



By Elder Jay E. Jensen
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THE SAVIOR

THE MASTER TEACHER

We are to feast upon the words of Christ—the scriptures—and, as He did, use them to teach and strengthen others.

Under the direction of His Father, Jesus Christ created worlds without number. He was the great Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament. He was born of a mortal mother, Mary, and of God the Eternal Father. He was the greatest being to live on earth. He said He came “to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34).

His message and ministry were declarations without equivocation that He is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the promised Messiah.

In His teachings He often cited Old Testament scriptures. He used the scriptures to prepare for His ministry, to resist evil and temptation, to honor and affirm the validity of past prophets, and to strengthen others. From His example we may learn to use the scriptures more effectively in our responsibilities as parents,

leaders, and teachers—He having set a perfect example in all things, including as the master teacher.

Preparing for His Ministry

When the Lord came to earth, He had a veil of forgetfulness placed over His mind, as we do, but He, like us, progressed from grace to grace (see D&C 93:11–17). He was taught by His Heavenly Father (see John 8:28; 12:49) and by mortal teachers. As Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles pointed out: “Our knowledge of Jewish life in that age

justifies the inference that the Boy was well taught in the law and the scriptures, for such was the rule. He garnered knowledge by study, and gained wisdom by prayer, thought, and effort.”¹

“I am the bread of life:
he that cometh to me
shall never hunger; and
he that believeth on me
shall never thirst.”





His growing in knowledge before He began His ministry exemplifies the counsel He gave to Hyrum Smith in 1829: “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).

We too can search the scriptures for instruction and inspiration as we begin our ministries, whether that ministry be a new calling, a new responsibility (such as parenthood), or simply a family home evening lesson.

Resisting Evil and Temptation

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus was tempted by the devil. Two of the three temptations began with a barb of doubt: “If thou be the Son of God” (Matthew 4:3, 6). To resist Satan, the Savior cited three Old Testament scriptures, saying, “It is written . . .” (verses 4, 7, 10).

The Savior also taught His followers through scriptural examples how to overcome evil. Teaching people to resist evil or face dire consequences, the Master Teacher cited an Old Testament account: “It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than

From His early childhood until He began His public ministry, the only story we have of Him is in a teaching role in the temple at age 12, demonstrating an unusual command of wisdom and knowledge: “After three days [Joseph and Mary] found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors [or teachers], both hearing them, and asking them questions” (Luke 2:46). The Joseph Smith Translation clarifies this verse and indicates that the teachers were listening to Jesus and asking *Him* questions.

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LEFT: ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS, BY HARRY ANDERSON. COURTESY OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH; RIGHT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MATTHEW REIER © IRI; JESUS IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT NAZARETH, BY GREG OLSEN, COURTESY OF LEO AND ANNETTE BEUS

for that city [those who rejected His gospel]" (Matthew 10:15).

If we obey it, the word of God has an inherent protective power: "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" (1 Nephi 15:24).

One of my favorite scriptures to resist Satan today is this verse: "Mine eyes are upon you. I am in your midst" (D&C 38:7). It dispels forever the lie "no one will know."

Honoring Past Prophets

The Savior acknowledged the ancient prophets and quoted what they said. In this dispensation, He commanded Sidney Rigdon to "call on the holy prophets to prove [Joseph Smith's] words" (D&C 35:23).

To give testimony of and reverence to Old Testament prophets, the Savior referred to Noah (spelled "Noe" in the New Testament; see Matthew 24:37–38); Abraham (see Luke 16:22–31; John 8:56–58); Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see Matthew 8:11); Moses (see John 5:46); David (see Luke 6:3); Elijah (spelled "Elias" in the New Testament; see Luke 4:25–26); and Isaiah (spelled "Esaias" in the New Testament; see Luke 4:16–21; John 1:23). He also honored and supported His contemporary, John the Baptist (see Matthew 11:7–11).

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Savior made important connections to Old Testament prophets and their teachings concerning Him. This is illustrated by the close correlations between phrases from the Beatitudes (see Matthew 5:3–11) and from Isaiah 61:1–3.²

We too can honor past and current prophets by considering their teachings for what they are: the word and the will of the Lord

(see D&C 68:4). As we prepare to teach from the scriptures, we must prayerfully search for principles we can liken to those we teach.

Strengthening Others

A singularly significant message in the life of the Master is "the bread of life" sermon (see John 6). It illustrates His command and use of the scriptures as well as their relevance to us.

