

# Old Testament

Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual



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Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual

Published by  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
Salt Lake City, Utah

## Comments and Suggestions

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Cover: *Hannah Presenting Her Son Samuel to Eli*, by Robert T. Barrett

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Printed in the United States of America

English approval: 1/01

# Contents

Lesson Number and Title	Page
Helps for the Teacher	v
1 “This Is My Work and My Glory” (Moses 1)	1
2 “Thou Wast Chosen Before Thou Wast Born” (Abraham 3; Moses 4:1–4)	5
3 The Creation (Moses 1:27–42; 2–3)	9
4 “Because of My Transgression My Eyes Are Opened” (Moses 4; 5:1–15; 6:48–62)	12
5 “If Thou Doest Well, Thou Shalt Be Accepted” (Moses 5–7)	17
6 “Noah . . . Prepared an Ark to the Saving of His House” (Moses 8:19–30; Genesis 6–9; 11:1–9)	23
7 The Abrahamic Covenant (Abraham 1:1–4; 2:1–11; Genesis 12:1–8; 17:1–9)	27
8 Living Righteously in a Wicked World (Genesis 13–14; 18–19)	32
9 “God Will Provide Himself a Lamb” (Abraham 1; Genesis 15–17; 21–22)	36
10 Birthright Blessings; Marriage in the Covenant (Genesis 24–29)	40
11 “How Can I Do This Great Wickedness?” (Genesis 34; 37–39)	46
12 “Fruitful in the Land of My Affliction” (Genesis 40–45)	51
13 Bondage, Passover, and Exodus (Exodus 1–3; 5–6; 11–14)	56
14 “Ye Shall Be a Peculiar Treasure unto Me” (Exodus 15–20; 32–34)	62
15 “Look to God and Live” (Numbers 11–14; 21:1–9)	68
16 “I Cannot Go Beyond the Word of the Lord” (Numbers 22–24; 31:1–16)	73
17 “Beware Lest Thou Forget” (Deuteronomy 6; 8; 11; 32)	77
18 “Be Strong and of a Good Courage” (Joshua 1–6; 23–24)	82
19 The Reign of the Judges (Judges 2; 4; 6–7; 13–16)	87
20 “All the City . . . Doth Know That Thou Art a Virtuous Woman” (Ruth; 1 Samuel 1)	92
21 God Will Honor Those Who Honor Him (1 Samuel 2–3; 8)	96
22 “The Lord Looketh on the Heart” (1 Samuel 9–11; 13; 15–17)	101
23 “The Lord Be Between Thee and Me For Ever” (1 Samuel 18–20; 23–24)	107
24 “Create in Me a Clean Heart” (2 Samuel 11–12; Psalm 51)	111

25	“Let Every Thing That Hath Breath Praise the Lord” (Psalms)	117
26	King Solomon: Man of Wisdom, Man of Foolishness (1 Kings 3; 5–11)	123
27	The Influence of Wicked and Righteous Leaders (1 Kings 12–14; 2 Chronicles 17; 20)	128
28	“After the Fire a Still Small Voice” (1 Kings 17–19)	134
29	“He Took Up . . . the Mantle of Elijah” (2 Kings 2; 5–6)	139
30	“Come to the House of the Lord” (2 Chronicles 29–30; 32; 34)	144
31	“Happy Is the Man That Findeth Wisdom” (Proverbs and Ecclesiastes)	151
32	“I Know That My Redeemer Liveth” (Job 1–2; 13; 19; 27; 42)	157
33	Sharing the Gospel with the World (Jonah 1–4; Micah 2; 4–7)	162
34	“I Will Betroth Thee unto Me in Righteousness” (Hosea 1–3; 11; 13–14)	166
35	God Reveals His Secrets to His Prophets (Amos 3; 7–9; Joel 2–3)	170
36	The Glory of Zion Will Be a Defense (Isaiah 1–6)	175
37	“Thou Hast Done Wonderful Things” (Isaiah 22; 24–26; 28–30)	179
38	“Beside Me There Is No Saviour” (Isaiah 40–49)	183
39	“How Beautiful upon the Mountains” (Isaiah 50–53)	187
40	“Enlarge the Place of Thy Tent” (Isaiah 54–56; 63–65)	190
41	“I Have Made Thee This Day . . . an Iron Pillar” (Jeremiah 1–2; 15; 20; 26; 36–38)	194
42	“I Will Write It in Their Hearts” (Jeremiah 16; 23; 29; 31)	198
43	The Shepherds of Israel (Ezekiel 18; 34; 37)	201
44	“Every Thing Shall Live Whither the River Cometh” (Ezekiel 43–44; 47)	207
45	“If I Perish, I Perish” (Daniel 1; 3; 6; Esther 3–5; 7–8)	211
46	“A Kingdom, Which Shall Never Be Destroyed” (Daniel 2)	216
47	“Let Us Rise Up and Build” (Ezra 1–8; Nehemiah 1–2; 4; 6; 8)	220
48	“The Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord” (Zechariah 10–14; Malachi)	225

# Helps for the Teacher

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President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “I hope that for you [studying the scriptures] 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” (“The Light within You,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 99).

As a Gospel Doctrine teacher, you have the opportunity to help the members of your class learn to love the Old Testament and find the enlightenment that President Hinckley promised. As you teach, you will be following the example of the Savior, who loved the scriptures and used them to teach his disciples.

Just after Jesus was resurrected, he used the scriptures to teach two disciples powerful truths. A disciple named Cleopas and his companion were walking along the road to Emmaus, discussing the news they had just heard that Jesus’ body was no longer in the sepulchre. As they walked, they were joined by Jesus but did not recognize him. He asked what they were talking about and why they were sad, and they told him of the Crucifixion and Resurrection. When Jesus heard this, he “expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27).

Cleopas and his companion asked the Savior to stay with them, and as they sat to eat they recognized him as the resurrected Lord. He then vanished from their sight, and they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” (Luke 24:32).

The scriptures that prompted the disciples’ hearts to burn were from the books of Moses and the prophets—the scriptures that we know as the Old Testament. As you teach these same sacred truths, the Holy Ghost will testify of their truthfulness to your class as he did to Cleopas and his companion.

Studying the Old Testament should strengthen class members’ testimonies of the Savior and their commitment to live his gospel. Guided by the Spirit in their study, class members should be able to testify with Job, “I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth” (Job 19:25).

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## Teaching by the Spirit

When preparing for Gospel Doctrine class, it is important that you seek inspiration and guidance from the Spirit of the Lord. “The Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith,” said the Lord, “and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach” (D&C 42:14). Remember that the Holy Ghost is the teacher in your class.

The way you seek the Spirit is through prayer, fasting, daily study of the scriptures, and obedience to the commandments. While preparing for class, pray for the Spirit to help you understand the scriptures and the needs of class members. The Spirit can also help you plan meaningful ways to discuss the scriptures and apply them to the present (1 Nephi 19:23). With the help of the Spirit, you will become an effective instrument in the hands of the Lord to teach his word to his children.

Some suggestions for how to invite the Spirit into your class are given below:

1. Invite class members to offer prayers before and after the lesson. During class, pray in your heart for the Spirit to guide you, to open the hearts of class members, and to testify and inspire.
2. Use the scriptures (see “Focusing on the Scriptures” below).
3. Bear testimony whenever the Spirit prompts you, not just at the end of the lesson. Bear testimony of the Savior. Frequently invite class members to bear their testimonies.
4. Use hymns, Primary songs, and other sacred music to prepare class members’ hearts to feel the Spirit.
5. Express love for class members, for others, and for Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.
6. Share insights, feelings, and experiences that relate to principles in the lesson. Invite class members to do the same. Members could also tell how they have applied or taught what was discussed in previous lessons.

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### **Focusing on the Scriptures**

Preparing for Gospel Doctrine class requires diligent, prayerful study of the scriptures. The Lord commanded, “Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word.” As you obtain his word through scripture study, the Lord promises that “your tongue [shall] be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea the power of God unto the convincing of men” (D&C 11:21).

This manual is a tool to help you teach the scriptures. Encourage class members to bring their scriptures to class every week. Where possible, Latter-day Saint editions of the scriptures should be used. Refer to the excerpts from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible that are in the Bible footnotes and in the section following the Bible Dictionary.

During class, keep discussions focused on the scriptures. Be judicious in your use of commentaries and other nonscriptural sources of information. Class members should be taught to seek knowledge and inspiration from the scriptures and the words of the latter-day prophets.

Each class member should be given a copy of the *Old Testament Class Member Study Guide* (34592). This booklet provides summaries and questions that will help class members understand the scriptures, ponder how to apply them, and prepare for class discussion. Encourage parents to use the study guide in family scripture study.

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### **Lesson Format**

This manual has been written for youth and adult Gospel Doctrine classes and is to be used every four years. The lessons have been designed to contain more information than you will probably be able to teach in one class period. Seek the Spirit of the Lord in selecting the scripture accounts, questions, and activities that best meet the needs of class members.

Each lesson includes the following sections:

1. *Purpose*. The purpose statement provides you with a main idea to focus on as you prepare and teach the lesson.

2. *Preparation.* The first part of this section summarizes the scripture accounts in the lesson outline. Some lessons suggest additional reading that will give you increased understanding. In many lessons this section also includes other suggested preparations, such as materials you may want to bring to class.
3. *Attention activity.* This section consists of a simple activity, object lesson, or question to help class members prepare to learn, participate, and feel the influence of the Spirit. Whether you use the manual's attention activity or one of your own, it is important to focus class members' attention at the beginning of the lesson. The activity should be brief.
4. *Scripture discussion and application.* This is the main part of the lesson. Prayerfully study the scripture accounts so you can teach and discuss them effectively. Use the suggestions in "Helps for Teaching the Scriptures" (below) to vary the way you teach and to maintain class members' interest.
5. *Conclusion.* This section helps you summarize the lesson and encourage class members to live the principles you have discussed. It also reminds you to bear testimony. Be sure to leave enough time to conclude each lesson.
6. *Additional teaching ideas.* This section includes additional truths from the scripture accounts, alternate teaching approaches, activities, and other suggestions that supplement the lesson outline. You may want to use some of these ideas as part of the lesson.

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## Helps for Teaching the Scriptures

Use the following suggestions to teach scripture accounts more effectively and with greater variety:

1. Help class members understand what the scriptures teach about Jesus Christ, the Jehovah of the Old Testament, whose birth, mortal mission, second coming, and millennial reign are prophesied in the Old Testament.
2. Ask class members to think of and share specific ways that a scripture passage can apply in their lives.
3. In addition to the doctrine, give emphasis to the stories in the Old Testament, particularly the stories of faith, ensuring that class members understand them and discuss ways to apply them.
4. Have class members look for words, phrases, or ideas that are repeated often in a scripture passage or that have special meaning for them.
5. Write on the chalkboard some phrases, key words, or questions that relate to the scripture account. Then read or summarize the account. As class members hear the phrases, key words, or answers to the questions, stop and discuss them.
6. Throughout the Book of Mormon, the phrase "and thus we see" is used to introduce a summary of the principles taught. After discussing a scripture passage, ask class members to complete the sentence "and thus we see" in order to explain the gospel principle being taught.
7. Look for and discuss symbols that are used throughout the Old Testament. For example, the bride and the Bridegroom represent Israel and the Savior.
8. Notice how people or events in the scriptures can be contrasted with each other. For example, you could contrast Cain with Abel and Enoch (Moses



5–7); David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11) with Joseph of Egypt and Potiphar’s wife (Genesis 39:7–13); or the prophet Elijah with wicked King Ahab (1 Kings 16:29–33; 17–19).

9. Conduct a readers’ theater by having class members read the words of the different people in the scriptures.
10. Divide the class into two or more small groups. After reviewing the scripture account, have each group write down the principles taught in the account. Then have the groups take turns discussing how these principles apply in their lives.
11. Invite class members to bring a pencil to mark significant verses as you discuss them.

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## Encouraging Class Discussion

You normally should not give lectures but should try to help class members participate meaningfully in discussing the scriptures. As class members participate, they more effectively learn about the scriptures and better understand how to apply gospel principles. Seek the Spirit’s guidance in deciding which questions to ask, how to organize them, and how to develop them. Class discussions should center on matters that help members come unto Christ and live as his disciples. Redirect discussions that do not accomplish these purposes.

Scripture references are provided to help you and class members find answers to most questions in the scriptures. Answers to some questions will come from class members’ experiences.

Covering all the lesson material is less important than helping class members better understand the scriptures and commit themselves to increased discipleship. If class members are learning from a good discussion, it is often helpful to let it continue rather than try to cover all the lesson material.

Use the following guidelines to encourage class discussion:

1. Ask a question and then give a scripture reference so class members can find the answer.
2. Ask questions that require thought and discussion, rather than yes or no answers. Questions that begin with *why*, *how*, *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where* are usually most effective for encouraging discussion.
3. Encourage class members to share their feelings about what they are learning from the scriptures. Also encourage them to share experiences that show how scriptural principles can be applied to life. Make positive comments about their contributions.
4. Be sensitive to the needs of each class member. Although all class members should be encouraged to participate in class discussions, some may hesitate to respond. You may wish to speak privately with them to find out how they feel about reading aloud or participating in class. Be careful not to call on class members who might be embarrassed.
5. Encourage class members to prepare for class by studying the assigned scripture account and the *Old Testament Class Member Study Guide* (34592). They will be better able to participate in discussions if they are prepared. Suggest that class members discuss the scripture accounts and the lessons with their families.

# “This Is My Work and My Glory”

## Lesson 1

Moses 1

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### Purpose

To help class members understand that (1) we are children of God, (2) we can resist Satan’s temptations, and (3) God’s work and glory is to bring to pass our immortality and eternal life.

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### Preparation

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures from the Pearl of Great Price:
    - a. Moses 1:1–11. Moses sees God and talks with him face to face. Moses learns that he is a son of God in the similitude of the Only Begotten of the Father. Note: Class members should understand that Jehovah, not Heavenly Father, appeared to Moses in this vision. Jehovah was the premortal Jesus Christ and the God of the Old Testament. He is one with his Father in purpose and represents him in power and authority. His words are those of the Father, and sometimes, as in Moses 1:6, he speaks in the first person for the Father. (See James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. [1924], 470–71.)
    - b. Moses 1:12–23. Satan confronts Moses; Moses casts him out.
    - c. Moses 1:24–39. God appears again and teaches of his work and glory.
  2. Study the lesson and decide how to teach the scripture accounts. Because it would be difficult to ask every question or cover every point in the lesson, prayerfully select those that will best meet class members’ needs. You may need to adapt some questions to fit class members’ circumstances.
  3. Obtain a copy of the *Old Testament Class Member Study Guide* (34592) for each person in your class. (The ward should have ordered these study guides as part of the annual curriculum order; a member of the bishopric should give them to the Sunday School presidency.)
  4. If you use the second attention activity, obtain a paper or cloth bag and place in it a few everyday items, such as a rock, comb, and pencil.
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### Suggested Lesson Development

#### Introduction to the Old Testament

The Old Testament is an account of God’s dealings with his covenant people from the time of the Creation to a few hundred years before the Savior’s birth. The Old Testament provides powerful examples of faith and obedience. It also shows the consequences of forgetting, disobeying, or opposing God. Its prophecies bear witness of the Messiah’s birth, redeeming sacrifice, second coming, and millennial reign.

In addition to the Old Testament, this course includes the books of Moses and Abraham from the Pearl of Great Price. These books provide important additions and clarifications to some of the material in the book of Genesis. The book of Moses is an extract from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. The book of Abraham is a translation that the Prophet Joseph Smith made from some Egyptian papyri. For additional information about the Joseph Smith Translation, see

“Joseph Smith Translation,” Bible Dictionary, page 717. Note also that selections from the Joseph Smith Translation are included after the Bible Dictionary in the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Bible.

#### Attention Activity

You may want to use one of the following activities (or one of your own) to begin the lesson. Select the activity that would be most appropriate for the class.

1. Ask class members to look in Moses 1:6, 20–22, and 39 to identify important truths that are revealed. Answers may vary. Explain that this lesson will focus on the three truths that are listed under “Purpose” on page 1.
2. Select two class members and hand them a bag that contains a few everyday items (see “Preparation,” page 1). Tell the participants that they are going to play a game, but do not give instructions or explain the object of the game. Ask the participants to open the bag and begin playing. They will expect the contents of the bag to explain the game. However, the contents do not provide this information, and the participants will wonder what they are supposed to do.

Point out that to understand a game we must understand its object or purpose. Similarly, to understand our lives on earth we must understand the object or purpose of our lives. Moses 1 helps us understand this by answering three important questions:

- Who are we?
- How can we overcome the influence of the adversary?
- What is God’s work and glory?

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#### Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles. At an appropriate time during the lesson, hand out the *Old Testament Class Member Study Guide* (34592) and encourage class members to use it to further their personal and family scripture study.

##### **1. God teaches that Moses is a son of God.**

Teach and discuss Moses 1:1–11.

- What did Moses learn about God from the experiences described in Moses 1:1–7? What did Moses learn about himself? (You may want to have class members note the number of times God refers to Moses as “my son” in these verses.)
- What does it mean that Moses was created “in the similitude” of the Savior? (Moses 1:6). What difference can it make in our lives to know that we are children of God, created in the similitude of his Son?

Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught: “Consider the power of the idea taught in our beloved song ‘I Am a Child of God.’ . . . Here is the answer to one of life’s great questions, ‘Who am I?’ I am a child of God with a spirit lineage to heavenly parents. That parentage defines our eternal potential. That powerful idea is a potent antidepressant. It can strengthen each of us to make righteous choices and to seek the best that is within us. Establish in the mind of a . . . person the powerful idea that he or she is a child of God, and you have given self-respect and motivation to move against the problems of life” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 31; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 25).

- By repeatedly calling Moses “my son” and by saying that he was created “in the similitude of mine Only Begotten,” God gave Moses confidence and an understanding of his worth. How can following this principle help us as parents? How can it strengthen marriages? How can it strengthen friendships?

Suggest that in a world where criticism and negative, demeaning comments seem to dominate, we should follow the Lord’s example and say things that help others see themselves as children of God who have dignity and worth.

- Moses’ importance and eternal potential are emphasized in Moses 1:1–7. However, after the presence of God withdrew from him, Moses said, “Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing” (Moses 1:10). In what sense are both concepts true? (God is infinitely wiser and more powerful than mortal men and women. We are nothing without him. However, as his children we have the potential to become like him.)

## 2. Satan confronts Moses; Moses casts him out.

Teach and discuss Moses 1:12–23.

- When Satan came, what did he command Moses to do? (See Moses 1:12.) Why do you think Satan called Moses “son of man”? (Satan wanted Moses to believe that he was *not* a son of God.) Why does Satan want us to doubt or disregard that we are children of God? How does he try to do this?
- How did Moses respond when Satan called him “son of man”? (See Moses 1:13.) How can a strong testimony that we are sons and daughters of God help us resist temptation?
- How many times did Moses tell Satan to depart? (See Moses 1:16, 18, 20, and 21.) What does this teach us about resisting Satan’s efforts?
- How did Moses receive strength to resist the temptations of Satan? (See Moses 1:18, 20–21.) How did Moses get Satan to leave? How can prayer strengthen us to resist temptation? What else can we do to gain this strength?

## 3. God appears again and teaches of his work and glory.

Teach and discuss Moses 1:24–39.

- After Satan departed, Moses again beheld the glory of God and was shown another vision of the earth and its inhabitants (Moses 1:24–28). What two questions did Moses ask when he was shown this vision? (See Moses 1:30.) What answers did God give? (See Moses 1:31–32, 39.)
- Even though God has created worlds and people that are numberless to us, he assured Moses that he knows them all (Moses 1:35). How have you come to feel that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ know you individually and love you? (You may want to bear testimony of a time when you felt their love and concern for you.)
- God’s work and glory is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). What is immortality? Who will receive immortality? What is eternal life? Who will receive eternal life?

Elder James E. Faust said: “There is a distinction between immortality, or eternal existence, and eternal life, which is to have a place in the presence of

God. Through the grace of Jesus Christ, immortality comes to all . . . , just or unjust, righteous or wicked. However, eternal life is ‘the greatest of all the gifts of God’ (D&C 14:7). We obtain this great gift, according to the Lord, ‘if you keep my commandments and endure to the end.’ If we so endure, the promise is, ‘you shall have eternal life’ (D&C 14:7)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 14; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 12).

- Why is it important for us to know what God’s work and glory is? What are some specific ways we can assist him in this great work?

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “We are here to assist our Father in His work and His glory, ‘to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man’ (Moses 1:39). Your obligation is as serious in your sphere of responsibility as is my obligation in my sphere. No calling in this church is small or of little consequence. All of us in the pursuit of our duty touch the lives of others. To each of us in our respective responsibilities the Lord has said: . . . ‘In doing these things thou wilt do the greatest good unto thy fellow beings, and wilt promote the glory of him who is your Lord’ (D&C 81:4)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 94; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 71; see also D&C 81:5–6).

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## Conclusion

Moses 1 teaches the powerful doctrine that we are sons and daughters of God. Invite class members to ponder the significance of this truth. Testify that our Heavenly Father knows and loves each of us. Encourage class members to express to their families their feelings about what they have learned from Moses 1.

---

## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. “Moses was left unto himself” (Moses 1:9)

- There may be times when we are “left unto [ourselves]” as Moses was—times when we do not feel the Spirit strongly or have many trials. What can we learn from Moses 1 to help us deal with these times? (Answers could include: Such difficulties may not be due to any wrongdoing on our part; God does not leave us entirely, as shown in verse 15; and we often gain great strength by facing our trials, calling on God, and increasing our faith.)

### 2. All are children of God

- Moses received the vision that is recorded in Moses 1 before leading the children of Israel out of Egypt. How do you think this vision helped him in this effort, especially when he was discouraged by the people’s frequent rebellion and lack of faith? How can knowing that all of us are children of God help a teacher or leader? How can this knowledge help us in relationships with family members, friends, and others?

### 3. The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible

If *Old Testament Video Presentations* (53224) is available, you may want to show “The Power of the Joseph Smith Translation,” a five-minute segment, as part of the lesson. Remind class members that the book of Moses is an extract from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible.

# “Thou Wast Chosen Before Thou Wast Born”

## Lesson 2

*Abraham 3; Moses 4:1–4*

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**Purpose** To help class members understand the doctrine of foreordination and their own responsibility to help build up the kingdom of God and bring souls to Christ.

---

**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures from the Pearl of Great Price and the Doctrine and Covenants:
  - a. Abraham 3:11–12, 22–23; Doctrine and Covenants 138:53–57. Abraham talks with the Lord face to face and learns that in the premortal life many “noble and great” spirits were foreordained to their mortal missions (Abraham 3:11–12, 22–23). President Joseph F. Smith learns more about the “noble and great ones” in a vision of the Savior’s visit to the spirit world before His Resurrection (D&C 138:53–57).
  - b. Abraham 3:24–28; Moses 4:1–4. Abraham and Moses are shown in vision that Jesus Christ was chosen in the Council in Heaven to be our Savior and that we chose to follow him. They are also shown that Lucifer (Satan) and the spirits who followed him were cast out of heaven.
2. Additional reading: Isaiah 14:12–15; Revelation 12:7–9; Alma 13:3–5; Doctrine and Covenants 29:36–39; and the rest of Abraham 3 and Doctrine and Covenants 138.

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### Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use one of the following activities (or one of your own) to begin the lesson. Select the activity that would be most appropriate for the class.

1. Point out that the scriptures become more meaningful to us when we apply their teachings in our lives. To do this, often we must put ourselves in the place of ancient prophets and their followers. However, in Abraham 3:22–28 we do not have to put ourselves in someone else’s place because these verses are about important events in which we participated. These events took place during our premortal life.
2. Draw 14 blank spaces on the chalkboard to represent the 14 letters in the word *foreordination*. Explain that the word represented by these spaces relates to the premortal life.

Give class members 14 chances to guess which letters form the word. When they guess a correct letter, write it in the appropriate space or spaces. When they guess a letter not used in the word, write it elsewhere on the chalkboard to prevent duplicate guesses.

When class members have filled in all the blank spaces or guessed the word, help them define its meaning. (Foreordination is God’s premortal ordination

of his spirit children to fulfill certain missions during their mortal lives.) Explain that this lesson is about the premortal life, when many spirits were foreordained to do important things for Heavenly Father.

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Scripture Discussion  
and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

**1. Abraham learns that in the premortal life many spirits were foreordained to their mortal missions.**

Teach and discuss Abraham 3:11–12, 22–23, and Doctrine and Covenants 138:53–57.

- In the vision recorded in Abraham 3, the Lord showed Abraham the Council in Heaven that was held before the earth was created. (Note that latter-day prophets have indicated that the Council in Heaven was a series of meetings rather than a single meeting.) Who was present at this council? (Heavenly Father and his spirit children.) What do we learn about this council from Abraham 3:22–23?
- Who are the “noble and great ones” described in Abraham 3:22–23? (The prophets and other Church leaders.) Explain that in 1918, President Joseph F. Smith saw some of these “noble and great ones” in a vision of the spirit world. Whom did President Smith see? (See D&C 138:53; see also the second additional teaching idea.)
- What does it mean that Abraham was “chosen before [he was] born”? (See Abraham 3:23. He was foreordained to be a prophet.) What does it mean to be foreordained? (See the definition in the second attention activity.) What were the people mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 138:53 foreordained to do? (See D&C 138:53–56.)
- Did foreordination guarantee that Abraham, Joseph Smith, and others would become prophets? What is the relationship between foreordination and agency? (Even though a person is foreordained to a calling, that calling is dependent on the person’s worthiness and willingness to accept it.)
- In addition to foreordaining the prophets to their callings, God foreordained many “other choice spirits” to help build up his kingdom in different ways. What might we have been foreordained to do? (See D&C 138:56.)

President Ezra Taft Benson taught:

“God has held you in reserve to make your appearance in the final days before the second coming of the Lord. Some individuals will fall away; but the kingdom of God will remain intact to welcome the return of its head—even Jesus Christ. While our generation will be comparable in wickedness to the days of Noah, when the Lord cleansed the earth by flood, there is a major difference this time. It is that God has saved for the final inning some of His strongest children, who will help bear off the kingdom triumphantly. . . .

“. . . Make no mistake about it—you are a marked generation. There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time than there is of us” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 104–5).

- How can we be sure that we are fulfilling our foreordained callings? (Answers may include by living the gospel, studying our patriarchal blessings, and seeking personal revelation. Remind class members that to fulfill these callings, we must be willing and worthy. See also D&C 58:27–28.)

## 2. Jesus Christ was chosen in the Council in Heaven to be our Savior; we chose to follow him. Lucifer (Satan) and the spirits who followed him were cast out of heaven.

Teach and discuss Abraham 3:24–28 and Moses 4:1–4.

- Explain that in the Council in Heaven, Heavenly Father presented his plan of salvation and chose a Savior for us. Who were the two spirits who offered to be our Savior? (See Abraham 3:27; Moses 4:1–2.) How did their offers differ? (Jesus wanted to follow Heavenly Father’s plan and give him the glory. Lucifer wanted to follow his own plan and take the glory for himself.) Why did Heavenly Father choose Jesus Christ to be our Redeemer? (See Moses 4:2–3.)
- Whom did we choose to follow in the Council in Heaven? How do we know we chose to follow Jesus Christ? (We have been born on earth to receive physical bodies.)
- What do the terms *first estate* and *second estate* mean in Abraham 3:26? (*First estate* refers to the premortal life, and *second estate* refers to our mortal life. We kept our first estate by choosing to follow Jesus Christ instead of Lucifer.) What blessing did we each receive because we kept our first estate? (The opportunity to be born on earth.) What blessings will we receive if we keep our second estate? (See Abraham 3:26.) How can we keep our second estate?
- What happened to Lucifer (Satan) and those who chose to follow him? (They were cast out of heaven and denied the opportunity to have physical bodies. See Moses 4:3; Abraham 3:28; Revelation 12:7–9; D&C 29:36–37.)
- What are Satan and his followers doing now? (They are still trying to destroy our agency. They are on the earth today as evil spirits who tempt us to sin. See Moses 4:4.) What are some ways that Satan and his followers try to limit or destroy our agency? What can we do to recognize and resist their efforts?
- How does it help you to know that you chose to follow Jesus Christ in the Council in Heaven? Encourage class members to continue making decisions to follow Christ, as they did in the premortal existence.

### Conclusion

Bear testimony of Jesus Christ and his role as our foreordained Savior. Express your confidence in class members’ ability to fulfill their foreordained missions to help build up the kingdom of God.



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**Additional  
Teaching Ideas**

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

**1. “And we will prove them herewith”**

- Abraham 3:24–25 specifies one of the main purposes for which Jesus Christ, under the direction of Heavenly Father, created the earth. Why was the earth created? How does it help you to know that you chose to come to earth knowing that you would be tested here?

**2. “The great and mighty ones”**

- In his vision recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 138, President Joseph F. Smith also saw some of the “great and mighty ones” who had lived on the earth before Christ was born. Whom did President Smith see? (See D&C 138:38–49. You may want to list these names on the chalkboard. Point out that class members will learn about most of these individuals during the coming year in Sunday School.)

# The Creation

## Lesson 3

*Moses 1:27–42; 2–3*

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**Purpose** To help class members feel gratitude that God created all things for our benefit and that we are created in his image.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures from the Pearl of Great Price:
  - a. Moses 1:27–42. Moses sees a vision of God’s creations and is commanded to write an account of the creation of the earth.
  - b. Moses 2:1–25; 3:1–14. Moses learns that God is the creator of all things.
  - c. Moses 2:26–31; 3:7, 15–25. Moses learns that men and women are created in God’s image.
2. Additional reading: Abraham 4–5; Genesis 1–2.
3. If you use the second attention activity, bring modeling clay or chalk.
4. If the following audiovisual materials are available, you may want to use some of them as part of the lesson:
  - a. “In the Image of God,” a three-minute segment from *Old Testament Video Presentations* (53224).
  - b. A brief excerpt from “The Creation,” part 1 of the *Beginnings/Abraham* videocassette (53150).
  - c. The picture Creation—Living Creatures (62483; Gospel Art Picture Kit 100).

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### Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use one of the following activities (or one of your own) to begin the lesson. Select the activity that would be most appropriate for the class.

1. Ask class members to consider how much information they would give if they were trying to answer one of the following questions for a preschool child: How does an airplane stay in the air? How does a television set work? How do plants grow? Most of us would consider the understanding of a preschool child and give only general concepts, leaving the details until a child becomes more mature.
  - How are these examples like the Lord’s revelations about the Creation? (The Lord has revealed only that portion of eternal truth that our mortal minds can understand and that we need to know to gain salvation.)

This lesson will discuss the truths the Lord has revealed about the Creation.

2. Ask a class member to volunteer to make or draw a small animal using modeling clay or chalk (allow only one or two minutes). Then discuss the fact that while we can create a model of a living thing, only God can create life. This lesson will discuss the great miracle of God’s creation of the earth and everything that lives on it.

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As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

### 1. Moses sees a vision of God's creations.

Teach and discuss Moses 1:27–42.

- Who wrote the account of the Creation in Genesis? (See Moses 1:40; 2:1.) Why did Moses write this account? (See Moses 1:40–41.) What can we learn from Moses 1:27–39 about God's power? What can we learn about God's love for his children?
- How do the accounts of the Creation found in Genesis, Moses, and Abraham differ from each other? (Abraham and Moses saw in vision the organizing of this earth and then recorded their visions. Each included slightly different details. The account in Genesis was originally written by Moses, but some of the fulness of his account was lost. This fulness is restored in the book of Moses.)

### 2. Moses learns that God created all things.

Teach and discuss Moses 2:1–25; 3:1–14.

- Who created the earth? (See Moses 1:32; 2:1; see also John 1:1–3, 14; Hebrews 1:1–2; Mosiah 3:8; D&C 14:9.) Why is it important for us to know who the Creator is?
- What has God revealed about the purpose of the Creation? (See Moses 1:39; Abraham 3:24–25; see also 1 Nephi 17:36; 2 Nephi 2:11–15. The purpose of the Creation is to provide a place where Heavenly Father's spirit children can come to obtain a physical body and be tested or proven to see if they will obey him when they are away from his presence. Those who are faithful will receive eternal life. You may want to point out that although an account of the Creation is included in the book of Genesis, the purposes and importance of the Creation are explained only in latter-day revelation.)
- In what ways does earth life prepare us for eternal life? (Answers may include: We receive physical bodies, learn to use our agency, gain knowledge, have families, receive ordinances, and make covenants.)
- What did God say about the results of the Creation? (See Moses 2:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; 3:2. Eight times in the brief account of the Creation, God declared that his work was good.) Which of God's creations are especially beautiful to you? Why would we be benefited by noticing the beauties of creation more carefully each day?
- Was the earth created out of nothing? (See Abraham 3:24; 4:1.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "The word create came from the [Hebrew] word *baurau* which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos—chaotic matter" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 350–51).

- How does the account of the Creation affect your feelings toward Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ? How do the creations “bear record” of God? (See Moses 6:63; Alma 30:44.) How can we show gratitude for the gift of the Creation?

### 3. Moses learns that men and women are created in God’s image.

Teach and discuss Moses 2:26–31; 3:7, 15–25.

- In whose image are we created? (See Moses 2:26–27.)

The First Presidency said: “All men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother, and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity” (“The Origin of Man,” *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1909, 78).

- How can the knowledge that we are created in the image of God bless our lives? How should it affect our relationships with other people?
- What do Enoch’s words in Moses 7:30 teach about God’s individual care for each of us? What do they teach us about our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ?
- What do you think the Lord meant when he told us to have dominion over his creations on this earth? (See Moses 2:26. We need to respect the earth and care for God’s creations.) How can we better fulfill our responsibility to have dominion over the creations?

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#### Conclusion

Bear testimony of the truth of the principles you have taught. Invite class members to share their feelings about the Creation.

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#### Additional Teaching Idea

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use it as part of the lesson.

##### **Length of the Creation**

The length of time required for the Creation is not known. The term *day* in the scriptural account of the Creation does not represent a 24-hour period. The Hebrew word *yom* can be translated as “day,” “time,” or “period.” The Apostle Peter said that “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years” (2 Peter 3:8; see also Abraham 3:4).

# “Because of My Transgression My Eyes Are Opened”

Moses 4; 5:1–15; 6:48–62

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## Purpose

To help each class member understand that the Fall was a necessary part of Heavenly Father’s plan for us.

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## Preparation

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
    - a. Moses 4; 5:10–11; 6:48–49, 55–56. Satan comes to the Garden of Eden and seeks to deceive Eve. Eve and Adam partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (4:5–12). Having fallen, Adam and Eve are cast out of the garden (4:13–31). Adam and Eve later rejoice in the blessings of the Fall (5:10–11). Enoch teaches about the effects of the Fall (6:48–49, 55–56).
    - b. Moses 5:14–15; 6:50–54, 57–62. Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, mortals are saved from physical death through the Resurrection and may be saved from spiritual death through faith, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and obedience to the commandments.
    - c. Moses 5:1–9, 12. Adam and Eve begin life as mortals. They have children and teach them the truths they have learned (5:1–4, 12). Adam offers sacrifices in similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten (5:5–9).
  2. Additional reading: Genesis 2–3; 1 Corinthians 15:20–22; 2 Nephi 2:5–30; 2 Nephi 9:3–10; Helaman 14:15–18; Doctrine and Covenants 19:15–19; 29:34–44; Articles of Faith 1:2; “Fall of Adam,” Bible Dictionary, page 670.
  3. You may want to ask a class member to prepare to summarize the account of the Fall of Adam and Eve (Moses 4:6–31) and another class member to prepare to summarize the account of Adam offering sacrifices (Moses 5:5–9).
  4. If the following audiovisual materials are available, you may want to use them as part of the lesson:
    - a. “The Fall,” a six-minute segment from *Old Testament Video Presentations* (53224).
    - b. The picture Adam and Eve (62461; Gospel Art Picture Kit 101).
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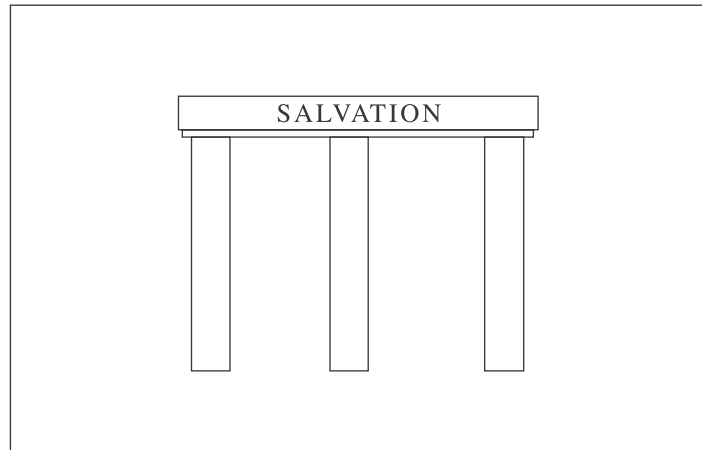
## Suggested Lesson Development

### Attention Activity

You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Draw the illustration on page 13 on the chalkboard. Tell class members that Elder Bruce R. McConkie said that our salvation is made possible because of “three divine events—the three pillars of eternity” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 81). Then ask the following question:

- What are some events that are important enough to be the “pillars of eternity” that make salvation possible? (Elder McConkie said that these pillars are the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement, which are all part of God’s plan for our salvation. Write the words *Creation*, *Fall*, and *Atonement* in the three pillars on the chalkboard.)



Explain that this lesson helps us understand how the Fall was a necessary part of Heavenly Father's plan to bring to pass our immortality and eternal life (Moses 1:39).

### Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

#### 1. The Fall of Adam and Eve and its effects on them and us

Teach and discuss Moses 4; 5:10–11; 6:48–49, 55–56.

In the Garden of Eden, God commanded Adam and Eve to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth” (Moses 2:28). He also commanded them not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Moses 3:17). As long as they did not partake of the forbidden fruit, they would remain in the garden and would not die. But they also would not be able to obey the command to multiply (Moses 5:11; 2 Nephi 2:23). Heavenly Father gave them agency to choose between the two commands.

Briefly review the account of the Fall of Adam and Eve from Moses 4:6–31, or have an assigned class member do so.

- What were the results of the Fall for Adam and Eve—and for us? (See Moses 4:22–29; 5:10–11; 6:48–49, 55–56; 2 Nephi 2:22–23; 9:6; Genesis 3:16–23.) You may want to list some of these results on the chalkboard. Point out that many of these truths about the Fall have been restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith and are not generally known in the world.
  - a. Adam and Eve were able to have children, which allowed us to come to earth and receive mortal bodies (Moses 5:11; 6:48; 2 Nephi 2:23, 25).
  - b. We experience physical death, or separation of the physical body from the spirit (Moses 4:25; 6:48; 2 Nephi 9:6).
  - c. We experience spiritual death, or separation from God's presence (Moses 4:29; 6:49; 2 Nephi 9:6).
  - d. We are partakers of misery and woe (Moses 6:48; Genesis 3:16–17).
  - e. We are capable of sinning (Moses 6:49, 55; 2 Nephi 2:22–23).

- f. The ground is cursed, causing us to need to work (Moses 4:23–25; Genesis 3:17–19).
- g. We can learn to recognize good and evil (Moses 4:28; 6:55–56; 2 Nephi 2:23; Genesis 3:22).
- h. We can have joy in mortality (Moses 5:10; 2 Nephi 2:23, 25).
- i. We can know the joy of our redemption (Moses 5:11).
- j. We can obtain eternal life (Moses 5:11).

As you discuss these results of the Fall, emphasize how the Fall is beneficial to us. Latter-day revelation clarifies that even before the Creation, Heavenly Father intended our earth life to be a time of testing and proving so we could become more like him (Abraham 3:24–26). This required that we be mortals, able to learn to choose between good and evil, which was made possible through the Fall.

- How can a correct understanding of the Fall help us during mortality?
- Why is it important to understand that God foresaw the Fall and that it was a necessary part of his plan for our salvation?
- Satan hoped that by getting Adam and Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit, he would frustrate God’s plan (Moses 4:6). What does the account of the Fall teach us about Satan’s ability to frustrate the purposes of God? (See D&C 3:1–2.)

## 2. The Atonement of Jesus Christ saves us from physical and spiritual death.

Teach and discuss Moses 5:14–15; 6:50–54, 57–62.

The Fall of Adam and Eve brought physical and spiritual death into the world. Physical death is the separation of the body and the spirit that occurs at the end of our mortal lives. Spiritual death is the separation from the presence of God, which occurred when Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden. Explain that we cannot overcome death by ourselves. For that reason, Heavenly Father sent his Only Begotten Son to redeem us from death through his atoning sacrifice (Alma 22:14).

- When prophets teach about the Fall of Adam and Eve, they often also teach about the Atonement of Jesus Christ (Moses 5:10–15; 6:48–62; 2 Nephi 9:6–10). Why is it important to teach the Atonement along with the Fall? (The Fall made the Atonement necessary in God’s plan for our salvation. Teaching the Atonement along with the Fall helps us understand how we are redeemed from physical and spiritual death.)

President Ezra Taft Benson said: “The plan of redemption must start with the account of the fall of Adam. In the words of Moroni, ‘By Adam came the fall of man. And because of the fall of man came Jesus Christ, . . . and because of Jesus Christ came the redemption of man’ (Mormon 9:12). Just as a man does not really desire food until he is hungry, so he does not desire the salvation of Christ until he knows why he needs Christ. No one adequately and properly knows why he needs Christ until he understands and accepts the doctrine of the Fall and its effect upon all mankind” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 106; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 85).

- How are we saved from physical death? (See 1 Corinthians 15:20–22; 2 Nephi 2:8; 9:6. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we will be resurrected.)

- How can we be saved from spiritual death? (See Moses 5:14–15; 6:50–52, 59; Helaman 14:15–18; D&C 19:15–19. Because of the Atonement, we can be made clean and worthy to dwell with God through faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and obedience to the commandments.)

The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob rejoiced in the redemption from death that comes through the Savior's atoning sacrifice (2 Nephi 9:10). You may want to read this passage and share your testimony and some of your feelings about the blessings we receive through the Atonement. Invite class members to do the same.

### 3. Adam and Eve begin life as mortals, bear children, teach them the gospel, and worship and obey God.

Teach and discuss Moses 5:1–9, 12.

- What did Adam and Eve do after they were cast out of the Garden of Eden? (See Moses 5:1–5, 12.) In what ways were the lives of Adam and Eve like our lives today? What can we learn from Moses 5:1–9, 12 about the purposes of our mortal lives?
- Review the account in Moses 5:5–9, or have an assigned class member do so. What commandment did the Lord give to Adam? (See Moses 5:5.) Why did Adam offer sacrifices even though he did not know the reason for doing so? (See Moses 5:6.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "Whatever God requires is right, . . . although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 256).

- Why is it important to obey the Lord's commandments even when we do not understand all the reasons for them? How have you been blessed for keeping a commandment you did not completely understand?
- What was the purpose of the sacrifices that Adam offered? (See Moses 5:7–9. They were a similitude, or likeness, of the sacrifice that Heavenly Father would make of his Only Begotten Son. Offering such sacrifices was a reminder to Adam and his posterity that all mortals can be redeemed from the Fall through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.) What reminders of this doctrine have we been given? How can we show our gratitude for the Fall and the Atonement?

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#### Conclusion

Reread Eve's testimony of the blessings of the Fall (Moses 5:11). Express gratitude for the actions of Adam and Eve, for the Fall, and for the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

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#### Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

##### 1. Partaking of the forbidden fruit was not a sin

To help explain that Adam and Eve did not sin when they partook of the forbidden fruit, read the following statement from Elder Dallin H. Oaks:



“It was Eve who first transgressed the limits of Eden in order to initiate the conditions of mortality. Her act, whatever its nature, was formally a transgression but eternally a glorious necessity to open the doorway toward eternal life. Adam showed his wisdom by doing the same. . . .

“ . . . We celebrate Eve’s act and honor her wisdom and courage in the great episode called the Fall. . . . Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said: ‘I never speak of the part Eve took in this fall as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of a sin. . . . This was a transgression of the law, but not a sin.’ . . .

“This suggested contrast between a *sin* and a *transgression* reminds us of the careful wording in the second article of faith: “We believe that men will be punished for their own *sins*, and not for Adam’s *transgression*” (italics added). It also echoes a familiar distinction in the law. Some acts, like murder, are crimes because they are inherently wrong. Other acts, like operating without a license, are crimes only because they are legally prohibited. Under these distinctions, the act that produced the Fall was not a sin—inherently wrong—but a transgression—wrong because it was formally prohibited. These words are not always used to denote something different, but this distinction seems meaningful in the circumstances of the Fall” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 98; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 73).

## **2. Distinction between the *consequences of* and *responsibility for* the Fall**

All of Adam and Eve’s posterity inherited the *consequences* of the Fall, including physical and spiritual death, but not the *responsibility* for the Fall. The second article of faith teaches that “men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression.” See also Moroni 8:5–23.

## **3. “Thy desire shall be to thy husband”**

The following statements may help class members understand the Lord’s statement to Eve when he said, “Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Moses 4:22).

President Spencer W. Kimball said: “I have a question about the word *rule*. It gives the wrong impression. I would prefer to use the word *preside* because that’s what he does. A righteous husband presides over his wife and family” (“The Blessings and Responsibilities of Womanhood,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1976, 72).

Elder M. Russell Ballard said: “God has revealed through his prophets that men are to receive the priesthood, become fathers, and with gentleness and pure, unfeigned love they are to lead and nurture their families in righteousness as the Savior leads the Church (see Eph. 5:23)” (“Equality through Diversity,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 90).

# “If Thou Doest Well, Thou Shalt Be Accepted”

## Lesson 5

Moses 5–7

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**Purpose** To help class members understand that choices to follow Jesus Christ lead to liberty, happiness, and eternal life, while choices to follow Satan lead to misery and captivity.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures from the Pearl of Great Price:
  - a. Moses 5:16–41. Cain loves Satan more than God and obeys Satan’s command to make an offering to the Lord (5:16–19). The Lord rejects Cain’s offering and commands Cain to repent (5:20–25). Cain covenants with Satan and kills Abel (5:26–33). The Lord curses Cain, and Cain is shut out from the presence of the Lord (5:34–41).
  - b. Moses 6:26–63. Enoch, a fourth great-grandson of Adam, is called by the Lord to preach repentance to the people (6:26–36). Enoch obeys the Lord’s command and teaches the people (6:37–63).
  - c. Moses 7:13, 17–21, 23–47, 68–69. The faith of Enoch is so great that mountains are removed, rivers change course, and all nations greatly fear (7:13, 17). The Lord and Enoch weep over the wickedness of the people on the earth (7:23–47). The people in the city of Enoch are of one heart and one mind with the Lord, and the entire city is taken to heaven (7:18–21, 68–69).
2. Additional reading: Moses 5:42–55; 6:10–23; 7:14–16, 59–64; 2 Nephi 2:25–27; Genesis 4:1–16.

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### Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson. Before class, write the following two sets of statements side by side on the chalkboard:

<i>Set 1</i>	<i>Set 2</i>
“Who is the Lord that I should know him?”	“He is my God, and your God.”
“I am free.”	“Why counsel ye yourselves, and deny the God of heaven?”
“Am I my brother’s keeper?”	“Ye are my brethren.”

Tell class members that the statements in these two lists were made by two men they will learn about in the lesson. Ask class members what they can determine about each man based on his set of statements. (You may want to have class members gather in small groups to discuss the statements. When the groups have discussed the statements for five or six minutes, have one person from each group summarize the group's discussion for the rest of the class members.)

When class members have responded, explain that the statements in the first set were made by Cain, who chose to follow Satan. The statements in the second set were made by Enoch, who chose to follow the Lord. Each man's statements reflect his attitude toward God.

## Scripture Discussion and Application

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As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

### 1. Cain covenants with Satan, kills Abel, and is cursed by the Lord.

Teach and discuss Moses 5:16–41.

- Adam and Eve hoped their son Cain would follow the Lord as they did. But Cain “hearkened not” to his parents and the Lord and asked, “Who is the Lord that I should know him?” (Moses 5:16). What does this question show about Cain's attitude toward God? What must we do to come to know God? (See Alma 22:17–18.)
- Why did Cain make an offering unto the Lord? (See Moses 5:18.) What did Cain offer? (See Moses 5:19.) Why did the Lord accept Abel's sacrifice but reject Cain's offering? (See Moses 5:5, 20–23. The Lord had commanded Adam and Eve and their children to offer the firstlings of their flocks. Abel obeyed, but Cain heeded the words of Satan and offered the fruit of the ground.) Why was it important to make sacrifices in the way the Lord had commanded?

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “Abel offered to God a sacrifice that was accepted, which was the firstlings of the flock. Cain offered of the fruit of the ground, and was not accepted, because he could not do it in faith. . . . Shedding the blood of the Only Begotten to atone for man . . . was the plan of redemption; . . . and as the sacrifice was instituted for a type, by which man was to discern the great Sacrifice which God had prepared; to offer a sacrifice contrary to that, no faith could be exercised . . . ; consequently Cain could have no faith; and whatsoever is not of faith, is sin” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 58).

- How did Cain react when the Lord rejected his sacrifice and called him to repentance? (See Moses 5:21, 26.) Why is it sometimes hard for us to be called to repentance? How can we develop more repentant hearts?
- After killing his brother Abel, Cain said, “I am free” (Moses 5:33). What do you think Cain believed he was free of? How does disobeying God's commandments actually decrease our freedom? How does obedience increase our freedom?
- How did Cain respond when the Lord asked where Abel was? (See Moses 5:34.) What does it mean to be our brother's keeper? (See 1 John 3:11, 17–18.) In what ways can we act as our brothers' and sisters' keepers?

Bishop Robert L. Simpson said: “The world today tells you to leave your friend alone. He has the right to come and go as he pleases. The world tells you that persuasion to attend church or priesthood meeting or to discard a bad habit might lead to frustration and undue pressures; but again I repeat the word of the Lord: You are your brother’s keeper, and when you are converted, you have an obligation to strengthen your brother” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1971, 114; or *Ensign*, Dec. 1971, 103).

- What happened to Cain as a result of choosing to follow Satan instead of God? (See Moses 5:23–25, 36–41.) How did Cain’s choices affect his descendants as well as himself? (See Moses 5:41–43, 49–52, 55.) How can our righteous or unrighteous choices affect our family members?

## 2. Enoch preaches repentance to the people.

Teach and discuss Moses 6:26–63.

- How did Enoch react when he was called by the Lord to preach repentance to the people? (See Moses 6:31.) What did the Lord promise Enoch if he would go forth as commanded? (See Moses 6:32–34.) What can we learn from the story of Enoch about how the Lord chooses his leaders? (See also 1 Samuel 16:7.) What can we learn from Enoch about serving the Lord even when we do not feel capable?
- Why do you think the people were offended when Enoch began to preach repentance? (See Moses 6:37; see also 1 Nephi 16:2; Mosiah 13:7.) Why did they continue to listen to him even though they were offended? (See Moses 6:38–39. At first they were just curious, but then they realized he was a man of God.) How can we gain a testimony that the living prophet is a man of God? How can this testimony help us follow the prophet even when his teachings are unpopular?
- What doctrines of the gospel did Enoch teach as he called the people to repentance? (See Moses 6:47–63. If you discussed these verses in lesson 4, you may not need to review them again.)
- The Lord has made us “agents unto [our]selves” (Moses 6:56). What does this mean? (We have the power to choose.) Why is agency necessary in God’s plan for our salvation? (We need agency so we are responsible for our choices.) What are the consequences of choosing to follow Satan? What are the consequences of choosing to follow the Lord? (See 2 Nephi 2:25–27.)

## 3. The people in the city of Enoch are of one heart and one mind with the Lord, and the entire city is taken to heaven.

Teach and discuss Moses 7:13, 17–21, 23–47, 68–69.

- What miracles did the Lord perform because of Enoch’s great faith? (See Moses 7:13.) What miracles does the Lord perform in our day because of people’s faith?
- How were the people who heard Enoch’s words and repented of their sins blessed? (See Moses 7:17–18.) Why was their city called Zion? (See Moses 7:18.) What does it mean to be “of one heart and one mind”? What can we do to

become of one heart and one mind with the Lord? in our families? in the Church?

- What ultimately happened to Enoch and the people of his city? (See Moses 7:19–21, 69.)
- In Moses 7:28, Enoch saw the Lord weep. Why was the Lord weeping? Why did Enoch question the Lord’s weeping? (See Moses 7:29–31.) What did the Lord answer? (See Moses 7:32–33, 36–37.) How do you feel about the Lord as you read these verses?
- When Enoch saw the wickedness of the people, he also wept (Moses 7:41, 44). How did the Lord comfort Enoch? (See Moses 7:44–47.)

You may want to tell class members that future lessons discuss the reestablishment of Zion in the latter days (including a New Jerusalem), the Second Coming of the Savior, and his millennial reign upon the earth, which Enoch saw in vision (Moses 7:62–65).

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## Conclusion

Point out that Cain chose to follow Satan and teach his evil practices to his children and followers. As a result, Cain’s descendants grew in wickedness and were cursed by God for their unrighteousness. In contrast, Enoch chose to follow the Lord. As a result of Enoch’s choice to be obedient and teach the gospel to all who would listen, an entire city became so righteous that they were removed from the earth to dwell with God.

Testify that the choices we make to follow Jesus Christ will help draw us closer to him and lead us to liberty, happiness, and eternal life.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. Keeping family records

- Why was it important that Adam and Eve and their descendants keep a book of remembrance and a genealogy? (See Moses 6:5–8, 45–46.) Why is it important for us to keep such records today? How have written accounts of your ancestors’ lives helped you? How might a written account of your life and faith help your family members?
- How can the scriptures be considered family records? How can parents and teachers effectively use the scriptures to teach children?

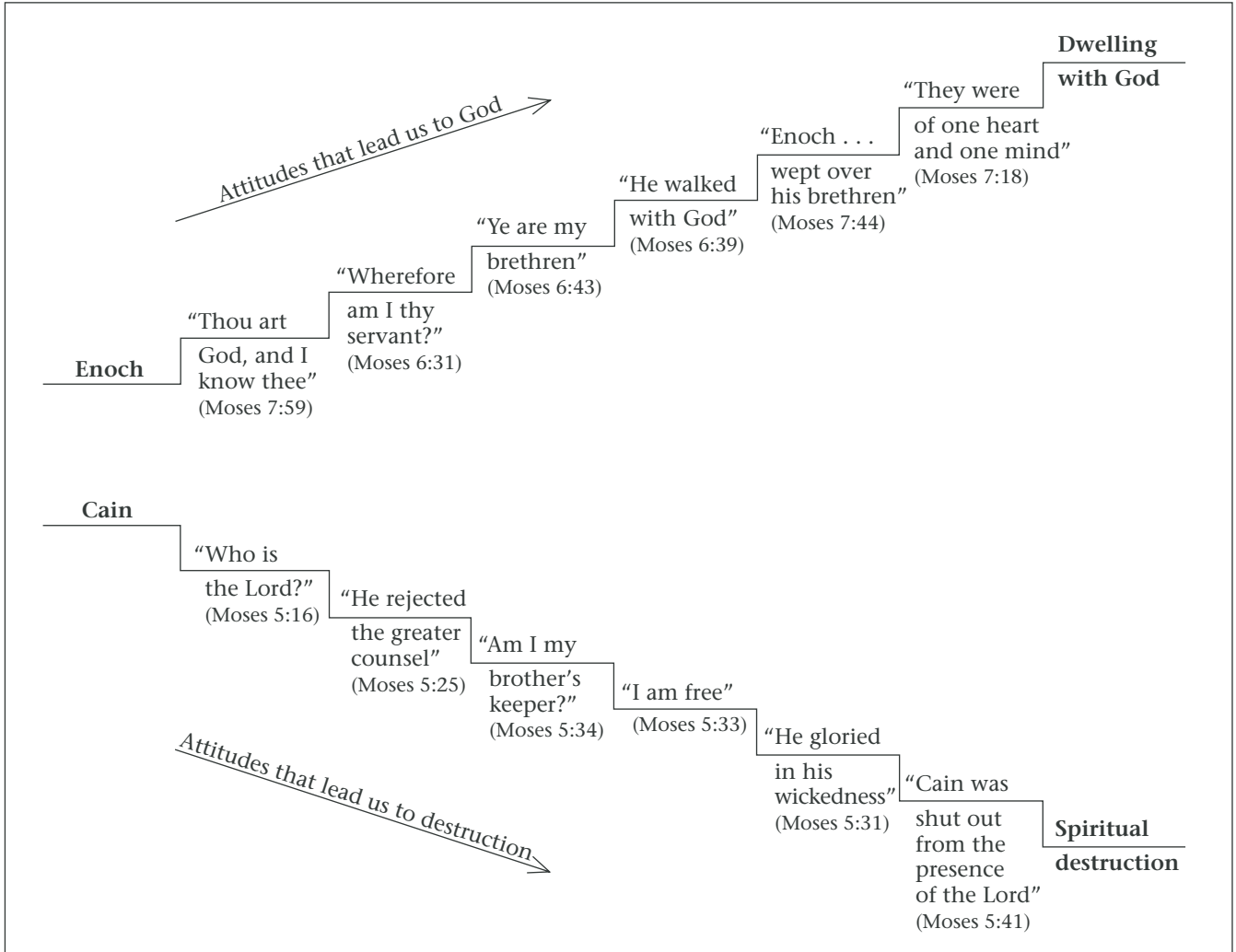
### 2. Enoch and Cain compared

On the chalkboard draw two sets of steps, one going up and one going down (see the illustration on page 21). Label the steps going up *Attitudes that lead us to God*, and write Enoch’s name on the first step. Label the steps going down *Attitudes that lead us to destruction*, and write Cain’s name on the first step.

Have class members read the first verse indicated on Enoch’s steps (Moses 7:59) and the first verse indicated on Cain’s steps (Moses 5:16). Then write a few key

words on the appropriate steps on the chalkboard. Repeat for the remaining steps. When all the verses have been read, label the end of Enoch’s steps *Dwelling with God*, and label the end of Cain’s steps *Spiritual destruction*. Discuss how Enoch’s words and actions helped him grow closer to God, while Cain’s words and actions brought him closer to Satan.

- In what ways can we follow Enoch’s example and grow closer to God?



**3. “Anoint thine eyes . . . and thou shalt see” (Moses 6:35)**

Jesus Christ once healed a blind man by anointing the man’s eyes with clay (John 9:1–7). Enoch, who was not yet spiritually mature and thus was spiritually blind to some things, was also commanded to “anoint [his] eyes with clay, and wash them” (Moses 6:35).

- What did Enoch see when he did this? (See Moses 6:36.) What does the symbolic act of washing off the clay teach us?
- What can we do to more fully open our eyes to the things of God? How can we improve our study of the scriptures so that we see the treasures that are in them?

#### 4. Loved ones who go astray

- Even though Adam and Eve taught their children the gospel (Moses 5:12), Cain and others chose to live unrighteously. What can we do to help ourselves bear the pain when loved ones go astray? What can we do to help these loved ones?

Elder Richard G. Scott counseled:

“Many of you have heavy hearts because a son or daughter, husband or wife, has turned from righteousness to pursue evil. My message is for you.

“Your life is filled with anguish, pain, and, at times, despair. I will tell you how you can be comforted by the Lord.

“First, you must recognize two foundation principles:

“1. While there are many things you can do to help a loved one in need, there are some things that must be done by the Lord.

“2. Also, no enduring improvement can occur without righteous exercise of agency. Do not attempt to override agency. The Lord himself would not do that. Forced obedience yields no blessings (see D&C 58:26–33).

“I will suggest seven ways you can help.

“First, love without limitations. . . . Second, do not condone the transgressions, but extend every hope and support to the transgressor. . . . Third, teach truth. . . . Fourth, honestly forgive as often as is required. . . . Fifth, pray trustingly. ‘The . . . fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much’ (James 5:16). . . .

“Sixth, keep perspective. . . . When the things you realistically can do to help are done, leave the matter in the hands of the Lord and worry no more. Do not feel guilty because you cannot do more. Do not waste your energy on useless worry. . . . In time, you will feel impressions and know how to give further help. You will find more peace and happiness, will not neglect others that need you, and will be able to give greater help because of that eternal perspective. . . .

“*One last suggestion—Never give up on a loved one, never!*” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 69–71; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 60–61).

# “Noah . . . Prepared an Ark to the Saving of His House”

## Lesson 6

Moses 8:19–30; Genesis 6–9; 11:1–9

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**Purpose** To help class members desire to live worthily and avoid the evils of the world.

