

# Defining a Prophet

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And How the Savior worked with Them

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## **Table of Contents**

<b><i>Defining a Prophet Part One</i></b> .....	3
Chapter One: Defining a Prophet.....	4
A Type and Shadow.....	6
A Repairer of the Breach.....	8
A Light of Christ.....	10
Give Heed to the Word of Prophecy.....	11
A Watchman .....	12
Chapter Two: The Ordination of a Prophet .....	13
The Gate.....	14
Authority to Ordain Priesthood .....	15
The False Gate.....	17
False Prophets, Teachers, and Antichrists .....	21
The Righteousness of a Prophet .....	23
Faith of a Prophet .....	23
Hope of a Prophet.....	25
Love of a Prophet.....	26
Chapter Three: The Prophet and the Church.....	30
Head of the Church .....	31
One Head, One Prophet.....	32
Chapter Four: Defining a Seer.....	36
Chapter Five: The One Servant .....	39
Conclusion: The High Calling of the Prophets.....	46
<b><i>Defining a Prophet Part Two</i></b> .....	47
Chapter Six: How the Savior worked with the Prophets.....	48
Chapter Seven: Strength to Break our Bonds .....	51
Chapter Eight: Restored to Innocence and Protected in the Kingdom of God.....	55
Chapter Nine: Comforted and Everlasting Consolation.....	62
Chapter Ten: Nourished with Everlasting Life .....	68
Chapter Eleven: Directs our Steps to a better Land of Promise .....	72

Chapter Twelve: By Small Means, God Brings about Great things, even Zion .....	77
Conclusion: How the Savior Worked with the Prophets .....	88



# Defining a Prophet

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*Part One*

## Chapter One: Defining a Prophet

In order to understand the high calling of the prophets, it is first critical to apprehend and understand what a prophet is. The 1828 Webster's Dictionary defines the word "prophet" as "one that foretells future events; a predictor; a foreteller. In Scripture, a person illuminated, inspired or instructed by God to announce future events; as Moses, Elijah, David, Isaiah, etc. An interpreter; one that explains or communicates sentiments. One who pretends to foretell; an imposter; as a false prophet." The Scriptures however testify that a prophet is more than just one who foretells of future events, but also one who testifies of Christ, sees into the past, and gains insight to the nature of God and His spiritual creation. Perhaps a better definition of a prophet is an interpreter or mediator between God and man.

Turning again to the Webster Dictionary, we read that an interpreter is "one that explains or expounds; an expositor; as an interpreter of the Scriptures," or as "one who renders the words of one language in words of corresponding signification in another," whereas a mediator is "one that interposes between parties at variance for the purpose of reconciling them." For an example of a mediator, we only need to look to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."<sup>1</sup>

In Deuteronomy, chapter eighteen, Moses spake to the people of Israel concerning the advent of the Great Mediator, who was Christ, saying that Jesus would be a prophet of God like unto Moses. In particular, Moses explained that because the Israelites did not desire to hear the voice of God or to witness His power firsthand at Mount Horeb, God would send His Only Begotten Son in the meridian of time to give the Jews the word of the Lord. Please read the following verses from Deuteronomy 18:15-19:

**18:15** The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet [Jesus Christ]<sup>2</sup> from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, **like unto me**;<sup>3</sup> unto him ye shall hearken; **18:16** According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. **18:17** And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.

**18:18** I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put ***my words in his mouth***; and he shall speak unto them ***all*** that I shall command him. **18:19** And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, **I will require it of him.**"

Moses's testimony helps to give light and understanding to what a prophet is, for he said that God would give *His words* to His Only Begotten and that Jesus would speak them to the people. In the gospel of John, we read..."For I [Jesus] have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is *life*

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5-6

<sup>2</sup> **Note:** all bracketed words [] are the statement of the author.

<sup>3</sup> **Note:** all emboldened, italicized, and or underlined words, are added for emphasis

*everlasting*; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak...For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.<sup>1</sup>

In the Scriptures from John, we witness that Jesus truly was a mediator between God and man as He gave mankind all the words which He had received from His Father. John the Baptist testified of Christ, saying... “He who cometh from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he who cometh from *heaven* is above all. And what he hath *seen and heard* [in heaven], that he testifieth; and but few men receive his testimony.<sup>2</sup>” Thereby God gave mankind a commandment following Jesus’s baptism, saying from heaven...“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him.<sup>3</sup>” Not only is Jesus the mediator of the new covenant because of His great and eternal sacrifice, but He is also a witness of what a prophet does, which is to reveal the truth of heaven and the will of God to the children of men through the power of the Holy Ghost. Please read concerning the word of prophecy from 2 Peter 1:16-21:

“**1:16** For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. **1:17** For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a **voice to him from the excellent glory**, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **1:18** And this voice which came from heaven **we heard**, when we were with him in the holy mount. **1:19** We have therefore a more sure knowledge of the word of prophecy, to which word of prophecy ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts; **1:20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scriptures is given of any private will of man. **1:21** 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.”

Peter explained that the *word* of prophecy is similar to a light shining in a dark place until the dawning of the sun, or in other words until the return of Jesus Christ in glory. It is important for mankind to take heed of this word for we read in Isaiah and in the Doctrine and Covenants that... “darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people... and the whole world lieth in sin, and groaneth under the darkness and under the bondage of sin; and by this you may know they are under the bondage of sin, because they *come not unto me*; for whoso cometh not unto me *is under the bondage of sin*; and whoso receiveth not my voice *is not acquainted* with my voice, and is not of me; and by this you may know the righteous from the wicked, and that the whole world groaneth under sin and darkness even now.<sup>4</sup>”

Without that light which is the word of prophecy, how could any man be acquainted with the voice of the Lord and be liberated from the bondage of sin? “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.<sup>5</sup>” John

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<sup>1</sup> John 12:49-50 and John 17:8

<sup>2</sup> John 3:32

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 3:46

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 60:2 and DC 83:7f-i

<sup>5</sup> John 8:12



testified that Jesus was the Word and that He was the light and life of men, saying... “Brethren, this is the testimony which we give of that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us).<sup>1</sup>”

What then is the word of prophecy other than the testimony of Jesus Christ, or in other words the testimony of life? For we read in the book of Revelation that...“the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,<sup>2</sup>” and in the book of John, Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, *but by me*.<sup>3</sup>” It is important to understand that it is through the words of prophecy that mankind can come to the knowledge of their Redeemer, who is Christ the Lord, and thereby receive the words of eternal life. “Behold, I say unto you, that *none* of the prophets have written, nor prophesied, save they have spoken concerning this Christ.<sup>4</sup>”

In Colossians, chapter one, Paul profoundly described Jesus as the visible image of the invisible God. In this, we see that the very life of Christ was the “Word of God” which was made manifest in the flesh so that the children of men might know the path to follow in order to receive eternal life. While Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant through His blood, He is also the Interpreter of God. Instead of interpreting a particular language of man however, Jesus interpreted the spiritual will of the Father in the flesh by demonstrating and expounding upon what man might become, which is a child of God, and how they might enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. “But as many as received him [Jesus], to them gave he power to become the sons of God; only to them who believe on his name.<sup>5</sup>”

## **A Type and Shadow**

In the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses told the people that God would raise up a prophet like unto himself, but perhaps the more correct way to phrase the Scripture is that God rose up Moses like unto Christ. Paul explained in the third chapter of Galatians that whereas Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant, Moses was the mediator of the law. Thus it was Moses who was the type and shadow of Jesus rather than Jesus being a type of Moses, and in this shadow we can start to understand what a prophet truly is.

Following Israel’s exodus out of the land of Egypt, the Lord God called on Moses to gather Israel together that He might speak with them from Mount Horeb, saying...“Gather me the people together, and I will make them *hear my words*, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.<sup>6</sup>” After the Lord descended upon the mountain in a midst of fire however, we read that Moses stood between God and the people for they were sore afraid of the

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<sup>1</sup> 1 John 1:1-2

<sup>2</sup> Revelation 19:10

<sup>3</sup> John 14:6

<sup>4</sup> Jacob 5:19

<sup>5</sup> John 1:12

<sup>6</sup> Deuteronomy 4:10

awesome and powerful presence of the Lord. Please read the words of Moses from Deuteronomy 5:4-6, 23-33:

“**5:4** The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, **5:5** (I stood between the Lord and you at that time, **to show you the word of the Lord**; for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount,) saying, **5:6** I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

**5:23** And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; **5:24** And ye said, Behold, the Lord our God hath showed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire; we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.

**5:25** Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God **any more**, then we shall die. **5:26** For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?<sup>1</sup> **5:27** Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and **speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee**; and we will hear it, and do it.

**5:28** And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee; they have well said all that they have spoken. **5:29** Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!

**5:30** Go say to them, Get you into your tents again. **5:31** But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it. **5:32** Ye shall observe to do therefore as the Lord your God hath commanded you; ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. **5:33** Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.”

While the people of Israel spoke well, it is apparent that they did not possess a right heart within them that they would fear God and keep His commandments. Paul wrote in Hebrews concerning Israel, saying... “Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will *hear his voice*, harden not your hearts, as in the *provocation*, in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, they do always *err in their heart*; and they have not known my ways...For some, when they had heard, did provoke.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Answer: Exodus 3:2-4 when Moses saw the burning bush he did not turn away, but went toward it, also found in Acts 7:30-32

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 3:7-10 and 16

Rather than commune directly with the Father and receive the words of Life, for the law of Moses does not bring salvation [read Mosiah 8:3-5], the people desired and requested that Moses be both a mediator and an interpreter between God and man. After the peoples' request, God called Moses up to the mountain to give him the everlasting covenant, but the children of Israel...“soon forgot his [God's] works; they waited not for his counsel; but *lusted exceedingly* in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them *their request*; but sent *leanness* into their soul,<sup>1</sup>” meaning that God gave the people a harsh schoolmaster, which was the law of Moses, instead of the words of eternal life because the people desired it. Please read the following Scripture from Psalms 106:19-25:

**“106:19** They made a calf in Horeb, and worshiped the molten image. **106:20** Thus they *changed their glory* into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. **106:21** They forgot God their savior, which had done great things in Egypt; **106:22** Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea.

**106:23** Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen *stood before him in the breach*, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them. **106:24** Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word; **106:25** But murmured in their tents, and **hearkened not unto the *voice* of the Lord.”**

## **A Repairer of the Breach**

In the fourteenth chapter of Numbers, the Lord commanded Moses to speak to Israel after they had built the golden calf, saying... “Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you...which have murmured against me, doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein...And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness...and ye shall know *my breach of promise.*”<sup>2</sup> It was because the people sinned that the promise of God to gather Israel to the land of their inheritance was breached, causing a spiritual separation between the Lord and the people. Thus the responsibility was then laid upon Moses to be an intermediary between them, for while it is God's will to present the words of life, He cannot dwell in unholy temples.

It was Moses' charge, and therefore the duty of a prophet, to stand in the breach and to repair the break by acting as an interpreter for God until the Day Star arose... “Till we, in the unity of the faith, all come to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”<sup>3</sup> The responsibility that was given to Moses was also a type of Jesus Christ, as it is only through the gift and grace of the Holy Messiah that both sin and death are overcome so that all mankind will stand before the bar of God to be judged according to our works. Just as there is no way for the children of men to overcome the grave and come back into the presence of the Father on their own because of our disobedience, there is no way for mankind to know of Jesus Christ and the great plan of redemption except by the word of prophecy. In Mormon, chapter four, Moroni wrote:

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 106:13-15

<sup>2</sup> Numbers 14:29-30, 33-34

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 4:13

**4:70** But behold, I will shew unto you a God of miracles, even the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and it is that same God who created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. **4:71** Behold, he created Adam; and by Adam came the fall of man. And because of the fall of man, came Jesus Christ, even the Father and the Son; and because of Jesus Christ came the redemption of man.

**4:72** And because of the redemption of man, which came by Jesus Christ, they are **brought back into the presence of the Lord**; yea, this is wherein all men are redeemed, because the death of Christ bringeth to pass the resurrection, which bringeth to pass a redemption from an endless sleep, from which sleep all men shall be awakened by the power of God, when the trump shall sound; **4:73** And they shall come forth, both small and great, and all shall stand before his bar, being **redeemed and loosed** from this eternal band of death, which death is a temporal death; **4:74** And then cometh the judgment of the Holy One upon them; and then cometh the time that he that is filthy, shall be filthy still, and he that is righteous, shall be righteous still; he that is happy, shall be happy still; and he that is unhappy, shall be unhappy still.”

It is imperative to understand that because of sin, mankind was both spiritually and temporally separated from the Father, but because of Jesus Christ, every man, woman, and child, whether they be good or evil, will be resurrected to stand before the judgment bar of God. However, how can man be judged unless there was a punishment affixed and how can there be a punishment affixed without a just law given? “Wherefore he [the Lord God] hath given a law; and where there is no law given there is no punishment; and where there is no punishment, there is no condemnation... Therefore God gave unto them [Adam and Eve, i.e. mankind] commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption, that they should not do evil, the penalty thereof being a second death... For on such the plan of redemption could have *no power*, for the works of justice could not be destroyed, according to the supreme goodness of God. But God did call on men, in the name of his Son, (this being the plan of redemption which was laid,) saying: If ye will repent, and harden not your hearts, then will I have mercy upon you, through mine only begotten Son. Therefore, whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy through mine only begotten Son, unto a remission of his sins; and these shall enter into my rest.<sup>1</sup>”

In order for the children of men to have claim on mercy, they must first believe in Jesus Christ and keep His commandments. Nevertheless, how can man believe in whom they have not heard and...“how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?”<sup>2</sup> Thus it has behoved God to call upon His servants, the prophets, to stand between Him and mankind in order to speak the Word of Truth and to repair the breach of sin until the dawning of the Son. “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.<sup>3</sup>”

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Nephi 6:51-52 and Alma 9:52-55

<sup>2</sup> Romans 10:14-15

<sup>3</sup> 2 Peter 1:21

## A Light of Christ

Throughout the Book of Mormon and the Old Testament, the Lord continually sent prophets to testify of Christ and to declare repentance unto the people so that they might know the will of God concerning them and that they might choose to follow the example of His Beloved Son. Jesus told the Nephites that... “all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have testified of me.<sup>1</sup>” Through the prophets, the light of the Gospel has shined forth and has been made known to the children of men, for without the light and the hope of immortality... “no man hath seen, nor can see, unto whom no man can approach...<sup>2</sup>” our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The apostle John bore record of John the Baptist, who was a prophet of God, that he... “came into the world *for a witness*, to bear witness of the *light*, to bear record of the *gospel* through the Son, unto all, that through him men might believe. He was not that light, but came to bear witness of that Light, which was the *true light*.<sup>3</sup>” From the very foundation of the world, holy men have been constrained by the power of the Holy Ghost to speak and bear record of Jesus Christ so that mankind might see that Jesus is the only and true light which leads to God the Father. It is only through following His light that we can receive the gift of eternal life and thereby fulfill the will of God concerning us. The Lord therefore has not ceased to make the light of the Gospel known to man, and this so that we might understand the love and grace of God, which is... “made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and that brought life and immortality to light through the gospel;<sup>4</sup>” and so that we might always see the path we ought to walk while in this life. Please read the following from Hebrews 1:1-3:

“**1:1** God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, **1:2** Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; **1:3** Who being the *brightness of his glory*, and the *express image of his person*, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”

As Jesus is the express image of God and shows forth the brightness of God’s glory, the prophets have strived to repair the breach between the Lord and the children of men by bearing witness of the Son and calling them to true repentance. While the world has often thought of a prophet as one who foretells of future events, the Scriptures have explained that a prophet is one who interprets the will of God and bears record of the light of Christ. “For behold, my brethren, it is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night...Wherefore I beseech you, brethren, that ye should search diligently in the light of Christ, that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ.<sup>5</sup>” Please read the following from a sermon given by Apostle Arthur Oakman:

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<sup>1</sup> 3 Nephi 9:62

<sup>2</sup> 1 Timothy 6:16

<sup>3</sup> John 1:7-9

<sup>4</sup> 2 Timothy 1:10

<sup>5</sup> Moroni 7:13 and 18

*Did you notice the language of saint Peter? “We have a more sure knowledge of the word of prophecy, to which word of prophecy ye do well that ye **take heed**, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” Our Lord Jesus said... “I am the seed and the offspring of David, the bright and the morning star.<sup>1</sup>” And it was the Apostle Peter’s anxiety that the saints of God give heed to the divine word, because that **divine word** has the power to create the image of the Lord Jesus Christ in the soul that steadily contemplates it. That’s why he urged us to give heed to the word of prophecy as unto a light which shineth unto a dark place.*

*It is to be regretted that many people look at the word of prophecy with the idea of finding signs, times and seasons, and foretelling future events. Prophecy is only related to future events in a very secondary way. The business of the prophet is to **declare the nature of God** in every situation in which he finds himself. And if in order to explicate the will of God, the purpose of God, and the nature of God, it becomes necessary to talk about the future, he will talk about the future.*

## **Give Heed to the Word of Prophecy**

If it is the duty of a prophet to declare the nature of God and to reveal the light of Christ, how much more should we give heed to their words? Nephi, a prophet in the Book of Mormon, delighted much in the words of Isaiah and searched them diligently for he knew that...“they are of worth unto the children of men.<sup>2</sup>” Nephi wrote, saying...“For I know that they [the words of Isaiah] shall be of great worth unto them in the last days; for in that day shall they understand them; wherefore, for their good have I written them...my soul delighteth in his words...for he verily saw my Redeemer, even as I have seen him...And all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him.<sup>3</sup>”

God told the prophet, Hosea...“I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.<sup>4</sup>” Although God has spoken to mankind throughout all the ages through His servants, His people have not always hearkened to His word. Following the fall of the northern kingdom in the second book of Kings, we read that Israel was carried away captive into Assyria because of their wickedness, and...“Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God.<sup>5</sup>”

A true prophet will not fail to testify of the mercy, grace, and power of Jesus Christ our Lord, whether it be through holding up a brazen serpent in the wilderness [read Numbers 21:5-9, John 3:14-17, Helaman 3:46-49] or by prophesizing of the advent of Christ [read Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 53:1-12, 1 Nephi

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<sup>1</sup> Revelation 22:16

<sup>2</sup> 2 Nephi 11:13

<sup>3</sup> 2 Nephi 11:14 and 2 Nephi 8:2-3, 9

<sup>4</sup> Hosea 12:10

<sup>5</sup> 2 Kings 17:13-14

3:4-6]. Thus as Jesus is the true light of God and the brightness of His glory, the prophets have shown forth the light and glory of Christ. For as Nephi exclaimed, their souls have delighted...“in his grace, and his justice, and power, and mercy, in the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death. And my soul delighteth in proving unto my people, that save Christ should come, all men must perish.<sup>1</sup>” It is only through the Son that mankind has access to God the Father, therefore it is imperative that we give heed to the word of prophecy.

## A Watchman

Similar to how Jesus is the Good Shepherd over the flock of God, a prophet is a watchman over God’s people. The Webster’s Dictionary defines a watchman as “a sentinel,” which in military affairs, is “a soldier sent to watch or guard an army, camp or other place from surprise, to observe the approach of danger and give notice of it.” In the eleventh and twelfth chapters of Exodus, God warned Moses that He would bring one more plague upon all the land of Egypt, the death of the firstborn. It was at this time that the Lord instituted the first Passover, which was to be a memorial and an ordinance for the children of Israel. “For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.<sup>2</sup>”

After receiving the instruction from the Lord, Moses gathered together all the elders of Israel and warned them of the coming danger and what needed to be done in order for the destroying angel to pass over their homes. Nevertheless, what would have occurred had Moses not stood as a watchman and warned the people? Certainly the firstborn of the Israelites would have perished just as the Egyptians. Thus the responsibility of a prophet to be a watchman over the people is a tremendously important one.

God placed this charge on the prophet, Ezekiel, when He said...“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 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.<sup>3</sup>” The act of interpreting and mediating God’s word to the people is a primary calling of a prophet, and in order to do so, a prophet must stand as a watchman for God’s people. Please read the following from Ezekiel 33:1-9:

“**33:1** Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, **33:2** Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman; **33:3** If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and *warn the people*; **33:4** Then whosoever heareth the

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Nephi 8:11-12

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 12:12-13

<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel 3:17, 20-21

sound of the trumpet, and **taketh not warning**; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his **own head**. **33:5** He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning **shall deliver his soul**.

**33:6** But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the **watchman's hand**.

**33:7** So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a **watchman** unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and **warn them from me**. **33:8** When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; **but his blood will I require at thine hand**. **33:9** Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”

Although it is primarily upon the prophet to send out a voice of warning to the flock of God, as...“the Lord God will do nothing, until he revealeth the secret unto his servants the prophets...”<sup>1</sup> it is also the responsibility of the people to not follow a false or failed watchman. Alma the Elder commanded the church to trust no one to be our teacher, minister, or prophet...“except he be a man of God, walking in his ways and keeping his commandments.”<sup>2</sup> Jesus also told the disciples in Mark, chapter nine...“If thine eye which seeth for thee, him that is appointed to watch over thee to show thee *light*, become a transgressor and offend thee, pluck him out. It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God, with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. For it is better that thyself should be saved, than to be cast into hell with thy brother, where their worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched.”<sup>3</sup> It is absolutely crucial to understand therefore that a prophet is not infallible and that...“there is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God.”<sup>4</sup>

## Chapter Two: The Ordination of a Prophet

In Matthew, chapter twenty-four, Jesus warned the disciples in Jerusalem that...“many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.”<sup>5</sup> He counseled them to...“Take heed that no man deceive you. For *many shall come* in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many... For in those days [the latter 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,”<sup>6</sup> meaning the baptismal covenant of both the water and the Spirit. If false prophets will arise so that even those who have received the everlasting covenant will be led astray and deceived, it is imperative that the

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<sup>1</sup> Amos 3:7

<sup>2</sup> Mosiah 11:15

<sup>3</sup> Mark 9:46-48

<sup>4</sup> DC 17:6d

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 24:9

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 24:5-6, 23



members of the Church of Jesus Christ are able to distinguish a true prophet of the Lord from a false one. One way to do so is to treasure up the words of Christ, which is the word of prophecy.

In Section Fifty-two of the Doctrine and Covenants, God spoke to the Church, saying...“And again, I will give unto you a pattern in all things, that ye may not be deceived; for Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations.<sup>1</sup>” It is important to recognize while studying Scripture that God is one eternal round and that He does not change. “For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today, and for ever; and in him there is *no variableness neither shadow of changing*.<sup>2</sup>” Thereby the children of men know that the ways of God are infinite and eternal and that He does not turn to the right hand or to the left, but He is ever constant and never changing. In order to therefore identify a true prophet from a false one, mankind merely has to follow God’s pattern.

