

A Standard of Doctrine

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Traditions and policies are perpetrated gradually over time, so that eventually the ‘traditions’ of dogma will assume the force of doctrine. As these traditions, opinions, and interpretations become accepted as doctrines, they become more difficult to change with each passing generation. This is always a concern because the cost of making the correction may outweigh the cost of status quo. These doctrinal traditions are not disseminated intentionally, but they nevertheless become accepted by all who are exposed to the traditions or interpretations over time. For this reason, a ‘Standard of Doctrine’ was established by the Lord to counteract ‘the traditions of the fathers and of men.

The scriptures are the best commentary on the scriptures and all members of the church should rely on the doctrines and teachings found in the “standard works” or canonized scriptures. The words of the prophets and apostles at general conference are those doctrines, issues and ideas that members of the Church need to know and understand to survive the spiritual and temporal calamities of the last days. The talks of leaders help individual members recognize the need for change in their character and lifestyles. Even though policies and programs may change to better administer the gospel to the general membership of the church, true and eternal principles and doctrines do not change. Doctrines that need to be changed or scripture that may need to be added will be accomplished by revelation. This change can only come only through the Prophet and President of the church and no one else. If a change is to take place the new scripture is then presented as a revelation and Declaration with the sustaining vote of the general membership of the church. The two examples of doctrinal changes are the Declarations on “The Plurality of Wives” and “The Priesthood to All Worthy Males” found in the Doctrine and Covenants. This is the standard: *revelation is scripture. A declaration is a change or addition of revelatory position or doctrine within scripture and may even add scripture. A proclamation establishes or emphasizes the position of the church* on a given issue or subject based on existing revelation or scripture.

The scriptures are often referred to as the “Standard Works.” However, for many reasons they have not remained the standards of doctrine and truth among some members of the church. Because of a lay ministry, what is taught is generally filtered by the teachers’ opinions and understandings, which is a product of their education, upbringing, and traditions. This is one reason prepared manuals of instruction are needed. These manuals have been written under the direction of the leaders of the church to help teachers understand basic principles and doctrines using the scriptures. Nevertheless, traditions have sometimes morphed into doctrines, creating questions in the minds of many members.

Sadly, the scriptures as a standard have taken a back seat to the Church Magazines, the “Church News” and other sources of information. Many members have found it more convenient and entertaining to quote books, talks, and articles using church authorities and authors as sources rather than quoting straight from the scriptures. In a classroom setting, when scriptures are quoted or read that teach something different than tradition, the first cry is, “but Elder ‘so-and-so’ said—”. Many

teachers and speakers scramble to find quotes from publications, Internet blogs, or websites from self-appointed saviors of gospel doctrine teachers, which perpetuates the acceptance of traditions rather than rely on the prepared manuals and the scriptures. Many years ago, “Especially for Mormons” was the source book for almost every talk in church rather than the scriptures. Sacrament talks today are drawn more from the words of church leaders than they are from the source of doctrine. Not that this is wrong, but the scriptures are the “standard” of truth and should be the primary source when it comes to doctrinal learning or teaching.

Some members feel that the Church Magazines should take the place of the scriptures, and that the scriptures should only be used as a secondary source rather than as the primary word of God. The words of modern priesthood leaders are important for the day and age in which we live, and their counsel is needed and invaluable as we plod through the struggles of daily life seeking to become free from the sins of our times. Nevertheless, the scriptures set the doctrinal standards and should be the primary source of light, truth, and doctrine, rather than opinion, tradition and personal interpretation. God is the same yesterday, today and forever and His word, found in scripture, is for every dispensation, as the nature and sins of mankind have never changed.

The scriptures have been neglected because it takes effort and time to study them well enough to learn the doctrines contained in them, much less where to find them. Everyone has their favorite scripture verse and quote to pass along in Gospel Doctrine class, but to know the scriptures requires constant effort and study. There are only a few times that the word “read” is used in reference to what should be done with the scriptures. More often, words like: hold tightly, seek to obtain my word, grasp firmly, feast upon, ponder in your hearts, seek diligently and study, is found much more often than ‘read’. All these words and phrases imply more than simple rote reading. Many members check the obedience box by reaching the goal of an allotment of time, or reading a set number of verses or chapters in order to fulfill the perceived requirement of scripture reading. It is better to understand two verses than read two chapters just to check the box. The scriptures should be read consecutively by chapters, verses, or chronologically. However, one should study the scriptures topically—searching, pondering and feasting in addition to the reading that one might accomplish.

The importance of the scriptures or ‘Standard Works’ are easily seen in a few quotes from church leaders as they explain that, not just priesthood leaders, but even the prophets themselves are held accountable to the doctrines and teachings found in scripture. This means that scriptural accountability rests upon all, from prophet to primary teacher.

Joseph Fielding Smith

It makes no difference what is written or what anyone has said. If what has been said is in conflict with what the Lord has revealed, we can set it aside. My words, and the teaching of any other member of the church, high or low, if they do not square with the revelations, we need not accept them. Let us have this matter clear. We have accepted the four-standard works as the measuring yardsticks, or balances by which we measure every man’s doctrine. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol.3, p.203)

You cannot accept the books written by the authorities of the church as standards in doctrine, only in so far as they accord with the revealed word in the standard works. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol.3, p. 203)

The Lord has given us the four Standards which lie at the foundation of our faith. Each member of the church should be so well versed that he or she, would be able to discern whether or not any doctrine taught conforms to the revealed word of the Lord. . .The fact remains, however, that too many of the members have not taken advantage of their blessings and obligations, and therefore they are unable to distinguish between truth and error. The "lay" members of the Church are under obligation to accept the teachings of the authorities, unless they can discover in them some conflict with the revelations and commandments the Lord has given. There are times when the leading brethren have expressed their own opinions on various subjects. This they have a perfect right to do. They have divided on political questions; some belong to one political party and others to another. This they have a perfect right to do. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, Vol.2, p.113)

