

Lectures on Faith

Lecture Sixth- Part Two

Note. This lecture is so plain, and the facts set forth so self-evident, that it is deemed unnecessary to form a catechism upon it: the student is therefore instructed to commit the whole to memory.

7 Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things, never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; for from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things: it was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life; and it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things, that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has, for the truth's sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice, because he seeks to do his will, he does know most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not nor will not seek his face in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life.

Joseph's Thoughts:

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 220

The great Jehovah contemplated the whole of the events connected with the earth, pertaining to the plan of salvation, before it rolled into existence, or ever “the morning stars sang together” for joy; the past, the present, and the future were and are, with Him, one eternal “now;” He knew of the fall of Adam, the iniquities of the antediluvians, of the depth of iniquity that would be connected with the human family, their weakness and strength, their power and glory, apostasies, their crimes, their righteousness and iniquity; He comprehended the fall of man, and his redemption; He knew the plan of salvation and pointed it out; He was acquainted with the situation of all nations and with their destiny; He ordered all things according to the council of His own will; He knows the situation of both the living and the dead, and has made ample provision for their redemption, according to their several circumstances, and the laws of the kingdom of God, whether in this world, or in the world to come.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 68

The great plan of salvation is a theme which ought to occupy our strict attention, and be regarded as one of heaven's best gifts to mankind. No consideration whatever ought to deter us from showing ourselves approved in the sight of God, according to His divine requirement. Men not unfrequently forget that they are dependent upon heaven for every blessing which they are permitted to enjoy, and that for every opportunity granted them they are to give an account.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 308

It was the design of the councils of heaven before the world was, that the principles and laws of the priesthood should be predicated upon the gathering of the people in every age of the world. Jesus did everything to gather the people, and they would not be gathered, and He therefore poured out curses upon them. Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 322

The sacrifice required of Abraham in the offering up of Isaac, shows that if a man would attain to the keys of the kingdom of an endless life; he must sacrifice all things. When God offers a blessing or knowledge to a man, and he refuses to receive it, he will be damned. The Israelites prayed that God would speak to Moses and not to them; in consequence of which he cursed them with a carnal law.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 150

After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 149

The Doctrine of Election. Peter exhorts us to make our calling and election sure. This is the sealing power spoken of by Paul in other places.

“13. In whom ye also trusted, that after ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

“14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory, that we may be sealed up unto the day of redemption.” —Ephesians, 1st chapter.

Russell's Thoughts:

In the account of the prophet Elijah in 1 Kings, he was a lone prophet going against the world and the priests of Baal. Israel could not make up their minds whether to follow the Lord or follow Baal but all their choices pointed them towards Babylon.

“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.” (1 Kings 18:21)

Will we be silent when the Lord asks us this question, How long halt ye between two opinions? Or will we stand up and exclaim to the Lord that we are all in! Are we spiritually dying by degrees while seeking after riches and the accolades of Babylon or are we seeking the Kingdom

of God and His Glory and learning His ways line upon line through the power of the Holy Ghost. What have we given and what will we give to the Lord? Are we all in for Zion and the Lord Jesus Christ?

Elder Gary Sabin said, “We don’t hold back to see what the minimum is we can get by with. The Lord requires the heart and a willing mind. Our whole heart! When we are baptized, we are fully immersed as a symbol of our promise to fully follow the Savior, not half-heartedly. When we are fully committed and “all in,” heaven shakes for our good. When we are lukewarm or only partially committed, we lose out on some of heaven’s choicest blessings.” Elder Gary B. Sabin (Stand Up Inside and Be All In)

I’m now going to share a story from my life. I enjoy the sport of Canyoneering and I have introduced the sport to friends, family, and scouts.

Several years ago, I was canyoneering with the scouts in Southern Utah. It was the same canyon (Blue John Canyon) that Aaron Ralston cut his arm off when it was caught between a choke stone and the slot canyon walls. He was canyoneering alone in a remote part of the desert. It was dumb and no one should ever follow that man into a canyon. As we went on this trip with the scouts we had just past the point in the canyon where Aaron Ralston had endured that unfortunate accident. As we got into some water the canyon became slippery and one of the leaders with me, who I had only just met that weekend, slipped, and fell breaking his arm.

As scouts are well trained in first aid, we took care of him properly and prepared the boys and him for the final rappel. An 80-foot free hanging rappel off a dry waterfall to the canyon floor below and an 8-mile hike back to camp awaited us. As he saw what was ahead, fear gripped him and this 250 plus pound man sat on the ground. He refused to be moved, he refused to get up, he refused to be rescued. I wanted to knock that man out and lower his unconscious body off the cliff as he was putting the whole troop at risk. No one should be in a slot canyon longer than is required and flash flooding can occur at any point. I respected his agency, but I needed to honor the charge of protecting those boys and getting them to safety. My friend decided to stay with him. A priesthood blessing was given, and a prayer offered, and I left that man and my friend on that cliffside while I took the boys to safety. Upon my return to camp I called search and rescue to retrieve them from this remote cliff.

