

# Drawing Closer to the Savior

By Elder Neil L. Andersen

*Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*

*Seeking to know and love the Savior, we separate ourselves from the world through covenants with God, being distinct, uncommon, and special, without isolating ourselves from others who believe differently.*

## Section I (Courtney)

My dear brothers and sisters, this evening I speak to the humble and devoted followers of Jesus Christ. As I see the goodness of your lives and your faith in our Savior here in this country and in the nations across the world, I love you all the more.

Toward the end of His ministry, Jesus’s disciples asked Him to tell them of “the sign of [His Second Coming], and of the end of the world.”<sup>1</sup>

Jesus told them of the conditions that would precede His return and concluded by declaring, “When ye shall see all these things, [you will] know that [the time] is near.”<sup>2</sup>

In the last general conference, I listened very closely to the words of President Henry B. Eyring: “Each of us,” he said, “wherever we are, knows that we live in increasingly perilous times. . . . Anyone with eyes to see the signs of the times and ears to hear the words of prophets knows that is true.”<sup>3</sup>

The Savior commended His valiant disciples: “Blessed are *your* eyes, for they see: and *your* ears, for they hear.”<sup>4</sup> May this blessing be ours as we listen closely to the words of the Lord through His prophets and others in this conference.

## Wheat and Tares

The Lord explained that in this final time prior to His return, the “wheat,” whom He describes as “the children of the kingdom,”<sup>5</sup> would grow side by side with the “tares,” or those who do not love God and do not keep His commandments. They would “both grow together,”<sup>6</sup> side by side. This will be our world until the Savior returns, with much that is good and much that is evil on every side.<sup>7</sup>

You may at times not feel like a strong, mature strand of wheat. Be patient with yourself! The Lord said that the wheat would include tender blades springing up.<sup>8</sup> We are all His Latter-day Saints, and although not yet all we want to be, we are serious in our desire to be His true disciples.

## Strengthen Our Faith in Jesus Christ

We realize that as evil increases in the world, our spiritual survival, and the spiritual survival of those we love, will require that we more fully nurture, fortify, and strengthen the roots of our faith in Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul counseled us to be rooted,<sup>9</sup> grounded, and settled<sup>10</sup> in our love for the Savior and our determination to follow Him. Today and the days ahead require more focused and concentrated effort, guarding against diversions and carelessness.<sup>11</sup>

But even with the increasing worldly influences around us, we need not fear. The Lord will never desert His covenant people. There is a compensatory power of spiritual gifts and divine direction for the righteous.<sup>12</sup> This added blessing of spiritual power, however, does not settle upon us just because we are part of this generation. It comes as we strengthen our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and keep His commandments, as we come to know Him and love Him. “This is life eternal,” Jesus prayed, “that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”<sup>13</sup>

As we know very well, having faith in Jesus Christ and being a true disciple is more than a one-time decision—more than a one-time event. It is a sacred, ongoing process that grows and expands through the seasons of our lives, continuing until we kneel at His feet.

### **Courtney’s Thoughts:**

#### **Doctrine and Covenants 45:16–75**

##### Doctrine and Covenants

**16** And I will show it plainly as I showed it unto my disciples as I stood before them in the flesh, and spake unto them, saying: As ye have asked of me concerning the signs of my coming, in the day when I shall come in my glory in the clouds of heaven, to fulfil the promises that I have made unto your fathers,

**17** For as ye have looked upon the long absence of your spirits from your bodies to be a bondage, I will show unto you how the day of redemption shall come, and also the restoration of the scattered Israel.

**18** And now ye behold this temple which is in Jerusalem, which ye call the house of God, and your enemies say that this house shall never fall.

**19** But, verily I say unto you, that desolation shall come upon this generation as a thief in the night, and this people shall be destroyed and scattered among all nations.

**20** And this temple which ye now see shall be thrown down that there shall not be left one stone upon another.

**21** And it shall come to pass, that this generation of Jews shall not pass away until every desolation which I have told you concerning them shall come to pass.

**22** Ye say that ye know that the end of the world cometh; ye say also that ye know that the heavens and the earth shall pass away;

**23** And in this ye say truly, for so it is; but these things which I have told you shall not pass away until all shall be fulfilled.

**24** And this I have told you concerning Jerusalem; and when that day shall come, shall a remnant be scattered among all nations;

**25** But they shall be gathered again; but they shall remain until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

**26** And in that day shall be heard of wars and rumors of wars, and the whole earth shall be in commotion, and men's hearts shall fail them, and they shall say that Christ delayeth his coming until the end of the earth.

**27** And the love of men shall wax cold, and iniquity shall abound.

**28** And when the times of the Gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fulness of my gospel;

**29** But they receive it not; for they perceive not the light, and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men.

**30** And in that generation shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

**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.

**34** And now, when I the Lord had spoken these words unto my disciples, they were troubled.

**35** And I said unto them: Be not troubled, for, when all these things shall come to pass, ye may know that the promises which have been made unto you shall be fulfilled.

**36** And when the light shall begin to break forth, it shall be with them like unto a parable which I will show you—

**37** Ye look and behold the fig trees, and ye see them with your eyes, and ye say when they begin to shoot forth, and their leaves are yet tender, that summer is now nigh at hand;

**38** Even so it shall be in that day when they shall see all these things, then shall they know that the hour is nigh.

**39** And it shall come to pass that he that feareth me shall be looking forth for the great day of the Lord to come, even for the signs of the coming of the Son of Man.

**40** And they shall see signs and wonders, for they shall be shown forth in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath.

**41** And they shall behold blood, and fire, and vapors of smoke.

**42** And before the day of the Lord shall come, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon be turned into blood, and the stars fall from heaven.

**43** And the remnant shall be gathered unto this place;

**44** And then they shall look for me, and, behold, I will come; and they shall see me in the clouds of heaven, clothed with power and great glory; with all the holy angels; and he that watches not for me shall be cut off.

**45** But before the arm of the Lord shall fall, an angel shall sound his trump, and the saints that have slept shall come forth to meet me in the cloud.

**46** Wherefore, if ye have slept in peace blessed are you; for as you now behold me and know that I am, even so shall ye come unto me and your souls shall live, and your redemption shall be perfected; and the saints shall come forth from the four quarters of the earth.

**47** Then shall the arm of the Lord fall upon the nations.

**48** And then shall the Lord set his foot upon this mount, and it shall cleave in twain, and the earth shall tremble, and reel to and fro, and the heavens also shall shake.

**49** And the Lord shall utter his voice, and all the ends of the earth shall hear it; and the nations of the earth shall mourn, and they that have laughed shall see their folly.

**50** And calamity shall cover the mocker, and the scorner shall be consumed; and they that have watched for iniquity shall be hewn down and cast into the fire.

**51** And then shall the Jews look upon me and say: What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet?

**52** Then shall they know that I am the Lord; for I will say unto them: These wounds are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God.

**53** And then shall they weep because of their iniquities; then shall they lament because they persecuted their king.

**54** And then shall the heathen nations be redeemed, and they that knew no law shall have part in the first resurrection; and it shall be tolerable for them.

**55** And Satan shall be bound, that he shall have no place in the hearts of the children of men.

**56** And at that day, when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins.

**57** For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day.

**58** And the earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance; and they shall multiply and wax strong, and their children shall grow up without sin unto salvation.

**59** For the Lord shall be in their midst, and his glory shall be upon them, and he will be their king and their lawgiver.

**60** And now, behold, I say unto you, it shall not be given unto you to know any further concerning this chapter, until the New Testament be translated, and in it all these things shall be made known;

**61** Wherefore I give unto you that ye may now translate it, that ye may be prepared for the things to come.

**62** For verily I say unto you, that great things await you;

**63** Ye hear of wars in foreign lands; but, behold, I say unto you, they are nigh, even at your doors, and not many years hence ye shall hear of wars in your own lands.

**64** Wherefore I, the Lord, have said, gather ye out from the eastern lands, assemble ye yourselves together ye elders of my church; go ye forth into the western countries, call upon the inhabitants to repent, and inasmuch as they do repent, build up churches unto me.

