

The Arm of Flesh

2 Chronicles 32:7-8

7 Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him:

8 With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words...

Jeremiah 17:5

5 Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.

There is a widespread confusion both in and outside the Church with regards to what this actually means. What is the arm of flesh? What does it mean to trust in the arm of flesh more than God?

I was thinking about putting out another “5 Things That I Wish LDS Knew (take the time to learn and gain a testimony of) Part 2” but this one seems to be serious enough, and a serious enough problem that I believe this deserves its own individual time.

The first misconception that is skewed, that is warped from these sets of scriptures is to, what I would call, witchhunt. I’ve had, over the last few weeks, people contact me, warning me of individuals ranging from Roger K. Young to Brigham Young to Joseph Fielding Smith. They will then take a quote from Emma, or some post on Facebook and attempt to besmirch these people, and then will broadly tell you “don’t trust in the arm of flesh!” When pressed on what we should trust in they will point you to the Bible or the Book of Mormon or the Doctrine and Covenants etc as though those words were penned by God Himself. What’s lost to all these people is that all of these words were written by men. If you could point to an individual and then find a fault with said individual and then once you found a fault with the individual you could discredit everything they have ever written, that would mean that every single scripture that we have today would be wiped out, for all were written by men and all these men had sinned. Not coincidentally so, the only person to not have sinned, the Savior of the world, wrote no books. This is obviously not what “trusting in the arm of flesh” means. There has to be a more detailed procedure to go through to weed out what is truth and not truth, versus just simply saying “that man has sinned therefore nothing he wrote can be of God” or worse these words are older and therefore the sins of the person who wrote the book are not as well known and therefore we will trust these older words over newer words. Ie. the books of Moses hold more validity than the Book of Mormon, which holds more validity than the Doctrine and Covenants. The answer is no, Moses sinned, Mormon sinned and Joseph Smith sinned. In fact, if anything the newer revelation penned by the prophet of your dispensation actually, most of the time, will be more correct than older writings due to translation problems.

So what is the criteria? What is scripture?

In the Bible Dictionary we learn:

“The word scripture means “a writing” and is used to denote a writing recognized by the Church as sacred and inspired. It is so applied to the books of the Old Testament by the writers of the New Testament (Matt. 22:29; John 5:39; 2 Tim. 3:15). For an account of the process by which the books of the Old Testament and New Testament came to be recognized as scripture, see Canon. Latter-day revelation identifies scripture as that which is spoken under the influence of the Holy Ghost (D&C 68:1–4).”

First in this we learn that scripture is anything that is written when moved upon by the Holy Ghost. So the next thing to answer would be, “what is the Holy Ghost allowed or authorized to tell an individual so that that individual can then write it down?”

Joseph Smith gives us the answer, “I will inform you that it is contrary to the economy of God for any member of the Church, or any one, to receive instruction for those in authority, higher than themselves; therefore you will see the impropriety of giving heed to them; but if any person have a vision or a visitation from a heavenly messenger, it must be for his own benefit and instruction; for the fundamental principles, government, and doctrine of the Church are vested in the keys of the kingdom. Respecting an apostate, or one who has been cut off from the Church, and who wishes to come in again, the law of our Church expressly says that such shall repent, and be baptized, and be admitted as at the first.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p.21)

So a man or a woman will never be moved upon by the Holy Ghost with information for or on behalf of somebody that they do not hold keys over. The keys of the kingdom are ironically yet another thing that was going to appear on my “5 things list” but it too might get its own paper due to Relief Society Presidents, District Leaders on missions etc still thinking they hold keys. Hint: they don’t. Suffice it to say, if you are a woman, you hold the key of revelation over yourself and if you are a man or a father, you hold the key of revelation over yourself and your family. Any other position of authority in the Church where you actually receive keys I pray that somebody teaches you that, if not see my video/paper which I may or may not write, “Keys of the Kingdom.” Nobody has more keys for the right of revelation save he is given the keys.

