Why I am a Miner

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January 8, 2023 Printing

Holding Fast that which is Good

During the 1980's, I earned advanced engineering degrees in metallurgy at the Colorado School of Mines (CSM), a mining school established in 1874. As part of my undergraduate studies, I received training in how to profitably extract[1] an ounce of gold from a ton of *gangue*[2]—the commercially worthless rock in which traces of valuable metals and minerals may be found.[3]

This and similar technical training in extractive metallurgy I received at CSM has proved to be an important parallel to my walk of faith with Jesus Christ. It has taught me, by analogy, to look to God for ways nuggets of truth may be effectively separated from the gangue of unprofitable information and beliefs present in this world.

My endeavor to pursue truth is based in part on these few words penned by the Apostle Paul:

> *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good*. (Thessalonians 5:21)

My inspiration for seeking truth is, above all, my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In His descriptions of the kingdom of heaven, He has revealed eternal riches of truth held in store for those who love Him.[4] Jesus' parables in particular reveal the pattern for obtaining these riches of His kingdom by highlighting the importance of seeking them with singleness of purpose.[5]

> *Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single to the glory of God, thy whole body shall be full of light.* (Matthew 6:19-22)
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> *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field. And when a man hath found a treasure which is hid, he secureth it, and, straightway, for joy thereof, goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.* (Matthew 13:46)
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> *And again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.* (Matthew 13:47)

These are but a few examples of Jesus' instructions preserved in scripture that show us how our Lord actively and strategically uses His creation[6] to teach us about the truth and preeminence of His everlasting kingdom and how to obtain it. Paul summed up this understanding as follows:

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[1] One example is described here: https://www.911metallurgist.com/blog/how-to-use-mercury-to-recover-gold
[2] For a cleaner and safer alternative to traditional approaches, see doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2012.03.022
[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gangue and Gangue - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics
[4] I Corinthians 2:9-16 with Isaiah 64:4,5 & Moroni 7:18-26; see also Proverbs 25:2 with I Corinthians 2:9-16
[5] Matthew 6:36-39 & III Nephi 6:8-12
[6] cf. John 1:3, Colossians 1:16,17 & Hebrews 1:1-4 with Isaiah 40:28, 41:20, 42:5, 43:1-28, 45:1-25, etc.

For God hath revealed unto them the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, which are clearly seen; things which are not seen being understood by the things that are made, through his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Romans 1:20,21)

From this passage I have also learned that my aim to "*prove all things; hold fast that which is good*" must be to glorify the Lord of glory through obedience unto worship and thanksgiving.[7]

For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. (Hebrews 13:14,15)

By relying upon God's written words[8] and holding fast to them as *a rod of iron*—especially when *mists of darkness* engulf me and *shafts in whirlwinds* assail me—I have become encouraged, even emboldened to continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of my Lord and His salvation. Instruction Helaman gave to his sons has been very helpful to me in my quest to mine for the gold of God's truth that is obscured by the gangue of this world.[9]

Thus we may see that the Lord is merciful unto all who will, in the sincerity of their hearts, call upon His holy name. Yea, thus we see that the gate of heaven is open unto all, even to those who will believe on the name of Jesus Christ, which is the Son of God. Yea, we see that whosoever will lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery—which is prepared to engulf the wicked—and land their souls, yea, their immortal souls, at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven, to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and with Jacob and with all our holy fathers to go no more out. (Helaman 2:25,26)

And remember also the words which Amulek spake unto Zeezrom in the City of Ammonihah; For he said unto him that the Lord surely should come to redeem His people; But that He should not come to redeem them in their sins, but to redeem them from their sins; And He hath power given unto Him from the Father to redeem them from their sins because of repentance; Therefore, He hath sent His angels to declare the tidings of the conditions of repentance, which bringeth unto the power of the Redeemer, unto the salvation of their souls. And now my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the Rock of our Redeemer, which is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the Rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men buildeth, they cannot fall. (Helaman 2:72-75)

All Have Sinned and Come Short

In mining for truth, I have also become convinced of the truthfulness and certainty of scriptures that declare all people, including me, have sinned and come short of the glory of God, beginning with our first parent.[10]

