

What We Are Learning and Will Never Forget (1.0)

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If you look at your life prayerfully, I believe you will see many ways in which the Lord has been guiding you through this time of hardship.

I thought about this sentence for awhile, trying to figure out why President Nelson would choose to put this as the synopsis for his talk- it didn't seem to fit and taken out of context it is not even a true sentence. There are many in the world who are not led by the Lord, they are led by Satan, and there are many who have chose to let go of the rod at this time and "curse God and die." Those who have been guided by the Lord at this time have been the elect, those who are letting God prevail in their lives. But then it hit me- maybe that's exactly why President Nelson put this as the synopsis- to let the elect know that this talk, the "you's" are directed entirely at them. This is not a talk for the world, this is a talk for *you*. Based off of the footnotes and what was gone over in this talk I am left to conclude that this is an accurate assessment.

With that being said, it would make sense that those who would get the most out of the talk would be those that President Nelson knew would be going through his footnotes, those who understood macro last day timelines, etc. President Nelson in this talk is talking to *you*.

My dear brethren, I have looked forward to this virtual meeting with you. The last time we held a priesthood session of general conference was in April 2019. Much has happened in the past two years!

A lot has happened in the last two years and continuing with the theme of the talk, President Nelson is talking to the specific group who understand the macro last day timeline and through the talk he will be confirming the macro last day timeline, he will be confirming what has happened in the last two years.

Some of you have lost loved ones. Others have lost jobs, livelihood, or health. Still others have lost a sense of peace or hope for the future. My heart goes out to each one of you who has suffered these or other losses. I pray constantly that the Lord will comfort you. As you continue to let God prevail in your life, I know that He is just as optimistic about your future as He has ever been.

Once again, we have confirmation that President Nelson is talking directly to those who are currently letting God prevail in their lives. This last sentence showcases two things:

1. How to use assumptive language properly
2. The prepared need not fear

President Nelson here took a page directly out of my *Teaching for Edification*, namely “as you ____ I know that ____”. Those who have taken the time to go over my *Teaching for Edification* paper or have listened to the role plays I have done with the missionaries, know this is a master teacher technique. The second thing is that when you are letting God prevail in your life the Savior is optimistic about your future and with the Savior optimistic about your future, what need have ye of fear? However, the opposite is true. If you are not letting God prevail in your life the Lord is not optimistic about your future. And that should and does give the unrighteous cause to fear.

Amid the *losses* we have experienced, there are also some things we have *found*. Some have found deeper faith in our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Many have found a fresh perspective on life—even an eternal perspective. You may have found stronger relationships with your loved ones and with the Lord. I hope you have found an increased ability to *hear Him* and receive personal revelation. Difficult trials often provide opportunities to grow that would not have come in any other way.

President Nelson here is describing all of the reasons for what we just went through discussed in Isaiah Chapter 28. This desolating sickness was designed to wake up the drunkards of Ephraim. If you haven’t already, I would recommend watching our April 25 2021 fireside where guests shared their “wake up” stories tied directly to this.

Think back on the past two years. How have you grown? What have you learned? You might initially wish you could go back to 2019 and stay there! But if you look at your life prayerfully, I believe you will see many ways in which the Lord has been guiding you through this time of hardship, helping you to become a more devoted, more converted man—a true man of God.

In conjunction with the last paragraph, President Nelson now directs this directly at the “men of God” who have woken up.

“...Take the boys here, the sons of our brethren and sisters, and you may cut them into inch pieces, and they will not forsake this cause, but they will defend it to the last. Some of them may be rough, and perhaps some of them do not pray much, but send them into the vineyard, and then you will see them shew forth the power that is in them. At present the Prophet Joseph's boys lay apparently in a state of slumber, everything seems to be perfectly calm with them, but by and by God will wake them up, and they will roar like the thunders of Mount Sinai.”

-Heber C. Kimball (Journal of Discourses 4:1)

If you are not familiar with this, I would recommend reading or watching my *Joseph's Boys* papers.

I know the Lord has great and marvelous plans for us—individually and collectively. With compassion and patience, He says:

“Ye are little children, and ye have not as yet understood how great blessings the Father hath ... prepared for you;

“And ye cannot bear all things now; nevertheless, be of good cheer, for I will lead you along.”¹

My dear brothers, I testify that He has been, and *is*, indeed leading us along, as we seek to hear Him. He wants us to grow and to learn, even through—perhaps *especially* through—adversity.

