

The Last Days and Difficult Relationships

Fireside – October 24, 2021

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1. **What are some things prophets have warned us that will precede the Second Coming? Anything specific to families and friends, etc.? What have prophets counseled us to do to prepare for those events?**

- **[Marlene](#) –**

Starting out, I was surprised at how well this topic aligned up with this weeks come follow me study. It was D&C 121-123 where Joseph Smith was praying from liberty jail, the answer Joseph received to his prayer, and then the duty of the Saints in relation to their persecutors.

As I prepared for this fireside, I felt directed to first go read over Presidents Nelson's message that he gave in the April 2020 Liahona, "The Future of the Church: Preparing the World for the Savior's Second Coming". This talk is so interesting because the first time I read it, it was clearly about the second coming. The second time I read it, it was clearly about ministering. And this last time I read it, it was clearly about this subject right here that answers super beautifully this first question. What about our family and friends has the prophet warned us about? And what have they counseled us to do to prepare for those events?

Warning- **"Sadly, some whom you thought were your friends will betray you. And some things will simply seem unfair."**

I think many people are already seeing this not only from friends but from family as well. What was President Nelson's council?

Counsel - **"...pray for courage not to give up!"**

Warning - "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)."

Many of us have seen this as well. Friends and family members who have suddenly declared that they are no longer members of the church or are quickly heading in that direction. President Nelson counseled,

Counsel - "Our safest insurance is to continue to be worthy of admission to His holy house. The greatest gift you could give to the Lord is to keep yourself unspotted from the world, worthy to attend His holy house.

Blessing - His gift to you will be the peace and security of knowing that you are worthy to meet Him, whenever that time comes."

Warning - "Family is under attack, high divorce rates, abortion."

I know we can all identify with this. Feeling the attacks of satan in our lives and homes daily can be discouraging and exhausting.

President Nelson tells us that to combat this,

Counsel - "But we do not need to let our fears displace our faith. We can combat those fears by strengthening our faith.

Spiritual security will always depend upon *how* one lives, not *where* one lives.

Blessing - I promise that if we will do our best to exercise faith in Jesus Christ and access the power of His Atonement through repentance, we will have the knowledge and power of God to help us take the blessings of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people and to prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord.

Counsel - 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.

Blessing - 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.

Counsel - We are to be builders of an individual faith in God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and faith in His Church. We are to build families and be sealed in holy temples. We are to build the Church and kingdom of God upon the earth (see Matthew 6:33). We are to prepare for our own divine destiny: glory, immortality, and eternal lives (see Romans 2:7; Doctrine and Covenants 75:5)."

I'm sure that most of us can identify a friend and or family member in our lives that have left the church, are struggling with their testimony, or who are actively fighting against the church. Maybe these friends or family members are still supportive of you and your beliefs, or maybe they sow contention and try to chip away at your faith. No matter the situation, when someone we love is struggling it breaks our hearts facing the realization that we may lose these people in our lives.

President Nelson, to review, gave us several trials that we will be facing. First the warnings; friends and family will turn against us, those who obey will be separated from those who do not, and the family is under attack. He then tells us what we can do to combat these things, the council; pray for courage, continue to be worthy to enter His house, strengthen our faith, increase our understanding of the doctrine, relentlessly seek truth, build families and be sealed in holy temples, build the church and kingdom of God, and prepare for our own divine destiny. When we do this, President Nelson promised blessings to us; we would have peace and security of knowing we are

worthy to meet Him, have the knowledge and power of God to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world, and be able to step forward in faith and dogged persistence and cheerfully do all that lies in your power to fulfill the purposes of the Lord.

Doing these things and being strengthened by these blessings will allow us to receive the blessings promised to the House of Israel. President Nelson described that we would be involved in the Gathering of Israel on both sides of the veil, we would be a part of sealing families for eternity, and that we would be heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant. President Nelson said,

Blessings - “The Lord has reminded you, your children, and your grandchildren that you are lawful heirs, that you have been reserved in heaven for your specific time and place to be born, to grow and become His standard bearers and covenant people. As you walk in the Lord’s path of righteousness, you will be blessed to continue in His goodness and be a light and a savior unto His people (see Doctrine and Covenants 86:8–11).

Being a light and a savior unto His people means that we will have the power through Jesus Christ to ransom those loved ones who are struggling or have fallen away.

- **Tamra – John 16:33,**

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have ^apeace. In the ^bworld ye shall have ^ctribulation: but be of good ^dcheer; I have ^eovercome the world.

The Lord has love for each of us, HIS daughters, and sons. He knows us personally, he knows our needs, our desires, and our fears. We must learn to TRUST him in order to withstand the coming tribulations, especially in regard to our families. Tribulations and challenges are the common mortal challenges we experience. Opposition is essential and part of the divine plan to help us grow. In focusing on eternal perspectives, we are not allowing Satan the ability to overcome us. You know the saying, “I never said it would be easy, I just said it would be worth it” applies to every aspect to tonight’s conversation.

We know that the world will be in commotion and that pestilences, sickness, war and instability will be part of the Last Days. Which we are NOW living. We can see the things that are dividing us (the family) right now. Just twenty years ago most families and friends could have civil conversations about abortion, race, religion, politics, and cultures. Around today’s dinner table, many of these things cannot be discussed, cannot even be approached because Satan has done a very good job at dividing our communities, disabling families and mocking God.

We have an important promise that Joseph Smith received in Doctrine and Covenants 121: 7 – 8.

7 My son, ^apeace be unto thy soul; thine ^badversity and thine afflictions shall be but a ^csmall moment;
8 And then, if thou ^aendure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy ^bfoes.

And in the last days those foes might be family. I am going to talk a little more on this during the wheat and tare discussion, but for the purpose of this question, lets read Luke 12: 51-53.

51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son ^aagainst the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

Another important verse is Matthew 10:36,

36 And a man's ^afoes shall be they of his own ^bhousehold.

, and finally, a warning and statement scripture for this question is Micah 7: 4-6.

4 The best of them *is* as a brier: the most upright *is sharper* than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen *and* thy ^avisitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity.

5 ¶ ^aTrust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.