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

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[7] cf. John 4:24-26 with Matthew 6:5-15 & D&C 59:5a,b
[8] II Timothy 3:16,17, II Peter 1:19 & Revelation 1:3 with John 14:25,26, John 16:13-15 & D&C 16:1b-1d
[9] I Nephi 3:68 & I Nephi 4:38-40 with John 1:14-16, John 17:1-3, Helaman 2:26,72-75 & Moroni 10:27-30
[10] Romans 3:23, Romans 5:12 & Galatians 3:22 with John 3:14-19, I John 1:1-27 & I John 2:1,2

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. (Romans 5:12)

The cross of Jesus Christ has declared this truth resoundingly from the foundation of the world.[11] Equally important, the cross continues to shout aloud the message that we must therefore not place our trust in the arm of flesh, but in the living God and His abiding Spirit of truth, the Comforter.[12] For Jesus has said, it is the Spirit of truth who is to lead us into all truth.

These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:25,26)

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you. (John 16:13-15)

Not only have I discovered sins and mistakes of others in my mining for truth, but my own sins and mistakes have also become plainly evident to me. Many of these have resulted from my mistaking lies and deceptions for truth. So, my continuing prayer is that I can discard all such gangue—all such worthless information and beliefs—from my life. Doing so is possible, I believe, because lies and deception do not endure probing as does the gold of God's truth in Christ. Instead, they flake, powder, and crumble like fool's gold when tested.[13]

Because everyone has sinned and come short of God's glory, I have also learned how it is not news to hear about the sins of others. Neither is it justifiable to cast off other people and their works based on their sins and mistakes. Consider the book of Psalms. Can anyone justly reject or discard this precious book of scripture because of the evil David did to another man and his wife?[14] Jesus did not.[15] Neither should we.[16] If we did, no person's testimony could remain.

Jesus knew David's sins better than anyone.[17] Yet He decidedly came into the world through the line of David and bore and atoned for his sin in bearing and atoning for the sins of the whole world.[18] In fact, Jesus came as our Redeemer Lord precisely for this reason. He came because David and everyone else who has been born into this world (besides Jesus) stands in need of His intercession and advocacy.[19] This includes every prophet and apostle the Lord has called over time to bring the light of His gospel to the inhabitants of this world. For, of truth, all have sinned and come short of His glory.

The Lord God of heaven and earth is not a respecter of persons; all flesh is alike to Him.[20] He nevertheless favors the righteous, that is, those who live by faith unto loving Him and their

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[11] Genesis 7:54 with Revelation 13:8b; cf. Hebrews 2:9-18 with I Corinthians 15:21-58 & Colossians 2:13-15
[12] II Nephi 12:37-39, II Nephi 3:61-66 & Jeremiah 17:5 with John 14:1-27, John 15:1-8 & John 16:12-15
[13] e.g. https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/what-fools-gold
[14] II Samuel 11:1-27 & II Samuel 12:1-24 with Psalm 51:1-19
[15] e.g. https://openthebible.org/article/jesus-quotes-old-testament-book-most/
[16] Matthew 7:1-9 with John 7:24, James 2:13 & Ephesians 4:29-32; cf. Moroni 7:12-18 with Moroni 7:49-53
[17] Psalm 51:5 & Genesis 38:1-30 with John 2:24,25 & Ephesians 2:1-3; cf. II Nephi 7:5-11 with Jacob 3:19-31
[18] Matthew 1:1,3, Matthew 9:33, etc. with Revelation 5:5
[19] cf. John 3:14-17 & Hebrews 7:23,24 with II Nephi 6:10-105 & Hebrews 10:1-18; cf. Ether 5:28,28 with II Corinthians 12:6-10
[20] Acts 10:34 with Proverbs 24:23; II Nephi 11:95-115 with Galatians 3:27-29 & Colossians 3:9-15

neighbors as themselves.[21] Therefore, we all must come down in the depths of humility, having a meek and contrite heart, to be received into the body of Jesus Christ (His church) so we might enter the everlasting kingdom of God.[22] Otherwise, we must go to our own places outside the kingdom of heaven.[23]

> *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.* (I Peter 1:18-25)

> *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.* (I John 1:5-10)

> *Wherefore, if a man have faith, he must needs have hope; For without faith, there cannot be any hope. And again, behold, I say unto you that he cannot 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 forever; 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)

