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With the Power of God in Great Glory

(1 Nephi 14:14)

Honoring covenants arms us with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.

I pray that the Holy Ghost will enlighten and edify all of us as we consider together the marvelous work of salvation and exaltation in the dispensation of the fulness of times.

Moroni's First Visit to Joseph Smith

Approximately three years after the First Vision, on the night of September 21, 1823, young Joseph Smith was praying to receive a remission of his sins and to know of his state and standing before God.¹ A personage appeared at his bedside, called Joseph by name, and declared “he was a messenger sent from the presence of God . . . and that his

name was Moroni.” He explained “that God had a work for [Joseph] to do”² and then instructed him about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Significantly, the Book of Mormon was one of the first topics addressed in Moroni’s message.

The Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ and the great tool of conversion in the latter days. Our purpose in sharing the gospel is to invite all to come unto Jesus Christ,³ receive the blessings of the restored gospel, and endure to the end through faith in the Savior.⁴ Helping individuals to experience the mighty change of heart⁵ and bind themselves to the Lord through sacred covenants and ordinances are the fundamental objectives of preaching the gospel.

Moroni’s introduction of the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith initiated the work of salvation and exaltation for individuals on *this side of the veil* in the dispensation of the fulness of times.

Continuing his instruction to Joseph, Moroni next quoted from the book of Malachi in the Old Testament, with a little variation in the language used in the King James Version:

“Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

“. . . And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.”⁶

Our purpose in building temples is to make available the holy places wherein the sacred covenants and ordinances necessary for the salvation and exaltation of the human family can be administered, for both the living and the dead. Moroni’s instruction to Joseph Smith about the vital role of Elijah and priesthood authority expanded the work of salvation and exaltation on *this side of the veil* and initiated in our dispensation the work for the dead on *the other side of the veil*.

In summary, Moroni’s teachings in September of 1823 about the Book of Mormon and the mission of Elijah established the doctrinal foundation for the work of salvation and exaltation on *both sides of the veil*.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith

The lessons Joseph Smith learned from Moroni influenced every aspect of his ministry. For example, at a solemn assembly held in the Kirtland Temple on April 6, 1837, the Prophet declared, “After all that has been said, the greatest and most important duty is to preach the Gospel.”⁷

Almost precisely seven years later, on April 7, 1844, Joseph Smith delivered a sermon known today as the King Follett Discourse. He declared in that address, “The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead.”⁸



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But how can preaching the gospel and seeking after our dead both be the single greatest duty and responsibility God has placed upon us? I believe the Prophet Joseph Smith was emphasizing in both statements the fundamental truth that covenants, entered into through authoritative priesthood ordinances, can bind us to the Lord Jesus Christ and are the essential core of the work of salvation and exaltation on both sides of the veil.

Missionary and temple and family history work are complementary and interrelated aspects of one great work that focuses upon the sacred covenants and ordinances that enable us to receive the power of godliness in our lives and, ultimately, return to the presence of Heavenly Father. Thus, the two statements by the Prophet that initially may appear contradictory, in fact, highlight the focal point of this great latter-day work.

Bound to the Savior through Covenants and Ordinances

The Savior said:

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”⁹

We take the Savior’s yoke upon us as we learn about, worthily receive, and honor sacred covenants and ordinances. We are bound securely to and with the Savior as we faithfully remember and do our best to live in accordance with the obligations we have accepted. And that bond with Him is the source of spiritual strength in every season of our lives.

The Covenant People of the Lord

I invite you to consider the blessings promised to covenant-keeping disciples of Jesus Christ. For example, Nephi

“beheld the church of the Lamb of God [in the latter days], and its numbers were few, . . . the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth; and their dominions . . . were small.”¹⁰

He also “beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and *upon the covenant people of the Lord*, . . . and they were *armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory*.”¹¹

The phrase “armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory” is not simply a nice idea or an example of beautiful scriptural language. Rather, these blessings are readily evident in the lives of countless latter-day disciples of the Lord.