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- Preparation**
1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
    - a. Moses 8:19–30; Genesis 6:5–22; 7:1–10. Noah preaches the gospel, but the people do not listen (Moses 8:19–25). Because of the people’s wickedness, the Lord declares that he will destroy all flesh from the earth (Moses 8:26–30; Genesis 6:5–13). The Lord commands Noah to build an ark and take his family and two of every living thing into it (Genesis 6:14–22; 7:1–10).
    - b. Genesis 7:11–24; 8; 9:8–17. It rains for 40 days and 40 nights (7:11–12). All people and creatures that are not on the ark die, and the waters cover the earth for 150 days (7:13–24). When the waters recede, Noah, his family, and the animals leave the ark (8:1–19), and Noah offers sacrifice to the Lord (8:20–22). The Lord establishes his covenant with Noah and sets the rainbow as a token of the covenant (9:8–17; note that the Joseph Smith Translation of verse 15 states that the covenant was between God and Noah, not between God and every living creature).
    - c. Genesis 11:1–9. A few generations after the flood, the people try to build a tower to heaven (the tower of Babel). The Lord confounds their language so they cannot understand one another and scatters them over the whole earth.
  2. Additional reading: Hebrews 11:7; Moses 7:32–36.
  3. If the following audiovisual materials are available, you may want to use some of them as part of the lesson:
    - a. A brief excerpt from “Noah and the Flood,” part 2 of the *Beginnings/Abraham* videocassette (53150).
    - b. The pictures Building the Ark (62053; Gospel Art Picture Kit 102); Noah and the Ark with Animals (62305; Gospel Art Picture Kit 103); and Creation—Living Creatures (62483; Gospel Art Picture Kit 100).
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### Suggested Lesson Development

- Attention Activity** You may want to use one of the following activities (or one of your own) to begin the lesson. Select the activity that would be most appropriate for the class.
1. If your classroom is large enough, ask several class members to stand in a straight line, with their arms outstretched and their fingertips touching the fingertips of the person next to them. Explain that it would take approximately 85 class members standing this way to make a line the same length as the ark that Noah built.



2. Show the chart at the end of the lesson to help class members visualize the size of Noah's ark in comparison to ships that may be more familiar.

## Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

### 1. The people reject Noah's call to repentance; Noah builds an ark.

Teach and discuss Moses 8:19–30 and Genesis 6:5–22; 7:1–10. (If class members have questions regarding “clean” and “unclean” animals, you may want to refer them to Leviticus 11:1–31.)

- What was the world like when the Lord called Noah to preach the gospel? (See Moses 8:20–22.) What similarities can you see between the people of Noah's day and the people of our day? How could the people of Noah's day have avoided destruction? (See Moses 8:23–24.) How can listening to and following the prophets help us avoid spiritual and temporal destruction?
- Why did Noah build the ark? (See Hebrews 11:7.) Church leaders have counseled each of us to “build a personal ark” (W. Don Ladd, in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 36; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 29). What can we do to protect ourselves and our families spiritually? Which commandments do you feel are especially important in protecting us today? (You may want to use the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth* [34285] in your discussion.)
- What can we do to be temporally prepared in case of calamity or other need? (See the quotations below and the quotation from Elder L. Tom Perry on page 54.) Why do many of us procrastinate making the necessary preparations? How can we become more committed to preparing now?

President Ezra Taft Benson said, “The revelation to produce and store food may be as essential to our temporal welfare today as boarding the ark was to the people in the days of Noah” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 61; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 49).

Elder W. Don Ladd taught: “When it starts raining, it is too late to begin building the ark. . . . We . . . need to listen to the Lord's spokesmen. We need to calmly continue to move ahead and prepare for what will surely come. We need not panic or fear, for if we are prepared, spiritually and temporally, we and our families will survive any flood. Our arks will float on a sea of faith if our works have been steadily and surely preparing for the future” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 37; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 29).

- What qualities did Noah demonstrate in building the ark? (Answers could include faith, obedience, and hard work.) How can we strengthen these qualities in ourselves?

President Spencer W. Kimball explained that when Noah built the ark, “there was no evidence of rain and flood. . . . His warnings were considered irrational. . . . How foolish to build an ark on dry ground with the sun shining and life moving forward as usual! But time ran out. The ark was finished. The floods came. The disobedient and rebellious were drowned. The miracle of the ark followed the faith manifested in its building” (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1972], 5–6).

## 2. The Lord cleanses the earth with a flood.

Teach and discuss Genesis 7:11–24; 8; and 9:8–17.

- What happened when the flood came? (See Genesis 7:23.) What “arks” do we have today that can help save us from the evil around us? (You may want to list responses on the chalkboard and invite class members to tell how these “arks” have helped protect them. Possible responses include our homes and families, friends, temples, seminary, Church meetings, prayer, the scriptures, and living prophets.) How can we help others find refuge in these “arks”?
- After the rain stopped, why did Noah send out a dove from the ark? (See Genesis 8:8.) What happened the first two times he sent out the dove? (See Genesis 8:8–11.) What happened the third time? (See Genesis 8:12.)
- What was the first thing Noah did after leaving the ark? (See Genesis 8:20; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 9:4.) How can we show our gratitude to the Lord when he helps us through a difficult situation?
- What did God put in the sky after the flood was over? (See Genesis 9:13.) What did God say the rainbow was to represent? (See Genesis 9:12–13, 16–17.) What covenant did God make with Noah? (See Genesis 9:8–11, 15; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 9:21–22, 24.)

## 3. The people build the tower of Babel.

Teach and discuss Genesis 11:1–9.

- Why did the descendants of Noah decide to build a tower? (See Genesis 11:4.) What do you think they wanted to accomplish by “making a name” for themselves? What is the difference between making a name for ourselves and taking upon us the name of Christ? What responsibilities do we take upon ourselves when we bear the name of Christ? (See Mosiah 18:8–10.)
- What resulted from the attempt to build a tower to heaven? (See Genesis 11:5–9.) Why can’t we reach heaven on our own or by human methods? What is the Lord’s way for us to reach heaven?

### Conclusion

Explain that the people who built the tower of Babel were punished because they tried to reach heaven by worldly means. Conversely, Noah and his family were saved from the flood because they lived according to God’s commandments.

Testify that the only way for us to reach heaven—to return to live with our Heavenly Father—is through the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must live righteously, as Noah did, having faith in Christ, repenting of our sins, receiving sacred ordinances, and enduring to the end of our lives. If we do these things, we will rise above evil and be able to return to the presence of God.

### Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

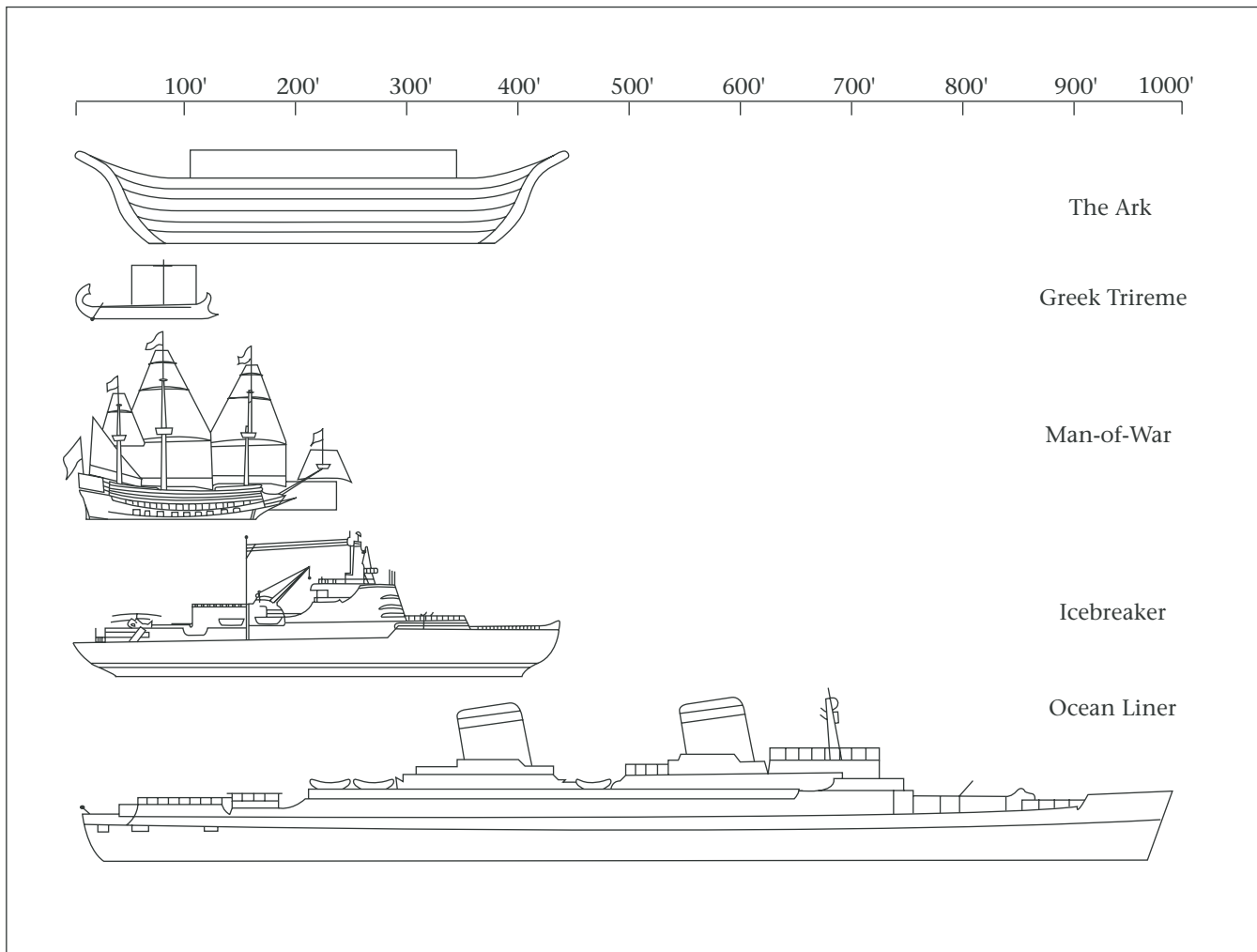
## 1. Enoch sees the days of Noah in a vision

Enoch, Noah's great-grandfather, saw in a vision the wickedness of Noah's generation and the resulting flood (Moses 7:41–52). Enoch was sorrowful because of this wickedness, and he asked the Lord to have mercy on Noah and his children. The Lord promised Enoch that He would never again destroy the world by flood (Moses 7:51). The Lord also promised Enoch that Noah would be his descendant, and thus Enoch's seed would continue on the earth even after the flood (Moses 7:52; 8:2, 6, 8–9). The Lord renewed this covenant with Noah after the flood (Genesis 9:8–17; note that the Joseph Smith Translation of verses 9 and 11 refers to the Lord's covenant with Enoch; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 9:21–25).

## 2. The Lord preserves the righteous

Just as Noah and his family were saved from the flood because of their righteousness, the Lord also protected righteous people at the time of the tower of Babel. Briefly discuss the story of Jared and his brother, as found in Ether 1:1–5, 33–37, and why their language was not confounded.

### Comparative Sizes of Various Ships (see the attention activity)



# The Abrahamic Covenant

## Lesson 7

*Abraham 1:1–4; 2:1–11; Genesis 12:1–8; 17:1–9*

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**Purpose** To help class members understand the blessings and responsibilities of the Abrahamic covenant.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study Abraham 1:1–4; 2:1–11; Genesis 12:1–8; 17:1–9. Abraham seeks to be righteous and live worthy of the blessings of God. God covenants with Abraham, promising that he will have a numerous posterity who will receive a promised land and the blessings of the priesthood and the gospel.
2. Additional reading: Genesis 15; Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–24, 29–32; “Abraham, Covenant of,” Bible Dictionary, page 602.
3. If the following audiovisual materials are available, you may want to use them as part of the lesson:
  - a. A brief excerpt from “Abraham—The Journeys” or “Abraham—The Promise,” parts 3 and 4 of the *Beginnings/Abraham* videocassette (53150).
  - b. Pictures of missionaries (62611) and a local temple.

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### Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

- What is a patriarchal blessing?

The First Presidency said: “Patriarchal blessings [are] an inspired declaration of the lineage of the recipient, and also, where so moved upon by the Spirit, an inspired and prophetic statement of the life mission of the recipient, together with such blessings, cautions, and admonitions as the patriarch may be prompted to give. . . . The realization of all promised blessings is conditioned upon faithfulness to the gospel of our Lord” (letter to stake presidents, 28 June 1957; quoted in Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 558).

- How many of you have received your patriarchal blessing? What does it mean to have the patriarch declare our lineage in a blessing? (When a patriarch declares our lineage, he reveals to us that we are descendants of the prophet Abraham through Ephraim, Manasseh, or another of Abraham’s descendants.)

Explain that this lesson discusses the blessings we can receive and the responsibilities we have as Abraham’s descendants.

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**Scripture Discussion and Application** As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

## 1. God covenants with Abraham.

Teach and discuss Abraham 1:1–4; 2:1–11; and Genesis 12:1–8; 17:1–9.

- When Abraham was a young man, he wanted to be righteous and live worthy of the blessings of God. According to Abraham 1:2–4, what blessings did Abraham desire?
- God directed Abraham and his family to leave their home in Ur and travel to a land they named Haran (Abraham 2:1–4). There Abraham prayed and received a vision in which God covenanted to bless him and his posterity. This is called the Abrahamic covenant. What blessings did God promise Abraham in this covenant? (See Abraham 2:6–11; Genesis 12:1–8; 17:1–9. You may want to point out that Abraham had to wait many years before some of these promised blessings were fulfilled, and they are still being fulfilled today.)

The following chart can help you summarize the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. You may want to put an abbreviated chart on the chalkboard, leaving room to add a “Responsibilities” section as shown on page 29:

Blessings and Responsibilities of the Abrahamic Covenant			
Earthly Blessings:	A promised land to live in (Abraham 2:6, 19; Genesis 12:7; 17:8)	A great posterity (Abraham 2:9–10; Genesis 12:2–3; 17:2, 4–6)	The gospel of Jesus Christ and the priesthood for Abraham and his posterity (Abraham 2:9–11; Genesis 17:7)
Eternal Parallels:	The celestial kingdom (D&C 88:17–20)	Eternal marriage and eternal increase (D&C 132:19–22)	Exaltation and eternal life (D&C 132:23–24)

## 2. We are heirs to the blessings and responsibilities of the Abrahamic covenant.

Explain that all Church members are the “seed of Abraham,” which means we are his descendants. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said: “The great majority of those who become members of the Church are literal descendants of Abraham through Ephraim, son of Joseph. Those who are not literal descendants of Abraham and Israel must become such, and when they are baptized and confirmed they are grafted into the tree and are entitled to all the rights and privileges as heirs” (“How One May Become of the House of Israel,” *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1923, 1149).

- As the seed of Abraham, Church members are heirs to the blessings and responsibilities of the Abrahamic covenant. How do we become heirs to this covenant? (When we are baptized into the Church, the Abrahamic covenant’s promise of *salvation* is renewed with us. When we are sealed in the temple, the Abrahamic covenant’s promise of *exaltation* is renewed with us. To receive the blessings of the covenant, we must fulfill the associated responsibilities and live worthily.)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained:

“Abraham first received the gospel by baptism (which is the covenant of salvation); then he had conferred upon him the higher priesthood, and he entered into celestial marriage (which is the covenant of exaltation), gaining assurance thereby that he would have eternal increase; finally he received a promise that all of these blessings would be offered to all of his mortal posterity. (Abra. 2:6–11; D. & C. 132:29–50.) Included in the divine promises to Abraham was the assurance that Christ would come through his lineage, and the assurance that Abraham’s posterity would receive certain choice, promised lands as an eternal inheritance. (Abra. 2; Gen. 17; 22:15–18; Gal. 3.)

“All of these promises lumped together are called the *Abrahamic covenant*. This covenant was renewed with Isaac (Gen. 24:60; 26:1–4, 24) and again with Jacob. (Gen. 28; 35:9–13; 48:3–4.) *Those portions of it which pertain to personal exaltation and eternal increase are renewed with each member of the house of Israel who enters the order of celestial marriage; through that order the participating parties become inheritors of all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (D. & C. 132; Rom. 9:4; Gal. 3; 4.)*” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 13).

- What blessings can we receive through the Abrahamic covenant? (We can receive all the blessings that Abraham received, as outlined in the preceding chart. These blessings include the gospel, the priesthood, exaltation, and eternal family relationships.)
- What are our responsibilities as heirs of the Abrahamic covenant? (See Abraham 2:9, 11; Genesis 18:19. We are to help all of God’s children, living and dead, receive the full blessings of the gospel. We are also to obey God’s commandments.)

If you have written the chart on page 28 on the chalkboard, add a section to the bottom of the chart, listing our responsibilities as follows:

Responsibilities:	Help all of God’s children receive the full blessings of the gospel (Abraham 2:9, 11)	Obey God’s commandments (Genesis 18:19)
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- How can we help others receive the gospel? (By doing missionary work, by performing temple ordinances for the dead, and by being examples of righteousness. You may want to show pictures of a temple and of missionaries.)

President Ezra Taft Benson said, “The responsibility of the seed of Abraham, which we are, is to be missionaries to ‘bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations’ (Abraham 2:9)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 107; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 85).

Elder Boyd K. Packer made the following analogy to emphasize our responsibility to share the gospel with others:

Imagine that our bishop has appointed us to plan a picnic for ward members. It is to be the best social in the history of the ward, and we are to spare no expense. We reserve a beautiful picnic ground in the country. We are to have it all to ourselves.

The day arrives and everything is perfect. The tables are set and the feast is spectacular. Then, just as the blessing is being said, an old car turns into the picnic grounds and sputters to a stop. A worried man lifts the hood, and a spout of steam comes out. Several children climb out of the car. An anxious mother takes a box to a nearby table. She puts a few leftovers on the table, trying to make them look like a meal for her hungry children. But there is not enough.

Then one of the little girls sees our table. She pulls her little brother over to us and pushes her head between you and me. We move aside. The little girl says, "Look at that; I wonder what that tastes like."

What would we do? Would we ignore the people or ask them to be quiet? Would we show them back to their table and give them some of the food we don't really need? Or would we invite them to come and join us, to sit between us and share the feast, and to let us help fix their car and give them something for their journey?

Elder Packer asks: "Could there be more pure enjoyment than seeing how much we could get those hungry children to eat? Could there be more satisfaction than to interrupt our festivities to help [them] fix their car? . . .

". . . There are people across the world and about us—our neighbors, our friends, some in our own families—who, spiritually speaking, are undernourished. Some of them are starving to death! If we keep all this to ourselves, it is not unlike feasting before those who are hungry" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1984, 59–61; or *Ensign*, May 1984, 41–42).

- What does this analogy teach about our responsibility to help others receive the blessings of the gospel? (We have been blessed with the fulness of the gospel, the greatest feast the world has ever known [D&C 58:8–12]. God expects us to share this blessing with others, both living and dead.)
- How is the declaration of lineage in our patriarchal blessings like a call to fulfill our responsibilities as heirs to the Abrahamic covenant? (By declaring that we are the seed of Abraham, our patriarchal blessings reemphasize our privilege to receive the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant and our obligation to fulfill its responsibilities.)

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## Conclusion

Bear testimony of the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. Encourage class members to fulfill their responsibilities as heirs to this covenant.

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**Additional  
Teaching Idea**

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use it as part of the lesson.

**The challenge of living in the world**

Explain that the ancient Israelites were surrounded by many nations whose people did not believe in the true God. These nations included the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, and others. (You may want to have class members turn to map 2 in the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible.)

- Why do you think the Lord put his covenant people in the middle of the ancient world instead of where they could be left alone? (See Deuteronomy 4:6–8. He wanted them to set an example for others and to fulfill the Abrahamic covenant to bless all nations.)

Explain that many stories in the Old Testament show the success or failure of the Lord's people to keep their covenants and influence others toward righteousness. Abraham, Joseph, Daniel, Esther, and many others were righteous influences. Samson, Ahab, the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness, and others allowed the world to influence them.

As he did with ancient Israel, the Lord has placed us, his latter-day covenant people, in the middle of the world. Our challenge is to influence the world in righteous ways rather than allowing the world to influence us in unrighteous ways.



Lesson  
**8**

# Living Righteously in a Wicked World

*Genesis 13–14; 18–19*

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**Purpose** To strengthen each class member’s resolve to hold fast to righteous standards during times of increasing wickedness.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures. Note: Genesis 17:5 tells of the Lord changing Abram’s name to Abraham. The name *Abraham* is used throughout this lesson.
  - a. Genesis 13. After living in Egypt for a time because of a famine in the land of Canaan, Abraham and his family return to Canaan. Abraham settles in Hebron, and his nephew Lot settles near Sodom.
  - b. Genesis 14:1–2, 8–24. Lot is taken captive during the battles of the kings and is rescued by Abraham (14:1–2, 8–16). Abraham pays tithes to Melchizedek and refuses to accept the spoils of war from the king of Sodom (14:17–24).
  - c. Genesis 18:16–33; 19:1–29. The Lord announces that he will destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of the people’s wickedness (18:16–22). Abraham pleads with the Lord to spare the cities if he can find righteous people living there (18:23–33). Lot and his family are commanded to leave Sodom (19:1–23; note that in the Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 19:11–13 states that Lot did *not* offer his daughters to the men of Sodom; rather, he tried to protect his daughters from the men). The Lord destroys Sodom and Gomorrah (19:24–29).
2. Additional reading: Genesis 12; Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 14:25–40; 19:9–15.
3. If you use the attention activity, bring a recent newspaper to class.
4. You may want to show a brief excerpt from “Abraham—The Promise” or “Abraham—Sodom and Gomorrah,” parts 4 and 5 of the *Beginnings/Abraham* videocassette (53150), as part of the lesson.

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**Suggested Lesson  
Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Show a recent newspaper to the class. Without dwelling on specific news items, comment on how we are surrounded by unrighteous influences. Explain that this lesson is about the importance of being righteous even when wickedness is all around us.

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**Scripture Discussion  
and Application** As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

## **1. Abraham and his family settle in Hebron, and Lot and his family settle near Sodom.**

Teach and discuss Genesis 13.

You may want to give a brief overview of Abraham's travels to this point in his life. He was raised in Ur of Chaldea, then was led by the Lord to settle in Haran (Genesis 11:31; Abraham 2:1–5). The Lord later led him from Haran to the land of Canaan and promised, "Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Genesis 12:7). Because of a famine in Canaan, Abraham and his family went to Egypt (Genesis 12:10). Genesis 13 begins with Abraham and his family returning to Canaan from Egypt.

- Why couldn't Abraham and Lot and their families live together when they returned to Canaan from Egypt? (See Genesis 13:5–7.) What do we learn about Abraham from his comments in Genesis 13:8–9? How can we follow Abraham's example when we have conflicts with family members or others?
- Where did Lot choose to live? (See Genesis 13:10–12.) Point out that the people of Sodom were extremely wicked (Genesis 13:13), but Lot still chose to live near them. What made the land near Sodom appealing to Lot? (See Genesis 13:10. It was "well watered" and beautiful.)
- At first Lot "lived in the cities of the plain," outside Sodom, but he "pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Genesis 13:12). Later he lived in the city of Sodom itself (Genesis 14:12). What things might we do that are the spiritual equivalent of pitching our tents toward Sodom? (We may associate with evil things instead of shunning them, or we may allow ourselves to commit small sins without thinking that they may lead to bigger ones.) How can we change our behavior before little problems or sins become big ones?
- Like Lot, the people of King Benjamin in the Book of Mormon also pitched their tents facing a specific direction. What did their tents face? (See Mosiah 2:6.) How can we point our homes more toward the temple instead of worldly places?

## **2. Abraham rescues Lot, pays tithes to Melchizedek, and refuses to accept the spoils of war from the king of Sodom.**

Teach and discuss Genesis 14:1–2, 8–24.

- While Lot lived in Sodom, the kings of several city-states, including Sodom and Gomorrah, began warring with one another (Genesis 14:1–2, 8–9). What happened to Lot during this war? (See Genesis 14:10–12.) How did Abraham help Lot after Lot was taken captive? (See Genesis 14:13–16.)
- Whom did Abraham meet with after rescuing Lot? (See Genesis 14:17–18.) Who was Melchizedek? (See Genesis 14:18; see also D&C 107:1–2.) What did Abraham give to Melchizedek? (See Genesis 14:20; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 14:36–40.)
- Why did Abraham refuse to accept even a thread as a reward from the king of Sodom? (See Genesis 14:21–24. He did not want to receive anything from an unrighteous king.) What might be considered a "thread" of immorality in today's world? What might be a "thread" of dishonesty? How do we sometimes compromise in the amount of unrighteousness we are willing to accept

in the entertainment we seek? Why is it important that we try not to let even a small amount of worldly ways into our lives? (See 2 Nephi 28:20–21.)

- What can we learn about Abraham’s commitment to the Lord by comparing his reactions to Melchizedek and to the king of Sodom?

### 3. The Lord destroys Sodom and Gomorrah.

Teach and discuss Genesis 18:16–33; 19:1–29.

- Because of the iniquity of the people in Sodom and Gomorrah, the Lord planned to destroy the cities (Genesis 18:20–21). What did Abraham ask of the Lord after learning of this plan? (See Genesis 18:23–32.) What can we learn from the fact that the Lord was willing to spare the cities if righteous people could be found within them?
- Why was Lot instructed to leave Sodom? (See Genesis 19:12–13, 15.) How did Lot’s sons-in-law react when he urged them to leave? (See Genesis 19:14.) Why do some people refuse to remove themselves from bad influences even when they are aware of the danger?
- What counsel did the angels give as Lot and his family left the city? (See Genesis 19:17.) Point out that the Savior has given similar counsel to his followers (Luke 9:62; 17:29–32; D&C 133:14–15). What does “looking back” represent? (Reluctance to give up what is asked of us; a less than complete commitment to following Christ.) How might we sometimes “look back”?
- What happened to Lot’s wife when she looked back at Sodom? (See Genesis 19:26.) What can the story of Lot’s wife teach us about repentance? (To repent we must change our hearts and our behavior. To do this we must sometimes choose a new environment and new associates.)
- What did Lot lose because he “pitched his tent toward Sodom”? What do we stand to lose when we put ourselves in positions where we know we will be tempted? How are we affected when we allow ourselves to be surrounded by evil, even if we are not directly participating in sinful acts?
- What does Genesis 19:29 suggest was the reason Lot was spared when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed? (The Lord remembered the righteousness of Abraham.) How can our righteous behavior benefit others?

President Spencer W. Kimball said: “Our world is now much the same as it was in the days of the Nephite prophet who said: ‘. . . if it were not for the prayers of the righteous . . . ye would even now be visited with utter destruction. . . .’ (Al. 10:22.) Of course, there are many many upright and faithful who live all the commandments and whose lives and prayers keep the world from destruction” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 7; or *Ensign*, June 1971, 16).

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#### Conclusion

Testify of the importance of keeping ourselves free from sin, even when evil is all around us. Encourage class members to strive to be a righteous influence in the world instead of letting worldly things influence them.

You may want to conclude with the following statement from Elder M. Russell Ballard:

“In the Church, we often state the couplet, ‘Be in the world but not of the world.’ As we observe television shows that make profanity, violence, and infidelity commonplace and even glamorous, we often wish we could lock out the world in some way and isolate our families from it all. . . .

“Perhaps we should state the couplet previously mentioned as two separate admonitions. First, ‘*Be in the world.*’ Be involved; be informed. Try to be understanding and tolerant and to appreciate diversity. Make meaningful contributions to society through service and involvement. Second, ‘*Be not of the world.*’ Do not follow wrong paths or bend to accommodate or accept what is not right. . . .

“Members of the Church need to influence more than we are influenced. We should work to stem the tide of sin and evil instead of passively being swept along by it. We each need to help solve the problem rather than avoid or ignore it” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 100–101; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 80).

### **Additional Teaching Ideas**

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

#### **1. The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah**

As suggested in Genesis 19:4–11 and in the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis 19:9–15, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah engaged in grievous sexual sins. But these sins, while severe, were not the only sins for which the cities were destroyed. Have a class member read Ezekiel 16:49–50 aloud, and discuss with the class the other sins of which people in Sodom and Gomorrah were guilty. Help class members understand that we can be destroyed by seemingly small sins as well as by large ones.

#### **2. Leading by example**

To illustrate one way Latter-day Saints can be an influence for good instead of being influenced by the world, you may want to show “Leading by Example,” a seven-minute segment from *Old Testament Video Presentations* (53224). In this segment, the righteous example of a young woman helps a friend become converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Lesson  
**9**

# “God Will Provide Himself a Lamb”

*Abraham 1; Genesis 15–17; 21–22*

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**Purpose** To help class members better understand Heavenly Father’s sacrifice in offering his Son as they learn of Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures. Note: Genesis 17 tells of the Lord changing Abram’s name to Abraham and Sarai’s name to Sarah (see verses 5, 15). The names *Abraham* and *Sarah* are used throughout this lesson.
  - a. Abraham 1:1, 5–20. As a young man, Abraham is persecuted by the false priests of Pharaoh. They attempt to sacrifice him, but he is saved by Jehovah.
  - b. Genesis 15–17; 21. Later in his life, Abraham desires and is promised seed (15:1–6). Sarah gives Hagar to Abraham as his wife; Hagar bears Ishmael (16:1–16). God again speaks of his covenant with Abraham, promising that he will be the father of many nations (17:1–14; see lesson 7). The birth of Isaac, through whom the covenant would continue, is announced (17:16–22). Sarah bears Isaac (21:1–12).
  - c. Genesis 22. God commands Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (22:1–2). Abraham prepares to sacrifice Isaac, but God provides a ram to be sacrificed instead (22:3–19).
2. Additional reading: Hebrews 11:8–19; James 2:21–23; Jacob 4:5; Doctrine and Covenants 132:34–36.
3. If you use the second attention activity, at least a week before this lesson ask a few class members to prepare to tell about a time when they were blessed because they were willing to sacrifice.
4. If the following audiovisual materials are available, you may want to use some of them as part of the lesson:
  - a. A brief excerpt from “Abraham—The Promise” or “Abraham Is Commanded to Sacrifice Isaac,” parts 4 and 6 of the *Beginnings/Abraham* videocassette (53150).
  - b. The pictures An Angel Saves Abraham (62607; Gospel Art Picture Kit 104) and Abraham Taking Isaac to Be Sacrificed (62054; Gospel Art Picture Kit 105).

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**Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use one of the following activities (or one of your own) to begin the lesson. Select the activity that would be most appropriate for the class.

1. Ask class members to think of a person they love very much or a possession they value highly.
  - How would you feel if God asked you to give up, or sacrifice, this person or possession? What would you do?

2. Invite a few class members to tell about a time when they were blessed because they were willing to sacrifice.

After either of these activities, explain that God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, whom Abraham loved very much. Although Abraham was not ultimately required to make this sacrifice, his willingness to do so was “accounted unto him for righteousness” (D&C 132:36). Because of Abraham’s righteousness, he and his descendants were greatly blessed.

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Scripture Discussion  
and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

**1. Abraham is nearly sacrificed by the false priests of Pharaoh.**

Teach and discuss Abraham 1:1, 5–20. Part of this lesson focuses on God’s command that Abraham sacrifice Isaac. To help class members understand the significance of this command and the depth of Abraham’s faith, the lesson begins with a brief discussion of Abraham’s experience when he, as a young man, was almost sacrificed by a false priest of Pharaoh.

- What were the conditions in Chaldea when Abraham lived there? (See Abraham 1:1, 5–8.) What did Pharaoh’s false priests try to do to Abraham? (See Abraham 1:7, 12.) How was Abraham saved from these false priests? (See Abraham 1:15–16, 20.)
- How might Abraham’s experience on the altar of the false priests have helped prepare him for future trials? How can our trials help us prepare for future difficulties?

**2. Abraham has children through Hagar and Sarah.**

Teach and discuss Genesis 15–17; 21.

- What promise did the Lord give Abraham regarding children? (See Genesis 15:1–6.) Why did Sarah give Hagar to Abraham as his wife? (See Genesis 16:1–3; D&C 132:34–35.) What promise did the Lord give Hagar? (See Genesis 16:10–11.)
- What did God reveal to Abraham in Genesis 17:15–16, 19, and 21? How did Abraham respond? (See Genesis 17:17. Note that while the King James Version of the Bible says that Abraham “laughed” when he heard that Sarah would bear a son, an alternate translation of the Hebrew word is “rejoiced.” The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible says that Abraham “rejoiced” at the news.)
- What can the revelation that Abraham and Sarah would have a son teach us about how God fulfills his promises? (God will fulfill his promises, though not necessarily in the way or at the time we might expect. Point out that Abraham and many others in the scriptures had to wait faithfully for many years before promised blessings were given.)
- How were the promises that God made regarding Isaac different from those regarding Ishmael? (See Genesis 17:19–21.)

### 3. God commands Abraham to sacrifice Isaac.

Teach and discuss Genesis 22.

- Why did God ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? (See Genesis 22:1. Note footnote 1a, which says the word *tempt* in this verse means to test or prove.) Why would this have been a difficult test for Abraham? (Not only was Isaac his son, but God had promised that the Abrahamic covenant would continue through Isaac and his descendants [Genesis 17:19]. Another reason this would have been difficult is that as a young man, Abraham himself had nearly been sacrificed by the false priests of Pharaoh [Abraham 1:1, 5–20].)
- How did Abraham respond to God’s command to sacrifice Isaac? (See Genesis 22:2–3.) What can we learn from Abraham about faith and obedience? (See Hebrews 11:17–19; James 2:21–23.)
- How did Isaac respond to this situation? (See Genesis 22:3–10. There is no indication that Isaac opposed the intention of Abraham to sacrifice him.)

Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained: “When they came to the prescribed place, Abraham built an altar and laid wood upon it. Then, the Bible says, ‘Abraham . . . bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood’ (Genesis 22:9). What did Isaac think when Abraham did such a strange thing? The Bible mentions no struggle or objection. Isaac’s silence can be explained only in terms of his trust in and obedience to his father” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 51; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 37).

- Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac was a similitude of Heavenly Father’s willingness to sacrifice his Only Begotten Son (Jacob 4:5; Genesis 22:8, 13). What are some similarities between Abraham’s experience and Heavenly Father’s? What is the greatest difference?
- In what way can we be compared to Isaac? If Isaac represents us, whom does the ram in the thicket represent? How do these comparisons help you better understand Heavenly Father’s love for you in sacrificing his Son?

Elder Dallin H. Oaks said: “This story . . . shows the goodness of God in protecting Isaac and in providing a substitute so he would not have to die. Because of our sins and our mortality, we, like Isaac, are condemned to death. When all other hope is gone, our Father in Heaven provides the Lamb of God, and we are saved by his sacrifice” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 51; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 37).

- What did Abraham prove through this test? (See Genesis 22:11–12.) Invite class members to tell about other situations, scriptural or personal, where individuals have been tested as an opportunity to prove their faithfulness. Ask class members also to tell of the joy and blessings that have come through proving faithful.
- Why is Isaac referred to in Genesis 22:16 as Abraham’s only son? (Isaac was the son through whom the covenant would continue. This reference also emphasizes the parallel between Isaac and our Savior, the Only Begotten Son of the Father.) What blessings were assured to Abraham because of his faithfulness? (See Genesis 22:15–18.) What blessings are we promised through the

Abrahamic covenant? (See lesson 7.) What are our responsibilities as heirs of the Abrahamic covenant?

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Conclusion

Express your appreciation for the example of faith and obedience provided by Abraham. Testify that Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac was a similitude of Heavenly Father's willingness to sacrifice his Only Begotten Son. Invite class members to share their feelings about the Atonement and the great love that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have for us.

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**Additional Teaching Ideas**

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

**1. Learning from trials**

- President Hugh B. Brown said that God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac because "Abraham needed to learn something about Abraham" (in Truman G. Madsen, *The Highest in Us* [1978], 49). What might Abraham have learned about himself from this experience? What have you learned from your trials?
- The Lord revealed that we must be tried "even as Abraham" (D&C 101:4). Why do you think this is necessary? (See D&C 101:5, 35–38; 122:5–7.) What can we do now to prepare ourselves for sacrifices the Lord may ask us to make?

**2. Building a strong relationship with God**

Abraham 1 and 2 describe the relationships that Abraham and his father had with God. Abraham's father turned to God in times of trouble, but turned to idol worship when things were going well in his life (Abraham 1:5, 30; 2:5). Abraham, on the other hand, sought God continually (Abraham 1:2, 4; 2:12).

- How can we seek God, making our relationship with him active rather than passive? How can we make our commitment to God more consistent, so that we seek him in times of peace and comfort as well as in times of trial?



Lesson  
**10**

# Birthright Blessings; Marriage in the Covenant

*Genesis 24–29*

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**Purpose** To strengthen class members' desires to live worthy of their birthright blessings and of eternal marriage.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. Genesis 24. Abraham emphasizes the importance of marriage in the covenant (eternal marriage) through the selection of a worthy wife for Isaac.
  - b. Genesis 25:20–34. Rebekah receives a revelation concerning her unborn twin sons (25:22–23). When these sons are grown, Esau sells his birthright to Jacob (25:29–34).
  - c. Genesis 26–29. Isaac and his descendants are promised the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant (26:1–5). Esau marries out of the covenant and brings sadness to his parents (26:34–35). Isaac blesses Jacob to rule over peoples and nations (27:1–46). Isaac pronounces on Jacob the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant and sends him away to find a worthy wife (28:1–10). Jacob marries Leah and Rachel in the covenant (29:1–30).
2. If you use the first attention activity, bring a small bowl or bag of popped popcorn or a piece of fruit.
3. If you are teaching teenagers or young single adults, consider using the second additional teaching idea, "Right marriage begins with right dating."
4. If the following audiovisual materials are available, you may want to use some of them as part of the lesson:
  - a. "Marriage in the Covenant," a four-minute segment from *Old Testament Video Presentations* (53224).
  - b. A brief excerpt from "Rebekah" or "Esau and Jacob" parts 1 and 2 of the *Isaac and Jacob* videocassette (53151).
  - c. The picture Rebekah at the Well (62160).

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**Suggested Lesson  
Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use one of the following activities (or one of your own) to begin the lesson. Select the activity that would be most appropriate for the class.

1. Display a bowl or bag of popcorn or a piece of fruit, then ask class members the following question:
  - If you had to choose between a bowl of popcorn (or a piece of fruit) right now or the promise of unlimited popcorn (or fruit) later, after you had planted, cultivated, and harvested the kernels (or fruit), which would you choose? Why?

Explain that we often face choices between things we can easily have now or things we must work and wait for. Sometimes we choose what will bring immediate gratification (pleasure or satisfaction), even if the choice to work and wait would eventually provide a greater blessing. Choosing whether to have popcorn (or fruit) now or later is not an important decision. However, we face other choices in life—such as decisions about whom and where to marry—where choosing immediate gratification could deny us glorious and lasting blessings.

2. Ask class members the following question:

- Have you ever spent money or time to obtain something, only to discover that it was not worth what you had spent on it?

Invite a few class members to tell about times when they paid too much for something they thought they wanted (you may want to share an experience of your own).

Explain that the same thing can happen spiritually. By making unrighteous choices, we may trade eternal blessings for things of far less value. By living righteously, however, we can receive all the blessings that Heavenly Father has prepared for us.

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Scripture Discussion  
and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

**1. Abraham emphasizes the importance of marriage in the covenant (eternal marriage).**

Teach and discuss Genesis 24. As you discuss the importance of eternal marriage, be sensitive to the feelings of class members who have not been married in the temple or whose parents have not been married in the temple.

- Why was Abraham so insistent that Isaac marry a woman from his kindred rather than from the Canaanites, in whose land Abraham and Isaac lived? (Abraham wanted Isaac to marry someone of his own faith so he could marry in the covenant. This was necessary so the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant could be given to Abraham's descendants.) Why is it important that we marry in the covenant? (If necessary, explain that in our day, the phrases *marriage in the covenant*, *eternal marriage*, and *temple marriage* are often used interchangeably.)
- How long has marriage in the covenant been a commandment of God? (It is an eternal ordinance that has been the Lord's order in all ages when the fullness of the gospel has been on the earth. Adam and Eve were the first on this earth to enter into this ordinance.)
- Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:4). What impresses you about Abraham's servant? (See Genesis 24. Answers may vary but could include that he was trustworthy, loyal, prayerful, and faithful. Even after a long journey, he wouldn't eat until he had finished his errand for Abraham.)

And rather than stay for a 10-day celebration, he wanted to take Rebekah and return directly to Abraham.) What could we learn from Abraham's servant to help us better fulfill responsibilities the Lord has given us?

- How could Abraham's servant tell that Rebekah would be a good wife for Isaac? (See Genesis 24:15–20, 58. Rebekah was kind and willing to help others, as shown by her drawing water for Abraham's servant and his camels. You may want to point out that a camel can drink up to 30 gallons in one day, so Rebekah would have had to draw a great deal of water to satisfy 10 camels. Rebekah was also willing to leave her family to marry Isaac, probably because she had great faith and knew that it was the Lord's will that she marry Isaac.)
- What qualities do you want in a husband or wife? Why are spiritual qualities more important than physical appearance? What qualities should each of us develop (whether or not we are already married) that will make us a good husband or wife?
- When should a person begin preparing for eternal marriage? What are some things that children and youth can do to prepare for eternal marriage? How can parents and other adults help children and youth prepare to be married in the temple?

President Howard W. Hunter said: "Let us plan for and teach and plead with our children to marry in the house of the Lord. Let us reaffirm more vigorously than we ever have in the past that it does matter where you marry and by what authority you are pronounced man and wife" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 118; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 88).

## 2. Esau sells his birthright to Jacob.

Teach and discuss Genesis 25:20–34.

- What revelation did Rebekah receive about her unborn twin sons? (See Genesis 25:22–23.) Why was the Lord's statement that "the elder shall serve the younger" an unusual revelation? (The birthright was usually passed from father to eldest son. Receiving this birthright meant that the eldest son would inherit a double share of the family wealth, and in return he would preside over the family and take care of his mother and sisters after his father's death. The statement that "the elder shall serve the younger" in the Lord's revelation to Rebekah meant that in this situation the younger son would receive the birthright and his descendants would be the covenant people.)
- How did Esau, the elder son, feel about his birthright to the covenant that had been made between his grandfather Abraham and the Lord? (See Genesis 25:29–34. Esau's willingness to give up the birthright to satisfy his temporary physical hunger shows how little he valued the birthright.)
- As members of the Church, we are each entitled to a spiritual birthright from our heavenly parents. What blessings are included in our birthright? (Answers may include the priesthood, temple blessings, ordinances, revelation, and the potential for exaltation.)
- How does where we marry affect our ability to receive the blessings of our birthright? (We enter into the part of the Abrahamic covenant that pertains to

exaltation and eternal increase by making and keeping the covenants of the temple endowment and eternal marriage.)

- How do our words and actions show the value we place on our birthright? How might some of us make errors similar to Esau's, choosing things that bring immediate gratification rather than things that have eternal value?
- In determining the heir to the covenant, the Lord chose Isaac over his older brother Ishmael (Galatians 4:22–23), Jacob over his older brother Esau, Joseph over his older brother Reuben (1 Chronicles 5:1–2), and Ephraim over his older brother Manasseh (Genesis 48:17–20). What does this suggest about how we become qualified for God's callings and blessings?

### 3. Jacob marries Leah and Rachel in the covenant, and through him the Abrahamic covenant continues.

Teach and discuss Genesis 26–29.

- What does Esau's choice of wives tell us about his priorities? (See Genesis 26:34–35; 28:6–9.) What can we learn about Jacob from his efforts to marry in the covenant? (See Genesis 28:1–5; 29:1–28. One thing we can learn is that marriage in the covenant was very important to Jacob. He made a long journey to find a faithful woman to marry. He then worked for Laban for seven years before marrying Rachel and continued to work for him afterward.) How can we show that marrying in the covenant is important to us?

President Gordon B. Hinckley told of a family who joined the Church in Australia and then sold all their possessions so they could travel to New Zealand and be sealed as a family. The father of this family said: "We could not afford to come [to the temple]. Our worldly possessions consisted of an old car, our furniture, and our dishes. I said to my family, 'We cannot afford *not* to go. If the Lord will give me strength, I can work and earn enough for another car and furniture and dishes, but if I should lose these my loved ones, I would be poor indeed in both life and in eternity' " (*Be Thou an Example* [1981], 138).

- After two people have been married in the temple, what must they do to ensure they have a truly eternal marriage? How can a husband and wife maintain and improve the marriage relationship so that the covenants and blessings promised in the temple will be fulfilled? (You may want to invite a few class members to share an example of something their spouse or parent does to bring a celestial spirit to the marriage.)

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#### Conclusion

Emphasize the importance of being married in the covenant and living worthy of the birthright blessings. Challenge class members to make wise choices and not trade eternal blessings for temporary pleasure or satisfaction.

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#### Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

## 1. Rebekah was chosen as a wife for Isaac

Write each of the following quotations from Genesis 24 on separate pieces of paper and give one or more to each class member. Have class members use their scriptures to find out who made the statements and in what verses the statements are recorded. When class members have finished, discuss the statements and the context in which they were made. Point out the importance of marriage in the covenant, the faith and loyalty of Abraham's servant, and the qualities Rebekah had that made her a good choice for an eternal companion.

- a. "Thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites."
- b. "Thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son."
- c. "The Lord God of heaven . . . shall send his angel before thee."
- d. "Thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master."
- e. "I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking."
- f. "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor."
- g. "Blessed be the Lord God [who] led me to the house of my master's brethren."
- h. "And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the Lord hath appointed out for my master's son."
- i. "And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me."
- j. "Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken."
- k. "I will go."
- l. "Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions."

Answers: a-Abraham (v. 3); b-Abraham (v. 4); c-Abraham (v. 7); d-servant (v. 14); e-Rebekah (v. 19); f-Rebekah (v. 24); g-servant (v. 27); h-servant (v. 44); i-servant (v. 49); j-Laban and Bethuel (v. 51); k-Rebekah (v. 58); l-Rebekah's family (v. 60).

## 2. "Right marriage begins with right dating"

- Both Isaac and Jacob were instructed by their fathers to marry women of their own faith. Esau brought sorrow to his parents by marrying wives who did not believe in the God of Abraham. Why is it important to marry a person of our own faith?

President Spencer W. Kimball gave this counsel: "Paul told the Corinthians, 'Be ye not unequally yoked together . . . .' Perhaps Paul wanted them to see that religious differences are fundamental differences. Religious differences imply wider areas of conflict. Church loyalties and family loyalties clash. Children's lives are often frustrated. The nonmember may be equally brilliant, well trained and attractive, and he or she may have the most pleasing personality, but without a common faith, trouble lies ahead for the marriage. There are some exceptions but the rule is a harsh and unhappy one" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [1969], 240).

- What can you do to help make sure the person you marry is someone with whom you can have an eternal marriage? How will your present associations and friendships affect the rest of your life and eternity?

President Kimball continued: “Clearly, right marriage begins with right dating. A person generally marries someone from among those with whom he . . . socializes. Therefore, this warning comes with great emphasis. Do not take the chance of dating nonmembers, or members who are untrained and faithless. A girl may say, ‘Oh, I do not intend to marry this person. It is just a “fun” date.’ But one cannot afford to take a chance on falling in love with someone who may never accept the gospel. True, a small percentage have finally been baptized after marrying Church members. . . . They are our blessed minority. . . . But the majority did not join the Church and . . . friction, frustration and divorce marked a great many of their marriages” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 241–42).

### 3. God gives revelation to women as well as men

Scriptural accounts of revelation tell mostly of God’s interactions with priesthood leaders, who were men. However, Genesis 25:22–23 contains an account of God giving revelation to a woman.

Concerning Rebekah’s prayer, Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: “May I now take our common ancestor, Rebekah, as a pattern for what her daughters in the Church today can do? . . . When Rebekah was troubled and needed divine guidance she herself took the matter up with the Lord, and he spoke to her in reply. The Lord gives revelation to women who pray to him in faith” (in Conference Report, Tahiti Area Conference 1976, 16).

- How can men and women alike prepare themselves to receive personal revelation?

### 4. Jacob’s vision of a ladder reaching into heaven

- While Jacob was traveling from Canaan to the land of his kindred to find a wife and to escape the anger of Esau, he stopped to rest for the night and had a remarkable dream (Genesis 28:10–19). What did Jacob see in this dream? What blessings did the Lord promise him? (See Genesis 28:13–15. These are the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, renewed with Jacob in this vision; see lesson 7.) What does the ladder symbolize?

Elder Marion G. Romney said of this dream: “Jacob realized that the covenants he made with the Lord . . . were the rungs on the ladder that he himself would have to climb in order to obtain the promised blessings—blessings that would entitle him to enter heaven and associate with the Lord” (“Temples—The Gates to Heaven,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1971, 16).

Lesson  
**11**

# “How Can I Do This Great Wickedness?”

*Genesis 34; 37–39*

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**Purpose**

To help class members (1) learn how to make all experiences and circumstances work together for their good and (2) strengthen their commitment to obey the Lord’s standard of sexual morality.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. Genesis 37. Joseph, eleventh son of Jacob, is hated by his brothers and sold into slavery.
  - b. Genesis 39. Joseph prospers as a slave but is accused of immorality and sent to prison (39:1–20). The keeper of the prison gives Joseph responsibility over the other prisoners (39:21–23).
  - c. Genesis 34:1–12; 35:22; 38:1–30. The sin of immorality has negative consequences on Jacob’s family—Dinah, his daughter (34:1–12); Reuben, his eldest son (35:22); and Judah, another of his sons (38:1–30).
2. Additional reading: Genesis 34:13–31.
3. If the following audiovisual materials are available, you may want to use some of them as part of the lesson:
  - a. A brief excerpt from “The Dreamer” or “Joseph Interprets Pharaoh’s Dream,” parts 1 and 2 of the *Joseph and His Brothers* videocassette (53152).
  - b. The pictures *Joseph Is Sold by His Brothers* (62525; Gospel Art Picture Kit 109) and *Joseph Resists Potiphar’s Wife* (62548; Gospel Art Picture Kit 110).

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**Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity**

You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Ask the class to name some of the movies, television shows, books, or magazines currently popular in your area.

- What standards of sexual morality are presented by these popular media items? How do these standards differ from the Lord’s standard as taught in the scriptures and by Church leaders?

Explain that the moral behavior of society often differs from the moral standards that the Lord has established. While the standards of society can change, the Lord’s standards are constant.

This lesson discusses the experiences of one man who followed the Lord’s standard of morality and other men who did not. The lesson also discusses the consequences of following or not following the Lord’s standard.

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As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

### 1. Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers.

Teach and discuss Genesis 37.

Jacob married Leah and Rachel, daughters of his mother's brother Laban, and also married their handmaids, Zilpah and Bilhah. Jacob's wives bore him twelve sons, who became the beginnings of the twelve tribes of Israel (the Lord changed Jacob's name to Israel; see Genesis 32:28). Jacob's eleventh son was Joseph; as the eldest son of Jacob and Rachel, Joseph received the birthright when Reuben, eldest son of Jacob and Leah, lost it through unrighteousness (1 Chronicles 5:1–2).

- Why were Joseph's brothers jealous of him? (See Genesis 37:3–8.) How do you react when members of your family offend you or receive better treatment than you do? How can we overcome feelings of jealousy or anger toward family members or friends?
- How did Joseph respond when his father asked him to go to Shechem to see how his brothers were doing? (See Genesis 37:13–14. Note that Shechem was about 45 miles away.) What did Joseph do when he couldn't find his brothers in Shechem? (See Genesis 37:15–17. Note that Dothan was at least another 12 miles away.) What can we learn about young Joseph from this account? (Answers could include that he was obedient to his father and persistent in doing what his father asked.)
- What did Joseph's brothers conspire to do when Joseph came to the fields where they were feeding the sheep? (See Genesis 37:12–18.) How did Reuben's reasons for sparing Joseph's life differ from Judah's? (See Genesis 37:21–22, 26–27.) What did the brothers eventually do with Joseph instead of killing him? (See Genesis 37:28, 31–33.)

### 2. Joseph refuses to “sin against God.”

Teach and discuss Genesis 39.

- How did the Lord bless Joseph after he was sold as a slave? (See Genesis 39:1–4.) Why did Potiphar, a wealthy officer of Pharaoh, put such trust in Joseph, a slave? (See Genesis 39:5–6.)
- What did Joseph do when Potiphar's wife tried to tempt him to do wrong? (See Genesis 39:11–12. Point out that Joseph immediately removed himself from the situation.) How can we follow Joseph's example when we are tempted?
- What excuses might Joseph have used if he had wanted to give in to the advances of Potiphar's wife? What excuses do people offer today to try to justify moral transgressions? Why are these excuses not valid justifications?
- How was Joseph punished for being virtuous when Potiphar's wife approached him? (See Genesis 39:12–20. He went from being overseer of Potiphar's household to being a prisoner.) In the world today, how do some people treat others



who are virtuous? (Answers may vary. People who are virtuous are sometimes ridiculed and excluded socially, but often they are respected.) You may want to discuss the world's pressure to be immoral that today's youth face and how youth can resist this pressure.

- The scriptures emphasize that while Joseph was in prison, the Lord was with him (Genesis 39:21–23). What does this reveal about Joseph? (He continued in faith rather than questioning or blaming God for the imprisonment that resulted from being virtuous.) What can we learn from Joseph about turning bad experiences and circumstances into good ones? (You may want to read Romans 8:28 during this discussion.)

Elder Hartman Rector Jr. explained: “[The] ability to turn everything into something good appears to be a godly characteristic. Our Heavenly Father always seems able to do this. Everything, no matter how dire, becomes a victory to the Lord. Joseph, although a slave and wholly undeserving of this fate, nevertheless remained faithful to the Lord and continued to live the commandments and made something very good of his degrading circumstances. People like this cannot be defeated” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1972, 170; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1973, 130).

### **3. Shechem, Reuben, and Judah commit serious moral sins.**

Teach and discuss Genesis 34:1–12; 35:22; and 38:1–30. Do not discuss at length the sins of these men; use them as a contrast to the faithfulness of Joseph.

- Point out that not all of Joseph's family members and acquaintances were as valiant as Joseph was when facing temptation. How did Shechem, Reuben, and Judah react to sexual temptation?
- Notice the language in Genesis 34:3 that describes Shechem's feelings for Dinah: “And his soul clave unto Dinah . . . and he loved the damsel.” Why is this description inconsistent with Shechem's actions? (If Shechem had truly loved Dinah, he would not have defiled her. Help class members understand that often people use the excuse “We are in love” to justify immoral activity, but people who truly love each other will not cause each other guilt and suffering to gratify physical passions and desires. Behavior that makes it hard to pray, makes people unworthy to enter the temple, or breaks up families is not motivated by love.)
- When Jacob blessed each of his sons at the end of his life, he referred to Reuben's moral transgression and described Reuben as “unstable as water” (Genesis 49:3–4). How is this a valid comparison? What did Jacob tell Reuben would result from his being “unstable as water”?
- Compare the price that Joseph paid to be virtuous with the price that Reuben paid to be immoral. What did Reuben lose because of his immorality? (See 1 Chronicles 5:1–2.) What are the spiritual and temporal consequences of sexual sin today? Why does the Lord place such importance on being morally clean?
- Church leaders have consistently taught that obedience to God's commandments is true freedom. How do we see this in the life of Joseph? How did disobedience result in less freedom for Shechem, Reuben, and Judah?

How can choosing to keep the commandments make us more free than choosing to break them? (See John 8:31–36.)

## Conclusion

Testify that with the Lord's help, all of our experiences and circumstances can work together for our good. Testify also of the value of remaining morally clean in thought and action. Challenge class members to evaluate the movies, magazines, and other media and use only those that reflect the Lord's standard of sexual morality. Encourage class members to be as committed as Joseph was to obeying the law of chastity.

## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. Bethel—the house of God

- While Jacob was traveling from Canaan to the land of his kindred, he stopped to rest for the night and had a remarkable dream of a ladder that reached up into heaven (Genesis 28:10–19; see the fourth additional teaching idea in lesson 10). Jacob named this place *Bethel*, which means “house of God” (Genesis 28:19; see footnote 19a). What place has the same name today? (The temple, which is called the house of the Lord.)

Elder Marion G. Romney stated, “Temples are to us all what Bethel was to Jacob” (“Temples—The Gates to Heaven,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1971, 16).

- In Genesis 35:1–15, Jacob took his family back to this sacred place. What did Jacob ask his family to do to prepare to return to Bethel, the “House of God”? (See Genesis 35:2.) How do these things compare to the preparations we make to go to the house of the Lord? What “strange gods” may be among us?

President Spencer W. Kimball said:

“The Lord has blessed us as a people with a prosperity unequaled in times past. The resources that have been placed in our power are good, and necessary to our work here on the earth. But I am afraid that many of us have been surfeited with flocks and herds and acres and barns and wealth and have begun to worship them as false gods, and they have power over us. Do we have more of these good things than our faith can stand? . . .

“In spite of our delight in defining ourselves as modern, and our tendency to think we possess a sophistication that no people in the past ever had—in spite of these things, we are, on the whole, an idolatrous people—a condition most repugnant to the Lord” (“The False Gods We Worship,” *Ensign*, June 1976, 4, 6).

- How can we “put away [our] strange gods . . . and be clean” and worthy to attend the temple? (See Genesis 35:2; Psalm 24:3–4; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Moroni 10:30, 32.)

## 2. Jacob and Esau are reunited

- In returning to the land of Canaan, Jacob knew that he would meet again with his brother Esau (Genesis 32:3–23; 33:1–17). Why was Jacob afraid to see Esau? (See Genesis 32:11.) How did Jacob prepare to meet Esau? (See Genesis 32:13–20.) How did Esau react to Jacob when they met again? (See Genesis 33:4, 8–11.) What can we learn from Jacob and Esau about resolving family conflicts?

## 3. Concubines in Old Testament times

In Genesis 35:22, Bilhah, one of Rachel's handmaids, is referred to as Jacob's concubine. Elder Bruce R. McConkie provided the following explanation of the use of the term *concubine* in the Old Testament:

“All down through the history of God's dealings with his people, including those with the house of Israel, concubines were legal wives married to their husbands in the new and everlasting covenant of marriage. . . . Anciently they were considered to be *secondary wives*, that is, wives who did not have the same standing in the caste system then prevailing as did those wives who were not called concubines” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 154).

# “Fruitful in the Land of My Affliction”

## Lesson 12

Genesis 40–45

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**Purpose** To help class members understand that if we are faithful and obedient, God will consecrate our afflictions for our good.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. Genesis 40–41. In prison, Joseph correctly interprets the dreams of Pharaoh’s servants. He then interprets Pharaoh’s dreams about cattle and corn. Joseph is made ruler over all Egypt under Pharaoh and prepares the people for the coming famine.
  - b. Genesis 42–45. Jacob twice sends his sons to Egypt to buy grain. Joseph makes himself known to his brothers and forgives them, and they rejoice together.
2. Additional reading: 2 Nephi 2:2; Doctrine and Covenants 64:8–11; 122:5–9.
3. You may want to ask a class member to prepare to present a brief summary of Genesis 42–43.
4. You may want to show a brief excerpt from “Joseph’s Brothers” or “Reconciliation,” parts 3 and 4 of the *Joseph and His Brothers* videocassette (53152), as part of the lesson.

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### Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Ask class members to imagine that they have died and entered the spirit world and are now reviewing their experiences in mortality. Explain that you will ask four questions to help them think about how adversity has shaped their lives. After asking all four questions, invite class members to comment on whichever questions they want.

- What were some of the trials you faced in mortal life?
- What lessons have you learned from life’s trials?
- If you could live your life over, what would you change about the way you dealt with your trials?
- How could you have taken better advantage of life’s experiences?

Explain that this lesson is about Joseph, son of Jacob, and how he was faithful and obedient even during great trials.

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As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

**1. Joseph interprets the dreams of the butler, the baker, and Pharaoh.  
Pharaoh makes Joseph ruler over all Egypt.**

Teach and discuss Genesis 40–41.

Have class members review the previous lesson by naming some of the trials Joseph experienced in the early part of his life (Genesis 37; 39). You may want to list class members' responses on the chalkboard. Answers may include:

- a. He was hated by his brothers (Genesis 37:4).
  - b. His brothers conspired to kill him, then sold him as a slave instead (Genesis 37:18–28).
  - c. He was unjustly put in prison after refusing to do evil (Genesis 39:20).
- How did Joseph respond to his trials? How did the Lord bless Joseph for being righteous even in times of trial?
  - Joseph was joined in prison by Pharaoh's butler and baker, both of whom had had dreams they did not understand. When Joseph interpreted the butler's dream, what did he ask of the butler in return? (See Genesis 40:14–15.) What happened when the butler was released from prison? (See Genesis 40:21, 23.) Why was this another trial for Joseph? (See Genesis 41:1, 14. He remained in prison for two more years.)
  - Why was Joseph finally let out of prison? (See Genesis 41:1, 8–15.) What was Joseph's response when the Pharaoh said he had heard that Joseph could interpret dreams? (See Genesis 41:16.) How can we give proper acknowledgment to the Lord for our talents and gifts? (We can use them to glorify God and bless others, not for our own glory.)
  - What did Pharaoh dream? (See Genesis 41:1–7; 17–24.) What was the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream? (See Genesis 41:25–32.) After Joseph gave the interpretation, what did he suggest Pharaoh do? (See Genesis 41:33–36; see also the second additional teaching idea.) How did Pharaoh respond to Joseph's suggestion to prepare for a famine? (See Genesis 41:37–43.)

