

Our Earthly Stewardship

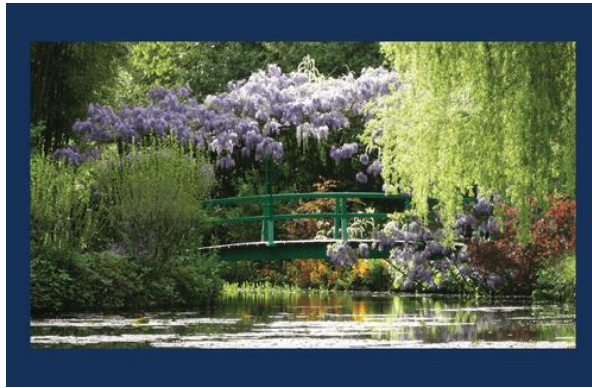
By Bishop Gérald Caussé

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Great spiritual blessings are promised to those who love and care for the earth and their fellow men and women.

Section I (Matt)

While visiting our native country of France, my wife and I recently had the pleasure of taking a few of our grandchildren to explore a magnificent garden situated in the little town of Giverny. We enjoyed wandering along its paths to admire the beautiful flower beds, the elegant water lilies, and the light playing on the ponds.



This amazing place is the result of the creative passion of one man: the great painter Claude Monet, who, for 40 years, tenderly shaped and cultivated his garden to make it his painting workspace. Monet immersed himself in nature's splendor; then, with his paintbrush, he conveyed the impressions he felt with strokes of color and light. Over the years, he created an extraordinary collection of hundreds of paintings, directly inspired by his garden.



Water Lilies and Japanese Bridge, 1899, by Claude Monet

Brothers and sisters, our interactions with the beauties of nature around us can produce some of the most inspiring and delightful experiences in life. The emotions we feel kindle within us a deep sense of gratitude for our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, who created this magnificent earth—with its mountains and streams, plants and animals—and our first parents, Adam and Eve.¹

The work of creation is not an end in itself. It is an integral part of God’s plan for His children. Its purpose is to provide the setting in which men and women may be tested, exercise their agency, find joy, and learn and progress so that they may one day return to the presence of their Creator and inherit eternal life.

These wonderful creations were prepared entirely for our benefit and are living proof of the love the Creator has for His children. The Lord declared, “Yea, all things which come of the earth ... are made for the benefit and the use of man, both to please the eye and to gladden the heart.”² However, the divine gift of the Creation does not come without duties and responsibilities. These duties are best described by the concept of *stewardship*. In gospel terms, the word *stewardship* designates a sacred spiritual or temporal responsibility to take care of something that belongs to God for which we are accountable.³

As taught in the holy scriptures, our earthly stewardship includes the following principles:

First principle: The entire earth, including all life thereon, belongs to God.

The Creator has entrusted the earth’s resources and all forms of life to our care, but He retains full ownership. He said, “I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.”⁴ All that is on the earth belongs to God, including our families, our physical bodies, and even our very lives.⁵

Matt’s Thoughts:

My words ■

Quotes & Scriptures ■

Nature Reflects the Light of Christ: All things Denote there is a God (Alma 30:43-44)

The Endless Works of Creation: All the World’s Thy Hands Have Made (Hymn 86)

The Purpose for Creation: All are alike unto God (2 Nephi 26:33)

Our Duties and Responsibilities as Stewards of Creation: All Things Belong to God (Mosiah 4:9)

The Glorious Future: All Things Have Become New (3 Nephi 12:47)

Testimony

The opening paragraphs of this talk remind us that nature often inspires the human soul to pause and reflect upon God’s creations with a sense of awe; whether observing some grand macro-scale vista or some microscopic detail, the Light of Christ permeates all things, **and all things**, thereby, **denote there is a God!**

Whether we recognize and properly revere the creator of all things depends on whether we perceive things by that same Light of Christ within us. Too often, the residue of men, who have neglected this Light of Truth, have their minds darkened and will not easily recognize the readily

apparent Author of all creation, chalking all things up to random chance, while ironically, claiming to be enlightened. Yet, with all probability and truth stacked against them, they scoff at believers: “God? If there is a God, show me real evidence!”

We recall that Korihor told Alma: “If thou wilt show me a sign, that I may be convinced that there is a God...” In part, Alma replied: “Thou hast had signs enough; will ye tempt your God? ... The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and **all things denote there is a God**; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator.” (Alma 30:43-44)

Light of Christ

Even Korihor would confess to the light of truth which shineth ... “which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings (it gives you consciousness and a conscience by which to distinguish between good and evil); Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things.” (D&C 88:6-13)

It’s no wonder we’re awestruck with wonder when we behold the works of God. Even Moses felt awe, when he was caught up in a vision and “cast his eyes and beheld the earth, yea, even all of it; and there was not a particle of it which he did not behold, discerning it by the Spirit of God.” (Moses 1:27)

Elder Maxwell invited us to look up and contemplate the far-reaching expanse of creation: “By viewing the stretching cosmos, we can humbly contemplate the vastness of divine handiwork. Long before he was born at Bethlehem and became known as Jesus of Nazareth, our savior was Jehovah; Way back then, under the direction of the Father, Christ was the Lord of the universe, who created worlds without number, of which ours is only one. How many planets are there in the universe with people on them? We don't know, but we are not alone in the universe! God is not the god of only one planet. I testify that Jesus is truly the Lord of the universe—that by Christ and through Him and of Him, the worlds are and were created; and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.” (Special Witnesses of Christ; Elder Maxwell)

One of my earliest clear memories of feeling awe for the sacred was at the Jordan River Temple open house in the Fall of 1981; I was only 2 years and few months old. I remember being carried down a long outdoor tent; shoe coverings; dark, rich wood; colourful stained glass next to a long staircase; and what then seemed like enormous rooms and paintings. The Light of Christ in that experience etched a firm memory in my mind. I actually went back to that temple for the recent rededication to confirm whether I remembered things correctly. I had.

A few years later, around 5 years old or so, while lying on the grassy side lawn at my childhood home, I remember looking up that afternoon watching the occasional white cloud roll by the blue blue sky; I was feeling a bit blue myself, having been left uninvited from a party that my usual play friends were attending. I’d had my thoughts in the clouds for some time, when out of the blue, literally, as if from the sky above, a thought—words—pierced my mind and heart as if to say: “Matthew, you are my child; I love you.” Although I’ve had my share of ups and downs and

Korihor-like doubts since, my mind is often drawn back to these and other moments of pure recognition—that truly, there is a God.

