

Sunday February 28th 2021

The topic is: “Absolute Truth vs Relative Truth and Our Personal Accountability”

1. ***“How does the Lord reveal truth? Has it ever changed? Will it ever change? How does one find truth, and/or how will we be held to account for finding truth? What are the expectations placed on us for finding truth?”***

Moroni 10:4-5

“And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would:

- ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true;
and if ye shall

- ask with a sincere heart,
- with real intent,
- having faith in Christ,

[then]

“he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.”

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

In the last days, our ability to discern truth will be key to our ability to “survive spiritually” as Pres. Nelson has stated. Only the constant guidance of the Holy Ghost will really allow us to be able to protect our families from the confusion rampant in our culture, and at times even within the Church. I recently reflected on this with my uncle when discussing some of these ideas. I have often wondered why the Lord has so strongly discouraged relying solely on our senses or reason to determine what’s true and it’s likely because there will come a time when those tools will simply fail (if we’re not there already).

D&C 1:38 What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.

From the time Adam left God's presence he sent messengers to his children to guide and protect them.

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord God will do nothing, ^abut he ^brevealeth his ^csecret unto his servants the ^dprophets.

And because even the prophets aren't always speaking prophetically and even they get it wrong occasionally, if you find a belief coming from just one single source, like Brigham Young or McConkie you can disregard it until it has been substantiated by another.

Matthew 18:16 "...that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

Missionaries are sent out 2 by 2. We have even been given two witnesses of Christ in that we have both the Bible and The Book of Mormon.

Christ taught that we are to live, even be dependent, on both bread and the word of God.

Deuteronomy 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.

Matthew 4:4; But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God

D&C 98:11 And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, that ye shall live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God.

(17-3) Isaiah 48:1–8. Judah’s Apostasy (Old Testament Institute Manual)

Isaiah 48:1–2 describes Israel’s apostasy from God’s revealed ways. While these chosen people of the Lord have “come forth out of the waters of ... baptism” (1 Nephi 20:1; compare Isaiah 48:1–2 with 1 Nephi 20:1–2), “they do not stay themselves upon the ... Lord” (1 Nephi 20:2). In other words, they have apostatized. For this reason, the Lord elected to demonstrate His powers of omniscience. He had, He told them, “declared ... things from the beginning,” that is, He spoke of them before their occurrence, and then “shewed them ... suddenly” by bringing them to pass (Isaiah 48:3). This He had done, He said, lest the apostates should say, “Mine idol hath done them” (v. 5), or “Behold, I knew them” (v. 7), that is to say, “I already knew that.” The Lord then promised to defer His anger but utterly refused to give His glory to false gods or to suffer His name to be polluted (compare v. 11 with 1 Nephi 20:11). Thus the Lord’s purpose for revealing the future unto man is partly made clear: it is the solid proof that He is truly God, for no mute idol could possibly duplicate such a feat.

End quote

The Prophet Joseph Smith said: “I make this broad declaration, that whenever God gives a vision of an image, or beast, or figure of any kind, He always holds Himself responsible to give a revelation or interpretation of the meaning thereof, otherwise we are not responsible or accountable for our belief in it. Don’t be afraid of being damned for not knowing the meaning of a vision or figure, if God has not given a revelation or interpretation of the subject.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 291.)

In the Old Testament Student Manual we read: “For reasons not at present known, the Lord has not revealed the key for interpreting [certain] passages, and, until He does so, speculation and calculations are pointless.” (Old Testament Student Manual, p.309) “

D&C 88:93 The Sign of the Coming of the Son of Man

“Immediately after the testimony of these messengers [mentioned in D&C 88:92] a great sign **will** appear in heaven, which, **like the sun, will be** seen all round the world. Our Lord calls it the ‘Sign of the Son of Man’ (Matt. 24:30).

“... when the sign appears, God will make its meaning known to the Prophet, Seer and Revelator who at that time may be at the head of the Church, and through him to His people and the world in general.” (Smith and Sjodahl, Commentary, p. 560.)”

End quote

Joseph Smith made it clear that the Lord would not do anything unless He first revealed it to the prophet and the prophet reveals it to the world (TPJS, p.279-280). He proved this using Amos 3:7, which Lindey provided above.

In Doctrine and Covenants chapter 28 v. 2 we read: “But, behold, verily, verily, I say unto thee, no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., for he receiveth them even as Moses.” And in Doctrine and Covenants chapter 1 the Savior continues (v 6, 17, 24, 37-38) “Behold, this is mine authority, and the authority of my servants... Wherefore, I the Lord... called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments... Behold, I am God and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of

their language, that they might come to understanding... Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled. What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.”

