

**ON POLYGAMY AND HOW IT HINDERED  
THE RESTORATION OF THE LAMANITES  
AND THE REDEMPTION OF ZION**

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*And again I would exhort you, that ye would come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing. And awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion, and strengthen thy stakes, and enlarge thy borders for ever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled.*

*Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in no wise deny the power of God. And again, if ye, by the grace of God, are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father, unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy without spot. (Moroni 10:27-30 [10:30-33])<sup>1</sup>*

This paper presents a history, based primarily on latter day scripture, of the development of polygamy in the church that was organized on April 6, 1830 according to the revelations<sup>2</sup> Jesus Christ gave to Joseph Smith, Jr., and Oliver Cowdery. In particular, it reviews how polygamy was used by Satan to hinder the restoration of the Lamanites and the redemption of Zion. The first section is an abbreviated or condensed version of what follows. The subsequent sections provide detailed discussions of the topics introduced in this extended summary.

***LET US SHAKE OFF THE COALS OF OUR GARMENTS,  
AND ARISE IN THE STRENGTH OF THE LORD***

When preparing to restore His church in these latter days, our Lord Jesus Christ announced that a *great and marvelous work* was about to come forth unto the children of men.<sup>3</sup> With the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon, the restoration of the Lamanites and the coming forth of a New Jerusalem upon Joseph's land were on the horizon.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, scripture references are from: *The King James (Authorized) Version* (KJV) of the Bible and *The Holy Scriptures, an Inspired Revision* (IR) of the Authorized Edition (Herald Publishing House, 1974 Edition, First Printing) – also known as the *Joseph Smith Translation* (JST); *The Book of Mormon*, 1908 Authorized Edition (Herald Publishing House, 10<sup>th</sup> Printing, 1973); *The Doctrine and Covenants* (Herald Publishing House, 1970 Edition, Second Printing, 1974). Verse numbers from *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (LDS) Book of Mormon and Doctrine & Covenants editions are listed in square “[ ]” brackets. Emphasis via bolding, italics, and underlining has been added in various scriptures to highlight portions of quoted texts to emphasize points made within the text.

<sup>2</sup> *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, pp. 915, 944, 945

<sup>3</sup> D&C 4:1a [4:1], 6:1a [6:1], 10:1a [11:1], 11:1a [12:1], 12:1a [14:1]

<sup>4</sup> cf. D&C 2:6 [2:16-20], 3:10-12 [10:44-52], 42:3b [42:8,9] with Ether 6:3-13 [13:2-12] & Alma 2:17 [4:10]

This announcement put Satan on notice that his time was short.<sup>5</sup> Satan *knew* that if he did not take action against the restored church he would soon have no power because of the righteousness of God's people.<sup>6</sup> Unless he moved quickly to block the *progress* of the church and its work in that first generation,<sup>7</sup> he knew he would soon be bound when the Lord brought Zion again upon the earth.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, as prophesied, Satan stepped up his subtle work of temptation and his *fiery dart* attacks.<sup>9</sup> He would send *mists of darkness* and *shafts in the whirlwind* upon the budding church in an attempt to confound it by compromising its members with sin and transgression.<sup>10</sup>

Also as prophesied the Lord would *suffer* Satan so to work.<sup>11</sup> But why would Jesus Christ allow Satan to work his subtle works of darkness among the members of His church? There were those among them who *received not the love of the truth that they might be saved*.<sup>12</sup> Rather than give diligent heed to the words of eternal life as the Lord admonished, they turned *unto fables*.<sup>13</sup> Rather than *embrace the truth and look upward* according to the everlasting covenant, they *had pleasure in unrighteousness and remained in the same with greediness*.<sup>14</sup>

According to His word, then, the Lord tried the patience and faith of His people to *prove them in all things*, whether they would abide in

His covenant or if they would choose the evil *gift* over the good *gift*.<sup>15</sup> Tragically, during the trial of their faith many transgressed the covenants and commandments of their Lord,<sup>16</sup> which delayed the restoration of the Lamanites – who were to receive the fullness of the gospel through the restored church.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, in consequence of the transgressions of His people, the Lord postponed the redemption of Zion.<sup>18</sup>

The members of the church continued sufficiently in their disobedience until the Lord finally notified them in plain terms that His judgments were to begin upon His house, and from His house His judgments would go forth.<sup>19</sup> Judgments came upon the members of His church in many forms, including being driven from their homes and lands.<sup>20</sup> Then, with the murder of Joseph Smith, Jr., and his brother Hyrum in June of 1844,<sup>21</sup> the restored church was scattered abroad upon the face of the land.

Polygamy was found in a number of the prominent and not so prominent fragments or divisions that formed from the dispersed saints.<sup>22</sup> Why note the incidence of polygamy in the scattered church? It provides evidence of what had befallen the church.

<sup>5</sup> cf. Revelation 12:12 with II Thessalonians 2:1-12

<sup>6</sup> cf. I Nephi 3:230,231 [14:14] & 7:60 [22:26] with D&C 17:1a [20:1] & D&C 38:4a,6b-d, [38:13,14,28-30] etc.

<sup>7</sup> cf. D&C 3:1-6 [10:20-34]

<sup>8</sup> cf. III Nephi 7:42-45 [16:16-20] with Isaiah 52:8-10; see also D&C 83:17b [84:100-101], 98:5e [101:28-29]

<sup>9</sup> cf. D&C 3:1d-13d [10:4-56], D&C 50:1 [50:1-3], etc. with I Nephi 4:39,40 [15:24] & Revelation 12:12

<sup>10</sup> cf. I Nephi 2:67 [8:23], I Nephi 3:125 [12:17], Helaman 2:74,75 [5:12]

<sup>11</sup> cf. II Thessalonians 2:7 IR

<sup>12</sup> cf. II Thessalonians 2:10 with D&C 50:1-3 [50:1-9], 63:4,5 [63:12-18], 90:6-9 [93:36-50], 92:1e [95:6-7], 105:5c,d [112:12,13], etc.

<sup>13</sup> cf. D&C 83:7,8 [84:43-59] with I Timothy 1:4, II Timothy 4:4, etc.; see also John 17:17

<sup>14</sup> cf. II Thessalonians 2:11,12 with Ephesians 4:17-19, II Peter 2:9-22, Jude 11-13, Genesis 9:21-23 IR & Romans 1:18

<sup>15</sup> cf. Mosiah 11:23-25 [23:21,22], D&C 28:10d [29:39] & 95:3a-d [98:11-16] with II Nephi 1:73-128 [2:8-30] & Moroni 10:27 [10:30]; see also I Nephi 5:48-50

[16:37,38], & Alma 15:55,56 [29:4,5] with Genesis 6:5-7 IR, I Peter 1:3-9, Romans 5:1-5 & James 1:1-5

<sup>16</sup> cf. D&C 1:5b,c [25-28] with D&C 2:4 [3:9-11], 6:6a,b [6:14], 23:1 [24:1-2], 52:8c [52:37], 63:1-4 [63:1-15], 64:1b-2b,3b-d [64:3-7,15-17], 81:1 [82:1-6], 92:1 [95:1-7], 93:2b [96:8], 98:1a,5m [101:1,2,41,42], 102:2a,3c [105:2,9,10], etc.

<sup>17</sup> cf. with I Nephi 4:16 [15:13] & III Nephi 9:101-10:32 [21:14-23:5]

<sup>18</sup> cf. D&C 102:1-3,10 [105:1-14,33-37], D&C 2:1-2a [3:1-3], 3:9d,12 [10:43,52], etc.

<sup>19</sup> cf. D&C 102:2d [105:6] & D&C 105:9,10 [112:23-26] with D&C 58:6i [58:32,33], 81:3b [82:10]

<sup>20</sup> cf. D&C 98:1a,5m [101:1-2,41-42] with D&C 43:5 [43:17-22] & D&C 105:9,10 [112:23-26]

<sup>21</sup> *The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Vol. 2 – 1836-1844, 1952, p. 743

<sup>22</sup> *The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Vol. 3 – 1844-1872, 1952, pp. 35, 53, 72, 200-202, 215, 348, 362, etc.

Satan had devised a subtle plan to destroy the church based on a warning the Lord had given His church upon their arrival in Kirtland, Ohio. It was a warning that alerted the devil of a way by which he might more effectively tempt and potentially neutralize, and, where possible, even destroy the members of the church.<sup>23</sup> Here is how his plan worked (and still works where there are those who allow him to so work<sup>24</sup>).

Jesus Christ warned His newly restored church that if a man looks upon a woman to lust after her or if any person commits adultery in his or her heart, that individual will not have His Spirit, but will deny the faith, and shall fear.<sup>25</sup> Lust and adultery, then, would be the means Satan would attempt to use to disarm the church, and the priesthood in particular, of the Spirit of the Lord.

Satan knew very well the fallen tendencies of *the natural* or *old man*, those found specifically embedded within *the lust of the flesh*, *the lust of the eyes*, and *the pride of life*.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the devil, as *the mystery of iniquity*,<sup>27</sup> set out to beguile members of the early church with *lust* and *adultery* in order that he might bring the body of Christ under the condemnation that comes of transgression.<sup>28</sup> In this way he would work to prevent members of the body from becoming pure in heart and, thus, from having *a portion in Zion*.<sup>29</sup>

Satan's ambitions went well beyond just overthrowing the church itself, however. Using lust and adultery to promote polygamy in the church would be his way of disqualifying the members of the church from bringing the full-

ness of the gospel of Jesus Christ unto the Lamanites. Why polygamy? Lehi's son, Jacob, had testified that, unlike the Nephites, the Lamanites of his day had not committed the particular sin of polygamy. Consequently, according to his prophecy, the Lamanites would one day be a blessed people.<sup>30</sup> If Satan, then, could cause the restored church to become guilty of the very sin the Lamanites had *not* been guilty of, the church would not be in a justifiable position to call the Lamanites to repentance and faith on their Redeemer, Jesus Christ.<sup>31</sup>

Polygamy had been plainly identified and condemned in the records preserved in the Book of Mormon as an *abomination* and a *grosser crime* committed by the Nephites. It sprang from a sin that is the most abominable sin in the site of the Lord except for the shedding of innocent blood and denying the Holy Ghost.<sup>32</sup> Satan, then, would go about seeking to draw the Lord's people in the latter days into this same abominable practice through lust and adultery in an attempt to overthrow the church and keep it from fulfilling its mission.<sup>33</sup>

For a church compromised with polygamy to attempt to preach repentance to the Lamanites would be the height of hypocrisy.<sup>34</sup> For them to presume to *revenge* the Lamanites *disobedience*<sup>35</sup> – when they had committed a grosser crime than the Lamanites had committed – would be an attempt to live by and impose on others a double standard, a thing which God hates.<sup>36</sup> Remember the admonition Jesus gave

<sup>23</sup> cf. Genesis 3:4,5 IR with D&C 1:5f,g [1:31-33]; see also I Corinthians 10:12-14 with Ephesians 6:10-18

<sup>24</sup> cf. I Nephi 3:227-231 [14:12-14] with Luke 13:24,25

<sup>25</sup> cf. D&C 42:7 [42:19-28] & D&C 63:5 [63:16-18] with Matthew 5:29-36 IR [27-32 KJV] & III Nephi 5:76-80 [12:27-30] & 7:34-41 [16:10-15]

<sup>26</sup> cf. Colossians 3:5-10, I John 2:15-17 & Mosiah 1:119,120 [3:19] with I Peter 5:8,9; see also Mosiah 1:79-85 [2:36-39], etc.

<sup>27</sup> cf. II Thessalonians 2:3-7

<sup>28</sup> cf. I Peter 5:8,9 & D&C 50:1 [50:1-3] with John 3:19,20 & Mosiah 11:166 [27:13]

<sup>29</sup> cf. D&C 94:5c [97:21]

<sup>30</sup> Jacob 2:54-58 [3:5-7]

<sup>31</sup> cf. D&C 58:6i [58:32-33], 64:7 [64:34-39], 81:3b [82:10], etc. with III Nephi 7:34-41 [16:10-15], 10:1-4 [21:22-25], etc.; see also II Corinthians 10:6 with Psalm 51:12,13, II Timothy 2:5,6, James 1:5-8, James 5:16b, etc.

<sup>32</sup> cf. Alma 19:7 [39:5] with Jacob 2:29-37 [2:22-28] & D&C 111:4b [see D&C 101, 1835 Edition]

<sup>33</sup> cf. D&C 3:6d [10:33] & 50:1 [50:1-3] with D&C 22:8-15 [Moses 1:12-22], Job 1:7 & I Peter 5:8,9

<sup>34</sup> cf. Luke 6:38-42 & Luke 11:35-53 IR [34-52 KJV]

<sup>35</sup> cf. II Corinthians 10:6

<sup>36</sup> cf. Matthew 15:1-8 IR [1-9 KJV], Proverbs 11:1-9 & Proverbs 20:23 with James 1:5-8,4:1-8; see also Revelation 3:16 with Psalm 12:1-8

His disciples: First take the beam out of your own eye before offering to take the speck from another person's eye; otherwise you are a hypocrite and unworthy of the kingdom of heaven.<sup>37</sup>

Could Satan get such a large plank as polygamy lodged in the eye of the church? If he could, he would effectively blind and obstruct its members. This plank of polygamy would make them like the blind guides Jesus described, those who cause themselves and others to fall into a *ditch*.<sup>38</sup>

Briefly comprehended, through the Book of Mormon, the restored church had been given a marvelously plain and precious knowledge of things pertaining unto righteousness and the plan of restoration regarding the covenant people of God. By coaxing members of the church to fall into the abominable practice of fornication, adultery, and polygamy, Satan would lead them to sin against the greater light and, thereby, bring them under the greater condemnation.<sup>39</sup> In this way he would cause the church to fail in its progress of bringing the fullness of the gospel unto the Lamanites.<sup>40</sup> He would cause its members to fail to assist in bringing the Lamanites to blossom as a rose and build a New Jerusalem upon Joseph's land.<sup>41</sup>

Through those who would deny the faith because of lust and adultery, the adversary would also have power<sup>42</sup> in the midst of the church that would allow him to cause it to become a stumbling block unto the Lamanites. Through its compromised members, he could more easily promulgate false doctrines and thereby delay, if not stall indefinitely, the Lamanites becoming a righteous people.

Satan's early successes in this area of war-

*fare*<sup>43</sup> were made evident through the action taken in August 1835 by a general assembly of the church.<sup>44</sup> The church, the assembly declared, had been *reproached* with the *crime of fornication and polygamy*.<sup>45</sup> Note that this declaration was made just over five years after the church had been organized!

To better understand how such a *reproachful crime* could come into the church in so short a time, consider how years earlier Jesus Christ had warned His apostle Simon Peter that Satan *desired to have him to sift the children of the kingdom as wheat*.<sup>46</sup> Peter was a prime target for temptation because, being promised the keys to the kingdom,<sup>47</sup> he was in a position to influence and affect a great many, if not all, of the Lord's people.<sup>48</sup>

It is truly astonishing to note just how quickly Satan moved to tempt Peter following Jesus stating that He would give Peter the keys of the kingdom. Yet, the scripture plainly records that within moments after Jesus had commended Peter for receiving the revelation from His Father in heaven that He, Jesus, is the Christ, Satan *provoked* Peter<sup>49</sup> to resist the words of Jesus. Peter, being tempted by Satan, said, "*Be it far from thee, Lord,*" when Jesus prophesied that He would suffer many things at the hands of the elders in Jerusalem and be killed and raised from the dead.<sup>50</sup> Jesus' reply to Peter identified the true source (inspiration) of Peter's rebuke. Turning to Peter, Jesus said, "*Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those*

<sup>37</sup> cf. Matthew 7:4-9 IR [3-5 KJV] with Matthew 23:21-30 IR [24-33 KJV]

<sup>38</sup> Matthew 15:13, Matthew 23:21-30, etc.