Adversity is a great teacher.

There is a lot to unpack here. President Nelson first identifies the great and marvelous work as yet future from us. He then quotes Doctrine and Covenants 78 and then testifies that the Lord is in the process of doing what those verses go over. And then says that the way the Lord is going to get us ready is through adversity.

So what is Doctrine and Covenants 78 talking about? It is primarily talking about the law of consecration, “For if ye are not equal in earthly things ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things;” (D&C 78:6). The law of consecration is part of Celestial law which is required to build up Zion, the New Jerusalem in Jackson County Missouri. That city or “tower” as it is referred to in the Parable of the Nobleman and the Olive Trees, would have enabled us to “stand independent above all creatures beneath the celestial world” (D&C 78:14). But we lost Zion the New Jerusalem because we failed to do this:

D&C 105:1-5

1 Verily I say unto you who have assembled yourselves together that you may learn my will concerning the redemption of mine afflicted people—

2 Behold, I say unto you, were it not for the transgressions of my people, speaking concerning the church and not individuals, they might have been redeemed even now.

3 But behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them;

4 And are not united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom;

5 And Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself.

And the Lord then lets us know that because we failed to do this on our own we would have to learn obedience the hard way:

D&C 105:6

6 And my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer.

D&C 101:16-20

16 Therefore, let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God.

17 Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered.

18 They that remain, and are pure in heart, shall return, and come to their inheritances, they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy, to build up the waste places of Zion—

19 And all these things that the prophets might be fulfilled.

20 And, behold, there is none other place appointed than that which I have appointed; neither shall there be any other place appointed than that which I have appointed, for the work of the gathering of my saints

Doctrine and Covenants 101:17–21. Zion and her stakes will be established

Despite the Saints’ expulsion from Jackson County, Missouri, the Lord reaffirmed that “Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered” (D&C 101:17). Although the stakes of Zion have spread over the face of the earth, “the center place,” Jackson County, continues to be designated by the Lord as the location for the city of New Jerusalem (see D&C 57:1–3; 101:17, 20–21).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “There is no occasion for uncertainty or anxiety about the building up of Zion—meaning the New Jerusalem—in the last days. The Lord once offered his people the chance to build that Zion from which the law shall go forth to all the world. They failed. Why? Because they were unprepared and unworthy, as is yet the case with those of us who now comprise the kingdom. When we as a people are prepared and worthy, the Lord will again command us and the work will go forward—on schedule, before the Second Coming, and at the direction of the President of the Church. Until then, none of us need take any personal steps toward gathering to Missouri or preparing for a landed-inheritance there. Let us, rather, learn the great concepts involved and make ourselves worthy for any work the Lord may lay upon us in our day and time. Some things must yet precede the building up of Jackson County” (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith [1985], 586).

2 Nephi 27:24-28: “A Marvelous Work and a Wonder”

The “marvelous work and a wonder” spoken of by the Lord in 2 Nephi 27:26 includes the Book of Mormon, the restoration of the priesthood and the Church, and the presence of latter-day prophets on the earth. **But it is even more than these things.** It is the restoration of *all* things, including the establishment of Zion on the earth again.

Can we not clearly see what President Nelson just told us in plain language? He has told us that the Lord is preparing us right now for this marvelous work and a wonder, even Zion, even New Jerusalem, and in it will be found the law of consecration.

What have *you* learned in the past two years that you always want to remember? Your answers will be unique to you, but may I suggest four lessons I hope we have all learned and will never forget.

President Nelson then goes into four lessons that he hopes we have learned. Based on what we just went over, what do you think the lessons he hoped we would learn have to deal with? Making us worthy and ready to redeem Zion and build New Jerusalem. With that in mind, those who wish to be Joseph's Boys should pay close attention to these four lessons.

Lesson 1: The Home Is the Center of Faith and Worship

Often when the Lord warns us about the perils of the last days, He counsels thus: "Stand ye in holy places, and be not moved."²

There are bombshells in this series of references that President Nelson has provided at this point. I will not be going over this series because I have already done so in a separate video/paper called *Where Are We?* which was over an hour long. But the one to pay close attention to is his reference to D&C 45- he could have only included verse 32 but specifically chose to start it at verses 31 and add verse 33

31 And there shall be men standing in that generation, that shall not pass until they shall see an overflowing scourge; *for a desolating sickness shall cover the land.*

32 But my disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved; but among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices and curse God and die.