My assignments as a member of the Twelve take me all over the world. And I have been blessed to meet and learn memorable lessons from many of you. I testify that the

covenant people of the Lord today indeed are armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory. I have witnessed faith, courage, perspective, persistence, and joy that extend far beyond mortal capacity—and that only God could provide.

I witnessed the righteousness and power of God in great glory, received through faithfulness to covenants and ordinances, in the life of a young Church member who was partially paralyzed in a horrific automobile accident. After this individual's grueling months of recovery and adapting to a new lifestyle with restricted mobility, I met and talked with this stalwart soul. During our conversation I asked, "What has this experience helped you to learn?" The immediate response was, "I am not sad. I am not mad. And everything will be OK."

I witnessed the righteousness and power of God in great glory, received through faithfulness to covenants and ordinances, in the lives of newly baptized and confirmed members of the Church. These converts were eager to learn and serve, willing but often unsure about how to set aside old habits and strong traditions, and yet joyful to become "fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God."¹²

I witnessed the righteousness and power of God in great glory, received through faithfulness to covenants and ordinances, in the lives of a family who cared tenderly for a spouse and parent with a terminal disease. These valiant disciples described times that their family felt all alone—and times they knew the hand of the Lord was lifting and strengthening them. This family expressed sincere gratitude for the difficult mortal experiences that allow us to grow and become more like our Heavenly Father and our



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Redeemer, Jesus Christ. God succored and blessed this family with the companionship of the Holy Ghost and made their home as sacred a place of refuge as the temple.

I witnessed the righteousness and power of God in great glory, received through faithfulness to covenants and ordinances, in the life of a Church member who experienced the heartache of divorce. This sister's spiritual and emotional distress was heightened by a sense of unfairness associated with her spouse's violation of covenants and the breakup of their marriage. She wanted justice and accountability.

As this faithful woman was struggling with all that had happened to her, she studied and pondered the Savior's Atonement more intently and intensely than ever before in her life. Gradually, a deeper understanding of Christ's redemptive mission distilled upon her soul—His suffering for our sins and also for our pains, weaknesses, disappointments, and anguish. And she was inspired to ask herself a penetrating question: since the price already has been paid for those sins, would you demand that the price be paid twice? She realized that such a requirement would be neither just nor merciful.

This woman learned that binding herself to the Savior through covenants and ordinances can heal the wounds caused by another person's unrighteous exercise of moral agency and enabled her to find the capacity to forgive and receive peace, mercy, and love.

Promise and Testimony

Covenant promises and blessings are possible only because of our Savior, Jesus Christ. He invites us to look to Him,¹³ come unto Him,¹⁴ learn of Him,¹⁵ and bind ourselves to Him¹⁶ through the covenants and ordinances of His restored gospel. I testify and promise that honoring covenants arms us with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory. And I witness that the living Lord Jesus Christ is our Savior. Of these truths I joyfully testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See Joseph Smith—History 1:29.
2. Joseph Smith—History 1:33.
3. See Moroni 10:30–33.
4. See *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2019), 1.
5. See Alma 5:12–14.
6. Joseph Smith—History 1:38–39.
7. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 330; see also Joseph Smith discourse, 6 April 1837, in "Anniversary of the Church of Latter Day Saints," *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 7 (April 1837), 487; josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-6-april-1837/1.
8. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 475; see also Joseph Smith discourse, 7 April 1844, in "Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 15 (August 15, 1844), 616; josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-and-discourses-6-7-april-1844-as-published-by-times-and-seasons/14.
9. Matthew 11:29–30.
10. 1 Nephi 14:12.
11. 1 Nephi 14:14; emphasis added.
12. Ephesians 2:19.
13. See Doctrine and Covenants 6:36.
14. See 3 Nephi 12:20; Moroni 10:32–33.
15. See Matthew 11:29; Doctrine and Covenants 19:23.
16. See Doctrine and Covenants 43:9; 82:10.