<sup>39</sup> Mosiah 11:166 [27:13] & Helaman 3:26 [7:24] with D&C 50:1 [50:1-3], etc.

<sup>40</sup> cf. Alma 2:17 [4:10] with I Nephi 4:16-29 [15:13-18]

<sup>41</sup> cf. D&C 49:5 [49:24-28] with III Nephi 9:46-10:32 [20:10-23:5] & Ether 6:4-14 [13:4-13]; cf. Isaiah 35

<sup>42</sup> cf. D&C 90:8d [93:49] with D&C 28:11a [29:40] & D&C 76:4a [76:31]

<sup>43</sup> cf. Ephesians 6:10-18 with II Corinthians 10:3-6

<sup>44</sup> See D&C 111 [Section 101 of the 1835 D&C; retained in the LDS D&C as Section 109 until 1876 LDS Edition of the D&C, at which time it was completely removed.]

<sup>45</sup> D&C 111:4b [see D&C 101, 1835 Edition]

<sup>46</sup> Luke 22:31 IR [the KJV reads "*that he may sift you as wheat.*"]

<sup>47</sup> See Matthew 16:19,20 IR [18,19 KJV]

<sup>48</sup> See John 21:15-22

<sup>49</sup> cf. I Chronicles 21:1(-30); see also D&C 90:8d [93:49] with John 13:27 & Acts 5:3

<sup>50</sup> Matthew 16:20-23 IR [19-22 KJV]

*that be of men.*”<sup>51</sup> This would not be the only time that Satan would move successfully to tempt Peter to sin. Later, according to Jesus’ prophecy, Peter would deny his Lord in an hour of temptation while Jesus was placed on trial before the elders at Jerusalem.<sup>52</sup>

Now, in these latter days, Satan would again target church leaders, in particular those to whom the keys of the various offices of ministry had been (and are) given.<sup>53</sup> He had the same intent in mind: to sift the children of the kingdom, which he accomplished quite ably because of the frailties and foolishness of men.<sup>54</sup>

Satan’s plan was (and is) straightforward: cause the Lord’s people to yield to the temptations of lust and adultery to, in turn, cause them to deny the faith. Why was causing them to deny the faith key to Satan’s attack? Without faith none of us can overcome the world and be saved in the kingdom of God.<sup>55</sup>

Further, those who yielded to the devil’s temptations of lust and adultery did not, according to the word of the Lord, have His Spirit of truth. Thus they became subject to the wiles of the devil, and if they failed to repent and keep the commandments of the Lord, they were to eventually become as the fallen angels, subjects of the devil.<sup>56</sup>

Having members in the church, and priesthood in particular, who did not have the Spirit of the Lord would give Satan a ready means for introducing heresies and lies<sup>57</sup> into the church. This Satan would do to disrupt its peace and prosperity and, more particularly, to sift the children of the kingdom as wheat.<sup>58</sup> Those so

compromised would not be able to discern between truth and lies, between light and darkness, and, therefore, would be more easily led into *forbidden paths* as well as to lead others in the same.<sup>59</sup>

Inasmuch as lust, fornication, adultery, and the related sin of polygamy remain unresolved sins in the church, wickedness will continue to *hinder* the progress of the church in becoming *pure in heart* and, thus, in fulfilling its work of restoration among the Book of Mormon peoples.<sup>60</sup>

To be resolved, these sins, as all sins, must be confessed and forsaken.<sup>61</sup> To have their sins forgiven and their garments washed white through the blood of the Lamb of God, all those who have participated or who are participating in such sins, overtly or covertly, must repent according to *the conditions of repentance*.<sup>62</sup> Otherwise they cannot participate in the latter day work of restoration nor inherit the kingdom of heaven.<sup>63</sup>

Zion awaits! The City of God awaits a people who will *arise from the dust* and worship Jesus Christ (embrace the Truth) in spirit and in truth;<sup>64</sup> a people who will lay hold of the *good gift* of eternal life and touch not the *evil gift* of corruption; a people who will repent and earnestly desire to be like Jesus unto the purifying of their souls; a people who have the hope to be pure even as Jesus is pure. For thus it is written, “...*this is Zion, THE PURE IN HEART.*”<sup>65</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Matthew 16:24 IR [23 KJV]

<sup>52</sup> Mark 14:33-35,42,73-82 IR [29-31,38,66-72 KJV]

<sup>53</sup> D&C 26:1a-3g [27:1-18], 40:1b [2,3], 50:1b [2,3]; 52:3d [52:11,12] with D&C 83:3 [84:18-22], D&C 104:9,10 [107:18-20]; cf. Ephesians 4:8-16 & 6:12

<sup>54</sup> cf. D&C 76:3i-m [76:25-30] with III Nephi 8:46-52 [18:14-21] & Helaman 4:48-57 [12:1-7]

<sup>55</sup> cf. I John 5:4 with Habakkuk 2:4; see also Moroni 7:18-26, 35,42, [7:19-26,33,37,38]

<sup>56</sup> D&C 63:5 [63:16-18] with Romans 8:16, D&C 28:10-12 [29:36-45], II Nephi 6:57-85 [9:28-43], etc.

<sup>57</sup> See John 8:44

<sup>58</sup> cf. III Nephi 8:46-52 [18:14-21]

<sup>59</sup> cf. I Nephi 2:68-76 [8:24-28]

<sup>60</sup> cf. Alma 2:17 [4:10] & Proverbs 28:13 with D&C 58:6i,9c,d,14b [58:32-33,42-43,60], D&C 83:7f-i [84:49-53], etc.; see also John 3:19-21, James 4:1-10, Ether 6:61 [14:25], etc.

<sup>61</sup> cf. D&C 58:9c,d [58:42-43]

<sup>62</sup> Alma 12:21-27 [17:13-17], Alma 19:94 [42:13], Helaman 2:71-75 [5:9-12], Helaman 5:64-74 [14:10-19] & D&C 16:3d,e [18:12-14] with Mosiah 2:8-17 [4:5-10], Alma 3:19-23 [5:10-12], etc.; see also Ether 6:10-12 [13:10,11]

<sup>63</sup> cf. D&C 11:4 [12:7,8] & Galatians 5:19-21 with Alma 3:60-70 [5:36-42]

<sup>64</sup> cf. Genesis 9:21-23 IR & John 4:25,26 IR [23,24 KJV] with I John 3:1-3 & Moroni 7:53 [7:48]

<sup>65</sup> D&C 94:5c [97:21]

Why do we wait then?<sup>66</sup> Why procrastinate the day of our repentance?<sup>67</sup> The Lord is waiting with healing in His wings for all those who will repent and come unto Him.<sup>68</sup> Awake, then, O daughter of Zion, arise and shake off the coals from your garments that you may no longer be confounded. Rise up in the strength of your Lord and worship the Most High, the Eternal God, so that His covenants may be fulfilled.<sup>69</sup> Sing anew the hymn penned by David H. Smith, son of the martyr, Joseph Smith, Jr.:

*Let us shake off the coals from our garments  
And arise in the strength of our Lord;  
Let us break off the yoke of our bondage,  
And be free in the joy of the word.  
For the pebble has dropped in the water,  
And the waves circle round with the shock –  
Shall we anchor our barks in the center,  
Or drift out and be wrecked on the rock?*

*Let us waken our songs in the morning  
And let them at noontide resound;  
Then the evening shall find us rejoicing,  
While the law in our hearts will be found.  
For the Lord is remembering Zion,  
And bringing her comfort once more –  
Shall we anchor our barks in the center,  
Or drift out and be wrecked on the shore?*

*Thank the Lord for the plan he has given  
That will render us pure as a child,  
That will change this cold world into heaven  
By his Spirit so holy and mild  
And the hope of a portion in Zion  
Shall cheer us till trials are o'er –  
Let us anchor our barks in the center,  
And be safe from the rocks on the shore.*

It is to these two brethren, Joseph and his son David, that this history is dedicated.

<sup>66</sup> cf. Acts 22:16 with Mark 1:1-13

<sup>67</sup> cf. Alma 16:207-239 [34:8-40]

<sup>68</sup> D&C 3:15d-16b [10:63-68], D&C 28:1 [29:1-3], III Nephi 11:23 [25:2], etc.

<sup>69</sup> Moroni 10:28 [10:31] with Genesis 9:21-23 IR

## ***THE BLESSINGS AND CURSINGS ASSOCIATED WITH POLYGAMY***

The Book of Mormon contains a record of the greatest blessing found in the available volumes of scripture<sup>70</sup> that was granted to a covenant people for *not* practicing polygamy. Jacob, Lehi's firstborn son in the wilderness,<sup>71</sup> prophesied concerning the future of the Lamanites, saying they would be a blessed people in the future because of their *observance* in keeping the Lord's commandment to have and cherish but one wife and to have no concubines.

*And now this commandment [to have but one wife] they [the Lamanites] observe to keep; wherefore because of this observance in keeping this commandment, the Lord God will not destroy them, but will be merciful unto them; and one day they shall become a blessed people.*

*Behold, their husbands love their wives, and their wives love their husbands, and their husbands and their wives love their children;*

*And their unbelief and their hatred towards you, is because of the iniquity of their fathers; wherefore, how much better are you than they, in the sight of your great Creator? (Jacob 2:56-58 [3:6-7])*

Many years later, Samuel the Lamanite would explain the appropriateness of this blessing, saying it was because of the firmness of the Lamanites, when they were once enlightened, that the Lord would prolong their days. According to the words of Jacob this included their respectful understanding of the importance of the marriage covenant and of having but one wife.

*And now because of their [the Lamanites] steadfastness, when they do believe, in that thing*

<sup>70</sup> The *plates of brass*, from which the commandments of God were preserved for Lehi's seed, may contain greater instruction and blessings on this commandment concerning the pureness and fidelity of the marriage covenant between one man and one woman (cf. I Nephi 1:60-62 [3:2-4], 116-118 [4:14-16], 158-174 [5:10-22] with Jacob 2:44 [2:34]).

<sup>71</sup> II Nephi 1:59-62 [2:1-3]

**which they do believe; for because of their firmness when they are once enlightened, behold the Lord shall bless them and prolong their days, notwithstanding their iniquity;**

*Yea, even if they should dwindle in unbelief, the Lord shall prolong their days until the time shall come which hath been spoken of by our fathers, and also by the prophet Zenos and many other prophets, concerning **the restoration of our brethren, the Lamanites**, again, to the knowledge of the truth;*

*Yea, I say unto you [the Nephites], that in the latter times, the promises of the Lord hath been extended to our brethren, the Lamanites; and notwithstanding the many afflictions which they shall have, and notwithstanding they shall be driven to and fro upon the face of the earth, and be hunted, and shall be smitten and scattered abroad, having no place for refuge, the Lord shall be merciful unto them; **and this is according to the prophecy, that they shall again be brought to the true knowledge, which is the knowledge of their Redeemer, and their great and true Shepherd, and be numbered among his sheep.** Therefore I say unto you, It shall be better for them than for you, except ye repent. (Helaman 5:100-105 [15:10-14]; cf. Alma 14:46 [24:19] & Helaman 2:118 [6:1])*

Of equal importance, the Book of Mormon records the strongest rebuke against polygamy that is found anywhere in the available volumes of scripture when Jacob identified it as a *grosser crime* and an *abomination* before God.

*And were it not that I must speak unto you concerning **a grosser crime**, my heart would rejoice exceedingly, because of you. But the word of God burthens me because of **your grosser crimes**. For behold, thus saith the Lord, This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures: for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of the things which were written concerning David, and Solomon his son. Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives, and concubines, which thing was **abominable** before me, saith the Lord... (Jacob 2:30-33 [2:22-24])*

Blessings and cursing (*woes*) are associated with

all of God's covenants,<sup>72</sup> including the marriage covenant. Because the Nephites transgressed against the marriage covenant they did not receive the promised blessing the Lamanites received. Rather, for sinning against the greater light in this and other matters, they were eventually destroyed as a people.<sup>73</sup> Conversely, their brethren, the Lamanites – called by the name of Lehi's firstborn son – were to receive a great blessing of promise in a future day because they did not sin against the Lord's commands pertaining to the marriage covenant.

### **THE RESTORATION OF THE LAMANITES**

Jacob commended the Lamanites of his day<sup>74</sup> for not practicing polygamy in obedience to the commandment of the Lord, saying they were more righteous than his own people, the Nephites.<sup>75</sup> Jacob's words teach us a great deal about God's judgments pertaining to His commandments. In fact, they show us just how incredibly important this particular commandment on marriage is in the sight of God. Though the different peoples known collectively as Lamanites<sup>76</sup> would commit many sins, including murder and plundering, their faithfulness in this one command early on was cited as the reason that one day the Lord would cause them to blossom as a rose<sup>77</sup> and build a New Jerusalem upon Joseph's land.<sup>78</sup> But, first, for many generations they would dwindle in spiritual darkness and

<sup>72</sup> That is, *the way of life and of death*; cf. Deuteronomy 30:15-20 with 5:1-33, Psalm 109:16,17, Jeremiah 21:8, Malachi 2:2, Luke 6:20-26, etc.; see also Ezekiel 3:18

<sup>73</sup> Alma 12:9-15 [17:5-9] & 21:8-18 [45:9-16] with Helaman 5:108 [15:17]; Mormon 3:1 [6:1], 4:1-13 [8:1-11]

<sup>74</sup> In later generations, adultery was identified as one of the sins from which the king of the Lamanites wanted his people to be turned (e.g. Alma 14:5,6 [23:3]).

<sup>75</sup> Jacob 2:54-58 [3:5-7] with II Nephi 3:6-16 [4:3-9]

<sup>76</sup> Jacob 1:13,14 [1:13,14], Alma 14:56 [24:28], Alma 20:6,15 [43:6,13], Alma 21:120 [47:35], IV Nephi 1:42 [1:38], Mormon 1:8,9 [1:8,9], etc.

<sup>77</sup> D&C 49:5 [49:24-28], II Nephi 3:6-16 [4:3-9], Alma 7:19-23 [9:15-17], Helaman 5:102-107 [15:14-16], etc.