33 And there shall be earthquakes also in divers places, and many desolations; yet men will harden their hearts against me, and they will take up the sword, one against another, and they will kill one another.

The prophet of God going out of his way to include verse 31 with reference to what is going on today is beyond coincidence. When asked about President Nelson's use of references, Elder _____ said _____. This is a confirmation that at the very least President Nelson believes COVID is the desolating sickness.

There were many people who were confused, possibly even disappointed, when President Nelson in the last conference said,

"As you study your scriptures during the next six months, I encourage you to make a list of all that the Lord has promised he will do for covenant Israel. I think you will be astounded! Ponder these promises. Talk about them with your family and friends. Then live and watch for these promises to be fulfilled in your own life." (Let God Prevail, October 2020)

And in this conference didn't "explicitly bring this up again." I believe he did. In the LDS Student Manual for Doctrine and Covenants 45 it says,

D&C 45:32. Stand in Holy Places

President Harold B Lee stated:

“As one studies the Lord’s commandments and attending promises upon compliance therewith, one gets some definite ideas as to how we might ‘stand in holy places,’ as the Lord commands- if we will be preserved with such protection as accords with his holy purposes, in order that we might be numbered among the ‘pure in heart’ who constitute Zion, as I have read from the Lord’s own words.” (In Conference Report, Oct. 1968, pp.61-62)

Israel is anybody who lets God prevail and thus prevails with God, one who builds upon the rock. We let God prevail in our lives when we do what the Lord tells us to do. These are the commandments of the Lord. When the Lord gives a commandment He also gives a promise, this is why commandments are also referred to as covenants with a promise, ie. when you do _____ I promise you _____. With this true definition and understanding the “promises made to the house of Israel” are synonymous with “promises made for those who keep the commandments” ie. promises made to those who let God prevail. This quote by President Lee states those that study commandments and their attached promises (ie. blessings) will have a good idea of places of safety (standing in holy places). President Nelson here goes over four things that he hopes we have learned and the first thing he mentions is places of safety, or holy places. Ergo, he did address his commitment from the previous conference.

These “holy places” certainly include the Lord’s temples and meetinghouses. But as our ability to gather in these places has been restricted in varying degrees, we have learned that one of the holiest of places on earth is the home—yes, even *your* home.

This not only gives us a functioning definition of holy places, but also gives us a functioning definition of those at this same time who are “cursing God and dying.” This is not referring to physical death, this is referring to spiritual death. There are those during this pandemic who woke up, purified their lives and made their homes as sacred as possible as they strived for Zion. These stood in holy places. There were others who gave in to itching ears and wandered online and filled their hearts and soul with poison. There were those who didn’t take this time to increase their family’s spiritual awakening, purity, sanctification etc. These individuals have been “cursing God and dying” (spiritually).

Brethren, you bear the priesthood of God. “The rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven.”³ You and your family have received priesthood ordinances. It is “in the ordinances [of the priesthood that] the power of godliness is manifest.”⁴

I had a discussion with a gentleman on Discord about this very thing. Without the sacrament we slowly lose the right to the guidance of the Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost being what purifies us, being what enables us to “hear Him” etc (I go over this process recently in President Eyring’s talk *Tested, Proved, Polished*). The sacrament prayer says, “that they may always have His spirit to be with them” and these two verses (from footnote #4) in conjunction teach the principle plainly.

D&C 84:20-21

20 Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.

21 And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh;

With that understanding President Nelson's next line becomes very important.

That power is available to you and your family *in your own home* as you keep the covenants you have made.⁵

Once again, let's go back to the sacrament prayer, this time attaching the first half of that sentence "and keep his commandment which he hath given them, *that they* may always have his spirit to be with them." That power is available to you regardless of whether or not you have a priesthood holder in the home- it is a right that you have if you don't have somebody who can provide the sacrament in your home, please ask the priesthood keys to send somebody to your home. The scriptures provided in footnote #5 further emphasize President Nelson's A) belief of where we are at on the macro last day timeline, B) what it means to stand in holy places and C) explains why our temples were shut down. (For a further understanding of this see *Understanding Isaiah: Chapter One*)

John 4:20–23

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

Alma 32:9–12, 16

9 Behold thy brother hath said, What shall we do?—for we are cast out of our synagogues, that we cannot worship our God.

10 Behold I say unto you, do ye suppose that ye cannot worship God save it be in your synagogues only?

11 And moreover, I would ask, do ye suppose that ye must not worship God only once in a week?

12 I say unto you, it is well that ye are cast out of your synagogues, that ye may be humble, and that ye may learn wisdom; for it is necessary that ye should learn wisdom; for it is because that ye are cast out, that ye are despised of your brethren because of your exceeding poverty, that ye are brought to a lowliness of heart; for ye are necessarily brought to be humble.