The Works of Creation

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught (TPJS p.343): “In the first place, I wish to go back to the beginning—to the morn of creation. There is the starting point for us to look to, in order to understand and be fully acquainted with the mind, purposes and decrees of the Great Elohim, who sits in yonder heavens as he did at the creation of this world. ... If we start right, it is easy to go right all the time; but if we start wrong, we may go wrong, and it be a hard matter to get right...”

Joseph Fielding Smith will help us “start right” regarding creation: “Authority is an eternal principle operative throughout the universe. To the "utmost bounds" _of space, all things are governed by law emanating from the Lord our God. On Kolob and other giant governing stars, and in the tiny electron, infinitely small and of which all things are composed, divine authority is manifest in the form of immutable law [Light of Truth]. All space is filled with matter, and that matter is controlled and directed by an all-wise and omniscient Creator.” (CR, October 1966)

D&C 131:7-8 adds this insight on the matter of matter: “There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes;” We cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter.”

Joseph Smith lays some groundwork principles to help us understand God’s Creations (Sermon April 7, 1844): “[T]he word create came from the word baurau, which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; ...Hence we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos – chaotic matter, which is element ... Element had an existence from the time He had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and reorganized, but not destroyed. They had no beginning and can have no end.”

Joseph Smith also dispensed this first-things-first insight: **TPJS p.354** “Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle. It is a spirit from age to age, and there is no creation about it. All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement. The Power to Advance in Knowledge; The first principles of man are self-existent with God. God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge. He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with himself, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence....”

I want to take a moment to outline some basic ideas concepts related to the creation of our Earth; forgive me, if my wording is incomplete or imprecise:

- The Father first laid out well-proven plans or blue-print for organizing this Earth [Think Architect].

- The Lord was the only one capable of completing the work [Think Foreman].
- Adam and other spirits assisted in the work.
- All things were organized first spiritually, then physically.
- Through this creation process, the Earth was “born” into being; the Earth has a spirit [or intelligence]; the Earth is alive and has an eternal destiny.
- In the beginning, the Earth, like man, was not mortal nor subject to death; it enjoyed a paradisiacal or terrestrial-like condition; however, after the Fall, it literally fell into its current Celestial glory orbit, becoming subject to death and requiring redemption from Christ.
- In a real sense, the Earth follows a redemptive process similar to mankind:
 - It obeys the Law given to it; the Earth was baptized by Noah’s flood;
 - It feels and suffers pains from the wicked men and spirits who dwell upon it, as it hosts both the mortal world and the world of spirits;
 - It acts within the bounds set for it;
 - It will be baptized by Fire at the Great and Dreadful Day, then it will be transfigured to receive its terrestrial/paradisiacal/millennial glory; and after the millennium is finished and Satan bound and cast off,
 - It will pass through a death but resurrect unto a Celestial glory.

The Purpose for Creation:

Truly, God spoke to Moses (1:39): “Behold this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”

Abraham (3:22-25) also gave his vision: “Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; ...: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born. And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;”

President Young stated: “The whole object of the creation of this world is to exalt the intelligences that are placed upon it, that they may live, endure, and increase for ever and ever” (DBY, 57).

President McKay adds: "man is the jewel of God" (Mal. 3:17). This is just another way of saying that the earth was created for man and not man for the earth.” (*Conference Report*, October 1969, pp. 5-9)

Other spirits may have had a role in the creation process. Joseph Fielding Smith taught: “It was Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, who, under the direction of his Father, came down and organized

matter and made this planet. ... “... It is true that **Adam helped to form this earth**. ... I have a strong view or conviction that there were others also who assisted them....” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:74–77).

Elder McConkie adds: “We know that Jehovah–Christ, assisted by ‘many of the noble and great ones’ (*Abr. 3:22*), ... did in fact create the earth and all forms of plant and animal life on the face thereof. But when it came to placing man on earth, there was a change in Creators. That is, the Father himself became personally involved.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, 62).

Joseph F. Smith taught: “Our spirits existed before they came to this world. They were in the councils of heaven before the foundations of the earth were laid. We were there. We sang together with the heavenly hosts for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid, and when the plan for our existence upon this earth and redemption were mapped out. We were there; we were interested, and we took a part in this great preparation.” (Presidents of the Church; *Gospel Doctrine* (1919; rpt., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977))

I witness to these words from Joseph F. Smith; technically, all of us witnessed it; we were there—even if we haven’t remembered much about those events... yet! On one occasion, when I thought my world was falling apart, I was blessed to remember just enough to anchor my soul and to testify that God the Father is enthroned in the Heavens; Jesus is the Christ prepared from before the foundation of the world; we trusted Him perfectly; and these truths restored to the world through the Prophet Joseph Smith are certain and true.

I had this re-cognition occurred during a Priesthood ordinance performed in a Holy Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. By this and many other simple, sweet experiences wherein the power of Godliness has been manifest through priesthood ordinances, I know for myself that the keys of the kingdom are with the church. This is the Lord’s true and living church upon the Earth; it teaches His true gospel; and it is led by the Lord through His servants, the prophets, as they exercise the keys of His kingdom on this side of the veil.

Stewards of Creation: All Things Belong to God:

I expect others will touch on The Law of Consecration and stewardships in relation to this topic, so I will just say that we must sacrifice ourselves and everything the Lord has blessed us with and may bless us with for the building up of the Kingdom of God on Earth; and that by living the gospel more fully, including opening our mouths to share and defend the Truth, we will help gather Israel and prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord; we know the Lord cannot make His first appearance until we’ve established Zion; so let’s prepare ourselves through strict obedience to the keys of His kingdom to be counted worthy to help redeem the center place of Zion and build that Tower—the Holy City, the New Jerusalem—that our Lord may have wherewith to be crowned King of kings and commence His millennial reign, and that in due time, the Earth may receive its promised and well-deserved paradisiacal glory. Doing this for the Earth would signal truer stewardship over its blessings than focusing on any number of the popular dystopian schemes proposed by political activists and agitators of our day, who claim they want to “Save the Earth.”

The Glorious Future: All Things Revealed; All Things Become New

Remember D&C 3:1 “The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught.”

D&C 101:32-34 reminds us: “Yea, verily I say unto you, in that day when the Lord shall come, he shall reveal all things—Things which have passed, and hidden things which no man knew, things of the earth, by which it was made, and the purpose and the end thereof—Things most precious, things that are above, and things that are beneath, things that are in the earth, and upon the earth, and in heaven.”

Our Prophet Joseph cried out in prayer from Liberty Jail: “O God, where art thou? ... O Lord God Almighty, maker of heaven, earth, and seas, and of all things that in them are... Remember thy suffering saints, O our God; and thy servants will rejoice in thy name forever.” ...

