

Jesus Christ—The Central Focus of All Scripture

Lesson 15

Teaching Objective

All scripture is given to testify of Christ and to center our attention on His work and mission.

Themes

1. Christ should be the focus of our scripture study.
2. The scriptures testify of Christ's mission.
3. All prophets testify of Christ.
4. All things given of God typify Christ.

Teaching Ideas

1. Christ should be the focus of our scripture study.

Discuss with students the importance of centering their scripture study on Jesus Christ. While there are many interesting topics to study in the scriptures, there is nothing more significant than learning of the Savior and what He does for mankind. Emphasize to students that if they want to achieve this focus, the library of scripture is the best source to learn about the Savior.

The following statement by Elder Howard W. Hunter, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, might help the class understand this point: "I am grateful for the library of scripture through which a greater knowledge of Jesus Christ can be learned by devoted study. I am grateful that in addition to the Old and New Testaments, the Lord, through prophets of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has added other revealed scripture as additional witnesses for Christ—the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price—all of which I know to be the word of God. These bear witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 93; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 65).

Read John 17:3. Point out that to have eternal life an individual must come to know the Father and the Son. John 5:39 explains how we come to know the Father and the Son—we must search the scriptures (see also JST, Luke 11:53).

2. The scriptures testify of Christ's mission.

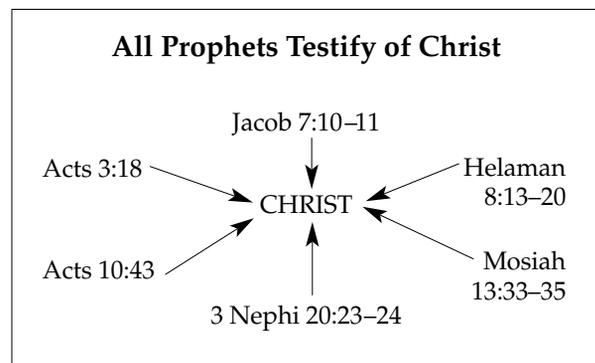
As students study the scriptures, alert them to be watchful of Christ's mission to mankind. Make the following points concerning the Savior's mission:

1. He set up the kingdom of God on earth (see Ephesians 4:11–16; 3 Nephi 12:1; Mark 3:13–19).
2. He taught the plan of salvation (see 3 Nephi 11:31–40; Matthew 4:23–24; Mosiah 3:5–6; Acts 10:34–43).
3. He worked out the Atonement for mankind (see John 3:16–17; Matthew 26–27; 2 Nephi 10:25; Alma 7:11; Articles of Faith 1:3).
4. He commenced the work for the dead (see 1 Peter 3:18–19; 4:6; Moses 7:38–39; D&C 76:73; 138:29–35).

Have students compile a list of scriptures from each of the standard works defining the mission of Jesus Christ. You might want to divide the class into groups and have students search the Topical Guide under "Jesus Christ, mission of," for insights into the Savior's mission.

3. All prophets testify of Christ.

Draw the following illustration on the board, and discuss and mark the references with the class. Students should come to understand that prophets in all ages have testified of Christ.



Have class members turn to the heading "Jesus Christ" in the Topical Guide; point out to them that there are a multitude of references to the Savior listed under fifty-seven subcategories. Review the topics with students so they can see the many aspects of the nature and work of Christ that are covered. Point out that there are far more references under the heading "Jesus Christ" than under any other topic listed. This is one indication that the fundamental theme of all scripture is Jesus Christ.

4. All things given of God typify Christ.

Read and discuss 2 Nephi 11:4 and Moses 6:63. Help students understand that all things bear record of the Savior.

■ To further develop the concept that all things typify Christ, refer to the following categories:

1. *The law of Moses testifies of Christ.*

The whole purpose of the law of Moses—with its teachings, rites, and ordinances—was to point the children of Israel to Christ and His Atonement. In studying any aspect of the law of Moses, you should look for teachings and representations of the Savior. If you understand the life and work of the Savior, you can better understand the law of Moses, which was designed to testify of Christ and lead people to Him. Read Galatians 3:24; Jacob 4:4–6; Alma 34:13–15, which teach these concepts.