Scripture then becomes anything received through the authorized keys that has been written down. Your family can have your own set of scriptures so long as the revelations pertain to you and only you, not the Kingdom of God (and do not conflict with the revealed doctrine taught in the Kingdom of God).

For this first group who says, “do not trust in the arm of flesh” and then pivot to basically say “don’t trust the keys of God” it would be just as idiotic to say, “you don’t need to be baptized, you just need to live the gospel of Jesus Christ.” The Lord’s way is to reveal His will to us through revelation through the proper keys, “for mine house is a house of order sayeth the Lord”. To trust in the keys is to trust in the arm of the Lord. To “lean unto thine own understanding” is to set the keys at naught and inflate your own ignorant ability of self revelation. When you are saying “don’t trust in the arm of flesh” and you use it in this context it is ironic because the only person in that situation trusting in the arm of flesh is you.

So what does it mean to not trust in the arm of flesh but to trust in the Lord? The Book of Mormon gives us the answer once again,

Mosiah 23:14

14 And also trust no one to be your teacher nor your minister, except he be a man of God, walking in his ways and keeping his commandments.

Trusting in somebody, or yourself, over the keys of God is to put your trust in the arm of flesh. Before continuing on, let us address a concern that might arise and that is, how do we know that Joseph Smith held the keys? How can you know that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints still holds those keys? The Book of Mormon once again, not only holds the key, but is the keystone to our religion:

Moroni 10:3-5

3 Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

4 And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

5 And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.

Every human being in and outside the Church has keys of revelation that get turned on for themselves when an individual has a sincere heart, real intent and faith in Christ, which allows them to have the Holy Ghost testify personally of the truthfulness of things which are in their sphere. When one reads and then prays and comes to know that the Book of Mormon is true,

“Those who gain this divine witness from the Holy Spirit will also come to know by the same power that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, that Joseph Smith is His revelator and prophet in these last days, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s kingdom once again established on the earth, preparatory to the Second Coming of the Messiah” (Book of Mormon Introduction).

There is not a scenario where the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is true, but yet Joseph Smith wasn’t a true prophet or the Book of Mormon was a fairy-tale and not true. For without Joseph Smith the Church has no keys and without the Book of Mormon there is no validity to Joseph Smith.

There is not a scenario where the Book of Mormon is true, but Joseph Smith was a fallen prophet or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is apostate. For Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon and the prophecies foretold in the Book of Mormon have no completion

without the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, meaning if there was no Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints it would prove the Book of Mormon to be a false book.

There is not a scenario where Joseph Smith was a true prophet but the Book of Mormon or Doctrine and Covenants were and are false documents or that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints isn't the Lord's Kingdom on the earth. For Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon and said, "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book." And the introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants states,

"In the course of time, Joseph Smith was enabled by divine assistance to translate and publish the Book of Mormon. In the meantime he and Oliver Cowdery were ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood by John the Baptist in May 1829 (see D&C 13), and soon thereafter they were also ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood by the ancient Apostles Peter, James, and John (see D&C 27:12). Other ordinations followed in which priesthood keys were conferred by Moses, Elijah, Elias, and many ancient prophets (see D&C 110; 128:18, 21). These ordinations were, in fact, a restoration of divine authority to man on the earth. On April 6, 1830, under heavenly direction, the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the Church, and thus the true Church of Jesus Christ is once again operative as an institution among men, with authority to teach the gospel and administer the ordinances of salvation. (See D&C 20 and the Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith—History 1.)

These sacred revelations were received in answer to prayer, in times of need, and came out of real-life situations involving real people. The Prophet and his associates sought for divine guidance, and these revelations certify that they received it. In the revelations, one sees the restoration and unfolding of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times. The westward movement of the Church from New York and Pennsylvania to Ohio, to Missouri, to Illinois, and finally to the Great Basin of western America and the mighty struggles of the Saints in attempting to build Zion on the earth in modern times are also shown forth in these revelations" (Doctrine and Covenants Introduction).

