Lesson 7
Various Scriptures on the First Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel

Faith

Doctrine and Covenants 19

Verse 23: What does the Savior mean when he commands us to learn of him? If we are familiar with the Gospels and 3 Nephi, then we have all the facts of his biography that are known. Presumably that isn’t what he is commanding us to learn, so what is he commanding? Can the word of in “learn of me” meaning something other than “about”?

How do we listen to his words? How do we walk in the meekness of his Spirit? What does it mean to have peace in Christ?

Doctrine and Covenants 88

Verse 118: What does the phrase “words of wisdom” mean? How do we seek them diligently?

How are the commandment of this verse and the discussion of gifts in D&C 46 related to one another?

Is it significant that this phrase appears in the section that immediately precedes the section that we call the “Word of Wisdom”?
In the context of this section, to what does “the best books” refer? What does the revelation mean when it commands us to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith”? What does “study” mean in this case? How do we seek learning by faith?

2 Nephi 25

Verse 23: What are the two purposes for Nephi’s writing?

How is what Nephi says here related to what he says in 2 Nephi 10:20–25?

How does the Book of Mormon persuade us to believe in Christ? How does it persuade us to be reconciled to God?

What does it mean to be saved by grace? (Compare 2 Nephi 31:19, Mosiah 2:21, and Luke 17:7–10.) Why does Nephi’s point about being saved by grace follow his statement of his purposes for writing? Why make that point here?

We sometimes read this verse to say that first we do everything we can, then Christ makes up the difference between what we can do on our own and what is needed. However, to my knowledge, the scriptures don’t say anything like that anywhere else. (Look, for example, at the three scriptures mentioned in the previous paragraph.) Notice that when we read “after all we can do,” we read it as if it said “after we have done all we can do.” Do we change the meaning of the verse by unconsciously inserted those italicized words? Webster’s 1828 dictionary tells us that the phrase “after all” meant “when all is said and done.” Does that make it possible to understand this
verse in another way, or does it require us to stretch the meaning of these words too far?

Alma 32

**Verse 27:** Why must the Zoramites awake and arouse their faculties? Webster’s dictionary of 1828 defines *faculty* as “that power of the mind or intellect which enables it to receive, revive, or modify perceptions. . . . The power of doing anything.” Does that add any understanding to what Alma is saying?

In the same dictionary, “experiment” is defined as a “trial; an act or operation designed to discover some unknown truth.” The *Oxford English Dictionary*, a historical dictionary, tells us that “experiment” first meant “an experience” and then came to mean “something ascertained by trial.” Do we learn anything about what Alma is asking them to do if we substitute the older words: “arouse your faculties, even to an experience based on my words”? Does thinking about these older meanings of the word help us understand any better or differently what Alma was asking the Zoramites to do? What does he mean when he asks them to exercise “a particle of faith”? Is a desire to believe the same as a particle of faith? How so?

Repentance

Doctrine and Covenants 58

**Verse 42:** What does the Lord mean when he says that he remembers no more the sins of a repentant person? Does
it mean that he no longer knows that they occurred? Does it mean that he no longer remembers them as things that stain us, preventing us from being righteous, in other words, as sins?

Verse 43: Which sins need to be confessed to a Church authority and which sins need only to be confessed to the Lord? Why do we have to confess our sins in order to be repentant?

Consider the following definition: “Forsake: 1. to quit or leave entirely; to desert; to abandon” (Webster’s 1828). What does this tell us about our attempts to overcome particular sins? Is it significant that this scripture speaks of forsaking our sins in the plural? Does that suggest forsaking them one at a time or something else?

Baptism

Doctrine and Covenants 18

Verse 22: What does saved mean in this verse?

Why are only three requirements for salvation mentioned (repentance, baptism, endurance to the end)? Why aren’t obedience and ordinances mentioned?

If “endure to the end” means “continue to be obedient,” why does the Lord use endurance as a metaphor for obedience? Does endurance to the end mean something else?

Doctrine and Covenants 20

Verse 37: How does one humble himself before God? How do people “witness before the church that they have truly re-
pented of all their sins”? How do they witness that they “are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ”? How do they show that they have “a determination to serve him to the end”? What works manifest “that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins”?

2 Nephi 2

Verse 6: This verse begins with wherefore, or “because.” Redemption comes through the Messiah because the law cuts us off. What does that mean? What does redemption mean in this context?

Why is the Savior referred to here as the Messiah rather than by one of his other names? Lehi, who consistently uses the word Messiah, tells us that redemption comes through the Messiah because he is full of grace and truth. How does that explain that redemption comes through him? What do grace and truth mean in this context?

Verse 7: What does the phrase “to answer the ends of the law” mean? Ends usually means “purposes.”

What is the image of a broken heart and why is it relevant? Why are “broken heart” and “contrite spirit” used as synonyms? Why can the sacrifice of the Messiah apply to no one but those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit?

Why doesn’t Lehi mention obedience or ordinances?

Verse 8: Why does Lehi tell Jacob it is important to make these things known to everyone? Jacob is in the wilderness of a new land, without much chance to tell very many others this gospel.
Why is it that “no flesh . . . can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah”? What is his merit? His mercy? His grace?

Why does Lehi connect resurrection to redemption? We know that everyone will be resurrected, but only those who come to Christ with a broken heart and contrite spirit, or as it says here, relying on the merits and mercy and grace of Christ, will be able to enter into the presence of the Father.

**Verse 9:** Why is the Savior said to be the firstfruits? First fruit of what? Does this have anything to do with the fact that he is called the Firstborn?

Why do the scriptures so often reduce the requirements for salvation to belief in Christ?

### The Gift of the Holy Ghost

**Doctrine and Covenants 49**

**Verses 13–14:** What kind of gift is the gift of the Holy Ghost? Why is it a gift rather than something we earn by having faith, repenting, and being baptized? What is the import of the ordinance being performed as a commandment, with the person receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost being told to *receive* it?

What is the power of the Holy Ghost? (See Bible Dictionary, “Holy Ghost,” p. 74.) Can you think of reasons that might explain why we confer the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands? What kinds of symbolism might be in that act?