In reply, the Lord offered encouragement then said God would give knowledge of that “Which our forefathers have awaited with anxious expectation to be revealed in the last times, which their minds were pointed to by the angels, as held in reserve for the fulness of their glory; A time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest. All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ. And also, if there be bounds set to the heavens or to the seas, or to the dry land, or to the sun, moon, or stars—All the times of their revolutions, all the appointed days, months, and years, and all the days of their days, months, and years, and all their glories, laws, and set times, shall be revealed in the days of the dispensation of the fulness of times--According to that which was ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods before this world was, that should be reserved unto the finishing and the end thereof, when every man shall enter into his eternal presence and into his immortal rest. How long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints. Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson— That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.”

This pairs well with D&C 107:18-19: “The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church—To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.”

Now back to the Earth itself (Moses 7:48-49): “And it came to pass that Enoch looked upon the earth; and he heard a voice from the bowels thereof, saying: Wo, wo is me, the mother of men; I am pained, I am weary, because of the wickedness of my children. When shall I rest, and be

cleansed from the filthiness which is gone forth out of me? When will my Creator sanctify me, that I may rest, and righteousness for a season abide upon my face?

And when Enoch heard the earth mourn, he wept, and cried unto the Lord, saying: O Lord, wilt thou not have compassion upon the earth? Wilt thou not bless the children of Noah? And Enoch beheld the Son of Man ascend up unto the Father; and he called unto the Lord, saying: Wilt thou not come again upon the earth? ...

And the Lord said unto Enoch: As I live, even so will I come in the last days, in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfil the oath which I have made unto you concerning the children of Noah; And the day shall come that the earth shall rest, but before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve; And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem.

And the Lord said unto Enoch: Then [after other events transpire on Earth] shalt thou and all thy city meet them there, and we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other; And there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion, which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made; and for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest.

“And again, verily I say unto you, the earth abideth the law of a celestial kingdom, for it filleth the measure of its creation, and transgresseth not the law--Wherefore, it shall be sanctified; yea, notwithstanding it shall die, it shall be quickened again, and shall abide the power by which it is quickened, and the righteous shall inherit it.” (D&C88:25-26)

Elder Orson Pratt taught:“By and by it will be needful to have a new earth. Now how does the Lord make this new earth? He makes it out of the materials of the old one. This very earth on which we dwell, whose elements are to be melted and sanctified with fervent heat, in order that the Saints may reign upon it for a thousand years; this very earth that will pass away and...will be resurrected, the elements thereof will be brought together again, as they were in the beginning, and they will be sanctified and purified, and made holy and celestial, and become like a sea of glass, and then, after all things are made new, and old things have passed away,... Now, do you not see that there is a similarity in regard to God's dealings with the earth and with the inhabitants who dwell upon its face? The earth has to undergo a change as well as our bodies.” (Discourse by Elder Orson Pratt, Nov. 22, 1873.)

After giving a macro-timeline from our day until the Second Coming of the Lord has been accomplished, Elder Orson Pratt remarked: “The work is of great magnitude, Latter-day Saints, and we are living almost upon the eve of it. ... the world is getting aged, and Satan has accomplished almost all that the Lord intends that he shall accomplish, before the day of rest. With a work of such magnitude before them, the Latter-day Saints should be wide awake, and should not have their minds engaged in those fooleries in which many indulge at the present

time. We should put these things away, and our inquiry should be—“Lord, how can we prepare the way before thy coming? How can we prepare ourselves to perform the great work which must be performed in this greatest of dispensations, the dispensation of the fullness of times? How can we be prepared to behold the Saints who lived on the earth in former dispensations...?? How can we be prepared for this?” (Discourse by Elder Orson Pratt, Nov. 22, 1873.)

Joseph Smith, Jr. spoke plainly: “Noah came before the flood. I have come before the fire.”

Testimony

Micah’s Thoughts:

The thing that really drew my attention and I really appreciated because it is just so not taught often anymore and when it is taught, it is taught incorrectly- and that is the concept of stewardship vs ownership. What is taught here in the first section is a correct principle. We don’t own anything- there is no concept of private property- you are simply a steward. Which includes “our families, our physical bodies, and even our very lives.” Note that it includes your very children- yes parents, before they were your children they were your Father in Heaven’s children- you are simply stewards over them. If you have no right to ownership, you are simply a steward over your very own children, it makes one wonder how Satan was able to convince people that they owned private property in the first place.

There are two things that I would like to talk about in this first section:

1. Satan; the Great Counterfeiter
2. How this relates to the principle of stewardship

Brother Hyrum Andrus taught,

“Let me just add this point of clarification. When Zion begins to arise with glory and power so that there is visible power made manifest and the glory begins to be made manifest as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, then the Lord will permit Satan to manifest *an equivalent opposing force.*” (Nephi’s Prophecy of the Last Days)

This is a true principle and it is something people really need to pay attention to. And that is this: as things are progressing there will be opposites that will be formed. As the Lord performs His work there are equal manifestations, doctrines, etc. taught in competition and in opposition to the Lord’s program. As the Lord said,

Doctrine and Covenants 1:

35 For I am no respecter of persons, and will that all men shall know that the day speedily cometh; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion.

36 And also the Lord shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst, and shall come down in judgment upon Idumea, or the world.

What is interesting is that the order always seems to go:

1. Satan lets the world know of his plan openly and readily.

2. The Savior's plan is also known but it is only known through worthiness and great personal sacrifice as one diligently studies the scriptures. Meaning, that the overwhelming majority, i.e., the lazy learners and lax disciples, will never learn of Christ's plan.
3. People begin to be either extremely hardened against Satan's plan or for Satan's plan.
4. The Savior implements His plan before Satan and here is the kicker- His plan is very, very similar to Satan's and why? Because Satan is the great counterfeiter.

But now we have a problem- and the problem is- because people were so lazy and lax they don't know Christ's plan and because it looks so similar and they are so hardened now against it, many will fall because they were lazy and lax and did not learn the truth through hard work and sacrifice. They simply lazily listened to Glenn Beck, letting him do all the thinking for them, and they never learned. And then the next step is:

5. Separation. Those who obeyed the Lord will be separated from those who do not. And this has multiple layers- eventually they will be physically removed but in the meantime the separation will occur between those standing in holy places and being not moved vs those who lift up their voices, curse God and die spiritually
6. Satan raises his program in opposition to the truth.
7. We now have three different groups- we have Satan's group, you could say those seeking to destroy the laws of the land/government. You have those who are united against Satan's crew "they were united in the hatred of those who had entered into a covenant to destroy the government...yet they were not a righteous people" (3 Nephi 7:11). The third group are the righteous remnant who obeyed the Lord. These three groups constitute the righteous, the wicked and those who will have their portion allotted to them with the hypocrites.

