

NT 16: The Good Shepherd — John 9–10

Monte F. Shelley, 8 May 2011

Quotes

- The truth will make you free, but first it will make you miserable.
- Humility is not thinking less of ourselves, but thinking of ourselves less. (C. S. Lewis)
- Long ago ... I resolved that I would permit no man, no matter what his color might be, to narrow and degrade my soul by making me hate him. (Booker T. Washington, 1856-1915)

1. Feast of the Tabernacles (Sukkoth)

Feast or Holy Day	Month/Day	Purpose
Passover	1/14 (Mar-Apr)	Deliverance from Egypt; Passover meal
Weeks (Pentecost)	3/6 (May-Jun)	Thanksgiving (grain harvest)
Day of Atonement	7/10 (Sep-Oct)	Atone for sins, purify temple
Tabernacles	7/15–21	40 years in wilderness; thanksgiving (fruit harvest); live in booths/tents (Mos 2:6)
Dedication (Hanukkah)	9/25 (Dec)	Purification of temple—165 BC

The events of the lesson for last week and this occurred during the annual Feast of Tabernacles, the last of three major annual feasts. The month began with 10 days of repentance, followed by the Day of Atonement. The first and eighth day of the 7 day Feast of Tabernacles were Sabbaths. During the feast, the people were to “dwell in booths” (huts or tents) and “rejoice *before the LORD*” or at the Temple (Lev 23:39–43). The harvest of grapes and other fruits was complete and the people were to rest, rejoice, eat, drink, and tithe their crops. This was a messianic feast pointing to the millennium when the Messiah would come and bring perpetual living water and eternal light to the world.

Prayers: Prayers were offered for rain following 6 dry months and for the resurrection of the dead.

Hosanna Shout: The people chanted Psalm 118 and waved palm branches. The modern hosanna shout (“please save us” or “save now” 118:25) and the waving of handkerchiefs at modern temple dedications help us remember this time.

Pouring Living Water: The priests would draw water from the Pool of Siloam at the end of an 1,800 foot long aqueduct that brought living water from the Gihon Spring inside the city. The water was drawn from “the wells of salvation” (Isa 12:3) while accompanied by flute music. This also represented the waters that would flow from Jerusalem to heal the Dead Sea (Zech 13:1; 14:8; Ezek 47:1–2).

Temple Lights at Night: “Three huge golden candlesticks [75 feet high] in the Temple court which were lit on these occasions” “and there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that did not reflect the light.” ... “Men of piety and good works used to dance before them with burning torches in their hands, singing songs and praises.” It was further said that whoever had not seen the [water drawing ceremony], had never witnessed real joy in his life.” (EJ-Sukkot) “Countless Levites played on harps, lyres, cymbals, trumpets and other musical instruments” (EJ Jr.). (Rona #15)

The lights reminded Israel that God guided Israel in the wilderness by a pillar of fire at night. They symbolized Israel’s role as a light to the Gentiles and to send light and truth to those who walk in darkness (Isa 9:2; 42:6; 49:6).

2. Opinions of Christ (Jn 7)

¹² Some said, He is a good man; others said, ... he deceiveth the people.¹³ ... No man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

If a “prophet ... giveth thee a sign or a wonder ... saying, Let us go after other Gods,” do not listen to him for the Lord is testing you “That prophet ... shall be put to death” (Dt 13:1–5)

¹⁴ Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. ¹⁵ And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

The question relates to training and to who might have been his teacher. (Sense 156)

Where had he been trained? He had not learned under their curriculum; he was not a graduate of their academies; he did not cite rabbinic precedent. (Ogden 404)

¹⁶ Jesus ... [said,] ¹⁷ If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. ... ¹⁹ Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? ... ²³ Ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

18 months earlier Jesus had healed a man by the pool on the Sabbath and told him to take up his bed and walk.

Six months later at Passover, the Jewish leaders would succeed in murdering Jesus.

Ten Commandments	Actions of the Jews
1. No other gods before me	Their traditions became their God. They rejected the Holy One of Israel
2. No graven image	Every man walketh in his own way, & after the image of his own god. (D&C 1:16)
3. Not take the name of the Lord in vain	Swore false oaths in Lord’s name
4. Remember Sabbath day and keep it holy	Focused on avoiding any type of work instead of doing good.
5. Honor thy Father and thy Mother	Released themselves from this duty by the law of corban (Mt 14:4-6)
6. Not kill (murder)	Plotted and consented to Christ’s murder
7. Not commit adultery	A wicked & adulterous generation (Mt 16:1-4)
8. Not steal	Devour widow’s houses and were full of extortion and excess (Mt 23:14, 25)
9. Not bear false witness	Bear false witness against Christ (Mk 14:56, Jn. 8:55)
10. Not covet	Coveted Christ’s knowledge, authority, and popularity (Mk 15:10)

3. If any man thirst, let him come unto me (Jn 7)

³⁷ In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. ³⁸ He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹ (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: ...