The Lord gave His pattern concerning the ordaining of a true prophet in Section Forty-three, saying...“and this shall be a law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelation, or commandments; and this I give unto you, that you *may not* be deceived, that you may know they are *not of me*. For verily I say unto you, that he that is ordained of me, shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before, to teach those revelations which you have received, and shall receive through him whom I have appointed.<sup>3</sup>” Only God has the right to choose those who will represent Him, and He has promised that such a one will be ordained in the same manner to which all the prophets have been ordained.

## The Gate

The gate by which a prophet is called and ordained is similar to the manner in which the priesthood are ordained, which is that...“no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God; as was Aaron. *So also* Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.<sup>4</sup>” Similar to how Aaron was called [read Exodus 4:10-15 and 27-28], and even Jesus Christ, the authority of priesthood does not come through a man but only through the power of God, as Paul wrote to the Galatians...“Paul, an apostle, (*not of men*, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.)<sup>5</sup>”

Jesus told the twelve...“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit.<sup>6</sup>” When God chooses a man to receive the mantle of priesthood through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, that individual is then confirmed and ordained through the pattern of the laying on of hands by those who already have authority to do so, as God has demonstrated throughout the Holy Scriptures. In Acts, chapter six, seven men full of wisdom and the Holy Ghost were chosen by God to assist the Church in Jerusalem and were...“set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they *laid their*

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<sup>1</sup> DC 52:4b

<sup>2</sup> Mormon 4:68

<sup>3</sup> DC 43:2b-c

<sup>4</sup> Hebrews 5:4-5

<sup>5</sup> Galatians 1:1

<sup>6</sup> John 15:16

*hands on them.*<sup>1</sup> Barnabas and Paul were also set aside for the work of the Lord by the directing of the Holy Ghost and when the priesthood had...“fasted and prayed, and *laid their hands on them*, they sent them away.<sup>2</sup>” Further, Timothy was counseled by Paul to...“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the *laying on of the hands* of the presbytery [elders].<sup>3</sup>” Jesus gave the same instruction to the twelve Nephites in third chapter of Moroni:

“**3:1** The manner which the disciples, who were called the elders of the church, ordained priests and teachers. **3:2** After they had prayed unto the Father in the name of Christ, ***they laid their hands upon them***, and said, In the name of Jesus Christ I ordain you to be a priest; (or if he be a teacher;) I ordain you to be a teacher, to preach repentance and remission of sins through Jesus Christ, by the endurance of faith on his name to the end. Amen. **3:3** And ***after this manner*** did they ordain priests and teachers, according to the gifts and callings of God unto men; and they ordained them by the power of the Holy Ghost, ***which was in them.***”

Although the calling of priesthood can only come through the power of God, and the ordination through the laying on of hands by those who already have authority, it is critical to understand another pattern which the Lord has established. Simply that a priesthood member can only present calls and ordain an individual up to the office to which he holds, and this includes that of a prophet. Sections Seventeen and One hundred and four of the Doctrine and Covenants speak concerning the authority which various priesthood offices have in order to ordain other priesthood members.

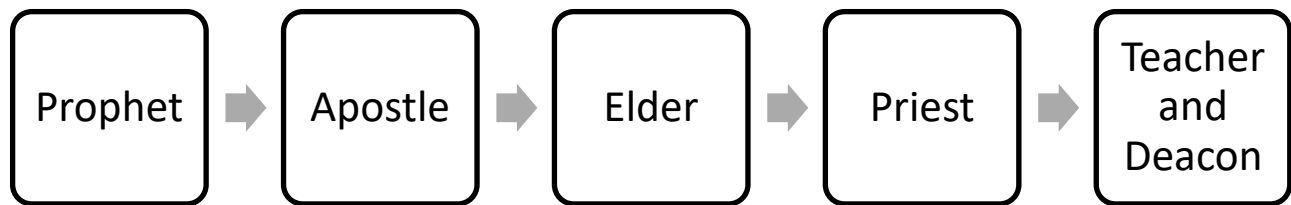
#### Authority to Ordain Priesthood

Office	Scripture	Authority
Prophet	DC 104:42	And again, the duty of the president of the office of the high priesthood is to <i>preside</i> over the whole church, and to be like unto Moses. Behold, here is wisdom, yea, <i>to be a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet</i> ; having all the gifts of God which he bestows upon the <b><i>head of the church.</i></b>
Apostle	DC 17:8b	An apostle is an elder, and it is his calling to baptize, and to <b><i>ordain other elders, priests, teachers, and deacons...</i></b>
Elder	DC 17:8b	...it is his calling to baptize, and to <b><i>ordain other elders, priests, teachers, and deacons...</i></b>
Priest	DC 17:10c	...and he may also <b><i>ordain other priests, teachers, and deacons.</i></b>
Teacher and Deacon	DC 17:11e	...but neither teachers nor deacons have authority to baptize, administer the sacrament, <b><i>or lay on hands.</i></b>

<sup>1</sup> Acts 6:6

<sup>2</sup> Acts 13:3

<sup>3</sup> 1 Timothy 4:14



After Moses fled from Egypt in the second chapter of Exodus, he came to the land of Midian where he met his future father-in-law, Jethro, who was a high priest of God. It was during this time that Moses was ordained...“according to the holy priesthood, which he received under the hand of his father-in-law, Jethro.<sup>1”</sup> If Jethro had the authority of the Melchisedec priesthood, why did he not then ordain Moses to be a prophet? The answer is simply that he did not have the authority to ordain Moses to an office above a high priest. How then was Moses ordained as a prophet, a mediator, and spokesman for God? We read the answer in Galatians 3:19:

“Wherefore then, the law was added because of transgressions, till the seed come to whom the promise was made in the law given to Moses, ***who was ordained by the hand of angels*** to be a ***mediator*** of this first covenant, (the law.)” [Meaning the law of Moses]

It is only through God and Jesus Christ that a prophet can be ordained to be the head of the Church. Thus, as in the occasion concerning Moses, when there is no higher authority on the earth, God Himself has intervened from heaven through both the power of the Holy Ghost and through angels. We read in the second chapter of Jeremiah that he was ordained to be a prophet from his mother’s womb. “Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and *before* thou camest forth out of the womb *I sanctified thee*, and *I ordained thee* a prophet unto the nations.<sup>2”</sup>

For Enoch we read...“the Spirit of God descended out of heaven, and *abode upon him*; And he heard a voice from heaven, saying, Enoch, my son, *prophesy* unto this people, and say unto them, Repent.<sup>3”</sup> In the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord spoke to Joseph Smith, Jr., saying...“there shall be a record kept among you, and in it thou shalt be called *a seer, a translator, a prophet*.<sup>4”</sup> In each of these testimonies, the Lord spoke from heaven to designate whom He had chosen to serve as an interpreter between God and man.

In latter day revelation the Lord affirmed His pattern for times when there has been power and authority on the earth to ordain a prophet. For Jesus counseled the Church in Section Forty-three, saying...“But verily, verily I say unto you, that *none else* shall be appointed unto this gift *except* it be through him, for if it be taken from him he shall not have power, *except* to appoint another in his stead; and this shall be a

<sup>1</sup> DC 83:2c

<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah 1:4-5

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 6:26-27

<sup>4</sup> DC 19:1a

law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelation, or commandments; and this I give unto you, that you may not be deceived, that you may know they are not of me.<sup>1</sup> The Lord told Joseph further...“Verily I say unto you, The keys of this kingdom shall never be taken from you, while thou art in the world, neither in the world to come; nevertheless, through you shall the oracles be given to another; yea, even unto the church.<sup>2</sup>”

This pattern is also evident in the Old Testament for in the fortieth year after the children of Israel escaped from Egypt, God commanded Moses to “charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see...And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him.<sup>3</sup>” In the first book of Kings, God also gave charge to His servant Elijah to anoint Elisha to be the next prophet of the Lord. After receiving this commandment on Mount Horeb, Elijah...“departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat...and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.<sup>4</sup>”

## The False Gate

Through the Scriptures we can plainly see the gate by which a prophet of the Lord does enter, namely that God first chooses him and sets him aside to be a servant even as Moses, Jeremiah, and the other prophets. “Therefore he [God] said that he would destroy them [Israel], had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach.<sup>5</sup>” Nevertheless, there have sadly been individuals who have rejected the Lord’s choice and have sought to place themselves at the head of God’s people. Please read the testimony of Aaron and Miriam, siblings of Moses, and God’s response to their murmurings from Numbers 12:1-8:

“**12:1** And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. **12:2** And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? ***hath he not spoken also by us?*** And the Lord heard it.

**12:3** (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.) **12:4** And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. **12:5** And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forth.

**12:6** And he said, Hear now my words; If there be a prophet among you, ***I the Lord*** will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. **12:7** My servant Moses ***is not so***, who is faithful in all mine house. **12:8** With him ***will I*** speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold; wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”

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<sup>1</sup> DC 43:2a-b

<sup>2</sup> DC 87:2a

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 3:28 and 34:9

<sup>4</sup> 1 Kings 19:19

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 106:23

While it is evident that Moses was God’s chosen servant, there have been many individuals throughout history who have not been called of the Lord but by some other means, whether it is of themselves, by other people, or by the devil. In an article entitled “We Must Not Reconcile with Wrong Doctrines” by Richard and Pamela Price, it was stated that...“we must be extremely careful not to accept any as the Prophet of the Church unless we have a Divine assurance that God has truly called him. During the last thirty years, *more than twenty* men have claimed that God has chosen them to be the next true Prophet. More men will arise, each making that claim for himself. Several “Restoration” churches have ordained a leader to the office of prophet – all of them are false prophets, and we are still waiting for the true one to be called and come forward to teach and preach the fullness of the Gospel.<sup>1</sup>”

If God has established a gate for a true prophet to enter in through, is there not a gate or a way in which a false prophet would be distinguished? The answer is yes. Perhaps the first and most important way to identify a false prophet is by the method or manner in which they enter through the gate. For example, Jesus told the Jews who persecuted Him, “I am come in *my Father’s name*, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.<sup>2</sup>” Rather than testifying of Himself with just mere words, Jesus more importantly witnessed to the people that He was the Son of God through His works. Jesus testified of His Father saying...“for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, *the same works that I do*, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself who hath sent me, *hath borne witness of me*...I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.<sup>3</sup>”

A true prophet of God therefore will not come testifying of himself or saying that he is the Christ, but he will come bearing witness that Jesus is the Only Begotten Son of God and will declare the Gospel of the Lamb. For Jesus said...“Yea; and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many *as have spoken*, have testified of me.<sup>4</sup>” Furthermore, as Paul counseled the Corinthians, writing, “And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.<sup>5</sup>” The words which the prophets of the Lord speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost must agree with one another. Thus we know that when individuals, such as Sherem and Korihor from the Book of Mormon, proclaim that there is no Christ, they cannot be true prophets. For their teachings go against the testimonies of all those who have come before them, who have testified that unless mankind should rely on the Messiah, they would remain forever in a lost and fallen state. Please read the Lord’s counsel to the Church in the latter days concerning false prophesies from Doctrine and Covenants 125:15:

“**125:15a** Prophesying over them that are sick in administering to them has been a fruitful source of trouble among my people. **125:15b** They must observe that this they are not required to do except there be a **direct manifestation of the Spirit** which may direct it. **125:15c** Pray over the

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<sup>1</sup> Richard and Pamela Price, “We Must Not Reconcile with Wrong Doctrines,” *Vision #56* (July 2007), pg. 12.

<sup>2</sup> John 5:44

<sup>3</sup> John 5:37-38 and John 10:25

<sup>4</sup> 3 Nephi 9:62

<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:32-33

sick, anoint them with oil, as commanded in the law, and leave them in my hands, that the Spirit may deal with them according to my wisdom.

**125:15d** Many spiritual manifestations have been had. Some of these *have been false*, and under the operation of the law which I gave many, many years ago, those who make these false presentations are *not* to be feared among my people. **125:15e** They are *not* justified in permitting their human sympathies to overcome that which has been written in my Scriptures. The spirit of the prophets is *subject* to the prophets.”

As the works of Jesus testified of His divinity, so too will the works of a prophet testify of their authority and whether they are called of God or not. The apostle John wrote...“If ye know that he [Jesus Christ] is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is *born of him*.<sup>1</sup>” While speaking to the people at Zarahemla concerning those individuals who are of the Lord’s fold, Alma the Younger asked, “And now if ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd, of what fold are ye?”<sup>2</sup> Alma provided the answer, along with the pattern of discernment, by saying...“whatsoever is good, *cometh from God*, and whatsoever is evil, *cometh from the devil*; Therefore, if a man bringeth forth *good works*, he *hearkeneth* unto the voice of the good shepherd; and he *doth follow him*; But whosoever bringeth forth evil works, the same becometh a child of the devil; for he hearkeneth unto his voice, and doth follow him.<sup>3</sup>”

Jesus taught the disciples in the seventh chapter of Matthew...“beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing; but *inwardly* they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their *fruits*; for do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth *good fruit*; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth *evil fruit*.<sup>4</sup>” It is important for the children of God to be grounded and rooted in truth, to hold firm to the rod of iron, and to take the Holy Ghost as their guide so that they will not be deceived by the teachings of false servants, as Peter warned...“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers *among you* who privily shall bring in abominable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And *many* shall follow their pernicious<sup>5</sup> ways by reason of whom the way of truth shall be *evil spoken of*. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words *make merchandise of you*; whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not.<sup>6</sup>”

It is evident that the Lord does not desire for mankind to be ignorant concerning these things but instead has established a method for the children of men to be able to discern His servants from those of the adversary’s through the power of the Holy Ghost. We read that just as Enoch, John the Baptist, and Jesus were chosen by God and set aside through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that that self-same Spirit will also bear witness to the people concerning the truth of their words and their testimony. “Verily I say unto you, He that is *ordained of me* and sent forth to preach the word of truth by the Comforter, in the spirit

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<sup>1</sup> 1 John 2:29

<sup>2</sup> Alma 3:64

<sup>3</sup> Alma 3:67-69

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 7:24-26

<sup>5</sup> Pernicious means “destructive; having the quality of killing, destroying or injuring; very injurious or mischievous.”

<sup>6</sup> 2 Peter 1:1-3

of truth, doth he preach it by the spirit of truth, or some other way? and if it be by some other way, it be *not* of God. And again, he that receiveth the word of truth, doth he receive it by the spirit of truth, or some other way? if it be some other way, it be *not* of God: therefore, why is it that ye can not understand and know that he that receiveth the word by the spirit of truth, receiveth it as it is preached by the spirit of truth?<sup>1</sup> Please read the following Scripture passages from 1 John 3:7-10, Doctrine and Covenants 52:4b-5a, and DC 97:2:

“**3:7** Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, ***even as*** he [Jesus Christ] is righteous. **3:8** He that continueth in sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. **3:9** Whosoever is born of God ***doth not*** continue in sin; for the Spirit of God ***remaineth*** in him; and he cannot continue in sin, because he is born of God, having **received that Holy Spirit of promise**. **3:10** In this the children of God ***are manifest***, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”

“**52:4b** And again, I will give unto you ***a pattern in all things***, that ye may not be deceived; for Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations; **52:4c** wherefore he that prayeth whose spirit is contrite, the same is accepted of me, ***if*** he obey mine ordinances. **52:4d** He that speaketh, whose spirit is contrite, whose language is meek, and edifieth, the same is of God, ***if*** he obey mine ordinances. **52:4e** And again, he that trembleth under my power shall be made strong, and shall bring forth **fruits** of praise, and wisdom, ***according*** to the revelations and truths which I have given you.

**52:5a** And again, he that is overcome and bringeth not forth fruits, even according to this pattern, ***is not of me***; wherefore by this pattern ye shall know the spirits ***in all cases***, under the whole heavens.”

“**97:2a** But a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall declare whatsoever things ye declare in ***my name***, in ***solemnity of heart***, in the ***spirit of meekness***, in all things. **97:2b** And I give unto you this promise, that inasmuch as ye do this, the Holy Ghost shall be shed forth in ***bearing record*** unto all things whatsoever ye shall say.”

There have been several false prophets mentioned throughout the Scriptures, such as Hananiah, Korihor, and Elymas, and while they did not enter in through the gate according to the pattern and while their doctrines were not of God, they succeeded in tearing many souls away from the Gospel of Jesus Christ. “Insomuch that they began to be *hard* in their hearts, and *blind* in their minds, and began to *disbelieve* all which they had heard and seen, imagining up some vain thing in their hearts, that it was wrought by men, and by the power of the devil, to lead away and deceive the hearts of the people; And thus did Satan get possession of the hearts of the people again, insomuch that he did blind their eyes, and lead them away to believe that the doctrine of Christ was a *foolish* and a *vain* thing.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> DC 50:5

<sup>2</sup> 3 Nephi 1:39-40

It is important therefore to recognize that though their false teachings might seem obvious in hindsight, it was undoubtedly a significant trial for the people of the day to discern through the Spirit of Truth. This is not meant to condemn those people from the past, but rather instead to learn from their testimony and to remember Christ’s warning that even the elect according to the covenant would be deceived. Mormon wrote to those who would eventually read the Book of Mormon, saying, “Condemn me not because of mine imperfections; neither my father, because of his imperfection; neither them who have written before him, but rather *give thanks* unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may *learn* to be *more wise* than we have been.<sup>1</sup>”

### False Prophets, Teachers, and Antichrists

False Prophet, Teacher	Description
<b>Balaam</b> [Numbers, chapters 22-24]	Balaam was originally a righteous prophet. However, Balak, who was king of the Moabites, asked Balaam to curse Israel because he was afraid of them. The Lord told Balaam not to do this, and so he refused Balak at first. Nonetheless, when Balak asked again with the promise of abundant riches, Balaam agreed. Balaam is slain with the sword in Numbers 31:8.
<b>Hananiah</b> [Jeremiah 28]	During the reign of Zedekiah, the puppet king of Babylon over Jerusalem, Hananiah prophesied that the Lord had broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. In response, the Lord told Jeremiah to prophesy against Hananiah and that he would die that year because he prophesied lies to the people. Hananiah died two months later.
<b>Sherem</b> [Jacob 5:1-35]	Story of Sherem, who contended with Jacob that there was to be no Jesus Christ. Sherem spoke very flattering words that deceived the people of the Church. Eventually, Jacob, through the Spirit, confounded Sherem in all of his words, and then the Spirit of the Lord stroke Sherem down. In the end, Sherem confessed the truth and then died immediately after.
<b>Nehor</b> [Alma 1:3-9, 22-23]	Nehor preached that there was no Christ and that everyone will be redeemed regardless of how they live. He also preached that priesthood should become popular and get gain. After Gideon confounded him with the word of God, Nehor became angry and slew Gideon. Nehor was tried under the laws of the land and found guilty of priest craft and murder, and was sentenced to death.
<b>Korihor</b> [Alma 16:7-77]	The story of Korihor, who was called antichrist because he preached that there was no Jesus Christ. Further, he also preached that it was not against the law to disbelieve in God. After contending with Alma, Korihor is struck dumb and eventually trampled to death by the Zoramites.
<b>Elymas</b> [Acts 13:6-12]	When Paul and Barnabas went to preach the word of God to a deputy of a county, Elymas spoke against them and sought to turn the deputy away from faith in Jesus Christ. Paul became filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied that Elymas would be blinded. Elymas immediately became blind for a season and the deputy’s faith in the Lord was increased.

In order to better understand what those saints in the past might have experienced, we need only to look to more recent days with the split in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints that

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<sup>1</sup> Mormon 4:97



occurred in the 1980's, which created two churches, one being the Community of Christ and the other being the Restoration Movement, which consists of independent Restoration branches who hold true to the original doctrine restored in 1830 through the prophet Joseph Smith, Jr.

Although it is well known that the allowance of women in the priesthood was the primary cause behind the split, the truth is much deeper as the events which eventually lead to the separation began in the early 1960's and possibly even before then. Starting during that time period, subtle changes began to creep into the Church, including the watering down of the Gospel, a change in the view of Zion, and a push to join the National Council of Churches. The allowance of women in the priesthood was simply the final push in an effort which had been building for decades. The true heart of the matter was that incorrect belief that God can change. Today, the C of C has very little resemblance to the Church that was established by Joseph Smith, Jr.

For the younger generation of today, who were either not born or not old enough to understand what was occurring within the Church, this again appears as an obvious false doctrine. And yet, how many people were led astray? How many people were so discouraged that they left the Church altogether? Finally, how many people knew the truth but still struggled to understand what they should do? It is impossible to judge. Although the split occurred in the late 1980's, there were many events going on within the Church that eventually led to its separation. The lesson to be learned is to not become complacent in the Scriptures and in our understanding of the truth. Instead, Peter wrote...*“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”*<sup>1</sup> [Read 2 Nephi 12:25-38 and Alma 9:18-19 concerning people being lulled into a carnal security.]

It is ultimately through the Holy Ghost and the rod of Iron that mankind is able both to see the true gate by which a prophet will enter and to discern the truthfulness of the manner in which they have entered. And yet the Lord, in His infinite grace and wisdom, has provided other avenues and means in which the children of men can identify a false prophet or work. A fundamental method of discernment is that...*“if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; be careful, therefore, lest ye be found even to fight against God.”*<sup>2</sup> The prophet Jeremiah counseled further, saying...*“hear thou now this word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people; The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and pestilence. The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him.”*<sup>3</sup>

While Jeremiah explained that one way to judge a prophet is by whether their prophesy comes to pass or not, Moses warned that this is not always the case. He told Israel...*“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us*

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 5:8

<sup>2</sup> Acts 5:38-39

<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah 28:7-9

serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.<sup>1</sup>” Though it is possible in some circumstances to discern a prophet of the Lord by whether their prophecy comes to pass, it is imperative that we have a relationship with the Holy Ghost, who will guide us into all truth.

## The Righteousness of a Prophet

A portion of the gate which God established in order for a prophet to be discerned is not only by the method in which they enter or by the works which they perform, but also by their manner of person. In other words, do they walk uprightly before the Lord as apostle John spake, saying...“If ye know that he [Jesus Christ] is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him... Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he [Jesus] is righteous...Whosoever is born of God doth not continue in sin; for the Spirit of God remaineth in him; and he cannot continue in sin, because he is born of God, having received that Holy Spirit of promise. In this the children of God are manifest.<sup>2</sup>”

The Lord has promised that neither He nor the Holy Ghost will dwell in unholy temples [read Mosiah 1:79-82, Alma 5:36-37, Alma 16:233-236, and Helaman 2:58-59], thus it is by the power of the Spirit that the righteousness of children of God is made known. Not the righteousness of man, which is ever changing, but the righteousness of God. “And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.<sup>3</sup>” Righteousness is essentially the conformity of a man’s heart and life to the divine will of God.<sup>4</sup> In order for a man to be a prophet of God, he therefore must walk in righteousness even as Jesus is righteous.

