well, and filled her pitcher,
and came up. And the servant ran to
meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee,
drink a little water of thy pitcher.
And she said, Drink, my lord: and she
hasted, and let down her pitcher upon
her hand, and gave him drink. And
when she had done giving him drink,
she said, I will draw water for thy
camels also” (Gen. 24:15–19).*