The Feast of Tabernacles (a) recalled Israel’s wandering in the wilderness, and (b) celebrated the waters that would flow from Jerusalem to heal the Dead Sea (Zech 13:1; 14:8; Ezek 47:1–2). Thus, while teaching, most likely in the courtyard of the temple, Jesus said he was the source of the water that would flow from that spot and heal the world, thus giving the Old Testament prophecies a symbolic interpretation. (Sense 157)

The Lord Jehovah had proclaimed to ancient Israel: “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” (Isa. 44:3.) “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to

the waters.” (Isa. 55:1.) ... [Christ’s] solemn invitation, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink,” was a plain and open claim of Messiahship. In making it he identified himself as the very Jehovah who had promised drink to the thirsty through an outpouring of the Spirit. ... On each of the eight days of the feast of Tabernacles, as most authorities agree, it was the custom, for the priest as part of the temple service, to take water in golden vessels from the stream of Siloam, which flowed under the temple-mountain, and pour it upon the altar. Then the words of Isaiah were sung: “With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” (Isa. 12:3.) And it was at this very moment of religious climax that Jesus stepped forth and offered draughts of living refreshment which would satisfy the deepest spiritual cravings of the thirsty soul. (Studies, ch 22)

For seven days the priests had drawn water from the pool of Siloam and then poured that water into the silver bowl on the altar while pilgrims chanted “Lord, save now, we beseech thee.” On the last day of the feast, the procession marched around the altar seven times dramatizing the importance of the rite. The Savior’s challenge to come unto him to receive the living waters was a clear statement of His claim that he was the promised awaited messiah. Of this event, R. E. Brown writes: “It was at this solemn moment in the ceremonies on the seventh day that the teacher from Galilee stood up in the temple court to proclaim solemnly that he was the source of living water. Their prayers for water had been answered in a way they did not expect; the feast that contained within itself the promise of the Messiah had been fulfilled.” (MM 16)

⁴⁰ Many of the people ... said, ... this is the Prophet [like unto Moses (Dt 18:15)]

⁴¹ Others said, This is the Christ [=Messiah or anointed one].

¹⁵ The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me [Moses]; unto him ye shall hearken; (Dt 18:15)

But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee [Nazareth]? ⁴² Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh ... out of the town of Bethlehem [of Judea], where David was? ⁴³ So there was a division among the people because of him.

“Jerusalem was the place where the sects (Pharisees and Sadducees) flourished, with few of their followers dwelling outside its vicinity. The masses that made up the towns and villages of the land were known as the *Am haAretz* or the ‘people of the land.’ Uninstructed in the detail of the traditions, they were looked upon as ignorant, common, country folk. The people of the region of Galilee and the countryside of Judea fell short in the eyes of the sects in fulfilling the requirements of the law of God. The scriptural record demonstrates the skeptical view held of the country folk by the religionists, ‘Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? ...’ (John 1:46.) ‘Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.’ (John 7:52.) Yet it was from among the people of the land that Jesus called those who were to be apostles.” (Edward J. Brandt, “Everyday Life in Palestine,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1974, 22)

⁴⁵ Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and ... [said,] Never man spake like this man. ⁴⁷ Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? ⁴⁸ Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? ⁴⁹ But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. ⁵⁰ Nicodemus saith unto them ... ⁵¹ Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? ⁵² They ... said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. ...

4. A woman taken in adultery (Jn 8)

Jesus returned to the temple the next day which was a Sabbath. He sat down and taught the people. Roman soldiers patrolled three sides of the 35 acre temple square. With plenty of Jewish and Roman witnesses, the Pharisees brought to Jesus a “woman taken in adultery” and said Moses commanded us to stone adulterers, “but what sayest thou? ⁶ <They were using this question as a trap> that they might have to accuse him.” (<> = NIV)

How was this question a trap?

If he agreed with Moses, he would (a) he upset the people by advocating the reinstatement of a penalty not supported by the people, or (b) oppose the Roman law that prevented Jews from using capital punishment. If he did not, he would be opposing the Law of Moses.

When you have two bad choices (rock and a hard place; horns of a dilemma), pick the third.

Why didn’t they bring the man also?

Why did the woman commit adultery?

Many assume she voluntarily committed adultery.

Gerald Lund suggests that the Jewish woman had been sold into prostitution as a slave. (Gerald Lund, *Kingdom and the Crown*)

Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. (Mt 5:32)

Their question was whether he would accept the implications of his earlier teachings, that a remarried divorcee, which had been called an adulterous relationship in some instances, should be stoned according to the law of Moses. This may clarify why no male partner is mentioned in the story. (Sense 160).

⁶ But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not*.

The Ten Commandments were written by the finger of God.

Writing was defined as work if it left a permanent mark, but writing in the dust with one’s finger on the Sabbath was OK since it left no mark. This shows Jesus knew their oral tradition. Some believe he wrote ‘stone her’ because of his following words. (MEE 234–235)

⁷ So when they continued asking him, he ... [said,] He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. ⁸ And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

If everyone in the crowd stones the woman, no one will bear responsibility for her death. Here Jesus says, ‘You want me to go to jail for the law of Moses. I am willing to do so, but I want to know which one of you is willing to go with me. (MEE 235)

What were the crimes punishable by death?