When this final stage reaches its climax is when we will have the destruction both temporally and spiritually as spoken of in 1 Nephi 14:7.

We have seen this play out multiple times recently.

Example One:

1. Satan lets us know that he plans on removing/limiting our freedom, forcing us to make decisions.
2. Those who have studied the scriptures know that there is a point of reference coming up in which people will lift up their voice, curse God and die vs following the prophet. They understand what President Eyring taught:

"Korihor was arguing, as men and women have falsely argued from the beginning of time, that to take counsel from the servants of God is to surrender God-given rights of independence. But the argument is false because it misrepresents reality. When we reject the counsel which comes from God, we do not choose to be independent of outside influence. We choose another influence. We reject the protection of a perfectly loving, all-powerful, all-knowing Father in Heaven, whose whole purpose, as that of His Beloved Son, is to give us eternal life, to give us all that He has, and to bring us home again in families to the arms of His love. In rejecting His counsel, we choose the influence of

another power, whose purpose is to make us miserable and whose motive is hatred. We have moral agency as a gift of God. Rather than the right to choose to be free of influence, it is the inalienable right to submit ourselves to whichever of those powers we choose.” (Finding Safety in Counsel)

3. Lazy learners and lax disciples don't learn the above but become extremely hardened against anything they view as taking away their freedom.
4. The Lord, through his prophet President Nelson, urges all members around the globe to be vaccinated and wear masks when social distancing is not possible.
5. We now have separation between those standing in holy places and being not moved vs those lifting up their voices against the prophet, cursing God and dying spiritually.
6. Freedoms are removed and Satan further implements his agenda
7. We now have the three different groups- one escapes with the Lord and the other two kill each other.

I know that going over this is going to upset some people, but I only do it to show an example so that I can pivot into another example that is happening right now so that we can learn from the past and not make the same mistake in the future.

Example Two:

1. Satan broadcasts to the world his 2030 agenda. “You will own nothing and be happy”
2. Those who study the gospel and understand the gospel understand that we already own nothing and that we are simply only stewards over everything. And those who live the law of consecration understand this. Everything belongs to the Lord, and the Lord does not want us to possess that which is above our brothers and sisters.

Doctrine and Covenants 38:

26 For what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one: Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other: Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there—and looketh upon his sons and saith I am just?

27 Behold, this I have given unto you as 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.

Orson Pratt taught:

In temporal matters it is not given that one man shall possess that which is above another, saith the Lord. Now did the people really enter into this, or was it mere theory? I answer that, in the year 1831, we did try to enter into this order of things, but the hearts of the people had been so accustomed to holding property individually, that it was a very difficult matter to get them to comply with this law of the Lord. Many of them were quite wealthy, and they saw that on that land a great city called Zion, or the New Jerusalem, was to be built; they understood that from the revelations, and they said in their hearts—“What a fine chance this will be for us to get rich. We have means and money, and if we consecrate according to the law of God we cannot get rich; but we know that people by thousands and tens of thousands will gather up here, and these lands will become very valuable. We can now get them at the government price, a dollar and a quarter an acre, and if we lay out a few thousands in land, we can sell it out to the brethren when they

come along at a thousand percent profit, and perhaps in some cases at ten thousand percent, and make ourselves wealthy, so we will not consecrate, but we will go ahead for ourselves individually, and we will buy up the lands to speculate upon." These were the feelings of some who went up to that country; but others were willing to comply with the word of God, and did just as the revelation required, and they laid everything they had before the Bishop, and received their stewardship. (Orson Pratt, Journal of Discourses 17:16)

3. Now we have a time period where people are either becoming extremely hardened to Satan's plan or they understand the Lord's plan and are getting ready for it.
4. The Lord then asks for us to give up our private property- what we think to be our private property. To give up our desires for gain- to stop practicing priestcraft and become one. This is not the time to be planning on how to get richer.
5. We then have separation- people are separated between those who are okay with priestcraft and those who are not; separation between those who want to be one vs those who glory in their own wealth. Those who want to glorify gain, money, capitalism vs those who want to become one. Eventually this group is separated further into the New Jerusalem where the law of consecration will be fully implemented.
6. Satan fully implements his plan- you will own nothing and be happy. Eventually this will include the mark of the beast.
7. And then there are the three groups:

Helaman 13:

19 For I will, saith the Lord, that they shall hide up their treasures unto me; and cursed be they who hide not up their treasures unto me; for none hideth up their treasures unto me save it be the righteous; and he that hideth not up his treasures unto me, cursed is he, and also the treasure, and none shall redeem it because of the curse of the land.

20 And the day shall come that they shall hide up their treasures, because they have set their hearts upon riches; and because they have set their hearts upon their riches, and will hide up their treasures when they shall flee before their enemies; because they will not hide them up unto me, cursed be they and also their treasures; and in that day shall they be smitten, saith the Lord.

One group hid their treasures up unto the Lord, one group hid up their treasures not unto the Lord and thirdly, the wicked group. And once again, the wicked group and those who hid not their treasures up to the Lord are placed in the same basket- the Lord does not differentiate between them.

This is one of those talks that will go under a lot of people's radars because it is coming out now. But within the next couple years people will be digging it up again, just like they follow the prophet talks or even the Family Proclamation, etc. until it becomes seemingly a lot more relevant. We do not want to be playing catch up or continuing to make the same mistake over and over again. Eventually time is up and as President Nelson said, "those who obey the Lord will be separated from those who do not...do it now, time is running out."

Section II (Dani)

Second principle: As stewards of God's creations, we have a duty to honor and care for them.

As God's children, we have received the charge to be stewards, caretakers, and guardians of His divine creations. The Lord said that He made "every man accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures."⁶

Our Heavenly Father allows us to use earthly resources according to our own free will. Yet our agency should not be interpreted as license to use or consume the riches of this world without wisdom or restraint. The Lord gave this admonition: "And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used, with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion."⁷

President Russell M. Nelson once remarked: "As beneficiaries of the divine Creation, what shall we do? We should care for the earth, be wise stewards over it, and preserve it for future generations."⁸

Beyond being simply a scientific or political necessity, the care of the earth and of our natural environment is a sacred responsibility entrusted to us by God, which should fill us with a deep sense of duty and humility. It is also an integral component of our discipleship. How can we honor and love Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ without honoring and loving Their creations?

There are many things that we can do—collectively and individually—to be good stewards. Considering our individual circumstances, each of us can use the bountiful resources of the earth more reverently and prudently. We can support community efforts to care for the earth. We can adopt personal lifestyles and behaviors that respect God's creations and make our own living spaces tidier, more beautiful, and more inspirational.⁹

Our stewardship over God's creations also includes, at its pinnacle, a sacred duty to love, respect, and care for all human beings with whom we share the earth. They are sons and daughters of God, our sisters and our brothers, and their eternal happiness is the very purpose of the work of creation.