My Sheep Know My Voice

In mining for truth, I have also learned of my great need to call upon the Lord to keep myself from being misled by the sin nature of mankind and the cunning wiles of the devil. In fact, I have found that extracting eternal truths from the gangue of lies and deception present in the world—like jewels embedded in sin—requires the personal guidance of Jesus Christ as the

[21] Micah 6:8,9 & Luke 10:18 with I Peter 1:18-25 & Romans 1:17, Hebrews 10:38 & Acts 24:15; I Nephi 5:121,122 with II Nephi 13:29-32
[22] Moroni 6:2-9 with I John 1:5-10
[23] cf. Acts 1:24,25 with Jacob 4:4

Good Shepherd. For He is the Bishop of our souls, and we are His purchased possession.[24]

> *I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. And the shepherd is not as a hireling, whose own the sheep are not, who seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth the sheep and scattereth them. For I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. But he who is a hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.* (John 10:11-13)

> *What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.* (I Corinthians 6:19,20)

When people claim to be led by the Holy Ghost, none of us can know for sure if any or all of their words or claims are true or complete unless we ourselves are being led by our Lord through His Spirit of truth.[25] Consequently, I have come to see how the motivation I receive from Jesus Christ to continue seeking for truth must remain centered in His saying that His true followers know His voice.

> *… he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers.* (John 10:2-5)

> *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.* (John 10:27,28)

Even when I have encountered a gangue-load of lies, fraud, disinformation, deception, errant doctrine, etc., I have found my Lord's voice sounding clearly through it all. This is especially true when He is in all my thoughts and if I do not *regard* iniquity (wickedness) in my heart.

> *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God; God is not in all his thoughts.* (Psalm 10:4)

> *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me; But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.* (Psalm 66:18-20)

Like a candle whose light pierces cleanly through the darkness, the light of my Lord's voice has and continues to fill my soul with clarity and joy. Therefore, in the light of His Spirit, I have sought to know the voice of Jesus Christ by studying His words preserved in scripture.[26] Instead of being overwhelmed by the tremendous burden of worldly gangue, I have chosen to mine for the truth He assures me is present within the witness and works of others, like King David.

Equally important, I call to remembrance that only Jesus will not fail me or let me down. Since everyone else in this world has or will come short of the glory of God, mining for truth requires focusing on receiving and continuing in the light of Christ's words. Here are a few quotes I am often reminded of as I pray to discern what is true in the teachings and beliefs of others:

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[24] I Peter 2:25 & I Corinthians 6:19,20 with Hebrews 13:20,21; II Nephi 6:81-85 & John 10:1-42
[25] John 16:13-15 & Romans 8:1-14 with John 14:15-18 & John 14:25,26
[26] Moroni 7:12-18 with II Timothy 3:15-17 & II Peter 1:13-21

… 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 the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (Romans 8:6-9)

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. (I Corinthians 2:14-16)

Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. (James 3:13-18)

We have therefore a more sure knowledge of the word of prophecy, to which word of prophecy ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scriptures is given of any private will of man. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (II Peter 1:19-21)

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now it is already in the world. (I John 4:1-3)

These and other scriptures like them describe for me just how important it is to honestly rely upon divine help and guidance in discerning truth and how easy it is to be deceived when we stray from the written word of the Lord. Unless we come to rely solely on *the pillar and ground of the truth*, we will drift and eventually fall away from all truth.

The pillar and ground of the truth is, (and without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness,) God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (I Timothy 3:16)

Take heed therefore how ye hear; for whosoever receiveth, to him shall be given; and whosoever receiveth not from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have. (Luke 8:18)

Retinal Disparity

When seeking to confirm the truth of a matter, my thoughts often go back to my first sermon, which I gave in the spring of 1975 in Cañon City, Colorado. In that message, I spoke about retinal disparity[27] to illustrate the importance of drawing on multiple witnesses to establish the truth of a given matter.[28]

[27] https://www.merriam-webster.com/medical/retinal%20disparity
[28] Matthew 18:16 with II Corinthians 13:1

What is retinal disparity? It has to do with how each of our eyes receives a different view of our surroundings due to their slight difference in positions. Since our eyes do not have the same vantage point at any given instant, our brains simultaneously see two slightly different points of view when we look at an object. Although slight, this angular difference is sufficient to give a sense of depth to our vision and, thereby, a 3-D view of the world about us.