Capital crimes included adultery, murder, blasphemy, and rebellion of children against their parents.

Who were the legal judges?

Official tribunals were legally responsible for judgments in cases like this.

Who were the executioners and how did they do it?

The procedure included causing death by [throwing] the convicted person over a cliff (an abandoned stone quarry could be an execution site). That included the participation of one of the witnesses. The second witness threw or placed the “first stone” on the body in a process of burying the convicted. The stoning was the burying, yet depriving the convicted of a mourning chamber. (Rona #15)

[When Jesus said “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,” He was saying in effect,] “Where are your witnesses? Why come to me when you have a procedure for the witnesses to do their legal duty?” Yet, at the same time, He had them examine their own lives (and lusts?). “Where is the witness — without sin, let him cast the first stone?” When they all left, Jesus, the ultimate Judge and Advocate, said, “Neither do I accuse thee, go thy way and sin no more.” Hopelessness and darkness were turned to lighted hope. She was saved. (Rona #15)

Were her accusers adulterers too?

When some scribes and Pharisees asked for a sign, Jesus said, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign.’ (Mt 12:38–39)

Gerald Lund suggests “He who is without *this* sin.” (Gerald Lund, *Kingdom and the Crown*)

Bruce R. McConkie: “[Jesus] was here dealing with men who themselves were guilty, either actually or in their sin-laden hearts, of the same offense charged against the woman; that is, they were in effect adulterers worthy of death according to the terms of the very law they now sought to invoke against the woman.” (DNTC 1:451.)

⁹ They which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

In the Middle East, one is to avoid shame and defend honor. If one claims to be sinless, it will bring him shame. They also turn to the oldest one present. From eldest to youngest they withdraw in humiliation. Jesus writes again in the sand instead of watching the public humiliation of his opponents. Earlier the woman was terrified of dying. Now the Pharisees are angry at Jesus for humiliating them. At great cost, he shifted their hostility from her to himself. She knows that they will be back with a bigger stick and that Jesus will get hurt because of what he did for her. She is the recipient of a costly demonstration of unexpected love that saves her life. (MEE 235–236)

¹⁰ When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? ¹¹ She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. {*And the woman glorified God from that hour, and believed on his name.*} { } = JST

Did Jesus forgive the woman?

Jesus did not condemn the woman or condone the sin. He let the woman and the Pharisees know they were both wrong. (MEE 238)

³ A bruised reed shall he not break, and the ^a smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. (Isa 42:3)

^a IE He will not harm nor hurt the weakest.

<A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;> (NIV Isa 42:3)

²⁴ Thou shalt not commit adultery; and he that committeth adultery, and repenteth not, shall be cast out. ²⁵ But he that has committed adultery and repents with all his heart, and forsaketh it, and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive; ²⁶ But if he doeth it again, he shall not be forgiven, but shall be cast out. ²⁷ Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor, nor do him any harm. (D&C 42:24–27)

5. I am the light of the world (Jn 8)

¹² Jesus ... [said], I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. ...

The day following the Savior’s invitation to come to Him for living water, while Jesus was teaching in the Court of Women (Jn 8:20), he said: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Jn 8:12). Could there be any doubt in the minds of his listeners as to what Jesus was claiming? In the very place where, as part of the lighting ceremony of the Feast, the huge candelabra were lit giving light to “every courtyard in Jerusalem” symbolizing the continuous light of the messianic age, Jesus proclaims that he is that light. Not only the light of Jerusalem, but of all the world. (MM 16)

6. The truth shall make you free (Jn 8)

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; ³² And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. ... ³⁶ If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Who or what does the truth refer to?

The truth shall make you free, ... but first it will make you miserable!

Truth is a name/title of Jesus. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (Jn 14:6)

Danny Ainge story of pro BB player who encouraged him to party and have fun. Later, the man was in a paternity suit and divorce proceedings. Danny said, now who is having fun.

7. Before Abraham was, I Am (Jn 8)

⁵⁶ Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad. ... ⁵⁸ Before Abraham was, ^b I am. ⁵⁹ Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple. ...

^b The term I Am used here in the Greek is identical with the Septuagint usage in Ex. 3:14 which identifies Jehovah. (Cp. also John 4:26.)

‘Moses did not only testify of these things, but also all the holy prophets, from his days even to the days of Abraham. Yea, and behold, Abraham saw of his coming, and was filled with gladness and did rejoice.’ (Hel. 8:16–17.)

‘Abram looked forth and saw the days of the Son of Man, and was glad, and his soul found rest.’ (JST Gen. 15:12.)