The author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry recounted the following: One day, while traveling on a train, he found himself sitting amidst a group of refugees. Deeply moved by the hopelessness he saw in the face of a young child, he exclaimed: "When by mutation a new rose is born in a garden, all the gardeners rejoice. They isolate the rose, tend it, foster it. But there is no gardener for men."¹⁰

My brothers and sisters, should we not be the gardeners for our fellow men and women? Are we not our brother's keeper? Jesus commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves.¹¹ From His mouth, the word *neighbor* does not merely mean geographic proximity; it implies a proximity of the heart. It encompasses all the inhabitants of this planet—whether they live near us or in a faraway country, regardless of their origins, personal backgrounds, or circumstances.

As disciples of Christ, we have a solemn duty to work tirelessly for peace and harmony among all nations of the earth. We must do our very best to protect and bring solace and relief to the weak, the needy, and all those who suffer or who are oppressed. Above all, the greatest gift of love we can offer our fellow men is to share with them the joy of the gospel and invite them to come unto their Savior through sacred covenants and ordinances.

Dani's Thoughts:

Definitions are critical! So what is a steward as it pertains to the gospel?
According to the TG, other phrases associated with steward/stewardship include: *accountability*, and *delegation of responsibility*.

Let's go to the scriptures. Specifically, what was said by Christ as recorded in the D&C.

D&C 72:3-4

3 And verily in this thing ye have done wisely, **for it is required of the Lord, at the hand of every steward, to render an account of his stewardship**, both in time and in eternity.

4 For he who is faithful and wise in time is accounted worthy to inherit the mansions prepared for him of my Father.

D&C 104: 11-18

11 It is wisdom in me; therefore, a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall organize yourselves and appoint every man his stewardship;

12 That every man may **give an account unto me** of the stewardship which is appointed unto him.

13 For it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures.

14 I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and **all things therein are mine**.

15 And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine.

16 But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low.

17 For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.

18 **Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment.**

Brigham Young, *Philosophy of Man, Etc.* JD 18:257

“You, my brethren and sisters, who were poor when you came here, but who now, through the blessing of God, ride in your carriages and live in fine houses, enjoying all the comforts of life, as well as good health, and the society of friends, how do you feel? As for myself, I have not the slightest feeling in my heart that I own a single thing. **What I am in possession of, the Lord has merely made me a steward over, to see what I will do with it.** Now, my brethren and sisters, do you feel the same? If you do you will each enquire what is my duty? One duty is to go to work and build this and other Temples, and the other ones can be built long before we can finish this one. Shall we do so? I say we will. If we had reached that perfect state of unity which we should have long before this, and still hope that we yet shall, do you suppose we would ask a man to pay Tithing on ten bushels of wheat, or a hundred or a thousand? No, all that would be necessary under such circumstances would be to say, brother so-and-so, from you we want so much, and from another so much. “Yes,” they would say, “Take it. I have nothing. It is all the Lord’s, let it be used to do him service in the building up of his kingdom.” “What would you do, brother Brigham, if you were required to give up all your substance?” Just what I have always been willing to do. I would continue to do my duty and trust in God for the results; that is what I have done all my life. This, doubtless, seems foolishness in the eyes of the world, they cannot understand it, neither have they any means of understanding it, for “the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”

Bishop Caussé references a phrase from a talk by Pres. (then Elder) Nelson, titled *The Creation*. In this talk, Pres. Nelson gives great insight into the purpose of the earth and our stewardship as well:

“Grand as it is, planet Earth is part of something even grander—that great plan of God. Simply summarized, **the earth was created that families might be.** Scripture explains that a husband and wife “shall be one flesh, and all this **that the earth might answer the end of its creation.**”

And as part of the planned destiny of the earth and its inhabitants, here our kindred dead are also to be redeemed. Families are to be sealed together for all eternity. A welding link is to be forged between the fathers and the children. In our time, a whole, complete, and perfect union of all dispensations, keys, and powers is to be welded together. For these sacred purposes, holy temples now dot the earth.

...

Meanwhile, brothers and sisters, we should understand our significant responsibilities. Both the creations of God and the creations of man teach us the importance of each component.

...

We are to be creators in our own right—builders of an individual faith in God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and faith in His Church. We are to build families and be sealed in holy temples. **We are to build the Church and kingdom of God upon the earth.** We are to prepare for our own divine destiny—glory, immortality, and eternal lives. These supernal blessings can all be ours, through our faithfulness.” (*The Creation*, April 2000).

Another great talk to study with Bishop Caussé’s is Elder Christofferson’s from October 2020, *Sustainable Societies*:

“Reflecting on this and other examples of once flourishing societies that later foundered, I think it safe to say that when people turn from a sense of **accountability to God** and begin to trust instead in the “arm of flesh,” disaster lurks. Trusting in the arm of flesh is to ignore the divine Author of human rights and human dignity and to give highest priority to riches, power, and the praise of the world (while often mocking and persecuting those who follow a different standard). Meanwhile, those in sustainable societies are seeking, as King Benjamin said, to “grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created [them], or in the knowledge of that which is just and true.”

The institutions of family and religion have been crucial for endowing both individuals and communities with the virtues that sustain an enduring society. These virtues, rooted in scripture, include integrity, **responsibility and accountability**, compassion, marriage and fidelity in marriage, respect for others and the property of others, service, and the necessity and dignity of work, among others.”

What have we learned?

1. The earth was created for us to live on.
2. All of our “possessions” are actually the Lord’s (He created all things). That includes ourselves.
3. Building the kingdom of God on earth should be our greatest cause (one way we do this is by building temples for families to receive the ordinances of the gospel).
4. We will be held accountable for what we are stewards over.