The scriptures are like this. Just as retinal disparity gives us visual depth perception, having multiple records of the gospel gives us spiritual depth perception. Through study, I have come to see the first four books of the New Testament as paintings[29] of the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. These four authors, like painters, have captured for us many unique aspects and perspectives of Jesus' life and work, thereby giving us meaningful depth of understanding about the gospel of His kingdom.

It is my understanding that, as a tax collector, Matthew was accustomed to keeping detailed records. In his careful way of accounting, he went on to capture exquisite details about his Master, beginning with Jesus' genealogy and covering many of His detailed lessons of His kingdom. Mark was youthful and appears to have focused on the miraculous nature of Jesus' ministry. Luke was a physician who was converted by the gospel of Christ when seeking out and recording many eyewitness accounts of Jesus. John provides us with the identity of God's Word and how He was made flesh to dwell among us. Taken together, these accounts give great depth of understanding of Jesus Christ and His redeeming work among mankind.

In my own writing, I have often been led to combine and contrast passages from these scriptures to sketch out a particular theme for a study letter or article. Just as an artist may use sketch lines to frame the elements of his or her painting, combinations of scriptures provide me with reference lines from which to flesh out the text of a message. Here is how I described this approach to writing in the preface to my 1993 booklet titled *Reflections on "As we forgive."*[30]

> As a draftsman uses construction lines in developing a drawing, so have I felt led to use the scriptural references noted throughout this booklet in "constructing" the body of the text. The references in parentheses are included for the interested reader. You, the reader, are encouraged to consult your own Bible regarding the references made and the scriptures quoted. And as it is written, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God..." (James 1:5); He is the Engineer.

Many times, when I write on faith and the gospel of Jesus Christ, I am led to include footnotes or endnotes starting with "cf." This abbreviation typically means "consider" or "compare" the scripture references cited with each other and with the text to which they refer. Contrasting different references in this way forms an outline that is intended to draw attention to the depth of a topic and point out further avenues of study for those who may be inclined to pursue them.

The Book of Mormon especially has added greatly to my depth perception of God's words and covenants.[31] I have found that when combined with Bible passages, this sacred text gives me marvelous understandings of the Lord and His creation by giving me spiritual retinal disparity for

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[29] I heard this description in a documentary on the gospel and found it helps me better appreciate the various accounts of Jesus.
[30] https://www.hisworkmanship.net/index_files/Books/AsWeForgive0405reformatorig.pdf
[31] cf. John 17:17 with John 1:14-16 & John 14:6

seeing God's word in depth.[32] I am convinced the Bible and Book of Mormon are records of the two sticks spoken of in Ezekiel 37 (one for Joseph and one for Judah) and are thus one instrument in the hand of the Lord for honoring and completing all His covenant promises.[33] In fact, I often hear in my soul as I write, "…*they shall become one in thine hand.*"[34] This is one way I know it is the Lord who is teaching me His words because He is the One who holds both sticks in His hand.

> *Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins shall write, and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins—and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah—shall grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of My covenants, saith the Lord.* (II Nephi 2:19-23)

As a final note to this section, by presenting combinations of scriptures in my writings, I am not necessarily trying to prove a particular point. Rather, I am inviting readers into further thought and study about the depth and riches of God's words from which they can prove the efficacy of His Word in their lives for themselves.

Dreams and Visions

A major part of mining for truth is discerning the source and meaning of dreams and visions. In the scriptures we read of many prophetic dreams and visions that are parables or allegories. For instance, the Book of Revelation is filled with imagery of things like candlesticks, lamps, beasts, bowls, different kinds of angels and judgments, etc. In certain instances, such items represent things such as people, places, times, and events, some of which are tied to imagery found in prophecies of old, such as those given by Ezekiel and others.

Prophets like Joseph, the son of Jacob (Israel),[35] and Daniel[36] understood the parable nature of dreams and visions. More importantly, they understood how only God can provide the true meaning and purpose of all such spiritual gifts.[37] Therefore, they also knew to call upon the Lord to receive the correct interpretation of the dreams and visions made known to them.

Sadly, I have met people who suppose they know how to interpret dreams and visions without the necessity of calling on the Lord. Some are overly simplistic in interpreting them in that they simply ignore the parable nature of dreams and visions. Others claim they have a special gift to interpret dreams, one that is automatic, giving them the ability to instantly know the meanings and purposes of all such things. Instead of calling on the Lord like Joseph and Daniel did, they listen to any spirit who offers them an interpretation.[38] Such individuals simply do not have the integrity of Joseph and Daniel and, therefore, should not be relied upon for understanding or wisdom.

