


USING THE
TOOLS 
HELPS
CONTAINED IN THE
LATTER-DAY SAINT EDITION
OF THE SCRIPTURES

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This address was given August 12, 1993, at the 11th semiannual conference of Collegium Aesculapium in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

When Spencer W. Kimball became prophet, seer, revelator, and president of the Church, he implemented a plan to leave, as part of his prophetic legacy, a set of scriptures that would allow Church members to learn more about the Savior than any previous generation. Sometime after he was sustained, he called a committee to begin exploration of the development of such a set of scriptures. The committee was chaired by Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve.

During the early committee deliberations, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was authorized to become a publisher of the King James Version of the Bible. As a result, the committee was able to correlate all of the standard works. In the previous (1922) edition

of the scriptures, chapter headings, footnotes, and cross references were written for the triple combination by Elder James E. Talmage; however, there were no annotations available for the Bible. Now all of the standard works can be studied together as testaments of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first LDS English edition was printed in 1979. The first LDS Spanish edition of the triple combination became available in January 1994 with the Spanish Bible to follow.

The publication of the LDS edition of the scriptures has been proclaimed by many from both within and outside the Church as one of the most significant achievements in Biblical publishing. *An official of Cambridge University Press has been quoted as saying that the 1979 publication of the new Latter-day Saint edition of the King*

way through the Old Testament, but for the first time in my whole life I understand what I'm reading. So I'm not going to go to the MTC president. I'm going to go on my mission." I've had three letters from that elder, and he has yet to memorize a discussion, but there have been many people enter the waters of baptism after feeling his sweet, humble, sincere spirit.

Another time an elder at the MTC approached me and said, "Elder Woolley, this morning I heard you tell us that we should read the chapter headings. So, I've been reading them today. Would you please read my patriarchal blessing?" I said, "No. I don't read other people's patriarchal blessings. That's between you and the Lord." He said, "Then read one paragraph in my blessing. I received my blessing when I was 12, and I'm leaving the MTC tomorrow morning for my mission." So I read that paragraph and it said, "When you arrive in the mission field, you will have an overview of the scriptures that will allow you to immediately begin teaching the Savior and His mission." He looked at me and said, "The chapter headings are the answer to my patriarchal blessing."

C

The reader of this edition will also find running heads at the top of each page. These heads list the name of the book, the chapter number, and the first and last verse on the page. The margin at the top and bottom of each page can also be valuable for writing additional personal notes.

D

The footnotes at the bottom of each page provide extensive added insight as they lead the student of the scriptures to additional material from all of the standard works. Note that the lettering for the footnotes begins with the letter *a* with each verse. This is the first time that this method has been used in publication of the standard works. These footnote entries can generally be divided into three major categories.

1. Footnotes headed by six different types of capital letters. (These letter footnotes are explained on the page facing the beginning of the Book of Genesis in the LDS edition of the Bible.)

a. **GR** denotes helpful information concerning Greek terminology and meaning. Most of these **GR** footnote entries are found in the New Testament.

b. **HEB** denotes helpful information concerning Hebrew terminology and meaning. These **HEB** footnote entries are almost all found in the Old Testament.

In fact, there are only two **HEB** footnote entries found in the New Testament (Romans 9:29a and Hebrews 2:7a).

c. **IE** provides an explanation of idioms and difficult constructions. An idiom is a statement that does not provide a literal meaning to anyone outside of the culture. For example, a modern sports idiom could be, "In the third inning, Jackson died on third." Generally the Hebrews didn't want the Gentiles to understand their scriptures, so they used idioms extensively. For example, **IE** footnotes in the Book of Isaiah provide clearer understanding to the meaning of Nephi's statement: "Isaiah spake many things which were hard for many of my people to understand; for they know not concerning the manner of prophesying among the Jews. For I, Nephi, have not taught them many things concerning the manner of the Jews" (2 Ne. 25:1-2).

d. **OR** is an abbreviation for Old Roman. These footnotes define and describe alternate words to clarify the meaning of ancient or archaic English expressions.

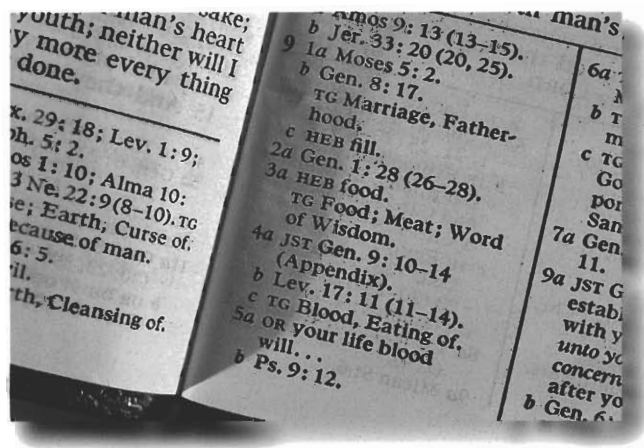
e. **JST** provides many of the Prophet Joseph Smith's doctrinal changes that he made in his revision of the Bible (Joseph Smith Translation). If the Prophet's revision is short (eight lines or less), the changes are found on the bottom of the page in italics. If the changes are extensive and/or lengthy (nine lines or longer), they are found in the appendix at the back of the Bible.

f. **TG** refers the student to the specific topic listing in the topical guide located as the first of five Bible appendices.

g. **HC** indicates *History of the Church*. B. H. Roberts wrote or edited two histories of the Church. One, the documentary *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, was taken from the diary and personal writings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is in seven volumes and covers the period of the Prophet's life and the interim period from the time that the Prophet was martyred until Brigham Young became President of the Church. The other, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, is in six volumes and covers historical events from the time of the Prophet's parents to that of Roberts himself. The **HC** footnotes in the LDS edition of the scriptures refer to the documentary *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*.

2. Footnote entries also contain cross-references to other scriptures on the same topic or event. This edition, for the first time, contains cross-references to all of the standard works.

3. Some footnote entries also contain editorial notes of clarification and enhancement. These entries may come from varied sources, but mostly include teachings of the living prophets.



E

The Bible appendix contains five major enhancements to the Latter-day Saint edition of the scriptures.

1. The topical guide is a 598-page scriptural concordance, which includes over 2,800 topics of specific interest to Latter-day Saints. Each of the topics is listed in alphabetical order and is thus easily located. Important scriptures from all of the standard works are listed for each topic and are recorded in the order of the Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

2. President Kimball wanted each reader of the scriptures to have ready access to an excellent Bible dictionary. The dictionary selected was an abridged *Cambridge Bible Dictionary*. Definitions were revised to reflect meanings consistent with doctrines of the restored gospel with additional definitions of importance to the Latter-day Saint. This work contains definitions of over 600 words and is found on pages 599–793 of the appendix. One significant part of the dictionary is the expanded, comprehensive *Harmony of Gospels*. The original work for this section was prepared by President J. Reuben Clark Jr. in his *Our Lord of the Gospels*. The current version of *Harmony of Gospels* provides references from all four gospels in a sequential listing of the events in the mortal ministry of Jesus Christ. *Harmony of Gospels* is found on pages 684–96 of the Bible dictionary.

3. The Joseph Smith Translation section of the appendix contains excerpts from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible that are too lengthy to be quoted on the bottom of each page. The modifications made by the Prophet

Joseph Smith that are nine lines in length or longer are included in this special section found on pages 797–813.

4. A gazetteer is a dictionary of geographical names. This part of the Bible appendix contains alphabetical listings of places and locations discussed in the Bible. Each entry is followed by a letter and number in bold print (the map grid) followed by a number that is not in bold print (the number of the specific map).

5. The last division of the Bible appendix is a 24-page section that contains 22 colored maps depicting geography of important periods of Biblical history.

F

There are four black-and-white maps located at the end of the Doctrine and Covenants depicting important places and locations of LDS Church history mentioned in the Doctrine and Covenants. There is no gazetteer for these four maps.

G

The triple-combination index is also a compilation of topics of interest to the Latter-day Saint. Although there is overlap, the index is generally more doctrinally oriented than the topical guide and is an additional triple-combination reference for locating scriptures on doctrinal subjects.

CONCLUSION

Elder Boyd K. Packer has stated, “[This] work affirms an acceptance of, a reverence for, and a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. *Follow those references and you will open the door to whose Church this is, what it teaches, and by whose authority—all anchored to the sacred name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah, the Redeemer, Our Lord*” (“How to Use the Tools in the New LDS Scriptures,” video segment no. 5, in Family Home Evening Video Supplement, VHS 53276 [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1987]; emphasis added).

President Harold B. Lee wrote, “*All that we teach in the Church ought to be couched in the scriptures. If we want to measure truth, we should measure it by the four standard works, regardless of who writes it . . . This is the standard by which we measure truth*” (*Improvement Era*, January 1969, p. 13; emphasis added). President Spencer W. Kimball wrote, “*I am convinced that each of us, at some time in our lives, must discover the scriptures for ourselves—and not just discover them once, but rediscover them again and again*” (*Ensign*, September 1976, p. 4; emphasis added). □