

Lesson Highlights

- The Savior quotes some of Isaiah's prophecies about the house of Israel.
- The Savior commands the people to add to their records.
- The Savior expounds all things from the beginning.

A study of this lesson will help us to earnestly desire to search the words of the prophets.

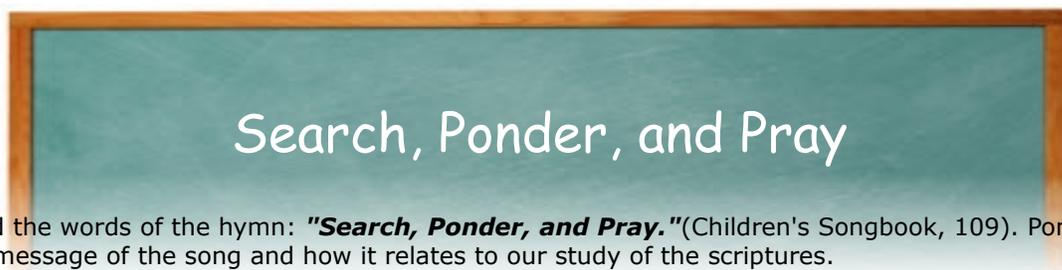
Next Week

Lesson 42:

*"This Is My Gospel",
3 Nephi 27-30;
4 Nephi*

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Introduction



Read the words of the hymn: "**Search, Ponder, and Pray.**" (Children's Songbook, 109). Ponder the message of the song and how it relates to our study of the scriptures.

1. *I love to read the holy scriptures,*

*And, ev'ry time I do,
I feel the Spirit start to grow within my heart--
A testimony that they're true.*

2. *So, prayerfully I'll read the scriptures*

*Each day my whole life through.
I'll come to understand.
I'll heed the Lord's command
And live as he would have me do.*

Chorus

*Search, ponder, and pray
Are the things that I must do.
The Spirit will guide, and, deep inside,
I'll know the scriptures are true.*

This lesson illustrates how the Savior used the scriptures to teach valuable truths. As we search, ponder, and pray about the scriptures, we will have a greater understanding of these truths.

The Savior quoted some of Isaiah's prophecies about the house of Israel.

Chapter 22 records the Savior quoting an entire chapter of Isaiah's teachings (Isaiah 54) concerning the glory of Zion in the latter days.

3 Nephi 22:2 Isaiah exhorted the house of Israel, "Enlarge the place of thy tent...[and] lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes". Think about what the tent and the stakes symbolize and what you think it means to "enlarge the place of thy tent" and "strengthen thy stakes..." as you read the following from a prophet...

President Ezra Taft Benson said: "*The prophets likened latter-day Zion to a great tent encompassing the earth. That tent was supported by cords fastened to stakes. Those stakes, of course, are various geographical organizations spread out over the earth. Presently, Israel is being gathered to the various stakes of Zion.*" "...Stakes are a defense for the Saints from enemies both seen and unseen. The defense is direction provided through priesthood channels that strengthens testimony and promotes family solidarity and individual righteousness" ("Strengthen Thy Stakes," Ensign, Jan. 1991, 2, 4).

Take a moment to consider what you can do individually and what we as families can do to ensure that our stakes are a refuge and a defense against evil.

3 Nephi 22:4-10 Isaiah described the relationship between the Lord and the house of Israel as a marriage commitment. He described the Lord as the husband and Israel as the wife.

Referring to this description and what it can teach us about the Lord's devotion to His people, **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** said: "*The imagery of Jehovah as bridegroom and Israel as bride is among the most commonly used metaphors in scripture, being used by the Lord and his prophets to describe the relationship between Deity and the children of the covenant. ... Christ has, on occasion, been rightfully angry with backsliding Israel, but that has always been brief and temporary; a small moment.' Compassion and mercy always return and prevail in a most reassuring way. The mountains and the hills may disappear. The water of the great seas may dry up. ... But the Lord's kindness and peace will never be taken from his covenant people. He has sworn with a heavenly oath that he will not be wroth with them forever*" (Christ and the New Covenant [1997], 290).

3 Nephi 22:11-12; see also **Revelation 21:18-21** The Lord described the place to which the house of Israel would be gathered in the last days as a place adorned with precious stones.

3 Nephi 22:13-17 The promises made to those who will live in this place include: all of their children shall be taught of the Lord and they shall live in peace and righteousness, having no need for fear because the Lord will protect them from their enemies. These promises give strength to those who are afflicted.

3 Nephi 23:1 After Jesus had quoted these prophecies, He said to the people, "Ye ought to search these things".

President Spencer W. Kimball: "I have had many people ask me through the years, 'When do you think we will get the balance of the Book of Mormon records?' And I have said, 'How many in the congregation would like to read the sealed portion of the plates?' And almost always there is a 100-percent response. And then I ask the same congregation, 'How many of you have read the part that has been opened to us?' And there are many who have not read the Book of Mormon, the unsealed portion. We are quite often looking for the spectacular, the unobtainable. I have found many people who want to live the higher laws when they do not live the lower laws." (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p531)

Speaking about searching the scriptures instead of merely reading them, **Elder Henry B. Eyring** said: "*We treasure the word of God not only by reading the words of the scriptures but by studying them. We may be nourished more by pondering a few words, allowing the Holy Ghost to make them treasures to us, than by passing quickly and superficially over whole chapters of scripture*" (Ensign, Nov. 1997, 84). Consider how you have been blessed as you have studied the scriptures and try to concentrate on an experience in which particular passages of scripture have provided inspiration or insight or become meaningful as answers to personal problems.