**2. Joseph makes himself known to his brothers and forgives them.**

Teach and discuss Genesis 42–45. You may want to have an assigned class member briefly summarize Genesis 42–43.

- Why did Joseph's brothers come to Egypt the first time? (See Genesis 42:1–3.) Why did they return to Egypt a second time? (See Genesis 42:33–34; 43:2.) Why was Jacob reluctant to let Benjamin go to Egypt with his brothers? (See Genesis 42:36, 38.) Why did he finally agree to let Benjamin go? (See Genesis 43:3–5, 11–14.)
- In sending Benjamin to Egypt with his brothers, Jacob felt that he would be losing another son (Genesis 42:36). How did the Lord turn this perceived trial into a blessing for Jacob?

- When Joseph was young, he had a dream foretelling that his brothers would eventually bow down to him (Genesis 37:5–11). How was this dream fulfilled? (See Genesis 42:6; 43:26–28.) How did this fulfillment, which the brothers had thought would be a great trial to them, turn out to be a blessing?
- More than 20 years after they sold Joseph into slavery, his brothers still felt guilty about their action (Genesis 42:21). How can guilt be a positive force in our lives? How can it be a negative force? How does complete repentance affect feelings of guilt? (See Enos 1:4–6.)
- How did Joseph’s brother Judah show that he had become a kinder person since he had last seen Joseph? (See Genesis 44:18, 30–34. Remind class members that it had been Judah’s idea to sell Joseph as a slave.)
- Why do you think Joseph’s brothers were worried when Joseph revealed his identity to them? (See Genesis 45:1–3.) How did Joseph show that he had forgiven his brothers? (See Genesis 45:4–11, 14–15.) How do you think Joseph’s forgiveness helped lift his brothers spiritually?
- What does the world tell us to do when someone has wronged us, as Joseph’s brothers did him? What does the Lord tell us to do? (See D&C 64:8–11.) How have you been blessed when you have dealt kindly with others who have mistreated you? How can we become more forgiving?
- How did Joseph’s imprisonment in Egypt, which was a trial for him, become a blessing for him, his family, and all Egypt? (See Genesis 45:4–8.) How can we follow Joseph’s example in dealing with our own challenges and trials?
- In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul told the Romans that “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28). How has this been true in your life? Invite class members to share personal experiences in which an event that at first appeared negative later became a blessing.

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## Conclusion

Remind class members that throughout his many trials, Joseph remained faithful. He even forgave his brothers for selling him into slavery. Because of his righteousness, Joseph was greatly blessed. Testify that if we are faithful, God will bless us by making all things work together for our good.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. The great latter-day Joseph

The Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis 50:24–38 contains prophecies that Joseph made about one of his descendants who would become a “choice seer.” The Book of Mormon prophet Lehi restated these prophecies in 2 Nephi 3:5–15. The descendant referred to in these prophecies is the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Discuss how the following prophecies made by Joseph of Egypt were fulfilled in the life of Joseph Smith:

- a. One of Joseph’s descendants would be a “choice seer” (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:26; 2 Nephi 3:6).
- b. This seer would be greatly respected by the other descendants of Joseph (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:27; 2 Nephi 3:7).
- c. He would teach them of the covenants that God had made with their ancestors (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:28; 2 Nephi 3:7).
- d. He would be obedient to God (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:28; 2 Nephi 3:8).
- e. He would be a great prophet, like Moses (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:29; 2 Nephi 3:9).
- f. He would be the means for bringing forth new scripture (the Book of Mormon) that would support and work with existing scripture (the Bible) (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:30–31; 2 Nephi 3:11–12).
- g. Although he would be weak, the Lord would make him strong (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:32; 2 Nephi 3:13).
- h. Both he and his father would be named Joseph (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:33; 2 Nephi 3:15).

## 2. Preparing for famine

- Joseph counseled Pharaoh to use the seven years of plenty to prepare Egypt for the seven years of famine that would follow (Genesis 41:29–30, 34–36). What counsel do our Church leaders give us about preparing for times of famine or other difficulty?

Elder L. Tom Perry taught:

“Just as it is important to prepare ourselves spiritually, we must also prepare ourselves for our temporal needs. . . . We have been instructed for years to follow at least four requirements in preparing for that which is to come.

“First, gain an adequate education. Learn a trade or a profession to enable you to obtain steady employment that will provide remuneration sufficient to care for yourself and your family. . . .

“Second, live strictly within your income and save something for a rainy day. Incorporate in your lives the discipline of budgeting that which the Lord has blessed you with. As regularly as you pay your tithing, set aside an amount needed for future family requirements. . . .

“Third, avoid excessive debt. Necessary debt should be incurred only after careful, thoughtful prayer and after obtaining the best possible advice. We need the discipline to stay well within our ability to pay. . . .

“Fourth, acquire and store a reserve of food and supplies that will sustain life [if local laws permit such storage]. Obtain clothing and build a savings account on a sensible, well-planned basis that can serve well in times of emergency. As long as I can remember, we have been taught to prepare for the future and to obtain a year’s supply of necessities. I would guess that the years of plenty have almost universally caused us to set aside this counsel. I believe the time to disregard this counsel is over. With events in the world today, it must be considered with all seriousness” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 46–47; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 36).

- During the famine, “all countries came into Egypt to Joseph” to buy food because Egypt was the only country that had prepared for the famine (Genesis 41:54–57). How can being prepared provide us with opportunities to serve others?

### 3. Joseph’s sons

- After Pharaoh made him ruler over Egypt, Joseph married a woman named Asenath, and they had two sons (Genesis 41:45, 50). What did Joseph and Asenath name their sons? (See Genesis 41:51–52.) Why were these appropriate names for sons of Joseph? (You may need to tell class members that *Manasseh* means “forgetting” and *Ephraim* means “fruitful.” See the Bible Dictionary, pages 666 and 728.)



Lesson  
**13**

# Bondage, Passover, and Exodus

*Exodus 1–3; 5–6; 11–14*

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**Purpose**

To encourage class members to (1) trust the Lord to fulfill his promises, (2) increase their appreciation for the Savior's atoning sacrifice, and (3) make the sacrament more meaningful in their lives.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. Exodus 1–3. The children of Israel are made slaves by the Egyptians (1:1–14). Pharaoh orders that all sons born to the Israelites be killed (1:15–22). Moses is born and is raised by Pharaoh's daughter (2:1–10). Moses kills an Egyptian and flees to Midian, where he marries Zipporah (2:11–22). The Lord appears to Moses at the burning bush and calls him to deliver Israel from bondage (3:1–22; note that in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, the phrase "the angel of the Lord" in Exodus 3:2 is changed to "the presence of the Lord").
  - b. Exodus 5–6. Moses and Aaron ask Pharaoh to free Israel, but Pharaoh refuses and places greater burdens on the people (5:1–23). The Lord promises to fulfill the covenant he made with Abraham (6:1–8). (Note: Chapters 7–10 tell of Moses approaching Pharaoh many more times, asking him to free Israel. Despite many signs, wonders, and plagues, Pharaoh refuses. In the Joseph Smith Translation of these chapters, the phrase "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart" is changed to "Pharaoh hardened his heart.")
  - c. Exodus 11–13. The Lord promises to send one more plague on Egypt in which the firstborn in every home will die (11:1–10). The Lord instructs Moses in the preparation of the Passover, which will protect Israel from the plague (12:1–20). The firstborn in Egypt are killed (12:29–30). Pharaoh tells Moses to take his people from Egypt, and the Israelites leave (12:31–42). Moses tells the children of Israel to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the future as a memorial of their deliverance (13:1–16). The Lord goes before the camp of Israel in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (13:17–22). (Note that the titles "Feast of the Passover" and "Feast of Unleavened Bread" are often used synonymously; the Passover is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.)
  - d. Exodus 14. Pharaoh and his army pursue the children of Israel (14:1–9). The people are afraid, and Moses appeals to the Lord for help (14:10–18). The children of Israel are delivered from the army and cross the Red Sea on dry ground; Pharaoh's men pursue them and are drowned (14:19–31).
2. Additional reading: Exodus 4; 7–10; 15.
3. Ask a class member to prepare to present a brief overview of Exodus 1 and 2.
4. Prepare wordstrips of the words *Passover* and *Sacrament*.

5. If the following audiovisual materials are available, you may want to use some of them as part of the lesson:
- “Animal Sacrifice and the Atonement,” a nine-minute segment from *Old Testament Video Presentations* (53224).
  - The pictures Jesus the Christ (62572; Gospel Art Picture Kit 240); Moses in the Bulrushes (62063; Gospel Art Picture Kit 106); Moses and the Burning Bush (62239; Gospel Art Picture Kit 107); and The Crossing of the Red Sea (62100).

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## Suggested Lesson Development

- Attention Activity      You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.
- Ask class members if they have ever been rescued from a dangerous situation. Invite one or two of them to briefly share their experience, or relate one of your own. Ask class members how they felt toward the ones who rescued them.
- Explain that this lesson is about one of the most dramatic rescues that has ever occurred—the deliverance of the children of Israel from the plague of death and from Egyptian slavery. Explain also that in many ways this rescue symbolizes an even greater rescue—our deliverance from sin and death through the Savior’s atoning sacrifice.
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- Scripture Discussion and Application      As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.
- After Jacob and his family moved to Egypt, the Israelites lived there for 430 years. During that time, a Pharaoh arose who enslaved them and imposed heavy burdens on them. As Joseph had prophesied, the Lord raised up Moses to deliver the children of Israel (2 Nephi 3:10).
- 1. The Lord calls Moses to deliver Israel from bondage.**
- Have the assigned class member give a brief overview of Exodus 1 and 2; then teach and discuss Exodus 3.
- How did the Lord call Moses to deliver Israel from bondage? (See Exodus 3:1–4.) What did the Lord tell Moses while calling him? (See Exodus 3:5–10.) What can we learn about the Lord from his calling of Moses? (Answers could include that the Lord knows his people, is merciful to them, wants to bless them, and keeps his promises to them.)
  - Invite class members to imagine they are the children of Israel living in Egypt. For generations they have been taught that they are God’s covenant people and that he will fulfill the promises he made to Abraham. Yet now they are slaves, living in oppression and bondage. What can we learn from this circumstance that can help us when we experience adversity? (God does not forget us in our adversity, as he showed by calling Moses and eventually delivering

Israel. But usually he does not deliver us from trials immediately. No matter how long the trial, we should continue to pray to him, trusting that he loves us and will have all things work together for our good if we obey him. See D&C 90:24; 98:3; Mosiah 24:14–15.) How have you received comfort and help from the Lord during times of adversity?

- What did Moses say when the Lord called him to deliver Israel? (See Exodus 3:11; 4:1, 10.) In what ways did Moses feel inadequate? What assurances did the Lord give him? (See Exodus 3:12; 4:11–12.) How do you feel when you receive a calling from the Lord? Why might some feelings of inadequacy be good? How has the Lord helped you in callings for which you felt inadequate?
- What did Moses sacrifice by accepting the call to lead his people? (See Hebrews 11:24–26.) What do we sacrifice by accepting calls to serve the Lord? Why is it important that we be willing to sacrifice for the Lord?

## **2. The Lord sends plagues upon Egypt.**

Teach and discuss Exodus 5–6. You may also want to give a brief overview of Exodus 7–10, explaining that Moses approached Pharaoh many times and asked him to free Israel. Despite signs, wonders, and plagues, Pharaoh refused. You probably should not take class time to review the individual signs, wonders, and plagues.

- How did Pharaoh respond the first time Moses and Aaron asked him to let the children of Israel go? (See Exodus 5:1–9.) How did the children of Israel respond to this trial? (See Exodus 5:15–21.) How did Moses respond to it? (See Exodus 5:22–23.) What can we learn from this account? (One thing we can learn is the need for patience in adversity. The Lord will fulfill his promises, though he may not do so at the time or in the way we expect.)
- After Pharaoh increased Israel’s burdens, the Lord repeated His promises to Moses. What were these promises? (See Exodus 6:4–8.) How did the children of Israel respond when Moses reminded them of these promises? (See Exodus 6:9.) Why do some of us stop listening to the prophets and believing God’s promises during times of trial? How can we maintain faith in God during adversity?
- How did Moses respond when the Lord asked him to go before Pharaoh a second time to request Israel’s freedom? (See Exodus 6:10–12.) Point out that we also may sometimes feel reluctant to do what the Lord asks because of fear or because we do not think it is possible. How has the Lord helped you when you have felt doubt or fear?

## **3. The Lord instructs Moses in the preparation of the Passover.**

Teach and discuss Exodus 11–13.

- What was the purpose of the first Passover? (See Exodus 12:12–13, 22–23.) Why did the Lord want Israel to continue to keep the Feast of the Passover in future years? (See Exodus 12:24–27, 42; 13:1–10.)
- Explain that in addition to reminding Israel that God had protected them from the plague of death and delivered them from the Egyptians, the Passover also symbolized an important future event. What was this event? (The atoning

sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, which delivers us from sin and death. See 1 Corinthians 5:7.) How did the Passover symbolize the Atonement?

You may want to show the following similarities between the Passover and the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ:

- a. The children of Israel were to use a firstborn male lamb without blemish in the Passover (Exodus 12:5). The Savior is the firstborn Son of God, the Lamb of God without spot or blemish (1 Peter 1:19).
  - b. The children of Israel were to sprinkle the blood of the lamb on their doorposts to save their firstborn from death (Exodus 12:7, 22–23). The Savior’s blood, which he shed in Gethsemane and on the cross, cleanses the faithful and saves them from spiritual death (Mosiah 4:2).
  - c. The children of Israel were to eat unleavened bread (Exodus 12:8, 15–20). “Leaven, or yeast, was seen anciently as a symbol of corruption because it so easily spoiled and turned moldy. . . . For the Israelites, eating the unleavened bread symbolized that they were partaking of the bread which had no corruption or impurity, namely, the Bread of Life, who is Jesus Christ (see John 6:35)” (*Old Testament Student Manual: Genesis–2 Samuel* [1981], 119). The removal of leaven also suggested repentance, or the removal of sin from a person’s life.
  - d. The children of Israel were to eat the Passover meal in haste (Exodus 12:11). Like the Israelites, we need to respond eagerly and immediately to the deliverance that the Savior offers us.
- At the Last Supper, the Savior instituted the sacrament in place of the Passover (Matthew 26:19, 26–28). Display the picture of the Savior, placing the wordstrip *Passover* on the left side and the wordstrip *Sacrament* on the right. What similarities are there between the Passover and the sacrament? (See Exodus 12:14; 13:9–10; D&C 20:75–79.)

Elder Howard W. Hunter taught that at the Passover meal that is now known as the Last Supper, “the bread and wine, rather than the animals and herbs, [became] emblems of the great Lamb’s body and blood, emblems to be eaten and drunk reverently and in remembrance of him forever.

“In this simple but impressive manner the Savior instituted the ordinance now known as the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. With the suffering of Gethsemane, the sacrifice of Calvary, and the resurrection from a garden tomb, Jesus fulfilled the ancient law and ushered in a new dispensation based on a higher, holier understanding of the law of sacrifice. No more would men be required to offer the firstborn lamb from their flock, because the Firstborn of God had come to offer himself as an ‘infinite and eternal sacrifice’ ” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1985, 22; or *Ensign*, May 1985, 19).

- Elder Howard W. Hunter said that just as the Passover was a covenant of protection for ancient Israel, the sacrament is a “new covenant of safety” for us (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 24; or *Ensign*, May 1974, 18). How is the sacrament a covenant of safety for us? (The sacrament reminds us of the Savior’s atoning sacrifice, which brings eternal safety by freeing us from the bonds of sin and death. The covenants we renew as we partake of the sacrament also help provide us eternal safety.)

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland asked:

“Do we see [the sacrament] as *our* passover, remembrance of *our* safety and deliverance and redemption?”

“With so very much at stake, this ordinance commemorating our escape from the angel of darkness should be taken more seriously than it sometimes is. It should be a powerful, reverent, reflective moment. It should encourage spiritual feelings and impressions” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 89; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 68).

- In his instructions about the Passover, the Lord emphasized the need for parents to teach their children its significance (Exodus 12:26–27; 13:8, 14). Why was it important that Israelite parents do this? How might this apply to our day? (Like ancient Israel, we should teach our children the significance of the sacrament and other ordinances that remind us of the Lord’s hand in delivering us from sin and death.)

#### 4. The children of Israel cross the Red Sea.

Teach and discuss Exodus 14.

- After Pharaoh let the children of Israel leave Egypt, he turned against them and sent his army after them (Exodus 14:5–9). What did the children of Israel do when they saw the advancing army? (See Exodus 14:10–12.) What did Moses tell the children of Israel when their faith faltered? (See Exodus 14:13–14.) How can we develop faith that is strong enough to sustain us when we are filled with fear?
- How did the Lord save the children of Israel from the advancing Egyptian army? (See Exodus 14:21–31.) How can this story help us in times of trial?

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#### Conclusion

Testify that just as the Lord fulfilled his promise to deliver the Israelites from bondage, he will fulfill his promises to us. Encourage class members to increase their appreciation for the Savior’s atoning sacrifice and to partake of the sacrament worthily and thoughtfully, keeping the covenant to “always remember him” (D&C 20:77).

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#### Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

##### 1. Satan counterfeits God’s power

- What did Pharaoh do when Moses and Aaron were showing him signs of God’s power? (See Exodus 7:8–12, 17–22.) What can we learn about Satan from these verses?
- What are some ways Satan counterfeits God’s power and blessings today? What gifts has the Lord given us to help us discern between good and evil? How can we increase our ability to discern between good and evil?

## 2. The plagues

- Why did the Lord send the plagues upon Egypt? (See Exodus 7:5, 17; 8:10; 9:14, 29; 10:2; 14:4.) What was Pharaoh's reaction to the plagues? (See, for example, Exodus 8:8, 15, 25, 28, 32.) Why didn't the plagues harm the children of Israel? (See Exodus 9:4–6, 23–26; 10:22–23; 11:4–7.)

## 3. The Passover

As you teach how the Passover is a symbol of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, you may want to obtain the following items to illustrate the symbols of the Passover:

- a. Pictures of a lamb and a door.
- b. Tortillas, crackers, or matzoth (to represent flat, unleavened bread).
- c. Horseradish or romaine lettuce (for bitter herbs).
- d. A pair of shoes or sandals (the Israelites ate the meal with their shoes on, symbolizing the haste with which they left Egypt).

## 4. "All were baptized . . . in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:2)

You may want to read 1 Corinthians 10:1–4, where Paul teaches that the children of Israel were baptized in the cloud and in the sea. Explaining the significance of this, Elder Bruce R. McConkie said, "[Paul] is saying that even as Israel, when they passed through the Red Sea, fled from the worldliness of Egypt, so their Christian descendants, through baptism, are to forsake the lusts of the flesh and live godly lives" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [1966–73], 2:355).

Lesson  
**14**

# “Ye Shall Be a Peculiar Treasure unto Me”

*Exodus 15–20; 32–34*

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**Purpose**

To encourage class members to partake of the Lord’s spiritual water and bread, sustain his chosen leaders, and obey his commandments so he can make of them a “holy nation” (Exodus 19:6).

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. Exodus 15:22–27; 16:1–31; 17:1–7. The children of Israel murmur because they are thirsty and hungry, and the Lord provides water, manna, and quail.
  - b. Exodus 17:8–13; 18:13–26. Amalek comes to fight with Israel. Israel prevails while Moses holds up his hands, but Amalek prevails when Moses tires and lowers his hands. Aaron and Hur hold up Moses’ hands, and Israel wins the battle (17:8–13). Moses follows Jethro’s counsel to appoint judges and delegate authority to them (18:13–26).
  - c. Exodus 19–20. The Lord meets with Moses on Mount Sinai and gives Israel the Ten Commandments.
  - d. Exodus 32–34. Moses receives stone tablets containing instructions from the Lord but breaks the tablets when he returns from Sinai and sees the people worshipping a golden calf (31:18; 32:1–24). The Lord takes the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood from Israel and gives them a lesser law, the law of Moses (Joseph Smith Translation, Exodus 34:1–2). Moses hews new tablets of stone to replace those that he has broken, but the new tablets do not include “the words of the everlasting covenant of the holy priesthood” (Exodus 34:1–5; Joseph Smith Translation, Deuteronomy 10:2). The people covenant to obey the law of Moses (34:10–35).
2. Additional reading: Psalm 78; 1 Corinthians 10:1–11; Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–27.
3. Bring to class several books or other heavy objects if you use the object lesson on pages 64–65.
4. If *Old Testament Video Presentations* (53224) is available, you may want to show “Modern Idolatry,” a seven-minute segment, as part of the lesson.

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**Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity**

You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

- Imagine that you must make a journey into a wilderness where you have never been and that has not been mapped. How would you prepare for this journey? (Answers may vary, but one helpful preparation would be to find a guide.)
- What qualifications would you want in a guide who was leading you into a wilderness area? (Answers may vary, but the guide should know the area and be trustworthy.)

- Who was the guide for Moses and the children of Israel after they had fled Egypt and entered the wilderness? (The Lord.)

Point out that the experiences of the Israelites while journeying in the wilderness can teach us important lessons as we journey through mortality. One important lesson is that we can trust God to guide and care for us as he did the Israelites.

## Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles. Because it would be difficult to ask every question or cover every point in the lesson, prayerfully select those that will best meet class members' needs.

### 1. The Lord provides water, manna, and quail for the children of Israel.

Teach and discuss Exodus 15:22–27; 16:1–31; and 17:1–7.

After the Israelites had passed through the Red Sea, the Lord instructed Moses to lead them to the promised land. But first the Lord tested the Israelites' faith in the wilderness. Many of the people lacked faith, complaining to the Lord instead of turning to him. Nevertheless, the Lord provided water for their thirst and manna and quail for their hunger.

- What problem did the Israelites face in Exodus 15:22–24 and 17:1–3? How did Moses respond when the people murmured against him? (See Exodus 15:25; 17:4. He turned to the Lord for help.) What can we learn from Moses' response? How did the Lord respond to Moses' prayers for help? (See Exodus 15:25–26; 17:5–7.)
- The Lord provided physical and spiritual water for the children of Israel. The physical water came from the rock that Moses smote; the "spiritual drink" came from the "spiritual Rock," which is Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4). What is the spiritual water that flows from Christ? (See 1 Nephi 11:25.) How can we drink that water? What is promised to those who drink that water? (See John 4:14; D&C 63:23.)
- What problem did the Israelites face in Exodus 16:2–3? How did the Lord respond? (See Exodus 16:4, 11–15.) In addition to satisfying the people's hunger, what were some other purposes of sending manna?
  - a. It would show the Lord whether his people would obey him (Exodus 16:4, 16–31).
  - b. It would give the people daily reminders of the Lord's power and love (Exodus 16:12).
  - c. It would teach the people that they do not live "by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 8:3).
  - d. It would humble the people and help them receive salvation (Deuteronomy 8:16).
- How do you think sending manna helped accomplish each of these purposes? How does the Lord accomplish each of these purposes in our lives?
- How is manna a representation of Christ? (See John 6:35.) How does Christ's living bread differ from manna? (See John 6:48–51.) How can we daily partake of Christ's living bread?



- The Israelites needed to gather manna every day to maintain physical strength. How can this be likened to what we must do to maintain spiritual strength? (Just as we need daily nourishment to maintain physical strength, we also need daily nourishment to maintain spiritual strength. We cannot expect to be nourished spiritually if we study the scriptures and pray only occasionally.)
- What usually happened when the Israelites kept the manna overnight? (See Exodus 16:19–20.) What happened when they kept manna overnight in preparation for the Sabbath? (See Exodus 16:22–25.) How can we apply this principle to our weekly preparation for the Sabbath?
- What would have happened to the Israelites if they had tried to journey through the wilderness without the Lord’s help? What will happen to us if we try to journey through mortality without the Lord’s help?

**2. Aaron and Hur hold up Moses’ hands so Israel prevails in battle against Amalek. Moses follows Jethro’s counsel to appoint judges and delegate authority to them.**

Teach and discuss Exodus 17:8–13 and 18:13–26. Point out that both of these accounts teach us the importance of supporting and sustaining Church leaders.

- The Amalekites warred with the children of Israel for many years, beginning in the time of Moses. How were the Israelites able to defeat Amalek’s people in the battle described in Exodus 17:8–13? (When Aaron and Hur sustained Moses by holding up his arms, Israel prevailed in battle.) What kinds of spiritual battles do we fight today? How does sustaining the prophet help us prevail in these battles?

President Ezra Taft Benson said: “I am reminded how Moses up on the hill raised his arms for the victory of the armies of Israel. As long as his arms were raised, Israel prevailed, but when they dropped from weariness, then the enemy prevailed. And so Aaron and Hur ‘stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side,’ and Israel was victorious (Exodus 17:12). So will we be victorious as we hold up the arms of the Lord’s anointed servants” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 98; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 77).

- What concerned Jethro when he saw the people coming to Moses all day and evening? (See Exodus 18:13–18.) What did Jethro counsel Moses to do? (See Exodus 18:19–23.)
- What responsibilities of a prophet are mentioned in Exodus 18:16–20?

You may want to have class members look for the responsibilities in these verses, then list the answers on the chalkboard. You may also want to use the following object lesson: Invite a class member to hold out his or her arms. As the first responsibility is identified, place a book or other heavy object in the class member’s hands. Add another book or heavy object as each other responsibility is identified.

- a. Be a judge for the people (Exodus 18:16).
- b. Represent the people before God (Exodus 18:19).
- c. “Teach them ordinances and laws” (Exodus 18:20).
- d. “[Show] them the way wherein they must walk” (Exodus 18:20).
- e. “[Show] them . . . the work that they must do” (Exodus 18:20).

- How can we hold up the hands and ease the burdens of our prophet and apostles today? (See D&C 21:4–5; 107:22. As class members offer suggestions, take some of the books or other objects from the arms of the class member who is holding them.)
- How can we support and sustain our local Church leaders? (Answers may include speaking well of them, serving diligently in our Church callings, and being good home teachers and visiting teachers.)
- How have you been blessed as you have supported Church leaders? (You may want to use D&C 21:6 in this discussion.)

### 3. The Lord meets with Moses on Mount Sinai and gives Israel the Ten Commandments.

Teach and discuss Exodus 19–20.

Within three months of Israel’s entering the wilderness, the Lord wanted to establish his covenant with them (Exodus 19:5–6). As part of this covenant he revealed the Ten Commandments to Moses.

- While the children of Israel were camped at Mount Sinai, what did the Lord promise if they would be obedient? (See Exodus 19:3–6. He would make them “a peculiar treasure, . . . a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”) What do these promises mean? How do these promises apply to us today?

These promises mean that Israel would become the Lord’s covenant people, favored above all others and chosen to bear the priesthood and the gospel to all people (see also Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:1–2; 1 Peter 2:9). Note that in this context, *peculiar* carries the meaning of “being the Lord’s own special people or treasure,” not the meaning of “odd or eccentric” (Bible Dictionary, “Peculiar,” 748).

- What experience did the Lord want his people to have at Mount Sinai? (See Exodus 19:9, 11, 16–17; D&C 84:23.) What did the Lord require his people to do before they could meet with him? (See Exodus 19:10, 14.)
- Mount Sinai was a holy place where the Lord wanted to speak to his people and show himself to them. What holy places has he provided where we can receive these same blessings? (Temples; see D&C 97:15–16; 109:12–13.) Invite class members to tell how the temple has helped them hear the Lord’s voice and feel his presence.
- The first four commandments in Exodus 20 teach the proper relationship between us and God (Exodus 20:3–11). How is the commandment to worship the Lord and to have no other gods before him relevant today? What false gods do some people worship today? (See 1 Samuel 15:23; Ephesians 5:5; D&C 1:15–16.)

President Spencer W. Kimball said:

“Idolatry is among the most serious of sins. . . . Modern idols or false gods can take such forms as clothes, homes, businesses, machines, automobiles, pleasure boats, and numerous other material deflectors from the path to godhood. . . .

“Intangible things make just as ready gods. Degrees and letters and titles can become idols. . . .

“Many people build and furnish a home and buy the automobile first—and then they ‘cannot afford’ to pay tithing. Whom do they worship? Certainly not the Lord of heaven and earth. . . .

“Many worship the hunt, the fishing trip, the vacation, the weekend picnics and outings. Others have as their idols the games of sport, baseball, football, the bullfight, or golf. . . .

“Still another image men worship is that of power and prestige. . . . These gods of power, wealth, and influence are most demanding and are quite as real as the golden calves of the children of Israel in the wilderness” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [1969], 40–42).

- What are some ways that people take God’s name in vain? Why is it important that we not take his name in vain?
- Why is it important for us to keep the Sabbath day holy? (See Exodus 20:8; 31:16–17; Isaiah 58:13–14; D&C 59:9–10.) How should we decide what activities are appropriate for the Sabbath? How have you been blessed as you have kept this day holy?
- Review the six commandments that concern our relationships with other people (Exodus 20:12–17). How does obeying these commandments improve our relationships with others? (You may want to focus on individual commandments, defining what they mean and discussing them as appropriate.)

#### **4. The Lord introduces the law of Moses.**

Teach and discuss Exodus 32–34.

When the Lord spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai, he revealed a law that included the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood (D&C 84:19–23). However, the Israelites’ idolatrous behavior showed that they were not ready to live the fulness of the gospel (Exodus 32:1–9; D&C 84:24). Because they forgot the Lord so quickly, he withdrew the Melchizedek Priesthood from them and revealed a lesser law—the law of Moses (Joseph Smith Translation, Exodus 34:1–2; D&C 84:25–27).

The law of Moses did not replace the commandments, covenants, or principles of the gospel. Rather, it provided “a law of performances and of ordinances, a law which they were to observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him” (Mosiah 13:30). The law of Moses taught people to confess their sins and make amends, to follow strict rules in offering animal sacrifices, to keep their bodies healthy, to give to support the Lord’s work, to give thanks, and to be reconciled to God.

- Why did the Lord give the children of Israel the law of Moses? (See Galatians 3:23–24; Mosiah 13:29; Alma 25:15–16; D&C 84:19–27.) How would this law help make Israel holy and bring them to Christ? (See Mosiah 13:30; Alma 34:14–15.)
- When was the law of Moses fulfilled? (See 3 Nephi 15:4–10.) Now that the Lord no longer requires animal sacrifices, which were an important part of the

law of Moses, what sacrifice does he ask us to make? (See 3 Nephi 9:19–22.)  
What does it mean to offer a broken heart and a contrite spirit?

Elder M. Russell Ballard taught:

“Although the law of Moses was fulfilled, the principles of the law of sacrifice continue to be a part of the doctrine of the Church.

“While the primary purpose of the law of sacrifice continued to be that of testing and assisting us to come unto Christ, two adjustments were made after Christ’s ultimate sacrifice. First, the ordinance of the sacrament replaced the ordinance of [animal] sacrifice; and second, this change moved the focus of the sacrifice from a person’s animal to the person himself. In a sense, the sacrifice changed from the offering to the offerer. . . .

“. . . After his mortal ministry, Christ elevated the law of sacrifice to a new level. . . . Instead of the Lord requiring a person’s animal or grain, now the Lord wants us to give up all that is ungodly. This is a higher practice of the law of sacrifice; it reaches into the inner soul of a person” (*The Law of Sacrifice* [address delivered at the Church Educational System Symposium, 13 Aug. 1996], 5).

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## Conclusion

Testify to class members that if they will partake of the Lord’s spiritual water and bread, sustain his chosen leaders, and obey his commandments, he will invite them to his holy mountain—the temple. There they can meet with him, receive his laws, behold his glory, and go forth inspired to be more like him.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. The Ten Commandments

Note that the Ten Commandments are repeated in Deuteronomy 5:5–21, Mosiah 12:33–36 and 13:12–24, and D&C 42:18–27 and 59:5–16. Review these passages for further insights into the Ten Commandments.

### 2. The golden calf

You may want to discuss the story of building and worshiping the golden calf as recorded in Exodus 32. Numerous principles can be drawn from this story, including the two below:

- a. Old habits and patterns of belief or behavior are hard to break. Even though the Israelites had left Egypt physically, they were still not spiritually free from its influences. After the Israelites had heard the voice of God proclaim the Ten Commandments from Sinai, they quickly broke the first two.
- b. It is important to withstand negative peer pressure. Aaron gave in to the Israelites’ unrighteous desires. At times, leaders and parents must say “no,” even at the risk of offending or alienating those whom they are responsible for.

Lesson  
**15**

# “Look to God and Live”

*Numbers 11–14; 21:1–9*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to overcome worldly desires and fears and look to the Savior and his prophets for guidance.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. Numbers 11. The Israelites complain about the manna and desire to eat meat (11:1–9). Moses asks the Lord for guidance and for help in bearing his burdens (11:10–15). As instructed by the Lord, Moses gathers 70 elders to assist him (11:16–17, 24–30). The Lord answers the Israelites’ desire for meat by sending them an overabundance of quail and smiting them with a plague because of their greed and overindulgence (11:18–23, 31–35).
  - b. Numbers 12. Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses, complaining about his marriage to an Ethiopian woman and challenging him as their presiding authority (12:1–3). The Lord chastens and punishes Miriam and Aaron for their murmuring (12:4–16).
  - c. Numbers 13–14. Moses instructs 12 men to search the land of Canaan (13:1–20; note that “Jehoshua” in verse 16 is a form of the name Joshua). They return with favorable reports of the land’s resources, but all except Joshua and Caleb fear the inhabitants and desire to return to Egypt (13:21–14:10). The Lord tells Moses that the faithless and complaining Israelites will wander in the wilderness 40 years, until all of the adult generation are dead but Joshua and Caleb (14:11–39).
  - d. Numbers 21:1–9. The Israelites destroy the Canaanites who come against them (21:1–3). The Lord sends fiery serpents as punishment for the Israelites’ incessant complaining (21:4–6). Moses makes a serpent of brass, fastens it to a pole, and tells the people that if they look at it, they will live (21:7–9).
2. Additional reading: John 3:14–16; 1 Nephi 17:41; Alma 33:18–22; 37:46–47; Helaman 8:13–15.
3. If you use the attention activity, make a poster with the words *The Promised Land*.
4. If the picture Moses and the Brass Serpent is available, you may want to use it during the lesson (62202).

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**Suggested Lesson  
Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Write the word *Egypt* on the chalkboard. Place a poster with the words *The Promised Land* at the other side of the room. Challenge a class member to walk from the chalkboard to the poster while looking over his or her shoulder at the word *Egypt*.

If the class member has difficulty reaching the poster, ask the following question:

- Why is it difficult to go straight forward as you look backward?

If the class member reaches the poster easily, ask the following questions:

- How far do you think you could go without wandering from the straight line? Why is it difficult to go straight forward as you look backward?

Explain that this demonstration may be compared to the Israelites' journey from Egypt. Despite the blessings the Israelites received from the Lord, their fear and lack of faith often caused them to wish they had not left Egypt. Their yearning for Egypt delayed and complicated their journey to the promised land.

## Scripture Discussion and Application

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As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles. Because it would be difficult to ask every question or cover every point in the lesson, prayerfully select those that will best meet class members' needs. You may need to adapt some questions to fit class members' circumstances.

### **1. The Lord answers the Israelites' desire for meat by sending them quail and smiting them with a plague.**

Teach and discuss Numbers 11.

- Even though manna was a great blessing from the Lord, the Israelites began to complain about it (Numbers 11:6). What prompted their complaint? (See Numbers 11:4–5; they began to think about and desire the meat and other food they had eaten in Egypt.) What are the dangers of wanting more than we already have?
- The Israelites became so lustful for meat that they lost their focus on the promised land and began to wish they had not left Egypt (Numbers 11:4–6). What are some modern-day examples of people giving up great blessings in order to satisfy immediate desires? Why do people do this? How can we overcome such temptations?
- How did the Lord answer the Israelites' desire for meat? (See Numbers 11:18–20; 31–33.)
- Moses became so burdened by the sins of the Israelites that he asked the Lord to take his life (Numbers 11:14–15). How did the Lord give him relief? (See Numbers 11:16–17. Seventy men were called to assist Moses.) What great blessings did these men receive? (See Numbers 11:24–29.)

### **2. The Lord chastens Miriam and Aaron for speaking against Moses.**

Teach and discuss Numbers 12.

- Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses as their presiding authority, pointing out that they too had received revelation (Numbers 12:2). What was the Lord's reply to their complaint? (See Numbers 12:5–9.) What are the limits to our right to receive revelation?

Elder James E. Faust said: “The prophets, seers, and revelators have had and still have the responsibility and privilege of receiving and declaring the word of God for the world. Individual members, parents, and leaders have the right to receive revelation for their own responsibility but have no duty nor right to declare the word of God beyond the limits of their own responsibility” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1989, 9; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 8).

- The Lord chastened and punished Miriam and Aaron for complaining about Moses’ marriage to an Ethiopian woman (Numbers 12:1, 9–10). How are we affected when we criticize Church leaders? How can our criticism of Church leaders affect our family and friends?
- Numbers 12:3 says that “Moses was very meek.” What does it mean to be meek?  
President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “Meekness implies a spirit of gratitude as opposed to an attitude of self-sufficiency, an acknowledgment of a greater power beyond oneself, a recognition of God, and an acceptance of his commandments” (“With All Thy Getting Get Understanding,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1988, 3–4).
- How did Moses show his meekness when Miriam was punished for rebelling against him? (See Numbers 12:13–15. Rather than being pleased with his authority to preside over his sister, he pleaded with the Lord to heal her. He and his people postponed their journey until she was healed.) How can we be meek, even when people criticize or turn against us? How does it help us to respond to criticism with meekness?

### 3. Moses instructs 12 men to search the land of Canaan.

Teach and discuss Numbers 13–14.

- When the Israelites reached the border of the land of Canaan, Moses sent 12 men to search the land, its resources, and its people (Numbers 13:17–20). What report did they bring of the land’s resources? (See Numbers 13:23–27.) What did the 10 men besides Caleb and Joshua report about the people who lived in Canaan? (See Numbers 13:28–33.) How do some of us make the same error as these 10 men?

President Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“Ten of the spies were victims of their own doubts and fears. They gave a negative report of the numbers and stature of the Canaanites. . . . They compared themselves as grasshoppers to the giants they had seen in the land. . . .

“We see some around us who are indifferent concerning the future of this work, who are apathetic, who speak of limitations, who express fears, who spend their time digging out and writing about what they regard to be weaknesses which really are of no consequence. With doubt concerning its past, they have no vision concerning its future” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 93–94; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 71).

- How did the report of Caleb and Joshua differ from the report of the other 10 men? (See Numbers 13:30; 14:6–9.) Why were Caleb and Joshua unafraid of the inhabitants of Canaan? (See Numbers 14:9.) What are some ways that we can follow the example of Caleb and Joshua when we face difficult situations?

President Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“There is no place in this work for those who believe only in the gospel of doom and gloom. The gospel is good news. It is a message of triumph. It is a cause to be embraced with enthusiasm.

“The Lord never said that there would not be troubles. Our people have known afflictions of every sort as those who have opposed this work have come upon them. But faith has shown through all their sorrows. This work has consistently moved forward and has never taken a backward step since its inception. . . .

“This is an age of pessimism. Ours is a mission of faith. To my brethren and sisters everywhere, I call upon you to reaffirm your faith, to move this work forward across the world. You can make it stronger by the manner in which you live” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 94–95; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 71–72).

- How did the congregation react to the words of Caleb and Joshua? (See Numbers 14:10.) How did the Lord punish the Israelites for their continual murmuring and their desire to return to Egypt? (See Numbers 14:22–23, 26–35.) How did he punish the 10 men who delivered the negative report of Canaan? (See Numbers 14:36–37.) How did he bless Caleb and Joshua for their faithfulness? (Numbers 14:24, 38.)

#### **4. Moses makes a serpent of brass and tells the people that if they look at it, they will be healed.**

Teach and discuss Numbers 21:1–9.

- Although the Lord helped the Israelites defeat the attacking Canaanites, the Israelites continued to murmur. How did the Lord punish them? (See Numbers 21:6.) How did the Israelites respond to this punishment? (See Numbers 21:7.)
- What did the Lord tell Moses to do when Moses asked him to take the fiery serpents away? (See Numbers 21:8–9.) What did each person need to do to be saved from the bites of the fiery serpents?
- Nephi and Alma, two Book of Mormon prophets, taught that many Israelites died because they would not look at the brass serpent. Why didn’t they look? (See 1 Nephi 17:41; Alma 33:18–20.)
- Whom did the brass serpent symbolize? (See John 3:14–16; Helaman 8:13–14.)
- Just as the children of Israel needed to look at the brass serpent to live, we need to look to Jesus Christ to receive eternal life (Alma 37:46–47; Helaman 8:15). What does it mean to look to Christ? How do many people today make the same error as the Israelites who would not look at the brass serpent? (See Alma 33:20. They do not look to Jesus Christ because they do not believe that doing so can save them.)

Elder Carlos E. Asay said: “We, like Israel of old, must rivet our eyes and minds upon . . . Christ if we hope to gain eternal life. . . . Our looks must not be allowed to wander across the way or to become fixed upon the perishable things of the world. The eye . . . must be trained to look upward. We must



look to God and live!" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1978, 81; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 54).

- Alma taught that just as the way to be healed from the fiery serpents was easy, the way to eternal life is easy (Alma 37:46). In what sense is the way to eternal life easy? How do some people try to complicate the way to eternal life? (See Jacob 4:14. They look beyond the simple, saving principles of faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and obedience.) How can we keep our focus on faith in Christ?

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## Conclusion

Encourage class members to look past the things of the world and to be unafraid of the “giants” that distract us from the things that are most important. Testify that if we will “look upon the Son of God with faith” (Helaman 8:15) and follow his prophets, we will be blessed in this life and in the life to come.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. “Let us return into Egypt” (Numbers 14:4)

- What was the response of the Israelites when they were:
  - a. Trapped between the Egyptians and the Red Sea? (See Exodus 14:10–12.)
  - b. Given nothing to eat but manna? (See Numbers 11:4–6, 18–20.)
  - c. Challenged with the task of conquering the land of Canaan? (See Numbers 14:1–4.)
  - d. Discouraged by the difficult journey in the wilderness? (See Numbers 21:4–5.)
- Why do you think it was so difficult for the Israelites to forsake Egypt? What are some things that are difficult for us to forsake today? How can we strengthen each other as we strive to turn away from old habits or worldly attitudes?

### 2. Where to look for guidance

The book of Numbers teaches us where we should look for guidance. You may want to emphasize these teachings by writing the following principles on the chalkboard as you teach the scripture accounts:

- a. Look to the prophet (Numbers 12).
- b. Look to the promised land—for us, the celestial kingdom (Numbers 13–14).
- c. Look to the Savior (Numbers 21:4–9).

# “I Cannot Go Beyond the Word of the Lord”

## Lesson 16

*Numbers 22–24; 31:1–16*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to submit to God’s will without hesitation.

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- Preparation**
1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
    - a. Numbers 22:1–21. Balak, king of Moab, is terrified by the approach of the Israelites. He offers Balaam rewards if he will come to Moab and curse the Israelites. God commands Balaam to refuse, and Balaam obeys (22:1–14). Balak offers Balaam additional honor and wealth if he will come to Moab and curse Israel. God tells Balaam he can go if he desires but that he must speak only the words God gives him (22:15–21). Balaam decides to go. (Note that in verse 6 the word *wot* means “know.” Note also that the Joseph Smith Translation of Numbers 22:20 includes the phrase “if thou wilt” before the words “go with them.”)
    - b. Numbers 22:22–35. God is angry with Balaam for going to Moab, knowing that he hopes for some reward from Balak. While on his way, Balaam learns the dangers of displeasing God when his donkey and an angel speak to him.
    - c. Numbers 22:36–24:25. Balaam meets with Balak (22:36–23:2). Three times Balak asks him to curse Israel, but Balaam obeys God and blesses Israel each time (23:3–24:9). He then curses Moab and prophesies of Jesus Christ (24:10–25).
    - d. Numbers 31:1–16. The Israelites destroy the Midianites and slay Balaam. Moses explains that Balaam had counseled the Midianites to entice the Israelites into sin. (The consequences of Balaam’s counsel are described in Numbers 25:1–3. Although Balaam would not curse Israel directly, he apparently wanted a reward from Balak badly enough that he suggested tempting Israel to sin, causing them to lose God’s protection.)
  2. Additional reading: 2 Peter 2:15–16; Jude 1:11; Revelation 2:14.
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### Suggested Lesson Development

- Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.
- Ask class members to listen closely to the following statements and think about the type of person who would make them:
- “If [the king] would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God” (Numbers 22:18).
- “All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do” (Numbers 23:26).
- “I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak” (Numbers 24:13).

- What are some of the qualities of a person who would say these things? (Such statements suggest that a person is obedient, faithful, and humble.)

Explain that these statements were made by a man named Balaam, who professed strict obedience but in his heart desired earthly rewards and honors. This lesson shows the consequences of stubbornly insisting on our own will to fulfill such desires.

## Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

### 1. Balaam refuses Balak's offer of rewards in exchange for cursing Israel.

Teach and discuss Numbers 22:1–21.

- Terrified by the approach of the Israelites, Balak, king of Moab, sent messengers to offer Balaam rewards if he would come to Moab and curse Israel (Numbers 22:5–7). How did Balaam respond to this offer? (See Numbers 22:8–14.) What so-called rewards are we sometimes offered in exchange for disobeying God?
- After Balaam refused to come to Moab, Balak sent a second group of men, more impressive than the first, to try to persuade him. What did Balak offer Balaam? (See Numbers 22:15–17.) How did Balaam respond? (See Numbers 22:18–19.) Why do you think he wanted to ask the Lord again? (Balaam may have hoped the Lord would change his mind and allow him to get the rewards offered by Balak.) What are the dangers of seeking exceptions to God's commandments and counsel?
- The Lord gave Balaam permission to go with Balak's messengers if he wanted to. But then the Lord was angry with Balaam for going (Numbers 22:20–22). What does the Lord's anger suggest about what was in Balaam's heart? (See 2 Peter 2:15; Isaiah 29:13.)

### 2. The Lord shows the danger of Balaam's stubborn insistence on his own will.

Teach and discuss Numbers 22:22–35.

- On his way to Moab, Balaam tried three times to force his donkey forward (Numbers 22:22–30). In what way was this like Balaam's relationship with the Lord? (Balaam wanted to force his own will on the donkey and on the Lord. You may also want to point out that the donkey saw the angel, but Balaam did not. Similarly, the Lord saw many things that Balaam did not see.)
- What are some modern parallels of individuals and groups stubbornly trying to do what they want rather than submitting to God's will or to the righteous counsel of parents or leaders?

You may want to discuss some of the following examples:

- a. A child, unhappy with an answer from one parent, goes to the other parent, hoping for a different answer.
- b. A member of the Church, unsatisfied with the counsel of a priesthood leader, goes to another priesthood leader.

- c. A member of the Church rationalizes that a commandment doesn't apply to him or her as it does to other members.
- The Lord chastened Balaam through the angel and the donkey. How did Balaam respond to the chastening words of the angel? (See Numbers 22:31–35.) Why does God chasten his children? (See D&C 95:1.) How can God's chastening be a blessing to us?

### 3. Balaam refuses to curse Israel.

Teach and discuss Numbers 22:36–24:25.

- After Balaam arrived in Moab, Balak asked him three times to curse Israel. Each time the Lord told Balaam to bless Israel, and Balaam obeyed. What strengths did Balaam show in this account? (See Numbers 22:38; 23:8, 19–20; 24:1, 12–13.) What weakness was still evident in Balaam? (See Numbers 22:41; 23:1–3, 13–15, 27–30. Although Balaam refused Balak's requests to curse Israel, he was willing to follow Balak from place to place and listen to his requests even though he knew they were wrong.) What are the dangers of listening to unrighteous suggestions (from friends or the media, for example) when we know they are wrong?

### 4. The Israelites destroy the Midianites and slay Balaam.

Teach and discuss Numbers 31:1–16.

- Why did the Israelites go to war against the Midianites? (See Numbers 31:1–3; the Lord was angry with the Midianites for enticing the Israelites to sin, as recorded in Numbers 25:1–3.) Who counseled the Midianites to tempt the children of Israel to participate in idol worship and immorality? (See Numbers 31:16.) Why did Balaam give this counsel? (Although Balaam obeyed the Lord's commands to bless rather than curse Israel, in his heart he wanted earthly honors and rewards. To receive these rewards, he suggested tempting Israel to sin, causing them to lose God's protection.) What happened to Balaam during the Israelites' battle with the Midianites? (See Numbers 31:8.)
- Three writers in the New Testament referred to Balaam (2 Peter 2:15–16; Jude 1:11; Revelation 2:14). What are their impressions of him?
- What lessons can we learn from this story? (Members of the Church who seek earthly rewards and honors, who seek exceptions to God's counsel and commandments, or who try to introduce worldly ideas, practices, or standards into the Church are following Balaam's unrighteous example. This is called the "doctrine of Balaam" in Revelation 2:14.)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said:

"What a story this is! Here is a prophet of God who is firmly committed to declare only what the Lord of heaven directs. There does not seem to be the slightest doubt in his mind about the course he should pursue. He represents the Lord, and neither a house full of gold and silver nor high honors offered by the king can sway him from his determined course. . . .

"But greed for wealth and lust for honor beckon him. How marvelous it would be [for him] to be rich and powerful. . . . Perhaps the Lord would let

him compromise his standards and have some worldly prosperity and power. . . . I wonder how often some of us get our direction from the Church and then, Balaam-like, plead for some worldly rewards. . . .

“Balaam, . . . inspired and mighty as he once was, lost his soul in the end because he set his heart on the things of this world rather than the riches of eternity” (“The Story of a Prophet’s Madness,” *New Era*, Apr. 1972, 7).

- Refer back to the statements in the attention activity. Point out that although Balaam appeared to be strictly obedient, the desires of his heart were to receive earthly rewards and honors. What does this story teach about the importance of keeping the desires of our hearts pure? How can we keep the desires of our hearts pure?

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## Conclusion

Testify that if Balaam had humbly submitted to God’s will, much sin and suffering would have been avoided for himself and for Israel. Encourage class members to be steadfast rather than stubborn—to seek and follow the Lord’s will without trying to get around it or change it.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. Obeying the Lord

We can learn from Balaam the importance of obeying the Lord. We can also learn this from the good examples of many other men and women in the scriptures. You may want to refer to the following examples:

- a. The Savior, aware of the agony before him in Gethsemane and on the cross, “kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:41–42).
- b. When Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his son Isaac, he “rose up early in the morning” to begin the journey to Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:3).
- c. When Mary was told that she would be the mother of the Son of God, she responded, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38).
- d. When Nephi was instructed to return to Jerusalem to get the brass plates from Laban, he immediately responded, “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded” (1 Nephi 3:7).
- e. The sons of Helaman were successful in battle because “they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness” (Alma 57:21).

### 2. “The Lord hath kept thee back from honour” (Numbers 24:11)

- When Balaam refused to curse Israel and receive Balak’s rewards and honor, Balak told him, “The Lord hath kept thee back from honour” (Numbers 24:11). How does following the Lord sometimes keep us from receiving earthly rewards and honors? What does the Lord promise instead of earthly rewards? (See D&C 81:6.)

# “Beware Lest Thou Forget”

## Lesson 17

*Deuteronomy 6; 8; 11; 32*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to (1) remember the Lord and the covenants they have made with him and (2) create an environment that will help them do so.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. Deuteronomy 6:1–9; 11:18–21. Moses gives instructions to the Israelites to help them remember their covenants. He instructs parents to teach their children his words.
  - b. Deuteronomy 6:10–12; 8:1–20. Moses reminds the Israelites of God’s blessings to them. He warns them that they will perish if they do not obey God’s commandments and remember Him.
  - c. Deuteronomy 32:1–4, 15–18, 30–40, 45–47. Moses counsels the Israelites to be mindful of the Rock of their salvation (Jesus Christ).
2. Additional reading: Deuteronomy 4; 7:1–4; 13:1–8; 34.
3. If you use the first attention activity, bring objects from your home as described under “Attention Activity.”

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### Suggested Lesson Development

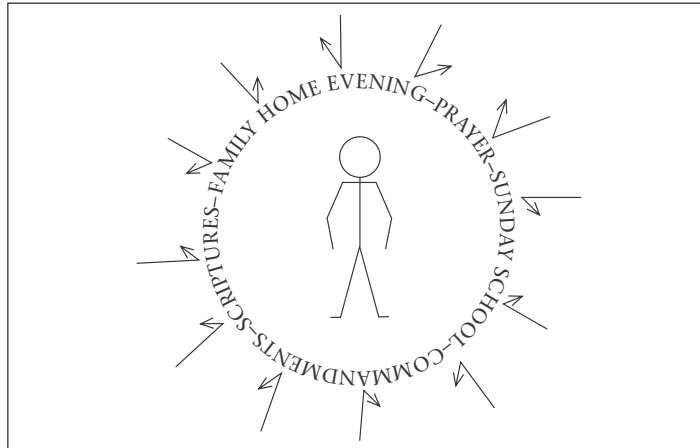
**Attention Activity** You may want to use one of the following activities (or one of your own) to begin the lesson. Select the activity that would be most appropriate for the class.

1. Display objects from your home that remind you of the Lord and the covenants you have made with him. (Such objects could include scriptures, pictures, books, and musical recordings.) Tell class members why these objects are important to you. Explain that part of this lesson is about physical objects that the ancient Israelites used to remind themselves of the Lord and their covenants with him. Point out that physical objects can be powerful reminders for us also.

2. Write the following words on the chalkboard:

*Deceive, beguile, snare, cheat, devour, entice, tempt, lull, rage, blind, lie, flatter, destroy*

- What do these words have in common? (One common characteristic is that they all describe Satan’s tactics in his efforts to draw us away from the Lord.)
- Have a class member read D&C 76:28–29. Explain that these verses are from a vision given to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon. What can we do to be protected from Satan’s influence? (You may want to use the following diagram to illustrate some of the things we can do to shield ourselves from Satan’s temptations.)



Explain that in the book of Deuteronomy, Moses taught the Israelites how to create an environment that would help them resist Satan’s temptations. This lesson reviews Moses’ counsel and discusses how we can apply it today.

**Scripture Discussion and Application**

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

After testing, chastening, and teaching the Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years, the Lord said they were ready to enter the promised land. But first he had some important instructions for them. Moses delivered these instructions in three sermons that are recorded in Deuteronomy.

In these sermons Moses reviewed Israel’s 40-year sojourn in the wilderness, recognizing God’s hand in their deliverance. Moses also discussed Israel’s responsibilities as God’s chosen people. He emphasized that they must obey God’s commandments, particularly the commands to remember Him and refrain from idol worship. Moses warned that although the children of Israel were ready to enter the promised land, if they returned to wickedness they would lose their inheritance and be scattered.

**1. Moses gives instructions to the Israelites to help them remember their covenants.**

Teach and discuss Deuteronomy 6:1–9 and 11:18–21.

- Deuteronomy contains Moses’ last words to the Israelites. If you were to give one last message to your family and friends, what would it be?
- What did the Lord command the Israelites to do in Deuteronomy 6:5–7? How can we get the words of the scriptures into our hearts? How can parents effectively teach the gospel to their children and help them learn to love the scriptures?
- What did Moses counsel the Israelites to do in Deuteronomy 6:8–9 and 11:18–20? (Note that frontlets were “strips of parchment on which were written four passages of scripture . . . and which were rolled up and attached to bands of leather worn . . . around the forehead or around the arm” [Bible Dictionary, “Frontlets,” 676]).

- Why do you think Moses told the people to place passages of scripture between their eyes, on their hands, on the posts of their houses, and on their gates? How would such constant reminders affect our actions? What can we do in our homes to remind us of the Lord, his words, and our covenants with him? Do the pictures on our walls, the books we read, and the movies and television shows we watch remind us of the Lord, or do they suggest a longing for the world?

President Ezra Taft Benson said that people who are “captained by Christ will be consumed in Christ. . . . Enter their homes, and the pictures on their walls, the books on their shelves, the music in the air, their words and acts reveal them as Christians” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 6–7).

## 2. Moses counsels the Israelites to obey God’s commandments and remember Him.

Teach and discuss Deuteronomy 6:10–12 and 8:1–20.

- What are Moses’ main messages in Deuteronomy 6:10–12 and 8:1–20? What does it mean to forget the Lord? (See Deuteronomy 8:11.) What are the consequences of forgetting him? (See Deuteronomy 8:19.) How can we be sure that we do not forget God?
- What conditions or challenges did Moses name that might cause people to forget God? (See Deuteronomy 6:10–12; 8:10–20.) Why do some people forget the Lord after he blesses them abundantly? (See Deuteronomy 8:17.)

President Brigham Young said: “The worst fear that I have about [members of this Church] is that they will get rich in this country, forget God and his people, wax fat, and kick themselves out of the Church and go to hell. This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution, and be true. But my greater fear for them is that they cannot stand wealth; and yet they have to be tried with riches, for they will become the richest people on this earth” (in Preston Nibley, *Brigham Young: The Man and His Work* [1936], 128).

- Who is the source of any prosperity that we may have? (See Deuteronomy 8:18.) How can we use our prosperity to further the Lord’s work? (See Deuteronomy 8:18; Jacob 2:18–19.)

## 3. Moses counsels the Israelites to be mindful of the Rock of their salvation (Jesus Christ).

Teach and discuss Deuteronomy 32:1–4, 15–18, 30–40, 45–47.

- Who is the Rock spoken of in Deuteronomy 32:3–4? (Jesus Christ; see also verses 15, 18, and 30–31.) Why do you think Jesus Christ is sometimes called the Rock? (See Helaman 5:12.)
- Moses declared that “their rock” (the false gods of the wicked) “is not as our Rock” (Deuteronomy 32:31). How is “their rock” different from “our Rock”? (See Deuteronomy 32:37–40.)
- What does it mean to build upon the Rock? (See Deuteronomy 32:46–47; Matthew 7:24–27; D&C 50:44.) How can we do this? (See Deuteronomy 18:18–19, which, in prophesying of the coming of Christ, tells of the need to hearken to his words.)



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## Conclusion

Bear your testimony of the Savior and express your gratitude for the covenants you have made with him. Emphasize the importance of remembering God and keeping the covenants we make with him. Testify that the things we place around us—such as pictures, books, and music—can be powerful reminders of the Lord and the covenants we have made with him. Point out that our purpose in surrounding ourselves with these things is the same as the ancient Israelites' purpose in wearing frontlets: to help us build upon the Rock—to help us remember and follow the Lord.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. “Write them upon the posts of thy house” (Deuteronomy 6:9)

Invite class members to list the paintings, posters, musical recordings, and other objects in their homes. Have them label each item with either a “+” (indicating that the object is likely to lead them to remember the Lord) or a “-” (indicating that it is more likely to lead their hearts away from the Lord). You may want to suggest that class members do this with their families during family home evening.

### 2. “He will not forsake thee” (Deuteronomy 4:31)

- After prophesying that the Israelites will turn to the worship of other gods and be scattered (Deuteronomy 4:25–28), Moses offered words of hope. What did he promise those who seek the Lord with all their hearts? (See Deuteronomy 4:29–31; Isaiah 49:14–16.) How has this promise been fulfilled in your life? What must we do to seek the Lord with all our heart and soul?

### 3. Withstanding the negative influences of others

- What danger did Moses warn against in Deuteronomy 13:6–8? How can we recognize when someone is trying to pull us away from the Lord? How should we respond to such a person?

### 4. “They shall not appear before the Lord empty” (Deuteronomy 16:16)

- The place mentioned in Deuteronomy 16:2, 11, and 16 is the tabernacle, which was a portable temple for the Israelites. In preparation for a feast at the tabernacle, Moses instructed the people not to “appear before the Lord empty” (Deuteronomy 16:16). How might this apply to our temple attendance? How can we prepare ourselves for temple attendance so we do not enter the temple “empty”? How would this preparation help us to “rejoice before the Lord” in the temple? (Deuteronomy 16:11).
- President Howard W. Hunter counseled: “Let us be a temple-attending people. Attend the temple as frequently as personal circumstances allow. Keep a picture of a temple in your home that your children may see it” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 8; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 8). Why is it important for us to go to the temple as frequently as possible? Why is it important to keep a picture of a temple in our home?

**5. “No man knoweth of his sepulchre” (Deuteronomy 34:6)**

The writer who finished the book of Deuteronomy knew only that Moses was gone and so assumed that he had died, that the Lord had buried him, and that no one knew where his grave was. However, we know that Moses was translated. (For an explanation of the state of translated beings, see 3 Nephi 28:7–9, 37–40.) The Bible Dictionary gives the following explanation of Moses’ translation:

“As was the case with many of the ancient prophets, Moses’ ministry extended beyond the limits of his own mortal lifetime. In company with Elijah, he came to the Mount of Transfiguration and bestowed keys of the priesthood upon Peter, James, and John (Matthew 17:3–4; Mark 9:4–9; Luke 9:30; D&C 63:21; *History of the Church*, 3:387). From this event, which occurred before the resurrection of Jesus, we understand that Moses was a translated being and had not died as reported in Deuteronomy 34 (Alma 45:19). It was necessary that he be translated, in order to have a body of flesh and bones at the time of the transfiguration, since the resurrection had not yet taken place. Had he been a spirit only, he could not have performed the work on the mount of giving the keys to the mortal Peter, James, and John (cf. D&C 129)” (Bible Dictionary, “Moses,” 735).

