The Precise Purposes of the Book of Mormon

Elder Jay E. Jensen

"This work of supernal significance offers a convincing testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, who manifests Himself to all who repent and come unto Him."
"The Book of Mormon is the most Christ-centered book ever written and truly 'Another Testament of Jesus Christ.'”

Elder Jay E. Jensen

ON THE COVER:
THE SAVIOR'S WILLINGNESS TO MANIFEST HIMSELF TO THOSE WHO SEEK HIM IS REPRESENTED BY A PHOTO OF THE SACRED GROVE NEAR PALMYRA, NEW YORK.

PHOTO BY STEVE MORTENSEN. USED BY PERMISSION.
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Editors' Introduction

Elder Jay E. Jensen recalls reading books at the local library and often skipping the authors' prefaces. As he now confesses, he did not know what he was missing. Authors sometimes often divulge their main purposes right up front. This is true in the Book of Mormon as well, as Mormon, Moroni, Nephi, and Jacob precisely identified their intents in writing. Readers will want to get out their colored pencils to highlight the excellent passages identified in this timely article.

Millions of tourists have made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to see the sites associated with the death and burial of Jesus Christ. The best candidates for Jesus' burial place have traditionally been the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Garden Tomb. Jeffrey R. Chadwick explores the archaeological, geological, and cultural evidence for these sites, arriving at some unexpected conclusions.

How does a person use the language of thee and thou in prayer? Furthermore, how can we as parents, teachers, or leaders teach others to use these reverential forms? John W. Welch, professor of law at BYU and editor-in-chief of BYU Studies, offers six simple guidelines to make this usage more natural in our prayers.

Many otherwise well-meaning denominations oppose the work of the Latter-day Saints because they misunderstand our doctrines and practices, believing, in some cases, that we do not reverence Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Unfortunately, we as Latter-day Saints sometimes narrowmindedly fail to appreciate others for their sincerity of worship. Robert L. Millet, former dean of Religious Education at BYU, offers a heartfelt plea for mutual respect in his article, "Outreach: Opening the Door or Giving Away the Store?"

Where did the names of the parables come from? Thomas A. Wayment, assistant professor of ancient scripture at BYU, considers the origin of such names as the parable of the prodigal son. He argues, convincingly, that the names by which they are known subtly influence our understanding of the main message. This thought-provoking article opens the door to some shades of meaning we may have overlooked.

These are a few of the treasures you will find in this issue of the Religious Educator.

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Editor-in-Chief
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The Precise Purposes of the Book of Mormon

Elder Jay E. Jensen

Elder Jay E. Jensen is a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

As a young student in grade school and high school, I developed a love for reading good books. I am certain that much of my motivation came from my mother. Good books were always available at home. We also had the local public library. Saturdays were shopping days, and Mother drove the short distance from Mapleton to Springville, Utah, to do the weekly grocery shopping. The city library was one block from the market, and I often spent my time reading in the library rather than following her through the aisles of the store—a boring task.

Somehow, through all those early years of reading, I failed to learn the significance of reading the prefaces or introductions to books, and I am confident the fault was mine, not the fault of my teachers. Later on in college, I learned that reading the preface is one of the most important things to do, for in them I learned the authors’ stated purposes or intents and important background information concerning the text.

Moroni’s Purpose Statement on the Title Page

Reading and understanding the introductions to the four standard works and their stated purposes is no exception; this practice is particularly true for the Book of Mormon. Unique to this volume of scripture are two significant introductions: (1) the title page, written by Moroni, and (2) the introduction, written under the direction of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve. The three other introductory
sections to the Book of Mormon—The Testimony of the Three and Eight Witnesses, Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and A Brief Explanation about the Book of Mormon—are also important because of the useful background and contextual information they provide, but not because they are statements of intent.

Moroni states the precise purposes of the Book of Mormon on the title page—"Which is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel 1. "what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and 2. "that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—And also
3. “to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations."

To this list we might add Moroni’s last words on the title page, “That ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ,” a vital part of the Book of Mormon’s purpose.

A worthwhile scripture study exercise is to take three separate pieces of paper and write one of the statements at the top of each and then begin a careful study of the Book of Mormon, writing scripture references supporting each purpose. My own efforts showed that the longest list of references is under the third purpose, substantiating the truth that the Book of Mormon is the most Christ-centered book ever written and truly “Another Testament of Jesus Christ.”

In the first two purpose statements, “what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers,” and “that they may know the covenants of the Lord,” Moroni clearly established that people in the Book of Mormon are Israelites and inheritors of the promises made to the fathers. Specifically, the term fathers referred to in the first statement may refer to specific ancestral lines and to all the great prophets and patriarchs in the Old Testament, but quite often the fathers are the three great patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with whom the Lord made covenants. Thus, the first statement leads to the second: “that they may know the covenants of the Lord.”

Nephi is the principal writer and author of the small plates, and Mormon and Moroni are the principal compilers and writers of the large plates. These three writers were clear in their purposes for writing, all of which generally tie into the title page of the Book of Mormon; but, as will be shown below, it was probably Nephi who started the basic themes that helped all other writers and compilers with their focus, resulting in the title page as we know it today.
Nephi’s Purposes in Writing

So significant are the small plates, and especially the writings of Nephi, that the Lord declared, “Behold, there are many things engraven upon the plates of Nephi which do throw greater views upon my gospel” (D&C 10:45; emphasis added). This greater view appears early on in 1 Nephi. In fact, the more I read, study, ponder, and pray over the Book of Mormon, the more I am convinced that Lehi and Nephi set the major doctrinal themes for all other writers. If this is so, then the small plates of Nephi (1 and 2 Nephi, Jacob, Enos, Jarom, and Omni) are a preface to the entire 531 pages (English edition). Perhaps it is even safe to say that those themes are established by the dream and vision of Lehi (see 1 Nephi 8; 10) and Nephi’s subsequent vision of the same (see 1 Nephi 11–14). Also, it is important to include Nephi’s commentary on Lehi’s vision or dream as found in chapter 15. In summary, 1 Nephi chapters 8 through 15 (inclusive) are the most complete preface to the entire Book of Mormon, and all else that follows in this magnificent book grows out of and is in harmony with these eight chapters.²

Lehi and Nephi focus on covenants, the Messiah, the gathering of Israel, the Gentiles, and the Restoration in these early chapters, but it is Nephi’s commentary on them that establishes the centrality of the themes Moroni outlined in the title page. For me, 1 Nephi 15 is one of the most important chapters in the entire Book of Mormon. The setting for it is that Laman and Lemuel had not understood Lehi’s words “concerning the natural branches of the olive-tree, and also concerning the Gentiles” (1 Nephi 15:7). Nephi answered them by teaching them about Israel and its scattering and subsequent gathering in the latter days, beginning with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, which he said contains the fulness of the gospel and would “come unto the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles unto the remnant of our seed” (1 Nephi 15:13). As a result of the Book of Mormon, the remnant of their seed and all the house of Israel would know

1. “that they are of the house of Israel, and
2. “that they are the covenant people of the Lord; and
3. “then shall they know and come to the knowledge of their forefathers, and also
4. “to the knowledge of the gospel of their Redeemer which was ministered unto their fathers by him; wherefore,
5. “they shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer and the very points of his doctrine, that they may know how to come unto him and be saved” (1 Nephi 15:14).
Those who come to this knowledge will rejoice and come into the true fold of God and be grafted into the true olive tree (see 1 Nephi 15:15–16). To be grafted in, by scriptural definition, is to “come to the knowledge of the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer” (1 Nephi 10:14). As people come to this knowledge and are grafted in, we see the grand fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham, “pointing to the covenant which should be fulfilled in the latter days; which covenant the Lord made to our father Abraham, saying: In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed” (1 Nephi 15:18).

The kindreds or families spoken of will be converted through the power of the Spirit as they read, ponder, and pray about the Book of Mormon and will be led to the holy temple, where families are sealed together in fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham.

All other Book of Mormon writers and prophets received revelation from the Holy Ghost, from heavenly messengers, and from the Savior Himself that build upon and expand the simple, profound truths that Lehi and Nephi received by revelation. This revelation shows that “he [Jesus Christ] is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; and the way is prepared for all men from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come unto him” (1 Nephi 10:18).

Nephi concluded his portion of the plates by teaching us what he hoped his writings would do—and, for emphasis, I identify them in outline form with this introductory statement by Nephi: “And the words which I have written in weakness will be made strong unto them; for

1. “it persuadeth them to do good;
2. “it maketh known unto them of their fathers;
3. “and it speaketh of Jesus, and persuadeth them to believe in him, and to endure to the end, which is life eternal.
4. “And it speaketh harshly against sin” (2 Nephi 33:4–5).

Other Purposes of the Book of Mormon as Described by Nephi

In addition to the declared purposes discussed thus far, Nephi shared poignant thoughts and feelings about what he had written and what he hoped his writings would do. For example, Nephi included the writings of Isaiah with the hope that we would liken them and that they would “persuade them [us in these latter days] that they would remember the Lord their Redeemer ... and believe in [Him]” (1 Nephi 19:18, 23). Furthermore, speaking about the plates of brass, Nephi testified that by likening them to ourselves, we will know they
“are true; and they testify that a man must be obedient to the commandments of God” (1 Nephi 22:30).

Nephi’s understanding about these things, the writings on the small plates, is clearly stated with his interpretation of his father’s dream, and we can read between the lines to discern his deep feelings: “I said unto them that it [the iron rod] was the word of God; and whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction” (1 Nephi 15:24).

In the so-called Psalm of Nephi, we glimpse his feelings about the plates: “And upon these I write the things of my soul . . . For my soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children. Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard” (2 Nephi 4:15–16).

After Nephi had included the writings of Isaiah and his commentaries and prophecies of the same, he said he was satisfied except for “a few words which I must speak concerning the doctrine of Christ” (2 Nephi 31:2). Following that statement, he wrote about what the Lord had showed to him, perhaps as part of the vision described in 1 Nephi 11–14, about the Savior, His baptism, and why we must follow Him and stay on the path He marked (see 2 Nephi 31; compare to 1 Nephi 8, Lehi’s dream). Then, Nephi gave first what I call an if-then proposition concerning the words of Christ: “If ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold [then], thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Nephi 31:20; emphasis added). This strong invitation was followed by this command: “Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).

Finally, he brought his portion of the small plates to a close by stating that “I, Nephi, have written what I have written, and I esteem it as of great worth” (2 Nephi 33:3). He was commanded to write these things, knowing that they are the words of Christ and that we and Nephi “shall stand face to face” and be judged according to what we have done with the words he wrote, for they will either condemn us or bless us with life eternal (see 2 Nephi 33:11–15).

**Jacob’s Purpose Statement**

Jacob adhered to the intent established by Nephi and the important focus on the themes of what the Lord had done for their fathers,
that Israel may know the covenants of the Lord, and to the convincing of Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ. These are found in 2 Nephi 6 through 10, especially chapters 9 and 10, and Jacob 1 through 6. In the following meaningful purpose statement, Jacob expressed his hopes for what he had written: “And we labor diligently to engraven these words upon plates, hoping that our beloved brethren and our children will receive them with thankful hearts, and look upon them that they may learn with joy and not with sorrow, neither with contempt, concerning their first parents. For, for this intent have we written these things, that they may know that we knew of Christ, and we had a hope of his glory many hundred years before his coming; and not only we ourselves had a hope of his glory, but also all the holy prophets which were before us” (Jacob 4:3–4).

This precise statement of intent is then illustrated by the magnificent allegory in Jacob chapter 5 and his summary of that allegory in chapter 6, specifically that God will remember the house of Israel and His covenant with them, exhorting them to “repent, and come with full purpose of heart, and cleave unto God” and not “reject all the words which have been spoken concerning Christ” (Jacob 6:5, 8), which he and Nephi had been so careful in writing and preserving.

Fulfillment of the Writers’ Intents in the Book of Alma

In Mormon’s abridgment of Alma’s teachings and experiences, the following summary of what the plates had accomplished thus far illustrates the fulfillment of intent. If we change the verb tense from the past to the present or future, these truths also may be considered as statement of purpose.

“And now, it has hitherto been wisdom in God that these things should be preserved; for behold they [the writings on the plates] have

1. “enlarged the memory of this people, yea, and
2. “convined many of the error of their ways, and
3. “brought them to the knowledge of their God unto the salvation of their souls.
4. “Yea, I say unto you, were it not for these things that these records do contain, which are on these plates, Ammon and his brother could not have convinced so many thousands of the Lamanites of the incorrect tradition of their fathers; yea, these records and their words brought them unto repentance; that is, they brought them to the knowledge of the Lord their God, and to rejoice in Jesus Christ their Redeemer” (Alma 37:8–9).
This work of supernal significance offers a convincing testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, who manifests Himself to all who repent and come unto Him, especially Lehi’s posterity, whom the Lord loves—His covenant people, the children of Israel.

A Purpose Statement from the Doctrine and Covenants

In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1828, the following declaration appears. Note how it parallels the title page and Lehi and Nephi’s visions. Again, I emphasize the introductory words *purpose* and *that*, which establish intent:

“And for this very *purpose* are these plates preserved, which contain these records—

1. “*that* the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to this people; And
2. “*that* the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and
3. “*that* they might know the promises of the Lord, and
4. “*that* they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and be glorified through faith in his name, and
5. “*that* through their repentance they might be saved” (D&C 3:19–20, emphasis added).

A Purpose Statement from the Book of Ether

When Moroni included his abridgment of the plates of Ether, he inserted this short purpose statement:

“Wherefore, I, Moroni, am commanded to write these things
1. “*that* evil may be done away, and
2. “*that* the time may come that Satan may have no power upon the hearts of the children of men, but
3. “*that* they may be persuaded to do good continually,
4. “*that* they may come unto the fountain of all righteousness and be saved” (Ether 8:26; emphasis added).

Notice how the fourth purpose above parallels the words established by Lehi and Nephi in the tree-of-life dream as illustrated by the metaphor of coming unto the fountain of all righteousness and being saved (see 1 Nephi 8:15–16, 30; 11:25).

Comparison of Mormon’s and Moroni’s Purpose Statements

Sons learn from their fathers in both word and deed. Moroni surely learned much from his father Mormon, as illustrated by comparing
three purpose statements, two of Mormon’s and the title page written by Moroni.

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<th>Mormon's Purpose Statement No. 1</th>
<th>Title Page (Mormon's Purpose Statement)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Therefore I write unto you, Gentiles and also unto you, house of Israel,...</td>
<td>Written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jews and Gentile,...</td>
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<td>Yea, behold, I write unto all the ends of the earth. ...</td>
<td>Which is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—</td>
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<tr>
<td>And I write also unto the remnant of this people... Therefore, I write unto you all. And for this cause I write unto you, that ye may know that ye must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; ... and ye must stand to be judged of your works, whether they be good or evil;</td>
<td>And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL God, manifesting himself unto all nations,...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And also that ye may believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, which ye shall have among you;</td>
<td>Wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ. (title page)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And also that the Jews, the covenant people of the Lord, shall have other witnesses besides him whom they saw and heard, that Jesus, whom they slew, was the very Christ and the very God.</td>
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<tr>
<td>And I would that I could persuade all ye ends of the earth to repent and prepare to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. (Mormon 3:17-22)</td>
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Note the emphasis on the judgment-seat in Mormon 3 and in the title page and, as was stated earlier, the role of the Book of Mormon in helping us to prepare for the judgment.

**Mormon’s Final Purpose Statement**

As seen in the parallels above (Mormon 3:17–22; Mormon 5:12, 14–15; and the title page), Mormon clearly understood the intended purpose of the Book of Mormon. If we look at the chronology of Mormon’s writings, it appears that Mormon chapter 7 is his final message. (Moroni concluded the plates and inserted two epistles from his father, Moroni 8 and 9, that were probably written earlier in his ministry, making Mormon chapter 7 his final written message on the
plates.) Mormon’s final hope and counsel are that the remnant of this people in the Book of Mormon will know the following:

- The things of their fathers (v. 1).
- That they are the house of Israel (v. 2).
- What they must do to be saved (vv. 3–4).
- That they must come to the knowledge of their fathers (v. 5).
- That they must believe in Jesus Christ and in His mission, Atonement, and Resurrection and that there will be a final judgment (vv. 5–6).
- That those who believe in the Book of Mormon will believe the Bible and vice versa (v. 9).
- That they are the seed of Jacob (Israel) and that if they believe in Jesus Christ, repent, are baptized, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will be well with them in the day of judgment (v. 10).

Moroni’s Final Purpose Statements

Moroni received the records from his father, Mormon, and then added his words (see Mormon 8–9, Moroni 1–10, and portions of Ether). Moroni said that “my father hath made this record, and he hath written the intent thereof” (Mormon 8:5; see 3:20–22, 5:14–15; and 7). Moroni summarized his father’s intent by saying that he hoped the record would help its writers to “rid our garments of the blood of our brethren” (Mormon 9:37) and that these brethren would be restored to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and that God, the Father, would “remember the covenant which he hath made with the house of Israel” (Mormon 9:37).

I continue to marvel at the precise parallels found in all these purpose statements, all of them so beautifully summarized in the title page to the Book of Mormon.

In addition to the title page, the concluding chapter of the Book of Mormon, Moroni 10, contains eight truths relating to all these purpose statements. Each truth begins with an exhortation.

1. “I would exhort you ... that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been ... and ponder it in your hearts” (v. 3).
2. “I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true” (v. 4).
3. “I would exhort you that ye deny not the power of God” (v. 7).
4. “I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the gifts of God” (v. 8).
5. “I would exhort you ... that ye remember that every good gift cometh of Christ” (v. 18).
6. “I would exhort you . . . that ye remember that he is the same yesterday, today and forever” (v. 19).

7. “I exhort you to remember these things” (v. 27).

8. “I would exhort you that ye would come unto Christ” (v. 30).

The last two exhortations focus on “these things” and on Jesus Christ. “These things” refers to the written records, and Moroni’s exhortation parallels Nephi’s: there will be a final judgment, and we will see Nephi and Moroni, to ensure an accountability concerning what we have done with the records (see 2 Nephi 33:10–15). Finally, Moroni invites us to come unto Christ and be perfected in Him (see Moroni 10:30, 32). Thus end the large plates, with this stirring Christ-centered invitation.

But what about the end of the small plates? It is no surprise that the small plates, those magnificent writings that Nephi started and that Amaleki concluded, parallel Moroni’s exhortations: “I shall deliver up these plates unto him, exhorting all men to come unto God, the Holy One of Israel, and believe in prophesying, and in revelations, and in the ministering of angels, and in the gift of speaking with tongues, and in the gift of interpreting languages, and in all things which are good; for there is nothing which is good save it comes from the Lord: and that which is evil cometh from the devil. And now my beloved brethren, I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption. Yea, come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved” (Omni 1:25–26; emphasis added).

The Prophet Joseph Smith translated the small and large plates by the gift and power of God and declared to the world that “the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.” This bold declaration takes on greater meaning when it is harmonized with the declared purposes of the Book of Mormon. 

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Notes

1. A summary of those covenants that God made with Abraham is that Jesus Christ would be born in Abraham's lineage, that Abraham's posterity would be more numerous than the stars or sand on the seashores, that his posterity would bless all nations, and, finally, that they were promised a land of inheritance (see Genesis 17; 22; Abraham 2:6–11; Bible Dictionary, s.v. "Abraham" and "Abraham, Covenant of," 601–2).


Skull feature of Golgotha, Jerusalem

Photo courtesy of Jeffrey R. Chadwick
The Garden Tomb in Jerusalem is a site of significant interest to many Latter-day Saints and religious educators. In the last thirty years, tens of thousands of Latter-day Saint visitors to Israel have spent time at the pleasantly landscaped site. Many of these, if not most, have come away impressed, both by the sincere explanations of the volunteer guides and by the peaceful spirit of the place. Visitors have often left with the feeling that this was where Jesus Christ rose from the dead on a Sunday morning nearly two thousand years ago. Photos, slides, and videos featuring the tomb in that garden are often used in Church classrooms when educators discuss the events of Jesus’ death and Resurrection. In a recently produced video presentation entitled “Special Witnesses of Christ,” President Gordon B. Hinckley, standing at the Garden Tomb, made the following statement: “Just outside the walls of Jerusalem, in this place or somewhere nearby was the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, where the body of the Lord was interred.”1 There is, however, something very notable about this statement. Always a cautious observer, President Hinckley, with the words “or somewhere nearby” left wide open the possibility that the Garden Tomb might not have been the sepulchre of Jesus at all.

In 1992, I began a decade-long archaeological investigation of both the Garden Tomb and the so-called Skull Hill not far away (hereafter referred to as the “skull feature”) with the goal of determining whether either or both may be identified with the New Testament “Golgotha” and the tomb of Jesus’ Resurrection.2 That investigation

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has yielded mixed results. The good news is that evidence is quite positive for the skull feature having been Golgotha, or the “place of the skull” where Jesus was crucified. However, the bad news, for some at least, is that the Garden Tomb does not seem to meet the archaeological criteria to be the site of Jesus’ Resurrection described in the New Testament. The tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, if it still exists, will have to be sought “somewhere nearby.”

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre as the Site for Golgotha and the Tomb

Before I discuss the investigation of the skull feature and Garden Tomb and consider whether either or both may be connected to the account of Jesus’ Crucifixion and Resurrection, I must revisit the traditional and more widely accepted candidate for Golgotha and the tomb. It must first be demonstrated that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, located inside the Christian Quarter of Jerusalem’s Old City, does not represent the correct site of Jesus’ death and burial.

