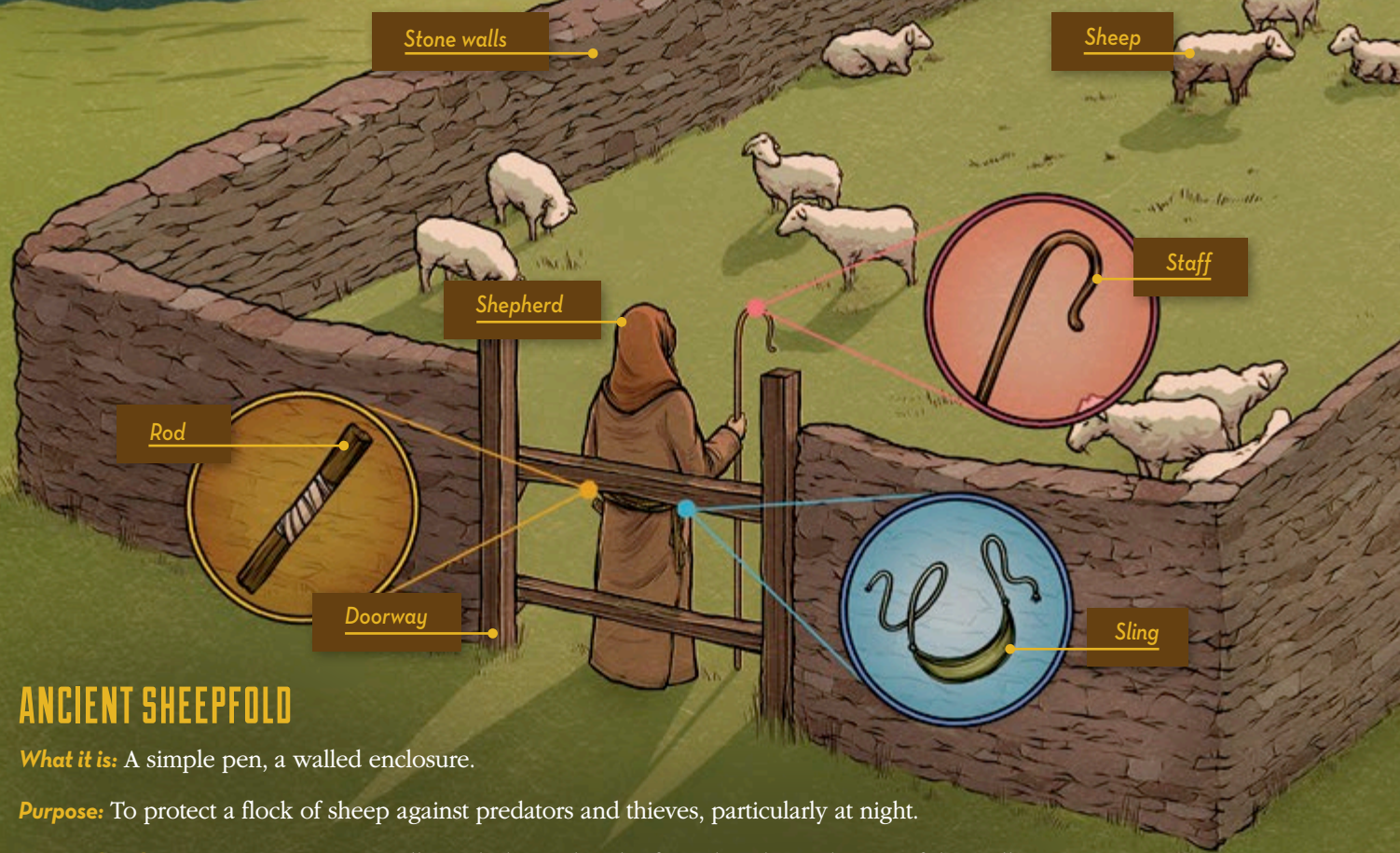


THE FOLD AND SHEPHERD

AN ENCLOSURE FOR A FLOCK OF SHEEP TEACHES US ABOUT THE SAVIOR'S CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE.



ANCIENT SHEEPFOLD

What it is: A simple pen, a walled enclosure.

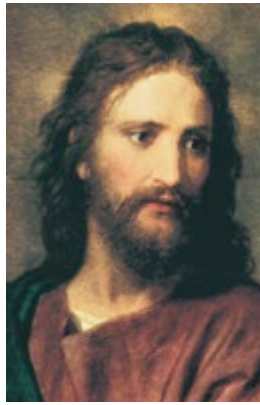
Purpose: To protect a flock of sheep against predators and thieves, particularly at night.

Material and construction: Stones, usually, with thorny brush often placed into the top of the walls. Thick thorn bushes were also often used to make a fence for a temporary makeshift sheepfold. Caves sometimes served as a sheepfold, with small rock or brush barriers placed in front of them.

BIBLE FACTS

- Sheep were very valuable for their meat, milk, fat, wool, skins, and horns and were a primary sacrificial animal.
- In Israel, wolves, hyenas, panthers, and jackals are among predators that would target sheep. In ancient times, lions and bears also inhabited the region (see 1 Samuel 17:33-37).
- Shepherds used a staff to lead the sheep and a rod and a sling to defend them.
- A shepherd led his sheep to food and water during the day (see Psalm 23:1-2) and back to the fold at night. The shepherd would count the sheep as they returned, searching for strays if any were missing. He would then lie in the doorway of the fold to protect them.
- Jesus Christ called Himself the Good Shepherd (see John 10:11-15) because He laid down His life for us. He also compared Himself to the door of the sheepfold (see John 10:1-9) because it is through Him that we receive spiritual nourishment, rest, peace, salvation, and exaltation.
- The Apostle Paul compared the Church to a flock of sheep (see Acts 20:28).

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID HABBEN



“OTHER SHEEP I HAVE, WHICH ARE NOT OF THIS FOLD: THEM ALSO I MUST BRING, AND THEY SHALL HEAR MY VOICE; AND THERE SHALL BE ONE FOLD, AND ONE SHEPHERD.”

John 10:16 (see also 3 Nephi 15:14-24; 16:1-3)

WHAT WE CAN LEARN

SHEEPFOLDS ARE:

Where the flock gathers. As Church members, we share a bond of unity through our faith and our covenants, as well as through literally gathering together. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught: “The joy of unity [Heavenly Father] wants so much to give us is not solitary. We must seek it and qualify for it with others. It is not surprising then that God urges us to gather so that He can bless us. He wants us to gather into families. He has established classes, wards, and branches and commanded us to meet together often. In those gatherings, . . . we can pray and work for the unity that will bring us joy and multiply our power to serve” (“Our Hearts Knit as One,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 69).

A place of safety and rest. In Jesus Christ we “find rest unto [our] souls” (Matthew 11:29). His Church is “a defense, and . . . a refuge” (D&C 115:6). And as President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught, “We find safety and security for ourselves and our children in honoring the covenants we have made and living up to the ordinary acts of obedience required of the followers of Christ” (“These Things I Know,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 7).

Guarded by the shepherd. Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd who saves us. He suffered and died so that we might overcome sin and death and return to our Heavenly Father. As we come unto Christ and are obedient to His commandments, He blesses, guides, and protects us both individually and as His covenant people.