**65** And with one heart and with one mind, gather up your riches that ye may purchase an inheritance which shall hereafter be appointed unto you.

**66** And it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God;

67 And the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there, insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it, and it shall be called Zion.

68 And it shall come to pass among the wicked, that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor must needs flee unto Zion for safety.

69 And there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven; and it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another.

70 And it shall be said among the wicked: Let us not go up to battle against Zion, for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible; wherefore we cannot stand.

71 And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations, and shall come to Zion, singing with songs of everlasting joy.

72 And now I say unto you, keep these things from going abroad unto the world until it is expedient in me, that ye may accomplish this work in the eyes of the people, and in the eyes of your enemies, that they may not know your works until ye have accomplished the thing which I have commanded you;

73 That when they shall know it, that they may consider these things.

74 For when the Lord shall appear he shall be terrible unto them, that fear may seize upon them, and they shall stand afar off and tremble.

75 And all nations shall be afraid because of the terror of the Lord, and the power of his might. Even so. Amen.

### **Micah's Thoughts:**

The first reference that Elder Andersen makes here is the Savior teaching the Olivet Discourse. Matthew 24 is Joseph Smith-Matthew, also covered in Doctrine and Covenants 45. Elder Andersen quotes "When ye shall see all these things, [you will] know that [the time] is near". It's important to know what those things are because Elder Andersen's next thought is those who are diligently seeking knowledge, those with ears to hear and eyes to see will have heard at General Conference (specifically he mentions President Eyring) speaking of these very signs and events.

### **Doctrine and Covenants 45**

16 And I will show it plainly as I showed it unto my disciples as I stood before them in the flesh, and spake unto them

So we can see here that what the Lord is sharing here in Doctrine and Covenants 45 is exactly the same as what he shared with the disciples on Mt Olivet. We won't go into here for the sake of time, but the sign the Lord was giving here was primarily that of "the times of the Gentiles

being fulfilled”, I.e. “the parable of the fig leaf”... And the Savior then says “when he shall see these things, know then that the end, or coming of the Savior is close... Joseph Smith Jr. Said something very similar:

“We ought to have the building up of Zion as our greatest object. When wars come, we shall have to flee to Zion. The cry is to make haste. The last revelation says, Ye shall not have time to have gone over the earth, until these things come. . . . “. . . The time is soon coming when no man will have any peace but in Zion and her stakes. “I saw men hunting the lives of their own sons, and brother murdering brother, women killing their own daughters, and daughters seeking the lives of their mothers. I saw armies arrayed against armies. I saw blood, desolation, fires. The Son of Man has said that the mother shall be against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother. These things are at our doors. They will follow the Saints of God from city to city. Satan will rage, and the spirit of the devil is now enraged. I know not how soon these things will take place; but with a view of them, shall I cry peace? No! I will lift up my voice and testify of them. How long you will have good crops, and the famine be kept off, I do not know; **when the fig tree leaves, know then that summer is nigh at hand.**” (History of the Church, 3:390–91.)

So Elder Anderson says here that if we have been paying attention, things have been said at conference that tie directly into this- specifically President Eyring... Can we find that? Yes...

### **President Eyring**

*“You sisters, your daughters, your granddaughters, and the women you have nurtured will be at the heart of creating that society of people who will join in glorious association with the Savior. You will be an essential force in the gathering of Israel and in the creation of a Zion people who will dwell in peace in the New Jerusalem.”* (Sisters in Zion, October 2020)

President Nelson in his “What we are learning and will never forget” said:

## 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.”<sup>2</sup> 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.

And footnote 2 was:

2.

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**Doctrine and Covenants 45:31-33**

Doctrine and Covenants

**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.

President Nelson in that reference also includes **Doctrine and Covenants 101**



13 And they that have been scattered shall be <sup>a</sup>gathered.

14 And all they who have <sup>a</sup>mourned shall be comforted.

15 And all they who have given their <sup>a</sup>lives for my name shall be crowned.

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

17 <sup>a</sup>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 <sup>a</sup>inheritances, they and their children, with <sup>b</sup>songs of everlasting joy, to <sup>c</sup>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 <sup>a</sup>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—

21 Until the day cometh when there is found no more room for them; and then I have other places which I will appoint unto them, and they shall be called <sup>a</sup>stakes, for the curtains or the strength of Zion.

22 Behold, it is my will, that all they who call on my name, and worship me according to mine everlasting gospel, should <sup>a</sup>gather together, and <sup>b</sup>stand in holy places;

Those with eyes to see and ears to hear have most certainly heard the call these last conferences tied directly to these very points...

President Benson had some awesome things to say about the wheat and tare situation:

*“Sometimes from behind the pulpit, in our classrooms, in our Council meetings and in our church publications we hear, read or witness things that do not square with the truth... Now do not let this serve as an excuse for your own wrong-doing. The Lord is letting the wheat and the tares mature before he fully purges the Church. He is also testing you to see if you will be misled. The devil is trying to deceive the very elect.”* (Our Immediate Responsibility. BYU Devotional, October 25, 1966)

So you could say that there are X-Bishops, Mission Presidents, etc. who are tares, those that are teaching false doctrines as the Lord gives the person enough rope to see if they will go down a ledge (I.e. develop further along as a tare) or if they will repent and pull themselves up (I.e. become wheat). President Benson also read the lyrics of a hymn that are just so spot on:

*Though in the outward Church below*

*Both wheat and tares together grow,  
Ere long will Jesus weed the crop  
And pluck the tares in anger up . . .  
We seem alike when here we meet;  
Strangers may think we are all wheat;  
But to the Lord's all-searching eyes,  
Each heart appears without disguise.  
The tares are spared for various ends,  
Some for the sake of praying friends,  
Others the Lord against their will,  
Employs, his counsels to fulfill.  
But though they grow so tall and strong,  
His plan will not require them long;  
In harvest, when he saves his own,  
The tares shall into hell be thrown.*

("Though in the Outward Church Below", Hymns, No. 102.)

Elder Anderson in the final paragraph in this section says “This added blessing of spiritual power, however, does not settle upon us just because we are part of this generation.” I love quote because one could read as much into this statement as they like or not like... Why say “this generation” right after talking about the “Fig Leaves”? Why say “this generation” right after talking about the Olivet Discourse? One might brush it off as coincidental, but I don’t... He understands “this generation” and all the promises and blessings this generation can obtain if they are but worthy... As President Nelson put it:

*“But, my dear brothers and sisters, so many wonderful things are ahead. In coming days, we will see the greatest manifestations of the Savior’s power that the world has ever seen. Between now and the time He returns “with power and great glory,”<sup>1</sup> He will bestow countless privileges, blessings, and miracles upon the faithful.”* (Overcome the World and Find Rest, October 2022)

## **Section II (Brandon)**

With the wheat growing amidst the tares in the world, how can we deepen and strengthen our commitment to the Savior in the days ahead?

Here are three thoughts:

## Immerse Ourselves in the Life of Jesus

First, we can immerse ourselves more completely into Jesus's life, His teachings, His majesty, His power, and His atoning sacrifice. The Savior said, "Look unto me in every thought."<sup>14</sup> The Apostle John reminds us, "We love him, because he first loved us."<sup>15</sup> As we better experience His love, we love Him even more and, very naturally, better follow His example of loving and caring for those around us. With every righteous movement toward Him, we see Him more clearly.<sup>16</sup> We adore Him, and we try in our small ways to emulate Him.<sup>17</sup>

## Make Covenants with the Lord

Next, as we better know and love the Savior, we desire even more to promise Him our allegiance and trust. We make covenants with Him. We begin with our promises at baptism, and we confirm these promises and others as we repent daily, ask for forgiveness, and eagerly anticipate receiving the sacrament each week. We pledge to "always remember him and keep his commandments."<sup>18</sup>

When we are ready, we embrace the ordinances and covenants of the temple. Feeling the influence of eternity in our sacred, quiet moments in the house of the Lord, we gladly make covenants with God and strengthen our resolve to keep them.