Harold B. Lee

We have the standard church works. Why do we call them standard? If there is any teacher who teaches a doctrine that can't be substantiated from the standard church works—and I make one qualification, and that is unless that one be the president of the church, who alone has the right to declare new doctrine—then you may know by that same token that such a teacher is but expressing his own opinion. If, on the other hand, you have someone teaching a doctrine that cannot be substantiated by the scriptures, and more than that, if it contradicts what is in the standard Church works, you may know that that person is teaching false doctrine, no matter what his position in this church may be. The president of the church alone may declare the mind and will of God to His people. No officer nor any other church in the world has this high and lofty prerogative. When the president proclaims any such new doctrine, he will declare it to be a revelation from the Lord. (Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye In Holy Places*, p.109-110)

It is not to be thought that every word spoken by the General Authorities is inspired, or that they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost in everything they write. I don't care what his position is. If he writes something or speaks something that goes beyond anything that you can find in the standard church works, unless that one be the prophet, seer, and revelator—please note that one exception—you may immediately say, "Well, that is his own idea." And if he says something that contradicts what is found in the standard church works, you may know by that same token that it is false, regardless of the position of the man who says it. (Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye In Holy Places*, p.162-163)

Ezra Taft Benson

We know that Satan has great power to deceive, and because of this, we must be aware. The safeguard against his sophistry and deception has been specified by revelation. We are to give heed to the words of eternal life. In other words, we must understand and live by the revelations the Lord has granted to His prophets. These are contained in the four standard works and the written and public declarations of our current prophet. (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p.404-405)

Bruce R. McConkie

The books, writings, explanations, expositions, views, and theories of even the wisest and greatest men, either in or out of the church, do not rank with the standard works. Even the writings, teachings, and opinions of the prophets of God are acceptable only to the extent they are in harmony with what God has revealed and what is recorded in the standard works. (Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p.764)

As these quotes make clear, the standard works are the standards of doctrine and truth, and modern-day prophets and apostles are held accountable to these standards of truth.

As mentioned earlier, if scriptures are to be added to, or doctrines changed, it can only be done by the President of the Church, not by any other general authority or church leader. The scriptures are the standards for prophet and apostle alike, and only the Prophet and President of the Church has the authority to make any changes by revelation.

A common motif in the heavenly visitations of God and angels is that a manifestation of the divine is almost always accompanied by scripture being quoted as the source of the central message. Christ quoted and explained scripture in his teaching during his life and often answered questions using scripture. The Sermon on the Mount is based on the fulfilling the law given to Moses. In the Book of Mormon, Christ quoted Malachi and Isaiah and commanded that their words be added to the record. When the Father and Son appeared to Joseph Smith in the First Vision, Christ quoted scripture. Joseph's account of Moroni's visit reveals that the angel quoted the same passages of scripture multiple times and throughout the night. If the scriptures are important enough for God and angels to use, then they should be important enough for all to study and talk about in almost every meeting. If one might hope to see an angel, it should be expected that he would quote scripture.

Everyone has a favorite General Authority to quote and rely on for insights and teaching. However, the scriptures are the standard for the prophets and should be for all priesthood leaders. Without a standard there is no basis for doctrine and truth. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. The priesthood leaders teach, when they speak in local and general settings, how to become better saints. They instruct the members using doctrinal concepts and principles that will help listeners develop a better character as they seek for that relationship with God. Leaders must adhere to their call of perfecting the saints, the work of the ministry, and edifying the body of Christ. In order to accomplish this great work of teaching and ministering, the scriptures must

always be the standard of truth and doctrine. The scriptures are the meals that sustains life day to day. The “Liahona” is a sweet desert, and the General Conferences are the Easter and Thanksgiving feasts. However, its the daily meals of scripture study that will provide the nourishment necessary to keep you alive.

Every spiritual revival that has occurred in the history of the world has revolved around the scriptures—every one. From Adam teaching his children the words of God to Enoch quoting from the Book of Adam to establish his city; from Moses coming down from the Mount with the Law to Josiah finding the record of the Law in the Temple. The early Christian church relied on the Law and the Prophets of Judaism along with the Gospels and the letters of the apostles to help set the religious and moral standard. The reformation that began with Luther and his interpretation of scripture spawned the Protestant faiths. The publication of the Bible in German and then English fostered a religious awakening that led to the Puritans and Pilgrims moving to a new land for religious freedom and the private interpretation of scripture. The Book of Mormon and other modern scripture from a living prophet was pivotal in the rise of the Latter-day Saint faith. Every spiritual revival was founded in, on, and around sacred texts. It may be that the next spiritual revival, when it comes, will of necessity revolve around scriptures once again.

Growing Pains

History teaches that every organization, nation, government, or religion will have some growing pains, even if the leadership was chosen by God and the prophet leaders are inspired. Moses continued to learn after he led the Children of Israel out of Egypt. It is evident that those who founded this nation were inspired by God to do so, and they still had to go through the growing pains of a new nation. The same is evident as the church moved from Palmyra to Kirtland, from Kirtland to Far West, then from Far West to Nauvoo, and shortly thereafter from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City. Even today, as the membership snowballs, the church still has growing pains along the way, as the gospel is always new to every generation. That which keeps the church or any other organization together and solid through these growing pains is an unalterable standard. Where would the United States be today without its Constitution to set the rules and standards of freedom and rights?

The growing pains of any organization are sometimes met with inside opposition, especially when a supposed doctrine is only tradition or policy. Likewise, there is opposition when some do not know the doctrine or the standard that sets the doctrine apart from policy, opinion, or tradition.