The original Holy Sepulchre shrine was built by order of the Roman-Christian emperor Constantine between A.D. 326 and 335, some three hundred years after Jesus’ death. Prior to A.D. 326, the site was occupied by a pagan temple built by the Roman emperor Hadrian in A.D. 135. Archaeological soundings show that the site of the Hadrianic temple and Holy Sepulchre was a stone quarry in the seventh century B.C., at which time its topsoil was entirely removed. The site remained without vegetation thereafter, and the bare bedrock became the location of tombs carved there during a later period. In his book The Holy Land, noted scholar Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, professor of New Testament at the Ecole Biblique et Archeologique Francaise (otherwise known as the French School) in Jerusalem, offers an enthusiastic case in favor of the Holy Sepulchre. Murphy-O’Connor describes the location in these terms: “At the beginning of the C1 A.D. the site was a disused quarry outside the city walls. Tombs similar to those found elsewhere and dated to the C1 B.C. and the C1 A.D. had been cut into the vertical west wall left by the quarrymen. . . . Windblown earth and seeds watered by winter rains would have created the covering of green in the quarry that John dignifies by the term ‘garden.’”

Murphy-O’Connor’s description of the quarry and the presence of tombs is basically correct (except for his “C1 A.D.” assumption), but his description of the “garden” as a naturally occurring weed patch shows little regard for the reliability of the Gospel of John. One might ask
revisiting Golgotha and the Garden Tomb

Murphy-O’Connor why Mary Magdalene would suppose she was talking to a “gardener” (John 20:15) if she were standing in nothing more gardenlike than a windblown weed patch on denuded quarry bedrock. The scenario he presents makes no sense when compared to the setting described in the New Testament. Because of the lack of arable soil, the Holy Sepulchre site could not have been a garden in the time of Jesus.

But the New Testament account calls not just for a real working garden. It stipulates that the tomb in that garden was newly cut at the time of Jesus’ death: “Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid” (John 19:41). Though horizontal burial niches (called kokhim in Hebrew) were found carved into the quarry bedrock under Hadrian’s temple (see figure 1), none of those could have been a “new sepulchre” in A.D. 30, when Jesus was buried:

![Figure 1. Two kokhim (burial vaults) at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.](image)

Murphy-O’Connor is mistaken in claiming that the tomb remains at the Holy Sepulchre date to both “the C1 B.C. and the C1 A.D.” The Byzantine Christians who selected the site assumed an incorrect date for the tombs they found when they demolished Hadrian’s pagan temple. Those burial niches probably date to the third or second centuries B.C., the period of Hellenistic control that culminated in Judea’s Hasmonean monarchy, but they cannot under any circumstances be dated to the first century A.D. when Jesus lived. Here is why.
From the tenth century B.C. through the first century A.D.—the archaeological Iron Age through the Herodian period—tombs were not constructed west of the inhabited areas of Jerusalem. The only exceptions were tombs located over one thousand meters west of the city walls. By and large, the west was simply avoided as a burial area. The primary reason for this seems to have been connected with the prevailing winds. In Jerusalem, like most other areas in the land of Israel, the wind blows almost exclusively from the west. Exceptions are during short transition periods in spring and fall when hot desert winds called shmarav blow from the east or southeast. But more than 350 days a year, the wind is from the west—from the sea. Jews did not embalm dead bodies prior to burial; and corpses were left exposed in the tomb to desiccate, which could take over a year. Tombs to the west of the city presented two problems: (1) the scent of decomposing corpses would be carried over the city by breezes from the west, and (2) Jews believed ritual impurity rising from interred corpses could be carried over the city by those breezes, causing the living inhabitants of the city to become "defiled" or unclean.

The prohibition on burial to the west of Jewish cities, including Jerusalem, is noted in both the Talmud and the archaeological record. I will consider first the Talmud. A quote from the Mishnah, the portion of Talmud that was put into writing about A.D. 200 and that preserves Jewish traditions from the second century B.C. to the second century A.D., recalls how Jews dealt with dead bodies in regard to their city limits: "They distance the animal carcases and the tombs and the tannery from the city fifty cubits. None place a tannery other than to the east of the city. Rabbi Akiva says: to every wind one places, except the west, and distances fifty cubits."

In this Mishnah, the sages of the late second century A.D. indicate that Jews of their day did not deposit dead bodies, whether human or animal, within twenty-five meters ("fifty cubits") of their town limits. The same was true for tanneries, where dead animals were processed for leather—in fact, tanneries were located only east of the city. The sages then refer to an earlier authority, Rabbi Akiva, to explain older practices upon which theirs were based. Akiva had grown up in the late first century A.D. and became nasi (the presiding rabbinic authority) in A.D. 110. He was killed by the Romans in A.D. 135. His words, recalled to harmonize the two prior statements in the Mishnah, reflect the first century A.D. custom that corpse deposition was permissible anywhere but to the west of the city—the words "to every wind" are both an idiomatic expression of direction as well as an indication that wind was
the primary factor in determining permissible direction. The sages who compiled the Mishnah often crafted preliminary statements in a way that allowed them to be harmonized or summarized by a preexisting statement from an earlier authority. That Akiva's summary statement permitting deposition in every direction "except the west" has reference both to the dead animals and tombs of the first statement as well as the tannery of the second statement is deduced from the presence of terminology from both statements: the verb "distance" and the "fifty cubit" measurement of the first statement as well as the verb "place" from the second statement. The Mishnah is indicating, in its own peculiar way, that Jews did not place tombs on the west side of their cities during the first century A.D.

That Jerusalemites constructed their tombs only to the east, north, or south of the city is also evident from archaeological research. A map in the authoritative *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* that charts the location of Jerusalem's ancient necropolis (burial grounds) shows that hundreds of tombs were located on the Mount of Olives, east of the city, as well as in large tracts on the north and south sides of the city. But no tombs of the first century A.D. appear on those maps in any area within a kilometer of ancient Jerusalem's western limit. Physical remains of tombs in that area are nonexistent. Both the Talmud's recollection of first century A.D. practices and the thorough surveys of archaeologists seem to indicate that the west side of Jerusalem was an area where burial was entirely out of bounds.

A related aspect of the Holy Sepulchre's location and the question of wind direction was the erection of the Temple of Herod and the expansion of the Temple Mount platform after 20 B.C. University of Haifa archaeologist Rami Arav and researcher John Rousseau have demonstrated that Pharisee tradition, the basis for most Jewish practice in the Herodian period, would not have permitted tomb construction anywhere directly west of the expanded Temple Mount because wind passing over western tombs would also have passed over the sacred temple enclosure, thus defiling it and anyone in it. They maintain that "tombs found in this area [west of the city] are either older than the first century C.E. [A.D.] or are located more than a distance of 2,000 cubits (3,000 feet) from the Temple Mount." Arav and Rousseau conclude that since "burial customs in the first half of the first century C.E. [A.D.] preclude burials and their attendant impurities west (windward) of the Temple, then the crucifixion and burial of Jesus could not have taken place at the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which is almost exactly due west of the Holy of Holies."
How then may we account for the tomb remains at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre? The likely answer is that when the burial niches there were initially constructed, the area actually lay to the north of the city. Until the first century B.C., the northern limit of Jerusalem’s inhabited neighborhoods was the east-west line of the so-called “first wall” (see figure 2), originally built by King Hezekiah in the late eighth century B.C. and rebuilt by the Hasmoneans in the second century B.C. No prohibition would have existed, in those centuries, to locating graves a reasonable distance north of that “first wall.” The Holy Sepulchre’s burial niches are located some one hundred meters north of that line (two hundred cubits by the sages’ measure). Those niches were most likely carved out during the third or second centuries B.C., either by Jews or possibly by non-Jewish Syrians garrisoned in the city. However, later, during the first century B.C., the growing population of Jerusalem expanded north of that “first wall,” establishing residential areas along the upper Tyropoean Valley as far as today’s Damascus Gate. Scholarly opinion on just when is divided, but sometime between 63 B.C. and 4 B.C. (when Herod the Great died), either during the reign of the last of the Hasmonean monarchs or of Herod himself, a
rampart known as the "second wall" was built, surrounding the newer neighborhoods and annexing them to Jerusalem (see figure 3). With the appearance of those neighborhoods and the erection of that "second wall," the site of the Holy Sepulchre, only fifty meters west of that wall, became an area where new tombs would not have been permitted. In other words, at the time Jesus died in A.D. 30, no "new sepulchre" could have been cut out by Joseph of Arimathea at the Holy Sepulchre site—the cultural prohibition on tomb construction and burial at a point only fifty meters to the west of the "second wall" would have already come into play sixty to a hundred years earlier.

The exact reasoning behind the original placement of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is not known. But it is clear that the Byzantine Christians of the fourth century who built the shrine were essentially uninformed concerning Jewish tradition and practice at the time of Jesus as well as the historical geography of Herodian Jerusalem, or else they would not have chosen the site they did. In modern times, generally, the only conversation about the authenticity of the tomb site at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has surrounded the question of its location inside or outside the "second wall" of Herodian Jerusalem. This is a fair question itself because it is by no means certain that the "second wall" was located east of the Holy Sepulchre’s location. It may indeed have run on the west side of that location, meaning that the Holy Sepulchre site was inside the city in Jesus’ day. But inside or outside, the tombs there would have been emptied of all human remains when the city expanded northward in the first century B.C. Allowing, for the sake of argument, that the tombs at the Holy Sepulchre were outside the "second wall" in Jesus’ day, the site still cannot have been where Joseph of Arimathea was cutting his new tomb in A.D. 30. It was in extremely close proximity to the western side of Jerusalem and west of the Temple of Herod and the expanded Temple Mount platform, thus disqualified as a new tomb site by the prevailing west winds. And, as discussed above, the site was a barren stone quarry, not a working garden, and would have needed no gardener. The New Testament accounts require, for the site of Jesus’ burial, a newly cut tomb, a working garden, and the theoretical presence of a gardener. The Holy Sepulchre site fails on all counts. It is highly unlikely to have been the site of Jesus’ burial.

But what about the Holy Sepulchre’s "Hill of Calvary" as a crucifixion site? It should be noted that the New Testament does not say Jesus was executed on top of a hill, and no hill is mentioned in connection with the Crucifixion. The tradition of a hill seems to have first
appeared with the building of the Holy Sepulchre church itself and the identification of a small bedrock knoll as the crucifixion site. This was the knoll later idyllized in the Protestant hymn as "a green hill far away," but no such hill is mentioned in the New Testament. Three of the four Gospel accounts give the Aramaic name for the place of Jesus' crucifixion as *golgotha*, which literally means "the skull." This is what the local Jews, who all spoke Aramaic, called the site—"the skull." Luke alone omits the Aramaic term *golgotha*, simply calling the place *kranion* (Greek for "skull"). The latinesque Catholic term "Calvary," which appears in the English King James Version of Luke, is somewhat misleading—it is not found in the original Greek of Luke at all. Other than a few Roman soldiers who spoke Latin (and not all of them did), probably nobody called the place "Calvary" in Jesus' day. But whether we read Matthew, Mark, and John's *golgotha* or Luke's *kranion*, it seems clear that there was something about the crucifixion site that led the Jews of Jerusalem to think of a skull. There is, however, no surviving feature of the Holy Sepulchre's "Hill of Calvary" that can be identified in any way with a skull, nor is any such feature mentioned in the account of Eusebius, who chronicled the building of the church at the site in his "Life of Constantine." Though the Holy Sepulchre site was a tomb locale a century prior to Jesus' day, it is unlikely in a Jewish culture so careful about the disposition of human remains that skulls left lying about the site gave it the Golgotha name, as some have maintained.10

Since the Holy Sepulchre site was immediately west of an inhabited part of the city, the same ritual purity and wind-related factors that would have prohibited burials there in Jesus' day would likely have put the location out of bounds for crucifixion or other forms of execution. (Arav and Rousseau reach the same conclusion in relation to the temple.) To the question of whether Roman soldiers would have given regard to Jewish concerns for ritual purity, it must be pointed out that Pontius Pilate and other governors found it necessary to do so, in order to work with the local Jewish leadership at keeping civil order (the Romans seem to have been closely allied with the Sadducees, from which were chosen the high priest and chief priests who administered the temple complex). Pilate, for example, gave regard to purity concerns when coming out of his residence to confer with the chief priests, who would not enter his hall "lest they should be defiled" (John 18:28–29). The ritual purity of the city and the temple would have been no less a concern; thus, the Romans would have avoided capital punishment west of the city. It becomes necessary, then, to look elsewhere for the Golgotha of Jesus' crucifixion.
The Skull Feature as Golgotha

The skull feature sits just north of the modern wall of Jerusalem’s Old City and fits all the requirements of the New Testament setting that the Holy Sepulchre’s Hill of Calvary does not. It was outside the city wall in Jesus’ day and was located well over twenty-five meters (fifty cubits) to the north of the city, which avoided any question of wind direction and the ritual purity of inhabited areas or the temple. It was near an area where Jewish tombs were being located in Jesus’ day (I will return to this issue later), and there is good reason to suppose that the people of ancient Jerusalem would have called it “the skull.” That is because it does indeed look like a skull.

The skull feature is a naturally occurring rock formation in the southern scarp of a large hill called el-Edhemieh by local Arabs. (The toponym is derived from the name of Ibrahim el-Edhem, a Muslim mystic who lived in the eighth century.) The top of the hill has been a Muslim cemetery for nearly two centuries. Three horizontally lenticular caves, all natural and very small and shallow, pock the limestone scarp of el-Edhemieh’s south side. When viewed from the south, the center cave of the three is not visible, and the two outside caves have the uncanny resemblance of slitted eye sockets in a human skull. When viewed from the west (from the Garden Tomb platform), the westernmost cave blends visually with the rock around it, but the center and eastern caves give the same impression—the two eye sockets of a skull. No matter how you look at it, it looks like a skull. A slightly protruding piece of stone that slopes downward from between the two easternmost caves gives the optical illusion of a skeletal nose bridge, and horizontally fissured layers of limestone below the nose bridge lend a jawlike quality to the whole picture.

As early as 1842, the German scholar Otto Thenius suggested the skull feature site as Golgotha.\(^\text{11}\) The British Major Claude Condor came to the same conclusion prior to 1870 and the scholar Fisher Howe in 1871.\(^\text{12}\) Not until 1883 did the famed British General Charles George Gordon arrive at Jerusalem and join the ranks of Christian students who concluded that the skull feature must have been Golgotha, but it was his famous name that became attached to the site, which since then has often been referred to (sometimes snidely) as “Gordon’s Calvary.” Prior to the buildup of modern eastern Jerusalem, and in particular the bus station that was erected there by the Jordanians in the 1950s, the skull feature was much more visible. Photographs from the late 1800s and early 1900s, when ground level of the area in front of the stone formation was lower and void of buildings, show a stone image that is
skull-like from jaw to forehead—a grim cranial visage staring off to the south (see photo at beginning of article). But even today, from the top of the Old City wall, or even from the parking lot of the bus station, the skull-like appearance of the escarpment is easily discernable from below the nose bridge to the top of the brow.

This natural formation has probably not changed significantly in the last three thousand years, though the areas around it were extensively cut away in biblical times. Because of the pocked and fissured nature of its stone, the skull feature itself was not quarried, while the area just to the east, traditionally called Jeremiah’s Grotto, has experienced a great deal of stone quarrying. The entire area from Jeremiah’s Grotto eastward and south to the Old City wall was cut away anciently for building stone, resulting in a wide moat north of the “second wall.” Evidence of this quarrying is visible even in the hump-shaped bedrock beneath the Old City wall itself, just across the street south of the bus station (about one hundred meters east of Damascus Gate). The type of bedrock in this part of Jerusalem is called meleke, a medium-hard Turonian limestone excellent for quarrying because it withstands natural erosion very well. Like the stone building blocks anciently cut away, the quarry itself remains uneroded after thousands of years. The skull feature, of that same meleke limestone, but never quarried away, has also resisted erosion.

So the skull feature looked essentially the same in Jesus’ day as it does today. That Aramaic-speaking Jewish inhabitants of Herodian Jerusalem would call this feature golgotha is not at all improbable; in fact, it is to be expected. Other instances come to mind of Jews calling sites after their resemblance to certain physical things. Examples include Gamla (Aramaic for “the camel”), the Jewish city on the Golan built atop a hill shaped like a camel’s hump, and Susita (Aramaic for “the horse”), a town built on a horse-head-shaped hill east of the Kinneret (even Greek speakers called it Hippos, Greek for “horse,” showing that Gentiles saw the same feature).

Given the plausibility that the skull feature would have been called golgotha, the next question is whether crucifixions could have been carried out at the site. The answer to that is also positive. Romans crucified their capital convicts in conspicuous places near cities and towns, generally at crossroads or along the sides of other well-traveled roads, so that the public would be able to see the executed convicts without hindrance. This was thought to act as a deterrent against crime and rebellion. The skull feature is located one hundred meters northeast of Damascus Gate, the gate area of the “second wall” at the time.
of Jesus (see figure 3). At that time, the open area below the skull face was a natural plaza and junction of two major roads leading away from the gate. The “Jericho Road” going east toward the Mount of Olives, now called Sultan Suleiman Street, ran through the moat-like corridor left from quarrying between the city wall and Jeremiah’s Grotto. The road going north was on the west side of el-Edhemiye and followed essentially the same route as modern Nablus Road. This northward road passed through an abandoned cemetery from the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., the tombs closest to the road having long since been cleared of their human remains, lest Jewish travelers unwittingly become ritually unclean. Archaeological research has demonstrated that burials were not interred on the west side of el-Edhemiye during the time of Jesus, not even at the Garden Tomb. The active necropolis (cemetery) to the north of Jerusalem in the early first century A.D. was located on the east side of el-Edhemiye, where there was no major road in Jesus’ day (although it is the site of modern Saladin Street).

Crucifixions at the natural plaza in front of the skull feature (today’s bus station parking lot) would have been close to and clearly visible to ancient Jews walking along both roads—the “Jericho Road” east and “Nablus Road” north. The grisly scene of execution would have been all the more ominous because of the giant stone face of death in the background behind the crucified victims.

In summary, when geographical, cultural, archaeological, and geological evidences are taken together—the skull feature’s location outside the northern wall of Jerusalem in Jesus’ day, the fact that it was just west of an area permissible for tomb construction at the time, its position in relation to the main roads leading north and east, and the plausibility that because of its natural appearance the Jews of the day would have called it golgotha (“the skull”)—the skull feature was very likely the location of the Crucifixion.

The Garden Tomb

The burial cave known as the Garden Tomb was unearthed around 1867 by a local land owner who lived in Jerusalem. (Archaeologists often use the term “cave” to refer to a rock-cut tomb.) Because of its close proximity to the skull feature, it was soon suggested as the tomb of Jesus by a variety of different parties, including, for a time, General Gordon. At the time, there was no real archaeological expertise as we know it today—no one then could have accurately dated the tomb on the basis of content or design. The earliest descriptions of the cave were brief reports prepared in 1874 and 1892 by Conrad Schick, a German
missionary who lived in Jerusalem and who studied antiquities.\textsuperscript{14} The
cave and surrounding property were purchased in 1893 by a commit-
tee of British Christians founded just for the purpose—the Garden
Tomb Association of London. Throughout the twentieth century, the
burial cave has gained popularity, among Christians uncomfortable
with the Holy Sepulchre site, as a candidate for the tomb in which
Jesus was laid.

Many Latter-day Saint tourists and students visiting Jerusalem have
become convinced that the Garden Tomb was the sepulchre provided
by Joseph of Arimathea for the burial of Jesus. Since President Harold
B. Lee’s visit to the site in 1972, every Church President has visited the
Garden Tomb and expressed feelings of reverence at the site, although
none has stated absolutely that the tomb was the one in which Jesus
was laid. (President Hinckley’s statement that was quoted at the begin-
nning of this article is characteristic of the caution exercised by previous
Church Presidents.) If a poll were conducted, however, probably an
overwhelming majority of Latter-day Saints would maintain that the
Garden Tomb was the actual site of Jesus’ burial and Resurrection. But
was it?

In March 1986, Israeli archaeologist Gabriel Barkay, an expert on
ancient Jewish tombs in Israel, published his now-famous article on the
Garden Tomb in \textit{Biblical Archaeology Review}.\textsuperscript{15} In that article, he
reported: “I have concluded that the cave of the Garden Tomb was
originally hewn in the Iron Age II, sometime in the eighth or seventh
century B.C. It was reused for burial purposes in the Byzantine period
(fifth to seventh centuries A.D.), so it could not have been the tomb of
Jesus.”\textsuperscript{16} Barkay’s article presents at least three basic propositions:

1. That since the Garden Tomb was originally an Iron Age II multi-
chambered, triple-bench sepulchre cut out six to seven hundred years
before Jesus was born, it could not have been a “new tomb” (Matthew
27:60) “wherein never man before was laid” (Luke 23:53) in Jesus’
day, as required by the New Testament.

2. That the tomb’s benches were carved into fixed sarcophagi for
burial of Byzantine Christians four to six hundred years after Jesus (an
act that would not likely have occurred had any Christians of the time
identified the tomb as that of Jesus).