6 For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's ^aenemies are the men of his own ^bhouse.

Understanding what the scriptures teach us, will help each of us to gird up our loins in order to face what comes our way. Difficulties within a family, and opposite ideals can and (most likely will) damage family relationships. Satan was smart attacking families. Why? We are born into a family, we build families, we are sealed as families, we do genealogy to save (and link) our ancestors as a family. The heart of the gospel is the salvation of each of us WITHIN a family. So how will we face the stark realities of the desolating sickness upon the people of this earth? How can we watch the famine and pestilences change the personalities of those we love who are now in the "survival mode" because they did not prepare temporally? How can we watch as family members choose opposite sides of useless wars? There is only one way – with HIS promise of protection that we can (and will) walk away from Sodom and not look back. We may not have all of our family members with us (because they are bound by their choices). We must recognize that we will be bound by our choices and our focus has to be on our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Micah

The Family

A Proclamation to the World

The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

It says “*Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.*” This tells us two things, 1. That the disintegration of the family unit will happen and 2. After it will happen, the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets will fall upon individuals, communities, and nations. So if we look at The Family, A Proclamation to the World in that light, we see everything not only as a statement, but also a warning of a pillar that will collapse. Let’s see how well they did.

We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

Marriage being only between a man and a woman- pillar gone.

All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life.

Gender is a part of who we are before we were born, cannot be changed, and is something we should love and cherish- pillar gone.

The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

Only those who keep sacred ordinances/covenants in temples if given the opportunity in this life will qualify for exaltation- pillar all but removed.

The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God’s commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

God commanded us to replenish the earth (2 children) and multiply therein (4+ children) when physically able and only do so within the bonds of marriage- pillar removed

We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

Sanctity of life- pillar removed

I commit everyone to go through the rest of that document and ask yourself, “do we have any pillars left?” and if not, ask yourself, “what comes next?” We have been warned by Prophets and Christ himself on what is to come, we just have to be willing and humble enough to listen and hopefully heed in the time we have left.

2. Why does the Lord chasten/try/prove us? What can and does bring us solace in times of trial? How does building support networks in Christ (i.e. Zion) provide refuges from the storms of life?

▪ Marlene –

If we look back at the people of Alma and the people of Limhi, we see that one group was able to humble themselves and the other needed to go through chastening. Alma's group softened their hearts and followed the council of the prophet. Their burdens were made light and they were quickly redeemed. Limhi's group hardened their hearts and fought against the prophets council. If the Lord had not chastened them, they would have remained forever in that hardened state. But because they were chastened, their hearts were softened and they too in time were redeemed.

D&C 105:6 And my people must needs be **chastened** until they learn **obedience**, if it must needs be, by the things which they **suffer**.

D&C 136:31 My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them, even the glory of Zion; and he that will not bear chastisement is not worthy of my kingdom.

“Infuriating Unfairness” Elder Dale G. Renlund, April 2021 General Conference.

“Suffering and brutal unfairness can seem incompatible with the reality of a kind, loving Heavenly Father. Yet He is real, He is kind, and He loves each of His children perfectly.

Nothing compares to the unfairness He endured. It was not fair that He experienced all the pains and afflictions of mankind. It was not fair that He suffered for my sins and mistakes and for yours. But He chose to do so because of His love for us and for Heavenly Father. He understands perfectly what we are experiencing.

When faced with unfairness, we can push ourselves away from God or we can be drawn toward Him for help and support. For example, the prolonged warfare between the Nephites and the Lamanites affected people differently. Mormon observed that “many had become hardened” while others “were softened because of their afflictions, insomuch that they did humble themselves before God.”

The atonement allows us to soften our hearts. It will allow us to soften our hearts toward those who cause us grief and pain so that we may reach out to them in love. It will allow us to soften our hearts toward God so that we may have His spirit to be with us. So what can and does bring us solace in times of trial?

“In unfair situations, one of our tasks is to trust that “all that is unfair about life can be made right through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.” Jesus Christ overcame the world and “absorbed” all unfairness. Because of Him, we can have peace in this world and be of good cheer. If we let Him, Jesus Christ will consecrate the unfairness for our gain. He will not just console us and restore what was lost; He will use the unfairness for our benefit. When it comes to *how* and *when*, we need to recognize and accept, as did Alma, that “it mattereth not; for God knoweth all these things; and it sufficeth me to know that this is the case.”

How does building support networks in Christ (i.e. Zion) provide refuges from the storms of life?

President Brigham Young gave some advice that is just as applicable to us right now today. So many people have begun to feel more and more isolated whether it is because of Covid, separations of ideas and values, families having to move due to work, etc. President Young said,

“We are not here isolated and alone, differently formed and composed of different material from the rest of the human race. We belong to and are part of this human family, consequently we are under obligations one to another, and the Latter-day Saints in these mountains are under obligations to their brethren and sisters scattered in the nations who, through indigent circumstances, are unable to gather to themselves in the comforts of life.

Be just as independent as a God to do good. Love mercy, eschew evil, be a saviour to yourselves and to your families, and to your fellow beings just as much as you possibly can...”

(“Discourses of Brigham Young” Compiled by John H. Widtsoe. pg. 271)

Reach out in love to all. Find those who are like-minded but don't stop there. This is where ministering comes in. Minister to your family, to your wife or husband who is struggling in their testimony, minister to your child who is questioning, minister to your brother or sister

who has left the church, minister to your friend who is vocally fighting against the church. Even on the cross Christ ministered to those who crucified him, praying to His Father, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The Saints who minister to and care for each other will build refuges from the storms among themselves. They will be able to care for each other and build each other up creating a shelter from the outside world. A people united in Christ will have the ability to move mountains and tame the waves of the sea.

- **Tamra –**

We are chastened, tried and tested to become sanctified. One of my favorite books in all of the scriptures is that of Malachi. I included this story in the paper form of this fireside, I have kept it within my scriptures for well over 30 years. It is "Anonymous".



- **Art by Gill Kyle**

Malachi 3:3

Some time ago a few ladies met in a certain city to study the scriptures. While reading the third chapter of Malachi, they came upon a remarkable expression in the third verse: "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver (Malachi 3:3)". One lady proposed to visit a silversmith and report to them what he said about the subject. She went accordingly, and without telling the object of her errand, begged the silversmith to tell her about the process of refining silver.

After he had fully described it to her, she asked "But sir, do you sit while the work of refining is going on? "Oh, yes madam," he replied, I must sit with my eyes steadily fixed on the furnace, for if the time necessary for refining be exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver will be injured."