There are members of the church that are trying to convince others that some specific and current doctrines are not correct or ‘fair’. These individuals believe that these doctrines are just policies, and that doctrine can and should change with the times (the linear view of time). Policy may need to change often, to reflect the needs of the church, but doctrine cannot change because doctrine is established in scripture. Understanding the difference between doctrine and policy requires one to accept the standard as an irrevocable standard. Thus, many “do err, not knowing the scriptures” (Matthew 22:29). A church without an unchangable standard of truth in God’s word is not a church. Without a standard, every member would be “tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine” based on the whim or wish of the arm of flesh.

When the rules and doctrines of an organization are open to change by petition, vigil, vote, or pressure, it is not a religion—it is nothing more than a social club. If doctrines can change with every social movement believing that the standards of salvation and truth are fluid, then that religion has no power of salvation, authority, or eternal truths upon which one might build an enduring faith. To be considered a religion, the organization's articles of faith and doctrines of truth cannot change, and therefore must be founded on a written standard that will not change. The individual that does not like the rules of an organization that is founded on unchangeable doctrine and scripture will discover there are many other options. There exists clubs and organizations and even other churches where the petition and vote of a committee have the power to change the rules without the burden of a scriptural standard.

Thus, when any activist declares that the church needs 'changing', what they are really saying is that the organization is not a religion, that the doctrines are not founded on scripture, and that the church is not directed by Christ. They are subtly insinuating that the church is just a social club that can be changed by petition or vigil. Those who seek to change doctrine are also asserting that the priesthood leaders are no longer inspired and that God needs to change His mind to conform to personal opinions and desires of special interest groups. In short, they do not believe the church is true. Believing that one can change the church or will of God that is found in scripture, or to change the doctrines and sins described in scripture is an open manifestation of disbelief, lack of faith, and one's practical and practiced atheism.

9 For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing?

10 And now, if ye have imagined up unto yourselves a god who doth vary, and in whom there is shadow of changing, then have ye imagined up unto yourselves a god who is not a God of miracles. (Mormon 9:9-10)

Religion and Scripture

The word Religion is defined as “A set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature and purpose of the universe. A religion explains why things are, especially the creation of mankind and the environment in which he lives by a superhuman agency or agencies defined as God. A religion defines devotional and ritual observances which will always contain a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.” Simply put: A religion or system of beliefs will answer questions about the purpose of the universe, about the creation, the Creator, and will establish rituals and a written moral code.

The word Scripture is defined as: “A definitive collection of sacred books or texts regarded as given by the inspiration of God, with the purpose to perpetuate His revealed will.” Scripture is the way God makes known His will to man. This He does by raising up men from time to time to commit to writing an infallible record [His revelations]. God then places His seal of authority on these divine collections as given by inspiration.

A religion must be founded upon the revealed word of God that is unchangeable or it cannot be considered a religion. For a God to exist He must be all knowing, and all powerful which would mean that His commands or rules should be eternal in nature for the benefit of every believer on earth and in heaven. Everyone within a religion or denomination should understand that God-given rules cannot and should not be changed but by divine revelation. The scriptures are the standards—not the cultural beliefs or practices of the time or generation in which one lives, nor the standards of political correctness currently in vogue. Someone who seeks to force a change in church doctrine does not know the difference between doctrine and policy, or scripture and opinion. Without standards your own mind becomes your religion, your church, and your doctrine

There is a standard to which the church and the doctrine **MUST** adhere. This standard will not change and cannot change without the heavens opening. The scriptures are the standard, because God is the “same today, yesterday and forever.”

The church doesn't make the rules the scriptures do the church is organized to administer the gospel as contained in the scriptures. Church policy exists to best administer to the members based on the doctrines taught and found in the scriptures

The Scriptural Standard

The opening chapters of the Bible record a message about the creation of the “heaven and earth” (Genesis 1:1). The same standard work ends in the last chapters of the book of Revelation with the creation of a “new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1). Everything between the first few chapters and last two chapters of the Bible—between these two creations, between the beginning and the end—exists to teach mankind how to make it through the creation of a temporal world of mortality and obtain the second creation of a new celestial heaven and earth. This world is a probationary state created to provide a place to choose between good and evil. Life is a gift of time and agency for the purpose of changing character. Time is needed to gain a sufficient knowledge of the gospel plan necessary to put off the natural man and gain the required change of heart and character through individual choice and agency.

A place had to be prepared (within a world governed by the evil designs of conspiring men) to proclaim truth to the world. A place and nation of freedom had to be prepared and protected from the control and compulsion upon the souls of the children of men by the unrighteous. A land prepared and dedicated for the restoration, where no work of man could “hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge upon the heads” of the righteous. A land chosen to be above all others, a promised land, a land of promises, a place of the beginning and the ending, the same land where the city of Enoch was; and where a people will be prepared to receive the city of Enoch again. This is the land where Adam stood with his righteous posterity before the Lord three years previous to his death (D&C 107:53–54) and where he will stand again with his righteous posterity, before the Lord, in the “promised land” of Adam-ondi-Ahman (D&C 116; Daniel 7:9–13).

History and Scripture

A number of years ago I had the opportunity to work on a project designed to separate the ‘doctrine’ from the ‘history’ of the Book of Mormon. After multiple readings of the text and the separation of history from the doctrine (which was no easy task) the work was done. There were a few concepts discovered that changed my view of scripture and scriptural history.

The first insight learned was that history is not always scripture, but scripture always comes from the context of history. For many years “Church History and Doctrine” has been taught as a course in Seminary, Institute and in Gospel Doctrine classes. However, church history can change with the finding of another diary, a letter, or any historical research that might change conclusions about the events surrounding any historical event. The revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants are scripture. They are revelations and doctrines from the Lord, and have been canonized as scripture. All doctrine and revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants came out of a setting that is not necessarily “scripture,” but from the history of a people led and taught by a true prophet of God. If the Doctrine and Covenants is to be considered “living scripture” and is applicable for every age, then the historical setting and “church history” that is not canonized is of secondary significance.