Lesson  
**18**

# “Be Strong and of a Good Courage”

*Joshua 1–6; 23–24*

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**Purpose** To encourage each class member to be strong and courageous in living the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. Joshua 1. The Lord calls Joshua to succeed Moses and commands him to be strong, have courage, study the scriptures, and keep the commandments. Joshua prepares the Israelites to possess the land that the Lord has promised them.
  - b. Joshua 3–4; 6. The Israelites cross the Jordan River on dry ground and place 12 stones as a memorial of their crossing. Through the Israelites’ faith, Jericho is destroyed.
  - c. Joshua 23; 24:14–31. Joshua and his people covenant to serve the Lord.
2. Additional reading: Joshua 7; 14.
3. Ask a class member to prepare to relate the account of the battle of Jericho as if he or she were an eyewitness (Joshua 6). Ask one or two other class members to prepare to share an experience that reminds them of God’s power and love.
4. If you use the attention activity, obtain a sheet of paper, tape or a rubber band, and a book. If you use the questions on traps and snares, you may want to bring a small trap, such as a mousetrap, to illustrate the discussion.

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## Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Explain that this lesson is about Joshua, the prophet who led the children of Israel in their conquest of the promised land. When calling Joshua to be a prophet, the Lord counseled him to “be strong and of a good courage” (Joshua 1:6). Write this phrase on the chalkboard. Display a sheet of paper and a book. Ask a class member to stand the paper on its edge and try to balance the book on top of it.

After the class member has tried this, explain that there is a way to make the paper strong enough to support the book. Roll the paper into a tube and secure it with a rubber band or tape. Stand the tube on end on a flat surface. Carefully place the book on top. (You may want to practice this before class.)

Explain that Joshua became strong as he allowed God to shape his character. Similarly, as we allow God to shape our character, we can become strong and accomplish the things the Lord wants us to do.

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As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

During the Israelites' 40-year sojourn in the wilderness, Moses had given them God's law, acted as God's spokesman, and served as their guide. He was the only leader an entire generation of Israelites had known. But the Lord took him at the end of their sojourn—just when they faced a great test. Remembering his promises to Israel, the Lord raised up a new leader, Joshua, who ably directed the conquest and settlement of the promised land.

### **1. The Lord calls Joshua.**

Teach and discuss Joshua 1.

- What challenges do you think Joshua faced when the Lord called him to succeed Moses in leading the Israelites? (He was to lead Israel in the conquest and settlement of Canaan, which was a mighty undertaking. He was also taking the place of a great leader.) What assurance did the Lord give Joshua as Joshua prepared to enter the promised land? (See Joshua 1:5.) How can this assurance help us in new callings or challenges? How has the Lord helped you in such circumstances?
- What command did the Lord repeat three times in Joshua 1:6–9? What did the Lord say Joshua would need courage and strength to do? (See Joshua 1:7. Point out that although Joshua would need courage to fight many military battles, he would also need moral courage—the courage to do what is right.) What challenges do we face today that require strength and moral courage? What examples of moral courage have you observed?
- What did the Lord tell Joshua to do to “have good success”? (See Joshua 1:8. Explain that the book of the law is the scriptures.) Why do you think scripture study would have been important for Joshua to succeed in his calling? How does regular scripture study help us?

### **2. The Israelites cross the Jordan River on dry ground; through their faith, Jericho is destroyed.**

Teach and discuss Joshua 3–4 and 6.

- When the Israelites needed to cross the Jordan River, its banks were overflowing. How did the Lord show the children of Israel that he was with Joshua just as he had been with Moses? (See Joshua 3:7–8, 14–17; 4:14. If necessary, explain that the ark of the covenant was a portable altar that contained sacred writings, including Moses' writings and the tablets containing the Ten Commandments.) How does the Lord show us that he directs and inspires the living prophet as he did past prophets?
- What did the priests who carried the ark have to do before the waters of the Jordan River stopped? (See Joshua 3:13–17. They had to step into the overflowing river while carrying the ark.) How does the Lord sometimes ask similar things of us?

Elder Boyd K. Packer said:

“Shortly after I was called as a General Authority, I went to Elder Harold B. Lee for counsel. He listened very carefully to my problem and suggested that I see President David O. McKay. President McKay counseled me as to the direction I should go. I was very willing to be obedient but saw no way possible for me to do as he counseled me to do.

“I returned to Elder Lee and told him that I saw no way to move in the direction I was counseled to go. He said, ‘The trouble with you is you want to see the end from the beginning.’ I replied that I would like to see at least a step or two ahead. Then came the lesson of a lifetime: ‘You must learn to walk to the edge of the light, and then a few steps into the darkness; then the light will appear and show the way before you’ ” (“The Edge of the Light,” *BYU Today*, Mar. 1991, 22–23).

- Why did Israel set up a memorial of 12 stones after crossing the Jordan River? (See Joshua 4:1–9. It was to be a testimony of the Lord’s power to future generations, reminding them that the Lord would bless them just as he had their fathers.) What personal memorials remind you of God’s power in your life? (Answers could include the sacrament; pictures of Christ, temples, and prophets; the scriptures; and spiritual experiences recorded in journals.) How can these memorials bless the lives of others? (See Joshua 4:21–24.)

Testify that the Lord will answer prayers, give blessings, give revelation, and perform wonderful works for each new generation. Ask the previously assigned class members to share experiences that remind them of God’s power and love.

- Ask the previously assigned class member to describe the fall of Jericho as if he or she were an eyewitness (Joshua 6). What caused the walls of Jericho to fall? (See Hebrews 11:30.) Why was the Israelites’ behavior an act of faith?
- Who were the only inhabitants of Jericho who were saved? (See Joshua 6:17, 22–25; see also Joshua 2:1–15.) What can we learn from the saving of Rahab and her family?

### **3. Joshua and his people covenant to serve the Lord.**

Teach and discuss Joshua 23 and 24:14–31.

- Toward the end of his life, Joshua reminded the Israelites what God had done for them. Joshua also counseled them about avoiding traps and snares. If you brought a small trap, demonstrate how it works. If you did not bring a trap, describe how one works. What are some things we must do to avoid being caught in a trap? (We must first recognize that it is a trap and then stay away from it.)
- In his final counsel, Joshua exhorted Israel to “cleave unto the Lord” rather than “cleave unto the remnant of [the Canaanite] nations” (Joshua 23:8, 12. Note that in this instance, the word *cleave* means to glue or join together). How can we “cleave unto the Lord” rather than cleave to the world? How would cleaving to the Canaanite nations be a snare and a trap to the Israelites? What are some of the snares and traps of the world that we face today?

- What important counsel did Joshua give at the end of his life? (See Joshua 24:14–15.) Whom did Joshua and Israel covenant to serve? (See Joshua 24:15–18, 21–25, 31.) Why can't a person serve the true God and worldly gods at the same time?
- Why is it important to choose *today* to serve the Lord? How can we show that we have chosen to serve him?

Elder Marvin J. Ashton said: “Joshua reminds us of the importance of making decisions promptly: ‘Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord’ (Joshua 24:15). Not tomorrow, not when we get ready, not when it is convenient—but ‘this day,’ straightway, choose whom you will serve. He who invites us to follow will always be out in front of us with His Spirit and influence setting the pace. He has charted and marked the course, opened the gates, and shown the way. He has invited us to come unto Him, and the best time to enjoy His companionship is straightway. We can best get on the course and stay on the course by doing as Jesus did—make a total commitment to do the will of His Father” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1983, 41; or *Ensign*, May 1983, 30–31).

## Conclusion

Joshua's final counsel to the Israelites included the same charge that the Lord had given when calling him to be a prophet—to be strong and to have courage (Joshua 23:1–6). The charge applies as much today as it did then because we are all engaged in the important spiritual battle between good and evil.

Elder Ezra Taft Benson said that two principles are essential for security and peace: “First, trust in God; and second, a determination to keep the commandments, to serve the Lord, to do that which is right. . . . The Lord has made it very clear in the revelations that even though times become perilous, even though we be surrounded by temptation and sin, even though there be a feeling of insecurity, even though men's hearts may fail them and anxiety fill their souls, if we only trust in God and keep his commandments we need have no fear” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1950, 146).

## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. Taking the place of a successful leader

- Many people, such as Joshua and Brigham Young, have been called to take the place of great leaders. What might have been some of their challenges? What do you think helped them be successful? What can we do to help us be successful when we come after someone who has excelled, whether at work, church, school, or home?

### 2. The consequences of an individual's sins on other people

- Teach the account of Achan in Joshua 7. Because of Achan's disobedience, the Israelites were defeated by the people of Ai (Joshua 7:1–5). What had Achan done to cause this? (See Joshua 7:20–21. He had brought the Lord's disapproval on Israel by disobeying him in taking clothing and money from Jericho.)

- What do the effects of Achan’s sin suggest about how our individual sins can affect other people? What is the fallacy in thinking that what we do is our own business and will not hurt anyone else? (You may want to use examples of how one person’s actions can affect others: An accident caused by a drunken driver can affect the lives of the innocent people who are injured. A person who disrupts a Sunday School class makes it difficult for others to concentrate and feel the Spirit. A person who commits sexual sins or does not live the Word of Wisdom brings pain and suffering to others. A spouse who is unfaithful can break up a family and cause great pain to innocent family members. Individual Church members who do not follow the Lord may hold back the Church as a whole from receiving the Lord’s blessings.)

Elder James E. Faust said: “Private choices are not private; they all have public consequences. . . . Our society is the sum total of what millions of individuals do in their private lives. That sum total of private behavior has worldwide public consequences of enormous magnitude. There are no completely private choices” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 101; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 80).

### 3. Caleb receives the land of Hebron

- Joshua 14 recounts how Caleb received the land of Hebron from Joshua. Why did Caleb receive the land of Hebron? (See Joshua 14:6–14. Note that the phrase “wholly followed the Lord” is repeated in verses 8, 9, and 14.)

President Spencer W. Kimball stated his admiration for Caleb and suggested some lessons we can learn from him:

“From Caleb’s example we learn very important lessons. Just as Caleb had to struggle and remain true and faithful to gain his inheritance, so we must remember that, while the Lord has promised us a place in his kingdom, we must ever strive constantly and faithfully so as to be worthy to receive the reward.

“Caleb concluded his moving declaration with a request and a challenge with which my heart finds full sympathy. The Anakims, the giants, were still inhabiting the promised land, and they had to be overcome. Said Caleb, now at 85 years, ‘Give me this mountain’ (Joshua 14:12).

“This is my feeling for the work at this moment. There are great challenges ahead of us, giant opportunities to be met. I welcome that exciting prospect and feel to say to the Lord, humbly, ‘Give me this mountain,’ give me these challenges” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 115; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 79).

### 4. “Choose You This Day Whom Ye Will Serve”

If *Old Testament Video Presentations* (53224) is available, you may want to show “Choose You This Day Whom Ye Will Serve,” a six-minute segment about the testing of an Arabian stallion’s obedience in a time of hunger and thirst.

# The Reign of the Judges

## Lesson 19

*Judges 2; 4; 6–7; 13–16*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to seek influences that will strengthen them in living the gospel in a challenging world.

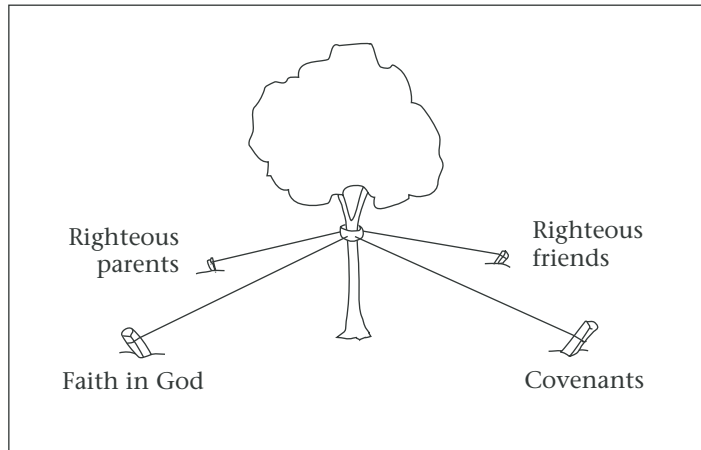
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- Preparation**
1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
    - a. Judges 2:6–23. The cycle of apostasy begins as the rising generation of the children of Israel forsake the Lord to serve the gods of the people around them.
    - b. Judges 4:1–16. Barak is commanded to free Israel from Jabin, king of Canaan (4:1–7). He agrees to go if Deborah will go with him (4:8–9). Deborah and Barak deliver Israel from the Canaanites (4:10–16).
    - c. Judges 6–7. Gideon is commanded to deliver Israel from the Midianites (6:1–24). He and 10 other men destroy Baal’s altar at night (6:25–35). The Lord assures Gideon of help by granting him two signs (6:36–40). Gideon and 300 other men deliver Israel from the Midianites (7:1–25).
    - d. Judges 13–16. An angel instructs Samson’s parents to raise him as a Nazarite (13:1–25). Samson performs great feats of strength but breaks many of his Nazarite vows (14–15). Samson gives in to Delilah’s enticing; his hair is cut, and he becomes weak, is captured by the Philistines, and dies while pulling down their temple (16:1–31).
  2. Additional reading: “Judges, The” and “Judges, Book of,” Bible Dictionary, pages 719–20.
  3. You may want to ask class members to prepare to summarize one or more of the scripture accounts in this lesson.
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### Suggested Lesson Development

- Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.
- President Gordon B. Hinckley told of a time when he planted a young tree in his yard but neglected to use supporting stakes to help it grow straight. In time, the wind caused the tree to lean badly to one side. President Hinckley realized that if he had tied the tree to stakes, it would have been supported until it was strong enough to resist the wind on its own. (In Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 77–78; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 59.)
- Explain that we may sometimes be like that young tree, unable to withstand the wind (the temptations of Satan) on our own. In the book of Judges we learn about some of the “stakes” that can support us. Draw on the chalkboard a young tree tied to four supporting stakes. As you progress through the four scripture accounts in the lesson, label each stake as follows:





## Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

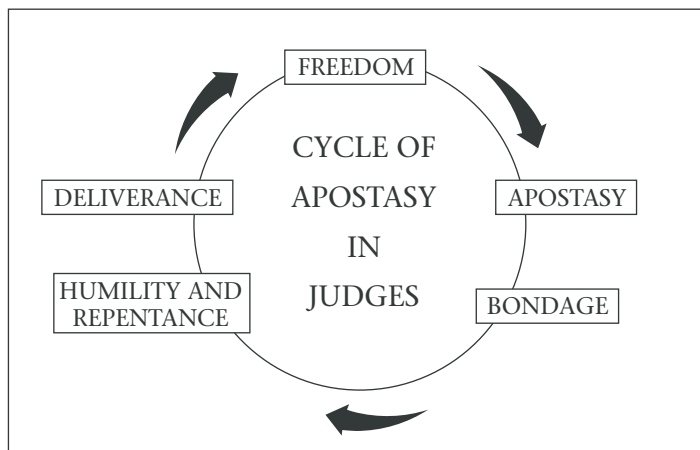
Led by Joshua, the Israelites conquered much of the promised land. After Joshua died, Israel was not united under a single leader until the days of the prophet Samuel and King Saul. During this interval, 12 judges served as Israel's rulers and military leaders. Most of their reign was tragic as Israel went through the cycle of apostasy, bondage, repentance, and delivery many times.

Offsetting the tragic parts of this history are stories of people who remained true, setting powerful examples of how to exercise faith and courage in an apostate world. Deborah and Gideon were both righteous judges whom the Lord raised up to deliver Israel. Deborah's faith was largely responsible for delivering Israel from a Canaanite army. Gideon's reliance on the Lord allowed his 300-man army to miraculously defeat the Midianites.

### 1. The strength of righteous parents and the consequences of forsaking their ways

Teach and discuss Judges 2:6–23.

- In the book of Judges, the children of Israel experienced several cycles of righteousness and apostasy (see the "Cycle of Apostasy in Judges" diagram on page 89). How did the rising generation of Israelites begin the cycle of apostasy? (See especially Judges 2:10, 12, 17, 20, and 22. Suggest that class members mark key words in these verses. Point out that the children of Israel left God and left the ways and the covenants of their parents.)
- Why do children sometimes forsake the righteous teachings and ways of their parents? How can parents help their children be faithful? How have your parents or other family members strengthened you in righteous living?
- How can we recognize the early signs of apostasy? How can an individual break the cycle of apostasy? How might we appropriately help a family member or friend who seems to be falling away from the truth?



## 2. Deborah—the strength of a righteous friend

Briefly review the story of Deborah and Barak from Judges 4:1–16, or have an assigned class member do so.

- What did the Lord command Barak to do? (See Judges 4:6–7.) How did Barak feel about this assignment? On what condition was Barak willing to go to battle against Sisera and his 900 chariots? (See Judges 4:8.) Why do you think Barak was willing to face Sisera if Deborah would go with him?
- What impresses you about Deborah? What qualities did she have that Barak may not have had? (See Judges 4:4–9, 14.)
- What can we learn from Deborah about being a true friend? (One thing we can learn is that true friends inspire us to obey the Lord and give us the strength to do what is right.) How have your friends helped you face difficult challenges or obey the Lord’s commandments? How can we be better friends to others?

Suggest that class members write down the names of their friends and ask themselves (1) if they are like Deborah to these friends and (2) if these friends are like Deborah.

## 3. Gideon—the strength of faith in God

Briefly review the story of Gideon from Judges 6–7, or have an assigned class member do so.

- What did the Lord command Gideon to do? (See Judges 6:14.) What was Gideon’s first response? (See Judges 6:15.)
- How did the Lord assure Gideon that He had commanded him to deliver Israel and that He would be with him and help him? (See Judges 6:16–23, 36–40; 7:9–15.)
- When Gideon believed that the Lord had truly commanded him to deliver Israel, he went forward with faith. Why did the Lord want Gideon’s army of 32,000 men reduced to 300 to fight the Midianites? (See Judges 7:2. The Lord wanted the Israelites to trust him and recognize his power, not their power.) How does the Lord teach us to trust him and recognize his power today?

- What happened when Gideon and his 300 men faced the Midianites? (See Judges 7:16–23.) Why do you think Gideon had his men shout, “The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon”? (See Judges 7:20. Gideon knew—and wanted his men to know—that the Lord was with them.)
- What can we learn from Gideon? How has the Lord helped you do something that he asked you to do that was difficult? (As class members share experiences, testify that when the Lord commands us to do something, he will help us accomplish it.)

#### **4. Samson—the strength of covenants and the consequences of breaking them**

Briefly review the story of Samson from Judges 13–16, or have an assigned class member do so.

- How did Samson’s mother, who was barren, learn that she would have a son? (See Judges 13:2–3.) What did the angel tell Samson’s mother about the son she would bear? (See Judges 13:4–5. Explain that Nazarites made covenants with the Lord to separate themselves from the things of the world and become holy unto him. The Nazarite vow is set forth in Numbers 6:2–6, 8.)
- What blessings did the Lord give Samson to help him fulfill his mission to deliver Israel from the Philistines? (See Judges 13:24–25; 14:5–6, 19; 15:14–15. The Lord gave him spiritual and physical strength.)
- As a Nazarite and a member of the house of Israel, Samson made covenants with the Lord. However, he soon broke his Nazarite vow and his covenants as a member of the house of Israel. What vows and covenants did he break? (Some of the covenants Samson broke are listed below.)
  - a. He married outside the covenant house of Israel (Judges 14:1–3).
  - b. He was immoral with a harlot (Judges 16:1).
  - c. He had his hair cut (Judges 16:4–20).
- What were the consequences of Samson’s violation of his covenants? (See Judges 16:17–21. He lost his spiritual and physical strength, and the Philistines blinded him and bound him. If necessary, explain that Samson’s hair was not the source of his physical strength. Rather, his hair was a sign of his covenant with the Lord, and when his hair was cut, the Lord took away his physical strength because the covenant was broken.) What happens when we violate our covenants? What signs do we have of our covenants with the Lord?
- The covenants we make with the Lord should be a source of strength, guidance, and commitment. What covenants do we make with the Lord? How have these covenants strengthened you? (One way covenants strengthen us is by helping us resist Satan’s efforts to blind or bind us.)
- Samson had great potential. The angel who announced his birth said he would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. The Lord blessed him with many gifts, including great physical strength. What inner weaknesses caused his downfall? (See Judges 15:7; 16:1; D&C 3:4. Answers may include self-indulgence, immorality, seeking revenge, and violating covenants.) How can we overcome weaknesses that may hinder us from fulfilling our potential?

**Conclusion**

Explain that in the book of Joshua the Israelites fought and won many physical battles against the Canaanites. However, in the book of Judges the Israelites began to lose spiritual battles, letting themselves be influenced by the Canaanites' worldly practices and false gods. We face similar spiritual battles. Testify that we can succeed in these battles as we (1) follow the ways of righteous parents and ancestors, (2) make good friends, (3) increase our faith in the Lord, and (4) keep our covenants.

**Additional Teaching Ideas**

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

**1. Parents' contribution to their children's worldliness (Judges 1:28)**

- The failure of the rising generation of Israelites to remain faithful was not entirely their own fault. According to Judges 1:21, 27–33, and 2:1–4, how was the foundation for the children's failure laid? (It was laid by the parents' failure to drive out the Canaanites. Even though the parents were strong enough to resist the influences of the world around them, their children were not.)
- How do some parents today expose their children to worldly influences, making the same error as the parents of the "rising generation" of Israelites? (Encourage specific answers.)

**2. Miracles in our day**

- Why do some people feel, like Gideon, that the Lord worked more miracles in previous generations than he does in theirs? (See Judges 6:13.) What is our role in the working of miracles? (See Moroni 7:35–38.) How do you know that God continues to work miracles today? How can we better recognize the quiet miracles in our lives?

**3. "Lest Israel vaunt themselves against me" (Judges 7:2)**

- Why did the Lord command Gideon to send most of his troops home before facing the Midianites? (See Judges 7:2.) How do some of us today "vaunt [our]selves"? (Instead of recognizing that our blessings and strength come from the Lord, some of us claim to have earned all that we have through our own efforts.) How can we overcome this problem?

**4. Resisting temptation**

- Why, after Samson knew that Delilah had tried three times to betray him, did he tell her the secret of his strength? (See Judges 16:15–17.) Contrast Samson's responses to Delilah with Joseph's responses to Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:7–12). How can we resist or overcome persistent temptations?

Lesson  
**20**

# “All the City . . . Doth Know That Thou Art a Virtuous Woman”

*Ruth; 1 Samuel 1*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to emulate the righteous qualities of Ruth, Naomi, and Hannah.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. Ruth 1–2. After her husband dies, Ruth leaves her home to go to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law, Naomi. In Bethlehem, Ruth works in the fields of Boaz, who treats her kindly.
  - b. Ruth 3–4. Ruth lies at the feet of Boaz, and he promises to marry her. They marry and have a child. Their descendants include King David and Jesus Christ.
  - c. 1 Samuel 1; 2:1–2, 20–21. Hannah is blessed with a son, whom she lends to the Lord as she promised. She is later blessed with more children.
2. If you use the attention activity, bring a piece of paper and a pen or pencil for each class member.
3. If *Old Testament Video Presentations* (53224) is available, you may want to show “Hannah’s Faith,” a three-minute segment, as part of the lesson.

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## Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Give each class member a piece of paper and a pen or pencil.

Explain that although the book of Ruth is brief, it shows clearly that Ruth was a righteous woman. Then ask the following questions and have each class member write the answers on his or her piece of paper:

- If your character were to be described in just a few words, what would you want those words to be? What is one thing you can do this week to come closer to matching that desired description?

Explain that this lesson will discuss the righteous qualities of Ruth and two other women, Naomi and Hannah.

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**Scripture Discussion and Application** As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

## 1. Ruth leaves her home to go to Bethlehem with Naomi.

Teach and discuss Ruth 1–2.

- Why did Naomi and her family go to Moab to live? (See Ruth 1:1–2.) Why did Naomi return to Bethlehem after the deaths of her husband and sons? (See Ruth 1:6. Bethlehem was her home, and the famine there was over.)
- While living in Moab, Naomi’s sons had married Orpah and Ruth, who were women of Moab (Ruth 1:4). How did Naomi show love and concern for her daughters-in-law when they offered to return to Bethlehem with her? (See Ruth 1:7–13.) What can we learn from Naomi’s concern for her daughters-in-law that can help us in our family relationships?
- One of Naomi’s daughters-in-law, Orpah, returned to her family, but the other, Ruth, insisted on going to Bethlehem with Naomi. What can we learn about Ruth from her promise to Naomi in Ruth 1:16–17? (She was loving, loyal, and willing to sacrifice.) How can we show greater loyalty in our families? How can we show greater selflessness, as Ruth did?
- What did Ruth give up by going to Bethlehem with Naomi? (Answers may include her homeland, family, friends, and religion.) What did Ruth gain by going with Naomi? (The gospel of Jesus Christ; see the first additional teaching idea.) What can we learn from Ruth about making sacrifices for the gospel?
- After going to Bethlehem, what did Ruth do to provide food for herself and Naomi? (See Ruth 2:2. You may need to explain that a gleaner was a person who was allowed to gather and keep the grain that was left in the fields after the harvest.) Whose fields did Ruth glean in? (See Ruth 2:1, 3.) Why was Boaz impressed by Ruth? (See Ruth 2:5–7, 11. Boaz saw that Ruth was a hard worker. He also knew of all that Ruth had done for Naomi.) How did Boaz show kindness to Ruth? (See Ruth 2:8–9, 14–16.)
- How did Ruth show her selflessness when she returned from gleaning? (See Ruth 2:14, 17–18. Ruth brought the grain that she had gleaned home to Naomi, and she also brought Naomi some food she had saved from her noon meal.) How have you been blessed by other people’s selfless acts?

## 2. Ruth and Boaz marry and have a child.

Teach and discuss Ruth 3–4.

- Naomi counseled Ruth to perform a ritual that she hoped would result in the marriage of Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 3:1–5). By lying at the feet of Boaz, Ruth would be, in effect, proposing marriage to him. What did Ruth’s obedience to Naomi’s counsel reveal about her feelings toward Naomi?
- How did Boaz respond when he woke up and found Ruth lying at his feet? (See Ruth 3:8–15. Note that when Ruth said, “Spread . . . thy skirt over thine handmaid,” she meant “guard me, protect me, care for me.”) Under what condition did Boaz agree to marry Ruth? (See Ruth 3:11–13. Explain that when Ruth’s husband died, his nearest male relative was supposed to marry Ruth. Boaz was not the nearest male relative, but he agreed to marry Ruth if the nearest male relative did not wish to do so.)

- What was Ruth’s reputation among the people of Bethlehem? (See Ruth 3:11.) How did this reputation benefit her in her relationship with Boaz? Why is it important that our family members, friends, and neighbors know what we believe in and what values we strive to uphold?
- What did Boaz do after promising to marry Ruth? (See Ruth 3:15; 4:1–8.) How did Boaz show that he was a man of integrity? (See Ruth 4:9–10, 13. He carried out his promise to Ruth and honored his social obligation to her late husband.)
- What famous king of Israel was a descendant of Ruth and Boaz? (King David was one of their great-grandsons; see Ruth 4:17, 21–22.) Who else was a descendant of Ruth and Boaz? (Jesus Christ; see Matthew 1:5–16; John 7:42.)
- Elder Thomas S. Monson called Ruth a heroine (in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, 156; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 108). In what ways do you think Ruth is a heroine? (Elder Monson said Ruth is an example of fidelity and loyalty. Class members may suggest additional ways Ruth is a heroine.)

### **3. Hannah is blessed with a son, whom she lends to the Lord as she promised.**

Teach and discuss 1 Samuel 1.

- Hannah, wife of Elkanah, was childless. Each year at the temple she wept and prayed for a son (1 Samuel 1:1–7). What promise did Hannah make to the Lord in 1 Samuel 1:11? What can we learn about Hannah from this promise? (She was a woman of great faith; class members may suggest additional answers.)
- Who witnessed Hannah praying in the temple? (See 1 Samuel 1:9–12.) What did Eli tell Hannah about her promise to the Lord? (See 1 Samuel 1:17.) How did Hannah feel after hearing Eli’s words? (See 1 Samuel 1:18.) How can Church leaders help us when we are troubled?
- Hannah told Eli that she had “poured out [her] soul before the Lord” (1 Samuel 1:15). How can we make our personal prayers more sincere and meaningful?
- What happened in response to Hannah’s promise to the Lord? (See 1 Samuel 1:19–20.) How did Hannah keep her promise after Samuel was born? (See 1 Samuel 1:21–28.) What promises do we make to the Lord? (Answers may include the covenants we make with him at baptism and in the temple.) What can we learn from Hannah to help us be diligent in keeping these promises?
- How do you think Hannah felt about giving Samuel to the service of the Lord? What does the Lord ask us to give him? What should be our attitude about giving to him? (We should give willingly, remembering that everything we have comes from the Lord.)
- When Hannah brought Samuel to the temple, she made offerings and sang praises to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:24–25, 28; 2:1–2). Why is it important to remember to thank the Lord for the blessings he gives us?
- Hannah waited many years before being blessed with children (1 Samuel 1:2; 2:21). What other Biblical characters were blessed for patiently waiting on the Lord? What does the world say regarding when we should receive the things

we want? What does the Lord say? How can we learn to wait patiently for blessings that will come in the Lord's time?

## Conclusion

- What righteous qualities have been exemplified by Ruth, Naomi, and Hannah? (List these qualities on the chalkboard.)

Encourage class members to emulate the righteous qualities demonstrated by Ruth, Naomi, and Hannah. Testify that developing these qualities will bring us closer to our Savior, Jesus Christ.

## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. Acceptance of converted Gentiles into the covenant of Abraham

Explain that Ruth was not an Israelite by birth. When she left Moab to go to Bethlehem with Naomi, she also left her religion and followed the God of Israel, telling Naomi, "Thy God [shall be] my God" (Ruth 1:16). By marrying Boaz, Ruth became part of the royal line of Israel, an ancestor of King David and Jesus Christ.

- How does Ruth's conversion and acceptance into the house of Israel reflect Christ's attitude toward those who wish to join his Church? (See 2 Nephi 26:33; Alma 19:36; 3 Nephi 21:6.) How can we help new converts feel welcome in the Church?

### 2. Judging appropriately

- As Eli the priest watched Hannah praying in the temple, he misjudged her, thinking "she had been drunken" (1 Samuel 1:13). What are the dangers of judging people solely on the basis of appearance? How can we avoid this kind of judgment?
- President Hugh B. Brown said, "If I make errors [in judging people,] I want them to be on the side of mercy" (in Eugene E. Campbell and Richard D. Poll, *Hugh B. Brown: His Life and Thought* [1975], 225). How can we apply this principle?

### 3. Resolving worries and troubles by going to the temple

- Where did Hannah make her promise to the Lord? (See 1 Samuel 1:9–11.) How can going to the temple help us with our worries and troubles?

Elder John A. Widtsoe said: "I believe that the busy person . . . who has his worries and troubles, can solve his problems better and more quickly in the house of the Lord than anywhere else. If he will [do] the temple work for himself and for his dead, he will confer a mighty blessing upon those who have gone before, and . . . a blessing will come to him, for at the most unexpected moments, in or out of the temple will come to him, as a revelation, the solution of the problems that vex his life. That is the gift that comes to those who enter the temple properly" (quoted by David B. Haight, in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 76; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 61).



Lesson  
**21**

# God Will Honor Those Who Honor Him

*1 Samuel 2–3; 8*

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**Purpose** To help class members understand the blessings of honoring and pleasing the Lord above themselves, others, or the world.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - 1 Samuel 2:12–17, 22–25. The sons of Eli commit transgressions and are counseled by their father.
  - 1 Samuel 2:27–36; 3:12–14. A man of God warns Eli about the consequences of the wickedness in his family.
  - 1 Samuel 3. The Lord calls Samuel, and he responds.
  - 1 Samuel 8. The Israelites want a king so they can be “like all the nations.” Samuel warns them about the dangers of such a choice.
2. You may want to ask one class member to prepare to summarize the account of the calling of Samuel (1 Samuel 3) and another class member to prepare to summarize the account of Israel desiring a king (1 Samuel 8).
3. If you decide to discuss the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth* (34285) in this lesson, bring a copy of it to class.
4. If you use the attention activity, bring a picture of the Savior (62572; Gospel Art Picture Kit 240). If you prefer not to sketch the drawings on the chalkboard, bring a mirror, an object to represent other people, and a map, globe, or other object to represent the world.
5. If the picture *Boy Samuel Called by the Lord* is available, you may want to use it during the lesson (62498; Gospel Art Picture Kit 111).

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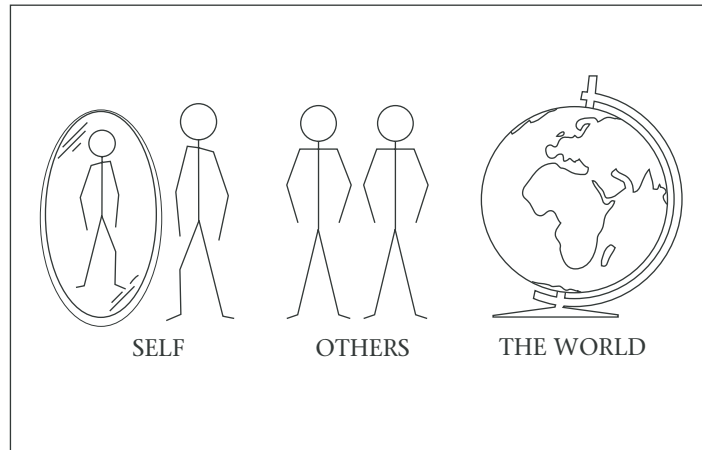
**Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Before class, display and cover a picture of the Savior. Sketch the three figures on page 97 on the chalkboard and cover them (or display and cover the three objects listed under “Preparation”). Explain that each hidden item has something to do with whom we honor and whom we try to please.

- According to 1 Samuel 2:30, whom will the Lord honor?

Tell class members that this lesson will discuss the blessings that come from honoring the Lord. Explain that you will uncover the hidden items at appropriate times during the lesson.



Scripture Discussion  
and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

**1. The sons of Eli honor themselves above the Lord.**

Teach and discuss 1 Samuel 2:12–17, 22–25.

Hophni and Phinehas were sons of Eli, the high priest, and were priests themselves. However, they were wicked. When Israelites came to offer sacrifices at the tabernacle, Hophni and Phinehas forcibly took the flesh of the sacrificial animals before the fat portions had been burned on the altar. They also took some of the flesh that the offerer was boiling for the sacrificial meal (1 Samuel 2:12–17). These were serious transgressions of God’s laws, equivalent to robbing God. Eli’s sons also committed the extremely serious sin of seducing women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle (1 Samuel 2:22).

- What effect did the actions of Eli’s sons have on other people in Israel? (See 1 Samuel 2:17, 24.)
- What do the actions of Eli’s sons suggest about whom they chose to honor? (Uncover the first sketch or an actual mirror.) In what areas of our lives do we sometimes honor and please ourselves rather than the Lord? Class members may suggest areas such as the following:
  - a. Entertainment
  - b. Sabbath observance
  - c. Dating and morality
  - d. Fasting
  - e. Church callings
- Why do you think we sometimes choose to please ourselves rather than God? What are the consequences of honoring ourselves more than God?

**2. Eli honors his sons above the Lord.**

Teach and discuss 1 Samuel 2:27–36; 3:12–14.

- What responsibility did Eli have when he learned of the wickedness of his sons? What did he do? (See 1 Samuel 2:22–25.) What was their response? (See 1 Samuel 2:25.)
- After reprimanding his sons, Eli did nothing further to correct the terrible sins in his family and at the tabernacle. As a result, a man of God came and chastised him, telling him that he honored his sons more than God (1 Samuel 2:27–29). In what way had Eli honored his sons more than God? What did the man of God say would happen to the house of Eli? (See 1 Samuel 2:30–35.)
- In what ways do we sometimes honor other people more than God? (Uncover the second sketch or the object representing other people.) Class members may suggest ways such as the following:
  - a. We allow our peers to persuade us to do something we know is wrong.
  - b. We act dishonestly because we are afraid of what other people might think of us.
  - c. We fail to correct family members or friends in their wrongdoing because we want to maintain good relations with them.

President Joseph F. Smith taught: “There should [not] be any of us so unwisely indulgent, so thoughtless and so shallow in our affection for our children that we dare not check them in a wayward course, in wrong-doing and in their foolish love for the things of the world more than for the things of righteousness, for fear of offending them” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 286).

- How can parents fulfill their responsibility toward wayward children in a spirit of love? What is the responsibility of children as their parents strive to lead them in righteousness?

### 3. Samuel honors the Lord.

Teach and discuss 1 Samuel 3. You may want to have an assigned class member briefly summarize this chapter. Remind class members that the boy Samuel was serving in the temple after his mother, Hannah, had given him to the Lord’s service, as she had promised (1 Samuel 1).

- Who spoke to Samuel in the night? (See 1 Samuel 3:4.) Whom did Samuel first think was calling him? (See 1 Samuel 3:5–6, 8). How did Samuel learn it was the Lord calling? (See 1 Samuel 3:8–9.)
- How does the Lord communicate with us? (He communicates most often through the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. Class members may suggest additional ways he communicates with us.) How can we prepare ourselves to receive and understand communications from the Lord?
- In what ways did Samuel honor the Lord? (Uncover the picture of the Lord.) You may want to consider the following passages in your discussion:

“I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind” (1 Samuel 2:35).

“The Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I” (1 Samuel 3:4).

“Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth” (1 Samuel 3:10).

- The Lord promised to honor those who honored him (1 Samuel 2:30). How did the Lord honor Samuel? (See 1 Samuel 3:19.) How do you think the Lord will honor us if we honor him as Samuel did?

#### 4. The Israelites honor the world.

Teach and discuss 1 Samuel 8. You may want to have an assigned class member briefly summarize this chapter.

- What type of government did Israel have during Samuel's ministry? (See 1 Samuel 8:1. The Israelites were governed by judges.) Whom was Israel supposed to regard as their king? (See 1 Samuel 12:12.)
- Why did the children of Israel want a king? (See 1 Samuel 8:5, 20.) In asking for a king "like all the nations," whom did Israel reject? (See 1 Samuel 8:7.) What did the Lord instruct Samuel to say about the problems of having a king? (See 1 Samuel 8:9–18.) What was the response of the Israelites to Samuel's warnings? (See 1 Samuel 8:19–22.)
- In asking for a king, whom did the Israelites honor? (Uncover the third sketch or the object representing the world.)
- In what ways do we sometimes desire to be "like all the nations"? (See 1 Samuel 8:5.)

You may want to use the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth* (34285) to discuss the standards the Lord has set for us so we will not participate in the wicked ways of the world. Explain that these standards apply to adults as well as youth.

- The Lord Jesus Christ is our true king, just as he was the true king of the Israelites (Psalm 47:7; 89:18; 149:2). How should this knowledge affect our attitudes toward the ways of the world? How do we sometimes reject the Lord as our king?

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#### Conclusion

Call attention to the four items that have been displayed during class. Explain that all of us must choose each day whom we will honor. Bear testimony of the blessings and joy you have received as you have honored the Lord. Invite class members to share their own experiences or testimonies.

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#### Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

##### 1. Value of the things we choose

- Sometimes we exchange things of great value for things of lesser value. What did Eli and his sons give up because of their choices? What things did Samuel tell the Israelites they would give up if they wanted a king? (See 1 Samuel 8:11–17.) What things of great value do we sometimes give up for things of lesser value?

## 2. “Whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies”

President Thomas S. Monson made the following statement to show how the Lord honors those who honor Him:

“Some of you may be shy by nature or consider yourselves inadequate to respond affirmatively to a calling. Remember that this work is not yours and mine alone. It is the Lord’s work, and when we are on the Lord’s errand, we are entitled to the Lord’s help. Remember that whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 62; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 44).

Then President Monson told the following story:

“Should we feel [an] assignment too arduous or time-consuming, let me share with you the experience of a faithful home teacher and his companion in what was then East Germany.

“Brother Johann Denndorfer had been converted to the Church in Germany, and following World War II he found himself virtually a prisoner in his own land—the land of Hungary in the city of Debrecen. How he wanted to visit the temple! How he desired to receive his spiritual blessings! Request after request to journey to the temple in Switzerland had been denied, and he almost despaired. Then his home teacher visited. Brother Walter Krause went from the northeastern portion of Germany all the way to Hungary. He had said to his home teaching companion, ‘Would you like to go home teaching with me this week?’

“His companion said, ‘When will we leave?’

“‘Tomorrow,’ replied Brother Krause.

“‘When will we come back?’ asked the companion.

“‘Oh, in about a week—if we get back then!’

“And away they went to visit Brother Denndorfer. He had not had home teachers since before the war. Now, when he saw the servants of the Lord, he was overwhelmed. He did not shake hands with them; rather, he went to his bedroom and took from a secret hiding place his tithing that he had saved from the day he became a member of the Church and returned to Hungary. He presented the tithing to his home teachers and said: ‘Now I am current with the Lord. Now I feel worthy to shake the hands of servants of the Lord!’

“Brother Krause asked him about his desire to attend the temple in Switzerland. Brother Denndorfer said: ‘It’s no use. I have tried and tried. The government has even confiscated my Church books, my greatest treasure.’

“Brother Krause, a patriarch, provided Brother Denndorfer with a patriarchal blessing. At the conclusion of the blessing, he said to Brother Denndorfer, ‘Approach the government again about going to Switzerland.’ And Brother Denndorfer submitted the request once again to the authorities. This time approval came, and with joy Brother Denndorfer went to the Swiss Temple and stayed a month. He received his own endowment, his deceased wife was sealed to him, and he was able to accomplish the work for hundreds of his ancestors. He returned to his home renewed in body and in spirit” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 64–65; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 45–46).

# “The Lord Looketh on the Heart”

## Lesson 22

1 Samuel 9–11; 13; 15–17

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to trust in the Lord rather than their own understanding.

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- Preparation**
1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
    - 1 Samuel 9–11. Saul seeks guidance from the prophet Samuel (9:1–14, 18–24). The Lord reveals to Samuel that Saul is to be king (9:15–17). Samuel counsels Saul and anoints him as Israel’s first king (9:25–27; 10:1–8). Saul is spiritually reborn, and he prophesies (10:9–13). Samuel presents Saul to the people (10:17–27). Saul leads Israel to victory in a battle with the Ammonites (11:1–11). He refuses to punish the men who had doubted his ability to lead the people (11:12–15).
    - 1 Samuel 13:1–14. Saul offers a burnt offering without the proper authority.
    - 1 Samuel 15. Saul is commanded to destroy the Amalekites and all their possessions, but he saves some of their animals for a sacrifice (15:1–9). The Lord rejects Saul as king, and Samuel tells Saul that obedience is better than sacrifice (15:10–35).
    - 1 Samuel 16. The Lord chooses David, a young shepherd boy, to succeed Saul as king (16:1–13). The Holy Spirit departs from Saul, and an evil spirit takes possession of him (16:14–16; note that the Joseph Smith Translation corrects these verses to show that the evil spirit was *not* from God). Saul chooses David to play the harp for him and to be his armor bearer (16:17–23).
    - 1 Samuel 17. David slays Goliath in the strength of the Lord.
  2. Additional reading: 1 Samuel 12; 14.
  3. You may want to ask one class member to prepare to summarize the account of the Lord choosing David as king (1 Samuel 16:1–13) and another class member to prepare to summarize the account of David slaying Goliath (1 Samuel 17:1–54).
  4. If you use either of the attention activities, write the following scripture on the chalkboard or on a poster: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5–6). If you use the first attention activity, select a word from the Bible Dictionary that may be unfamiliar to class members, such as *diaspora*, *hyssop*, or *laver*. Write this word on the chalkboard or on a poster.
  5. If the following audiovisual materials are available, you may want to use them as part of the lesson:
    - “The Lord . . . Will Deliver Me,” a four-minute segment about David from *Old Testament Video Presentations* (53224).
    - The picture David Slays Goliath (62073; Gospel Art Picture Kit 112).

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## Suggested Lesson Development

Attention Activity You may want to use one of the following activities (or one of your own) to begin the lesson. Select the activity that would be most appropriate for the class.

1. Refer class members to the unfamiliar word you have written on the chalkboard or on a poster (see “Preparation” above). Ask class members to guess at the definition of the word. After a few guesses, have class members look up the correct definition in the Bible Dictionary.

Explain that guessing at the definition of an unfamiliar word is like making decisions based only on our own understanding. Display the text of Proverbs 3:5–6. Emphasize that just as we turned to a trusted source to learn the correct definition of the word, we need to trust the Lord and seek his will to make correct decisions in our lives. This lesson contrasts the experiences of two men, Saul and David, to teach the importance of trusting the Lord and seeking his guidance when we make decisions.

2. Ask class members to tell about some of the important decisions they have made recently. Ask what helped them to make those decisions.

Display the text of Proverbs 3:5–6 (you may want to have class members memorize this scripture). Explain that this lesson contrasts the experiences of two men, Saul and David, to teach the importance of trusting the Lord and seeking his guidance when we make decisions.

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Scripture Discussion and Application As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles. Because it would be difficult to ask every question or cover every point in the lesson, prayerfully select those that will best meet class members’ needs. If you want to focus on David and Goliath, for example, you could spend less time discussing Saul’s life.

### 1. Saul seeks guidance from Samuel and is anointed to be king.

Teach and discuss 1 Samuel 9–11.

- The Israelites wanted a king like those of the nations around them. Yielding to the Israelites’ request, the Lord told Samuel to anoint Saul as Israel’s first king. Saul was “a choice young man, . . . and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he” (1 Samuel 9:2). What did Saul do before he was anointed king and shortly thereafter that demonstrated his good qualities?
  - a. He was diligent in his search for his father’s donkeys (1 Samuel 9:3–4).
  - b. He was willing to listen to and follow the wise counsel of his father’s servant (1 Samuel 9:5–10).
  - c. He trusted the prophet Samuel and communed with him (1 Samuel 9:18–25).
  - d. He was humble (1 Samuel 9:20–21).
  - e. He was spiritually reborn, and he prophesied (1 Samuel 10:6–10).
  - f. He forgave his critics (1 Samuel 11:11–13).
  - g. He recognized the help of the Lord in Israel’s victory over the Ammonites (1 Samuel 11:13).

## 2. Saul offers a burnt offering without the proper authority.

Teach and discuss 1 Samuel 13:1–14.

- Two years after Saul was anointed king, the Philistines gathered a mighty army to fight against Israel. Saul's men were so afraid that many of them hid and scattered. Why did Saul want the prophet Samuel to come to him at this time? (See 1 Samuel 13:7–8. Saul wanted Samuel to offer sacrifices to the Lord in behalf of the people.) What did Saul do when Samuel did not come at the appointed time? (See 1 Samuel 13:9. Saul offered the sacrifices himself even though he did not have the priesthood authority to do so.)

Elder James E. Talmage wrote, “Saul prepared the burnt offering himself, forgetting that though he occupied the throne, wore the crown, and bore the scepter, [he had] no right to officiate . . . in the Priesthood of God; and for this and other instances of his unrighteous presumption he was rejected of God and another was made king in his place” (*The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. [1924], 185).

- What was Samuel's response to Saul's offering an unauthorized sacrifice? (See 1 Samuel 13:10–14.)
- What did Saul's offering an unauthorized sacrifice reveal about him? (He was no longer “a man after [the Lord's] own heart” [1 Samuel 13:14]. He had grown impatient, failed to trust the Lord, and disobeyed. In addition, his presuming the authority to offer sacrifice suggests that he had an exaggerated opinion of his own power and importance.) In what ways are we sometimes impatient with the Lord or his servants? What may be the consequences of such impatience? How can we come to trust the Lord fully?

## 3. Saul disobeys the Lord in the battle with the Amalekites and is rejected as king.

Teach and discuss 1 Samuel 15.

- What did the Lord command Saul to do to the Amalekites? (See 1 Samuel 15:1–3.) What did Saul do instead? (See 1 Samuel 15:4–9.) What did Saul's actions reveal about him? (See 1 Samuel 15:11. He followed his own judgment rather than doing the Lord's will.)
- How did Saul try to justify his disobedience in saving the best of the Amalekites' animals? (See 1 Samuel 15:13–15, 20–21, 24. He blamed his people for wanting to save the animals.) According to Saul, why did his people want to save the best of the Amalekites' animals? (See 1 Samuel 15:15, 21.) In what ways do we sometimes try to justify disobeying the Lord? (We might tell ourselves, “It's just a little sin,” “I'm obeying the spirit of the law rather than the letter of the law,” “It won't hurt anyone,” “I'll try it just once,” “Other people are doing it,” or “That commandment doesn't apply to me.”) How can we overcome the tendency to excuse or justify sin?
- How did Samuel respond to Saul's explanation for saving the Amalekites' animals? (See 1 Samuel 15:22.) How can Samuel's words apply to us?
- When reprimanding Saul for being stubborn and rejecting the word of the Lord, Samuel told him, “Stubbornness is as . . . idolatry” (1 Samuel 15:23). How is stubbornness like idolatry? What was the result of Saul's becoming



stubborn and rebellious? (See 1 Samuel 15:23, 26, 28.) How are we sometimes stubborn and rebellious? What are the results of our being stubborn and rebellious? How can we recognize and overcome these attitudes?

#### **4. The Lord chooses David as king.**

Teach and discuss 1 Samuel 16. You may want to have an assigned class member briefly summarize this account. Explain that although Samuel anointed David to be king, David did not become king until Saul died many years later.

- What did Samuel learn while trying to determine which of Jesse's sons should be the next king? (See 1 Samuel 16:6–7.) How did the Lord's method of choosing David compare with the way He chooses leaders today? What does 1 Samuel 16:7 teach about how the Lord evaluates us? What does the Lord look for in our hearts?

Elder Marvin J. Ashton said:

"We . . . tend to evaluate others on the basis of physical, outward appearance: their 'good looks,' their social status, their family pedigrees, their degrees, or their economic situations.

"The Lord, however, has a different standard by which he measures a person. . . . He does not take a tape measure around the person's head to determine his mental capacity, nor his chest to determine his manliness, but He measures the heart as an indicator of the person's capacity and potential to bless others" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 17; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 15).

- Why is it important that in our relationships with others, we see beyond the outward appearance and look on the heart? How can we improve our ability and commitment to do this?
- Because Saul had been disobedient, the Spirit of the Lord departed from him (1 Samuel 16:14). How did Saul seek relief from the evil spirit that came upon him? (See 1 Samuel 16:15–23.) What outside sources do people today sometimes turn to as they try to find relief from their sins? What is the Lord's way for us to find relief from our sins? (See Matthew 11:28–30; D&C 58:42.)
- What characteristics did David have that qualified him to be a leader? (See 1 Samuel 16:18.)

#### **5. David slays Goliath in the strength of the Lord.**

Teach and discuss 1 Samuel 17. You may want to have an assigned class member briefly summarize this account.

- What could the Israelites gain or lose in the fight with Goliath? (See 1 Samuel 17:8–9.) Why were Saul and his army afraid to fight Goliath? (See 1 Samuel 17:4–11. They did not think they could defeat Goliath because of his size, strength, armor, and weapons.)
- How did David get the courage to fight Goliath? (See 1 Samuel 17:32–37, 45–47. David recognized that the Lord had delivered him from a lion and a bear while tending his father's sheep, and he trusted the Lord to help him fight Goliath.)
- What did Goliath say when he saw David come to fight him? (See 1 Samuel 17:42–44.) What did David say in response? (See 1 Samuel 17:45–47.) How can remembering David's response help us when people mock or threaten us?

- As a youth, David's victories over a lion and a bear helped prepare him to face the greater challenge of Goliath. What challenges might we face now that prepare us for greater challenges? How do our responses to these challenges affect our ability to battle the Goliaths that may come later? Testify that as we defeat the lions and bears in our lives, we will develop the confidence, character, and faith to defeat our Goliaths.
- What Goliaths do we encounter today? What can we learn from David about how to overcome them? (See 1 Samuel 17:45; Ephesians 6:11–18.) How has the Lord helped you overcome Goliaths that you have encountered?

President Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“There are Goliaths all around you, hulking giants with evil intent to destroy you. These are not nine-foot-tall men, but they are men and institutions that control attractive but evil things that may challenge and weaken and destroy you. 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 drugs of various kinds which, I am told, are relatively easy to obtain in many high schools. For those who peddle them, this is a multimillion-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 designed to take your money and lead you toward activities that would destroy you.

“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. Insofar as you are concerned, you can hit them ‘between the eyes,’ to use a figurative expression. You can triumph over them by disciplining yourselves 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. . . . You have His power within you to sustain you. You have the right to ministering angels about you to protect you. Do not let Goliath frighten you. Stand your ground and hold your place, and you will be triumphant” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1983, 66; or *Ensign*, May 1983, 46, 51).

## Conclusion

Encourage class members to trust and obey the Lord. Promise that by doing so they will grow stronger and have the Lord's assurance that he will help them triumph over personal Goliaths. Remind class members that the Lord looks upon our hearts, not upon our wealth or position or conformity to popular standards.

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**Additional  
Teaching Ideas**

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

**1. Rationalizing sin**

The following quotation from Elder Spencer W. Kimball may be helpful as you discuss Saul's disobedience with regard to the Amalekites:

"Saul rationalized. It was easy for him to obey as to the disposition of the kings, for what use were conquered kings? But why not keep the fat sheep and cattle? Was not his royal judgment superior to that of lowly Samuel? . . .

"How like Saul are many in Israel today. One will live some of the Lord's revelation on health except that he must have his occasional cup of coffee; she will not use tobacco nor liquor for which she has no yearning anyway but must have the comforting cup of tea.

"He will serve in a Church position, for here is activity which he likes and honor which he craves, . . . but rationalization is easy as to tithing which he finds so difficult. He cannot afford it. . . . He is not sure it is always distributed as he would have it done, and who knows anyway of his failure?

"Another will attend some meetings but Saul-like rationalize as to the rest of the day. Why should he not see a ball game, a show, do his necessary yard work, or carry on business as usual?

"Another would religiously attend his outward Church duties but resist any suggestions as to family frictions in his home or family prayers when the family is so hard to assemble.

"Saul was like that. He could do the expedient things but could find alibis as to the things which countered his own desires" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1954, 51).

**2. Defeating our Goliaths**

Cut a piece of string 9½ feet (3 meters) long, the approximate height of Goliath. Take the string, some tape, several sheets of paper, and a marker to class. Fasten the string vertically to the wall with one piece of tape at the top and one at the bottom (if the wall is not tall enough, run the last part of the string onto the floor). Tell class members that the string represents Goliath. Ask class members to name things that could be dangers to them (answers may include pride, pornography, jealousy, and drugs). Write each danger on a piece of paper and tape each piece of paper to the wall and the string, covering the string from top to bottom.

Explain that we need weapons to defeat Goliath. Ask class members to name weapons that can defeat Goliath (answers may include trusting the Lord, praying, studying the scriptures, learning the truth, being morally pure, and choosing good friends). As class members mention each weapon, remove a paper. Begin at the top of the string, removing the paper and tape holding the string to the wall. Allow the string to fall to the next paper. After all the papers and tape have been removed, the string will fall to the floor and Goliath will be defeated.

# “The Lord Be Between Thee and Me For Ever”

## Lesson 23

1 Samuel 18–20; 23–24

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to be true to their friends, as Jonathan and David were, and avoid being consumed by jealousy and hatred, as Saul was.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - 1 Samuel 18:1–16. Jonathan and David make a covenant of friendship (18:1–4). David is honored by the Israelites for his success in battle (18:5–7). Saul becomes jealous of David and tries to kill him with a javelin (18:8–16; note that the Joseph Smith Translation of 1 Samuel 18:10 indicates that the evil spirit that came upon Saul was *not* from God).
  - 1 Samuel 18:17–30; 19:1–18. David fights the Philistines in exchange for the right to marry Saul’s daughter, unaware that Saul is hoping David will die on the battlefield (18:17–25). David triumphs over the Philistines and marries Saul’s daughter Michal (18:26–28). Jonathan tells David to hide and tries to convince Saul not to kill him (19:1–7). Saul fails in another attempt to kill David with a javelin (19:9–10; see footnote 9a). Michal saves David from another of Saul’s attempts on his life (19:11–18).
  - 1 Samuel 20. Jonathan and David renew their covenant of friendship and peace (note that this covenant was not only between Jonathan and David but was also between their households). When Saul again tries to kill David, Jonathan warns David to flee.
  - 1 Samuel 23–24. David continues to fight the Philistines and flee Saul. David finds Saul and spares his life.
2. Additional reading: 1 Samuel 14:1–16; 2 Samuel 1.

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### Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Ask class members the following question:

- What are some of the qualities you look for in a friend? (You may want to write class members’ answers on the chalkboard. Answers may include loyalty, integrity, unselfishness, kindness, and charity.)

Explain that part of this lesson teaches the importance of being a true friend.

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**Scripture Discussion and Application** As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

## 1. Jonathan and David make a covenant of friendship. Saul becomes jealous of David and tries to kill him.

Teach and discuss 1 Samuel 18:1–16.

David quickly became a hero after he killed Goliath. King Saul and the entire kingdom honored him. However, none was as true to David as was Jonathan, Saul's son.

- How did Jonathan and David feel about each other? (1 Samuel 18:1, 3.) Why would it have been easy for Jonathan to feel jealous of David?
  - a. As Saul's son, Jonathan was next in line to be king. However, the prophet Samuel had anointed David to become the next king (1 Samuel 16:6–13).
  - b. While David was greatly honored by the people for his success in battle, Jonathan received little attention for his own success on the battlefield (1 Samuel 14:1–16).
- Why do you think Jonathan was not jealous of David or threatened by him? (1 Samuel 18:1, 3.) How did Jonathan show his support for David? (See 1 Samuel 18:4. He gave his royal robe and weapons to David.)
- How did King Saul feel about David after the slaying of Goliath? (See 1 Samuel 18:2, 5. Saul took David into his home and set him over his armies.) How did David show his loyalty to King Saul? (See 1 Samuel 18:5.) What prompted Saul to turn against David? (See 1 Samuel 18:6–9.) Why is it sometimes difficult to be happy about the success of others? How do jealousy and pride affect our spiritual well-being?

President Ezra Taft Benson said:

“Saul became an enemy to David through pride. He was jealous because the crowds of Israelite women were singing that ‘Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands’ (1 Samuel 18:7; see also 18:6, 8).

“The proud stand more in fear of men’s judgment than of God’s judgment. . . . ‘What will men think of me?’ weighs heavier than ‘What will God think of me?’ . . .

“Fear of men’s judgment manifests itself in competition for men’s approval. The proud love ‘the praise of men more than the praise of God’ (John 12:42–43). Our motives for the things we do are where the sin is manifest. Jesus said He did ‘always those things’ that pleased God (John 8:29). Would we not do well to have the pleasing of God as our motive rather than to try to elevate ourselves above our brother and outdo another?

“Some prideful people are not so concerned as to whether their wages meet their needs as they are that their wages are more than someone else’s. Their reward is being a cut above the rest. . . .

“When pride has a hold on our hearts, we lose our independence of the world and deliver our freedoms to the bondage of men’s judgment. The world shouts louder than the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. The reasoning of men overrides the revelations of God, and the proud let go of the iron rod” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 4–5; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 5).

- How did David act after the Lord blessed him with success on the battlefield? (See 1 Samuel 18:5, 14–16.) What can we learn from his example? What do you think it means to “behave [ourselves] wisely” when we are successful?

## 2. Saul fails in three more attempts to take David’s life.

Teach and discuss 1 Samuel 18:17–30; 19:1–18.

- Saul offered to let David marry one of his daughters if David would fight the Philistines. What was Saul’s real motive in doing this? (See 1 Samuel 18:20–25. He hoped David would be killed by the Philistines.)
- How was Jonathan a true friend when Saul sought to kill David? (See 1 Samuel 19:1–7.) What does it mean to be a true friend? In what ways are your friends true to you? How are you true to your friends?
- Despite Jonathan’s efforts to change Saul’s feelings toward David, Saul continued to seek David’s life (1 Samuel 19:9–10). How did Michal, David’s wife, show that she was true to her husband? (See 1 Samuel 19:11–18.)

## 3. David and Jonathan renew their covenant of friendship, and Jonathan saves David’s life.

Teach and discuss 1 Samuel 20.

