

# Winning the War against Evil

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Of the Seventy

*You were entrusted to come to the earth in these last days to do again what you did before—to once again choose good over evil.*



I speak tonight to my brethren of the Aaronic Priesthood. It is my desire to help you more deeply appreciate who you are, what your purpose in life is, and how you may succeed in accomplishing that purpose.

You have come into the world at a most significant time. We are entering the final stages of a great war. This war commenced before the foundations of the world and has been pursued with awful consequence throughout the world's history. I speak of the war between the followers of Christ and all those who deny Him as their God.<sup>1</sup>

John the Revelator wrote concerning this war:

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

“And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”<sup>2</sup>

It was Satan who instigated this premortal war. He did so by rebelling against our Father's plan of salvation for His children and rejecting the Christ, who was designated to effectuate the plan. Tragically, a third of our Father's children followed Satan.<sup>3</sup> Yet two-thirds did not. You, my young friends, were among these, and with them have come to earth to pursue the Father's plan of happiness.

Unfortunately, Satan's war did not end with his expulsion from heaven. As John observed, Satan and his followers were “cast out into the earth”<sup>4</sup> and have come here with “great wrath.”<sup>5</sup> The evidence of their wrath can be seen in the blood and horror that has afflicted man from the beginning of time.

So profound and extensive have been the wounds suffered among

men that God Himself wept as He surveyed man's condition.<sup>6</sup>

We now find ourselves in the last days of this earth's temporal history. In a coming day, our Father's Son will return to the earth from which He was rejected and reclaim it as His own.<sup>7</sup> In that day, He will subdue Satan and his legions and usher in a thousand years of peace and righteousness.<sup>8</sup> In anticipation of that day, God has restored His kingdom to the earth one last time. That kingdom is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>9</sup>

While God's kingdom has been established on the earth in times past, the people to whom the kingdom was previously committed were unable to keep it. This time, however, is different. The prophetic promise is that this time God's kingdom will not be lost but will overcome the world.<sup>10</sup>

To ensure its ultimate success, the final restoration of God's kingdom has been commenced with unprecedented spiritual power<sup>11</sup> and is being sustained by that same spiritual power and something more. Reserved to come forth in these last days and labor for our Father and His Son are some of the most valiant and noble of our Father's sons and daughters. Their valiance and nobility were demonstrated in the pre-earth struggle with Satan. There, “being left to choose good or evil,” they “[chose] good” and exhibited “exceedingly great faith” and “good works.”<sup>12</sup> Such are the traits that are now needed to sustain the work of God in the earth and to save the souls of men from the intensifying wrath of the adversary.

Now, my young friends of the Aaronic Priesthood, you are these valiant and noble sons of our Father! You are the strength of the Lord's house, His warriors!<sup>13</sup> You are those who chose good over evil and who exhibited “exceedingly great faith” and “good works.” And because of your personal history, you were



entrusted to come to the earth in these last days to do again what you did before—to once again choose good over evil, exercise exceedingly great faith, and perform good works—and to do so in behalf of the kingdom of God on the earth and your fellowman!

With God's kingdom restored to the earth and your entry into the world, Satan knows that "he hath but a short time."<sup>14</sup> Therefore, Satan is marshalling every resource at his disposal to entice you into transgression. He knows that if he can draw you into transgression, he may prevent you from serving a full-time mission, marrying in the temple, and securing your future children in the faith, all of which weakens not only you but the Church. He knows that nothing can overthrow God's kingdom "save it [be] the transgression of [his] people."<sup>15</sup> Make no mistake about it—the focus of his war is now on you—you who seek to "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."<sup>16</sup>

Now, my young friends, you need to appreciate that our days now and the days that lie ahead are "perilous."<sup>17</sup>

In this regard, President Boyd K. Packer has observed:

"I know of nothing in the history of the Church or in the history of the world to compare with our present circumstances. Nothing happened in Sodom and Gomorrah which exceeds in wickedness and depravity that which surrounds us now."<sup>18</sup>

In referring to the perils of our day, I do not intend to inspire fear, but soberness. Being sober means being earnest and serious in assessing your circumstances and careful and circumspect in weighing the consequences of your actions. Soberness therefore yields good judgment, as well as measured conduct. No wonder then that prophets counsel young men to be sober.<sup>19</sup> Remember Mormon's observation that what made Helaman's 2,000 stripling warriors so effective in battle was not just their courage, strength, and trustworthiness, but their "soberness."<sup>20</sup> Mormon valued such a trait because he was blessed to possess it himself. It was Mormon who was entrusted with the sacred records of the Nephite nation at only 10 years of age because he was a "sober child" and "quick to

observe."<sup>21</sup> And it was Mormon who, at age 15, was "visited of the Lord" and "knew of the goodness of Jesus" because he was of a "sober mind."<sup>22</sup>

So, as we enter the final climactic stages of the war against Satan, be sober, my young friends. Understand that you cannot partake of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco. You cannot participate in pornography or other immoral activity. You cannot lie, cheat, or steal. You cannot use false, demeaning, or dirty language. You cannot deface your body with tattoos and other piercings. You cannot do these things and be victorious in the battle for your own soul, let alone be a valiant warrior in the great struggle for the souls of all the rest of our Father's children.<sup>23</sup>

Understand, my young friends, that there is only one way to win the war against Satan, and that is to win it in the same way it was won in the beginning. When victory was finally achieved in the War in Heaven, a loud voice was heard to declare:

"Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ. . . .