16 Therefore, blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble; or rather, in other words, blessed is he that believeth in the word of God, and is baptized without stubbornness of heart, yea, without being brought to know the word, or even compelled to know, before they will believe.

Just 185 years ago, this very day, April 3, 1836, Elijah restored the keys of the priesthood that allow our families to be sealed together forever. That is why it felt so good to administer the sacrament in your home. How do you think it affected your family members to see you—their father, grandfather, husband, son, or brother—administer this holy ordinance? What will you do to retain that sacred feeling in your family?

This paragraph confirms that in our study and breakdown we have been going down the line of understanding that President Nelson wanted us to go down as it confirms everything that we have just gone over. President Nelson asks us how we plan on keeping that in our family, which is (keeping that in our family) the basic building block of the New Jerusalem. To me this was a less clear but still a direct call for members to understand the redemption of Zion and the building of New Jerusalem.

You may feel that there is still more you need to do to make your home truly a sanctuary of faith. If so, please do it! If you are married, counsel with your wife as your equal partner in this crucial work. There are few pursuits more important than this. Between now and the time the Lord comes again, we all need our homes to be places of serenity and security.⁶

This obviously is referencing when the Lord comes again to the Saints because after the Lord is living in New Jerusalem this statement no longer makes sense for the Lord said in that day (the day in which He lives in New Jerusalem) that we shall grow up as calves in the stall. President Nelson is saying that between now and the Anointing we need our homes to be places of serenity and security. He then references:

Alma 50:4

4 And he caused towers to be erected that overlooked those works of pickets, and he caused places of security to be built upon those towers, that the stones and the arrows of the Lamanites could not hurt them.

And I would include:

“And it came to pass in the seventeenth year, in the latter end of the year, the proclamation of Lachoneus had gone forth throughout all the face of the land, and they had taken their horses, and their chariots, and their cattle, and all their flocks, and their herds, and their grain, and all their substance, and did march forth by thousands and by tens of thousands, until they had all

gone forth to the place which had been appointed that they should gather themselves together, to defend themselves against their enemies.... And they did fortify themselves against their enemies; and they did dwell in one land, and in one body, and they did fear the words which had been spoken by Lachoneus, insomuch that they did repent of all their sins; and they did put up their prayers unto the Lord their God, that he would deliver them in the time that their enemies should come down against them to battle... Therefore, there was no chance for the robbers to plunder and to obtain food, save it were to come up in open battle against the Nephites; and the Nephites being in one body, and having so great a number, and having reserved for themselves provisions, and horses and cattle, and flocks of every kind, that they might subsist for the space of seven years, in the which time they did hope to destroy the robbers from off the face of the land; and thus the eighteenth year did pass away. And it came to pass that in the nineteenth year Giddianhi found that it was expedient that he should go up to battle against the Nephites, for there was no way that they could subsist save it were to plunder and rob and murder... And it came to pass that Giddianhi, who had stood and fought with boldness, was pursued as he fled; and being weary because of his much fighting he was overtaken and slain. And thus was the end of Giddianhi the robber. And it came to pass that the armies of the Nephites did return again to their place of security. And it came to pass that this nineteenth year did pass away, and the robbers did not come again to battle; neither did they come again in the twentieth year.” (3 Nephi 3:22, 25; 3 Nephi 4:4-5, 14-15)

Further proof of the time period we are in.

Attitudes and actions that invite the Spirit will increase the holiness of your home. Equally certain is the fact that *holiness will vanish* if there is anything in your behavior or environment that offends the Holy Spirit, for then “the heavens withdraw themselves.”⁷

President Nelson here does confirm that righteous people will create righteous places, but that unrighteous people will turn righteous places unrighteous- just like the temple. So once again, personal sanctification and worthiness makes the place, the place does not make one personally worthy or sanctify you. President Nelson also started this off with the word “attitude” which most will skim over and others will attribute falsely to things like “having a positive attitude!”- this is not what he is talking about and it is crucial to understand because it is what we are to purge ourselves of to make us righteous, ie if we have not purged ourselves of this “this attitude”, it is what makes us unrighteous and thus offend the Spirit and turn the righteous place unrighteous. He is talking about attitudes that will change sins from sins of weakness to sins of rebellion. And then he references D&C 121:37 which is one giant warning against sins of rebellion.