- What was David’s reaction to Saul’s hatred and efforts to kill him? (See 1 Samuel 20:1.) How did Jonathan continue to show his friendship while Saul sought David’s life? (See 1 Samuel 20:2–4, 13–17, 23; see also 1 Samuel 20:24–42, which is discussed below.)
- How did faith in God influence the friendship of Jonathan and David? (See 1 Samuel 20:23.) How does our love of God affect our love of others?
- If we place loyalty to God first in our lives, what will we do if our friends do things that are wrong? (We will lovingly try to help our friends change.) What will we do if our friends ask us to do things that are wrong? (We will not do unrighteous things that our friends ask us to do, regardless of the social consequences, and we will try to influence our friends to make righteous choices.)
- How was Jonathan to let David know if it was safe to come back to Saul’s court? (See 1 Samuel 20:5–7, 18–22.) How did King Saul respond to David’s absence and Jonathan’s defense of his friend? (See 1 Samuel 20:24–33.) How did Jonathan warn David to flee from Saul? (See 1 Samuel 20:35–42.)

## 4. Saul is consumed by hatred for David. David spares Saul’s life.

Teach and discuss 1 Samuel 23–24.

- David was blessed with continued success on the battlefield (1 Samuel 23:1–5). Why did David have to leave the city of Keilah after he had saved its people from the Philistines? (See 1 Samuel 23:7–13.)
- When Saul learned that David was in Keilah, he prepared his armies to destroy the entire city (1 Samuel 23:10). What changed Saul from a righteous king to someone who was willing to destroy an entire city in order to kill one person?

Why are jealousy and hatred so consuming? How can we rid ourselves of jealousy or hatred?

- When David was hiding from Saul, Jonathan visited David and “strengthened his hand in God” (1 Samuel 23:16). What do you think this means? How can we strengthen our friends in God?
- During another attempt to find and kill David, Saul stopped to rest in a cave (1 Samuel 24:1–3). What did David’s men say when they found Saul? (See 1 Samuel 24:4.) What did David do? (See 1 Samuel 24:4–5. Note footnote 4a, which explains that David cut off the hem of Saul’s robe—the portion of the robe that symbolized authority.)
- Why did David refuse to harm Saul? (See 1 Samuel 24:6–12.) What does David’s example teach us about revenge and about responding to those who do evil to us? (See 1 Samuel 24:12–15; see also Mormon 8:20.) What did Saul say when David spared his life? (See 1 Samuel 24:16–19.)

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## Conclusion

Point out that the story of Jonathan and David reminds us that true friendship and love bring us closer to our friends and to God. The story of Saul reminds us that jealousy and hatred can consume us and lead us away from our friends and from God. Encourage class members to be true to their friends so they can say to them, “The Lord be between thee and me for ever” (1 Samuel 20:23).

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## Additional Teaching Idea

### Friendship self-evaluation

Use the following activity if you want to emphasize the importance of being a true friend.

Give each class member a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Explain that you are going to ask them a few questions to help them determine if they are true friends. Have class members write their answers down, assuring them that they will not have to share their answers. Then ask the following questions:

1. What was the last kind thing you did for someone?
2. What do you do when you hear someone saying unkind things about another person?
3. What have you done to help your friends be better people?

# “Create in Me a Clean Heart”

## Lesson 24

2 Samuel 11–12; Psalm 51

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to be chaste in thought and action and to repent of their sins.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. 2 Samuel 11. David commits adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah (11:1–5). David fails in his attempt to hide his sin (11:6–13). He arranges for Uriah to die in battle (11:14–17). David marries Bathsheba, and they have a son (11:26–27).
  - b. 2 Samuel 12:1–23. The prophet Nathan teaches of the severity of David’s sins by telling David a parable (12:1–6). David is told that he will be punished because of his sins (12:7–14; note that in the Joseph Smith Translation of verse 13, Nathan states, “The Lord hath *not* put away thy sin that thou shalt not die”). The first son of David and Bathsheba dies in infancy (12:15–23).
  - c. Psalm 51. A repentant David seeks forgiveness.
2. Additional reading: 2 Samuel 2–10.
3. If you use the attention activity, bring a spool of thread and a pair of scissors.

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### Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Have a volunteer stand at the front of the class with his or her hands held forward. Tie a strand of thread loosely around both of the class member’s wrists. Explain that this one thread represents an unclean thought. Then have the class member break the thread by pulling his or her hands sharply outward.

- What should we do when an unclean thought enters our mind? (We should dismiss it immediately.)

Ask the class member to hold out his or her hands again. Wrap the class member’s wrists with a few strands of thread—enough to make it more difficult to break them. Then ask the class member to try to break the strands of thread. Repeat this process using enough strands of thread to make it impossible to break free.

- What happens when we allow unclean thoughts to stay in our minds?

Free the class member’s hands by cutting the thread with the scissors. Explain that part of this lesson deals with the consequences of dwelling on unclean thoughts. The lesson also discusses ways to free ourselves from unclean thoughts.



Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles. Because it would be difficult to ask every question or cover every point in the lesson, prayerfully select those that will best meet class members' needs. You may need to adapt some questions to fit class members' circumstances.

1 Samuel 25 through 2 Samuel 10 provide important information about the historical setting for this lesson. Since these chapters are not covered in this manual, you may want to summarize them as follows:

Soon after David spared Saul's life, Saul sought David's life one more time. Again David had the opportunity to kill the king, but he refused to do so. Battles continued between the people of Judah and the surrounding nations, and Saul and Jonathan were killed in one of those battles. David succeeded Saul as king and became one of the greatest kings in the history of Israel. He united the tribes into one nation, secured possession of the land that had been promised to his people, and set up a government based on God's law. However, the last 20 years of his life were marred by the sinful decisions that are discussed in this lesson.

**1. David commits adultery with Bathsheba and arranges the death of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband.**

Teach and discuss 2 Samuel 11.

- David was walking on his roof when he saw Bathsheba and was tempted to commit adultery with her (2 Samuel 11:2). What should David have done when he saw Bathsheba? What did David do that led him to sin with her? (See 2 Samuel 11:2–4.) What might lead people to be tempted to commit sexual sins? What can we do to avoid being tempted to commit sexual sins?

You may want to list class members' answers on the chalkboard using a chart like the one below. Answers may include the following:

<i>Things to avoid</i>	<i>How to avoid them</i>
Unclean or immoral thoughts	Fill your mind with uplifting thoughts.
Television shows, movies, magazines, books, and music that are pornographic or suggestive in any way	Choose media that will inspire you to do good.
Unwholesome dating activities	Follow the dating standards taught by latter-day prophets and outlined in <i>For the Strength of Youth</i> .
Flirting after marriage	Love your spouse with all your heart. Continue to "court" (develop your relationship with) your spouse.
Places or activities that will not enable you to have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost	Ensure that the places you go and the activities you participate in will enable you to have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost.

You may want to use the first additional teaching idea to discuss ways to dismiss unclean thoughts.

- What did David attempt to do when he learned that Bathsheba was with child? (See 2 Samuel 11:6–13. He tried to get Uriah, Bathsheba’s husband, to return home to her. Then it would appear that the unborn child was Uriah’s.) Why did David’s plan fail? (See 2 Samuel 11:11. Uriah would not return home at that time because he was true to his battlefield companions and felt that he should stay with them.)
- What more serious sin did David commit in an attempt to hide his immorality? (See 2 Samuel 11:14–17.) From whom do you think David thought he could hide his sin? How do people try to cover up sins today? What happens when we try to cover our sins?

Elder Richard G. Scott said:

“Do not take comfort in the fact that your transgressions are not known by others. That is like an ostrich with his head buried in the sand. He sees only darkness and feels comfortably hidden. In reality he is ridiculously conspicuous. Likewise our every act is seen by our Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son. They know everything about us. . . .

“If you have seriously transgressed, you will not find any lasting satisfaction or comfort in what you have done. Excusing transgression with a cover-up may appear to fix the problem, but it does not. The tempter is intent on making public your most embarrassing acts at the most harmful time. Lies weave a pattern that is ever more confining and becomes a trap that Satan will spring to your detriment” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 103; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 77).

You may want to use the second additional teaching idea to illustrate the danger of trying to cover our sins.

## 2. David is told that he will be punished because of his sins.

Teach and discuss 2 Samuel 12:1–23.

- What parable did the prophet Nathan tell to illustrate how displeased the Lord was with David? (See 2 Samuel 12:1–4.) What did David think about the rich man’s actions against the poor man in the parable? (See 2 Samuel 12:5–6.) How had David’s actions been like the rich man’s? (See 2 Samuel 12:7–9.) How did David react to the Lord’s rebuke? (See 2 Samuel 12:13.)
- Why do you think David failed to recognize that he was represented by the rich man in the parable? Why are we sometimes unable to recognize our own sinfulness?
- What were the consequences of David’s sins? (See 2 Samuel 12:10–14. The fulfillment of these prophecies can be found in verses 15–23 and subsequent chapters of 2 Samuel and 1 Kings; see also D&C 132:39. Note that adultery is a serious sin, but David forfeited his exaltation because the Lord held him accountable for the murder of Uriah.)

President Marion G. Romney said: “David, . . . though highly favored of the Lord (he was, in fact, referred to as a man after God’s own heart), yielded to temptation. His unchastity led to murder, and as a consequence, he lost his families and his exaltation” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1979, 60; or *Ensign*, May 1979, 42).

- What are some of the immediate consequences of immorality today? What are some long-term effects for the unrepentant?

### 3. A repentant David seeks forgiveness.

Teach and discuss Psalm 51.

In a psalm to the Lord, David expressed a desire to help others repent, saying, “I [will] teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee” (Psalm 51:13). Even though David forfeited his exaltation because he arranged the death of Uriah, we can learn from his repentant attitude as he sought forgiveness for the sin of adultery. His words in Psalm 51 teach many aspects of true repentance. As you study the psalm with class members, discuss how we can apply David’s repentant example to our lives.

- In Psalm 51, David first acknowledged God and His mercy (Psalm 51:1). David also acknowledged his own sinfulness (Psalm 51:1–3). Why is it important that we recognize God’s greatness and our own sinfulness when we repent of our sins?
- What must we sacrifice in order to receive forgiveness of our sins? (See Psalm 51:16–17.) What do you think it means to have “a broken and a contrite heart”?
- How are our sins “ever before [us]” before we are forgiven? (Psalm 51:3). How does that change after we have been forgiven? (See Psalm 51:10; Alma 36:17–19.) How does God look upon our past sins after he has forgiven us? (See Psalm 51:9; Isaiah 43:25; D&C 58:42.)
- David described forgiveness as a cleansing (Psalm 51:1–2, 7, 9–10), a restoration (Psalm 51:12), and a deliverance (Psalm 51:14). Why are these appropriate descriptions of the blessing of God’s forgiveness?

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#### Conclusion

Explain that no matter how successful or strong we may be, we are not above temptation. Encourage class members to make any necessary changes in their lives that will help them be chaste in thought and action. Express your love for Jesus Christ and your gratitude for his Atonement. Testify that because of the Atonement, we can be forgiven of our sins.

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#### Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

##### 1. Dismissing unclean thoughts from our minds

In your own words, share the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer about how to dismiss unclean thoughts that have entered our minds uninvited:

“The mind is like a stage. Except when we are asleep, the curtain is always up. There is always some act being performed on that stage. It may be a comedy, a tragedy, interesting or dull, good or bad; but always there is some act playing on the stage of the mind.

“Have you noticed that without any real intent on your part, in the middle of almost any performance, a shady little thought may creep in from the wings and attract your attention? These delinquent thoughts will try to upstage everybody. If you permit them to go on, all thoughts of any virtue will leave the stage. You will be left, because you consented to it, to the influence of unrighteous thoughts.

“If you yield to them, they will enact for you on the stage of your mind anything to the limits of your toleration. They may enact a theme of bitterness, jealousy, or hatred. It may be vulgar, immoral, even depraved. When they have the stage, if you let them, they will devise the most clever persuasions to hold your attention. They can make it interesting all right, even convince you that it is innocent—for they are but thoughts.

“What do you do at a time like that, when the stage of your mind is commandeered by the imps of unclean thinking, whether they be the gray ones that seem almost clean or the filthy ones which leave no room for doubt? If you can control your thoughts, you can overcome habits, even degrading personal habits. If you can learn to master them, you will have a happy life.

“This is what I would teach you. Choose from among the sacred music of the Church a favorite hymn, one with words that are uplifting and music that is reverent, one that makes you feel something akin to inspiration. Go over it in your mind carefully. Memorize it. Even though you [may] have had no musical training, you can think through a hymn.

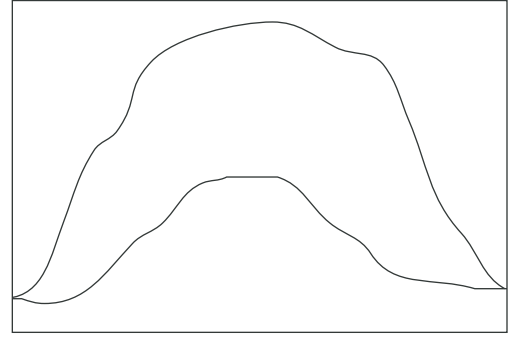
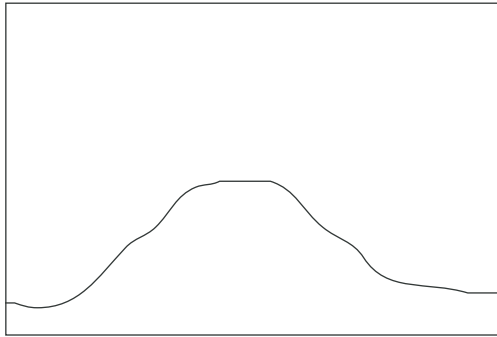
“Now, use this hymn as the place for your thoughts to go. Make it your emergency channel. Whenever you find these shady actors have slipped from the sidelines of your thinking onto the stage of your mind, put on this record, as it were. As the music begins and as the words form in your thoughts, the unworthy ones will slip shamefully away. It will change the whole mood on the stage of your mind. Because it is uplifting and clean, the baser thoughts will disappear. For while virtue, by choice, will not associate with filth, evil cannot tolerate the presence of light.

“In due time you will find yourself, on occasion, humming the music inwardly. As you retrace your thoughts, you discover some influence from the world about you encouraged an unworthy thought to move on stage in your mind, and the music almost automatically began.

“Once you learn to clear the stage of your mind of unworthy thoughts, keep it busy with learning worthwhile things. Change your environment so that you have things about you that will inspire good and uplifting thoughts. Keep busy with things that are righteous” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1976, 99–100).

## **2. The danger of trying to cover our sins**

In trying to hide his sin of adultery, David committed an even greater sin. To discuss the danger of trying to hide our sins, compare sin to a mound of dirt. Illustrate this concept on the chalkboard as shown in the first drawing on page 116.



- What will happen if we try to cover a small mound of dirt? (The mound will become larger and more visible. Illustrate this concept as shown in the second drawing above.)
- How is covering our sins like covering a mound of dirt? (Our sinfulness becomes greater and more serious when we try to cover our sins.)
- If we do not want people to see a mound of dirt, what should we do? (We should remove the mound rather than cover it.) How can we remove sin from our lives?

### 3. “Then Amnon hated her exceedingly” (2 Samuel 13:15)

2 Samuel 13 contains the story of David’s son Amnon and David’s daughter Tamar. Amnon was attracted to Tamar and forced her to commit fornication with him.

- 2 Samuel 13:1 says that Amnon loved Tamar. How did Amnon’s feelings for Tamar change after he had sinned against her? (See 2 Samuel 13:15.) Why does hatred, rather than love, often result between people who violate the principles of morality?

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “I heard Elder John A. Widtsoe . . . say, ‘It is my observation that a young man and a young woman who violate the principles of morality soon end up hating one another.’ I have observed the same thing. There may be words of love to begin with, but there will be words of anger and bitterness later” (“True to the Faith,” *Ensign*, June 1996, 5).

### 4. Hope for the repentant

If you emphasize that it is never too late to repent, you may want to share the following statement by Elder Boyd K. Packer:

“The discouraging idea that a mistake (or even a series of them) makes it everlastingly too late, does not come from the Lord. He has said that *if* we will repent, not only will He forgive us our transgressions, but He will forget them and remember our sins no more. . . . Repentance is like soap; it can wash sin away. Ground-in dirt may take the strong detergent of discipline to get the stains out, but out they will come” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 72; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 59).

# “Let Every Thing That Hath Breath Praise the Lord”

Lesson  
**25**

## *Psalms*

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**Purpose** To help class members show their gratitude for the Savior and for the many blessings that he and our Heavenly Father have given us.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the scriptures discussed in the lesson and as much of the book of Psalms as you can.
2. Study the lesson and prayerfully select the scriptures, themes, and questions that best meet class members' needs. This lesson does not cover the entire book of Psalms. Rather, it deals with a few of the important themes that are expressed throughout the book.
3. If you use the first attention activity, bring a picture of the Savior and four or five items that represent things for which you are grateful, such as the scriptures, a picture of a loved one, an item that represents one of your talents, or an item of food. If you use the second attention activity, ask one or two class members to prepare to share a favorite psalm and tell why it is important to them.
4. Bring one or more pictures of temples.

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## **Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use one of the following activities (or one of your own) as class begins. Select the activity that would be most appropriate for the class.

1. Show a picture of the Savior and express your gratitude for his life and mission. Display the items that represent other things for which you are grateful. Express your gratitude for each one. Then ask the following questions:
  - What gifts and opportunities from the Lord are you especially grateful for? How would your life be different without these blessings?Explain that many of the psalms express gratitude for blessings the Lord has given. Part of this lesson focuses on those blessings and on what we can do to show our gratitude for them.
2. Ask a class member to read Psalm 23 aloud. Then ask the following questions:
  - What feelings are expressed in this psalm? What are your feelings as you read or listen to this psalm?Ask one or two assigned class members to share a favorite psalm and tell why it is important to them.

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As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

Explain that the book of Psalms is a collection of poems originally sung as praises or petitions to God. Many were written by David. This book is like a hymnal from ancient Israel. Its lyrics constitute some of the world's best inspirational literature, expressing faith in the Lord and an earnest desire to live righteously.

### 1. Prophecies of the life and mission of Jesus Christ

Many psalms prophesy of Christ's mission as the Messiah. The resurrected Savior declared, "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44). Discuss the fulfillment of a few of the following prophecies about Christ that are written in the book of Psalms:

<i>Prophecy</i>	<i>Fulfillment</i>
Psalm 107:23–30	Matthew 8:23–27. Jesus calmed the winds and the waves.
Psalm 69:8	John 1:11; 7:5. Jesus was not received by his own people.
Psalm 41:9; 55:12–14	John 13:18, 21. Jesus was betrayed by a friend.
Psalm 69:20	Mark 14:32–41. Jesus suffered alone in Gethsemane.
Psalm 22:7–8	Matthew 27:39–43. Jesus was mocked.
Psalm 22:16	Mark 15:25. Jesus was crucified.
Psalm 22:18	Matthew 27:35. The soldiers cast lots for Christ's clothes.
Psalm 22:1	Matthew 27:46. Jesus asked the Father why he had forsaken him.
Psalm 69:21	John 19:28–30. Jesus was given vinegar for his thirst.
Psalm 34:20	John 19:33–36. None of Jesus' bones was broken.
Psalm 31:5	Luke 23:46. Jesus commended his spirit to the Father and died.
Psalm 16:10	Acts 2:31–32; 13:34–35. The Savior's flesh did not see corruption, being raised up in the Resurrection.

- Jesus Christ is the only person whose birth, life, death, and resurrection were prophesied before his birth. Why do you think such detailed prophecies were given about the Savior's life? (These prophecies made it clear that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Savior of the world.) How were these prophecies a blessing to those who received them? (The prophecies helped people learn of the Savior and gain testimonies of him even before he was born [see Mosiah 3:13]. The prophecies also helped some people recognize him when he came.)

### 2. "The Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee" (Psalm 116:7).

In addition to prophesying of the Savior's life and mission, many psalms express gratitude for blessings such as the creation of heaven and earth; the Savior's mercy, forgiveness, and love; the scriptures; and the temple.

#### *The Creation of Heaven and Earth*

Discuss the following psalms that express gratitude to the Lord for the creation of heaven and earth:

Psalm 19:1  
 Psalm 104:5–7, 14, 24  
 Psalm 136:3–9

- How does the creation of heaven and earth testify of God’s power and love? (See Alma 30:44; Moses 6:63.) How can we show gratitude for the gift of the Creation?

#### *The Savior’s Mercy, Forgiveness, and Love*

Discuss some of the following psalms that express gratitude to the Savior for his mercy, forgiveness, and love:

Psalm 23 (you may not need to discuss this psalm if you used it in the attention activity)

Psalm 51 (you may not need to discuss this psalm if you discussed it in lesson 24)

Psalm 59:16

Psalm 78:38

Psalm 86:5, 13

Psalm 100:4–5

Psalm 103:2–4, 8–11, 17–18

- What can we learn about the Lord from these psalms? Invite class members to tell how they have come to know of the Lord’s mercy, forgiveness, and love.
- What impresses you about David’s plea for forgiveness in Psalm 51? What does this psalm teach us about repentance and forgiveness? (Note the first words in verses 2, 7, and 12. These words describe important aspects of repentance. Note also verse 17, which describes the condition of heart we must have to truly repent.)

#### *The Scriptures*

Discuss the following psalms that express gratitude to the Lord for the scriptures:

Psalm 19:7–11

Psalm 119

- What words did David use in Psalm 19:7–10 to describe the scriptures? (Synonyms for the scriptures include *law, testimony, statutes, commandment, and judgments*. Adjectives describing the scriptures include *perfect, sure, right, pure, true, and righteous*. The scriptures are also described as more desired than gold and sweeter than honey.)
- What blessings can the scriptures bring into our lives, as recorded in Psalm 19:7–11? You may want to list these blessings on the chalkboard:
  - a. They convert our souls (verse 7).
  - b. They make the simple wise (verse 7).
  - c. They cause our hearts to rejoice (verse 8).
  - d. They enlighten our eyes (verse 8).
  - e. They give us warning (verse 11).
- How have the scriptures blessed your life in these or in other ways?



- The Psalmist exclaimed to the Lord, “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97; see also verses 15–16, 33–35, 40, 47–50, 72, 92, 104, 174). How can we develop such a love for the scriptures?
- How are the scriptures like “a lamp unto [our] feet, and a light unto [our] path”? (Psalm 119:105).

### *The Temple*

Discuss some of the following psalms about the temple. You may want to display one or more pictures of temples as class members read these psalms:

Psalm 5:7  
 Psalm 15:1–3  
 Psalm 24  
 Psalm 27:4  
 Psalm 65:4  
 Psalm 84:1–2, 4, 10–12  
 Psalm 122  
 Psalm 134

- What can we learn about the temple from these psalms? What can we learn about preparing ourselves to go to the temple?

You may want to have class members sing or read the words to “We Love Thy House, O God” (*Hymns*, no. 247), or invite some Primary children to come to class and sing “I Love to See the Temple” (*Children’s Songbook*, 95).

### **3. “What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?” (Psalm 116:12)**

- In Psalm 116:12, David asked, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?” How did David answer this question? You may want to list each of David’s statements as shown below:
  - a. “I will take the cup of salvation” (116:13).
  - b. “I will . . . call upon the name of the Lord” (116:13).
  - c. “O Lord, truly I am thy servant” (116:16).
  - d. “I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving” (116:17).
  - e. “I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord’s house” (116:18–19).
- How can we apply David’s answers in showing gratitude to the Lord?

### **4. “Trust in the Lord” (Psalm 4:5)**

- “Trust in the Lord” is one of the most common admonitions in the book of Psalms (Psalms 4:5; 5:11; 9:10; 18:2; 56:11; 62:8; 118:8–9). How do we place our trust in the Lord? How have you been blessed as you have trusted him?

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### Conclusion

The psalms bear powerful witness of the divine mission of Jesus Christ. They also remind us of the great blessings that he and our Heavenly Father have given us. And they suggest ways we can express gratitude for those blessings.

You may want to invite class members to read the final Psalm (Psalm 150) to summarize the message of the book of Psalms. Add your own testimony of praise and thanksgiving.

### Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

#### 1. Latter-day hymns inspired by Old Testament psalms

Explain that the hymnbook could be viewed as our latter-day equivalent of the psalms. You may want to have class members sing a latter-day hymn that was inspired by an Old Testament psalm. Some of these hymns are “The Lord Is My Shepherd” (*Hymns*, no. 108; Psalm 23), “The Lord Is My Light” (*Hymns*, no. 89; Psalm 27:1), “How Great Thou Art” (*Hymns*, no. 86; Psalms 8:3–9; 9:1–2), and “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” (*Hymns*, no. 72; Psalms 23:6; 150).

#### 2. Blessings of singing hymns

- What are some of the main topics of our latter-day hymns? (Answers may include the Savior, our duties as Church members, enduring to the end, faith, home and family, love, missionary work, prayer, priesthood, prophets, the restoration of the gospel, the sacrament, service, enduring trials, and Zion.) How does singing hymns bless us? (See D&C 25:12.)

Discuss some of the following ways that singing hymns can bless us:

- Hymns lift our spirits.
- Hymns inspire us to live more righteously.
- Hymns remind us of our blessings.
- Hymns give us an opportunity to sing praises to the Lord.
- Hymns give us a way to bear testimony.
- Hymns help us recommit ourselves to the Lord.
- Hymns help us feel the Spirit.
- Hymns help us be more in tune with our Heavenly Father.
- Hymns help us learn and teach the gospel.

The First Presidency said:

“Inspirational music is an essential part of our church meetings. The hymns invite the Spirit of the Lord, create a feeling of reverence, unify us as members, and provide a way for us to offer praises to the Lord.

“Some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns. Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end” (*Hymns*, ix).

- Several psalms speak of singing as making a “joyful noise unto the Lord” (Psalms 98:4; 100:1; see also 66:1; 95:1–2). How can we make better use of hymn singing in our Church meetings and homes, ensuring that it is joyful and meaningful?

- At the Last Supper, Jesus and his Apostles sang a hymn (Matthew 26:30). How do you think singing a hymn helped Jesus and his Apostles prepare to fulfill the work that was before them?
- Just before the Prophet Joseph Smith was martyred in Carthage Jail, he asked John Taylor to sing “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief” (*Hymns*, no. 29; see also B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 2:282–84). How do you think the singing of this hymn helped the Prophet?

### 3. Poetic parallelism in the psalms

Your study of the psalms may be enriched by an understanding of the poetic techniques that David and other Hebrew poets used. One of these techniques is parallelism. One common characteristic of parallelism is the repetition of a thought in different words. Such repetition expands or intensifies the meaning of an idea. One example of this kind of parallelism is Psalm 102:1–2, in which the same thought is expressed in different words five times (“hear my prayer,” “let my cry come unto thee,” “hide not thy face from me,” “incline thine ear unto me,” and “in the day when I call answer me speedily”). Point out how repetition intensifies the message.

# King Solomon: Man of Wisdom, Man of Foolishness

Lesson  
**26**

*1 Kings 3; 5–11*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to use their blessings wisely and to enter the temple worthily.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - 1 Kings 3:5–28. Solomon succeeds his father, David, as king, and follows the Lord. The Lord appears to Solomon, who asks to be blessed with an understanding heart (3:5–9). The Lord blesses Solomon with wisdom, riches, and honor (3:10–15). Two women take a child to Solomon, who wisely determines which woman is the mother of the child (3:16–28).
  - 1 Kings 5–6; 7:1–12. King Solomon directs the construction of a great temple (5–6). He has a palace built for himself (7:1–12).
  - 1 Kings 8:22–66; 9:1–9. Solomon dedicates the temple and asks the Lord to bless the Israelites with spiritual and temporal prosperity (8:22–53). The people worship for 14 days (8:54–66). The Lord again appears to Solomon, promising to bless the Israelites if they serve him but to curse them if they turn to other gods (9:1–9).
  - 1 Kings 10–11. Solomon’s fame grows because of his wealth and wisdom (10:1–13, 24–25). He becomes excessively wealthy (10:14–23, 26). He marries many non-Israelite women who persuade him to worship false gods (11:1–10). The Lord stirs up adversaries against Solomon (11:11–25). A prophet foretells that the kingdom of Israel will be divided because of Solomon’s wickedness (11:26–40).
2. Additional reading: 1 Kings 2:1–12; 4:29–34; 7:13–51; 1 Chronicles 29; Doctrine and Covenants 46.
3. If the picture Temple Used Anciently is available, you may want to use it during the lesson (62300; Gospel Art Picture Kit 118).

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## **Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Read or have a class member read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

“We generally think of Satan attacking us at our weakest spot. . . . But weakness is not our only vulnerability. Satan can also attack us where we think we are strong—in the very areas where we are proud of our strengths. He will approach us through the greatest talents and spiritual gifts we possess. If we are not wary, Satan can cause our spiritual downfall by corrupting us through our strengths as well as by exploiting our weaknesses” (“Our Strengths Can Become Our Downfall,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 12).

- What are some strengths that could become our downfall?

Explain that this lesson is about King Solomon, a man who received great gifts from God but eventually used those gifts unrighteously. Suggest that class members look for incidents that show the gradual decline of Solomon. Emphasize that we should look for his flaws not to judge him, but to learn from his mistakes.

## Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

Just before David died, Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon as the new king. Solomon, who was a son of David and Bathsheba, received the following counsel from his father: “Be thou strong . . . , and shew thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, . . . that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest” (1 Kings 2:2–3).

### 1. The Lord blesses Solomon with wisdom, riches, and honor.

Teach and discuss 1 Kings 3:5–28.

- Soon after Solomon became king, the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Ask what I shall give thee” (1 Kings 3:5). What did Solomon ask for? (See 1 Kings 3:9.) What does it mean to have an “understanding heart”? (See 1 Kings 3:28; 4:29.) Why did Solomon feel a special need for that blessing? (See 1 Kings 3:7–8.) How would having “the wisdom of God” help us with our responsibilities at home? at work? at school? in the Church? How can we receive this wisdom?
- Why was the Lord pleased with Solomon’s request for an understanding heart? (See 1 Kings 3:11–12. Solomon asked for a gift that would help him serve others rather than a gift with selfish purposes.) What are some spiritual gifts we may seek? (See D&C 46:13–26.) On what conditions does the Lord give gifts of the Spirit? (See 1 Kings 3:14; D&C 46:8–12.) How can we use these gifts to serve others?
- What additional blessings did the Lord grant Solomon? (See 1 Kings 3:13–14.) How might these blessings be used to serve others?
- What was the first situation requiring King Solomon’s judgment? (See 1 Kings 3:16–22.) How did Solomon solve the problem? (See 1 Kings 3:23–28.) How did Solomon’s solution show that the Lord had blessed him with wisdom?

### 2. King Solomon directs the construction of a great temple and has a palace built for himself.

Teach and discuss 1 Kings 5–6; 7:1–12.

- As commanded by the Lord, Solomon directed that a temple be constructed. (You may want to briefly review 1 Kings 5:1–6, 17–18; 6:15–36 to emphasize the elaborate nature of the temple.) Why do you think Solomon used such fine material to build the temple?

- How did the builders show reverence for the temple during its construction? (See 1 Kings 6:7.)
- How did Solomon use his wisdom, riches, and honor to ensure proper construction of the temple? (See 1 Kings 5:1–12. Because of these blessings he was able to obtain building materials and enlist the help of skillful laborers in the construction of the temple.)
- What promise did the Lord give Solomon regarding the temple? (See 1 Kings 6:11–13.) What similar promise has the Lord given us today? (See D&C 97:15–17.)
- Solomon also had a house built for himself. How did the size of his house compare to the size of the house of the Lord? (See 1 Kings 6:2–3; 7:2, 6–7.) How does this use of riches show Solomon’s gradual decline?

### 3. Solomon dedicates the temple.

Teach and discuss 1 Kings 8:22–66; 9:1–9.

- After seven years of construction, the temple was dedicated. What are some of the things Solomon prayed for in the dedicatory prayer? (See 1 Kings 8:22–53.)

You may want to list class members’ answers on the chalkboard. Answers may include the following:

- Answers to prayers (1 Kings 8:28–30, 49–52)
  - Forgiveness (1 Kings 8:33–39)
  - Rain (1 Kings 8:35–36)
  - Help during famine and sickness (1 Kings 8:37)
  - Help in battle (1 Kings 8:44–45)
- In his dedicatory prayer Solomon prayed for the Lord to help his people through many difficult problems. How can temple attendance help us when we are weighed down with problems?  
  
President Ezra Taft Benson said: “In the peace of these lovely temples, sometimes we find solutions to the serious problems of life. Under the influence of the Spirit, sometimes pure knowledge flows to us there. Temples are places of personal revelation. When I have been weighed down by a problem or a difficulty, I have gone to the House of the Lord with a prayer in my heart for answers. These answers have come in clear and unmistakable ways” (“What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1985, 8).
  - Solomon prayed that the temple would help lead unbelievers to the Lord (1 Kings 8:41–43). How might a temple do this? (Invite class members to share examples of how they or others have become interested in the Church because of their interest in temples.)
  - After Solomon offered the dedicatory prayer, he counseled his people, “Let your heart . . . be perfect with the Lord our God” (1 Kings 8:61). What do you think it means to have a heart that is “perfect with the Lord”? How can temple attendance help us perfect our hearts?

- What can we do to keep the influence of the temple strong in our lives? (Answers may include: Attend frequently where possible, keep a current recommend, and display pictures of temples in our homes.)
- What did the people do after the temple was dedicated? (See 1 Kings 8:62–66.) What was the attitude of the people as they returned to their homes after the temple dedication and the 14 days of worship? (See 1 Kings 8:66.) How do you feel when you return home from the temple?
- What was the Lord’s message when he visited Solomon after the dedication of the temple? (See 1 Kings 9:3–9. See also 1 Kings 6:11–13. Note that the Lord made a similar statement during the construction of the temple.) Why do you think Solomon needed to be reminded of his covenants? How does the Lord remind us of our covenants?

**4. Solomon becomes excessively wealthy and marries many non-Israelite women who persuade him to worship idols.**

Teach and discuss 1 Kings 10–11.

- How did Solomon’s riches and honor increase after the temple was built? (See 1 Kings 10:1–15, 24–25.) How did Solomon misuse these blessings? (See 1 Kings 10:16–23, 26–29. Point out that he used them to build up his own kingdom rather than God’s kingdom.) How should wisdom, riches, and honor be used? (See Jacob 2:18–19.)
- How did Solomon’s choice of wives show that he had turned away from God? (See 1 Kings 11:1–2. He married out of the covenant.) What did Solomon’s non-Israelite wives influence him to do? (See 1 Kings 11:3–8. Note that in the Joseph Smith Translation, verse 4 says that Solomon’s heart “became as the heart of David his father” and verse 6 says that “Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, as David his father.”)
- What did the Lord do when Solomon broke his covenants and turned away? (See 1 Kings 11:9–14, 23–25, 33–36.)
- How do you think the blessings of wisdom, riches, and honor contributed to Solomon’s downfall? How have you seen these strengths contribute to the downfall of people today? How can we ensure that our strengths do not become a downfall for us? (See 1 Kings 8:61; D&C 88:67.)

Elder Dallin H. Oaks said:

“How . . . do we prevent our strengths from becoming our downfall? The quality we must cultivate is humility. Humility is the great protector. Humility is the antidote against pride. Humility is the catalyst for all learning, especially spiritual things. Through the prophet Moroni, the Lord gave us this great insight into the role of humility: ‘I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them’ (Ether 12:27).

“We might also say that if men and women humble themselves before God, he will help them prevent their strengths from becoming weaknesses that the adversary can exploit to destroy them. . . .

“ . . . If we are humble and teachable, hearkening to the commandments of God, the counsel of his leaders, and the promptings of his Spirit, we can be guided in how to use our spiritual gifts, our accomplishments, and all of our other strengths for righteousness. And we can be guided in how to avoid Satan’s efforts to use our strengths to cause our downfall.

“In all of this, we should remember and rely on the Lord’s direction and promise: ‘Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers’ (D&C 112:10)” (“Our Strengths Can Become Our Downfall,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 19).

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## Conclusion

Express your gratitude for the spiritual and material blessings the Lord has given you and for the temple. Encourage class members to humble themselves before the Lord so they can use their blessings wisely and enter the temple worthily.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. “That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren” (Deuteronomy 17:20)

- Have a class member read aloud Deuteronomy 17:14–20. How would application of this scripture have changed Solomon’s life and the lives of the people in his kingdom?

### 2. Dedicatory prayers for temples

If any class members have attended a temple dedication, ask one or two of them to tell about their experience. You may want to ask a class member to prepare to share two or three insights from the dedicatory prayer of a latter-day temple. (Doctrine and Covenants 109 contains the prayer offered at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. Dedicatory prayers of newly dedicated temples are sometimes printed in the *Ensign*.)

- How should dedicatory prayers influence our personal lives?

President Joseph Fielding Smith said, “When we dedicate a house to the Lord, what we really do is dedicate ourselves to the Lord’s service, with a covenant that we shall use the house in the way He intends that it shall be used” (*Church News*, 22 Jan. 1972, 3).



Lesson  
**27**

# The Influence of Wicked and Righteous Leaders

*1 Kings 12–14; 2 Chronicles 17; 20*

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**Purpose**

To encourage class members to develop good leadership qualities so they can influence others to live righteously.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
    - a. 1 Kings 12:1–20. Rehoboam succeeds his father, Solomon, as king over the twelve tribes of Israel. He rejects the counsel of wise men to serve his people, seeking instead to impose greater burdens on them (12:1–15). The kingdom is divided as ten tribes revolt (12:16–19; the ten tribes retain the title kingdom of Israel, while the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remain under Rehoboam’s rule and are called the kingdom of Judah). The kingdom of Israel selects Jeroboam, a former administrator in Solomon’s kingdom, as king (12:20).
    - b. 1 Kings 12:25–33; 13:33–34; 14:14–16, 21–24. Jeroboam leads his people into idolatry and replaces the priests with men who are not Levites (12:25–33; 13:33–34; for an explanation of groves and high places, see the second additional teaching idea). A prophet foretells the destruction of Jeroboam’s family and the scattering of Israel (14:14–16). Rehoboam leads the kingdom of Judah into idolatry (14:21–24).
    - c. 2 Chronicles 17:1–10; 20:1–30. Jehoshaphat, Rehoboam’s great-grandson, reigns righteously in the kingdom of Judah, destroying the groves and high places and sending Levites throughout Judah to teach from the book of the law of the Lord (17:1–10). As Judah’s enemies come against them, Jehoshaphat and his people fast and pray. The Lord tells them the battle is not theirs, but his. Their attackers war among themselves and destroy each other (20:1–30).
  2. Additional reading: 1 Kings 11:26–40; 2 Kings 17:20–23.
  3. If you use the attention activity, obtain an old piece of clothing that can be torn in pieces or a large piece of paper that is cut in the shape of a piece of clothing.
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**Suggested Lesson Development****Attention Activity**

You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Take an old piece of clothing or a piece of paper that is cut in the shape of a piece of clothing and tear it into 12 pieces. Explain that toward the end of Solomon’s life, the prophet Ahijah prophesied that Jeroboam, one of Solomon’s 12 superintendents over taxes and labor, would take over much of the Israelite nation. To illustrate this, Ahijah seized the garment from the back of Jeroboam,

tore it into 12 pieces, and gave 10 of the pieces to Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:29–32; footnote 32*a* points out that according to the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, two tribes, not one, would be left in the kingdom ruled by the descendants of David).

The Savior taught that “every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation” (Matthew 12:25). Explain that this is what happened to the kingdom of Israel after Solomon’s death. This lesson is about the influence of wicked and righteous leaders on the divided kingdom of Israel.

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Scripture Discussion  
and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

**1. The kingdom of Israel is divided, primarily because of Rehoboam’s harsh leadership.**

Teach and discuss 1 Kings 12:1–20.

You may want to write the following statement on the chalkboard:

*A good leader:*

1. *Gives service.*

- After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king of Israel. What changes did the Israelites want Rehoboam to make from the way his father ruled? (See 1 Kings 12:3–4.) What counsel did the older men give Rehoboam about ruling successfully? (See 1 Kings 12:6–7; 2 Chronicles 10:7.) Why are we more likely to be influenced positively by a leader who is kind and who serves us? How can we apply this counsel at home? at church? at school? at work? (See D&C 121:41–46.) What are some examples you have seen of parents or other leaders applying this counsel successfully?
- After refusing the counsel of older men, Rehoboam turned to young men he had known in his youth. What was their advice? (See 1 Kings 12:8–11.) What were the results of Rehoboam’s decision to follow their advice? (See 1 Kings 12:12–17. Explain that the phrase “Israel departed to their tents” refers to the ten tribes separating themselves from Rehoboam’s kingdom.) How might these results have been different if Rehoboam had followed the counsel of the older men? (See 1 Kings 12:7.)
- Jeroboam had been one of Solomon’s 12 superintendents over taxes and labor. Toward the end of Solomon’s reign, the prophet Ahijah had prophesied that Jeroboam would become king over many of the tribes of Israel (1 Kings 11:29–31; see the attention activity). How was this prophecy fulfilled? (See 1 Kings 12:20, including footnote 20*b*. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin stayed with Rehoboam in the Southern Kingdom, or kingdom of Judah. The other ten tribes followed Jeroboam in the Northern Kingdom, or kingdom of Israel.)

**2. Jeroboam and Rehoboam lead their kingdoms into idolatry.**

Teach and discuss 1 Kings 12:25–33; 13:33–34; 14:14–16, 21–24.

You may want to add to the statement you have written on the chalkboard:

*A good leader:*

1. Gives service.
2. Trusts and obeys the Lord.

- Through the prophet Ahijah, the Lord promised Jeroboam that he would be given a “sure house” (a secure kingdom) if he would walk in the Lord’s ways (1 Kings 11:38). How did Jeroboam forfeit the blessings of that promise? (See 1 Kings 12:25–33.) Why did Jeroboam build the golden calves and high places and ordain false priests? (See 1 Kings 12:26–33; 13:33–34.)

Explain that Jeroboam was afraid that if his people went to Jerusalem to worship, they might go back to Rehoboam. In an effort to control his people and retain their loyalty, he made golden calves in Bethel and Dan, two cities in the Northern Kingdom, and invited his people to worship in those cities. In doing this, he allowed his fear of defeat to override his trust in the Lord’s promises. Point out that a wise leader trusts the Lord and does not base decisions on fear or personal judgment.

- When his son became sick, Jeroboam sought the help of the prophet Ahijah. What did Ahijah prophesy concerning Jeroboam’s house (family) and kingdom? (See 1 Kings 14:14–16. The fulfillment of this prophecy is found in 2 Kings 17:20–23.)
- Like Jeroboam, Rehoboam also disobeyed God by leading people into idolatry (1 Kings 14:21–24). The wicked leadership of these two kings had long-lasting results. Both kingdoms were scattered or carried away captive many years later (Israel by the Assyrians and Judah by the Babylonians) because they continued in their wicked traditions. How can one wicked leader have such a profound effect on so many people?

You may want to point out that we need not mirror the acts of wicked leaders as the people of Israel and Judah did. God has given us agency, and we can use that power to choose good, even if leaders choose evil (Helaman 14:30–31).

### **3. Jehoshaphat leads the kingdom of Judah to follow the Lord and His prophets.**

Teach and discuss 2 Chronicles 17:1–10; 20:1–30.

You may want to add again to the list on the chalkboard:

*A good leader:*

1. Gives service.
2. Trusts and obeys the Lord.
3. Has faith in God.
4. Teaches from the scriptures.
5. Follows the prophets.

- Three generations after Rehoboam, his great-grandson Jehoshaphat reigned over the kingdom of Judah. How did Jehoshaphat demonstrate his personal righteousness? (See 2 Chronicles 17:3–4, 6.) How does our private devotion affect our ability to lead others?

- Jehoshaphat “took away the high places and groves out of Judah” (2 Chronicles 17:6). What do you think the people learned from this? (See 2 Chronicles 20:12–13, noting that “all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.”) What might we remove from our homes and our personal lives so we can worship God with greater devotion?
- Jehoshaphat sent Levites throughout the kingdom to teach the people from “the book of the law of the Lord” (2 Chronicles 17:9). How do you think being taught from the scriptures affected the people of Judah? How has personal and family scripture study helped you? How does scripture study in the home influence our families and the Church as a whole?

President Ezra Taft Benson taught: “Often we spend great effort in trying to increase the activity levels in our stakes. We work diligently to raise the percentages of those attending sacrament meetings. We labor to get a higher percentage of our young men on missions. We strive to improve the numbers of those marrying in the temple. All of these are commendable efforts and important to the growth of the kingdom. But when individual members and families immerse themselves in the scriptures regularly and consistently, these other areas of activity will automatically come. Testimonies will increase. Commitment will be strengthened. Families will be fortified. Personal revelation will flow” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 44).

- 2 Chronicles 20 tells of a period of terrible anxiety for the people of Judah, as three nations had declared war on them. The outcome seemed bleak for King Jehoshaphat and his people, who were greatly outnumbered. What did Jehoshaphat do to receive help? (See 2 Chronicles 20:3–13.) What was the Lord’s answer to this supplication? (See 2 Chronicles 20:14–17. Note that this answer came through the prophet Jahaziel.) What counsel did Jehoshaphat give his people? (See 2 Chronicles 20:20.) As Latter-day Saints, how are we outnumbered today as were the people of Judah anciently? How does Jehoshaphat’s counsel apply to us?
- Remembering the prophet Jahaziel’s assurance that the battle was God’s, Jehoshaphat appointed singers to praise the Lord rather than fight. When they began to sing, the Lord protected them by causing their attackers to war among themselves and destroy one another (2 Chronicles 20:21–24). How are we protected when we remember and obey the words of the living prophet?
- In contrast to Jeroboam and Rehoboam, who led their people into idolatry, Jehoshaphat influenced the people of Judah to humble themselves before the Lord (2 Chronicles 20:3–4). What examples have you seen of the influence of righteous leaders? What can we do to help those we serve live righteously?

## Conclusion

Testify of the power that leaders have to guide people to wickedness or righteousness. Remind class members of our responsibility to lead in our Church callings, in our communities, at work, and at home. Encourage class members to be good leaders by giving service, trusting and obeying the Lord, having faith in him, teaching from the scriptures, and following the prophets.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. Overcoming negative peer pressure

- The kingdom of Israel was divided largely because Rehoboam chose to follow the unwise counsel of his peers (1 Kings 12:9–16). How can we resist the temptation to follow unwise advice from our friends?

Elder Malcolm S. Jeppsen said:

“Many of you . . . will be, at some time or another, approached by one or more of your ‘friends’ who will entice you to do something you know you should not do. . . .

“‘No one will ever know,’ the so-called friends will tell you. ‘Besides, what difference will it make?’

“. . . You don’t have to reject your friends who are on the wrong path; you don’t even have to give them up necessarily. You can be their caring friend, ready to help them when they are ready to be helped. You can talk to them and lift them and bear your testimony to them. Lead them by example.

“But don’t ever be led into displeasing your Father in Heaven by your friends who might ask that as a condition of being your friend, you must choose between their way and the Lord’s way.

“If that happens, choose the Lord’s way and look for new friends” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1990, 59; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 45).

### 2. Meaning of *high places* and *groves*

The following definitions will help you explain the false worship instigated by Jeroboam and Rehoboam.

High places (1 Kings 12:31): altars that were built on hilltops. When the people fell into idolatry, they desecrated these altars and used them for idol worship.

Groves (1 Kings 14:15): places of pagan worship where people sometimes engaged in immoral behavior.

### 3. “And . . . ye shall serve gods, the work of men’s hands” (Deuteronomy 4:28)

- When Jeroboam set up the golden calves and the people worshiped on the high places and in the groves, he and his people were ignoring the warnings of Moses given 500 years earlier (Deuteronomy 4:25–28). What calamity were they setting themselves up for? What was promised if they would turn to the Lord instead of false idols? (See Deuteronomy 4:29–31.)

### 4. Leadership object lesson

Bring to class two identical sets of blocks (or other objects). Invite two class members to participate in the following demonstration. Give each participant

a set of blocks. Designate one class member to be the leader and the other to be the follower. Have the two class members turn their backs to each other so they cannot see each other's blocks. Have the leader quickly build something with the blocks and give directions to the follower on how to build an identical structure. The follower should not ask questions as he or she follows the directions. Neither participant is to look at the other's blocks until the project is complete.

When the follower is finished building, discuss how important it is for leaders to give clear instructions and for followers to listen carefully. If the follower has built a structure identical to the leader's, praise both participants and ask other class members to comment on why they were successful. If the demonstration has resulted in differing structures, ask the following questions:

- Could the leader have stated the instructions more clearly? Could the follower have listened more carefully? How would it have helped to allow the follower to watch as the leader built the structure?
- How can we apply what we have learned from this demonstration in our Church callings and in our homes?

Lesson  
**28**

# “After the Fire a Still Small Voice”

*1 Kings 17–19*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to put God first in their lives and to find guidance and comfort in the words of the living prophet and the whisperings of the Holy Ghost.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - 1 Kings 17. Elijah seals the heavens against rain, flees from Ahab and Jezebel, and is miraculously sustained in the wilderness (17:1–6). The Lord sends Elijah to a widow who gives him food and water (17:7–16). Elijah raises the widow’s son from the dead (17:17–24).
  - 1 Kings 18. After more than two years of famine, Elijah meets with Ahab and challenges the priests of Baal to call down fire from heaven to consume their sacrifice (18:1–2, 17–24). The priests of Baal fail in their attempts, but Elijah prays and the Lord sends down fire to consume the sacrifice he has prepared (18:25–40). Elijah prays to end the famine, and the Lord sends rain (18:41–46).
  - 1 Kings 19. Jezebel tries to kill Elijah (19:1–2). Elijah flees into the wilderness and is fed by an angel (19:3–8). Elijah goes to Horeb, where he is comforted by the Holy Ghost and instructed to continue in God’s work (19:9–19).
2. Ask a class member to prepare to give a brief report on Elijah’s confrontation with the priests of Baal (1 Kings 18:17–40).

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**Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Share the following story told by Elder Thomas S. Monson:

“Born in poverty but nurtured in faith, [José García] prepared for a mission call. I was present the day his recommendation was received. There appeared the statement: ‘Brother García will serve at great sacrifice to his family, for he is the means of much of the family support. He has but one possession—a treasured stamp collection—which he is willing to sell, if necessary, to help finance his mission.’

“President [Spencer W.] Kimball listened attentively as this statement was read to him, and then he responded: ‘Have him sell his stamp collection. Such sacrifice will be to him a blessing.’ ”

Invite class members to think about how they would react if they were asked to give up all their possessions to serve the Lord. Then continue with the story:

“Then, with a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face, this loving prophet said, ‘Each month at Church headquarters we receive thousands of letters from all

parts of the world. See that we save these stamps and provide them to José at the conclusion of his mission. He will have, without cost, the finest stamp collection of any young man in Mexico'” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1978, 83; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 56).

Explain that when we put the things of God first in our lives, the rewards we receive are far greater than anything we may have to sacrifice along the way. This lesson tells about two people—Elijah and the widow of Zarephath—who received great blessings because they were willing to follow God even when it was difficult to do so.

#### Scripture Discussion and Application

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As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

After Jeroboam led the kingdom of Israel into idolatry, he and his descendants were destroyed. They were followed by another succession of idolatrous kings. Of those rulers, Ahab was the king who “did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him” (1 Kings 16:33). He married Jezebel, adopted her practice of Baal worship, and encouraged his people to join him in the worship of this false god. The prophet Elijah delivered words of warning to Ahab and his kingdom.

#### **1. Elijah seals up the heavens, is miraculously sustained, and raises a widow’s son from the dead.**

Teach and discuss 1 Kings 17.

- Because of the wickedness of Ahab and his people, Elijah declared, “There shall not be dew nor rain these years, *but according to my word*” (1 Kings 17:1; italics added). Why was Elijah able to make such a statement? (You may want to compare Elijah to Nephi, the son of Helaman, who was given a similar power. The Lord’s reasons for allowing all things to be done according to Nephi’s words are found in Helaman 10:4–5.)
- After Elijah declared that no rain would fall in the kingdom, the Lord commanded him to flee. How did Elijah respond to the Lord’s command? (See 1 Kings 17:2–5.) What can we learn from Elijah’s response?

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“I draw strength from a simple statement made concerning the Prophet Elijah, who warned King Ahab of drought and famine to come upon the land. But Ahab scoffed. And the Lord told Elijah to go and hide himself by the brook Cherith, that there he should drink of the brook, and that he would be fed by the ravens. And the scripture records a simple and wonderful statement: ‘So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord.’ (1 Kings 17:5.)

“There was no arguing. There was no excusing. There was no equivocating. Elijah simply ‘went and did according unto the word of the Lord.’ And he was saved from the terrible calamities that befell those who scoffed and argued and questioned” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1971, 159; or *Ensign*, Dec. 1971, 123–24).



- How did Elijah survive in the wilderness after the drought began? (See 1 Kings 17:4, 6.) What experiences have you had when the Lord has sustained you physically or spiritually?
- Whom had the Lord prepared to help Elijah after the brook in the wilderness dried up? (See 1 Kings 17:7–13.) What can this teach us about how the Lord helps those in need? (Explain that the Lord often helps those in need through the service of other people.) How have you seen the Lord help those in need through the service of other people? What can we do to help others who are in need?

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said: “I know we can each do something, however small that act may seem to be. We can pay an honest tithe and give our fast and freewill offerings. . . . And we can watch for other ways to help. To worthy causes and needy people, we can give time if we don’t have money, and we can give love when our time runs out. We can share the loaves we have and trust God that the cruse of oil will not fail” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 41; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 31).

- How did the widow respond to Elijah’s request for some water to drink? (See 1 Kings 17:10–11. She went without hesitation.) What did the widow say when Elijah asked her for food? (See 1 Kings 17:11–12.) What did Elijah promise her? (See 1 Kings 17:13–14.) What did the widow then do? (See 1 Kings 17:15.) What can we learn from the widow’s response?

Elder Holland said that the widow’s response when Elijah asked her for food was an “expression of faith—as great, under these circumstances, as any I know in the scriptures. . . . Perhaps uncertain what the cost of her faith would be . . . , she first took her small loaf to Elijah, obviously trusting that if there were not enough bread left over, at least she and her son would have died in an act of pure charity” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 39; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 29).

- Why do you think God commanded the widow to feed Elijah when she had so little? What blessing did the widow receive for her obedience? (See 1 Kings 17:16.) What are some things that God asks of us that might be difficult? In what ways are we blessed when we put God first, doing what he asks even when it is difficult?

President Ezra Taft Benson taught:

“When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities. . . .

“May God bless us to put [him] first and, as a result, reap peace in this life and eternal life with a fulness of joy in the life to come” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 3, 6; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 4, 6).

- What did Elijah do when the widow’s son became sick and died? (See 1 Kings 17:17–22.) By what power was Elijah able to bring the widow’s son back to life? How has your life been blessed through the power of the priesthood?

## **2. Elijah challenges the priests of Baal and opens the heavens for rain.**

Teach and discuss 1 Kings 18.

- In the third year of the famine, the Lord commanded Elijah, “Go [show] thyself to Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth” (1 Kings 18:1). How did Ahab react when he saw Elijah? (See 1 Kings 18:17. Point out that Ahab blamed Elijah for the famine.) What was the real cause of the famine? (See 1 Kings 18:18.)
- As Elijah had requested, Ahab gathered all of Israel and 850 false priests at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:19–20). When the people gathered to hear Elijah speak, he asked them, “How long halt ye between two opinions?” (1 Kings 18:21). What do you think it means to halt between two opinions? How do we sometimes halt between two opinions? (See Matthew 6:24. Point out that the word *mammon* refers to worldliness.)

Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: “The stirring words of various prophets . . . urge us to choose, to decide, and not to halt. . . . Elijah’s message has tremendous relevancy today, for all must finally choose between the gods of this world and the God of eternity” (*That My Family Should Partake* [1974], 22).

Have the assigned class member give a brief report on Elijah’s confrontation with the priests of Baal (1 Kings 18:17–40).

- What was Elijah’s purpose in challenging the priests of Baal? (See 1 Kings 18:36–37.) How did the people react to the Lord’s display of power? (See 1 Kings 18:38–39.) How were they blessed for acknowledging the Lord and his power? (See 1 Kings 18:45.) How can we more fully acknowledge the Lord and his power? (See 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18; Alma 34:38; Moroni 7:33–39.)

### 3. Elijah is comforted by the Holy Ghost and instructed to continue in God’s work.

Teach and discuss 1 Kings 19.

Angry about Elijah’s victory over the priests of Baal, Jezebel sought to kill him. Elijah fled into the wilderness and cried to the Lord, saying, “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life” (1 Kings 19:4). The Lord blessed Elijah by sending an angel with food and water. You may want to point out that even prophets can experience despair and need the comfort and guidance that only God can provide.

- Why was Elijah discouraged? (See 1 Kings 19:10, 14. Despite the people’s response to God’s spectacular display of power, Elijah felt that he was the only Israelite left who worshiped the true God.) What did he do to gain peace? (See 1 Kings 19:4, 8. He prayed and fasted.) What can we learn from Elijah’s experience to help us if we feel discouraged, depressed, or despairing?
- How did God comfort Elijah on Mount Horeb? (See 1 Kings 19:9–13.) What can we learn from this about how God communicates with us? Why do you think God communicates more often through the “still small voice” of the Holy Ghost than through loud and spectacular displays of power? How can we discern the whisperings of the Holy Ghost?

When a news reporter asked President Hinckley how he communicates with God, the prophet responded, “I think the best way I could describe the process is to liken it to the experience of Elijah as set forth in the book of First Kings. Elijah spoke to the Lord, and there was a wind, a great wind, and the Lord was not in the wind. And there was an earthquake, and the Lord was not in the

earthquake. And there was a fire, and the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire a still, small voice, which I describe as the whisperings of the Spirit” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 71; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 51).

President Ezra Taft Benson taught: “Do you take time to listen to the promptings of the Spirit? Answers to prayer come most often by a still voice and are discerned by our deepest, innermost *feelings*. I tell you that you can know the will of God concerning yourselves if you will take the time to pray and to listen” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, 46; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 32).

- Besides being the Comforter, the Holy Ghost is also a teacher (John 14:26; 2 Nephi 32:5). What did the Lord—through the Holy Ghost—instruct Elijah to do? (See 1 Kings 19:15–16.) How can serving the Lord help us when we are discouraged?
- One way the Lord comforted Elijah was by telling him that there were still many Israelites who had not adopted the worship of Baal (1 Kings 19:18). How can fellowship with other faithful Latter-day Saints comfort us? What influences do you have around you that help you know you are not alone? What can you do to help others when they feel alone?

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## Conclusion

Testify that we will be comforted and guided as we put God first and heed the whisperings of the Holy Ghost.

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## Additional Teaching Idea

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use it as part of the lesson.

### The Spirit of Elijah

Latter-day Saints often talk about the Spirit of Elijah. This phrase refers to the work we do “to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers” (D&C 110:15). This work includes family history research and temple work for the living and the dead. We call it the Spirit of Elijah because Elijah restored the keys of the sealing power of the priesthood to Joseph Smith (D&C 110:13–16). Through this power, sealing ordinances can be performed that unite families for eternity.

Joseph Smith said:

“The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is, that ye have power to hold the key of the revelations, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth; and to receive, obtain, and perform all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God, even unto the turning of the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the hearts of the children unto the fathers, even those who are in heaven. . . .

“I wish you to understand this subject, for it is important; and if you receive it, this is the spirit of Elijah, that we redeem our dead, and connect ourselves with our fathers which are in heaven, and seal up our dead to come forth in the first resurrection; and here we want the power of Elijah to seal those who dwell on earth to those who dwell in heaven. This is the power of Elijah and the keys of the kingdom of Jehovah” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 337–38).

# “He Took Up . . . the Mantle of Elijah”

Lesson  
**29**

*2 Kings 2; 5–6*

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**Purpose** To help class members understand how the authority (mantle) passes from one prophet to another, to encourage them to obey the words of the prophets, and to assure them that the power of God is greater than any other power.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. 2 Kings 2:1–18. Elijah prepares Elisha to become the new prophet (2:1–10). Elijah is taken up into heaven. Elisha takes up Elijah’s mantle and becomes the prophet (2:11–15). Fifty men search for Elijah for three days despite Elisha’s counsel that they should not do so (2:16–18).
  - b. 2 Kings 5. Elisha heals Naaman of leprosy (5:1–14). Naaman praises God and offers Elisha a reward, which Elisha declines (5:15–19).
  - c. 2 Kings 6:8–18. Elisha guides the king of Israel in a war with Syria (6:8–10). The king of Syria commands his men to capture Elisha, and the army surrounds the city of Dothan (6:11–14). Unafraid, Elisha prays, and the Lord reveals a mountain full of horses and chariots of fire, then smites the Syrian army with blindness (6:15–18).
2. If you use the attention activity, bring a piece of cloth to use as a mantle.

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## **Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Drape a piece of cloth around your shoulders (or around the shoulders of a class member). Explain that the prophet Elijah wore a mantle. We do not know exactly what the mantle looked like, but it apparently was a cloak made of cloth. The passing of the mantle from Elijah to Elisha symbolized the passing of prophetic authority to Elisha.

In modern times we sometimes speak of the “mantle” of authority that the prophet receives when he is ordained and set apart. Although the prophet today does not carry a cloak or piece of cloth, God bestows the keys of the priesthood on him. These keys give him the power to act in God’s name as the leader of the Church on the earth. When a prophet dies, this mantle of authority is given to the new prophet.