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[32] Ezekiel 37:15-20 with II Nephi 2:19-23; I have been taught of the Lord that because He has said the Book of Mormon contains the fullness of the gospel (D&C 26:2), I can be assured that if some doctrine or teaching is not in this book it is not a part of His gospel.
[33] D&C 26:2a,b with I Nephi 3:157-251 & II Nephi 2:19-23
[34] See Ezekiel 37:17 with II Nephi 2:19-23
[35] Genesis 41:14-16; cf. Genesis 37:5-11 with Genesis 44:14, Genesis 45:1-28 & Genesis 48:8-11; see also II Nephi 2:1-50 with II Nephi 3:1-5
[36] Daniel 1:17 with Daniel 2:25-30
[37] Genesis 41:14-16 & Daniel 1:17
[38] cf. https://hisworkmanship.net/why-strong-delusions-part-1/

Ultimately, each of us must strive to exercise the integrity exhibited by the prophets of God in this matter, especially as the day of the Lord draws near. Why? On the positive side, the prophet Joel spoke of two outpourings of God's Spirit in which dreams and visions would be given to many people.

> *Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil … And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.* (Joel 2:23-24,28-29)

The first rain spoken of by Joel was moderate and occurred on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2. Another outpouring of the Lord's Spirit is yet to come; this *latter* rain will not be moderate like the first. We know this *latter* rain is yet to come because James called for patience in waiting for it.

> *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.* (James 5:7)

Please be sure to note here how James' call for patience was written after the day of Pentecost, which followed Jesus Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven. Simply put, the latter rain was yet in the future for James. Since this event has not as yet happened to *all flesh*, it is yet in the future for us as well.

On the negative or opposing side, Jesus and His disciples warned there would also come false Christs and false prophets in the last days who would come in the name of the Lord to deceive even the elect if possible.[39] Therefore, while we wait patiently for this latter outpouring of the Lord's Spirit, we must do so cautiously. This includes being on our guard against false dreams and visions as well as false interpretations and conclusions about God's gift of true dreams and visions.

Because dreams and visions are often parables, we must also understand an important reason why Jesus taught in parables during His ministry. Luke recorded this reason as follows:

> *And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he [Jesus] spake by a parable, saying, a sower went out to sow his seed … And when he had said these things, he cried, He who hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; **but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand**. Now the parable is this; The seed is the word of God.* (Luke 8:4-11)

Why does the Lord withhold truth from certain people? For one, it is because they do not receive the love of the truth. Instead, they have pleasure in unrighteousness.

> *Yea, the Lord, even Jesus, whose coming is not until after there cometh a falling away, by the working of Satan with all power, and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of*

[39] Matthew 24:9,23, II Peter 2:1, II Timothy 3:13, II John 1:7, etc. with Matthew 7:31-37

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. (II Thessalonians 2:9-12)

Interpretations of dreams and visions, like parables, are made available through the Spirit of truth to all who follow Jesus and ask in meekness and humility (as a child) for understanding so they may walk more closely with Him.[40] Conversely, those who do not call upon God in meekness and love for truth will remain without a true understanding of these gifts and their meaning.

As recorded in the scriptures, many dreams and visions have been given to expressly try the faith of specific individuals or people. One of the Lord's purposes in trying people's faith is to separate the unbelieving from those who truly believe Him and are willing to act based on His words. Take, for example, Luke's report quoted above in which we read of how Jesus, when teaching the parable of the Sower, cried out "*He who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*" John recorded similar words of the Lord when He called upon the seven churches in Asia. Two examples are:

Revelation 2:7 – *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

Revelation 3:20 – *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

Here again we see how the Lord spoke in parables for the same intent as noted before: to speak to those who have ears to hear and hearts to understand His words of truth. In speaking in dreams and visions, His purposes are the same, to lead us to ask, seek, and knock.[41] He also speaks in such a way as to try our faith. For people who hear Him, His parables serve to increase their faith while others are left to wonder and speculate about their meaning. Hence, the admonition is given to prove all things and hold fast to what is good and true. We must do so by faith in God's word.