The lady at once saw the beauty, and comfort too, of the expression, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." God sees it needful to put His children into a furnace; His eye is steadily intent on the work of purifying, and His wisdom and love are both engaged in the best manner for us. Our trials do not come at random, and He will not let us be tested beyond what we can endure.

Before she left, the lady asked one final question, "When do you know the process is complete?"

"Why that is quite simple," replied the silversmith. "When I can see my own image in the silver, the refining process is finished."
~Anonymous

In the June 2001 talk by Elder Todd Christofferson

Justification and sanctification are at the center of God’s gracious plan of salvation and are the essence of our witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. While justification and sanctification may be viewed as distinct topics, in reality I believe they are elements of a single divine process that qualifies us to live in the presence of God the Father and Jesus Christ. I have organized my discussion of this doctrine into three sections based upon statements from “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles.”

Justification and sanctification are the fruit of the Atonement’s “infinite virtue,” which virtue we also refer to as mercy or grace. A verse in the Book of Mormon lays a helpful foundation: “And if ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is no sin. If ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness. And if there be no righteousness there be no happiness. And if there be no righteousness nor happiness there be no punishment nor misery. And if these things are not there is no God. And if there is no God we are not, neither the earth; for there could have been no creation of things, neither to act nor to be acted upon; wherefore, all things must have vanished away” ([2 Ne. 2:13](#)).

When we are refined, we are sanctified, and when we are sanctified we are ready to meet our Savior and Heavenly Father. Before that day, we must go through heartache, be tested, be refined, and learn to accept our test. We must be free of Babylon within our hearts. We need to be able to stand (perhaps) alone in holy places and not bend. This is when Zion will be found in our hearts. When the worldly vices become Zion vices (i.e. genealogy, temple work, personal revelation, living celestial law, taking care of each other).

- **Micah**

Suffering is a part of life, there is no getting around that, life will not be entirely rainbows and sunshine and lollipops, we should all understand that... but we also have to understand that in conjunction with what the Lord taught us:

Doctrine and Covenants 105:

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

We know the Lord isn't a liar, and here the Lord says that "we suffer until we learn obedience- ***if it must needs be***" meaning, if we give Him no other choice!

I have done a lot of thinking of the difference between Alma and Limhi with that in mind, but recently my mind has been focused more intently on the children of Israel... The humbling experience that multiple groups there went through should teach us a lot- but why should that comparison hold a special place in our hearts?

Doctrine and Covenants 103:

15 Behold, I say unto you, the redemption of Zion must needs come by power;

16 Therefore, I will raise up unto my people a man, who shall lead them like ***as Moses led the children of Israel.***

17 ***For ye are the children of Israel,*** and of the seed of Abraham, and ye must needs be led out of bondage by power, and with a stretched-out arm.

18 ***And as your fathers were led at the first, even so shall the redemption of Zion be.***

There are many such examples in that time period of groups of people making the choice for suffering vs being humble to the Lord

1. We talk of the "plagues of Egypt" like they all needed to happen- they didn't... If the people had humbled themselves and "let the Lord's people go" the plagues would have stopped. But the disobedience to the Lord's prophet eventually cost the proud their first born children- Jews and Egyptians who didn't listen to the prophet BOTH paid that price

2. The Brass Serpent

3. The Egyptians being swallowed in the sea

4. The Israelites wandering in the desert for 40 years

etc. etc. etc.

So I think first and foremost people need to understand that a lovingly Heavenly Father in many cases, only makes us "suffer" as a last resort due to our own personal stubbornness, pride, and wickedness... This should bring us peace and joy if we are righteous and should cause us to fear greatly if we have set at naught the counsel of the Lord...

Tying these two points together, the Lord taught is in

Doctrine and Covenants 124:

84 ... behold, [anyone who] aspieth to establish [their own personal] counsel instead of the counsel which I have ordained, even that of the Presidency of my Church... he setteth up a golden calf for the worship of my people

I personally know that gaining a testimony of this helps one in times of suffering- if one is prideful and wicked they will know why they are suffering and can quickly repent and end the suffering, and if one is simply being tried they can know as Paul taught:

1 Corinthians 10

13 ...but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

So lastly, why support networks? Going back to Alma vs Limhi as a type:

Mosiah 18:

7 And it came to pass after many days there were a goodly number gathered together at the place of Mormon, to hear the words of Alma. Yea, all were gathered together that believed on his word, to hear him. And he did teach them, and did preach unto them repentance, and **redemption**, and faith on the Lord.

8 And it came to pass that he said unto them: Behold, here are the waters of Mormon (for thus were they called) **and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people,** **and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;**

9 **Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort,** and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life—

10 Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, **that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?**

11 And now when the people had heard these words, they clapped their hands for joy, and exclaimed: This is the desire of our hearts.

Moses 7

18 And the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.

Now that we have gone over those scriptures with Alma and Enoch's city, let us read the following and let's see if we can figure out our answer:

Doctrine and Covenants 105:

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

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

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

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

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

3. Why would persecution arise against Saints of God? How does knowing the “why” help us prepare for/against it?

- **Marlene**

“We are now in a day of trial to prove ourselves worthy or unworthy of the life which is to come.

All intelligent beings who are crowned with crowns of glory, immortality, and eternal lives must pass through every ordeal appointed for intelligent beings to pass through, to gain their glory and exaltation. Every calamity that come upon mortal beings will be suffered to come upon the few, to prepare them to enjoy the presence of the Lord. If we obtain the glory that Abraham obtained, we must do so by the same means that he did. If we are ever prepared to enjoy the society of Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or of their faithful children, and of the faithful Prophets and Apostles, we must pass through the same experience and gain the knowledge, intelligence, and endowments that will prepare us to enter into the celestial kingdom of our Father and God.”

(“Discourses of Brigham Young” Compiled by John H. Widtsoe. pg. 345)

As Elder Holland, quoting Elder Maxwell, in his talk, “Waiting on the Lord” in the October 2020 General Conference, “...Lord, be careful to keep me from all the experiences that made Thee divine. And then, when the rough sledding by everyone else is over, please let me come and dwell with Thee, where I can boast about how similar our strengths and our characters are as I float along on my cloud of comfortable Christianity.”