3. That the features outside the Garden Tomb, including the
“track” feature and large cistern, were from a stable complex for don-
keys or mules constructed during the Crusader period, eleven centuries
after Christ, and could not be evidence of a missing rolling stone—the
“track” was in fact a water channel.
At this point, it becomes necessary to rehearse my past reactions to Barkay’s claims and how subsequent research has changed those views. When Barkay’s article originally appeared, my reaction to it was negative. My rebuttal, entitled “In Defense of the Garden Tomb,” was published by Biblical Archaeology Review in its July 1986 “comments” section. At the time, I was not a trained archaeologist but did hold a master's degree in near eastern studies, had taught in three BYU Jerusalem student programs, and reasoned myself qualified to comment on the authenticity question surrounding the Garden Tomb. In my BAR comments, I took Barkay to task for an “unconvincing and disappointing” article that “offered no real evidence that the Garden Tomb was cut out during the First Temple period rather than the Second Temple period.” (Those themes were later repeated in a 1990 book entitled The Holy Land, and although the senior coauthor of that book was D. Kelly Ogden, I alone was responsible for the section titled “The Garden Tomb and Golgotha.”)

Since offering those original comments, however, I have learned a good deal more about the tombs and burial customs of the region, having since become a practicing field archaeologist in Israel with a doctorate in near eastern archaeology and anthropology. Although still maintaining that Barkay could have argued his case better by using more convincing parallels and visuals, I must now agree that on every issue Barkay addressed concerning the Garden Tomb, he was right. Here is how that realization came to be.

Upon completing a Ph.D. in archaeology, I began a systematic archaeological investigation to evaluate every aspect of the Garden Tomb, with the goal of determining if the cave could be positively identified as a first century A.D. tomb—one that could have been where Jesus was laid. The investigation turned into a multiyear project (see note 2) and included careful examination and consideration of all the physical remains outside the Garden Tomb as well as inside and the production of updated drawings of all the architectural features of the site. The Garden Tomb Association of London kindly granted permission to enter the tomb itself with measuring instruments and on two occasions (in 1993 and 1998) allowed me inside the gate of the tomb’s inner chamber to examine, measure, and photograph features of the cave at the closest range possible. The data gathered were compared with published archaeological descriptions of other tombs in Jerusalem and the vicinity. Additionally, I visited anew every known and accessible Jewish tomb complex in the Jerusalem area and beyond from both the First and Second Temple periods to compare their architectural
styles with the features of the Garden Tomb’s interior. A key opportunity also became available during those years as the Israel Antiquities Authority excavated the large Crusader complex “Montjoie” at Nebi Samuel near Jerusalem, which I visited several times to compare with the features of the Garden Tomb’s exterior and grounds. The research was essentially complete by 2001 but was supplemented with clarification visits to several sites in 2002. The results of the project seem irrefutable, although the conclusions are just the opposite of what I had presupposed. In the spirit of the principle of “two or more witnesses,” it is now time to make those conclusions public.

The burial cave interior. The Garden Tomb itself shows every sign, as Barkay maintained, of having been constructed in the late eighth or seventh century B.C.—the end of archaeological Iron Age II. This would date it to sometime in the era beginning with the prophet Isaiah and ending with the prophet Jeremiah. Before it was altered by gentile Christians in the Byzantine period, who carved its stone benches into casket-like troughs, the Iron Age II burial cave consisted of two chambers: an outer chamber with a single stone bench along the back (north) wall and an inner chamber to the right (east) with a triple-bench design—stone benches along three walls, north, east, and south. (See figure 4 for a three-dimensional drawing of the tomb, and figure 5 for a reconstructed plan drawing.) The ceiling height of the outer chamber is just under two meters (just over six feet), but because of the lower floor of the inner chamber, its ceiling is about 2.3 meters high (seven feet). A doorway that was originally about 1.5 meters high and measuring 68 centimeters wide (2 feet 3 inches) was located in the wall between the two chambers. A small, square opening 70 centimeters wide (2 feet 4 inches) and originally about the same height sat low in the south wall of the outer chamber, serving as the entry to the tomb from outside.

The remains of the tomb’s original benches are still obvious from the ridges left behind after the Byzantine vandalism, and their original measurements can still be discerned. The benches were not perfectly rectangular but measured about a meter wide (3 feet 3 inches) on average, except for the middle (eastern) bench in the inner chamber, which was only 68 centimeters wide (2 feet 3 inches). The length of the benches was over two meters long (6 feet 6 inches) in each case. Benches in the inner chamber averaged 70 centimeters high (2 feet 4 inches), rising from the floor 65 centimeters (north bench) to 75 centimeters (south bench), the floor sloping slightly downward toward the south. The bench in the outer chamber was about 75 centimeters high (2 feet 6 inches).
Figure 4. The Garden Tomb, Iron Age II, ca. 700–600 B.C. This cutaway drawing by the author shows the original bench design.

Figure 5. The Garden Tomb, Iron Age II, reconstructed plan drawing by the author.

In its original form, the Garden Tomb was not very similar to the highly ornate Iron Age II tombs at the St. Stephen’s Monastery, located just north of the Garden Tomb grounds, even though both sites featured the triple-bench design common to many Iron Age II burial caves. In 1986, I rejected Barkay’s comparison of the two tomb
complexes on the grounds that, aside from the triple-bench layout, many of the architectural features were very different. During my own later survey of Jerusalem area tombs, however, I discovered that many other Iron Age II burial caves, plainer and simpler in design than the ornate caves at St. Stephen’s, matched the features of the Garden Tomb cave in every respect. (For this reason, I maintain that Barkay would have done better if, in his 1986 BAR article, he had offered plan drawings of the smaller, simpler Iron Age II tombs he knew about rather than focus on the St. Stephen’s caves as a parallel to the Garden Tomb.) Such tombs generally consist of an outer chamber with one or more inner chambers and feature a triple-bench plan in their inner chambers similar to the original Garden Tomb’s inner chamber (see figure 6). Many are exact parallels of the two-chamber design of the Garden Tomb, with triple benches in their inner chambers but a single- or double-bench layout in their outer chambers (see figure 7). The Garden Tomb, in its original state, was a very typical example of the two-chamber, triple-bench genre. The area just north of Damascus Gate, around Nablus Road, was home to several triple-bench Iron Age II tombs of both the two-chamber and the multichamber types. Known examples include the burial caves just across the street from the Garden Tomb (on the west side of Nablus Road) at the White Sisters Convent, which are not published, but which I examined personally, and the caves discovered by British surveyors while doing work on the Jerusalem drainage system north of Damascus Gate under the modern

![Figure 6. Typical Iron Age II Tomb at Ketef Hinnom (after Barkay). Note the two-chamber plan and bench alignment similar to the Garden Tomb.](image-url)
Sultan Suleiman Street, published by Amihay Mazar in 1976 (see figure 8). Additionally, the elaborate tomb complex at St. Stephen’s, just north of the Garden Tomb, dates from Iron Age II. However, not a single tomb from the Second Temple Period, Herodian or otherwise, has been discovered in the Damascus Gate and Garden Tomb vicinity. Burials were simply not occurring in the area west of el-Edhemieh in Jesus’ day—it was too close to the city gate and the busy road north now called Nablus Road.

**Figure 7.** Iron Age II Tomb on Mount Zion (after Geva, NEAEHL). Note the reverse image of the Garden Tomb plan.

**Figure 8.** Iron Age II Tomb near Damascus Gate (after Mazar). The tomb, no longer extant, was excavated beneath Sultan Suleiman Street.
Outside the Garden Tomb. On the Garden Tomb grounds are features that have often been cited as evidence that the Garden Tomb itself was located in a garden at the time of Jesus. These include the large cistern near the tomb (a cistern is an underground water reservoir cut into bedrock) as well as a small winepress to the south of the tomb's entrance (see figure 9 for a diagram of the area). The rock-cut channel below the tomb's entrance has traditionally been identified as the track of a rolling stone, and the arched feature carved into the tomb's outer facade above the entrance and the flat bedrock floor in front of the tomb entrance have usually been postulated as evidence of an early Christian church or shrine marking the place of Jesus' Resurrection (see figure 10). In light of what is now known archaeologically, all of these suppositions turn out to be false.

I will deal with the garden issue first. The small winepress is difficult to date, and it is unclear whether the press was present during the Herodian period or was constructed later. But a winepress is, in any case, no evidence of a garden, since the biblical term "garden" does not refer to an area where grapes are grown. The term in the New Testament used to describe a grape-producing plot is "vineyard" (Greek ἀμπελόνι; see Matthew 21:28). The term "garden" (Greek κήπος) is used to describe an orchard of fruit-producing trees, very often olive trees (see John 18:1, where the term κήπος refers to the olive garden...
near Gethsemane, and John 19:41, where *kepos* denotes the garden in which the tomb was located). Had John meant to tell us that the area where Jesus was buried was a grape-producing plot, he would probably have called it a vineyard (*amteloni*), and we could suppose that a winepress might have existed at the site. But since John called the plot a garden, it is not likely that a winepress or grapevines were present—grapes were not planted in tree gardens because shade from the trees would not allow proper growth of the vines or ripening of the fruit.\(^2\)

Additionally, the term for the caretaker of a vineyard is “husbandman” (Greek *georgos*) in John 15:1, whereas the term employed in John 20:15 is “gardener” (Greek *kepouros*). This language also suggests that the plot in which Jesus’ tomb was found was not a vineyard. The winepress found near the Garden Tomb may suggest that a vineyard was once there but proves nothing concerning a garden there in New Testament times.

Contrary to what Garden Tomb visitors are often told, the presence of a large cistern near the tomb in no way suggests that the area was a working garden in Jesus’ day. Artificial irrigation of working gardens, whether olive gardens (like the garden near Gethsemane) or other fruit-producing gardens, was not practiced in the land of Israel during biblical times. Winter rains and summer dews were the adequate sources relied upon for watering of olives and other tree fruits, as well
as grapes, grains and grasses. The only exception was the small “garden of herbs” (vegetable garden) often maintained adjacent to a private home (see Deuteronomy 11:10). But since a tomb had been cut in the garden of Jesus’ burial and since it was outside the city wall, no home would have been in that garden—it was not a small vegetable garden of which the New Testament is speaking. The supposition that a “gardener” might be at work there (see John 20:15) also suggests that it was a fruit-producing garden of trees, most probably an olive garden, in which Jesus’ tomb was located. Such a garden, as already stated, would have required no irrigation. The large cistern near the Garden Tomb proves nothing concerning a garden.

More important, the bell-shaped cistern was not even present at the site during the first century A.D., nor anytime close to the life of Jesus. It was, in fact, cut out and plastered sometime between about A.D. 1100 and 1187, during the Crusader period. The type of plaster used to seal the cistern against water leakage is known from other Crusader cisterns in Israel, and Crusader crosses carved into the interior wall of the cistern are a typical identifying stamp of twelfth-century construction. The cistern measures 9.4 meters in depth (31 feet) with a bottom area 9 meters wide (29 feet 9 inches) by 20.1 meters long (65 feet 9 inches). When full, it could hold an estimated one million liters of water (250,000 gallons), and it is still used for water storage today. But since the cistern did not exist at the time of Jesus, it cannot be cited as proof of a garden then. It does, however, relate to other Crusader remains at the site.

A section of rock-cut channel below the entrance to the Garden Tomb, 8.5 meters long (27 feet 7 inches), is nearly always represented to visitors as a track in which a large stone disc once stood—a “rolling stone” to seal the tomb entrance. However, this “track” was not designed at all properly for a stone-disc type of tomb door. The inside face of the channel’s outer edge was not cut straight up and down but was cut at a 45-degree angle away from the tomb facade, making the width of the channel 37 centimeters wide (15 inches) at the bottom but 50 centimeters wide (19 inches) at the top (see figure 11). This is an impossible arrangement for a stone disk, since the angle of the outer edge would provide no support for the disk—a large “rolling stone” would have been prone to fall outward, crushing anyone trying to move it. The outer edge, in any case, is too low to have been meant for a large, disk-type stone. At other “rolling-stone” tombs, such as Jerusalem’s Tomb of the Kings and those found at Midras in the Shfe-lah, the outer edge of the stone track was built straight up and was
essentially an outer wall as tall as the disk itself, preventing the stone from tipping or falling. In other words, the stone disk actually rolled between two upright walls, not in a low-cut track (see figure 12). There is no archaeological precedent for a low-cut track for a stone-disk door, particularly a track with a slanted outer edge as we see at the Garden Tomb. Moreover, if the Garden Tomb channel were actually the track of a stone disk, we would expect the low point or resting point of the track to be directly in front of the cave opening. But it is not. The channel actually slopes away from the Garden Tomb entrance, downward to the west. None of the features of this channel were designed to function as a track for a “rolling stone.”

In reality, the channel was not made for a “rolling stone” at all but was cut by Crusader workmen as a water trough for an eleventh-century donkey stable built directly in front of the Garden Tomb (the stable is described below). This trough was cut well below the tomb door (see again figure 11) so that water in the trough could not run over the threshold of the tomb entrance and flood the cave itself, which was probably used as a storage room for fodder. But the trough was still high enough above the bedrock floor in front of the tomb to afford donkeys comfortable access to the water it brought into the stable. The 45-degree angle on the inside of the trough’s outer edge allowed donkeys an easy drink without hitting their heads against the exterior wall of the tomb. Water for the trough was undoubtedly brought from the nearby Crusader cistern, either by manual transfer or more likely via a clay pipeline or extension channel of the trough that ran east of the stable and turned south to connect with the cistern.
In his 1986 *Biblical Archaeology Review* article, Barkay used an endnote to argue that the "rolling stone track" was really a Crusader channel used in connection with the Crusader stable, but he did not specify its use as an animal trough. In my 1986 response, I argued that the channel "does not seem to go anywhere nor is it correctly cut for drainage"—it was "much more likely . . . a track for a huge rolling stone." I was wrong on the "rolling-stone" part but right on the drainage part, even though I did not know why. Now I do. The channel did not drain because it was not designed for drainage. The Crusaders designed it to retain water—it was the stable's water trough. The slight westward slope of the trough was meant to let water entering the stable from the east side (the cistern side) run the length of the trough, keeping it full for the animals.

What of the stable itself? Above the Garden Tomb entrance, carved into the solid rock of the tomb's exterior, is an arched feature six meters wide and some 5.5 meters high. It obviously fit into a vaulted roof that extended outward from the tomb facade, covering the bedrock floor in front of the tomb entrance. This feature is often represented to visitors as evidence of an early Christian church or shrine at the site, erected by people who felt the tomb had been the sepulchre in which
Jesus was laid. But arched vaulted roofs were not yet being built in Herodian Israel or in the second century afterward—at least not for synagogues, domestic buildings, or mundane structures such as stables. On the basis of architecture alone, the building could not date prior to the Byzantine period (fourth century A.D.)—it cannot have been an early Christian (that is, pre-Byzantine) shrine to the Resurrection. The proportional dimensions of the arched feature are, however, typical of vaulted roofs from the Crusader period. The building the vaulted roof covered was, in fact, a Crusader structure—the stable spoken of above.

The bedrock floor of the stable was flattened manually by the Crusader builders, who lowered it 30 centimeters from the top of the water trough’s outer edge. In his 1986 article, Barkay explained why the Crusader floor was cut so low: “In order to create vaults that were high enough, but would not extend above the escarpment, the Crusader builders lowered the rock surface in front of the cave entrance. As a result, today one must step up to enter [the tomb].” In the 1986 rebuttal, I disagreed: “When did Crusaders ever lower a solid stone floor . . . for a structure as common as a stable?” Within a few years, an answer to that question was unearthed. During the mid-1990s, the Israel Antiquities Authority carried out a wide-ranging excavation of the Crusader complex “Montjoie,” complete with large stables and troughs, at Nebi Samuel northwest of Jerusalem. Upon visiting the new excavations and examining the fresh finds, I was astonished at how similar they were to the area in front of the Garden Tomb. From the stone-cut troughs (set higher for horses) to the flat finished bedrock floor, the resemblance to the area in front of the Garden Tomb was striking. Nebi Samuel’s stone stable floors even featured the same type of shallow drainage channels visible in the surface at the Garden Tomb a few meters south of the door. These shallow drains, about 10 centimeters in width, allowed liquid waste from the animals to flow away to the outside of the structure and also allowed wash water to drain away when workers would muck out the stable and wash the floor with water taken from the trough. The archaeological parallels between the Nebi Samuel stables and the Garden Tomb exterior were too significant to be ignored.

It is now even possible to ascertain the approximate floor plan of the Garden Tomb’s Crusader stable. In July 1997, during work to expand the area for visitor seating in front of the tomb, a section of bedrock cut to function as a cornerstone was unearthed exactly 7.5 meters south of the arched feature’s eastern ledge. This bedrock cornerstone stands 70 centimeters high and was cut into the shape of a
block about 95 centimeters square (see figure 13). Cuttings in the bedrock surface between the block and the arched feature suggest that a wall 7.5 meters long once ran from the arch’s eastern ledge to that cornerstone—the eastern wall of the stable. The likely reconstruction of the building would have the wall then run south from the cornerstone some 15 meters. This is the known length of the escarpment on the north from the arch’s eastern ledge to the end of the extended ledge that runs on the arch’s western side. The whole stable, re-created, would have featured a 7.5-by-15-meter floor plan, with a vaulted roof on the eastern end, and probably a pitched roof on the west end (see figure 14 for proposed plan and section drawing of the stable).

But why the odd dual-roof design? Why did not the Crusaders simply run a pitched roof for the entire east-west length of their stable? The reason for vaulting the roof on the east end was that a supporting ledge for the pitched roof could not be cut into the rock face of the tomb itself. Because of the open chamber behind it, there would be no rock for a ledge at all. Thus, to cover the stable’s eastern section, rather than a pitched roof resting upon a ledge, the area directly in front of the tomb had to be vaulted well above the burial cave’s ceiling level. Hence, the result is the unusual combination of arch and ledges that we see in the Garden Tomb’s facade today (see figure 15).

In summary, the Garden Tomb cannot be materially connected to the New Testament accounts of Jesus’ burial and Resurrection. The tomb itself was not a “new sepulchre” in Jesus’ day, having been cut out six or seven centuries earlier, in Iron Age II. The “track” in front of the tomb was not designed for a “rolling stone” at all; it was really a water trough that was part of the donkey stable built eleven centuries after Jesus. The stable itself was certainly no early Christian shrine. And
Figure 14. Proposed plan and northern section of Crusader stable at the Garden Tomb.

even though it is possible that a garden occupied the area in Jesus’ day, neither the winepress nor the nearby cistern is proof of this. In any case, the cistern also dates to eleven centuries later. None of the features at the Garden Tomb, either inside the burial cave or outside it, can be connected archaeologically with the events of Jesus’ burial and Resurrection as recorded in the New Testament.

So Where Was Jesus Buried?

If the skull feature in el-Edhemieh’s southern scarp is identified as the New Testament Golgotha, but the Garden Tomb is disqualified as the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, where then was the sepulchre in which Jesus was laid and from which He rose again? Probably, as President
Hinckley suggested, it was “somewhere nearby”—somewhere as near to the skull feature as the Garden Tomb is. If we take at face value the passage in John that the garden and tomb were “in the place where he was crucified” (John 19:41), it means that we cannot look too far in any direction from the skull feature.

The area west of el-Edhemieh is ruled out, that being the Nablus Road and Garden Tomb area. Heavy Jewish foot traffic there would not have allowed for tomb construction in Jesus’ day. No Second Temple period tombs have been discovered in that area.

But what about the other side of el-Edhemieh—the east side? The eastern slope of that hill (technically the northeastern slope, since that face of the hill runs southeast to northwest) actually was a place where tombs could have been dug in Jesus’ day. This is the area along modern Saladin Street, between the Israeli post office and the money changer Aladdin (a well-known landmark to Jerusalem Center faculty and students), but across the road on the west side (properly the southwest side) of the street. Behind the single line of commercial buildings on that western side of Saladin Street is the Muslim cemetery on el-Edhemieh. The hill rises steeply enough in that area to have allowed for ancient burial caves to be cut horizontally into bedrock. Photos of the area taken eighty to a hundred years ago show an agricultural hillside with more than enough slope for tomb construction. That relatively
fertile area of Saladin Street was likely a garden area in the early first century, and the new sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea may well have been cut into the bedrock of the el-Edhemieh hillside, on its north-eastern slope (see figure 16). Such a tomb site would have been as close to the skull feature as is the Garden Tomb area because then (unlike today) a person could simply walk from the skull feature over the el-Edhemieh hill to get there. Any site behind or under the buildings on that stretch of Saladin Street, along its west side, could qualify as having been “in the place where he was crucified.” The presence further up
Saladin Street of the so-called Tomb of the Kings, a Herodian Period burial complex dug out about twenty years after Jesus’ death, demonstrates that the region east and north of el-Edhemieh was deemed acceptable for sepulchre construction in the first century A.D. However, no modern archaeological exploration has ever taken place on the west-side stretch of Saladin Street that fronts el-Edhemieh, and the presence of modern Arab buildings now there prevents any close research or excavation at present.

How Jesus’ Tomb Would Have Looked

Jewish tombs in the Herodian period were architecturally different from tombs of Iron Age II (such as the Garden Tomb) in a number of ways. The term used by archaeologists to describe the part of a tomb where a body was laid is loculus (plural loculi). Herodian period tombs featured two different types of loculi: the bench and the kohk. The kohk (a Hebrew term—plural kohkim) was a narrow vault carved about two meters deep into the tomb’s stone wall. The vault and its opening were generally about 70 centimeters high and about 60 centimeters wide and usually were carved at floor level or low in the wall of the tomb. This type of loculus began appearing in Israel as early as the third century B.C., and kohkim from before Jesus’ era are found at the Holy Sepulchre (see again figure 1).