Long story short, they were rescued from the cliffside and I said to myself two things that day. One, I would never refuse to be rescued from danger and two, if I ever broke my arm in a slot canyon, I would use the other arm the good Lord gave me and not put others at risk of death. But that is another slot canyon story for later. In all the years I was in scouts and as a leader as well no one had ever just sat down ready to die like I had witnessed here. Sure I had scouts sit down or lie down in the middle of a trail and refuse to go on, but I would just say to them well you have two choices, sit here and die of starvation when your food and water run out. I really don’t want to have that conversation with your mom. Or you can get off your butt and walk with us down the trail until we reach camp and then you can rest. They always chose option two thankfully.

When we hem and haw with the Lord and our salvation or sit down and refuse to move, we may ultimately be rescued but who are we putting at risk by not being all in for the Lord. Is it just our salvation at stake or are we putting others at risk through our inaction? Are we waiting for the fire come down to burn the wicked before we act and commit ourselves to the Lord and His gospel? Things never work out as they should for sign seekers or for those expecting something greater than they have received without putting forth the efforts.

Micah's Thoughts:

That first quote, “let us here observe” has to be one of the most quoted quotes from the Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. and most people A) don’t realize it is found in the Lectures on Faith and B) don’t accept that the Lectures on Faith are “Joseph Smith’s Lectures on Faith”... It is a paradox, but it is what it is... I feel like if one was to balloon this topic out it would clearly go into “idolatry”, which is the opposite of the “sacrifice of all worldly things” that is required for life and salvation, and from idolatry the topic would blossom in “Babylon”... We are currently doing a book club for Hugh Nibley’s book Approaching Zion which is a compilation of lectures dealing mainly with the concepts of Zion (“the sacrifice of all worldly things so as to obtain the Heavenly) and its counterpart Babylon (“the worship of all worldly things that are obtained through purchase”).

President Brigham Young:

“The worst fear that I have about [members of this Church] is that they will get rich in this country, forget God and his people, wax fat, and kick themselves out of the Church and go to hell. This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution, and be true. But my greater fear for them is that they cannot stand wealth; and yet they have to be tried with riches” (quoted in Preston Nibley, Brigham Young: The Man and His Work [1936], 128).

“And when the spirit of persecution, the spirit of hatred, of wrath, and malice ceases in the world against this people, it will be the time that this people have apostatized and join hands with the wicked, and never until then; which I pray may never come.” (Discourses of Brigham Young compiled by John A. Widtsoe p.112)

New Testament Student Manual Revelation 9:20–21. Modern Idolatry:

As described at the conclusion of Revelation 9, the evil men who are not killed by the war and destruction described in earlier verses will still refuse to repent of their evil practices, including idol worship. While serving as a member of the Seventy, Elder David R. Stone taught that a prevalent form of modern idolatry is adopting the tastes and attitudes of the worldly culture that surrounds us: “Our culture tends to determine what foods we like, how we dress, what constitutes polite behavior, what sports we should follow, what our taste in music should be, the importance of education, and our attitudes toward honesty. It also influences men as to the importance of recreation or religion, influences women about the priority of career or childbearing, and has a powerful effect on how we approach procreation and moral issues. All too often, we are like puppets on a string, as our culture determines what is ‘cool.’ ... “Seduced by our culture, we often hardly recognize our idolatry, as our strings are pulled by that which is

popular in the Babylonian world” (“Zion in the Midst of Babylon,” Ensign or Liahona, May 2006, 91–92).

New Testament Student Manual Revelation 18:3, 7–16. The Wealth and Materialism of Babylon:

John used phrases such as “waxed rich” and “lived deliciously” (Revelation 18:3, 7, 9) to highlight the lust for wealth and lavish possessions that define Babylon. These riches will be destroyed, and those who have placed their hearts upon them will lament (see Revelation 18:8–19; 2 Nephi 9:30; D&C 56:16). President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) warned that with prosperity often comes the temptation to embrace the materialism of Babylon: “We are tested, we are tried, we are going through some of the severest tests today and we don’t realize perhaps the severity of the tests that we’re going through. … Today we are basking in the lap of luxury, the like of which we’ve never seen before in the history of the world. It would seem that probably this is the most severe test of any test that we’ve ever had in the history of the Church” (“First Presidency Devotional” [unpublished Christmas devotional for Church employees, Dec. 13, 1973], 4–5; see Jacob 2:18–19).

8 It is in vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their all in sacrifice, and by this means obtained faith in God and favor with him so as to obtain eternal life, unless they in like manner offer unto him the same sacrifice, and through that offering obtain the knowledge that they are accepted of him.

Joseph’s Thoughts:

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 63

That those who keep the commandments of the Lord and walk in His statutes to the end, are the only individuals permitted to sit at this glorious feast, is evident from the following items in Paul’s last letter to Timothy, which was written just previous to his death,—he says: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”⁹ No one who believes the account, will doubt for a moment this assertion of Paul which was made, as he knew, just before he was to take his leave of this world. Though he once, according to his own word, persecuted the Church of God and wasted it, yet after embracing the faith, his labors were unceasing to spread the glorious news: and like a faithful soldier, when called to give his life in the cause which he had espoused, he laid it down, as he says, with an assurance of an eternal crown. Follow the labors of this Apostle from the time of his conversion to the time of his death, and you will have a fair sample of industry and patience in promulgating the Gospel of Christ. Derided, whipped, and stoned, the moment he escaped the hands of his persecutors he as zealously as ever proclaimed the doctrine of the Savior. And all may know that he did not embrace the faith for honor in this life, nor for the gain of earthly goods. What, then, could have induced him to undergo all this toil? It was, as he said, that he might obtain the crown of