8. Jesus heals a man born blind (Jn 9)

¹ As *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth. ² And his disciples asked ..., who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? ³ Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

James E. Faust: The challenge of having handicapped people is not new. Many have questioned why some have such limitations. It was so in the time of Jesus. ... How are the works of God manifested in these, our handicapped brothers and sisters? Surely they are manifested greatly in the loving care and attention given by parents, other family members, friends, and associates. The handicapped are not on trial. Those of us who live free of such limitations are the ones who are on trial. While those with handicaps cannot be measured in the same way as others, many of the handicapped benefit immensely from each accomplishment, no matter how small. (*Reach Up for the Light*, 88-90) **See also story on last page of these notes.**

⁴ I must work the works of him that sent me, {while *I am with you*; the *time cometh when I shall have finished my work, then I go unto the Father.*} ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. ⁶ When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, ⁷ And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

The Pool of Siloam is at the end of Hezekiah's Tunnel, an 1,800 foot long tunnel that brought living water from the Gihon Spring inside the city. The man was sent like the leper Naaman to wash in water. Both had the faith to do so and were healed. (Ogden 419-420)

After he washed his eyes in the same pool where the priest had drawn water for the water drawing ceremony, he came out seeing. Two major symbols of the Feast of Tabernacles, water and light, were present in the miracle. (MM 16)

Jesus then granted sight—light—to the man, first by anointing his eyes and then by sending him to wash in the pool of Siloam. (Siloam means *sent*, corresponding with John the Baptist, who was *sent* from God, Jesus who was *sent* from God, and so forth. All who are sent from God are to give sight and light to the blind, to those who are in darkness.) (Griggs)

The Hebrew word for “sent” is “shiloach.” Water emanating from the Gihon spring filled a pool of water was called the “Pool of Sent,” or “Pool of Shiloach.” The “living” (spring) water was sent through Hezekiah's tunnel to be collected and stored for the people's use. The name of the collection pool has been transliterated into the “Pool of Shiloam.” ... Jesus sent a blind man to the “Pool of Sent” to receive sight by washing his eyes in living water. The “Fountain of Living Waters,” giving sight to the blind man, was sent from God to give us all sight. (Rona #16)

The healing of the man born blind in John 9, was not meant by John to be separated from the stories associated with the Savior's experience in Jerusalem during and after the Feast of Tabernacles recorded John 7-8. Indeed, this miracle was the “sign” that verifies the Savior's admonitions to come unto him for living water (John 7:37-39) and that He is the light of the world (John 8:12). (MM 16)

Why did Christ heal a blind man?

¹⁸ The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, ¹⁹ To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Lk 4:17-19; Isa 61:1-2)

The Lord Omnipotent ... shall come down from heaven ... and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases. ⁶ And he shall cast out devils, or the evil spirits which dwell in the hearts of the children of men. (Mos 3:5-6)

⁸ The neighbours ... said, Is not this he that sat and begged? ... ¹⁰ Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? ¹¹ He ... said, A man ... called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. ¹² Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

9. Pharisees investigate healing of blind man (Jn 9)

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. ¹⁴ And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. ¹⁶ Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

Story of clock high on wall at church to keep members from changing it to match their own watches.

Bruce R. McConkie: “Their Messiah stoops down; he spits on the ground, he makes clay with the spittle; and he anoints the eyes of the blind man with the saliva-filled lump of the dust of the earth. ... There can be little doubt that he is deliberately violating the [rabbinical] law of the Sabbath in two major respects: (1) he made clay, and (2) he applied a healing remedy to an impaired person, which of itself was forbidden, and in addition there was a specific prohibition against the application of saliva to the eyes on the Sabbath. This strange restriction came into being because of a common belief that saliva was a remedy for diseases of the eye.” “The Rabbis had forbidden any man to smear even one of his eyes with spittle on the Sabbath, except in cases of mortal danger. Jesus had not only smeared *both* the man's eyes, but had actually mingled the saliva with clay!” (*The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary*, 3:208, 202.)

¹⁷ They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. ¹⁸ But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. ¹⁹ And they asked them, ... Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? ²⁰ His parents ... and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: ²¹ But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him. ²² These *words* spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. ...

The synagogue was the center of Jewish community, so excommunication cut a person off from many social relationships. (NIV Study)

Neal A. Maxwell: How sad that so many cannot see that to be put out of the secular synagogues for one's belief in Christ is the first step toward being let in the kingdom of God! (*Things As They Really Are*, p. 62.)

²⁴ Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. ²⁵ He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

We → emphatic in Greek

²⁶ Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? ²⁷ He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye also be his disciples? ²⁸ Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. ²⁹ We know that God spake unto Moses: *as for this fellow*, we know not from whence he is.

Test: Easy to believe in dead prophets, but not living prophets.

³⁰ The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened mine eyes. ³¹ Now we know that God heareth not

sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. ³² Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind {*except he be of God.*} ³³ If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. ³⁴ They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

Excommunicated him

10. Spiritual Blindness (Jn 9)

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? ³⁶ He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? ³⁷ And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. ³⁸ And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

³⁹ And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. ⁴⁰ And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? ⁴¹ Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

Blindness is not based on whether a person can or cannot see with their eyes, but whether or not they recognize God's work in their midst. (Sense 163)

Because his blindness was not caused by sin, he could receive light and sight, but those who were blind because of their sins must remain in their darkness. (Griggs)

Healing the blind man → Jesus did the works of God, and helped the blind see the light of day and the Light of the world.