It is important to understand however, that even the prophets tripped and stumbled on occasion, such as Moses, who did not circumcise his son before returning to Egypt [Exodus 4:24-26], or the Brother of Jared not praying to the Lord [Ether 1:37-39]. The difference between these servants and those false prophets found in the Scriptures, is that the prophets of God repented, meaning that they both confessed and forsook their sins. The righteousness of the servants of the Lord has been made manifest in their life. If the prophets were not righteous, how then were they able to be a direct interpreter and spokesman for God? It is imperative therefore to recognize that in order for a man to be true a prophet, he must be humble and obedient. He must have faith, hope, and charity, which is the pure love of Jesus Christ.

## Faith of a Prophet

In the fifth chapter of Mosiah, Ammon told King Limhi that God has provided a means to work mighty miracles among the children of men through the prophets. It is important to understand however that those miracles are only wrought through faith in Jesus Christ, for...“in nothing did they work miracles save

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 13:1-4

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 2:29 and 1 John 3:7, 9-10

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 6:25

<sup>4</sup> 1828 Webster’s Dictionary, <http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/righteousness>

it were in the name of Jesus...And there was not any man who could do a miracle in the name of Jesus, save he were cleansed every whit from his iniquity.<sup>1</sup>”

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews defines faith as...“the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, we read in the sixteenth chapter of Alma that faith is not the perfect knowledge of something, but it is the belief or assurance of things that are not seen, such as God as the Creator of heaven and earth, which are true. We read nonetheless that if we continue to nourish our faith in a thing, it will increase and grow until we come to a perfect knowledge. The faith of a prophet, as we read in the testimony of the Brother of Jared, is a perfect knowledge of Jesus Christ.

In Ether, chapter one, we read that as the people of Jared prepared to build barges to sail across the ocean to the Promised Land, they had difficulty in finding a source of light which would keep them from traveling the seas in total darkness. In order to solve the issue, the brother of Jared went up into the mountain to inquire of the Lord what they might do. In response, the Lord asked the brother of Jared...“What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels? For behold, ye can not have windows, for they will be dashed in pieces; neither shall ye take fire with you, for ye shall not go by the light of fire; for behold, ye shall be as a whale in the midst of the sea; for the mountain waves shall dash upon you... Therefore what will ye that I should prepare for you, that ye may have light when ye are swallowed up in the depths of the sea?”<sup>3</sup>

The Brother of Jared responded by exercising great faith as he gathered sixteen small stones and brought them humbly before the Lord that He might touch them with His finger so that they might shine with light, saying...“I know, O Lord, that thou *hast all power*, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man; therefore touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger, and prepare them that they may shine forth in darkness...Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this. We know that thou art able to shew forth great power, which looks small unto the understanding of men.”<sup>4</sup> Please read from Ether 1:68-79:

“**1:68** And it came to pass that when the Brother of Jared had said these words, behold, the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones, one by one, with his finger; **1:69** And ***the veil was taken from off the eyes*** of the Brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood; and the Brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear.

**1:70** And the Lord saw that the Brother of Jared had fallen to the earth; and the Lord said unto him, Arise, why hast thou fallen? **1:71** And he saith unto the Lord, I saw the finger of the Lord, and I feared lest he should smite me; for I knew not that the Lord had flesh and blood.

**1:72** And the Lord said unto him, Because of ***thy faith*** thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood; and never has man come before me with ***such exceeding faith*** as thou hast; for

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<sup>1</sup> 4 Nephi 1:7 and 3 Nephi 4:2

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 11:1

<sup>3</sup> Ether 1:55-56 and 59

<sup>4</sup> Ether 1:66-67

were it not so, ye could not have seen my finger. Sawest thou more than this? **1:73** And he answered, Nay, Lord, shew thyself unto me.

**1:74** And the Lord said unto him, Believest thou the words which I shall speak? **1:75** And he answered, Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie. **1:76** And when he had said these words, behold the Lord shewed himself unto him, and said, Because thou knowest these things, ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I shew myself unto you. **1:77** Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. **1:78** In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters. **1:79** *And never* have I shewed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast.”

Moroni, who was called to abridge the record of Ether, expounded upon the passage of Scripture above by writing...“And because of the knowledge of this man, he could not be kept from beholding within the veil; and he saw the finger of Jesus, which, when he saw, he fell with fear; for he knew that it was the finger of the Lord; And he had faith no longer, *for he knew, nothing doubting*; wherefore, having this perfect knowledge of God, he could not be kept from *within the veil*; therefore he saw Jesus, and he did minister unto him.<sup>1</sup>” In order to be a direct witness of Jesus Christ and a mediator between God and man, one must first have a perfect knowledge of God and Christ. Thus, the Brother of Jared is a perfect example of the exceeding great faith that is required of all the holy prophets.

### Hope of a Prophet

In the fifth chapter of Ether, Moroni wrote...“Behold, I will shew unto the Gentiles their weakness, and I will shew unto them that faith, hope, and charity, bringeth unto me the fountain of all righteousness.<sup>2</sup>” The Brother of Jared demonstrated not only great faith, but also a perfect brightness of hope, as we cannot have one without the other. Moroni’s father wrote...“How is it that ye can attain unto faith, save ye shall have hope? And what is it that ye shall hope for? Behold I say unto you, that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal; and this because of your faith in him according to the promise; Wherefore, if a man have faith, he *must needs* have hope; for without faith there can not be any hope.<sup>3</sup>”

With their lively hope in both the atonement of the Son of God and the power of His resurrection, the prophets of old were able to accomplish more than simply professing their faith, but they moved out with the power of the Holy Ghost subduing kingdoms and obtaining the promises of God. Paul wrote of the hope in Abraham by writing...“He [Abraham] staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded, that what he [God] had promised, he was able also to perform.<sup>4</sup>”

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<sup>1</sup> Ether 1:84-85

<sup>2</sup> Ether 5:29

<sup>3</sup> Moroni 7:46-48

<sup>4</sup> Romans 4:20-22

Abraham was seventy-five years old when the Lord commanded him to leave the land of Haran, for God had promised to show Abraham the land in which He would make his seed a great nation. Although Israel would not dwell in the Promised Land until hundreds of years later, Abraham embraced the promise and departed in faith believing that he would receive. Through a hope that was alive within them, the prophets were able to endure many great and terrible tribulations, please read from Hebrews 11:32-40:

“**11:32** And what shall I say more? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, **and of the prophets; 11:33** Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, ***obtained promises***, stopped the mouths of lions, **11:34** Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

**11:35** Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain the first resurrection; **11:36** And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment; **11:37** They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; **11:38** Of whom the world ***was not worthy***; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

**11:39** And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promises; **11:40** God having provided some better things for them through their sufferings, for without sufferings they ***could not*** be made perfect.”

While the prophets did not always receive the physical manifestations or the fulfillment of the promises during their life on the earth, such as Zion, their hope was in the atonement and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was through this hope in Christ that the servants of God were able to adorn the helmet of salvation, which allowed them to consecrate and dedicate their lives completely to their Heavenly Father, as we are called to do.

### Love of a Prophet

Although we read that faith, hope, and charity are the fountain of all righteousness, the Scriptures explain that without charity, which is the pure love of Jesus Christ, we are nothing. If we only have faith and hope, we will not be able to please God, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians...“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.<sup>1</sup>” Please read the following from Moroni 7:50-53:

“**7:50** And if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity, ***he is nothing***; wherefore he must needs have charity. **7:51** And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:3

all things, endureth all things; wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, ***for charity never faileth.***

**7:52** Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the ***greatest of all***, for all things must fail; but charity is the ***pure love of Christ***, and it endureth for ever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with them. **7:53** Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the ***energy of heart***, that ye may be filled with this love which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son Jesus Christ, that ye may become the sons of God, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is, that we may have this hope, that we may be purified ***even as he is pure.*** Amen.”

The depth, magnificence, and brilliance of the love of God is nearly as impossible to describe as it is to understand. God gave mankind a way however to both witness and to comprehend a portion of the love that He bares for all His creation through the gift of His Only Begotten Son. “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.<sup>1</sup>” The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is the greatest testimony of the love of God and one which the prophets have borne record of throughout their ministry.

In Matthew, chapter thirteen, Jesus presented to the disciples the parables of the treasure hid in the field and of the pearl of great price. In these two parables the Master taught about the Kingdom of God, that in particular when we come to know the Gospel of Christ, we will give away everything that we have in order to purchase it, or in other words, that we will emulate King Laman and give away all of our sins for the Kingdom. The prophets understood that God had found His peculiar treasure [read Exodus 19:5] in His sons and daughters, and that He gave His everything in the life of His Son to purchase us from sin. To the holy prophets, giving anything less than their life was simply not enough to repay the God of their salvation.

Paul wrote to the Romans...“For none of us *liveth* to himself, and no man *dieth* to himself. For whether we live, *we live unto the Lord*; and whether we die, *we die unto the Lord*; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.<sup>2</sup>”

Jesus told His disciples...“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, or husband, yea and ***his own life*** also; or in other words, is afraid to lay down his life ***for my sake***, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.<sup>3</sup>” Again, Jesus also said...“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.<sup>4</sup>” The prophets truly were the friends of the Son of God, and there is

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<sup>1</sup> 1 John 4:9-10

<sup>2</sup> Romans 14:7-9

<sup>3</sup> Luke 14:26-27

<sup>4</sup> John 15:13

perhaps no greater example of the pure love of Christ than the life and testimony of Abinadi who willingly gave his life for the Lord.

In the seventh chapter of Mosiah, we read concerning the reign of a wicked man named King Noah, whose wickedness, along with that of his priests, caused the people to ripen in iniquity. In order to call the people to repentance, the Lord sent His servant Abinadi to prophesy concerning the Messiah. Nevertheless, the hearts of King Noah and his people waxed hard, their ears were dull of hearing, and their eyes could not see afar off, so much so that they did cast Abinadi from their city. However, notwithstanding the great danger imposed upon his life, Abinadi returned to the city two years later in order to again preach the Gospel of Christ and repentance to the people.

Shortly after Abinadi began preaching, we read that he was arrested and brought before King Noah and his priests to be judged. And when King Noah and his priests attempted to contend with Abinadi, they were confounded in all of their words, so much so that they grew angry with Abinadi and desired to kill him. Please read from Mosiah 7:100-102 and 105-110:

**“7:100** And now when the king had heard these words, he said unto his priests, Away with this fellow, and slay him: for what have we to do with him, for he is mad. **7:101** And they stood forth and attempted to lay their hands on him: but he withstood them, and said unto them, Touch me not, for God shall smite you if ye lay your hands upon me, for I have not delivered the message which the Lord sent me to deliver; **7:102** Neither have I told you that which ye requested that I should tell: therefore, God will not suffer that I shall be destroyed ***at this time...***

**7:105** Now it came to pass after Abinadi had spoken these words, that the people of King Noah durst not lay their hands on him; **7:106** For the Spirit of the Lord was upon him: and his face shone with exceeding luster, even as Moses' did while in the mount of Sinai, while speaking with the Lord. **7:107** And he spake with power and authority from God; and he continued his words, saying, Ye see that ye have not power to slay me, therefore I finish my message.

**7:108** Yea, and I perceive that it cuts you to your hearts, because I tell you the truth concerning your iniquities: yea, and my words fill you with wonder and amazement, and with anger. **7:109** But I finish my message; ***and then*** it matters not whither I go, if it be so that I am saved. **7:110** But this much I tell you: What you do with me, after this, shall be as a type and a shadow of things which are to come.”

After hearing the truth of Abinadi's words, King Noah and his priests chose not to repent, but instead desired to slay Abinadi by fire. After they deliberated for three days, King Noah finally found a reason to put Abinadi to death, saying that it was blasphemous to preach that there would be a Christ. Please read Mosiah 9:11-16 and 26-27:

**“9:11** For thou hast said that God himself should come down among the children of men; **9:12** And now for this cause thou shalt be put to death, unless thou wilt recall all the words which thou hast spoken evil concerning me and my people.

**9:13** Now Abinadi said unto him: I say unto you, I will not recall the words which I have spoken unto you concerning this people, for they are true; **9:14** And that ye may know of their surety, I have suffered myself that I have fallen into your hands. **9:15** Yea, and I will suffer even until death, and I will not recall my words, and they shall stand as a testimony against you. **9:16** And if ye slay me, ye will shed innocent blood, and this shall also stand as a testimony against you at the last day.

**9:26** O God, receive my soul. **9:27** And now when Abinadi had said these words, he fell, having suffered death by fire; yea, having been put to death because he would not deny the commandments of God: having sealed the truth of his words by his death.”

Abinadi understood well before he ever entered into the city of Shilom that he would lose his life and yet he still chose to go and to preach the Gospel as God had commanded him, and though the words of Abinadi only converted one man, Alma the Elder, the work which he accomplished helped to lay the foundation for the Church of God. It is important to realize that the testimony of Abinadi is not one of sadness, but of great joy, for he had faith and hope in Jesus Christ, not just in words but also in action. In the second epistle of Peter, we read...“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>” As Abinadi willingly laid down his life for the Lord, so too will a true prophet give his life for the Kingdom of God.

For a man to truthfully be ordained a prophet of God, he must come in through the gate which the Lord has established through both His word and the power of the Holy Ghost. In other words, he must be chosen by God and ordained either by the Lord Himself, as was Moses, or by the hand of one who already has authority on the earth to do so, as was Joshua. Although Satan and his servants have frequently appeared as angels of light or ministers of righteousness, God has provided mankind with a pattern in order to discern a true servant from a false one...“with the spirit of his mouth [truth], and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming [light],<sup>2</sup>” so too will the light and truth of the Only Begotten Son tear down all fallacies and false doctrines. “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.<sup>3</sup>”

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Peter 1:10-11

<sup>2</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2:8

<sup>3</sup> 1 John 3:10



## Chapter Three: The Prophet and the Church

The Holy Scriptures plainly testify that there is no variableness or shadow of changing with God [read James 1:17, 1 Nephi 3:32, Mormon 4:66-69 and 81-82], and that He has established a pattern in all things so that...“ye may not be deceived; for Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations.<sup>1</sup>” The Lord God has therefore ordained a way in which all things are done, which not only includes the calling and the ordination of a servant of God, but also the relationship between the prophet and the Church. In particular, the relationship between the prophet and the Church is founded upon the eternal principle of becoming one in God the Father through the Only Begotten Son.

In his testimony concerning the dawn of creation, apostle Oakman said that there was a single primary difference between God and man, which was, “we are many and He is one.” In Section Thirty-eight of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord Jesus Christ said...“Behold, this I have given unto you a parable, and it is even as *I am*: I say unto you, *Be one*; and if ye are not one, ye are *not mine*.<sup>2</sup>” In this parable, Jesus is trying to open our understanding to the truth that in order to receive Celestial Glory with God, we must first become one with Christ as He is one with the Father, and this because no unclean thing can enter into the His presence. God has thus...“put all things under his [Jesus’s] feet, and gave him to be the *head* over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all,<sup>3</sup>” in order so that the children of men might be purified and sanctified through the blood of Christ. Please read the following from Ephesians 1:3; 9-10; 17-23:

“**1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; **1:9** Having made known unto us the **mystery of his will**, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed *in himself*; **1:10** That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together *in one* all things *in Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him,...

**1:17** That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; **1:18** The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of *his* calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, **1:19** And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, **1:20** Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, **1:21** Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; **1:22** And hath put all things under his [Jesus’s] feet, and gave him to be the *head* over all things to the church, **1:23** Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.”

In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, God has manifested the mystery of His will for the children of men. That if we would believe in the Son of God and follow His steps, we too will be raised

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<sup>1</sup> DC 52:4b

<sup>2</sup> DC 38:6a

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 1:22-23

from the dead and receive the gift eternal life, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God. In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul is attempting to open our understanding to the truth that...“God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness,<sup>1</sup>” ...and that...“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.<sup>2</sup>” This essentially is the hope of *God’s* calling, that mankind would choose to come unto Christ and to be baptized unto repentance in order to purify their souls from all sin. That they might exercise their faith on the Lamb of God...“who taketh away the sins of the world, who is mighty to save and to cleanse from all unrighteousness.<sup>3</sup>”

Unless the world is spiritually born of God and becomes one in Christ, it is impossible to inherit eternal life for God...“doth not dwell in unholy temples; neither can filthiness, nor anything which is unclean be received into the kingdom of God.<sup>4</sup>” “Wherefore gird up the loins of *your mind*, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As *obedient* children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; But as he which hath called you is holy, so *be ye holy* in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; *for I am holy*.<sup>5</sup>”

In order to dwell with the Father, the children of men must have His character born into their soul, which means that they must be holy because God is holy, and the only way for mankind to be made holy according to the calling of God is to first be of one heart and one mind in Christ Jesus. Thus God has placed all things under the feet of His Beloved Son, so that Jesus Christ, as the head of the body and the bridegroom to the Church, might deliver the Kingdom unto His Father. In so doing, God will become one in all and all those who have believed in Jesus will become one in God, to dwell with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost forevermore. Please read the Scripture below from 1 Corinthians 15:24-28:

“**15:24** Afterward cometh the end, when he [Jesus] shall have ***delivered up*** the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. **15:25** For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies ***under his feet***. **15:26** The last enemy, death, shall be destroyed. **15:27** For he saith, When it is manifest that he hath put all things under his feet, and that all things are put under, he is excepted of the Father who did put all things under him. **15:28** And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be ***all in all***.”

## Head of the Church

From the eternal principle of becoming one in the Father, God has established a pattern of one Eternal Head through the relationship between Jesus and the Church. Paul wrote to the Ephesians and the Colossians, saying...“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the *head* of the church; and he is the *Savior of the body*. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything...For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:7

<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians 7:2

<sup>3</sup> Alma 5:25

<sup>4</sup> Alma 5:36

<sup>5</sup> 1 Peter 1:13-16

in him, which is the *head* of all principality and power.<sup>1</sup> It is evident in this pattern that there must be a head in all things, even our body, which is in the image and the likeness of God, has a single head.

According to the 1828 Webster's Dictionary, the head is the...“uppermost part of the human body, or the foremost part of the body of prone and creeping animals. This part of the human body contains the organs of hearing, seeing, tasting and smelling; it contains also the brain, which is supposed to be the *seat* of the *intellectual powers*, and of sensation. Hence the head is the *chief* or more important part.” While Jesus is the chief part of the body, it is the responsibility of priesthood to both represent Him and stand in His stead. Even within the authority of priesthood, the pattern of a single head is demonstrated. Section Seventeen explains that when an elder is present, it is his duty to take the lead of meetings. However, when an elder is not present, it is then the priests' responsibility to lead the meetings, and if there is no elder or priest, then it is the teachers' obligation to lead.

In the One hundred and fourth Section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord declared...“And again, the duty of the president of the office of the high priesthood is to *preside* over the *whole church*, and to be like unto Moses. Behold, here is wisdom, yea, to be a seer, a revelator, a translator, and a prophet; having all the gifts of God which he bestows upon the *head* of the church.”<sup>2</sup> The prophet therefore is to represent Christ as the head of the Church, just as Jesus represents God as the head of all principality and power. This pattern was also witnessed through the prophet, Moses, and the children of Israel.

In the book of Acts, Stephen quoted the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy to the Jews, saying that Jesus was that prophet who was likened unto Moses who the Lord God promised to raise up, and that Moses essentially was the prophet to...“the church in the wilderness...who received the lively oracles *to give* unto us. Whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them.”<sup>3</sup> As prophet to God's people, it was Moses's charge to hear the commandments of the Lord from the mouth of God and to teach them to the children of Israel. It was also his duty to stand between God and the people in order to both repair the breach and to judge Israel, and this he did by following the advice of his father-in-law, Jethro, who counseled Moses to teach the people the ordinances and laws while also choosing “able men, such as fear God, men of truth...and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens; and let them judge the people at all seasons; and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge; so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall *bear thy burden with thee*.”<sup>4</sup>

## One Head, One Prophet

It is critical to understand that in the example of Moses, that there is a difference between the spirit of revelation and prophecy, which is simply a testimony of Christ, and being prophet over the Church. For as our physical bodies have only one head, so too does the Church of God. “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”<sup>5</sup> If God had ordained multiple prophets to be

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 5:23-24 and Colossians 2:9-10

<sup>2</sup> DC 104:42

<sup>3</sup> Acts 7:38-39

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 18:20-22

<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:33

the head over all of the people of Israel at the same time, assuredly chaos and turmoil would have ensued. Thus when the Church of Jesus Christ has been established on the earth, there has ever only been one prophet to the Church as Moses was the single watchman over Israel in the wilderness.

The pattern of one prophet of the Church is also evident in the Book of Mormon, for although Alma the Elder, who was a high priest, went about establishing the Church in the eleventh chapter of Mosiah, we read that he received authority to do so under the hand of King Mosiah, who was the seer and prophet over the Nephites. “And it came to pass that King Mosiah granted unto Alma, that he might establish churches throughout all the land of Zarahemla; and gave him power to ordain priests and teachers over every church.<sup>1</sup>” The power and authority which Mosiah granted unto Alma is no different than the authority which Moses gave to the chosen men of Israel.

If God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and has established the pattern of a single prophet in the past, then He must also demonstrate His pattern in the present day. In the early days of the Restoration, the Church received direct and plain instruction from the Lord that there was to be only one prophet over the Church and that he was commanded to lay its foundation. The Lord further commanded the saints to receive the word of the prophet as the direct word of God, inasmuch as the prophet walked in righteousness. Please read the following from the Doctrine and Covenants 19:1-2:

**“19:1a** Behold, there shall be a record kept among you, and in it thou shalt be called ***a seer, a translator, a prophet***, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ; **19:1b** being inspired of the Holy Ghost **to lay the foundation thereof**, and to build it up unto the most holy faith; **19:1c** which church was organized and established, in the year of your Lord eighteen hundred and thirty, in the fourth month, and on the sixth day of the month, which is called April.

**19:2a** Wherefore, **meaning the church**, thou shalt ***give heed*** unto ***all his words***, and commandments, which he shall give unto you, as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; **19:2b** for his word ye shall receive, ***as if from mine own mouth***, in all patience and faith; for by doing these things, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; **19:2c** yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory. **19:2d** For thus saith the Lord God, ***him have I inspired to move the cause of Zion in mighty power for good***; and his diligence I know, and his prayers I have heard: **19:2e** yea, his weeping for Zion I have seen, and I will cause that he shall mourn for her no longer, for his days of rejoicing are come unto the remission of his sins, and the manifestations of my blessings upon his works.”

Notwithstanding God’s revelation that He had chosen and inspired Joseph Smith, Jr. to lay the foundation of the Church and to move the cause of Zion forward in mighty power, the early Restoration struggled with the pattern of one revelator. In September 1830, five months after the restoration of God’s Church on the earth, Hiram Page came into possession of a stone referred to as the “peepstone,” from which Hiram professed to receive “revelations” concerning the Church. At this time, both Oliver Cowdery and

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<sup>1</sup> Mosiah 11:97

the Whitmer family began to believe in these “revelations.” It was during this trial that Joseph received further revelation from God stating that there is only one appointed to receive commandments and revelations concerning the Church. It is crucial to understand that God did not say that others could not receive direction from the Holy Ghost, but instead clarified that only the prophet, who is the head of the Church, is able to receive revelation commanding the whole Church. Read the following Scripture passage from the Doctrine and Covenants 27:1-2:

**27:1** Behold, I say unto thee, Oliver, that it shall be given unto thee that thou shalt be heard by the church in all things whatsoever thou shalt teach them **by the Comforter**, concerning the revelations and commandments which I have given.