<sup>78</sup> cf. III Nephi 9:57-59 [20:21,22] & 10:1-4 [21:22-25] with Ether 6:3-13 [13:3-13:12]

unbelief because of the wicked traditions of their fathers.<sup>79</sup>

When will the Lamanites be awakened unto the Lord? When will they be freed from wicked traditions that have kept them bound in darkness and unbelief these many years? What will precipitate their conversion in these latter days unto the fullness of the gospel that was preached and recorded years earlier by their forefathers and brethren? According to prophecy, God will commence to prepare the way for their conversion at the time He brings about His judgments upon the church of the devil, that great and abominable church that persecutes the saints of God.<sup>80</sup>

*And when the day cometh that the wrath of God is poured out upon the mother of harlots, which is the great and abominable church of all the earth, whose foundation is the devil, then at that day, the work of the Father shall commence in preparing the way for the fulfilling of His covenants which He hath made to His people, who are of the house of Israel. (I Nephi 3:236,237 [14:17])*

Please note further that the Lord will fulfill His promises when His covenant people turn their hearts unto the Holy One of Israel.<sup>81</sup>

*Nevertheless, when that day cometh, saith the prophet, that they no more turn aside their hearts against the Holy One of Israel, then will he remember the covenants which he made to their fathers; Yea, then will he remember the isles of the sea; Yea, and all the people who are of the house of Israel, will I gather in, saith the Lord, according to the words of the prophet Zenos, from the four quarters of the earth; Yea, and all the earth shall see the salvation of the Lord, saith the prophet; Every nation, kindred, tongue and people, shall be blessed. (I Nephi 5:253-257 [19:15-17])*

<sup>79</sup> I Nephi 3:130-134 [12:20-12:23] with II Nephi 12:25-27 [28:21,22] & D&C 90:6b,c [93:38,39]

<sup>80</sup> cf. I Nephi 7:48-62 [22:22-26] & II Nephi 12:1-78 [28:1-30:2] with I Nephi 3:232-237 [3:232-237]

<sup>81</sup> cf. II Nephi 11:27-32 [25:16-18]

Therefore, the Lord will prepare a humble remnant to receive the truth and fulfill all His promises. According to the prophecies contained within the Book of Mormon, the Lamanites will receive the precious records of their faithful ancestors through the instrumentality of the Gentiles. God's purpose in this arrangement is to bring the Lamanites to the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ and *the very points of His doctrine, that they may know how to come unto him and be saved.*<sup>82</sup>

*And behold, are we not broken off from the house of Israel; and are we not a branch of the house of Israel?*

*And now, the thing which our father meaneth concerning the grafting in of the natural branches through the fullness of the Gentiles, is, that in the latter days, when our seed shall have dwindled in unbelief, yea, for the space of many years and many generations, after the Messiah shall be manifested in body unto the children of men, **then shall the fullness of the gospel of the Messiah come unto the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles unto the remnant of our seed;***

*And at that day shall the remnant of our seed know that they are of the house of Israel, and that they are the covenant people of the Lord; And then shall they know and come to the knowledge of their forefathers, and also to the knowledge of the gospel of their Redeemer, which was ministered unto their fathers by him; Wherefore, they shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer, and the very points of his doctrine, that they may know how to come unto him and be saved.*

*And then at that day, will they not rejoice and give praise unto their everlasting God, their rock and their salvation? Yea, at that day, will they not receive the strength and nourishment from the True Vine? Yea, will they not come unto the true fold of God? Behold, I say unto you, Yea: they shall be remembered again among the house of Israel; They shall be grafted in, being a natural branch of the olive tree, into the true olive tree; And this is what our father meaneth; And he*

<sup>82</sup> cf. I Nephi 4:16-24 [15:13-16] & III Nephi 7:27-31 [16:4-7], I Nephi 3:184-200 [13:35-42] and Enos 1:23-28 [1:15-18], with Romans 11:25-12:1, etc.; see also Alma 17:35-40 [37:6-10] with Alma 3:3-26 [5:3-13]

*meaneth that it will not come to pass, until after they are scattered by the Gentiles; And he meaneth that it shall come by way of the Gentiles, that the Lord may shew his power unto the Gentiles, for the very cause that he shall be rejected of the Jews, or of the house of Israel:*

*Wherefore, our father hath not spoken of our seed alone, but also of all the house of Israel, pointing to the covenant which should be fulfilled in the latter days; Which covenant the Lord made to our father Abraham, saying, In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. (I Nephi 4:15-29 [15:12-18])*

The *very points* of the doctrine of Jesus Christ and the way to come unto Him are contained within the record of the Book of Mormon, and were summarized by Moroni for the Lamanites in the last book called the Book of Moroni.<sup>83</sup>

The Restoration of the gospel and the founding<sup>84</sup> of the church in these latter days among the rising Gentile nation on Joseph's land were major milestones in the Lord's preparation for bringing about this restoration of the Lamanites and the whole house of Israel.<sup>85</sup> However, shortly after its organization, sin was found in the restored church, and the church was eventually *overthrown*.<sup>86</sup> Within a few years of its institution, its work became severely hindered, and in just 14 years the church was scattered, as it were, to the four winds following the murder of Joseph Smith, Jr., and his brother Hyrum. Why? What was the cause of this great tragedy? Only one thing is listed in scripture that can account for this result: the transgression of the members of the Lord's restored church.

*For the Lord hath said, This is my church, and I will establish it; and nothing shall overthrow it, save it is the transgression of my people. (Mosiah 11:166 [27:13])*

The following are some of the warnings the

<sup>83</sup> cf. Moroni 1:4 & 10:1-4

<sup>84</sup> cf. Matthew 16:19 IR [18 KJV]

<sup>85</sup> cf. III Nephi 9:101-10:1 [21:14-22] with D&C 2:6 [3:16-20], 3:14-18 [10:57-70], 17:1 [20:1-4], etc.

<sup>86</sup> cf. D&C 50:1b [50:2,3]

Lord gave of mounting judgments for the transgressions found in His church.

### ***THE VOICE OF WARNING IS UNTO ALL MEN***

The Lord had brought forth His work in these latter days with a voice of warning unto all the peoples of the earth.

*Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the voice of him who dwells on high, and whose eyes are upon all men; yea, verily I say, Hearken ye people from afar, and ye that are upon the islands of the sea, listen together; for verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape, and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated; and the rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow, for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops, and their secret acts shall be revealed; and the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days, and they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them. (D&C 1:1 [1:1-5])*

But would the very ones who were called to lift up this warning voice heed the warning themselves?

In January 1831, less than a year after He established His church,<sup>87</sup> the Lord revealed that the church was clean, *but not all*.<sup>88</sup>

*Verily I say unto you, **Ye are clean but not all;** and there is none else with whom I am well pleased, for all flesh is corruptible before me, and the powers of darkness prevail upon the earth, among the children of men, in the presence of all the hosts of heaven, which causeth silence to reign, and all eternity is pained, and the angels are waiting the great command to reap down the earth, **to gather the tares that they may be burned;** and, behold, the enemy is combined. And now I show unto you a mystery, a thing which is*

<sup>87</sup> cf. D&C 17:1 [20:1-4] with III Nephi 10:1 [21:22]

<sup>88</sup> cf. D&C 84:1-4 [86:1-11] & 98:9 [101:63-71] with Matthew 13:22-29 IR [24-30 KJV]

*had in secret chambers, to bring to pass even your destruction, in process of time, and ye knew it not, but now I tell it unto you, and ye are blessed, not because of your iniquity, neither your hearts of unbelief, for verily some of you are guilty before me; but I will be merciful unto your weakness.* (D&C 38:3a-4b [38:10-14])

Note the phrase “*but not all.*” It is reminiscent of the words Jesus spoke to His apostles concerning Judas, the one of their number who would betray Him.

*For he [Jesus] knew who should betray him; therefore said he, **Ye are not all clean.*** (John 13:11)

Would there be members of the church at this early date of the Restoration who would betray Jesus Christ? Both revelation and history answer yes.

As early as May of 1831, the Lord revealed that He had looked upon the church *that professed His name* and had seen *abominations* and *hypocrites* among the members, giving the adversary power in their midst:

***Behold, I the Lord have looked upon you, and have seen abominations in the church that professes my name; but blessed are they who are faithful and endure, whether in life or in death, for they shall inherit eternal life. But woe unto them that are deceivers, and hypocrites, for thus saith the Lord, I will bring them to judgment. Behold, verily I say unto you, **There are hypocrites among you, and have deceived some, which has given the adversary power,*****<sup>89</sup> *but, behold, such shall be reclaimed; but the **hypocrites** shall be detected and shall be cut off, either in life or in death, even as I will, and woe unto them who are cut off from my church, for the same are **overcome of the world**; wherefore, let every man beware lest he do that which is not in truth and righteousness before me.* (D&C 50:2-3 [50:4-9])

A few months later, in August of the same year,

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<sup>89</sup> Please duly note the word of the Lord, that hypocrisy gives the adversary power.

the Lord identified a particular sin in the church that is germane to this paper, namely adultery. This specific sin carries with it some rather notable judgments, namely the withdrawal of the Lord’s Spirit, denial of the faith, and fears (the kind of fears those who are cast into the lake of fire have<sup>90</sup>):

*There were among you **adulterers and adulteresses**; some of whom have turned away from you, and others remain with you, that hereafter shall be revealed. Let such beware and repent speedily, lest judgment shall come upon them as a snare, and their folly shall be made manifest, and their works shall follow them in the eyes of the people. And verily I say unto you, as I have said before, **He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, or if any shall commit adultery in their hearts, they shall not have the Spirit, but shall deny the faith and shall fear**: wherefore, I, the Lord, have said that the fearful, and the unbelieving, and all liars, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, and the whoremonger, and the sorcerer, shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Verily I say, that they shall not have part in the first resurrection.* (D&C 63:4b-5c [63:14-18])

A month later, on September 11, 1831, in the last revelation printed in the Book of Commandments,<sup>91</sup> the Lord spoke to the elders of the church.

*Behold, thus saith the Lord your God unto you, O ye elders of my church, Hearken ye, and hear, and receive my will concerning you; for verily I say unto you, I will that ye should overcome the world [i.e. keep the faith]; wherefore I will have compassion upon you. **There are those among you who have sinned; but verily I say, For this once, for mine own glory, and for the salvation of souls, I have forgiven you your sins.*** (D&C 64:1 [64:1-3]; cf. I John 5:4)

In November 1831, the Lord again identified

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<sup>90</sup> cf. Hebrews 10:26,27, James 2:19, Revelation 21:8, etc.

<sup>91</sup> The Book of Commandments was in production, with Section 64 printed up through paragraph 7b, when a mob destroyed the press in July of 1833.

the sin that had sprung up among the inhabitants of Zion (the brethren in Independence, Missouri), namely the sin of idleness and that of having *greedy* eyes that were on worldly treasure, and not on things above.<sup>92</sup>

*Now I, the Lord, am not well pleased with the inhabitants of Zion, for there are **idlers** among them: and their children are also growing up in wickedness; **they also seek not earnestly the riches of eternity, but their eyes are full of greediness.** (D&C 68:4f [68:31])*

The following April of 1832 the Lord revealed that there were those in the land of Zion who had sinned exceedingly. He admonished every member to watch and pray because the adversary, the devil, was *spreading* his dominions and darkness *reigned*.<sup>93</sup>

*Verily I say unto you, my servants, that inasmuch as you have forgiven one another your trespasses, even so I, the Lord, forgive you; nevertheless **there are those among you who have sinned exceedingly: yea, even all of you have sinned, but verily I say unto you, beware from henceforth and refrain from sin lest sore judgments fall upon your heads; for unto whom much is given much is required; and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation.***

*Ye call upon my name for revelations, and I give them unto you; and inasmuch as ye keep not my saying which I give unto you, **ye become transgressors, and justice and judgment is the penalty which is affixed unto my law: therefore, what I say unto one I say unto all, Watch, for the adversary spreadeth his dominions and darkness reigneth; and the anger of God kindleth against the inhabitants of the earth; and none doeth good, for all have gone out of the way.** (D&C 81:1 [82:1-6])*

All had sinned,<sup>94</sup> and none, said the Lord, was doing that which was good. Like a cancer, the

<sup>92</sup> cf. Colossians 3:1-16 with Matthew 6:19-24

<sup>93</sup> cf. III Nephi 8:46-52 [18:14-21] with D&C 50:1 [50:1-3] & 81:1 [82:1-6]

<sup>94</sup> cf. Romans 3:23 with Matthew 7:1-3 IR [1-2 KJV] & James 2:13

seeds of iniquity, born of tares sown within the church by the enemy,<sup>95</sup> had sprouted and were growing.

On September 22 and 23, 1832, on the fifth anniversary of the date Joseph Smith, Jr., received the plates containing the Book of Mormon, the Lord revealed that the precious records it contained had been treated lightly, even with vanity and unbelief, which had brought *the whole church*, the Lord said, under condemnation.

*And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received, **which vanity and unbelief hath brought the whole church under condemnation.** And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, **even all; and they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments** which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written, that they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom, otherwise there remaineth a scourge and a judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion; for, shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, I say unto you, Nay. (D&C 83:8 [84:54-59])*

Six months later, in March of 1833, the Lord declared that He would *contend with Zion and plead with her strong ones* until she overcame and became *clean* before Him, saying there were those in the midst of the church who had many things to repent of.

*Behold, I say unto you, that your brethren in Zion begin to repent, and the angels rejoice over them; nevertheless, I am not well pleased with many things; and I am not well pleased with my servant William E. McLellin, neither with my servant Sidney Gilbert; and the bishop also; **and others have many things to repent of; but verily I say unto you, that I, the Lord, will contend with Zion***

<sup>95</sup> cf. D&C 84:1-4 [86:1-11] with Matthew 13:22-29,35-45 IR [24-30,36-43 KJV]; see also D&C 50:1b [50:2,3] & 52:4b-5b [52:14-21]

*and plead with her strong ones, and chasten her, until she overcomes and is clean before me; for she shall not be removed out of her place. I, the Lord, have spoken it. Amen. (D&C 87:8b,c [90:34-35])*

In August of the same year the Lord reiterated the voice of warning to the inhabitants of Zion.

*...and to the residue of the school, I, the Lord, am willing to show mercy, nevertheless there are those that must be chastened, and their works shall be made known. **The ax is laid at the root of the trees, and every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be hewn down and cast into the fire;** I, the Lord have spoken it. (D&C 94:2d,e [97:6-7])*

*for, behold, and lo, vengeance cometh speedily upon the ungodly, as the whirlwind, and who shall escape it; the Lord's scourge shall pass over by night and by day; and the report thereof shall vex all people; yet, it shall not be stayed until the Lord come; **for the indignation of the Lord is kindled against their abominations, and all their wicked works;** nevertheless Zion shall escape **if she observe to do all things whatsoever I have commanded her, but if she observe not to do whatsoever I have commanded her, I will visit her according to all her works, with sore affliction, with pestilence, with plague, with sword, with vengeance, with devouring fire; nevertheless, let it be read this once in their ears,** that I, the Lord, have accepted of their offering; and **if she sin no more, none of these things shall come upon her, and I will bless her with blessings, and multiply a multiplicity of blessings upon her, and upon her generations, for ever and ever, saith the Lord your God. Amen. (D&C 94:5d-g [97:22-28])***

A few days later, on August 6, 1833, the Lord addressed the church at Kirtland in a similar manner, saying *many*, not just a few, needed to repent and forsake their sins.

*Behold, I, the Lord, am not well pleased with many who are in the church at Kirtland, **for they do not forsake their sins, and their wicked ways, the pride of their hearts, and their covetousness, and all their detestable things, and observe the***

*words of wisdom and eternal life which I have given unto them. **Verily I say unto you, that I, the Lord, will chasten them and will do whatsoever I list, if they do not repent and observe all things whatsoever I have said unto them.** And again, I say unto you, **If ye observe to do whatsoever I command you, I, the Lord, will turn away all wrath and indignation from you, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against you. (D&C 95:4 [98:19-22])***

Exactly four months later, On December 6, 1833, the Lord explained that members of the church in Jackson County, Missouri, had been afflicted and cast from the lands of their inheritance in consequence of their many transgressions by which *they polluted their inheritances.*

*Behold, I say unto you, **there were jarrings, contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them; therefore by these things they polluted their inheritances.** They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble. In the day of their peace they esteemed lightly my counsel; but in the day of their trouble, of necessity they feel after me. (D&C 98:3 [101:6-8])*

Other admonitions had and would be given until finally, in June of 1834, four years after the founding of the church, the Lord identified that the transgressions of His people had escalated to such a point that He would take dramatic steps to correct His church, requiring that the redemption of Zion be postponed.

*Behold, I say unto you, **Were it not for the transgressions of my people, speaking concerning the church and not individuals, they might have been redeemed even now; but, behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I require at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh Saints, to the poor and afflicted among them, and are not united according to the union [i.e. the bonds of perfectness and***

peace, charity<sup>96</sup>] required by the law of the celestial kingdom. (D&C 102:2a,b [105:2-4])

*Therefore, in consequence of the transgression of my people, it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion, that they themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience,<sup>97</sup> and know more perfectly, concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands. (D&C 102:3c [105:9,10])*

A little more than a year later, in August of 1835, in conference action, the church would identify *fornication* and *polygamy* as a *crime* that had already reproached the church by that date. Note that this declaration was penned just over five years after the church had been organized!