Jesus opens our spiritual eyes as he did these physical eyes.

He opens our eyes and ears that we might see and hear.

11. Old Testament references to shepherds

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest *between* the cherubims, shine forth. (Ps 80:1). Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Amos, and David were shepherds.

¹⁰ The Lord GOD ... ¹¹ shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. (Isa 40:10–11)

¹¹ For thus saith the Lord GOD; ... I ... will both search my sheep, and seek them out. ¹² As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep *that are* scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. ¹³ And I will ... gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. ¹⁴ I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down. ... ¹⁶ I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. (Ezek 34:11–16)

The Good Samaritan and Good Shepherd are similar

* Samaritan is from **h8104=shamar** : *to keep, watch, preserve, support, aid, or tend.* (BDB) or one who does this, e.g., guardian, watchman, keeper, shepherd (1 Sam 17:20)

²³ And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them ... and he shall be their shepherd. (Ezek 34:23)

12. The Lord is my shepherd (Ps 23)

Jews traditionally sing this at the third Sabbath meal

¹ The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want.

Want = HEB *lack, need, be lacking* (BDB)

Shepherd: A widely used metaphor for kings in the ancient Near East. The Lord is the shepherd of Israel (Ps 80:1).

² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

Lie down → content and secure; Oasis= water and green plants

Our country is a dry and thirsty land. Six months in the year we have not rain [Apr/May to Sept/Oct]. During the dry season or droughts, the shepherd must look for water and green pasture.

“Little streams of water have trickled down from the mountains in the north until they have come down to Palestine and made a green pasture and still waters. But between the sheep and this pasture is a field covered with thorns and thistles ... that catch your garments as you go through it, and tear them, so that your arms are bleeding and wounded.” (LM 141-142)

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Palestine is a land of paths. Some of them are winding and lead to green fields and brooks of waters. Others lead to narrow lanes of hedges of thorns and of briars; others to serpent's nests; others to dens of wolves. So the shepherd as to know all these paths and where they lead. ... He leaves his flock resting at noon and goes and finds out where the paths lead to. Often he gets very tired and footsore in going quite a distance and coming back. ... The hireling ... never troubles to find out where the safe and good places are, but takes his chances of leading them through any path that seems easy for himself. (LM 139-140)

Paths of righteousness → secure and prosperous paths (NIV Study) that lead to eternal life (green pastures & still waters)

By day, a shepherd's duties consisted of leading his or her flocks to food and water and protecting the sheep from wild animals and thieves. At night, shepherds often led their sheep into a cave or a "fold," a minicorral often built against the side of a hill, to keep the sheep from straying and to protect them from danger. (Dana M. Pike, "Jesus, the Great Shepherd-King," <http://rsc.byu.edu>)

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

In our language the serpent is [nick named] 'khayal il moat,' which means 'the shadow of death,' because it was through the serpent that the death sentence was pronounced upon man. ... The shepherd ... goes into the valley of the shadow of death and begins knocking down the thorns and the thistles. ... He strikes the serpent with his club and crushes its head with his heel. (LM 147)

Rod: The word 'rod' should have been translated 'club.' ... A bear or lion comes to attack the flock, and the shepherd gives him a blow with his club, which stuns him; then he pulls out his two-edged short sword [or dagger] and he slays him. (LM, 49)

Staff: The staff or shepherd's crook was used to count, inspect, guide, and rescue sheep (NIV Study). [With] the shepherd's staff or crook ... he guides and leads his flock over the rough rocks (LM 107). The shepherd's crook is an insignia of kings, princes, and chieftains. It symbolized the ruler's power and eminence, and also his obligation to maintain order and justice. (Pike)

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

The literal translation should have been, 'Thou hast prepared a table-land.' A pasture land is called with us the sheep's table. [The good shepherd clears the land of enemies (serpents, wolves, ...) and thorns, thistles. He puts barricades in front of caves where wolves hide.] (LM 154)

Eating at one's table was part of a covenant of friendship and protection. The Lord invites us to eat at His table each week.

thou anointest my head with oil;

"Sheep ... sometimes hit their heads against sharp rocks or trees. If we leave them in the sun, their wounds will all fester. So when they are on this table, we ... oil their heads with pure olive oil. ... We begin to pour it on, and we" [say comforting words] (LM 156)

This is also customary treatment of honored guests at a table. my cup runneth over.