Figure 17. Drawing of a typical arcosolium burial bench from the time of Jesus.
But even though *kokhim* continued to appear in tombs into the first century A.D., it is virtually certain that the body of Jesus was not laid in a *kokh*. The New Testament describes angels sitting at both the head and foot of where Jesus had lain (see John 20:11–12), which would be impossible with a long, narrow *kokh* carved deep into the rock wall of the tomb. John’s description strongly suggests the other type of loculus—the burial bench. Two styles of burial benches are common in Herodian period tombs. One, called *arcosolium* (plural *arcosolia*) is actually a recessed bench cut into the stone wall of the tomb with the bench surface at a level about waist high and an arch above the bench serving as the top of the recess (see figure 17). This elaborate type of burial bench is well known from wealthier tomb complexes, and it is tempting to think that Jesus might have been laid on an *arcosolium* bench in the Arimathian’s tomb. But *arcosolia* are usually found only in the interior chambers of multichambered tombs. Since the bench where Jesus had lain was clearly and entirely visible from outside His tomb (see John 20:5; 20:11–12), that bench cannot have been in an interior chamber; otherwise, it could not have been seen by John and Mary from outside. Unlike drawings of Jesus’ burial depicted in some popular books, the body of Jesus was probably not laid in an *arcosolium*.28

The other type of bench loculus was just a plain bench, with no elaborate decoration or overhead arching (very much like the original benches in the Iron Age II Garden Tomb). Such benches are usually waist high from the tomb floor, are about two meters long, and vary anywhere from half a meter to a meter in width. It was upon this type of plain bench that Jesus’ body was most likely laid and where angels were later seen sitting at the head and foot of where he had lain. Since the bench was clearly visible through the tomb entry from outside, it is almost certain that the tomb consisted of only a single chamber. The most common bench arrangement for single-chamber tombs in the Herodian period was the triple-bench arrangement. (This was different from the Iron Age II plan only in that the Iron Age II tombs like the Garden Tomb had their triple benches in their interior chambers.) A single-chamber, triple-bench tomb of the Herodian period would have an interior area of only about three meters square (about 10 feet). This type of tomb could contain benches only (see figure 18) or might also contain *kokhim* carved into the walls at bench level (see figure 19). For those who wonder if a single-chamber tomb could suffice as the sepulchre for a man of the social stature of Joseph of Arimathea, who was known to be a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin
Figure 18. Single-chamber tomb from Herodian period, located at Gilo, Jerusalem, shown with blocking stone (after Kloner).

Figure 19. Single-chamber tomb from Herodian period with *kokhim*, located at Jerusalem, Peace Forest (after Kloner). Note that the ossuary of Calaphas was found in this tomb.
(see Luke 23:50–51), it may be pointed out that the ossuary (bone box) of the high priest Caiaphas was found in just such a single-chamber tomb (the Jerusalem tomb depicted in figure 19).29

In reviewing recent archaeological literature, I am not alone in suggesting that Jesus was placed in a single-chamber, triple-bench tomb. In a very useful article in Biblical Archaeology Review, Israeli archaeologist Amos Kloner, an expert on ancient tombs in Israel, comes to essentially the same conclusion.30 Kloner also makes a somewhat surprising suggestion: that Jesus’ tomb was not sealed with a disk-like “rolling stone” of the type generally imagined. Pointing out that “98 percent of the Jewish tombs from this period . . . were closed with square blocking stones,” Kloner suggests that the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ burial and Resurrection are probably referring to that type of stone—a square, plug-like stone about a meter wide—as the type of stone that was “rolled” to and from the door of Jesus’ tomb: “Matthew, Mark, and Luke all describe the stone being ‘rolled’ (in John it is ‘taken away’), and thus it is only natural to assume that the stone was round. But we must remember that ‘rolled’ is a translation of the Greek word κυλίον, which can also mean ‘dislodge,’ ‘move back’ or simply ‘move.’”33

Kloner further points out that “the Hebrew word for these blocking stones, both round and square [is] גולל or גואל (plural גוללים). The root means ‘to roll’ as well as ‘to move.’”32 He also suggests three other interesting considerations:

1. That only four of the huge disk-type “rolling stones” have been discovered from the time of Jesus, versus hundreds of the square blocking types—this statistically favors the latter as the type of sealing stone at Jesus’ tomb.

2. That the huge disk-type of stone was employed only for very elaborate multichambered tombs (as opposed to single-chamber tombs of the type proposed above for Jesus’ burial).

3. That the New Testament description of an angel sitting on the stone moved away from the tomb door (see Matthew 28:2) does not work well with a huge disk-like stone—“A square blocking stone would make a much better perch.”33

So how would Jesus’ tomb have looked? Based on a decade of research, and including Kloner’s blocking-stone suggestion, a drawing of the tomb with a cutaway view (see figure 20) shows a small, square entry that someone would have to stoop down to look into or enter through. The single chamber of the tomb, only about three meters square, would have featured three connected benches. Quite probably,
the body of Jesus was laid on the back bench, directly opposite the entry, where on Sunday morning, John, “stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying” (John 20:5). Shortly thereafter, Mary "stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting [on that back bench], the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain” (John 20:11–12). The bench on the right-hand side of the entry would probably have been the place where the women mentioned in Mark “saw a young man [angel] sitting on the right side” (Mark 16:5). The square, plug-like blocking stone, a meter wide and very heavy, had been “taken away from the sepulchre” (John 20:1), and an angel “sat upon it” (Matthew 28:2—or “two angels” sat on it, according to the JST). It is even likely that if this tomb were cut into the eastern scarp of el-Edhemieh (the Saladin Street side), the entry faced east, allowing the first rays of Sunday dawn to illuminate the sepulchre enough for visitors to peer in and see the place where Jesus had lain. Outside the tomb (not pictured in figure 20) were olive trees—the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, where Mary Magdalene momentarily thought she was speaking with a gardener.

**Figure 20.** Proposed design of the tomb in which the body of Jesus was laid. Note that the body would have rested on the bench opposite the door. Note also the square, plug-like blocking stone to seal the entrance.
What Do We Do Now?

With the Garden Tomb ruled out as the site of Jesus’ burial and with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre also disqualified as a viable candidate, what do we do now? For those who are interested in the precise geography of the life of Jesus, for those who conduct study programs in Israel, and even for those who find it useful to display photographs of New Testament venues in their classrooms, there is simply no tomb of Joseph the Arimathean that we can represent to students as authentic. It is possible, as demonstrated above, to isolate the general area where that tomb must have been located and to reconstruct quite accurately how that tomb might have looked. But it would hardly be inspiring to march a group of students or visitors to the dingy sidewalk outside Aladdin the money changer, point west across Saladin Street, and say, “It’s probably underneath there somewhere.” It is even possible that the Arimathean’s tomb no longer exists. And even if it does, the likelihood that it will be identified and excavated anytime in the near future is practically nil. For Latter-day Saint students and others who have the desire to know the exact places of sacred events, archaeology presents only a rather gray cloud in terms of the tomb of Jesus’ Resurrection. But something of a silver lining still exists. That silver lining is, somewhat ironically, the Garden Tomb itself.

It may be an adjustment for some, but if Latter-day Saints would regard the Garden Tomb as a teaching tool rather than as a shrine, a visit to the site or even a photo of the burial cave may still provide valuable insight into New Testament events. Rather than venerate it as sacred space, we would do well to employ the Garden Tomb as a visual aid—a pleasant and useful locale that may continue to be used in teaching aspects of the accounts of Jesus’ Crucifixion, burial, and Resurrection. The Garden Tomb does, after all, possess a number of qualities for the Latter-day Saint teacher and student:

1. It is adjacent to the skull feature, which is the best candidate for the site called Golgotha in the New Testament. This is an extremely important point. Even though a visit to the Garden Tomb may not bring us to the actual sepulchre of Jesus, it does bring us to the “place of a skull,” where the final hours of the Savior’s sacrifice were accomplished. There can be little doubt, as demonstrated above, that the skull feature was the site of the Crucifixion. In this regard, we really do access “sacred space” by going to the Garden Tomb. For those who desire knowing and visiting an exact location, the Garden Tomb’s platform for viewing Golgotha is as good as it gets.
2. The Garden Tomb is almost certainly within two hundred meters of wherever the real tomb of Joseph of Arimathea was located. Since we know where Golgotha is, we know that the actual tomb in which Jesus was laid must be somewhere close by. Probably it was to the east of Golgotha, as demonstrated earlier. But, in any case, when we visit the Garden Tomb, we are no more than a few minutes’ walk from where the actual garden and the actual tomb must have been. Often, there is educational value in knowing we are merely in the vicinity of a sacred event, such as in New York’s Sacred Grove or Missouri’s Adam-ondi-Ahman. This knowledge can certainly also be the case in terms of that most sacred of events, the Savior’s Resurrection.

3. Physical aspects of the Garden Tomb itself can be used to illustrate the New Testament accounts. Even though the exterior of the tomb is of little use in demonstrating how they “rolled a great stone to the door” (Matthew 27:60), the tomb’s interior originally featured benches, as Jesus’ tomb most certainly did. And even though those benches have been cut away, their visible lines remain, and the form and position of the original loculi are easily distinguished. The interior chamber’s triple-bench design may be used to demonstrate how a single-chamber tomb with a triple bench could fit the accounts of Jesus’ burial and Resurrection (compare figure 4 with figure 20). Of course, examining any other existing bench tomb would serve the same purpose, but the Garden Tomb is especially suited for receiving groups of visitors and is very convenient for both teachers and students in this regard.

4. Last, but certainly not least, is the “spirit of place” visitors encounter at the Garden Tomb. Here, within a pleasant garden setting, a reverential memory of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection is the main concern of Christian hosts, while the meaning of those events, which can differ somewhat from denomination to denomination, is discreetly left to the minds and hearts of the individual visitors. The Garden Tomb itself is actually not the end focus of the polite and friendly guides there, who frequently summarize their presentations with a declaration of belief in Christ rather than confidence in the tomb. It is not uncommon to hear those guides say something along these lines: “The most significant thing about the Garden Tomb is that it is empty! He is risen! And because of this, we too shall all rise again!” Latter-day Saints can agree with this significant testimonial as much as any other Christians.

With these suggestions in mind, anyone who revisits Golgotha and the Garden Tomb, whether in person or by photograph, continues to have a spiritually enriching and educationally instructive adventure. 

\[\text{ref}\]
Revisiting Golgotha and the Garden Tomb

Notes


2. The author holds a Ph.D. in near eastern archaeology and is an active field archaeologist at sites in Israel. The long-term investigation was carried out periodically, during the author’s free time, beginning with his two-year appointment to the full-time faculty of Brigham Young University’s Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies (1992–94) and continuing as he returned to Jerusalem each summer on Jerusalem Center teaching assignments or for archaeological excavation at Tel Mique (biblical Ekron) and Tel Saffi (biblical Gath) from 1995 to 2002.

3. This conclusion represents a change of position for the author, who in previous publications, prior to completing a degree in archaeology, had supported the Garden Tomb as a candidate for Jesus’ sepulchre. See Jeffrey R. Chadwick, “In Defense of the Garden Tomb,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 12, no. 4 (July/August 1986): 16–17; and D. Kelly Ogden and Jeffrey R. Chadwick, *The Holy Land: A Geographical, Historical and Archaeological Guide to the Land of the Bible* (Jerusalem: HaMakor and BYU Jerusalem Center, 1990), 340–45.


5. Babylonian Talmud, Baba Batra 25a, literal translation by the author. The Hebrew version reads as follows:

"מריחים את הנבלת את הקברות ואת הפרסקים ממעי ה Lesb סל של היא עשה, עשה מעני יברנ, הריחים יברנ אמא.

Although the Hebrew version uses the term *ruah* (wind), the Soncino English translation idiomatically renders the term as “direction,” which is not incorrect but which does not preserve the important aspect of wind direction. The Gemara that follows specifies that the sages were discussing wind-related issues—hence the need for a more literal translation of the Mishnah.


8. Rousseau and Arav, *Jesus and His World*, 167–68. The singular presence of the so-called “Herod family tomb” to the west of Jerusalem’s Old City, on the grounds of the present-day King David Hotel, is explained by its distance from the Temple Mount—over 2,000 cubits, or 3,000 feet.


10. James E. Talmage incorrectly supposed that “the exposure of skulls and other human bones . . . would not be surprising; though the leaving of bodies or any of their parts unburied was contrary to Jewish law and sentiment.” But he also concluded that “the origin of the name is of . . . little importance” (Jesus the Christ [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1915, 1973], 667).

21. The same is true in the Old Testament, where the Hebrew term kerem is consistently rendered as “vineyard.”
22. Even today, grapevines are usually not planted in modern Arab tree gardens (orchards) because the shade from the trees would hinder vine growth and ripening of the grapes. On the other hand, it is not uncommon in modern Arab vineyards to see one of two fruit trees growing among the rows of grapevines—an occasional tree does not cast enough shade to block the vines from needed sunlight as the angle of the sun changes throughout the day. It is unlikely, however, that this Arab habit was practiced by ancient Jews, since the law of Moses specifically forbade mixing other fruit species in a vineyard (see Deuteronomy 22:9). In any case, the point is moot because the setting of Jesus’ tomb is referred to as a garden and not a vineyard, and grapevines would not likely have been planted among the trees of that garden.
27. The discovery of the bedrock cornerstone was made by Brian Bush, the Garden Tomb’s director of grounds and maintenance, who permitted me to use the photo he took.
28. Amos Kloner, “Did a Rolling Stone Close Jesus’ Tomb?” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 25, no. 5 (September/October 1999): 29. Kloner reaches the same conclusion for a different reason. He maintains that arcosolia were at most two feet high, and angels could not have sat upright in such a niche. But I have visited tombs in Jerusalem and the Shfelah with arcosolia more than three feet high and have sat upright in them.
Teaching the Usage of *Thee* and *Thou*

*John W. Welch*

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In his May 1993 general conference address, Elder Dallin H. Oaks encouraged Latter-day Saints to address God by using “special words that have been sanctified by use in inspired communications, words that have been recommended to us and modeled for us by those we sustain as prophets and inspired teachers.” In particular, he mentioned the use of the pronouns *thee, thou, thy,* and *thine* to show respect to God, even though those words may seem “archaic... unfamiliar and difficult.” Indeed, using these reverent forms of speech when addressing God in prayer or encountering them in the scriptures can be confusing or awkward. But with a little effort, this small hurdle can be removed for people who wish to use these pronouns more comfortably.

The use of *thee* and *thou* has shifted somewhat arbitrarily and loosely over the centuries; however, I believe the following six guidelines may be helpful in teaching children or other students or useful simply in keeping the basic patterns in mind. These reminders are not intended to create rigid constraints on the free flow of words uttered in love and humility before the Lord because the essence of prayer is not in the parts of speech but in the sincerity of a person’s heart. The following patterns, however, may increase our familiarity with these forms and raise our comfort level, thus building our confidence and openness in speaking this way before the Lord. Using *thee-thou* language also helps English speakers to learn foreign languages, most of
which have two forms of you that are used in particular circumstances, depending on the local culture.

**Guideline 1:** *Thee is like me. Thy is like my. Thine is like mine.*

In other words, in places where it would sound right to use the first-person pronouns me, my, or mine, it is appropriate to use the rhyming second-person forms.

For example, a person would say, “Walk with me.” So in speaking of God, one would say, “Walk with thee” (not with thou). Similar pairs illustrate this point further:

- People thank me.
- People thank thee.
- My mother knows me.
- My mother knows thee.
- This is my church.
- This is thy church.
- The glory be mine.
- The glory be thine.

Indeed, when praying, we can formulate a thought negatively in the first person and then resolve it positively in the second person with respect to God:

- That they will glorify not me, but thee.
- Not my will, but thy will be done.
- The thanks be not mine, but thine.

Obviously, more is at work in improving our language than mechanically mastering an archaic form of speech. Thinking “not me, but thee” and “not my, but thy” can shift our attention away from ourselves and to our Father in Heaven. Speaking this way in prayer also reinforces the close relationship that God desires to foster between us and Him, the me and thee.

**Guideline 2:** Use thine instead of thy when the next word starts with a vowel.

These cases are exceptions to the first guideline. Accordingly:

- thy son
- thine only son
- thy word
- thine own word

This rule is similar to what happens in using a or an. English usage requires the use of an when the next word begins with a vowel sound:
a son
an only son
a day
an extraordinary day
When the main word begins with an h, the usage can go either way. The King James Bible treats the initial h as a vowel, but modern usage is mixed:
thy foot
thine hand (alternatively, thy hand)
thy mind
thine heart (alternatively, thy heart)

Guideline 3: Use thou as the subject of a sentence or of a dependent clause when you would normally use you.

In grammatical terms, thou is the nominative form. This rule is a little more difficult to apply than the first rule because, as the following example shows, the same word you can be used either as a subject (in the nominative case) or as an object (in the accusative case):
You love us, and we love you.
The first you is doing the loving; the second you refers to the one who is loved. This becomes:
Thou lovest us (Guideline 3), and we love thee (Guideline 1).

Note the similarity in spelling between you and thou, even though the ou is pronounced differently. The two words are closely related (through the German du). This third rule is further illustrated by other examples:
I am here.
Thou art here.
I see.
Thou seest.
You know our needs.
Thou knowest our needs.
You have given us.
Thou hast given us.

Guideline 4: Use ye as the plural equivalent of thou.

The word ye is not likely to be used in prayers, but it appears frequently in scripture. For example, when Jesus instructs individuals how to pray alone in their closets, He says, “When thou prayest.” When He instructs people regarding group prayers, He says, “After this manner therefore pray ye” (3 Nephi 13:6, 9).
Guideline 5: When *thou* is the subject, the indicative verb ends in 
*-st* or *-t*.

For example:

you *have*
thou *hast*
you *had*
thou *hadst*
you *would*
thou *wouldst* (or *wouldest*)
you *should*
thou *shouldst* (or *shouldest*)
you *know*
thou *knowest*
you *love*
thou *lovest*

A simple *-* is added to the end of some English verbs where the *s* sound has dropped out:

you *will*
thou *wilt* (not *wills*)
you *are*
thou *art* (not *arst*)

Other verbs remain the same as in normal speech. Even a verb in the imperative mood with *thou* as the subject does not change: “Father, glorify thou me with thine own self” (John 17:5).

One of the best ways to learn to appreciate the rhythm and distinctive sound of *thee-thou* language is to read the scriptures out loud. Especially rich is the entire chapter of John 17, where Jesus prays to the Father. The King James translation renders Jesus’ words:

I have finished the work which *thou gavest* me.
They have believed that *thou didst* send me.
I pray not that *thou shouldst* take them out of the world.
Sanctify them through *thy* truth.
That the world may know that *thou hast* sent me, and *hast loved* them, as thou *hast loved* me.

Guideline 6: When the word *who* stands in place of *thou* or refers to God, the verb that follows may likewise end in *-st* or *-*.

Our Father, [thou] who *art* in heaven.

But this usage is flexible. For example, in the sacrament hymn we sing, “O God the Eternal Father, who *dwell* (not *dwellst*) amid the sky.”
Conclusion

In most cases, these six guidelines are the only rules a person needs to know to use *thee-thou* language. Strictness is not crucial; many variations exist. And if ever in doubt, we can usually avoid awkward or uncertain constructions by rephrasing but retaining the respectful tone. For example, to avoid a sentence like “We ask thee that thou mightest lend us thy mercy,” we might say, “We ask thee to lend us thy mercy” or “Please lend us mercy.” The Lord, who looks upon the heart, will understand and answer the humble prayer that is offered with real intent.

Notes

4. The use of *you* began to replace *thou* and *ye* as nominatives in the fourteenth century, eventually becoming common in sixteenth-century speech; but “for a long while the old and the new forms often alternated with each other,” and by the eighteenth century *you* became the standard in English prose. See George O. Curme, *A Grammar of the English Language* (Essex, Connecticut: Verbatim, 1977), 2:15–16; 2:527–29; and J. N. Hook and E. G. Matthews, *Modern American Grammar and Usage* (New York: Ronald Press, 1956), 170. During Elizabethan times, when the King James Version of the Bible was being produced, “there is strong evidence that, while the older ‘eth’ ending continued to be written, it was pronounced as if it were ‘e’” (Alister E. McGrath, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 272. So we cannot insist that the distinctions between these forms must be rigidly or dogmatically enforced.
5. “In Biblical language *ye* is now uniformly employed as nominative [plural] and *you* as dative and accusative [plural]. . . . In the original text of [the King James] version this usage was not so uniform, as there were in it a number of *you’s where we now find ye*” (Curme, *Grammar*, 2:15).
6. For a chart of the full inflection of English verbs, see Curme, *Grammar*, 1:327–33.
7. “O God, the Eternal Father,” *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 175.
"In the spirit of Christian brotherhood and sisterhood, is it not possible to lay aside theological differences long enough to address the staggering social issues in our troubled world?"—Robert L. Millet
Outreach: Opening the Door or Giving Away the Store?

Robert L. Millet

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We are called to be holy, to stand as lights in a darkened world, to be different in order to make a difference. And yet we live in the world. We do not attend church every day of the week, not do many of us associate only with persons of our own faith or moral persuasion. We have been called to come out of the world in the sense that we are to forsake the ways, whims, voices, and values of the world and the worldly. In speaking of His chosen Twelve, Jesus prayed: "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:14-15; emphasis added).

There is a fine line here. While on the one hand, the Saints of the Most High are to eschew all forms of evil and reject every effort to dilute the divine or corrupt the truth, yet we are commissioned to be a leavening influence among the people of the earth. We cannot make our influence felt if we completely avoid the troublesome issues in society and insulate ourselves and our families from today's challenges. President Howard W. Hunter explained that "the gospel of Jesus Christ, which gospel we teach and the ordinances of which we perform, is a global faith with an all-embracing message. It is neither confined nor partial nor subject to history or fashion. Its essence is universally and eternally true. Its message is for all the world, restored in these latter days to meet the fundamental needs of every nation, kindred,
tongue, and people on the earth. It has been established again as it was in the beginning—to build brotherhood, to preserve truth, and to save souls.”

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have a responsibility to love and care for our neighbors and make a difference for good in their lives. Perhaps they will join our church, but perhaps they will not. Whether they do or not, we have been charged by our Lord and Master, as well as by His chosen spokesmen, to love them, to serve them, and to treat them with the same respect and kindness that we would extend to people of our own faith. Unfortunately, religious discussions with those not of our faith too often devolve into debates or wars of words as a result of defensiveness over theological issues. This need not happen when men and women of goodwill come together in an attitude of openness and in a sincere effort to better understand and be understood.

There is a very real sense in which the Latter-day Saints are a part of the larger “body of Christ,” the Christian community, whether certain groups feel comfortable with acknowledging our Christianity or not. Given the challenges we face in our society—fatherless homes, child and spouse abuse, divorce, poverty, the spread of crime and delinquency, spiritual wickedness in high places—it seems so foolish for men and women who claim to believe in the Lord and Savior, whose hearts and lives have been surrendered to that Savior, to allow doctrinal differences to prevent them from working together. Okay, this person believes in a triune God, that the Almighty is a spirit, and that He created all things ex nihilo. I believe that God is an exalted Man, that He is a separate and distinct personage from the Son and the Holy Ghost. She believes that the Sabbath should be observed on Saturday, while her neighbor does not believe in blood transfusions. This one speaks in tongues, that one spends much of his time leading marches against social injustice, while a third believes that little children should be baptized. One good Baptist is a strict Calvinist, while another tends to take freedom of the will seriously, and so on, and so on. Do we agree on the problems in our world? Do we agree on the fact that most all of these ills have moral or spiritual roots?

President Gordon B. Hinckley pleaded with us:

We must not become disagreeable as we talk of doctrinal differences. There is no place for acrimony. But we can never surrender or compromise that knowledge which has come to us through revelation and the direct bestowal of keys and authority under the hands of those who held them anciently. Let us never forget that
this is a restoration of that which was instituted by the Savior of the world. It is not a reformation of perceived false practice and doctrine that may have developed through the centuries.

We can respect other religions and must do so. We must recognize the great good they accomplish. We must teach our children to be tolerant and friendly toward those not of our faith. We can and do work with those of other religions in the defense of those values which have made our civilization great and our society distinctive.²

In the spirit of Christian brotherhood and sisterhood, is it not possible to lay aside theological differences long enough to address the staggering social issues in our troubled world? My recent interactions with men and women of various faiths have had a profound impact on me; they have broadened my horizons dramatically and reminded me—a sobering reminder we all need once in a while—that we are all sons and daughters of the same Eternal Father. We may never resolve our differences on the Godhead or the Trinity, on the spiritual or corporeal nature of Deity, or on the sufficiency of the Bible, but we can agree that salvation is in Christ; that the ultimate transformation of society will come only through the application of Christian solutions to pressing moral issues; and that the regeneration of individual hearts and souls is foundational to the restoration of virtue in our communities and nations.

It is my conviction that God loves us, one and all, for I believe that He is our Father in Heaven and that He has tender regard for us. I also feel strongly that, in spite of growing wickedness, men and women throughout the earth are being led to greater light and knowledge—to the gradual realization of their own fallen nature and thus of their need for spiritual transformation. C. S. Lewis once stated that there are people “who are slowly becoming Christians though they do not yet call themselves so. There are people who do not accept the full Christian doctrine about Christ but who are so strongly attracted by Him that they are His in a much deeper sense than they themselves understand.” Lewis went on to speak of people “who are being led by God’s secret influence to concentrate on those parts of their religion which are in agreement with Christianity, and who thus belong to Christ without knowing it.”³

I am fully persuaded that we can be committed Latter-day Saints and that we need not compromise one whit of our doctrine or our way of life; indeed, our strength, our contribution to the religious world, lies in our distinctiveness. We are who we are, and we believe what we
believe. At the same time, we can and should build bridges of friendship and understanding with those of other faiths. I believe this is what our Master would do, He who mingled with all elements of society and whose gaze penetrated the faces and the facades of this temporal world.

Once again, the people of the covenant have been charged to be “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that [we] should shew forth the praises of him who hath called [us] out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). Our religion is more than wearing dark suits and white shirts and attending meetings, more than external trappings or successful activities. What we are, deep down to the core, is so much more important than what we are doing or what we may appear to be. Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: “In the final analysis, the gospel of God is written, not in the dead letters of scriptural records, but in the lives of the Saints. It is not written with pen and ink on paper of man’s making, but with acts and deeds in the book of life of each believing and obedient person. It is engraved in the flesh and bones and sinews of those who live a celestial law, which is the law of the gospel. It is there to be read by others, first, by those who, seeing the good works of the Saints, shall respond by glorifying our Father in heaven, and finally by the Great Judge to whom every man’s life is an open book.”

**Blessings and Challenges of Outreach**

When I was appointed dean of Religious Education in 1991, I encouraged some of our teachers of world religion classes in their desire to visit Asian countries and become more personally acquainted with the people, the varying religions, and their ways of life. We began to rethink the role of the Richard L. Evans Chair and undertook a major reorganization. Competent and energetic scholars like David Paulsen, Darwin Thomas, Larry Porter, and Roger Keller were appointed as Evans professors. I found myself spending more and more time attending conferences, delivering lectures, and meeting religious leaders and academicians from religious schools. And, concurrently, I began a reading program (books, journals, magazines) that was broad and extensive, in terms of Christian doctrine and practice. I sensed I would not be in a position to carry on meaningful conversations with these people if I did not understand their backgrounds, their vocabularies, and even some of the crises in their respective traditions.

Understanding is a wonderful thing, especially among people of goodwill, among people who are open and teachable. Over the years, I have developed some remarkable friendships with people of many
faiths, but for some reason I have been especially attracted to Evangelical Christians. Maybe it has something to do with my own upbringing in Louisiana. Many of my cousins were Pentecostal Holiness, and a few of them are ministers today. I know something about their goodness, their devotion to Jesus Christ, and their desire to live for Him. I would have to be honest and admit that not every interaction with Evangelicals has been sweet and satisfying; I think Stephen Robinson could affirm, with me, that our encounters with some of the leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention were anything but warm and inviting. But on the whole, our meetings have been cordial, and I have always sensed at the conclusion of our gathering that both groups were different somehow—they were just a bit less suspicious of us, and we were slightly less critical of them.

There have been some unanticipated blessings associated with outreach and with interfaith dialogue. Some of these people have become my friends—my friends. I have grown to appreciate them, admire them, and look up to them. On certain occasions, I have felt the pure love of Christ toward them. This feeling attests to me that God loves them and that what we are about is the result of neither accident nor coincidence.

I must say at this point that there is a world of difference between being able to teach the doctrines of salvation to those of our own faith and being able to do the same to those not of our faith. Our backgrounds and vocabularies are so different that I have been required to bend and stretch and reach for clarity of expression. Let me illustrate. It is not uncommon to have one of my Christian friends, particularly one who knows me well and senses my commitment to the Savior, ask me, "Bob, if you sincerely believe in the ransoming power and completed work of Jesus Christ, why do you as a people build and attend temples? Is salvation really in Christ, or must you enter the temple to be saved?" This is an excellent question, one that has forced me to ponder carefully upon the place and meaning of temples in Latter-day Saint theology.

I sat at lunch a few years ago with a dear friend of mine, Pastor Greg Johnson, who happens to be an Evangelical minister. We have met on many occasions to chat, to reflect on one another's faith, to ask hard questions, to seek to better understand each other's beliefs. On this particular occasion, we were discussing grace and works. I had assured my friend that Latter-day Saints do in fact believe in, accept, and rely upon the saving mercy of Jesus. "But Bob," he said, "you folks believe you have to do so many things to be saved!"
“Like what?” I asked.

“Well,” he continued, “let’s just take baptism, for example. You believe that baptism is what saves you.”

“No, we don’t,” I responded.

“Yes, you do,” he followed up. “You believe baptism is essential for entrance into the celestial kingdom.”

“Yes,” I said, “while baptism or other ordinances are necessary as channels of divine power and grace, they are not the things that save us. *Jesus saves us!*

My response about baptism to my colleague is also applicable to temples and temple work. While Latter-day Saints believe and teach that the highest form of salvation or exaltation comes to those who receive the blessings of the temple (see D&C 131:1–4), we do not in any way believe that it is the temple, or the ordinances contained there, that saves us. Salvation is in Christ. We believe the temple makes us eligible to receive the covenants and ordinances that open the door to greater truths; it is a house of learning, of communion and inspiration, of covenants and ordinances, of service, and of personal refinement. We believe that the temple is the house of the Lord. But it is not the Lord. We look to Christ the Person for salvation. I doubt that I would ever have come to those conclusions had I not been challenged by my friends of other faiths regarding the place of Christ in our temple worship.

Now, to be sure, there have been a host of challenges to this work of outreach. Some have asked: “Why are you doing this? Do you really think you will convert that person to our way of thinking? How can you justify the time and expense required of such efforts?” Others are forever suspicious that any person who wants to build relationships with us must have some malicious motive. The greatest source of frustration I have felt in this work—and the one that has brought me to the brink of turning in my badge and resigning from my professorship—has not been unsuccessful encounters with other Christians but rather with misunderstanding and occasionally outright unkindness on the part of Latter-day Saints. In some cases, I suppose it is simply a matter of their questioning my motives or wondering how it is possible to make progress in interfaith dialogue without some form of doctrinal compromise. I am persuaded that too often such suspicion comes from plain old ignorance, from a lack of the love of God in the heart, or simply from a lack of perspective about the bigger picture.

Another challenge with outreach is simply being able to respond to difficult questions that come from those of other faiths. Most of the
doctrinal or historical queries are handled easily enough. But there are some particularly sensitive topics—for example, God was once a man; how Jesus is literally the Son of God; what it means for man to become like God; women and the priesthood; priesthood restriction until 1978; plural marriage; and so forth—topics that tax the soul, causing one to wonder how little or how much to say. Little is generally better than much, and “I really don’t know” works quite well too. The other thing I have begun to stress with groups is that the “doctrine of the Church” today has a rather narrow focus and direction; central and saving doctrine is what we are called upon to emphasize, not tangential and peripheral doctrines. Not everything that was ever spoken or written by a Church leader in the past is necessarily a part of the doctrine of the Church today. Ours is a living constitution, a living tree of life, a dynamic Church (see D&C 1:30). We are commanded to pay heed to the words of living oracles (see D&C 90:3–5).

A Broader Perspective

Outreach requires a broader perspective on how God is working throughout the earth through men and women of all types and attitudes and religious persuasions. Five years ago, I read the autobiography of Billy Graham, entitled Just As I Am (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997). It was a life-changing experience for me. I had, of course, grown up in the South watching Billy Graham revivals and thus was not completely ignorant of his prominence in the religious world. But I was not prepared for what I learned. His influence for good among rich and poor, black and white, high and low—including his service as spiritual adviser to several presidents of the United States—was almost overwhelming to me. The more I read, the more I became acquainted with a good man, a God-fearing man, a person who had felt called to take the message of Christ to the far parts of the earth. I remember sitting in my chair in the living room finishing the last page of the book. No one else was in the house except for my wife, Shauna, who was also reading. As I laid the book down, I let out a rather loud “Wow!” Shauna responded with “What did you say?” I replied: “Wow! What a life!” I remember being very emotional at the time, sensing deep down that God had worked wonders through this simple but submissive North Carolina preacher.

Not long after I had read the Graham autobiography, one of our faculty drew my attention to a general conference address by Elder Ezra Taft Benson given in April 1972. “God, the Father of us all,” Elder Benson said, “uses the men of the earth, especially good men, to
accomplish his purposes. It has been true in the past, it is true today, it will be true in the future.” Elder Benson then quoted the following from a conference address delivered by Elder Orson F. Whitney in 1928: “Perhaps the Lord needs such men on the outside of His Church to help it along. They are among its auxiliaries, and can do more good for the cause where the Lord has placed them, than anywhere else. . . . Hence, some are drawn into the fold and receive a testimony of the truth; while others remain unconverted, . . . the beauties and glories of the gospel being veiled temporarily from their view, for a wise purpose. The Lord will open their eyes in His own due time.” Now note this particularly poignant message: “God is using more than one people for the accomplishment of His great and marvelous work. The Latter-day Saints cannot do it all. It is too vast, too arduous for any one people. . . . We have no quarrel with the Gentiles. They are our partners in a certain sense.”

In June of 1829, Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer were instructed, “Contend against no church, save it be the church of the devil” (D&C 18:20). Elder B. H. Roberts offered this insightful commentary on this passage:

I understand the injunction to Oliver Cowdery to “contend against no church, save it be the church of the devil” (D&C 18:20), to mean that he shall contend against evil, against untruth, against all combinations of wicked men. They constitute the church of the devil, the kingdom of evil, a federation of unrighteousness; and the servants of God have a right to contend against that which is evil, let it appear where it will, in Catholic or in Protestant Christendom, among the philosophical societies of deists and atheists, and even within the Church of Christ, if, unhappily, it should make its appearance there. But, let it be understood, we are not brought necessarily into antagonism with the various sects of Christianity as such. So far as they have retained fragments of Christian truth—and each of them has some measure of truth—that far they are acceptable unto the Lord; and it would be poor policy for us to contend against them without discrimination. Wherever we find truth, whether it exists in complete form or only in fragments, we recognize that truth as part of that sacred whole of which the Church of Jesus Christ is the custodian; and I repeat that our relationship to the religious world is not one that calls for the denunciation of sectarian churches as composing the church of the devil.

Elder Roberts added this statement that demonstrates the kind of breadth necessary in reaching out and understanding our brothers and sisters of other faiths: “All that makes for untruth, for unrighteousness constitutes the kingdom of evil—the church of the devil. All that makes
for truth, for righteousness, is of God; it constitutes the kingdom of right-
eousness—the empire of Jehovah; and, in a certain sense at least,
constitutes the Church of Christ. With the latter—kingdom of right-
eousness—we have no warfare. On the contrary, both the spirit of the Lord’s
commandments to his servants and the dictates of right reason would sug-
gest that we seek to enlarge this kingdom of righteousness both by
recognizing such truths as it possesses and seeking the friendship and coop-
eration of the righteous men and women who constitute its membership.”

Let me pose three questions—questions I propose we have not
pondered or probed enough. What was the Great Apostasy? What was
lost? What was not lost? We know from the Book of Mormon and from
modern scripture that following the time the gospel was delivered to
the Gentiles, plain and precious truths, as well as many covenants of the
Lord, were taken from or kept back from the Bible and from the gospel
of Jesus Christ (see 1 Nephi 1:3; D&C 6:26; 8:11; Moses 1:40–41). We
know that with the deaths of the Apostles, the keys of the kingdom of
God—the directing power, the right of presidency—were lost. Those
apostolic keys had been conferred in order to direct the work of the
ministry (including overseeing and performing the sacraments or ordi-
nances) and also to assure the correctness of doctrine and Church
practice within and among the branches of the Church. The truths and
covenants that were lost surely included the teachings and ordinances
of the temple and the nature of exaltation; the destiny of man (includ-
ing his premortal existence); the nature and personality of God and the
Godhead; life and labors in the postmortal spirit world; three degrees
of glory in the heavens hereafter; and so forth.

Over the decades, in an effort to satisfy the accusations of Jews who
denounced the notion of three Gods (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) as
polytheistic and at the same time to incorporate ancient but appealing
Greek philosophical concepts of an all-powerful moving force in the
universe, the Christian Church began to redefine the Father, Son, and
Holy Spirit. Centuries of debate on the nature of the Godhead took
place at Nicaea (A.D. 325), Constantinople (A.D. 381), Ephesus (A.D.
431), and Chalcedon (A.D. 451), resulting in creedal statements that
became the walk and talk of Christian doctrine. Men sought to har-
monize revealed doctrine with Greek philosophy, which resulted in the
corruption of fundamental and foundational truths.

As one writer not of our faith has observed, “The classical theo-
logical tradition became misguided when, under the influence of
Hellenistic philosophy, it defined God’s perfection in static, timeless
terms. All change was considered an imperfection and thus not applicable
to God." Further, "since Plato, Western philosophy has been infatuated with the idea of an unchanging, timeless reality. Time and all change were considered less real and less good than the unchanging timeless realm. . . . This infatuation with the 'unchanging' unfortunately crept into the church early on and has colored the way Christians look at the world, read their Bibles, and develop their theology."56

I have wrestled for years with the meaning of certain verses in the Book of Mormon. The allegory of Zenos (Jacob 5) seems to divide the history of the world (and of God's patient workings with His covenant people) into distinct time periods. My understanding is that beginning in verse 29, after "a long time had passed away," we have moved through a universal apostasy into the dispensation of the fulness of times. Thus, verses 29 through 77 are devoted principally to the Holy One of Israel's dealings with the posterity of Jacob from the time of the call of Joseph Smith until the end of the Millennium. After the Lord of the vineyard and His servant return to the mother tree, they discover that it has produced wild fruit, "and there is none of it which is good" (v. 32). This language is reminiscent of the words of Joseph Smith regarding what he was taught in his First Vision: "I was answered that I must join none of them [the churches of his day], for they were all wrong" (Joseph Smith—History 1:19).

In the allegory of Zenos, the Lord of the vineyard asks what should be done to the tree in order to produce and preserve good fruit. Notice the servant's answer: "Behold, because thou didst graft in the branches of the wild olive-tree they have nourished the roots, that they are alive and they have not perished; wherefore thou beholdest that they are yet good" (Jacob 5:31–34; emphasis added). What are the roots that are alive and "yet good"? When I first came to BYU, I was informed by one of the senior faculty that the roots were the blood of Israel, and I think there is much to recommend this idea. I would like to suggest another, perhaps related, interpretation. What if the roots are remnants of Christianity, pieces and parts and principles of the original gospel of Jesus Christ that have survived the centuries through the teachings or practices of both Protestant and Catholic churches? It is as though the servant is saying to his Master: "Look, we have a foundation upon which to build, an ancient archetype of the full gospel that rests deep within the souls and minds of good people throughout the earth. We can begin the final work of gathering Israel, and we can restore and replace and rebuild upon those fundamental verities of the primitive gospel." Discussing the passing of the primitive Church and the flickering and dimming (not dousing) of the flame of Christian faith,
President Boyd K. Packer stated: "But always, as it had from the beginning, the Spirit of God inspired worthy souls. We owe an immense debt to the protesters and the reformers who preserved the scriptures and translated them. They knew something had been lost. They kept the flame alive as best they could."9

President Hinckley made this observation: "Reflect upon it, my brethren and sisters. For centuries the heavens remained sealed. Good men and women, not a few—really good and wonderful people—tried to correct, strengthen, and improve their systems of worship and their body of doctrine. To them I pay honor and respect. How much better the world is because of their bold action. While I believe their work was inspired, it was not favored with the opening of the heavens, with the appearance of Deity."10

It is but reasonable, therefore, that elements of truth, pieces of a much larger mosaic, should be found throughout the world in varying cultures and among diverse religious groups. Further, as the world has passed through phases of apostasy and restoration, relics of revealed doctrine remain, albeit in some cases in altered or even convoluted forms. President Joseph F. Smith had much to say to those who seek to upstage Christianity. Jesus Christ, he taught, "being the fountain of truth, is no imitator. He taught the truth first; it was his before it was given to man. . . . If we find truth in broken fragments through the ages, it may be set down as an incontrovertible fact that it originated at the fountain, and was given to philosophers, inventors, patriots, reformers, and prophets by the inspiration of God. It came from him through his Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, in the first place, and from no other source. It is eternal."11

The tenth section of the Doctrine and Covenants includes instructions to the young prophet Joseph Smith regarding the loss of the 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript. Toward the latter part of the revelation, the Lord speaks of the prayers of the ancient Nephites that the fulness of the gospel might be made known in a future day to people who come to America and that this land "might be free unto all of whatsoever nation, kindred, tongue, or people they may be. And now, behold, according to their faith in their prayers will I bring this part of my gospel [specifically the Book of Mormon, but also the other revelations of the Restoration] to the knowledge of my people. Behold, I do not bring it to destroy that which they have received, but to build it up" (D&C 10:49–52). This seems to be the Lord's way of affirming that when He delivers additional light and truth to His children, even additional scripture, He in no way detracts from what has been dispensed
before. In this case, neither the Book of Mormon nor the additional revelations would lessen in the slightest the precious and distinctive contribution of the Holy Bible. The scriptures of the Restoration bear a united witness with the Bible of the divinity of Jesus Christ and, working together, confound false doctrine, lay down contention, and establish peace (see 2 Nephi 3:12).

Now note what follows in section 10: “And for this cause have I said: If this generation harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them. Now I do not say this to destroy my church, but I say this to build up my church” (D&C 10:53–54; emphasis added). It is the summer of 1828, almost two years before Joseph Smith and the early Saints would gather at Father Whitmer’s home to organize the Church of Christ. And yet here the Lord seems to be saying: “I do not speak concerning the coming organization of the restored Church in order to destroy my Church, but I say this to build up my church.” Well, what was His church in the summer of 1828? The restored church, equipped with doctrine and scripture and divine authority was not yet on earth. I suggest that when the Lord in this section refers to “my church,” He is referring to Christianity in general, to the Christian world, to Christendom. This is in harmony with Elder Roberts’s earlier statement that “All that makes for truth, for righteousness, is of God; it constitutes the kingdom of righteousness—the empire of Jehovah; and, in a certain sense at least, constitutes the Church of Christ.” In short, while Latter-day Saints claim to have received angelic ministrations and divine authority, are neither Catholic nor Protestant, and thus stand independent in the religious world, we are part of a larger whole—we are what might be called “Christian, but different”—and we really need to try to view things through those lenses if we are to become effective in reaching out.

Relating to Those with Differences

I am immeasurably grateful for the fullness of the gospel—for the priesthood, for living Apostles and prophets, for the ordinances of salvation, for temples and sealing powers, and for mind-expanding doctrines. But I have found myself, more and more often, looking into the eyes of those of other Christian faiths, sensing their goodness, perceiving their commitment to Christ, and feeling those quiet but profound impressions that God knows them, loves them, and desires for me to love, respect, and better understand them. Probably too often we allow doctrinal differences to deter us from fruitful conversation, enlightening discussion, and joint participation in moral causes.
This should not be. I believe with all my heart in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ. I am committed to the doctrine and practices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; indeed, I have never been more committed to my own religious faith than I am right now. At the same time, I have never been more liberal in my views—in the proper sense of that word liberal, meaning open, receptive—in regard to people of other faiths, especially Christian faiths. To some extent, I am motivated in this direction by the following statement from the prophet Mormon: “For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God” (Moroni 7:16).

So often people of different religious persuasions simply talk past one another when they converse on religious matters. They may even use the same words, but they bring a different mind-set and an entirely different perspective to the encounter. In other situations, we employ a different vocabulary but intend to convey the same message. Confusion and misrepresentation inevitably follow. If there is anything needed in this confused world, it is understanding. While Latter-day Saints readily acknowledge that not all who learn of our doctrine will accept what we teach, it is very important to us that others understand what we say and what we mean. Elder Neal A. Maxwell thus counseled, “It is important in our relationships with our fellowmen that we approach them as neighbors and as brothers and sisters rather than coming at them flinging theological thunderbolts.”

Outreach is not debate. Outreach is not ecumenism. Outreach is not associated with being timid to teach or hesitant to herald the message of the Restoration. Outreach entails neither compromise nor concession. Friendliness with others does not preclude firmness in our faith. To be involved with outreach is to comply with what Elder M. Russell Ballard called the “doctrine of inclusion.” “Our doctrines and beliefs are important to us,” he taught. “We embrace them and cherish them. I am not suggesting for a moment that we shouldn’t. On the contrary, our peculiarity and the uniqueness of the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ are indispensable elements in offering the people of the world a clear choice. Neither am I suggesting that we should associate in any relationship that would place us or our families at spiritual risk.” Quoting the First Presidency message from 1978, Elder Ballard reaffirmed: “Our message . . . is one of special love and
concern for the eternal welfare of all men and women, regardless of religious belief, race, or nationality, knowing that we are truly brothers and sisters because we are sons and daughters of the same Eternal Father." "That is our doctrine," Elder Ballard concluded—"a doctrine of inclusion. That is what we believe. That is what we have been taught. Of all people on this earth, we should be the most loving, the kindest, and the most tolerant because of that doctrine."13

"Disagreeing with one another need not, and should not, be scary and divisive," Gregory Boyd writes, "so long as we keep our hearts and minds focused on the person of Jesus Christ. Indeed, when our hearts and minds are properly focused, our dialogues with one another, however impassioned they may be, become the means by which we lovingly help each other appreciate aspects of God's word we might otherwise overlook or fail to understand."14 We can possess what my friend Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, calls "convicted civility"—we can be completely committed to our own faith and way of life but also eager to learn and grow in understanding and thus treat those with differing views with the dignity and respect they deserve as sons or daughters of God.15 Let me quote just a few statements from Richard Mouw's book:

As Martin Marty has observed, one of the real problems in modern life is that the people who are good at being civil often lack strong convictions and people who have strong convictions often lack civility.16

Being civil isn't just trying to be respectful toward the people we know. It is also to care about our common life.17

Christians need to be careful about seeing civility as a mere strategy for evangelism. As an evangelical Christian I want to be careful not to be misunderstood as I make this point. I want people to accept the evangel, the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. I place a high priority on the evangelistic task. But this does not mean that Christian civility is simply an evangelistic ploy—being nice to people merely because we want them to become Christians.18

The quest for empathy can be helped along by a good dose of curiosity. We ought to want to become familiar with the experiences of people who are different from us simply out of a desire to understand the length and breadth of what it means to be human.19

We cannot place artificial limits on how God may speak to us. This has relevance to our encounters in the public square. When we approach others in a civil manner, we must listen carefully to them. Even when we strongly disagree with their basic perspectives, we
must be open to the possibility that they will help us discern the truth more clearly. Being a civil Christian means being open to God’s surprises.29

We cannot consistently develop empathy and curiosity and teachability in our relationships without the reinforcing experiences of divine grace. We can sustain open hearts toward others only because of the love that flows from the heart of God.21

[We need] to have such a total trust in Christ that we are not afraid to follow the truth wherever it leads us. He is “the true light, which enlightens everyone” (John 1:9). Jesus is the Truth. We do not have to be afraid, then, to enter into dialog with people from other religious traditions. If we find truth in what they say, we must step out in faith to reach for it—Jesus’ arms will be there to catch us.22

I have a hunch about what is going on with some Christians who worry about being “compromised” by their involvement in non-Christian settings. I suspect they are being influenced in some good ways by their work, but they’re nervous about how to interpret this experience.23

President Hinckley said to the Latter-day Saints: “We want to be good neighbors; we want to be good friends. We feel we can differ theologically with people without being disagreeable in any sense. We hope they feel the same way toward us. We have many friends and many associations with people who are not of our faith, with whom we deal constantly, and we have a wonderful relationship. It disturbs me when I hear about any antagonisms. . . . I don’t think they are necessary. I hope that we can overcome them.”24

Consider other comments from President Hinckley:

Let us be good citizens of the nations in which we live. Let us be good neighbors in our communities. Let us acknowledge the diversity of our society, recognizing the good in all people. We need not make any surrender of our theology. But we can set aside any element of suspicion, of provincialism, of parochialism.25

Are we Christians? Of course we are! No one can honestly deny that. We may be somewhat different from the traditional pattern of Christianity. But no one believes more literally in the redemption wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ. No one believes more fundamentally that He was the Son of God, that He died for the sins of mankind, that He rose from the grave, and that He is the living resurrected Son of the living Father.

All of our doctrine, all of our religious practice stems from that one basic doctrinal position: “We believe in God, the Eternal
Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.” This is the first article of our faith, and all else flows therefrom.26

We are met to worship the Lord, to declare His divinity and His living reality. We are met to reaffirm our love for Him and our knowledge of His love for us. No one, regardless of what he or she may say, can diminish that love.

There are some who try. For instance, there are some of other faiths who do not regard us as Christians. That is not important. How we regard ourselves is what is important. We acknowledge without hesitation that there are differences between us. Were this not so, there would have been no need for a restoration of the gospel. . . .

I hope we do not argue over this matter. There is no reason to debate it. We simply, quietly, and without apology testify that God has revealed Himself and His Beloved Son in opening this full and final dispensation of His work.27

Our entire case as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rests on the validity of [Joseph Smith’s] First Vision. It was the parting of the curtain to open this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. Nothing on which we base our doctrine, nothing we teach, nothing we live by is of greater importance than this initial declaration. . . .

Are we Christians? Of course we are Christians. We believe in Christ. We worship Christ. We take upon ourselves in solemn covenant His holy name. The Church to which we belong carries His name. He is our Lord, our Savior, our Redeemer through whom came the great Atonement with salvation and eternal life.28

Now, brethren and sisters, let us return to our homes with resolution in our hearts to do a little better than we have done in the past. We can all be a little kinder, a little more generous, a little more thoughtful of one another. We can be a little more tolerant and friendly to those not of our faith, going out of our way to show our respect for them. We cannot afford to be arrogant or self-righteous. It is our obligation to reach out in helpfulness, not only to our own but to all others as well. Their interest in and respect for this Church will increase as we do so.29

Our membership has grown. I believe it has grown in faithfulness. . . . Those who observe us say that we are moving into the mainstream of religion. We are not changing. The world’s perception of us is changing. We teach the same doctrine. We have the same organization. We labor to perform the same good works. But the old hatred is disappearing; the old persecution is dying. People are better informed. They are coming to realize what we stand for and what we do.30
As a Church we have critics, many of them. They say we do not believe in the traditional Christ of Christianity. There is some substance to what they say. Our faith, our knowledge is not based on ancient tradition, the creeds which came of a finite understanding and out of the almost infinite discussions of men trying to arrive at a definition of the risen Christ. Our faith, our knowledge comes of the witness of a prophet in this dispensation who saw before him the great God of the universe and His Beloved Son, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. . . . It is out of that knowledge, rooted deep in the soil of modern revelation, that we, in the words of Nephi, “talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that [we and] our children may know to what source [we] may look for a remission of [our] sins.”

President Brigham Young explained that “we, the Latter-day Saints, take the liberty of believing more than our Christian brethren: we not only believe . . . the Bible, but . . . the whole of the plan of salvation that Jesus has given to us. Do we differ from others who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? No, only in believing more.” It is, of course, the “more” that makes many in the Christian world very nervous and usually suspicious of us. But it is the “more” that allows us to make a meaningful contribution in the religious world.

The older I get, the less prone I am to believe in coincidence. Like you, I believe that God has not only a divine plan for the ultimate establishment of the kingdom of God on earth but also an individualized plan for you and me. I gladly and eagerly acknowledge His hand in all things, including the orchestration of events in our lives and the interlacing of our daily associations. I believe He brings people into our path who can bless and enlighten us, and I know that He brings us into contact with people whose acquaintance will, down the road, open doors, dissolve barriers, and make strait the way of the Lord.

Joseph Smith observed: “While one portion of the human race is judging and condemning the other without mercy, the Great Parent of the universe looks upon the whole of the human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard; He views them as His offspring, and without any of those contracted feelings that influence the children of men, causes ‘His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.’ He holds the reins of judgment in His hands; He is a wise Lawgiver, and will judge all men, not according to the narrow, contracted notions of men, but, ‘according to the deeds done in the body whether they be good or evil.’” Thus, our charge, in the words of President Howard W. Hunter, is to “seek to enlarge the circle of love and understanding among all the people of the earth.”
Notes

19. Mouw, Uncommon Decency, 63–64.
23. Mouw, Uncommon Decency, 112.

Calls to the Apostolic Ministry

Michael D. Taylor

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What a profound blessing it is to live at a time when we have a prophet of the Lord on the earth! Our lives are blessed every day by the influence of our prophet as we are taught and instructed, nourished and fed, encouraged and uplifted.

We are also richly blessed by the direction of other prophets, seers, and revelators who serve with the President of the Church. All these faithful brethren have been called of God by revelation and inspiration through the instrumentality of the Lord’s ordained prophet.

In a very real and direct way, we are benefiting today from the inspiration of previous prophets. For example, Presidents Gordon B. Hinckley and Thomas S. Monson were called to the apostleship by President David O. McKay. As the Lord’s seer, President McKay sought the Lord’s will in calling these worthy men to fill these high and holy positions. How significant are the results of President McKay’s inspiration those many years ago. Similarly, it is wonderful to contemplate that of our fifteen currently serving Apostles, almost half (seven) were called to the apostleship by President Spencer W. Kimball.

Following are three helpful tables dealing with the numbers of Apostles called during the years of service of each of our fifteen Church Presidents. The largest number of Apostles were called during the presidency of Joseph Smith, primarily because of the organization of the original Quorum of the Twelve and the frequency of apostasy among the early Church leaders. It is interesting to note that during the six years and nine months that John Taylor served as Church President, he
called six new Apostles, while President Hinckley, who has now served almost eight years as Church President, has called just one new Apostle, Elder Henry B. Eyring.

The last chart points out that of our fifteen Church Presidents, only six have called Apostles who subsequently served as Presidents of the Church. The call of Joseph Smith is unique in that he was called directly by the Lord Himself.

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<th>Prophet</th>
<th>Years as President</th>
<th>Apostles Called</th>
<th>Apostles Living</th>
<th>Names of Apostles Called</th>
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<td>Joseph Smith</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Joseph Smith to Amasa M. Lyman</td>
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<td>Brigham Young</td>
<td>1847-1877</td>
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<td>Ezra T. Benson to Albert Carrington</td>
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<td>John Taylor</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Moses Thatcher to John W. Taylor</td>
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<td>Wilford Woodruff</td>
<td>1899-1904</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Marriner W. Merrill to Abraham O. Woodruff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lorenzo Snow</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Rudger Clawson to Reed Smoot</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Hyrum M. Smith to Richard R. Lyman</td>
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<td>Heber J. Grant</td>
<td>1918-1945</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>George Albert Smith</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Matthew Cowley to Delbert L. Stapley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harold B. Lee</td>
<td>1972-1973</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Bruce R. McConkie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spencer W. Kimball</td>
<td>1973-1985</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>L. Tom Perry to M. Russell Ballard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ezra Taft Benson</td>
<td>1985-1995</td>
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<td>Joseph B. Wirthlin to Robert D. Hales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Howard H. Hunter</td>
<td>1994-present</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jeffrey R. Holland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gordon B. Hinckley</td>
<td>1995-present</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Henry B. Eyring</td>
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### Number of Apostles Called during the Tenure of Each Prophet

Listed by Decreasing Number of Apostles Called

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<td>David O. McKay</td>
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<td>Marion G. Romney to Alvin R. Dyer</td>
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<td>Joseph B. Wirthlin to Robert D. Hales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lorenzo Snow</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rudger Clawson to Reed Smoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Fielding Smith</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Boyd K. Packer to Marvin J. Ashton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold B. Lee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bruce R. McConkie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard H. Hunter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jeffrey R. Holland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon B. Hinckley</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Henry B. Eyring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Future Church Presidents Called during the Tenure of Each Prophet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prophet</th>
<th>Year Called to the Apostleship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brigham Young</td>
<td>1835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Taylor</td>
<td>1838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilford Woodruff</td>
<td>1839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorenzo Snow</td>
<td>1849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph F. Smith</td>
<td>1866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heber J. Grant</td>
<td>1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Albert Smith</td>
<td>1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David O. McKay</td>
<td>1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Fielding Smith</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold B. Lee</td>
<td>1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spencer W. Kimball</td>
<td>1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezra Taft Benson</td>
<td>1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard W. Hunter</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon B. Hinckley</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Joseph Smith by Alvin Gittins, 1959.
Insights into the Mind and Personality of the Prophet Joseph Smith

Donald Q. Cannon

Donald Q. Cannon is a professor of Church history and doctrine at BYU.

Several years ago, Larry Dahl and I discussed the possibility of preparing a new version of Joseph Smith's teachings and arranging them by topic. Essentially, we planned to make a book available that would provide information on "what Joseph Smith said about what"—that is, a topical approach.

We set to work and over a period of about three years created a manuscript that was first published in 1997 under the title The Teachings of Joseph Smith. It was later published as the Encyclopedia of Joseph Smith's Teachings. During the course of our research, I learned a lot about the Prophet Joseph Smith. The research process afforded a more detailed and intimate view of the Prophet than I ever thought possible.

Concerning sources, I was surprised to learn that the single best place to look for Joseph Smith's teachings is a readily available publication—namely, the History of the Church. Although many other sources are available, such as The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith, The Papers of Joseph Smith, The Concordance of Doctrinal Statements of Joseph Smith, Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Teachings of Joseph Smith, Scriptural Teachings of Joseph Smith, The Words of Joseph Smith, The Wisdom of Joseph Smith, as well as the manuscript sources in the Church Archives, I found that the History of the Church is the single most valuable source of information concerning Joseph Smith.

As we searched, we discovered that certain types of materials came up again and again. Joseph Smith's Sunday addresses furnished the
most entries for our book. The next most frequent entries were his editorials in the *Times and Seasons*. As this process went on, we asked our research assistant, Robert Bond, to perform a computer analysis of the various types of materials and the frequency of their usage. The results of that analysis are found in the introduction to our book, and they are also reproduced here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Hits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath addresses</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorials in the <em>Times and Seasons</em></td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference addresses</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remarks to the Relief Society</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Follett Discourse</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter to the Brethren scattered from Zion, 22 January 1834</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty Jail letter, 20–25 March 1839</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter to the Elders of the Church, 1 September 1835</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse on the Priesthood, 8 August 1839</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funeral of James Adams</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructions to the Apostles and Seventies, 2 July 1839</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay on Happiness</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funeral of Elias Higbee</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that Joseph Smith was speaking to the Saints quite regularly on Sunday is also of interest because, in the early part of his career as President of the Church, Joseph spoke only rarely. By the time he was in Nauvoo, he spoke frequently, not only on Sunday but in general conferences and other meetings.

What did Joseph Smith speak about in these settings? We decided to employ a computer analysis on the subjects covered, as we had done on the various types of sources. The results of that analysis are found below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Hits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham, Book of</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obedience</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devil</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This analysis of topics is, of course, not a complete list but is simply a listing of the main ideas he presented.

I found it especially fascinating that the Prophet Joseph taught most about the subject of revelation. Since the whole work of the Restoration is centered on the concept of revelation, this is entirely fitting and appropriate.

I learned that revelation can be withheld from us because of our own improper conduct; Joseph taught covetousness can seal the heavens and prevent revelations from coming from the Lord. He also taught that God tailors revelations to the needs of a given generation. This notion goes to the heart of why current revelation is so essential. Concerning the purity of revelation, he said, "Spring water tastes best right from the fountain." I learned, then, that revelation was a common experience for Joseph Smith and that he had an excellent understanding of that source of truth.

The Prophet Joseph Smith had a marvelous understanding of the principle of obedience. He taught, for example, about rewards for obedience when he said, "Live in strict obedience to the commandments of God, and walk humbly before Him, and He will exalt thee in his own due time." Also, he said that "in obedience there is joy and peace."

Sometimes I have been quite amazed at the subjects that were not discussed by Joseph Smith. In our collection of teachings, there were no entries under the Sabbath. This is not to say that the Prophet never mentioned the Sabbath but simply that other subjects were of greater concern to him.

Through my study of the teachings of Joseph Smith, I learned something about Joseph as a man—the human dimension. For one thing, I learned that Joseph had a sense of humor. He employed humor in his teaching because he understood that humor is helpful in reaching one's audience. Some examples of his humor are the following:

You might as well baptize a bag of sand as a man, if not done in view of the remission of sins.

There are so many fools in the world for the devil to operate upon, it gives him the advantage oftentimes.
If we go to hell, we will turn the devils out of doors and make a heaven of it.\textsuperscript{19}

All ye lawyers who have no business, only as you hatch it up, would to God you would go to work or run away.\textsuperscript{20}

It is best to let Sharp\textsuperscript{21} publish what he pleases and go to the devil, and the more lies he prints the sooner he will get through.\textsuperscript{22}

Mr. Sollars stated that James Mullone, of Springfield, told him as follows:—"I have been to Nauvoo, and seen Joe Smith, the Prophet: he had a gray horse, and I asked him where he got it; and Joe said, 'You see that white cloud.' 'Yes.' 'Well, as it came along, I got the horse from that cloud.'"\textsuperscript{22}

When a man undertakes to ride me I am apt to kick him off and ride him.\textsuperscript{24}

I have said more than I ever did before, except once at Ramus, and then up starts the little fellow (Charles Thompson) and stuffed me like a cock-turkey with the prophecies of Daniel, and crammed it down my throat with his finger.\textsuperscript{25}

In addition to using humor, Joseph Smith tried to incorporate colorful expressions that people could relate to and understand. He wanted to talk their language to help them comprehend his message. Here are some examples:

I tried to prevail upon him, making use of the figure, supposing that he should get into a mud-hole, would he not try to help himself out? And I further said that we were willing now to help him out of the mud-hole. He replied, that provided he had got into a mud-hole through carelessness, he would rather wait and get out himself, than to have others help him.\textsuperscript{26}

A little tale will set the world on fire.\textsuperscript{27}

Hit pigeons always flutter.\textsuperscript{28}

As I studied these research materials on Joseph Smith, it became evident that he was a patriot in the best sense of the word. He frequently expressed his loyalty to the United States of America and often praised the government and especially the Constitution. Once, while pointing out some problems in that time, he nevertheless concluded, "With all our evils we are better situated than any other nation."\textsuperscript{29} His patriotic feelings are further expressed in these examples:

The Constitution . . . is a glorious standard; it is founded in the wisdom of God. It is a heavenly banner.\textsuperscript{30}
I am the greatest advocate of the Constitution of the United States.  

Joseph Smith believed that women had an important contribution to make to the building of the kingdom. He said that the Church was not fully organized until the women were organized. In his view, women had qualities and traits that were commendable, desirable, and useful. He taught:

Our women have always been signalized for their acts of benevolence and kindness.  

It is natural for females to have feelings of charity and benevolence.

The Prophet viewed wives as being qualified to help their husbands and also make them better men. He believed that a good wife could encourage a man to make the best choices and pursue the most desirable path. 

Feelings of charity came easily and naturally to Joseph Smith. As he taught:

Love is one of the chief characteristics of Deity, and ought to be manifested by those who aspire to be the sons of God. A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race.

I frequently rebuke and admonish my brethren, and that because I love them.

There is a love from God that should be exercised toward those of our faith, who walk uprightly, which is peculiar to itself, but it is without prejudice; it also gives scope to the mind, which enables us to conduct ourselves with greater liberality towards all that are not of our faith, than what they exercise towards one another. These principles approximate nearer to the mind of God, because it is like God, or Godlike.

I have no enmity against any man. I love you all; but I hate some of your deeds.

My heart is large enough for all men.

Joseph Smith sincerely believed that he had a special mandate to set things right in matters of religion. He had an overwhelming desire to correct false doctrine and proclaim the truths that God had revealed to him. This was his mission and his purpose as a prophet of God—a theme that runs through much of his teaching. In fact, there are at least
thirty separate settings in which the Prophet discussed his mission as a proclaimer of precious truth to a world that had lost it. Rather than list all of these statements or repeat them, I have chosen to present four that best illustrate this point:

The object . . . is to obey and teach others to obey God in just what He tells us to do. It mattereth not whether the Principle is popular or unpopular, I will always maintain a true principle, even if I stand alone in it.39

It is my duty to teach the doctrine. I would teach it more fully—the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. God is not willing to let me gratify you; but I must teach the Elders, and they should teach you.40

The whole earth shall bear me witness that I, like the towering rock in the midst of the ocean, which has withstood the mighty surges of the warring waves for centuries, am impregnable, and am a faithful friend to virtue, and a fearless foe to vice,—no odds whether the former was sold as a pearl in Asia or hid as a gem in America, and the latter dazzles in palaces or glimmers among the tombs.

I combat the errors of ages; I meet the violence of mobs; I cope with illegal proceedings from executive authority; I cut the Gordian knot of powers, and I solve mathematical problems of universities, with truth—diamond truth; and God is my right hand man.41

I stood alone, an unlearned youth, to combat the worldly wisdom and multiplied ignorance of eighteen centuries, with a new revelation, which (if they would receive the everlasting Gospel,) would open the eyes of more than eight hundred millions of people, and make “plain the old paths,” wherein if a man walk in all the ordinances of God blameless, he shall inherit eternal life.42

Putting together a book on Joseph Smith’s teachings has been a truly wonderful experience. This encounter with Joseph’s ideas has deepened my understanding and strengthened my testimony of him. I trust that those who read this book and use it in their study will likewise benefit and be strengthened. Engaging in this project has reinforced my own personal conviction that Joseph Smith was indeed a true prophet. He was actually what he so boldly proclaimed. The range of his teachings and the inherent wisdom and power of his ideas testify of his divine calling.43
Notes


15. Encyclopedia, 448.


18. Encyclopedia, 188.


20. Encyclopedia, 393.

21. Thomas Sharp was the caustic editor of the Warsaw Signal, a newspaper opposed to Joseph Smith and the Church and Nauvoo.


24. Words, 178. To include more examples of his humor, we had to go outside our book and draw from other sources. Some of these statements were not deemed appropriate for inclusion in our teachings book.

25. History of the Church, 5:345.


27. Encyclopedia, 303.


30. Encyclopedia, 143-44.

31. Encyclopedia, 144.

42. *Encyclopedia*, 717.
Scripture Note: Doctrine and Covenants 125

Fred E. Woods

Fred E. Woods is an associate professor of Church history and doctrine at BYU.

On 19 January 1841, the Lord gave a revelation to Joseph Smith regarding the building of the Nauvoo Temple and issued a call for the faithful Saints to gather to assist in the building of this sacred edifice (see D&C 124:25–55). With the emphasis on the gathering to Nauvoo and the building of the temple, the Iowa Saints on the eastern banks of the Mississippi were wondering if they should move across the river to Nauvoo. Therefore, in March 1841, the Prophet Joseph Smith posed the question, “What is the will of the Lord concerning the saints in the Territory of Iowa?” (D&C 125:1). The Lord responded, “Let them build up a city unto my name upon the land opposite the city of Nauvoo, and let the name of Zarahemla be named upon it” (D&C 125:3). This response stirs the question of why the Lord specifically asked the Iowa Saints to build a city named Zarahemla.

The Lord, who knows all things as they are continually present before His eyes (see D&C 38:2), appears to have deliberately used the name Zarahemla and then left His covenant people to ponder over the meaning of the word. A linguistic and historical investigation suggests an interesting possibility. Hebrew lexicons reveal that the noun zera may be translated “seed, offspring, or descendant.” These sources explain that the root $h-m-l$ in the Hebrew language may be translated as meaning to “have compassion on” or “to spare.” A noun form from the root $h-m-l$ (hemlah) is used in the Hebrew Bible and may be translated as “sparing,” “compassion,” or “mercy.” Thus, the combination of words may be translated as “seed of mercy” or perhaps “seed of the spared.”
The proposed meaning of Zarahemla as a city of the "seed of the spared" recalls the imagery of ancient covenant peoples. Even if the etymology of the word is hidden, the historical background of the place Zarahemla provides clues to the Lord's usage of the word. For example, when Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar slew the sons of Zedekiah, he killed all except Mulek, a Jew, who escaped to America (see 2 Kings 25:7; Helaman 8:21). Mulek had a descendant named Zarahemla (see Mosiah 25:2). Mosiah was warned to flee the land of Nephi and go to the land of Zarahemla (see Omni 1:12–15), where the seed of Mulek and Zarahemla dwelt—or, in other words, the "seed of the spared." Furthermore, there the Nephites met not only the Jewish Mulekites but also the last survivor of the Jaredites, Coriantumr, who had been spared for this meeting (see Omni 1:21).

Perhaps this divinely appointed name was given as a reminder to the Saints in Iowa that they had been spared from the hand of extermination in Missouri and also from the grip of death through priesthood miracles that were performed in Montrose, Iowa (Zarahemla region), in the 1839 summer of sickness.2

Notes


2. For an overview of the miraculous display of healing in Montrose, Iowa, see Church History in the Fulness of Times: The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989), 217–19.
Jesus Christ: Master Teacher

Craig J. Ostler

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The Savior is the Master Teacher, and He uses divine methods and purposes to teach the definitive course. In His instruction, particularly in the revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord exemplified several approaches that we should consider in our teaching responsibilities: preparing meaningful messages; bearing testimony; applying the message to the listener; expressing love, forgiveness, and appreciation; teaching truth from the heart; enhancing curiosity; teaching the mysteries of the kingdom; disciplining and chastening; holding people accountable; guiding students in their assignments; and leading the way.

Preparing Meaningful Messages

The Lord did not make idle chitchat in teaching. He knew the doctrines that needed to be taught, and He was very specific in the commands or assignments He gave concerning gospel instruction. He required the same standard of His servants. For example, He counseled Hyrum Smith, "Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue 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; emphasis added).

Further, He commanded the Saints to "teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom" and to "teach ye diligently . . . that ye may be prepared in all things . . . to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you" (D&C 88:77–78, 80; emphasis added).
The Lord approached His teaching responsibility with a seriousness that was commensurate with the message of salvation. The revelations emphasized quality time—that is, the Lord had a work to carry out, and He helped the Saints by giving them meaningful assignments and staying on task. The spirit of the revelations indicates that the time is short and that, similarly, gospel teachers should be about the Father’s business. The time in the classroom is precious, and if the instructors’ and students’ efforts are worthy of the companionship of the Spirit, teaching will be directed, attended, and confirmed by the power of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 50:21–22). That Spirit will give life to lessons prepared with meaningful forethought.

Bearing Testimony

Another simple but important aspect of the Savior’s teaching was bearing witness of the truthfulness of the revelations. “These commandments are of me,” He testified in His preface to the Book of Commandments (D&C 1:24). “Search these commandments,” He continued, “for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled” (D&C 1:37).

Jesus Christ began many of the revelations in the spirit of testimony, preparing the hearts of the Saints to receive the truths He was about to reveal. Often, His testimony was brief and straightforward: “A great and marvelous work is about to come forth unto the children of men. Behold, I am God; give heed unto my word” (D&C 6:1–2; 11:1; 12:1–2; 14:1–2).

Teaching as the Savior did suggests that religious educators follow this example. Gospel teachers can increase their effectiveness as servant-teachers of the Master by beginning their lessons with brief, clear, and direct testimony regarding the principles they will discuss.

Applying the Message to the Listener

The Savior frequently sealed the truthfulness of the revelations with the charge that His servants should go forth applying the teachings they had received. The Lord concluded several revelations with encouragement and a witness that He spoke the truth and that the Saints would be blessed in their obedience. For example, in a revelation calling Stephen Burnett to preach the gospel, He instructed, “Therefore, declare the things which ye have heard, and verily believe, and know to be true. Behold, this is the will of him who hath called you, your Redeemer, even Jesus Christ. Amen” (D&C 80:4–5). Likewise, teachers bless their students by sealing teachings with admonitions to live the truths they have been taught.
Expressing Love, Forgiveness, and Appreciation

In the revelations of the Restoration, the Lord frequently expressed love and compassion to His disciples. The old adage that students do not care how much a teacher knows until they know how much the teacher cares conveys this aspect of teaching.

The Savior extended mercy in forgiving sins and strengthened the Saints in expressing confidence in them. “Behold, thy sins are forgiven thee,” He declared to Emma Smith, “and thou art an elect lady, whom I have called” (D&C 25:3). In a revelation directed to Thomas B. Marsh, the Lord declared, “Thomas, my son, blessed are you because of your faith in my work” (D&C 31:1).

In a further example, when inspired by the Spirit of God, the Prophet Joseph Smith expressed his sentiments and those of the Lord, “Dear and well-beloved brother, Brigham Young, verily thus saith the Lord unto you: My servant Brigham, it is no more required at your hand to leave your family as in times past, for your offering is acceptable to me” (D&C 126:1). Furthermore, the Savior often addressed His servants as His friends (see D&C 84:77; 93:45; 94:1; 98:1; 100:1; 104:1). Students are led to live the commandments when they know that they are known and loved.

Teaching Truth from the Heart

Truths of the gospel are best taught from the heart. That is, the instructor teaches the gospel from the soul, not simply from a lesson outline. Going through the motions of teaching will not communicate the principles of the gospel from the heart of the teacher to the heart of the student. The Savior’s words were heartfelt, even to piercing the very soul. In the revelations, His words are described as being “quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow, soul and spirit” (D&C 33:1).

In this dispensation, the Lord blessed faithful teachers that “thy heart shall be opened to teach the truth” (D&C 23:2; emphasis added; see also D&C 23:3). In addition, the Lord instructed the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, “Speak the thoughts that I shall put in your hearts; . . . declare whatsoever thing ye declare in my name, in solemnity of heart, in the spirit of meekness, in all things. And I give unto you this promise, that inasmuch as ye do this the Holy Ghost shall be shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever ye shall say” (D&C 100:5, 7–8).
Enhancing Curiosity

Some of the most effective teaching occurs when instruction is prompted by student questions. The Lord frequently taught by responding to questions posed by the Prophet Joseph Smith or to requests made by others. Even a brief review of the historical headings to the Doctrine and Covenants demonstrates this principle. In many instances, specific doctrinal questions were answered in the revelations. Inquiries dealt with topics such as how to obtain a forgiveness of sins, how to recognize if revelation is from God, what events will attend the Savior’s Second Coming, and what conditions will prevail during the Millennium. Modern students often ask questions on similar topics. Many of the best days in teaching are when students become actively involved by asking questions.

However, this is not to say that the Prophet Joseph Smith and other early Saints determined the topics of discussion in the revelations of the Restoration. The Lord directed the Restoration and placed the Prophet in circumstances that, predictably, elicited questions on certain topics. Likewise, an attentive teacher may set up the classroom and learning experiences to enhance the curiosity of students in predetermined directions. In the case of the Restoration of the gospel, the Lord designed the curriculum by means of assignments that He gave to the Prophet Joseph Smith. For example, the Lord asked Joseph to translate the Book of Mormon, organize the Church of Christ, and work on the inspired translation of the Bible. These assignments actually gave opportunity for questions to be posed in areas that the Lord, in His wisdom, knew would be asked (see Joseph Smith—History 1:68; D&C 18; 77; 113).

Similarly, if teachers direct students to the scriptures for answers to questions, students will often desire further clarification and ask questions of their own after reading the scripture passages. Thus, as instructors study the scriptures with students, the students will be prompted to ask questions, thereby allowing the instructor or the Spirit to teach the most valuable and applicable doctrines and principles that are most appropriate in their lives.

Teaching the Mysteries of the Kingdom

On each occasion after revealing a new insight to eternity, the Lord waited until Joseph and the Saints were ready for additional light and truth before He revealed more. The Savior repeatedly returned to discuss previous topics, when He knew that the Saints were prepared to
learn more on that subject. For example, information came line upon line regarding the Second Coming and the Millennium (see D&C 29; 43; 45; 88; 101; 130; 133), the law of consecration (see D&C 38; 42; 51; 70; 78; 82; 83), and the law of celestial glory (D&C 76; 131; 132; 137). This instructional approach emphasizes teaching from the scriptures sequentially rather than by topic, especially for young students, and thus allowing the doctrines to be unfolded line upon line.

The Lord revealed several items to the Prophet Joseph Smith that he was not to teach the world or the Saints at that particular time (see Moses 1:42, 4:32). The Savior instructed, “Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit” (D&C 63:64). Further, with reference to the visions of eternity and the degrees of glory, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them.”

Comfortingly, the Lord assured the Saints that even if they were not prepared for answers to their questions, answers were available and would be given when they were better prepared to receive them (see D&C 101:32–34; 121:26–28). Similarly, students should know that there are appropriate answers to their questions, even to their hard questions. However, they must trust their teachers’ good judgment that the answers sought will come at a later but proper time and place.

**Disciplining and Chastening**

The Lord was forthright in His discipline and chastening. At various times, the chastening was privately administered; and, at other times, the Lord publicly corrected those in error. For instance, Oliver Cowdery was told to take Hiram Page aside “between him and thee alone, and tell him that those things which he hath written from that stone are not of me and that Satan deceiveth him” (D&C 28:12). On the other hand, the Savior later instructed the individual members of His Church: “If thy brother or sister offend many, he or she shall be chastened before many. And if any one offend openly, he or she shall be rebuked openly. . . . If any shall offend in secret, he or she shall be rebuked in secret, that he or she may have opportunity to confess in secret to him or her whom he or she has offended, and to God, that the church may not speak reproachfully of him or her” (D&C 42:90–92).

Thus, we read that the Lord chastened the Saints for not building the temple in Kirtland, Ohio (see D&C 95:1–12) and for their disunity
and disobedience to the celestial law required to build up Zion (see D&C 101:1–9; 105:1–6). Further, the Lord’s rebuke and warning to the Prophet Joseph Smith after the loss of the 116-page manuscript of the Book of Mormon is especially poignant: “How oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men. For, behold, you should not have feared man more than God. Although men set at naught the counsels of God, and despise his words—yet you should have been faithful” (D&C 3:6–8). Likewise, a trusted teacher may discipline his or her students with “a tender but firm voice” (explanatory introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants).

An additional principle important in disciplining is that the Lord prepared a way of deliverance before He chastened. For example, Christ had the situation firmly in hand to compensate for the Prophet’s weakness when Joseph was persuaded by Martin Harris to give Martin the 116-page manuscript. The Lord not only had the small plates of Nephi prepared to replace the material on the lost manuscript but also was preparing Oliver Cowdery to be a scribe and a witness of the Restoration with Joseph. It is important that teachers faithfully chasten students concerning their inappropriate behavior, but it is equally important that teachers have a plan by which they can correct students’ errors.

Similar to situations in which teachers may find themselves, the Lord corrected immature behavior. The mistakes of youth were not uncommon in the infant Church. When young elders taught the gospel by jumping up from the floor and striking their head on a ceiling joist or behaving like a baboon, He required them to act with dignity (see D&C 50:1–4, 13–18). Specifically, He asked them to evaluate their behavior against the standard of gospel teaching. When they misbehaved, was the Comforter able to teach the truth? Were the teacher and the student both edified? (See D&C 50:13–14, 21–22.) If their behavior was not acceptable to the abiding Spirit of the Holy Ghost, it was not of God and thus not acceptable to the Master Teacher.

Note, however, that the Lord did not issue a more condemning rebuke for mistakes than was justified. In the summer of 1836, during a period of great financial distress for the Church, the Prophet Joseph Smith traveled several hundred miles to look for a secret treasure to pay debts he had incurred (see D&C 111). Although this activity was not sinful, neither was it complimentary to the Church. The Lord wisely addressed Joseph’s choice to seek the treasure as evidencing a lack of judgment, but not as wickedness: “I, the Lord your God, am not displeased
with your coming this journey, notwithstanding your *folies*” (D&C 111:1; emphasis added). We can even imagine that Christ may have had a smile on His face as He revealed these words of mild rebuke. The Lord did not ignore the need to correct the Prophet’s foolish choice; however, the Savior was tempered in His reproof. He directed the Prophet’s company to more significant and appropriate activities. That is, they were to seek another treasure in the city of Salem, Massachusetts—knowledge regarding the ancient inhabitants and founders of the area, which included some of the earliest Smiths to come to America (see D&C 111:9–10).

**Holding People Accountable**

The Savior held His servants, especially the Prophet Joseph Smith, accountable for the directions and assignments He gave them. He was sincerely concerned about their gospel understanding, progress, and obedience. For example, it is clear in the revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants that the Lord placed the responsibility to translate the Book of Mormon and the inspired translation of the Bible squarely on the shoulders of the Prophet Joseph Smith (Joseph Smith—History 1:59–60; D&C 3:5). When revealing additional information regarding the signs of the Second Coming, the Lord informed the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Saints: “And now, behold, I say unto you, it shall not be given unto you to know any further concerning this chapter, until the New Testament be translated, and in it all these things shall be made known; wherefore I give unto you that ye may now translate it, that you may be prepared for the things to come” (D&C 45:60–61). Jesus Christ expected His servants to become familiar with previous revelation and prophetic writings. Moreover, and unmistakably, the Lord taught that unless His servants personally understood previous scripture and were prepared to learn, He would not teach them the greater mysteries of the kingdom (see D&C 30:1–3; 50:28–30; 76:114–18; 84:23–25, 57–58).

**Guiding Students in Their Assignments**

Whenever the Savior gave callings or assignment to the Saints, He also promised to guide and strengthen them in fulfilling those assignments. That is, first, the Lord counseled and commanded the Saints, and then He assured them that He would be with them to help them fulfill the command or that He would provide means to accomplish the things He had commanded them.
For example, the Lord guided and inspired the Prophet Joseph Smith in the translation of the Book of Mormon. This same attentiveness in providing needed help is evident in commands to build the Kirtland Temple (see D&C 88:119; 95:11–17), to redeem Zion (see D&C 103:15–20; 105:14–15), and to bless Joseph and other Church leaders in paying debts they incurred in financing the needs of the kingdom (see D&C 104). Indeed, in the revelation calling for the organization of the United Firm that oversaw Church business endeavors, the Lord lovingly reassured, "Ye cannot bear all things now; nevertheless, be of good cheer, for I will lead you along" (D&C 78:18).

**Leading the Way**

Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher, showed us the way to instruct by precept and example, particularly in the revelations of the Restoration. As we prepare ourselves to present true doctrine by the power of His Spirit and in the manner He showed us, we have His promise that "he that [teacheth] and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together" (D&C 50:22).1

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**Note**

Names of the Parables

Thomas A. Wayment

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The history of interpretation of Jesus’ parables reveals a fascinating tradition of insightful applications and unique interpretations. Scholars and clergy alike have interpreted the parables in almost every way imaginable. Some of those interpretations are markedly different than modern interpretations, whereas others are quite similar. In looking at the history of interpretation of the parables, we can find consistent evidence for a close relationship between the given name of the parable and its interpretation or application. This article will consider the issue of the names of the parables and the origins of our modern names for the parables. The process of how the parables came to bear their current names will also be discussed. It will become readily apparent that the names of the parables are largely functional designations and have the capacity to lead us on certain preconceived interpretive paths. The names of the parables unwittingly predispose us into looking at the parables in a certain way.¹

A brief example of this may be seen in the so-called parable of the “marriage of the king’s son” (Matthew 22:1–14). The parable tells the story of a king who has invited certain guests to the wedding of his son, but those guests ultimately turn down the invitation and refuse to attend the wedding. The name of the parable directs our attention to the actual wedding of the son, an event that is mentioned in only one verse (22:2). This parable, however, focuses almost entirely on actions that can cause someone to be excluded from a wedding party. Perhaps the parable could be more appropriately named the “parable of the
invited guests” or, equally as likely, “the guests who refuse to attend.” Yet another possibility is quite interesting. The parable ends with the account of one of the guests being thrown out because he does not have on the proper wedding garment (22:11–13). If this portion of the parable were the main point of focus, perhaps a name such as the “wedding garment” would be more appropriate. The point here is not to question endlessly the names of the parables but to recognize that there may be another point of emphasis we have failed to see because our understanding has been directed by the modern name.

**A Brief History of the Names of the Parables**

Beginning with the earliest attested names for the parables and moving toward more recent titles, we can trace a fairly consistent pattern for naming the parables. Typically, we have relied on the modern chapter headings and Bible Dictionary to give us the names or titles of the parables. Have we ever asked ourselves concerning the actual origin of the titles of the parables? Are they inspired names? Do the names go back to the Savior Himself? Are they human inventions? These questions have led one Latter-day Saint scholar to comment, “The titles or names assigned to the parables are purely subjective and generally emphasize some important feature. Often the title only emphasizes part of the message and is therefore inadequate or misleading.” Fortunately, we can answer many of these questions with relative accuracy.