Those who wish to escape all trial and tribulation will not only be worthy of God's kingdom but will not even be prepared. Being prepared means becoming even as our Father with the ability to handle His glory. It means being able to stand on equal ground with those who suffered, fought, died to build the kingdom of God. Always being rescued will never get us there.

All trials as bitter as they are, are for our benefit. Even the whirlwinds of Satan who does not want us not God's plan to succeed are a trial that will be for our benefit. They will cause us to become the sons and daughters of God so that we may become even like unto God dwelling again with Him.

- **Tamra**

We know that the Book of Mormon is a prototype of what is going to happen to us. One of the many papers that Micah has put out for us is his Lamanite vs Nephite paper. I will let Micah speak for himself on this subject, but just like the Nephites, the early Christians and lastly the early Saints, we too will be tried and persecuted. In our world, I believe it is becoming clearer that persecutions against Christians, Jews and ultimately the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints will only continue to increase. Why? Because each of these groups are awaiting the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan wants to destroy everything “good” in the world and replace it with things that entice, seduce, obstruct, and create unhealthy addictions. Also; just like in Alma, we should anticipate that much of the persecution will be from within.

Joseph Smith Quotes

“I am like a huge, rough stone rolling down from a high mountain; and the only polishing I get is when some corner gets rubbed off by coming in contact with something else, striking with accelerated force against religious bigotry, priestcraft, lawyer-craft, doctor-craft, lying editors, suborned judges and jurors, and the authority of perjured executives, backed by mobs, blasphemers, licentious and corrupt men and women—all hell knocking off a corner here and a corner there. Thus I will become a smooth and polished shaft in the quiver of the Almighty” (*History of the Church*, 5:401).

Joseph Smith wrote the following from Liberty Jail after receiving letters from his loved ones: “We need not say to you that the floodgates of our hearts were lifted and our eyes were a fountain of tears, but those who have not been enclosed in the walls of prison without cause or provocation, can have but little idea how sweet the voice of a friend is; one token of friendship from any source whatever awakens and calls into action every sympathetic feeling . . . until finally all enmity, malice and hatred, and past differences, misunderstandings and mismanagements are slain victorious at the feet of hope; and when the heart is sufficiently contrite, then the voice of inspiration steals along and whispers, [‘]My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; and then if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes[’]” (*History of the*

Church, 3:293; the last portion of this paragraph was later canonized in Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–8).

Hyrum Smith, Church Patriarch, 1841–1844

“Bonds and imprisonments and persecutions are no disgrace to the Saints. It is that that is common in all ages of the world since the days of Adam. . . . The same things produce the same effect in every age of the world. We only want the same patience, the same carefulness, the same guide, the same grace, the same faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . What we do not learn by precept we may learn by experience. All these things are to make us wise and intelligent that we may be the happy recipients of the highest glory” (letter to Mary Fielding Smith, c. 1839, probably from Liberty Jail, Liberty, Missouri, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization modernized).

Orson F. Whitney, Apostle, 1906–1931

“No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude and humility. All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts, expands our souls, and makes us more tender and charitable, more worthy to be called the children of God, . . . and it is through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we come here to acquire and which will make us more like our Father [in heaven]” (quoted by Spencer W. Kimball, in “Tragedy or Destiny,” *Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year*, Dec. 6, 1955, 6).

Alma 4:15.

15 And now it came to pass that Alma, having seen the afflictions of the humble followers of God, and the persecutions which were heaped upon them by the remainder of his people, and seeing all their [inequality](#), began to be very sorrowful; nevertheless the Spirit of the Lord did not fail him.

And finally, the most amazing verse of warning –

2 Timothy 3:12

12 Yea, and all that will live [godly](#) in Christ Jesus shall [suffer](#) [persecution](#).

- **Micah**

If one knew the “why” of the persecution of the Saints in the last days, they could then teach their children, friends, family, and Saints what they needed to do to be able to best weather the storm.

In early February 1844, four months prior to his death, Joseph Smith had a dream, which he related to Wilford Woodruff, Willard Richards, and W. W. Phelps. He stated,

*"I was standing on a peninsula, in the midst of a vast body of water where there appeared to be a large harbor or pier built out for boats to come to. I was surrounded by my friends, and while looking at this harbor I saw a steamboat approaching the harbor. There were bridges on the pier for persons to cross, and there came up a wind and drove the steamboat under one of the bridges and upset it. I ran up to the boat, expecting the persons would all drown; and wishing to do something to assist them, I put my hand against the side of the boat, and with one surge I shoved it under the bridge and righted it up, and then told them to take care of themselves. But it was not long before I saw them starting out into the channel or main body of the water again. The storms were raging and the waters rough. I said to my friends that **if they did not understand the signs of the times and the spirit of prophecy, they would be apt to be lost**. It was but a few moments after when we saw the waves break over the boat, and she soon foundered and went down with all on board.*

Back to Alma vs Limhi as a type:

Mosiah 12:

25 And now Abinadi said unto them: Are you priests, and pretend to teach this people, and **to understand the spirit of prophesying**, and yet desire to know of me what these things mean?

26 I say unto you, wo be unto you for perverting the ways of the Lord! For if ye understand these things ye have not taught them; therefore, ye have perverted the ways of the Lord.

27 Ye have not applied your hearts to understanding; therefore, ye have not been wise.

Doctrine and Covenants 45:

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**.

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.

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.

2 Nephi 27-28

24 And again it shall come to pass that the Lord shall say unto him that shall read the words that shall be delivered him:

25 Forasmuch as this people draw near unto me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men—

10 And the blood of the saints shall cry from the ground against them.

11 Yea, they have all gone out of the way; they have become corrupted.

12 Because of pride, and because of false teachers, and false doctrine, their churches have become corrupted, and their churches are lifted up; because of pride they are puffed up.

14 ..., they have all gone astray save it be a few, who are the humble followers of Christ; nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err because they are taught by the precepts of men.

15 O the wise, and the learned, and the rich, that are puffed up in the pride of their hearts, and all those who preach false doctrines, and all those who commit whoredoms, and pervert the right way of the Lord, wo, wo, wo be unto them, saith the Lord God Almighty, for they shall be thrust down to hell!

16 Wo unto them that turn aside the just for a thing of naught and revile against that which is good, and say that it is of no worth!

3 Nephi 24

15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

16 Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

17 And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

18 Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

Now that we have gone through those, let's read some recent words from President Nelson and not see if we can once again find our answer:

“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.