We give water out of a cup to sheep that are lame and blind (LM 159). Good shepherds take care of old and injured sheep. Jesus told Peter to "feed my lambs" and "feed my sheep" (→poor and needy) not pasture them.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Sheepdogs ("goodness and mercy") followed to prevent sheep from being left behind and to protect them from wild animals (Gower, 141). "The LORD will go before you; and ... will be your <rear guard>." (Isa 52:12)

13. I am the good shepherd (Jn 10)

¹ He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ² But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

Porter → <watchman> or gate/door keeper [Strongs]

This implies several shepherds were keeping their flocks of sheep in the sheepfold.

The sheepfold was adequate for keeping sheep in, not thieves out. Jesus identified Himself as "the door," the means by which the flock entered the fold for protection.

"The shepherd was famed for his devotion to his sheep. At night several flocks would be driven into the sheepfold, an enclosure with high walls topped with thorns to prevent wolves from leaping in. During the night each shepherd took a turn guarding the sheep by lying across the open entrance, literally becoming the gate, while his fellows went home to sleep. If a wild animal, driven by hunger, managed to leap over the walls, the shepherd would give his life if necessary to protect the sheep. When the other shepherds came in the morning to claim their flocks, each sheep recognized its masters call. For a sheep to be kept safe, it had to follow its master closely as he led it to good pasture." (New Testament Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual, 1989, 18)

Sheep were vital to the Jews because the products derived from them: meat, wool, skins, and milk. (Ogden 424)

James E. Talmage: Dummelow's *Commentary* says, on John 10:2: 'To understand the imagery, it must be remembered that Eastern folds are large open enclosures, into which several flocks are driven at the approach of night. There is only one

door, which a single shepherd guards, while the others go home to rest. In the morning the shepherds return, are recognized by the doorkeeper, call their flocks round them, and lead them forth to pasture.' (*Jesus the Christ*, 391.)

⁴ And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. ⁵ And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

⁶ This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not. ...

⁷ Then said Jesus unto them again, ... I am the door of the sheep.

In ancient Israel, as it is today, sheep are kept within a sheepfold. Often dens or caves were utilized by shepherds as sheep folds. The shepherds would take rocks and enclose the front of the den or cave so that there is an opening about the size of a door. Then after corralling the sheep within the fold, the shepherd would sleep in the door way. In this way, the shepherd could protect his sheep from an enemy, whether predator or thief. (MM 16)

Other ancient manuscripts have *shepherd* instead of *door*. (Sense 164)

⁸ All that ever came before me {*who testified not of me*} are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

The modern Jewish Tallith (prayer shawl) is a garment like that used in the ancient temple. The one worn over the clothing is usually made from wool. It may have a significance in wrapping or covering ourselves in the Lamb of God. The word for lamb is Taleh and a female lamb is a Talitha, hence the name of the garment - Tallith. It has four markings that denote its religious meaning. The Tallith is a symbol of the Temple and is always used at a wedding. "... customary for the groom to cover the bride's head with his Tallith as a symbol of sheltering her; ... a *huppah* constructed of a Tallith supported ... by friends of the bride and groom ... erected ... outside, or at least in a spot open to the sky, underneath the stars" (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) (Rona #15)

¹² But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. ¹³ The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

¹⁵ As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

Who did the Jews think "other sheep" referred to?

Then "other sheep" might have referred to Diaspora Jews (Jews living abroad) as well as perhaps Gentiles and Samaritans. Also includes Nephites. (Sense 165)

²² And they understood me not, for they supposed it had been the Gentiles; for they understood not that the Gentiles should be converted through their preaching. (3 Ne 15:22)

¹⁷ Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. ¹⁸ No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have ^c power

to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.
^c GR authority, full power.

¹⁹ There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. ²⁰ And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? ²¹ Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

“Jesus taught the multitudes in the temple, ‘I am the door of the sheep’ (Jn 10:7), and, ‘I am the good shepherd’ (Jn 10:14). He thus indicated that He was the fulfillment of David’s messianic Psalm 23, ‘The Lord is my Shepherd,’ and of Isaiah’s messianic words, ‘He shall feed his flock like a shepherd’ (Isa 40:11). Jesus was saying that as the Messiah, He had the power to care for and watch over all His ‘sheep,’ for how could any ordinary man claim to be King David’s ‘shepherd?’” (Jonathan H. Stephenson, “I Am He,” *Ensign*, Apr 1999, 10)

The statement “I am the good shepherd” would have been a clear reference to Psalm 23 and other Old Testament passages. His clear reference to this psalm constituted a claim to his divinity (“The Lord is my shepherd”), and this identification with Deity was not missed by the Pharisees. Some argued that he was a demoniac, while others asked if a demoniac could heal a blind person. As the division grew more heated in succeeding days, some of the Jews again displayed their understanding of the matter, though not their acceptance of his claim, by taking up stones to stone him. (Griggs)

14. The unbelief of the Jews (Jn 10)

²² It was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

The feast of the dedication [Hanukkah] took place in the winter of the last year of the Savior’s mortal life.

²³ And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch. ²⁴ Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

²⁵ Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. ²⁶ But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father’s hand. ³⁰ I and *my* Father are one.