The Lord always has and always will make his will known to us through the keys. But what about The Holy Ghost or The Light of Christ? Would either or both of these things be enough on their own for the Lord to make known his will to us? King Benjamin answers that question (Mosiah Chapter 1: 2-3) : “And it came to pass that [King Benjamin] had three sons; and he called their names Mosiah, and Helorum, and Helaman. And he caused that they should be taught in all the language of his fathers, that thereby they might become men of understanding; and that they might know concerning the prophecies which had been spoken by the mouths of their fathers, which were delivered them by the hand of the Lord. And he also taught them concerning the records which were engraven on the plates of brass, saying: My sons, I would that ye should remember that were *it not for these plates*, which contain these records and these commandments, *we must have suffered in ignorance, even at this present time, not knowing the mysteries of God.*”

Without the keys we have no prophets, without prophets we have no scriptures and without scriptures we would not know the will of God and would “suffer in ignorance”. We need to understand that the Holy Ghost is just an extension of the keys, without the keys we would have no “Gift of the Holy Ghost”, for it is by the keys of the priesthood that the Gift of the Holy Ghost is given, it is not by the authority of priesthood which is not enough.

So in summary the Lord only reveals his will to us through the keys, these keys extend into what we understand as “scriptures” as well as “the Gift of the Holy Ghost”. This entire life is a proving ground to see if we will search out these keys, and we will be judged based on the knowledge we have received and for which was available to us. With the internet and Google translate, everyone alive today with access to the internet will be judged against all the knowledge that is available on the internet- it is part of the proving in us to judge the fruit, decipher it, etc. and progress line upon line, precept upon precept. If we are distracted by the world and don’t seek for this light and knowledge (keys) that is available- that has proved us. We have chosen the vain things of the world and the honors of men over seeking first to find and build up the Kingdom of God (D&C 121); for many are called but few are chosen, and as the Lord explained in Doctrine and Covenants 105: 35-36 “There has been a day of calling, but the time has come for a day of choosing; and let those be chosen that are worthy. And it shall be manifest unto *my servant*, by the voice of the Spirit, those that are chosen; and they shall be sanctified...”

2. “How do we avoid deception? What is the difference between “the fruits of the Light of Christ” and “The Holy Ghost”?”

“The Spirit” the “Light of Christ”: These describe receiving a portion of the intelligence of God. It is not just a good feeling or an emotion, but the communication of knowledge, truth, and actual intelligence emanating from God. All people receive this opportunity to help guide them towards the truth in this life.

D&C 93: 36 The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.

37 Light and truth forsake that evil one.

38 Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God.

39 And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers.

The “Gift of the Holy Ghost” is the right to receive a fullness of this intelligence to always strive with us while we keep our covenants to always remember Christ. This gift is available to all members of the Church.

Living in accordance with the truth leads us to the fruits of the Spirit described in Galatians: “love, joy, peace, etc.” *but* the presence of those feelings or fruits does not always mean that our ideas or thoughts are ultimately from God.

Further, the absence of those fruits for a time does not mean we are sinning. For example, in the Allegory of the Olive Tree, Zenos describes the trees bringing forth good fruit, but the “wild” portions of the tree begin to slowly choke out the fruitful portions and once they do, the fruits may cease.

One key is to humbly allow the Lord and his Servants to prune our wild branches. For example, we may not feel “warm fuzzies” inside when a Prophet asks us to do something outside our comfort zone or when a leader corrects us on a doctrinal point. But by humbly recognizing these and other challenges, and acting in faith, these can become learning experiences that allow us to grow in the principle of revelation and not allow pride to choke out our good fruits.

To answer this question I went straight to the church website and typed in Light of Christ. God is clearly "giving away the secrets of the universe." Neal A. Maxwell, “Meek and Lowly” (Brigham Young University devotional, Oct. 21, 1986).

The Light of Christ is the divine energy, power, or influence that proceeds from God through Christ and gives life and light to all things. The Light of Christ influences people for good and prepares them to receive the Holy Ghost. One manifestation of the Light of Christ is what we call a conscience.

The Light of Christ “proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space.” It is “the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:12–13; see also Doctrine and Covenants 88:6–11). This power is an influence for good in the lives of all people (see John 1:9; Doctrine and Covenants 93:2). In the scriptures, the Light of Christ is sometimes called the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, or the Light of Life.

The Light of Christ should not be confused with the Holy Ghost. It is not a personage, as the Holy Ghost is. Its influence leads people to find the true gospel, be baptized, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (see John 12:46; Alma 26:14–15).

Conscience is a manifestation of the Light of Christ, enabling us to judge good from evil. The prophet Mormon taught: “The Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God. ... And now, my brethren, seeing that ye know the light by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ, see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge ye shall also be judged” (Moroni 7:16, 18).

Hopefully we have an understanding of what The Light of Christ is vs The Holy Ghost, if you want an exhaustive break down of this see my paper The Light of Christ, The Holy Ghost, The Second Comforter. The Light of Christ are the “feelings”, they are “the fruits of the Spirit”. Many in the world exhibit and thrive on those fruits, the fruits of the Spirit, ie “The Light of Christ”, but these are not the Holy Ghost. In Preach My Gospel, chapter 4: How Do I Recognize and Understand the Spirit? We read:

“God loves you and all His children. He is anxious to support you in your practical and specific challenges. You have been promised inspiration to know what to do and have been given the power to do it (see Doctrine and Covenants 43:15–16). He will help you as you try to recognize and understand the [The Holy Ghost] **through diligent scripture study** ... He will shower His blessings upon you through the gift of the Holy Ghost. He asks that you remain worthy of this gift and that you ask, seek, and knock (see Doctrine and Covenants 4:7; Matthew 7:7–8)... We live in the day prophesied by Book of Mormon prophets—a day when people will “contend one with another, and they shall teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance” (2 Nephi 28:4; see also 3 Nephi 29:6; Mormon 9:7–8). ... As [one] learns to receive personal revelation, [they] will teach with power and authority (see Alma 17:3) because the Holy Ghost gives [one] power to speak (see 1 Nephi 10:22). A person is capable of receiving spiritual guidance before being baptized and confirmed. **This spiritual influence** begins with the Light of Christ, which “is given to every man, that he may know good from evil” (Moroni 7:16; see also verses 14–19).

“The light of Christ is just what the words imply: enlightenment, knowledge, and an uplifting, ennobling, persevering influence that comes upon mankind because of Jesus Christ. ...

“The light of Christ should not be confused with the personage of the Holy Ghost, for the light of Christ is not a personage at all. Its influence is *preliminary to and preparatory to one’s receiving the Holy Ghost. The light of Christ will lead the honest soul who ‘hearkeneth to the voice’ to find the true gospel and the true Church and thereby receive the Holy Ghost*” (Bible Dictionary, “Light of Christ”; see also Doctrine and Covenants 84:46–47).

President Boyd K. Packer said: “It is important ... to know that the Holy Ghost can work *through* the Light of Christ.” (“The Light of Christ” [address given at the seminar for new mission presidents, June 22, 2004], 2, Church History Library, Salt Lake City).

“...you will need to ask some basic questions every day—even many times each day (see the “*Scripture Study*” box that follows for examples of questions). Seek inspiration to answer these questions in a way that meets each situation. The answers should then take shape in your plans ...

Study the... scriptures and consider how they answer these important questions that you should ask each day.

President Howard W. Hunter offered this counsel: “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 [1997], 184). The Spirit of the Lord *always edifies*.”

End Quote from PMG

If you “feel good” but you haven’t learned anything, if there was no invitation or commitment to repent, etc. it was not, I repeat, it was not the Holy Ghost. Period. It was a chemical response in your body that Satan uses to deceive, almost the very elect; for the Holy Ghost *always edifies*. The Holy Ghost and the connection to the Word of God should hopefully by now be almost a “second language” to those familiar with my work. The Light of Christ gets us on the path, it leads us to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when heeded, and we enter that path by baptism. The receipt of The Holy Ghost and the appearance of the “rod of iron” at the same time should now make perfect sense to you- they are one and the same, and both are tied to the keys. We learn that those of the terrestrial kingdom are those that received of the Light of Christ but who did not receive of the Holy Ghost, they were deceived. The Holy Ghost can and does work through the Light of Christ (feelings) at times but “feelings” all by themselves are never and will never be “The Holy Ghost”. Once again, it wouldn’t be right if I didn’t include this quote from President Joseph Fielding Smith, it might be one of the most important, if not the most important quote for this generation at this time as we head straight into the fulfillment of the parable of the ten virgins:

“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.” (Doctrines of Salvation, p.43)

I pray to our Heavenly Father, that that quote is engraved in all of our hearts and minds, committed to memory, for it is the key to “hearing Him”, it is the key to the difference between The Light of Christ vs The Holy Ghost, it is the key to not being deceived. Brothers and sisters, it is key and it was given by the keys through the keys.

I want to say as well, at this time, before continuing, that Marlene from Building Zion has broken down this doctrine beautifully in her video series “Hear Him” which includes Counterfeit Revelation, The Language of the Spirit, etc.

3. ***“We will be held to account for doctrine we teach? What if we put an ‘in my opinion’ in front of it? Does that change your accountability for what you are teaching? Should there be, or is there, any ‘relative truth’ when it comes to the gospel?”***

D&C 72:3 And verily in this thing ye have done wisely, for it is required of the Lord, at the hand of every steward, to render an account of his stewardship, both in time and in eternity.

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

What we teach, especially as part of our work in the Church, is part of the stewardship the Lord has entrusted to us. We should be very cautious to not teach things that confuse others or lead them to doubt or possibly harm their faith.

I don't believe there's necessarily anything wrong with speculation, but the Lord has strongly cautioned us to focus on what we know and has been revealed, and not to teach for truth our own ideas or thoughts. Further, speculation can be a waste of time or we might start to defend a speculative idea we might have and it can become a prideful wedge that may harm us spiritually.

In some cases, we may feel that we have received some insight or idea from the Spirit that, while not conflicting with what prophets have taught, may go beyond their teachings. This could be from the Lord, and a revelation of his mysteries to us individually. **However**, if so, it is likely something that should be guarded with such sacredness that such things may never be taught to another person. In Alma we're taught:

Alma 12:9 It is given unto *many* to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the *heed and diligence* which they give unto him.”