Like parables, dreams and visions teach lessons and principles that lead us to exercise faith in Jesus Christ. They may be prophetic for the near term, or they may be for future times and generations. For example, John was told to write a vision he received for the seven churches because it was for that very time.[42] Daniel, on the other hand, was told to seal up the interpretation of a vision he was given because the time for it was not until the end.[43]

In every case, the timing of such manifestations of the Lord's Spirit and the timing in which they are to be fulfilled are our heavenly Father's to decide and manage. As in the Book of Revelation, they are meant to provide insights and instruction regarding past, present, and/or future events for those who have ears to hear. They are also given as warnings of pending judgments and to provide instruction and encouragement to the faithful in trying times.

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[40] Moroni 7:53 with John 14:15-26
[41] Matthew 7:12,13, Luke 11:10,11 & III Nephi 6,19.20 with Mormon 4:84
[42] Revelation 22:10
[43] Daniel 12:4,9

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life

Being effective at mining for truth requires greatly valuing all that is true—not just some element of truth we prefer or may be content with at any given moment. Valuing the truth in a sentimental way or as some type of collector of facts (as artifacts) will not do either. No! We must have a deep and an abiding love for all truth.[44] That is, we must have a deep and abiding love for Jesus Christ because, as the Word of God, He is *the truth*, even the sanctifying word of truth spoken by His heavenly Father.[45]

> *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* (John 14:6)
>
> *Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.* (John 17:17)
>
> *And the same word [Jesus Christ] was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bear witness of him, and cried, saying, This is he of whom I spake; He who cometh after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me. For in the beginning was the Word, even the Son, who is made flesh, and sent unto us by the will of the Father. And as many as believe on his name shall receive of his fullness. And of his fullness have all we received, even immortality and eternal life, through his grace.* (John 1:14-16)
>
> *Brethren, this is the testimony which we give of that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* (I John 1:1-3)
>
> *For in him [Jesus Christ] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power…* (Colossians 2:9,10)

To love Jesus is to love all His words. According to Him, *they are spirit, and they are life.*

> *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. … If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* (John 14:21-23)
>
> *It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* (John 6:63)
>
> *Wherefore, I said unto you: Feast upon the words of Christ, for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.* (II Nephi 14:4)

Like the Psalmist, we must hide the word of the Lord in our hearts—not temporarily, but permanently—so we might not sin against Him.

> *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.* (Psalms 119:11)

How exactly do we hide God's word in our hearts? We receive Jesus Christ as God's Word into

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[44] cf. "The Epitome of Faith" RLDS Church History, Vol 2, Ch 25, pg 570
[45] Hebrews 1:1-4 with John 1:1-10 & Colossians 1:9-20

our hearts by faith.[46] When we do, the Father fills our hearts with the love of Christ until we are filled with the fullness of His light and truth—not in part or in fragments, but in full.[47]

> *For this caused I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.* (Ephesians 3:14-19)

> *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* (Romans 5:5)

Briefly comprehended, God is in His Word, Christ Jesus, reconciling the world unto Himself.

> *Therefore if any man live in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and receiveth all the things of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation*. (II Corinthians 5:17-19; see also Hebrews 13:20,21)

> *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 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 the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, though the body shall die because of sin, yet the Spirit is life, because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, unto sin, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live unto Christ. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* (Romans 8:1-14)

Why exactly is it written in the scriptures that Jesus Christ is to dwell in us by faith? Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, who is Jesus Christ.

> *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* (Romans 10:16)

Our Lord's true followers know Him as the Good Shepherd, and they follow Him by listening to His voice—the *still, small voice* of the Holy Ghost dwelling within their hearts.[48]

> *... He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. … To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his*

[46] John 14:15-26 with Hebrews 10:38
[47] cf. John 1:16 & John 3:36 with D&C 85:85:6c,6d; cf. D&C 76:5g with D&C 76:6f
[48] e.g. I Kings 19:11-13; cf. I Nephi 5:145-147 with II Nephi 14:1-14; cf. D&C 8:1 with D&C 131:1c

voice. … Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheepfold. … I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. … I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. … For I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. … My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. (John 10:2-4,7,9,11,13,27-28)

Those who do not receive Jesus Christ and follow Him have neither His word nor the love of God residing within them.[49] Simply put, they are not His sheep. Therefore, we must love Jesus Christ as the Word of life as if our very lives depend upon Him completely, now and forever, because we do indeed depend upon Him for all things.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. (Colossians 1:14-17)

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience; In the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them. (Colossians 3:1-7)

In fine, to live by faith is to live by God's very Word (Jesus Christ) dwelling within us such that we can hear His voice, His words. Working within us, God strengthens our reliance on His words of faith through various trials; then He tests His work within us by the same Word. This process is meant to refine our faith as fine gold.