Many missionaries when teaching James 1:5 would not read the passage as it stands in the KJV to investigators because most people don't know what “liberally”, “upbraideth” etc mean and so they will instead say “if any of you have a question, pray and ask God, He will give you the answer freely and will not get mad at you for asking.”

With that in mind I hear members read D&C 121:37 all the time but they don't know what it means or worse, they have a false understanding of what it actually means. It is a confusing set

of scriptures that deserves to be broken down so that people can better understand it. So let's break down this verse in a way that will hopefully make more sense to us.

“The powers of heaven may be given to us (priesthood, the Holy Ghost etc) it is true but when we lie about our sins and our weaknesses, when we justify/make excuses for our disobedience or divergence from the revealed will of God ie. the commandments (be they the words of ancient or modern prophets), when we justify/make excuses for our extravagant living and our priority of worldly pursuits over the kingdom of God, when we force people to do things against their will, yea, when we do any of the above in any degree of unrighteousness, behold the heavens withdraw; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man.”

Everyone makes mistakes. When you make a tiny mistake the Holy Ghost isn't immediately grieved and flees from you. If this was the case it would be an absolutely utterly worthless gift. The moments that we would need it the most it would already be long gone. Justifying your sins or rationalizing them etc is to raise the sin to the level of a sin of rebellion. And it is described here that any degree of this type of sin will immediately grieve the Spirit. You are not simply failing and succumbing to the weaknesses of flesh and mortality, you are pitting your will against that of the Father's, your desires against His, while looking up to heaven in your infantile state proclaiming, “I know better than you.” These sins committed in *any degree*, meaning it can be as simple as drinking green tea, the Spirit is immediately grieved and leaves you (and why? Because you are unteachable, you are attempting to teach the Holy Ghost with your justification and are no longer willing to be taught by the Holy Ghost. You have hardened your heart, and we learn of such in D&C 45 that they will eventually curse God and die.). A sign to judge whether or not people are suffering from sins of weakness vs. sins of rebellion is given in verses 41-42, a list of characteristics is provided for those not suffering with sins of rebellion and then the key is given to judge- “which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy and without guile.” Finding a man or woman who is honest and without guile is an indicator that the individual does not suffer from sins of rebellion. These individuals will still make mistakes, will still fail but they will confess and talk openly about their mistakes and do not seek to rationalize or justify them. This ties directly into having one's calling and election made sure, becoming a son and daughter to Christ. I would highly recommend watching the fireside with Marlene and Lindey on this subject, as well as my paper on having your calling and election made sure. When somebody has their calling and election made sure in this life it is made clear that they will still err, meaning perfection is not a requirement, the ridding of ourselves of all sins of rebellion however is the requirement. Hence the apex of this entire doctrine taught here, “behold there are many called but few are chosen, and why are they not chosen?” It is not because perfection is required to be chosen, it is because rebellion has to be eliminated. And their love for the things of the world, and the honors of men prevent them from learning this lesson and ridding themselves of this problem. To exercise the powers of heaven is not to exercise perfection, it is to exercise a complete lack of rebellion, a complete lack of dishonesty, a complete lack of guile and hypocrisy. It is why when John the Revelator saw those that had their calling and election made sure he said of such “in their mouth was found no guile.” (Revelation 14:5)

For example, we may look upon a man who comes out among his peers and says that the Holy Spirit of the Lord commanded him that he should no more impart speeches unto the crowd and

then witness the crowd get whipped into a hysteria, crying forth, “No! No! Please speak more unto us and deny that which the Holy Ghost gave you as utterance!” And then if we witness that man come back out to his peers and say “Oh you have convinced me, I shall speak on!”- you can know with assuredly that this man is a hypocrite, that man has no principles, is full of guile and thus is suffering from sins of rebellion. These are the sins among all sins that are the most important for us to rid ourselves of in order to make ourselves chosen. For many are called but few are chosen, and why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set too much upon the things of this world and they aspire to the honors of men and because of that they refuse to learn.

