

DECEMBER 31-JANUARY 6, 2019

We Are Responsible for Our Own Learning

“Help for the teacher and the student”

It is important that the actual scriptures be read. The Holy Land and Jewish insights are added to help the teacher and student “go back” to the setting in which the scriptures were given, and to better understand the general Jewish views of those scriptures. Jewish views have varied with time and dispersion. Yet understanding the Jews (basically Judah) will help Joseph in the prophetic mission of reuniting “Joseph and Judah.” This knowledge will restore the original understanding and truths which God gave to his children, yesterday and today as well as tomorrow.

Pondering Scriptural Verses on Becoming More Deeply Converted:

JOHN 1:38

What seek ye?

MATTHEW 7:7

Ask, and it shall be given . . .

LUKE 18:22

Yet lackest thou one thing . . .

“Come, follow me.”

MATTHEW 19:16-22

What shall I do?

MATTHEW 6:14-15

Forgive, be forgiven

MATTHEW 18:21-35

Forgive 7 times 70

LUKE 23:33-34

Father, forgive them

I am responsible for my own learning.

JOHN 7:17

If any man do his will, he shall know

1 THESSALONANS 5:21

Prove all things

JAMES 1:5-6, 22

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God

JAMES 2: 2-17

Faith without works is dead

1 NEPHI 10:17-19

That I might see . . . hear . . . know . . . by the power of the Holy Ghost

2 NEPHI 4:15

Delighteth in the scriptures . . . my heart pondereth them

ALMA 32:27

Arouse your faculties . . . experiment . . . desire to believe

MATTHEW 25:1-13

Parable of the wise and foolish virgins, they that were ready went in

D&C 58:26-28

Anxiously engaged in a good cause . . . many things of their own free will

D&C 88:118

Seek ye out of the best books . . . seek learning . . . by study and also by faith

D&C 18:18

Ask the Father in my name . . . Holy Ghost which manifesteth all things

D&C 88:118

Teach one another words of wisdom; out of the best books, seek learning by study and faith

I need to know the truth for myself

LUKE 11:9-13

He that asketh - receiveth . . . seekth - findeth . . . knocketh - it shall be opened

John 7:14-17

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God . . .

John 5:39

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think . . . they are they which testify of me

Acts 17:10-12

Received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily

1 Corinthians 2:9-11

God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things

Alma 5:45-46

I have fasted and prayed . . . God hath made them manifest . . . by his Holy Spirit

Ideas for Family Scripture Study and Family Home Evening

Matthew 13:1-23

Parable of the sower, some seeds fell in stony places, thorns and good ground

Matthew 13:8

Some produced an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold

Galatians 5:22-23

Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, faith, meekness

Philippians 4:8

If there be any virtue . . . if there be any praise, think on these things

How to Recognize the Truth in the Holy Lands:

The 2019 New Testament study material has numerous Christian traditions to consider. Unfortunately, Christian tradition is very competitive. Most traditional Holy Land sites that were significant in Jesus' life were established hundreds of years after his mortal mission. Let me reiterate that there are four considerations which have helped me ascertain the truth as I guide thousands through Israel. They are (1) archaeology, (2) written accounts (especially scriptures), (3) traditions (especially names of places) and (4) the spirit that God gives confirming the truth.

Old and New Covenant:

The New Testament, refers mostly to the account of the thirty-three-year life of Jesus. It provides some valuable information about his life, describes a short period following his life, and explains what his followers did. In the Greek language (the language of the New Testament's first canonized presentation), the word "testament" means "covenant."

"In the Bible we have the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word testament is the English rendering of a Greek word that can

also be translated as "covenant . . ." **(Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p.52-53)**

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: . . ." **(Jeremiah 31:31)**

"For this is my blood of the new testament (covenant), which is shed for many for the remission of sins" **(Matthew 26:28)**

". . . Jesus the mediator of the new covenant . . ." **(Hebrews 12:24)**

Purpose of Metaphors and Patterns:

In future lessons we'll examine and compare metaphors, such as "old wine" and "new wine" like comparing the Old Testament and the New Testament. We will learn by recognizing the use of a chiasmus with its center point - illuminating God's gift of Jesus' life and atonement.

The young prophet Nephi gave us a substantial key to understanding the scriptures. Note how subtly he teaches us through a 'chiasmas' (an order of words listed in one direction to a center thought and then listed in the other direction in reverse order).

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. learning of my father 2. highly favored of the Lord 2. knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God 1. learning of the Jews 	<p>I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days.</p> <p>Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians. (1 Nephi 1:1-2)</p>
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The center point of his instruction is the gift he acknowledges, the knowledge of mysteries. A synonym for mysteries is the “subtle understanding” of God’s word. This understanding is available through the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

“For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round.”

(1 Nephi 10:19)

The center point is sandwiched by “learning of my father” and “learning of the Jews.”

This material suggests some ‘learning of the Jews’ to add insight to the study of the same religion and scriptures that Nephi brought from Israel. Other Jewish insights

may simply help Latter-day Saints better understand Judah and thereby bring our two families closer together. It is necessary for the teacher and the student to relate and coordinate this information with the material provided in their respective lesson manuals.

What Really Counts:

As you study and ponder, look for the meanings that really count. For example, using the common Gregorian calendar, Jesus lived approximately 12,053 days (33 full years X 365 days + 8 leap-years). Yet the New Testament only documents a record of 31 days of His life.