"The reason we do not have the secrets of the Lord revealed unto us is because we do not keep them but reveal them, we do not keep our own secrets but reveal our difficulties to the world, even to our enemies, then how would we keep the secrets of the Lord. Joseph says I can keep a secret till dooms day." (Joseph Smith; 19 Dec. 1841: Wilford Woodruff Journal; Words of Joseph, p. 80-81; TPJS, p. 195: HC 4:479.)

Here are some favorite quotes of mine about the caution in sharing what we receive:

"Early in his life, Lorenzo Snow developed a remarkable understanding about the nature of God and man. In Kirtland, Ohio, he met Joseph Smith, Sr., the first patriarch to the Church, who promised him that he would soon be baptized into the Church and then said, 'You will become as great as you can possibly wish - EVEN AS GREAT AS GOD, and you cannot wish to be greater.'

"Four years later, in 1840, Lorenzo received a personal revelation that clarified Father Smith's mysterious saying: "The Spirit of the Lord rested mightily upon me - the eyes of my understanding were opened, and I saw as clear as the sun at noonday, with wonder and astonishment, the pathway of God and man. I formed the following couplet which expressed the revelation, as it was shown to me, and explains Father Smith's dark saying to me at a blessing meeting in the Kirtland Temple prior to my baptism... "As man now is, God once was: As God now is, man may be." At first he shared this revelation with no one except his sister Eliza. Then he privately related it to Brigham Young, who wisely told him: "Brother Snow, that is a new doctrine: if true, it has been revealed to you for your own private information, and will be taught in due time by the Prophet of the Church; till then I advise you to lay it upon the shelf and say no more about it. This Lorenzo did until the Prophet Joseph delivered the King Follett discourse and taught the same doctrine publicly for the first time. Thereafter, Lorenzo Snow felt free to teach it." (My Kingdom Shall Roll Forth, Readings in Church History, p. 68.)

“Here let me give you one lesson that may be profitable to many. If the Lord Almighty should reveal to a High Priest, or to any other than the head, things that are, or that have been and will be, and show to him the destiny of this people twenty-five years from now, or a new doctrine that will in five, ten, or twenty years hence become the doctrine of this Church and kingdom, but which has not yet been revealed to this people, and reveal it to him by the same Spirit, the same messenger, the same voice, and the same power that gave revelations to Joseph when he was

living, it would be a blessing to that High Priest, or individual; but he must rarely divulge it to a second person on the face of the earth, until God reveals it through the proper source to become the property of the people at large. Therefore when you hear Elders, High Priests, Seventies, or the Twelve (though you cannot catch any of the Twelve there, but you may the High Priests, Seventies, and Elders), say that God does not reveal through the President of the Church that which they know, and tell wonderful things, you may generally set it down as God's truth that the revelation they have had, is from the devil, and not from God. If they had received from the proper source, the same power that revealed to them would have shown them that they must keep the things revealed in their own bosoms, and they seldom would have a desire to disclose them to the second person. That is a general rule, but will it apply in every case, and to the people called the kingdom of God at all times? No, not in the strictest sense, but the Spirit which reveals will impart the proper discretion. All the people have not learned this lesson, they should have learned it long ago." (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, Vol. 3, p. 318)

We *must* guard carefully any ideas not taught by the Prophet. It's his responsibility to reveal and teach truth to the Church. That said, as long as we stay in harmony with those teachings, we are perfectly free and even commanded to stretch and search as much understanding as we can. And we're promised we'll be given all we need to accomplish our missions here on the earth.

"Relative Truth" – Abraham 3:8 – "And where these two facts exist, *there shall be another fact above them*"

The Word of Wisdom, D&C 89:3 – "Given for a principle with promise, *adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints, who are or can be called saints.*"

Part of our progression involves learning and growing. We can believe in all the revelations the Lord has given us, but we also have to recognize that we may be making assumptions or bringing faulty ideas into our understanding that may mean that we don't have it quite right. That said, we know the Lord will work with us in great patience if our hearts are humble and in the right place.

I wanted to highlight the entire speech by Spencer W Kimball titled Absolute Truth. I like to listen to youtube videos while I'm working and it was the talk I had been listening to when Micah asked me if I had any suggestions on the topic for this fireside. I looked it up because my sisters and I were talking about truth and how they can be different for different people and I was trying to square that away in my mind and with the gospel and what just IS true. So for example what if someone says to you something like "well this works for me", or I know it to be right because it makes me happy and it feels good." Does this automatically make it right or true? No, our perspectives are limited, our view is not God's view nor His ways our ways. To me, from my perspective, "in my opinion" the world is flat. because that is what I can see out my front door, because that is what I was taught by the scientists of my day, because the ship sailed west and never came back...etc etc. To quote President Kimball "There are relative truths, and there are also absolute truths which are the same yesterday, today, and forever—never changing. These absolute truths are not altered by the opinions of men...The earth is spherical. If all the four billion people in the world think it flat, they are in error. That is an absolute truth, and all the arguing in the world will not change it."