"For they [referring to Michael and



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his angels] have overcome him [referring to the devil] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; for they loved not their own lives, but kept the testimony even unto death.<sup>24</sup> Do not miss the significance of this declaration. Satan was overcome in the beginning by (1) *faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice, (2) *testimony* of Him that was steadfastly kept to the very end, and (3) *consecration* of

oneself to the Lord and His work. If this was the means for defeating him in the beginning, you can be sure that this is the one sure way to defeat him now.<sup>25</sup>

Now, you may wonder how to acquire the faith, testimony, and consecration of spirit necessary to overcome the adversary. Let me assure you that these qualities are already within you. You simply need to recover them. To that end, allow me

to make three suggestions.

First, do as young Joseph Smith did. Find a quiet place and pray to your Father in Heaven.<sup>26</sup> Do so regularly and earnestly. Prayer is a precondition to revelation. The more regular and earnest the prayer, the more frequent the revelation. When received, revelation provides the evidence or assurance of things unseen, which is the foundation of faith.<sup>27</sup>

Second, learn to hear the voice of the Lord. His is a still, small, and whisper-like voice.<sup>28</sup> It is one that is felt more than it is heard. It comes in the form of thoughts, feelings, and impressions. To hear such a voice, you must be still and quiet in your own soul, laying aside your excess laughter and light-mindedness.<sup>29</sup> While it may not seem easy to so discipline your life, hearing the precious, loving voice of the Lord will sustain you in every circumstance and is therefore worth every effort.

Third, obey the word of the Lord as it is given to you. His word will not only love and comfort but invariably instruct and correct. Do as He bids you to do, no matter how hard it may seem to you, and do it now. It is in doing the will of the Lord that knowledge of Him and love for Him accrue to your soul, which leads you to be ever more willing to lay down your own life and follow Him.<sup>30</sup>

My dear brethren of the Aaronic Priesthood, these are your days! Do not squander them! Be sober! Take “the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall . . . quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”<sup>31</sup> Then “fight the good fight of faith.”<sup>32</sup> And when you have done all, “stand”<sup>33</sup> still and “see the salvation of the Lord.”<sup>34</sup> I assure you that His salvation will come, delivering you and yours from every evil. I so testify in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. See 1 Nephi 14:10, 13 (“There are save two churches only; the one is the church of the

- Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil . . . [which] gather[s] together multitudes upon the face of all the earth . . . to fight against the Lamb of God”).
2. Revelation 12:7–9.
  3. See D&C 29:36.
  4. Revelation 12:9.
  5. Revelation 12:12.
  6. See Moses 7:29, 36–37.
  7. See Matthew 21:33–44.
  8. See D&C 88:110; Moses 7:64.
  9. See Bruce R. McConkie, “The Caravan Moves On,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 84.
  10. See Daniel 2:44–45; D&C 38:9–15; 82:24.
  11. See Joseph Smith—History 1:17–19 (the appearance of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith was the first such appearance to man since the Garden of Eden); 1:30–49 (Moroni); D&C 27:7–8, 12–13 (John the Baptist, Peter, James, and John); 110:11–16 (Moses, Elias, and Elijah); 128:19–21 (“divers angels, from Michael or Adam down to the present”).
  12. Alma 13:3.
  13. See D&C 101:55; 105:16.
  14. Revelation 12:12.
  15. Mosiah 27:13.
  16. Revelation 12:17.
  17. 2 Timothy 3:1.
  18. Boyd K. Packer, “The One Pure Defense” (address to CES religious educators, Feb. 6, 2004), 4.
  19. Alma counseled each of his sons—Helaman, Shiblon, and Corianton—to “be sober” (see Alma 37:47; 38:15; 42:31). Paul also exhorted young men to be “sober minded” (Titus 2:6). In addition, Paul counseled others to be sober, particularly bishops (see Romans 12:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:6, 8; 1 Timothy 3:2, 11; Titus 1:8; 2:2, 4, 12).
  20. See Alma 53:20–21.
  21. Mormon 1:2.
  22. Mormon 1:15.
  23. See Gordon B. Hinckley, “An Unending Conflict, a Victory Assured,” *Liabona*, June 2007, 2–7; *Ensign*, June 2007, 4–9.
  24. Joseph Smith Translation, Revelation 12:9, 11.
  25. See D&C 76:53 (those who inherit the celestial kingdom “overcome by faith”); 1 John 5:4–5 (“this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith,” and “he that overcometh the world” is “he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God”).
  26. See Joseph Smith—History 1:11–15.
  27. See Hebrews 11:1; Alma 32:21; Ether 12:6.
  28. The voice of the Spirit is described as a still, small voice of perfect mildness, as if it were a whisper. See 1 Kings 19:12; Helaman 5:30; D&C 85:6.
  29. See D&C 88:69, 121.
  30. See Matthew 16:24–25; John 7:17.
  31. Ephesians 6:16.
  32. 1 Timothy 6:12.
  33. See Malachi 3:2. “Who shall be able to stand?” (Revelation 6:17). Those who have taken the “whole armour of God” and have “done all” (Ephesians 6:13).
  34. Exodus 14:13.