Making and keeping covenants allows the love of the Savior to sink more deeply into our heart. In this month's *Liahona*, President Russell M. Nelson said: "[Our] covenant[s] will lead us closer and closer to Him. ... God will not abandon His relationship with those who have forged such a bond with Him."<sup>19</sup> And as President Nelson said so beautifully this morning, "With the dedication of each new temple, additional godly power comes into the world to strengthen us and counteracts the intensifying efforts of the adversary."<sup>20</sup>

Can we see why the Lord would direct His prophet to bring the holy temples closer to us and allow us to be in His house more often?

As we enter the temple, we are freed for a time from the worldly influences crowding against us as we learn of our purpose in life and the eternal gifts offered us through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

## Safeguard the Gift of the Holy Ghost

Finally, my third thought: in this sacred quest, we treasure, protect, defend, and safeguard the gift of the Holy Ghost. Both President M. Russell Ballard earlier and Elder Kevin W. Pearson just moments ago spoke of President Nelson's prophetic warning that I will repeat again: "It will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost."<sup>21</sup> It is a gift beyond price. We do our very best to protect our daily experiences so the influence of the Holy Ghost remains with us. We are a light to the world, and when necessary, we willingly choose to be different from others. President Dallin H. Oaks recently asked young adults: "Do [you] 'dare to be different?' ... [Especially] important ... are the choices you are making in your personal life. ... Are you going forward against the world's opposition?"<sup>22</sup>

### [Brandon's Thoughts](#)

How well do you know your Saviour?

I am not talking about what he looks like, what his favourite brand of sandals are or what he likes in his sandwiches, I am asking you how well do you know the life of YOUR Saviour?

What is important to him?

What does he do with his time?

Who does he spend his time with?

What does he talk about?

How does he treat other people?

Your initial thought to these questions could be “Well, I know he is my Saviour and he saved me, so I am all good, I don’t need to know all the little details.”

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

John 13:15

Ok sweet, Christ has given himself as an example...What does that mean I need to do?

An example is defined as

*“A pattern, in morals, manners; a Copy, or model; that which is proposed or is proper to be imitated”*

And he said unto them, I am he of whom it is written by the prophets; follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

JST Matthew 4:18

“To follow Christ is to become more like Him. It is to learn from His character. The Savior invites us to learn His gospel by living His teachings. Ancient and modern prophets described it with three words: “Keep the commandments” —nothing more, nothing less.”  
**President Dieter F. Uchtdorf General Conference Oct 2005**

Many of us would be familiar with the follow words from our Prophet Joseph Smith.

Let us here observe, that three things are necessary, in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation.

First, The idea that he actually exists.

**Secondly, A correct idea of his character, perfections and attributes.**

Thirdly, An actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing, is according to his will.

So without the correct idea of the character of Christ, his perfections and his attributes, we will not be able to exercise faith. Sounds like a lot of effort, surely, I don’t have to study all those things?

“Lazy learners and lax disciples will always struggle to muster even a particle of faith. To do anything well requires effort. Becoming a true disciple of Jesus Christ is no exception.

Increasing your faith and trust in Him takes effort.”

*President Russel M. Nelson General Conference April 2021*

To draw closer to your Saviour you MUST learn of him. The more you learn of him the more you grow to Love him, want to be like him and want to be obedient to his council.

Elder Anderson reminds us that keeping our covenants is a very important reflection of our desire to draw closer to our Saviour.

What covenants have you made with your Saviour?

How well do you understand these covenants?

How well do you keep those covenants?

Now, can you answer these questions honestly without any self justification of your laziness? Don't worry, all of us have at least at some point justified our laziness to not follow instruction received from our Saviour or his servants, but that does not excuse us from striving to improve.

“Every member has made the covenant in the waters of baptism to be a witness for God. Every member has made a covenant to do works of kindness as the Savior would do. So any call to bear witness and to care for others is not a request for extra service; it is a blessing designed by a loving Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ. They have provided such calls as well as other settings, sometimes without a formal call, all for the same purpose. Each is a chance to prove what blessings flow from being a covenant people, and each is an opportunity for which you agreed to be accountable.”

*President Henry B. Eyring General Conference October 1996*

We make covenants with the Lord when we are Baptised, Receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost, partake of the Sacrament, receive the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood, take out our Temple Endowments and when we participate in the New and Everlasting covenant of marriage.

If we are worthy, these covenants come with immeasurable blessings.

“...I will...open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

Malachi 3:10

There are so many blessings that come from those who **KEEP** their covenants with God, Let's go over just a few.

**For Baptism we are promised:**

- We qualify for membership into Christ's Church
- To be raised up in the first resurrection
- To have his spirit poured out upon us

[Mosiah 18:8-10](#)

[Doctrine and Covenants 20:37](#)

### **The Gift of the Holy Ghost later.**

- We are confirmed as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- We receive the right or privilege to enjoy the continual companionship of the Holy Ghost. We can receive inspiration, divine manifestations, spiritual gifts, and direction from the Holy Ghost continually. We also receive blessings by receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost as the Holy Ghost bears witness of Jesus Christ and of divine truths, provides spiritual guidance and warnings, and enables us to discern right and wrong.

[2 Nephi 31:13, 17](#)

[3 Nephi 27:20](#)

[Moroni 10:4–5](#)

### **Partaking of the Sacrament:**

- Our sins are forgiven.
- We are promised to ALWAYS have his spirit to be with us

[Moroni 4-5](#)

[3 Nephi 18:28–29](#)

### **The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood.**

- Be “sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies”
- Receive the Father’s kingdom and “all that my Father hath shall be given unto him”
- Receive of the Father’s fulness and glory and become “gods, even the sons of God”

[Doctrine and Covenants 84:26-44](#)

[Doctrine and Covenants 76:58](#)

### **Our Temple endowments:**

- We may receive a “Fullness of the Holy Ghost.”
- The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the endowment was designed to give us “a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God”), “to prepare the disciples for their missions unto the world”, to prevent us from being “overcome by these evils”, and to enable us “to secure the fullness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the Firstborn”.

[Doctrine and Covenants 109:15](#)

[Teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith p237, 259, 274, 324](#)

### **The New and Everlasting covenant of Marriage:**

- Come to KNOW God the Father and Jesus Christ.
- Obtain exaltation in the highest degree of the celestial glory.
- Become gods with all power and “shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers”

[Doctrine and Covenants 132:48–50](#)

[Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4](#)

[Doctrine and Covenants 132:19](#)

We read the words of King Benjamin

**20** I say unto you, my brethren, that if you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole soul has power to possess, to that God who has created you, and has kept and preserved you, and has caused that ye should rejoice, and has granted that ye should live in peace one with another—

**21** I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another—I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants.

Mosiah 2:20-21

“Covenants and ordinances are the building blocks that enable us to build our lives upon the “rock of our Redeemer” and His Atonement. Precisely because faithfully honoring sacred covenants binds us securely to the Savior, He becomes the ultimate source of spiritual direction and strength in our lives.”

***Elder David A. Bednar Liahona February 2022***

The third point that Elder Anderson makes regarding how we can deepen and strengthen our commitment to the Savior, is to Safeguard the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

How does the Holy Ghost help those who are worthy of his presence?

- He reveals the truth to you.
- He helps teach you the gospel.
- He helps you remember things.
- He comforts you in times of sorrow.
- He protects you from evil.
- He inspires you as you teach the gospel in talks and lessons.
- He warns you in times of danger.
- He tells you all things you should do.

The Gift of the Holy Ghost is one of the greatest gifts ever given to Man.

“I would rather have my children and my children’s children enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost than any other companionship in this world because if they will heed the promptings of that Spirit, he will lead them into all truth and see them safely back into the presence of their Father in heaven”

*Elder LeGrande Richards, Conference Report April 1966*

“Let me offer a word of caution...I think if we are not careful..., we may begin to try to counterfeit the true influence of the Spirit of the Lord by unworthy and manipulative means. I get concerned when it appears that strong emotion or free-flowing tears are equated with the presence of the Spirit. Certainly, the Spirit of the Lord can bring strong emotional feelings, including tears, but that outward manifestation ought not to be confused with the presence of the Spirit itself.”