Scripture often consists of revelation and human histories that have been canonized as a standard work upon which all should study for righteousness and doctrine. History can and should give insight into the purpose of doctrine. But we cannot “liken doctrine unto ourselves.” However, we should liken the history and character of the people unto ourselves. There exists, as it should be, a recognizable distinction between history and doctrine. Even though prophecy is history in reverse, prophecy is more-sure than the history. Prophecy and doctrine are given within a historical setting because of the actions of those who live within that historical setting. That which we can “liken unto ourselves” are the attitudes, character traits, concerns, and sins of the people that live in the historical setting of scripture. There are many uncomfortable, yet specific, reasons why Latter-day Saints need a history and record of a “fallen people.” This is one of the three most important messages of the Book of Mormon.

General and Specific Orders

The second concept learned had to do with the importance of the “historical” part of scripture. This was such a profound insight that it completely changed my outlook on the purpose of history within scripture. The “inspired history” (like that found in the Book of Mormon) might address the actions of the “Lord’s people” within the historical as well as a present-day setting. For this reason, scriptural history may be considered “living scripture” because the inspired choice of revelation and history included in the text would not necessarily be limited to a given time in history. However, some commandments and restrictions like the Law of Moses anciently, or the Word of Wisdom in our day, may be revealed for a specific time period or dispensation. Generally speaking, though, the scriptures, revelations, and doctrines contained in them are for every generation.

In military engagements there exist what is called “orders of battle.” There are always “general orders” and “specific orders.” General orders are those pertaining of the overall goal, while specific orders are the detailed orders needed to accomplish the general goal. The general orders in scripture are issued for the good of all mankind, in all times. The specific orders, rules, laws, and commandments are given for a particular time and or place. Scripture contains both general and specific orders. The Ten Commandments could be considered “general orders” as they are for the benefit of mankind in every time period and every dispensation, just as is the timeless benefit of developing charity toward our fellow beings. These are the general orders upon which all moral societies should be built. Specific orders or commandments might be dietary laws given for a specific time in history. Or, as seen in the case of the children of Israel and their rejection of the higher law, they were given a lesser law “until John” (D&C 84:19–27) or the coming of Christ in the flesh. In 3 Nephi the Savior restores a higher law as he stated many times in his first sermon that, “Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, and it is also written before you...But I say unto you...” then declaring that “old things are done away, and all things have become new” (3 Nephi 12:21–47).

The words of living prophets are for the time in which they live and should be carried forward in time, unless modified by a later prophet under the inspiration of the Lord (like the declarations in the Doctrine and Covenants on plural marriage and granting the priesthood to all worthy males). These living prophets will also stress those general and specific commandments and scriptures given in a former time, and add the inspired words that will benefit the people of the present.

Standards

Changes that have taken place in doctrine or policy (and they are different) by prophets of God teach us that there are both “general” (all time periods) and “specific” (selective time periods) orders and commandments. Policies such as meeting times, lengths of missions, and other church programs will often change to address the needs of the growing membership in the Church as those needs change. However, “doctrine” seldom changes and, if it does, it can only come through the prophet and president of the Church. President Lee declared:

The President of the Church alone may declare the mind and will of God to His people. No officer nor any other church in the world has this high and lofty prerogative. When the President proclaims any such new doctrine, he will declare it to be a revelation from the Lord. (Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye In Holy Places*, 109–110)

“Revelation,” when canonized, becomes scripture and doctrine. A “declaration” is a change in scripture or doctrine, and can be done only by revelation to the Prophet and President of the Church. A “proclamation” is the position, stand, or explanation by the prophet and presiding priesthood leaders on a given issue based on existing revelation and scripture.

Prophetic Responsibility

As individuals, there is an imperative need to become free from the sins of “our” generation; that is, the generation in which we now live — not the generations of past prophets like that Moses, Abraham, or Isaiah — but the sins of our generation. Past prophets declared the sins of their generation, which demonstrates why there must be living prophets to declare what those sins are. To become “free” from the sins that are prevalent and present in the time and world in which we live requires that a living prophet to declare repentance unto his generation. As taught by Jacob, the people of Nephi came according to the Law of Moses to a gathering at the temple. The words in the text reveal the weight and worry in the prophet’s mind of his responsibility to help rid the people from the sins of their generation, and their sins from him.

Now, my beloved brethren, I, Jacob, according to the responsibility which I am under to God, to magnify mine

office with soberness, and that I might rid my garments of your sins, I come up into the temple this day that I might declare unto you the word of God.

And ye yourselves know that I have hitherto been diligent in the office of my calling; but I this day am weighed down with much more desire and anxiety for the welfare of your souls than I have hitherto been. (Jacob 2:2–3)

This concept can also be seen in the words the Lord communicated to Ezekiel about his responsibility as a prophet or “watchman” to the house of Israel.

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul. (Ezekiel 3:17–21)

Even in this dispensation the Lord has warned that this same responsibility remains with the prophets of God—to declare in their time the sins of that generation. This is done for the sake of the remnant who will listen, who will repent, who will change, and for the prophet to rid himself of the sins of those in his generation for whom he is responsible, as taught in scripture.

Why History

The third concept realized with reference to ‘doctrine and history’ actually made the scriptures come alive in their historical context. The realization of: “why history” assisted in understanding the words of Nephi as he taught that we should “liken all scripture unto us” for our profit and learning (1 Nephi 19:23). First, it must be recognized who reads the Book of Mormon?

When Mormon took the Nephite wagonloads of records, then abridged and edited those volumes into one condensed and concise record, there was no one left to read it. The normal question to ask would be, “so who did he write it for?”