An important thing I’d also like to note is how rendering an account of our stewardship is related to Zion/the New Jerusalem. Here is more from D&C 72:

14 And the labors of the faithful who labor in spiritual things, in administering the gospel and the things of the kingdom unto the church, and unto the world, shall answer the debt unto the bishop in Zion;

15 Thus it cometh out of the church, for according to the law **every man that cometh up to Zion must lay all things before the bishop in Zion.**

16 And now, verily I say unto you, that as every elder in this part of the vineyard must give an **account of his stewardship unto the bishop** in this part of the vineyard—

17 A certificate from the judge or bishop in this part of the vineyard, unto the bishop in Zion, rendereth every man acceptable, and answereth all things, for an inheritance, and to be received as a wise steward and as a faithful laborer;

18 Otherwise he shall not be accepted of the bishop of Zion.

We do not have to wonder if we will be worthy to enter the New Jerusalem. I invite all of us to study further what it means to be a “good steward,” specifically what we have been given stewardship over and then to *honestly* reflect how we can improve. A great place to start is the *D&C Institute Student Manual*. In “Enrichment H: The Last Days,” it lists the parable of the talents (Matthew 25: 14-30) as a “parable of preparation. It says:

“Now apply the message of these parables to your preparing yourself for Christ’s coming. Three great qualities are stressed by the Savior: spiritual power, **stewardship** (parable of the talents), and Christian service. The Lord’s promise is, “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear” (D&C 38:30). In what better way could you prepare to be one of the wise virgins (see Matthew 25:1–13), a “**good and faithful servant**” (Matthew 25:23), and a sheep to whom the Lord says, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34).”

(I highly suggest reading that whole enrichment section).

In summary, the earth was created for a specific purpose. We must learn our roles and responsibilities while we are here, so we can be prepared for the Lord to come again.

In the name of our beloved Savior—Jesus Christ, Amen.

Micah’s Thoughts:

President Marion G. Romney taught,

“We lose our life by serving and lifting others. By so doing we experience the only true and lasting happiness. Service is not something we endure on this earth so we can earn the right to live in the celestial kingdom. Service is the very fiber of which an exalted life in the celestial kingdom is made.

Knowing that service is what gives our Father in Heaven fulfillment, and knowing that we want to be where He is and as He is, why must we be commanded to serve one another? Oh, for the glorious day when these things all come naturally because of the purity of our hearts. In that day there will be no need for a commandment because we will have experienced for ourselves that we are truly happy only when we are engaged in unselfish service. Let us use the freedom which comes from self-reliance in giving and serving.

Can we see how critical self-reliance becomes when looked upon as the prerequisite to service, when we also know service is what Godhood is all about? Without self-reliance one cannot exercise these innate desires to serve. How can we give if there is nothing there? Food for the hungry cannot come from empty shelves. Money to assist the needy cannot come from an empty purse. Support and understanding cannot come from the emotionally starved. Teaching cannot

come from the unlearned. And most important of all, spiritual guidance cannot come from the spiritually weak.

There is an interdependence between those who have and those who have not. The process of giving exalts the poor and humbles the rich. In the process, both are sanctified.” (The Celestial Nature of Self-reliance, 1982)

Jacob 2:

17 Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you.

18 But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.

19 And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, ***if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good***—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted.

Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual, D&C 72:3–4. “He Who Is Faithful and Wise in Time”

“The scriptures teach that the station and rewards we inherit in the life after this are determined by how firmly we commit ourself to the gospel, seek the power of the Atonement to overcome our sins, and take responsibility for our stewardship over temporal blessings. The Savior said, “The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. . . . If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?” (Luke 16:8, 11). Elder James E. Talmage explained: “Worldly minded men do not neglect provision for their future years, and often are sinfully eager to amass plenty; while the ‘children of light,’ or those who believe spiritual wealth to be above all earthly possessions, are less energetic, prudent, or wise. By ‘mammon of unrighteousness’ we may understand material wealth or worldly things. While far inferior to the treasures of heaven, money or that which it represents may be the means of accomplishing good, and of furthering the purposes of God. Our Lord’s admonition was to utilize ‘mammon’ in good works, while it lasted, for some day it shall fail, and only the results achieved through its use shall endure. If the wicked steward, when cast out from his master’s house because of unworthiness, might hope to be received into the homes of those whom he had favored, how much more confidently may they who are genuinely devoted to the right hope to be received into the everlasting mansions of God! Such seems to be part of the lesson. “Make such use of your wealth as shall insure you friends hereafter. Be diligent; for the day in which you can use your earthly riches will soon pass. If you have not learned wisdom and prudence in the use of ‘unrighteous mammon,’ how can you be trusted with the more enduring riches? If you have not learned how to use properly the wealth of another, which has been committed to you as steward, how can you expect to be successful in the handling of great wealth should such be given you as your own? Emulate the unjust steward and the lovers of

mammon, not in their dishonesty, cupidity, and miserly hoarding of the wealth that is at best but transitory, but in their zeal, forethought, and provision for the future.” (Jesus the Christ, pp. 463–64.)”

Elder L. Tom Perry:

“It is essential that we plan for our future. I believe it is time, and perhaps with some urgency, to review the counsel we have received in dealing with our personal and family preparedness. We want to be found with oil in our lamps sufficient to endure to the end. President Spencer W. Kimball admonished us:

“In reviewing the Lord’s counsel to us on the importance of preparedness, I am impressed with the plainness of the message. The Savior made it clear that we cannot place sufficient oil in our preparedness lamps by simply avoiding evil. We must also be anxiously engaged in a positive program of preparation.”

He also said: “The Lord will not translate one’s good hopes and desires and intentions into works. Each of us must do that for himself” (The Miracle of Forgiveness, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969, p. 8).

As long as I can remember, we have been taught to prepare for the future and to obtain a year’s supply of necessities. I would guess that the years of plenty have almost universally caused us to set aside this counsel. I believe the time to disregard this counsel is over. With events in the world today, it must be considered with all seriousness.” (If Ye Are Prepared Ye Shall Not Fear, 1995)

Doctrine and Covenants 78:

11 Wherefore, a commandment I give unto you, to prepare and organize yourselves...

13 Behold, this is the preparation wherewith I prepare you, and the foundation, and the ensample which I give unto you, whereby you may accomplish the commandments which are given you;

14 That through my providence, notwithstanding the tribulation which shall descend upon you, that the church may stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world;

Section III (Russell)

Third principle: We are invited to participate in the work of creation.

The divine process of creation is not yet complete. Every day, God’s creations continue to grow, expand, and multiply. A most wonderful thing is that our Heavenly Father extends to us an invitation to participate in His creative work.

We participate in the work of creation whenever we cultivate the earth or add our own constructions to this world—as long as we show respect for God’s creations. Our contributions may be expressed through the creation of works of art, architecture, music, literature, and culture, which embellish our planet, quicken our senses, and brighten our lives. We also contribute through scientific and medical discoveries that preserve the earth and life upon it. President Thomas S. Monson summarized this concept with these beautiful words: “God left the world unfinished for man to work his skill upon ... that man might know the joys and glories of creation.”¹²

In Jesus’s parable of the talents, when the master returned from his journey, he praised and rewarded the two servants who grew and magnified their talents. In contrast, he called the servant who hid his unique talent in the earth “unprofitable,” and he took away even that which he had received.¹³

Similarly, our role as stewards of earthly creations is not solely about conserving or preserving them. The Lord expects us to work diligently, as moved upon by His Holy Spirit, to grow, enhance, and improve upon the resources He has entrusted to us—not for our benefit only but to bless others.