Lastly, and almost more importantly as it seems to be the largest false assumption is that Joseph Smith can be a prophet and the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants are true but the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is apostate. This cannot be, for if the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints isn't true or is apostate, or it doesn't hold all the keys necessary for salvation, then the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants are also false because without the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints all the prophecies will have been proven false. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has dotted the earth with temples, no other organization has done this. No other organization, no other church has fulfilled and thus proved the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants to be of God. And finally, if the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is not true, it is apostate, it no longer has the keys, then by virtue of that Joseph Smith was no prophet of God, for Joseph Smith taught that the truth and the keys of salvation would remain in the Church unmolested and unbroken until Christ takes the keys himself in Adam-ondi-ahman. Joseph Smith himself prophesied of temples dotting the

earth, Joseph Smith himself prophesied of seas of priesthood holders, Joseph Smith himself prophesied time and time again, and the only way for them to be true prophecies is through Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. If the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints does not hold all the keys necessary for salvation, if the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints isn't the Lord's kingdom there is no situation in which the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants or Joseph Smith are true. They all rise and fall collectively. To try to separate them is to make one the fool. And the only type of person to attempt such a feat would be a wolf in sheep's clothing.

I add my witness, for what it is worth, that I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and that the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and that it too is the word of God. And because of that I know that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints alone is the kingdom of God established once again on the earth preparatory to the second coming of the Savior and that in it is housed all of the keys necessary for salvation. Trusting in this is to trust in the arm of the Lord. Trusting in anything else, including your own ignorant, self-aggrandizing image of personal revelation, is to trust in the arm of flesh. Period. Joseph Smith will come back and get the clay pot and put it back in the fire, and what is the clay pot? It is not openly excommunicated members of the Church, it is not another church, the clay pot is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and its faithful members. Who do you think He is coming back for? If you are sitting outside the church, looking into the church wagging your finger and saying, "Joseph Smith is going to clean you up!" what do you think, that he is coming for you? God forbid! You have admitted it yourself, he is going to clean out the church- you on the outside who are not active members of the church and thus are not the clay pot and thus aren't even worth his time! Harsh? Possibly. But true? Absolutely. You stick with the keys of God and God will justify you. If you however "lean unto thine own understanding" you are trusting in the arm of flesh and the Lord will say unto you, "I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity."

A second misconception that people have with this is that it means that you shouldn't do anything because to do something is to rely on the arm of flesh, on your industriousness (eg. A temple recommend, food storage, personal defense etc) This is also an incorrect application of this scripture, for we know "we are saved by grace after ALL we can do".

"For the disciples to suppose that they can come to this land without ought to eat, or to drink, or to wear, or anything to purchase these necessaries with, is a vain thought. For them to suppose that the Lord will open the windows of heaven, and rain down angel's food for them by the way, when their whole journey lies through a fertile country, stored with the blessings of life from His own hand for them to subsist upon, is also vain. For them to suppose that their clothes and shoes will not wear out upon the journey, when the whole of it lies through a country where there are thousands of sheep from which wool in abundance can be procured to make them garments, and cattle upon a thousand hills, to afford leather for shoes, is just as vain. ..." (Old Testament Student Manual) For a more complete breakdown of this see my paper, *The Prepared Need Not Fear, Temporal Salvation, The Parable of the 10 Virgins* etc. You can also see the talk by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, *Stand Independent Above All Other Creatures* or the paper "Tent Cities in