³¹ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

³² Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

³³ The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

³⁴ Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? ³⁵ If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; ³⁶ Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? ³⁷ If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. ³⁸ But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.

³⁹ Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, ⁴⁰ And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. ⁴¹ And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. ⁴² And many believed on him there.

15. Why couldn’t the Pharisees hear Christ’s voice?

a. Interpretation of the scriptures

They judged according to their oral traditions or interpretations (Sabbath day traditions, blasphemy, ...). Since Christ broke their traditions, He was a sinner and God did not work through sinners.

They quoted scripture to justify their actions. For example, no prophet comes from Galilee, blasphemy, as descendants of Abraham we are a chosen people.

Pharisees knew the scriptures, but not the voice of the Lord.

b. Belief that they were a chosen people

By establishing a chosen people, the Lord is able to gather enough people and resources to build Temples. It also allows Him to assemble sufficient numbers to establish a priestly class who can attend to ordinances continually. It allows God to organize a culture which can produce and preserve documents. Chosen people enable God to accomplish with a group what He could never accomplish with individuals. Pooling resources and talents to perpetuate His divine projects is one inevitable result of the Lord choosing a people. (Snuffer 42)

EG humanitarian, welfare, BYU,

The Lord ... establishes a system in which the ‘chosen people’ can continue to perpetuate both their true and false traditions, while also providing the means for truth to be kept alive by the ‘few, who are humble followers of Christ. ... Nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err because they are taught by the precepts of men’ (2 Ne 28:14). ... Those who will receive Christ in any generation do so because they hear and recognize His words. Anyone who will not believe in His words, no matter who He sends to speak them, will not believe in Christ or His Father. Those who trust only institutional sources of truth, whether they are Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, or Latter-day Saint, believe in an institution, and do not believe in Christ. The ability to individually recognize His words distinguishes those who are saved from those who are lost. (Snuffer 70–71)

c. Religious hierarchy

Jesus was not trained for the ministry in their accepted schools of learning. He did not quote their learned wise men to support His teachings. He was not wealthy. He was not a priest and had no position of authority in their religious and political hierarchy.

For [the Pharisees and Sadducees], the institutional trappings of those who controlled the Temple site, presided at the official functions, wore the priestly garb, and collected the tithes, offerings and sacrifices were all that mattered. That alone defined power and authority. Christ paid tithing to them. Christ acted subordinate to them. Christ never challenged their right to preside. To the faithful members of that religious tradition Christ was unauthorized to teach, lead or initiate anyone into a higher order. Indeed, Christ was a threat to the established order of things. ... He ministered among the most wicked of men. ... **These people were wicked because of their religion.** They were blind to what Jesus really taught. They had an order in their society they thought Christ threatened. He was not a bona fide source of anything. He was an outsider, and interloper. Leaders worried He was threat and that he would cause a schism among their people. They did not want a deceiver to lead them away. (Snuffer 64)

d. Natural man desires (fame, money, power, lusts of flesh)

Pharisees, scribes, and Sadducees enjoyed their money, power, and fame. Many probably also enjoyed the lusts of the flesh.

e. How does this pattern apply to us today?

Ezra Taft Benson: Yes, within the Church today there are tares among the wheat and wolves within the flock. As President Clark stated, "The ravaging wolves are amongst us, from our own membership, and they, more than any others, are clothed in sheep's clothing because they wear the habiliments of the priesthood. . . . We should be careful of them. . . ." (Era, May 1949, p. 268. See also, Conference Report, April 1949, p. 163.)

The wolves amongst our flock are more numerous and devious today than when President Clark made this statement.

President McKay has said that "the Church is little, if at all, injured by persecution and calumnies from ignorant, misinformed or malicious enemies. A greater hindrance to its progress comes from faultfinders, shirkers, commandment-breakers, and apostate cliques within its own ecclesiastical and quorum groups." (Era, Dec 1967, 35. See also, Conference Report, Oct 1967, 9.)

Not only are there apostates within our midst, but there are also apostate doctrines that are sometimes taught in our classes and from our pulpits and that appear in our publications. And these apostate precepts of men cause our people to stumble. (CR, Apr 1969)

Hear his voice → receive the Holy Ghost

In Christ's day, the test for His generation was whether they would choose truth and light from a teacher who came bearing nothing but the truth. He controlled no synagogue, was not authorized to minister in the Temple because He was not a Levite. He did not hold any official position among the well established hierarchy, did not have wealth, political position, nor traditional learning. But He came with the power of the Spirit. When He spoke words of truth those who heard could feel within themselves the validity of His message. These faithful followers were not intimidated by the opposition which gathered against them. They were not deterred by threats from men. They relied on the Spirit. . . . Well intentioned and devout followers of a false tradition rejected Him solely because they trusted in the traditions handed down to them. They wrongly believed God would never send someone to tell them anything important unless he were to occupy a position of authority among them. And so they rejected our Lord because He was not in the hierarchy. With that rejection they also forfeited their own salvation. . . . He challenged those who killed Him to leave their false beliefs behind. They did not. Instead, they killed Him to silence His criticism and to put an end to His example. They failed. He triumphed. (Snuffer 78–79)

Why did Christians reject Joseph Smith?