**27:2a** But, behold, verily, verily I say unto thee, **No one** shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church **excepting** my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., for he receiveth them **even as Moses**; **27:2b** and thou shalt be obedient unto the things which I shall give unto him, even as Aaron, to declare faithfully the commandments and revelations, with power and authority unto the church. **27:2c** And if thou art led at any time by the Comforter to speak or teach, or at all times by the way of commandment unto the church, **thou mayest do it**. **27:2d** But thou shalt not write by **way of commandment**, but by wisdom; and thou **shalt not** command him who is at thy head, and at the head of the church, for I have given him the keys of the mysteries and the revelations, which are sealed, until I shall appoint unto them another in his stead.”

Not six months after the incident with the “peepstone,” the early Church faced another crisis in February 1831 when Mrs. Hubble also proclaimed to receive “revelations” governing the Church. The Lord again gave commandment that Joseph Smith was the only person appointed to receive commandment for a law to the Church, and just as importantly, the Lord also instructed that Joseph would only receive commandments and revelations if he abode in Him. It is absolutely imperative to understand that the prophet is not infallible, and that...“there is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God.”<sup>1</sup> Thus again, we are commanded to trust in no one to be our teacher, minister, or prophet...“except he be a man of God, walking in his ways and keeping his commandments.”<sup>2</sup> The following revelation is from Doctrine and Covenants 43:1-2:

**43:1a** O hearken, ye elders of my church, and give ear to the words which I shall speak unto you: for, behold, verily, verily I say unto you, that ye have received a commandment **for a law** unto my church, through him whom **I have appointed** unto you, to receive commandments and revelations from my hand. **43:1b** And this ye shall know assuredly, that there is **none other appointed** unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me.

**43:2a** But verily, verily I say unto you, that **none else** shall be appointed unto this gift **except** it be through him, for if it be taken from him he shall not have power, **except** to appoint another in his

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<sup>1</sup> DC 17:6d

<sup>2</sup> Mosiah 11:15

stead; **43:2b** and this shall be a law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations, or commandments; and this I give unto you, that you **may not be deceived**, that you may know they are ***not of me***. **43:2c** For verily I say unto you, that he that is ordained of me, shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before, to teach those revelations which you have received, and shall receive through him whom I have appointed.”

While it is true that God has established a pattern of one prophet to the Church, it is important to recognize that this pattern is only in effect when the Church has place on the earth. There are many occasions in the Old Testament when there was more than one prophet at a single time, such as with Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah who all prophesied between 745 and 740 B.C. However, Israel was in a condition of apostasy during these times, which is defined as...“an abandonment of what one has professed; a total desertion, or departure from one’s faith or religion.” In other words, it is not the Church that apostatizes, but the people. Thus the Old Testament prophets were not given to be heads of the Church, for there was no Church on the earth during this time.

The Church of Jesus Christ is first spiritual, and when the children of men believe in the Son of God and are willing to follow His commandments, the Church is manifested physically upon the earth. During those occurrences when the Church has had place on the earth, such as in the days of Enoch, it has only ever had one head, whose charge is to stand as a watchman over the Church just as Jesus, who is the Great Shepherd, watches over the flock of God.

## Chapter Four: Defining a Seer

In Section Nineteen of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord spake to Joseph Smith, Jr., saying...“there shall be a record kept among you, and in it thou shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet.<sup>1</sup>” While a prophet is defined as an interpreter and mediator of the word of God to man, a seer, who is also a prophet, is one who in particular views the spiritual nature of God. In the sixth chapter of Genesis, the Lord spoke to Enoch, the first recorded seer in the Scriptures, saying...“Anoint thine eyes with clay, and wash them, and thou shalt see; and he did so. And he beheld *the spirits* that God had created, and he beheld also things which were *not visible* to the natural eye; and from thenceforth came the saying abroad in the land, A seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people.<sup>2</sup>”

The Lord explained in the first two chapters of Genesis that there were two creations, first a spiritual and second, a physical. “For I, the Lord God, created all things of which I have spoken spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth...Nevertheless, all things were before created, but spiritually were they created and made, according to my word.<sup>3</sup>” God also told the saints in the latter days...“all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal, neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam your father, whom I created...for my commandments are spiritual; they are not natural, nor temporal, neither carnal nor sensual.<sup>4</sup>”

Paul wrote in his first epistle to the Corinthians that only those who have the Spirit of God within them are able to see and understand the things of God. “But as it is written, Eye hath *not seen*, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so *the* things of God knoweth no man, except he has the Spirit of God.<sup>5</sup>” The gift of a seer is to view, hear, and understand the spiritual nature of God which is invisible to the natural man...“For God hath revealed unto them the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, which are *clearly seen*; things which are not seen *being understood by* the things that are made, through his eternal power and Godhead.<sup>6</sup>”

While the children of men are able to witness God through His creation, as all things bear record of Him, a seer is able to witness God’s creation through Him, such as Moses, who was able to see every particle of the earth through the power of the Holy Ghost. In the fiftieth chapter of Genesis, Joseph of Egypt prophesied that God would raise up a man...“to deliver my people, O house of Israel, out of the land of Egypt; for a seer will I raise up to deliver my people out of the land of Egypt; and he shall be called *Moses*.<sup>7</sup>” The apostle Paul also wrote concerning Moses, saying...“By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him [God] who is invisible.<sup>8</sup>” Through faith and the power of God,

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<sup>1</sup> DC 19:1a

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 6:37-38

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 2:5 and 9

<sup>4</sup> DC 28:9a; 9c

<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:9-11

<sup>6</sup> Romans 1:20

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 50:29

<sup>8</sup> Hebrews 11:27

Moses was able to forsake the world and lead the children of Israel out of bondage. Rather therefore than fear the temporal things of the world, Moses was able see things as they truly are, which is first spiritual. Please read from Section Twenty-two after Moses was transfigured and caught up to meet with God face to face:

**“22:19a** And it came to pass, as the voice [God] was still speaking, he [Moses] cast his eyes and beheld the earth; yea, even all the face of it; and there was ***not a particle*** of it which he ***did not behold, discerning it by the Spirit of God.*** **22:19b** And he beheld also the inhabitants thereof, and there was not a soul which he beheld not, and he discerned them by the Spirit of God, and their numbers were great, even as numberless as the sand upon the seashore. **22:19c** And he beheld many lands, and each land was called earth; and there were inhabitants on the face thereof.”

There have been many individuals in the Scriptures who were given to see great and marvelous truths through their exceeding faith, things so great that they were forbidden to write them, such as Enoch, the Brother of Jared, Ether, Nephi, and John the Revelator. These men, and others like unto them, did not see different things than the rest of mankind, but instead they saw things differently. In the fifth chapter of Mosiah, Ammon explained to King Limhi that there is no greater gift which a man can receive in this life than the gift of a seer. Please read the following Scripture from Mosiah 5:72-81:

**“5:72** Now Ammon said unto him, I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man [King Mosiah] that can translate the records [the Book of Ether]: for he has wherewith that he can look, and translate all records that are of ancient date: and it is a gift from God. **5:73** And the things are called interpreters [Urim and Thummim; read Exodus 28:29-30]; and no man can look in them, ***except*** he be commanded, lest he should look for that he ought not, and he should perish. **5:74** And whosoever is commanded to look in them, the same is called ***seer***. **5:75** And behold, the king of the people who is in the land of Zarahemla, is the man that is commanded to do these things, and who has this ***high gift*** from God.

**5:76** And the king said, that a seer is greater than a prophet.

**5:77** And Ammon said, that a seer is a revelator, ***and a prophet also***; and a gift which is greater, can no man have, except he should possess the power of God, which no man can; yet a man may have great power given him from God. **5:78** But a seer can know of things which have past, and also of things which are to come; **5:79** And by them shall ***all things*** be revealed, or rather, shall ***secret things be made manifest***, and ***hidden things shall come to light***, and things which are not known, shall be made known ***by them***; **5:80** And also, things shall be made known by them, which otherwise could not be known.

**5:81** Thus God has provided a means that man, ***through faith***, might work mighty miracles; therefore, he becometh a great benefit to his fellow beings.”

It appears that one attribute which separates a seer from a prophet is the faith that goes beyond a simple belief and into a perfect knowledge. As Ammon explained however, one item which also sets a seer apart is having the interpreters, or in other words the Urim and Thummim, which translated essentially means



“Light” and “Truth.” It was through the Urim and Thummim that King Mosiah was able to interpret the record of the Jaredites. “And now he translated them by the means of those two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow. Now these things were prepared from the beginning, and were handed down from generation to generation, for the purpose of interpreting languages; And they have been kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he should discover to every creature who should possess the land, the iniquities and abominations of his people; And whosoever has these things, is called seer, after the manner of old times.<sup>1</sup>”

It was through these same interpreters...“which were given to the Brother of Jared upon the mount, when he talked with the Lord face to face,<sup>2</sup>” that Joseph Smith was able to translate the Book of Mormon, and thus he too was called a seer. Notwithstanding these truths, there are occasions in the Scriptures when it appears as if the term “seer” can be interchanged with the term “prophet,” for we read in first Samuel, chapter nine...“for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.<sup>3</sup>” Although the difference between a seer and a prophet might not always be discernable, both are important in bearing witness of the true nature of God so that the children of men might be benefited thereby and receive eternal life. Thus those righteous men who have received the designation of a seer, have also received a distinct and mighty testimony of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. For Enoch walked with the Lord, while Moses, Nephi, and the Brother of Jared were caught up into an exceeding high mountain and were given to talk with God face to face. If any man therefore claims to be a seer of the Most High, he must also have a powerful testimony to accompany his words. Thereby God has given men the pattern that they might know the difference between a truth and a lie.

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<sup>1</sup> Mosiah 12:18-21

<sup>2</sup> DC 15:1b

<sup>3</sup> 1 Sam 9:9

## Chapter Five: The One Servant

In the Ninety-eighth Section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord foretold of the redemption of the land of Zion through the parable of the vineyard. It is in this parable that Jesus promised to call forth a servant, or in other words a prophet, to gather the strength of God's house and to redeem the Lord's vineyard. There is some dispute however if there will be another prophet called in these the latter days before the return of Christ or if Joseph Smith, Jr. or Joseph Smith III was the "servant" mentioned in Sections Ninety-eight and One hundred of the Doctrine and Covenants. In order to briefly compare the works which that "servant" was promised to accomplish with the works of Joseph Smith Jr. and Joseph Smith III, please read first from Section 98:6-8:

**98:6a** And now, I will show unto you a parable that you may know my will concerning the redemption of Zion. **98:6b** A certain nobleman had a spot of land [meaning the land of Zion], very choice; and he said unto his servants, Go ye into my vineyard, even upon this very choice piece of land, and plant twelve olive trees [latter day Israel and apostolic authority]; and set watchmen [priesthood] round about them and build a tower [power and authority of God], that one may overlook the land round about, to be a watchman [prophet] upon the tower; **98:6c** that mine olive trees may not be broken down, when the enemy shall come to spoil and take unto themselves the fruit of my vineyard.

**98:6d** Now the servants of the nobleman went and did as their lord commanded them; and planted the olive trees, and built a hedge [doctrine of Christ and protection of God] round about, and set watchmen, and began to build a tower. **98:6e** And while they were yet laying the foundation thereof, they began to say among themselves, And what need hath my lord of this tower? and consulted for a long time, saying among themselves, What need hath my lord of this tower, seeing this is a time of peace? **98:6f** Might not this money be given to the exchangers? for there is no need of these things! **98:6g** And while they were at variance one with another they became very slothful, and they hearkened not unto the commandments of their lord, **98:6h** and the enemy came by night and broke down the hedge, and the servants of the nobleman arose, and were affrighted, and fled; and **the enemy destroyed their works and broke down the olive trees**.

**98:7a** Now, behold, the nobleman, the lord of the vineyard, called upon his servants, and said unto them, Why! what is the cause of this great evil? ought ye not to have done even as I commanded you? and after ye had planted the vineyard, and built the hedge round about, and set watchmen upon the walls thereof, **98:7b** built the tower also, and set a watchman upon the tower, and watched for my vineyard, and not have fallen asleep, lest the enemy should come upon you? **98:7c** and, behold, the watchman upon the tower would have seen the enemy while he was yet afar off, and then you could have made ready and **kept the enemy from breaking down the hedge thereof**, and saved my vineyard from the hands of the destroyer.

**98:7d** And the lord of the vineyard said unto one of his servants, Go, and gather together the residue of my servants; and take all the strength of mine house, which are my warriors, my young men, and they that are of middle age also, among all my servants, who are the strength of mine

house, save those only whom I have appointed to tarry; **98:7e** and go ye straightway unto the land of my vineyard, and ***redeem my vineyard*** [redeem Zion], for it is mine, I have bought it with money. **98:7f** Therefore, get ye straightway unto ***my land***; break down the walls of mine enemies, throw down their tower, and scatter their watchmen; **98:7g** and inasmuch as they gather together against you, avenge me of mine enemies; that by and by I may come with the residue of mine house and **possess the land**.

**98:8a** And the servant said unto his lord, When shall these things be? **98:8b** And he said unto his servant, When I will: go ye straightway, and do all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and this shall be my seal and blessing upon you; a faithful and wise steward<sup>1</sup> in the midst of mine house; a ruler in my kingdom. **98:8c** And his servant went straightway, and did all things whatsoever his lord commanded him, and after many days ***all things were fulfilled.*** [Zion was redeemed]

The parable of the vineyard is mentioned in many places throughout the Scriptures, but it is principally found in Isaiah, chapters five and twenty-seven, the third chapter of Jacob, Section Ninety-eight, and the eleventh chapter of Romans. The parable of the vineyard is an allegory of the earth, from the beginning of God's creation to the end thereof, in which the Lord has given the children of men understanding concerning both the latter days and the redemption of Zion. In Section Nine-eight, we read that God will call forth a servant and that this servant will accomplish all things that the Lord has commanded him.

The servant was first commanded to gather the residue of the Lord's servants, or in other words the few servants who would be left. It can be surmised from Scripture, such as the parable of the mustard seed in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, that Zion will start small at the first, as Jesus asked the disciples... "when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"<sup>2</sup> Further, we read in the latter portion of Jacob, chapter three... "And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard sent his servant; and the servant went and did as the Lord had commanded him, and brought other servants; and they were ***few.***"<sup>3</sup>

The servant therefore will call both the young and the middle aged warriors who are the faithful and few, the strength of the Lord's house, to break down the false doctrines and teachings of Satan, to redeem the vineyard, meaning Zion, and to prepare the way before the coming of the Lord. "And if it so be that these last grafts shall grow, and bring forth the natural fruit, ***then*** shall ye [Jesus Christ] prepare the way for them that they may grow; And as they begin to grow, ye shall clear away the branches which bring forth bitter fruit, according to the *strength of the good* and the size thereof...ye shall clear away the bad, according as the good shall grow, that the root and the top may be equal in strength, until the good shall *overcome* the bad, and the bad be hewn down and cast into the fire...and thus I will sweep away the bad *out of my vineyard.*"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Read also Matthew 24:50-54, Mark 13:54-58, and Luke 12:44-53

<sup>2</sup> Luke 18:8

<sup>3</sup> Jacob 3:136

<sup>4</sup> Jacob 3:129-132

Finally, the Lord told the servant...“Go ye straightway, and do all things whatsoever I have commanded you...And his servant went straightway, and did all things whatsoever his lord commanded him, and after many days all things were fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>” In prophecy, God always gives a point of reference, meaning a start or end period, in order for mankind to know when these prophecies will take place and to understand them. The point of reference in Section Ninety-eight is when all things are fulfilled or completed, thus, as Zion has yet to be redeemed, the Church of Jesus Christ can know with certainty that neither Joseph Smith, Jr. nor Joseph Smith III were this servant. The servant mentioned in this section therefore has yet to be called forth and ordained.

There are individuals however who still question and wonder if either Joseph Smith, Jr. or Joseph Smith III was indeed that servant as both were essential to the restoration and to the reorganization of the Church in 1830 and 1860, respectively. Again, while it is true that God called and used these men to lay the foundation of His Church and move the cause of Zion forward, the saints need only look at the Center Place today to know that the Lord’s vineyard has not yet been redeemed. Please read the second Scripture from Section 100:1-4:

“**100:1a** Verily I say unto you, my friends, Behold, I will give unto you a revelation and commandment, that you may know how to act in the discharge of your duties concerning the salvation and redemption of your brethren, **who have been scattered on the land of Zion**, being driven and smitten by the hands of mine enemies; on whom I will pour out my wrath without measure in mine own time; **100:1b** for I have suffered them thus far, that they might fill up the measure of their iniquities, that their cup might be full, and that those who call themselves after my name might be chastened for a little season, with a sore and grievous chastisement, **because they did not hearken** altogether unto the precepts and commandments which I gave unto them.

**100:2a** But verily I say unto you, that I have decreed a decree which my people shall realize, **inasmuch as they hearken** from this very hour, unto the counsel which I, the Lord, their God, shall give unto them. **100:2b** Behold, they shall, **for I have decreed it**, begin to prevail against mine enemies from this very hour, and by hearkening to observe all the words which I, the Lord their God, shall speak unto them, they shall never cease to prevail until the kingdoms of the world are subdued under my feet; and the earth is given unto the saints, to possess it for ever and ever. **100:2c** But inasmuch as they **keep not** my commandments, and **hearken not** to observe all my words, the kingdoms of the world **shall prevail against them**, for they were set to be a light unto the world, and to be the saviors of men; **100:2d** and inasmuch as they are not the saviors of men, they are as salt that has lost its savor, and is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

**100:3a** But verily I say unto you, I have decreed that your brethren, which have been scattered, **shall return** to the land of their inheritances and **build up** the waste places of Zion; for after much tribulation, as I have said unto you in a former commandment, cometh the blessing. **100:3b** Behold, this is the blessing which I have promised after your tribulations, and the tribulations of

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<sup>1</sup> DC 98:8b-c

your brethren; your redemption, and the redemption of your brethren; even their restoration to the land of Zion, to be established, **no more to be thrown down**; **100:3c** nevertheless, if they pollute their inheritances, they shall be thrown down; for I will not spare them if they pollute their inheritances.

**100:3d** Behold, I say unto you, The redemption of Zion must needs come ***by power***; therefore I will raise up unto my people ***a man***, who shall lead them like ***as Moses*** led the children of Israel, for ye are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham; **100:3e** and ye must needs be led out of bondage ***by power***, and with a stretched out arm; and as your fathers were led at the first, ***even so shall the redemption of Zion be***. **100:3f** Therefore, let not your hearts faint, for I say not unto you as I said unto your fathers, Mine angel shall go up before you, but not my presence; but I say unto you, Mine angels shall go before you, and also my presence, and in time ye shall possess the goodly land.

**100:4** Verily, verily I say unto you, that my servant Joseph is the man to whom I ***likened*** the servant to whom the Lord of the vineyard spoke in the parable which I have given unto you.”

In February 1834, two days after a delegation arrived in Kirtland to inform the Church that the saints had been forced out of Jackson County Missouri; Joseph Smith received revelation One Hundred which called for the redemption of Zion. In the revelation, Joseph Smith, Parley P. Pratt, and Lyman Wight were commanded to obtain companies of 500 men, or lower if they could not find 500, in order to...“***organize my kingdom*** upon the consecrated land; and establish the children of Zion.<sup>1</sup>”

In response, Joseph went around the surrounding area from February 26 to March 28, 1834 with Wight, Pratt, and Sidney Rigdon to obtain monies and to gather young and middle aged men. On April 18th, Joseph Smith left Kirtland with about one hundred and fifty men, which would eventually grow to two hundred and five men, not counting the few women and children that accompanied them. This period of time in Church history is referred to as Zion’s Camp, and it was a complete failure, as it was not the work of God, but the work of man. “And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, ***it will come to naught***; But if it be of God, ye ***cannot*** overthrow it; be careful, therefore, lest ye be found even to fight against God.<sup>2</sup>”

There are three separate events which stand out during the build-up and the eventual march of Zion’s Camp. Firstly, the Lord commanded Joseph and the Church in Section One hundred to gather up monies to purchase lands in Zion. In Joseph’s journal however he noted that his object in having a conference in Avon, New York...“was to obtain young men and middle aged to go and assist in the redemption of Zion, according to the commandment; and for the church to gather up their riches, and send them to purchase lands according to the commandment of the Lord; also to devise means, or obtain money for the relief of the brethren ***in Kirtland***, say two thousand dollars, which sum would deliver the ***church in Kirtland from debt***; and also determine the course which the several companies shall pursue, or the manner they shall

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<sup>1</sup> DC 100:6g

<sup>2</sup> Acts 5:38-39

journey when they shall leave this place.<sup>1</sup>” Although the Lord commanded the saints to gather monies for Zion, they raised funds for the church at Kirtland. It is important to note both that it is not our place to judge our past brethren, whether during the early days of the restoration or during the time that Israel was in the wilderness, and that there is much we do not understand concerning the situation at Kirtland.

Secondly, even though various Church history resources attempt to state that Zion’s Camp was not a military campaign but instead that the saints were relying on the counsel state authorities, the evidence clearly illustrates that it was indeed a military campaign. For as the saints marched toward Jackson County, the company not only performed military drills, but they also dispensed to each other military rankings (Lyman Wight was elected general June 12). Joseph Smith stated...“I chose twenty men for my life guards, of whom my brother Hyrum was chosen captain, and George A. Smith was my armor-bearer.”<sup>2</sup>”

The Lord commanded Joseph “to *organize* my kingdom,” not to wage a military campaign. Imagine the power of the Holy Ghost that would have accompanied five hundred men, or even two hundred and five, moving together in a singleness of heart and purpose to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. “And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; And if they endure unto the end, they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; And whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, *how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be.*”<sup>3</sup> Zion’s Camp however was disbanded in late June after a cholera outbreak, which claimed the lives of thirteen people, and after Section One hundred and two was received.

The Lord called His servant in the parable of the vineyard to break down the walls of His enemies, to throw down their tower, to scatter their watchmen, and to avenge God of His enemies so that an ensign to the nations would be established and so that a place would be prepared to look forward to the time of Jesus Christ’s return to reign on the earth for a thousand years. These commandments were not physical in nature, but spiritual. Please read from 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 and 1 Nephi 3:230-232:

“**10:3** For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; **10:4** (For the weapons of our warfare are *not carnal*, but *mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds*;) **10:5** Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; **10:6** And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.”

“**3:230** And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; **3:231** And they were *armed* with *righteousness* and with the *power of God* in great glory. **3:232** And it came to pass that I beheld that the wrath of God was poured out upon the great and abominable church...”