righteousness from the hand of God. No one, we presume, will doubt the faithfulness of Paul to the end. None will say that he did not keep the faith, that he did not fight the good fight, that he did not preach and persuade to the last. And what was he to receive? A crown of righteousness. And what shall others receive who do not labor faithfully, and continue to the end? We leave such to search out their own promises if any they have; and if they have any they are welcome to them, on our part, for the Lord says that every man is to receive according to his works. Reflect for a moment, brethren, and enquire, whether you would consider yourselves worthy a seat at the marriage feast with Paul and others like him, if you had been unfaithful? Had you not fought the good fight, and kept the faith, could you expect to receive? Have you a promise of receiving a crown of righteousness from the hand of the Lord, with the Church of the Firstborn? Here then, we understand, that Paul rested his hope in Christ, because he had kept the faith, and loved His appearing and from His hand he had a promise of receiving a crown of righteousness.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:50-70

50 And again we bear record—for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ concerning them who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just—

51 They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given—

52 That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power;

53 And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.

54 They are they who are the church of the Firstborn.

55 They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things—

56 They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory;

57 And are priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son.

58 Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God—

59 Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

60 And they shall overcome all things.

61 Wherefore, let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God, who shall subdue all enemies under his feet.

62 These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever.

63 These are they whom he shall bring with him, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven to reign on the earth over his people.

64 These are they who shall have part in the first resurrection.

65 These are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just.

66 These are they who are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all.

67 These are they who have come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of Enoch, and of the Firstborn.

68 These are they whose names are written in heaven, where God and Christ are the judge of all.

69 These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood.

70 These are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all, whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical.

Russell's Thoughts:

I've known many members who look at the sealing they received in the temple and think it is like the born-again philosophy of, I just need to be born again and no matter what I do I have attained this status of being born again. I've been sealed so, you know, I'm good to go. Why should I sacrifice my time to go back to the temple and honor my covenants? Yes, we all need to be sealed and make that covenant in the temple, but the gospel and its saving ordinances and covenants are not one and done. We should all expect that we will be tried and tested in this life and we are required to make sacrifices. It is part of God's plan and purpose to test us and to try us to the utmost of what he knows we are capable to endure in this life. We are all progressing in this life and we will continue to progress if we make the choices necessary to make that progression possible. Do we as Joseph Smith put, "fancy ourselves as heirs with those, or can be heirs with those, who have offered their all in sacrifice."?

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead, yet speaketh." (Hebrews 11:4.)

So the Lord does see differences in the sacrifices we offer to him. I had a childhood friend who when he went on a mission thought that he would be given the gift of tongues without putting in the work to learn the language with the brain, ears and mouth God had blessed him with. When he got to the mission at the first lesson with an investigator, he opened his mouth fully expecting that the Lord would miraculously place the words required to spew from his parted lips. When nothing came out, he closed his mouth. He then put forth his hand a second time to exclaim something, but nothing came from his unused tongue. I'm happy to say that it was a humbling experience for my friend, and he sacrificed and put in the work to learn the language the Lord had called him to speak. This is a simple story, but I think it illustrates well the point Joseph

Smith is making here. We cannot expect to be among those that have sacrificed all if we are not willing to put forth that same level of effort and sacrifice ourselves.

Joseph Smith said, “The sacrifice required of Abraham in the offering up of Isaac, shows that if a man would attain to the keys of the kingdom of an endless life; he must sacrifice all things. When God offers a blessing or knowledge to a man, and he refuses to receive it, he will be damned. The Israelites prayed that God would speak to Moses and not to them; in consequence of which he cursed them with a carnal law.” (TPJS p.322)

Again on this theme we need to be all in for the Lord and willing to sacrifice all.

Micah's Thoughts:

Elder Holland

The point is that faith means trusting God in good times and bad, even if that includes some suffering until we see His arm revealed in our behalf. That can be difficult in our modern world when many have come to believe that the highest good in life is to avoid all suffering, that no one should ever anguish over anything. But that belief will never lead us to “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

With apologies to Elder Neal A. Maxwell for daring to modify and enlarge something he once said, I too suggest that “one’s life … cannot be both faith-filled and stress-free.” It simply will not work “to glide naively through life,” saying as we sip another glass of lemonade, “Lord, give me all thy choicest virtues, but be certain not to give me grief, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor opposition. Please do not let anyone dislike me or betray me, and above all, do not ever let me feel forsaken by Thee or those I love. In fact, 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.” (Oct 2020, Waiting on the Lord)

Joseph Smith Jr

A Tried People

And now, beloved brethren, we say unto you, that inasmuch as God hath said that He would have a tried people, that He would purge them as gold, now we think that this time He has chosen His own crucible, wherein we have been tried; and we think if we get through with any degree of safety, and shall have kept the faith, that it will be a sign to this generation, altogether sufficient to leave them without excuse; and we think also, it will be a trial of our faith equal to that of Abraham, and that the ancients will not have whereof to boast over us in the day of judgment, as being called to pass through heavier afflictions; that we may hold an even weight in the balance with them; but now, after having suffered so great sacrifice and having passed through so great a season of sorrow, we trust that a ram may be caught in the thicket speedily, to relieve the sons and daughters of Abraham from their great anxiety, and to light up the lamp of salvation upon their countenances, that they may hold on now, after having gone so far unto everlasting life. (TPJS 135-136)

9 It was in offering sacrifices that Abel, the first martyr, obtained knowledge that he was accepted of God. And from the days of righteous Abel to the present time, the knowledge that men have that they are accepted in the sight of God, is obtained by offering sacrifice: and in the last days, before the Lord comes, he is to gather together his saints who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice. Psalms 50:3-5: Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant unto me by sacrifice.