Among all of man’s achievements, none can equal the experience of becoming *cocreators* with God in giving life or in helping a child learn, grow, and thrive—whether it be as parents, teachers, or leaders, or in any other role. There is no stewardship more sacred, more fulfilling, and also more demanding than that of partnering with our Creator in providing physical bodies for His spirit children and then helping them reach their divine potential.

The responsibility of cocreation serves as a constant reminder that life and each person’s body are sacred, that they belong to none other than God, and that He has made us guardians to respect, protect, and care for them. The commandments of God, which govern the powers of procreation and the establishment of eternal families, guide us in this holy stewardship, which is so crucial to His plan.

My brothers and sisters, we should recognize that all is spiritual to the Lord—including the most temporal aspects of our lives. I testify that great spiritual blessings are promised to those who love and care for the earth and their fellow men and women. As you stay faithful in this sacred stewardship and honor your eternal covenants, you will grow in the knowledge of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ, and you will feel Their love and Their influence more abundantly in your life. All this will prepare you to dwell with Them and receive additional creative power¹⁴ in the life to come.

At the end of this mortal existence, the Master will ask us to give an account for our sacred stewardship, including how we have cared for His creations. I pray that we will then hear His loving words whispered to our hearts: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”¹⁵ In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Footnotes:

1. The earth and all things upon it (with the exception of Adam and Eve) were created by Jesus Christ under the direction of the Father; Adam and Eve, our first parents, were created by God the Father (see [John 1:1–3](#); [Moses 2:1, 26–27](#)).
2. [Doctrine and Covenants 59:18](#).
3. See Spencer W. Kimball, “[Welfare Services: The Gospel in Action](#),” *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 76–79.
4. [Doctrine and Covenants 104:14](#).
5. See Spencer W. Kimball, “[Welfare Services](#),” 76–79.
6. [Doctrine and Covenants 104:13](#).
7. [Doctrine and Covenants 59:20](#).
8. Russell M. Nelson, “[The Creation](#),” *Ensign*, May 2000, 86; *Liahona*, July 2000, 104.
9. See Gospel Topics, “[Environmental Stewardship and Conservation](#),” [topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](#).
10. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Terre des Hommes* (1939), 214; see also *Wind, Sand and Stars* (1939), in *Airman’s Odyssey* (1984), 206.
11. See [Mark 12:31](#).
12. Thomas S. Monson, “[In Quest of the Abundant Life](#),” *Ensign*, Mar. 1988, 2; “[In Search of an Abundant Life](#),” *Tambuli*, August 1988, 3.
13. See [Matthew 25:14–30](#).
14. See David A. Bednar and Susan K. Bednar, “[Moral Purity](#)” (Brigham Young University–Idaho devotional, Jan. 7, 2003), [byui.edu](#).
15. [Matthew 25:21](#).

Russell’s Thoughts:

Russell Commentary:

As Bishop Causse quotes President Monson, I will quote him as well as I share some of my thoughts. His message “The Quest for an Abundant Life” parallels Elder Causse’s message nicely.

“The spirit of exploration, whether it be of the surface of the earth, the vastness of space, or the principles of living greatly, includes developing the capacity to face trouble with courage; disappointment with cheerfulness; and triumph with humility.

God left the world unfinished for man to work his skill upon. He left the electricity in the cloud, the oil in the earth. He left the rivers unbridged and the forests unfelled and the cities unbuilt. God gives to man the challenge of raw materials, not the ease of finished things. He leaves the pictures unpainted and the music unsung and the problems unsolved, that man might know the joys and glories of creation.

Carl Sandberg described our possibilities: “I see [life] not in the setting sun of a black night of despair ahead of us. I see [life] in the crimson light of a rising sun, fresh from the burning creative hand of God. I see great days ahead, great days possible to men and women of will and vision.”

However, during the last half century, there has been a gradual but continual retreat from standards of excellence in many phases of our lives.

We observe business without morality; science without humanity; knowledge without character; worship without sacrifice; pleasure without conscience; politics without principle; and wealth without works.

Perhaps the renowned author Charles Dickens, without really realizing it, described our day when he spoke of a period two centuries ago. His classic *A Tale of Two Cities* begins:

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us.”

To measure the goodness of life by its delights and pleasures and safety is to apply a false standard. The abundant life does not consist of a glut of luxury. It does not make itself content with commercially produced pleasure, the nightclub idea of what is a good time, mistaking it for joy and happiness.

On the contrary, *obedience to law, respect for others, mastery of self, joy in service*—these constitute the *abundant life*.”

President Monson continued in his message to detail the importance of those four measures of an abundant life, and I would encourage each of us take a personal assessment of our lives against the Prophets measuring stick as it pertains to our earthly stewardship.

As Bishop Causse continued, comparing our role to the Lord’s parable of the talents “our role as stewards of earthly creations is not solely about conserving or preserving them. The Lord expects us to work diligently, as moved upon by His Holy Spirit, to grow, enhance, and improve upon the resources He has entrusted to us—not for our benefit only but to bless others.”

He then goes on and speaks of our most sacred stewardship. “There is no stewardship more sacred, more fulfilling, and also more demanding than that of partnering with our Creator in providing physical bodies for His spirit children and then helping them reach their divine potential... The commandments of God, which govern the powers of procreation and the establishment of eternal families, guide us in this holy stewardship, which is so crucial to His plan... we should recognize that all is spiritual to the Lord—including the most temporal aspects of our lives.”

I’m humbled by my sacred stewardship and my role as Husband and Father. Some of my children have strayed from the path the Lord would have them on and some are firmly planted on the covenant path. I have tried to lead my family and teach each of them as the prophet taught – obedience to the law, respect for others, self-mastery, and to find joy in service to God and their fellowman. I have taught them reverence for the sacred things of this world. I pray in faith for my children that they will reach their divine potential and for those that have strayed that they will repent and get back on the covenant path.

I feel as Lehi did for his sons, 2 Nephi 1 - 13 O that ye would awake; awake from a deep sleep, yea, even from the sleep of hell, and shake off the awful chains by which ye are bound, which are the chains which bind the children of men, that they are carried away captive down to the eternal gulf of misery and woe. 14 Awake! and arise from the dust, and hear the words of a trembling parent, whose limbs ye must soon lay down in the cold and silent grave, from whence no traveler can return; a few more days and I go the way of all the earth.

15 But behold, the Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love.

16 And I desire that ye should remember to observe the statutes and the judgments of the Lord; behold, this hath been the anxiety of my soul from the beginning.

Helaman 13:11 - But if ye will repent and return unto the Lord your God I will turn away mine anger, saith the Lord; yea, thus saith the Lord, blessed are they who will repent and turn unto me, but wo unto him that repenteth not.

We all have need for the daily repentance the prophet has pleaded for us to enact in our lives. I pray that one day the veil will pass over me and I will enter into the presence of my Father and Jesus Christ, and that I will be able to participate fully in the redemption of Zion in the coming days. I feel my weekly temple service brings me much needed priesthood power, strength and joy in service of my ancestors. It also gives me a focused time to ponder and pray on how I can best serve and love my family here on earth.

As covenant keeping members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, we have a sacred responsibility to all of God's creations especially our families. As Bishop Causse spoke of our sacred responsibility to family it immediately took my thoughts to the temple. When our hearts are set upon Christ and His temple it may not change our loved ones, but it will change us. I attended a temple preparation meeting this past week before my temple shift. These meetings take place before each shift and this week a story stood out to me about our sacred responsibility to our families. I asked the temple president after the meeting for a reference to the story shared. It was from a BYU-I devotional talk given by Elder and Sister Duncan.

I will quote part of their message here... Elder Duncan said, "As you know, or will know, there is no greater joy than to see a person gain a testimony of Jesus Christ and the Restoration of His gospel and enter the waters of baptism. Imagine for a moment how you would feel if you helped bring a person along to the point where they wanted to enter the waters of baptism but they and you had to rely on someone else to perform that actual ordinance. Wouldn't it be agonizing for both you and your convert if no one stepped forward to help perform this baptism? The following true story illustrates this point.

Frederick William Hurst was working as a gold miner in Australia when he first heard Latter-day Saint missionaries preach the restored gospel. He and his brother Charles were baptized in 1854. He tried to help his other family members become converted, but they rejected him and the truths he taught.

Fred settled in Salt Lake City four years after joining the Church, and he served faithfully as a missionary in several different countries. He also worked as a painter in the Salt Lake Temple.

In one of his final journal entries, he wrote:

Along about the 1st of March, 1893, I found myself alone in the dining room, all had gone to bed. I was sitting at the table when to my great surprise my elder brother Alfred walked in and sat down opposite me at the table and smiled. I said to him (he looked so natural): "When did you arrive in Utah?"

He said: "I have just come from the Spirit World, this is not my body that you see, it is lying in the tomb. I want to tell you that when you were on your mission you told me many things about the Gospel, and the hereafter, and about the Spirit World being as real and tangible as the earth. I could not believe you, but when I died and went there and saw for myself I realized that you had told the truth. I attended the Mormon meetings."

He raised his hand and said with much warmth: “I believe in the Lord *Jesus Christ* with all my heart. I believe in faith, and repentance and *baptism* for the remission of sins, but that is as far as I can go. I look to you to do the work for me in the temple. . . .

You are watched closely. . . . We are all looking to you as our head in this great work. I want to tell you that there are a great many spirits who weep and mourn because they have relatives in the Church here who are careless and are doing nothing for them.”

Bishop Causse closed his remarks by saying, “At the end of this mortal existence, the Master will ask us to give an account for our sacred stewardship, including how we have cared for His creations.” I believe that chiefly we will be held to account as to how we handle our most sacred stewardship of our families and those neighbors the Lord has placed in our path to help along the way.

As I visited with my aunt and uncle this weekend in Utah, they spoke about how my grandfather used to have family reunions where they would talk almost exclusively about genealogy. He would give each child a stewardship to look after a certain part of the family line and ensure that the temple work was being done for them and their descendants. At the next reunion they would return and report on that effort. I like this pattern my grandfather setup in his family, and I am feeling prompted similarly to do the required temple work.

I have had many sacred experiences in and outside the temple where I know they were eagerly awaiting those sacred ordinances to progress along the covenant path. I know that those ancestors in turn will help me and my earthly family in the coming days of tribulation. I know that as we improve ourselves and improve upon what the Lord has blessed us with as stewards over on this earth we will be counted worthy to stand in His presence and He will say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”

Micah’s Thoughts:

Isaiah 65:

17 ¶ For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

20 In those days there shall be no more thence an infant of days nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall not die but shall live to be a hundred years old; but the sinner, living to be a hundred years old, shall be accursed.

21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

Brigham Young:

"You read in the Bible, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the [p. 61a]

days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." (Isa. 65:20-23)

The human family has again to return to this state—not you and I as individuals. Mankind have degenerated; they have lost the physical and mental power they once possessed. ...

Some of our old traditions teach us that a man guilty of atrocious and murderous acts may savingly repent when on the scaffold; and upon his execu-

tion you will hear the expression—"Bless God! He has gone to heaven, to be crowned, in glory, through the all-redeeming merits of Christ the Lord." This is all nonsense. Such a character never will see heaven. Some will pray, "O that I had passed through the veil on the night of my conversion!" This proves the false ideas and vain notions entertained by the Christian world. They have no good sense pertaining to God and godliness. (2 Pet. 1:3)

This is a world in which we are to prove ourselves. The lifetime of man is a day of trial, wherein we may prove to God, in our darkness, in our weakness, and where the enemy reigns, that we are our Father's friends, and that we receive light from him and are worthy to be leaders of our children—to become lords of lords, and kings of kings Rev. 17:14 to have perfect dominion over that portion of our families that will be crowned in the celestial kingdom with glory, immortality, and eternal lives. ...

Our Father, who is Lord of all, will reign a King of kings and Lord of lords Rev. 19:16 over all his children. ...

Many professing to be Saints seem to have no knowledge, no light, to see anything beyond a dollar, or a pleasant time, a comfortable house, a fine farm, &c., &c. O fools, and slow of heart Luke 24:25 to understand the purposes of God and his handiwork among the people. ...

If the days of man are to begin to return, we must cease all extravagant living. When men live to the age of a tree, Isa. 65:22 D&C 101:30 their food will be fruit. Isa. 65:21 D&C 89:16 Mothers, to produce offspring full of life and days, must cease drinking liquor, tea, and coffee, that their systems may be free from bad effects. [p. 64a]

If every woman in this Church will now cease drinking tea, coffee, liquor, and all other powerful stimulants, and live upon vegetables, &c., not many generations will pass away before the days of man will again return. D&C 89:1-21 But it will take generations to entirely [p. 64b]

eradicate the influences of deleterious substances. This must be done before we can attain our paradisiacal state, for the Lord will bring again Zion to its paradisiacal state.

May God grant that we may see and enjoy it. Amen. ”

(Privileges of the Sabbath, Etc., JD 8:57)