The answer is simple: he wrote it for those who would read it in our day. However, it is not found on the New York Times bestseller list, nor is this book a “must read” on Oprah. The answer to whom was it written for, often goes unseen because of the “beam” that blocks the view of the mirror. The Book of Mormon was not written for the unbeliever or non-members. Because of inspiration, and for a “wise purpose,” it is written for those who are reading it, or who should be reading it. Why did Mormon and Moroni choose the history of a fallen people to take up the valuable and limited space on the plates of gold? Because they knew who would read it.

As Moroni stated when he takes over the record, “Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing”

(Mormon 8:35). Moroni is speaking to those who will read the record, those who have the desire to come unto Christ and be numbered with his people. He is speaking to those who will have accepted the Book of Mormon as scripture and will “feast upon the words” of this book, speaking to those who will “ponder in their hearts” the words that are written therein. Mormon and Moroni have written for those “who know from whence their blessings come” (Mormon 5:10). The Book of Mormon was written for Israel, the children of Abraham, those who know the Gospel of Jesus Christ, those who seek more light and knowledge, who are coming to an understanding of the necessity of the Atonement and have the hope of a better resurrection. It was written to the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and those who desire to come to the understanding that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the Living God (see the Title Page of the Book of Mormon). The Book of Mormon was written to Latter-day Saints because it came from the history of the former “saints” of the Church of Jesus Christ. The former and latter-day “saints” have had, and do have the same sins. Moroni wrote that he spoke to us “as if we were present” (Mormon 8:35). For this reason, Mormon and Moroni chose to record the history of a “fallen people” to save us from the same sins and consequently from the same results. Those who read this book of scripture are the members of the Church or those who are investigating membership. Therefore, the inspired inclusion of history in the Book of Mormon is principally and perhaps specifically written for the Latter-day Saint reader.

Since doctrine does not change and cannot be likened unto ourselves, the character, attitudes, and sins of the people are what we should “liken unto ourselves.” The purpose of scriptural history is simple and revelatory – and the shortest way to express it (though uncomfortable) is —the sins of Israel are the sins of Israel in every age and in every dispensation. The sins of the children of Israel throughout the Old Testament are the same sins revealed by Christ to the Pharisees and Jewish leaders of his day. These are the same sins that beset the early members of the Church and were written about by the apostles in the New Testament. The sins are the same for the Nephites and those who knew and understood the gospel and the laws and commandments of God in the Book of Mormon. Even those sins at the time of Enoch and of Noah are the same sins described in all scripture. So how do we “liken the scriptures unto us”? We must understand that the sins that beset and plague the world and members of the church in this dispensation are the same sins of character that have existed in all dispensations that have gone before. The failure of all dispensations in the establishment of Zion (excepting Enoch and Melchizedek [JST Genesis 14:30–34]) is the reason that Zion has not been redeemed even now.

Because the sins of Israel are the same in every generation, we must “liken all scripture unto ourselves” as the sins of the true church in scriptural history are the sins of the true church even now. If the readers of scripture do not view and discuss scriptural history seriously, recognizing and likening the sins of Israel anciently to those of Israel today, we will fail to understand a key purpose of scripture. This is especially true of the Book of Mormon. Nephi taught that the sure sign of apostasy in the last days would be for those who may call themselves Zion—those who have the truth and the scriptures—to declare that “all is well in Zion, yea, Zion prospereth” (2 Nephi 28:21) in both the community and the heart of the individual. If we cannot discover ourselves within the history of scripture, we cannot fully liken the scriptures unto ourselves.

History is included in scripture for a reason, and that reason is connected to the doctrines and commandments contained within the revelations of that scripture. The “work and glory” of God is the same in all generations, and the character of mankind has not changed from the time of Cain and Abel until the present. Even the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “...there has been no change in the constitution of man since he fell” (TPJS, 1979, p. 59).

Only when we liken the scriptural history unto ourselves can we see the need for the revelatory doctrines and commandments found within the history. It is for the “work and glory of God to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). In scripture many—like the Pharisees and Zoramites—want to project the wickedness discussed in scripture onto others who they consider sinners. Even as members of the church, we often project the sins in scripture to those outside our affiliations, outside our church, outside our homes, outside our own hearts. The value of the history of scripture is the likening the sins of the people found in that history to ourselves, to recognize the signs of wickedness, and realize the cause of destruction—spiritually and physically— of previous individuals and nations. The revelations of the prophets of God within history can provide an escape from the temporal and spiritual judgments that will come in time and in eternity.

Empty are the annals of a happy people. It is common for people to write most often in their personal journals when things are not going so well. Similarly, the Book of Mormon is a “record of a fallen people” (D&C 20:9). There is only part of one chapter in the Book of Mormon that described a time of perfect happiness, a time when there are no “ites” and the people had all things in common (4 Nephi 1:3, 15–17). This millennial type and time of life is found in the single chapter of Fourth Nephi. The rest of the book contains the struggles, frustrations, and sins of a people who knew and understood the gospel at one time in their lives. Over and over again, Mormon described the “cycle of prosperity,” the sin of pride, and the manifestation of that sin as inequality. This book described what caused the suffering of this people and their ultimate rejection of God, and then by God. We often read and wonder why the Nephites couldn’t see the cause or consequence of sin as the text describes the Lord’s judgments upon Israel from beginning to end. The question begs to be asked: “why was Mormon inspired and directed by God to include the stories and events that fill the pages of a fallen people?”

For only one reason the events described in this record are contained in this scripture. And that is because Mormon and Moroni saw and understood the people who would read the book (Mormon 8:35). They realized first and foremost that the sins of the Nephites were going to be the sins of those Gentiles who accept the gospel and read and consider the book as scripture. Second, that there was going to be a Gentile nation that would be raised up to inhabit the same land; a nation on the same land that would be governed by the same promises of freedom and prophecies of destruction. The Book of Mormon was not written for those who would never turn its pages in ponderous study. It was written specifically for a culture and church blessed with the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the divinity of the Book of Mormon.