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**Scripture Discussion  
and Application** As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

## 1. Elisha succeeds Elijah as the prophet.

Teach and discuss 2 Kings 2:1–18.

- What relationship existed between Elijah and Elisha? (See 2 Kings 2:2–10.) Why do you think Elisha was so intent on staying with Elijah? What did Elisha do after Elijah was taken up into heaven? (See 2 Kings 2:11–13. If you did not use the attention activity, refer to it to explain what Elijah’s mantle was and what it represented.)
- Who has the mantle of the prophet today? (The current President of the Church.) How is this mantle transferred when the prophet dies?

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained:

“There is no mystery about the choosing of the successor to the President of the Church. The Lord settled this a long time ago, and the *senior apostle automatically becomes the presiding officer of the Church*, and he is so sustained by the Council of the Twelve which becomes the presiding body of the Church when there is no First Presidency. The president is *not elected*, but he has to be *sustained* both by his brethren of the Council and by the members of the Church” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 3:156).

President Gordon B. Hinckley explained how this procedure was followed when he was ordained and set apart as the prophet and President of the Church following the death of President Howard W. Hunter:

“With President Hunter’s passing, the First Presidency was dissolved. Brother Monson and I, who had served as his counselors, took our places in the Quorum of the Twelve, which became the presiding authority of the Church.

“[A few days later] all of the living ordained Apostles gathered in a spirit of fasting and prayer in the upper room of the temple. Here we sang a sacred hymn and prayed together. We partook of the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, renewing in that sacred, symbolic testament our covenants and our relationship with Him who is our divine Redeemer. The Presidency was then reorganized, following a precedent well established through generations of the past [this precedent is explained in the preceding statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith]. There was no campaigning, no contest, no ambition for office. It was quiet, peaceful, simple, and sacred. It was done after the pattern which the Lord Himself had put in place” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 92; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 69).

You may want to point out that as he did anciently, the Savior has given the keys of the priesthood to each of the latter-day Apostles. However, only the President of the Church, who is the senior living Apostle, may use these keys (or authorize others to use them) on behalf of the entire Church (see D&C 132:7).

- How did the people respond when they saw Elisha duplicate Elijah’s miracle of parting the waters of Jordan? (See 2 Kings 2:14–15.) Why is it important that we immediately accept and sustain a newly ordained President of the Church? (See D&C 43:2–3, 7.)
- Soon after Elijah had been taken into heaven, the people wanted to send 50 strong men to look for him. What did Elisha tell the people? (See 2 Kings 2:16.)

How did the people respond to Elisha's answer? (See 2 Kings 2:17. They pleaded with Elisha until he permitted the men to go.)

- What did Elisha say to the people when the 50 men came back without finding Elijah? (See 2 Kings 2:18.) What can we learn from the experience of the 50 men? (We should follow the counsel of the prophet the first time we hear it.) Why do we sometimes wait for prophets to repeat counsel before we follow it? What counsel have Church leaders given us in recent years? How have you been blessed as you have followed this counsel?

## 2. Elisha heals Naaman of leprosy.

Teach and discuss 2 Kings 5.

- Who was Naaman, and what was his affliction? (See 2 Kings 5:1.) Why did he go to Elisha? (See 2 Kings 5:2–9.) What did Elisha's messenger tell Naaman to do to be healed? (See 2 Kings 5:10.) Why, at first, did Naaman refuse to follow Elisha's instructions? (See 2 Kings 5:11–12.)
- How did Naaman's servants convince him to do what Elisha had told him to do? (See 2 Kings 5:13.) What happened after Naaman dipped himself seven times in the Jordan River? (See 2 Kings 5:14.)
- What can the story of Naaman teach us about following the counsel of the prophet—even when we may not like or understand it or when it may be about small and simple matters? What are some of the small, simple things we have been asked to do by the prophet or other Church leaders? Why are these things sometimes hard to do? How can we increase our willingness to follow the counsel of Church leaders?

Elder Rex D. Pinegar asked, "Are we not sometimes like Naaman, looking for big or important things to do and bypassing simple things which could change our lives and heal us of our afflictions?" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 106; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 80).

After recounting the story of Naaman, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley said: "The way of the gospel is a simple way. Some of the requirements may appear to you as elementary and unnecessary. Do not spurn them. Humble yourselves and walk in obedience. I promise that the results that follow will be marvelous to behold and satisfying to experience" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1976, 143; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 96).

- What did Naaman learn from his healing? (See 2 Kings 5:15.) How has obedience in simple things strengthened your testimony?
- What did Naaman try to give Elisha after being healed? (See 2 Kings 5:15.) Why do you think Elisha refused Naaman's offer? Why is it important to serve without concern for earthly rewards?

## 3. Elisha guides Israel in a war with Syria.

Teach and discuss 2 Kings 6:8–18.

- How did Elisha help the king of Israel in the war against Syria? (See 2 Kings 6:8–10.) What did the king of Syria do when he learned what Elisha was doing? (See 2 Kings 6:11–14.)

- How did Elisha’s servant respond when he saw the Syrian horses and chariots surrounding the city? (See 2 Kings 6:15.) How did Elisha respond? (See 2 Kings 6:16.) What did Elisha mean when he told his servant, “They that be with us are more than they that be with them”? (2 Kings 6:16). How have you seen that Elisha’s statement is still true today?
- What modern-day circumstances might lead some of us to believe that we are helpless against the evils of the world? How can the confidence that “they that be with us are more than they that be with them” help us as we battle against these evils?

Elder Dallin H. Oaks said: “When I read this wonderful story as a boy, I always identified with the young servant of Elisha. I thought, If I am ever surrounded by the forces of evil while I am in the Lord’s service, I hope the Lord will open my eyes and give me faith to understand that when we are in the work of the Lord, those who are with us are always more powerful than those who oppose us” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 54; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 39).

- How can the confidence that “they that be with us are more than they that be with them” help us as we take the gospel to all people? (See D&C 84:87–88.)

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “We have not as yet carried the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. But we have made great strides. We have gone wherever we are permitted to go. God is at the helm, and doors will be opened by His power according to His divine will. Of that I am confident. Of that I am certain” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 93; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 70–71).

- What was Elisha’s prayer in his servant’s behalf? (See 2 Kings 6:17.) Why, at first, didn’t the servant see the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire that God had sent? What can we do to open our eyes more fully to the power of God in our own lives and in the world?

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## Conclusion

Testify that the President of the Church is a prophet of God. Encourage class members to sustain new Church leaders and to follow the counsel of the prophets. Testify that the power of God is greater than any other power.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. Elisha’s miracles

Elisha performed many great miracles, showing compassion for the people and giving further evidence that he was Elijah’s authorized successor. He parted the waters of Jordan, healed the waters of Jericho, multiplied a widow’s oil, raised a boy from the dead, healed people who had been poisoned, fed the hungry, healed Naaman’s leprosy, caused an ax to float, and guided kings in war. You may want to review some of these miracles from 2 Kings 2–6.

- Do you think that miracles occur in our day to the same extent that they occurred in Elisha's? What are the dangers of looking only for the spectacular miracles? What seemingly small miracles occur in our lives?

## **2. A young Israelite girl tells Naaman of Elisha**

- How did Naaman learn about Elisha and his healing powers? (See 2 Kings 5:2–4. A young Israelite girl whom the Syrians had taken captive told Naaman's wife that there was a prophet in Israel who could heal Naaman.) How is this young Israelite girl an example for us? (Regardless of our age, circumstance, or Church calling, we can do much good by directing people to the prophets—and to the Lord.)



Lesson  
**30**

# “Come to the House of the Lord”

*2 Chronicles 29–30; 32; 34*

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**Purpose** To inspire each class member to receive the promised blessings that come from temple work and scripture study.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. 2 Chronicles 29–30. Hezekiah, king of Judah, opens the doors of the temple and instructs the priests and Levites to cleanse and sanctify it for worship (29:1–19). When the temple is cleansed, Hezekiah and his people worship and praise the Lord (29:20–36). Hezekiah invites all Israel to come to the house of the Lord in Jerusalem (30:1–9). Some laugh and mock at the invitation, but the faithful of Israel worship the Lord in Jerusalem (30:10–27).
  - b. 2 Chronicles 32:1–23. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invades Judah and speaks abusively against the Lord (32:1–19). Isaiah and Hezekiah pray for help, and an angel of the Lord destroys much of the Assyrian army (32:20–23).
  - c. 2 Chronicles 34. After Hezekiah’s son and grandson rule in wickedness, Hezekiah’s great-grandson Josiah becomes king of Judah. Josiah destroys the idols in the kingdom and repairs the temple (34:1–13). The book of the law is found in the temple and read to Josiah, who weeps when he learns how far the people have strayed from the law (34:14–21). Huldah the prophetess tells of the forthcoming desolation of Judah but prophesies that Josiah will not have to witness it (34:22–28). Josiah and his people covenant to serve the Lord (34:29–33).
2. Additional reading: 2 Chronicles 31; 33; 2 Kings 18–19; 22–23; Isaiah 37:10–20, 33–38.
3. If the following pictures are available, you may want to use them during the lesson: Temple Used Anciently (62300) and a picture of a latter-day temple.

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**Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Explain that to help defend Jerusalem against attacks by the Assyrians, King Hezekiah diverted the water of the spring of Gihon to the pool of Siloam, inside the city walls (2 Chronicles 32:2–4, 30; Bible Dictionary, “Hezekiah’s Tunnel,” 702). This was done by digging a conduit (tunnel) for the water through about 1770 feet of limestone rock. Hezekiah then ordered that the fountains outside the city be covered to deny the Assyrians easy access to the water. Without this water inside the walls of the city, the people of Jerusalem would not have survived the siege by the Assyrians.

Point out that just as the water from the spring of Gihon was vital for the physical survival of Hezekiah's people during their battles with the Assyrians, living water is essential for our spiritual survival during our battles with Satan.

- What is living water? (See John 4:10–14.)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained that living water is “the words of eternal life, the message of salvation, the truths about God and his kingdom; it is the doctrines of the gospel” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [1966–73], 1:151).

- How can we open a conduit to the Lord so that living water can flow in our lives?

Explain that one way to receive living water is to go to the temple, the house of the Lord, where we may be endowed with power and understanding, be instructed by the Lord, and feel peace and joy.

Point out that worship in the temple was an important protection for the Israelites in Hezekiah's time, and it can also be an important protection for us today.

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## Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

### 1. Hezekiah orders the house of the Lord to be cleansed.

Teach and discuss 2 Chronicles 29–30.

- Hezekiah's father, Ahaz, was a wicked king who had desecrated the temple of the Lord and “shut up [its] doors” (2 Chronicles 28:24). When Hezekiah became king of Judah (the Southern Kingdom) in 715 B.C., one of the first things he did was open the doors of the temple and order the priests and Levites to cleanse and sanctify it (2 Chronicles 29:3–5). Why, according to Hezekiah, did the temple need to be sanctified? (See 2 Chronicles 29:6–7.) In what ways might we also be guilty of “turn[ing] away [our] faces from the habitation of the Lord”? What happened to the people of Judah because of their disregard for the temple? (See 2 Chronicles 29:8–9.)
- What did Hezekiah hope to achieve by cleansing the temple and preparing it for worship again? (See 2 Chronicles 29:10.) Why is it important to keep unclean things out of the temple? (See D&C 97:15–17.) What is our responsibility in ensuring that no unclean thing enters the temple? (See D&C 109:20–21. We must make sure that we are clean when we go to the temple.)
- What did Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem do when the temple had been cleansed? (See 2 Chronicles 29:20–21, 29–31, 36.) Whom did Hezekiah invite to come to the house of the Lord for the celebration of the Passover? (See 2 Chronicles 30:1, 6.) How was this invitation received? (See 2 Chronicles 30:10–11.)
- What blessing did the people of Israel reject by refusing to come to the temple? (See 2 Chronicles 30:6–9. Explain that by the time of Hezekiah's reign, much of the kingdom of Israel [the Northern Kingdom] had been taken captive by the Assyrians. Hezekiah promised the remaining Israelites that if they would “turn

again unto the Lord,” the captives would be released. Instead, most of the people of Israel rejected Hezekiah’s invitation. Because of the wickedness of the people, the remainder of the kingdom of Israel was taken captive several years later [2 Kings 18:10–12]. The captive Israelites became the lost ten tribes.)

## **2. The Assyrians invade the kingdom of Judah. Isaiah and Hezekiah pray for help, and an angel of the Lord destroys much of the Assyrian army.**

Teach and discuss 2 Chronicles 32:1–23.

- After the kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity, the Assyrians began to attack the kingdom of Judah (2 Chronicles 32:1). What did Hezekiah do when he saw that Sennacherib’s army planned to attack Jerusalem? (See 2 Chronicles 32:2–5.) After Hezekiah had made preparations for war, what did he tell his people about the impending attack? (See 2 Chronicles 32:6–8.) What can we learn from Hezekiah about the proper relationship between trusting in our own efforts and trusting in the Lord?
- Sennacherib sent his servants to speak to the people in Jerusalem. What did the servants say? (See 2 Chronicles 32:9–17.) Why did they say these things? (See 2 Chronicles 32:18.) In what ways does Satan try to convince us that God cannot or will not help us?
- How did Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah react to the words of Sennacherib’s servants? (See 2 Chronicles 32:20; Isaiah 37:14–20.) How did the Lord answer Hezekiah’s and Isaiah’s prayers? (See 2 Chronicles 32:21–22; Isaiah 37:33–38.)
- Hezekiah and his people received the Lord’s protection because of their righteousness, which was demonstrated by their worship at the temple. How can temple attendance be a protection for us? (See D&C 109:24–28.) What can we do to make temple worthiness and attendance a priority in our lives?

President Howard W. Hunter encouraged:

“Let us be a temple-attending people. Attend the temple as frequently as personal circumstances allow. Keep a picture of a temple in your home that your children may see it. Teach them about the purposes of the house of the Lord. Have them plan from their earliest years to go there and to remain worthy of that blessing.

“If proximity to a temple does not allow frequent attendance, gather in the history of your family and prepare the names for the sacred ordinances performed only in the temple. This family research is essential to the work of the temples, and blessings surely will come to those who do that work” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 8; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 8).

## **3. Josiah and his people covenant to serve the Lord.**

Teach and discuss 2 Chronicles 34.

Hezekiah was succeeded as king by his son Manasseh and his grandson Amon (2 Chronicles 33). Manasseh ruled Judah in wickedness, placing idols in the temple and leading the people to sin. Manasseh eventually humbled himself, however, and repented before his death. Manasseh’s son Amon also ruled in

wickedness, worshipping the idols his father had made. Amon did not repent, and he was slain by his own servants. Amon's son Josiah was made king of Judah when he was eight years old. He became a righteous king who rejected the wicked ways of his father and grandfather.

- What kind of person was King Josiah? (See 2 Chronicles 34:1–2; 2 Kings 23:25. Note that the David mentioned in 2 Chronicles 34:2 is King David, who was Josiah's forefather, not his literal father.)
- What good things did Josiah do early in his reign as king? (See 2 Chronicles 34:3–8. He sought the true God, destroyed idolatry in the kingdom, and sent people to repair the temple. Point out that Josiah was only 15 or 16 years old when he began making these important changes.)
- What significant discovery did Hilkiah the high priest make during the renovation of the temple? (See 2 Chronicles 34:14. He found a book of the law of the Lord, or the scriptures. Note that by this time in Judah's history the written law apparently had been lost and was virtually unknown.) How did Josiah react when the book of the law was read to him? (See 2 Chronicles 34:19. Note that it was a custom in ancient Israel to rend, or tear, one's clothes to show mourning or great sorrow.) Why was Josiah so distressed to hear what the book of the law contained? (See 2 Chronicles 34:21.)
- What did the prophetess Huldah say would happen to Judah because the people had failed to keep the word of the Lord and do what the scriptures taught? (See 2 Chronicles 34:22–25.) What will happen to us if we neglect to read the scriptures and apply their teachings?

President Ezra Taft Benson described the dangers of neglecting one of our books of scripture, the Book of Mormon:

“In 1829, the Lord warned the Saints that they are not to trifle with sacred things (see D&C 6:12). Surely the Book of Mormon is a sacred thing, and yet many trifle with it, or in other words, take it lightly, treat it as though it is of little importance.

“In 1832, as some early missionaries returned from their fields of labor, the Lord reproved them for treating the Book of Mormon lightly. As a result of that attitude, he said, their minds had been darkened. Not only had treating this sacred book lightly brought a loss of light to themselves, it had also brought the whole Church under condemnation, even all the children of Zion. And then the Lord said, ‘And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon’ (D&C 84:54–57). . . .

“If the early Saints were rebuked for treating the Book of Mormon lightly, are we under any less condemnation if we do the same?” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 3–4; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 4–5).

- What did Huldah say would happen to Josiah? (See 2 Chronicles 34:26, 28. The fulfillment of this promise is described in 2 Chronicles 35:20–24.) Why did the Lord make this promise to Josiah? (See 2 Chronicles 34:27.)

- After Josiah found out that his people would be condemned because they had not done as the scriptures instructed, he called all the people to the temple and read the scriptures to them (2 Chronicles 34:29–30). Why do you think he did this? (The people could not follow God’s laws if they did not know them.) How can parents follow Josiah’s example and teach their children the laws of the gospel? (See D&C 68:25, 28.)
- How can we show the value we place on the scriptures? Point out that we have more scripture available to us than the Israelites had, and the scriptures are more readily accessible to us. What responsibility do we have because of these blessings?

President Spencer W. Kimball said: “The Lord is not trifling with us when he gives us these things, for ‘unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.’ (Luke 12:48.) Access to these things means responsibility for them. We must study the scriptures according to the Lord’s commandment (see 3 Ne. 23:1–5); and we must let them govern our lives” (“How Rare a Possession—the Scriptures!” *Ensign*, Sept. 1976, 5).

- While Josiah and his people were at the temple, they made a covenant with the Lord. What did they covenant to do? (See 2 Chronicles 34:31–33.) Explain that in the temple we make sacred covenants with the Lord, the fulfillment of which will bring us earthly blessings and eternal exaltation. How can we prepare to make the sacred temple covenants? Once we have made these covenants, why is it important that we return to the temple as often as possible?

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## Conclusion

Explain that the people in the kingdom of Judah eventually became so wicked that the Lord allowed them to be taken captive (2 Chronicles 36:14–21). During their reigns, however, Hezekiah and Josiah had sought to strengthen the people by turning their attention to the temple and the scriptures. Testify that as we focus our attention on obeying the Lord’s commandments and being worthy to enter the temple, we will be blessed with spiritual strength and joy. Encourage class members to enjoy the blessings of the temple by living worthily and attending as often as possible.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. “A credit card with the Lord”

A week before this lesson is to be taught, ask a class member to become familiar with the following excerpt from a talk by President Gordon B. Hinckley and be prepared to share it with the class:

“I hold before you two credit cards. Most of you are familiar with cards such as these.

“The first is a bank credit card. It permits me to secure merchandise on credit and then pay for my purchases at one time. It is a valuable thing and something to be safeguarded. If stolen and dishonestly used, it could cause me great loss and

perhaps considerable embarrassment. In accepting it from my bank, I enter into a contract and become bound by obligations and agreements. In accepting the card, I agree to meet the conditions under which it was issued.

“It is issued for one year only and must be reissued each year if I am to enjoy the privileges afforded by it. It is not really mine. The bank retains ownership. If I fail in my required performance, then the bank may shut off the credit and repossess the card.

“The other card which I have is what we call a temple recommend. It represents a credit card with the Lord, making available to me many of His greatest gifts. The bank card is concerned with things of the world, the recommend with things of God.

“To secure a temple recommend, the receiver must also have demonstrated his eligibility, and that eligibility is based on personal worthiness. Once granted, it is not in place forever but must be reissued each year. Furthermore, it is subject to forfeiture if the holder does anything which would disqualify him for its privileges.

“Eligibility for a temple recommend is not based on financial worth. That has nothing whatever to do with it. It is based on consistent personal behavior, on the goodness of one’s life. It is not concerned with money matters, but rather with things of eternity.

“The bank card opens the door to financial credit. The temple recommend opens the door to the House of the Lord. It is concerned with entry into holy precincts to do sacred and divine work. . . .

“. . . This recommend which I have and which so many of you have is a precious and wonderful thing. It makes one eligible for an exclusive and remarkable privilege—the privilege of entering that House which says on its wall, ‘Holiness to the Lord—the House of the Lord.’ Live worthy to serve in that house. Keep it holy. Do your part to keep from the Lord’s house any unclean or defiling influence or person. Enjoy its beauty. Enjoy the wonder of the things that are spoken there, the beauty and the blessing of the ordinances there administered.

“To [those] who have not yet been to the temple, may I suggest that you take advantage of the opportunity of being baptized in behalf of the dead. And then let that sacred experience become an anchor to your lives, that you so conduct yourselves at all times and in all circumstances that, at the proper time, you may secure a special and restricted credit card with the Lord, even a recommend to His holy house, there to enjoy all of its blessings and privileges” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1990, 65, 69; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 49, 52).

## 2. Purposes of temples

Bring pictures of several latter-day temples (in several architectural styles, if possible). Point out that although these temples may appear different from the outside, the ordinances performed and the covenants made inside these temples are the same.

Explain that although some of the practices in the temple of ancient Israel were different from what we do in latter-day temples (for example, we do not sacrifice animals or burn candles and incense in latter-day temples), the purposes of ancient temples and latter-day temples are the same: to prepare us to come into the presence of the Lord and be like him.

You may want to show “Ancient Temples,” a nine-minute segment from *Old Testament Video Presentations* (53224), which describes Moses’ tabernacle and some of the activities that took place there.

### **3. Studying the scriptures**

- Why do we sometimes have difficulty studying the scriptures?

List class members’ answers in a column on the chalkboard. Then discuss ways we can overcome these difficulties. For example, if we do not understand what we read, we can pray for understanding and study what the prophets and apostles have said about the scriptures we are reading; if we are too sleepy to read the scriptures at night, we can find another time of day to read. List these solutions in another column on the chalkboard.

Challenge class members to be more dedicated in their study of the scriptures.

# “Happy Is the Man That Findeth Wisdom”

## Lesson 31

### *Proverbs and Ecclesiastes*

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**Purpose** To inspire class members to be more Christlike by applying the wise counsel in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

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- Preparation**
1. Prayerfully study the scriptures discussed in the lesson outline and as much of the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes as you can.
  2. If you use the first attention activity, write the following sentences on a poster or on the chalkboard before class:
    - a. \_\_\_\_\_ goeth before destruction.
    - b. Train up a \_\_\_\_\_ in the way he should go.
    - c. To every thing there is a \_\_\_\_\_, and a \_\_\_\_\_ to every purpose under the heaven.
    - d. \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord with all thine heart.
    - e. A \_\_\_\_\_ turneth away wrath.
    - f. For as he \_\_\_\_\_ in his heart, so is he.

If you use the second attention activity, ask one or two class members to prepare to share a favorite passage from Proverbs or Ecclesiastes and tell why it is important to them.

3. If *Old Testament Video Presentations* (53224) is available, you may want to show “Trusting in the Lord,” a five-minute segment, as part of the lesson.
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### **Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use one of the following activities (or one of your own) to begin the lesson. Select the activity that would be most appropriate for the class.

1. Refer class members to the sentences you have written on a poster or on the chalkboard (see “Preparation” above). Explain that these are well-known statements from the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and ask class members to fill in the blanks. If necessary, give the following references so class members can look up the scriptures to find the words they do not know.
  - a. Proverbs 16:18 (Pride)
  - b. Proverbs 22:6 (child)
  - c. Ecclesiastes 3:1 (season, time)
  - d. Proverbs 3:5 (Trust)
  - e. Proverbs 15:1 (soft answer)
  - f. Proverbs 23:7 (thinketh)
2. Ask one or two assigned class members to share a favorite passage from Proverbs or Ecclesiastes and tell why it is important to them.



## Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles. Because it would be difficult to ask every question or cover every point in the lesson, prayerfully select those that will best meet class members' needs. You may need to adapt some questions to fit class members' circumstances.

Proverbs are short sayings that generally give counsel about living righteously. The Old Testament records that Solomon "spoke three thousand proverbs" (1 Kings 4:32). Some of these wise sayings are included in the book of Proverbs. Although Solomon and the other authors of this book were not prophets, much of what they wrote was inspired by the Lord. Their writings generally reflect a belief that true wisdom comes from God.

The book of Ecclesiastes also contains wise sayings, and some people believe Solomon to be its author. The message of Ecclesiastes is that life is meaningful only through God.

This lesson is divided into seven sections that focus on important topics in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. In your personal study, you may find other topics that you would like to discuss in class.

### 1. Wisdom

Teach and discuss the following passages from Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

- The books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes emphasize the importance of wisdom. What differences are there between being learned and being wise? (See Proverbs 1:7; 9:9–10; 2 Nephi 9:28–29. Point out that in biblical language, to fear the Lord means to reverence and obey him. Explain that wisdom is more than knowledge; it is the proper application of knowledge. To the Israelites, wisdom meant obedience to God's laws.)
- What can we learn from Proverbs 2:2–6 about how to obtain the knowledge of God? Why do you think it requires diligence to obtain this knowledge?
- How does the value of wisdom compare to the value of earthly treasures? (See Proverbs 3:13–18; Ecclesiastes 7:12. Note that the words *she* and *her* in Proverbs 3:15–18 refer to wisdom.) How does wisdom bring happiness and peace?
- Proverbs 3:18 says that wisdom "is a tree of life" to those who have it. What can this symbol teach us about the value of wisdom? (See 1 Nephi 11:8–11, 21–25, noting that the tree of life is a symbol of God's love.)
- What qualities of wise people are listed in Proverbs 9:9–10 and 15:31–33? Why are these qualities necessary to gain wisdom?

### 2. Trust in the Lord

Teach and discuss Proverbs 3:5–7.

- What counsel is given in Proverbs 3:5–7? How does the Lord direct our paths? What experiences have taught you to trust the Lord?
- What does it mean to acknowledge God? (See Proverbs 3:6; Alma 34:38; D&C 59:21.) How are we blessed as we acknowledge him?

### 3. The words we speak

Teach and discuss the following passages from Proverbs.

- Proverbs 6:16–19 lists seven things the Lord hates. Three of these things—lying, bearing false witness, and sowing discord—apply to the words we speak. Why is the Lord so concerned with the words we speak? (See Proverbs 16:27–28; 18:8; 25:18; Matthew 12:36–37.) How can we overcome the problems of lying, gossiping, or speaking negatively about others?
- Proverbs 16:24 says that “pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul.” How is this true? What are the results of speaking kindly? (See Proverbs 12:25; 15:1; 16:24.) How have the kind words of others helped you?
- What benefits come from speaking softly when a disagreement arises? (See Proverbs 15:1.)

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley said: “We seldom get into trouble when we speak softly. It is only when we raise our voices that the sparks fly and tiny molehills become great mountains of contention” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 82; or *Ensign*, June 1971, 72).

To reinforce the importance of speaking kind words, you may want to have class members sing “Let Us Oft Speak Kind Words” (*Hymns*, no. 232).

### 4. Pride

Teach and discuss Proverbs 8:13; 13:10; 16:18–19.

- Proverbs 8:13 states that the Lord hates pride. Why is pride such a serious sin?

President Ezra Taft Benson said:

“The central feature of pride is enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen. *Enmity* means ‘hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition.’ It is the power by which Satan wishes to reign over us.

“Pride is essentially competitive in nature. We pit our will against God’s. When we direct our pride toward God, it is in the spirit of ‘my will and not thine be done.’ As Paul said, they ‘seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s’ (Philippians 2:21).

“Our will in competition to God’s will allows desires, appetites, and passions to go unbridled (see Alma 38:12; 3 Nephi 12:30).

“The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives (see Helaman 12:6). They pit their perceptions of truth against God’s great knowledge, their abilities versus God’s priesthood power, their accomplishments against His mighty works.

“Our enmity toward God takes on many labels, such as rebellion, hard-heartedness, stiff-neckedness, unrepentant, puffed up, easily offended, and sign seekers. The proud wish God would agree with them. They aren’t interested in changing their opinions to agree with God’s. . . .

“Pride is a damning sin in the true sense of that word. It limits or stops progression (see Alma 12:10–11). The proud are not easily taught (see 1 Nephi 15:3, 7–11). They won’t change their minds to accept truths, because to do so implies they have been wrong” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 3–5; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 4, 6).

- Proverbs 13:10 and 16:18 teach that pride leads to contention and destruction. How can pride do this? How does pride affect our families?

President Ezra Taft Benson said:

“Another face of pride is contention. Arguments, fights, unrighteous dominion, generation gaps, divorces, spouse abuse, riots, and disturbances all fall into this category of pride.

“Contention in our families drives the Spirit of the Lord away. It also drives many of our family members away. . . .

“Pride adversely affects all our relationships—our relationship with God and His servants, between husband and wife, parent and child” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 5; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 6).

- How can we overcome pride? (See Proverbs 16:19.) What can we do to be more humble in our relationships with our family members and with God?

## 5. Friendship

Teach and discuss the following passages from Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

- Why are we warned about unrighteous friends? (See Proverbs 13:20; 22:24–25.)
- What are some characteristics of good friends? (See Proverbs 17:17; 27:9.) How have good friends helped you through difficult times?
- What can we do to gain true friends? (See Proverbs 18:24. Point out that to have good friends we need to be good friends.)
- How do true friends react when we make unwise choices? (See Ecclesiastes 4:9–10.)

Elder Marvin J. Ashton said:

“Someone has said, ‘A friend is a person who is willing to take me the way I am.’ Accepting this as one definition of the word, may I quickly suggest that we are something less than a real friend if we leave a person the same way we find him. . . .

“No greater reward can come to any of us as we serve than a sincere ‘Thank you for being my friend.’ When those who need assistance find their way back through and with us, it is friendship in action. When the weak are made strong and the strong stronger through our lives, friendship is real. If a man can be judged by his friends, he can also be measured by their heights. . . .

“Yes, a friend is a person who is willing to take me the way I am but who is willing and able to leave me better than he found me” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1972, 32, 35; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1973, 41, 43).

- How can we strengthen friendships among family members?
- Jesus Christ has often called his followers his friends (D&C 88:62; 93:45). How has he shown that he is our friend? (See John 15:13.) How do we show that we are his friends? (See John 15:14.) How have you felt his friendship?

## 6. Raising children

Teach and discuss the following passages from Proverbs.

- Proverbs 22:6 says to “train up a child in the way he should go.” What should parents do to follow this counsel? (See D&C 68:25–28.) How can we more effectively teach children the principles of the gospel and nurture their testimonies?

Elder Richard G. Scott said: “You must be willing to forgo personal pleasure and self-interest for family-centered activity, and not turn over to church, school, or society the principal role of fostering a child’s well-rounded development. It takes time, great effort, and significant personal sacrifice to ‘train up a child in the way he should go.’ But where can you find greater rewards for a job well done?” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 43; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 34).

- Why do children need rules, boundaries, and loving correction? (See Proverbs 19:18; 29:17.) How should children respond to the righteous counsel of their parents? (See Proverbs 6:20–23.) How should parents give correction? (See D&C 121:41–44.)

## 7. Happiness and good humor

Teach and discuss Proverbs 15:13 and 17:22.

- Why is it important to develop a happy attitude and a good sense of humor? (See Proverbs 15:13; 17:22.)

President Hugh B. Brown said: “I would like to have you smile because after all we must keep a sense of humor whatever comes. I think of all the people in the world we should be the happiest. We have the greatest and most joyous message in the world. I think when we get on the other side, someone will meet us with a smile (unless we go to the wrong place and then someone will grin), so let us be happy. But let our happiness be genuine—let it come from within” (*The Abundant Life* [1965], 83).

- What can we do to encourage uplifting humor in our families? (You may want to ask class members to tell about times when humor has helped their families solve problems and grow in love for each other.)

## Conclusion

Share your feelings about the topics you have discussed. Encourage class members to remember and follow the counsel in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. You may also want to encourage them to memorize a favorite passage from one of those books.

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**Additional  
Teaching Ideas**

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

**1. Proverbs activity**

Write several references from the book of Proverbs on separate slips of paper and put them in a bowl. Have class members take turns choosing a slip of paper from the bowl, reading the passage of scripture cited on the slip of paper, and explaining how that passage applies in our lives.

**2. Scripture application**

Draw a figure of a body on the chalkboard. Have class members find the following verses and write the references next to each corresponding part of the body. Read the verses together and discuss how they apply in our lives.

- a. Proverbs 2:2 (ear and heart)
- b. Proverbs 3:5 (heart)
- c. Proverbs 3:7 (eyes)
- d. Proverbs 3:27 (hand)
- e. Proverbs 4:26–27 (foot)
- f. Proverbs 8:7 (mouth)
- g. Proverbs 10:4 (hand)
- h. Proverbs 12:15 (eyes)

**3. “A virtuous woman” (Proverbs 31:10)**

Have class members review Proverbs 31:10–31 and list the qualities of a virtuous woman. Point out that these are qualities that all of us, male and female, should strive to develop. You may want to write class members’ answers on the chalkboard. Answers might include the following:

<i>Verse</i>	<i>Quality</i>
11	Can be trusted
13	Works willingly
20	Is compassionate
25	Is strong and honorable
26	Speaks with wisdom and kindness
28	Is a dedicated wife and mother
30	Obeys the Lord

Invite a few class members to talk about people they know who exemplify these qualities.

# “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth”

Lesson  
**32**

*Job 1–2; 13; 19; 27; 42*

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**Purpose** To help class members develop strength to face adversity by trusting the Lord, building their testimonies of him, and maintaining personal integrity.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures (you may also want to study the chapter headings in the book of Job to give an overview of the story):
  - a. Job 1–2. Job, a just and faithful man, experiences severe trials. He remains faithful to the Lord despite losing his possessions, children, and health.
  - b. Job 13:13–16; 19:23–27. Job finds strength in trusting the Lord and in his testimony of the Savior.
  - c. Job 27:2–6. Job finds strength in his personal righteousness and integrity.
  - d. Job 42:10–17. After Job has faithfully endured his trials, the Lord blesses him.
2. Additional reading: Other chapters in Job; Doctrine and Covenants 121:1–10.

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## **Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Share the following analogy with class members (or ask a class member to prepare to share it):

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin once told of farmers in the hot desert of northwest Mexico who “grow varieties of corn and beans that are unusually hardy and drought resistant. These varieties survive and flourish in a harsh climate where other plants would wither and die. One of these plants is the white tepary bean. Its seed will sprout and the plant will grow even when very little rain falls. It sends its roots as deep as six feet into the rocky, sandy earth to find the moisture it needs. It can flower and fruit in the 115-degree (Fahrenheit) desert temperatures with only one yearly rainfall. Its foliage remains remarkably green, with little irrigation, even in the heat of mid-July.”

- What can we learn from this analogy that can help us endure adversity?

Elder Wirthlin suggested: “Perhaps members of the Church could emulate the example of these hardy, sturdy plants. We should send our roots deep into the soil of the gospel. We should grow, flourish, flower, and bear good fruit in abundance despite the evil, temptation, or criticism we might encounter. We should learn to thrive in the heat of adversity” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 7; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 7).

Explain that this lesson is about Job, a man whose faith and righteousness helped him endure severe adversity.

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As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

### 1. Job is sorely tested.

Teach and discuss Job 1–2.

- What kind of man was Job? You may want to list some of the following characteristics on the chalkboard. Many of the corresponding references are not in the reading assignment, so you may want to ask individual class members to look them up and tell what characteristic is described.
  - a. He was a good man who feared God and shunned evil (Job 1:1).
  - b. He was wealthy but not caught up in wealth (Job 1:3, 21).
  - c. He had integrity (Job 2:3).
  - d. He strengthened the weak (Job 4:3–4).
  - e. He walked in the Lord’s paths and esteemed the Lord’s words (Job 23:10–12).
  - f. He was compassionate to the widow, the poor, the lame, and the blind (Job 29:12–16).
  - g. He was concerned for his enemies and forgave them (Job 31:29–30).
- What trials did Job experience? You may want to list some of these trials on the chalkboard. Many of the corresponding references are not in the reading assignment, so you may want to ask individual class members to look them up and tell what trial is described.
  - a. Loss of servants, property, and income (Job 1:13–17).
  - b. Loss of children (Job 1:18–19).
  - c. Physical illness and pain (Job 2:7; 7:5; 16:16).
  - d. Restless sleep filled with nightmares (Job 7:4, 13–14).
  - e. Cruel accusations and loss of support from friends and family (Job 2:9; 4:1, 7–8; 11:1–6; 19:13–22).
  - f. Confusion about why he was asked to go through these trials (Job 10:15).
  - g. Mockery by those who delighted in his downfall (Job 16:10–11; 30:1, 8–10).
  - h. The feeling that God had forgotten him or was not listening (Job 19:6–8; 23:3–4; note that the word *him* in Job 23:3–4 refers to God).
- How do Job’s trials compare with the trials people experience in our day? (The trials are similar: loss of property, loss of children, loss of health, and loss of the love and companionship of friends and family.)
- What did Satan claim was the reason for Job’s righteousness? (See Job 1:9–10.) How did Satan predict Job would react when his wealth and other blessings were taken away? (See Job 1:11; 2:4–5.) How did Job react when this happened? (See Job 1:20–22; 2:10.) What can we learn from these reactions?
- Despite his adversity, Job “sinned not, nor charged God foolishly” (Job 1:22). How do some people charge God foolishly when sorrow, misfortune, or tragedy strike? (They may blame God or question his wisdom or providence, feeling that he does not understand or love them. Some may even question his existence.)

## 2. Job finds strength in the Lord.

Teach and discuss Job 13:13–16; 19:23–27.

- Job’s trust in the Lord was a great source of spiritual strength for him (Job 13:13–16). What does it mean to trust in the Lord? How can we develop trust in the Lord that will sustain us through trials? (See Romans 8:28; 2 Nephi 2:2, 11, 24; D&C 58:2–4; 122:5–9.) Testify that because the Lord loves us, he has assured us that as we are faithful, all things will be for our good and help us grow.
- In chapter 19, Job described the trials that had befallen him, then testified of the Savior. How did Job’s testimony of the Savior help him endure his trials? (See Job 19:25–27.) How can a testimony of the Savior give us strength during adversity?

You may want to have class members sing “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” (*Hymns*, no. 136), or you could play a recording of this hymn.

## 3. Job finds strength in his personal righteousness and integrity.

Teach and discuss Job 27:2–6.

- Job’s integrity was another source of spiritual strength during his afflictions (Job 27:2–6). What is integrity? How did personal integrity strengthen Job during his trials? How can personal integrity help us during times of trial? (As we maintain our integrity, we can gain strength from knowing that the course of our lives is pleasing to the Lord.)

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin defined *integrity* as “always doing what is right and good, regardless of the immediate consequences. It means being righteous from the very depth of our soul, not only in our actions but, more important, in our thoughts and in our hearts. Personal integrity implies such trustworthiness and incorruptibility that we are incapable of being false to a trust or covenant” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1990, 38; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 30).

## 4. After Job has faithfully endured his trials, the Lord blesses him.

Teach and discuss Job 42:10–17.

- After Job had faithfully endured his trials, how did the Lord bless him? (See Job 42:10–15; James 5:11.) How does the Lord bless us as we faithfully endure trials? (See Job 23:10; 3 Nephi 15:9. Encourage class members to share personal experiences. You may want to point out that although the Lord blessed Job with “twice as much as he had before,” the spiritual blessings the Lord gives us as we faithfully endure are even greater than the temporal blessings.)

Elder Orson F. Whitney said: “No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude and humility. All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts, expands our souls, and makes us more tender and charitable, more worthy to be called the children of God . . . and it is through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we



come here to acquire and which will make us more like our Father and Mother in heaven” (quoted in Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, 98).

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: “I am like a huge, rough stone rolling down from a high mountain; and the only polishing I get is when some corner gets rubbed off by coming in contact with something else, . . . knocking off a corner here and a corner there. Thus I will become a smooth and polished shaft in the quiver of the Almighty” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 304).

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## Conclusion

Summarize your discussion of the book of Job, emphasizing that we can receive strength to endure our trials by trusting in the Lord, building our testimonies of him, and maintaining our integrity so we can know our lives are pleasing to him. You might want to tell class members about a time when you received strength during adversity. Suggest that class members contemplate how they can apply the principles discussed in this lesson to help them endure adversity.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. Job’s friends

- How did Eliphaz and Bildad, two of Job’s friends, explain his suffering? (See Job 4:7–8; 8:6. They thought Job’s suffering was a punishment from God for sins that Job had committed.) What are the dangers of believing that all suffering comes as God’s punishment for our sins?
- What can the errors of Job’s friends teach us about helping people who suffer adversity?

### 2. Questions to ask during adversity

Elder Richard G. Scott said: “When you face adversity, you can be led to ask many questions. Some serve a useful purpose; others do not. To ask, Why does this have to happen to me? Why do I have to suffer this now? What have I done to cause this? will lead you into blind alleys. It really does no good to ask questions that reflect opposition to the will of God. Rather ask, What am I to do? What am I to learn from this experience? What am I to change? Whom am I to help? How can I remember my many blessings in times of trial?” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 18; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 17).

### 3. Keeping perspective during adversity

President Spencer W. Kimball said:

“If we looked at mortality as the whole of existence, then pain, sorrow, failure, and short life would be calamity. But if we look upon life as an eternal thing stretching far into the premortal past and on into the eternal post-death future, then all happenings may be put in proper perspective.

“ . . . Are we not exposed to temptations to test our strength, sickness that we might learn patience, death that we might be immortalized and glorified?

“If all the sick for whom we pray were healed, if all the righteous were protected and the wicked destroyed, the whole program of the Father would be annulled and the basic principle of the gospel, free agency, would be ended. No man would have to live by faith” (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1975], 97).

#### **4. Prosperity of the wicked is short-lived**

- Sometimes the wicked seem to prosper while the righteous suffer. What does the book of Job teach about the seeming prosperity of the wicked? (See Job 21; 24.)

Lesson  
**33**

# Sharing the Gospel with the World

*Jonah 1–4; Micah 2; 4–7*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to fulfill their responsibilities as latter-day Israel to love all the people of the world and share the blessings of the gospel with them.

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**Preparation** Prayerfully study the following scriptures:

- a. Jonah 1–2. The Lord calls Jonah to preach repentance to the people of Nineveh. Jonah tries to flee from the Lord on a ship, is swallowed by a great fish, prays, and is delivered from the belly of the fish.
- b. Jonah 3–4. Jonah prophesies the downfall of Nineveh and is angry when the people of Nineveh repent and the Lord spares the city (the Joseph Smith Translation of Jonah 3:9–10 explains that the people, not God, repented). The Lord uses a gourd and a worm to teach Jonah that he should love all people.
- c. Micah 2:12–13; 4:1–7, 11–13; 5:2–4, 7–8; 6:6–8; 7:18–20. Micah prophesies of the mission of Israel in the last days.

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## Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

- How many young men in the Church does the Lord want to serve full-time missions? (All worthy, able young men.) Why is it important that each of these young men respond to this call? Who else is eligible to serve full-time missions? (Worthy single sisters 21 years of age or older and senior couples when their circumstances allow.)

In 1979, President Spencer W. Kimball spoke of the need for more missionaries who could preach the gospel to people in all parts of the world. He declared: “I believe the Lord can do anything he sets his mind to do. But I can see no good reason why the Lord would open doors that we are not prepared to enter” (“The Uttermost Parts of the Earth,” *Ensign*, July 1979, 9).

This lesson will discuss how the lives and writings of Jonah and Micah can help us understand our responsibility to love all people and share the blessings of the gospel with them.

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**Scripture Discussion and Application** As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

**1. Jonah is called to preach to Nineveh, but he runs away.**

Teach and discuss Jonah 1–2.

- Why did the Lord want Jonah to go to Nineveh? (See Jonah 1:2.) Why might Jonah have been reluctant to accept a mission call to Nineveh? (See Nahum 3:1–5, where the great wickedness and violence of Nineveh are described. The people of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, were enemies to Israel.)
- Why did Jonah go to Tarshish? (See Jonah 1:3.) In what ways do we sometimes try to escape from the presence of the Lord or from callings extended to us by his representatives? What are the results of such efforts?
- How did the Lord show mercy and help Jonah repent? (See Jonah 1:4–2:10.) What did Jonah learn while he was inside the great fish? (See Jonah 2:1–9.) How does the Lord help us repent and return to his ways?
- During his earthly ministry, the Savior spoke about the “sign of the prophet Jonas [Jonah]” (Matthew 12:39). What did this sign mean? (See Matthew 12:39–41. Jonah spent three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish and then was brought forth alive. The Savior would spend three days and nights buried in the earth and then would come forth resurrected.)
- Through his prophets, the Lord has repeatedly commanded every worthy, able young man to serve a full-time mission. He has also encouraged senior couples to serve as full-time missionaries if they are able. (See the additional teaching ideas.) What are some reasons why some able young men and senior couples choose not to serve missions? (Lack of commitment and faith, unworthiness, unwillingness to leave the comforts of home and family, fear of what might be expected of them.) What can we learn from the story of Jonah that can help us be more valiant in obeying the Lord and sharing the gospel?

## **2. The people of Nineveh respond to Jonah’s message and repent.**

Teach and discuss Jonah 3–4.

- After Jonah repented, the Lord called him again to preach repentance to the people of Nineveh. How did the people of Nineveh respond to Jonah’s message? (See Jonah 3:5–9 and footnote 9a. In ancient times, people clothed themselves in coarse cloth, called sackcloth, and sat in ashes to show that they were humble and repentant.) How did God respond to the change in the people? (See Jonah 3:10 and footnote 10c.)
- Jonah had prophesied the downfall of Nineveh (Jonah 3:4). How did Jonah respond when the Lord forgave the people of Nineveh? (See Jonah 4:1–3. He was angry because the Lord was merciful to the people.)
- What did the Lord teach Jonah by the growth of the gourd that gave shade and comfort and then died? (See Jonah 4:4–11. God loves all his children. Just as he showed mercy to Jonah, he desired to show mercy to the repentant people of Nineveh.) What can Jonah’s experience teach us about loving other people?

## **3. Micah prophecies of the mission of latter-day Israel.**

Teach and discuss the following passages from Micah.

The prophet Micah called on the people of Israel to repent of their wickedness and return to the Lord. He prophesied of the destruction of Jacob (Israel) and Judah. He also prophesied that latter-day Israel (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) would accomplish the purposes of the Lord with great power.

- What promises did the Lord give in Micah 2:12–13? (He promised that he would gather the remnant of Israel, that they would become a great multitude, and that he would lead them.) How are these promises being fulfilled today?
- Some of Micah’s great prophecies about the latter days are recorded in Micah 4:1–7. What did Micah prophesy about the latter-day temple? (See verses 1–2.) What did he prophesy about the Millennium? (See verses 3–7.) Why are these prophecies important to us?
- What can we learn from Micah 4:11–13 about the latter-day destiny of Israel? (In the ancient world, oxen were often used to thresh grain. They would walk over the grain, separating the chaff from the kernel. The chaff was blown away and the kernel saved. The nations that oppose Zion will be gathered as sheaves and then be threshed by Israel.) How might this separation of the chaff from the kernel be compared to latter-day Israel’s responsibility to do missionary work throughout the world? (See D&C 29:7; 33:5–7.)
- Of whom did Micah prophesy in Micah 5:2–4? (Compare this prophecy to the record of its fulfillment in Matthew 2:4–6.)
- What are the Lord’s people compared to in Micah 5:7? How can the image of dew or showers on the grass be compared to the effect of Church members on the people of the world? What do you think Micah meant by saying that these showers will not wait “for the sons of men”? (Just as mortals cannot stop dew from forming or showers from falling, nothing can stop the Lord’s work from progressing throughout the world.)
- What are the Lord’s people compared to in Micah 5:8? What does this image suggest about the strength and power of the Lord’s work? (Just as a flock of sheep have no power to stop a young lion, no power on earth will be able to hinder the work of the Lord.)

In 1842 the Prophet Joseph Smith declared, “No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done” (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

- How can Micah 6:6–8 help us when we feel overwhelmed by all that is expected of us?
- After prophesying of the Lord’s work in the latter days, what conclusion did Micah come to about God’s nature? (See Micah 7:18–20.) What phrases in these verses could be applied to the Lord’s dealings with the people of Nineveh? Which of these phrases could be applied to the Lord’s dealings with us?

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**Conclusion** Bear testimony that the Lord loves all his children and that we, as latter-day Israel, have the great responsibility to share his love and the truths of the gospel with all people. Ask class members to share what they have learned from Jonah and Micah.

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**Additional Teaching Ideas**

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

**1. Every worthy, able young man should prepare to serve a mission**

Discuss the following statement from President Spencer W. Kimball:

“When I ask for more missionaries, I am not asking for more testimony-barren or unworthy missionaries. I am asking that we start earlier and train our missionaries better in every branch and every ward in the world. That is another challenge—that the young people will understand that it is a great privilege to go on a mission and that they must be physically well, mentally well, spiritually well, and that ‘the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.’ . . .

“The question is frequently asked: Should every young man fill a mission? And the answer has been given by the Lord. It is ‘Yes.’ Every young man should fill a mission” (“When the World Will Be Converted,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1974, 7–8).

**2. The need for couple missionaries**

Discuss the following statement from Elder David B. Haight:

“In behalf of the Brethren, this is a call for retired couples to seriously consider serving a mission. We desperately need more couples to help meet our needs. . . . Less than 50 percent of the requests for couple missionaries from [our] mission presidents are being filled. . . .

“The Brethren hope that many, many more couples will make themselves available for full-time service to the Church. The need is great! Hundreds of thousands of new members join the Church each year, and they need to hear a friendly voice of support and comfort from experienced members.

“The refrain, ‘I’ll go where you want me to go, dear Lord’ (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 270), should be more than a hymn we sing on Sunday. It should be our own prayer of faith as we serve wherever the Lord has need of us” (“Couple Missionaries: ‘A Wonderful Resource,’” *Ensign*, Feb. 1996, 7, 12).

Lesson  
**34**

# “I Will Betroth Thee unto Me in Righteousness”

*Hosea 1–3; 11; 13–14*

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**Purpose** To help class members understand that the Lord is loving and merciful and will forgive us when we repent and return to him.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. Hosea 1–3. Using the similitude of a faithful husband and an adulterous wife, Hosea describes the relationship between the Lord and Israel.
  - b. Hosea 11; 13–14. Because of his love for his people, the Lord continues to invite Israel to repent and return to him.
2. Additional reading: The rest of Hosea.
3. If you use the attention activity, write each of the following phrases on a separate piece of paper before class. If your class is small, prepare only one piece of paper for each class member.

“The children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea” (Hosea 1:10)  
“I will pour out my wrath upon them like water” (Hosea 5:10)  
“The Lord . . . shall come unto us as the rain” (Hosea 6:3)  
“He shall come as an eagle” (Hosea 8:1)  
“Israel is an empty vine” (Hosea 10:1)  
“Judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field” (Hosea 10:4)  
“They shall be . . . as the smoke out of the chimney” (Hosea 13:3)  
“I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps [cubs]” (Hosea 13:8)  
“I am like a green fir tree” (Hosea 14:8)

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## **Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Distribute the papers you have prepared among class members (see “Preparation” above). Explain that each of these phrases is a comparison from the book of Hosea. Have each class member who received a paper read the phrase aloud and suggest one possible meaning for the comparison. For example, saying someone is “as a lion” may indicate strength or fierceness.

- Why do you think Hosea and other prophets used comparisons? (Comparing a complicated or unfamiliar idea with one that is simpler or more familiar makes it more understandable to the people who are being taught. Comparisons also help provide a lot of detail in just a few words.)

Explain that in addition to these smaller comparisons, Hosea also used extended comparisons, which are called metaphors or similitudes (*similitude* is the word

used in the scriptures). The book of Hosea contains several comparisons to help us understand the relationship between Jesus Christ and his people.

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Scripture Discussion  
and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

**1. Using the similitude of a faithful husband and an adulterous wife, Hosea describes the relationship between the Lord and Israel.**

Teach and discuss Hosea 1–3. If you did not use the attention activity, explain what a similitude is before you begin the discussion.

One of the most frequently used similitudes in the scriptures describes the Lord as a bridegroom (or husband) and his covenant people as his bride (or wife). Hosea 1–3 powerfully uses this similitude, comparing Israel’s idol worship to adultery. In these chapters the prophet Hosea represents the Lord as the husband, and Gomer represents Israel as the wife.

- In the book of Hosea, the Lord’s relationship with Israel (and with the Church today) is compared to the relationship between a husband and wife. What does this comparison teach us about the level of commitment and devotion the Lord expects from us?
- In what way was ancient Israel comparable to Gomer, who is described as “a wife of whoredoms”? (See Hosea 1:2–3; 2:5, 13. Gomer had left her husband for her lovers; Israel had forgotten the Lord and become wicked.)
- Who or what were Israel’s “lovers”—the things that caused the people to turn from the Lord? (Other gods, material goods, and the practices of the world.) What things may divert us from our dedication to following the Savior?
- To whom did the adulterous wife give credit for her food and clothing? (See Hosea 2:5.) To whom did the Israelites attribute the fruitful land in which they lived? (See Hosea 2:5, 12; to their false gods or idols.) How do people today give credit to false gods for the blessings they receive?
- How did the husband remind his wife that he—not her lovers—supplied her with food, water, and other possessions? (See Hosea 2:8–9.) In what ways has the Lord provided you with material and spiritual blessings? How can we show our appreciation to the Lord for the blessings he gives us?
- What was the attitude of the husband toward his unfaithful wife in Hosea 2:6–13? How was this attitude different in verses 14–23? (Point out that even though the wife had been unfaithful, the husband still loved her and wanted her to come back to him. Likewise, the Lord still loves his people who have gone astray, and he wants them to turn again to him.)

Elder Henry B. Eyring explained: “This was a love story. This was a story of a marriage covenant bound by love, by steadfast love. . . . The Lord, with whom I am blessed to have made covenants, loves me, and you, . . . with a steadfastness about which I continually marvel and which I want with all my heart to emulate” (*Covenants and Sacrifice* [address delivered at the Church Educational System Symposium, 15 Aug. 1995], 2).



- What did the husband promise his wife if she would return to him? (See Hosea 2:19.) What does the Lord promise his people if they will repent and return to him? (See Hosea 2:20, 23.) Why is this promise important?
- In Hosea 3:1–2, the husband purchased his wife from her lover (you may want to explain that in Old Testament cultures, women were often considered property and could be bought or sold). What did the husband require of his wife after he purchased her? (See Hosea 3:3.) What did he promise her? In what sense has Jesus Christ “bought” each of us? (See 1 Peter 1:18–19.) What does Christ require of us in return?

**2. Because of his love for his people, the Lord continues to invite Israel to repent and return to him.**

Teach and discuss Hosea 11; 13–14.

Throughout the book of Hosea, the Lord reproves the Israelites for their great sins. After the Lord, through Hosea, describes the captivity and destruction that will result from Israel’s wickedness, he again invites his people to repent and return to him.

- Another similitude often used in the scriptures to describe the relationship between the Lord and his people is the master-animal relationship. This similitude is used briefly in Hosea 11:4. What do we learn about the Lord’s feelings for his people through this comparison? (See also Hosea 11:7–9. Note that the Joseph Smith Translation of verse 8 says “mine heart is turned toward thee” instead of “mine heart is turned within me.”)
- Several times the Lord reminded the Israelites of how their ancestors were delivered out of captivity in Egypt (Hosea 11:1; 12:9, 13; 13:4–5). What might this event be a similitude of? (See Hosea 13:14. As the Lord delivered the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt, so will he deliver them—and all people who come unto him—from sin and death.)
- What did the Israelites need to do to return to the Lord and receive deliverance? (See Hosea 12:6; 14:2–3. They needed to repent of their sins and renounce the other gods they had worshiped.) What did the Lord promise to do if they repented? (See Hosea 14:4–7.) What does the Lord promise he will do if we repent of our sins?
- How do the similitudes in the book of Hosea help you understand how the Savior feels about you?

Conclusion

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Testify that while the Lord’s blessings are reserved for those who keep his commandments, his love is constant and extended to all. Even when we turn away from him through sin, the Lord loves us and wants us to repent and return to him. Encourage class members to be faithful to the Lord.

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**Additional  
Teaching Ideas**

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

**1. “I desired mercy, and not sacrifice” (Hosea 6:6)**

In Hosea 6:6 the Lord tells Israel, “I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.” During his earthly ministry, Christ twice referred to this verse to answer criticism from the Pharisees (Matthew 9:13; 12:7). After examining the context of these two references (Matthew 9:10–13; 12:1–8), discuss what this verse means.

**2. “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself” (Hosea 13:9)**

During Hosea’s ministry, the Northern Kingdom (Israel) was attacked by the Assyrians, who would eventually destroy the kingdom and take the people captive. In a literal sense the Assyrians were responsible for the destruction of Israel. But the Lord said, “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself” (Hosea 13:9).

- In what sense had Israel destroyed itself? What was Israel’s only hope for salvation after the destruction of their nation? (See Hosea 13:9–10; 14:1.) How can following Jesus Christ protect us from temporal and spiritual destruction?

**3. Repentance**

If it is available, you may want to show “Repentance: It’s Never Too Late,” a six-minute segment from *Family Home Evening Video Supplement 2* (53277).

Lesson  
**35**

# God Reveals His Secrets to His Prophets

*Amos 3; 7–9; Joel 2–3*

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**Purpose** To teach class members that in the latter days, the Lord reveals his secrets to his prophets and pours out his Spirit on all people.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. Amos 3:6–7. Amos teaches that the Lord reveals his secrets to his servants the prophets.
  - b. Amos 7:10–17; 8:11–13; 9:8–15. Amos is called of God to be a prophet (7:10–15). He prophesies of the captivity and scattering of Israel (7:16–17; 9:8–10). He prophesies that there will be a famine of hearing the word of the Lord (8:11–13). He prophesies that in the last days Israel will be established as a great and prosperous people (9:11–15).
  - c. Joel 2; 3:16–17. Joel prophesies of the wars and calamities of the last days (2:1–11). He calls on the people to repent (2:12–14; note that the Joseph Smith Translation of verses 13 and 14 explains that the people, not the Lord, were to repent). Joel prophesies that God will bless his people in the latter days and pour out his Spirit upon them (2:15–32; 3:16–17).
2. Additional reading: Joseph Smith—History 1:41; Doctrine and Covenants 1:14–28, 37–38.
3. If you use the second attention activity, you may want to arrange for musical accompaniment for the hymn. You may also want to invite a class member to share briefly some recent counsel from the prophet.
4. If possible, obtain a picture of the living prophet.

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## Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use one of the following activities (or one of your own) to begin the lesson. Select the activity that would be most appropriate for the class.

1. Share the following story with class members:

“When I was a young wife and mother, my husband spent two years in the air force. We lived in military housing on Long Island, New York. While tending our young children, I often visited with neighbors who had come from all over the country. One day as a neighbor and I were talking about our beliefs, she became curious about what was different about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

“I told her briefly about the Restoration, and I explained that the restored Church of Jesus Christ has a living prophet today. This really seemed to pique her interest, and she wanted to know what the prophet had said. As I started

to tell her about the Doctrine and Covenants and modern revelation, she said, ‘But what has he said lately?’ I told her about general conference and that the Church had a monthly publication with a message from the prophet. Then she got really interested. I was so embarrassed to admit that I hadn’t read the current message. She concluded our conversation by saying, ‘You mean you have a living prophet and you don’t know what he said?’ ” (Janette Hales Beckham, “Sustaining the Living Prophets,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 84).

- If someone asked you what the living prophet has recently said, would you be able to answer the question?

Explain that this lesson emphasizes the importance of listening to and following the living prophet.

2. Ask class members to sing the hymn “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet” (*Hymns*, no. 19). Explain that it is important for us to study the counsel of our living prophet. Invite class members to share some counsel that he has given recently. Or invite an assigned class member to review briefly some recent counsel from the prophet.

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#### Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa, a small town south of Jerusalem. He ministered to the people of the kingdom of Israel from about 800 to 750 B.C. Most of these people were in apostasy. They loved riches and oppressed the poor, and they were so hardened that not even famine or pestilence humbled them. As Amos confronted the people with their sins, he prophesied even more dire penalties. Nevertheless, he emphasized that God was eager to cleanse anyone who would repent, exhorting, “Seek the Lord, and ye shall live” (Amos 5:6). Amos also prophesied about the latter days.

The prophet Joel ministered to the people of the kingdom of Judah. We do not know exactly when he lived, but his prophecies are of particular importance to us because many of them concern the latter days. Joel used the powerful image of a devouring host of locusts to symbolize the devastation that armies and God’s judgments would bring in the latter days. Joel also prophesied great blessings in the latter days, foreseeing that the Lord would “pour out [his] spirit upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28).

#### 1. Amos teaches that the Lord reveals his secrets to his servants the prophets.

Teach and discuss Amos 3:6–7.