Similar pattern when Christ restored His church to Joseph Smith. Many latter-day Pharisees (devout Christians) rejected modern prophets because of their traditions based on the Old and New Testaments. Protestants, like the Pharisees, studied the scriptures intensely! Catholics trusted in those with authority in their Church hierarchy.

People who join the church bring baggage from their religious and cultural traditions as did Jesus' disciples.

Conclusion

If Christ came today, would I hear His voice?

Quotes

Gordon B. Hinckley: “Even those who transgress, we want you to know that we love you. We cannot condone the sin, but we love the sinner.” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 89)

James E. Faust: The challenge of having handicapped people is not new. Many have questioned why some have such limitations. It was so in the time of Jesus. ... How are the works of God manifested in these, our handicapped brothers and sisters? Surely they are manifested greatly in the loving care and attention given by parents, other family members, friends, and associates. The handicapped are not on trial. Those of us who live free of such limitations are the ones who are on trial. While those with handicaps cannot be measured in the same way as others, many of the handicapped benefit immensely from each accomplishment, no matter how small.

Neal A. Maxwell: How sad that so many cannot see that to be *put out* of the secular synagogues for one’s belief in Christ is the first step toward being *let in* the kingdom of God! (*Things As They Really Are*, 62.)

Sources:

- LM = Lydia Mountford, *The King of the Shepherds and His Psalm*
- Pike = Dana M. Pike, “Jesus, the Great Shepherd-King,” <http://rsc.byu.edu>
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- NT-I = New Testament Institute manual, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus & his Apostles*, <http://institute.lds.org>
- Ogden= Ogden and Skinner, *Verse by Verse*
- MEE = Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*
- Sense = Holzapfel and Wayment, *Making Sense of the New Testament*
- JWNT=Holzapfel, *Jehovah and the World of the New Testament*
- BTW = John Bytheway, *Of Pigs, Pearls & Prodigals*
- P-UP = Donald and Jay Parry, *Understanding the Parables of Jesus Christ*
- SEB = Susan Easton Black, *400 Questions and Answers About the Life and Times of Jesus Christ*
- BRM-MM = Bruce R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah 2:400*
- Lachs= Samuel Tobias Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* [online at <http://books.google.com>]
- Pinegar= Pinegar and Allen, *Teachings and Commentaries on the New Testament*
- DNTC = Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*
- KJV King James Version of the Bible.
- NIV = New International Version of the Bible
- TPJS = *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*
- SOED = Shorter Oxford English Dictionary
- OED = Oxford English Dictionary
- BDB = *Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
- Bauer = Walter Bauer, *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*
- SOSL = Trumbull, *Studies in Oriental Social Life*.

- EJ = *Encyclopedia Judaica*
- Rona= Daniel Rona, www.israelrevealed.com/comp-sup-r.htm.
- DBlog= Donna Nielsen Blog, donna-connections.blogspot.com/
- DBI = *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*
- MM = Meridian Magazine, Gospel Doctrine, www.ldsmag.com
- beardall2000.com/gospdoct.shtml; www.gospeldoctrine.com/
- <http://scriptures.byu.edu>

Works of God were manifest

“I had never understood this scripture. Jesus healed the blind man, so the works of God were manifest. But what about all those who are not healed? What about my sister with disabilities, who had died when I was a child? What about Cameron, our home teacher’s son who had cerebral palsy and was in a wheelchair?

“As I thought of Cameron, scenes flooded my mind. We are sitting on our back porch with our home teachers. Cameron is in his wheelchair. He is bearing his testimony, slowly, painstakingly — fighting the obstinate, uncooperative muscles in his face.

“I know God loves me, he says. I love God. It takes much effort, much time before he is finished. My husband, Van, leans forward.

“Cameron,’ he says earnestly, ‘you are improving so much on your speaking. It is so much clearer. I can understand every word!’

“Cameron beams with pride. I see my husband’s tender, caring face, and I wonder: Are not the works of God made manifest?

“Dennis, Cameron’s father and our home teacher, relates in sacrament meeting the story of how Cameron got his first wheelchair from caring members of their ward. I see Cameron’s joy and gratitude. Again the thought: Are not the works of God made manifest?

“At twelve, Cameron is old enough to pass the sacrament. One of the brethren in our ward has designed and fitted his wheelchair with a special tray. The bread and water are placed on his tray by members of his Aaronic Priesthood quorum. He wheels to the end of the pew, where a member lifts the tray to partake of the sacrament. Are not the works of God made manifest?

“I see Cameron, my sister, and others I have known who have disabilities in mind or body. Others carry them; others are their arms, their legs, their minds. I see these same individuals with disabilities, giving others gifts of love and hope. I see the works of God made manifest for them and by them.” (Ruth Cosby, “Cameron’s Picture,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1994, 48)