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<sup>1</sup> History of the Church, Volume 1, pg. 442.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pg. 461

<sup>3</sup> 1 Nephi 3:187-189

It is also important to remember that although Joseph Smith III traveled to Utah and confounded some of the Mormon priesthood there, and even helped to convert some to return to the Church, the promise in Section Ninety-eight is for Zion to be redeemed, and Zion is located in the Center Place, or in other words, Independence, MO. “Hearken, O ye elders of my church saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land which is the land of Missouri, which is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the Saints: wherefore this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion.<sup>1</sup>”

Moreover, the Lord said that He would raise up a man who would lead His people like as Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, and that...“ye must needs be led out of bondage by power.<sup>2</sup>” The bondage that the saints were in during that time, and the bondage that we are in now, was not that the saints had been pushed out of Jackson County, but that we have altogether subjected ourselves to sin and disobedience.

In Genesis, chapter fifteen, Abraham had a vision in which God said...“Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land which shall not be theirs, and shall serve strangers; and they shall be afflicted.<sup>3</sup>” For four hundred years the people of Israel were in bondage and...“dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he [God] them out of it.<sup>4</sup>” Unfortunately, the latter day Church has also suffered itself to be in bondage in a land that is not theirs, meaning the world, and the Lord has promised that the redemption of Zion must also come by power as Israel was led out of Egypt. Please read the following from the Doctrine and Covenant, Section 108:2 and 4:

“**108:2c** And let every man call upon the name of the Lord; yea, verily I say unto you again, The time has come when the voice of the Lord is unto you, Go ye out of Babylon; gather ye out from among the nations, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

**108:4a** Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour. Let them, therefore, who are among the Gentiles, flee unto Zion. **108:4b** And let them who be of Judah, flee unto Jerusalem, unto the mountains of the Lord's house. Go ye out from among the nations, **even from Babylon**, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon.”

The servant mentioned in Sections Ninety-eight and One hundred was called to do mighty things in the name of Jesus Christ, particularly to redeem the Lord’s vineyard and to lead the sons and daughters of God out of spiritual Babylon. The Lord also promised that after a little season in which the Church should be chastised because of disobedience, that the saints would be gathered to build up the waste places of Zion. The Lord also vowed that when the saints begin to hearken to all His words, from that very hour, the Church will begin to prevail until all...“the kingdoms of this world may be constrained to acknowledge that the kingdom of Zion is in very deed the kingdom of our God and his Christ.<sup>5</sup>” Although Joseph Smith,

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<sup>1</sup> DC 57:1a-b

<sup>2</sup> DC 100:3e

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 15:16-17

<sup>4</sup> Acts 13:17

<sup>5</sup> DC 102:9b

Jr. and Joseph Smith III were mighty men of faith and did much for the Lord, it is evident that these events have not yet occurred. Therefore, the servant who has been promised to lead the people of God out of bondage has not yet been called and ordained.



## Conclusion: The High Calling of the Prophets

In the fifth chapter of Mosiah, Ammon explained that all the hidden and secret things which have not yet come to light will be made manifest to the children of men through the high calling of the seers and prophets. For the Lord God has promised that He...“will do nothing, until he revealeth the secret unto his servants the prophets,<sup>1</sup>” and...“Thus God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles; therefore, he becometh *a great benefit* to his fellow beings.<sup>2</sup>”

The responsibility which is laid upon a prophet of the Lord is one of tremendous importance to the spiritual welfare of the sons and daughters of God. It is through the word of prophecy that the light of Jesus Christ, and thereby the Father, is shed forth as the dawning of the sun. Without this light it would be nigh impossible to understand the love and truth of God, for the prophets ever only testified of Jesus Christ and it was through them that the nature and words of God were manifested to the children of men. The Lord told Hosea...“I have also spoken *by* the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, *by* the ministry of the prophets.<sup>3</sup>”

It is through the mediation and ministry of the prophets that God has spoken to the children of men, desiring that mankind might hearken and believe in the truth of the Only Begotten Son, who will deliver as many as will from the death and captivity of the devil. And as Jesus is the brightness of the glory of God and the express image of His person, the prophets have stood as examples of the light of Christ and have delivered the word of prophecy as they were moved by the Holy Ghost so that the children of men would not dwell in darkness but have everlasting life.

Through the prophets...“We have therefore a more sure knowledge of the *word of prophecy*, to which word of prophecy ye do well that ye *take heed*, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place, *until* the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.<sup>4</sup>” As Nehemiah, the governor to the Jews, cried out for the people of God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, so too do the prophets cry out to mankind come unto Jesus Christ and build up the Kingdom of God, even Zion. For as...“by a prophet [Moses] the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he [Israel and also Ephraim] preserved,<sup>5</sup>” God has promised to call forth another servant in the latter days like unto Moses who will deliver the sons and daughters of God out of bondage and spiritual Babylon by power. The question remains however if those who profess to know the Lord’s name will take heed to the word of God and emulate those servants, the prophets, who have given their all to do the will of their Heavenly Father.

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<sup>1</sup> Amos 3:7

<sup>2</sup> Mosiah 5:81

<sup>3</sup> Hosea 12:10

<sup>4</sup> 2 Peter 1:19

<sup>5</sup> Hosea 12:13

# Defining a Prophet Part Two

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## Chapter Six: How the Savior worked with the Prophets

In the first portion of this study, we examined the high calling of the prophets and the pattern concerning their authority and ordination which God has shown through the Gospel. The second part of defining a prophet is recognizing that...“the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.<sup>1</sup>” Through this understanding comes the realization that all of the children of God are called to be a prophet, for they are to be filled with the testimony of the Lord Jesus. Thus the following chapters focus on the ways in which the prophets shared how their Lord and Redeemer worked with them so that the souls of men might benefit withal and seek to emulate those individuals who have given their whole soul unto God.

Throughout the Scriptures, there were many prophets who gave their all, even their life, for their Heavenly Father, and this they were able to accomplish by following the example of Jesus Christ, who said...“For I can of mine own self do nothing; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father who hath sent me.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, Jesus did not live for himself, but for God, and the same can be said for the prophets. Paul wrote...“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, *we are the Lord’s.*”<sup>3</sup>

While studying the testimonies of the prophets, it seems that we either glorify the tribulations that they suffered, or we turn their testimonies into children stories, which is especially true for those testimonies that are found in the Old Testament. However, by doing so, we lessen the truth of their testimony. In essence, we lose the power and meaning behind their sacrifice, and we forget that these sufferings truly happened. The persecutions that Jesus, the prophets, and the former saints experienced were not pleasant, but were real. Please read the following Scripture from Hebrews 11:36-40:

“**11:36** And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment; **11:37** They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; **11:38** Of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. **11:39** And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promises; **11:40** God having provided some better things for them through their sufferings, for without sufferings they could not be made perfect.”

Nonetheless, these saints were able to overcome all of their afflictions and sufferings because they had a strong faith and a lively hope through Jesus Christ. Although the prophets faced great trials, both physical and spiritual, no height, nor depth, nor any power could separate them from the love of God. “...but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not

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<sup>1</sup> Revelation 19:10

<sup>2</sup> John 5:31

<sup>3</sup> Romans 14:7-8

at the things which are seen, but at the things which are *not seen*; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen *are eternal*.<sup>1</sup>

Again, it is important to understand that the prophets were not supermen, but were flesh and blood. However, even so, these men chose not to allow that natural man to overcome them, but instead they kept their eye single to the glory of God and embraced those exceeding and precious promises. In so doing, the prophets had a blessed hope and a pure love in the Son of God that passes all understanding, which affected their hearts to preach the everlasting gospel and to give their all for the Lord. Please read the following from Ephesians 3:13-19:

**“3:13** Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. **3:14** For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **3:15** Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, **3:16** That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; **3:17** That Christ may dwell in your hearts *by faith*; that ye, being rooted and grounded *in love*, **3:18** May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; **3:19** And to know the love of Christ, *which passeth knowledge*, that ye might be filled with all the *fullness of God*.”

In the Scriptures, we see that Jesus truly dwelt in the hearts of the prophets, and we know this because of the witness that they left behind and because of the works that they accomplished for God. In the fifteenth chapter of John, Jesus explained that He is the true vine and that we are the branches, and if we do not abide in Him we can do nothing. However, Jesus said...“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be *my disciples*.”<sup>2</sup>

The only way that the prophets could be an interpreter and watchman for God, is if they were abiding in Jesus Christ. The prophets therefore were not only Jesus’s disciples, but they were also His friends. Unfortunately, the present usage of the word “friend” has been watered down significantly over the years. The 1828 Webster’s Dictionary defines the word friend as, “One who is attached to another by affection; one who entertains for another sentiments of esteem, respect and affection, which lead him to desire his company, and to *seek to promote his happiness and prosperity*; opposed to foe or enemy.” The prophets actively sought with their whole soul to promote the happiness and prosperity of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom on earth. The Scriptural definition of the word friend can be found in John 15:12-15:

**“15:12** This is my commandment, That ye love one another, *as I have loved you*. **15:13** Greater love hath no man than this, *that a man lay down his life for his friends*. **15:14** Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. **15:15** Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but *I have called you friends*; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

<sup>2</sup> John 15:7-8

The prophets have shared a simple and precious truth through their testimonies, that Jesus Christ was their friend, and that they were His friends in return. In particular, the prophets have shed light on what a relationship with Jesus Christ truly means. If we emulate those who have given their all, we too might have this friendship with our Savior, who is the way, the life, and the truth that leads us to God the Eternal Father and to Zion. Jesus told the disciples...“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will *manifest myself to him*.<sup>1</sup>”

Throughout the Scriptures, the prophets have shared what the Master will do for His friends. In particular, we read that Jesus strengthened them, He protected them, He comforted them, He nourished them, He walked and talked with them, and He stood with them always. In these things we witness that Jesus blessed the prophets both spiritually and temporally. In response, the prophets strengthened and protected God’s Kingdom, they comforted and nourished His people, they walked with them, and stood together with them as a shepherd over the flock.

Paul wrote...“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”<sup>2</sup> Jesus Christ sought the welfare of those that His Father had given Him, so much so that He laid down His life for God and for them. Similarly, the prophets laid down their lives for the welfare of God, for their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and for His sons and daughters. This is the pure definition of friendship.

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<sup>1</sup> John 14:21

<sup>2</sup> Acts 20:28

## Chapter Seven: Strength to Break our Bonds

In Ether, chapter five, Moroni wrote that he beheld the weakness of his writing because he recognized that it was God, not man, that made his words powerful and great, and through this recognition Moroni feared that others would mock at the words of God because of his weakness. In response, the Lord told Moroni...“if men come unto me, I will shew unto them their weakness. *I give* unto men weakness, that they may be *humble*; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become *strong unto them*.<sup>1</sup>”

The world today views weakness as something that is negative or undesirable, while also advising mankind to take pride in themselves and to cut out all weakness from their lives. By reading Charles Darwin’s theory of Natural Selection, which states that the weak die and that only the strong survive, it is easier to understand how the world regards weakness. God told Moroni however that He gave men weakness in order for them to be humble and so that they might become strong through Him. “And because thou hast seen thy weakness, *thou shalt be made strong*, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father.<sup>2</sup>”

The Lord said in the Doctrine and Covenants...“and all this that it might be fulfilled, which was written by the prophets; the weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellow-man, *neither trust in the arm of flesh*, but that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world.<sup>3</sup>” Weakness is not a cursing, but a great blessing and mercy. For when mankind comes to recognize that they are weak and that they cannot overcome their trials alone, they humbly seek the Lord for strength. Please read from 2 Corinthians 12:5-10:

“**12:5** Of such a one will I glory; yet of myself I will not glory, but in *mine infirmities*. **12:6** For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth; but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth of me, or that he heareth of me. **12:7** And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, **lest I should be exalted above measure**.

**12:8** For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. **12:9** And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; *for my strength is made perfect in weakness*. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. **12:10** Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, *then am I strong*.”

Nonetheless, it appears to be the nature of the natural man to fight against his or her weaknesses instead of embracing them, such as David did. In the eighteenth Psalms, David wrote of what Jesus Christ did for

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<sup>1</sup> Ether 5:27-28

<sup>2</sup> Ether 5:38

<sup>3</sup> DC 1:4b-c

him as he recognized that he was too weak for his enemies, saying...“He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me; for they were *too strong for me*. They prevented me in the day of my calamity; *but the Lord was my stay*.<sup>1</sup> He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me. The Lord rewarded me *according* to my righteousness; *according* to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.<sup>2</sup>”

Unfortunately, we as saints in the latter days often view the admitting of a weakness and the admitting of a defeat as one and the same. Therefore, instead of trusting and relying upon the Lord such as David did, we press onward with the strength of a man when we could press forward with the strength of God. In the many wars recorded in the Book of Mormon, the Nephites were almost always outnumbered by the Lamanites but because...“the Lamanites knew nothing concerning the Lord, nor the strength of the Lord; therefore they depended upon their *own* strength. Yet they were a strong people, as to the strength *of men*.<sup>3</sup>” Whereas the sons of Helaman relied upon Jesus Christ for their strength and not one soul fell in battle. “...yea, and they had fought as if with the *strength of God*; yea, never were men known to have fought with such miraculous strength.<sup>4</sup>”

It is important to understand that the strength that David received was not only because he recognized that his enemies were too strong for him, but also because Jesus recognized David’s righteousness. Further, the blessing was not just for David alone, but also for God to show forth His power to all men. For us today, our enemies are not necessarily physical in nature such as they were for David, but they are spiritual, and God does not strengthen us because we simply profess to know Jesus Christ, but because we walk with Him and have a desire to spread the glorious Gospel.

The Lord told Moroni that if men humbled themselves and exercised faith in Him, then would He make them strong, which again can be physical or spiritual. Many people assume that the thorn in Paul’s side was a physical affliction, but the word infirmity does not just apply to an unhealthy state of the body, but also to a weakness in mind or a weakness of resolution. Paul’s infirmity very well could have been a spiritual affliction that helped him to glory in Jesus Christ.

In first Nephi, chapter two, we read that shortly after Lehi’s family departed out of Jerusalem toward the promised land that Laman and Lemuel rebelled against their father and desired to return to Jerusalem. However, when Nephi spoke against them through the power of the Spirit of the Lord, his two older brothers became angry with Nephi and bound him with cords with the intention of leaving him in the wilderness to die. Please read from 1 Nephi 2:28-30:

“**2:28** But it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord, saying, O Lord, ***according to my faith which is in thee***, wilt thou deliver me from the hands of my brethren; **2:29** Yea, even give me strength that I may burst these bands with which I am bound. **2:30** And it came to pass that when I had

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<sup>1</sup> To rest; to rely; to confide in; to trust

<sup>2</sup> Psalms 18:17-21

<sup>3</sup> Mosiah 6:44-45

<sup>4</sup> Alma 26:66

said these words, behold, **the bands were loosed** from off my hands and feet, and I stood before my brethren, and I spake unto them again.”

Through Nephi’s relationship with Jesus Christ, he had faith and trust in God that he would receive the physical strength needed in order to break free from his bonds. Similarly, Alma the younger (Alma II), who was confirmed as a prophet of God by an angel of the Lord [read Alma 6:26 and Alma 8:10], and Amulek...“had power given unto them, insomuch that they could not be confined in dungeons; neither were it possible that any man could slay them; Nevertheless they did not exercise their power until they were bound in bands and cast into prison. Now this was done that the Lord might shew forth *his power* in them.<sup>1</sup>” Please read the following Scripture from Alma 10:74-81:

“**10:74** And their chief judge stood before them [Alma and Amulek], and smote them again, and said unto them, If ye have the power of God, deliver ***yourselves*** from these bands, and then we will believe that the Lord will destroy this people according to your words. **10:75** And it came to pass that they all went forth and smote them, saying the same words, even until the last; **10:76** And when the last had spoken unto them, the **power of God** was upon Alma and Amulek, and they arose and stood upon their feet; and Alma cried, saying, How long shall we suffer these great afflictions, O Lord? **10:77** O Lord, give us strength **according to our faith which is in Christ, even unto deliverance**; and they **brake the cords** with which they were bound; and when the people saw this, they began to flee, for the fear of destruction had come upon them.

**10:78** And it came to pass that so great was their fear, that they fell to the earth, and did not obtain the outer door of the prison; **10:79** And the earth shook mightily, and the walls of the prison were rent in twain, so that they fell to the earth: **10:80** And the chief judge, and the lawyers, and priests, and teachers, who smote upon Alma and Amulek, were slain by the fall thereof. **10:81** And Alma and Amulek came forth out of the prison, and they were not hurt; for the Lord had granted unto them power, **according to their faith which was in Christ.**”

The prophets have shared that not only does the Son of God provide physical strength for His friends in order for them to break their bonds, but He also provides that spiritual strength to break the bands of death and the chains of hell that lead to everlasting destruction. It is Satan’s desire to encircle the children of men about with these chains, which he thought he had done with the fall of Adam and Eve and the separation of man from God. “For behold, if the flesh should rise no more, our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more. And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, *like unto himself.*”<sup>2</sup>

However, this was not a part of God’s wonderful plan. Instead, we read that because Jesus Christ came to die and to rise again that there was a redemption made, and that the grave should have no victory, thus Jesus broke the bands of death and hell, which man could never do alone. When Alma and Amulek were imprisoned and beaten, the chief judge said to them...“If ye have the power of God, deliver

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<sup>1</sup> Alma 6:39-41

<sup>2</sup> 2 Nephi 6:20-21



yourselfs from these bands.<sup>1</sup> It is important to understand that it is only through the power of Jesus Christ that mankind can break the bonds that keep them from living eternally with God. “And since man had fallen, he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atoneth for their sins, through faith and repentance, etc.: And that he breaketh the bands of death, that the grave shall have no victory, and that the sting of death should be swallowed up in the hopes of glory.<sup>2</sup>”

If the sons and daughters of God will recognize that they are weak and understand that only through Jesus Christ can they know the joy of their redemption, Jesus *will* give His friends spiritual strength to overcome even the sting of death. Nonetheless, this promise requires more than just professing to believe in Him, but also by keeping His commandments. David said...“The Lord rewarded me *according to my righteousness*; according to the *cleanness of my hands* hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.<sup>3</sup>” Please read the following from Alma 10:27-30:

**“10:27** And now my brethren, **I wish from the inmost part of my heart**, yea, with great anxiety, even unto pain, that ye would hearken unto my words, and cast off your sins, and not procrastinate the day of your repentance; **10:28** But that ye would **humble yourselves before the Lord**, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long suffering; **having faith on the Lord**; **10:29** Having a hope that ye shall receive eternal life; having the love of God always in your hearts, that ye may be lifted up at the last day, and enter into his rest; **10:30** And may the Lord grant unto you repentance, that ye may not bring down his wrath upon you, **that ye may not be bound down by the chains of hell**, that ye may not suffer the second death.”

The prophets have shared that through our faith in Jesus Christ we will receive the strength to break the bonds of sin as well as to endure and overcome those many physical trials that we experience every day, which will help us to further develop that friendship with Him. This friendship however is not only for our personal gain, but that we might lay down our life in order to seek the happiness and prosperity of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom on earth, and in this desire we shall be strengthened and overcome all things...“because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.<sup>4</sup>”

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<sup>1</sup> Alma 10:74

<sup>2</sup> Alma 13:46-47

<sup>3</sup> 2 Samuel 22:21-22

<sup>4</sup> 1 John 4:4

## Chapter Eight: Restored to Innocence and Protected in the Kingdom of God

In the sixth chapter of Daniel, we read that shortly after Darius took over the kingdom of Babylon, he established a hundred and twenty princes to rule over his kingdom. Furthermore, he set Daniel, the prophet, to be the chief president over them all, we read that...“this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an *excellent spirit was in him*; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.<sup>1</sup>”

Naturally, the other presidents and princes despised Daniel because of his position and his favor with the king, and because he worshiped the true and living God. Therefore...“the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as *he was faithful*, neither was there *any error or fault* found in him.<sup>2</sup>” In an attempt to kill Daniel, all of the presidents, governors, princes, counselors, and captains conspired together to establish a royal statute, which, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, could not be changed or rescinded after it had been decreed, even by the king.

The royal statute was written...“that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God, or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.<sup>3</sup>” The conspirators knew beforehand that Daniel kneeled and prayed to God three times a day, and that he would not follow the decree. Please read the following from Daniel 6:10-27:

**6:10** Now when Daniel *knew* that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and, his windows being *open* in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, **as he did aforetime.** **6:11** Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

**6:12** Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of Medes and Persians, which altereth not. **6:13** Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.

**6:14** Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. **6:15** Then these men assembled unto the king and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

**6:16** Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, **he will deliver thee.**

**6:17** And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel 6:3

<sup>2</sup> Daniel 6:4

<sup>3</sup> Daniel 6:7

own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

**6:18** Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting; neither were instruments of music brought before him; and his sleep went from him. **6:19** Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. **6:20** And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel, and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, **able to deliver thee** from the lions?

**6:21** Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live forever. **6:22** My **God hath sent his angel**, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before him **innocency** was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. **6:23** Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

**6:24** And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

**6:25** Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. **6:26** I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and steadfast forever, and **his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed**, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. **6:27** He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath **delivered** Daniel from the power of the lions.”

In the beginning of Daniel’s testimony, we read that wicked men attempted to conspire against him, but yet they were unable to find a fault with Daniel because he was faithful and because he was a man of innocence. The 1828 Webster’s Dictionary defines the word innocent as...“not producing injury; free from guilt; not having done wrong or violated any law; not tainted with sin; pure; upright.” Not only had Daniel done no wrong against the king, but he also said that he was found innocent before God. How is a man found innocent before God?

Jesus said...“Every spirit of man was *innocent* in the beginning, and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again in their infant state, *innocent before God*. And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, *through disobedience*, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers.<sup>1</sup>” Every man therefore was innocent in the beginning because of the redemption that God had made through Jesus Christ from the foundation of the world. Nevertheless, God told Adam...“Inasmuch as thy children are conceived in sin, even so, when they begin to grow up sin conceiveth in their hearts,

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<sup>1</sup> DC 90:6b-c

and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good. And it is given unto them to know good from evil; wherefore, they are agents unto themselves.<sup>1</sup>”

While every spirit of man was innocent before God in the beginning, the Scriptures explain that the children of men are born on the earth in order to experience opposition and to exercise their gift of agency. God told Adam that sin would be conceived, or formed, in the heart of man, thus removing themselves from a state of innocence, and yet this was a part of God’s great plan of happiness. For without opposition, we could not have agency, and without agency we could not know of the joy of our redemption through Christ.