Joseph's Thoughts:

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 29

I declared to you what the Lord had brought forth by the ministering of His holy angels to me for this generation. I pray that the Lord may enable you to treasure these things in your mind, for I know that His Spirit will bear testimony to all who seek diligently after knowledge from Him. I hope you will search the Scriptures to see whether these things are not also consistent with those things which the ancient Prophets and Apostles have written.

Doctrine and Covenants 100:13,16

13 And now I give unto you a word concerning Zion. Zion shall be redeemed, although she is chastened for a little season.

16 For I will raise up unto myself a pure people, that will serve me in righteousness;

Doctrine and Covenants 101:4-5

Therefore, they must needs be chastened and tried, even as Abraham, who was commanded to offer up his only son. For all those who will not endure chastening, but deny me, cannot be sanctified.

Doctrine and Covenants 45:71

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

Russell's Thoughts:

How did Abel know that his sacrifice was acceptable to the Lord? Because he walked and talked with him and the Lord told him it was acceptable just as he had for his Father Adam.

I want the saints to think on the fireside that the Two Brothers did with Micah a few weeks ago and much of the study and discussion many have done and shared on having our pillar of fire by day and our cloud by night. What must we sacrifice to be able to endure that pillar of fire? What sacrifices have we been asked to make by our prophet Russell M. Nelson to prepare us for the

redemption of Zion and the coming of the Lord to His temple. What sacrifices do we need to make to be worthy to stand in His presence? If the Lord comes in His glory what must we do to not be burned at that day. We know that for us as Saints of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints that day will come much sooner than for most on this earth.

I used this quote in the last fireside I did but I will use it again here. Joseph Smith said, “We need to gird up our loin’s brothers and sisters. Joseph Smith said, “I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: **they cannot stand the fire at all**. How many will be able to abide a celestial law, and go through and receive their exaltation, I am unable to say, as many are called, but few are chosen.” (Jan. 20, 1844.) DHC 6:183–185. – (TPJS p. 331)

President Russell M. Nelson said, "And to each of you who has made temple covenants, I plead with you to seek—prayerfully and consistently—to understand temple covenants and ordinances. Spiritual doors will open. **You will learn how to part the veil between heaven and earth, how to ask for God's angels to attend you, and how better to receive direction from heaven.** Your diligent efforts to do so will reinforce and strengthen your spiritual foundation." President Russell M. Nelson (The Temple and Your Spiritual Foundation, General Conference, October 2021)

May we bear the heat that “we may grow up in righteousness and truth; that when His purposes shall be accomplished, we may receive an inheritance among those that are sanctified.”

The Lord expects... “great things of you, while you are privileged to enjoy the blessing of the Saints’ society.” Joseph’s boys “pray (to) our heavenly Father that you may be very prayerful, very humble, and very charitable; working diligently, spiritually and temporally for the redemption of Zion, that the pure in heart may return with songs of everlasting joy to build up her waste places and meet the Lord when He comes in His glory. Brethren, in the name of Jesus Christ, we entreat you to live worthy of the blessings that shall follow, after much tribulation, to satiate the souls of them that hold out faithful to the end” —M&A 1:137–138. – (TPJS p78)

What do we need to do to offer and acceptable sacrifice to the Lord? This is the greatest work we can be about to bring the gospel to our brother and sisters on both sides of the veil. We invite all to come unto Christ, repent, be baptized, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, keep the commandments, and honor sacred covenants.

Micah’s Thoughts:

I am hoping that Joseph and Russell hit more on the doctrinal implication of this section because I want to just hit on the points of reference... Who says solid points of reference have to always be found in “last days” talks? Here is a solid series of points of reference given in the Lectures on Faith and I’d like to simply walk through it:

1. Saints are in a scattered state in the last days (they have to be scattered to be gathered)
2. Saints of God make covenants with God via sacrifice
3. Saints of God *know* they are accepted *in the sight of God*

4. God comes, and is not silent: a fire devours before him, and it is very tempestuous round about him. He calls to the heavens from above, and to the earth.

5. The Lord judges “His people” and the specific Saints who have made the sacrifice and *know* they are accepted *in the sight of God*, are gathered by the Lord from their scattered state “unto Him” in the New Jerusalem

Based on this, it is clear to see how this understanding of faith as the Brother of Jared ties directly into the “power of the Lamb descending upon the Saints of God in their scattered state directly before the Redemption of Zion and building of New Jerusalem”.