*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter, 184*

For nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the Spirit of God”

*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pg. 205*

13 Wherefore, I the Lord ask you this question—unto what were ye ordained?

14 To preach my gospel by the Spirit, even the Comforter which was sent forth to teach the truth.

15 And then received ye spirits which ye could not understand, and received them to be of God; and in this are ye justified?

16 Behold ye shall answer this question yourselves; nevertheless, I will be merciful unto you; he that is weak among you hereafter shall be made strong.

17 Verily I say unto you, he that is ordained of me and sent forth to preach the word of truth by the Comforter, in the Spirit of truth, doth he preach it by the Spirit of truth or some other way?

**18 And if it be by some other way it is not of God.**

19 And again, he that receiveth the word of truth, doth he receive it by the Spirit of truth or some other way?

**20 If it be some other way it is not of God.**

21 Therefore, why is it that ye cannot understand and know, that he that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth?

22 Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together.

Doctrine and Covenants 50:13–22

“The Holy Ghost will not dwell with that person who is unwilling to obey and keep the commandments of God. ... In such a soul the spirit of the Holy Ghost cannot enter.

“That great gift comes to us only through humility and faith and obedience. ... Did you ever stop to think what a great privilege it is for us to have the companionship of one of the



members of the Godhead? Have you thought of it that way? That is our privilege, if we keep the commandments the Lord has given us”

**President Joseph Fielding Smith**, (*“Fundamental Gospel Truths Balance Education For Students At BYU,” Church News, 4 Nov. 1961, 14*).

President Heber J. Grant told how the Holy Ghost brought knowledge and comfort to members of his family:

“About one hour before my wife died, I called my children into her room and told them that their mother was dying and for them to bid her good-bye. One of the little girls, about twelve years of age, said to me: ‘Papa, I do not want my mamma to die. I have been with you in the hospital ... for six months; ... [every time] mamma was in distress you had administered to her and she has been relieved of her pain and quietly gone to sleep. I want you to lay hands upon my mamma and heal her.’

“I told my little girl that we all had to die sometime, and that I felt assured in my heart that her mother’s time had arrived. She and the rest of the children left the room.

“I then knelt down by the bed of my wife (who by this time had lost consciousness) and I told the Lord I acknowledged His hand in life, in death, in joy, in sorrow, in prosperity, or adversity. I thanked Him for the knowledge I had that my wife belonged to me for all eternity. ... But I told the Lord that I lacked the strength to have my wife die and to have it affect the faith of my little children ... ; and I [asked] the Lord with all the strength that I possessed, that He would give to that little girl of mine a knowledge that it was His mind and His will that her mamma should die.

“Within an hour my wife passed away, and I called the children back into the room. My little boy about five and a half or six years of age was weeping bitterly, and the little girl twelve years of age took him in her arms and said: ‘Do not weep, do not cry, Heber; since we went out of this room the voice of the Lord from heaven has said to me, ‘In the death of your mamma the will of the Lord shall be done.’ ...

“I ... know that God hears and answers prayers! [I know] that in the hour of adversity the Latter-day Saints are comforted and blessed and consoled as no other people are!”

**(Gospel Standards, comp. G. Homer Durham [1941], 361).**

I end this section testifying of the truthfulness of the words of our living Prophet President Russel M. Nelson.

My dear brothers and sisters, with all the pleadings of my heart, I urge you to get on the covenant path and stay there. Experience the joy of repenting daily. Learn about God and how He works. Seek and expect miracles.

Contrary to the doubts of some, there really is such a thing as right and wrong. There really is absolute truth – Eternal Truth.

The adversary never sleeps. There will always be opposition to the truth.

I plead with you to make time for the Lord! Make your own spiritual foundation firm and able to stand the test of time by doing those things that allow the Holy Ghost to be with you always.

Never underestimate the profound truth that “the Spirit speaketh ... of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be.” “It will show unto you all things what ye should do.”

If we are to have any hope of sifting through the myriad of voices and the philosophies of men that attack truth, we must learn to receive revelation.

Our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, will perform some of His mightiest works between now and when He comes again. We will see miraculous indications that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, preside over this Church in majesty and glory. But in coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost.

My beloved brothers and sisters, I plead with you to increase your spiritual capacity to receive revelation.....Choose to do the spiritual work required to enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost and hear the voice of the Spirit more frequently and more clearly.

With Moroni, I exhort you....to “come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift,” beginning with the gift of the Holy Ghost, which gift can and will change your life.

We are followers of Jesus Christ. The most important truth the Holy Ghost will ever witness to you is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. He lives! He is our Advocate with the Father, our Exemplar, and our Redeemer. On this Easter Sunday, we commemorate His atoning sacrifice, His literal Resurrection, and His divinity.

In the Name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen

## **Micah's Thoughts:**

I just want to focus on this section on the “Safeguard the Gift of the Holy Ghost” and the “are we willing to choose to be different”? These tie directly into something I've seen taught incorrectly now for some time, mostly as a pontification geared more towards making the speaker sound intelligent, instead of an eternal truth grounded in sound doctrine shared for edification... So let me build this step at a time and clear it up:

1. How does one qualify, and then safeguard the Gift of the Holy Ghost?

*“We have the right to the guidance of the Holy Ghost, but we cannot have that guidance, if we wilfully refuse to consider the revelations that have been given to help us to understand and to guide us in the light and truth of the everlasting gospel. We cannot hope to have that guidance when we refuse to consider these great revelations which mean so much to us both temporally and spiritually. Now if we find ourselves in this condition of unbelief or unwillingness to seek for the light and the knowledge which the Lord has placed within our reach, then we are liable or in danger of being deceived by evil spirits, the doctrines of devils, and the teachings of men. And when these false influences are presented before us, we will not have the distinguishing understanding by which we can segregate them and know that they are not of the Lord. And so we may become prey unto the ungodly, to the vicious, to the cunning, to the craftiness of men.”*

*-President Joseph Fielding Smith (Doctrines of Salvation, p.43)*

2. “Dare to be different! We are to be the Light of the World! Let your Light so shine before men so that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven!”

This “contrast” between light and dark... between good and evil... between the Lord’s church and “all others”... etc. Etc. Is what allows people to judge clearly, without it, if the “salt has lost its savor, it is good for nothing”... the Prophet Joseph Smith when he visited President [Martin] Van Buren, president of the United States. The President asked the Prophet what difference there was between the Prophet’s church and the other churches of the world. The Prophet answered: “We have the correct mode of baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.” Then he said: “We considered that all other considerations were contained in the gift of the Holy Ghost” (see *History of the Church*, 4:42). Meaning that all other “differences” between the Lord’s church and “all the others”, is contained squarely within the Gift of the Holy Ghost...

3. “Proving Contraries”: these things that are different are “contraries”, and contraries that prove something are known as “proving contraries”, or in other words they are examples of opposing teachings, doctrines, principles, attributes, etc. Etc. Etc. That prove something about each thing separately and individually... Missionaries have to deal with these “proving contraries” all the time, as people come up to them and attempt to prove that there are differences between what The Bible teaches and what the missionaries are teaching, I.e. they try to show contraries, and the desire of “proving those contraries” is to “prove that the missionaries faith is in vain” or not correct... This is what a “proving contrary” is...

4. False teaching taking from a butchering of a Joseph Smith quote:

Letter: Joseph Smith to L. Daniel Rupp—Book on Religious Sects.

Nauvoo, Illinois, June 5th, 1844.

