



THE

# Gospel of Jesus Christ

## A REFUGE AND PROTECTION

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**T**he Lord wants to protect His people.

During a time of great persecution in the Church, He stressed the importance of gathering to Zion “for a *defense*, and for a *refuge* from the storm” (D&C 115:6; emphasis added).

This refuge and protection is found by living the gospel of Jesus Christ as we “search these commandments” (D&C 1:37). Therefore, let us examine some principles found in the Doctrine and Covenants that, *if understood and lived,*

will bring us protection and will be a refuge against the temptations, evil, and other dangers that we face today.

### **We Are Protected as We Seek the Holy Ghost**

Having the Holy Ghost with us can be a refuge and a protection from the world. The Lord promised that if Oliver Cowdery would “apply unto” the gift of revelation, “it shall deliver you out of the hands of your enemies, when, if it were not so, they would slay you and bring your soul to destruction” (D&C 8:4). Observe that by the voice of the Spirit, Oliver Cowdery could be protected from death and from sin.

Receiving the truth through the power of the Holy Ghost

will also protect us against the precepts of men and the lies and deceptions of Satan. The Lord promised that “they that are wise and have received the truth, and *have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide*, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day” (D&C 45:57; emphasis added). The power of the Holy Ghost writes the truth in our hearts and protects us from deception.

But heeding the promptings of the Spirit doesn’t mean that we will be protected from every trial. Section 122 of the Doctrine and Covenants shows that even when worthy, we can face sorrows and challenges. In the view

and wisdom of God, who “knoweth all these things” (D&C 127:2), “all these things shall give [us] experience, and shall be for [our] good” (D&C 122:7).

### **We Are Protected as We Follow Living Prophets**

On the day the Church was organized, the Lord commanded His Saints to listen to the prophet:

“Thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;

“For his [the Church President’s] word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith.

“For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name’s glory” (D&C 21:4–6).

The Lord tells us in the Doctrine and Covenants that “they who will not hear the

voice of the Lord, neither the voice of his servants, neither give heed to the *words of the prophets and apostles*, shall be cut off from among the people” (D&C 1:14; emphasis added).

Listening to and applying the teachings of the living prophets will bring protection and security, for they speak of our current problems and tell us what we need to do to overcome these challenges. What a wonderful blessing it is to have living oracles of the Lord.

In Doctrine and Covenants 101:43–62, the Lord uses a parable about an olive vineyard to demonstrate the importance of listening to a living prophet. The parable compares the prophet to a watchman on a tower. In ancient times people built towers where a watchman could see beyond the city and warn the people when the enemy was approaching.

The parable begins: “Build a tower, that one may overlook the land round about, to be a watchman upon the tower, that mine olive trees may not be broken down when the

*The teachings in the Doctrine and Covenants can protect us from the difficulties we will face as we prepare for the Lord’s Second Coming.*

enemy shall come to spoil and take upon themselves the fruit of my vineyard” (verse 45; emphasis added).

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about the protection and blessings that come from following the counsel of a living prophet: “It is no small thing, my brothers and sisters, to have a prophet of God in our midst. . . . When we hear the counsel of the Lord expressed through the words of the President of the Church, our response should be

positive and prompt. History has shown that there is safety, peace, prosperity, and happiness in responding to prophetic counsel.”<sup>1</sup>

More important than the physical protection that comes from listening to the prophets is the spiritual protection. It is sorely needed, for “Satan hath sought to deceive you, that he might overthrow you” (D&C 50:3). Listening to the prophets protects us from the philosophies of the world and “the subtle craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (D&C 123:12).

### **We Are Protected as We Are Faithful in Marriage**

The Lord promises us that the new and everlasting covenant of marriage can be eternal (see D&C 132:19). This doctrine of exaltation is a refuge from the relationship falsehoods that plague our world. Although many worldly voices claim that marriage is old-fashioned, inconvenient, or unnecessary, the voice of the Lord declares, “Whoso forbiddeth to marry

is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man” (D&C 49:15).