*Inasmuch as this Church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy: we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife; and one woman but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again. (D&C 111:4b [D&C 101, 1835 Edition])<sup>98</sup>*

This was a profound statement, one that would foreshadow things to come within the church. As historic events now show us, this declaration was like the sighting of the tip of an iceberg, if you will. Following the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in June of 1844, many leaders emerged to form an array of religious movements, with a sufficient number of them incorporating polygamy in their organizations to in-

<sup>96</sup> cf. D&C 85:38c [88:125,126] with Colossians 3:14 (2:2) & Moroni 7:49-53 [7:43-48]

<sup>97</sup> cf. Romans 5:1-5 with James 1:1-5

<sup>98</sup> Section 111 was included as Section 101 in the first edition of the Doctrine & Covenants, printed in 1835. This section was retained in the second through fourth Nauvoo printings of the Doctrine & Covenants (1844, 1845, 1846). It was also retained in all editions published by the LDS church in Utah up to the 1876 LDS edition.

definitely delay the work of the restored church.<sup>99</sup>

## AND THIS IS THE CONDEMNATION

Integral to the restoration of the fullness of His gospel and the Lord's church was the restoration of the knowledge of the everlasting covenant which God made with Enoch.<sup>100</sup>

*And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant, which I made unto thy father Enoch; that, when men should keep all my commandments, Zion should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I caught up unto myself. And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy; and the general assembly of the church of the firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine everlasting covenant, which I made with thy father Enoch. (Genesis 9:21-23 IR)*

Those who did not keep this covenant by embracing the truth (God's Word)<sup>101</sup> and by looking upward (for wisdom)<sup>102</sup> opened themselves to deception.<sup>103</sup> Satan quickly moved in to destroy the unfaithful, and if possible, the whole of the church by scattering the flock. Those who

<sup>99</sup> Though some of these leaders were said to have stood adamantly against this false doctrine, they would eventually succumb to the subtle lies of the devil and be overcome with the same for the purpose of ensuring that the work of the church would be compromised. Consider, for example, J.J. Strang. Many vouched for his integrity initially, but later in his life he was brought to ruin by the consequences of such evil practices. (*The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 1952, Vol. 3 – 1844-1872, pp. 36-53)

<sup>100</sup> cf. D&C 1:4d [1:21,22], 59:1b,1c [59:3,4] & 83:7 [84:43-53] with D&C 38:4e [38:18,19]

<sup>101</sup> John 17:17

<sup>102</sup> James 3:17,18

<sup>103</sup> Genesis 3:5 IR

loved darkness more than light would be reserved unto the day of judgment to be judged for their evil deeds.<sup>104</sup>

*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men <love> [loved] darkness rather than light, because their deeds <are> [were] evil. For <everyone who> [very one that] doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he <who loveth> [that doeth] truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest. (John 3:19-21 <IR>, [KJV])*

*...and the whole world lieth in sin, and groaneth under the darkness and under the bondage of sin: and by this you may know they are under the bondage of sin, because they come not unto me; for whoso cometh not unto me is under the bondage of sin; and whoso receiveth not my voice is not acquainted with my voice, and is not of me; and by this you may know the righteous from the wicked, and that the whole world groaneth under sin and darkness even now. (D&C 83:7f-i [84:49-53])*

Since the beginning of mankind's time on earth, the methods of destruction *that wicked one*, Satan, has employed among us have involved taking away light and truth through disobedience and traditions.<sup>105</sup>

*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 traditions of their fathers. But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth...** (D&C 90:6a-d [93:36-40])*

Many priesthood members in the early church

<sup>104</sup> cf. John 3:19,20, D&C 3:3a [10:20,21], D&C 28:12d [29:44,45], etc. with Isaiah 66:1-5, Genesis 4:13 IR, etc.

<sup>105</sup> cf. D&C 90:6 [93:36-43] with D&C 28:10-12 [29:36-45]; see also II Nephi 1:101-110 [2:17-21] & Alma 9:15-32 [12:9-18]

did not keep the commandments of God and, thereby, failed to abide the light of Christ unto fulfilling the everlasting covenant God made with Enoch. The Lord had warned them to take great care of what had been entrusted unto them.

*And all they who receive the oracles of God, let them beware how they hold them, lest they are accounted as a light thing, and are brought under condemnation thereby; and stumble and fall, when the storms descend, and the winds blow, and the rains descend, and beat upon their house. (D&C 87:2b [90:5])*

Tragically, they failed to heed the admonition and as a result, the light and truth they had received was taken from them, and they began to walk in darkness.<sup>106</sup>

*But, behold, verily I say unto you, **There are many** who have been ordained among you, whom I have called, but few of them are chosen: they who are not chosen have sinned a very grievous sin, **in that they are walking in darkness at noon-day**; and for this cause, I gave unto you a commandment, that you should call your solemn assembly. (D&C 92:1d,e [95:5-7])*

*Verily I say unto you, It is my will that you should build a house; if you keep my commandments, you shall have power to build it; **if you keep not my commandments the love of the Father shall not continue with you; therefore you shall walk in darkness.** (D&C 92:3a [95:11,12])*

As the Lord warned, the love of the Father would not continue with them if they continued in their disobedience.<sup>107</sup> As such, they would not have the power to complete the work to which they had been called (in this particular reference, to build the house of the Lord in Kirtland).

Those who failed to heed the warning to re-

<sup>106</sup> cf. Luke 8:18 with Alma 9:15-32 [12:9-18]

<sup>107</sup> cf. Romans 1:18-32 & 5:1-5 with I Nephi 3:187-189 [13:37]

pent and meet *the conditions of repentance*,<sup>108</sup> failed also to bring forth fruits (works) meet for the same, i.e. for both repentance and the kingdom of God.<sup>109</sup> As a result they were cast off from the precious land of their promised inheritance, a land which would have contained no curses had they sought it with all their hearts.<sup>110</sup>

As in previous generations, some in the church had underestimated the judgments of God and did not heed the counsel and admonition of His Spirit to repent of and forsake the ways of unrighteousness. They failed to heed the call to work out their own salvation through repentance and faith and to bring forth works meet for repentance. Thus, the axe was laid to the root of the tree and, consequently, many among them fell.<sup>111</sup>

*And also the Spirit saith unto me, yea, crieth unto me with a mighty voice, saying, Go forth and say unto this people, Repent, for except ye repent, ye can in no wise inherit the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, the Spirit saith, **Behold, the ax is laid at the root of the tree; therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be hewn down and cast into the fire; yea, a fire which can not be consumed; even an unquenchable fire. Behold, and remember, the Holy One hath spoken it.** (Alma 3:89-91 [5:51,52])*

### **THE NEW COVENANT, EVEN THE BOOK OF MORMON AND THE FORMER COMMANDMENTS**

Back in September of 1832, in a revelation “of Jesus Christ unto his servant Joseph Smith, Jr., and six elders” concerning the Lord’s church and the priesthood,<sup>112</sup> Jesus Christ had admonished these men to give diligent heed to

the words of eternal life, i.e. God’s word of truth.<sup>113</sup> The *whole church*, the Lord declared, had come under condemnation for failing to do so by remembering *the New Covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments*.

*And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received, which vanity and unbelief hath brought the **whole church** under condemnation. And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all; and they shall remain under this condemnation until they **repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments** which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written, that they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father’s kingdom, otherwise there remaineth a scourge and a judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion; for, shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, I say unto you, Nay. (D&C 83:8 [84:54-59])*

Although the Lord had plainly revealed His will on marriage through *the former commandments*,<sup>114</sup> there were individuals within the first generation of the church who *had pleasure in unrighteousness* and, subsequently, broke His commandments. They had done even as those in the first generation of Nephites who had committed that which was abominable before the Lord, including the *grosser crime* of polygamy.<sup>115</sup> Rather than take up their cross and deny themselves all unrighteousness<sup>116</sup> – to cross themselves<sup>117</sup> and to allow none of *these things* to enter into their hearts<sup>118</sup> – they sowed to their flesh and reaped a *whirlwind* of corrup-

<sup>108</sup> cf. Alma 19:93-95 [42:12,13] & Helaman 2:71-75 [5:9-12] with D&C 16:3d,e [18:12-14]

<sup>109</sup> cf. D&C 98:13d [101:100]

<sup>110</sup> cf. Alma 3:27-70 [5:14-42] with Matthew 3:35-39 IR [8-12 KJV]; see also D&C 98:13c-e [101:99-101] with D&C 38:4d-f [38:17-20]

<sup>111</sup> D&C 94:2 [97:3-9]

<sup>112</sup> cf. D&C 83:1a,6i,7a [84:1,42,43,44] with D&C 2:2b-3c [3:4-8]

<sup>113</sup> John 17:17; cf. John 8:31-32 with Genesis 6:62 IR

<sup>114</sup> D&C 42:7d,e [42:22-26], D&C 49:3a-c [49:15-17], D&C 63:5 [63:16-18] with D&C 111:4b [see D&C 101, 1835 Edition]

<sup>115</sup> cf. D&C 50:2 [50:4-6] & 102:1,2 [105:1-6] with Jacob 2:29-32 [2:22-23]

<sup>116</sup> cf. Matthew 16:23-31 IR [22-28 KJV]

<sup>117</sup> Alma 19:13,14 [39:9]

<sup>118</sup> Matthew 5:31 IR

tion and judgment.<sup>119</sup> For thus it is written:

*Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil. (Proverbs 1:23-33)*

Like the grievous wolves the Apostle Paul warned the Ephesian church about,<sup>120</sup> evil men rose up in the Restoration speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Not long after Joseph Smith, Jr., and his brother Hyrum were murdered, these presumptuous men took away the church's statement against fornication and polygamy contained in D&C 111:4 and introduced a spurious revelation that brazenly but falsely exalted the abominable practice and gross crime of polygamy to be an essential requirement or element of salvation.<sup>121</sup>

**Clearly this teaching was, and is, and will always be contrary to God's word recorded in the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments!**<sup>122</sup> As such, those who embraced<sup>123</sup> the doctrine of polyga-

my did so in contempt of the restored scriptures and the everlasting covenant God made with Enoch.

The Lord had given definite instruction on marriage in the former commandments, stating that men are to cleave to one wife and none else.

*Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else; and he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not, he shall be cast out. Thou shalt not commit adultery; and he that committeth adultery and repenteth not, shall be cast out; but he that hath committed adultery and repents with all his heart, and forsaketh it, and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive; but if he doeth it again, he shall not be forgiven, but shall be cast out. (D&C 42:7d,e [42:22-26]; see also D&C 63:5 [63:16-18])*

*And again, I say unto you, that whoso forbiddeth to marry, is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man; **wherefore it is lawful that he should have one wife**, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation; and that it might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation before the world was made. (D&C 49:3a-c [49:15-17])*

The message is unequivocal. Monogamy, with a pure heart, is clearly the Lord's avowed will for marriage in His church in these latter days just as it was in the beginning. Note further that this instruction is not just for priesthood.

Accordingly, the actions of those who introduced the later revelation on marriage brought and continue to bring a great many people under the condemnation of the Lord. Except those so affected repent and remember the new covenant found within the Book of Mormon and the former commandments (including those on marriage), how can they hope to be saved in the kingdom of God, "for, shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, I say un-

<sup>119</sup> cf. Galatians 6:7,8, D&C 94:5d,e [97:22-24], D&C 68:4f [68:31], etc.

<sup>120</sup> Acts 20:28-31

<sup>121</sup> [D&C 132]; cf. D&C 111:4 [see D&C 101, 1835 Edition] with I Timothy 3:1-16 & Acts 20:28-31

<sup>122</sup> D&C 83:8b [84:56,57]

<sup>123</sup> Journal of Discourses 1:54

to you, Nay.”<sup>124</sup> Remember, the judgments of the Lord begin at the house of the Lord, and from there, go into all the world.

*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. Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth – a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation – and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord. And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord. **First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord.** (D&C 105:9,10 [112:23-26])*

#### **AFTER THEIR TEMPTATIONS AND MUCH TRIBULATIONS**

This last quote from D&C 105 [112] comes from a revelation given in July of 1837 and was addressed to the then president of the Council of Twelve Apostles, Thomas Marsh. In this revelation, he was given specific instruction to admonish the Twelve *for all their sins*.

*And pray for thy brethren of the Twelve. Admonish them sharply for my name’s sake, and let them be admonished for all their sins; and be ye faithful before me unto my name. **And after their temptations and much tribulations, behold, I, the Lord, will feel after them, and if they harden not their hearts, and stiffen not their necks against me, they shall be converted, and I will heal them.** (D&C 105:5c,d [112:12-13])*

Within 15 years from the time this revelation was given, it would be through this body of men, the Twelve, and under the leadership of a new quorum president, Brigham Young, that a revelation of deception would be brought for-

<sup>124</sup> D&C 63:5 [63:16-18] with D&C 42:7d-g [42:22-28] & Romans 1:18-2:2; see also II Timothy 2:24-26 with Joel 2:11-14

ward.<sup>125</sup> In it, polygamy would be promoted by men from a *grosser crime* and *abomination* – according to the Book of Mormon – to the status of an essential doctrine and a requirement for *exaltation* and eternal glory and happiness.<sup>126</sup>

With this action, members of the Twelve attested to the world that they believed God walks in crooked paths; that He varies from what He has said.<sup>127</sup> For this blasphemy<sup>128</sup> they have their reward among all liars and, consequently, will not come forth in the first resurrection.<sup>129</sup>

No doubt the Lord kept His word, that *after their temptations and much tribulations* He would *feel* after the members of the Twelve to heal them. Yet history marks it well that a significant portion of their number hardened their hearts and stiffened their necks, and consequently strayed into *forbidden paths* and wandered in *strange roads*.<sup>130</sup> They could have been healed according to the word of the Lord, and had they endured unto the end, they would have been saved in the kingdom of God.<sup>131</sup> Instead, when the whirlwind of judgment came upon the Lord’s house, many of them were swept away. Dare we not take seriously the questions put forth by the prophets and apostles?

*But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth?... (Malachi 3:2)*

*And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? (I Peter 4:18)*

Before the church was formally organized in

<sup>125</sup> cf. [D&C 132] with Ephesians 4:17-19, II Peter 2:9-20, Jude 1:7-18, D&C 68:4f [68:31], etc.

<sup>126</sup> [D&C 132]; see *The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 1952, Vol. 3 – 1844-1872, pp. 348,349

<sup>127</sup> D&C 2:1 [3:1,2]

<sup>128</sup> D&C 105:9,10 [112:23-26]

<sup>129</sup> D&C 63:5 [63:16-18]; cf. Hebrews 11:35; see also I Corinthians 9:14

<sup>130</sup> cf. I Nephi 2:76,79-82 [8:28,31-33]

<sup>131</sup> cf. I Nephi 3:187,188 [13:37] with D&C 105:5c,d [112:12,13]

April 1830, its members had the understanding that even the sanctified could fall from grace.

*And we know that all men must repent and believe on the name of Jesus Christ and worship the Father in his name, and endure in faith on his name to the end, or they can not be saved in the kingdom of God. And we know... there is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God. Therefore let the church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptations; yea, and even let those who are sanctified, take heed also. (D&C 17:6a,b,d,e [20:29-34])*<sup>132</sup>

Though the Twelve had been wondrously blessed with the apostolic ministry of Jesus Christ, like the fallen angels in the beginning,<sup>133</sup> certain ones in their ranks kept not their first estate but were overcome with the world and transgressed the commandments of God.<sup>134</sup> Had they remembered the new covenant, even *Book of Mormon and the former commandments*, God would have, according to His word, had mercy upon them.<sup>135</sup>

### **WISDOM IS THE PRINCIPAL THING; THEREFORE GET WISDOM**

Many of the Twelve would later claim that it had been Joseph Smith, Jr., and his brother Hyrum who had introduced the abominable practice of polygamy into the Restoration. Joseph's son, Joseph Smith III, answered this claim well by saying that if it were true that his father, Joseph Smith, Jr., was indeed responsible for these things, it still would not have excused such a practice; neither would it have sanctified it.