10 Those, then, who make the sacrifice will have the testimony that their course is pleasing in the sight of God, and those who have this testimony will have faith to lay hold on eternal life, and will be enabled, through faith, to endure unto the end, and receive the crown that is laid up for them that love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who do not make the sacrifice cannot enjoy this faith, because men are dependent upon this sacrifice in order to obtain this faith; therefore, they cannot lay hold upon eternal life, because the revelations of God do not guarantee unto them the authority so to do; and without this guarantee faith could not exist.

Joseph’s Thoughts:

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 306

It is one thing to be on the mount and hear the excellent voice, etc., and another to hear the voice declare to you, You have a part and lot in that kingdom.

1 John 2:23-25

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

John 17:1-3

1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent

and will be enabled, through faith, to endure unto the end,

Essential Meaning of endure

- 1: to continue to exist in the same state or condition
- 2: to experience (pain or suffering) for a long time
- 3: to deal with or accept (something unpleasant)

Beware of Pride - Ezra Taft Benson - President of the Church – General Conference April 1989

Therefore, no matter how the world uses the term, we must understand how God uses the term so we can understand the language of holy writ and profit thereby.

Russell's Thoughts:

Those who are willing in the sight of the Lord to sacrifice all will have the faith sufficient to lay hold upon eternal life. Those who sit down and await rescue will not be able to lay hold upon the promises of eternal life and they will receive a reward that the Lord has prepared for them in mercy and love unfeigned for the children of men. But that is not what we are after brothers and sisters, we are about the Lord's work and His Glory to bring to pass not only this immortality but the eternal life of man. I know these two brothers will cover the doctrine sufficiently on this point, so I'll digress to part two of my canyoneering adventures.

--Canyoneering Story – Part 2--

Micah's Thoughts:

President Nelson

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. Let this Easter Sunday be a defining moment in your life. Choose to do the spiritual work required to enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost and hear the voice of the Spirit more frequently and more clearly. (Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives)

Elder Heber C. Kimball

[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.” (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; Smith, Robert W. and Elisabeth A., Scriptural and Secular Prophecies Pertaining to The Last Days, Ninth Edition, Pyramid Press, SLC, UT, 1947, pp. 134-138; Deseret News, May 23, 1931; W. Cleon Skousen, Prophecy and Modern Times, pp. 31-33, An Army of Elders, May 1868, Heber C. Kimball Reported by his son J. Golden Kimball, CR October 1930, p. 58. See also Prophetic Sayings of Heber C. Kimball to Sister Amanda H. Wilcox)

3 Nephi 24:

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.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My humble desire for the wonderful [members] of the Church is that you will receive all that the Father hath, “even an hundred fold, yea, more.”

And I promise you that indeed you will. All of the blessings of our Father in Heaven will be yours if you continue faithful, if you are true, and if you serve Him and His children with all your heart, might, mind, and strength.

You are choice [sons and] daughters of our Father in Heaven. You are jewels in His crown. Your virtue and purity make your price above rubies.” (1988, To the Single Adult Sisters of the Church)

Joseph Smith Jr.

A Crown for the Righteous

If the Saints are not to reign, for what purpose are they crowned? In an exhortation of the Lord to a certain Church in Asia, which was built up in the days of the Apostles, unto whom He communicated His word on that occasion by His servant John, He says, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." And again, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne" (see Rev. 3). And again, it is written, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3). How is it that these old Apostles should say so much on the subject of the coming of Christ? He certainly had once come; but Paul says, To all who love His appearing, shall be given the crown: and John says, When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. Can we mistake such language as this? Do we not offer violence to our own good judgment when we deny the second coming of the Messiah? When has He partaken of the fruit of the vine new with His ancient Apostles in His Father's kingdom, as He promised He would just before he was crucified? In Paul's epistle to the

Philippians (3:20, 21) he says: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." We find another promise to individuals living in the church at Sardis who had not defiled their garments: "And they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels." John represents the sound which he heard from heaven, as giving thanks and glory to God, saying that the Lamb was worthy to take the book and to open its seals; because he was slain, and had made them kings and priests unto God: and they should reign on the earth (see Rev. 5). In the 20th chapter we find a length of time specified, during which Satan is to be confined in his own place, and the Saints reign in peace, all these promises and blessings we find contained in the law of the Lord, which the righteous are to enjoy: and we might enumerate many more places where the same or similar promises are made to the faithful, but we do not deem it of importance to rehearse them here, as this epistle is now lengthy; and our brethren, no doubt, are familiar with them all. (TPJS Section Two 1834-37, p.64)

The Ancient Saints Obtained Promises

Most assuredly it is, however, that the ancients, though persecuted and afflicted by men, obtained from God promises of such weight and glory, that our hearts are often filled with gratitude that we are even permitted to look upon them while we contemplate that there is no respect of persons in His sight, and that in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is acceptable with Him. But from the few items previously quoted we can draw the conclusion that there is to be a day when all will be judged of their works, and rewarded according to the same; that those who have kept the faith will be crowned with a crown of righteousness; be clothed in white raiment; be admitted to the marriage feast; be free from every affliction, and reign with Christ on the earth, where, according to the ancient promise, they will partake of the fruit of the vine new in the glorious kingdom with Him; at least we find that such promises were made to the ancient Saints. And though we cannot claim these promises which were made to the ancients for they are not our property, merely because they were made to the ancient Saints, yet if we are the children of the Most High, and are called with the same calling with which they were called, and embrace the same covenant that they embraced, and are faithful to the testimony of our Lord as they were, we can approach the Father in the name of Christ as they approached Him, and for ourselves obtain the same promises. These promises, when obtained, if ever by us, will not be because Peter, John, and the other Apostles, with the churches at Sardis, Pergamos, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, walked in the fear of God, and had power and faith to reveal and obtain them; but it will be because we, ourselves, have faith and approach God in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, even as they did; and when these promises are obtained, they will be promises directly to us, or they will do us no good. They will be commandments and walking uprightly before Him. If not, to what end serves the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and why was it ever communicated to us? (TPJS Section Two 1834-37, p.65)

11 All the saints of whom we have account in all the revelations of God which are extant, obtained the knowledge which they had of their acceptance in his sight, through the sacrifice which they offered unto him: and through the knowledge thus obtained, their faith became

sufficiently strong to lay hold upon the promise of eternal life, and to endure us seeing him who is invisible; and were enabled, through faith, to combat the powers of darkness, contend against the wiles of the adversary, overcome the world, and obtain the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.

Joseph's Thoughts:

Journal of Discourses 24:194, John Taylor, Scope of the Gospel, Etc.

It is necessary that we pass through certain ordeals, and that we be tried. But why is it that we should be tried? There is just the same necessity for it now that there was in former times. I heard the Prophet Joseph say, in speaking to the Twelve on one occasion: "You will have all kinds of trials to pass through. And it is quite as necessary for you to be tried as it was for Abraham and other men of God, and (said he) God will feel after you, and He will take hold of you and wrench your very heart strings, and if you cannot stand it you will not be fit for an inheritance in the Celestial Kingdom of God." Some people have wondered why so many of the Twelve fell away. God tries people according to the position they occupy. Joseph Smith never had many months of peace after he received the truth, and finally he was murdered in Carthage jail. I was with him on that occasion, and therefore know a little about it. And as I told this young man whose life had been attempted in Georgia; said I, "Brother Alexander, they shot at you and didn't hit you, but when they shot at me they hit me; so that you got off a little easier than I did." But all these personal things amount to but very little. It is the crowns, principalities, the powers, the thrones, the dominions, and the associations with the Gods that we are after, and we are here to prepare ourselves for these things. We are after eternal exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom of God. And we want to feel that this is the main object of existence, that this is why we were born, and that God has revealed Himself from the heavens, restored the Holy Priesthood and gathered us together in order that we might form a nucleus through whom He could communicate His will; through whom He could accomplish His work upon the earth and introduce the Gospel of the Son of God to the nations of the earth and gather together His elect from the four quarters of the globe; through whom He could introduce upon the earth the principles that exist in the heavens, that we might be taught to do the will of God on the earth as it is done in the heavens, that we might be a pure people, a virtuous people, a holy people, free from the vices and corruptions of the world, and that we might learn the laws of light, truth and intelligence from the fountain of all intelligence, for we are told the glory of God is intelligence.

Russell's Thoughts:

These past few years I have been on this magnificent spiritual journey or awakening like many of you listening. It has required sacrifice. It has required faith and dedication to the Lord and my covenants with Him. What Joseph Smith says right here. This is what we are all striving for. We are working out our own salvation and seeking to obtain the promises of eternal life.

Last month the Lord put me through a test of sorts to see if he could give me additional knowledge for my benefit. It was through the process of my own studies in the Joseph's Boy's round two (I was not part of round 1) that the Lord saw that I was willing to put forth the required efforts to gain further light and knowledge. In the middle of this experience I started to

doubt my own part in this work and if it was what the Lord wanted for me. I was thinking man this is a lot of work and time and more than I had previously dedicated in my life on such a regular basis, but I was gaining so much from the effort and experiences with my studies that I knew I did not want to give up on these things. I wanted more.

It was shortly after this “bad week” I’ll call it that I awoke in the morning after a dream, I had a specific scripture impressed upon my mind and I wrote down that scripture in my bedside journal. In the dream I was standing at the threshold of a massive temple between two large pillars. As I stood at the threshold this scripture was voiced repeatedly to me so I could not forget it. The scripture is from the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 18:21 “And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.” It was that question, “How long halt ye between two opinions?”, that repeated over and over in my dream. As I awoke from my dream and got on my knees to pray, I answered the Lord’s question of me. To paraphrase my prayer, I said, “I’m all in Lord!”

That very day I began a study of what the scripture meant for me along with other impressions I had from the dream, as I studied, I was prompted to go to the temple. It was a Saturday where it can be difficult to get an available appointment. So acting on this second prompting from the Lord, I went online immediately to look and there was a single opening for the noon session. I made the appointment, got dressed, and booked it over to the temple. When I came home, I wrote down additional impressions I had received there and began my study again.

The next Monday Sherry and I attended a funeral in Utah and returned home on Tuesday. That Thursday we all got Covid and I paused my studies while I was recovering. That Friday night while still sick I woke up coughing and having a hard time falling back asleep. It was around 2 am and I did not want to disturb Sherry. As I went downstairs, I felt prompted to continue my studies and so I went into my office and studied the topic all night until morning, writing down what I was learning, and the further impressions I was receiving. The next day I could not stop studying, writing down and pondering on the understanding that was being unfolded to me. At the end of the day I thought to myself, I have an understanding well enough and would get a good night’s rest to recover from Covid. That next morning I woke up at 4 am. I tried to go back to sleep but I could not because I felt some other promptings the Holy Ghost would not let me ignore. That whole next day I studied and learned more and more, the Holy Ghost corrected some of my past understandings and led me to study new things. This pattern continued for the next three days.

At the end of this experience I got down on my knees and thanked the Lord for giving me Covid and for the continual promptings to seek for more understanding. I’m grateful to the Lord that he humbled me sufficiently to act on those promptings and that I had already been working on establishing this pattern in my life. I’m thankful that the Lord challenged me to do more with my time while I endured Covid quarantine. Through this experience he showed me what sacrifice, and obedience was required of me to gain the knowledge that was imparted through the Holy Ghost and the spirit of revelation. I’m grateful the Lord accepts my efforts and simple willingness to hear and follow Him.

Elder Richard G. Scott described this pattern in his own life, “When we receive promptings from the Holy Ghost, we need to act on them in all diligence so that we can receive more light and knowledge. I believe that you can leave the most precious, personal direction of the Spirit unheard because you do not respond to, record, and apply the first promptings that come to you.”

What are we doing as saints here in this group? We are listening and acting on the promptings from the Lord. We are recording those promptings and applying the teachings from the Lord in our lives. We are working out our own salvation and sacrificing to show the Lord we are all in for Zion and the return of the Savior Jesus Christ to the earth.

Oh what joys we than will sing shout praises to our God and King. Above the rest these words will swell All is well! All is well!

AMEN!

Micah's Thoughts:

I feel like this is a good summary of things said thus far, I have nothing more to expound on that hasn't already been said.

12 But those who have not made this sacrifice to God, do not know that the course which they pursue is well pleasing in his sight; for whatever may be their belief or their opinion, it is a matter of doubt and uncertainty in their mind; and where doubt and uncertainty is, there faith is not, nor can it be. For doubt and faith do not exist in the same person at the same time. So that persons whose minds are under doubts and fears cannot have unshaken confidence, and where unshaken confidence is not, there faith is weak, and where faith is weak, the persons will not be able to contend against all the opposition, tribulations and afflictions which they will have to encounter in order to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus; and they will grow weary in their minds, and the adversary will have power over them and destroy them.

Joseph's Thoughts:

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 320

The great thing for us to know is to comprehend what God did institute before the foundation of the world. Who knows it? It is the constitutional disposition of mankind to set up stakes and set bounds to the works and ways of the Almighty.

* * *

But I will give you a more painful thought. Suppose you have an idea of a resurrection, etc., and yet know nothing at all of the Gospel, nor comprehend one principle of the order of heaven, but find yourselves disappointed—yes, at last find yourselves disappointed in every hope or anticipation, when the decision goes forth from the lips of the Almighty. Would not this be a greater disappointment—a more painful thought than annihilation?

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 288

Knowledge does away with darkness, suspense and doubt; for these cannot exist where knowledge is.

There is no pain so awful as that of suspense. This is the punishment of the wicked; their doubt, anxiety and suspense cause weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth.

In knowledge there is power. God has more power than all other beings, because he has greater knowledge; and hence he knows how to subject all other beings to Him. He has power over all.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 217

As far as we degenerate from God, we descend to the devil and lose knowledge, and without knowledge we cannot be saved, and while our hearts are filled with evil, and we are studying evil, there is no room in our hearts for good, or studying good. Is not God good? Then you be good; if He is faithful, then you be faithful. Add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, and seek for every good thing.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 135

And now, beloved brethren, we say unto you, that inasmuch as God hath said that He would have a tried people, that He would purge them as gold, now we think that this time He has chosen His own crucible, wherein we have been tried; and we think if we get through with any degree of safety, and shall have kept the faith, that it will be a sign to this generation, altogether sufficient to leave them without excuse; and we think also, it will be a trial of our faith equal to that of Abraham, and that the ancients will not have whereof to boast over us in the day of judgment, as being called to pass through heavier afflictions; that we may hold an even weight in the balance with them;

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 331

I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they cannot stand the fire at all. How many will be able to abide a celestial law, and go through and receive their exaltation, I am unable to say, as many are called, but few are chosen. (Jan. 20, 1844.)

1 Nephi 13:29

... because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book, which were plain unto the understanding of the children of men, according to the plainness which is in the Lamb of God—because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceedingly great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 322-323

The anointing and sealing is to be called, elected and made sure.

Men have to suffer that they may come upon Mount Zion and be exalted above the heavens.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 308

If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord.

Russell's Thoughts:

President Russell M. Nelson stated, “choose to believe in Jesus Christ. If you have doubts about God the Father and His Beloved Son or the validity of the Restoration or the veracity of Joseph Smith’s divine calling as a prophet, choose to believe and stay faithful. Take your questions to the Lord and to other faithful sources. Study with the desire to believe rather than with the hope that you can find a flaw in the fabric of a prophet’s life or a discrepancy in the scriptures. Stop increasing your doubts by rehearsing them with other doubters. Allow the Lord to lead you on your journey of spiritual discovery.

What would you do if you had more faith? Think about it. Write about it. Then receive more faith by doing something that requires more faith.

Ask your Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, for help.

Faith takes work. Receiving revelation takes work. But “every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” God knows what will help your faith grow. Ask, and then ask again.

Do not minimize the faith you already have. It takes faith to join the Church and remain faithful. It takes faith to follow prophets rather than pundits and popular opinion. It takes faith to serve a mission during a pandemic. It takes faith to live a chaste life when the world shouts that God’s law of chastity is now outmoded. It takes faith to teach the gospel to children in a secular world. It takes faith to plead for the life of a loved one and even more faith to accept a disappointing answer.” Russell M. Nelson – (Christ Is Risen; Faith in Him Will Move Mountains)

My mother and father are great examples of faith to me. It comes from their parents who were faithful to the end and valiant in their testimonies of the Savior Jesus Christ.

--Story of my Grandpa Sampson--

Micah's Thoughts:

Doctrine and Covenants 82:

1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, my servants, that inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses, even so I, the Lord, forgive you.

2 Nevertheless, there are those among you who have sinned exceedingly; yea, even all of you have sinned; but verily I say unto you, beware from henceforth, and refrain from sin, *lest sore judgments fall upon your heads.*

3 For of him unto whom much is given much is required; and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation.

4 Ye call upon my name for revelations, and I give them unto you; and inasmuch as ye keep not my sayings, which I give unto you, ye become transgressors; and justice and judgment are the penalty which is affixed unto my law.

5 Therefore, what I say unto one I say unto all: Watch, for the adversary spreadeth his dominions, and darkness reigneth;

10 I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, *ye have no promise.*

2 Nephi 25

22 Wherefore, these things shall go from generation to generation as long as the earth shall stand; and they shall go according to the will and pleasure of God; and *the nations who shall possess them shall be judged of them according to the words which are written.*

23 For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, *after all we can do.*

Those who have the revelations of God (the words which have been written) will be judged according to them; those who don't do "all that they can do" know that the course which they are pursuing is not well pleasing in the Lord's sight. Their personal beliefs or their personal opinions don't mean spit for there will always be a matter of doubt and uncertainty in their mind; and where doubt and uncertainty is, there faith is not, *nor can it be.* For doubt and faith do not exist in the same person at the same time. So that persons whose minds are under doubts and fears cannot have unshaken confidence, and where unshaken confidence is not, there faith is weak, and where faith is weak, the persons will not be able to contend against all the opposition, tribulations and afflictions which they will have to encounter in order to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus; and they will grow weary in their minds, and the adversary will have power over them and destroy them. Hugh Nibley explains this spiritual death spiral as follows:

"... the Nephites had to work all the time to preserve the [Celestial] order -- eating, fasting, praying, and doing all the other things."

i.e. "in order to qualify for grace they had to do all they could", which included "the sacrifice of all worldly things"

"[but there were some whom] couldn't tolerate the righteous pace, so they were lifted up in pride, such things as wearing costly apparel and seeking the fine things of the world."

i.e. "they no longer could keep the pace" simply means they no longer accepted that grace only kicked in "after all they could personally do" and thus the sacrifice of all worldly things really wasn't a requirement for exaltation and thus completed the justification for "seeking after the fine things in the world"

"And from that time forth they did have their goods and their substance no more common

"among them. And they began to be divided into classes" (4 Nephi 1:25-26).

i.e. this unwillingness to sacrifice all worldly things and disbelief in the doctrine of being required to do “all things in our power” before grace is applied is what causes the classes to be divided- this is the wheat and the tares

“They did not dwindle in unbelief but willfully rebelled against the gospel of Christ. They didn't just subside imperceptibly into a more relaxed way of life. Not at all. They didn't dwindle. "They did wilfully rebel against the gospel of Christ" (4 Nephi 1:38). Even as it was in the beginning, they went back to their old vices: "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly" (Proverbs 26:11).

i.e. the spiritual death spiral isn't slowly realized, it is fast, intentional, and is viewed by the Lord as “willfully rebelling” against Him, another famous story that showcases this is Lot's wife “looking back” and being turned into a pillar of salt. As we went over above, when the Lord gathers those unto Him who have covenanted with sacrifice, when the Lord gathers those unto him who have done all things within their power and thus qualified for grace, it will be the separation of the wheat and the tares.

“They actually taught their children to hate the children of God, even as the Lamanites were taught to hate the children of Nephi from the beginning.”

i.e. those that live in this state of fear because they have not (nor shall they) receive the “promise” and thus are in that state of uncertainty, those people then go on to teach themselves, their families, etc. to “hate the children of God”, in other words they teach to hate those “who have covenanted with the Lord in sacrifice and who know the Lord. This hardens them against the Light of Christ which then allows themselves to justify themselves in their actions (or lack of actions).

Brothers and Sisters let us do as President Nelson has counseled us and do all that is within our power to obtain that testimony, which requires covenants with the Lord in sacrifice and “all we can do” personally. Once we have obtained this assurance there will be no more “fear” or “doubt”, there will only be faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His promises to us that we know we have qualified for. Joseph Smith will then discern and select those who have remained worthy to take part in the Redemption of Zion and building of New Jerusalem. In the name of Jesus Christ amen.