The Lord teaches us how to protect our marriages: “Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else” (D&C 42:22).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) explained the all-encompassing nature of this commandment:

“When the Lord says *all* thy heart, it allows for no sharing nor dividing nor depriving. And, to the woman it is paraphrased: ‘Thou shalt love thy husband with *all* thy heart and shalt cleave unto him and none else.’

“The words *none else* eliminate everyone and everything. The spouse then becomes preeminent in the life of the husband or wife, and neither social life nor occupational life nor political life nor any other interest nor person nor thing shall ever take precedence over the companion spouse.”<sup>2</sup>

What we see affects us greatly for good or for evil. I think that is why the Lord



warns us in the following verse: “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” (D&C 42:23; emphasis added).

To be protected from the attacks of the enemy, our eyes and hearts should be turned only to our spouse and to the Lord. We must not permit our eyes to wander or desire someone other than our spouse. We need to lock our hearts and minds to be protected from that temptation. This is the Lord’s recipe for success in marriage.

### **We Are Protected as We Serve a Mission**

We have many opportunities to serve in the Church, and the Lord “delight[s] to honor those who serve [Him]” (D&C 76:5). Great principles are taught in the Doctrine and Covenants about serving missions.

The Lord promises that “any man that shall go and preach this gospel of the kingdom, and fail not to

continue faithful in all things, shall not be weary in mind, neither darkened, neither in body, limb, nor joint; and a hair of his head shall not fall to the ground unnoticed. And they shall not go hungry, neither athirst” (D&C 84:80). Note that the Lord does not exempt us from difficulties but promises that we will be in His divine care.

He added, “I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88). If we serve Him, “it shall come to pass that power shall rest upon thee; thou shalt have great faith, and I will be with thee and go before thy face” (D&C 39:12). Those who serve missions with all their hearts have the promise that they “shall be blessed both spiritually and temporally” (D&C 14:11).

The Lord also extends this protection to the families of those who serve: “I, the Lord, give unto them a promise that I will provide for their families; and an effectual door shall be

opened for them, from henceforth” (D&C 118:3).

And faithful missionaries are promised that “your sins are forgiven you, and you shall be laden with sheaves upon your back” (D&C 31:5). This blessing is a refuge for our souls.

### **We Are Protected as We Obey the Law of Tithing**

In the Doctrine and Covenants we find the following teaching concerning tithing: “Behold, now it is called today until the coming of the Son of Man, and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people” (D&C 64:23).

I like to say that the law of tithing is contrary to mathematics because 90 will be greater than 100. As we give the Lord 10 percent of our income, He promises to “open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10; see also 3 Nephi 24:10).

To evaluate how strong our faith is, we can look at

*Like watchmen on a tower, prophets see into the distance and warn of approaching enemies.*

our attitude toward the law of tithing. Paying tithing is not a question of money; it is a matter of faith.

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, teaches us: “By our decision now to be a full-tithe payer and our steady efforts to obey, we will be strengthened in our faith and, in time, our hearts will be softened. It is that change in our hearts through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, beyond the offering of our money or goods, that makes it possible for the Lord to promise full-tithe payers protection in the last days [see D&C 64:23]. We can have confidence that we will qualify for that blessing of protection if we commit now to pay a full tithe and are steady in doing it.”<sup>3</sup>

### **We Are Protected as We Obey the Word of Wisdom**

We live in a time when our health can be threatened by many dangerous substances. The Lord, knowing what we face, taught the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1833 that “in consequence of evils and designs

which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom” (D&C 89:4).

Those who keep the Lord’s law of health have the promise that they “shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones [physical health]; and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures [intellectual and spiritual blessings]; and shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint [physical health].”

And the Lord promises safety to those who obey this law: “And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them” (D&C 89:18–21).