2. *The gospel ordinances testify of Christ.*

Animal sacrifice. Adam was commanded to offer sacrifices unto the Lord and was told that it was in “similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father” (Moses 5:7). This practice was continued among the covenant people until after the ministry of Christ, when it was replaced with the ordinance of the sacrament. Study the comparison of passages on page 50 of this manual. It shows that the ordinance of sacrifice was in similitude of the sacrifice of the Son of God. Mark and cross-reference these passages in your own scriptures.

The sacrament. The ordinance of the sacrament instituted by the Lord at His last supper is a continual reminder to the Saints of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. It also provides an opportunity for us to renew often the covenant we made to follow His example and keep His commandments. It points back in time to the Atonement, whereas the ordinance of sacrifice anciently pointed forward to the Atonement.

Passover → Jesus Christ ← Sacrament

Read, mark, and cross-reference 1 Corinthians 11:23–29 and 3 Nephi 18:1–11.

Baptism. Study Paul’s discussion in Romans 6:3–11 of the relationship between the burial and Resurrection of the Savior and the covenant the Saints make when they are baptized.

3. *Individuals and places testify of Christ.*

Melchizedek, king of Salem. The name *Melchizedek* means “king of righteousness” or “my king is righteous.” Paul referred to Melchizedek as the “King of righteousness” and the “King of peace” (Hebrews 7:1–2). Melchizedek became great because he followed Jehovah—the premortal Christ. Jesus Christ is the great king of righteousness and peace (see Jeremiah 23:5–6; Isaiah 9:6–7) of whom Melchizedek was a “type.”

Joseph, sold into Egypt, later saved Israel. There are numerous similarities between Joseph and Christ; thus, Joseph’s life was in many ways a “type” or foreshadowing of the life and ministry

of the Savior. A few of the many parallels are as follows:

- a. Joseph was loved by his father “more than all his children” (Genesis 37:3). Jesus is the “beloved Son” of the Father (Matthew 3:17).
- b. Both Joseph and Jesus were betrayed by their brethren and sold (see Genesis 37:26–27; Matthew 26:14–16).
- c. Joseph was falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife (see Genesis 39:13–18), and Jesus was falsely accused before the Sanhedrin (see Matthew 26:57–66).
- d. Both were saviors to Israel. Joseph saved his father’s family from starvation and death by providing them with bread (see Genesis 45:4–7). Jesus, who is “the bread of life” (John 6:35), gave Himself to save Israel from spiritual death.
- e. Joseph’s brothers bowed to him in fulfillment of his prophetic dream (see Genesis 37:5–8; 43:26). Eventually all will bow before Christ and acknowledge His sovereignty (D&C 76:110).

Joshua led Israel into the promised land. It is significant that Joshua, not Moses, led Israel into the promised land. The English form of the Hebrew name *Yehoshua* or *Joshua* is “Jesus.” Just as Joshua (Jesus) led the Israelites into their land of promise, so also does Jesus bring faithful Israel into their eternal promised inheritance.

David, king of Israel. The name *David* means, “beloved.” In Old Testament times, David was the king of Israel at its zenith. His reign was but a foreshadowing of the reign of Jesus, the “Beloved Son” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17) of the Father. Jesus will come again and, as the second “David,” will reign on the throne of Israel forever (see Ezekiel 37:24–25; Isaiah 9:6–7).

Bethlehem. The name *Bethlehem* means “house of bread.” In fulfillment of ancient prophecy, Jesus, who is the “bread of life” (John 6:35, 48), was born in Bethlehem (see Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:4–6; Luke 2:15–16).

4. *Objects in the scriptures testify of Christ.*

The Liahona. The Book of Mormon teaches that just as the Liahona led the company of Lehi to the promised land, so also the word of Christ will lead the Lord’s children to the kingdom of heaven. Read Alma’s explanation of the symbolism of the Liahona in Alma 37:38–46.

5. *Manifestations in nature testify of Christ.*

Light and darkness. When Jesus, who is the “light of the world” (John 8:12), came into the world, the sign in America of His birth was a day, a night, and a day without darkness (see Nephi 1:15, 19). When the “light of the world” died, there was thick darkness both in Jerusalem and America (see Matthew 27:45; 3 Nephi 8:19–23).

The Lord supplied water from a rock. As the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness after their

Ordinance of Sacrifice

Jesus Christ

Leviticus 1

Luke 1

3 If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish:

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Hebrews 4

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Moses 5

D&C 93

5 And he gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord.

21 And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn;

Exodus 12

John 19

46 In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof.

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

Leviticus 1

Luke 22

11 And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar.

44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Mosiah 3

7 And lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people.

D&C 38:4

I am Christ, and in mine own name, by the virtue of the blood which I have spilt, have I pleaded before the Father for them.

Exodus 12

Matthew 26

8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

26 ¶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

exodus from Egypt, they were in need of water. Moses smote a rock and water came forth to save them from dying of thirst. This physical event was in the likeness of a spiritual reality and bears testimony of the saving power of the Lord. Review the scriptures in the chart below, which shows the parallels.

Physical Events in Moses' Day	Salvation Provided by Jesus Christ
1. Israel wandered in the wilderness of Sin (see Exodus 17:1).	1. Mankind is wandering in a world of sin (see D&C 84:49).
2. They were in need of water to sustain physical life (see Exodus 17:1–3).	2. Mankind needs the "living water" from Christ that leads to everlasting life (see John 4:14).
3. Moses smote a rock, which brought forth water and saved them from death (see Exodus 17:5–6; 1 Nephi 17:29).	3. The Lord is the "rock" upon which all must build (see Helaman 5:12). He was smitten in Gethsemane and on Calvary to save us from spiritual death (see Isaiah 53:4–5; Matthew 26:31).

Supplementary Study Sources

- Dallin H. Oaks, in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 75–80; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 65–68; answers the question, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matthew 22:42).
- Ezra Taft Benson, "Think on Christ," *Ensign*, Mar. 1989, 2–4; the impact that our thoughts have upon our character and how asking the Lord, "What wilt thou have me to do?" can influence our lives.
- Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 97–99; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 84–85; the Church as a whole can "Come unto Christ."
- Dallin H. Oaks, in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 75–79; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 63–66; Jesus Christ is both the "light" and the "life" of the world.
- George A. Horton Jr., *Keys to Successful Scripture Study*, 11–19; the scriptures are Christ-centered.
- Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Gospel Symbolism*, 1–11; all things testify of Christ.
- Lenet Hadley Read, "All Things Testify of Him: Understanding Symbolism in the Scriptures," *Ensign*, Jan. 1981, 4–7; there are several scriptural symbols that testify of Jesus Christ.

Suggested Student Study

The following exercises could be used as student assignments or as items for further in-class study.

- Explain how each of the following items in the scriptures testify of Christ and His work or are representative of Him. The passages in parentheses will help in understanding the prophetic message of the scriptures they accompany.
 1. The sacrament—see Matthew 26:26; 3 Nephi 18:1–11 (Moroni 6:6)
 2. Manna—see Exodus 16:4, 14–15, 31, 35 (John 6:30–35)
 3. The vine—see John 15:1–8
 4. Jonah and the whale—see Jonah 1:11–17 (Matthew 12:40; D&C 20:23)
 5. Adam—see 1 Corinthians 15:45 (Moses 1:34; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 47)
 6. High priests—see Hebrews 5:1–3 (Hebrews 4:14; 9:23–28)
 7. The Lamb—see Exodus 12:3–7 (Isaiah 53:7; John 1:36; 1 Peter 1:19–20; Revelation 13:8)
- One of the greatest similitudes of the Savior found in the Old Testament is the story of Abraham offering his son Isaac as a sacrifice (see Jacob 4:5). Review Genesis 22:1–14 and identify the parallel between each incident listed about Abraham and Isaac in the following chart and the corresponding event from the life of Christ:

Abraham and Isaac	Jesus Christ
A. Isaac was to have his blood shed (see Genesis 22:10).	see John 19:34; Luke 22:44
B. Isaac carried the wood for the sacrifice (see Genesis 22:6).	see John 19:17
C. The sacrifice took place in the land of Moriah, or Jerusalem (see Genesis 22:2; 2 Chronicles 3:1).	see Mark 15:22
D. Isaac was Abraham's only covenant son (see Genesis 22:2)	see John 3:16
E. Abraham loved God and was willing to sacrifice his son (see Genesis 22:12).	see John 3:16
F. Isaac did not resist; he was a willing sacrifice (see Genesis 22:9).	see Luke 22:42

(Answers)

- A. Jesus' blood was shed.
- B. Christ carried the cross.
- C. The sacrifice of Christ took place at Jerusalem.
- D. Jesus is the Only Begotten Son of God.
- E. God loved the world and willingly sacrificed His son.
- F. Christ was willing to do the will of the Father.