“...wrong committed by my father would be wrong just the same as if committed by any other individual, for his being a Prophet did not excuse nor sanctify it; it would be just as obnoxious in the

<sup>132</sup> cf. D&C 2:2 [3:3,4]

<sup>133</sup> Jude 1:6

<sup>134</sup> cf. D&C 76:3k-m [76:28-30]

<sup>135</sup> cf. D&C 105:5d [112:13] with II Nephi 1:111 [2:22] & Mosiah 1:87 [2:40]; see also D&C 98:3c,4b [101:8,10]

sight of God and good men as though done by any other member of the church or of decent society. Indeed, I felt his guilt would be greater<sup>136</sup> because of his greater responsibility as leader.”<sup>137</sup>

Could Joseph Smith, Jr., have been involved in these things? Could he have fallen into transgressions and, thus, have been judged accordingly by God? Here is what the Lord told Joseph back in July 1828, which was nearly two years before the Lord inspired him to move the cause of Zion:<sup>138</sup>

*The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God, cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught, for God doth not walk in crooked paths; neither doth he turn to the right hand nor to the left; neither doth he vary from that which he hath said; therefore his paths are straight and his course is one eternal round.*

*Remember, remember, that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men; for although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet, if he boast in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him.*

*Behold, you [Joseph] have been intrusted with these things, but how strict were your commandments; and remember, also, the promises which were made to you, if you did not transgress them; and, behold, how oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men: for, behold, you should not have feared man more than God, although men set at naught the counsels of God, and despise his words, yet you should have been faithful and he would have extended his arm, and supported you against all the fiery darts of the ad-*

<sup>136</sup> “And thus we can plainly discern, that after a people have been once enlightened by the Spirit of God, and have had great knowledge of things pertaining to righteousness, and then have fallen away into sin and transgression, they become more hardened, and thus their state becomes worse than though they had never known these things” (Alma 14:58 [24:30]).

<sup>137</sup> Joseph Smith III and the Restoration, © 1952, Herald Publishing House, Independence, Missouri, p. 429

<sup>138</sup> D&C 19:2d,e [21:7,8]

versary; and he would have been with you in every time of trouble.

Behold, thou art Joseph, and thou wast chosen to do the work of the Lord, **but because of transgression, if thou art not aware thou wilt fall**, but remember God is merciful; therefore, repent of that which thou hast done, which is contrary to the commandment which I gave you, and thou art still chosen, and art **again** called to the work; except thou doest this, thou shalt be delivered up and become as other men, and have no more gift. (D&C 2:1-4 [3:1-11])

If Joseph had participated in the ungodly practices that led to an open practice of adultery (polygamy), by his actions he would have joined the Twelve in saying that God walks in crooked paths, that the Almighty does indeed turn to the right and left from His eternal purposes founded in the *new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments*. Simply put, to attempt to justify polygamy after having received the Book of Mormon and the *former* commandments would be to call God a liar.

Did Joseph Smith, Jr., fall and incur the vengeance of a just God? The debate has many proponents on differing sides, none of which will be specifically taken up here. For this discussion it will simply be noted that if Joseph did fall, he would not have been the first, nor would he be the last to do so. Consider Gideon. This renowned judge in Israel was a polygamist, and in the latter days of his life he caused *all Israel* to sin through an ephod (special garment) he had fashioned.

*And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah; and all Israel went thither a whoring after it; which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house... And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten; for he had many wives. (Judges 8:27,30)*

Well it is written:

*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)*

In other words, it would not be inconsistent with the word of God to learn that a prophet such as Joseph Smith, Jr., or that any of the members of the Twelve had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.<sup>139</sup> In the words of Jesus, it is impossible but that offenses come.<sup>140</sup>

Determining whether or not Joseph Smith, Jr., participated in adultery or polygamy would not provide the church or any other people a just excuse to commit such works of darkness. Nor would it provide anyone with a valid argument from which to justly condemn the work of God in these latter days.

However, such contemplations do present the church with a decision. Will its members gain wisdom from the lives of those who have gone on before them? Will they heed the word of the Lord such that they will avoid falling into these same traps or the many other traps that the enemy, Satan, may set?

Oh dear reader, please hear the words of Moroni who appealed to us to not condemn him or his father or those who wrote before them for their imperfections, but be thankful unto God that we may learn to be more wise than they.

*Condemn me not because of mine imperfections; neither my father, because of his imperfections; neither them who have written before him, but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been. (Mormon 4:97 [9:31])*

Wisdom is the *principal thing*.

*Get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth... Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding. (Proverbs 4:5,7)*

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<sup>139</sup> cf. Acts 1:16-22

<sup>140</sup> Luke 17:1 (Note that in Luke 16 and 17 that this saying of Jesus Christ follows his teaching on the consequences for not ministering to those in need and leads into his teachings on child abuse. Adultery and the neglect of others, especially children, go hand in hand.)

Let us, therefore, gain wisdom and understanding from the lives of those who have gone on before us so that Zion may flourish in the goodly land of the Lord's choosing, and that the nations of the earth may come up unto the city of our God to learn of His ways.<sup>141</sup>

*O be wise: what can I say more? (Jacob 4:17 [6:12])*

### ***THAT MAN SHOULD NOT COUNSEL HIS FELLOW MAN, NEITHER TRUST IN THE ARM OF FLESH***

According to the opening section of the Doctrine and Covenants, Joseph Smith, Jr., had been chosen by God for particular purposes, which were according to God's wisdom.

*Wherefore I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., and spake unto him **from heaven**, and gave him commandments, and also gave commandments to others, that they should proclaim these things unto the world;*

*and all this that it might be fulfilled, which was written by the prophets; the weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, **that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh, but that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world;***

*that faith also might increase in the earth; that mine everlasting covenant might be established; that the fullness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple, unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers. (D&C 1:4 [1:17-23])*

While there are a number of reasons for his calling listed, two are of particular interest in the present study: 1) "that man should not counsel his fellow man," and 2) "neither trust in the arm of flesh." Joseph Smith, Jr., was not called to be an infallible leader or the deity of a movement

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<sup>141</sup> Isaiah 2 & Micah 4

as some religions claim for their leaders. If so, it would have meant that in calling Joseph Smith, Jr., God had set up priesthood. This could not have been the case because priesthood is a thing God has forbidden.<sup>142</sup>

*He commandeth that there shall be no priestcrafts; for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain, and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion. Behold, the Lord hath forbidden this thing; wherefore, the Lord God hath given a commandment, that all men should have charity, which charity is love. (II Nephi 11:106-107 [26:29-30])*

God does not walk in crooked paths.<sup>143</sup> Jesus Christ is the light we are to hold up before the world, not ourselves nor any other men or women.<sup>144</sup>

*Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you...Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up – that which ye have seen me do. (III Nephi 8:48,55 [18:16-24])*

Remember, Joseph Smith, Jr., had been called so that men *would not* counsel each other *nor* trust in the arm of flesh, e.g. in their own strengths, abilities, wisdom, etc.

*For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are <after> [in] the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:6-8 <IR> [KJV]; cf. Hebrews 11:6 & James 1:5-8)*

Joseph Smith, Jr., was not set forth by God to be the source and inspiration of a church member's devotion, the one upon whom their faith should

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<sup>142</sup> cf. III Nephi 7:34-37 [16:10-12] & III Nephi 9:101-106 [21:14-20]

<sup>143</sup> D&C 2:1 [3:3,4]

<sup>144</sup> cf. Matthew 5:16-18 IR [14-16 KJV] with John 8:12 & 12:35-46

rest.<sup>145</sup> Rather, Joseph was called so that *the weak and the simple* would proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world. This message is consistent with the testament of the apostle Paul:

*For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent... For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are <chosen> [called]; <For> [But] God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are <mighty>; that no flesh should glory in his presence. (I Corinthians 1:19,26-29 <IR> [KJV])*

This message is consistent with the prophecies of Jeremiah:

*Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm; and the man whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. (Jeremiah 17:5,6)*

This message is consistent with the prayer of faith offered up by Nephi as recorded in the Book of Mormon:

*O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee for ever. I will not put my trust in the arm of*

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<sup>145</sup> Yet there are those who look to Joseph Smith, Jr., for this purpose. Those who rely on the counsels of their fellow man and trust in the arm of flesh would be most devastated to think that Joseph could have fallen into transgression. Because their faith has been misplaced, they are the ones who will be most disturbed to think that Joseph could have transgressed and incurred the wrath of God. Remember, our confidence must always rest in the One to whom Joseph Smith, Jr., pointed us toward, the Messiah, Jesus the Christ, the only way of salvation.

*flesh; for I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh. Yea, cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm. Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss: therefore I will lift up my voice unto thee; yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, the rock of my righteousness. Behold, my voice shall for ever ascend up unto thee, my rock and mine everlasting God. Amen. (II Nephi 3:61-66 [4:34-35])*

Had the members of the Twelve remembered the *new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments*, not a *later* false “new covenant” born of an abominable practice – no matter its source (whether Joseph Smith, Jr., Brigham Young, a fallen angel, or someone else) – the Lord would have healed them and they would not have fallen.<sup>146</sup> Instead, contrary to the purpose of the restoration, they relied on *the arm of flesh* and the *counsel* of men among themselves.

*Behold, thus saith the Lord unto my people, You have many things to do, and to repent of; for, behold, your sins have come up unto me, and are not pardoned, because you seek to counsel in your own ways. And your hearts are not satisfied. And ye obey not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. (D&C 56:4c,d [56:14,15])*

Consequently, they inherited *a salt land*, both spiritually and physically, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah. For, as it is written, those who take lightly the Word of the Lord will, according to the words of the Psalmist, be held in derision for their folly and contempt.

*Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. (Psalm 2:1-4; cf. Proverbs 1:23-33)*

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<sup>146</sup> D&C 105:5d [112:13] & Mosiah 11:166 [27:13] with II Peter 2:9

## ***I ALSO WILL CHOOSE THEIR DELUSION***

On September 22 and 23, 1832, the fifth anniversary of the date Joseph Smith, Jr., received the plates containing the records of the Book of Mormon, the Lord testified that members of the church had treated lightly the Book of Mormon and the former commandments, which *vanity* He said had brought the whole church under condemnation.<sup>147</sup>

*And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received, which vanity and unbelief hath brought the whole church under condemnation. And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all; and they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written, that they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom, otherwise there remaineth a scourge and a judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion; for, shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, I say unto you, Nay. (D&C 83:8 [84:54-59])*

The members of the church had been tremendously blessed with the plain and precious testimony of Jesus Christ preserved in the Book of Mormon. They had been granted marvelous revelation upon wondrous revelation, and the Lord was in the process of inspiring Joseph Smith, Jr., to restore the scriptures of the Bible.<sup>148</sup> Should the Lord continue to bestow further blessings upon His church if they would continue to treat lightly His words and covenants?

*Beware from henceforth and refrain from sin lest sore judgments fall upon your heads; for unto whom much is given much is required; and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation. **Ye call upon my name for***

<sup>147</sup> cf. II Corinthians 10:3-6 with D&C 83:8 [84:54-59]

<sup>148</sup> Known as the Inspired Version or Revision of the Holy Scriptures; also known as the "Joseph Smith Translation."

*revelations, and I give them unto you; and inasmuch as ye keep not my sayings which I give unto you, ye become transgressors, and justice and judgment is the penalty which is affixed unto my law: Therefore, what I say unto one I say unto all, Watch, for the adversary spreadeth his dominions and darkness reigneth; and the anger of God kindleth against the inhabitants of the earth; and none doeth good, for all have gone out of the way. And now, verily I say unto you, I, the Lord, will not lay any sin to your charge; go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God. (D&C 81:1c-2 [82:2-7])*

It was time to test them.

*And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, that ye shall live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God; for he will give unto the faithful, line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you, and prove you herewith; and whoso layeth down his life in my cause, for my name's sake, shall find it again; even life eternal; therefore, be not afraid of your enemies; for I have decreed in my heart, saith the Lord, that I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant, even unto death, that you may be found worthy; for if ye will not abide in my covenant, ye are not worthy of me... (D&C 95:3a-d [98:11-15])*

Had the members of the church received the love of the truth? Would they respect God's words, the words of eternal life, through humble obedience? Or would they continue in their vanity and disobedience? Would they be like the covenant people of old who chose their own ways and delighted in their abominations? If so, according to the prophecies of Isaiah, God would choose their *delusion*.

*... Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. **I also will choose their delusions**, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear; but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not. (Isaiah 66:3,4)*

He would send strong delusions upon them accord-

ing to the prophecies of the Apostle Paul.

***And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.***  
(II Thessalonians 2:11,12)

The Book of Abraham was a very effective delusion that the Lord caused to be brought forth at this critical juncture in the history of the church.<sup>149</sup> The church could either hold fast to *the rod of iron* made plain through the Book of Mormon record and former commandments (and walk therein in the path of liberty and life), or they could *fall away into forbidden paths*<sup>150</sup> of fables and speculation (i.e. in the way of death and destruction).

Would they retain a love of the truth? Would they rely upon the word of God? Or would they turn away after a work of a man?

Would they try the spirits as admonished? Or would they go on in the persuasions of men?

Sadly, to their ruin many individuals regarded this spurious writing as scripture because of the man who wrote it, even though it deviated greatly from the revealed truth found in the scriptures.

To its great harm the church began to stray from the straight course of the Lord. They discounted the testimony that our God does not walk in crooked paths. In giving the so-called Book of Abraham credence, they failed to heed God's word, that He does not turn to the right hand nor to the left neither does He vary from that which he has said.

***The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God, cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught, for God doth not walk in crooked paths; neither doth he turn to the right hand nor***

<sup>149</sup> Another very effective delusion that was sent to try the patience and faith of the church and its members' love of the truth was the introduction of secret societies in their midst by various individuals. This topic is considered in another article by the author entitled, "The Enemy In the Secret Chambers." Through the record of the book of Mormon, the church had received the warning that all such combinations, bands, and societies have been, are, and will be founded by the devil. Yet there were (and are) those in the membership and leadership who did not heed the warning.

<sup>150</sup> I Nephi 2:76 [8:28] with Moroni 10:27 [10:30] ("touch not the evil gift")

***to the left; neither doth he vary from that which he hath said; therefore his paths are straight and his course is one eternal round.***

***Remember, remember, that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men; for although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet, if he boast in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him.***  
(D&C 2:1,2 [3:1-4])

Consequently, according to the revealed word of God, the errant members of the church were turned over Satan, even the devil, the father of all lies, to be deceived (if they would not return to the love of the truth), to be blinded (if their eyes would not become single to the glory of God), and to be captivated (if they were not willing to abide in the liberty of the Spirit of truth).

***Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him; and also that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten I caused that he should be cast down; and he became Satan. Yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive, and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice.*** (Genesis 3:4,5 IR)

### ***THEY SHALL NOT HAVE THE SPIRIT, BUT SHALL DENY THE FAITH AND SHALL FEAR***

One has to wonder just exactly how or why polygamy could have ever become so identified or associated with the restored church and among those unto whom the Book of Mormon had been entrusted. The word of the Lord, contained in the Book of Mormon, clearly condemns fornication and the abominable practice of polygamy. How, then, could those who claimed to believe its testimony go counter to the witness it so plainly sets forth?

According to the Lord, there were adulterers

and adulteresses among His people.<sup>151</sup> Why is this significant? Early in February 1831, the Lord had warned the restored church in Kirtland about lust and adultery, saying those who commit these sins would deny the faith and not have His Spirit. Further, if they did not repent, they were to be cast out from among the church:

*Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else; and he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not, he shall be cast out. Thou shalt not commit adultery; and he that committeth adultery and repenteth not, shall be cast out; but he that hath committed adultery and repents with all his heart, and forsaketh it, and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive; but if he doeth it again, he shall not be forgiven, but shall be cast out. (D&C 42:7d,e [42:22-26])*

With the words, “as I have said before,” the Lord would reiterate this message to the church in Kirtland, but with an added warning about the eternal state, not just the temporal disposition, of those who transgress the commandment to not commit adultery in their hearts.

*And verily I say unto you, as I have said before, He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, or if any shall commit adultery in their hearts, they shall not have the Spirit, but shall deny the faith and shall fear: wherefore, I, the Lord, have said that the fearful, and the unbelieving, and all liars, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, and the whoremonger, and the sorcerer, shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Verily I say, that they shall not have part in the first resurrection. (D&C 63:5 [63:16-18])*

In this revelation, which was given in August of 1831, the Lord made it abundantly clear that this was an absolute area of extreme “fire” danger to the members of the church. Why? Without His Spirit, the guilty would be defenseless against the evil one and would soon deny the faith and

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<sup>151</sup> D&C 63:4b [63:14]

fear. Consequently, they would not have part in the first resurrection. Instead they would have their place with the *liars, whomongers, etc.*, in that lake which burns with fire and brimstone, even the second death.<sup>152</sup>

*He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murders, and whomongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death. (Revelation 21:7,8)*

### **KNOW YE NOT?**

Adultery is one of the most *abominable* crimes, along with the unpardonable sin and murder, that we can commit.<sup>153</sup> As such it has severe consequences for those who do not repent of it in the space of time allotted, with all sincerity of heart according to the commandments. The apostles and prophets stressed the point that adulterers and fornicators will not inherit the kingdom of God.<sup>154</sup>

*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (I Corinthians 6:9,10)*

*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such*

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<sup>152</sup> cf. Luke 17:1

<sup>153</sup> cf. Alma 19:5-16 [39:4-10] with Galatians 5:19-21, Matthew 12:26 IR [31 KJV] & I John 5:16

<sup>154</sup> cf. Proverbs 6:32, Jeremiah 23:9-16, Malachi 3:5, Hebrews 13:4, James 4:1-4, II Peter 2:12-15,17, etc. with Leviticus 20:10; see also Mosiah 1:19,20 [1:13]

*things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*  
(Galatians 5:19-21)

The Lord grants a space of time for adulterers and adulteresses to repent based on *the conditions of repentance*.<sup>155</sup> The conditions of repentance include bringing forth fruits meet for repentance (e.g. confessing and forsaking their sins) and endurance to the end.<sup>156</sup>

*Thou shalt not commit adultery; and he that committeth adultery and repenteth not, shall be cast out; but he that hath committed adultery and repents with all his heart, and forsaketh it, and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive; but if he doeth it again, he shall not be forgiven, but shall be cast out.* (D&C 42:7e [42:24-26])

Consider, for example, the words of *the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire*, to the church in Thyatira concerning a woman named Jezebel.

*...I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. **And I gave her space to repent of her <fornications> [fornication]; and she repented not.** Behold, I will cast her into <hell> [a bed], and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, **except** they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; **and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.** (Revelation 2:20-23 <IR> [KJV])*

When Corianton, Alma's youngest son, left his ministry and became involved with a harlot, Alma corrected him with these words:

*Now, my son, I would that ye should repent, and*

*forsake your sins, and go no more after the lusts of your eyes, but cross yourself in all these things; for except ye do this, ye can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God. O remember, and take it upon you, and cross yourself in these things.* (Alma 19:13,14 [39:9])

Corianton repented and was restored to the ministry to which he had been called.<sup>157</sup> Apparently, Corianton crossed himself in all these things and no longer pursued the lust of his eyes.<sup>158</sup> The Twelve had been given a somewhat similar rebuke and promise, that after their temptations and tribulations, if they did not harden their hearts, the Lord would feel after them and they would be converted and He would heal them.

*And after their temptations and much tribulations, behold, I, the Lord, will feel after them, and if they harden not their hearts, and stiffen not their necks against me, they shall be converted, and I will heal them.* (D&C 105:5d [112:13])

If only they had repented and hardened not their hearts as in *the provocation*,<sup>159</sup> the Lord would have led them in the way which He had prepared for their deliverance.

*Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you, whom I love; and whom I love I also chasten, that their sins may be forgiven; for with the chastisement I prepare a way for their deliverance, in all things, out of temptation; and I have loved you.* (D&C 92:1a [95:1])

*For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness; When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.* (Psalm 95:7-9)

<sup>155</sup> cf. Helaman 2:71-73 [5:9-11], 5:64-74 [14:10-19] & D&C 16:3d,e [18:12-14] with Matthew 3:35,37 IR [8-10 KJV], D&C 58:9d [58:43], etc.

<sup>156</sup> cf. Hebrews 3:7-14 & D&C 63:4 [63:12-15] with I Corinthians 10:1-13 & Ether 5:29 [12:28]

<sup>157</sup> Alma 20:1,2 [43:1,2] & Alma 21:185 [49:29]

<sup>158</sup> cf. I John 2:15-17

<sup>159</sup> cf. Hebrews 3:7-4:16 with Psalm 95:7-9

## CAST OUT FIRST THE BEAM IN THINE OWN EYE

Satan's ambitions did not stop with overthrowing the restored church and its priesthood. He wanted to compromise the church such that it could not justly fulfill its calling to bring the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ unto the Lamanites. It had been promised that these ancient covenant people, the Lamanites, would one day be a blessed people because they did not practice polygamy.<sup>160</sup> As such, if Satan could cause the restored church to become guilty of the very sin of which the Lamanites had *not* been guilty, the church would not be in a justifiable position to call the Lamanites to repentance.<sup>161</sup>

If the church were to be compromised with polygamy, their preaching repentance to the Lamanites would be the height of hypocrisy.<sup>162</sup>

*<Again,> [Either] how canst thou say to thy brother, <Let> [Brother, let] me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam <which> [that] is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote <which> [that] is in thy brother's eye. (Luke 6:42 <IR> [KJV])*

If Satan could get such a large plank as polygamy lodged in the eye of the church they would become blind guides, whom Jesus described as those who cause themselves and others to end in a ditch.<sup>163</sup>

*And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch? (Luke 6:39)*

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<sup>160</sup> Jacob 2:54-58 [3:5-7]

<sup>161</sup> cf. D&C 58:6i [58:32,33], 64:7 [64:34-39], 81:3b [82:10], etc. with III Nephi 7:34-41 [16:10-15], 10:1-4 [21:22-25], etc.; see also II Corinthians 10:6 with Psalm 51:12,13, II Timothy 2:5,6, James 1:5-8, James 5:16b, etc.

<sup>162</sup> cf. Luke 6:38-42 & Luke 11:35-53 IR [34-52 KJV]

<sup>163</sup> Matthew 15:13 IR [14 KJV], Matthew 23:21-30 IR [24-33 KJV], Luke 6:39, etc.

From the restored records of the Nephites, polygamy was easily identifiable as an abomination before God.<sup>164</sup> However, through the means of *lust* and *adultery* Satan went about lying and deceiving the Lord's people for the express purpose of drawing them into this abominable practice.<sup>165</sup>

Through the Book of Mormon, the restored church had been given a precious knowledge of things pertaining to righteousness and the plan of restoration regarding the covenant people of God. By coaxing its members to fall into this abominable practice of polygamy Satan overthrew them through transgression.<sup>166</sup> And in so doing he led the church to fail in its progress of bringing the fullness of the gospel unto the Lamanites.<sup>167</sup>

As I now write these things, my soul agonizes over the loss of many of my brethren of the first generation unto which this sacred work of restoration was given charge to carry out. My soul cries with Mormon for the loss of his brothers and sisters and mine.

*...O ye fair ones, how could ye have departed from the ways of the Lord! O ye fair ones, how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you! Behold, if ye had not done this, ye would not have fallen. But behold, ye are fallen, and I mourn your loss. O ye fair sons and daughters, ye fathers and mothers, ye husbands and wives, ye fair ones, how is it that ye could have fallen! But behold, ye are gone, and my sorrows can not bring your return; and the day soon cometh that your mortal must put on immortality, and these bodies which are now moldering in corruption, must soon become incorruptible bodies; And then ye must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to be judged according to your works; and if it so be that ye are righteous, then are ye blessed with your fathers who have gone before you. O that ye had repented before this great destruction*

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<sup>164</sup> Jacob 2:29-37 [2:22-28]

<sup>165</sup> cf. D&C 50:1 [50:1-3] with D&C 22:8-15 [Moses 1:12-22], Job 1:7 & I Peter 5:8,9

<sup>166</sup> Mosiah 11:166 [27:13] with D&C 50:1 [50:1-3], etc.

<sup>167</sup> cf. Alma 2:17 [4:10] with I Nephi 4:16-29 [15:13-18]

had come upon you. But behold, ye are gone, and the Father, yea, the eternal Father of heaven knoweth your state; and he doeth with you according to his justice and mercy. (Mormon 3:18-23 [6:16-27])

### **WHAT I SAY UNTO ONE I SAY UNTO ALL**

The elders of the church had been warned that there were many false spirits going about to deceive the world and that Satan in particular was seeking to deceive them for the express purpose of overthrowing them.

**Hearken, O ye elders of my church, and give ear to the voice of the living God; and attend to the words of wisdom which shall be given unto you, according as ye have asked and are agreed as touching the church, and the spirits which have gone abroad in the earth. Behold, verily I say unto you, that there are many spirits which are false spirits, which have gone forth in the earth, deceiving the world: and also Satan hath sought to deceive you, that he might overthrow you.** (D&C 50:1 [50:1-3])

Therefore, the Lord commanded His church to watch and pray always so that they would not be overcome by the devil, but that they would be counted worthy to escape the pending judgments.<sup>168</sup>

**What I say unto one I say unto all: Pray always, lest that wicked one have power in you, and remove you out of your place.** (D&C 90:8d [93:49])

*<And what I say unto one, I say unto all,> Watch ye therefore, and pray always, <and keep my commandments,> that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things <which> [that] shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man <when he shall come clothed in the glory of his Father>.* (Luke 21:36 <IR> [KJV])

The church had received the call to lay hold

<sup>168</sup> Luke 21:36 with D&C 81:1 [82:1-6]

upon every good gift and *touch not the evil gift*, including the abominable practice of polygamy.

*And again I would exhort you, that ye would come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing.* (Moroni 10:27 [10:30])

Lest they become deceived, the Lord admonished them to seek the best (good) gifts, which are *faith, hope, and charity*; for these are the fountain from which all righteousness flows.

*Wherefore, beware, lest ye are deceived, and that ye may not be deceived, seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given.* (D&C 46:4a [46:8])

*And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.* (I Corinthians 13:13)

*Behold, I will shew unto the Gentiles their weakness, and I will shew unto them that faith, hope, and charity, bringeth unto me the fountain of all righteousness.* (Ether 5:29 [12:28])

Therefore, without faith, hope, and charity we cannot participate in the work.<sup>169</sup>

*Behold, I speak unto you, and also to all those who have desires to bring forth and establish this work; **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 thing whatsoever shall be intrusted to his care.*** (D&C 11:4 [12:7-8])

Why? Fallen mankind is carnal, sensual, and devilish:<sup>170</sup>

- The carnal mind fights against God continually, and so God sent the gift of faith into the

<sup>169</sup> cf. John 15:1-8 with I John 2:15-17

<sup>170</sup> Genesis 4:13 IR, 6:50 IR, James, 3:15, Mosiah 8:74,75 [16:3], Alma 19:91 [42:10], Helaman 4:48-73 [12:1-26], D&C 17:4 [20:17-20], etc.; see also Romans 8:6 & II Nephi 6:74 [9:39]

world to be the *antidote*<sup>171</sup> for the carnal mind. The carnal mind relies upon and is limited to its own abilities and capacities of reasoning and comprehension.<sup>172</sup> Faith, on the other hand, relies upon God and the intelligence His Spirit imparts. It is not limited to ones own abilities, but is founded in God's limitless wisdom and His eternal purposes.<sup>173</sup>

- The sensual nature of fallen man compromises and lusts; it envies and is willing to sell its birthright to temporarily satisfy its appetites.<sup>174</sup> Therefore, God sent the gift of hope into the world that mankind might look forward to the coming of Jesus Christ with the desire to be like Him and thereby be pure even as He is pure.<sup>175</sup> Hope holds out for the redemption that awaits the souls of the righteous. Thus it is written that we are saved by hope.<sup>176</sup>
- Finally, the devilish nature of fallen mankind persecutes and blames others; it supposes and conjectures; it does not know the truth nor does it abide in the truth and so it persecutes the more humble followers of Christ. In the end, it causes bitter envying and strife.<sup>177</sup> To heal the world of such confusion and calamity, the Lord sent charity into the world in the person of His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, <only> [even] to those who believe on His name.<sup>178</sup> Through the gift of His Son, God provided us with a way to live honorably and without guile, to be humble and full of love, to care for one another, and serve one another in love.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Why use the word *antidote*? Our carnal, sensual, and devilish natures are the result of a "snake bite," if you will, by that old serpent, Satan, who beguiled our first parents.

<sup>172</sup> Romans 8:7,8 with Colossians 1:21

<sup>173</sup> cf. Romans 10:16, etc.

<sup>174</sup> cf. Hebrew 12:16 with Ephesians 4:17-32

<sup>175</sup> I John 3:1-3 & Moroni 7:53 [7:48]

<sup>176</sup> Romans 8:24

<sup>177</sup> cf. Revelation 12:10, John 8:44, James 3:14-16, D&C 90:6 [93:36-43], etc.

<sup>178</sup> cf. John 1:11,12 <IR> [KJV]

<sup>179</sup> cf. I Peter 1:22,23

*Wherefore, if a man have faith, he must needs have hope; for without faith there can not be any hope.*

*And again, behold I say unto you, that he can not have faith and hope, save he shall be meek and lowly of heart; if so, his faith and hope are vain, for none is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly of heart;*

*And if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity, he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity.*

*And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth.*

*Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail; but charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth for ever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with them.*

*Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son Jesus Christ, that ye may become the sons of God, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is, that we may have this hope, that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen. (Moroni 7:48-53 [7:42-48])*

Faith, hope, and charity! These are the best gifts the church had been called to seek earnestly to obtain.<sup>180</sup> These are the gifts that were given to purify our hearts. In opposition<sup>181</sup> to these *best* gifts, stood polygamy, the *evil* gift they had been warned not to lay hold of.<sup>182</sup> Those who embraced the so-called "new covenant" of polygamy not only disqualified them-

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<sup>180</sup> Moroni 7:19-53 [7:20-48] with D&C 4:1 [4:1-5], 46:4a [46:8], I Corinthians 12:31, Ether 5:29 [12:28], etc.

<sup>181</sup> cf. II Nephi 1:81

<sup>182</sup> Jacob 2:30-44 [2:22-34] with Moroni 10:27 [10:30], etc.

selves from participating in the work of restoration in these last days, but they also disqualified themselves from fellowship in the kingdom of Jesus Christ and His saints.<sup>183</sup>

### ***IN THE ORDINANCES THEREOF***

Consider how the priesthood of the church would be strategic trophies for Satan. The influence they bear in the church, through their many responsibilities, would, if Satan could use them for his purposes, give him the greatest access to the membership of Christ's body, especially through the administration of the ordinances.

Why the ordinances? The ordinances are God's provisions for order in His church.

*Therefore, in the ordinances thereof the power of godliness is manifest; and without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; for without this, no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live. (D&C 83:3c [84:20-22])*

If Satan is to bring disorder or a false or divisive order to the church, he must compromise the pure ordinances of God, through which the power of godliness is manifest.

Remember, priesthood members are to perform the ordinances of God by the Spirit which is in them.<sup>184</sup> However, if they do not have the Spirit of God within them, because of lust and adultery, how then can they perform the ordinances in righteousness? They can not.<sup>185</sup> Consider the following instruction, that if they do not receive the Spirit of the Lord they are not to teach.

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<sup>183</sup> D&C 63:5 [63:16-18], 83:6h [84:41], etc.

<sup>184</sup> cf. Moroni 3:3 [3:4], Alma 4:9,10 [6:8], D&C 16:5e [18:32,33], D&C 17:12b [20:60], D&C 42:5b [42:13,14], etc.