You will have days when you will be discouraged. So pray for courage not to give up! Sadly, some who you thought were your friends will betray you. And some things will simply seem unfair.

However, I promise you that as you follow Jesus Christ, you will find sustained peace and true joy. As you keep your covenants with

increasing precision, and as you defend the Church and kingdom of God on the earth today, the Lord will bless you with strength and wisdom to accomplish what only members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can accomplish.” (President Nelson, The Future of the Church: Preparing the World for the Savior’s Second Coming)

4. What does the Lord teach us in the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares regarding what we will see in the church? How does reading, understanding, holding onto, loving, etc. the scriptures play into that teaching?

▪ **Marlene**

D&C 86:5-7 Behold, verily I say unto you, the angels are crying unto the Lord day and night, who are ready and waiting to be sent forth to reap down the fields;

But the Lord saith unto them, pluck not up the tares while the blade is yet tender (for verily your faith is weak), lest you destroy the wheat also.

Therefore, let the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest is fully ripe; then ye shall first gather out the wheat from among the tares, and after the gathering of the wheat, behold and lo, the tares are bound in bundles, and the field remaineth to be burned.

The New Testament Institute Student Manuel describes the tares as being, “...darnel grass, a poisonous weed, which, until it comes into ear, is similar in appearance to wheat”

We have no way of knowing who is truly a tare and who is tender wheat whose faith is not weak. We may look at those who have left the church or who are struggling and say to ourselves, “they must be a tare.” But examine our own lives and hearts. Are we currently strong mature wheat? Have we always been strong mature wheat? At any point in our lives because of our choices we can make the choice to be wheat and grow in faith or we can choose to become a tare. It is not our responsibility to identify who is a wheat and who is a tare. People will do that on their own “Ye shall know them by their fruits (Matthew 7:16)” and as *President Marion G. Romney* (1897–1988) of the First Presidency stated: “The tempo of wickedness and destruction has been greatly accelerated ... , and so has the gathering in of the wheat. Even now the tares are binding themselves in bundles, making ready for the field to be burned” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1966, 53). It is our job however to reach out to our neighbor, to our friends, and families, and to our enemy and bring the gospel to them.”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of the challenge this presents to Latter-day Saints today:

“Church members will live in this wheat-and-ares situation until the Millennium. Some real tares even masquerade as wheat, including the few eager individuals who lecture the rest of us about Church doctrines in which they no longer believe. They criticize the use of

Church resources to which they no longer contribute. They condescendingly seek to counsel the Brethren whom they no longer sustain. Confrontive, except of themselves of course, they leave the Church, but they cannot leave the Church alone (see [“The Net Gathers of Every Kind,”] Ensign, Nov. 1980, 14). ...

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, quiet goodness must persevere, even when, as prophesied, a few actually rage in their anger against that which is good (see 2 Ne. 28:20). Likewise, the arrogance of critics must be met by the meekness and articulateness of believers. If sometimes ringed by resentment, we must still reach out, especially for those whose hands hang down (see D&C 81:5). If our shortcomings as a people are occasionally highlighted, then let us strive to do better” (“Becometh As a Child,” Ensign, May 1996, 68).

The wheat and the tares will be divided by those who hold tight to the iron rod, and those who do not; by those who hold fast to the scriptures and the words of the prophets and those who do not. When President Nelson in The October 2019 General Conference asked us, “How would my life be different if my knowledge gained from the Book of Mormon were suddenly taken away?”, he was describing the separating of the wheat and tares. Hold onto the scriptures, the iron rod, as if your life depended on it.

- **Tamra – I have contemplated this question for over a well over a month, as we had that long to prepare and organize our thoughts. I kept coming back to the verse in Matthew 13:25,26**

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

This verse we can easily liken to the church and the tares being sown within the church. How does this happen? It happens in many ways. Members of the church attempting to bring “light unto themselves” or practicing priestcraft. It comes from those people who have not taken the time to study diligently the scriptures and understand the doctrines and principles of the gospel and they teach false doctrine in classes or from the pulpit.

Ezra Taft Benson states:

“The Book of Mormon exposes the enemies of Christ. It confounds false doctrines and lays down contention. (See 2 Ne. 3:12.) It fortifies the humble followers of Christ against the evil designs, strategies, and doctrines of the devil in our day. The type of apostates in the Book of Mormon are similar to the type we have today. God, with his infinite foreknowledge, so molded the Book of Mormon that we might see the error and know how to combat false educational, political, religious, and philosophical concepts of our time” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* [2014], 132).

In the Book for Mormon teaching manual, it teaches us further one of Satan’s tools is opposition to truth such as:

God-given truth versus moral relativism (the idea that there is no universal right or wrong), religious liberty versus the rights of special interest groups, and the right to an abortion versus the right to life.

In the New Testament student manual, chapter 8, it states:

Then the disciples asked the Savior about “the end of the world.” The **Prophet Joseph Smith** (1805–44) explained the meaning of this phrase (end of the world) while commenting on the parable of the wheat and the tares (see [Matthew 13:36–43](#)): “According to [the Savior’s] language, the end of the world is the destruction of the wicked; the harvest and the end of the world have an allusion directly to the human family in the last days, instead of the earth, as many have imagined” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], [300](#)). Thus, the end of the world is not the end of the earth but the end of wickedness.

Many of the Savior’s prophecies about the destruction of Jerusalem can also apply to our day, when we are preparing for the Second Coming of the Savior (see [Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:5–21](#)). The Savior taught that false Christs and false prophets would arise and would “deceive many ... if possible,” including, as recorded in [verse 22](#), “the very elect, who are the elect according to the covenant.” The term *elect* refers to “those who love God with all their hearts and live lives that are pleasing to Him” (Guide to the Scriptures, [“Elect”](#); scriptures.lds.org). In some instances, it refers more specifically to baptized members of the Church. **President Harold B. Lee** (1899–1973) taught that “‘according to the covenant’ means members of the Church of Jesus Christ” (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1996], 401; see also [D&C 29:7](#); [33:6](#)).

The END of the family. And the phrase “the elect according to the covenant” refers to members of the Church of Jesus Christ. The only way to not be caught in the “snares” set by Satan, is to KNOW, UNDERSTAND and put on the armor of God. We are going to need it in order to fight off these latter-day snares. We need to follow the teachings of the prophet and surround ourselves completely with the light of Christ. Having the ability to discern truth and light (word of God) from lies and deceit is paramount. We literally need to be adopted into the mindset of a stripling warrior.