Our modern chapter headings give us the most regularly accepted modern names of the parables. Unfortunately, any original names of the parables, if there were any, have largely been lost to us. Only two of the parables are given names in the New Testament, one by the Savior Himself, the “parable of the Sower” (Matthew 13:18), and one by the disciples, the “parable of the tares in the field” (13:36).

Regarding the early Christian tradition of naming the parables after the New Testament period, we have little evidence to suggest that there were fixed or universally accepted names for the parables. Our earliest evidences are the early Greek biblical manuscripts and the quotations of the New Testament by early church bishops, scholars, and clergy. The evidence from the early biblical manuscripts is sparse and relatively uncertain until the fifth century. Before that time, biblical manuscripts were generally written in continuous script with no verse or chapter divisions. Therefore, any titles to New Testament stories or parables would have had to be included in the margins. Around the turn of the fifth century, the trend began in New Testament manuscripts
to divide the books into rudimentary chapters, represented by columns and indentations in the text itself. As these divisions were introduced into the biblical text, the possibility of including titles and summaries also arose. This tradition yields some evidence for ancient Christian names for the parables.\(^5\)

The modern chapter divisions of the King James Version bear little if any relationship to the ancient chapter divisions. The modern chapter divisions of the New Testament were introduced in the early thirteenth century by Stephen Langton while he was a lecturer at the University of Paris. He created divisions in the Latin text of the New Testament, and these same divisions have been passed down to us as chapters in the King James Version. The descriptive names used for these divisions are likewise relatively recent. There was no canon of names, nor were they a fixed part of the text. Therefore, the King James translators had relative freedom in choosing the names. The breakdown of the chapters into verses took place in 1551 by Robert Stephanus, also known as Robert Estienne, who introduced them into an interlinear Greek and Latin New Testament. These same verse divisions were subsequently adopted by the Geneva Bible and have been fixed since that date.\(^6\) Our modern Latter-day Saint edition, which reflects the work of the 1979 scripture committee, contains neither the ancient chapter headings or descriptions of the early Greek biblical manuscripts nor those of the 1611 King James Version.\(^7\)

Since the invention of printing, there has been a great degree of liberty for each edition of the Bible to use its own chapter headings and summaries. These summary descriptions tend to extend well beyond denominational boundaries. Various translations have sought a degree of uniformity regarding the chapter headings, but there is no canon of accepted names. The modern names are interpretive and have been used predominantly for comparative purposes. The modern chapter headings, chapter divisions, and verses, like their ancient counterparts, help facilitate biblical research and scholarship. When we look at the history of the names of the parables, three parables stand out as examples of considerable diversity in name. The three parables are the parable of the wheat and tares, the parable of the prodigal son, and the parable of the laborers in the vineyard.\(^8\)

**The Wheat and the Tares**

The so-called parable of the "wheat and tares" is one of the few parables that are given a name in the New Testament. The parable is introduced in Matthew 13:24 with the common introductory phrase
“the kingdom of heaven is likened unto.” Later, after the departure of the multitude, the disciples approached Jesus and asked Him, “Declare unto us the parable of the *tares in the field*” (13:36; emphasis added). The disciples, who appear to have named the parable themselves, wanted to know about the tares that would infect the early Christian church, something that was of immediate concern to them.

The parable of the wheat and tares is unique to the Gospel of Matthew, and therefore it is to that Gospel that we can look for contextual clues in interpreting it. Chapters 10 through 12, the chapters preceding the parable, create a dramatic crescendo of opposition to Jesus in His teachings and miracles. The collection begins with Jesus sending the disciples on a mission that would ultimately condemn the wicked (10:5–15); He then censured the cities of Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum (11:20–24); He was rejected for threshing wheat on the Sabbath (12:1–9); and then a select group of Pharisees counseled how they might kill Him because He had healed a man on the Sabbath (12:10–14). The atmosphere of chapters 10 through 12 is charged with tension, the hostility against Jesus mounting until there is a pronounced plot against His life. In his conclusion to these events, Matthew records that Jesus then taught them that speaking against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but speaking against the Holy Ghost will not (12:31–32, 37–38; Joseph Smith Translation, 12:37–38). And He called them an adulterous generation (12:39). The overall impression is that both sides are heading toward an impasse, facing insurmountable differences in their beliefs.

The subsequent outcome of this building frustration and rejection of the Lord’s words is the discourse on parables. Jesus stated explicitly that He spoke in parables “because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand” (13:11, 13). It is as if to say, “I am through speaking with them, and now I will speak to you who are seeking to understand, but to those who seek my life I will veil my teachings.” The parables of Matthew 13 also support this conclusion.

The seven parables of Matthew 13, when read together, can be read as a road map to the beginning of the Restoration. They begin with the parables of the sower and the wheat and tares, which both suggest that during the early stages of teaching the gospel, there will also be corruption in the field and members who quickly wither away. The next parable is that of the mustard seed, something that starts out
very small yet grows to be quite remarkable in size. The concluding parables suggest such themes as finding hidden treasure, selling all to obtain a pearl of great price, and gathering all kinds of fishes in nets. Joseph Smith’s inspired interpretation of these parables likewise supports this interpretation. He stated in reference to Matthew 13 that it affords “us as clear an understanding upon the important subject of the gathering, as anything recorded in the Bible.” Joseph’s statement recommends the interpretation that the Savior was focusing His attention on the tares that would infect the wheat during the process of the gathering of Israel. The Prophet’s conclusion is supported by the context of the parable in Matthew 13. Several ancient authors also used the parable of the wheat and tares in their discourses concerning heretics within the Church. The most ancient of these is a retelling of the parable in Gospel of Thomas, chapter 57. The parable is there retold with nearly all emphasis on the good seed, or wheat, removed. The tares, it says, will become “conspicuous” at that last day and therefore easily gathered and burned. Likewise, Irenaeus and Clement used the parable to describe the eventual fall of the wicked tares in the last days. Of these two, Irenaeus named the parable the “tares and the wheat.” Although the difference in the various names might appear slight ("wheat and tares," "tares in the field," and "the tares and the wheat"), the name has immediately directed our attention to, and possibly away from, an idea contained within the parable. One carries the suggestion that both the wheat and tares are to be considered equally in the parable while the other emphasizes the tares. Interestingly, the Savior’s interpretation of the parable focused almost exclusively on the role of the tares and how they will be gathered and burned. The final reward for the wheat is not mentioned, but the final condemnation of the tare is. Is it a parable of wheat, tares, or both?

The Laborers in the Vineyard

In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, the master of the vineyard hired servants to work in his vineyard for an agreed-upon price. During the course of the day, the master hired other servants to work in the vineyard. At the end of the day, the master paid all of his servants the same wage, at which point the servants who had worked the longest complained because they felt their wage should be greater than those who had worked less (20:1–16). This parable, unfortunately, was not given a name in the New Testament. There is also no accompanying interpretation given by the Savior or one of the Apostles.
Where exactly should we direct our attention? What was Jesus' original intent? Can we ascertain the original context of the parable?

In looking for contextual clues, we may recall that chapter divisions and verse divisions are completely arbitrary designations created by academics for purposes of studying the Bible. If we look back to the preceding chapter, we find a question by Peter that helps explain the reason for which it was delivered. Peter asked Jesus, "We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" (19:27). Peter's concerned inquiry is precipitated by the Savior's statement that it will be easier to push a camel through the eye of a sewing needle than for a rich man to make it into heaven (19:24). This statement alarmed the brethren (19:25) and made them wonder how anyone would succeed in making it into heaven. The parable offers a comforting remedy to this unsettling image. Those who work the longest are paid the same wage as those who entered the field of labor toward the end. Both were given credit for their valuable service without any consideration of job training, experience, education, or relationship to employer. Those who were willing to work were paid appropriately.

History reveals the fact that this parable has been thought of in many different ways. At the end of the first century, Irenaeus called the parable "the workmen who were sent into the vineyard at different periods of the day." Irenaeus may have used this name to distinguish this parable of the vineyard from the other parable of the vineyard in Matthew 21:33-41. This different title appears to be more descriptive of content and less focused on interpretation. Clement of Alexandria spoke extensively on this parable and focused his interpretation almost entirely on the price that the workmen were paid at the end of the day. The price, Clement taught, is indicative of the fact that salvation is the same for everyone regardless of the work performed. Likewise, the Apocryphon of James, a late first- or second-century Gnostic work from Nag Hammadi, called this parable "The Wage of the Workmen." The early title from the manuscript tradition for this parable is "the workers who are hired out."

Each of the different names carries with it a slight change in nuance. Is the parable a lesson about the laborers, the length of time the workers worked, or the price they were paid? Each name directs our attention to an aspect of the parable. If the parable is indeed a response to Peter's inquiry, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" (19:27) then it is most likely that the parable was meant to focus on the wage. Peter, who is concerned about what he will ultimately receive after having given up all, would be comforted...
to learn that his reward, and the reward of all eleventh-hour servants, will be the same as for those who have labored in the vineyard from the beginning.

The Prodigal Son

Perhaps the most famous of all the parables is the parable of the prodigal son. The details of the story are very well known, as are the possibilities for modern application of the parable. Many of us have experienced the pain that a prodigal son creates, or we may have been prodigals ourselves at one time. The potential for application of this parable is almost endless. There was, however, another son with another set of problems and concerns as well as a caring father who accepted both sons into his open arms. Is the parable of the prodigal son a parable of one son only? Or is it the parable of two sons, a father, and their reconciliation? We probably relate most closely with the prodigal son or the father in the story, and therefore our name for the parable is fitting for modern application.

Fortunately, for this parable we have both a very strong contextual setting as well as a statement by Joseph Smith regarding the proper interpretation of the parable. Luke 15:1–2 creates the setting for the delivery of the parable when it states, “Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” Likewise, Joseph Smith taught, “What drew the saying out of Jesus? Phari sees and scribes murmured: ‘This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.’ This is the key word—to answer the murmuring and questioning of the Sadducees and Pharisees.” The parable of the prodigal son is, therefore, really the story of two sons, the prodigal representing the publicans and sinners in this situation and the older son representing the Pharisees and scribes who questioned Jesus.

The first reference to this parable outside of the New Testament was by Irenaeus, and he called it the “parable of the two sons.” In the same manner, Joseph Smith referred to the parable as a “certain man had two sons.” Tertullian also referred to the parable as the “parable of the two sons.” In the majority of references to this parable in the first three centuries of the Christian era, the parable of the prodigal son is most often referred to under the name of “the parable of the two sons.” This may simply be a result of the fact that many early Christian commentators thought of the parable as a story of Gentiles, exemplified by the younger brother, and Jews, exemplified by the older
brother. Their natural inclination, therefore, would be to look at how both sons reacted to their father, thus justifying their position as Gentiles who had recently entered the fold.

The tradition to identify only the prodigal son in the title can be identified quite early in Christian history. Clement, Tertullian, and the earliest title given in a biblical manuscript bear witness to a developing focus on the role of the prodigal son at the omission of the older brother. But, in reality, is the parable of the prodigal son really only about one of the sons? Are there not two sons and a father? Are the sons equally prodigal? Our modern name of the parable leads us in the direction of the younger son, but the older son has obstacles also, and the father is a model of forgiveness and acceptance.

Conclusion

While the names of the individual parables may appear at first glance to be insignificant, they lead us from the outset in a certain fixed direction of interpretation. The contents of the parables are brought into our minds through the recollection of the names that we have given them. Though not intentionally deceptive, the names of the parables set the stage for both our interpretation and subsequent application. Many feel that the application of a parable need not be responsible to the original intent and interpretation of the parables. However, our modern application of the parables can be greatly informed by their original context and purpose.

Names are one thing that can get in the way of our understanding the original context or meaning of the parable. Only two of the names are original to the New Testament; every other name is a later designation by later compilers and editors. Those names are subjective and often reflect a certain predisposition in interpreting the parables. While no evidence suggests the names of the parables have been influenced by conspiring men in the depth of apostasy, many of the names may unintentionally mislead.

Notes

1972). Hermann Von Soden has collected the ancient names of the parables, but they have yet to be fully analyzed and discussed (see Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911], 1:448–54).

2. In one instance, there is a parable that is named both by the Savior and by His disciples. In this instance, the two names are slightly different. The disciples called it the parable of the “tares of the field” (Matthew 13:36), while Jesus referred to it in modern revelation as the “parable of the wheat and of the tares” (D&C 86:1).


4. In Matthew 24:32, “a parable of the fig tree” cannot rightly be regarded as a proper name for one of Jesus’ parables. The Greek for this verse could be more accurately rendered, “Regarding the fig tree, learn this parable.” The construction suggests that Jesus has in view a certain fig tree and that He now has pulled His disciples aside to teach them something concerning it.

5. These divisions are known as the kepalaia majora, or chapters, and the titloi, or titles. They are first found in the codex Alexandrinus and can be firmly dated to the fifth century. At the end of Alexandrinus, there is also a section known as the Eusebian canons or Ammonian canons. These tables, known anciently as canons, were used to divide the Gospels into sections to facilitate comparisons among the individual Gospels. The divisions were extensive, with Matthew having 355 divisions; Mark, 233; Luke, 342; and John, 232.


7. Our modern chapter headings are the product of the 1979 Latter-day Saint edition of the scriptures and were not a part of the 1611 King James text.

8. The majority of the parables bear no significant changes in title, whereas a select few do demonstrate significant transformation in name. It is beyond the scope of this article to consider all of these changes and their significance.


11. A complete manuscript of the Gospel of Thomas was found at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt in 1945 and has been subsequently translated from Coptic into English. For a reader-friendly edition, see James M. Robinson, The Nag Hammadi Library in English (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), 124–38.

12. Irenaeus, Against All Heresies, 4.40.2; Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies, 7.15.

13. Of the eight verses that give the interpretation of the parable of the wheat and tares, only three of them mention the wheat at all, and then it is only in passing as the Savior moves on to explain what will happen to the tares. The only real insights given regarding the wheat are that they are “the children of the kingdom” (Matthew 13:38) and that they “shall . . . shine forth as the sun” (13:43). A similar situation occurs in D&C 86:1–7, where the Savior interprets the parable to Joseph Smith. Once again, the interpretation considers in detail the fate of the tares.

14. Joseph Smith’s key to understanding the parables is quite helpful here. He stated, “I have a key by which I understand the scriptures. I enquire, what was the question which drew out the answer, or caused Jesus to utter the parable?”

15. Irenaeus, Against All Heresies, 4.36.7; 1.1.3.
17. See Apocryphon of James, 8.1–10, in Nag Hammadi Library, 33.
19. Irenaeus, Against All Heresies, 4.36.7.
22. Clement, Instructor, 2.1; Tertullian, On Repentance, 8. The ancient titloï, or title, for Luke 15:3 reads, “concerning him who traveled to a distant land.”
New Publications

*Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior*

This new volume published by the Religious Studies Center contains powerful presentations from a BYU symposium on the Savior. Its sixteen chapters offer stirring testimonies and doctrinal pieces by General Authorities such as President Merrill J. Bateman and Elder Gerald N. Lund and religious educators such as Robert L. Millet and Andrew C. Skinner. The book answers questions such as

- How can the account of the visit of the resurrected Lord to the people of the Americas inspire us to come unto Christ?
- Do we as Latter-day Saints really worship a “different Jesus” than our evangelical brothers and sisters?
- How does the concept of grace fit in with Latter-day Saint theology?

The authors provide insight into the Redeemer’s love for us as individuals. For example, W. Jeffrey Marsh, associate professor of ancient scripture at BYU, writes: “While the Savior may not always remove the trials from our lives, His grace can bear us up against all the pressures surrounding us, regardless of the kinds of bondage we may find ourselves in. He knows how to help us, how to free us, and how to lead and protect us, if we will but exercise faith in Him.”

These topics are among the many doctrinal pieces:

- The Savior’s premortal foreordination and mortal ministry
Modern Perspectives on Nauvoo and the Mormons

Following the Church's 1999 announcement to rebuild the Nauvoo Illinois Temple, local residents began wondering whether this new development would help or harm its small-town atmosphere. No doubt the rebuilding of the temple would bring changes in city planning, public services, traffic, and so on to a population of eleven hundred.

Larry E. Dahl, appointed to direct the BYU Semester at Nauvoo program, noticed the mixed reactions of the townspeople and wanted to capture their thoughts about Nauvoo's history, current events, the future, and general perceptions of "the Mormons." Dr. Dahl, an emeritus professor of Church history and doctrine at BYU, recognized that Nauvoo's history is very much dependent upon its oral traditions and that a colorful picture of Nauvoo's history would emerge from a series of interviews with the long-standing residents.

With the endorsement of the Nauvoo Historical Society, Dr. Dahl decided to interview residents whose families had, in many cases, been in Nauvoo since its early history. He recruited nine students in the BYU Semester at Nauvoo program to conduct the interviews. What came of those interviews is alternately candid, funny, and illuminating. Edited by Larry E. Dahl and Don Norton and published by the Religious Studies Center, Modern Perspectives on Nauvoo and the Mormons contains the transcribed interviews of twenty-six residents. A piece of fascinating Americana, Modern Perspectives will interest historians of Nauvoo and those looking for a good study of small-town life in contemporary America.

The volume is not for sale, but a limited number of copies have been distributed to the Church Archives, the Harold B. Lee Library, the BYU Religious Education Library, the BYU Semester at Nauvoo Library, Nauvoo Public Library, and the Nauvoo Historical Society.
Defending the Faith: Early Welsh Missionary Publications

The press in nineteenth-century Wales was both a curse and a blessing for early members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. On the one hand, Church members and missionaries faced frequent attacks from several religious periodicals then being circulated, and their rebuttals were systematically refused publication. On the other hand, they were able to use the press as a defensive tool as well as an offensive weapon when Captain Dan Jones, using his brother’s printing press in the little village of Rhydybont, near Llanybydder in Carmarthenshire, translated the twelve-page Proclamation of the Twelve Apostles into Welsh and did much of the other work in getting four thousand copies printed for circulation. For the next three years, this “prostitute press,” as opponents called it, produced thousands of pages in support of Latter-day Saint doctrine. These stirring pamphlets and poems helped convert hundreds of Welsh.

In January 1849, a young convert by the name of John S. Davis was put in charge of Church publications in Welsh. He set up his own press in Merthyr Tydfil and for five years produced an amazing quantity and assortment of materials. Then, in January 1854, Dan Jones, back in Wales on his second mission, purchased Davis’s press and published even more tracts and pamphlets for another two years.

The vast majority of Jones’s and Davis’s publications have gone unnoticed by historians, due in large measure to the language barrier. Believing that such historically valuable treasures deserved to come to light, Professor Ronald D. Dennis has prepared “facsimile translations” of seventy of the early Welsh publications in his Defending the Faith: Early Welsh Missionary Publications, a new volume from the Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University. In addition to its historical value, genealogists will find valuable clues to Welsh family history.

This book is available at Latter-day Saint bookstores.
Religious Studies Center

Established in 1975 by BYU Religious Education Dean Jeffrey R. Holland, the Religious Studies Center (RSC) is the research arm of Religious Education at Brigham Young University. Since its inception, it has provided funding for numerous projects, including conferences, books, and articles relating to Latter-day Saint culture, history, scripture, and doctrine. The RSC endeavors to use its resources to, first, facilitate excellence in teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ; second, encourage research and publication that contribute to the mission of the university and its sponsoring institution, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and third, promote study and understanding of other cultures and religions.

Research and Publication

One of the primary aspects of the RSC’s mission is to promote the search for new truths and the quest to better understand well-known truths. The ultimate interpretation of doctrinal matters rests with the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; therefore, we seek to discover historical background, provide cultural and linguistic details, and explore new avenues of understanding into our faith, history, and way of life. Thus, research into scripture, Church history, and religious matters in general is an important part of what the full-time Religious Education faculty do. Because BYU is primarily a teaching institution, we recognize as our major thrust the classroom experience. We seek, however, to expand our classroom through the writing and publication of our research.

The RSC helps fund several meaningful projects each year and publishes books, articles, a newsletter, and the Religious Educator in helping to promote and disseminate Latter-day Saint research and thought. These publications enhance the libraries of Latter-day Saint readers and others who take an interest in the history or culture of the Latter-day Saints.
An Invitation to Join with Us

RSC research and publication projects are sustained by university funding and by financial donations from friends who want to encourage the kind of quality work the RSC does. We are thankful for the generosity of those who support our efforts to bring the best scholarship to light. If you would like to become a donor to the RSC to help its mission, please contact the RSC at 370 JSB, BYU, Provo, UT 84602.

The Religious Studies Center restricts its publications to items that fit within the scholarly range of the curriculum and mission of Religious Education. It produces materials that are well written, rigorous, and original and that reflect the doctrine, the history, the teachings of the living prophets, and the standard works of the Restoration. It seeks works that meet academic needs or fill a niche in the area of faithful scholarship. It welcomes all materials that fit within these parameters.
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Scripture Note:
Doctrine and Covenants 125
Fred E. Woods

Jesus Christ:
Master Teacher
Craig J. Ostler

Names of the Parables
Thomas A. Wayment

On Grocery Shopping with Children: Nurturing Spiritual Self-Reliance
Elder L. Whitney Clayton and Kathy Clayton

"The Light of Christ is given to all men, even young men and women, in sufficient quantity for them to feel the difference between right and wrong. Our goal is to cultivate [children's] hearts to crave, their ears to hear, and their will to honor that light."