The Savior commanded the people to add to their records.



After commanding the people to write the things He had taught them, Jesus continued to teach the people concerning other scriptures. Jesus commanded the Nephites to add to their records a prophecy made by Samuel the Lamanite. In this prophecy, Samuel said that "*many saints [would] arise from the dead, and [would] appear to many, and [would] minister unto them*" (3 Nephi 23:6-13). This particular record was important because the fulfillment of Samuel's prophecy bore witness of the reality of the Resurrection.

3 Nephi 23:14 After Jesus told the people to write Samuel's prophecy, He commanded them to teach it to others.

Consider specific ways in which you can more effectively teach the words of the Savior.

3 Nephi 24:1 Jesus also commanded the people to write some of the words of the prophet Malachi.

The words of Malachi were absent from the Nephites' records. Malachi was an Old Testament prophet whose words were not included on the plates of brass because he did not live until nearly 200 years after Lehi left Jerusalem. (See Bible Dictionary, "*Malachi*," 728.)

3 Nephi 24:1, 8-18; 3 Nephi 25:1-6 Some teachings of Malachi are of special importance to us. Look up the following passages and describe what Malachi taught.

3 Nephi 23:3-5 It was important that the people record the Savior's words so that they could go forth at a time of the Lord's choosing to the Gentiles, and because all who listen to and obey his teachings by repenting and then making and honoring the baptismal covenants will be saved.

The Savior commanded the people, "*Search the prophets, for many there be that testify of these things*" (3 Nephi 23:5). Pause and think about what the prophets testify of. Further, consider how you have been strengthened by the testimonies of ancient and modern prophets.

- a) **3 Nephi 24:1**; compare **Malachi 3:1**; See D&C 45:9. Messengers prepared the way for the Lord's Second Coming as the restored gospel, including the keys and powers, were restored by heavenly messengers. Also, consider the manner in which Joseph Smith might be considered a messenger for the last dispensation.
- b) **3 Nephi 24:8-12** ; compare **Malachi 3:8-12**. Great blessings are promised in these verses to those who pay tithes and offerings--including protection from Satan, abundant harvests, and being part of a delightful land. Consider how you have been blessed as you have paid tithes and offerings.
- c) **3 Nephi 24:13-18** ; compare **Malachi 3:13-18**. Some people believe that "*it is vain to serve God*" (see specifically 3 Nephi 24:14-15) because they don't see immediate worldly rewards. But think about how you can remain steadfast in your faith even when evil seems to be prospering.
- d) **3 Nephi 25:1-6**; compare **Malachi 4:1-6**. As you think about what it means to be left without "root or branch", consider your roots to be your parents and ancestors and your branches to be your children and posterity. To be united with our roots and branches, we must receive temple ordinances that preserve our family relationships for time and eternity. The Lord said He would send Elijah before the Second Coming.

D&C 110:13-16 Elijah did return as he appeared in the Kirtland Temple. Keys he restored were the keys of the sealing power, which provide the way for us to be united with our ancestors and our posterity.

The Savior expounded all things from the beginning.

3 Nephi 26:2 The Father's direction and His desire that Malachi's words be available to the present and future generations were the reasons the Savior gave for teaching the prophecies of Malachi to the Nephites.

Consider which teachings of Malachi have been of special significance to you.

3 Nephi 26:1, 3-5 The Savior taught the plan of salvation to the people after discussing the prophecies of Malachi. (Note: "expound" means to explain carefully and in detail.)

We should teach the gospel "from the beginning," as Jesus did so that we explain all the detail needed for the listener to have a fair understanding of the Father's plan and the responsibilities we all have in that plan.

In his record, Mormon included only "the lesser part" of what Jesus taught the people (3 Nephi 26:8).

Having only this small part tries our faith and requires us to develop a dependence on the Savior and personal revelation from Him through the Holy Ghost.

3 Nephi 26:9 As you ponder how we can receive "the greater things" by believing that which we have received, note what Pres. Kimball taught...

Conclusion

The Savior showed us the importance of the scriptures by quoting them, commanding the people to search them, and adding to them. As we search, ponder, and pray about the scriptures, we will understand them more deeply and be able to teach them to others more effectively.

President Spencer W. Kimball said: "I have had many people ask me through the years, 'When do you think we will get the balance of the Book of Mormon records?' And I have said, 'How many in the congregation would like to read the sealed portion of the plates?' And almost always there is a 100-percent response. And then I ask the same congregation, 'How many of you have read the part that has been opened to us?' And there are many who have not read the Book of Mormon, the unsealed portion. We are quite often looking for the spectacular, the unobtainable. I have found many people who want to live the higher laws when they do not live the lower laws" (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 531-32).

3 Nephi 26:14, 16. These verses indicate the Savior's special love for children.

3 Nephi 26:19-21 The Nephites who had witnessed these events treated each other as loved ones; brothers and sisters with whom they shared everything freely as if they were treasured family members.

Ponder how you can follow their example in your marriage, family, ward, and stake.

Gospel Doctrine

Notebook

Record your thoughts on the importance of the scriptural record as discussed in this lesson.

- How can you improve your scriptures study?