Have you ever wondered why the Lord wants us to make our homes the center of gospel learning and gospel living? It is not just to prepare us for, and help us through, a pandemic. Present restrictions on gathering will eventually end. However, your commitment to make your home your *primary* sanctuary of faith should *never* end. As faith and holiness decrease in this fallen world, your need for holy places will increase. I urge you to continue to make your home a truly holy place “and *be not moved*”⁸ from that essential goal.

Families are the essential building block for not only Zion but of the celestial kingdom, for “as such is the Kingdom of God.” I hope that many will search out the answers to these questions posed for a proper study on the subject will lead you to an understanding on, then a testimony of and finally a desire for the redemption of Zion and building of the New Jerusalem in Jackson County.

Lesson 2: We Need Each Other

God wants us to work together and help each other. That is why He sends us to earth in families and organizes us into wards and stakes. That is why He asks us to serve and minister to each other. That is why He asks us to live *in* the world but not be *of* the world.⁹ We can accomplish so much more together than we can alone.¹⁰ God’s plan of happiness would be frustrated if His children remained isolated one from another.

I might be reading too much into this, but President Nelson here used the word “remained” implying that potentially President Nelson views the Church in its current state as being scattered and the elect “isolated one from another.” President Nelson in his “Hear Him” talk said,

“We live in the day that “our forefathers have awaited with anxious expectation.”¹ We have front-row seats to witness live what the prophet Nephi saw only in vision, that “the power of the Lamb of God” would descend “upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.” You, my brothers and sisters, are among those men, women, and children whom Nephi saw. Think of that!” (April 2020 General Conference)

And now in this talk President Nelson is saying that we cannot remain isolated and scattered. So we have a group of Saints that are scattered across the Earth and Nephi sees them in that scattered condition but then he sees that the power of God descends upon them while in their scattered state and President Nelson said, “this is you brothers and sisters today” and now is saying that we need each other and we cannot remain isolated one from another. So, how does

the Lord protect His people and gather them together in one? This was the same question that Enoch had when he was shown the same thing. And the Lord answered Enoch, “great tribulation 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.” (Moses 7:61-62)

I would recommend reading or watching my papers Joseph Smith to Return and Joseph’s Boys.

The recent pandemic has been unique in that it has affected everyone in the world at essentially the same time. While some have suffered more than others, we have all been challenged in some way. Because of this, our common trial has the potential to help unite God’s children as never before. So, I ask, has this shared trial drawn you closer to your neighbors—to your brothers and sisters across the street and around the world?

In this regard, the two great commandments can guide us: first, to love God and, second, to love our neighbor.¹¹ We show our love by serving.

If you know of anyone who is alone, reach out—even if you feel alone too! You do not need to have a reason or a message or business to transact. Just say hello and show your love. Technology can help you. Pandemic or not, each precious child of God needs to know that he or she is not alone!

The description provided of the destruction dealt by the Assyrian as well as the warning to the Saints provided by Isaiah provides a concert of clarity surrounding the widows, the fatherless, the poor and the downtrodden. They are always among us but they have suffered greatly at this time period. A generous fast offering from those with means and a caring and thoughtful attention to detail should be taken for this group right now more than ever.

Lesson 3: Your Priesthood Quorum Is Meant for More Than Just a Meeting

During the pandemic, Sunday quorum meetings were canceled for a time. Some quorums are now able to meet virtually. Nevertheless, the work that the Lord has given to priesthood quorums was never meant to be confined to a meeting. Meetings are only a small part of what a quorum is meant for and what it can do.

My brethren of the Aaronic Priesthood and elders quorums, expand your vision of why we have quorums. How does the Lord wish you would use your quorum to accomplish His work—now? Seek revelation from the Lord. Humble yourself! Ask! Listen! If you have been called to lead, counsel as a presidency and with quorum members. Whatever your priesthood office or calling, let God prevail in your commitment as a member of your quorum and in your service.

Experience with joy the righteousness you will bring to pass as you are “anxiously engaged in a good cause.”¹² Quorums are in a unique position to accelerate the gathering of Israel on both sides of the veil.

There is something more that our priesthood quorums are meant for and there is something specific that they can and will do. And you will find that in my paper Joseph’s Boys. I too with the prophet hope that as many of the priesthood as possible during this time period woke up and learned that their priesthood quorum was meant for so much more than just meeting each week.