*Dear Sir.—He pasa Ek-klesia, &c., together with your note, has safely reached me, and I feel very thankful for so valuable a treasure. The design, the propriety, the wisdom of letting every sect tell its own story, and the elegant manner in which the work appears, have filled my breast with encomiums upon it, wishing you God speed.*

*Although all is not gold that shines, any more than every religious creed is sanctioned with the so eternally sure word of prophecy, satisfying all doubt with “Thus saith the Lord;” yet, “by proving contraries,” truth is made manifest,” and a wise man can search out “old paths, wherein righteous men held communion with Jehovah, and were exalted through obedience.*

*I shall be pleased to furnish further information at a proper time, and render you such further service as the work and vast extension of our Church may demand for the benefit of truth, virtue and holiness.*

*Your work will be suitably noticed in our papers for your benefit.*

*With great respect, I have the honor to be,*

*Your obedient servant,*

*Joseph Smith.*

END QUOTE



Context matters... Some have taken the quote “proving contraries” and have twisted it to mean something that Joseph Smith never taught... So what is Joseph Smith talking about in this letter? Here Joseph Smith is talking about "sects/churches/etc", and by "proving contraries" the "truth is made manifest" upon which sect, i.e. "church" is true...

Joseph Smith is not saying "Christ is both true and false" or that "mercy and justice" are contraries from each other, or that "within Christ are contraries proven", etc. He is saying if you contrast Jesus from other religious men in the world, the "contraries would prove" something about each person, i.e. "by those proving contraries we would learn the truth about Christ vs the others"...

Joseph Smith is teaching "your sect and the Lord's church are contraries from each other" and by proving the contraries, i.e. "focusing on what makes us different", people can and will see which church is true...

Anyone quoting Joseph Smith differently there is butchering his quote and twisting it to mean something that it doesn't mean... Another similar quote that Joseph Smith made:

#### **Parable of the Church in Last Days (TPJS 98-99)**

*The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a mustard seed. Behold, then is not this the Kingdom of Heaven that is raising its head in the last days in the majesty of its God, I even the Church of the Latter-day Saints,<sup>2</sup> like an impenetrable, immovable rock in the midst of the mighty deep,<sup>3</sup> exposed to the storms and tempests of Satan, but has, thus far, remained steadfast, and is still braving the mountain waves of opposition, which are driven by the tempestuous winds of sinking crafts, which have [dashed] and are still dashing with tremendous foam across its triumphant brow; urged onward with redoubled fury by the enemy of righteousness,<sup>4</sup> with his pitchfork of lies, as you will see fairly represented in a cut contained in Mr. Howe's Mormonism Unveiled? And we hope that this adversary of truth will continue to stir up the sink of iniquity,  that the people may the more readily discern between the righteous and the wicked.<sup>5</sup> *

5. Sent to minister, sent to savor, sent to be the Light: We are not sent into the world to "become one with the world", we are not sent into the world to "become like the world", etc. We are sent into the world to show a stark contrast between the righteous and the wicked, so that the world, through "proving contraries" could more readily discern between the righteous and the wicked... If salt has lost its savor, it is from that point on good for nothing according to the Lord... Not fit for an inheritance... This bridges perfectly into Babylon vs Zion and how the two can never mix, but that is too long, so let me simply read this quote from Brigham Young to finish my thoughts on this section:

*"And when the spirit of persecution, the spirit of hatred, of wrath, and malice ceases in the world against this people, it will be the time that this people have apostatized and joined hands with the wicked..."*

- **President Brigham Young** (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 112)

## **Section III (Josline)**

### **Choose to Be Different from the World**

In a recent social media post, I asked fellow disciples to share choices they had made that required them to be different from the world. I received hundreds of responses.<sup>23</sup> Here are just a few:

Amanda: I am a nurse working in the local jail. I try caring for inmates as Christ would.

Rachel: I am an opera singer, and it's often taken for granted that I will wear whatever costume I'm given, regardless of modesty. [Because I am endowed,] I told [the producers] that the

costume would need to be [modest]. They were unhappy ... but reluctantly made the alterations. I wouldn't trade the peace that comes from standing as a witness of Christ at all times.

Chriss: I'm an alcoholic (in recovery), temple-worthy, member of the Church. I'm not quiet about my experiences with addiction and gaining a testimony of the Atonement [of Jesus Christ].

Lauren: I was writing a skit with my classmates in high school. They wanted to have my quiet, reserved character have a sudden outburst of profanity. They kept pressuring me, but I refused and held my ground.

Adam: A lot of people do not believe me when I say I keep the law of chastity and choose to abstain from pornography. They don't understand the advantage of joy and peace of mind it gives me.

Ella: My father is a member of the LGBTQ community. I always try to keep other people's feelings in consideration while standing as a witness of Christ and being true to what I believe.

Andrade: I decided to continue to go to church when my family decided not to go anymore.

And finally, from Sherry: We were attending an event at the governor's mansion. They began handing out champagne for a "toast." I insisted on water, although the staff said it would be offensive. We toasted the governor, and I held my water glass high! The governor was not offended.

President Nelson said, "Yes, you are living in the world, but you have very different standards from the world to help you avoid the stain of the world."<sup>24</sup>

Anastasia, a young mother in Ukraine, was in the hospital having just given birth to a baby boy as the bombings began in Kyiv this past February. A nurse opened the hospital room door and said with an urgent voice, "Take your baby, wrap him in a blanket, and go into the hall—now!"

Later, Anastasia commented:

"I never imagined my first days of motherhood would be so difficult, ... but ... I am focusing on ... the blessings and miracles I have seen. ...

"Right now, ... it might seem impossible to ever forgive those who have caused so much destruction and harm ... , but as a disciple of Christ, I have faith that I will be able to [forgive]. ...

"I don't know all that will happen in the future ... but I know that keeping our covenants will allow the Spirit to be with us continually, ... allowing us to feel joy and hope, ... even during difficult times."<sup>25</sup>

## The Promise of Eternal Life and Celestial Glory

My brothers and sisters, I have been blessed to abundantly receive the love of our beloved Savior, Jesus Christ. I know He lives and guides His holy work. I do not fully have the words to express my love for Him.

We are all “children of the covenant” stretching across the earth in nations and cultures on every continent, numbering in the millions, as we await the glorious return of our Lord and Savior. Shining as a light to those around us, we consciously shape our desires, thoughts, choices, and actions. Seeking with all our heart to know and love the Savior, we separate ourselves from the world through covenants with God, being distinct, uncommon, and special, as we honor Him and His teachings without isolating ourselves from others who believe differently.

It is a wondrous journey to be wheat among the tares, sometimes fraught with heartache but always calmed by the maturing and assuring settling of our faith. As you allow your love for the Savior and His love for you to sink deep into your heart, I promise you added confidence, peace, and joy in meeting the challenges of your life. And the Savior promises us: “I [will] gather together my people, according to the parable of the wheat and the tares, that the wheat may be secured in the garner to possess eternal life, and be crowned with celestial glory.”<sup>26</sup> In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Footnotes:

1. [Matthew 24:3](#).

2. [Matthew 24:33](#).

3. Henry B. Eyring, “[Steady in the Storms](#),” *Liahona*, May 2022, 27.

4. [Matthew 13:16](#); emphasis added.

5. [Matthew 13:38](#).

6. [Matthew 13:30](#).

7. Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: “Church members will live in this wheat-and-tares situation until the Millennium. Some real tares even masquerade as wheat” (“[Becometh as a Child](#),” *Ensign*, May 1996, 68).

8. See [Doctrine and Covenants 86:4, 6](#).

9. See [Colossians 2:7](#).

10. See [Colossians 1:23](#); see also [Ephesians 3:17](#); Neal A. Maxwell, “[Grounded, Rooted, Established, and Settled](#)” (Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 15, 1981), speeches.byu.edu.

11. In [Matthew 13:22](#), Jesus cautioned His disciples to not allow the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches to “choke the word” and stop their spiritual progress. I like to tie the phrase “choke the word” to the [first chapter of John](#), where John declares the word to be Jesus: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. . . . All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” ([John 1:1, 3](#)). Our faith in Jesus Christ, our determination to follow Him, our love for the Savior can be choked, or prevented from growing, as it is deprived of spiritual light and nourishment (see [Alma 32:37–41](#)).

12. See Neil L. Andersen, “[A Compensatory Spiritual Power for the Righteous](#)” (Brigham Young University devotional, Aug. 18, 2015), speeches.byu.edu.

13. [John 17:3](#).