the Last Days?" by Roger K. Young. I've had some people comment, worried that I would suggest to read this paper. There is nothing in this paper that is doctrinally unsound or that points you in any direction other than back to the keys of God. Some have accused him of being excommunicated. Firstly, I have found (and no one has provided proof to counter) that this individual was not excommunicated. Secondly, being excommunicated is not the same thing as being "openly excommunicated" or in other words "coming out in open opposition to the Church." There are members who are not excommunicated but who in practice and in spirit come out in open rebellion against the Church. These are your wolves in sheep's clothing. Excommunication is used as a process of repentance- there are excommunicated members who still go to church weekly and are working themselves back into full fellowship and full blessings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. To lump both groups together and then besmirch them equally is to make it more difficult for members who might need to go through the excommunication process to fully repent. "I've made a mistake and if I repent of it all these members will lump me together with all these crazies who I'm not associated with." So we should be very careful when combining people who are in open rebellion against God and His Church and all excommunicated members. With that said, I have found no proof that this individual has been excommunicated- members should take doubly care not to accuse members of being excommunicated and ruining their good name when they have not been excommunicated as that is grounds for excommunication. I have been informed that this man started AVOW and then left, and that this group AVOW went on to be very sketchy. If I build a car and then sell it and the next person to own the car runs over a bunch of pedestrians, am I responsible? God forbid! Everyone who is familiar with my work knows how seriously I take priestcraft. If this man was still running this AVOW, taking monthly subscriptions, I would find it repulsive. As far as I can tell this man left years ago and yet he is still being besmirched in the Church while members like John Bytheway continue to sell their priestcraft and no one seems to give one dark duck turd about it. Why members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints? Why have we decided that what this guy did is unforgiveable but members like John Bytheway should be put on a pedestal as ideal Saints? Members need to check the beam that is so large sticking out of their own eye that it is making them walk cross legged. I don't even know this guy but I feel like I have to defend him until somebody gives me real proof that this guy is trying to take people out of the church and is currently practicing priestcraft.

So what does it really mean to trust the arm of flesh vs the arm of the Lord? If the Lord says (and remember, "by the voice of myself or the voice of my servants [keys] it is the same") to get a food storage, to get out of debt, to learn to garden etc etc and you do that, you are trusting in the Lord, you are not putting your trust in flesh. If however you decide to have all of your assets in money, currency, and/or to traffic in debt and have no food storage on hand, etc etc you are relying entirely on the arm of flesh, you are relying on the farmer to grow the food for you, on the trucker to drive the food to the store, on the store to provide the food for you and the currency system to provide the value for you in your transfer/exchange. What happens when your currency no longer holds any value? What happens in a famine? What happens when the stores clear out of food? Oh I hear one say, "that's when the Lord will rain manna down from heaven!" to which I ask, why would the Lord justify you, you who have spent your entire life ignoring the Lord (keys) and instead trusting in man and the institutions of him? Just like the

group above where it is ironic and sad when they are accusing someone else of trusting in the arm of flesh but they themselves are the only ones in the equation who are putting their trust in the arm of flesh the same sad, ironic, situation plays out here. Those with no works, those with no food storage, those swimming in debt accusing the other side of trusting in the arm of flesh are in fact the ones that are trusting in the arm of flesh. The other side is trusting in the Lord and what He has told them to do. One side is trusting in the divine counsel from the Lord and the other side is trusting entirely on the institutions of man and that of a forgiving God saving them when those institutions fail. Imagine if you will, Christians in Jerusalem see the army begin to encompass Jerusalem and those Christians, seeing it, flee into the mountains. And other Christians rebuking those fleeing as “trusting in the arm of flesh” and saying that the Lord will send angels to pluck them out of Jerusalem and feed them manna by the way. Those Christians if they had stayed behind, waiting for divine deliverance and manna from heaven would have been sorely shocked when they began eating their babies. Who then trusted in the arm of flesh? I suppose such individuals won’t accept that they have been trusting in the arm of flesh until they are eating another man’s arm of flesh or as in the case with Noah are bobbing for apples during the flood. And speaking of Noah and the flood, this is the perfect time to end this paper with that of the words of Joshua which I will echo and make my own:

Joshua 24:14-15

14 ¶ Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord.

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

I share this with you in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.