It is important to understand that God does not want to *reform* the children of men, but He wants to *restore* the children of men to be the sons and daughters of God. He wants to restore us to a state of innocence. However, not a state of innocence such as Adam and Eve had in the beginning, for all they understood was that God was their creator, but instead to one that has been washed clean before God and understands the everlasting joy of their redemption. “And unto him [Jesus Christ] who loved us, be glory; who washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, his Father. To him be glory and dominion, forever and ever. Amen.”<sup>2</sup> Please read the following Scriptures from Genesis 4:9-11 and Mormon 3:29:

“**4:9** And in that day, the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, saying, I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and forever; that, as thou hast fallen, thou mayest be ***redeemed***, and all mankind, even as many ***as will***. **4:10** And in that day Adam blessed God, and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth; saying, Blessed be the name of God, for, ***because of my transgression*** my eyes are opened, and in this life **I shall have joy**, and again, in the flesh I shall see God. **4:11** And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying, Were it ***not*** for our transgression, we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and ***the joy of our redemption***, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.

**3:29** And he [Jesus Christ] hath brought to pass the redemption of the world, whereby he that is found guiltless before him at the judgment day, hath it given unto him to dwell in the presence of God in his kingdom, to sing ceaseless praises with the choirs above, unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, which are one God, ***in a state of happiness which hath no end.***”

For Daniel to be found innocent before God he must have had a friendship with Jesus Christ. “And behold they are righteous for ever; for because of their *faith in the Lamb of God*, their garments are made white in his blood.<sup>3</sup>” Because the presidents and princes could find no fault in Daniel they thus devised a plan to kill him by using his faith against him. As they knew and understood that Daniel prayed to God daily, the presidents and princes established a decree which Daniel could not possibly follow. Nonetheless, Daniel was not ignorant of the royal statute, for we read, “Now when Daniel ***knew*** that the writing was

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 6:57-58

<sup>2</sup> Revelation 1:6

<sup>3</sup> 1 Nephi 3:117

signed, he went into his house; and, his windows being *open* in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, *as he did aforetime*.<sup>1</sup> It is crucial to understand that Daniel knew of this decree and yet he continued to pray to God regardless, and rather than attempt to hide his prayers, he prayed in his home with the windows to his chamber wide open for all to witness.

Certainly it would have been more “wise” to not pray to God during the thirty days, or at the very least to do so secretly. Daniel however exercised not only faith and trust in Jesus Christ by praying openly, but also a pure and innocent heart. “For I am persuaded, *that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”<sup>2</sup> Daniel’s love for the true and living God was to such an extent that he would rather die than to not pray to his Heavenly Father.

Nevertheless, Daniel’s love was not in vain, and the conspiracy of the presidents and princes was destroyed for God delivered Daniel from the lions by sending an angel to protect him. Daniel shared in his testimony that when we exercise our faith in the Only Begotten Son, that He both restores us to a state of innocence by cleansing us of all our sins and that He protects us as well. “Behold, I say unto you, Go forth as I have commanded you; *repent of all your sins*; ask and ye shall receive; knock and it shall be opened unto you: behold, *I will go before you*, and be your *rearward*; and *I will be in your midst*, and you shall not be confounded; behold, I am Jesus Christ, and I come quickly. Even so. Amen.”<sup>3</sup>

Daniel also shared that faith is not simply having a belief in Jesus, but also living with Him. Jesus told the disciples...“He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man *serve me*, let him follow me; and where I am there shall *also my servant be*; if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.”<sup>4</sup> Sadly, there appears to be a misperception of what faith truly is. Faith is more than just...“assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,”<sup>5</sup> but it is also how we choose to live our life. Please read the following Scripture from James 2:14-15:

“**2:14** What profit is it, my brethren, for a man to say he hath faith, and **hath not works**? can faith save him? **2:15** Yea, a man **may** say, I will show thee I have faith without works; but I say, Show me thy faith without works, and I will show thee my faith **by my works**.”

Daniel developed his relationship with Christ by being a servant of God, which requires action, not just words, as the king spake after he opened the lion’s den...“Daniel, O Daniel, *servant of the living God*, is thy God, whom thou *servest continually*, able to deliver thee from the lions?”<sup>6</sup> Daniel continued to serve God, even under the threat of death, because of his love and friendship with Jesus Christ, and because of Daniel’s faith in Christ, God delivered him from death, which the Lord God will also do for all mankind if

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel 6:10

<sup>2</sup> Romans 8:38-39

<sup>3</sup> DC 49:5c-d

<sup>4</sup> John 12:25-26

<sup>5</sup> Hebrews 11:1

<sup>6</sup> Daniel 6:20

they will follow after Jesus. Again, Jesus said, “If any man serve me, let him *follow me*.<sup>1</sup>” Please read the following passage from 2 Nephi 13:11-17, 21-27:

“**13:11** And again: It sheweth unto the children of men the straightness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter, he [Jesus Christ] having set the **example** before them. **13:12** And he said unto the children of men, **Follow thou me**. **13:13** Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus, **save we shall be willing** to keep the commandments of the Father?

**13:14** And the Father said, Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my beloved Son. **13:15** And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying, He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, **like unto me**; wherefore, **follow me**, and **do** the things which ye have seen me do.

**13:16** Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall follow the Son with **full purpose of heart**, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, **witnessing unto the Father** that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism: yea, **by following** your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word; behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; **13:17** Yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel.

**13:21** And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this, that unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, **he can not be saved**; **13:22** Wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen, that your Lord and your Redeemer should do: **13:23** For, for this cause have they been shewn unto me, that ye might know the **gate by which ye should enter**.

**13:24** For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water: and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire, and by the Holy Ghost. **13:25** And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; **13:26** And ye have received the Holy Ghost, which witnesses of the Father and the Son, unto the fulfilling of the promise which he hath made, that if ye enter in by the way, ye should receive.

**13:27** And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask, **if all is done?**”

The Kingdom of God is the gate by which we should enter, and once we enter the Kingdom, or rather once we are spiritually born of God, we are adopted as the sons and daughters of God and become joint heirs of the promise with Jesus Christ. “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his son...To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive *the adoption of sons*. And because ye are

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<sup>1</sup> John 12:26

sons, God hath sent forth the *Spirit of his son into your hearts*, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, *then an heir of God through Christ.*<sup>1</sup> It was not because of Daniel himself that the king favored him and established him as president over the entire kingdom, but because... “an excellent spirit was in him,<sup>2</sup>” which was the Holy Ghost who testifies of God and Jesus Christ.

In order for the king to be able to recognize the Spirit in Daniel, Daniel must have taken the Holy Ghost to be his guide by witnessing unto the Father that he was willing to follow His Son and always remember Him. Paul wrote in Romans, chapter eight... “For as many as are *led by the Spirit of God*, they are the *sons of God*. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the *Spirit of adoption*; whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness *with* our spirit, *that we are the children of God*; And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified *together.*<sup>3</sup>”

The Holy Ghost bears record with our spirit that we are the sons and daughters of God if we keep the commandments and truly take upon us the name of Christ, for we know that the Holy Ghost is the voice of God and Jesus Christ who speaks to our soul. “And now I say unto you, that the good shepherd *doth call after you*; and if you will hearken unto his voice, he will bring you into *his fold*, and ye are his sheep.<sup>4</sup>” If the children of men will listen to the Lord’s still small voice and follow after Jesus, He will bring them into His fold, or in other words His Kingdom. In so doing, God will deliver mankind from death and hell just as He delivered Daniel from the lion’s den. Please read the words of King Benjamin from Mosiah 3:8-12:

**“3:8** And now, because of the covenant which ye have made, **ye shall be called the children of Christ**, his sons, and his daughters: **3:9** For behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed **through faith on his name**; therefore, ye are born of him, and have become his sons and his daughters. **3:10** And under this head ye are **made free**; and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. **3:11** There is no other name given, whereby salvation cometh, therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God, that ye should be **obedient** unto the end of your lives. **3:12** And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this, shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called **by the name of Christ.**”

Daniel has shared that through faith, service, and the Holy Ghost, we can be restored to innocence and be protected from spiritual death by entering into the Kingdom of God. By listening to the voice of the Lord mankind can also develop that friendship with Jesus Christ. However, it takes more than just a belief in Jesus, but also to follow after and to serve Christ, even when faced with tremendous trials, such as physical death. For we know that if we are called after the name of Jesus Christ we will be found at the right hand of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians 4:4-7

<sup>2</sup> Daniel 6:3

<sup>3</sup> Romans 8:14-17

<sup>4</sup> Alma 3:105

King Darius said...“I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and steadfast forever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He *delivereth and rescueth*, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath *delivered* Daniel from the power of the lions.<sup>1</sup>”

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel 6:26-27



## Chapter Nine: Comforted and Everlasting Consolation

Paul wrote in his second epistle to the Thessalonians...“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us *everlasting consolation* and good hope through grace, *Comfort your hearts*, and stablish you in every good word and work.<sup>1</sup>” When the saints seek to build the Kingdom of God and establish the cause of Zion, it is the Lord that comforts our hearts with an everlasting consolation that we might abound in good works and develop our friendship with Jesus Christ. What does it mean however to be truly comforted and consoled by the Lord?

While the Scriptures testify that the work of the Lord is not grievous, the prophets have shared that there are moments when the work can bring anguish to the soul, not necessarily because of their own sins, but because of the choices and actions of others. For example, while Lehi’s family traveled to the promise land, Nephi was in almost constant struggle with his two elder brothers, Laman and Lemuel, and although they had witnessed the power of God on many occasions, they would not soften their hearts and turn to Christ. “And now I, Nephi, was *grieved* because of the hardness of their hearts, and also because of the things which I had seen, and knew they must unavoidably come to pass because of the great wickedness of the children of men. And it came to pass that I was *overcome* because of my afflictions, for I considered that mine afflictions were great above all, because of the destruction of my people; for I had beheld their fall.<sup>2</sup>” Please read Nephi’s words to his brothers from 1 Nephi 5:144-152:

“**5:144** Ye [Laman and Lemuel] are swift to do iniquity, but slow to remember the Lord your God. **5:145** Ye have seen an angel, and he spake unto you; yea, ye have heard his voice from time to time; **5:146** And he hath spoken unto you in a still, small voice, but ye were past feeling, that ye could not feel his words; **5:147** Wherefore, he has spoken unto you like unto the voice of thunder, which did cause the earth to shake as if it were to divide asunder. **5:148** And ye also know that by the power of his almighty word he can cause the earth that it shall pass away; **5:149** Yea, and ye know that by his word he can cause the rough places to be made smooth, and smooth places shall be broken up. **5:150** O, then, why is it that ye can be so hard in your hearts? **5:151** Behold, **my soul is rent with anguish because of you, and my heart is pained**: I fear lest ye shall be cast off for ever. **5:152** Behold, I am full of the Spirit of God, insomuch that my frame has no strength.”

While carried away in the Spirit of God, Nephi foresaw that after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, many of his people would also be destroyed because of their wickedness, saying...“O the pain, and the *anguish of my soul* for the loss of the slain of my people! For I, Nephi, hath seen it, and it well nigh consumeth me before the presence of the Lord: but I must cry unto my God, *Thy ways are just*.<sup>3</sup>” The pain that Nephi must have felt is unimaginable, but even so, he did not cease to put his faith in Jesus Christ, neither did he stop spreading the glorious gospel. Nephi could not have pressed forward with a perfect brightness of hope without a strong relationship with the Lord. It is crucial to remember that despite the anguish of his soul, Nephi never stopped attempting to reach his brethren for he wrote before he passed away...“For I pray continually for them [those that harden their hearts against the Holy Spirit] by day, and mine eyes

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

<sup>2</sup> 1 Nephi 4:5-6

<sup>3</sup> 2 Nephi 11:70-71

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*; and I know that the Lord God will consecrate my prayers, for the gain of my people.<sup>1</sup>

Alma the Younger experienced a similar anguish to that of Nephi when he preached to the Ammonihahites, as we read...“And it came to pass that while he [Alma] was journeying thither, being weighed down with sorrow, wading through much tribulation and *anguish of soul*, because of the wickedness of the people who were in the city of Ammonihah.”<sup>2</sup> Alma perhaps experienced a greater anguish than that of Nephi because he understood firsthand the awful reality of a condemned soul and the consequences of sin.

In Mosiah, chapter eleven, we read that in Alma’s earlier years, he went about with the sons of Mosiah seeking to destroy the Church of God, and that he continued in this wickedness until he was visited by an angel of the Lord. The visitation of the angel had such an effect on Alma that he was rendered unconscious for three days, and during this time he witnessed all of his sins. Alma detailed his testimony and all that he experienced in a letter to his son Helaman, writing...“But I was racked with eternal torment, for my soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree, and racked with all my sins. Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities, for which I was tormented with the pains of hell...Yea, and in fine, so great had been my iniquities, that the very thoughts of coming into the presence of my God, did rack my soul with inexpressible horror. O, thought I, that I could be banished and become extinct both soul and body, that I might not be brought to stand in the presence of my God, to be judged of my deeds.”<sup>3</sup>

Alma’s testimony however did not end in the gall of bitterness, but continued forward into the comfort and everlasting consolation through Jesus Christ. The Webster’s Dictionary defines the word comfort as, “To strengthen; to invigorate; to cheer or enliven. To strengthen the mind when depressed or enfeebled; to give new vigor to the spirits,” while the word consolation is defined as, “Comfort; alleviation of misery, or distress of mind; refreshment of mind or spirits; a comparative degree of happiness in distress or misfortune, springing from any circumstance that abates the evil, or supports and strengthens the mind, as hope, joy, courage and the like.” Nonetheless, the true definition of comfort and consolation is found in the following passage from Alma 17:14-26:

**17:14** And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the pains of a damned soul. **17:15** And it came to pass that as I was thus racked with torment, while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people, concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world.

**17:16** Now as **my mind caught hold** upon this thought, **I cried within my heart**, O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who art in the gall of bitterness, and art encircled about by the everlasting chains of death. **17:17** And now behold, when I thought this, **I could remember my pains no more**; yea, I was harrowed by the memory of **my sins no more**. **17:18** And O, what joy,

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Nephi 15:4

<sup>2</sup> Alma 6:17

<sup>3</sup> Alma 17:10 and 12-13

and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain; yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains.

**17:19** Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, ***there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy***; **17:20** Yea, methought I saw even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels, in the attitude of singing and praising their God; yea, and my soul did long to be there.

**17:21** But behold, my limbs did receive their strength again, and I stood upon my feet, and did manifest unto the people that I had been born of God; **17:22** Yea, and from that time, even until now, I have ***labored without ceasing***, that I might bring souls unto repentance; that I might bring them to taste of the exceeding joy of which I did taste; that they might also be born of God, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

**17:23** Yea, and now behold, O my son, the Lord doth give me exceeding great joy in the fruit of my labors; for because of the word which he has imparted unto me, behold, many have been born of God, and have tasted as I have tasted, and have seen eye to eye, as I have seen; **17:24** Therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God.

**17:25** And ***I have been supported under trials and troubles of every kind***, yea, and in all manner of afflictions; yea, God has delivered me from prison, and from bonds, and from death; yea, and I do put my trust in him, and he will still deliver me; **17:26** And I know that he will raise me up at the last day, to dwell with him in glory; yea, and ***I will praise him for ever...***”

Jesus Christ comforted and consoled Alma through the washing away of all of Alma’s sins. In response, Alma labored without ceasing in order to bring souls to Christ. Therefore, when the people of Zarahemla, Gideon, and Ammonihah began to turn away from the Lord their God, Alma gave up the judgment seat so that he could bear down in pure testimony against their wickedness and to bring them to repentance, which is true joy and comfort. Of course, as we know from the Scriptures, the people of Ammonihah did not repent, but instead rejected the word of God. The Ammonihahites’ response caused Alma much pain and anguish because he knew the consequences of their choices.

However, the Lord did not leave him comfortless...“It came to pass that while Alma was thus weighed down with sorrow, behold an angel of the Lord appeared unto him, saying, Blessed art thou, Alma; therefore *lift up thy head and rejoice*, for thou hast great cause to rejoice: For thou hast been *faithful* in keeping the commandments of God from the time which thou received thy first message from him.<sup>1</sup>” Without the comfort of the Lord which Alma had received, how else could Alma have been established in such a great and marvelous work?

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<sup>1</sup> Alma 6:18-19

It is important to remember that the Lord desires for the saints today to seek forth and establish the cause of Zion, and though the work itself is not grievous, we too might experience sorrow because of the choices of others. Nonetheless, the prophets have shared that no matter how much we might want to give up in despair; Jesus Christ will not leave us nor forsake us. Please read the following scriptures from 2 Nephi 5:90-92 and 1 Nephi 3:187-189

**“5:90** Therefore, the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy and holiness shall be upon their heads; **5:91** And they shall obtain gladness and joy: sorrow and mourning shall flee away. **5:92** I am he; yea, ***I am he that comforteth you:***”

**“3:187** And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; **3:188** And if they endure unto the end, they shall be lifted up at the last day, and **shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb**; **3:189** And whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be.”

The prophets have shared that although we may have sorrow because of the choices of others, Jesus Christ will comfort our hearts and establish us in His good works. We read further through the testimony of Alma that there are also times when our own choices do cause us to experience anguish of the soul, and again it is the Lord that consoles us through the remission of sins and the pure love of the Son of God. Certainly there have been moments in each of our lives where our temptations and sins were too much for us to bear and they threatened to bring us down forever into misery and woe. However, it is important to remember at these times...“For God sent not his Son into the world to *condemn* the world; but that the world through him *might be saved*.<sup>1</sup>” Not only did God so love the world that He sent His Only Begotten Son, but Jesus so loved the world that He pleaded before His Father to come and to lay down His life, and this because...“Greater love hath no man than this, *that a man lay down his life for his friends*.<sup>2</sup>” Please read what Jesus will do for His friends in Hebrews 2:14-18 and Hebrews 4:14-16:

**“2:14** Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Jesus Christ] also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; **2:15** And ***deliver*** them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime **subject to bondage**. **2:16** For verily, he took not on him the likeness of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. **2:17** Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. **2:18** For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, ***he is able to succor them that are tempted***.”

**“4:14** Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. **4:15** For we have not a high priest [Jesus Christ] which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was ***on all points tempted like as we***

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<sup>1</sup> John 3:17

<sup>2</sup> John 15:13

**are**, yet without sin. **4:16** Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Jesus experienced the same trials and temptations that the children of men experience today, and because He truly understands our pain and anguish, He is able to succor those that are tempted, meaning, “Literally, to run to, or run to support; hence, to help or relieve when in difficulty, want or distress; to assist and *deliver* from suffering.” We read through the testimony of Nephi, that Jesus will deliver us in our time of need if we will but trust in Him.

Nephi revealed in the third chapter of the second book of Nephi that even a prophet who has seen and talked with Jesus Christ can suffer misery and grief because of temptations. He wrote...“Nevertheless, the great goodness of the Lord, in showing me his great and marvelous works, my heart exclaimeth, O wretched man that I am; yea, my heart *sorroweth* because of *my flesh*. My soul *grieveth* because of mine iniquities. I am encompassed about because of the temptations and the sins which doth so *easily beset me*. And when I desire to rejoice, my heart *groaneth* because of my sins.<sup>1</sup>”

Nephi sorrowed because of his carnal self, for he knew that the carnal man is weak and an enemy to God. Nephi’s heart groaned in particular because he knew that the carnal man can not dwell with God and Jesus Christ, which was the true desire of his heart. Nephi therefore responded by writing...“nevertheless, I know in whom *I have trusted*. My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness; and he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep.<sup>2</sup>” When Nephi was in distress, he remembered his friend, the Lord Jesus Christ, and all the times that He comforted Nephi. Please continue to read from 2 Nephi 3:36-66:

**3:36** He hath filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh. **3:37** He hath confounded mine enemies, unto the causing of them to quake before me. **3:38** Behold, he hath heard my cry by day, and he hath given me knowledge by visions in the night time. **3:39** And by day have I **waxed bold in mighty prayer** before him; yea, my voice have I sent up on high; and angels came down and ministered unto me. **3:40** And upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away upon exceeding high mountains. **3:41** And mine eyes have beheld great things; yea, even too great for man; therefore I was bidden that I should not write them.

**3:42** O then, if I have seen so great things; if the Lord in his condescension unto the children of men, hath visited me in so much mercy, **why** should my heart weep, and my soul linger in the valley of sorrow, and my flesh waste away, and my strength slacken, because of mine afflictions? **3:43** And **why** should I yield to sin, because of my flesh? **3:44** Yea, **why** should I give way to temptations, that the evil one have place in my heart, to destroy my peace and afflict my soul? **3:45** **Why** am I angry because of mine enemy?

**3:46** **Awake, my soul!** No longer droop in sin. **3:47** Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul. **3:48** Do not anger again, because of mine enemies. **3:49** Do not slacken

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Nephi 3:31-34

<sup>2</sup> 2 Nephi 3:34-35

my strength, because of mine afflictions. **3:50** Rejoice, O my heart, and cry unto the Lord, and say, O Lord, I will praise thee for ever; yea, my soul will rejoice in thee, ***my God, and the rock of my salvation.***

**3:51** O Lord, wilt thou redeem my soul? **3:52** Wilt thou deliver me out of the hands of mine enemies? **3:53** Wilt thou make me that I may ***shake at the appearance of sin?*** **3:54** May the gates of hell be shut continually before me, because that my heart is broken and my spirit is contrite? **3:55** O Lord, wilt thou not shut the gates of thy righteousness before me, that I may walk in the path of the low valley, that I may be strict in the plain road?

**3:56** O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness? **3:57** O Lord, wilt thou **make a way** for mine escape before mine enemies? **3:58** Wilt thou make my path straight before me? **3:59** Wilt thou not place a stumbling block in my way? **3:60** But that thou wouldst clear my way before me, and hedge not up my way, but the ways of mine enemy.

**3:61** O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and ***I will trust in thee for ever.*** **3:62** I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh; for I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh. **3:63** Yea, cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm.

**3:64** Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. **3:65** Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss: therefore I will lift up my voice unto thee; yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, the rock of my righteousness. **3:66** Behold, my voice shall for ever ascend up unto thee, my rock and mine everlasting God. Amen.”

Nephi shared that when our heart is grieving because of temptations and sins we should always put our trust in our Savior, Jesus Christ, whom not only comforts us, but is also the way that we might escape our enemies. Paul wrote that we should not put our trust in our own flesh, but in Jesus, writing...“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed *lest he fall*. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but *God is faithful*, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also ***make a way to escape***, that ye may be able to bear it.<sup>17</sup> The way to escape is not just through prayer, but through the Only Begotten who has prepared the way for us to follow and serve Him.

Whether because of the choices of others or because of our own sins and temptations, the testimonies of Nephi and Alma have taught that if we trust in Jesus Christ and cease not to labor in good works, Jesus will comfort our hearts, bring an everlasting consolation which invigorates us to build His Kingdom, succors us in our time of need, and provides the way that we might escape and bear our trials.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

## Chapter Ten: Nourished with Everlasting Life

In the eighteenth chapter of the first book of Kings, the prophet Elijah issued a challenge to the four hundred false prophets of the queen of Israel to make an offering to their gods, while he would make a similar offering to the living God, saying before the people...“And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.<sup>1</sup>” The false prophets accepted Elijah’s challenge and when the Lord sent fire to consume Elijah’s offering, the people rose up and slew the false prophets. In response, Jezebel, the queen of Israel, promised that she would kill Elijah in a like manner.