14. [Doctrine and Covenants 6:36](#).

15. [1 John 4:19](#).

16. Elder David B. Haight said:

“It is true that some have actually seen the Savior, but when one consults the dictionary, he learns that there are many other meanings of the word *see*, such as coming to know Him, discerning Him, recognizing Him and His work, perceiving His importance, or coming to understand Him.

“Such heavenly enlightenment and blessings are available to each of us” (“[Temples and Work Therein](#),” *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 61).

17. See [Mosiah 5:13](#).

18. [Doctrine and Covenants 20:77](#).

19. Russell M. Nelson, “[The Everlasting Covenant](#),” *Liahona*, Oct. 2022, 5.

20. Russell M. Nelson, “[What Is True?](#),” *Liahona*, Nov. 2022, 29.

21. Russell M. Nelson, “[Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 96.

22. Dallin H. Oaks, “[Going Forward in the Second Century](#)” (Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 13, 2022), speeches.byu.edu. President Oaks credited the phrase “dare to be different” to a recent article in the *Deseret Magazine* by Elder Clark G. Gilbert, the Church Educational System Commissioner, on preserving religious identity in higher education (see “Dare to Be Different,” *Deseret Magazine*, Sept. 2022, deseret.com).

23. If you would like to learn from others who commented on how they have been different from the world, you can read their comments on Facebook (see Neil L. Andersen, Facebook, Aug. 18, 2022, facebook.com/neill.andersen) or Instagram (see Neil L. Andersen, Instagram, Aug. 18, 2022, instagram.com/neillandersen).

24. Russell M. Nelson, “[Hope of Israel](#)” (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

25. Anastasia Kocheva, “[Facing the Conflict in Ukraine, Healing the Conflict in My Heart](#),” *YA Weekly*, May 2022.

26. [Doctrine and Covenants 101:65](#)

## **Josline’s Thoughts:**

**Elder James A. Cullimore [To Be in the World but Not of the World \(churchofjesuschrist.org\)](#)**

What do we mean by the “world”? President McKay refers to it as those “... alienated from the Saints of God. They are aliens to the Church, and it is the spirit of this alienation that we should keep ourselves free from.” (*Conference Report*, October 1911, p. 58.) Elder Bruce R. McConkie defines the “world” as “the social conditions created by such of the inhabitants of the earth as live carnal, sensuous, lustful lives, and who have not put off the natural man by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], p. 847.)

**John 17:**

14 I have given them thy word: and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

We would not want to be free of our responsibility of being in the world by being taken out of the world, for this life is a probationary state. The “world” is our opportunity to prove ourselves. This is a part of the great plan of the Lord, to be confronted with the things of the “world,” that we might overcome them and be strengthened

**[Being in the World but Not of the World \(churchofjesuschrist.org\)](#) Elder Quentin L. Cook**

Separating evil from our lives has become even more essential since our homes are wired to bring much of what the Lord has condemned into our own living rooms if we are not vigilant. One of the most difficult challenges in our lives is to be in the world but not of the world (see [John 15:19](#)). Gospel doctrine makes it clear that we must live in this world to achieve our eternal destination. We must be tried and tested and found worthy of a greater kingdom (see [2 Nephi 2:11](#); [D&C 101:78](#)). We must do as Abraham did when he pitched his tent and built “an altar unto the Lord” ([Genesis 13:18](#)) and not do as Lot did when he “pitched his tent toward Sodom” ([Genesis 13:12](#))

**[1 Jn. 2:15–17](#)**

15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

*In the student manual*

We are living in an evil and wicked world. But while we are in the world, we are not of the world. We are expected to overcome the world and to live as becometh saints. ... We have greater light than the world has, and the Lord expects more of us than he does of them.<sup>5</sup>

...If we are living the religion which the Lord has revealed and which we have received, we do not belong to the world. We should have no part in all its foolishness. We should not partake of its sins and its errors—errors of philosophy and errors of doctrine, errors in regard to government, or whatever those errors may be—we have no part in it.

The only part we have is the keeping of the commandments of God. That is all, being true to every covenant and every obligation that we have entered into and taken upon ourselves.<sup>6</sup>

... , We are no longer to dress or speak or act or even think as others too often do. [Chapter 19: In the World but Not of the World \(churchofjesuschrist.org\)](#)

*We must know that for the world to like us, we must submit to its design and plan, in order to obtain even a particle of what it offers. If we are liked by the world we are part of it, but if we are hated by the world than we should rejoice if our desires are to be among the people of God.*

*Matt. 16*

**26** For what is a man <sup>a</sup>profited, if he shall <sup>b</sup>gain the whole <sup>c</sup>world, and <sup>d</sup>lose his own <sup>e</sup>soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

**27** For the <sup>a</sup>Son of man shall come in the <sup>b</sup>glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall <sup>c</sup>reward every man according to his <sup>d</sup>works.

**Scripture Citation Index (byu.edu) 1973 –O:110, Mark E. Petersen, “What will a man give?”**

Who would exchange the privilege of becoming like God for the very questionable and temporary advantages of this world?

Who in his right mind would prefer the corruptions of the flesh, the sensual pleasures, and the false excitement of sin, rather than the opportunity of becoming like God; rather than having inspired intelligence, or of some day wielding some of the powers that God uses as he walks in his majesty?

Which of us would sell his birthright for a mess of pottage?

Isn't it advisable that we direct to our own selves the question raised by the Savior: "... what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. 16:26

Whether we realize it or not, we are making this very kind of bargain if we prefer worldly things over our religion.

The only way to save our souls is to put God first in our lives.

If we reverse the process and relegate him to second, third, or fourth place, we make an exchange that we will rue throughout the eternities. It is possible to lose our salvation by default.



Realizing this, can we afford to be other than active in the Church? Can we afford to neglect our families? Can we afford to mix worldliness and Godliness, knowing very well that they will not blend and knowing, too, that Jesus said we cannot serve both God and mammon?

...So what will we exchange for our soul? Will it be worldly advantage, or money, or pleasure, or the corruption of sin, thinking that wickedness gives enough thrill to compensate for all its miseries?

**Luke 6:**

**24** But woe unto you that are rich! For ye have received your consolation.

**26** Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets.

*It is dishonest to think that we are in compliance with gospel teachings if our attitudes are even partly aligned with or being sympathetic to the cause and ways of Babylon for whatever reason, even if our family is taking part in it, the love of God should come first in our lives. We should be resilient and stand strong in unity with the Church as our reward will be sure. Those who are willing to put God first in their lives are the heroes of the last days. We should not be so weak that we want the world to like us for instant gratification. Proving our strength is to follow the Saviour at every footstep. Living the life of a true follower of Christ is not for the faint hearted. If we are weak, then strive to improve ourselves by seeking help from the Saviour and align ourselves in unity with the strong and our church leaders*

**Scripture Citation Index (byu.edu) 1964 – O:56, Ezra Taft Benson, Three threatening Dangers**

...virtue is not the only basis for being singled out and promoted. As the world gets more wicked, a possible way to attain worldly success may be to join the wicked. The time is fast approaching when it will require great courage for Latter-day Saints to stand up for their peculiar standards and doctrine—all of their doctrine, including the more weighty principles such as the principle of freedom. Opposition to this weighty principle of freedom caused many of our brothers and sisters in the pre-existence to lose their first estate in the war in heaven.

We are far removed from the days of our forefathers who were persecuted for their peculiar beliefs. Some of us seem to want to share their reward but are oftentimes afraid to stand up for principles that are controversial in our generation. We need not solicit persecution, but neither should we remain silent in the presence of overwhelming evils, for this makes cowards of men. We should not go out of the path of duty to pick up a cross there is no need to bear, but neither should we sidestep a cross that clearly lies within the path of duty.

We are in the world, and I fear some of us are getting too much like the world. Rather than continue a peculiar people, some are priding themselves on how much they are like everybody else, when the world is getting more wicked.,

...

Some things are changeless—priceless. We must anchor ourselves to the eternal verities of life, for life is eternal. The honors of men more often than not are fleeting. Anxious to run after the honors of office or succumb to the pressures of public glamour and worldly acclaim, some of us are no longer willing to stand up for all the principles of the gospel. We seek to justify our unrighteousness by claiming that if only we can get title or position, then think of the good we can do. Hence we lose our salvation en route to those honors. We sometimes look among our numbers to find one to whom we can point who agrees with us, so we can have company to

justify our apostasy. We rationalize by saying that some day the church doctrine will catch up with our way of thinking.

Seeking the applause of the world, we like to be honored by the men the world honors. But therein lies real danger, for oftentimes, in order to receive those honors, we must join forces with and follow those same devilish influences and policies which brought some of those men to positions of prominence.

More and more the honors of this world are being promoted by the wicked for the wicked. We see this in publicity and awards that are given to movies, literature, art, journalism, etc ... Less and less we see the virtuous rewarded by the world, and when they are, oftentimes it almost seems to be done insidiously in order to get us to swallow the many evils for which the wicked are even more profusely honored.

*Things of this world become our idol. We would say to anyone in our day that we don't worship idols, because we think we are civilized, but yet we worship our worldly wealth, we spend more times participating in games, on the social media, and contemplating how to make easy money than we spend on our scriptures. We are worshiping ourselves saying how good we are when we're taking sides, defend, and feel pity for those who lives in sins of immorality while throwing our prophet under the bus, when we supposed to put God first to love Him with all our might mind and strength. How can we say we are different from the world?*

(2 Nephi 9:30). [Commandments \(churchofjesuschrist.org\)](http://www.churchofjesuschrist.org)

2. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" ([Exodus 20:4](http://www.churchofjesuschrist.org)). In this commandment, the Lord condemns the worship of idols. Idolatry may take many forms. Some people do not bow before graven images or statues but instead replace the living God with other idols, such as money, material possessions, ideas, or prestige. In their lives, "their treasure is their god"—a god that "shall perish with them"

*Speaking to the young people, President Nelson said:*

*With the Holy Ghost as your companion, you can see right through the celebrity culture that has smitten our society. You can be smarter than previous generations have ever been. And if you are sometimes called "weird," wear that distinction as a badge of honor and be happy that your light is shining brightly in this ever-darkening world! Set a standard for the rest of the world! Embrace being different! [Hope of Israel \(churchofjesuschrist.org\)](http://www.churchofjesuschrist.org)*

*Those who strive to live their lives in conformity with the commandments of God have a broader understanding of the promised life eternal. They seek and gain knowledge from the scriptures and they follow the living prophet, they're enlightened by the Spirit that confirms truths given, due to their obedience.*

**In 1 Peter 2:**

**9 But ye are a <sup>a</sup>chosen generation, a <sup>b</sup>royal <sup>c</sup>priesthood, an <sup>d</sup>holy <sup>e</sup>nation, a <sup>f</sup>peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of <sup>g</sup>darkness into his marvellous <sup>h</sup>light:**

**[Scripture Citation Index \(byu.edu\)](http://www.byu.edu) 1971 –A:49, Joseph Fielding Smith, Our responsibilities As Priesthood Holders**

This promise is ours also. If we will walk in paths of virtue and holiness, the Lord will pour out his blessings upon us to a degree we have never supposed possible. ...And we will be peculiar because we will not be like other people who do not live up to these standards. To the extent we have overcome the world we are already a holy nation and a peculiar people. But unfortunately there are those among us who have not as yet put first in their lives the things of God's kingdom and who do not live in harmony with the standards of the Church.

**D&C 76:**

**7** And to them will I <sup>a</sup>reveal all <sup>b</sup>mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom.

**D&C 78:**

**7** For if you will that I give unto you a place in the <sup>a</sup>celestial world, you must <sup>b</sup>prepare yourselves by <sup>c</sup>doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you.

**D&C 82:**

**10** I, the Lord, am <sup>a</sup>bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no <sup>b</sup>promise.

**Abraham 3:**

**25** And we will <sup>a</sup>prove them herewith, to see if they will <sup>b</sup>do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

**26** And they who <sup>a</sup>keep their first <sup>b</sup>estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second <sup>c</sup>estate shall have <sup>d</sup>glory added upon their heads forever and ever.

**Scripture Citation Index (byu.edu) 1959-O:47. Eternal life Eternal Marriage Elder George Q. Morris of the Council of the Twelve Apostles**

The Lord defines eternal life very clearly in the 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, fourth verse.

"This Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom." Then to make plain that eternal life is the fullness of the celestial glory, he explains further, "Which glory is that of the church of the Firstborn, even of God, the holiest of all, through Jesus Christ his Son"

**1977 –O,18, Delbert L. Stapley, The Blessings of Righteous Obedience Scripture Citation Index (byu.edu)**

A...way we learn obedience is by following the counsel of living prophets and other appointed Church leaders. We are fortunate to live in a time when a living prophet is on the earth to counsel and guide us. Our Heavenly Father communicates His will through His prophet, and God will not permit His prophet to lead His people astray. The importance of the words of God's prophet has been clearly stated to the Church as follows:

“Thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;

“For his word ye shall receive, *as if from mine own mouth*, in all patience and faith.”D&C 21:4-5 (italics added.)

Then follows this promise to us when we heed the Lord’s admonition:

“For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name’s glory.”D&C 21:6

Sometime in the eternities to come, we will see that our trials were calculated to cause us to turn to our Heavenly Father for strength and support. Any affliction or suffering we are called upon to bear may be directed to give us experience, refinement, and perfection.

*Our work in this world is to repent of our sins, keep the commandments of our God and help those who are broken hearted and weak. It is not just to know the words of the Lord, nor to go to the temples and go to church every Sunday. We must also labour in the vineyard of the Lord. As we are not without sins, the Lord said by sharing what we know with others and be a light we show our love for our Heavenly father, we glorify His name, and we may also have our sins be forgiven when we commit ourselves to His work.*

#### **D&C 62:**

**3** Nevertheless, ye are <sup>a</sup>blessed, for the <sup>b</sup>testimony which ye have borne is <sup>c</sup>recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you, and your <sup>d</sup>sins are forgiven you.

D&C 18:

**14** Wherefore, you are called to <sup>a</sup>cry repentance unto this people.

**15** And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one <sup>a</sup>soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

**16** And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the <sup>a</sup>kingdom of my Father, how great will be your <sup>b</sup>joy if you should bring many <sup>c</sup>souls unto me!

[Scripture Citation Index \(byu.edu\)](#) **Overcome the World and Find Rest** By President Russell M. Nelson

As I have stated before, the gathering of Israel is the *most* important work taking place on earth today. One crucial element of this gathering is preparing a people who are able, ready, and worthy to receive the Lord when He comes again, a people who have already chosen Jesus Christ over this fallen world, a people who rejoice in their agency to live the higher, holier laws of Jesus Christ.

**1977 –O,18, Delbert L. Stapley, The Blessings of Righteous Obedience [Scripture Citation Index \(byu.edu\)](#)**

The Lord has revealed in this dispensation that our rewards in the eternities are predicated on our level of obedience. If we are fully obedient to celestial law, fulfilling the laws of Christ, we will be worthy of a celestial glory. But for those who do not fully comply with celestial law, other lesser degrees of glory have been prepared,

...Perhaps it would be well for each of us to reassess ourselves to determine where we presently stand in relation to the fundamental law of the celestial kingdom—the law of obedience. The results should reveal to us which kingdom we have chosen as our goal. For instance:

1. Do I study and ponder the scriptures in an effort to know the will of God and understand His commandments regarding His children?
  2. Do I follow the counsel of God's living prophet, or do I merely select those things with which I agree, disregarding the others?
  3. Do I seek the advice and counsel of my bishop and stake president on matters of concern to me and my family?
  4. Am I earnestly striving to discipline myself, placing my physical appetites under the subjection of my will?
  5. Am I making every effort to repent of past or present wrongdoings and correct them by doing right?
  6. Do I have an attitude of faith in God even though I experience trials, adversity, and affliction? And do I bear my burden without a complaining spirit?
- Keeping the commandments of God is not a difficult burden when we do it out of love of Him who has so graciously blessed us.  
Our willingness to comply with the commandments of God is a witness of our faith in Him and our love for Him.