- **Micah**

To cut down on time I don’t have written responses for the next two, but I do have some papers to refer people to on this, including “Tribalism, Covenants, Honesty”, Firesides held on May 2 2021, May 30 2021, and June 13 2021

- 5. **What is the depth of the sealing power? Why is it important? How will understanding the sealing power help us to have confidence in the promises given to us regarding our loved ones?**

- **Marlene**

Matthew 16:19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

“Families Under Covenant” President Henry B. Eyring, April 2012 General Conference

“The return of Elijah blessed all who hold the priesthood. Elder Harold B. Lee made that clear as he spoke in general conference, quoting President Joseph Fielding Smith. Listen carefully: “I hold the priesthood; you brethren here hold the priesthood; we have received the Melchizedek Priesthood—which was held by Elijah and by other prophets and by Peter, James and John. But while we have authority to baptize, while we have authority to lay on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost and to ordain others and do all these things, without the sealing power we could do nothing, for there would be no validity to that which we did.”

That feeling of his heart turning has already come to my friend and to his family. It may have come to you in this meeting. You may have seen in your mind, as I have, the face of your father or your mother. It may have been a sister or a brother. It may have been a daughter or a son.

They may be in the spirit world or continents away from you. But joy came from a feeling that connections with them are sure because you are or can be bound to them by priesthood ordinances that God will honor.

Melchizedek Priesthood holders who are fathers in sealed families have been taught what they must do. There is nothing that has come or will come into your family as important as the sealing blessings. There is nothing more important than honoring the marriage and family covenants you have made or will make in the temples of God.

The way to do that is clear. The Holy Spirit of Promise, through our obedience and sacrifice, must seal our temple covenants in order to be realized in the world to come. President Harold B. Lee explained what it means to be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise by quoting Elder Melvin J. Ballard: “We may deceive men but we cannot deceive the Holy Ghost, and our blessings will not be eternal unless they are also sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. The Holy Ghost is one who reads the thoughts and hearts of men, and gives his sealing approval to the blessings pronounced upon their heads. Then it is binding, efficacious, and of full force.”

“When we as Latter-day Saints talk about marriage we are talking about a holy celestial order. We are talking about a system out of which can grow the greatest love, joy, peace, happiness, and serenity known to humankind. We are talking about creating a family unit that has the potential of being everlasting and eternal, a family unit where a man and a wife can go on in that relationship to all eternity, and where mother and daughter and father and son are bound by eternal ties that will never be severed. We are talking about creating a unit more important than the Church, more important than any organization that exists on earth or in heaven, a unit out of which exaltation and eternal life grow; and when we talk about eternal life, we are talking about the kind of life that God our Heavenly Father lives.

In a manner of speaking we have, here and now, probationary families even though we have been married in the temple, because our marriage in the temple is conditional. It is conditioned upon our subsequent compliance with the laws, the terms, the conditions of the covenant that we then make. And so when I get married in the temple, I am put in a position where I can strive and labor and learn to love my wife with the perfection that must exist if I am going to have a fulness of the glory that attends this covenant in eternity, and it puts her in a position to learn to love me in the same way. It puts both of us in a position to bring up our children in light and truth and to school and prepare them to be members of an eternal family unit, and it puts us as children of our parents in a position where we honor our parents and do what is necessary to have these eternal ties go from one generation to the next and the next. Eventually there

will be a great patriarchal chain of exalted beings from Adam to the last man, with any links left out being individuals who are not qualified and worthy to inherit, possess, and receive along the indicated line.

(“Celestial Marriage” Elder Bruce R. McConkie, November 1977 BYU speeches.)

How many of us have difficult family relationships? I would be willing to bet that every single person on this planet has at least one difficult family relationship. Maybe we don't see eye to eye, maybe that person is unloving, maybe they have left the church, maybe you are the only person in your family who is a member of the church. The sealing power combined with the atonement has the ability to heal all difficulties within our families.

My dad is the first member of the church in his entire family line. His parents, nor brothers in life never joined the church. We found out years later that a cousin of his joined the church but we have no record of anyone else ever joining in life. My dad's family who were not only a dysfunctional and at times abusive family were also very against my dad joining the church. When my grandmother, his mother, passed away my parents didn't even bother doing her temple work. I was five when she passed away. A couple years later my grandmother came to my mom and dad. She was upset with them that they had not done her work and told them to get it done quickly. I was upset because I wanted to be the one to do her work but I was only seven or eight at the time. My parents told me that they couldn't wait, she was upset at them and they had to get it done right away. Years later when I had the opportunity to begin doing work for my family, I had the chance to do the work for my great-grandmother, my dad's grandmother, and then have her sealed to her husband were I felt the rejoicing of her children. My sister, her husband, my husband and I, after my grandfather, my dad's father died, went together to have him sealed to his parents. After my uncle died, my dad's brother, we also had his work done. I have had the opportunity to do work the works for so many of my dad's family especially. I have experienced baptismal rooms full of people when only a hand full of us physically stood there. I can't say that all have accepted the ordinances done for them in the temple but I know that many of them have. A family who had zero membership in the church now has a woven tapestry that connects it back hundreds of years. A family that was filled with pirates, knife fighters, abusers, and outlaws now has many of them who have had their garments washed white through the atonement of Jesus Christ and have been lifted out of their former state through the sealing power.

Each person has the freedom to choose to accept the work done for them in the temple. The sealing power gives us the ability to reach through the veil beyond the grave and lift up those who were blinded in life. It gives those who have passed away the ability to overcome the places they were trapped in life and be united with us, the rest of the human family, and with God. So many of us feel such great anxiety for our loved ones. We see the choices they are making and fear that we are losing them. Everyone will have to make that choice but the sealing power runs deep and strong. Where no hope existed for my entire family, because of the sealing power, I know that my grandmother has accepted the gospel and I know that some if not all of the children of my great-grandmother have accepted the gospel. We need not fear but rather have hope and faith in our Heavenly Father who created such a merciful and perfect plan that could ransom even from the grave.