This promise does not mean that we will not die, because death is part of the eternal plan. But “the destroying angel, he who comes to punish the unrighteous for their sins, as he in olden time afflicted the corrupt Egyptians in their wickedness [see

Exodus 12:23, 29], shall pass by the Saints.”<sup>4</sup>

### **We Are Protected as We Stand in Holy Places**

The Lord commands us again and again to “stand in holy places” (see D&C 45:32; 87:8; 101:22). Surely our temples are holy places. President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught:

“If we realize what we are doing then the endowment will be a protection to us all our lives—a protection which a man who does not go to the temple does not have.

“I have heard my father [President Joseph F. Smith] say that in the hour of trial, in the hour of temptation, he would think of the promises, the covenants that he made in the House of the Lord, and they were a protection to him.”<sup>5</sup>

Together with temples, the chapels and classrooms of Church meetinghouses and our homes are dedicated, holy places. These places are holy if people who inhabit them are pure in heart and live the commandments of God. When we keep the

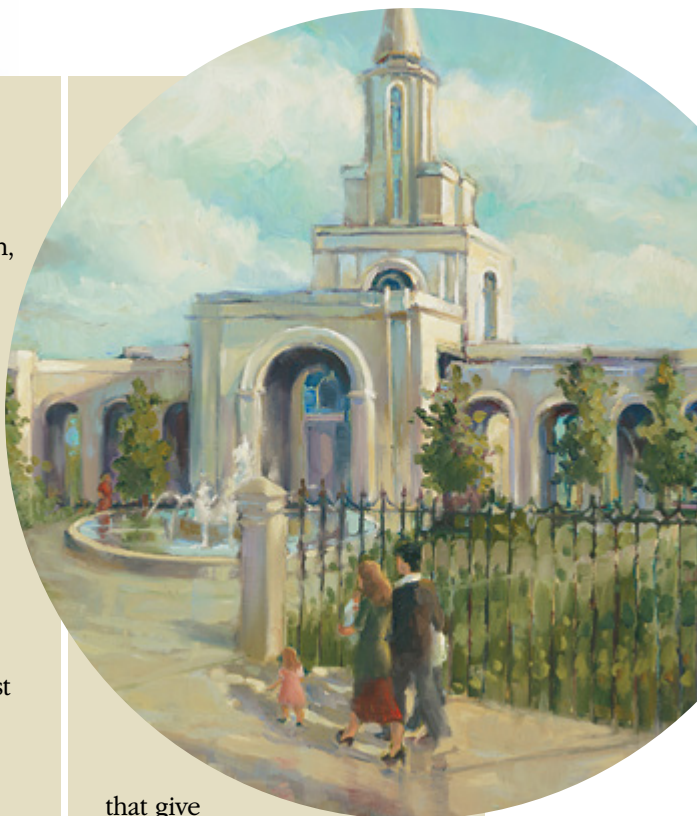
commandments, we enjoy the companionship, direction, and comfort of the Holy Ghost. If He can be our constant companion, then surely we will stand in holy places.

### **Conclusion**

We have seen in the Doctrine and Covenants various forms of protection that the gospel of Jesus Christ gives us when we seek to learn and live these principles. We may ask where to find this protection.

The Lord, showing His love and mercy to the Saints, promised He would be with us: “Be of good cheer, little children; for I am in your midst, and I have not forsaken you” (D&C 61:36). “Hearken, . . . saith the Lord your God, even Jesus Christ, your advocate, who knoweth the weakness of man and how to succor them who are tempted” (D&C 62:1).

When we apply the Atonement and teachings of our Savior Jesus Christ in our lives, we can receive the healing, protection, and refuge



that give us the strength to relieve our burdens, overcome our sins and difficulties, and make us Saints. ■

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### **NOTES**

1. M. Russell Ballard, “His Word Ye Shall Receive,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 65.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 199.
3. Henry B. Eyring, “Spiritual Preparedness: Start Early and Be Steady,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 40.
4. J. Reuben Clark Jr., in Conference Report, Oct. 1940, 17; see also *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* (Church Educational System manual, 2001), 211.
5. Joseph Fielding Smith, “The Pearl of Great Price,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, July 1930, 103; see also *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual*, 259.