Lesson 4: We Hear Jesus Christ Better When We Are Still

We live in a time prophesied long ago, when “all things shall be in commotion; and surely, men’s hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all people.”¹³

Let’s take a moment here to thank God for President Nelson clearly identifying that we are still pre-7th seal. The reference that he provides is D&C 88:91

D&C 88:91-95

91 And all things shall be in commotion; and surely, men’s hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all people.

92 And angels shall fly through the midst of heaven, crying with a loud voice, sounding the trump of God, saying: Prepare ye, prepare ye, O inhabitants of the earth; for the judgment of our God is come. Behold, and lo, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

93 And immediately there shall appear a great sign in heaven, and all people shall see it together.

94 And another angel shall sound his trump, saying: That great church, the mother of abominations, that made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, that persecuteth the saints of God, that shed their blood—she who sitteth upon many waters, and upon the islands of the sea—behold, she is the tares of the earth; she is bound in bundles; her bands are made strong, no man can loose them; therefore, she is ready to be burned. And he shall sound his trump both long and loud, and all nations shall hear it.

95 And there shall be silence in heaven for the space of half an hour; and immediately after shall the curtain of heaven be unfolded, as a scroll is unfolded after it is rolled up, and the face of the Lord shall be unveiled;

Revelation 8:1

1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

President Nelson says that the time period we are in is D&C 88:91.

That was true before the pandemic, and it will be true after.

I almost feel like President Nelson smirked here saying, “obviously we weren’t in the 7th seal before the pandemic and we won’t be in the 7th seal after the pandemic.” There are things that need to happen before we enter that time period and President Nelson goes over next some of those very things.

Commotion in the world will continue to increase. In contrast, the voice of the Lord is not “a voice of a great tumultuous noise, but ... it [is] a still voice of perfect mildness, [like] a whisper, and it [pierces] even to the very soul.”¹⁴ In order to hear this still voice, you too must be still!¹⁵

The reference that President Nelson provides here is a slam dunk against 7th sealers as the redemption of Zion and building of New Jerusalem are 6th seal events.

D&C 101:16

16 Therefore, let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God.

17 Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered.

President Nelson earlier in the talk said that adversity is getting us ready for the redemption and building of New Jerusalem and now here he is saying to be still and to be patient, or as Elder Bruce R McConkie put it, there should be no anxiety over it.

The reason why we can be calm and we can be still at this time period is because we can know that the tribulation is preparing us the redemption of Zion and building of New Jerusalem , and we can have faith, meaning we should not be anxious about, the redemption and building of New Jerusalem for the Lord God hath spoken it and every word of the Lord shall be fulfilled.

President Nelson’s reference for Psalm 46 is yet another reference for “the Lord dwells in His city”, ie. the redemption of Zion and building up of New Jerusalem, and in that shall be our peace and security. The footnote for Psalm 46:7 takes you to Isaiah 8:8 which refers to the Assyrian’s influence getting “even to the neck” (see my Understanding Isaiah series) which should further confirm that this is in fact all talking about the same series of events and the same city etc. I’m not going to do it in this paper for sake of time but I would highly recommend giving Psalm 46 a read over after digesting all of these thoughts as it is a good summary. Another Psalm that I personally think is even better at doing the same thing is Psalm 37. If you can’t recognize the themes in those two chapters being represented in the conferences in the last two years, you are dead asleep.

President Nelson then wraps up his talk by giving us some commitments and bearing his testimony, and always I will end with the words of the speaker and make them my own.

For a time, the pandemic has canceled activities that would normally fill our lives. Soon we may be able to choose to fill that time again with the noise and commotion of the world. Or we can

use our time to hear the voice of the Lord whispering His guidance, comfort, and peace. Quiet time is sacred time—time that will facilitate personal revelation and instill peace.

Discipline yourself to have time alone and with your loved ones. Open your heart to God in prayer. Take time to immerse yourself in the scriptures and worship in the temple.

My dear brethren, there are many things the Lord wants us to learn from our experiences during this pandemic. I have listed only four. I invite you to make your own list, consider it carefully, and share it with those you love.

The future is bright for God's covenant-keeping people.¹⁶ The Lord will increasingly call upon His servants who worthily hold the priesthood to bless, comfort, and strengthen mankind and to help prepare the world and its people for His Second Coming. It behooves each of us to measure up to the sacred ordination we have received. We can do this! I so testify, with my expression of love for each of you, my beloved brethren, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.