So now what about those who are not family who are difficult to deal with and who persecute us? Have any of you ever done that activity through the Family Search App were you search to see who in the room is related to you? You can do this with anyone who has the Family Search App. You will be shocked at how many people you are related to. It may be distantly but in reality, we are all in one way or another related. The more temple work that is done, the more the weaving of the human family become complete and clear. Those who are difficult, who persecute, and martyr will all, as we complete their work, have the opportunity to accept or reject that temple work; the hand that we are extending to them through the veil. And it is because of the sealing powers that our hearts will turn to them and their hearts will turn to us.

- **Tamra**

The talk I am going to share with you should be read in full.

December 2010 talk by Elder James Hamula, “Commandments, Calamities, and the Second Coming”

Ancient prophets who foresaw the last days also seemed to have been troubled. Referring to the Lord’s latter-day coming, Joel asked, “Who can abide it?” ([Joel 2:11](#)). Similarly, Malachi exclaimed: “Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?” ([Malachi 3:2](#); see also [3 Nephi 24:2](#); [D&C 128:24](#)). And after seeing the signs of the last days, John the Beloved cried out, “The great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” ([Revelation 6:17](#)).² These are expressions of concern about the ability of people to endure the calamities and perils of the last days. Fortunately, the Father and the Son have addressed these prophetic concerns.

Preparing for the Future

“Knowing the calamity” that was coming, the Father and the Son called upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and gave him—and through him, the rest of us—commandments ([D&C 1:17](#)). Perhaps the most important commandment was given by the Father when He and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820. Referring to His Son, the Father commanded Joseph, “Hear Him!” ([Joseph Smith—History 1:17](#); see also [Matthew 17:5](#); [Mark 9:7](#); [Luke 9:35](#)). On that day and thereafter, Jesus Christ gave Joseph doctrines, covenants, and commandments to “prepare [all people] for that which is to come” ([D&C 1:12](#); see also [D&C 133:10](#)). Only by receiving such doctrines, covenants, and commandments can the world be properly prepared for the Lord’s coming and everything leading up to that event. “If ye are prepared,” the Lord has counseled, “ye shall not fear” ([D&C 38:30](#)).

Among the essential instructions given by the Lord to prepare for His coming is that we listen to and obey His voice. “Hearken and hear, O ye inhabitants of the earth ... hear the voice of the Lord” ([D&C 133:16](#)). Significantly, “the voice of the Lord is unto all men” so that “all that will hear may hear” ([D&C 1:2, 11](#)). The Lord’s voice is manifest to us in various ways. It is manifest in the voice of His servants: “Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” ([D&C 1:38](#); see also [D&C 133:8–10, 16, 36–38, 71](#)).³ It is manifest in the administration of His Spirit: “My voice is Spirit” ([D&C 88:66](#)).⁴ In addition to His voice, manifestations in the commotions of the earth will be a witness of the warnings: “After your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes. ... And ... the testimony of the voice of thunderings, ... lightnings, ... tempests, and ... waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds” ([D&C 88:89–90](#)).

Regardless of the form of the voice, the substance of the Lord's message is the same. "Sanctify yourselves. ... Go ye out from Babylon. ... Hear the voice of the Lord; for he ... commandeth all men everywhere to repent" ([D&C 133:4, 5, 16](#)). The call to repent and be sanctified is a call to prepare "to meet the Bridegroom" ([D&C 133:10](#); see also [D&C 133:19](#); [88:92](#); [Matthew 25:1–13](#)), who is Jesus Christ (see [D&C 65:3](#)). When the Lord returns, He "shall stand in the midst of his people, and shall reign over all flesh" ([D&C 133:25](#)).⁵ To dwell with the Lord in that day, we must be clean, for no unclean thing can dwell in His presence (see [1 Nephi 10:21](#); [3 Nephi 27:19](#); [Moses 6:57](#); [1 Corinthians 6:9](#); [Ephesians 5:5](#)).

Thus, there is no more essential preparation for the great day of the Lord than heeding His call to repent and be sanctified, which we cannot accomplish without baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost (see [3 Nephi 27:19–20](#)).⁶

They who will endure the storms of the last days and will stand when the Lord appears are they who know and obey His voice. As the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith: "They ... [who] 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*" ([D&C 45:57](#); emphasis added). Such persons will have sanctified themselves through receipt of the saving ordinances and obedience to the covenants associated with such ordinances, understanding that when the veil is rent and all men shall see Him, "he that is not purified *shall not abide the day*" ([D&C 38:8](#); emphasis added). Such persons will be those who have availed themselves of the blessings of the temple and made such blessings available to their kindred dead (see [D&C 128:24](#); [Revelation 7:14–17](#)).

6. Why is the counsel to "Stand in Holy Places" important and how will it become even more important in the future during the tribulations? Holding strong to the "Iron Rod", the words of the Lord, our Prophet(s) and standing firm in personal revelation for ourselves?

▪ **Marlene**

Holy places are those that are temples or are those that we are transforming into temples, ie. Our homes. These are places where the Spirit of God can reside and these are places where God can physically come to visit His people.

Interesting that President Nelson this last conference pointed out, "My dear brothers and sisters, when renovations on the Salt Lake Temple are completed, there will be no safer place during an earthquake in the Salt Lake Valley than inside that temple. Likewise, whenever any kind of upheaval occurs in your life, the safest place to be spiritually is living inside your temple covenants!

Please believe me when I say that when your spiritual foundation is built solidly upon Jesus Christ, you have no need to fear. As you are true to your covenants made in the temple, you will be strengthened by His power. Then, when spiritual earthquakes occur, you will be able to stand strong because your spiritual foundation is solid and immovable." ("The Temple and Your Spiritual Foundation, Russel M. Nelson, General Conference, October 2021")

Whether we realize it or not we are all currently in a storm. It may be a little calmer right now, the rain may have momentarily stopped, but as the Second Coming draws closer and closer that storm will only intensify. The waves of the storm will come at us in a thousand different ways. Something we once knew to be true, we may find ourselves suddenly doubting. Someone may talk us into something that once knew to be false. A trial may shake our testimony or confuse us. The only way through the storm of voices and ideas, natural disasters,

wickedness and deceit, is the sure foundation that is built on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the anchor that binds our souls to Him. It is the only thing that will keep us from being tossed too and fro by the waves of the sea. “Standing in Holy Places”, “Holding Tight to the Iron Rod”, and “Hearing Him” will ensure that we will be able to successfully navigate the storm.