"We learn about these absolute truths by being taught by the Spirit. These truths are "independent" in their spiritual sphere and are to be discovered spiritually, though they may be confirmed by experience and intellect (see D&C 93:30). The great prophet Jacob said that "the Spirit speaketh the truth. . . . Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be." (Jacob 4:13). We needed to be taught in order to understand life and who we really are. God, our Heavenly Father—Elohim—lives. That is an absolute truth. All four billion of the children of men on the earth might be ignorant of him and his attributes and his powers, but he still lives. All the people on the earth might deny him and disbelieve, but he lives in spite of them. They may have their own opinions, but he still lives, and his form, powers, and attributes do not change according to men's opinions. In short, opinion alone has no power in the matter of an absolute truth. He still lives. And Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Almighty, the Creator, the Master of the only true way of life—the gospel of Jesus Christ. The intellectual may rationalize him out of existence and the unbeliever may scoff, but Christ still lives and guides the destinies of his people. That is an absolute truth."

As for our accountability, Alma 5 is always a good kick in the pants for self reflection and a reminder of what awaits us when we go stray or take others with us.

22 And now I ask of you, my brethren, how will any of you feel, if ye shall stand before the bar of God, having your garments stained with ^ablood and all manner of ^bfilthiness? Behold, what will these things testify against you?

23 Behold will they not ^atestify that ye are murderers, yea, and also that ye are ^bguilty of all manner of wickedness?

24 Behold, my brethren, do ye suppose that such an one can have a place to sit down in the kingdom of God, with ^aAbraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and also all the holy prophets, whose garments are cleansed and are spotless, pure and white?

25 I say unto you, Nay; except ye make our Creator a liar from the beginning, or suppose that he is a liar from the beginning, ye cannot suppose that such can have place in the kingdom of heaven; but they shall be cast out for they are the ^achildren of the kingdom of the devil.

Where my opinions are constantly getting me in trouble:-) one would hope I learn to keep them to myself. But I do want my witness, my personal testimony to be heard, to be written, and to be recorded in heaven for God lives, as does His Son. They have established their word through prophets in days of old as in Joseph Smith's day and on into today. The Book of Mormon is the word of God and reading it and living by its precepts fill my life with happiness found only in the redemptive love of Jesus Christ my master. I echo President Kimball in saying that is the absolute truth. (see D&C 62:3. "Nevertheless, ye are ^ablessed, for the ^btestimony which ye have borne is ^crecorded in heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you, and your ^dsins are forgiven you.")

I believe this has been answered really well up to this point so let me just summarize some points with some quotes before we continue:

“We do not present [this truth/this doctrine/etc.] with any other expectation than that we are to be called to answer to *every principle [we] advance*, in that day when the secrets of all hearts will be revealed, and the reward of every man's labor be given him”- **Joseph Smith**

“Seek not to declare my word but seek first to obtain my word...”- **Jesus Christ**

“Therefore, no matter how the world uses [terms], we must understand how God uses [terms] so we can understanding the language of holy writ and profit thereby”- **President Ezra Taft Benson**

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism...And [the Lord] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: *Till we all come in the unity of the faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” – **The Apostle Paul**

“The time is coming when those who do not obey the Lord will be separated from those who do ... difficult days are ahead. Rarely in the future will it be easy or popular to be a faithful Latter-day Saint. Each of us will be tested. The Apostle Paul warned that in the latter days, those who diligently follow the Lord ‘shall suffer persecution’. That very persecution can either crush you into silent weakness or motivate you to be more exemplary and courageous in your daily lives... Do whatever it takes to strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ by increasing your understanding of the doctrine taught in His restored church and by relentlessly seeking truth... anchored in *pure doctrine*, you will be able to step forward with faith and dogged persistence and cheerfully do all that lies in your power to fulfill the purposes of the Lord.”- **President Nelson**

“As the world speaks less of Jesus Christ [and his doctrine], let us speak more of Him [and his doctrine]” –**Elder Neil L. Andersen**

4. *“Should worldly science ever supersede God's truth? What if the two disagree? Will personal revelation ever supersede revealed revelation? What if those two disagree?”*
“What do we do when presented with teachings that do not square with the truth?”

I talked a bit about the idea of “personal revelation” accepted revelation by the Church up above. However, I do think there are some key overlaps in these questions. Whenever there appears to be conflict, it is likely due to one of 2 problems IMO:

- 1 – A lack of information, and
- 2 – A faulty assumption(s)

Lack of Info – A classic lack of info problem is that of the creation of the earth. Science uses its tools (archaeology, evolutionary biology, etc.) to make sense of the universe and the mechanics of how life could have emerged and evolved naturally. Revealed religion teaches us certain principles key to our understanding of our place in the universe (we are children of God and He created the earth and us). In both cases we simply don’t have as much information as we wished we had. Science is learning and growing, and we will one day have more revealed light from religion. However, to assume that one approach precludes the other brings us to the other issue that arises when different truth-seeking methods clash, the assumption problems.