Notwithstanding the great power that God had demonstrated, Elijah was taken with fear and fled into the wilderness for his life. God did not condemn Elijah however. Instead, God showed him mercy and brought him nourishment and strength through an angel of the Lord. We read that Elijah...“came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for *I am not better* than my fathers.<sup>2</sup>”

It is important to notice that instead of offering an excuse of why he ran away, Elijah admitted to the Lord of his wrongdoing by simply saying...“take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.<sup>3</sup>” From the juniper tree, Elijah then traveled to a cave in Mount Horeb where the Lord asked him...“What doest thou here?<sup>4</sup>” In response, Elijah admitted again that he was hiding for fear of his life, saying...“I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts;... because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left; and *they seek my life, to take it away.*<sup>5</sup>”

Similar to how we struggle to acknowledge our weaknesses before the Lord, we also tend to struggle to confess our wrongdoings before God, fearing that in doing so they might become more real. However, true repentance, which is choosing to believe in Jesus Christ, requires confessing and forsaking our sins. Repentance also requires trusting in God that He will forgive us and not condemn us, for the Lord has said...“Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remembereth them no more. By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins. Behold, he will *confess them* and forsake them.<sup>6</sup>”

Although Elijah was undoubtedly in misery because of his response to the Queen’s threat [read Matthew 16:25-28], he trusted in God enough to admit to Him that he did wrong. Elijah did not simply stop at confessing his sins nevertheless, but he also sought to forsake them by serving God and obeying His commandments. Please read from 1 Kings 19:5-19:

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings 18:24

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings 19:4

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings 19:4

<sup>4</sup> 1 Kings 19:9

<sup>5</sup> 1 Kings 19:10 and 14

<sup>6</sup> DC 58:9c-d

“**19:5** And as he [Elijah] lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. **19:6** And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. **19:7** And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. **19:8** And he arose, and did eat and drink, and **went in the strength of that meat** forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

**19:9** And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him...**19:11** Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake; **19:12** And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

**19:13** And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? **19:14** And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

**19:15** And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when thou comest, **anoint** Hazael to be king over Syria; **19:16** And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou **anoint** to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou **anoint** to be prophet in thy room...**19:19** So he departed thence.”

Elijah demonstrated that repentance is not just saying, “Please forgive me Lord.” Instead of remaining in misery and woe, Elijah went forth and did as God commanded, and in return, Elijah was ultimately caught up in to heaven by a chariot of fire. It appears unfortunately to be the instinct of the natural man to crawl and shrink into a corner when we know that we have transgressed God’s commandments. However, if we surrender to this desire, we will remain in that state, and though we may follow after Esau and seek...”carefully for repentance with tears,<sup>1</sup>” we will not receive that forgiveness until we *exercise* our faith in Jesus Christ. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, *he is faithful* and just to forgive us our sins, and to *cleanse us* from all unrighteousness.<sup>2</sup>” Please read the following from Enos 3-10:

“**1:3** And I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, **before** I received a remission of my sins; **1:4** Behold I went to hunt beasts in the forest; and the words which I had often heard my father speak, concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart. **1:5** And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 12:16-17

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 1:8-9



and supplication, for mine own soul; **1:6** And all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came, I did still raise my voice high, that it reached the heavens.

**1:7** And there came a voice unto me saying, Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed. **1:8** And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away. **1:9** And I said, Lord, how is it done? **1:10** And he said unto me, ***because of thy faith in Christ***, whom thou hast never before heard nor seen.”

It is only through Jesus Christ that we can receive a remission of sins, and because of Elijah’s trust in the Son of God, he was able to repent by offering to lay down his life, not his physical life, but the life of the natural man. “And he [Elijah] requested for himself that he *might die*; and said, *It is enough*; now, O Lord, take away *my life*; for I am not better than my fathers.<sup>1</sup>” Jesus told the disciples in Mark, chapter eight...“For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; or whosoever will save his life, shall be *willing to lay it down for my sake*; and if he is not willing to lay it down for my sake, he shall lose it. But whosoever shall be willing to lose his life for my sake, *and* the gospel, *the same shall save it*.<sup>2</sup>”

Elijah was willing to lay down his life for his friend, and Jesus was willing to save it by sending Elijah an angel to bring nourishment and life in the form of bread and water, which provided him with enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Horeb. Nonetheless, for those who are willing to take up their cross and to deny every worldly lust, the Lord has promised us that bread of life and fountain of living waters which will sustain us forevermore, for Jesus has said, “I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst...But whosoever drinketh of the water which I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be *in him* a well of water springing up into *everlasting life*.<sup>3</sup>”

In Genesis, chapter six, God told Adam...“If thou wilt, turn unto me and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and *repent of all thy transgressions*, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men; and *ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*.<sup>4</sup>” Moreover, Jesus said...“It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and *they are life*.<sup>5</sup>”

Elijah has taught that if we are willing to lay down our life and crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts of the world [read Galatians 5:16-25], and if we are willing to become a new creature in Christ, then we will not receive...“the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption...The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God...And because ye are sons, God

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings 19:4

<sup>2</sup> Mark 8:37-38

<sup>3</sup> John 6:35 and John 4:16

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 6:53

<sup>5</sup> John 6:63

hath sent forth the Spirit of his son into your hearts...Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.<sup>1</sup>”

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 8:15-16 and Galatians 4:6-7

## Chapter Eleven: Directs our Steps to a better Land of Promise

In Exodus, chapter thirty-two, we read that rather than waiting for Moses to return from Mount Sinai with the commandments of God, the people of Israel requested of Aaron to build them gods that they might worship. In response, God told Moses to go down to the people and command them to repent because they had corrupted themselves. “And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a *stiff-necked people*.<sup>1</sup>” After Moses had destroyed the golden calf he asked Aaron...“What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot; thou knowest the people, that they are *set on mischief*.<sup>2</sup>”

Despite their sin, the Lord did not forsake His people. Instead, God commanded Moses to continue to lead them to the Promised Land and that an Angel, meaning Jesus [read Exodus 23:20-23], would go before them, for in the day that God should visit the people He would assuredly visit their sins upon them. God said to Moses...“for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a *stiff-necked people*; lest I consume thee in the way.<sup>3</sup>”

It appears that instead of learning from the mistakes of Israel, the saints often times repeat them. Similar to how Aaron characterized the people of Israel as those which are set on mischief, we too utilize our gift of agency to choose things that are not beneficial for our souls or for the souls of others. Sadly, we tend to find ourselves in the mind set of doing what we want to do rather than what the Lord would have us to do, which can cause us to become frustrated because as Alma II said...“Wickedness never was happiness.<sup>4</sup>” It seems that we too often forget that God did not create us to please ourselves but to please Him. Even in this truth we are able to glimpse the love which God has toward the children of men, that in spite of our disobedience, He gave His own Son that we might have eternal life. Please read the Scripture passage from the Doctrine and Covenants 77:4a-c:

“**77:4a** Verily, verily I say unto you, Ye are little children, and ye have not as yet understood how great blessings the Father has in his own hands, and prepared for you; and ye can not bear all things now; **77:4b** nevertheless be of good cheer, for ***I will lead you*** along; ***the kingdom is yours*** and the blessings thereof are yours; and ***the riches of eternity are yours***; **77:4c** and he who receiveth all things, with thankfulness, shall be made glorious...”

It is important to understand that just as God had promised Israel a land overflowing with milk and honey if they would keep His commandments, He has promised us in the latter days that we shall receive a place in the Kingdom of God if we would keep the everlasting covenant, which is to keep all the commandments, to embrace the truth, and to look upward. We too however can be a stiff-necked people who are full of mischief. “Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord...By mercy and truth iniquity is

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 32:9

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 32:21-22

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 33:3

<sup>4</sup> Alma 19:74

purged; and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil. A man's heart *deviseth his way*; but the Lord *directeth his steps*.<sup>1</sup>

We learn through the testimonies of the prophets, that if we would become friends with Jesus Christ, He will lead us to that promised land, or in other words Zion, which is the Kingdom of God on earth [read DC 102:9b]. The fulfillment of this promise can be especially witnessed with Lehi and Nephi. For immediately after Lehi had received a vision from God concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity, he went and testified to the people of...“the things which he saw and heard, and...manifested plainly of the coming of a Messiah, and also the redemption of the world.”<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the Jews did not hearken to the voice of the Lord but instead desired to slay Lehi as they had done with the prophets of old.

Therefore, because of Lehi’s exceeding faith, God commanded Lehi to take his family and depart into the wilderness, and the Lord promised Lehi that if he would keep the commandments of God that the Lord would lead him to a land that was choice above all others. “And it came to pass that he was obedient unto the word of the Lord, wherefore he did as the Lord commanded him.”<sup>3</sup> It is important to understand that Lehi did not just simply depart from Jerusalem with his family, but in particular he left everything of the world behind. “And he left his house, and the land of his inheritance, and his gold, and his silver, and his precious things, and took *nothing* with him, save it were his family, and provisions, and tents, and he departed into the wilderness.”<sup>4</sup> [Read Matthew 19:16-22 and Matthew 13:46-47]

Before we can ever allow Jesus Christ to guide our steps, we must first obey Him. According to the 1828 Webster’s Dictionary, to obey means...“to comply with the commands, orders or instructions of a superior, or with the requirements of law, moral, political or municipal; to do that which is commanded or required, or to forbear doing that which is prohibited.” When God asks the children of men to be obedient, it does not mean to comply with just a portion of His law or only those portions which suit them, but rather it means for us to comply with the whole law as Lehi did. Jesus said, “No man having put his hand to the plough, and *looking back*, is fit for the kingdom of God.”<sup>5</sup> If our desire is the Kingdom of God and His Christ, then we must hearken to the voice of the Good Shepherd and allow Him to lead us beside the still waters [read Psalm 23]. Please read the following Scripture from Luke 14:28-34:

“**14:28** Wherefore, settle this in your hearts, that ye will do the things which I shall teach, and command you. **14:29** For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have money to finish his work? **14:30** Lest, unhappily, after he has laid the foundation and is not able to finish his work, all who behold, begin to mock him, **14:31** Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. And this he said, signifying there should not any man follow him, *unless he was able to continue*; saying, **14:32** Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with

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<sup>1</sup> Proverbs 16:5-6 and 9

<sup>2</sup> 1 Nephi 1:20

<sup>3</sup> 1 Nephi 1:27

<sup>4</sup> 1 Nephi 1:29

<sup>5</sup> Luke 9:62

ten thousand, to meet him who cometh against him with twenty thousand. **14:33** Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassy, and desireth conditions of peace. **14:34** So likewise, whosoever of you ***forsaketh not all that he hath he cannot be my disciple.***”

Before Lehi’s family began their long journey through the wilderness to the land called Bountiful, the Lord delivered to Lehi...“a round ball, of curious workmanship; and it was of fine brass. And within the ball were two spindles;” one of which pointed which way that they should go in the wilderness. Now as much as Lehi and his family were faithful, the ball did both direct them on where to travel and led them to the more fertile parts of the land. When Lehi and some other portions of his family began to murmur however, the ball, which was called the Liahona, stopped working, and it was not until after Lehi was chastened by the voice of the Lord that the Liahona began to direct them again. Moreover, there also appeared writings upon the Liahona which did open their understanding concerning the ways of the Lord. “And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld the pointers which were in the ball, that they did work *according to the faith, and diligence, and heed*, which we did give unto them.”<sup>2</sup>”

Through the testimony of Nephi, we learn of what God will do for those who are friends with Jesus Christ and who follow after Him. Nephi testified that for the space of eight years his family did travel through the wilderness and that it was through the preparations and blessings of the Lord that they did survive. Please read the following verses from 1 Nephi 5:56-63 and 75-83:

“**5:56** And we did travel and wade through much affliction in the wilderness; and our women did bear children in the wilderness. **5:57** And so great were the blessings of the Lord upon us, that while we did live upon raw meat in the wilderness, our women did give plenty of suck for their children, and were strong, yea, even like unto the men; and they began to bear their journeyings without murmurings. **5:58** And thus we see that the commandments of God must be fulfilled. **5:59** And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God, he doth ***nourish them***, and ***strengthen them***, and ***provide means*** whereby they can ***accomplish*** the thing which he has commanded them; **5:60** Wherefore, he did provide means for us while we did sojourn in the wilderness...**5:63** And all these things were prepared of the Lord, that we might not perish.

**5:75** For the Lord had not hitherto suffered that we should make much fire, as we journeyed in the wilderness; **5:76** For he said, I will make thy food become sweet, that ye cook it not; **5:77** And ***I will also be your light*** in the wilderness; **5:78** And ***I will prepare the way before you***, if it so be that ye shall keep my commandments; **5:79** Wherefore, inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye ***shall*** be led toward the promised land; and ye shall know that it is ***by me*** that ye are led. **5:80** Yea, and the Lord said also, that after ye have arrived to the promised land, ye shall know that I, the Lord, am God; **5:83** Wherefore, I, Nephi, did ***strive*** to keep the commandments of the Lord, and I did exhort my brethren to faithfulness and diligence.”

Lehi and his family eventually did reach the promised land, and it is important to recognize that it was in the same manner in which Enoch was able to build a city of Holiness, simply by following Jesus Christ. In

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Nephi 5:11-12

<sup>2</sup> 1 Nephi 5:34

return, the Lord demonstrated a type and shadow through the testimonies of Lehi and Nephi of how God does bless His sons and daughters, namely that He nourishes us with the bread of life, which is most sweet and precious to our soul, that He gives us His Only Son to be a light in the world, and that if we would keep His commandments, Jesus will lead us to Zion and to God the Father.

It is important that we hearken to the voice of Jesus Christ and obey His commandments because He has promised that He will not lead us astray. However, if we choose to be a stiff-necked people and despise the words of plainness such as the Jews, who sought for things that they could not understand, we too will become blind to the true light of Christ. “Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by looking beyond the mark, they must needs fall: For God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they can not understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it, God hath done it, that they may stumble.”<sup>1</sup> Please read a portion of Alma’s letter to his son Helaman from Alma 17:71-80:

“**17:71** And now my son, I have somewhat to say concerning the thing which our fathers call a ball, or director; or our fathers called it liahona, which is, being interpreted, a compass; and the Lord prepared it. **17:72** And behold, there can not any man work after the manner of so curious a workmanship.

**17:73** And behold, it was prepared to shew unto our fathers the course which they should travel in the wilderness; and it did work for them according to their faith in God; **17:74** Therefore if they had faith to believe that God could cause that those spindles should point the way they should go, behold, it was done; therefore they had this miracle, and also many other miracles wrought by the power of God, day by day; **17:75** Nevertheless, because those miracles were worked by *small means*, it did shew unto them *marvelous works*.

**17:76** They were slothful, and forgot to exercise their faith and diligence, and then those marvelous works ceased, and they did not progress in their journey: **17:77** Therefore they tarried in the wilderness, or did not travel a direct course, and were afflicted with hunger and thirst, because of their transgressions.

**17:78** And now my son, I would that ye should understand that these things are **not without a shadow**; for as our fathers were slothful to give heed to this compass, (now these things were temporal,) they did not prosper; even so it is with things which are spiritual. **17:79** For behold, it is as easy to give heed to the word of Christ, which will point to you a **straight course to eternal bliss**, as it was for our fathers to give heed to this compass, which would point unto them a straight course, to the promised land. **17:80** And now I say, Is there not a type in this thing? For just as surely as this director did bring our fathers, by following its course, to the promised land, shall the words of Christ, if we follow their course, carry us beyond this vale of sorrow, into a far better land of promise.”

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<sup>1</sup> Jacob 3:23-25

Alma wrote that it was as easy to listen and follow the words of Christ, which will teach us all things that we should do, as it was for Lehi to follow a compass. Regrettably however, it seems as though we too are often set on mischief. Although we fight and strive to remove those worldly desires and sins from our lives, we occasionally attempt to rationalize those that remain by explaining to ourselves, as well as to others, “It is okay, it is not all that bad.” Nonetheless, are we willing to give up the glory of the Kingdom in exchange for things that are “not all that bad?” “Why do you not think that greater is the value of an *endless happiness*, than that misery which never dies, because of the praise of the world? Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which *hath no life*, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick, and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not?<sup>1</sup>” Why do we choose the joys and pleasures of the world when so many suffer not only physical afflictions, but also spiritual darkness?

God has called His sons and daughters to be the salt of the earth, which can only be accomplished if we are willing to sell all that we have in order to become friends with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In so doing, we might become a light set on a hill so that others would know both the way to travel and that the Son of God came to the earth in order to die and to rise again that they might receive eternal life. In order for us to become that light we must first...“lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.<sup>2</sup>”

If we choose to obey the everlasting covenant and embrace Jesus Christ without looking back as Lehi and Nephi did, we too will be led by the Savior through a straight and direct course to a far better land of promise, the Kingdom of God. Therefore, let us give heed to the words of Christ, which are...“a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path,<sup>3</sup>” and...“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.<sup>4</sup>”

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<sup>1</sup> Mormon 4:53-54

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 12:1-2

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 119:105

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs 3:5-6

## Chapter Twelve: By Small Means, God Brings about Great things, even Zion

The Lord said in Section Fifty-two of the Doctrine and Covenants...“I will give unto you a pattern in all things, that ye may not be deceived.”<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the most important pattern that God has revealed through the prophets is...“that by small means, the Lord can bring about great things.”<sup>2</sup> For example, God called upon His servant Joseph Smith, Jr., a young man from back country New York who had less than a third grade education, to restore the Church of Jesus Christ and to proclaim the everlasting covenant...“and all this that it might be fulfilled, which was written by the prophets; the *weak things* of the world shall come forth and *break down* the mighty and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh, but that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world.”<sup>3</sup>

The Lord also showed forth this pattern with the Brother of Jared, who was a man of such exceeding faith that he could not be kept within the vail and yet his name was not recorded in Scripture. In the first chapter of Ether, after repenting from not calling upon God for four years, the Brother of Jared presented sixteen small stones before the Lord with the faith that the Lord might touch them with His finger so that the rocks would shine forth with light, and said...“I know, O Lord, that thou has all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man...Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this. We know that thou art able to shew forth great power, which looks *small* to the understanding of men.”<sup>4</sup>

God again established this pattern with His Only Begotten Son, who though He was equal with God...“made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the *likeness of men*; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”<sup>5</sup> To the understanding of men, the sacrifice which Jesus made might very well appear to be foolish. In fact, there are individuals who view Jesus as a failed prophet because He died. We know through our faith however that without the atonement of Christ, we would all be lost in misery and woe because of our own disobedience. Therefore, in order for the plan of redemption to be brought about, Jesus atoned for our sins and appeased the demands of justice on the conditions of mercy and repentance.

Although Jesus was given power through God to create all things both in heaven and in earth, He did not come as a conqueror but instead as a friend who laid down His life in order to be the savior of the world, which is the pure love of Christ that passes all knowledge and all understanding. While Jesus had the power to deliver Himself from death [read Matthew 26:51-52], He chose to both keep all of the commandments of His Father and to commit Himself to the will of God...“For God hath chosen the *foolish things* of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the *weak things* of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and *base things* of the world, and things which are *despised*, hath God chosen, yea, and things which *are not*, to bring to naught the things that are mighty; That no flesh should

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<sup>1</sup> DC 52:4b

<sup>2</sup> 1 Nephi 5:36

<sup>3</sup> DC 1:4b-c

<sup>4</sup> Ether 1:66-67

<sup>5</sup> Philippians 2:7-9



glory in his presence. But of him *are ye in* Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

Do we believe that Zion will come forth through the wise and mighty things of the world, or do we believe that it will be through the small and foolish? In Genesis, the Lord did not chose a man that had achieved a mastery in all things to establish Zion, instead He chose a young man named Enoch who was slow of speech and who was hated by the world. In the eyes of the world, Enoch would most likely have been considered weak and certainly not someone that most men would have chosen to build the city of God on the earth. Even Enoch himself asked God...“Why is it that I have found favor in thy sight.”<sup>2</sup> Despite all of his possible weaknesses and shortcomings however, he was a friend of Jesus Christ and a beloved son of God. Perhaps more than any other individual or prophet, Enoch showed what Jesus will do for those that will obey and humble themselves as a little child.

In the sixth chapter of Genesis, a man named Mahijah approached Enoch because of the everlasting Gospel which he taught and asked him...“Tell us plainly who thou art, and from whence thou comest.”<sup>3</sup> Enoch answered and explained that he was from the land of Cainan, which was a land of righteousness, and that he was taught by his father in all the ways of God. Moreover, Enoch said...“as I journeyed from the land of Cainan by the sea east, I beheld a vision; and lo, the heavens I saw, and the Lord spake with me, and gave me commandment; wherefore *for this cause, to keep the commandment*, I speak forth these words.”<sup>4</sup>

Notwithstanding his purpose of journeying into another land, Enoch chose from the very moment that he was visited by God to be a stranger and pilgrim on the earth by forsaking his own will and electing to obey the Lord, not simply because he was commanded but rather because Enoch loved God with all his heart, mind, and soul. “For I can of mine own self do nothing; because I seek not mine *own* will, but the will of the Father who hath sent me.”<sup>5</sup> Wherefore, despite his youth and speech impediment...“Enoch went forth in the land, among the people, standing upon the hills, and the high places, and cried with a *loud voice*, testifying against their works. And all men were offended because of him; and they came forth to hear him upon the high places, saying...we go yonder to behold the seer, for he prophesieth; and there is a strange thing in the land, *a wild man* hath come among us.”<sup>6</sup>

Enoch told Mahijah that in order to keep the commandment of God, he went forth to preach the words of Christ to the people, and this he did regardless of his fears and weaknesses. Instead of doubting God’s judgment and utilizing his humility as a crutch, Enoch took God for His word and trusted in Him as a child submits to his father. Therefore, rather than create a mystery out of the commandment of the Lord, Enoch simply obeyed. Enoch did not worry what the world would think of him or what they would think

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:27-31

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 6:32

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 6:42

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 6:44

<sup>5</sup> John 5:31

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 6:39-40

of his message, but instead he proclaimed the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ boldly. Please read from 1 Peter 4:10-19:

**“4:10** As every man hath received the gift [the grace of Jesus Christ], even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **4:11** If any man speak, let him speak as an oracle of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that ***God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ***; to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

**4:12** Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; **4:13** But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. **4:14** If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he [God] is evil spoken of, but on your part ***he is glorified***.