- How do we hear the word of the Lord in our day? What did the prophet Amos teach about the importance of prophets? (See Amos 3:7.) What two words were changed in the Joseph Smith Translation of Amos 3:6–7? (See footnotes 6*b* and 7*a*; in verse 6 the word *known* is used instead of *done*, and in verse 7 the word *until* is used instead of *but*.) How do these changes clarify the meaning of the passage? Point out that the Joseph Smith Translation itself is an example of the Lord’s secrets being made known to a prophet for our benefit.

- What does Doctrine and Covenants 1:37–38 teach about the respect we should have for the messages of the prophets? (Display a picture of the living prophet.) As recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 21:4–5, what counsel and commandment did the Lord give the Saints on the day the Church was organized? What blessings did he promise if the Saints would do this? (See D&C 21:6.) How have you seen this promise fulfilled in your own life as you have obeyed the counsel of the prophets?

## 2. Amos prophecies of ancient and latter-day Israel.

Teach and discuss Amos 7:10–17; 8:11–13; 9:8–15.

- Why did Amaziah, a priest in the kingdom of Israel, ask Amos to leave the land? (See Amos 7:10–17. Amos had prophesied that evil would come to the people and their king. Amaziah and his people did not want to hear the truth about their evil doings.) What do verses 14 through 17 teach us about the prophet Amos? (He had integrity and courage. He would not change what the Lord told him to say but continued to prophesy that evil would come to the people if they did not repent.)
- In all ages of time, why have so many people rejected or ignored prophets' messages? What did Amos prophesy would be the result if Israel rejected the counsel of the prophets? (See Amos 8:11–13. Spiritual famine, or apostasy, would result.) What are the results for us personally if we reject the counsel of the prophets?

Amos's prophecy of a spiritual famine was fulfilled among the children of Israel after the time of Malachi, the last Old Testament prophet. This period ended approximately 400 years later when John the Baptist was called to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. Amos's prophecy also applies to the Great Apostasy, the centuries of spiritual darkness that followed the death of the Savior's Apostles and ended with the restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

- In what ways can the absence of the word of the Lord be compared to a famine? What evidence do you see that people today are wandering "from sea to sea" seeking for the word of the Lord? How can having the blessings of the restored gospel be compared to a feast?
- What message of hope concludes the book of Amos? (See Amos 9:8–15. The children of Israel would not be completely destroyed, they would be scattered among all the nations, and in the last days they would be reestablished as a great and prosperous people. Note that at the end of verse 9, the Lord makes clear that he is concerned about each member of the house of Israel.)

## 3. Joel prophecies that God will bless his people in the latter days and pour out his Spirit upon them.

Teach and discuss Joel 2; 3:16–17.

The prophet Joel described some of the events of the latter days that would precede the Second Coming. He described the march of a great army that would cause great destruction because of the wickedness of the people (Joel 2:1–11). He called on Israel to repent and turn to the Lord, promised that God would be

in their midst, and described the eventual triumph and redemption of Israel (Joel 2:12–32).

- Write *Joel 2:12–32* and *Joel 3:16–17* on the chalkboard. Ask class members to review these passages and look for answers to the following question: What invitations has the Lord given to those living in the latter days?

Write the word *Invitations* on the chalkboard. As class members mention phrases, write key words from each invitation on the chalkboard. Encourage class members to mark these phrases in their scriptures. The following are some invitations that might be mentioned:

#### *Invitations*

- “Turn ye even to me with all your heart” (Joel 2:12).
  - “Rend your heart” (Joel 2:13, meaning to break your heart or be humble).
  - “Turn unto the Lord your God” (Joel 2:13).
  - “Sanctify the congregation” (Joel 2:16).
  - “Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice” (Joel 2:21).
- What do these invitations suggest about the importance of turning to the Lord with all our hearts? What can we do to sanctify ourselves so we are worthy of the Lord’s promised blessings?
  - Ask class members to review Joel 2:12–32 and Joel 3:16–17 again, looking for answers to the following question: What blessings has the Lord promised to those who follow him in the latter days?

Write the word *Blessings* on the chalkboard. As class members mention phrases, write key words from each blessing on the chalkboard. Class members may also want to mark these phrases in their scriptures. The following are some blessings that might be mentioned:

#### *Blessings*

- “He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and he will turn away the evil from you” (Joseph Smith Translation, Joel 2:13; see footnote 13*b*).
  - The Lord will “pity his people” (Joel 2:18).
  - The Lord will drive the northern army (described in verses 1–11) into a barren place (Joel 2:20).
  - “Ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied” (Joel 2:26).
  - “I am in the midst of Israel, . . . and my people shall never be ashamed” (Joel 2:27).
  - “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28; see also verse 29).
  - Young and old will prophesy, dream dreams, and see visions (Joel 2:28).
  - “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered” (Joel 2:32).
  - “The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem” (Joel 3:16).
  - “The Lord will be the hope of his people” (Joel 3:16).
  - “The Lord will be the . . . strength of the children of Israel” (Joel 3:16).
  - “So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion” (Joel 3:17).
- What do these blessings teach about the Lord’s commitment to his covenant people? about his power in behalf of his Saints? about his mercy and love? about our opportunities in the last days?

- Joel’s declaration that the Lord would pour out his Spirit on all people in the latter days (Joel 2:28–29) is a stark contrast to the famine that Amos described (Amos 8:11–12). The angel Moroni quoted Joel’s prophecy to Joseph Smith and told him that it was not yet fulfilled but was soon to be (Joseph Smith—History 1:41). What examples have you seen of this outpouring in the lives of youth and adults today?

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## Conclusion

Emphasize that it is a great blessing to live in the latter days, when many prophecies are being fulfilled and when we have the guidance of a living prophet. Encourage class members to prayerfully study the words of the living prophet and apply his counsel in their lives.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. Becoming at ease in Zion

- Amos warned the people about becoming “at ease in Zion” (Amos 6:1). What does it mean to become at ease in Zion? (See 2 Nephi 28:19–24, 27, 29–30.) In what ways might we be at ease in Zion today? How can we guard against this?

### 2. “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28)

- All the modern inventions of travel and communication have come since the gospel was restored. How do these developments help fulfill Joel’s prophecy in Joel 2:28–29? How do these developments help further the work of the Lord in our day?

You may want to read the following statement from Elder Joseph Fielding Smith to help class members understand the great benefit of these inventions in performing the work of the Lord:

“I maintain that had there been no restoration of the gospel, and no organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, there would have been no radio; there would have been no airplane, and there would not have been the wonderful discoveries in medicine, chemistry, electricity, and the many other things wherein the world has been benefited by such discoveries. Under such conditions these blessings would have been withheld, for they belong to the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times of which the restoration of the gospel and the organization of the Church constitute the central point, from which radiates the Spirit of the Lord throughout the world. The inspiration of the Lord has gone out and takes hold of the minds of men, though they know it not, and they are directed by the Lord. In this manner he brings them into his service that his purposes and his righteousness, in due time, may be supreme on the earth.

“. . . I do not believe for one moment that these discoveries have come by chance, or that they have come because of superior intelligence possessed by men today over those who lived in ages that are past. They have come and are coming because the time is ripe, because the Lord has willed it, and because he has poured out his Spirit on all flesh” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1926, 117).

# The Glory of Zion Will Be a Defense

Lesson  
**36**

*Isaiah 1–6*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to avoid the evils of the world by standing in holy places and to help them draw strength from Isaiah’s willingness to serve.

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**Preparation** 1. Prayerfully study the passages from Isaiah 1–6 that are discussed in this lesson.  
2. Additional reading: 2 Nephi 11.

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## Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Explain that the Lord often repeats the same idea many times throughout the scriptures. Write the following references on the chalkboard and ask class members to discover what counsel the Lord has given to help us endure the trials of the last days:

Doctrine and Covenants 45:32  
Doctrine and Covenants 87:8  
Doctrine and Covenants 101:22

Write on the chalkboard *“Stand ye in holy places, and be not moved.”*

- What do you think this phrase means? (Answers may include being worthy at all times, desiring to be in holy places frequently, choosing not to go into unholy places, having confidence that God will guide you, and taking a stand for truth and holiness.)

Explain that in this lesson, class members will discover why the Lord has commanded us to stand in holy places and what these holy places are.

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**Scripture Discussion and Application** As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

“Great are the words of Isaiah,” the Savior proclaimed as he commanded the Nephites to search Isaiah’s prophecies (3 Nephi 23:1). Isaiah’s prophecies are quoted more often in the New Testament, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants than the words of any other prophet. He prophesied many things about the earthly mission of the Savior, about the destruction that would follow Israel’s wickedness, and about the mission and destiny of latter-day Israel.



## 1. Isaiah describes the condition of the world in the last days.

- Many of Isaiah's warnings and prophecies apply both to his time, which was a time of great wickedness, and to our time. How are the conditions described in the following scriptures evident in the world today? (You may want to write the references on the chalkboard and have class members find them.)
  - a. Isaiah 1:3–5 (Rebellion against the Lord)
  - b. Isaiah 1:11–15 (Religious ceremonies without meaning or faith)
  - c. Isaiah 2:7–8 (Worship of worldly things and military security instead of the Lord; note that horses and chariots were used as instruments of war in ancient times)
  - d. Isaiah 2:11–12 (Pride)
  - e. Isaiah 3:5 (Oppression of other people and failing to honor older people)
  - f. Isaiah 3:9 (No shame for sin)
  - g. Isaiah 3:14–15 (Taking advantage of the poor and failing to care for them)
  - h. Isaiah 3:16–24 (Emphasis on outward physical beauty at the expense of righteousness and good character)
  - i. Isaiah 5:8 (Greedy desires to own more and more material things)
  - j. Isaiah 5:11–12 (Constantly seeking worldly pleasures instead of seeking the Lord and his work)
  - k. Isaiah 5:20 (Saying that evil things are good and good things are evil)
  - l. Isaiah 5:21 (Trusting in oneself instead of in God)
  - m. Isaiah 5:24 (Despising the commandments and word of God)
- How are these prophecies being fulfilled today? (See the additional teaching idea for further discussion of some of these prophecies.)

## 2. Isaiah counsels the faithful to stand in holy places.

- What places offer safety from the worldly conditions mentioned by Isaiah? What are the three holy places mentioned in Isaiah 4:5–6?
  - a. Every dwelling place of mount Zion (homes)
  - b. Assemblies (stakes, wards, and branches; see also D&C 115:5–6)
  - c. Tabernacle (temples)
- How can a home be a holy place that offers refuge from the wickedness of the world? How can stakes, wards, and branches be holy places and refuges? How can a temple be a holy place and refuge? How have these three holy places helped provide a defense for you against the evils of the world?

You may want to write *Stand in Holy Places* on the chalkboard and then write below it *1. Homes; 2. Stakes, Wards, and Branches; and 3. Temples*. List class members' comments under each heading.

- What expressions are used in Isaiah 4:5–6 to describe how these holy places will protect us?
  - a. "A shadow in the daytime from the heat"
  - b. "A place of refuge"
  - c. "A covert [a hiding place or shelter] from storm and from rain"

- Many of Isaiah's writings are also included in the Book of Mormon. Have class members read 2 Nephi 14:5 to discover what words are added to Isaiah 4:5. (The words *of Zion* are added.) What do these words add to our understanding of this verse?
- What prophecy about temples in the last days is included in Isaiah 2:2–3? (Many people will come to the house of God, which is the temple, and desire to learn God's commandments and walk in his ways.) Why do you think Isaiah described the temple as a "mountain of the Lord"? (Ancient prophets often went to mountains to commune with the Lord and receive counsel from him. He revealed things to them there. We can have similar experiences in the temple today.)

### 3. Isaiah describes the gathering of Israel in the latter days.

In Isaiah 5:26–29, Isaiah describes the latter-day gathering of Israel. The ensign that is being lifted up is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To "hiss" is to whistle or summon, which represents the invitation to the nations of the earth to gather to the Church. This gathering will be swift and powerful.

- How is the prophecy that nations will be gathered to the Church being fulfilled today? (Missionaries are going throughout the world to teach the gospel and gather people to the truth.) What can each of us do to help fulfill this prophecy?

### 4. Isaiah responded willingly to his call to be a prophet.

The Lord called Isaiah to be a prophet through a vision in which Isaiah saw the Lord in his glory. This vision is recorded in Isaiah 6.

- How did Isaiah describe the glory of the Lord? (See Isaiah 6:1–4.) What was Isaiah's response when he saw the Lord? (See Isaiah 6:5. Isaiah felt unworthy to be in the Lord's presence.) How did the Lord symbolically show that Isaiah was clean before him? (See Isaiah 6:6–7.) How did Isaiah respond when the Lord called him to be a prophet? (See Isaiah 6:8.)
- In accepting his call, Isaiah used the same words as the Savior did when He accepted the responsibility to carry out the plan of our Father in Heaven for the salvation of his children (Abraham 3:27). What are some situations in which we may also need to answer the Lord with similar words? (Answers could include when we are called to serve missions, when we are asked to serve in the Church, and when we are asked to endure difficult trials.)
- Many chapters of Isaiah are recorded in the Book of Mormon, including chapters 2 through 6. What reasons did the prophet Nephi give for including Isaiah's writings in his record? (See 2 Nephi 11:8.)
- Which messages from these chapters from Isaiah cause you to rejoice? Which messages of these chapters do you feel are most important to liken to yourself?

## Conclusion

The words of Isaiah teach us many things about the latter days. By studying Isaiah's counsel, we can learn how to stand in holy places and avoid the evils of the world. By following his example, we can be more willing servants of our Father in Heaven.

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**Additional  
Teaching Idea**

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use it as part of the lesson.

**Further discussion of Isaiah’s prophecies in Isaiah 1–6**

*Making our religious observances acceptable to the Lord*

- According to Isaiah 1:11, 16–17, why were the Israelites’ sacrifices unacceptable to the Lord? (Although the Israelites tried to be outwardly religious, their hearts were far from God. See also Matthew 5:23–24; Moroni 7:6–9.) Why do some people try to be outwardly religious even though their hearts are far from God? Why does this kind of hypocrisy offend God?

*The blessings of forgiveness*

- Isaiah provided two beautiful images that help us understand how completely the Lord will forgive those who repent. He said, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18). How can these images help us when we have sinned and feel far from the Lord? (See also D&C 58:42.)

*Avoiding worldliness in appearance*

- Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said that the prophecy in Isaiah 3:16–24 refers to today’s Church members and “pertains to the men as well as to the women” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957–66], 5:174). How might our manner of dress reflect or influence our spiritual well-being? What does it mean to dress modestly? What are the dangers of becoming too concerned with our dress and personal appearance? (See Alma 31:27–28.) How can we teach children to avoid worldliness in appearance?

*Calling evil good and good evil*

- Why was Israel’s ability to distinguish between good and evil impaired? (See Isaiah 5:20.) In what ways do people today call evil good and good evil? What can we do to ensure that we recognize the difference between good and evil? (See 2 Nephi 32:5; D&C 45:57.)

*“Wise in their own eyes”*

- What did Isaiah mean when he warned people not to be “wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight”? (Isaiah 5:21). What causes this problem? Why is it dangerous? How can we guard against it?

*“His hand is stretched out still”*

- What message did Isaiah emphasize in Isaiah 5:25, 9:12, 9:17, 9:21, and 10:4? Why is this message important? How have you come to know of the truth of this message?

# “Thou Hast Done Wonderful Things”

Lesson  
**37**

*Isaiah 22; 24–26; 28–30*

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**Purpose** To help class members come unto Christ through recognizing some of the wonderful things he has done.

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**Preparation** Prayerfully study the following scriptures:

- Isaiah 22:22. The Savior opens the door to Heavenly Father’s presence.
- Isaiah 24:21–22. The Savior shows mercy for those in spirit prison.
- Isaiah 25:1–4; 32:1–2. The Savior is a strength and a refuge.
- Isaiah 25:6–9. The Savior will prepare a feast and destroy the “vail.”
- Isaiah 25:8. The Savior wipes away our tears.
- Isaiah 26:19. The Savior will bring the Resurrection.
- Isaiah 28:16. The Savior is our sure foundation.
- Isaiah 29:4, 9–14, 18, 24. The Savior will restore the gospel to the earth.
- Isaiah 30:19–21. The Savior knows our trials and directs our paths.

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## **Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Tell class members about a family member or friend who has done a wonderful thing for you. Invite class members to talk about people who have done wonderful things for them. Ask them to briefly describe their feelings toward those people. Explain that this lesson will emphasize some of the wonderful things the Savior has done.

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**Scripture Discussion and Application** As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

Explain that the prophet Isaiah did much of his teaching in symbolic language. This language does not teach directly, so we must examine and ponder Isaiah’s words to discover the truths they teach.

Some of Isaiah’s most beautiful and profound symbolic language is about the Savior, who is the focus of this lesson. You may want to write on the chalkboard *“His name shall be called Wonderful”* (Isaiah 9:6). As you discuss the following prophecies about the Savior, summarize each of them on the chalkboard.

### **1. The Savior opens the door to Heavenly Father's presence.**

Discuss Isaiah 22:22.

- Isaiah 22:22 says that the Messiah has “the key of the house of David.” This is a symbolic way of saying the Savior has the power to admit or exclude any person from Heavenly Father's presence. (See also Revelation 3:7–8; 2 Nephi 9:41.) What did the Savior do to open this door for us? What must we do to be able to enter? (See 2 Nephi 9:45.)

### **2. The Savior shows mercy for those in spirit prison.**

Discuss Isaiah 24:21–22.

- What prison is referred to in Isaiah 24:21–22? (Spirit prison, the place where the spirits of some deceased mortals go while awaiting the Resurrection.) Why are the spirits of some deceased mortals in spirit prison? (See D&C 138:32. Some of them did not receive the gospel on earth, and others were not valiant in their testimonies.)
- What did the Savior do for the spirits in prison? (See Isaiah 42:5–7; D&C 138:29–37. He organized righteous spirits to teach them the gospel.) How did this demonstrate the Savior's love and mercy? (See Isaiah 49:9–10.)

### **3. The Savior is a strength and a refuge.**

Discuss Isaiah 25:1–4; 32:1–2.

- Isaiah wrote of the Savior strengthening us during the storms, tempests, deserts, and heat of our lives. What do the following images teach about how the Savior helps us when we face such challenges?
  - a. He is a refuge from the storm (Isaiah 25:4).
  - b. He is a shadow from the heat (Isaiah 25:4).
  - c. He is a hiding place from the wind (Isaiah 32:2).
  - d. He is a covert (cover) from the tempest (Isaiah 32:2).
  - e. He is rivers of water in a dry place (Isaiah 32:2).
  - f. He is the shadow of a great rock in a weary (thirsty) land (Isaiah 32:2).

### **4. The Savior will prepare a feast and destroy the “vail.”**

Discuss Isaiah 25:6–9.

- One interpretation of Isaiah 25:6–7 is that the mountain is a symbol for the temple (see also Isaiah 2:2; D&C 58:8–9). What is the feast mentioned in Isaiah 25:6? (A feast of the words and teachings of Christ.) How can temple attendance be like a feast?
- A veil is a thin covering. Symbolically it often represents the unbelief that prevents people from truly coming to Christ (Moses 7:26). How will the “vail” that is over the earth be destroyed? (See Isaiah 25:7–9.)

### **5. The Savior wipes away our tears.**

Discuss Isaiah 25:8.

- What do you do when someone you love is crying? How does the Savior “wipe away [our] tears”? (Suggest that class members picture a parent wiping tears away from a child’s face. There is a sense of intimacy in this act. It is a tender gesture that is shared only by people who love and trust each other deeply.)
- What are the conditions mentioned in Revelation 21:4 that cause tears? How will the Savior wipe away the tears that are caused by these conditions?

## 6. The Savior will bring the Resurrection.

Discuss Isaiah 26:19.

- Isaiah prophesied that when the Messiah would come, he would die and be resurrected (Isaiah 25:8). Who else will be resurrected? (See Isaiah 26:19; 1 Corinthians 15:20–22; Alma 11:43–44. All the children of God who have lived on the earth will be resurrected.) What does Isaiah 26:19 suggest about how we will feel when we are resurrected? (See also D&C 138:12–16, 50.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: “When the voice calls for the dead to arise, . . . what would be the first joy of my heart? To meet my father, my mother, my brother, my sister; and when they are by my side, I embrace them and they me” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 295–96).

## 7. The Savior is our sure foundation.

Discuss Isaiah 28:16.

- What does Isaiah tell us about the Savior by referring to him as a “tried stone”? (See Mosiah 3:17.) How is Jesus Christ our “sure foundation”? (See Helaman 5:12.) What can we do to build on this foundation? What does the Lord promise if we build on this foundation? (See D&C 50:44.)

## 8. The Savior will restore the gospel to the earth.

Discuss Isaiah 29:4, 9–14, 18, 24.

- What did Isaiah foresee about the latter-day restoration of the gospel? (See Isaiah 29:4, 9–14. He foresaw that it would come at a time of spiritual darkness. He also foresaw the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.)

Compare the following verses in Isaiah 29 with corresponding passages in the Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price, and Doctrine and Covenants to see how some of Isaiah’s prophecies have been fulfilled:

- |                       |                                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. Isaiah 29:4        | Moroni 10:27                    |
| b. Isaiah 29:9–10, 13 | Joseph Smith—History 1:18–19    |
| c. Isaiah 29:11–12    | Joseph Smith—History 1:63–65    |
| d. Isaiah 29:14       | Doctrine and Covenants 4:1; 6:1 |

- Isaiah told of people drawing near to the Lord with their mouths while their hearts are far from Him (Isaiah 29:13). How can we make sure that we are close to the Lord in our thoughts and actions as well as in our words?

- Isaiah said that the Book of Mormon would help the spiritually deaf and blind to hear and see (Isaiah 29:18, 24). How has this prophecy been fulfilled? How has the Book of Mormon helped you see and hear better spiritually?

### 9. The Savior knows our trials and directs our paths.

Discuss Isaiah 30:19–21.

- What does Isaiah 30:19–21 teach about adversity? What do these verses teach about what the Savior will do for us when adversity comes? (See also Alma 37:37.)

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#### Conclusion

Bear your testimony of the Savior, expressing gratitude for the wonderful things he has done for us. Invite class members to review the list on the chalkboard and express how they feel when they think about these things. Discuss what we can do in return. (See Isaiah 35:3–4 for some suggestions.) You may also want to have class members sing “I Stand All Amazed” (*Hymns*, no. 193).

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#### Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

##### 1. Objects that represent some of Isaiah’s images

Display various objects or pictures that represent some of Isaiah’s images, such as a key, a stone, or a picture of shade in the desert, as you discuss these images.

##### 2. Music from Handel’s *Messiah*

Play a recording of “For unto Us a Child Is Born,” the musical rendition of Isaiah 9:6 from George Frideric Handel’s *Messiah*.

##### 3. “The Touch of the Master’s Hand”

If *Family Home Evening Video Supplement 2* (53277) is available, you may want to show “The Touch of the Master’s Hand,” an 18-minute segment, as part of the lesson.

# “Beside Me There Is No Saviour”

Lesson  
**38**

*Isaiah 40–49*

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**Purpose** To help class members understand that Jesus Christ is incomparable in his devotion to his people and that he has a great work for them to do.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the passages from Isaiah 40–49 that are discussed in this lesson.
2. If you use the attention activity, write the following quotations on a poster or on the chalkboard before class:
  - a. “What think ye of Christ?” (Matthew 22:42).
  - b. “What manner of men ought ye to be?” (3 Nephi 27:27).
  - c. “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? . . . Whom say ye that I am?” (Matthew 16:13, 15).
  - d. “Who is on the Lord’s side?” (Exodus 32:26).
  - e. “Have ye received his image in your countenances?” (Alma 5:14).
3. If *Family Home Evening Video Supplement 2* (53277) is available, you may want to show the five-minute segment “What Think Ye of Christ?” as part of the lesson.

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## **Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Refer class members to the quotations you have written on a poster or on the chalkboard (see “Preparation” above). Then ask the following questions:

- What do these quotations have in common? (All of them are questions from the scriptures that help us evaluate our testimony of the Savior and our commitment to be his disciples.) Why do you think there are so many questions like these in the scriptures?

Explain that part of this lesson focuses on scriptural questions that emphasize the greatness of the Savior.

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**Scripture Discussion  
and Application** As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share personal experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

### **1. Isaiah teaches that the Savior is incomparable.**

- Through Isaiah, the Lord repeatedly asked a certain question in different ways. What question is asked in each of the following verses?



- a. Isaiah 40:18 (“To whom then will ye liken God?”)
- b. Isaiah 44:8 (“Is there a God beside me?”)
- c. Isaiah 46:5 (“To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me?”)
- What is similar about the preceding questions? (They all teach that the Savior is greater than any person or thing we could compare him to.) How would you answer these questions? How are they answered in the book of Isaiah? (See the verses listed below, noting that in each case the Lord was speaking to idolatrous people who manufactured their own false gods of silver and gold.)
  - a. Isaiah 43:11 (“Beside me there is no saviour.”)
  - b. Isaiah 44:6 (“Beside me there is no God.”)
  - c. Isaiah 45:5 (“There is no God beside me”; see also verses 6, 14, 18, 21–22.)
  - d. Isaiah 46:9 (“I am God, and there is none like me.”)
- Why do you think these questions and answers are repeated so many times in the book of Isaiah? How are these questions and answers relevant to our day?

## 2. Isaiah describes the Savior’s incomparable qualities.

- The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that we need “a *correct* idea of [God’s] character, perfections and attributes” in order to have faith in Him (*Lectures on Faith* [1985], 38). Isaiah gives many beautiful descriptions of the Savior’s character and attributes. Have class members read some of the passages listed below and discuss the following questions: Which attribute of the Savior is mentioned in the passage? How does knowing of this attribute help increase our faith in the Savior? You may want to list these attributes on the chalkboard.
  - a. Isaiah 40:13–14 (No one counsels or instructs him.)
  - b. Isaiah 40:28–31 (He is never weary; he strengthens us.)
  - c. Isaiah 40:12, 21–22, 26; 45:12, 18 (He planned and created the universe and knows every part of it.)
  - d. Isaiah 41:17–18 (He hears us when we are in trouble and blesses us abundantly.)
  - e. Isaiah 42:1, 4 (He will not fail or be discouraged till his purposes are fulfilled.)
  - f. Isaiah 42:16 (He lights and straightens the way for his people who are lost.)
  - g. Isaiah 43:1–4 (He will help his people through their trials.)
  - h. Isaiah 43:25–26; 44:21–23 (He blots out our sins and remembers them no more.)
  - i. Isaiah 44:2–4 (He pours out his Spirit on our families like water on dry ground.)
  - j. Isaiah 46:3–4 (He carries his people from birth to old age.)
  - k. Isaiah 49:14–16 (He will never forget us. We are “graven” in the palms of his hands.)

Invite class members to tell of experiences that have strengthened their testimonies of any of these attributes of the Savior.

## 3. The world (Babylon) competes with the Savior for our devotion.

- To whom is Isaiah 47 directed? (See the chapter heading to Isaiah 47 and verse 1. Babylon was a powerful city of the ancient world that was destroyed for its

wickedness. In the scriptures, Babylon is often also used as a symbol for the wickedness of the world.)

- In chapter 47, Isaiah warned that Babylon would be destroyed because of its wickedness. These warnings can also be applied to the eventual destruction of the world and its wickedness. What do the following passages teach about the results of seeking after the wicked ways of the world?
  - a. Isaiah 47:1, 5 (The world will be brought down to the dust and become silent and dark.)
  - b. Isaiah 47:7–9 (Despite the world’s thoughts that it is invincible, it will be destroyed and lose the things of greatest value, symbolized by the loss of husband and children.)
  - c. Isaiah 47:10–11 (Because the world declares that it is greater than God, desolation will come upon it.)
- In Isaiah 47:8, 10, what claim does Babylon (the world) make that is the same as the Savior’s declaration about himself? (“I am, and none else [is] beside me.”) What can the world offer in comparison to what the Savior offers? Why do so many people give their devotion to the world instead of to the Savior? How can we help others see what the Savior offers?
- In Isaiah 48:17–18, the Lord promised great blessings to those who seek him rather than the world. How do these promises make you feel about following the Savior with all your heart?

#### 4. Isaiah describes the mission of latter-day Israel.

- Isaiah 49 contains many prophecies about the mission of latter-day Israel. These prophecies can help us understand the important work the Lord has for each of us to do. Have class members read some of the passages listed below and discuss the following question: What does this passage teach about our responsibilities in these latter days? (Note that many of the prophecies apply both to the work of the Savior and to the work of his servants, the house of Israel [Isaiah 49:3].)
  - a. Isaiah 49:1, 5. “The Lord hath called me from the womb.” (We were called from birth to fulfill the Lord’s work in the last days; see also Jeremiah 1:5.)
  - b. Isaiah 49:2. “He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword.” (This image suggests speaking powerful words of truth—the words of the Lord; see also D&C 6:2.)
  - c. Isaiah 49:2. “In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me.” (The Lord has protected us and prepared us for our great responsibilities; see also D&C 86:9.)
  - d. Isaiah 49:2. “He hath . . . made me a polished shaft.” (Arrows with polished shafts will fly straight and true. We have been polished and prepared by the Lord to fly straight and true wherever he sends us.)
  - e. Isaiah 49:6. “Thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” (The Lord has asked his servants to raise up and restore the remnant of Israel and to be a light to the Gentiles. In this way we can help bring salvation to the ends of the earth; see also D&C 86:8–11.)

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## Conclusion

Testify that Isaiah's writings can help us develop greater love for the Savior and greater understanding of the work he wants us to do. You may want to invite class members or a small group to sing "How Great Thou Art" (*Hymns*, no. 86) or "How Firm a Foundation" (*Hymns*, no. 85).

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. Symbols used by Isaiah

- Isaiah repeatedly used blindness as a symbol of wickedness and spiritual ignorance (Isaiah 29:10, 18; 32:3; 42:6–7, 16–18; 43:8; 44:9). As you ponder these verses, remember that the Savior often proclaimed that he was the Light of the World (John 8:12). How can we more fully open our spiritual eyes to the Light of the World?
- Isaiah repeatedly used images of water (Isaiah 12:3; 32:2; 41:17–18; 43:19–20; 44:3–4; 48:18, 21; 49:10). How does the Savior's teaching that he is the source of living water help you understand these passages? (See John 4:7–14.)

### 2. Waiting upon the Lord

- What does it mean to "wait upon the Lord"? (Isaiah 40:31). In what ways does the Lord renew the strength of those who wait upon him? (See Isaiah 41:10.) Invite class members to share experiences about the Lord renewing a person's spiritual or physical strength.

### 3. "But thou hast not called upon me"

- Why do some of us occasionally feel that the Lord has forsaken us? If we feel the Lord has withdrawn from us, what is likely the cause? (See Isaiah 43:22–26; Mosiah 5:13.) What can we do to feel close to him again?

President Spencer W. Kimball said: "I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 135).

# “How Beautiful upon the Mountains”

Lesson  
**39**

*Isaiah 50–53*

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**Purpose** To strengthen each class member’s testimony of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the passages from Isaiah 50–53 that are discussed in this lesson. They center on the Savior’s atoning sacrifice.
2. Additional reading: Mosiah 14–15.
3. If you use the attention activity, assign two or three class members to choose a favorite hymn about the Savior’s love and sacrifice and prepare to tell the class about the message of the hymn and how it has influenced them. You may want to tell about one of your own favorite hymns about the Savior.

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## **Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Explain that many Church hymns help us understand the love the Savior showed for us through his atoning sacrifice. Invite each of the assigned class members to tell of a favorite hymn about the Savior’s love and sacrifice. Since music can help invite the Spirit of the Lord into the class, you may want to ask class members to sing one of the hymns that was discussed.

Explain that this lesson will discuss some of Isaiah’s prophecies about the life and mission of the Savior.

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**Scripture Discussion and Application** As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

### **1. Isaiah speaks of messengers who bring glad tidings.**

- In Isaiah 52:7, Isaiah poetically described people bringing a great message. Why do you think Isaiah referred to the messengers’ feet? (In the ancient world, before electronic communications were available, important messages were often brought by runners traveling on foot. Isaiah uses the messengers’ feet to symbolize the messengers themselves.) How did Isaiah feel about these messengers?
- How did Isaiah describe the message that is being delivered? (It is a message of good tidings, a message of peace and salvation.) The Book of Mormon prophet Abinadi explained that the messengers described by Isaiah include the prophets

and also the Lord himself (Mosiah 15:13–18). What great message of peace and salvation have these messengers brought? (See 2 Nephi 2:6–8.)

- Who else brings the message of the gospel to the world? You may want to ask class members to tell about experiences they have had with sharing the gospel message. You may also want to ask class members to tell how they feel about those who brought the message to them.

## 2. Isaiah prophecies of the Savior's atoning sacrifice.

Discuss the following prophecies about the Savior's atoning sacrifice and the blessings it provides us.

- Isaiah 50:5–7. What does this passage teach about the Savior's attitude toward the great sacrifice he was to make in our behalf? What do Matthew 26:39 and Philippians 2:8 teach about the Savior's attitude as he faced great suffering?
- Isaiah 51:6. What comparison is made in this verse? How long will the effects of the Atonement last? (See also Mosiah 16:9; Alma 34:10, 14.)
- Isaiah 51:22. For whom does the Savior plead? How does the Atonement allow him to be our Advocate? (See D&C 45:3–5.) What is the "cup of trembling" that Jesus has drunk for us? (See D&C 19:15–20.) What must we do to receive the full blessings offered through the Atonement?
- Isaiah 52:3. What does it mean to be "redeemed without money"? (See 2 Nephi 26:27–28; Isaiah 55:1–3.)
- Isaiah 53:2–4. What do these verses tell us about the life of the Savior? Why can he understand our sorrows and our grief? (See Alma 7:11–13; Hebrews 2:16–18; 4:15.) How have you sensed that he understands your sorrows and grief?
- Isaiah 53:5. Why was the Savior willing to suffer the pain of being wounded, bruised, and scourged? (See 1 Nephi 19:9.)
- Isaiah 53:6–7. What qualities of character did the Savior display when he was oppressed, afflicted, and made to bear our iniquities? How do we sometimes "turn [our] own way" rather than submit to Heavenly Father's will? How can the Savior's example help us submit to Heavenly Father's will?
- Isaiah 53:10. What did Isaiah mean when he said that "it pleased the Lord to bruise" the Savior? What do we learn from this passage about Heavenly Father's love for us? (See also John 3:16–17.)
- Isaiah 53:8–11. Explain that the Book of Mormon prophet Abinadi gave a powerful commentary on these verses when he was speaking to the wicked priests of King Noah (Mosiah 15:10–13). According to Abinadi, who will be the seed of the Savior? (See also Mosiah 5:7–8.)
- Isaiah 53:12. Explain that at the end of a battle, the leader of the victorious army divides the fruits of victory among his followers. What are the fruits of Christ's victory over sin and death that he is willing to share with us? (See Romans 8:16–17; 2 Timothy 4:7–8.)

### 3. Isaiah describes some of our responsibilities.

- As recorded in Isaiah 51 and 52, what responsibilities do we have as those who have accepted the Savior’s Atonement?
  - a. Isaiah 51:1, 4, 7. Listen to and obey the Lord; do not fear the revilings of men.
  - b. Isaiah 51:12–13. Remember the Lord, who is the Creator. Do not fear Satan.
  - c. Isaiah 52:1–2. Awake and put on the strength of the priesthood (see D&C 113:7–8). Put on the beautiful garments of righteousness (see Revelation 19:7–8). “Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck” (see D&C 113:9–10).
  - d. Isaiah 52:11. Depart from the wickedness of the world. Do not touch unclean things; be clean.
- How can we better fulfill each of these responsibilities?

#### Conclusion

Review Mosiah 15:18, in which the prophet Abinadi describes the Savior as a messenger whose feet are beautiful upon the mountains. Explain that one reason his feet are beautiful is that they bear the prints of the nails, the tokens of his atoning love. Bear testimony of how the teachings of Isaiah have strengthened your love for the Savior and your desire to be worthy of the blessings of his atoning sacrifice. Ask class members to share how their testimonies have been strengthened as well.

#### Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

##### 1. Walking in the light

Review Isaiah 50:10–11 and point out the choice Isaiah gives us in these verses. If we choose to fear the Lord, obey the voice of his servants, and trust him, we will have his light to guide us and will not walk in darkness (John 8:12; 12:46). If we choose to walk in our own light, which is compared to the light of sparks, the Lord warns that we will “lie down in sorrow.”

##### 2. Missionary work

If *Family Home Evening Video Supplement 2* (53277) is available, you may want to show “Missionary Work: Our Greatest Duty,” a five-minute segment, as part of the lesson.

Lesson  
**40**

# “Enlarge the Place of Thy Tent”

*Isaiah 54–56; 63–65*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to strengthen the stakes of Zion and prepare for the Second Coming and the Millennium.

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**Preparation**

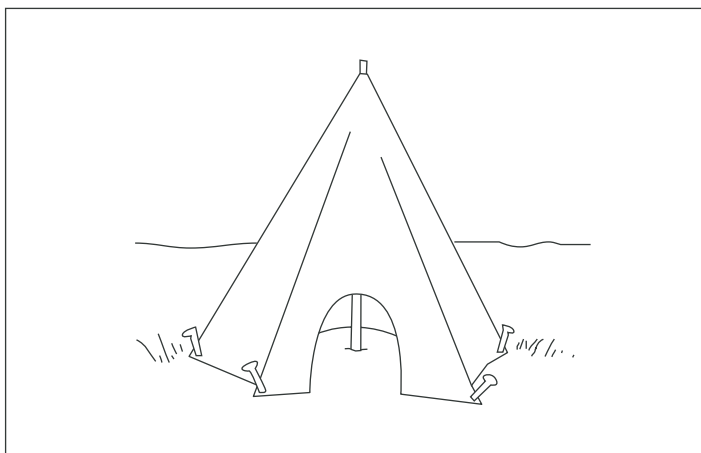
1. Prayerfully study the passages from Isaiah 54–56 and 63–65 discussed in the lesson.
2. If you use the attention activity, bring a tent stake.
3. If the picture *The Resurrected Jesus Christ* is available, you may want to use it during the lesson (62187; Gospel Art Picture Kit 239).

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## Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Draw on the chalkboard a picture of a tent like the one shown below. Then display a tent stake and ask the following questions.



- Why does this tent need stakes? What would happen if the tent were not supported by stakes?
- What does the tent mentioned in Isaiah 54:2 represent? (The Church of Jesus Christ.) What do the tent stakes represent?

President Ezra Taft Benson said:

“The term *stake* is a symbolic expression. Picture in your mind a great tent held up by cords extended to many stakes that are firmly secured in the ground.

“The prophets likened latter-day Zion to a great tent encompassing the earth. That tent was supported by cords fastened to stakes. Those stakes, of course, are various geographical organizations spread out over the earth. Presently, Israel is being gathered to the various stakes of Zion” (“Strengthen Thy Stakes,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1991, 2).

Tell the class that the first stakes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were organized in Kirtland, Ohio, and in Clay County, Missouri, in 1834. As the Church grew, more stakes were added as commanded by the Lord (D&C 101:20–21). Today there are hundreds of stakes located throughout the world.

Explain that this lesson will discuss how we can strengthen the stakes of Zion. It will also discuss Isaiah’s powerful teachings about the Second Coming and the Millennium.

Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

**1. “Lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes” (Isaiah 54:2).**

- What do you think is the meaning of the phrase “Enlarge the place of thy tent”? (Isaiah 54:2). (The Lord wants Church members to share the gospel with many people so it can cover the earth. Isaiah prophesied that in the latter days, the Church would grow rapidly and many people throughout the world would be converted to the truth [Isaiah 54:3]).
- What other counsel is given in Isaiah 54:3 regarding the tent, or Church? How can we follow this counsel? You may want to summarize the discussion on the chalkboard, as illustrated below.

Isaiah’s Counsel	What We Can Do
Stretch the tent curtains and lengthen the cords.	Serve as full-time missionaries; share the gospel with friends and neighbors.
Strengthen the tent stakes.	Strengthen our local stakes.

- What can we do to strengthen the stake in which we live? (Answers could include the following: Develop personal spiritual strength, influence our families and friends to do the same, serve our member and nonmember neighbors, and accept calls from priesthood leaders to serve in the Church.)
- How can stakes bless people’s lives? (See D&C 115:5–6.) How are the stakes of Zion places of defense and refuge for us?

**2. “With great mercies will I gather thee” (Isaiah 54:7).**

- Although Israel was scattered for many years, the Lord promised that he would gather her to the true Church in the last days (Isaiah 54:4–10). What can we



learn about the Lord in Isaiah 54:4–10? What specific blessings does the Lord promise his righteous servants? (See Isaiah 54:13–14, 17.) Why are these promises important?

- Who is invited to find refuge by gathering with the Saints? (All of Heavenly Father’s children.) Review the following passages from Isaiah that describe groups of people whom the Lord wants to come to him and find safety in the gospel:
  - a. Isaiah 55:1–3. (All who thirst.) What kind of thirst is referred to in these verses? What happens when we try to satisfy spiritual thirst by spending money and effort on temporal things? How can our spiritual thirst be truly satisfied? (See 2 Nephi 9:50–51; 3 Nephi 20:8.)
  - b. Isaiah 55:6–7. (The wicked who will repent.) What promise is extended to those who repent?
  - c. Isaiah 56:3, 5–8. (Strangers who do not know the Lord.) What must the stranger do to be accepted by the Lord?
- What do these passages teach about the mercy of the Lord? What do they teach about how we should view all of Heavenly Father’s children?
- Isaiah wrote that God’s word can nourish our souls much like rain and snow nourish seeds (Isaiah 55:10–13). How does God’s word nourish our souls? (See Alma 32:28, 41.)

### **3. The Millennium will be a time of peace and joy.**

- Throughout his writings, Isaiah testified that although there would be struggles, temptations, and suffering in this world, good would overcome evil in the end, and for the righteous, the future would be full of joy. Isaiah prayed fervently for the Second Coming of the Savior, which would bring retribution for the wicked and great rejoicing for the righteous (Isaiah 64). What message of hope and joy is contained in Isaiah 64:1–4? How does this message increase your desire to endure to the end in serving the Lord?
- The closing chapters of Isaiah’s record present a beautiful picture of the Millennium, the thousand-year period of peace that will be ushered in by the Savior’s Second Coming. As recorded in Isaiah 65:17–25, what conditions will exist during the Millennium? (You may want to list these conditions on the chalkboard; see also Isaiah 11:6–9.)
  - a. The Lord will create new heavens and a new earth (Isaiah 65:17).
  - b. There will be great joy and no more weeping for the Lord’s people (Isaiah 65:18–19).
  - c. People will not die young; they will live to be 100 years old (Isaiah 65:20).
  - d. People will enjoy the fruits of their own labors (Isaiah 65:21–23).
  - e. Prayers will be answered immediately (Isaiah 65:24).
  - f. There will be no enmity among beasts (Isaiah 65:25).
- What does Isaiah 63:7–9 teach about the infinite goodness and love of the Lord? (Ask class members to suggest words and phrases from these verses that show the Savior’s love for us. You may want to write these on the chalkboard.) In what ways has the Savior shown you “the multitude of his lovingkindnesses”?

## Conclusion

Testify that as we strengthen the stakes of Zion and share the gospel with the world, the riches of eternity await us. We can look forward to the Second Coming of the Savior and the peace and joy that will exist during the Millennium. The prophecies of Isaiah encourage us to remember that it is a privilege to serve the Lord and that he blesses his disciples.

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**Additional Teaching Ideas**

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

**1. The true law of the fast (Isaiah 58:3–12)**

- What can we learn from Isaiah 58 about fasting? What are the elements of a true fast? (See Isaiah 58:3–7.)

One element of a true fast is giving a generous fast offering. President Spencer W. Kimball said, “I think that when we are affluent, as many of us are, that we ought to be very, very generous . . . and give, instead of the amount we saved by our two meals of fasting, perhaps much, much more—ten times more where we are in a position to do it” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 184).

- What blessings for living the law of the fast are promised in Isaiah 58?
  - a. We become stronger in resisting temptation (Isaiah 58:6).
  - b. Our burdens are lightened (Isaiah 58:6).
  - c. Our physical and spiritual health are improved (Isaiah 58:8).
  - d. We become humble and prepared to communicate with the Lord (Isaiah 58:9).
  - e. We assist the poor and the needy (Isaiah 58:10).
  - f. We receive continual guidance from the Lord (Isaiah 58:11).
  - g. We have our souls satisfied in drought and become “like a spring of water, whose waters fail not” (Isaiah 58:11).

Invite class members to share examples from the scriptures, Church history, or personal experience that show the blessings of living the law of the fast. (See Topical Guide, “Fast, Fasting.”)

- How can we become more diligent in living the law of the fast?

**2. Description of the Savior’s ministry**

- Isaiah 61:1–3 is a declaration of the Savior’s calling and ministry. Early in his ministry in Nazareth, the Savior quoted these verses and said to the people, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:14–21). What do these verses teach about the character and mission of Jesus Christ?

**3. Christ’s Second Coming (Isaiah 63:1–6)**

- The Second Coming of the Savior is described in Isaiah 63:1–6. What color will the Savior’s robe be when he comes in his glory? (See Isaiah 63:2; Revelation 19:11–13; D&C 133:46–48.) What does the red color symbolize? (The blood that he shed when he suffered for our sins in Gethsemane and on the cross.)

Lesson  
**41**

# “I Have Made Thee This Day . . . an Iron Pillar”

*Jeremiah 1–2; 15; 20; 26; 36–38*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to remain faithful in times of opposition and adversity.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the passages from Jeremiah that are discussed in this lesson. This lesson focuses on the courage and commitment of Jeremiah as he faced opposition from everyone around him.
2. If you use the attention activity, bring a metal bar to class.

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**Suggested Lesson  
Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Display a metal bar and invite a class member to try to break it. Then ask the following questions:

- If this object represented a person’s characteristics, what would it suggest about him or her?
- Ask class members to read Jeremiah 1:17–19. What phrases does the Lord use in verse 18 to describe Jeremiah? What do these phrases suggest about the kind of person Jeremiah was? How would you feel if these words were used to describe you as you set out to fulfill a calling or assignment from the Lord?

Explain that kings, princes, priests, and all the people of the land opposed Jeremiah in his mission, but he valiantly did as the Lord commanded. Refer to the metal bar and explain that Jeremiah was an “iron pillar” who had great strength in times of adversity and did not bend or break.

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**Scripture Discussion  
and Application** As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

Jeremiah ministered during the reigns of five kings, from Josiah to Zedekiah (626 to 586 B.C.). With Josiah, he tried to turn the people from idolatry and immorality. But the kings after Josiah ruled in wickedness, and the people were in total apostasy. Jeremiah’s mission was to raise a voice of warning to these people, and his denunciations of their wickedness are among the strongest in all scripture. His was one of the last voices of warning before Judah was conquered by the Babylonians.

Jeremiah’s life was full of sorrow, but his response to trial can teach and inspire us. He was beaten and imprisoned for prophesying against the kingdom of Judah.

His life was constantly threatened. But through all the adversity and opposition, Jeremiah was like an “iron pillar” (Jeremiah 1:18). The book of Jeremiah provides a personal, faith-promoting record of the prophet’s response to his life’s sorrow and frustration.

### **1. Jeremiah is called of God to be a prophet.**

Review the account of Jeremiah’s call to be a prophet as recorded in Jeremiah 1:4–10.

- What does Jeremiah’s call teach us about the doctrine of foreordination? (See Jeremiah 1:5.) How do you think it helped Jeremiah to know that in the premortal existence he had been foreordained to be a prophet?

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was” (*History of the Church*, 6:364).

- What did the Lord do when Jeremiah felt inadequate to fulfill his calling? (See Jeremiah 1:6–10.) How have you been reassured by the Lord when you have felt inadequate?

### **2. Many people oppose Jeremiah and try to prevent him from fulfilling his mission.**

Use the following scriptures to discuss the opposition Jeremiah faced as he fulfilled the mission given to him by the Lord:

- a. Jeremiah 20:1–6. Displeased with Jeremiah’s prophecies, Pashur, the chief governor of the temple, had Jeremiah beaten and put in the stocks. Jeremiah prophesied that Pashur, his family, and his friends would be taken captive by the Babylonians and would die in Babylon.
  - b. Jeremiah 26:7–15. Most of the people in the land, including the priests, opposed Jeremiah and his message (26:7–11). However, Jeremiah courageously delivered the message the Lord had commanded him to give (26:12–15). Jeremiah was even opposed and hated by his neighbors and relatives (11:19–21; 12:6. Note that Jeremiah was from the city of Anathoth).
  - c. Jeremiah 36:1–6, 20–32. The words of Jeremiah’s prophecies were written down and read to the people (36:1–6). The king burned these words, and the Lord commanded Jeremiah to record them again (36:20–32).
  - d. Jeremiah 37:12–15; 38:4–13. Jeremiah was accused unjustly and put into prison (37:12–15). He was later cast into a dungeon, where he sank into the mire (38:4–6). By order of King Zedekiah, Jeremiah was released from the dungeon and put back in prison (38:7–13).
- What does Jeremiah 20:14–18 reveal about how Jeremiah felt as he endured such overwhelming opposition? What can we learn from Jeremiah to help us when we experience adversity? (Answers may include that Jeremiah continued to obey the Lord and fulfill his calling even when he was persecuted and discouraged; see Jeremiah 26:12–15.)
  - In Jeremiah 2:13, what two evils did the Lord say his people had committed? (They had forsaken him, the fountain of living waters. And they had made for themselves broken cisterns that could not hold the Lord’s living water,

meaning they had sought fulfillment and security in worldly things.) Why would people with these characteristics have difficulty accepting the words of Jeremiah? Why would they be unable to respond to adversity as Jeremiah did? How do we sometimes create “broken cisterns” that cannot hold the Savior’s living water?

Elder Marion D. Hanks said:

“Material objectives consume too much of our attention. The struggle for what we need or for more than we need exhausts our time and energy. We pursue pleasure or entertainment, or become overinvolved in associations or civic matters. Of course, people need recreation, need to be achieving, need to contribute; but if these come at the cost of friendship with Christ, the price is much too high.

“ ‘For my people have committed two evils,’ said the Lord to Israel; ‘they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.’ (Jer. 2:13.)

“The substitutions we fashion to take the place of God in our lives truly hold no water. To the measure we thus refuse the ‘living water,’ we miss the joy we could have” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1972, 127; or *Ensign*, July 1972, 105).

Jeremiah’s prophecies that the Babylonians would destroy Jerusalem were fulfilled, as recorded in Jeremiah 39–40. Jeremiah had been in prison during the siege, but afterward the Babylonians freed him and allowed him and a remnant of the Jews to remain in the land of Judah. Johanan, the leader of those who remained, asked Jeremiah to seek the Lord’s will for them and promised to obey it (Jeremiah 42:1–6). Through Jeremiah the Lord told the people to stay in the land of Judah and promised to bless them if they would do so (Jeremiah 42:9–22). But Johanan led the people into Egypt, where most of them continued in their wickedness (Jeremiah 43–44).

### **3. Jeremiah is strengthened in adversity by his love for the word of God.**

Discuss the following scriptures, which show how the word of God helped Jeremiah remain strong in times of adversity.

- As recorded in Jeremiah 1:9, what did the Lord put in Jeremiah’s mouth? As recorded in Jeremiah 15:16, what did Jeremiah do with the words of the Lord? (He ate them, which is poetic language meaning that the word of God became part of him.) How did Jeremiah feel about the words of the Lord?
- How can we “eat” the words of the Lord as Jeremiah did? (By studying the scriptures and the counsel of latter-day prophets.) The Book of Mormon prophet Nephi said to “feast upon the words of Christ” (2 Nephi 32:3). How can feasting on the words of the Lord strengthen us?
- In Jeremiah 20:9, how did Jeremiah describe the word of the Lord inside him? What do you think it means to have the word of the Lord be a burning fire in your bones? Why do you think Jeremiah could not hold back from teaching the word of the Lord?

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Conclusion

Express your feelings about the example of Jeremiah and the need to be faithful in times of adversity. Encourage class members to search and ponder the words

of the Lord until these words become fire in their bones, strengthening them as they do the Lord's work. If you used the attention activity, display the metal bar and challenge class members to become, like Jeremiah, an iron pillar for the Lord.

### Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

#### 1. "Clay . . . in the potter's hand" (Jeremiah 18:6)

- Review the account of Jeremiah's visit to the potter, recorded in Jeremiah 18:1–4. What did the Lord teach his people through Jeremiah's experience? (See Jeremiah 18:5–10. The Lord showed them that if they would repent, he would mold them into something better, just as the potter had reshaped the marred vessel. He also reminded them that he had the power to destroy them if they did not repent.)
- How does this comparison apply to us today? How can we become better clay in the Lord's hands? (By being humble—by obeying, repenting, trusting the Lord, and seeking his will. Invite class members to share experiences that show how the Lord has shaped and prepared people to fulfill his purposes.) What happens when we resist being molded by the Lord?

President Heber C. Kimball provided the following insights into the comparison in Jeremiah 18:1–10:

"All [who] are pliable in the hands of God and are obedient to His commands, are vessels of honor, and God will receive them" (*History of the Church*, 4:478).

"There are many vessels that are destroyed after they have been moulded and shaped. Why? Because they are not contented with the shape the potter has given them, but straightaway put themselves into a shape to please themselves; therefore they are beyond understanding what God designs, and they destroy themselves by the power of their own agency. [These people] have to go through a great many modellings and shapes, then . . . have to be glazed and burned; and even in the burning, some vessels crack" (in Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* [1981], 270).

#### 2. Jeremiah preached at the same time as the Book of Mormon prophet Lehi

The prophet Jeremiah was teaching and warning the people of Judah at the time Lehi left Jerusalem. Both Jeremiah and Lehi prophesied that Jerusalem would be destroyed.

- Where was Jeremiah when Lehi and his family left Jerusalem? (See Jeremiah 37:15–16; 1 Nephi 7:14.)
- Jeremiah spent much time counseling with Zedekiah, the king of Judah, but Zedekiah refused to obey the words of the Lord delivered by Jeremiah. What happened to Zedekiah as a result of his disobedience? (See Jeremiah 39:4–7.)
- From the Book of Mormon we know that one of the sons of Zedekiah was not slain by the Babylonians. What was his name? (See Helaman 8:20–21.) Where did he go? (See Omni 1:15.)

Lesson  
**42**

# “I Will Write It in Their Hearts”

*Jeremiah 16; 23; 29; 31*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to participate in God’s great latter-day work and to have his law written in their hearts.

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**Preparation** 1. Prayerfully study Jeremiah 16; 23; 29; and 31.  
2. Additional reading: Jeremiah 3–9; 13; 30; 32:37–42; 33; 35.

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**Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

- If you could have witnessed or participated in any story or event in the Old Testament, which one would you choose? (You may want to write class members’ responses on the chalkboard.)
- Why would you like to have witnessed or participated in this event?
- What is happening in the Church today that might be comparable to some of the events you have chosen?

Explain that although Jeremiah had few messages of hope for the people of his day, he foresaw a time of hope during the latter-day gathering of Israel. This lesson discusses Jeremiah’s prophecies of the great latter-day gathering that we are participating in today.

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**Scripture Discussion and Application** As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

**1. Jeremiah foresees the latter-day gathering of Israel.**

If the story of Israel’s exodus from Egypt is not mentioned in the attention activity, explain that it is one of the most miraculous events in the Old Testament. It is referred to in the book of Jeremiah and in other books of the Old Testament, as well as in the Book of Mormon.

- How did Moses feel about the importance of the Exodus? (See Deuteronomy 4:32–35.) What do you think it would have been like to have been part of Israel’s exodus from Egypt?
- Many generations later, Jeremiah saw visions of a latter-day event that the Lord said would be as great as the Exodus (Jeremiah 16:14–16; 23:3–8). What event is described in Jeremiah 16:15 and 23:3? (The gathering of Israel)

and the growth of the Church.) Who are the shepherds spoken of in Jeremiah 23:4? (Priesthood leaders and other Church leaders.) Who is the King spoken of in Jeremiah 23:5–6? (Jesus Christ.) Why do you think these events are as great as the Exodus?

- Elder LeGrand Richards said that the fishers and hunters described in Jeremiah 16:16 are missionaries of the Church (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 143; or *Ensign*, June 1971, 98–99). What do fishers and hunters have in common with missionaries? (See Matthew 4:18–19.) How can we be more effective missionaries?

## 2. God will write his law in the hearts of his people.

- The children of Israel relied on Moses to receive revelation for them during their sojourn in the wilderness. What great longing did Moses express in Numbers 11:29? (He wanted the people to learn God’s law and learn to listen to the Spirit for themselves.)
- As recorded in Jeremiah 31:31–34, what did the Lord promise to do in the latter days? (See also Ezekiel 11:17–20; 36:24–28; 2 Corinthians 3:2–3.) What does it mean to have God’s law written in our hearts? What must we do to have God’s law written in our hearts?
- How is our behavior affected when we have God’s law written in our hearts? You may want to discuss how this helps us obey specific commandments, such as:
  - a. Loving our neighbors.
  - b. Honoring our parents.
  - c. Being morally clean.
  - d. Keeping the Sabbath day holy.
  - e. Choosing appropriate movies, television programs, books, and magazines.
  - f. Wearing modest clothing.
  - g. Selecting suitable music.
- Joseph Smith was once asked how he successfully governed so many people. He said, “I teach the people correct principles and they govern themselves” (quoted by John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:57–58). How does this statement relate to having God’s law written in our hearts?
- Jeremiah prophesied that 70 years after the people of Judah would be taken captive into Babylon, they would return to their homeland and once again live in harmony with God (Jeremiah 29:10–14; the fulfillment of this prophecy is discussed in lesson 47). According to Jeremiah 29:12–14, what can we do to draw close to God? What do the words *call*, *pray*, *seek*, and *search* imply about the attitude we should have as we strive to draw near to God? Invite class members to share experiences they have had as they have sought to draw close to God.

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## Conclusion

Bear testimony that we live in a time that Jeremiah and many other prophets have looked forward to with rejoicing. Encourage class members to participate in the gathering of Israel and to have the law of God written in their hearts.



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**Additional  
Teaching Ideas**

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

**1. Now is the time to repent**

The Lord's mercy is always extended to those who repent. However, people who postpone repentance may find it increasingly difficult to repent.

President Joseph F. Smith taught: "The man with accumulated and unforgiven wrong behind him may find all retreat cut off and his condition in the world hopeless; and he who recklessly cuts off every opportunity of retreat by the neglected evils of the past is most unfortunate. The daily practice, then, of seeking divine mercy and forgiveness as we go along, gives us power to escape evils" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 374).

- What do the following passages teach about the importance of hearing the word of the Lord and repenting promptly?

Jeremiah 5:1–5, 21–25

Jeremiah 6:10–17

Jeremiah 7:23–28

Jeremiah 8:6–12, 20

Jeremiah 13:11, 23

Jeremiah 17:23

**2. Harkening to the words of the prophets**

- Jeremiah frequently recorded that the people had not hearkened to his words (Jeremiah 7:13; 25:3–4; 26:2–5; 32:33). What words of the latter-day prophets might we need to follow more diligently?

**3. Repeating the sins of previous generations**

- Jeremiah warned the Jews of his day that the sins they committed were the same sins for which past generations had been severely punished (Jeremiah 11:1–12). Why do you think Jeremiah's generation would not learn from the sins of their forefathers, especially when the punishment for those sins was so clearly documented? How can we benefit more fully from lessons learned by previous generations of God's covenant people?

**4. The importance of trusting in God**

- In Jeremiah 17:5–8, what comparisons are made between people who trust in man and people who trust in God? How have you seen that these comparisons are accurate? How can we demonstrate our trust in God?

**5. False prophets**

- Zedekiah was a king who wanted prophets to tell him what he wanted to hear. Consequently, many false prophets promised that Jerusalem would not fall (Jeremiah 28:1–4; 37:19). Today many false prophets come "in sheep's clothing" (Matthew 7:15). What evidence is there that false prophets are among us today? What are some of the messages of today's false prophets? How can we avoid being led astray by false prophets?

# The Shepherds of Israel

## Lesson 43

*Ezekiel 18; 34; 37*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to fulfill their responsibilities as “shepherds of Israel” (Ezekiel 34:2).

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. Ezekiel 34. The Lord reproves those shepherds who do not feed the flock. He will seek all the lost sheep and be their Shepherd.
  - b. Ezekiel 18:21–32. Ezekiel teaches that the wicked who repent will be saved and that the righteous who turn to wickedness will be cast out.
  - c. Ezekiel 37:1–14. Ezekiel sees a vision in which many dry bones are given life.
  - d. Ezekiel 37:15–28. Ezekiel prophesies that the stick of Judah and the stick of Joseph will become one in the Lord’s hand.
2. Additional reading: Ezekiel 2.

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### Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Read (or write on the chalkboard) the following question:

- How is a shepherd different from a shepherder?

Ask class members to listen for answers to this question in the following quotation from President Ezra Taft Benson (you may want to have a class member read the quotation):

“In Jesus’ time, the Palestinian shepherd was noted for his protection of his sheep. Unlike modern shepherders, the shepherd always walked ahead of his flock. He led them. The shepherd knew each of the sheep and usually had a name for each. The sheep knew his voice and trusted him and would not follow a stranger. Thus, when called, the sheep would come to him. (See John 10:14, 16.)