Assumption Problems - Some examples of this might be from a classic example that has been used in the bible. In Joshua, we’re told “the sun stood still” during a battle. For many years, people assumed that meant that the sun *had* to revolve around the earth. If your faith in the scriptures hinged on that assumption, you would have had major problems with astronomers like Galileo and Copernicus sharing their scientific insights. However, if we recognize that “there might be two facts which exist and another above them”, we can see that the real problem here is neither the scriptures nor science, but a faulty assumption that we’ve brought into our interpretation. I have found people with “assumption problems” get tripped up with things they discover in Church history in a similar way. Thus, we need to be careful to not allow our pride or assumptions block deeper understanding of God and His work.

In both cases, the tie must go to the revealed word of God to us and His prophets. Those ultimate, salvific truths are the ones that, for me, are the bedrock on which everything else rests. Some of them are:

1. We are the children of Heavenly Parents
2. Jesus Christ is our Savior
3. The Lord has restored his priesthood authority, keys, and ordinances to the Prophet Joseph Smith to seal us and our families together, with Christ

Should any of these clash with science, I can patiently wait for more data to come in, because my entire soul knows that I can have confidence in those principles, come what may.

The voice of the world and God's voice are increasingly at odds. Mormon picked out story after story to help us recognize what happens to the person/nation that puts their trust in man. To which Nephi attested after fleeing the destruction of his home, that of the whole Jewish nation and witnessing the consequences to the actions of his older brothers "...yea cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm." 2 Nephi 4:32
To answer the second part of this question I'm going to refer back to question 1 in how does God reveal truth. God is a God of order and he is the same, yesterday, today and forever. He reveals truth for the church through his prophets and confirmation of those words can come to us through a second witness of the Holy Ghost. I've never had personal revelation supercede revealed revelation but I think it is the exception not the rule. Nephi knew the 10 commandments "thou shalt not kill" and yet was commanded to kill laban in order to obtain the brass plates. He received this revelation from his father, who was the current prophet, and then multiple confirmations from the Holy Ghost to override the primary commandment and obtain the plates. I would feel confident in acting if the personal revelation I was receiving came from 2 or 3 key holders and I was holding fast to the iron rod with both hands. Elder Bednar has taught us that holding fast to the iron rod entails the prayerful and constant use of all three ways of obtaining living water(or truth) they are reading, studying, and searching. Not even listening to someone else read it to you as you then and go about your day having checked the box.

Turning back to Preach My Gospel (an awesome compilation) in Chapter 4 Recognizing the Spirit under the section “A Word of Caution” we read:

“As you pray for inspiration, you should also confirm your feelings. For example, compare your decisions with the scriptures and the teachings of the living prophets. Be certain that the feelings are consistent with the assignment

you have; for example, you will not receive revelation to tell a local bishop how he should perform in his calling. Discuss your decisions and conclusions with [the keys] when appropriate.”

President James E. Faust taught “If worthy, we are entitled to receive revelations for ourselves, parents for their children, and members of the Church in their callings. But the right of revelation for others does not extend beyond our own stewardship.” (Communion with the Holy Spirit,” Ensign, Mar. 2002, 4)

End quote PMG

Meaning no, our revelation cannot supersede or will ever supersede the Word of God. Sometimes there may be conflict between the revealed Word of God and perceived revelation, let alone “science”; in such cases we are expected to heed the Words of God, if we do not heed that Word of God and continue to persist in satisfying our “itching ears” we have been warned what will transpire next in our lives:

“We should study things out in our minds, using the reasoning powers our Creator has placed within us. Then we should pray for guidance and act upon it if we receive it. If we do not receive guidance, we should act upon our best judgment. Persons who persist in seeking revelatory guidance on subjects on which the Lord has not chosen to direct us may concoct an answer out of their own fantasy or bias, or they may even receive an answer *through the medium of false revelation*” —**Elder Oaks** (“Our Strengths Can Become Our Downfall,” Ensign, Oct. 1994, 13–14)

“If the members of the Church would search their scriptures more intensely in the spirit of humility and prayer, disputations would cease among us. It seems to be a difficult thing to eliminate from the minds of some of our brethren cherished notions that are contrary to the revealed word. Many questions have been answered time and time again by those who have the knowledge and are prepared to give the answers, yet the error continues to exist. . . . Why is it that some members of the Church grasp at every sensational rumor with apparent eagerness and delight? If the same eagerness were applied to the revelations already given and we would heed them soberly and in humility of spirit, all would be well. The Lord has promised the Church “commandments not a few, and revelation in their time,” yet we have some clamoring for more revelation when we have failed to keep those already given.”
— **Joseph Fielding Smith**, (Answers to Gospel Questions: The Classic Collection in One Volume)

“We want our sons and our daughters to know God’s truth and not the vagaries of the world and we want you to study those books from whence you will obtain a knowledge of the word of the Lord to us.

Some of our good people read many of the books that are published today, popular fiction so-called but they haven’t time to read the Word of the Lord. Many of these books are beautiful, but often many ideas are expressed which are only pretty words, well-connected sentences or sentiments that are like flowers blooming on the stem without root. Real truth you can gain from books that have been adopted as standard works of the Church. I see too many of our people who are very much better read in the things that are written by some of the popular authors of books than they are in the things of God. They don’t know one thing about the real essence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they don’t know or comprehend one thing about the rites of the Priesthood and the principles of government that God has revealed to the children of men to maintain the kingdom of God in the earth. They know more about novels than they do about the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants—yes, far more.