So just to review the council President Nelson gave us to on how to navigate the difficult relationships in our lives; **pray for courage, continue to be worthy to enter His house, strengthen our faith, increase our understanding of the doctrine, relentlessly seek truth, build families and be sealed in holy temples, build the church and kingdom of God, and prepare for our own divine destiny.** When we do this, President Nelson promised blessings to us; we would **have peace and security of knowing we are worthy to meet Him, have the knowledge and power of God to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world, and be able to step forward in faith and dogged persistence and cheerfully do all that lies in your power to fulfill the purposes of the Lord.**

Doing these things and being straightened by these blessings will allow us to receive the blessings promised to the House of Israel. President Nelson described that we would be involved in the Gathering of Israel on both sides of the veil, we would be a part of sealing families for eternity, and that we would be heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant. President Nelson said, **“The Lord has reminded you, your children, and your grandchildren that you are lawful heirs, that you have been reserved in heaven for your specific time and place to be born, to grow and become His standard bearers and covenant people. As you walk in the Lord’s path of righteousness, you will be blessed to continue in His goodness and be a light and a savior unto His people (see [Doctrine and Covenants 86:8–11](#)).**

My challenge to everyone tonight is to do just what President Nelson asked us to do; pray for courage, be worthy to enter His house, strengthen our faith, increase our understanding of the doctrine, relentlessly seek truth, build families and be sealed in holy temples, build the church and kingdom of God, and prepare for our ow

- **Tamra –**

I would like to read to you the words of our beloved prophet Thomas S. Monson, who addressed the world in October 2011, “Stand in Holy Places”

Our Father in Heaven is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The prophet Mormon tells us that God is “unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity.”³ In this world where nearly everything seems to be changing, His constancy is something on which we can rely, an anchor to which we can hold fast and be safe, lest we be swept away into uncharted waters.

It may appear to you at times that those out in the world are having much more fun than you are. Some of you may feel restricted by the code of conduct to which we in the Church adhere. My brothers and sisters, I declare to you, however, that there is *nothing* which can bring more joy into our lives or more peace to our souls than the Spirit which can come to us as we follow the Savior and keep the commandments. That Spirit cannot be present at the kinds of activities in which so much of the world participates. The Apostle Paul declared the truth: “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”⁴ The term *natural man* can refer to any of us if we allow ourselves to be so.

We must be vigilant in a world which has moved so far from that which is spiritual. It is essential that we reject anything that does not conform to our standards, refusing in the process to surrender that which we desire most: eternal life in the kingdom of God. The storms

will still beat at our doors from time to time, for they are an inescapable part of our existence in mortality. We, however, will be far better equipped to deal with them, to learn from them, and to overcome them if we have the gospel at our core and the love of the Savior in our hearts. The prophet Isaiah declared, “The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.”⁵

As a means of being *in* the world but not being *of* the world, it is necessary that we communicate with our Heavenly Father through prayer. He wants us to do so; He’ll answer our prayers. The Savior admonished us, as recorded in [3 Nephi 18](#), to “watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; for Satan desireth to have you. ...

“Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name;

“And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you.”⁶

As the winds of change swirl around us and the moral fiber of society continues to disintegrate before our very eyes, may we remember the Lord’s precious promise to those who trust in Him: “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”⁹

What a promise! May such be our blessing, I sincerely pray in the sacred name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

The only way to not be caught in the “snares” set by Satan, is to KNOW, UNDERSTAND and put on the armor of God. We must follow the teachings of the prophet and surround ourselves completely with the light of Christ. Having the ability to discern truth and light (word of God) from lies and deceit. We literally need to be adopted into the mindset of a stripling warrior.

- **Micah**

I want to take you through a scripture chain I’ve gone through a few times in the past, the most recent was in my conference talk break down of Essential Conversations by Sister Joy D. Jones

D&C 84:

44 For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from 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.

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.

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.

Moroni 7:

25 Wherefore, by the ministering of angels, and by every word which proceeded forth out of the mouth of God, men began to exercise faith in Christ; and thus by faith, they did lay hold upon every good thing; and thus it was until the coming of Christ.

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.

D&C 45:

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.

D&C 124:

45 And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place

And I'll finish with a quote we've heard a million times already, but that needs to reread over and over again, as we continue to pass through the time period we are in right now... When we are in our Young Women's class and are trying to uphold the prophet, and our young women's counselors undermine us- we need to remember this quote... When we are in our families upholding the prophets and our own families are undermining- we need to remember this quote... When we are in our online groups and are upholding the prophets and "those who we thought were our friends" would rather have conversations about exceptions to obedience- we need to remember this quote!

"[For] the time is coming when we will be mixed up in these now peaceful valleys to that extent that it will be difficult to tell the face of a Saint from the face of an enemy to the people of God. Then, brethren, look out for the great sieve, for there will be a great sifting time, and many will fall; for I say unto you there is a test, a Test, a TEST coming, and who will be able to stand? This church has before it many close

places through which it must pass before the work of God is crowned with victory. To meet the difficulties that are coming it will be necessary for you to have knowledge of the truth of this work for yourselves. The difficulties will be of such character that the man or woman who does not possess this personal knowledge or witness will fall. If you have not got the testimony, live right and call upon the Lord and cease not 'till you obtain it. If you do not, you will not stand... Then the Prophet Joseph and others will make their appearance and those who have remained faithful will be selected to return to Jackson County, Missouri and take part in the building of that beautiful city, the New Jerusalem."

- **Elder Heber C. Kimball** (May 1868, in Deseret News, 23 May 1931; see also Conference Report, Oct. 1930, p. 58-59; Orson F. Whitney, Life of Heber C. Kimball, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1945, p. 446.)

This is right where we are right now... This can't be stated enough- the Lord's primary focus is on "His Jewels", we can't lose focus on the that. My commitment today is to strengthen the ties you have with other "Zion or Bust" Saints and pluck out those eyes, cut off those hands, etc. that are offending the Lord- stop rehearsing doubts with other doubters- the Lord will never damn you for believing too much, but He most certainly will damn you for not believing enough- so be believing and hold fast, the Savior is coming for His jewels, His Israel, or in other words "all those found on the watchtower", it will be well for those found so doing when the Lord returns, so be found doing, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Closing Prayer: **Tamra**

Questions and Answers: