

The Light of Jesus Christ

Put on the Armor of God

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The Light of Jesus Christ

For thou art my lamp, O Lord; and the Lord will lighten my darkness.

2 Samuel 22:29

Perhaps one of the most intriguing storylines in all of fiction is the battle between good and evil, light and dark. However, this storyline which has captured the imagination of so many people is much more than fiction, but it is a true spiritual battle ground in which we live, even if many do not realize it. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.¹”

Nevertheless, it is important to understand that as sons and daughters of God we do not only fight against the darkness of this world, but also the darkness in us. Joseph Smith, Jr., prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, explained that each of us have two forces warring in our soul. It is crucial to note however that this was part of God’s great plan of happiness, because without darkness we could never be able to comprehend the light of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God and the messenger of salvation.

The 1828 Webster’s Dictionary defines the word light as “that ethereal² agent or matter which makes objects perceptible to the sense of seeing, but the particles of which are separately invisible.” Generally, when we use the term “light,” we are referring to light which is visible, but we would ask the reader, if only light existed would we be able to understand or appreciate it? Likewise, if only darkness existed, would we be able to see anything at all? Of course not, for without both light and darkness all things would be compounded into one body, and if so, God has said that it would have been created for a thing of nought and there would have been no purpose to its creation. “Wherefore, this thing must needs destroy the wisdom of God, and his eternal purposes; and also, the power, and the mercy, and the justice of God...For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things.³”

Moreover, Jesus Christ explained that “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.⁴” In particular, the word intelligence means understanding, thus we can state that the glory of God is the understanding of light and truth, and we know that He yearns to share that light and truth with us because He sent His Only Begotten Son into the world not only to be crucified and to rise again, but also to impart the word of God. Jesus said, “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do...I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world...and they have kept *thy word*. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast

¹ Ephesians 6:12

² Ethereal means heavenly; celestial; as ethereal messenger

³ 2 Nephi 1:87 and 81

⁴ DC 90:6a

given me are of thee. For I have given unto them *the words which thou gavest me*; and they have received them...⁵”

How could we understand anything, especially the word of God, without an opposite to compare it too? Hence, we have light and dark. Does this mean that God created evil as well as good [read Isaiah 45:7]? In short, the answer is yes. However, God did not create evil simply for the sake of evil, but instead, He created evil for His righteous purposes. In Proverbs we read, “The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.”⁶ Furthermore, Lehi expounded upon this question by saying, “And if ye shall say there is no law, ye shall say there is no sin. And 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.”⁷”

Therefore, the fact that we experience happiness and joy in this life is a testimony to all mankind that God is and that He sent His Son into the world. It is important to note that this testimony would not exist if we did not first experience both the bitter and the sweet of this life. “And the Lord spake unto Adam, saying, Inasmuch as thy children are conceived in sin [meaning born into the world], even so, when they begin to grow up sin conceiveth in their hearts, and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good. And it is given unto them to know good *from* evil; wherefore, they are agents unto themselves.”⁸”

The reader might ask how God can be a just God if His plan is for mankind to be conceived into a world of sin, but again, it is a part of the Lord’s merciful plan. Moreover, God does not want us to simply know good and evil, but as the Lord mentioned in Genesis, He desires for us to know good from evil. The twenty-fifth chapter of Proverbs helps to open our understanding of the nature of God, by saying, “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honor of kings is to search out a matter.”⁹” It is important to remember that the Glory of God is intelligence. Thus, how can we search out the truth without some knowledge or understanding of the light? Hence, we read in Genesis, chapter five, that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been preached from the very foundation of the world. “And thus the gospel began to be preached from the beginning, being declared by holy angels, sent forth from the presence of God; and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost.”¹⁰” Please read the following from Alma 9:38-56

9:38 Now we see that Adam did fall by the partaking of the forbidden fruit, according to the word of God; and thus we see, that by his fall, **all mankind became a lost and a fallen people.**

9:39 And now behold, I say unto you, that if it had been possible for Adam to have partaken of the fruit of the tree of life at that time, there would have been no death, and the word would have been void, making God a liar: for he said, If thou eat, thou shall surely die.

⁵ John 17:4-8

⁶ Proverbs 16:4

⁷ 2 Nephi 1:88-90

⁸ Genesis 6:57-58

⁹ Proverbs 25:2

¹⁰ Genesis 5:44

9:40 And we see that death comes upon mankind...which is the temporal death; nevertheless there was a space granted unto man, in which he might repent; **9:41** Therefore this life became a probationary state; ***a time to prepare to meet God***; a time to prepare for that endless state, which has been spoken of by us, which is after the resurrection of the dead. **9:42** Now if it had not been for the plan of redemption, which was laid from the foundation of the world, there could have been no resurrection of the dead; **9:43** But there was a plan of redemption laid, which shall bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, of which has been spoken.

9:44 And now behold, if it were possible that our first parents could have gone forth and partaken of the tree of life, they would have been ***for ever miserable***, having no preparatory state; **9:45** And thus the plan of redemption would have been frustrated, and the word of God would have been void, taking none effect. **9:46** But behold, it was not so; but it was appointed unto man that they must die; and after death, they must come to judgment; even that same judgment of which we have spoken, which is the end.

9:47 And after God had appointed that these things should come unto man, behold, then he saw that it was ***expedient that man should know*** concerning the things whereof he had appointed unto them; **9:48** Therefore he sent angels to converse with them, who caused men to behold of his glory.

9:49 And they began from that time forth to call on his name; therefore God conversed with men, and **made known unto them the plan of redemption**, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world; **9:50** And this he made known unto them according to their faith and repentance, and their holy works; **9:51** Wherefore he gave commandments unto men, they having first transgressed the first commandments as to things which were temporal [meaning the commandment to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil], and becoming as gods, knowing good from evil, placing themselves in a state to act, or being placed in a **state to act according to their wills and pleasures**, whether to do evil or to do good; **9:52** Therefore God gave unto them commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption, that they should not do evil, the penalty thereof being a second death, which was an everlasting death as to things pertaining unto righteousness; **9:53** For on such the plan of redemption could have no power, for the works of justice could not be destroyed, according to the supreme goodness of God.

9:54 But ***God did call on men***, in the name of his Son, (this being the plan of redemption which was laid,) saying: If ye will repent, and harden not your hearts, then will I have mercy upon you, through mine only begotten Son. **9:55** Therefore, whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy through mine only begotten Son, unto a remission of his sins; and these shall enter into my rest. **9:56** And whosoever will harden his heart and will do iniquity, behold, I swear in my wrath that he shall not enter into my rest.

God does not desire for the workmanship of His own hands to perish in the dark or to be caught unawares, neither does He desire for us to have no comprehension of the light. For the Lord has said,

“That which is of God *is light*, and he that receiveth light and continueth in God, receiveth more light, and that light groweth brighter and brighter, until the perfect day. And again, verily I say unto you, and I say it that you may know the truth, that you may *chase* darkness from among you...¹¹” Thus, God saw that it was expedient that we should know the things that He has appointed unto us, wherefore He has given mankind the knowledge of both good and evil so that we are able to act for ourselves.

In addition, He has called upon mankind from the beginning, through Jesus Christ, that we should repent and believe in His Son. In so doing, we have the promise that the Lord will have mercy upon us. In his first epistle, John wrote of the testimony which he and the other disciples received from Jesus, writing, “This then is the message which we have heard of him [Jesus Christ], and declare unto you, that *God is light*, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.¹²”

The Light and Dark Within

In the aftermath of a wrong doing we often hear in the world today, and even in the Church, the phrase, “That’s ok, we are only human,” as if being human justifies our wrongdoings. Perhaps we might even hear a familiar Scripture or two, such as “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,¹³” or “But we have sinned...and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.¹⁴” However, if we read the surrounding verses from these Scriptures, which are found in the third chapter of Romans and the sixty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, we will realize that it is our choices that have placed us in this state and not our human nature. Thus, we might say that it is our choices that influence our human nature, not our human nature that influences our choice.

Nonetheless, we also read that it is God’s desire for mankind to take part in something infinitely better, namely that precious fruit which is more pure, more white, and more sweet than all others, the fruit of eternal life, which we cannot receive unless we are cleansed from that sinful and filthy state through the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. Please read the following from Romans 3:22-26 and from Romans 6:1-12:

3:22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; [between Jews and Gentiles] **3:23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **3:24** Therefore being justified only by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; **3:25** Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; **3:26** To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the *justifier* of him which believeth in Jesus.

¹¹ DC 50:6a-b

¹² 1 John 1:5-7

¹³ Romans 3:23

¹⁴ Isaiah 64:6

6:1 What shall we say then? **Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 6:2 God forbid.** How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? **6:3** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? **6:4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should **walk in newness of life**. **6:5** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; **6:6** Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. **6:7 For he that is dead to sin is freed from sin.**

6:8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also **live with him**; **6:9** Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. **6:10** For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. **6:11** Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but **alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord**. **6:12** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

In order for mankind to enter into the Kingdom of God, we must be freed from sin, which can only be accomplished through baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end. In particular, Paul wrote that God sent forth His Son to be the atonement for all those who have faith in Him so that we might receive a remission of our sins through the forbearance of God. According to Webster, the word forbearance means “the act of avoiding, shunning or omitting; either the cessation or intermission of an act commenced, or a withholding from beginning an act. Liberty is the power of doing or forbearing an action, according as the doing or forbearance has preference in the mind. The forbearance of sin is followed with satisfaction of mind.” In other words, through our faith in Jesus Christ, God has promised to forbear, or wipe away, our sins through the plan of mercy so that we can enter into His presence. However, again this requires for mankind to live “unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The argument that we all fall short of the glory of God, and that we are all as filthy rags is founded on the belief that we are all carnal, sensual, and devilish. In the fourth chapter of Genesis we read, “And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God; and they made all things *known* unto their sons and their daughters. And Satan came among them, saying, I am also a son of God, and he commanded them, saying, Believe it not. And they believed it not; and they loved Satan more than God. And men began *from that time forth* to be carnal, sensual and devilish.¹⁵” However, how can mankind be purely carnal, sensual, and devilish as they enter into the world? Remember that we cannot have only dark, otherwise we would be compounded into one, meaning that we would have been created for a thing of nought. Therefore, mankind must also have by necessity a portion of the light of God.

In Moroni, chapter seven, and the Doctrine and Covenants, section Eighty-three, we learn that every person that is born into this world is given a portion of the Spirit of Christ, without which no man could have life. “For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to *every man*, that they may know good from evil...For

¹⁵ Genesis 4:12-13

the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ; and the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that *hearkeneth* to the voice of the Spirit.¹⁶

Therefore, in order for God's creation to experience opposition and not be compounded into one, each person has within them the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the natural man, or in other words, light and dark. Hence, we cannot excuse sin and wrongdoing because we are exclusively carnal, sensual, and devilish, nor can we excuse righteousness because we are exclusively filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ. To do so would be compounding all things into one, which would destroy the wisdom of God. Thus, in every man and woman is a spiritual battle between good and evil. Please read the testimony of Joseph Smith, Jr. through the apostle, Arthur Oakman:

But before the plates and the Urim and Thummim were handed to him [Joseph Smith, Jr.], he was blessed with a vision. The heavens were opened and he saw on the left hand side a vast army, organized, armed, and disciplined for war. And looking on the other side he saw another host armed, but not with carnal weapons, disciplined, clothed in appropriate raiment facing the other host. And he was given to understand that these were the adversary's hosts and these were the hosts of the Lord God and they were about to be joined in mortal combat.

*There was no compromise, none whatever, but the most gripping thing that came to Joseph was the fact that what he saw represented in the heavens was simply a revelation of **his own inward soul**. But whenever he did the will of God then the armies of heaven were empowered in their struggle against the armies of hell. And on the other hand if he would disobey the commandments of God, then the armies of the adversary were thus empowered by his disobedience to gain an advantage over the hosts of heaven. But that wasn't all, not only was he given to know that his own soul was a battle ground, but he was given to know also that he himself was the prize for which the two armies struggled. And gentlemen you can take that as gospel.*

*Yes, a boy went into woods, the light was growing brighter and brighter, the day dawn was beginning, the day star is beginning to arise in our hearts... My friends, one word from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ, open unto your soul, has the capacity to reproduce His character within you. It is not a question of the invitation of Christ...**it is a question of Christ in you**, the hope of glory. When there shall arise the Lord Jesus Christ in all His glory in the lives and the souls of the people of this Church, then, not before then, will come the Kingdom of God. My friends again, I may complete to you, where is the testimony of Jesus to be found? Show me where it isn't, for in every corner of the universe God has given Himself.*

*It is said in the Old Testament by one of the wise men that it is the glory of God to conceal a thing. Now if it takes glory or intelligence to conceal it, **what does it take to find it?** God has revealed Himself and hidden Himself at the same time so that one of Him is revealed shall entice*

¹⁶ Moroni 7:14 and DC 83:7b-c

us to search for that which is hidden, and in the search for that which is hidden there shall come to our souls the knowledge and the glory and the beauty of Zion. Not so far away my friends. Nearer than many of us think, yet it is certain God has not set His hand to the plough to look back. He has not cast us in this role at this time as a mere experiment for if there is one thing that I have learned during my ministry it is this. If I never learn anything else and if you never learn anything else all will be well. That there is in Jesus Christ for you a better self which He will give you if you will give Him the self that you are. So may the day star arise in our hearts and may we find peace and assurance in the hope of the Kingdom is my prayer.

“It is said in the Old Testament by one of the wise men that it is the glory of God to conceal a thing. Now if it takes glory or intelligence to conceal it, what does it take to find it?” Wherefore, we learn that God has given mankind intelligence, or light and truth, through His Son, Jesus Christ, while Satan has cast the chains of darkness over the world through sin and disobedience, and all of this so that mankind could become agents unto themselves. It is therefore crucial to understand that whereas God desires to share His love and eternal life with mankind, the adversary desires to subject mankind according to his will, which Jacob described as “...to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself.¹⁷”

Brethren, it our choice on who and what we will follow, “Therefore cheer up your hearts, and remember that ye are free to act for yourselves; to choose the way of everlasting death, or the way of eternal life.¹⁸” As brother Oakman explained, we give power to whom we list to obey, either God or the devil. In Alma, chapter eight, Amulek visited the people in Ammonihah because of their wickedness and preached unto them saying, “Why hath Satan got such great hold upon your hearts? Why will ye yield yourselves unto him that he may have power over you, to blind your eyes, that ye will not understand the words which are spoken, according to their truth?¹⁹”

Furthermore, when an antichrist named Korihor came before Alma and the chief judge of the land, Alma said unto him, “Believest thou that there is a God?...Will ye deny again that there is a God, and also deny the Christ?...Behold, I know that thou believest, but thou are possessed with a lying spirit, and ye have put off the Spirit of God, that it may have no place in you; but the devil has power over you, and he doth carry you about, working devices, that he may destroy the children of God.²⁰” Although Korihor had witnesses of both God and Jesus Christ, he confessed to Alma that he hearkened to the words of the devil and taught his false doctrines “because they were pleasing unto the carnal mind.²¹” Thus, Korihor allowed Satan to gain power over him by allowing the light of Jesus Christ to be darkened so that his eyes were blinded to the truth.

Thereby, when we choose to commit sin, we subject ourselves to both the devil and to that natural man which is an enemy to God [read Mosiah 1:119]. Abinadi explained when he preached before the priests

¹⁷ 2 Nephi 6:21

¹⁸ 2 Nephi 7:40

¹⁹ Alma 8:36-37

²⁰ Alma 16:46 and 50

²¹ Alma 16:68

of King Noah, “Yea, even that old serpent that did beguile our first parents, which was the cause of their fall; Which was the cause of all mankind becoming carnal, sensual, devilish, knowing evil from good, *subjecting* themselves to the devil.²²” Notice that Satan is the cause of all mankind knowing evil from good, whereas God told Enoch in Genesis, “And it is given unto them to know good from evil; wherefore, they are agents unto themselves.”

In Alma, chapter sixteen, Alma preached unto the Zoramites saying, “For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance, even until death, behold, ye have become *subjected* to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; Therefore the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked.²³” Thus, Alma taught that when we sin, we are giving power to the adversary to seal us to him, to work even more in our life as Korihor did, and “to remain with the father of lies, in misery like unto himself.²⁴” Obviously, by doing such, we make it much more difficult to choose God. Again, it is not the natural man that influences are choices, but rather it is our choices that influence the natural man. “For every man receiveth wages of him whom he listeth to obey...That they might reap their rewards according to their works, whether they were good or whether they were bad, to reap eternal happiness or eternal misery, according to the spirit which they listed to obey, whether it be a good spirit or a bad one.²⁵”

For an example, we desire for the reader to envision a man who has lived a very unhealthy lifestyle all of his life. Imagine that this man, after continuing to live unhealthy for many years, decides to finally meet with his doctor for a checkup and receives the news that if he does not change his ways he will suffer chronic health issues for the rest of his life. Naturally, the bad news from the doctor helps to shock the man into changing his lifestyle, and this begins to work at first.

However, after a few weeks, it becomes increasingly evident to him that it is very hard to overcome a lifetime of unhealthy living. Thus, the man struggles mightily until at last he eventually comes to a critical decision. The unhealthy man can either seek for help and continue to press forward, or he can give up because living healthily is just too grievous for him, and it is easier, or more comfortable, to slip back into that unhealthy lifestyle. We would ask the reader, would it not have been easier for the man if he were simply healthy to begin with?

Are we not like this in our spiritual life? For an example, we read in the Scriptures that we are to pray continually, but do we practice this, or do we wait for a need before we pray? As saints and servants of God, we cannot live reactively as in the example of the unhealthy man. Otherwise, how will we have the strength to overcome opposition if we do? We may be struck to remember our God when faced with difficult trials, just as the man did when he heard the bad news from the doctor. However, this is often not enough to keep us living unto God. Please read the following Scripture from Joshua 7:10-13:

²² Mosiah 8:74-75

²³ Alma 16:233-234

²⁴ 2 Nephi 6:21

²⁵ Alma 1:129 and 128

7:10 And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? **7:11** Israel hath sinned, and they have also **transgressed my covenant** which I commanded them; for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. **7:12** Therefore the children of Israel **could not stand before their enemies**, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed; neither will I be with you any more, **except** ye destroy the accursed from among you. **7:13** Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow; for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel; **thou canst not stand** before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.

In sections Ninety-seven, One hundred, and One hundred two, the Lord told the saints that Zion would not be redeemed until Zion was chastened for a little season in consequence of the transgressions of His people. "And Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom, otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself; and my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer."²⁶ Though the chastening of Zion has occurred for over a hundred years, have we learned to live unto God through Jesus Christ? At some point we must become more than just readers and speakers of the word, but also doers of the word, then, and only then, will the cause of Zion be established.

There is a saying which states, "It takes power to defeat power," and what power is greater than God? "If God be for us, who can prevail against us?"²⁷ Paul wrote in Romans, chapter six, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"²⁸ Therefore, just as we give power unto Satan by choosing the things of the world, we give power unto the Lord by choosing to live after God and to be His servants. Please read the following Scripture from 2 Nephi 1:115-123:

1:115 Adam fell, that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy. **1:116** And the Messiah cometh in the fullness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. **1:117** And because that they are redeemed from the fall, they have become **free for ever**, knowing good from evil; **1:118** To act for themselves, and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the Lord, at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given. **1:119** Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. **1:120** And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great mediation of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil...**1:122** And now...I would that ye should look to the great Mediator, and **hearken** unto his great commandments; **1:123** And be **faithful** unto his words, and **choose** eternal life, according to the will of his Holy Spirit

²⁶ DC 102:2c-d

²⁷ Romans 8:31

²⁸ Romans 6:16

It is important to realize that when we choose to follow after the things of the world over the things of God, it becomes increasingly difficult to see the path ahead and to follow the commandments of the Lord, and this is because we have given power unto the adversary to darken our lamps. Jesus told the disciples when they worried about Him traveling again into Judea, “If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.”²⁹ This verse is a parable for our spiritual life, if we take the Holy Ghost to be our guide and if our lamps are trimmed like the five wise virgins, then we will walk in the light of Jesus Christ whose words are a lamp unto our feet and who is a light unto our path, and we will be able to find our way through the darkness [read Psalm 119:80-176, Matthew 25:1-12, and DC 45:10b-d]. Please read the following Scripture from Proverbs 4:14-27:

4:14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. **4:15** Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away....**4:18** But the path of the just is as the *shining light*, that shineth more and more unto the **perfect day**.

4:19 The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble. **4:20** ...attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. **4:21** Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the **midst of thine heart**. **4:22** For they are *life* unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life... **4:25** Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. **4:26** *Ponder the path of thy feet*, and let all thy ways be established. **4:27** Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil.

David wrote in the second book of Samuel, “For thou art my lamp, O Lord; and the Lord will lighten my darkness.”³⁰ Jesus Christ is the light and life of the world and as we read previously, every man is given to know good from evil, or light from dark, through the Spirit of Christ, and this is “the way to judge: for everything which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ.”³¹ God told Moses in the first chapter of Genesis, that He created man after the likeness of Him and His Son, which is not only a physical likeness, but also a spiritual likeness.

Therefore, through the light of Christ we are able to witness and understand what man might become if we live faithful, pray always, and have our lamps trimmed and burning with oil, which is to become a son or daughter of God. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that,

²⁹ John 11:9-10

³⁰ 2 Samuel 22:29

³¹ Moroni 7:14

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.³²

Moreover, if we ponder the path of our feet with the light of Christ and if we keep our eyes looking straight upon Jesus and the Kingdom, then we will have a similar experience to that of King Lamoni while he was under the power of God. For “he knew that the dark veil of unbelief being cast away from his mind, and the light which did light up his mind, which was the light of the glory of God, which was a marvelous light of his goodness; Yea, this light had infused such joy into his soul, the cloud of darkness having been dispelled, and that the light of everlasting light was lit up in his soul.³³” Please read the following Scripture from Moroni 7:14-18:

7:14 For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that they may know good from evil; wherefore I shew unto you the way to judge: for everything which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; **7:15** Wherefore ye may know with a *perfect knowledge*, it is of God; but whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil, **7:16** For after this manner doth the devil work, for he persuadeth no man to do good, no not one; neither doth his angels; neither do they who subject themselves unto him.

7:17 And now, my brethren, seeing that ye know the light by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ, see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge, ye shall also be judged. **7:18** Wherefore I beseech you, brethren, that ye should **search diligently in the light of Christ**, that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ***ye certainly will be a child of Christ.***

Within in each person is a battle between good and evil, light and dark, which is a part of God’s great plan of happiness, for we could not receive the glory, or intelligence, of God without opposition. Although it is the glory of God to conceal a matter, it is the honor of mankind to discover it, and thus God has given every man light and dark, or in other words, the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the natural man which is carnal, sensual, and devilish. However, it is important to understand two truths. First, mankind does not choose to do evil because they are carnal, sensual, and devilish, but they are carnal, sensual, and devilish because they choose to do evil. Second, mankind does not choose to do good because they are a child of Christ, but they are a child of Christ because they choose to do good. Therefore brethren, let us choose hearken to the words of Lehi and “look to the great Mediator, and *hearken* unto his great commandments; And be *faithful* unto his words, and *choose* eternal life, according to the will of his Holy Spirit.”

³² 1 John 3:1-3

³³ Alma 12:133-134

The Lord Will Lighten My Darkness

“For thou art my lamp, O Lord; and the Lord will lighten my darkness...Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.³⁴” It is important to understand that when we feast upon the words of Jesus Christ and ponder our path by searching and examining diligently in the light of Christ, it becomes much more difficult for the adversary to lead us astray as he did with Korihor because we are walking in the light. However, not only are we walking in the light, but we are also pressing forward by holding fast to the rod of iron.

The rod of iron is found principally in Lehi and Nephi’s vision of the Tree of Life, which is a parable of our spiritual walk while in this life, and although this vision has been taught on numerous occasions throughout the years, we very seldom start at the beginning. In particular, before Lehi witnessed the tree of life, the rod of iron, or even the large and spacious field, which represented the world, he was first visited by a man dressed in a white robe. “And it came to pass that he spake unto me, and bade me follow him. And...as I followed him, I beheld myself that I was in a *dark and dreary waste*. And after I had traveled for the space of many hours in darkness I began to pray unto the Lord, that he would have mercy on me according to the multitude of his tender mercies. And it came to pass after I had prayed unto the Lord, I beheld a large and spacious field.³⁵”

The Scripture from Lehi’s vision does not explain how he was able to perceive the large and spacious field immediately following his prayer, but we can surmise from the previous section that only through the light of Jesus Christ are we able see through the darkness. Interestingly, this verse might give us some understanding on how mankind enters into this life, as we read from the Doctrine and Covenants, “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth; and light and truth forsaketh that evil one. *Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning*, and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again in their infant state, innocent before God. And that wicked one cometh and *taketh away light and truth, through disobedience*, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers.³⁶”

The Scriptures explain that all mankind became fallen because of the transgression in the garden of Eden. Further, we know “because that Adam fell, we are; and by his fall came death, and we are made partakers of *misery and woe*. Behold, Satan hath come among the children of men, and tempteth them to worship him; and men have become carnal, sensual, and devilish, and are shut out from the presence of God. But God *hath made known* unto our fathers, that all men must repent [read Genesis 6:49-65, 2 Nephi 6:10-30, and Mosiah 8:70-84].³⁷” Wherefore, though we are conceived in sin, or in other words, born into a dark world, we are able to find our way by the light of Jesus Christ according to God’s merciful plan, similar to how Lehi was able to perceive the large and spacious building and then the tree of life after traveling for hours in a dark and dreary waste [**Read Genesis 1:1-8**].

³⁴ 2 Samuel 22:29 and Psalm 119:105

³⁵ 1 Nephi 2:45-48

³⁶ DC 90:6a-c

³⁷ Genesis 6:49-51

After Lehi and his family partook of the fruit of the tree of life, he turned and beheld a rod of iron and a straight and narrow path which led to the tree, and at the other end of the rod of iron Lehi saw “a large and spacious field, as if it had been world.³⁸” In addition, Lehi saw a fountain of filthy water and a great and specious building, which represented the depths of hell and the pride of the world, respectively. From Lehi’s account, we read, “And I saw numberless concourses of people, many of whom were pressing forward, that they might obtain the path which led unto the tree by which I stood. And it came to pass that they did come forth and commence in the path which led to the tree. And it came to pass that there arose a *mist of darkness*; yea, even an exceeding great mist of darkness, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost.³⁹” Please read the following Scripture passage from 1 Nephi 2:77-84:

2:77 And now I, Nephi, do not speak all the words of my father. **2:78** But, to be short in writing, behold, he saw other multitudes pressing forward; and they came and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press their way forward, **continually holding fast to the rod of iron**, until they came forth and fell down and partook of the fruit of the tree.

2:79 And he also saw other multitudes feeling their way towards that great and spacious building. **2:80** And it came to pass that many were drowned in the depths of the fountain; **2:81** And many were lost from his view, wandering in strange roads. **2:82** And great was the multitude that did enter into that strange building. **2:83** And after they did enter into that building they did point the finger of scorn at me, and those that were partaking of the fruit also; but we heeded them not. **2:84** These are the words of my father: For as many as heeded them, had fallen away.

Nephi explained in his vision of the Tree of Life that the rod of iron was a representation of the word of God, while the mists of darkness were the temptations of the devil, “which blindeth the eyes, and hardeneth the hearts of the children of men, and leadeth them away into broad roads, that they may perish, and are lost.⁴⁰” Through this vision, the Lord has shared with us a precious spiritual truth, that as we walk in this life we will be confronted with many different paths, as there are many different ways to live our life. However, there is only one straight and narrow path which leads to eternal life, and the way is made clear by the Word of God, which is Jesus Christ. “For in the beginning was the *Word, even the Son*, who is made flesh, and sent unto us by the will of the Father. And as many as believe on his name shall receive of his fullness. And of his fullness have all we received, even immortality and eternal life, through his grace.⁴¹”

The Lord is my Light and Salvation, Whom shall I Fear

Although it is more difficult for Satan to blind our eyes through deception if we hold continually fast to the Word of God, it is important to recognize that there are other avenues in which the devil attempts to sift the children of God as wheat [read Luke 22:31, Alma 17:46-48, and 3 Nephi 8:49-51]. Besides

³⁸ 1 Nephi 2:64

³⁹ 1 Nephi 2:65-67

⁴⁰ 1 Nephi 3:125

⁴¹ John 1:16

pride and lust, perhaps the greatest method that Satan utilizes in order to separate us from God is fear, which is evident in the testimonies of both Joseph Smith and Moses. Please read the following from the pamphlet, “Joseph Smith Tells His Own Story:”

*It was on the morning of a beautiful clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally. After I had retired into the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such astounding influence over me as to **bind my tongue so that I could not speak.***

***Thick darkness gathered around me,** and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. But exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction, not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world who had such a marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being.*

*Just at this moment of great alarm **I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun;** which descended gradually until it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared than I found myself **delivered** from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages (whose brightness and glory defy all description) standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, (pointing to the other,) “This is My beloved Son, hear Him.”*

It is important to notice that in Joseph’s testimony, Satan did not attempt to deceive him as he did with Korihor who literally wrote, “But, behold the devil hath *deceived* me; for he appeared unto me in the form of an angel, and said unto me, Go and reclaim this people, for they have all gone astray after an unknown God. And he said unto me, There is no God.⁴²” Throughout the Scriptures there are many examples of Satan attempting to deceive the hearts of men in perhaps more obvious ways, such as he did with Korihor⁴³ or in section Three of the Doctrine and Covenants where Satan laid a cunning plan to utilize the lost one hundred sixteen translated pages of the Book of Mormon in order to destroy the Lord’s work.

3:3a Verily, verily I say unto you, that Satan has great hold upon their hearts; he stirreth them up to iniquity against that which is good, and their hearts are corrupt, and full of wickedness and abominations, and **they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; therefore they will not ask of me.** **3:3b** Satan stirreth them up, that he may lead their souls to destruction.

⁴² Alma 16:67-68

⁴³ As a side note, it should be obvious that if a supposed angel of the Lord testifies that there is no God, the angel cannot be of God

3:3c And thus he has laid a cunning plan, thinking to destroy the work of God, but I will require this at their hands, and it shall turn to their shame and condemnation in the day of judgment; **3:3d** yea, he stirreth up their hearts to anger against this work; yea, he saith unto them, Deceive and lie in wait to catch, that ye may destroy; behold, this is no harm; **3:3e** and thus he flattereth them, and **telleteth them that it is no sin to lie, that they may catch a man in a lie**, that they may destroy him; and thus he flattereth them, and leadeth them along until he draggeth their souls down to hell; **3:3f** and thus he causeth them to catch themselves in their own snare; and thus he goeth up and down, to and fro in the earth, seeking to destroy the souls of men.

3:4 Verily, verily I say unto you, Woe be unto him that lieth to deceive, because he supposes that another lieth to deceive, for such are not exempt from the justice of God.

Instead of attempting to deceive Joseph in the grove outright, the adversary tried to use the power of darkness to overcome and subject Joseph to his will, and this he almost did by causing Joseph to fear, for Joseph wrote, “Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were *doomed* to sudden destruction.” The Webster’s Dictionary defines the word fear as “a painful emotion or passion excited by an *expectation* of evil, or the apprehension of impending danger. Fear expresses less apprehension than dread, and dread less than terror and fright. The force of this passion, beginning with the most moderate degree, may be thus expressed, fear, dread, terror, fright. Fear is accompanied with a desire to avoid or ward off the *expected* evil. Fear is an uneasiness of mind, upon the thought of future evil *likely* to befall us.” This type of fear is what we might call an ungodly fear, which is a more potent and dangerous way for the devil to attempt to force individuals to believe in a thing that is not true. In the case of Joseph, Satan used a lie that affected Joseph so strongly that he feared that he was doomed to be destroyed. However, the irony in this type of lie is that if we allow it to take hold upon our hearts it will become a reality.

At this time, the reader might be asking, “If fear is evil, why does God command us to fear Him?” Unfortunately, there are many people today who do not understand the difference between a godly fear and an ungodly fear, which is a part of the adversary’s plan to blind both the eyes and the hearts of the children of men. In the Isaiah, chapter eight, we read, “Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.⁴⁴” The difference between the two is thus, a godly fear is to be afraid of something that is true, such as that we will stand before the bar of God to be judged according to our works, while an ungodly fear is to be afraid of something that is false, such as that Satan has the authority to destroy both our soul and body for only God has this authority [read Matthew 10:25].

For a scriptural example, we can examine the story of Israel, who shortly after God brought them out of the land of Egypt, began to murmur and complain in part because they feared that they would perish in the wilderness from a lack of water, food, etc. Therefore, instead of trusting in the Lord who continued to bless the people with every needful item in order to survive, such as water from a rock and manna from heaven, Israel turned to false gods and did not hearken to the voice of Lord. In response, God

⁴⁴ Isaiah 8:13

cursed the children of Israel to wander in the wilderness for forty years rather than allowing them to enter into the promised land, and this they did until every person in that generation passed away save Joshua and Caleb.

Thus, because of Israel's unbelief, the people feared that the Lord would not be their sun and shield, which helped to contribute to their disobedience. Hence, the fear that extended from the false belief that God would allow His chosen people to perish, caused the children of Israel to face the very real truth that God is a God of judgment, and if we disobey His commandments, the plan of mercy cannot have claim upon us. "And again, I say unto you, I give unto you a new commandment, that you may understand my will concerning you, or in other words, I give unto you directions how you may act before me, that it may turn to you for your salvation. I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say, but when ye do not what I say, *ye have no promise.*"⁴⁵

The same conclusion can be compared with us and Zion today. If we fear and doubt that God is with us and chase after the idols of the world for comfort, then we will encounter the very real fear of God's judgment, which is just and true. In Psalms, chapter nineteen, we read, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, *enlightening* the eyes. The fear of the Lord is *clean*, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are *true and righteous* altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."⁴⁶ Rather than allowing that false fear, which is darkness, to take hold in our hearts, it is crucial that we hearken to the words of Isaiah and allow the Lord God to be our dread. Please read the following from Alma 3:27-46:

3:27 And now behold, I ask of you, my ***brethren of the church***, Have ye spiritually been born of God? **3:28** Have ye received his image in your countenances? **3:29** Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts? **3:30** Do ye exercise faith in the redemption of him who created you? **3:31** Do you look forward with an eye of faith, and view this mortal body raised in immortality, and this corruption raised in incorruption, to stand before God, to be judged according to the deeds which have been done in the mortal body?

3:32 I say unto you, Can you imagine to yourselves that ye hear the voice of the Lord, saying unto you, in that day, Come unto me ye blessed, for behold, your works have been the works of righteousness upon the face of the earth? **3:33** Or do ye imagine to yourselves that ye can lie unto the Lord in that day, and say, Lord, our works have been righteous works upon the face of the earth, and that he will save you? **3:34** Or otherwise, can ye imagine yourselves brought before the tribunal of God, with your souls filled with guilt and remorse; having a remembrance of all your guilt; **3:35** Yea, a perfect remembrance of all your wickedness; yea, a remembrance that ye have set at defiance the commandments of God?

⁴⁵ DC 81:3

⁴⁶ Psalms 19:7-10

3:36 I say unto you, Can ye look up to God at that day with a pure heart and clean hands? **3:37** I say unto you, Can you look up, having the image of God engraven upon your countenances? **3:38** I say unto you, Can ye think of being saved when you have yielded yourselves to become subjects to the devil? **3:39** I say unto you, Ye will know at that day, that ye can not be saved: for there can no man be saved **except his garments are washed white:** **3:40** Yea, his garments must be purified until they are cleansed from all stain, through the blood of him of whom it has been spoken by our fathers who should come to redeem his people from their sins.

3:41 And now I ask of you, my brethren, How will any of you feel, if ye shall stand before the bar of God, having your garments stained with blood, and all manner of filthiness? **3:42** Behold, what will these things testify against you? **3:43** Behold, will they not testify that ye are murderers, yea, and also that ye are guilty of all manner of wickedness? **3:44** Behold, my brethren, do ye suppose that such an one can have a place to sit down in the kingdom of God, with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and also all the holy prophets, whose garments are cleansed, and are spotless, pure, and white?

3:45 I say unto you, Nay, except ye make our Creator a liar from the beginning, or suppose that he is a liar from the beginning, ye can not suppose that such can have place in the kingdom of heaven, but they shall be cast out, for they are the children of the kingdom of the devil. **3:46** And now behold, I say unto you my brethren, If ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, Can ye feel so now?

Fear, similar to evil, also has its place in God's great plan of happiness for Jesus said, "I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who *fear me*, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end; great shall be their reward, and eternal shall be their glory.⁴⁷" Arthur Oakman said that it was impossible for mankind to truly love God without fear after that godly sort. Moses asked Israel, "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to *fear* the Lord thy God, to *walk* in all his ways, and to *love him*, and to *serve* the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?⁴⁸"

The Lord God truly understands us better than we understand ourselves. Without a godly fear of the Lord and His eternal judgment would we be afraid to sin? Of course not, however, it is because of this fear that we can truly appreciate and comprehend the righteousness of God's judgment, and this because we know that we in and of ourselves are not worthy and despite our disobedience "God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also.⁴⁹" Wherefore, "we love God because he first loved us.⁵⁰" "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all

⁴⁷ DC 76:2a-b

⁴⁸ Deuteronomy 10:12-13

⁴⁹ Alma 19:97

⁵⁰ 1 John 4:19

filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.⁵¹ In so doing, we will walk in the light of Jesus Christ. Please read from Psalms 27:1-4:

27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? **27:2** When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. **27:3** Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this I am confident. **27:4** One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

Jesus described Satan as one who “was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.”⁵² The adversary will attempt to use every form of deception in order to murder the souls of men, even that of an ungodly fear. Therefore, it is important to always remember that “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and of a sound mind...God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect...There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”⁵³ Please read the following testimony:

I can truthfully testify first hand that ungodly fear has torment, and I can honestly say that it is the most difficult battle that I have ever faced. I can recall the exact day in which the trial began because it also so happened to be one of the most joyful days of my life, not only had I been given the opportunity to give a sermon that morning, but I had also been allowed to take part in a baptismal service. However, sometimes when we are at our highest spiritual mountain tops, we are also at our most vulnerable point because as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:13, God does not allow us to suffer temptation above that which we are able to bear without providing that escape, which is not just through prayer but through Jesus Christ Himself. There is no time when we are able to suffer more than when we are on a spiritual mountain.

Prior to this day, there were two items that I had been praying and thinking about, namely, being able to see those sins in my heart that were not right with God and the concern that I had too much fear when it came to certain things. The old adage of being careful what you ask for can be applied here.

In this trial, a certain thought entered into my mind which I knew was an abomination, but instead of trusting in the Lord, I began to immediately give power to this thought by fearing that it was true, when it was indeed, not true. Nonetheless, I feared that this thought was a desire that I carried in my heart and I pondered how I could be so evil. I cannot express in words the misery that I felt in the ensuing days and weeks as this thought continued to plague both my

⁵¹ 2 Corinthians 7:1

⁵² John 8:44

⁵³ 2 Timothy 1:7 and 1 John 4:16-18

mind and heart. Regrettably, I allowed that fear to take such a hold in my heart that I literally thought my spiritual life was going to be destroyed, and that all things which I loved most would be taken away. However, I do praise God because throughout this trial He continued to send me blessings so that I would understand that He in fact still loved me. One of which was in the form of a dream that helped me to understand what I was experiencing.

In the dream, I was sleeping and after a while I had a strong urgency that I needed to get up, the only problem was that I could not move. The feeling was quite horrifying. Although I tried with all my might and although I knew I absolutely needed to stand, I could not get to my feet. It was only through the power of God that I was finally able stand, which caused me to wake up from the dream.

Later, I was given to know that this was the affect that this ungodly fear was having on my soul. I feared this thought so much that I truly thought that I did not have any agency. That even though I knew that this thought was an abomination and that I did not want to commit this act, I had no choice but to continue to think on it until it consumed me. Further, instead of trusting in the Lord, I started to try and blame anyone or anything but myself because I did not want to admit that such evil could come from inside me. I felt like Moses from Section Twenty-two, who though knowing that Satan was not the Only Begotten Son, began to fear him so exceedingly that he saw the bitterness of hell. To me, that is what it felt like to feel as if I had no choice. I know now that if I had continued to allow this fear to control me, my agency would have truly been given away, because I would have allowed myself to become subjected to the will of Satan.

Nonetheless, I know in whom I have trusted, and it is God and Jesus Christ that have been my support and my rock of salvation. I see what manner of man that I might be without Jesus Christ, and so I stand today with the desire to praise my God, because in spite of what I am He has given His Son for me. He truly takes what the most wicked man can do and loves him into repentance, And if that was not enough, He allows us to become His sons and daughters, to serve Him, and to have a place in His Kingdom. So I thank God for this trial, because it has helped me to grow closer to my Savior, and also that I might be able to witness for Him in such a way that others would not experience this same type of ungodly fear.

Brothers and sisters, be strong, be of good courage, and trust in God. Doubt not. Fear not. Jesus Christ is the light of the world and He is truly mighty to save. He will not leave you comfortless. He will not forsake you. Therefore, repent and walk with Him, for He loves you greatly. Let Zion, the Kingdom of God on earth, move forward this day.

The Light and Dark in the World

Within every person there exists a spiritual battle between light and dark, which is a type and shadow of the spiritual battle that exists in the world today. Since almost the very beginning, or at least since the fall of Lucifer, who was a son of the *morning*,⁵⁴ this battle has been raging continuously, for we know

⁵⁴ Morning means the first or early part.

from the book of John that the gospel was preached through the Son from the beginning of the world and that Jesus Christ was the light and life of the world. We also know that in the seventh chapter of Genesis, while Enoch was taken up into the bosom of God and shown all things, “He beheld Satan, and he had a great chain in his hand, and it veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness; and he looked up and laughed, and his angels rejoiced.⁵⁵” Similar to Joseph Smith’s testimony, which was shared by brother Oakman, these two forces of light and dark that are present in this current world are battling for the souls of men.

It is evident throughout the Scriptures, especially in the third chapter of Genesis and the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah, along with Section Twenty-two, Section Twenty-eight, and Section Seventy-six of the Doctrine and Covenants, that Satan, who is called perdition, desires to place himself on the throne of God. For we read, “Let no man deceive you by any means; for there shall come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition [Satan]; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.⁵⁶” However, we know clearly from the Scriptures that the devil will eventually be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone after the Battle of the Great Day of the God Almighty [Revelation 16:14, Revelation 20:10, and DC 85:35].

At this moment, the reader might ask as many people have, “If Satan knows that he will lose in the end, why does he try?” There are perhaps many reasons for this, but we will only present three arguments here. First, what does an individual usually do when they are extremely angry with someone but cannot hurt them directly? The answer is quite simple, the individual attempts to hurt the other by harming what the other loves, and God loves mankind more than anything. Therefore, Satan went about to tempt Eve in order to separate man from God, not knowing of course that this was a part of God’s plan. “Satan...sought also to beguile Eve, for he knew not the mind of God; wherefore, he sought to destroy the world.⁵⁷”

Secondly, we can surmise from various Scriptures that what Satan desires most of all is to obtain his own kingdom. Interestingly, after Alma the younger realized that his desire to be an angel so that he could “declare unto every soul, as with the voice of thunder, repentance, and the plan of redemption, that they should repent and come unto our God, that there might be no more sorrow upon all the face of the earth,” went against the plan that God had for Alma, he said, “I ought not to harrow up in my desires, the firm decree of a just God, for I know that he granteth unto men *according to their desire*, whether it be unto *death* or unto *life*; yea, I know that he allotteth unto men, yea, decreeth unto them decrees which are unalterable, *according to their wills*; whether they be *unto salvation* or *unto destruction*; Yea, and I know that good and evil have come before all men; or he that knoweth not good *from* evil is blameless; but he that knoweth good and evil, to him it is given according to his desires; whether he desireth good or evil, life or death, joy or remorse of conscience.⁵⁸”

⁵⁵ Genesis 7:32

⁵⁶ 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

⁵⁷ Genesis 3:7

⁵⁸ Alma 15:53 and 55-56

It is important to understand that Alma recognized that he was only a man, and he did sin in his wish. Alma wrote, “For I ought to be *content* with the things which the Lord has *allotted* unto me... Why should I desire more than to perform the work to which I have been called? Why should I desire that I was an angel, that I could speak unto all the ends of the earth? For behold, the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word; yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have; therefore we see that the Lord doth counsel in wisdom, according to that which *is just and true*.⁵⁹” It was the wisdom of God that others would teach the gospel and to receive their own personal testimony and relationship with Jesus Christ. Although Alma’s desire was in theory for the greater good, in reality it would have violated the agency of many people. Remember that the Lord gives mankind what they want, and if they do not desire to know the words of Jesus Christ, then they will not. However, if they spiritually hear the word of God, “how much more cursed is he that knoweth the will of God and doeth it not, than he that only believeth, or only hath cause to believe, and falleth into transgression? Now of this thing, ye must judge.⁶⁰” Thus, many people would fall under a greater condemnation because they were not ready to receive, nor desired to receive, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We read that because Alma loved God so much, he refused to go against His will, but instead gloried in the Lord, saying, “I know that which the Lord hath commanded me, and I glory in it: I do not glory of myself, but I glory in that which the Lord hath commanded me; Yea, and this is my glory, that perhaps I may be an *instrument* in the hands of God, to bring some soul to repentance; and this is my joy.⁶¹” Conversely, we read in the third chapter of Genesis that Satan did the complete opposite of Alma. “And he [Satan] came before me, saying, Behold I, send me, I will be thy Son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore, give me thine honor.⁶²”

In other words, while Alma loved God and desired to do His will, Satan loved himself and desired to do his own will, which would have destroyed the agency of man. Thus, Satan is attempting to take the throne of God knowing that he will not succeed because it is his desire to have his own kingdom, and thereby we know that God will grant unto him according to his desire. Nonetheless, this is not a kingdom that is desirable for those who yearn for life for there will be no light there. Instead, this kingdom is outer darkness, which is a place where “the end, the width, the height, the depth, and the misery thereof, they understand not, neither any man except them who are ordained unto this condemnation.⁶³”

Third and finally, what individual who has his own kingdom does not desire for others to worship him? “And the devil came unto him [Jesus Christ] again, and said, All these things will I give unto thee, *if thou wilt fall down and worship me*.⁶⁴” In this verse we read that Satan’s greatest wish is for all mankind to

⁵⁹ Alma 15:54 and 57-59

⁶⁰ Alma 16:141

⁶¹ Alma 15:60-61

⁶² Genesis 3:2

⁶³ DC 76:4k

⁶⁴ Matthew 4:9

worship him “and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself,⁶⁵” which misery is caused because he could not have happiness in wickedness.

The difference between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil is the difference between light and dark, life and death. Therefore, we learn that in order for Satan to force the children of men to worship him, he sought to destroy the agency of man, and even though God cast him down by the power of Jesus Christ, he has not relented in this quest. Instead, Satan continues to this day to desire to blind mankind into thinking that they have no choice, which he attempts to accomplish with every form of deceit available, including fear. Therefore, while God desires for mankind to have knowledge and yearns to share His glory, or His Light and Truth, with each and every soul, Satan desires everyone to worship him for his own glory; thus he craves to take away the knowledge of mankind and to lead them into spiritual darkness.

Although we know that Satan will not take the throne of God, it appears that he is succeeding in his desire to tear souls away from God, for Jesus Christ told the latter day saints, “Verily, verily I say unto you, Darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and *all flesh* has become corrupt before my face.⁶⁶” Nevertheless, all is not lost because God has sent His everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for His sons and daughters. For in the everlasting covenant is the cause of Zion and the embodiment of Jesus Christ, and by keeping the everlasting covenant the light of God will again come into the world. We read, “When men are called unto mine everlasting gospel, and covenant with an everlasting covenant, they are accounted as the salt of the earth, and the savor of men. They are called to be the savor of men.⁶⁷”

According to the Webster’s Dictionary, the word savor means “to partake of the quality or nature of; or to have the appearance of.” The scriptural definition of savor is for mankind to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ, to be purified even as He is pure, and to exude the light of Christ in a world that is clouded in darkness. Please read a compilation of Scripture from Matthew 5:15-18, DC 85:18, DC 90:1a and 4e, DC 83:7a-f, Matthew 10:24-28, 2 Corinthians 4:1-11 and 16-18, and DC 11:2-5:

5:15 Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the salt of the earth; but if the salt shall lose its savor, **wherewith shall the earth be salted?** the salt shall thenceforth be good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. **5:16** Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the ***light of the world***; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. **5:17** Behold, do men light a candle and put it under a bushel? Nay, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light to ***all*** that are in the house. **5:18** Therefore, **let your light so shine before this world**, that they may see your good works, and ***glorify*** your Father who is in heaven.

85:18a And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies ***shall be filled with light***, and there shall be no darkness in you, and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things. **85:18b** Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the

⁶⁵ 2 Nephi 6:21

⁶⁶ DC 105:9a

⁶⁷ DC 98:5k

days will come that you shall see him: for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will.

90:1a Verily, thus saith the Lord, It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face, and know that I am, and that I am **the true light** that lighteth every man that cometh into the world... **90:4e** He that keepeth his commandments, receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth, and knoweth all things.

83:7a And now I give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give **diligent heed to the words of eternal life**; for you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. **83:7b** For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth **is light**, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ; **83:7c** and the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit; **83:7d** and everyone that **hearkeneth** to the voice of the Spirit, cometh unto God, even the Father; **83:7e** and the Father teacheth him of the **covenant** which he has renewed and confirmed upon you, which is confirmed upon you for your sakes, and not for your sakes only, **but for the sake of the whole world**: **83:7f** and the whole world lieth in sin, and groaneth under the darkness and under the bondage of sin:

10:24 What I tell you in darkness, preach ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, preach ye upon the housetops. **10:25** And fear not them who are able to kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. **10:26** Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father knoweth it. **10:27** And the very hairs of your head are all numbered. **Fear ye not**, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows. **10:28** Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven.

4:1 Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; **4:2** But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. **4:3** But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; **4:4** In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

4:5 For we preach not ourselves, but **Christ Jesus the Lord**; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. **4:6** For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, **hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**. **4:7** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

4:8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; **4:9** Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; **4:10** Always bearing about in the

body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. **4:11** For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. **4:17** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; **4:18** While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

5:13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. **5:14** Wherefore he saith, **Awake thou that sleepest**, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

11:2a Behold, the field is white already to harvest; therefore, whoso desireth to reap, let him thrust in his sickle with his might, and reap while the day lasts, that he may treasure up for his soul everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God; **11:2b** yea, whosoever will thrust in his sickle and reap, **the same is called of God**; **11:2c** therefore, if you will ask of me you shall receive, if you will knock it shall be opened unto you.

11:3a Now, as you have asked, behold, I say unto you, **11:3b** Keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion.

11:4a Behold, I speak unto you, and also to all those who have desires to bring forth and establish this work; **11:4b** and no one can assist in this work, except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things whatsoever shall be intrusted to his care.

11:5a Behold, I am the light and the life of the world, that speak these words; **11:5b** therefore, **give heed with your might**, and then you are called. Amen.

Brothers and sisters, God has called us to be the light of Christ in the world, which can only be accomplished by shaking of the coals of our garments and discovering that Jesus Christ the Lord is within each and every one of us through the power and gift of the Holy Ghost. "Wherefore I now send upon you another Comforter, even upon you, my friends, that it may abide in your hearts, even the Holy Spirit of promise...Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will *manifest myself to him*.⁶⁸"

⁶⁸ DC 85:1c and John 14:17-21

Jesus told the disciples, “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness...As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.⁶⁹” Although Jesus has ascended into heaven to sit on the right hand side of the throne of God, He is still the light and life of the world as long as His peculiar people will serve Him in righteousness, and as long as we have His image in our countenance. In so doing, we might become instruments in the hands of God to bring even one soul to Christ. “For this is my life and my light, my joy and my salvation, and my redemption from everlasting wo.⁷⁰”

The Armor of Light

In order to be a good and faithful servant and to be a light to the world, we cannot be idle. Instead, we must actively seek to glorify God by taking up our cross and following after Jesus Christ. This is keeping our eye single to the glory God. In so doing, we have the promise that our whole bodies will be filled with light. Unless we ourselves are filled with light, how can we possibly share that light with a world that groans in darkness? Jesus taught the disciples in Matthew, chapter seven, “Why is it that thou beholdest the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.⁷¹” If every human eye has a blind spot, how can we truthfully examine ourselves, or others, unless we have the light of Jesus Christ within us? “For thou wilt light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness...For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light.⁷²”

Therefore, in order for us to receive light and truth, which is the glory of God, we must first receive Jesus Christ into our soul and keep the everlasting covenant. However, this requires diligently searching and seeking in the light of Christ, which everyman that enters into the world has been given, and the Lord has again promised that if we seek, we shall find. “And again, verily I say unto you, my friends, I leave these sayings with you, to ponder in your hearts with this commandment which I give unto you, that ye shall call upon me while I am near; draw near unto me, and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask and ye shall receive; knock and it shall be opened unto you.⁷³”

If we have then received the light of Christ, let us hearken to the words of Paul, who wrote, “now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.⁷⁴” Please read the following Scripture from 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8:

5:4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. **5:5** Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. **5:6** Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. **5:7** For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. **5:8** But let us, who are of

⁶⁹ John 12:46 and John 9:5

⁷⁰ Alma 14:125

⁷¹ Matthew 7:4 and 8

⁷² Psalms 18:28 and 36:9

⁷³ DC 85:16a-e

⁷⁴ Romans 13:11-12



the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

Now is the time to awake from that natural man and walk in a newness of life. When we put off that old man and become new creatures through Jesus Christ, we receive all the promises and blessings of God, or in other words, we receive the whole armor of God. If we desire to glorify God and be a light to the world we must, “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”⁷⁵

The word wiles is defined by Webster as “a trick or stratagem practiced for ensnaring or deception; a sly, insidious artifice. To deceive; to beguile.” Thereby, it is important to understand that instead of putting on a physical suit of armor, we have been called to put on a spiritual armor so that we might stand in holy places against the buffetings of Satan and shine bright as a testimony of Jesus Christ. As we choose to serve and worship God, the Lord blesses us spiritually by equipping us with the Armor of God. Please read the following from Ephesians 6:13-17:

6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. **6:14** Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; **6:15** And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; **6:16** Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. **6:17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

The following is a short and basic description of the Armor of God.

The Pieces of the Armor God

1. Belt of Truth
2. Breastplate of Righteousness
3. Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace
4. Shield of Faith
5. Helmet of Salvation
6. Sword of the Spirit

The Belt of Truth

In order for us to first begin to put on the Armor of God, we must have our “loins girt about with truth,” meaning we must put on the belt of truth. In this verse, Paul was talking about the truth of Jesus Christ, who told his disciples, “I am the way, **the truth**, and the life.”⁷⁶ It is only through Jesus Christ that we can receive redemption and eternal life. Christ is the author and finisher of our faith, and He is our rock and strong foundation. Jesus said, “Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who *built his house upon a rock*, and the rains descended, and the floods

⁷⁵ Ephesians 6:11

⁷⁶ John 14:6



came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.⁷⁷” If we have the truth of Jesus Christ, we will not be deceived.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

After we embrace the truth that Jesus Christ is our Redeemer and Savior, we must begin to live the commandments that Christ taught, “Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps.⁷⁸” The Scriptures explain, “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.⁷⁹” One of the examples that Christ set for all mankind was baptism.

Although we know that Christ never committed sin, Jesus said to John the Baptist, “Suffer me to be baptized of thee, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.⁸⁰”

Jesus also said, “blessed are they that do *hunger and thirst after righteousness*; for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.⁸¹” Therefore, if we follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ we will receive the Holy Ghost as our Breastplate of Righteousness, which leads us into truth, comforts us in times of need, and gives us the exceeding great and precious promises.



The Feet Shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace

With the Holy Ghost as our guide, we can truly share the light of Jesus Christ with the world, “Speaking the truth in love.” Jesus said, “Seek not the things of this world *but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God*, and to establish his righteousness.⁸²” Throughout Christ’s ministry, he preached to His disciples, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Go ye into the world, saying unto all, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come nigh unto you. The kingdom of heaven is at hand.⁸³” The gospel of Jesus Christ is not meant for only a few individuals, but instead to bring all men, women, and children, to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which is the peace of God “which passeth all understanding.⁸⁴”

Paul wrote, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As

⁷⁷ Matthew 7:34

⁷⁸ 1 Peter 2:21

⁷⁹ James 1:22

⁸⁰ Matthew 3:43

⁸¹ Matthew 5:8

⁸² Matthew 6:38

⁸³ Mark 16:14, Matthew 7:9; Matthew 10:6

⁸⁴ Philippians 4:7

it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!⁸⁵”

The Shield of Faith

Paul wrote above all else, we need to take the shield of faith, “wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” In the ancient American Scripture called the Book of Mormon, we read, “And now, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation, that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds; yea, his shafts in the whirlwind; Yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you, to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build, they can not fall.⁸⁶”

The book of Hebrews defines faith as “the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.⁸⁷” Faith is not the perfect knowledge of something, but is the belief or assurance of things that are not seen, such as God as the Creator of heaven and earth, but are true. However, if we nourish our faith in a particular thing, like Jesus Christ, it can grow into a perfect knowledge. Moreover, faith is not simply believing in Jesus Christ, but walking with Him. “What profit is it, my brethren, for a man to say he hath faith, and hath not works? can faith save him? Yea, a man may say, I will show thee I have faith without works; but I say, show me thy faith without works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Even so faith, if it have not works is dead, being alone.⁸⁸”



It is important that each person has their own personal testimony of Jesus Christ. Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, explained that our faith grows through our trials, and that these trials should be precious to each of us because they help to grow our joy in the Lord. In the Book of Mormon, we read, “Yea, there are many who do say, If thou wilt shew unto us a sign from heaven, then we shall know of a surety; then we shall believe. Now I ask, Is this faith? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for if a man knoweth a thing, he hath no cause to believe, for he knoweth it. And now how much more cursed is he that knoweth the will of God and doeth it not, than he that only believeth, or only have cause to believe, and falleth into transgression? Now of this thing, ye must judge.⁸⁹”

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him *ask in faith*, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.⁹⁰”

⁸⁵ Romans 10:13-15

⁸⁶ Helaman 2:74-75

⁸⁷ Hebrews 11:1

⁸⁸ James 2:14-15 and 17

⁸⁹ Alma 16:139-141

⁹⁰ James 1:5-7

The Helmet of Salvation

The Helmet of Salvation is the peace that only comes from the true knowledge that God is love, and that He desires for us to have eternal life with Him and Jesus Christ. “He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us*, and sent his son to be the propitiation (*atonement*) for our sins.⁹¹”

We know that God is love, and because of His love for us, despite our transgressions, he holds nothing back from us, including his Son, whom He sent to die on the cross and to rise again on the third day that we may have atonement for our sins. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we can obtain a hope of salvation. “How is it that ye can attain unto faith, save ye shall have hope? And what is it that ye shall hope for?



Behold I say unto you, that ye shall have *hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection*, to be raised unto life eternal; and this because of your faith in him according to the promise.⁹²”

The Sword of the Spirit

Lastly, Paul wrote, “And take...the sword of the Spirit, *which is the word of God.*” John explained that the gospel was preached through Jesus Christ from the beginning, and that the gospel was the word, which was also the life and light of the world. “And the Light shineth in the world, and the world perceiveth it not.” In other words, the word of God is the gospel of Jesus Christ which shines through the darkness of the world, meaning all the lies and deceptions of the

devil that would take us away from God. It is important that we develop a love for the truth, so that we cannot be deceived. Nephi wrote, “Feast upon the word of Christ; for behold the words of Christ will tell you all things that ye should do.”⁹³”

Paul wrote that we should “study to show thyself approved unto God...rightly dividing the word of truth.”⁹⁴ Further, Paul also wrote that all Scripture that is given by the inspiration of God “is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”⁹⁵ If we hold fast to the word of God, we will not be lead astray.

Put on the Whole Armor of God



⁹¹ 1 John 4:8-10

⁹² Moroni 7:46-47

⁹³ 2 Nephi 14:4

⁹⁴ 2 Timothy 2:15

⁹⁵ 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Paul reminds us that in order for us to put on the whole Armor of God, we must be in constant prayer with God. A good prayer life is an important part of being in the army of Lord, as it allows us to commune with God and draw closer to Him. “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.⁹⁶” In the tenth chapter of Alma, we read, “But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and *watch and pray continually that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear*, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long suffering; having faith on the Lord; Having a hope that ye shall receive eternal life; having the love of God always in your hearts.⁹⁷”

It is important to understand that each part of the Armor of God is essential for the welfare of our souls, and through the light and truth of Jesus Christ we will be able to stand as a witness for Him and the Kingdom. Only the light of Zion will be able to overcome the darkness in this world, which can only be accomplished through righteousness. Brothers and sisters, now is the time to cast off the dark veil of unbelief and disobedience. Rather, let us take that everlasting light of the glory of God, which is a marvelous light of His goodness, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion. For “the night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light...and remember that Saints should be cheerful in their warfare that they may be joyous in their triumph.⁹⁸”



⁹⁶ James 4:8

⁹⁷ Alma 10:28-29

⁹⁸ Romans 13:12 and DC 119:6d