It is surprising to hear the multitude of questions that are continuously sent to the Presidency of the Church, and to others of my brethren who are in leading positions, for information upon some of the most simple things that pertain to the Gospel. Hundreds of questions, communications, and letters are sent to us from time to time asking information and instruction on matters that are so plainly written in the revelations of God—contained in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Bible—it seems that any one who can read should understand.

We have in the gospel the truth. If that is the case, and I bear my testimony that so it is, then it is worth our every effort to understand the truth, each for himself, and to impart it in spirit and practice to our children. . . . This should be done every day, and in the home, by precept, teaching and example. . . . Spend ten minutes in reading a chapter from the words of the Lord in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, before you retire, or before you go to your daily toil. Feed your spiritual selves at home, as well as in public places.”

Chapter 5

The Inspiration and Divinity of the Scriptures

Joseph F. Smith, Teachings of the Presidents

5. *“What do we do when these teachings come from over our pulpits, in our class rooms, over YouTube, etc? If we know they are teaching false doctrine, will we be held to account if we chose not to correct them? If we listen to these false teachings can we use that as an excuse for our own wrong doings?”*

I love the idea that the best thing we can do is present a better alternative. If YouTube is teaching nonsense, start a channel that does a better job presenting the truth. Over time, honest seekers will gravitate to the truth. If we present the alternative and raise our voices, it will help.

In the Church, I think we can try to gently correct others. If we're in a position of authority, it may be our responsibility to correct. Otherwise, we can seek and follow the Spirit to do so in a way that helps accomplish our goals of building Zion while hopefully avoiding unnecessary contention or disputations.

I'm not always good at recognizing things in the moment I am way too trusting and I probably take too much in before I even consider the source and while I'm very critical of myself I'm not very critical of others. But we need to do better Nephi saw our time, he was speaking to US and about US when he wrote

20 And the Gentiles are lifted up in the ^apride of their eyes, and have ^bstumbled, because of the greatness of their ^cstumbling block, that they have built up many ^dchurches; nevertheless, they ^eput down the power and miracles of God, and preach up unto themselves their own wisdom and their own ^flearning, that they may get gain and ^ggrind upon the face of the poor.

21 And there are many churches built up which cause ^aenvyings, and ^bstrifes, and ^cmalice.

22 And there are also secret ^acombinations, even as in times of old, according to the combinations of the ^bdevil, for he is the founder of all these things; yea, the founder of murder, and ^cworks of darkness; yea, and he leadeth them by the neck with a flaxen cord, until he bindeth them with his strong cords forever.

This is the time we are living in. be not afraid to do good, the guilty take the truth hard but the righteous fear God more than man.(see 1 Nephi 16:2, D&C 7:3) I don't always respond with correction perfectly but when I'm honest with myself I am always grateful for it and the changes it leads me to, even if the truth cuts and stings a bit. One of my favorite sayings, that I'm sorry I don't know where it came from, is "if you take offense, put it back"

“It makes no difference,” stated **President Joseph Fielding Smith**, “what is written or what anyone has said, if what has been said is in conflict with what the Lord has revealed, we can set it aside. My words, and the teachings of any other member of the Church, high or low, if they do not square with the revelations, we need not accept them. Let us have this matter clear. We have accepted the four standard works as the measuring yardsticks, or balances, by which we measure every man’s doctrine. “You cannot accept the books written by the authorities of the Church as standards in doctrine, only in so far as they accord with the revealed word in the standard works. “Every man who writes is responsible, not the Church, for what he writes. If Joseph Fielding Smith writes something which is out of harmony with the revelations, then every member of the Church is duty bound to reject it. If he writes that which is in perfect harmony with the revealed word of the Lord, then it should be accepted” (Doctrines of Salvation, 3:203-4).

Teaching the same principle, **President Harold B. Lee** said: “It is not to be thought that every word spoken by the General Authorities is inspired, or that they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost in everything they [speak] and write. Now you keep that in mind. I don’t care what his position is, if he writes something or speaks something that goes beyond anything that you can find in the standard church works, unless that one be the prophet, seer, and revelator—please note that one exception—you may immediately say, ‘Well, that is his own idea.’ And if he says something that contradicts what is found in the standard church works (I think that is why we call them ‘standard’—it is the

standard measure of all that men teach), you may know by that same token that it is false, regardless of the position of the man who says it” (“Place of the Living Prophet, Seer and Revelator,” 14).(Joseph Fielding McConkie, Answers: Straightforward Answers to Tough Gospel Questions [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1998], 221.)

President Benson warned: “Now Satan is anxious to neutralize the inspired counsel of the Prophet and hence keep the priesthood off-balance, ineffective and inert in the fight for freedom. He does this through diverse means including the use of perverse reasoning...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)

And finally **President Nelson** recently warned: “The time is coming when those who do not obey the Lord will be separated from those who do (see Doctrine and Covenants 86:1–7: “Wheat and the Tares”).