<sup>185</sup> God may, however, honor their service for His own glory and the salvation of souls (see D&C 38:4b [38:14] and D&C 64:1b [64:3]).

*And again, the elders, priests, and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in which is the fullness of the gospel; and they shall observe the covenants and church articles to do them, and these shall be their teachings, as they shall be directed by the Spirit; and the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith, **and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach.** (D&C 42:5a-b [42:12-14])*

A great many things lay in the balance. Without the Spirit of the Lord, which is the power of godliness, the priesthood would be powerless,<sup>186</sup> and the church would be vulnerable prey to the roaring lion who seeks their destruction.

*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, **that he may exalt you in due time.** Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. (I Peter 5:6-8)*

Through polygamy, the devil offered the church an alternate but false manner in which to be exalted.<sup>187</sup> Rather than the priesthood being humbled under the mighty hand of God, Satan offered them exaltation in time and eternity through this corruptible and damnable doctrine. Through "*the doctrine of a plurality of wives,*" Satan would draw them into condemnation and compromise their ministry. Simply put, this doctrine was a strategic lie. It had been formulated very craftily to captivate their souls and destroy the work to which they had been called.

The abominable practice of polygamy had been introduced by *the father of lies*<sup>188</sup> as a ploy to overthrow the church as well.<sup>189</sup> It would be readily adopted by the adulterers and adulteresses in the church as a convenient cover for their sin.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> cf. John 15:1-8

<sup>187</sup> [D&C 132] with *Journal of Discourses* 1:54

<sup>188</sup> cf. John 8:44

<sup>189</sup> cf. D&C 50:1 [50:1-3] with Mosiah 11:166 [27:13]

<sup>190</sup> cf. D&C 63:4b,c [63:14-15] with James 4:1-10

*There were among you **adulterers and adulteresses**; some of whom have turned away from you, and others remain with you, that hereafter shall be revealed. Let such beware and repent speedily, lest judgment shall come upon them as a snare, and their folly shall be made manifest, and their works shall follow them in the eyes of the people.* (D&C 63:4b,c [63:14-15])

The Lord had warned the church that *the enemy in secret chambers* would seek their lives – just as he had Peter’s life so many years before.<sup>191</sup>

*And again I say unto you, that the enemy in the secret chambers seeketh your lives.* (D&C 38:6b [38:28])

Satan knew that great judgments awaited those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, e.g. who purport that an abomination is a requirement for salvation.

*Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope; that say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it! Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.* (Isaiah 5:18-20)

When the Lord foretold how He would establish His church among the Gentiles, He also revealed that He would grant His Holy Spirit unto those who would seek to bring forth and establish His Zion in the day in which the Book of Mormon would be brought forth.<sup>192</sup> Equally important was the admonition that, if those to whom this precious gospel was given *endured to the end*, they would be saved in the kingdom

<sup>191</sup> D&C 38:6b-d [38:28-30]; cf. Luke 22:31 <children of the kingdom> [you] & III Nephi 8:46-54 [18:14-23]

<sup>192</sup> III Nephi 10:1-4 [21:22-25] with I Nephi 3:181-189 [13:34-37]

of heaven. If they did not endure, the promise was void.<sup>193</sup>

*And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth My Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end, they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb.* (I Nephi 3:187,188 [13:37])

As the Apostle Paul explained to the Thessalonians, salvation hinges upon our receiving *the love of the truth*, which is charity.<sup>194</sup> That is, it would depend upon their abiding in *the everlasting covenant*, which involves embracing the truth and looking upward through keeping all of the Lord’s commandments.<sup>195</sup>

### *Of What Fold Are Ye?*

Polygamy was a fast track to destruction. Remember how Jesus said He saw Satan fall from heaven even as lightning falls from the heaven above?<sup>196</sup> Those who have followed Satan have likewise fallen with him, swiftly and decisively, because of their transgressions and fears.

Satan is the devil, a fallen angel, that old serpent who beguiled our first parents, Adam and Eve.<sup>197</sup> He is the enemy of all righteousness and orderliness that comes of God. Satan is a false shepherd.

*O ye workers of iniquity; ye that are puffed up in the vain things of the world; ye that have professed to have known the ways of righteousness; nevertheless have gone astray, as sheep having no shepherd, notwithstanding a shepherd hath called after you, and art still calling after you, but ye will not hearken unto his voice.*

*Behold, I say unto you, that the good shepherd doth call you; yea, and in his own name he doth*

<sup>193</sup> cf. D&C 58:6i [58:32-33] & 81:3b [82:10] with Hebrews 4:1,2

<sup>194</sup> II Thessalonians 2:7-12 with Moroni 7:51-53 [7:45-48]

<sup>195</sup> Genesis 9:21-23 IR

<sup>196</sup> Luke 10:19 IR [18 KJV]

<sup>197</sup> II Nephi 1:101-104 [2:17,18]

call you, which is the name of Christ; and if ye will not hearken unto the voice of the good shepherd, to the name by which ye are called, behold, ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd.

And now if ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd, **of what fold are ye?** Behold, I say unto you, that the devil is your shepherd, and ye are of his fold; and now who can deny this? Behold, I say unto you, Whosoever denieth this, is a liar and a child of the devil; For I say unto you, that whatsoever is good, cometh from God, and whatsoever is evil, cometh from the devil; Therefore, if a man bringeth forth good works, he hearkeneth unto the voice of the good shepherd; and he doth follow him; But whosoever bringeth forth evil works, the same becometh a child of the devil; for he hearkeneth unto his voice, and doth follow him. And whosoever doeth this must receive his wages of him; therefore, for his wages he receiveth death, as to things pertaining unto righteousness, being dead unto all good works.

And now my brethren, I would that ye should hear me, for I speak in the energy of my soul; For behold, I have spoken unto you plain, that ye can not err, or have spoken according to the commandments of God. (Alma 3:61-72 [5:37-73])

Satan knows that it is the transgression of God's people which is the only thing that shall overthrow them.<sup>198</sup> Therefore, Satan attacked the ordinances of God for the purpose of destroying the orderliness of God's church. He sought to replace, change, and redefine the Lord's ordinances in an effort to lead as many as he could into strange and forbidden paths.<sup>199</sup> Still God is calling to those beguiled by the unfaithful shepherd, calling them to repentance and faith on the Good Shepherd, the Holy One of Israel. He is calling them to separate themselves from the wicked and touch not the *evil gift or unclean thing*.

And now I say unto you, all you that are desirous to follow the voice of the good shepherd, come ye out from the wicked, and be ye separate, and

<sup>198</sup> Mosiah 11:166 [27:13] with Mosiah 1:79-85 [2:36-39]

<sup>199</sup> D&C 63:5a [63:16]

touch not their unclean things. (Alma 3:98 [5:57a])

### **FOR THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY DOTH ALREADY WORK**

As foretold by the prophets of old, a great and marvelous work, along with the attendant blessings, awaited the world and the inhabitants of this land.<sup>200</sup> With the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the church in these latter days, the restoration of the Lamanites would soon be brought about and the subsequent coming forth of the New Jerusalem on Joseph's land would be revealed to all nations.

Satan, however, moved swiftly to block the progress<sup>201</sup> of the church in an attempt to thwart the work assigned to the restored church in that first generation of the restored church.<sup>202</sup> He knew<sup>203</sup> that if he did not do something to stop the rise of the church and its progress in these latter days that he would soon have no power because of the righteousness of God's people.<sup>204</sup> He knew he would be bound when the Lord brings again Zion, the New Jerusalem, upon this land.<sup>205</sup> Therefore, as foretold, Satan began his subtle work of deception and, as also prophesied, the Lord *suffered* him so to work.<sup>206</sup>

*For the mystery of iniquity doth already work <, > [:] <and he it is who now worketh, and Christ suffereth him to work, > [only he who know letteth will let,] until <the time is fulfilled that > he <shall > be taken out of the way. And then shall that <wicked one > [Wicked] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. <Yea, the Lord, even Jesus, > [Even him] whose coming is <not until > after <there cometh*

<sup>200</sup> cf. D&C 6:1a [6:1], 10:1a [11:1], 11:1a [12:1], 12:1a [14:1] with III Nephi 13:43-45 [28:31-33]

<sup>201</sup> cf. Alma 2:17 [4:10]

<sup>202</sup> cf. D&C 3:6d [10:33], D&C 84:1 [86:1-3], etc.

<sup>203</sup> Revelation 12:12

<sup>204</sup> cf. I Nephi 7:60 [22:26]

<sup>205</sup> cf. III Nephi 7:42-45 [16:16-20]

<sup>206</sup> cf. II Thessalonians 2:7-12 & Isaiah 66:1-5 with Genesis 9:21-24 IR

*a falling away, by> the working of Satan with all power, and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

*And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*<sup>207</sup>  
(II Thessalonians 2:7-12 <IR> [KJV])

Why did the Lord suffer Satan to work his works of darkness in the midst of His church? The answer is simple but far reaching. Individuals within the church would not *hearken* to the word of God. Therefore, according to His word, *the Lord God* turned them over to Satan to be lied to, deceived, blinded, and eventually captivated at Satan's will for refusing to repent and come unto the living Truth, Jesus Christ.<sup>208</sup>

*Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him; and also that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten I caused that he should be cast down; and he became Satan. Yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive, and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice.* (Genesis 3:4,5 IR)

According to His word, the Lord promises to preserve the just,<sup>209</sup> and to bring the unjust, i.e. those who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, to judgment.<sup>210</sup>

*The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished; but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.* (II Peter 2:9,10)

<sup>207</sup> cf. Romans 1:18

<sup>208</sup> cf. II Timothy 2:26 with D&C 3:16,17 [10:67-69] & 83:7 [84:43-53]

<sup>209</sup> cf. Genesis 7:69 IR with D&C 45:12-14 [45:64-71]

<sup>210</sup> cf. D&C 1:1c [1:3], 63:4b [63:14], etc.

Why? The unjust love lies and vanity more than the word of God and, therefore, they fail to receive *the love of the truth*, which is charity, the pure love of Christ (remember, Jesus is the Truth).<sup>211</sup> In practical terms, by not receiving the love of the truth, they had rejected the everlasting covenant.

### **REPENT AND DO THE FIRST WORKS**

As we labor as a remnant to repair this longstanding breach caused by fornication, adultery, and then polygamy in the church, we must take care how we strive to end these and all abominable practices. Otherwise, we will continue to disqualify ourselves from participating in the work.<sup>212</sup> As emphasized earlier, except we are humble and filled with love, *having faith, hope, and charity*, we are not qualified to assist in the work of restoring the house of Israel to a knowledge of the Messiah or in assisting in building the New Jerusalem.

*...and faith, hope, and charity, and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualifies him for the work.* (D&C 4:1e [4:5])

*...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.* (D&C 11:4b [12:8])

*For, shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, I say unto you, Nay.* (D&C 83:8c [84:58-59])

Equally important, we must take care not to attempt to cover up sin. If we do, we will not prosper.<sup>213</sup>

*He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but*

<sup>211</sup> cf. Moroni 7:50-53 [7:44-48] with John 14:6

<sup>212</sup> cf. II Timothy 2:5,6 with D&C 2:3,4 [3:5-11], 4:1e,2a [4:5,6], 8:3d [8:9,10], 11:4 [12:7,8], 38:6 [38:27-30], etc.

<sup>213</sup> cf. Alma 2:17 [4:10] with Mosiah 11:166 [27:13]

*whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.* (Proverbs 28:13)

Rather, we must uphold the call to repentance, including confessing and forsaking our sins before the church and the world.<sup>214</sup>

On the other hand, we must take care to not be too zealous in attempting to root out evil, lest we become as the hypocrites of old.<sup>215</sup> Recall the words of Jesus Christ to the Ephesian church, as found in the second chapter of the Book of Revelation. The Ephesian saints had been zealous in guarding against intruders into the flock, but later in their history Jesus Christ testified against them, stating that they had left their first love while in their pursuit to weed out false apostles.<sup>216</sup> Therefore, the Lord warned them to go back and do the first works of repentance<sup>217</sup> else He would take away their *candlestick* (priesthood ministry<sup>218</sup>).

The warning the Lord gave us is similar. He said that when the Gentiles who were brought to this continent, specifically unto those to whom the fullness of the gospel has been restored,<sup>219</sup> sinned against the fullness of His gospel, it would be taken from them.<sup>220</sup> That is, we, too, can lose the light which God has given us through zealously striving to rid the church of a wrong while failing to bring forth the works of repentance and righteousness ourselves.<sup>221</sup>

Consider the fact that the first elder or *servant*<sup>222</sup> which Jesus Christ placed in the restoration, Joseph Smith, Jr., was taken from the church in just 14 years after it was organized.<sup>223</sup>

<sup>214</sup> cf. D&C 58:9d [58:43] with Matthew 3:32 IR [6 KJV], Helaman 5:116 [16:5], etc.

<sup>215</sup> cf. Luke 10:38-11:3 IR [10:37-11:3 KJV]

<sup>216</sup> Revelation 2:1-7

<sup>217</sup> cf. Alma 3:3-108 [5:3-5:62] with Matthew 3:27-40 IR [1-12 KJV]

<sup>218</sup> Ephesians 4:8-16 & III Nephi 5:44-46,61-63 [12:1,14-16]; cf. D&C 38:6,7 [38:27-33] & 84:3,4 [86:8-11]

<sup>219</sup> cf. III Nephi 9:86-10:6 [21:1-27]

<sup>220</sup> cf. III Nephi 7:27-41 [16:4-15] with Matthew 21:54-56 IR

<sup>221</sup> D&C 98:13d [101:100] with Alma 9:15-32 [12:9-18]

<sup>222</sup> Revelation 1:20 (IR reads *servants*; KJV reads *angels*)

<sup>223</sup> cf. D&C 43:1b [43:3] with D&C 2:2-5 [3:3-15]

We would be wise, then, to heed the admonition that the Lord gave to the house of Zion through the prophet Joel:

*Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; And rend your heart, and not your garments, <and repent,> and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and <he will turn away the evil from you> [repenteth him of the evil]. <Therefore repent, and who> [Who] knoweth <but he will return and leave a blessing behind him... (Joel 2:12-14a <IR> [KJV])*

Like the Ephesians of old, God is calling us to return to Him and do the first works of the gospel, the works of faith, hope, and charity.<sup>224</sup> He is calling us to turn from a mote-and-beam hypocrisy trap by repenting and bringing forth fruits, or works, meet for repentance.<sup>225</sup> God is not mocked; what we sow is what we shall reap, beginning with the thoughts and intents of our hearts.<sup>226</sup> He judges our hearts and He forgives only the truly repentant in heart.<sup>227</sup>

### **BY THE MERCIES OF GOD**

An often quoted verse from the Apostle Paul reads as follows:

*I beseech you **therefore**, brethren, **by the mercies of God**, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God <is>.* (Romans 12:1,2 <IR> [KJV])

<sup>224</sup> Ether 5:29 [12:28] with Alma 10:6 [13:13]

<sup>225</sup> III Nephi 6:15-17 [14:3-5] & Luke 6:41,42 with D&C 50:2,3 [50:4-9]

<sup>226</sup> cf. Galatians 6:7-10 & Hebrews 4:12 with D&C 6:7b [6:16], 32:1b [33:1], 85:35 [88:109-116], etc.

<sup>227</sup> cf. D&C 64:7c,d [64:37-39] & Alma 19:106 [42:24] with Jeremiah 11:20

For what purpose or cause is Paul calling us to make such a sacrifice? The use of the word “*therefore*” indicates that this call is directly linked to the previous discussion, which concerns the restoration of the house of Israel.

*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And <then> [so] all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, **There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.***

*As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, **that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.** For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. (Romans 11:25-32 <IR> [KJV])*

To what specifically is Paul calling us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices? It is the work of restoring the house of Israel, beginning with the Lamanites.<sup>228</sup>

The Lord has called us to be nursing fathers and mothers to them, to be fishers who will gather them unto their covenant lands and to the knowledge of the covenants.<sup>229</sup> This means that the Lamanites are to receive the records of their forefathers *through the mercy extended to us*. They are to be brought to the knowledge of their Redeemer, Jesus Christ, through the kindnesses

<sup>228</sup> cf. Romans 10:1-12:3 with D&C 2:6 [3:16-20], 3:10-15 [10:44-66], 4:1 [4:1-5], 12:5 [14:9-11], 38:7 [38:31-33], 39:3e [39:11], 42:11 [42:37-39], ... 104:12,13a [107:33,34], etc.

<sup>229</sup> cf. Jeremiah 16:14-21, I Nephi 3:236,237 [14:17], II Nephi 12:50,51 [29:5], I Nephi 6:52-54 [21:22-24] & 7:13-16 [22:6,7], Isaiah 49:22,23, I Nephi 3:17-19,181-203 [10:13,14,13:34-14:2], 4:16-33 [15:13-20], II Nephi 12:71-99 [29:13-30:18], III Nephi 13:54-14:3 [29:1-30:2], Mormon 2:34-(37)-54 [5:8-24], etc.

God has shown us.

Through *the fullness of the Gentiles*, the Lamanites are to learn of *the very points* of His doctrine so they may know how to come unto Him and be saved.<sup>230</sup> Remember, their restoration is to be accomplished through the mercy which God has extended to us so that He may have mercy upon all.<sup>231</sup> It is not surprising then to see this theme written directly into the *pre-face* of the compilation of revelations given for the organization and regulation of the latter day church.

*Behold, I am God, and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding; and inasmuch as they erred it might be made known; and inasmuch as they sought wisdom they might be instructed; and inasmuch as they sinned they might be chastened, that they might repent; and inasmuch as they were humble, they might be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time; and after having received the record of the Nephites, yea, even my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., might have power to translate, **through the mercy of God, by the power of God, the Book of Mormon.** (D&C 1:5a-d [1:24-29])*

Has God not been merciful unto us in bringing forth the Book of Mormon and establishing His church among us?<sup>232</sup> Has not our God been merciful by calling us to repent according to the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the *former* commandments? Through these means has He not shown us how to come unto His Son, Jesus Christ – through faith on His name and be cleansed of all our iniquity – and thereby be saved from the wrath to come?<sup>233</sup>

<sup>230</sup> I Nephi 4:16-25 [15:13-17] & III Nephi 7:28 [7:28,29] with D&C 3:10-15 [10:44-66]

<sup>231</sup> cf. III Nephi 7:28 [16:4], I Nephi 3:18,19 [10:14], etc. with D&C 28:1 [29:1-3], 38:4b [38:14], 50:4d [50:16], etc.; see also D&C 98:4a [101:9];

<sup>232</sup> D&C 1:4-5 [1:17-33], 17:1 [20:1-4], 19:1 [21:1-3] with III Nephi 10:1-32 [21:22-23:5], etc.

<sup>233</sup> cf. Romans 5:9

Has not the Lord extended His wondrous invitation unto us, as well as to those of old, to come and partake of the tree of life and the waters of life freely?

*Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men; for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith, Repent, and I will receive you; Yea, he saith, Come unto me and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life; yea, ye shall eat and drink of the bread and the waters of life freely; Yea, come unto me and bring forth works of righteousness, and ye shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire; For behold, the time is at hand that whosoever bringeth forth not good fruit, or whosoever doeth not the works of righteousness, the same have cause to wail and mourn. (Alma 3:57-60 [5:33-36])*

The Lord promised to be merciful unto the weakness of the early laborers of the Restoration. In a pattern set forth by Nephi we may liken, or apply, these words unto ourselves as well.<sup>234</sup>

*And now I show unto you a mystery, a thing which is had in secret chambers, to bring to pass even your destruction, in process of time, and ye knew it not, but now I tell it unto you, and ye are blessed, not because of your iniquity, neither your hearts of unbelief, for verily some of you are guilty before me; **but I will be merciful unto your weakness.** (D&C 38:4a,b [38:13-14])*

The Lord knew the monumental task that lay before His newly established church as well that which awaits us. Some would and will falter and stumble. Some would and will come under the condemnation of transgression. Yet according to His tremendous grace, our Lord encouraged His people then and encourages us now with such words as these:

*Verily, I say unto you, Notwithstanding their sins, my bowels are filled with compassion toward them; I will not utterly cast them off; **and in the day of wrath I will remember mercy.** (D&C 98:4a*

<sup>234</sup> I Nephi 6:5,6 [19:23-24] & II Nephi 8:3-16 [11:2-8]

[101:9])

It remains with the Lord to do as He will with all those who have sinned and will sin, *as seemeth me good, saith the Lord.*<sup>235</sup>

*For behold, my beloved brethren, I say unto you, that the Lord God worketh not in darkness. He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world; for he loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life, that he may draw all men unto him. Wherefore, he commandeth none that they shall not partake of his salvation. Behold, doth he cry unto any, saying, Depart from me? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but he saith, Come unto me all ye ends of the earth, buy milk and honey, without money and without price.*

*Behold, hath he commanded any that they should depart out of the synagogues, or out of the houses of worship? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. Hath he commanded any that they should not partake of his salvation? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but he hath given it free for all men; and he hath commanded his people that they should persuade all men to repentance. Behold, hath the Lord commanded any that they should not partake of his goodness? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but all men are privileged the one like unto the other, and none are forbidden.*

*He commandeth that there shall be no priestcrafts; for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain, and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion. Behold, the Lord hath forbidden this thing; wherefore, the Lord God hath given a commandment, that all men should have charity, which charity is love. And except they should have charity, they were nothing; wherefore, if they should have charity, they would not suffer the laborer in Zion to perish. But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money, they shall perish.*

*And, again, the Lord God hath commanded that men should not murder; that they should not lie; that they should not steal; that they should not take the name of the Lord their God in vain; that they should not envy; that they should not have malice; that they should not contend one with*

<sup>235</sup> cf. D&C 40:1c [40:3]

*another; that they should not commit whoredoms; and that they should do none of these things; For whoso doeth them shall perish; for none of these iniquities come of the Lord; for he doeth that which is good among the children of men; And he doeth nothing save it be plain unto the children of men; And he inviteth them all to come unto him, and partake of his goodness; And he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; And he remembereth the heathen, and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile.*

*But behold, in the last days, or in the days of the Gentiles; yea, behold all the nations of the Gentiles, and also the Jews, both those who shall come upon this land, and those who shall be upon other lands; yea, even upon all the lands of the earth; behold, they will be drunken with iniquity, and all manner of abominations; And when that day shall come, they shall be visited of the Lord of hosts, with thunder and with earthquake, and with a great noise, and with storm and with tempest, and with the flame of devouring fire;*

*And all the nations that fight against Zion, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision; Yea, it shall be unto them even as unto a hungry man, which dreameth, and behold he eateth, but he awaketh and his soul is empty; Or like unto a thirsty man which dreameth, and behold he drinketh, but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite:*

*Yea, even so shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against mount Zion: For behold, all ye that do iniquity, stay yourselves and wonder; for ye shall cry out, and cry, yea, ye shall be drunken, but not with wine; ye shall stagger, but not with strong drink; For behold, the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep.*

*For behold, ye have closed your eyes, and ye have rejected the prophets, and your rulers, and the seers hath he covered because of your iniquity. And it shall come to pass, that the Lord God shall bring forth unto you the words of a book, and they shall be the words of them which have slumbered. (II Nephi 11:95-125 [26:23-27:6])*

It is time to extend the same mercy unto the household of Israel through the good graces of a just and merciful God. We are to do so by taking the Book of Mormon, the abridged record of

those who have slumbered, unto the remnant of the covenant peoples of the Lord. To do so, let us put on the Lord Jesus Christ that we may not continue to disqualify ourselves from the work. Let us turn and serve Him in righteousness and truth.

*Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that, **knowing the time, that 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 the Lord.** Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to <gratify> [fulfill] the lusts thereof. (Romans 13:10-14 <IR> [KJV])*

It is time to turn from false tradition and come unto Christ and walk in the light as He is in the light. It is time to put away childish things and hearken and hear the voice of the Lord, who calls to all men from on high, saying, “Repent ye! Repent Ye! Prepare ye the way of the Lord! Put away your sins and renew your strength in the law of the Lord.”

### **BEHOLD, I WILL SHOW UNTO THE GENTILES THEIR WEAKNESS**

Moroni wrote that he feared that we, the Gentiles unto whom the record of his fathers would be restored, would mock because of the weakness of his writing and the writings of his forefathers.

*And I said unto him, Lord, the Gentiles will mock at these things because of our weakness in writing; for Lord thou hast made us mighty in word by faith, but thou hast not made us mighty in writings...wherefore, when we write, we behold our weakness, and stumble because of the placing of our words; and I fear lest the Gentiles shall mock at our words. (Ether 5:23,26b [12:23,25])*

Jesus Christ replied by saying:

*...Fools mock, but they shall mourn...I give unto men weakness, that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them. Behold, I will shew unto the Gentiles their weakness, and I will shew unto them that faith, hope, and charity, bringeth unto Me the fountain of all righteousness. And I, Moroni, having heard these words, was comforted... (Ether 5:27-30a [12:26-29])*

Is it not apparent from our history that the Lord has shown us our weakness in many ways, including our treating lightly the writings of the ancients and in grosser sins such as polygamy?<sup>236</sup> Are we not just like the covenant people who stumbled because of the easiness of the way?<sup>237</sup> Is it not written, that “*all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way?*”<sup>238</sup>

Now is the time to humble ourselves, to submit ourselves to God that He may heal us.

*Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But He giveth more grace. Wherefore, he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubled-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. (James 4:5-10)*

*Wherefore, my beloved brethren, reconcile yourselves to the will of God, and not to the will of the devil and the flesh; and remember after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved. Wherefore, may God raise you from death, by the power of the*

*resurrection, and also from everlasting death, by the power of the atonement, that ye may be received into the eternal kingdom of God, that ye may praise him through grace divine. (II Nephi 7:41-44 [10:24,25])*

Notwithstanding the many failings of the restored church, God will reclaim the Lamanites as the firstborn of the righteous branch which He planted in Joseph’s land.<sup>239</sup> Even if we reject the fullness of the gospel, the Lamanites will yet blossom as a rose and come forth to build the New Jerusalem, Zion, upon Joseph’s land.<sup>240</sup>

Jesus is the Christ and He has said that in the day this Gentile nation sins against His gospel and rejects the fullness thereof, He would take it away from us and bring it back unto the covenant people of Israel.

*And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you, At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth, and shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and of deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, and of secret abominations;*

*And if they shall do all these things, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fullness of my gospel from among them;*

*And then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them;*

*And I will shew unto thee, O house of Israel, that the Gentiles shall not have power over you, but I will remember my covenant unto you, O house of Israel, and ye shall come unto the knowledge of the fullness of my gospel. (III Nephi 7:34-37 [16:10-12])*

These are momentous times, and momentous

<sup>236</sup> D&C 83:8 [84:54-59] with Jacob 2:29-65 [2:22-3:11]

<sup>237</sup> cf. Alma 17:81,82 [37:46]

<sup>238</sup> cf. Isaiah 53:6 with Romans 3:23

<sup>239</sup> cf. Ether 6:4-13 [13:4-12]

<sup>240</sup> D&C 49:5 [49:24-28], III Nephi 7:34-45 [16:10-20] & Ether 6:1-13 [13:1-12]

choices are before us, ones of eternal proportions. Will we repent and come unto Christ and be numbered among His covenant peoples? Or will we be swept from off the face of this land according to the covenants of the Lord, being cast off as salt that has lost its savor?

*But if the Gentiles will repent, and return unto me, saith the Father, behold, they shall be numbered among my people, O house of Israel; And I will not suffer my people, who are of the house of Israel, to go through among them, and tread them down, saith the Father.*

*But if they will not turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, I will suffer them, yea, I will suffer my people, O house of Israel, that they shall go through among them, and shall tread them down, and they shall be as salt that hath lost its savor, which is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of my people, O house of Israel. (III Nephi 7:38-41 [16:13-15])*

*Therefore, care not for the body, neither the life of the body; but care for the soul, and for the life of the soul, and seek the face of the Lord always, that in patience ye may possess your souls, and ye shall have eternal life.*

*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.*

*Therefore, if that salt of the earth lose its savor, behold, it is thenceforth good for nothing, only to be cast out and trodden under the feet of men.*

*Behold, here is wisdom concerning the children of Zion; even many, but not all; they were found transgressors, therefore, they must needs be chastened. He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that abaseth himself shall be exalted. (D&C 98:5j-m [101:37-42])*

As promised, Jesus Christ has indeed shown us our weakness. Will we now humble ourselves before Him and no longer despise the good words of eternal life conveyed to us through the record of the Nephites? Will we not now turn from all false exaltations unto receiv-

ing the one true exaltation that comes of having our garments washed white in the blood of the Lamb so that we might become pure as He is pure, and thereby join Zion, THE PURE IN HEART?

O my beloved brethren of the church far and wide, repent of all your sins and all of the wicked traditions of your fathers which have held you captive in darkness these many years. O come ye, come unto Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, and have your sins thoroughly washed away in His blood. No longer rely on the dead works of the flesh or on fables perpetuated by the enemy in secret chambers. Embrace Jesus Christ and the word He accomplished upon His cross. He loves you with an everlasting and redeeming love and longs to renew your minds in righteousness, to cleanse you of all sin, and to clothe you in robes of righteousness, that He might sanctify you wholly.

Repent, therefore, and acknowledge your transgressions before Him. Now is the day of your salvation. It is Jesus Christ who calls you. Feast upon His words that you may be healed. Remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the *former* commandments that you may be directed in the godly paths of righteousness and peace.

*Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause, and send down justice upon those who seek your destruction.*

*O all ye that are pure in heart, lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love; for ye may, if your minds are firm for ever.*

*But wo, wo, unto you that are not pure in heart; that are filthy this day before God; for except ye repent, the land is cursed for your sakes;*

*And the Lamanites which are not filthy like unto you, (nevertheless, they are cursed with a sore cursing,) shall scourge you even unto destruction.*

*And the time speedily cometh, that except ye repent, they shall possess the land of your inheritance, and the Lord God will lead away the righteous out from among you. (Jacob 2:49-53 [3:1-4])*

O hear and believe with all your heart the prophecies of Jesus Christ. Come and feast upon His words of eternal life. His invitation is open to all, for as it is written of Him, our Lord only does those things which are for the benefit of the world, for He loves the world even to the laying down of His own life that He might draw all men unto Himself.<sup>241</sup>

Through this *reproach* of fornication and polygamy our Lord has shown us our weakness and our tremendous need for Him as our Savior, the Redeemer of our souls. Will we not now turn unto Jesus Christ with our whole hearts and be healed? Will we not cast out the beam in our own eyes first before attempting to assist others? Will we not shake off the coals of our garments and be free in the joy of the Lord once more?

O Zion, your Redeemer calls you. Come unto Him without the gate that He may heal you.<sup>242</sup> Lay down the weapons of your rebellion and receive (embrace) with thanksgiving the engrafted Word of Truth, even Jesus Christ, who is able to save you.<sup>243</sup> For He alone is able and willing to intercede on your behalf forever.

Be thankful that He has opened a correspondence between you and the ancient covenant people, just as He had between the Lamanites and Nephites of old.<sup>244</sup> Zion waits. Hope, therefore, in Jesus Christ, the only name given under heaven whereby we may be saved.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> II Nephi 11:95-107 [26:23-30]

<sup>242</sup> Hebrews 13:12-15,20,21

<sup>243</sup> James 1:21 with John 1:14-16, John 17:17 & I John 5:7-12; see also Alma 14:11,12 [23:6-7]

<sup>244</sup> See Alma 14:29-32 [24:7-10]

<sup>245</sup> cf. Acts 4:10-12