*Elder Anderson referred to the following scriptures:*

**Doctrine and Covenants 101:65**

65 Therefore, I must gather together my people, according to the parable of the wheat and the tares, that the wheat may be secured in the garner to possess eternal life, and be crowned with celestial glory, when I shall come in the kingdom of my Father to reward every man according as his work shall be;

**Doctrine and Covenants 38:12**

12 Which causeth silence to reign, and all eternity is pained, and the angels are waiting the great command to reap down the earth, to gather the tares that they may be burned; and, behold, the enemy is combined.

**Scripture Citation Index (byu.edu) Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 76-77**

Now the Lord wants the tares and wheat to grow together:<sup>15</sup> for Zion must be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.<sup>16</sup> Every Elder that can, after providing for his family<sup>17</sup> (if he has any) and paying his debts, must go forth and clear his skirts from the blood of this generation.<sup>18</sup> While they are in that region instead of trying members for transgressions, or offenses, let every one labor to prepare himself for the vineyard,<sup>19</sup> sparing a little time to comfort the mourners;<sup>20</sup> to bind up the broken-hearted;<sup>21</sup> to reclaim the backslider;<sup>22</sup> to bring back the wanderer;<sup>23</sup> to re-invite into the kingdom such as have been cut off, by encouraging them to lay to while the day lasts,<sup>1</sup> and to work righteousness,<sup>2</sup> and, with one heart and one mind,<sup>3</sup> prepare to help redeem Zion,<sup>4</sup> that goodly land<sup>5</sup> of promise,<sup>6</sup> where the willing and the obedient<sup>7</sup> shall be blessed. Souls are as precious<sup>8</sup> in the sight of God<sup>9</sup> as they ever were; and the Elders were never called to drive any down to hell, but to persuade and invite all men<sup>10</sup> everywhere to repent,<sup>11</sup> that they may become the heirs of salvation. <sup>12</sup>

## **Scripture Citation Index (byu.edu) JD 12:167, Brigham Young, How to Prepare for the Coming of the Son of Man, Etc.**

If we thus subdue the wicked man that is within us, sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts, (1 Pet. 3:15) we may then begin to enjoy the glorious hope of joining the throng that will be gathered with the sanctified, and of being prepared for the coming of the Son of Man, when it will be said—"Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."(Mat. 25:6) Now, will we deceive ourselves and be found among the foolish virgins, with no oil in our vessels; (Matt. 25:3) and when the wheat and the tares are separated, shall I be found a tare or a wheat? (Matt. 13:24-30) Let us ask ourselves the question, am I a wheat or a tare? The proof as to whether we are tares or wheat may be seen in our lives, as it is written—"For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."Matt. 12:50 Again, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."Matt. 7:2

*Let us strive to reach our highest potential by being obedient and keep the laws and commandments of God, Read our scriptures and ponder them, follow the teaching of our prophet, keep the covenants we have made in the temple of our god, give service to our fellow men feed the poor and teach one another to be of one heart and one mind in the doctrine of Christ. To be different from the world, we must know for ourselves what we must do, and to what source we must go to obtain truths that we must follow and not to go after every wind of doctrine.*

## **Micah's Thoughts:**

I loved how this was in the CFM readings right as we were doing this talk breakdown... The Lord separates his people, he does not isolate his people... I love that!

## **John 3:3-5. Entering into the Lord's Kingdom**

"By choosing to be in His kingdom, we separate—not isolate—ourselves from the world. Our dress will be modest, our thoughts pure, our language clean. The movies and television we watch, the music we listen to, the books, magazines, and newspapers we read will be uplifting. We will choose friends who encourage our eternal goals, and we will treat others with kindness. We will shun the vices of immorality, gambling, tobacco, liquor, and illicit drugs. Our Sunday activities will reflect the commandment of God to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. We will follow the example of Jesus Christ in the way we treat others. We will live to be worthy to enter the house of the Lord" ("The Covenant of Baptism: To Be in the Kingdom and of the Kingdom," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 7-8).

In closing, I just love how he closes this talk with more Doctrine and Covenants 101... and pay close attention to which verses he places in... he says the following:

“I [will] gather together my people, according to the parable of the wheat and the tares, that the wheat may be secured in the garners to possess eternal life, and be crowned with celestial glory.”<sup>26</sup>

And then he references Doctrine and Covenants 101... Not 86 as one might assume as that is the quintessential “wheat and tares” Doctrine and Covenants chapter... but no... Elder Anderson goes back, once again, to Doctrine and Covenants 101, verse 65... Why is that significant? Well... let me read some of the verses that lead directly into verse 65, provide some context shall we about what truly is “the garners” in which the wheat is being gathered into...

### **Doctrine and Covenants 101**

55 And the lord of the vineyard said unto one of his servants: Go and gather together the residue of my servants, and take all the strength of mine house, which are my warriors, my young men, and they that are of middle age also among all my servants, who are the strength of mine house, save those only whom I have appointed to tarry;

56 And go ye straightway unto the land of my vineyard, and redeem my vineyard; for it is mine; I have bought it with money.

57 Therefore, get ye straightway unto my land; break down the walls of mine enemies; throw down their tower, and scatter their watchmen.

58 And inasmuch as they gather together against you, avenge me of mine enemies, that by and by I may come with the residue of mine house and possess the land.

59 And the servant said unto his lord: When shall these things be?

60 And he said unto his servant: When I will; go ye straightway, and do all things whatsoever I have commanded you;

61 And this shall be my seal and blessing upon you—a faithful and wise steward in the midst of mine house, a ruler in my kingdom.

62 And his servant went straightway, and did all things whatsoever his lord commanded him; and after many days all things were fulfilled.

63 Again, verily I say unto you, I will show unto you wisdom in me concerning all the churches, inasmuch as they are willing to be guided in a right and proper way for their salvation—

64 That the work of the gathering together of my saints may continue, that I may build them up unto my name upon holy places; for the time of harvest is come, and my word must needs be fulfilled.

65 Therefore, I must gather together my people, according to the parable of the wheat and the tares, that the wheat may be secured in the garners to possess eternal life, and be crowned with celestial glory, when I shall come in the kingdom of my Father to reward every man according as his work shall be;

66 While the tares shall be bound in bundles, and their bands made strong, that they may be burned with unquenchable fire.

1. Redeemer of Israel,  
Our only delight,  
On whom for a blessing we call,  
Our shadow by day  
And our pillar by night,  
Our King, our Deliv'rer, our all!

2. We know he is coming  
To gather his sheep  
And lead them to Zion in love,  
For why in the valley  
Of death should they weep  
Or in the lone wilderness rove?

3. How long we have wandered  
As strangers in sin  
And cried in the desert for thee!  
Our foes have rejoiced  
When our sorrows they've seen,  
But Israel will shortly be free.

4. As children of Zion,  
Good tidings for us.  
The tokens already appear.  
Fear not, and be just,  
For the kingdom is ours.  
The hour of redemption is near.

5. Restore, my dear Savior,  
The light of thy face;  
Thy soul-cheering comfort impart;  
And let the sweet longing



For thy holy place

Bring hope to my desolate heart.

6. He looks! and ten thousands

Of angels rejoice,

And myriads wait for his word;

He speaks! and eternity,

Filled with his voice,

Re-echoes the praise of the Lord.

I know that my Redeemer will come

I know that all those found upon the watch-tower, or in other words Israel, shall be saved.

I know that those that are scattered shall be gathered

I know all those who have mourned shall be comforted

I am comforted concerning Zion, for I know all flesh is in the Lord's hands

I know that Zion, the New Jerusalem in Jackson County shall not be moved out of her place, despite the fact that her children are currently scattered

I know that the pure in heart shall return, and come to their inheritances with their children, with songs of everlasting joy, and build up the waste places of Zion

I know the words of the prophets will be fulfilled, for the Lord cannot be denied and cannot lie

In the name of Jesus Christ amen