**4:15** But let none of you suffer as a murderer or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. **4:16** Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him ***not be ashamed***; but let him glorify God on this behalf. **4:17** For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? **4:18** And if the righteous ***scarcely be saved***, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? **4:19** Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”

Enoch understood that if the righteous be scarcely saved, that the ungodly would not have place in Zion. After thus receiving the precious gift of the Gospel of Christ, Enoch obeyed the word of God with an eye single to His glory, nothing doubting, and this he did because he knew the heart of the Savior and the Lord's desire for every soul [read DC 16:3b-4a]. In so doing, Jesus walked with Enoch. “And it came to pass when they heard him, no man laid hands on him, for fear came on them all that heard him, ***for he walked with God***.<sup>1</sup>” Does the cause of Zion require a great mystery, or rather, that does it simply require a people who are obedient, and how can we be obedient as we ought too if we do not love God with our whole soul? How can we build the Kingdom of God if we do not love others as we love ourselves? Jesus said...“A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another; ***as I*** have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another...verily thus saith the Lord, Let Zion rejoice, for this is Zion, THE PURE IN HEART.<sup>2</sup>”

Through the testimony of Enoch, we learn that in order for us to become pure in heart, we must first become humble and submissive as a little child who is full of kindness, joyfulness, virtue, godliness, faith and charity. “And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ***ye shall not*** enter into the kingdom

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 6:41

<sup>2</sup> John 13:34-35 and DC 94:5c

of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall *humble* himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>1</sup> Please read from Mosiah 1:118-120:

**“1:118** But men drink damnation to their own souls, except they humble themselves, and become *as little children*, and believe that salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent: **1:119** For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been, from the fall of Adam, and will be, for ever and ever; **1:120** But if he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man, and becometh a saint, through the atonement of Christ, the Lord, and *becometh as a child*, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to *all things* which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.”

If the Lord were to ask a question to both a natural man and to a man of God, how would each respond? The natural man who desires to follow after the vain imaginations of his heart will respond as did Cain...“Who is the Lord, that I should know him?”<sup>2</sup> Whereas the man who hearkens after the Spirit of God, believes in Christ, and submits to all things as does a little child, responds as Moses, Samuel, and Isaiah, saying...“Here am I; send me.”<sup>3</sup> When God speaks saying...“Keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion,<sup>4</sup>” what is our honest response? What type of man are we? “Behold, I speak unto you, and also to all those who have desires to bring forth and establish this work; and no one can assist in this work, except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things whatsoever shall be intrusted to his care. Behold, I am the light and the life of the world, that speak these words; therefore, give heed with your might, and *then you are called*. Amen.”<sup>5</sup>

Enoch was called to preach the Gospel and to become a son of God, and because of his response the Lord allowed him to be the servant that His work was done through, even to the building of Zion. Enoch has taught that only an individual who possesses a pure heart and becomes humble as a little child will be able to build the Kingdom of God on earth, for a little child submits to the will of his father, and just as Jesus laid down His own will and His own life for His friends, Enoch did likewise both for his Savior and for his people. Through his obedience Enoch became more than just a friend, but a brother with Christ. For Jesus said...“whosoever shall do the *will of my Father* which is in heaven, the same is my *brother, and sister, and mother*.”<sup>6</sup> Please read the following Scripture from Genesis 6:33-36 explaining what Jesus will do for His brother:

**“6:33** And the Lord said unto Enoch, Go forth, and do as I have commanded thee, and no man *shall pierce thee*. **6:34** Open thy mouth, and *it shall be filled*, and I will give thee utterance; for all flesh is in my hands, and I will do as seemeth me good. **6:35** Say unto this people, choose ye this day to serve the Lord God who made you. **6:36** Behold, my Spirit is upon you; wherefore all thy

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 18:2-3

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 5:4

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 3:4, 1 Samuel 3:4-8, and Isaiah 6:8

<sup>4</sup> DC 11:3b

<sup>5</sup> DC 11:4-5

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 12:39

words ***will I justify***, and the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course; and ***thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me.***”

For those individuals who choose to humble themselves as a little child, to abide with Jesus Christ, and to obey the word of God as Enoch did, the Lord has promised power that no man will be able to pierce them. We generally think of the word pierce as...“to thrust into with a pointed instrument; as, to pierce the body with a sword or spear; to pierce the side with a thorn,” and there have been several prophets such as Enoch, Daniel, Alma, and Samuel the Lamanite who have had this marvelous power given to them by God, and men were not able to slay them or lay their hands upon them.

However, the word pierce can also mean...“to penetrate *the heart* deeply; to touch the passions; to excite or affect the passions.<sup>1</sup>” In first Timothy, Paul wrote that men that fell into temptations and hurtful lusts, such as the love of money...“*pierced* themselves through with many sorrows.<sup>2</sup>” In other words, they were not pierced with a physical weapon but with spiritual wickedness, which if not subdued, leads to a spiritual death. Paul continued and wrote...“But thou, O man of God, *flee these things*; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. *Fight the good fight of faith*, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.<sup>3</sup>”

It is important to understand that the reason that no man was able to pierce Enoch, though he was weak, was because he chose to leave the things of the world behind, even his journey, and because he abided with Jesus Christ, which requires us to be faithful, for only then are we able to...“be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.<sup>4</sup>” For example, when Sherem came to contend with Jacob with the hopes of tearing down the spiritual leader of the Nephites, Jacob responded, writing...“notwithstanding the many revelations, and the many things which I had seen concerning these things; for I truly had seen angels, and they had ministered unto me. And also, I had heard the voice of the Lord speaking unto me in very word, from time to time; wherefore, *I could not be shaken.*<sup>5</sup>” Therefore, because of Jacob’s faith, God did not allow Sherem’s false doctrine to pierce Jacob through and bring him down. “But behold, the Lord God poured in his Spirit into my soul, insomuch that I did confound him [Sherem] in all his words.<sup>6</sup>”

When Satan sends...“forth his mighty winds; yea, his shafts in the whirlwind; Yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon<sup>7</sup>” us what will be our response? Will we be strong in the Lord and stand in holy places such as Jacob and Enoch did? We will put on the whole armor of God that we will be able to stand against all the wiles of the devil? We will take the shield of faith that we will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked? “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities,

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<sup>1</sup> 1828 Webster’s Dictionary

<sup>2</sup> 1 Timothy 6:9-10

<sup>3</sup> 1 Timothy 6:11-12

<sup>4</sup> Ephesians 6:10

<sup>5</sup> Jacob 5:7-8

<sup>6</sup> Jacob 5:13

<sup>7</sup> Helaman 2:74-75

against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.<sup>1</sup>”

In the twelfth chapter of the book of Revelation the Lord warned the inhabitants of the earth, saying...“for the devil is come down unto you, having *great wrath*, because he knoweth that he hath but *short time*.<sup>2</sup>” The Scriptures explain that it is Satan’s desire to build his own kingdom and to sit on the throne of God [read 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 and Isaiah 14:12-17]. Hence, the establishing of Zion is a great and powerful threat to his desires and thus Satan has made war with the saints of God continually from the beginning, desiring to wrap his flaxen cord around them and to carefully drag them down to hell, which Satan has strived to accomplish by setting out to deceive the nations through darkness and disobedience. It is therefore critical that the latter day saints stand on the rock of Jesus Christ, who is our friend and brother as Enoch did. “And now...remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation...which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build, *they can not fall*.<sup>3</sup>”

Enoch has taught that we will have the strength to overcome the adversary through the power and Spirit of God if we will abide with the Son of God. “Hereafter I will not talk much with you; for the prince of darkness, who is of this world, cometh, but hath no power over me, but *hath power over you*... These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye *shall* have tribulation; but be of *good cheer*; I have overcome the world... Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them [the world and spirit of antichrist]; because *greater is he that is in you*, than he that is in the world.<sup>4</sup>” If the children of men will stand fast and immovable with clean hands and a pure heart, we too will be able to overcome as Enoch did, for Jesus told the disciples...“blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.<sup>5</sup>” It is crucial that we keep the commandments of God and flee from *all* evil, from the least temptation even to the greatest. Please read the following Scripture from Proverbs 4:14-15, 18-23, 25-27:

**4:14** Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. **4:15** Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away....**4:18** But the path of the just is as the *shining light*, that shineth more and more unto the **perfect day**.

**4:19** The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble. **4:20** ...attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. **4:21** Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the **midst of thine heart**. **4:22** For they are *life* unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

**4:23** Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life... **4:25** Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. **4:26** *Ponder the path of thy feet*, and let

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 6:11-18

<sup>2</sup> Revelation 12:7

<sup>3</sup> Helaman 2:74-75

<sup>4</sup> John 14:30, John 16:33, and 1 John 4:4

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 5:10

all thy ways be established. **4:27** Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil.”

Enoch fled all the paths of darkness that were brought against him by searching diligently in the shining light of Christ, for...“that which is of God is light, and he that receiveth light and continueth in God, receiveth more light, and that light groweth brighter and brighter, until the perfect day,<sup>1</sup>” even Zion. Unfortunately, there are moments in our life where we berate ourselves for all the things that we have done wrong. However, if we happened to find ourselves in a cave with a light at one end and darkness on the other, which would we look to for guidance? It is important that we search for the light of Christ and ponder every path that we might travel in order for our works to be established in righteousness.

The Lord also promised Enoch that if he would keep all of His commandments, God would justify all of Enoch’s words and even give him the words to speak so that the mountains would flee before him and the rivers would turn from their course. In Genesis, chapter seven, we read the confirmation of this promise. Genesis 7:15-18, 21:

“**7:15** And so great was the ***faith*** of Enoch, that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them, and he spake the ***word of the Lord***, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command. **7:16** And the rivers of water were turned out of their course, and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness. **7:17** And all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language ***which God had given him***.

**7:18** There also came up a land out of the depths of the sea; and so great was the fear of the enemies of the people of God, that they fled and stood afar off, and went upon the land which came up out of the depths of the sea. **7:21** And the fear of the Lord was upon all nations, so ***great was the glory of the Lord which was upon his people***.”

In the verses above we read that the faith of Enoch was so great that God justified all of his words so that even the mountains and the waters obeyed his command. Through the Scriptures, we know that this magnificent promise was experienced with other prophets as well, such as Moses, who through the power of God, brought the ten plagues upon Egypt, parted the Red Sea, and brought forth water from a rock. In the book of Mormon, we find that Nephi also had this power given to him because of his faith.

When Nephi was mocked and attacked by his brothers for desiring to build a ship as the Lord had commanded him, Nephi said unto them...“If God had commanded me to do all things, ***I could do them***. If he should command me that I should say unto this water, Be thou earth, it should be earth; and if I should say it, ***it would be done***. And now, if the Lord has such great power, and has wrought so many miracles among the children of men, how is it that ***he can not instruct me*** that I should build a ship?<sup>2</sup>” If God has such great power, and has wrought so many miracles among the children of men, and if Jesus Christ has such great power that He might redeem all men, how is it that God cannot fulfill all of His promises, even

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<sup>1</sup> DC 50:6b

<sup>2</sup> 1 Nephi 5:157-159

Zion, if we would but keep His commandments and believe in His Only Begotten Son? “Is it not easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; than to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk?”<sup>1</sup>

Jacob has also helped to reveal that though these miracles might seem impossible to the understanding of men, they are not too difficult for God to accomplish. Jacob wrote...“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; Nevertheless, the Lord God sheweth us our *weakness*, that we may know that it is by his grace, and his great condescensions unto the children of men, that we have power to do these things.”<sup>2</sup> If we had faith the size of a mustard seed and truly believed in the Lord Jesus, do we not believe that God could give us the power to establish the cause of Zion? Please read the following Scriptures from Jacob 3:9-14 and Helaman 4:57-63:

“**3:9** Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. **3:10** How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. **3:11** And no man knoweth of his ways, save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God. **3:12** For behold, by the power of his word, man came upon the face of the earth; which earth was created by the power of his word. **3:13** Wherefore, if God, being able to speak, and the world was; and to speak, and man was created, O then, why not able to command the earth, or the workmanship of his hands upon the face of it, according to his will and pleasure. **3:14** Wherefore, brethren, seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand.”

“**4:57** O how great is the nothingness of the children of men; yea, even they are less than the dust of the earth. **4:58** For behold, the dust of the earth moveth hither and thither, to the dividing asunder, at the command of our great and everlasting God; **4:59** Yea, behold, at his voice doth the hills and the mountains tremble and quake; and by the power of his voice they are broken up, and become smooth, yea, even like unto a valley; **4:60** Yea, by the power of his voice doth the whole earth shake; yea, by the power of his voice, doth the foundations rock, even to the very center; **4:61** Yea, and if he say unto the earth, Move, it is moved; yea, if he say unto the earth, Thou shalt go back, that it lengthen out the day for many hours, it is done: **4:62** And thus according to his word, the earth goeth back, and it appeareth unto man that the sun standeth still: yea, and behold, this is so; for sure it is the earth that moveth, and not the sun. **4:63** And behold, also, if he say unto the waters of the great deep, Be thou dried up, it is done.”

The faith of Enoch was so great in the Lord Jesus Christ that he was able to speak as Nephi, the son of Helaman, who when he spake the people were not able to disbelieve his words because of his faith [read 3 Nephi 3:57-61]. We read in Genesis, chapter six...“And as Enoch spake forth the words of God, the *people trembled and could not stand in his presence*. And he said unto them, Because that Adam fell, we are; and by his fall came death, and we are made partakers of misery and woe.<sup>3</sup>” It was because of the

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<sup>1</sup> Mark 2:7

<sup>2</sup> Jacob 3:7-8

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 6:48-49

power of the Holy Ghost that the people could not stand in the presence of Enoch for God had justified all his words, even the truth that Jesus lives and that this present world is desperately miserable and hopeless without the Kingdom of God.

Being a seer and a spiritually minded man, Enoch saw the world through the eyes of God and called it “misery and woe.” Enoch therefore had a perfect knowledge that the world, i.e. Babylon, was a place of spiritual wickedness and had no yearning for it. Instead, Enoch sought for the heavenly kingdom, a place of light, supreme joy, and righteousness. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.<sup>1</sup>” The twenty first chapter of the Book of Revelation gives us glimpse of what such a celestial place might be like. Revelation 21:3-7:

“**21:3** And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and **God himself shall be with them**, and be their God. **21:4** And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. **21:5** And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful. **21:6** And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. **21:7** He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and **he shall be my son.**”

Enoch and his people believed in all of the words of the Lord and desired a better world, even a heavenly place at the right hand of God. They understood further...“that by faith all things are fulfilled,<sup>2</sup>” and that with such a faith comes a hope which...“maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God.<sup>3</sup>” Hence, Enoch and his people united with a singleness of purpose through their friend and brother, Jesus Christ, and...“the Lord called his people, Zion, because they were of one heart and of one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them. And Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the people of God. And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the city of Holiness, even Zion...And Enoch and all his people walked with God, and he dwelt in the midst of Zion.<sup>4</sup>”

It is important to understand that it was because of the exceeding faith which Enoch and the other prophets had in Jesus that allowed them to witness the physical manifestations of the power of God, and this would not have occurred unless the prophets had committed themselves to the will of God, which is to establish His Kingdom on the earth, and become as little children. Nevertheless, more important than the ability to move the physical mountains and rivers, was the power to overcome the spiritual obstacles, such as hardness of heart, unbelief, disobedience, and contention, which hinder the Kingdom.

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<sup>1</sup> Colossians 3:1-2

<sup>2</sup> Ether 5:3

<sup>3</sup> Ether 5:4

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 7:23-25 and 77



In the third chapter of Hebrews, Paul made the comparison between Israel entering into the Promised Land after Moses brought them out of Egypt, and the saints entering into the Kingdom of God. Paul said that because of the hardness of their heart and because of their unbelief, the children of Israel were not allowed to enter into the Promised Land, and we know through the prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. that the Church of Jesus Christ suffers from this same condemnation in the latter days. Please read the following from the Doctrine and Covenants 83:8:

**“83:8a** And your minds in times past have been ***darkened because of unbelief***, and because you have ***treated lightly*** the things you have received, which vanity and unbelief hath brought the whole church under condemnation. **83:8b** And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, ***even all***; 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, **83:8c** that they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom, otherwise there remaineth a scourge and a judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion; for, shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, I say unto you, ***Nay.***”

God did not suffer Israel to pollute His holy land. Do we believe that He allowed the saints in the days of Enoch to do differently? God forbid. Therefore, what must be our response in order for us today to establish the cause of Zion? Will we respond as the natural man or as the man of God? Jesus asked...“Therefore what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, ***Even as I am.*** And now I go unto the Father.<sup>1</sup>”

Just as God gave the everlasting gospel to a boy with less than a third grade education level, to a man who forgot to call upon the Lord for four years, and to a young lad who was slow of speech and hated by the world, He has also given the same to the saints in the latter days. God has not given us this sacred covenant because we are stronger or better than others, but because we are weak, and because we are weak as individuals we must be united as one people through Christ. The Lord said...“Behold, this I have given unto you a parable, and it is even as I am: I say unto you, Be one; and if ye are not one, ***ye are not mine.***”<sup>2</sup>

In John, chapter seventeen, the Lord Jesus Christ prayed to the Father, saying...“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the ***glory*** which thou gavest me ***I have given them***; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be ***made perfect in one***; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”<sup>3</sup>

The glory of God which Jesus has given to His brothers and sisters...“is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.”<sup>4</sup> It is this light and truth which testifies that God is, that He sent His Only Begotten Son

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<sup>1</sup> 3 Nephi 13:5 Bjorn

<sup>2</sup> DC 38:6a

<sup>3</sup> John 17:21-23

<sup>4</sup> DC 90:6a

into the world to be the light and life of the world, and that He will send His Son again to restore all things, even this earth...“that it may be prepared for the celestial glory; for after it hath filled the measure of its creation, it shall be crowned with glory, even with the presence of God the Father.<sup>1</sup>” However, before these things can come to pass and before Jesus Christ can return, God requires a pure and peculiar people that will become as little children and serve Him in righteousness. God requires a people who all have one heart and one mind which is embodied in Jesus Christ. Please read the following Scriptures from Mosiah 9:54 and 1 Nephi 4:17-19:

“**9:54** And he commanded them that there should be ***no contention*** one with another, but that they should look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism; ***having their hearts knit together in unity and in love***, one towards another.”

“**1:17** And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, ***because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people***. **1:18** And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; **1:19** And surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God:”

Enoch truly was a peculiar man, meaning that he was exclusively God’s. Enoch obeyed the Lord as a little child does submit to his father, he loved God with a pure heart, he stood in holy places with faith in Jesus Christ, he walked in the light of Christ, he unified the people, and he did the will of God. Enoch has taught that although we are weak, when we walk with Jesus and commit ourselves to the will of God, there is nothing that can stand against us and there is nothing that we cannot do, even moving the cause of Zion in mighty power for good.

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<sup>1</sup> DC 85:4c

## Conclusion: How the Savior Worked with the Prophets

The Lord invited the author in his patriarchal blessing to, “Study the high calling of the prophets of old who have shared how the Savior worked with them,” and also to “emulate those that have given their all...” Throughout this study, the Lord has shared that He works in plain and precious ways according to the language and understanding of men. God does not desire a great monument in His name nor does He require a mystery, but rather the Lord seeks for a people who will love Him with their whole heart. “That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall by my people, and I will be their God... And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.”<sup>1</sup> Please read the following Scriptures from DC 42:1a-b, Genesis 9:21-23, DC 45:2d, Alma 17:1 and 45-48, Alma 5:38-39, and DC 11:3a-b:

**“42:1a** Hearken, O ye elders [and people] of my church, who have assembled themselves together, in my name, even Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, the Savior of the world, inasmuch as they believe on my name and keep my commandments; **42:1b** again I say unto you, Hearken and hear and obey the law which I shall give unto you; for verily I say. **9:21** ...that, when men should keep ***all*** my commandments, Zion ***should*** again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I have caught up unto myself.”

**“9:22** And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, ***then*** shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy; **9:23** And the general assembly of the church of the firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine everlasting covenant, which I made with thy father Enoch.”

**“45:2d** And even so I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people and for the Gentiles to seek to it, and to be a messenger before my face to prepare the way before me. **17:1** ..., give ear to my words; ***for I swear unto you***, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God, ye shall prosper in the land.”

**“17:45** And now remember... that God has entrusted you with these things, which are sacred, which he has kept sacred, and also which he will keep and preserve for a wise purpose in him, that he may shew forth his power... **17:46** And now behold, I tell you by the spirit of prophecy, that if ye transgress the commandments of God, behold, these things which are sacred, ***shall*** be taken away from you by the power of God, and ye shall be delivered up unto Satan, that he may sift you as chaff before the wind; **17:47** But if ye keep the commandments of God, and do with these things which are sacred, according to that which the Lord doth command you (for you must appeal unto the Lord for all things whatsoever ye must do with them), behold ***no power of earth or hell can take them from you***, for God is powerful to the fulfilling of all his words: **17:48** For he will fulfill all his promises which he shall make unto you...”

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<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel 11:20 and Jeremiah 24:7

**“5:38** And now my beloved brethren, I have said these things unto you, that I might awaken you to a sense of your duty to God, that ye may walk blameless before him; that ye may walk after the holy order of God, after which ye have been received. **5:39** And now I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive, and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long suffering; being temperate in all things; being ***diligent*** in keeping the commandments of God ***at all times;***”

**“11:3a** Now, as you have asked, behold, I say unto you, **11:3b** Keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion.”

In the fifth chapter of the second book of Kings, Naaman, who was the captain of the host of the king of Syria, traveled to Israel on the word of his wife’s maid to search out the prophet Elisha because he was afflicted with leprosy. Therefore...“Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha,<sup>1</sup>” and asked for a healing. Elisha responded by sending a messenger to him, saying...“Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.”<sup>2</sup> Please read the following from 2 Kings 5:11-14:

**“5:11** But Naaman was ***wroth***, and went away, and said, Behold, **I thought**, He will surely hmmcome out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. **5:12** Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. **5:13** And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? ***how much rather then***, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? **5:14** Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, ***and he was clean.***”

Sadly, it appears that we are very much like Naaman. In our hearts and minds we desire great miracles and workings of the Lord, which we often view as impossible, and we spend much time searching for the secret that will unlock the mystery to Zion. We go about asking questions, saying, “Why do we not have Zion,” “Why we are not one heart and one mind,” and “How do we go about establishing the cause of Zion.” God however has shared through His servants the prophets that if we will simply do as He has commanded, He will fulfill all of His words. From Deuteronomy 26:16-19:

**“26:16** This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments; thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. **26:17** Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice; **26:18** And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as ***he hath promised thee***, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments; **26:19** And to make thee high above all nations which he

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings 5:9

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings 5:10

hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that thou mayest be a holy people unto the Lord thy God, ***as he hath spoken.***”

If we love God with all our might, mind, and strength, then we must keep His commandments and trust in Him. In so doing, Jesus Christ our Lord will not lead us astray, but He will instead walk with His Friends by giving us the power to break the bands of death and sin, He will restore us to innocence and protect us in His Kingdom, He will comfort us with an everlasting consolation, He will nourish us with everlasting life, He will direct our steps into a far better land of promise, and He will lead us to Zion. It is our choice whether we will become the friend and brother to Jesus Christ or not.