Wayne Brickey, at an Education Week lecture at BYU, taught that in Jesus’ first thirty years, just eighteen events were reported in the New Testament. In the next year, another eighteen events were reported. In the following year, another twenty-seven events were reported. In

Jesus' last year, over one-hundred-fifty events were reported; however, seventy-five of them occurred in the last six days of his life. What really counts is the atonement, and the verses that lead to a better understanding of it.

The Jewish view of the life of Jesus is shown in the following statement.

"Although the rift between the synagogue and the church caused later versions of the gospels to imply a gulf between Jesus and the Jewish way of life under the law, the first three gospels portray him as a Jew faithful to both the written and the oral Mosaic law, but more extreme than the Pharisaic school of Hillel in uniquely preaching love of one's enemies. He was closer in beliefs and lifestyle to the Pharisees than to the Essenes. His criticism of the Pharisees finds contemporary parallels in rabbinic literature and in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Like the Essenes, he held poverty, humility, purity and simplicity to be essential religious virtues."

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

The Value of Words:

Gospel writers had different approaches to describing Jesus' life. John's purpose is to explain WHAT He is and begins by describing Him as the WORD.

". . . God was not so much putting Abraham through a test, as making

his unswerving obedience a shining example of man's devotion to the word of God." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

To the Jews, the scriptures, the words of God, are so special they must never touch the ground. Many use a pointer to read the words rather than touch the scrolls with their fingers. The scroll cabinet, the "Ark," is said to contain the "presence of God," meaning the word of God.

John's book has twenty-one chapters that deal with the period before and during Jesus' mortal life. The last chapter is after His resurrection. Of the first twenty chapters, half are devoted to His last six days in mortality.

Connecting us to the truthful symbols of the Old Covenant, John links almost everything Jesus does to a Biblical holiday. He mentions Passover, Pentecost, Sukkoth/Yom Kippur (Feast of Tabernacles) and even a non-biblical holiday of Hanukkah (Feast of [Temple] Dedication).

Continuing with some of Brother Brickey's thoughts on John, we find that the Gospel writer refers to light twenty-four times, to water twenty-eight times, to life fifty-two times, to lamb three times and to bread seventeen times.

Quoting Jesus, John says we can see during the "twelve hours in the day." This contrasts with the thought that what we can't see – is perceived as "darkness." Learning these metaphors, used prolifically

as prophetic images, we understand more of the life, mission, and gift of the Messiah.

Old testament prophets are often quoted in the New Testament. Moses is mentioned more than any other Old Testament figure, although Isaiah is quoted most often. A comparison of some of the key words that both John and Isaiah use can deepen our understanding of the Savior's mission.

Light . . .

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." (Isaiah 9:2)

"For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." (Isaiah 60:2)

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." (John 1:4-5)

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."
(John 12:46)

Water . . .

". . . with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." (Isaiah 12:3)

"I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water." (Isaiah 41:18)

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
(John 3:5)

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37-38)

Life . . .

"O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live." (Isaiah 38:16)

"Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." (Isaiah 43:4)

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4)

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should

not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

Lamb . . .

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." (Isaiah 53:7)

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

Bread . . .

"Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." (Isaiah 55:2)

"For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." (John 6:33)

Darkness . . .

"To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." (Isaiah 42:7)

"Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in

the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God." (Isaiah 50:10)

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Perception of How Christianity Began:

Latter-day Saints feel that the doctrinal views within the Old and New Testaments are the same, but few Jews ever read the New Testament, and those that have read it view it mostly as anti-Semitic.

"It is only in the New Testament that Satan takes on the meaning it has borne in popular lore to this very day. There, Satan is the very personification of the spirit of evil, an independent personality antagonistic to the goodness of God. He is identified with the anti-Christ and described as "that old serpent called the devil . . . which deceived the whole world. He was cast into the earth and his angels were cast out with him." It is Satan who is the personal tempter of Jesus, and Jews who would not accept Jesus are referred to as "the synagogue of Satan."

"Strictly speaking, the ministry of Jesus himself does not come under the heading of "Christianity," but rather is part of the history of different Jewish-Christian sects which developed at the beginning of the

common era. The first Jewish sects which followed Jesus' teachings still observed much of the Torah but added the belief that Jesus was the messiah. The Greek translation of the word *messiah* is *Christos*, and thus Jesus' followers deemed him Jesus Christ. After his death, these followers came to be known as Christians."

"At this point, the nature of Christianity began to change from being a Jewish-Christian sect with partial observance of *mitzvot* to a sect embracing gentile followers. This development took place largely under the influence of Paul of Tarsus who attracted a gentile following by teaching that the observance of the commandments was no longer necessary. Faith in Jesus could take the place of the commandments and the "Church" could take the place of the Jewish people."

"A Christian community began to emerge whose traditions and beliefs concerning Jesus were shaped by the New Testament. The writings included in the New Testament were written between 66 C.E. and 200 C.E., a period in which relations between Jews and Christians had already begun to deteriorate. Thus, the New Testament portrays Jesus as engaged in violent debates with Jewish scribes and tends to describe "the Jews" as being responsible for Jesus' death. As the scriptural authority of Christianity, the New Testament has served as a basis for Christian anti-Semitism throughout the ages." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

The Holy Spirit is the Key:

The key to recognizing the Messiah and the true meaning of his life and those who testified of Him is the SPIRIT. The word for spirit in Hebrew is Ruach Elohim, the breath, the wind of God. Moses knew that gift well and desired that everyone would have it.

"And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!"

(Numbers 11:29)

Remember, there are some people who do not have that gift yet, and those that do must exercise patience and love because eventually more people will get that gift and be very happy. The gift of belief comes from God.