

## “Looking Beyond the Mark”

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Let me tell you a story that begins in 1907 when a wealthy Englishman, the fifth Earl of Carnarvon,<sup>1</sup> took up residence in a hotel in Cairo, Egypt. Lord Carnarvon was seriously injured in a car accident and moved from southern England, hoping that Egypt’s arid climate would help him recover. He quickly grew bored, so he took up an interest in archaeology, as one does in Egypt. Lord Carnarvon approached a well-known but unemployed Egyptologist, Howard Carter, and proposed a partnership. Carter would oversee the digging, and Carnarvon would provide the funding.

After years of digging in various locations in Egypt with some success, they decided to search the Valley of the Kings for the tomb of King Tutankhamun. Eight-year-old Tutankhamun had come to the throne of Egypt in about 1330 B.C., when Egypt was at the height of its power and wealth. Ten years later, he died unexpectedly.<sup>2</sup> He was known to have been buried in the Valley of the Kings,<sup>3</sup> but his tomb had never been located.

Carter and Carnarvon spent five years searching the valley for Tutankhamun’s tomb. Each year, they set up base camp in the same location and then searched in a methodical way throughout the Valley of the Kings. Eventually Carnarvon ran out of money, interest, or both. He informed Carter they’d have to stop. Carter negotiated for one more season of funding.

Carter realized that there was only one place remaining in the Valley of the Kings where they hadn’t yet searched — under their own base camp. Carter directed workers to begin digging there. Within a few days, they found the first steps leading down to Tutankhamun’s tomb.<sup>4</sup>

In late 1922, Carter peered into the antechamber of the tomb of Tutankhamun. There was gold everywhere. It took nearly three months to catalog everything before they finally opened the actual sealed burial chamber on February 16, 1923 — 100 years ago. This was the most famous archeological find of the 1900s.

This story illustrates what can happen when people focus on things in the distance at the expense of what is directly in front of them. When our eyeballs are too short, we become hyperopic or farsighted. This makes it so that things that are close are out of focus. We often take close things for granted because they are so familiar. In the Carter and Carnarvon story, the consequence of focusing distantly was simply a few extra years of frustrating work. However, if we are spiritually hyperopic, the consequences are far worse, as prophesied by the Book of Mormon prophet Jacob.

Jacob foresaw that the people in Jerusalem at the time of Christ “were a stiffnecked people; and they despised the words of plainness ... and sought for things that they could not understand. Wherefore, because of their blindness,

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<sup>1</sup> George Edward Stanhope Molyneux Herbert

<sup>2</sup> A CT scan done in 2005 indicated that King Tut may have suffered a compound fracture of one of his leg bones, perhaps leading to an infection and death. Many believe he had fallen from his chariot and broken his leg.

<sup>3</sup> The Valley of the Kings is located across the river from the modern town of Luxor and most of the New Kingdom pharaohs of Egypt were buried there. Most of those tombs were found and robbed in antiquity, but Tutankhamun’s had eluded discovery.

<sup>4</sup> Zahi Hawass, *Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs* (2005); Nicholas Reeves, *The Complete Tutankhamun: The King, the Tomb, the Royal Treasure* (2005); Nicholas Reeves and Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Valley of the Kings: Tombs and Treasures of Ancient Egypt’s Royal Burial Site* (2008)

which blindness came by looking beyond the mark, they [stumbled].”<sup>5</sup> Looking beyond the mark was the manifestation of their spiritual hyperopia. As a result, they missed the Savior of the world.

In our day, we must also guard against spiritual hyperopia. If we succumb to it, we can miss the blessings that come from Jesus Christ. We need to rely “wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.”<sup>6</sup> Thinking that there is a need for something beyond what Jesus Christ offers diminishes the scope and power of His infinite Atonement in our lives. We divert our attention from the ultimate “source [to which we should] look for a remission of [our] sins.”<sup>7</sup>

What are some things that are close at hand and easily accessible that we might take for granted or overlook because we’re looking beyond the mark? We may be casual about Church attendance, prayer, and scripture study. We may underestimate the blessing of having a living prophet on the earth to guide us because he is so familiar and his words are so accessible.

I pray that you’ll treasure what is close at hand so that you can receive God’s blessings. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is Christ’s Church on the earth. It’s available to all. You need not search far to find a guru who will tell you the path to happiness. You’ll find it right where you are. I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that His Church has been restored to the earth, enabling saving and exalting ordinances. I promise that as you enter and remain on the covenant path and come unto Christ, you will be able to “dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness.”<sup>8</sup> That happiness is right where you are. It’s not in the far distance. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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<sup>5</sup> [Jacob 4:14](#)

<sup>6</sup> [2 Nephi 31:19](#)

<sup>7</sup> [2 Nephi 25:26](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Mosiah 2:41](#)