6. “What is the difference between the elect who were not deceived and those who were deceived? Does it relate to absolute truth vs relative truth? How does this relate back to ‘hearing Him’ and 2 Nephi 28?”

I can’t say it better than President Nelson! Two quotes from recent years, when they sank into my heart, were mighty catalysts for me to begin the process of changing and trying to do much better in my life:

1 – “I urgently plead with each one of us to live up to our privileges as bearers of the priesthood. In a coming day, *only* those men who have taken their priesthood seriously, by *diligently* seeking to be taught by the Lord Himself, will be able to bless, guide, protect, strengthen, and heal others. Only a man who has paid the price for priesthood power will be able to bring miracles to those he loves and keep his marriage and family safe, now and throughout eternity.” (The Price of Priesthood Power, April 2016)

2 – “I promise that as you continue to be obedient, expressing gratitude for every blessing the Lord gives you, and as you patiently honor the Lord’s timetable, you will be given the knowledge and understanding you seek. Every blessing the Lord has for you—even miracles—will follow. That is what personal revelation will do for you.

I am optimistic about the future. It will be filled with opportunities for each of us to progress, contribute, and take the gospel to every corner of the earth. But I am also not naive about the days ahead. We live in a world that is complex and increasingly contentious. The constant availability of social media and a 24-hour news cycle bombard us with relentless messages. 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.”

We have the promise of a Prophet of God that as we earnestly seek to hear the voice of the Lord and *hearken* to what he tells us, that we will not be deceived, but we, and our families will be protected through turbulent times.

The reason I chose this particular subject is because we are living in the time of great deception as warned about by Christ that would precede his coming. (See JS Matthew 1) A few years ago I went through something really hard and it put me into a state of trauma. I wasn't sleeping well and the constant stress was exhausting. Plus it took me a while to recognize that my eyes were physically not focusing well anymore. So of course I found it easier to listen to my scriptures rather than read them and pretty soon I started listening to talks and then youtube videos, and the more starved for the word I got the more hungry I became so the more I searched and the further away I was being led. And like many of the other drunken Ephraimites I have been slowly starving spiritually while being fed a

glutinous non stop diet of all is well in Zion that fattens but doesn't nourish. It happened so subtly I didn't realize what was happening and it was like I somehow started just watching workout videos without any of the benefits of actually working out. When I read the scripture in 2 Nephi 28:29 the one that says "Wo be unto him that shall say: We have received the word of God, and we "need *b*no more of the word of God, for we have enough!" I thought it was for the bible thumpers who reject the Book of Mormon saying they didn't need more, I didn't think it applied to me. But what I didn't realize is that when Christ taught that the word is like bread for man that he means for us to eat it daily. How foolish is it to think that I don't need to eat today because I had a big meal last Sunday or I ate twice a day for a year when I was on my mission. Or I really feasted last Thanksgiving. Just as we need food to survive physically, we NEED the word of God to survive spiritually. President Nelson is trying to get us to wake up to our situation as he warns us that time is running out to hear Him. He warned us in 2018 well before covid would take away what for some is the only nourishment they get all week when he said "In coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost."

Thankfully I started sleeping better, I bought some old lady readers and I wasn't too far gone so that when I heard God's words I was compelled to pick up the hard copy again. One sure way to tell if you are being acted upon by the Holy Ghost is that you will be compelled to act, to change, to work, to pray, to read, to seek, to minister...to do, Not just once but again and again and again. Today and the next day, and every coming day.

It comes back to Doctrine and Covenants 1:16 once again, "They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world..." To walk after "your own way", to walk "after the image of your own god", is literally the definition of "relative truth". The more "relative truth" a society has the more diversity said society will possess and the connection between diversity in a society and conflict in the society are directly related and proportionate to each other. This is the opposite or an antithesis of the Lord and His Kingdom, for the Lord teaches "absolute truth", and His command is for all to heed it and obey it. The more God's people heed this truth and rid themselves of their own relative truth, the more unity God's people will have; the Lord cannot accept us as His people unless we are completely united. The way we rid ourselves of this relative truth and unite ourselves to absolute truth is through the iron rod, The Holy Ghost, the mind of God, etc. The elect hold to that, or as the Lord taught in Doctrine and Covenants 45:56-57 "And at that day... shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins. For they that are wise and have received *the truth* (absolute truth), and have taken *the Holy Spirit for their guide* (The Holy Ghost, the mind of God, the iron rod, etc.), 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." It is all directly connected, a one to one connection. No one should care what "Micah's opinions" are, or any other "LDS writer, YouTuber, etc." They have to, I repeat, they have to connect themselves back to absolute truth, the iron rod, the real Holy Ghost, the mind of God, the Word of God and "Hear Him"; for the time is soon coming when those who will not serve the Lord, those who "walk after their own way and after the image of their own god" yea in fine the time is soon coming when those who follow their own "relative truth", their own "opinions", will be separated from those who do, they will be hewn down and cast into the fire. Brothers and sisters cling to the rod, the iron rod, I know it will safely guide you through and you will abide the day, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen!