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WATCHFUL UNTO PRAYER CONTINUALLY

Susan and I . . . have traveled to Africa on many assignments. . . . We have tried to observe and learn lessons from the behavior of African wildlife. . . .

Susan and I spent almost two hours watching two cheetahs stalking a large group of topis, Africa's most common and widespread antelopes. . . .

While one cheetah sat upright in the grass and did not move, the other cheetah crouched low to the ground and slowly crept closer to the unsuspecting topis. Then the cheetah that had been sitting upright disappeared in the grass at exactly the same moment that the other cheetah sat upright. This alternating pattern of one cheetah crouching low and creeping forward while the other cheetah sat upright in the grass continued for a long time. The stealthy subtlety of the strategy was intended to distract and deceive the topis and thereby divert their attention away from the approaching danger. . . .

Positioned between the large group of topis and the approaching cheetahs were several older and stronger topis standing as sentinels on termite mounds. The enhanced view of the grasslands from the small hills enabled these guardian topis to watch for signs of danger.

Then suddenly, as the cheetahs appeared to be within striking distance, the entire group of topis turned and ran away. . . .

. . . The pattern of pursuit continued. . . . [The cheetahs] were relentless in following their strategy of distraction and diversion. . . .

That night Susan and I had a memorable conversation about what we had observed and learned. . . .

LESSON #1—BEWARE OF EVIL'S BEGUILING DISGUISES

. . . Spiritually dangerous ideas and actions frequently can appear to be attractive, desirable, or pleasurable. . . . Each of us needs to beware of beguiling bad that pretends to be good. . . .

LESSON #2—STAY AWAKE AND BE ALERT

. . . Spiritual complacency and casualness make us vulnerable to the advances of the adversary. . . .


Constant vigilance is required to counteract complacency and casualness. . . .

LESSON #3—UNDERSTAND THE INTENT OF THE ENEMY . . .

Satan "is the enemy of righteousness and of those who seek to do the will of God" [Guide to the Scriptures, "Devil," scriptures. ChurchofJesusChrist.org]. . . . His only intent and sole purpose are to make the sons and daughters of God miserable like unto himself. . . .

I promise that the blessings of effective preparation and spiritual protection will flow into your life as you are watchful unto prayer vigilantly and continually.

→ See the full address at conference.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

A close-up, low-angle photograph of a cheetah walking directly towards the camera. The cheetah's face is the central focus, with its distinctive orange and black spotted fur and intense orange eyes. The background is a soft-focus savanna landscape with dry grass and trees under warm, golden light. The overall mood is one of quiet intensity and focus.

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