Spiritual failures exist and are recorded in history and scripture in order that that the following generations might have greater spiritual successes and experiences, coming ever closer to God and His Son and the establishment of Zion. However, if the scriptures are not read and understood

(likening them unto ourselves) to glean the spiritual failures of the past (a record of a fallen people) then the generations of the future will leave a more mournful history to their descendants that will chronicle a greater spiritual failure than the self-deprived spiritual zombies of the scriptural past.

Scriptures exist for spiritual progression and if they are unused, ignored or replaced by entertainment and the supposed intellectual arms of flesh, then the natural progression of the natural man will be away from God. God has, and is speaking and teaching through the scriptural record.

The person that believes that spiritual progression is possible without a scriptural standard does not understand the love of God. Nor do they understand how He works or His purpose in providing scripture with a spiritual history and standard for the benefit of man.

Guardrails are constructed for protection against the life threatening dangers and pitfalls of mortality. The iron rod (scriptures) is not only a spiritual lifeline that will lead one safely to the tree of life, but a guardrail to protect the spiritual pilgrim from the raging rapids of a river of filthy water that threatens every step of mortality.

To minimize the value of the guardrail and ignore the importance of a Divine lifeline is tantamount to spiritual suicide. Despite the education, station, power or money offered in life, only the bereft and blind fool will refuse to grasp firmly and hold tightly to the iron rod as they stumble through the blinding mists of spiritual darkness.

Trusting in the arms of flesh, including one's own perspective and education will often cause more spiritual blindness than absolute darkness. The cataracts of pride not only blind the mind but also the heart to the light and truths of scripture, even more so than the mists of spiritual darkness discussed in Lehi's dream. The scriptures that testify of Christ should be the springboard into every discipline, thought, and action. All of world History is nothing more than the battle that rages between spiritual Babylon and the establishment of Zion, and each can only choose one side. Christ stated that 'we are unable to serve two masters.'

Knowing the score before you watch the game will change your attitude when you see the problems, plays and issues. Knowing the score described in scripture about the end of life should change your attitude toward the problems and issues of life. Knowing beforehand what the end result will be should inspire a change of character and vision to reset our goals.

Because of the battle of mortality (its not just a game) and knowing the end result (from scripture) that 'Babylon will fall,' should inspire everyone to prepare to stand in the winner's circle. Knowing how the game ends beforehand should affect one's choice of their team support and their participatory action and reaction to the details of the game itself. The end of the game we call mortality is not just predicted but prophesied. The detail found in scripture is more accurate and more-sure than any playbook can outline.

We are reminded that the body and the spirit are in constant, that is: "constant" need of nourishment. It is easy to recognize when the body is hungry and easy to find places to get filled. It might be the

fridge, a restaurant, maybe even fast food. When hungry our stomach sends the signals to our mind to search, find, and consume. Do we spend the same amount of time and energy each day to nourish the spirit? Do we recognize our spiritual hunger pains? Is the search for spiritual nourishment as pronounced and desperate as it is for McDonalds when hungry? Have we numbed the spiritual hunger pains, training the spirit to fast every day but Sunday? Are we becoming physically obese yet spiritual skeletons because of spiritual self starvation and a bulimic habit? Google maps will not show the nearest spiritual restaurants like it will the favorite buffets. Physical energy requires fuel on a regular basis because the fuel runs out. Spiritual energy also requires fuel and probably more often, however, the gauge may be broken or unused. Just as the fuel tank of the body (the stomach) holds but does retain or store the fuel of food. The food tank is just the beginning of the process of energy conversion. The spiritual tank also receives fuel for spiritual energy but likewise this tank cannot retain the spiritual fuel because it is filled with holes and will quickly leak.

For this reason the scriptures teach we need to be filled over and over again, with the spirit. Because of the natural man our spiritual tanks are full of holes. The spiritual fuel leaks out because of life, pride, selfishness, the people we hang out with the jokes we listen to, the things we watch, our words, works and our thoughts. Our spiritual tanks are riddled with earthly holes that can only be patched with the glue of obedience and sealed by light and truth. This is why Alma asks those who were once born again "can you feel so now". All must search, discover and find your spiritual service stations (the scriptures, conference talks, good music) fill up often on the premium word of God. This must be done again and again until all the holes are patched and the Holy Ghost becomes our constant companion, to the extent that we have no more disposition to do evil. The first sermon of Christ taught that: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.

As is shown time and time again in The Book of Mormon and throughout history, the culture itself is the greatest threat to the culture. It is not what exists on the outside that constitutes the greatest danger, but what becomes the accepted way of life within the culture. "...For the Lord hath said: This is my church, and I will establish it; and nothing shall overthrow it, save it is the transgression of my people" (Mosiah 27:13). The phrase "And thus we see" in Mormon's editorial comments always has the conclusion "that wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10). It becomes obvious that there is a great spiritual benefit and purpose of scriptural history. The Book of Mormon begins with a small group of people leaving Jerusalem because of the threat of the kingdom of Babylon. This small family was led by the hand of the Lord to a land of a promised "New Jerusalem." Their once blessed existence comes to a violent end centuries later, as described in the final chapters of the Book of Mormon. Portrayed in the text is the spiritual and temporal destruction of the Nephite nation and culture. This physical end of that culture was a self-induced destruction because of their great desires to attach themselves to the spiritual "Babylon" from which their wise and inspired father Lehi had so quickly fled. All of world history and all of scriptural history contain details of the constant battle that rages between Babylon and Zion.

Scriptures on the Scriptures

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are a religious people. This religious faith and fervor permeate the daily li and activities of the faithful members. Tantamount to testimony of Jesus Christ is The Book of Mormon as Moroni declares in the Title Page, that this book is “for the convincing of Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ”. Moroni is proclaiming that this sacred scripture is for our testimony of Christ. Joseph Smith stated that, “The Book of Mormon is the Keystone of our religion” it stands to reason then that this sacred book of scripture should also be the Keystone of our life.

<p>1 Nephi 5:21-22</p>	<p>21 And we had obtained the records which the Lord had commanded us, and searched them and found that they were desirable; yea, even of great worth unto us, insomuch that we could preserve the commandments of the Lord unto our children.</p> <p>22 Wherefore, it was wisdom in the Lord that we should carry them with us, as we journeyed in the wilderness towards the land of promise.</p>
<p>1 Nephi 8:19-24</p>	<p>19 And I beheld a rod of iron, and it extended along the bank of the river, and led to the tree by which I stood.</p> <p>20 And I also beheld a strait and narrow path, which came along by the rod of iron, even to the tree by which I stood; and it also led by the head of the fountain, unto a large and spacious field, as if it had been a world.</p> <p>21 And I saw numberless concourses of people, many of whom were pressing forward, that they might obtain the path which led unto the tree by which I stood.</p> <p>22 And it came to pass that they did come forth, and commence in the path which led to the tree.</p> <p>23 And it came to pass that there arose a mist of darkness; yea, even an exceedingly great mist of darkness, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost.</p> <p>24 And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press forward through the mist of darkness, clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree.</p>
<p>1 Nephi 15:23-25</p>	<p>23 And they said unto me: What meaneth the rod of iron which our father saw, that led to the tree?</p> <p>24 And I said unto them that it 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.</p> <p>25 Wherefore, I, Nephi, did exhort them to give heed unto the word of the Lord; yea, I did exhort them with all the energies of my soul, and with all the</p>

	<p>faculty which I possessed, that they would give heed to the word of God and remember to keep his commandments always in all things.</p>
<p>1 Nephi 19:21- 24</p>	<p>21 And he surely did show unto the prophets of old all things concerning them; and also he did show unto many concerning us; wherefore, it must needs be that we know concerning them for they are written upon the plates of brass.</p> <p>22 Now it came to pass that I, Nephi, did teach my brethren these things; and it came to pass that I did read many things to them, which were engraven upon the plates of brass, that they might know concerning the doings of the Lord in other lands, among people of old.</p> <p>23 And I did read many things unto them which were written in the books of Moses; but that I might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah; for I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning.</p> <p>24 Wherefore I spake unto them, saying: Hear ye the words of the prophet, ye who are a remnant of the house of Israel, a branch who have been broken off; hear ye the words of the prophet, which were written unto all the house of Israel, and liken them unto yourselves, that ye may have hope as well as your brethren from whom ye have been broken off; for after this manner has the prophet written.</p>
<p>2 Nephi 4:15-16</p>	<p>15 And upon these I write the things of my soul, and many of the scriptures which are engraven upon the plates of brass. For my soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children.</p> <p>16 Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard.</p>
<p>2 Nephi 6:4-6</p>	<p>4 And now, behold, I would speak unto you concerning things which are, and which are to come; wherefore, I will read you the words of Isaiah. And they are the words which my brother has desired that I should speak unto you. And I speak unto you for your sakes, that ye may learn and glorify the name of your God.</p> <p>5 And now, the words which I shall read are they which Isaiah spake concerning all the house of Israel; wherefore, they may be likened unto you, for ye are of the house of Israel. And there are many things which have been spoken by Isaiah which may be likened unto you, because ye are of the house of Israel.</p> <p>6 And now, these are the words: Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.</p>

<p>2 Nephi 31:19-21</p>	<p>19 And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.</p> <p>20 Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.</p> <p>21 And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end. Amen.</p>
<p>2 Nephi 32:3</p>	<p>3 Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.</p>
<p>2 Nephi 33:3</p>	<p>3 But I, Nephi, have written what I have written, and I esteem it as of great worth, and especially unto my people. For I pray continually for them by day, and mine eyes water my pillow by night, because of them; and I cry unto my God in faith, and I know that he will hear my cry.</p>
<p>Jacob 4:6</p>	<p>6 Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy; and having all these witnesses we obtain a hope, and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea.</p>
<p>Jacob 7:23</p>	<p>23 And it came to pass that peace and the love of God was restored again among the people; and they searched the scriptures, and hearkened no more to the words of this wicked man.</p>
<p>Mosiah 1:5-7</p>	<p>5 I say unto you, my sons, were it not for these things, which have been kept and preserved by the hand of God, that we might read and understand of his mysteries, and have his commandments always before our eyes, that even our fathers would have dwindled in unbelief, and we should have been like unto our brethren, the Lamanites, who know nothing concerning these things, or even do not believe them when they are taught them, because of the traditions of their fathers, which are not correct.</p> <p>6 O my sons, I would that ye should remember that these sayings are true, and also that these records are true. And behold, also the plates of Nephi, which contain the records and the sayings of our fathers from the time they left Jerusalem until now, and they are true; and we can know of their surety because we have them before our eyes.</p>

	<p>7 And now, my sons, I would that ye should remember to search them diligently, that ye may profit thereby; and I would that ye should keep the commandments of God, that ye may prosper in the land according to the promises which the Lord made unto our fathers.</p>
Alma 13:20	<p>20 Now I need not rehearse the matter; what I have said may suffice. Behold, the scriptures are before you; if ye will wrest them it shall be to your own destruction.</p>
Alma 17:2-3	<p>2 Now these sons of Mosiah were with Alma at the time the angel first appeared unto him; therefore Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren; and what added more to his joy, they were still his brethren in the Lord; yea, and they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God.</p> <p>3 But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God.</p>
Alma 37:8-10	<p>8 And now, it has hitherto been wisdom in God that these things should be preserved; for behold, they have enlarged the memory of this people, yea, and convinced many of the error of their ways, and brought them to the knowledge of their God unto the salvation of their souls.</p> <p>9 Yea, I say unto you, were it not for these things that these records do contain, which are on these plates, Ammon and his brethren 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.</p> <p>10 And who knoweth but what they will be the means of bringing many thousands of them, yea, and also many thousands of our stiffnecked brethren, the Nephites, who are now hardening their hearts in sin and iniquities, to the knowledge of their Redeemer?</p>
Alma 33:2	<p>2 And Alma said unto them: Behold, ye have said that ye could not worship your God because ye are cast out of your synagogues. But behold, I say unto you, if ye suppose that ye cannot worship God, ye do greatly err, and ye ought to search the scriptures; if ye suppose that they have taught you this, ye do not understand them.</p>
Alma 41:1	<p>1 And now, my son, I have somewhat to say concerning the restoration of which has been spoken; for behold, some have wrested the scriptures, and have gone far astray because of this thing. And I perceive that thy mind has been worried also concerning this thing. But behold, I will explain it unto thee.</p>

Helaman 3:28-29	<p>28 Yea, thus we see that the gate of heaven is open unto all, even to those who will believe on the name of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God.</p> <p>29 Yea, we see that whosoever will may lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery which is prepared to engulf the wicked—</p>
Helaman 15:6-8	<p>6 Yea, I say unto you, that the more part of them are doing this, and they are striving with unwearied diligence that they may bring the remainder of their brethren to the knowledge of the truth; therefore there are many who do add to their numbers daily.</p> <p>7 And behold, ye do know of yourselves, for ye have witnessed it, that as many of them as are brought to the knowledge of the truth, and to know of the wicked and abominable traditions of their fathers, and are led to believe the holy scriptures, yea, the prophecies of the holy prophets, which are written, which leadeth them to faith on the Lord, and unto repentance, which faith and repentance bringeth a change of heart unto them—</p> <p>8 Therefore, as many as have come to this, ye know of yourselves are firm and steadfast in the faith, and in the thing wherewith they have been made free.</p>
3 Nephi 10:14	<p>14 And now, whoso readeth, let him understand; he that hath the scriptures, let him search them, and see and behold if all these deaths and destructions by fire, and by smoke, and by tempests, and by whirlwinds, and by the opening of the earth to receive them, and all these things are not unto the fulfilling of the prophecies of many of the holy prophets.</p>
3 Nephi 20:11-12	<p>11 Ye remember that I spake unto you, and said that when the words of Isaiah should be fulfilled—behold they are written, ye have them before you, therefore search them—</p> <p>12 And verily, verily, I say unto you, that when they shall be fulfilled then is the fulfilling of the covenant which the Father hath made unto his people, O house of Israel.</p>
3 Nephi 23:1	<p>1 And now, behold, I say unto you, that ye ought to search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah.</p>
D&C 1:37-38	<p>37 Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled.</p> <p>38 What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but</p>

	shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.
D&C 10:63	63 And this I do that I may establish my gospel, that there may not be so much contention; yea, Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the scriptures and do not understand them.
D&C 11:21-22	21 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. 22 But now hold your peace; study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men, and also study my word which shall come forth among the children of men, or that which is now translating, yea, until you have obtained all which I shall grant unto the children of men in this generation, and then shall all things be added thereto.
D&C 26:1	1 Behold, I say unto you that you shall let your time be devoted to the studying of the scriptures, and to preaching, and to confirming the church at Colesville, and to performing your labors on the land, such as is required, until after you shall go to the west to hold the next conference; and then it shall be made known what you shall do.
D&C 33:16-17	16 And the Book of Mormon and the holy scriptures are given of me for your instruction; and the power of my Spirit quickeneth all things. 17 Wherefore, be faithful, praying always, having your lamps trimmed and burning, and oil with you, that you may be ready at the coming of the Bridegroom—
D&C 42:12-13	12 And again, the elders, priests and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fulness of the gospel. 13 And they shall observe the covenants and church articles to do them, and these shall be their teachings, as they shall be directed by the Spirit.
D&C 84:57	57 And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written—
D&C 84:85	85 Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say; but treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man.

<p>JS-Matthew 1:22, 37</p>	<p>22 For in those days there shall also arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch, that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect, who are the elect according to the covenant.</p> <p>37 And whoso treasureth up my word, shall not be deceived, for the Son of Man shall come, and he shall send his angels before him with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together the remainder of his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.</p>
<p>Ezra 7:10</p>	<p>10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.</p>
<p>Isaiah 34:16</p>	<p>16 Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.</p>
<p>Matthew 22:29</p>	<p>29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.</p>
<p>Mark 7:6- 9, 13</p>	<p>6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.</p> <p>7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.</p> <p>8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.</p> <p>9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.</p> <p>13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.</p>
<p>Luke 16:19- 31</p>	<p>19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:</p> <p>20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,</p> <p>21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.</p> <p>22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;</p> <p>23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.</p> <p>24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.</p>

	<p>25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.</p> <p>26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.</p> <p>27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:</p> <p>28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.</p> <p>29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.</p> <p>30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.</p> <p>31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.</p>
John 5:38-39	<p>38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.</p> <p>39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.</p>
John 5:45-47	<p>45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.</p> <p>46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.</p> <p>47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?</p>
Acts 17:11	<p>11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.</p>
Romans 15:4	<p>4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.</p>
Ephesians 6:17	<p>17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:</p>
2 Timothy 3:15-17	<p>15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.</p> <p>16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:</p> <p>17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.</p>

2 Peter 1:20-21	20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.
2 Peter 3:16-17	16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. 17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.