“At night shepherds would bring their sheep to a corral called a sheepfold. High walls surrounded the sheepfold, and thorns were placed on top of these walls to prevent wild animals and thieves from climbing over.

“Sometimes, however, a wild animal driven by hunger would leap over the walls into the midst of the sheep, frightening them. Such a situation separated the true shepherd—one who loved his sheep—from the hireling—one who worked only for pay and duty.

“The true shepherd was willing to give his life for the sheep. He would go in amongst the sheep and fight for their welfare. The hireling, on the other hand,

valued his own personal safety above the sheep and would usually flee from the danger” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1983, 61; or *Ensign*, May 1983, 43).

After reading the quotation, ask class members to summarize the differences between a shepherd and a shepherder (or hireling). Use the following questions if necessary, and list the answers on the chalkboard:

- Where does the shepherd walk in relation to the sheep? Where does the shepherder walk? (The shepherd walks ahead of the sheep and leads them; the quotation implies that the shepherder walks behind the sheep and drives them.)
- What is the shepherd’s relationship with each of the sheep? What is the shepherder’s relationship with each of the sheep?
- How does the shepherd respond when the sheep are in danger? How does the shepherder respond?

Explain that part of this lesson discusses our responsibilities as spiritual shepherds.

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## Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share personal experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

In 597 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon carried into captivity many people from the kingdom of Judah. Among these captives was Ezekiel, whom the Lord called as a prophet five years later. In 587 B.C. the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and took many more captives. Ezekiel ministered to his exiled people until 570 B.C.

Ezekiel’s writings include stern rebukes and glorious promises that apply not only to the ancient kingdom of Judah but to all Israel, including Church members today. Although Jerusalem had been destroyed, Ezekiel foresaw a day when Israel would be gathered and restored. This event is symbolized in his vision of the valley of dry bones and in his prophecy about the sticks of Judah and Joseph.

### 1. The shepherds of Israel

Teach and discuss Ezekiel 34. In this chapter the Lord reproved the self-serving shepherds of Israel who had not fed the flock. He then described himself as the Good Shepherd who would gather his flock in the latter days and lead them during the Millennium.

- Who are the “shepherds of Israel” spoken of in Ezekiel 34? (The religious leaders of Ezekiel’s day.) Why was the Lord displeased with them? (See Ezekiel 34:2–4.) What happened to the sheep when the shepherds neglected them? (See Ezekiel 34:5–6.)
- In what ways can each of us be considered a shepherd of Israel? (We are to watch over and strengthen each other as family members, Church members, neighbors, home teachers and visiting teachers, and members of quorums and classes.)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: “Anyone serving in any capacity in the Church in which he is responsible for the spiritual or temporal well-being of any of the Lord’s children is a shepherd to those sheep. The Lord holds his shepherds accountable for the safety (salvation) of his sheep” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 710).

- The Lord was displeased with some shepherds for feeding themselves rather than feeding the flocks (Ezekiel 34:2–3, 8). How might some of us make this error today?
- According to Ezekiel 34:11–16, what do true shepherds do for their sheep? (Note the verbs *search*, *seek*, *deliver*, *gather*, *feed*, *bind up*, and *strengthen*.) How can we help prevent others from straying or becoming scattered? How can we help gather those who have strayed? How can we feed and strengthen the Lord’s flocks? How have you been blessed by true shepherds who have done these things?

President Ezra Taft Benson said: “We call on you to extend yourselves with renewed dedication. . . . We want you to watch, to feed, to tend, and to care for the flock and, in the event that some are temporarily lost, we challenge you to find them” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1983, 64; or *Ensign*, May 1983, 45).

- How is the Savior like a shepherd to us? (See Ezekiel 34:11–16; Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:11; John 10:11–15.) You may want to discuss how the Savior has done each of the things described in these scriptures. Bear testimony of the Savior as you feel prompted by the Spirit.

## 2. Repentance and forgiveness

Teach and discuss Ezekiel 18:21–32.

- What does this passage teach about repentance and forgiveness? (See Ezekiel 18:21–22, 27–28.) What does it mean to “make . . . a new heart and a new spirit”? (Ezekiel 18:31). Why is it important to understand that repentance includes both turning away from sin and having a change of heart? How can we experience this change of heart? (See Alma 5:7–14.)
- What does this passage teach about people who turn away from righteousness and do not repent? (See Ezekiel 18:24, 26.)
- What does this passage teach about the Lord’s feelings when he punishes the wicked? (See Ezekiel 18:23, 32.)
- What does this passage teach about the Lord’s justice and mercy? (See Ezekiel 18:25, 29–32.) Why is it important to know that the Lord is just and merciful?

## 3. Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of bones

Teach and discuss Ezekiel 37:1–14. Explain that Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of bones symbolizes both the Resurrection and the restoration of the children of Israel to their promised land.

- How is the Resurrection symbolized in Ezekiel’s vision? (The bones came together, were covered with flesh and skin, and were given life; see Ezekiel 37:1–10; see also Alma 11:42–44; 40:23.)

- How is the restoration of the children of Israel to their promised land symbolized in Ezekiel’s vision? (See Ezekiel 37:11–14. The Resurrection is used to symbolize this restoration.)
- Ezekiel’s vision can also be read as an analogy describing the renewal of the “hope” of Israel (Ezekiel 37:11). Although Israel’s hope may be as dead as the “great army” of bones that Ezekiel saw, the Savior can bring it back to vitality and life. How has the Savior renewed your hope? (You may want to read Moroni 7:41 as you discuss this question.)
- The bones in Ezekiel’s vision began to take life after Ezekiel told them to “hear the word of the Lord” (Ezekiel 37:4). How does the word of the Lord give us life?

#### 4. The stick of Judah and the stick of Joseph

Teach and discuss Ezekiel 37:15–28. Explain that Ezekiel’s prophecy of the sticks of Judah and Joseph has a dual meaning. It refers to the latter-day combining of the scriptural records of Judah and Joseph (Israel). It also refers to the latter-day reunion of the kingdoms of Judah and Joseph (Israel).

- How has the prophecy in Ezekiel 37:15–20 been fulfilled? (See 1 Nephi 5:14; 2 Nephi 3:12; D&C 27:5. Explain that the word *stick* in these verses refers to a type of wooden writing tablet commonly used in Ezekiel’s day. The stick of Judah symbolizes the Bible, and the stick of Joseph symbolizes the Book of Mormon.)

Elder Boyd K. Packer said: “The stick or record of Judah—the Old Testament and the New Testament—and the stick or record of Ephraim—the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ—are now woven together in such a way that as you pore over one you are drawn to the other; as you learn from one you are enlightened by the other. They are indeed one in our hands. Ezekiel’s prophecy now stands fulfilled” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 75; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 53).

- What blessings have come from having the Book of Mormon in addition to the Bible? (See 1 Nephi 13:39–40; 2 Nephi 3:12.) How has the Book of Mormon helped you better understand the Bible? How has it reinforced for you the Bible’s witness of the Lord Jesus Christ?
- What did Ezekiel say would occur after the two sticks were put together?
  - a. The children of Israel would be gathered together and united into one kingdom with the Savior as King (Ezekiel 37:21–22).
  - b. The people would be cleansed and purified (Ezekiel 37:23).
  - c. The people would observe the Lord’s statutes (Ezekiel 37:24).
  - d. The people would dwell in a promised land (Ezekiel 37:25).
- What other blessings did the Lord promise in Ezekiel 37:26–28? (One important blessing is the restoration of the Lord’s sanctuary or tabernacle, meaning the temple. The next lesson discusses the blessings of the temple in more detail.)

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**Conclusion**

Ezekiel's teachings help us understand how much the Savior loves and cares for each of us. He is our Shepherd. He is eager to forgive. He made it possible for us to be resurrected. He is directing the latter-day gathering of Israel. And he brought forth the Book of Mormon as another witness of him. Invite class members to share their testimonies of these truths.

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**Additional  
Teaching Ideas**

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

**1. Learning to be a good shepherd**

While discussing our responsibilities as shepherds, you may want to read or tell the following story from President James E. Faust:

"When I was a very small boy, my father found a lamb all alone out in the desert. The herd of sheep to which its mother belonged had moved on, and somehow the lamb got separated from its mother, and the shepherd must not have known that it was lost. Because it could not survive alone in the desert, my father picked it up and brought it home. To have left the lamb there would have meant certain death, either by falling prey to the coyotes or by starvation because it was so young that it still needed milk. . . . My father gave the lamb to me, and I became its shepherd.

"For several weeks I warmed cow's milk in a baby's bottle and fed the lamb. We became fast friends. . . . It began to grow. My lamb and I would play on the lawn. Sometimes we would lie together on the grass and I would lay my head on its soft, woolly side and look up at the blue sky and the white billowing clouds. I did not lock my lamb up during the day. It would not run away. It soon learned to eat grass. I could call my lamb from anywhere in the yard by just imitating as best I could the bleating sound of a sheep. . . .

"One night there came a terrible storm. I forgot to put my lamb in the barn that night as I should have done. I went to bed. My little friend was frightened in the storm, and I could hear it bleating. I knew that I should help my pet, but I wanted to stay safe, warm, and dry in my bed. I didn't get up as I should have done. The next morning I went out to find my lamb dead. A dog had also heard its bleating cry and killed it. My heart was broken. I had not been a good shepherd or steward of that which my father had entrusted to me. My father said, 'Son, couldn't I trust you to take care of just one lamb?' My father's remark hurt me more than losing my woolly friend. I resolved that day, as a little boy, that I would try never again to neglect my stewardship as a shepherd if I were ever placed in that position again.

"Not too many years thereafter I was called as a junior companion to a home teacher. There were times when it was so cold or stormy and I wanted to stay home and be comfortable, but in my mind's ear I could hear my little lamb bleating, and I knew I needed to be a good shepherd and go with my senior companion. In all those many years, whenever I have had a desire to shirk my duties, there would come to me a remembrance of how sorry I was that night so many years ago when I had not been a good shepherd" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 62–63; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 46).

## 2. Watchmen to raise a warning voice

- When calling Ezekiel as a prophet, the Lord said, “I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel” (Ezekiel 3:17). How were Ezekiel’s duties as a prophet like those of a watchman? (See Ezekiel 3:17–21; 33:1–9. In Ezekiel’s day, a watchman on a tower would warn the people of impending danger from enemy armies. Ezekiel warned his people about enemies that would endanger them spiritually.)
- Who are our watchmen in the latter days? Why is it important to have these watchmen? What is our responsibility to be watchmen? (See D&C 88:81. Part of this responsibility is to teach the gospel to those who have not received it.)

To teach the importance of heeding the warnings of the prophets—and of warning our neighbors by teaching them the gospel—Elder Boyd K. Packer told of a devastating flood caused by the collapse of the Teton Dam in Idaho in 1976. In the immediate path of the fast-moving floodwaters were 7,800 people. As the flood rushed down the valley, it destroyed 790 homes and severely damaged another 800 homes, churches, schools, and businesses. Considering the amount of water, its speed, and the population of the area, one expert estimated that 5,300 people should have been killed. Incredibly, only 6 people drowned.

Elder Packer asked:

“How could there be such a terrible destruction with such little loss of life? . . . Because they were warned! They didn’t have very long, but they were warned; and every man who was warned, warned his neighbor. . . .

“What about the six that drowned? One of them was just below the dam and had no choice. Two of them wouldn’t believe the warning until it was too late. They later found them both in their car, but they hadn’t heeded the warning. Three of them went back to get some material possessions, and they lost their lives.

“But it was a miracle of tremendous proportion. As Latter-day Saints we learn to heed warnings. . . .

“Now, I see a great similarity in what is happening in the world, a great tidal wave of evil and wickedness in the world. It just seeps around us and gets deeper and deeper. Our lives are in danger. Our property is in danger. Our freedoms are in danger, and yet we casually go about our work unable to understand that it behooves every man that has been warned to warn his neighbor. . . .

“[We have been] warned by a prophet. Will [we] heed the warning, or will [we] be as those six in Idaho who thought the warning was not for them?” (*That All May Be Edified* [1982], 220–21, 223).

# “Every Thing Shall Live Whither the River Cometh”

## Lesson 44

*Ezekiel 43–44; 47*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to partake of the life-giving, healing powers that are available in the temple.

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- Preparation**
1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
    - a. Ezekiel 43:1–12; 44:6–9, 23. Ezekiel is shown a vision of the temple in Jerusalem.
    - b. Ezekiel 47:1, 6–12. Ezekiel sees a river flowing from the temple that gives life to the desert and heals the Dead Sea.
    - c. Ezekiel 47:2–5. Ezekiel measures the river’s depth and discovers that the water gets deeper each time he wades into it.
  2. Draw the map on page 209 on a poster or on the chalkboard before class begins.
  3. Additional reading: Ezekiel 40–42; Joel 3:18; Zechariah 14:8; Revelation 22:1–3; 1 Nephi 8:10–11; 11:25; Doctrine and Covenants 97:8–20.
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### Suggested Lesson Development

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Ask class members questions similar to the following:

- Have you ever been excited while watching a sporting event or some other kind of entertainment?
- Have you ever been so excited at such an event that you stood and shouted or cheered?
- Can you think of sacred events that have been or will be accompanied by enthusiastic expressions of joy and gratitude? Some of these events include:
  - a. The creation of the earth (Job 38:4–7).
  - b. The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (John 12:12–16).
  - c. The Second Coming of Christ and the Resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
- How does the excitement of sporting events or other entertainment compare to the joy of these sacred events? (While the excitement of sporting events or other entertainment is temporary, the joy associated with sacred events is eternal.)



- What is a sacred event in the Church where participants show their joy and gratitude by standing, shouting, and waving? (During the dedication of a temple, the congregation participates in a great expression of joy called the Hosanna Shout.)

“The Hosanna Shout is whole-souled, given to the full limit of one’s strength. The congregation stands and in unison shouts the words ‘Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna to God and the Lamb. Amen, Amen, and Amen,’ repeating them three times. This is usually accompanied by the rhythmic waving of white handkerchiefs with uplifted hands. The epithet ‘Lamb’ relates to the condescension and atonement of Jesus Christ” (in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. [1992], 2:659).

Explain that this lesson will help class members understand some of the many ways the temple brings joy.

### Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

#### 1. Ezekiel is shown a vision of the temple in Jerusalem.

Teach and discuss Ezekiel 43:1–12; 44:6–9, 23.

- Have class members read Ezekiel 43:1–12 and 44:6–9, 23. What can we learn about the temple from these verses?

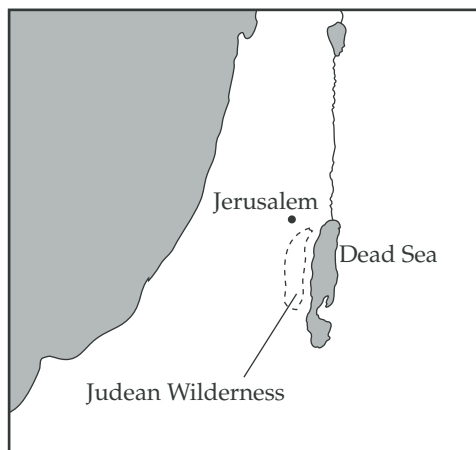
You may want to list class members’ answers on the chalkboard and discuss their meaning. Answers may include the following:

- The glory of the Lord fills the temple (Ezekiel 43:2, 4–5).
- The temple is “the place of [the Lord’s] throne” on earth (Ezekiel 43:7).
- The Lord walks in the temple, calling it “the place of the soles of my feet” (Ezekiel 43:7).
- The temple is a place where the Lord may “dwell in the midst” of his people (Ezekiel 43:7).
- We learn about the laws of the Lord in the temple (Ezekiel 43:11).
- There are ordinances that the Lord wants us to perform in the temple (Ezekiel 43:11).
- Even the grounds that surround the temple “shall be most holy” (Ezekiel 43:12).
- Only those who are worthy should enter the temple (Ezekiel 44:6–9).
- In the temple we learn the difference between holy and profane and between clean and unclean (Ezekiel 44:23).

#### 2. Ezekiel sees a river flowing from the temple that gives life to the desert and heals the Dead Sea.

Teach and discuss Ezekiel 47:1, 6–12.

- What did Ezekiel see coming from the east doors of the temple in Jerusalem? (See Ezekiel 47:1.) Where did the water go? (See Ezekiel 47:8. Show on the map that the Judean wilderness and the Dead Sea are east of Jerusalem.)



- The Judean wilderness is a barren desert, and the Dead Sea is too salty to sustain animal life. According to Ezekiel’s vision, what changes will take place in the Judean wilderness and the Dead Sea because of the river flowing from the temple? (See Ezekiel 47:6–12.)
- In a vision similar to Ezekiel’s vision of the temple, John the Beloved was shown the throne of God (Revelation 22:1–3. Note that in Ezekiel 43:7, the Lord calls the temple “the place of my throne”). What flowed from the throne of God in John’s vision? (See Revelation 22:1.) What is the “water of life”? (The doctrines of the gospel; see the attention activity in lesson 30.) How are we like the Judean wilderness and the Dead Sea if we do not partake of the water of life?
- How does the water of life that is available in the temple heal and give life to marriages? families? our ancestors? the Church? What else flows from the temple that gives spiritual life and healing? (Answers may include truth, wisdom, revelation, and covenants.)
- Ezekiel 47:12 describes the trees that grew along the banks of the river in Ezekiel’s vision. What did the trees have in common with the waters of the river? (They had healing and life-giving powers.)
- What grew along the banks of the river in John’s vision? (See Revelation 22:2.) Where else in the scriptures are prophets shown the tree of life? (See 1 Nephi 8:10–11; 11:25.) In the dream given to Lehi and Nephi, what did the tree of life represent? (See 1 Nephi 11:25.)
- How does the love of God heal and give life? What spiritual and physical wounds will God’s love heal?

### 3. Ezekiel measures the river’s depth.

Teach and discuss Ezekiel 47:2–5.

- How deep was the river the first time Ezekiel waded across it? (See Ezekiel 47:2–3.) How deep was it the second, third, and fourth times he waded across? (See Ezekiel 47:4–5.) What truth do these verses suggest about the temple? (The power of the temple increases in our lives the more often we attend.)

- Wonderful truths are taught in the temple, many through symbols. If at first our understanding of these truths or of temple ordinances is only “ankle deep,” what should we do? (See Ezekiel 47:2–5. We should wade into the “river” again and again—or, in other words, attend the temple as often as possible.)

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## Conclusion

Tell class members that the Lord has called the temple “a place of thanksgiving” (D&C 97:13). Express your thanks for the blessings that come because of the temple, and invite class members to share their feelings of gratitude for the temple. Testify that just as the waters from the temple healed the Judean wilderness and the Dead Sea in Ezekiel’s vision, the gospel of Jesus Christ will heal and cleanse us if we will partake of it.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. “I have loved the habitation of thy house” (Psalm 26:8)

Many of the psalms mention blessings we receive from temple attendance and express beautiful feelings of love and thanksgiving for the temple. You may want to ask some class members to express their feelings of gratitude for the temple as you discuss the following psalms:

Psalm 24:3–4

Psalm 26:6–8

Psalm 27:1, 4–6

Psalm 65:4

Psalm 84

Psalm 122

Psalm 134

### 2. “The Great Symbol of [Our] Membership”

President Howard W. Hunter said: “I invite the Latter-day Saints to look to the temple of the Lord as the great symbol of your membership. It is the deepest desire of my heart to have every member of the Church worthy to enter the temple. It would please the Lord if every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend. The things that we must do and not do to be worthy of a temple recommend are the very things that ensure we will be happy as individuals and as families” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 8; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 8).

- How can we make the temple the “great symbol of [our] membership” in the Church? How would looking to the temple in this way affect our outlook on life and our dedication to the Lord’s work?

# “If I Perish, I Perish”

## Lesson 45

*Daniel 1; 3; 6; Esther 3–5; 7–8*

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**Purpose** To help class members have the courage to live according to gospel standards.

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- Preparation**
1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
    - a. Daniel 1. Daniel and his friends refuse to defile themselves by eating King Nebuchadnezzar’s food (1:1–16; note that pulse was a food made of grains and edible seeds). The Lord blesses Daniel and his friends with good health and wisdom (1:17–21).
    - b. Daniel 3. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to worship King Nebuchadnezzar’s idol (3:1–12). King Nebuchadnezzar casts them into a fiery furnace, and the Lord saves them from death (3:13–30).
    - c. Daniel 6. King Darius’s men persuade the king to sign a decree that for 30 days all petitions must be directed to him rather than to any other man or to God (6:1–9). In spite of the king’s decree, Daniel prays to God (6:10–13). As punishment for disobeying the decree, Daniel is thrown into a den of lions (6:14–17). The Lord sends an angel to protect Daniel (6:18–23).
    - d. Esther 3–5; 7–8. Mordecai refuses to bow to Haman (3:1–4). Haman persuades King Ahasuerus to prepare a decree calling for the death of all Jews in the kingdom (3:5–14). Esther learns of Haman’s plan to kill her people and risks her life by going to the king for help (4:1–17). The king receives Esther and grants her request to come with Haman to a banquet (5:1–8). At the banquet Esther reveals Haman’s plot to kill the Jews (7:1–6). The king hangs Haman (7:7–10). The king honors Mordecai and grants Esther’s request to reverse Haman’s decree (8:1–17).
  2. Additional reading: Daniel 5; Esther 1–2; 6; 9–10.
  3. If you use the attention activity, ask two class members to prepare to tell briefly about a time when they or someone they know had to show courage to obey the Lord.
  4. If the following pictures are available, you may want to use some of them during the lesson: Daniel Refusing the King’s Meat and Wine (62094; Gospel Art Picture Kit 114); Three Men in the Fiery Furnace (62093; Gospel Art Picture Kit 116); and Daniel in the Lions’ Den (62096; Gospel Art Picture Kit 117).
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### Suggested Lesson Development

- Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.
- Ask the assigned class members to tell briefly about a time when they or someone they know had to show courage to obey the Lord.

After the class members have shared their experiences, explain that this lesson is about six people in the Old Testament who showed great courage in obeying the Lord.

Scripture Discussion  
and Application

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As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

**1. Daniel and his friends refuse to eat King Nebuchadnezzar's food; they are blessed with good health and wisdom.**

Teach and discuss Daniel 1.

As a young boy, Daniel was carried captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. He and other promising Hebrew youths—including his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—were trained in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar.

- What did Daniel and his friends propose when they were given the king's meat and wine? (See Daniel 1:8–14.) What blessings did they receive for obeying the Lord's law of health? (See Daniel 1:15, 17, 20.) How are the blessings they received similar to the Lord's promises to us if we obey the Word of Wisdom? (See D&C 89:18–20.)

Elder Boyd K. Packer taught: "I have come to know . . . that a fundamental purpose of the Word of Wisdom has to do with revelation. From the time you are very little we teach you to avoid tea, coffee, liquor, tobacco, narcotics, and anything else that disturbs your health. . . . If someone 'under the influence' can hardly listen to plain talk, how can they respond to spiritual promptings that touch their most delicate feelings? As valuable as the Word of Wisdom is as a law of health, it may be much more valuable to you spiritually than it is physically" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 28–29; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 20).

- What can this story teach us about how to respond when we feel pressure to do something we should not do? (See Daniel 1:5, 8.) What situations today require courage for us to obey the Lord's commandments? How can we develop the courage needed to obey in such situations?

**2. The Lord saves Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from death in the fiery furnace.**

Teach and discuss Daniel 3.

- King Nebuchadnezzar decreed that anyone who would not worship his idol would be cast into a fiery furnace (Daniel 3:1–6). How did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego respond to the decree? (See Daniel 3:12.) What did Nebuchadnezzar do when he found out that they would not worship his idol? (See Daniel 3:13–15, 19–20.)
- What did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego say when the king threatened to throw them in the furnace? (See Daniel 3:16–18.)

Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: "We will [not] always be rescued from proximate problems, but we will be rescued from everlasting death! Meanwhile, ultimate hope makes it possible to say the same three words used centuries ago by three

valiant men. They knew God could rescue them from the fiery furnace if He chose. 'But if not,' they said, nevertheless, they would still serve Him!" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 45; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 35).

- What can the response of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego teach us about obeying the Lord's commandments? (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were willing to obey the Lord whether he protected them or not. Our obedience should not be conditioned on whether or not the Lord gives us an expected blessing at an expected time in return.) What are the dangers of obeying the Lord only because we expect him to give us a certain blessing in return?
- What happened when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were cast into the furnace? (See Daniel 3:21–27.) Who was in the furnace with them? (See Daniel 3:25.) How does the Savior help us when we turn to him during our trials?
- What effect did the courage of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego have on Nebuchadnezzar? (See Daniel 3:28–30.) How do our actions affect our neighbors' attitudes toward the Church?

### **3. Daniel prays in spite of the king's decree and is thrown into a den of lions. The Lord sends an angel to protect Daniel.**

Teach and discuss Daniel 6.

King Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his son Belshazzar. When Belshazzar was slain, "Darius the Median took the kingdom" (Daniel 5:31), and Daniel rose to a position of great prominence. (Note: Darius the Mede is not the same King Darius who ruled the Persian Empire after Cyrus and to whom the Jews appealed while rebuilding the temple. See Ezra 4–6; lesson 47; and Bible Dictionary, "Darius," page 653.)

- Why did the king's presidents and princes want to find fault with Daniel? (See Daniel 6:1–5. They were jealous that the king preferred Daniel, and they were worried that the king might give him more power.) What decree did these men convince the king to sign? (See Daniel 6:6–9. Knowing that Daniel prayed regularly, they persuaded King Darius to sign a decree that for 30 days all petitions must be directed to him rather than to any other man or to God. Those who disobeyed the decree would be thrown into a den of lions.)
- How did Daniel respond to the king's decree? (See Daniel 6:10.) What can we learn from Daniel about the importance of prayer? (Prayer was so important to Daniel that he continued to pray even when his life was threatened for doing so.) Invite class members to ponder the value we place on the privilege of praying to our Heavenly Father.
- How did King Darius feel when his men reported that they had seen Daniel praying? (See Daniel 6:12–15.) How did the king demonstrate his belief in God? (See Daniel 6:16, 18.)
- How did the Lord bless Daniel in the lions' den? (See Daniel 6:19–23.) What effect did Daniel's faith and courage have on King Darius and the people of the kingdom? (See Daniel 6:24–28.)

Elder L. Tom Perry said: "Not only did Daniel's service benefit the king, but because of the faith that Daniel had in the Lord, it affected an entire land.

The king sent forth a proclamation that all the people of the kingdom should worship the true and living God, the God that Daniel worshiped. How mighty was the power of the service of one righteous man, affecting so many, as he served ‘in the world’ in which he lived! How effective will be the results of our service if we will continue to serve in our own personal way ‘in the world’ in which we live!” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 16; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 15).

#### 4. Esther risks her life to save her people.

Teach and discuss Esther 3–5; 7–8.

Esther was a Jewish woman who lived shortly after the time of Daniel. After her parents died, she was raised by her cousin Mordecai. Esther was very beautiful, and Ahasuerus, the king of Persia and Media, was so pleased with her beauty that he made her his queen.

- King Ahasuerus promoted Haman to be his highest-ranking prince (Esther 3:1). How did Mordecai show courage when the king commanded him and other servants to bow to Haman? (See Esther 3:2–4.) What was Haman’s reaction? (See Esther 3:5–14. He was angry and persuaded the king to order the destruction of “a certain people”—all the Jews in the kingdom.)
- When Esther learned of the mourning among the Jews, she sent a messenger to ask Mordecai what was wrong (Esther 4:1–6). What did Mordecai ask of Esther? (See Esther 4:7–9.) Why was it dangerous for Esther to go in and speak with the king? (See Esther 4:10–11. The law allowed the king to kill anyone who approached him uninvited.)
- What message did Mordecai send Esther when he learned of her concerns about approaching the king? (See Esther 4:13–14.) How do you think Esther felt as she contemplated the possibility that she had “come to the kingdom for such a time as this”? (Esther 4:14). How can we receive the assurance that our lives have purpose? How can this assurance help us?
- What did Esther ask of her maidens and the local Jews as she prepared to approach the king? (See Esther 4:16.) How can the united fasting and prayers of many people help us?
- Stating her intent to approach the king, Esther said, “If I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16). How was this declaration like the statement of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego before they were thrown into the furnace? (See Daniel 3:17–18.) How did this declaration show Esther’s devotion to her people and to God?
- When Esther approached the king, he received her and said he would grant anything she requested (Esther 5:1–3). She requested that the king and Haman come to a banquet (Esther 5:4–8). On the second day of the banquet, what did Esther ask of the king? (See Esther 7:3–4.) What did the king do when he learned that the people Haman was plotting to destroy were the Jews? (See Esther 7:5–10.)
- Haman was hanged, but the decree to kill all Jews had already been circulated throughout the kingdom. What did Esther ask the king to do? (See Esther 8:5–6.) What blessings did the Jews receive because of Esther’s courage and faith? (See Esther 8:16–17.) What blessings have you received because of the courage and faith of others?

- What challenges do we face today that require courage like Esther's? What blessings will we receive as we strive to do what is right even when we are faced with difficult consequences?

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## Conclusion

Testify that the Lord will bless us as we have the courage to stand for the truth. Encourage class members to follow the examples of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Esther, and Mordecai.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. The ultimate blessings of courageous obedience

- What did Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Esther, and Mordecai have in common? (They all had the courage to do what was right, even when doing so put their lives at risk.) What situations have you encountered where you had to decide whether or not you would stand for what you knew was right?

Testify that as we strive to keep the commandments, the Lord will bless us. However, the blessings we receive are not always immediately evident. To illustrate this, you may want to discuss the trials that the following people endured:

- Sarah was unable to have children until she was 90 years old (Genesis 17:15–17; 21:1–2).
  - Joseph was sold by his brothers and later imprisoned for a crime he did not commit (Genesis 37:27–28; 39:7–20).
  - The Savior was betrayed by a friend, illegally tried, and crucified (John 18–19).
  - Nephi was beaten and later bound with cords by his brothers (1 Nephi 3:28; 18:10–11).
  - Alma and Amulek were forced to watch as women and children were burned for their beliefs (Alma 14:8–11).
  - Joseph Smith was imprisoned and martyred (D&C 135).
- Why do you think the Lord allowed these people to suffer such trials? Why do you think they were able to endure these trials? What can we learn from their examples?

### 2. Standing for the truth

Have class members role-play different situations in which they would need to stand up for what they know is right. Think of circumstances that would apply to class members. The following suggestions may be helpful:

- A friend belittles someone and encourages you to do the same.
- Someone suggests that you listen to some music that you know is inappropriate.
- Someone asks you to go to a restaurant on Sunday after church.
- Someone offers you some alcohol or another substance contrary to the Word of Wisdom.



Lesson  
**46**

# “A Kingdom, Which Shall Never Be Destroyed”

*Daniel 2*

**Purpose**

To strengthen class members’ testimonies of the restored Church of Jesus Christ and encourage them to help build the kingdom of God on earth.

**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. Daniel 2:1–23. King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and commands his advisers to describe and interpret it (2:1–13). Daniel prays with his friends, and God reveals to him the dream and its interpretation (2:14–23).
  - b. Daniel 2:24–49. Daniel reveals that King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream foretells the rise and fall of the great kingdoms of the earth and the latter-day triumph of the kingdom of God over all other kingdoms.
2. Additional reading: Doctrine and Covenants 65.
3. Invite two or three class members to prepare to bear brief testimonies about the truthfulness of the Church.
4. If you use the attention activity, draw the chart at the bottom of this page on a poster or on the chalkboard before class begins.
5. If you use the “Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream” diagram (see page 218), draw it on a poster or on the chalkboard before class. Do not write the names of the individual kingdoms until you discuss the diagram in class.
6. If the picture Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream is available, you may want to use it during the lesson (62531; Gospel Art Picture Kit 115).

**Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity**

You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Direct class members’ attention to the chart you have drawn on a poster or on the chalkboard:

	6 April 1830	1880	1930	1980	1995	2000
	6	133,628	670,017	4,639,822	9,340,898	Over 11,000,000
	1	10	16	44	88	100
	0	23	104	1,218	2,150	2,581
	0	10	30	188	307	334
	0	1	7	19	47	102

- What do you think these numbers represent?

Give class members a few minutes to suggest answers to this question. Then complete the chart as shown below:

	6 April 1830	1880	1930	1980	1995	2000
Members of the Church	6	133,628	670,017	4,639,822	9,340,898	Over 11,000,000
Languages with published editions of the Book of Mormon	1	10	16	44	88 (39 full and 49 partial translations)	100 (61 full and 39 partial translations)
Stakes	0	23	104	1,218	2,150	2,581
Missions	0	10	30	188	307	334
Temples in operation	0	1	7	19	47	102

(Current statistics can be found in recent Church publications. You may want to add a column to the chart to include those statistics.)

Invite class members to comment on the rapid growth of the Church. Explain that this lesson tells of Daniel, an ancient prophet who foresaw the triumph of God’s kingdom on earth—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

**1. Daniel receives a revelation in which he is shown King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and given its interpretation.**

Teach and discuss Daniel 2:1–23.

King Nebuchadnezzar had a troubling dream one night. He tested his advisers by telling them that he had forgotten it and commanding them to reveal it and its interpretation (Daniel 2:2–5; see footnote 5a). When they said that they could not describe the dream, Nebuchadnezzar ordered the death of all the wise men of Babylon, including Daniel and his friends (Daniel 2:10–13). When the king’s captain came to take Daniel to be slain, Daniel went to the king and asked for time to interpret the dream (Daniel 2:14–16).

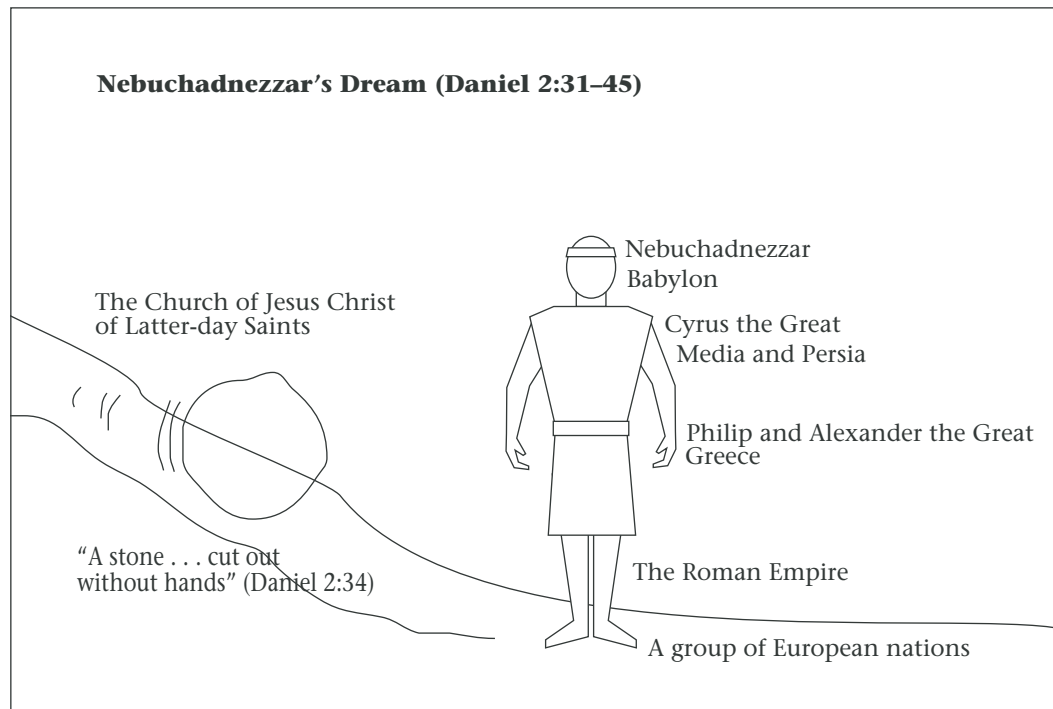
- How did Daniel prepare to interpret the king’s dream? (See Daniel 2:17–18. He asked his friends to pray with him.) How have the prayers of family members and friends helped you?
- How were the prayers of Daniel and his friends answered? (See Daniel 2:19, 27–28.) What did Daniel do immediately after receiving the vision of the king’s dream? (See Daniel 2:20–23.) What did his words reveal about his feelings toward God? Why is it important to show gratitude to the Lord? How can we show him our gratitude?
- Contrast the sources to which Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar turned when they sought answers to questions. (See Daniel 2:2, 19–23, 28.) What questionable

sources do people today turn to when they need help answering difficult questions or making decisions? What keeps many people from seeking God's guidance in such situations?

## 2. Daniel describes and interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Teach and discuss Daniel 2:24–49.

- How did Daniel describe the great image that the king had seen in his dream? (See Daniel 2:31–33. Refer to the picture Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar's Dream or to your drawing of the diagram shown below.)



- What did the different parts of the image represent? (See Daniel 2:36–43. The parts represented different kingdoms that would succeed each other as world powers.)

Write the names of the kingdoms on the diagram as you review the following interpretation from President Spencer W. Kimball:

- The head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom of Babylon.
  - The breast and arms of silver represented Cyrus and his kingdom of Media and Persia.
  - The belly and thighs of brass represented Philip and Alexander and the Greek or Macedonian kingdom.
  - The legs of iron represented the Roman Empire.
  - The feet of iron and clay represented a group of European nations. (In Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 10; or *Ensign*, May 1976, 8.)
- In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, what destroyed the image that represented the earthly kingdoms? (See Daniel 2:34–35.) What did the "stone . . . cut out without hands" represent? (See Daniel 2:44–45; D&C 65:2.)

President Kimball taught: “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was restored in 1830. . . . This is the kingdom, set up by the God of heaven, that would never be destroyed nor superseded, and the stone cut out of the mountain without hands that would become a great mountain and would fill the whole earth” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 10; or *Ensign*, May 1976, 8–9).

- What did Daniel prophesy concerning the Church in the latter days? (See Daniel 2:34–35, 44.)

You may want to list the following prophecies on the chalkboard. Daniel prophesied that the Church would:

- Be “cut out without hands” (Daniel 2:34).
  - Become “a great mountain, and [fill] the whole earth” (Daniel 2:35).
  - “Never be destroyed” (Daniel 2:44).
  - “Not be left [given] to other people” (Daniel 2:44).
  - “Consume all [other] kingdoms” (Daniel 2:44).
  - “Stand for ever” (Daniel 2:44).
- What did it mean that the stone would be “cut out without hands”? (See Daniel 2:34. It would not be man-made.) How is the restored Church of Jesus Christ like a stone cut out without hands?

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin said: “Our Lord and Savior stands at the head of this church and directs it through his servants. This is the Lord’s church; it is not a church of men” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 4; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 5).

- How is Daniel’s prophecy that the Church will “fill the whole earth” and “never be destroyed” being fulfilled today? (You may want to refer to the second chart in the attention activity.)

President Gordon B. Hinckley testified: “This Church is true. It will weather every storm that beats against it. It will outlast every critic who rises to mock it. It was established by God our Eternal Father for the blessing of His sons and daughters of all generations. It carries the name of Him who stands as its head, even the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. It is governed and moves by the power of the priesthood. It sends forth to the world another witness of the divinity of the Lord. Be faithful, my friends. Be true. Be loyal to the great things of God which have been revealed in this dispensation” (“Keep the Faith,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1985, 6).

- What can we do to participate in the building of the kingdom of God in our homes, in our communities, and throughout the world?

Invite the assigned class members to bear brief testimonies about the truthfulness of the Church.

## Conclusion

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Testify that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the kingdom of God on earth and that Jesus Christ leads it. Encourage class members to participate in building God’s kingdom on earth.

Lesson  
**47**

# “Let Us Rise Up and Build”

*Ezra 1–8; Nehemiah 1–2; 4; 6; 8*

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**Purpose**

To encourage class members to help build Zion and to show Christlike love to those who oppose the work of the Lord.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the following scriptures:
  - a. Ezra 1–6. King Cyrus reads his name in Isaiah’s prophecies and is filled with a desire to do the Lord’s will. He frees the Jews who have been captive in Babylon and invites them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1). Zerubbabel and Jeshua lead approximately 50,000 people back to Jerusalem, and they begin to rebuild the temple (Ezra 2–3). The Samaritans offer to help work on the temple, are turned down, and attempt to stop the work; the rebuilding ceases (Ezra 4). Several years later, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah exhort the Jews to finish the temple; the Samaritans continue to oppose it (Ezra 5; see also Haggai 1). King Darius renews the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple, and it is finished and dedicated in about 515 B.C. (Ezra 6).
  - b. Ezra 7–8. More than 50 years after the temple is dedicated, Ezra receives permission from King Artaxerxes of Persia to lead another group of Jews back to Jerusalem. Ezra and his people fast and pray, and the Lord protects them on their journey.
  - c. Nehemiah 1–2; 4; 6. Learning that the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem were “in great affliction and reproach,” Nehemiah receives permission from King Artaxerxes to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the city walls (Nehemiah 1–2). The enemies of the Jews seek to prevent them from rebuilding the walls. Nehemiah arms the laborers and keeps the work going forward until the walls are finished (Nehemiah 4; 6).
  - d. Nehemiah 8. After the walls are rebuilt around Jerusalem, Ezra reads the scriptures to the people. When they hear the words of the law, the people weep and desire to obey them.
2. Additional reading: Haggai 1; “Ezra,” Bible Dictionary, page 669; “Nehemiah,” Bible Dictionary, page 738.
3. You may want to invite a class member to prepare to give a brief summary of the historical background given at the beginning of the first scripture account.
4. If the picture Temple Used Anciently is available, you may want to use it during the lesson (62300; Gospel Art Picture Kit 118).

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**Suggested Lesson  
Development**

**Attention Activity**

You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Have a class member read the following quotation from Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

“We may . . . find that a specific verse of scripture that was spoken for quite a different purpose in an entirely different age will, under the interpretive influence of the Holy Ghost, give us a very personal message adapted to our personal needs today. . . . If we seek to liken the scriptures to our own circumstances, ‘that it might be for our profit and learning’ (1 Nephi 19:23), a loving Father in heaven can use them to bless us in highly individual ways” (*Studying the Scriptures* [devotional given in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, 24 Nov. 1985]).

- Have you ever been reading the scriptures and felt that a particular passage spoke directly to you? (Invite class members to share their experiences.)  
How have the scriptures helped provide direction specifically for your life?

Explain that the events discussed in this lesson were set in motion by a man who found that a passage of scripture written 150 years before his birth spoke to him personally—in fact, it mentioned him by name.

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Scripture Discussion  
and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

**1. King Cyrus allows the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple.**

Teach and discuss Ezra 1–6.

Present (or have an assigned class member present) a brief summary of the following historical information:

In 721 B.C., when the kingdom of Israel (the Northern Kingdom, or ten tribes) was taken captive by Assyria, the Assyrian empire was the greatest in the world. By 612 B.C., however, the Assyrian empire had been destroyed by the Babylonians. Under King Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon ruled most of the lands that had been conquered by the Assyrians. The Babylonian conquest of the kingdom of Judah (the Southern Kingdom) extended from about 605 B.C., when they took many Jews captive, to 587 B.C., when they destroyed Jerusalem.

After Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 B.C., Babylon declined rapidly in power. In 539 B.C., Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians, united under the leadership of Cyrus. Unlike Nebuchadnezzar, who treated those he conquered with cruelty, Cyrus was a benevolent ruler. By treating conquered peoples kindly and respecting their religions, Cyrus won the loyalty of those he ruled.

Shortly after conquering Babylon, Cyrus decreed that the temple in Jerusalem should be rebuilt. He invited the Jews in his empire to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, and he returned the vessels of gold and silver that Nebuchadnezzar’s troops had stolen from the temple. (See 2 Chronicles 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–3, 7. The prophecy of Jeremiah that is referred to in these verses is that the Jews would return to Jerusalem after 70 years of Babylonian captivity; see Jeremiah 25:11–12; 29:10.)

- Why did Cyrus decree that a temple should be built again in Jerusalem? (See Ezra 1:1–2.) How did Cyrus know the Lord wanted him to do this?

The words of Cyrus that are recorded in Ezra 1:2 refer to a prophecy in Isaiah 44:28 that mentioned Cyrus by name (see also Isaiah 45:1–5; explain that although the story of Cyrus comes before the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament, Isaiah lived about 150 years before Cyrus was born). The ancient Jewish historian Flavius Josephus reported that Cyrus read his name in Isaiah’s prophecies, was touched by the Spirit of the Lord, and desired to fulfill what was written (*The Works of Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews*, trans. William Whiston [n.d.], bk. 11, chap. 1, pars. 1–2).

- How would you feel if you were reading the scriptures and read a prophecy that gave your name and described specific things you would do?

When Zerubbabel and Jeshua led the first group of Jews back to Jerusalem, they found the Samaritans there. You may want to explain that the Samaritans were descendants of Israelites who had escaped at the time of captivity and had intermarried with Assyrian and Babylonian colonists whom the kings had sent to occupy the land.

- What did the Samaritans ask of the returning Jews? (See Ezra 4:1–2.) How did the Jews respond to the Samaritans’ request? (See Ezra 4:3. The Jews refused to let the Samaritans help rebuild the temple because they felt the Samaritans were not true Israelites.) What did the Samaritans do when the Jews refused to let them help? (See Ezra 4:4–7, 11–24. They tried to stop the rebuilding of the temple by complaining to the kings who succeeded Cyrus.)
- Work on the temple eventually ceased. What prompted the Jews to resume their work several years later? (See Ezra 5:1–2; Haggai 1. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah provided inspired direction.) What did the Lord, through Haggai, say to the Jews in Jerusalem about the temple? (See Haggai 1:3–4, 7–8.) What attitude among the Jews was hindering the rebuilding of the temple? (See Haggai 1:2.) What attitudes hinder us from regular worship and service in the temple?
- The Samaritans again tried to stop the rebuilding of the temple when construction resumed. But the Jews explained the decree of King Cyrus, and King Darius allowed the work to continue (Ezra 5–6). What did the Jews do when the temple was finished? (See Ezra 6:15–22.)

## **2. Ezra leads another group of Jews back to Jerusalem.**

Teach and discuss Ezra 7–8.

- Just as the Lord had earlier moved the heart of King Cyrus to free the Jews, He moved the heart of King Artaxerxes to let Ezra’s group of Jews return to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:27–28; see also verses 11–26). What are some examples of the Lord softening the hearts of government leaders toward the Church in the latter days? (See, for example, Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 65–69; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 50–53.) What can we do to encourage government leaders’ hearts to be softened toward the Church? (Answers could include obeying the laws of the land, doing good, preparing to teach the gospel to all the world, and praying for the Lord to soften the hearts of the leaders. See D&C 58:21, 27; 98:4–6.)
- What did Ezra do to ensure that the group of Jews he was taking to Jerusalem was protected? (See Ezra 8:21–23, 31.) How have you, your family, or others you know been blessed by fasting?

### 3. Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem and leads the people in rebuilding the walls to protect the city.

Teach and discuss Nehemiah 1–2; 4; 6. You may want to point out that Nehemiah was the cupbearer for King Artaxerxes of Persia. This was a position of great trust and responsibility, requiring Nehemiah to ensure that the king’s food and drink were safe. Even though Nehemiah was in a position of importance in Persia, he cared about his people in Jerusalem and sought to help them when he heard of their difficulties.

- What did Nehemiah do when he heard of the difficulties of his people in Jerusalem? (See Nehemiah 1:4–11; 2:1–5.) How did King Artaxerxes respond to Nehemiah’s request? (See Nehemiah 2:6–8. The king granted Nehemiah permission to go, provided him guards and an escort for safety, and authorized him to use timber from the forest to rebuild the city walls.) What can we learn from Nehemiah that can guide us when we are troubled by the suffering of others?
- How did Nehemiah encourage the people to rebuild the walls around the city? (See Nehemiah 2:17–18.) Why do you think testifying of the truth and sharing spiritual experiences have such power to inspire others to do good? How have the testimonies and spiritual experiences of others inspired you?
- Sanballat was the governor of Samaria, and he and his people were enemies of the Jews who had returned with Zerubbabel. How did Sanballat react to the plans to rebuild the city walls? (See Nehemiah 2:10, 19; 4:1–3, 7–8, 11.) How did the Jews respond to these efforts to stop the construction of the walls? (See Nehemiah 4:9, 13–15.)
- What did Nehemiah do when Sanballat asked him to stop working and meet with him? (See Nehemiah 6:1–4.) How do some people try to distract Church members from the Lord’s work today? How should we respond to such distractions?

Elder Marvin J. Ashton counseled: “Certain people and organizations are trying to provoke us into contention with slander, innuendos, and improper classifications. How unwise we are in today’s society to allow ourselves to become irritated, dismayed, or offended because others seem to enjoy the role of misstating our position or involvement. Our principles or standards will not be less than they are because of the statements of the contentious. Ours is to explain our position through reason, friendly persuasion, and accurate facts. Ours is to stand firm and unyielding on the moral issues of the day and the eternal principles of the gospel, but to contend with no man or organization. . . . Ours is to be heard and teach. Ours is not only to avoid contention, but to see that such things are done away” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1978, 10; or *Ensign*, May 1978, 8).

### 4. The people rejoice as Ezra reads the scriptures to them.

Teach and discuss Nehemiah 8.

- After the people had finished rebuilding the city walls, what did they request of Ezra? (See Nehemiah 8:1–2. Note that most of the Jews had been in captivity so long that they had never heard or read the scriptures.)
- How long did Ezra read to the people? (See Nehemiah 8:3, 17–18.) How did the people respond? (See Nehemiah 8:3, 6, 9, 12.) How can we be more attentive as



we read the scriptures? (Discuss how to be more attentive to the scriptures themselves and to the whisperings of the Spirit that come while reading the scriptures.) How can we develop the kind of excitement for the scriptures that these people had?

- What did Ezra do to help his people understand the scriptures? (See Nehemiah 8:8.) What has helped you in your efforts to understand the scriptures and to help your family understand them? (You may want to invite class members to share specific things they have done to improve their personal and family scripture study.)
- What did Ezra and the other leaders say when the people began to weep as they heard the scriptures? (See Nehemiah 8:9–11.) How have the scriptures caused you to rejoice?

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## Conclusion

“Nehemiah’s energy, ability, unselfish patriotism, and personal integrity brought a new, exuberant Judah into existence once again. The restoration of Jerusalem, which had lain in ruins for a century and a half, was begun. Ezra, a righteous, dedicated priest, joined Nehemiah in this work, and together they succeeded in restoring a Jewish community in Jerusalem once again” (*Old Testament Student Manual: 1 Kings–Malachi* [1982], 314).

Explain that just as the Jews had the responsibility to rebuild Jerusalem, Latter-day Saints have the responsibility to build Zion throughout the world. To help us do this, we need to follow the teachings in the scriptures and participate in temple work. Testify of the truthfulness of the scriptures and the importance of temple work.

Remind class members that some people will try to stop the work of the Lord. We should show Christlike love to them but not allow them to distract us from our efforts to build the kingdom of God.

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## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. “The work is great and large, and we are separated” (Nehemiah 4:19)

While rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem, the Jews separated themselves so they could work simultaneously on different sections of the wall (Nehemiah 3; 4:19). At times they were far apart, but they were all working toward the same goal, and by working together they were able to complete the wall. Remind class members that the Church is divided into different units (such as families, wards, branches, stakes, districts, and quorums) throughout the world. Sometimes a unit may seem far from other units. But all the Saints are working toward the same goals, and if each individual and each unit works diligently, the entire Church will continue to grow.

### 2. “Temples Are for Eternal Covenants”

If *Family Home Evening Video Supplement 2* (53277) is available, you may want to show “Temples Are for Eternal Covenants,” a six-minute segment, as part of a discussion on the importance of temples.

# “The Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord”

Lesson  
**48**

*Zechariah 10–14; Malachi*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to (1) prepare for the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, (2) pay an honest tithe and generous offerings, and (3) experience the blessings that come because of the sealing power of the priesthood.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study the passages from Zechariah 10–14 and Malachi that are discussed in this lesson.
2. Additional reading: Doctrine and Covenants 45.
3. You may want to write some of the scripture references from the first part of the lesson on separate pieces of paper to distribute to class members.
4. If you use the attention activity, obtain the picture *The Second Coming* (62562; Gospel Art Picture Kit 238).
5. Obtain a copy of the *New Testament Class Member Study Guide* (31392) for each person in your class. (The ward should have ordered these study guides as part of the annual curriculum order; a member of the bishopric should give them to the Sunday School presidency.)

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## **Suggested Lesson Development**

**Attention Activity** You may want to use the following activity (or one of your own) to begin the lesson.

Show the picture *The Second Coming*. Then ask the following questions:

- What feelings do you have when you hear words like *Second Coming*, *last days*, or *signs of the times*? The scriptures refer to the Second Coming as a “great and dreadful day” (Malachi 4:5). How can it be both?

President Ezra Taft Benson said, “[The Savior’s] coming will be both glorious and terrible, depending on the spiritual condition of those who remain” (“Prepare Yourself for the Great Day of the Lord,” *New Era*, May 1982, 49).

Explain that this lesson includes discussions about (1) the prophecies that Zechariah and Malachi made about the last days and (2) our preparation for the Second Coming.

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**Scripture Discussion and Application** As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

## 1. Zechariah and Malachi prophesy of many events of the last days.

Discuss some of the following prophecies from Zechariah and Malachi, which describe events of the last days. If you have prepared pieces of paper with the scripture references written on them, distribute them to class members. Have class members read each passage and tell what it teaches. If the passage gives information that can help us prepare for the Second Coming, discuss how we can apply it.

### *Prophecies that have been fulfilled in preparation for the Second Coming*

- a. Malachi 3:1. Malachi prophesied that a messenger would prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. John the Baptist prepared the way for the Lord's mortal ministry, and Joseph Smith is the messenger who prepared the way for the Second Coming (see Matthew 11:10; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 1:193–95, 3:10–14).
  - b. Malachi 4:5–6. Malachi prophesied that the prophet Elijah would return before the Second Coming to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers. This prophecy was fulfilled when Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple, restoring the keys of the sealing power (D&C 110:13–16). *Possible application:* We should search out the names of our ancestors and perform ordinances for them in the temple (this is discussed in more detail later in the lesson).
- Why is it helpful to know that some of the prophecies of the Second Coming have already been fulfilled?

### *Prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled before the Savior comes*

- a. Zechariah 10:6–8. The people of Judah and Joseph will be gathered, and the people of Ephraim will become mighty. The Lord will “hiss,” or call, for his people and gather them. *Possible application:* We can assist in this gathering by sharing the gospel with others.
  - b. Zechariah 12:2–3, 8–9. A great war will be fought in and around Jerusalem, but the Lord will intervene and save the inhabitants of Jerusalem from destruction. *Possible application:* We should trust God to defend his people during the difficulties of the last days.
  - c. Zechariah 14:8. Living waters will flow from the temple in Jerusalem and will heal the Dead Sea and the Judean wilderness (see also Ezekiel 47:1, 8–9).
- Many of the prophecies of the last days include tragedies such as war, natural disasters, and widespread wickedness. How can we maintain hope when we hear of these prophecies and witness their fulfillment? (See D&C 38:28–30.)

### *Prophecies that will be fulfilled when the Savior comes*

- a. Zechariah 14:3–4. The Savior will stand on the Mount of Olives, and the mount will be divided in half (see also D&C 45:48).
- b. Zechariah 12:10; 13:6. The Jewish people living at the time of Jerusalem's deliverance will see Jesus Christ and will mourn because they as a people have rejected him as the Messiah (see also D&C 45:51–53).
- c. Zechariah 13:2. False idols, unclean spirits, and false prophets will be destroyed.

- d. Zechariah 14:5. The righteous who are alive on the earth will be caught up to meet the Savior. The righteous who have died will be resurrected and will also be caught up to meet him (see also D&C 88:96–98).
- e. Zechariah 14:9. The Lord will be king over all the earth and will rule during the Millennium.
- f. Zechariah 14:12–13; Malachi 3:13–18; 4:1–3. The wicked will be destroyed, and the righteous will be spared (see also 1 Nephi 22:15–17, 19).
- Why do you think the Lord has revealed these prophecies about the latter days, the Second Coming, and the Millennium? (See D&C 45:34–44.) How can we prepare for the Second Coming of the Savior? (See D&C 45:56–57.)

President Ezra Taft Benson said: “As we live the commandments of God, we can look forward with joyful anticipation to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and know that through our efforts we are worthy, with our loved ones, to dwell in His presence for all eternity. Surely nothing is too hard to gain this great goal. We cannot let down for a moment. We must prove, every day of our lives, that we are willing to do the will of the Lord—to spread the restored gospel, to bear testimony to the world, to share the gospel with others” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 341).

- How does it help you to know that righteousness will eventually triumph over wickedness?

## 2. Malachi teaches about the blessings that come to those who pay tithes and offerings.

Teach and discuss Malachi 3:8–12.

- How do people “rob God” by not paying tithes and offerings?
- What does it mean to pay a full tithe?

The First Presidency has stated: “The simplest statement we know of is the statement of the Lord himself, namely, that the members of the Church should pay ‘one-tenth of all their interest annually,’ which is understood to mean income. No one is justified in making any other statement than this” (First Presidency letter, 19 Mar. 1970; see also D&C 119:1–4).

- What blessings has the Lord promised us if we pay tithing? (See Malachi 3:10–12.) How has the Lord blessed you as you have paid tithes and offerings?
- What should be our motivation for paying tithes and offerings?

After referring to the blessings the Lord gives to tithe payers, President Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“Now, do not get me wrong. I am not here to say that if you pay an honest tithing you will realize your dream of a fine house, a Rolls Royce, and a condominium in Hawaii. *The Lord will open the windows of heaven according to our need, and not according to our greed.* If we are paying tithing to get rich, we are doing it for the wrong reason. The basic purpose for tithing is to provide the Church with the means needed to carry on His work” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1982, 60; or *Ensign*, May 1982, 40).

- Why is it sometimes a challenge to obey the law of tithing? What can be done to overcome that challenge?

### 3. Malachi prophesies of Elijah’s return to the earth to restore the keys of the sealing power.

Teach and discuss Malachi 4:5–6.

- Malachi prophesied that the prophet Elijah would come to the earth before the Lord’s Second Coming (Malachi 4:6). How was this prophecy fulfilled? (See D&C 110:13–16. Elijah appeared in the Kirtland Temple and restored to Joseph Smith the keys of the sealing power.) What does it mean to “turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers”? (It means to be sealed to all our ancestors—our “fathers”—and to all our posterity—our “children”—forever. Because of the sealing power of the priesthood and the temple ordinances for the living and the dead, families can be bound together for eternity.)
- How have you felt your heart turn to your ancestors as you have done family history and temple work for them? How do the promises of temple covenants turn your heart to your parents, spouse, and children?
- The message in Malachi 4:5–6 is taught in each of the standard works (Luke 1:17; 3 Nephi 25:5–6; D&C 2:1–3; Joseph Smith—History 1:37–39). Why do you think this message is repeated so often?

#### Conclusion

Bear testimony of the things you have chosen to discuss in the lesson. As a conclusion to this year’s course of study, you may also want to express your gratitude for the teachings in the Old Testament.

Give each class member a copy of the *New Testament Class Member Study Guide* (31392; see “Preparation,” page 225). Explain that next year’s course of study is the New Testament. Encourage members to begin using the study guide to prepare for next week’s lesson and to study the New Testament with their families.

#### Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

##### 1. Prophesied appearances of the Savior

- At least seven latter-day appearances of the Savior have been foretold in the scriptures. How many of them can you identify?

The following information will help to answer this question:

- To the Prophet Joseph Smith in the First Vision (Acts 3:19–21; Joseph Smith—History 1:15–17).
- In his latter-day temples (Malachi 3:1; D&C 133:1–2).
- In the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman (D&C 116; Daniel 7:13–14, 22; see also D&C 107:53–56, which describes a past meeting at Adam-ondi-Ahman that is similar to the meeting that will take place there).

- d. In Jerusalem during a worldwide conflict known as the battle of Armageddon (Ezekiel 38–39; Zechariah 12–14; Revelation 11; D&C 45:47–53).
- e. In the city of New Jerusalem, at Independence, Missouri (3 Nephi 21:24–26).
- f. To the righteous at the time of his Second Coming (Zechariah 14:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; D&C 88:96–98).
- g. To the wicked (D&C 133:42–51).

## 2. When will the Second Coming occur?

The Lord has made clear that while he will surely come again, no person knows the exact time (D&C 39:20–21; 49:7).

Elder Richard L. Evans said: “Some of the brethren . . . approached [President Wilford Woodruff] and . . . inquired of him as to when he felt the end would be—when would be the coming of the Master? These, I think, are not his exact words, but they convey the spirit of his reported reply: ‘I would live as if it were to be tomorrow—but I am still planting cherry trees!’ I think we may well take this as a page for our own book and live as if the end might be tomorrow—and still plant cherry trees! In worrying about things that are beyond our reach, we should not overlook our opportunities with our own families and friends; in worrying about possible eventualities we should not neglect the things that need to be done here and now, and that are within our reach” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1950, 105–6).