The day before He gave this message, the Lord had worked the miracle of feeding the 5,000, gaining more followers (see John 6:5–14). If this and other miracles were not enough to help lead others to believe in Him, He openly declared in the bread of life sermon who He is. This sermon served to train His Apostles, especially Peter, whose testimony was strengthened (see verses 63–71).

The Master Teacher referred to an Old Testament event to introduce the bread of life sermon:

"Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.



THE MASTER TEACHER

"The Savior is the master teacher. The teaching of Jesus Christ constitutes a treatise on teaching technique surpassed by none. Jesus has been described as a philosopher, an economist, a social reformer, and many other things. But more than these, the Savior was a teacher. If you were to ask, 'What did Jesus have as an occupation?' There is only one answer: He was a teacher. It is He who should be our ideal. It is He who is the master teacher."

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, *Mine Errand from the Lord* (2008), 336.



bread and water in the sacrament: “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you” (John 6:53).

We know this sermon strengthened Peter, for he testified, “We believe and are sure that thou art Christ, the son of the living God” (John 6:69). The bread of life sermon is relevant to us, for we too will believe and be certain that Jesus is the Christ when we read, study, and cite—not paraphrase—holy writ to strengthen ourselves and others.

Fulfilling Scripture: The Triumphal Entry

The Lord’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem was a tacit affirmation of His knowledge and use of scriptures: “Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Psalm 118:26; see also Mark 11:9–10). He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling the prophecy “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: . . . thy King cometh unto thee: . . . riding upon an ass” (Zechariah 9:9; see also Matthew 21:4–5).

From the beginning of His mortal ministry to the Garden of Gethsemane, the cross, and the empty tomb, Jesus the Christ had established—through ancient scripture and His ministry, miracles, and messages—that He was the promised Messiah.

“For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world” (John 6:32–33; see also Exodus 16).

To which they said, “Evermore give us this bread” (John 6:34).

His answer revealed to the spiritually endowed His divine identity as the Son of God, the promised Messiah and Savior: “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:35).

The Savior then declared the divine doctrine uniting the Atonement and the emblems of the

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Sharing the Bread of Life

By Carlos Roberto Fusco, as told to Maiby Márcia Bastos Fusco

It was a hot day in Foz do Iguaçu, Paraná, Brazil. I had traveled several hours and was tired. As a leader in the Church Educational System, I had matters to address with the bishop, who was meeting me at the church. However, he was unavailable for a few minutes when I arrived.

While I waited, a lady entered the church. She approached me and humbly asked for a small amount of money to buy bread. She explained that she and her husband were hungry, and despite being embarrassed for asking, she said she didn't have any other choice. "Just for a little bread is all," she added.

I was moved, and I took a little money from my pocket. She thought it was a lot. I told her, "Buy bread, milk, and some meat."

She was grateful and told me that her husband had been promised a job for the next Tuesday. She wanted to pay me back as soon as he received his payment.

I told her that she didn't need to. She insisted.

I told her, "Instead of paying me, you can come back to this chapel on Sunday morning. When you get here, tell anyone you see that you want to talk with the missionaries. OK?" She agreed.

The woman left. I resolved what had to be discussed with the bishop and continued traveling through Paraná, doing my work.

Many months passed, and another opportunity took me to that same meetinghouse in Foz do Iguaçu for a conference. The choir was beautiful and performed sweetly. When the conference ended, one of the members of the choir approached me. She stretched forth her hand, greeting me with a beautiful smile, and said with emotion, "Thank you, brother. You gave me not only bread to satisfy my hunger and my husband's; you also gave me the bread of life. Thank you."

I felt an immense joy as I recognized the woman as the one who had asked me for a little money several months earlier. I realized that the gospel of Jesus Christ—who declared Himself to be the Bread of Life—transforms the life of whoever accepts it.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). This declaration of His submissiveness and His accomplishment of the infinite atoning sacrifice testifies that He is the Son of God, the greatest teacher who has ever or will ever live.

The scriptures testify and teach of Jesus Christ. When we immerse ourselves in them, we will come to know Him and His voice: "These words are not of men nor of man, but of me; wherefore, you shall testify they are of me and not of man" (D&C 18:34). I have found that when I immerse myself in the scriptures first at home with my wife and family, I am more effective in my service in the Church.

I love the scriptures. I testify that they are the word of God. May we teach from them, as the Savior did, in our homes and in our callings, that "the virtue of the word of God" might have a "powerful effect" upon those we teach (Alma 31:5). ■

NOTES

1. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 112.
2. See Thomas A. Wayment, "Jesus' Uses of the Psalms in Matthew," in Frank F. Judd and Gaye Strathearn, eds., *Sperry Symposium Classics: The New Testament* (2006), 137–49.