I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. (Isaiah 13:12)

And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. (Malachi 3:3)

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. (Philippians 2:12-16)

As these last few verses point out, the work of refinement is the Lord's, but we must be willing to cooperate with Him until His work of faith becomes complete within us.[50] And if His work is to be effectual in us, we must be willing to submit to whatsoever He sees fit to *inflict* upon us.[51]

[49] Romans 8:5-9 with Hebrews 12:6-8
[50] Hebrews 12:1-3 & Colossians 3:8-16 with Moroni 10:27-30
[51] cf. Mosiah 1:119,120 with Mosiah 11:64,65

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ; Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the object of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. (I Peter 1:3-9)

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (I Peter 4:12,13)

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption; whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; ***if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together****. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be named with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* (Romans 8:15-18)

In direct opposition to the work of faith wrought within us and upon us by the Holy Ghost,[52] Satan seeks to corrupt and oppose our faith by causing us to doubt the words of Jesus Christ. The reason Satan acts in opposition to our Lord's work within us is because there is no truth in him.

Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me; for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even ***because ye cannot bear my word****. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning,* ***and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him****. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.* (John 8:42-44)

And because there is no truth in Satan, he does not know the mind of God.

And Satan put it into the heart of the serpent, for he had drawn away many after him; and he sought also to beguile Eve, for he knew not the mind of God; wherefore, he sought to destroy the world. (Genesis 3:7)

Therefore, everyone who does not receive the love of the truth through the Spirit of truth residing in them will remain unsaved with Satan in an everlasting state that is absent of all truth.

Yea, the Lord, even Jesus, whose coming is not until after there cometh 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****.* (II Thessalonians 2:9-12)

My aim in writing this study is to encourage others to love Jesus as the Word of truth so they might live by the true faith of the gospel which works by love.[53] In hiding Him as God's Word in our hearts by faith, we have the promise that God will fill us with His love of the truth in His everlasting kingdom.

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[52] cf. Philippians 1:4-6 with https://hisworkmanship.net/Jesus-Christ/#The_Ability_of_Jesus_Christ
[53] Galatians 5:6 with Moroni 7:49-53

Think on These Things

In closing, mining for the gold of truth by faith requires careful sifting through the gangue of lies and deceptions we face in this world and within the church. Without all of us taking great care in studying God's written words and relying on His Spirit to lead us into all truth, truth can become discarded while worthless rubble is retained. Having the heart of a miner for truth requires a keen desire to think about things which are true, not just for a time, but routinely to the end of our lives on earth. Here is some encouragement to do so by the Apostle Paul.

> *Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be afflicted for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just; whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.* (Philippians 4:4-9)

A beautiful hymn that has greatly encouraged me in mining for truth has been "*Look for the Beautiful, Look for the True*" by F. E. Belden.

Look for the beautiful, look for the true;
Sunshine and shadow are all around you.
Looking at evil we grope in the night,
Looking at Jesus we walk in the light;
Look for the beautiful, honor the right.

Think of the beautiful, think of the true;
Thoughts like an avalanche sweep over you.
Keep not the multitude, sort them with care,
Testing by purity, purging by prayer;
Think of the beautiful, think of the fair.

Talk of the beautiful, talk of the true;
Tongues full of poison are whispering to you.
Answer them not with a tale-bearing word,
Only in blessing the voice should be heard;
Talk of the beautiful, talk of thy Lord.

Live for the beautiful, love for the true,
Lifting the fallen as Christ lifted you.
Search for the jewels imbedded in sin;
Bring them to Jesus, his blood washes clean;
Live for the beautiful, keep love within.

My prayer is that everyone may come to know the joy of believing in Jesus Christ as the Word of Life. May you who read this study letter receive courage from His words of truth in your walk of faith with Him. To Him be all honor and glory forever.

> *But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.* (Jude 1:17-21)

> *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen*. (Hebrews 13:20,21)