

# The Eye of Faith

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If we pick and choose what we accept in the proclamation, we cloud our eternal view, putting too much importance on our experience here and now.

Shortly before His Crucifixion, Jesus was taken before Pilate in the judgment hall. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Pilate condescendingly asked. Jesus responded: "My kingdom is not of this world. ... I [came] into the world, that I should bear witness [of] the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Pilate cynically asked, "What is truth?"<sup>1</sup>

In today's world, the question "What is truth?" can be painfully complex to the secular mind.

A Google search for "What is truth?" brings more than a million responses. We have more available information on our cell phones than in all the books of a brick and mortar library. We live with information and opinion overload. Enticing and alluring voices pursue us at every turn.

Caught in today's confusion, it is no wonder that so many consign themselves to the words spoken 2,500 years ago by Protagoras to the young Socrates: "What is true for you," he said, "is true for you, and what is true for me, is true for me."<sup>2</sup>

### Truth through the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ

Blessed with the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, we humbly declare that there are some things that are completely and absolutely true. These eternal truths are the same for every son and daughter of God.

The scriptures teach, "Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come."<sup>3</sup> Truth looks backward and forward, expanding the perspective of our small point in time.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."<sup>4</sup> Truth shows us the way to eternal life, and it comes only through our Savior, Jesus Christ. There is no other way.

Jesus Christ teaches us how to live, and, through His Atonement and Resurrection, He offers us forgiveness from our sins and immortality beyond the veil. This is absolutely true.

He teaches us that it does not matter if we are rich or poor, prominent or unknown, sophisticated or simple. Rather, our mortal quest is to strengthen our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to choose good over evil, and to keep His commandments. While we celebrate the innovations of science and medicine, the truths of God go far beyond these discoveries.

In opposition to the truths of eternity, there always have been counterfeits to distract God's children from the truth. The arguments of the adversary are always the same. Listen to these, voiced 2,000 years ago:

"[You] cannot know of things [you] do not see. ... [Whatever a person does is] no crime."

"[God is not blessing you, but] every [person] prosper[s] according to his [own] genius."<sup>5</sup>

"It is not reasonable that such a being as ... Christ ... [would] be the Son of God."<sup>6</sup>

"[What you believe is a foolish tradition and a] derangement of your [mind]."<sup>7</sup> Sounds like today, doesn't it?

With the Restoration of the gospel, God has given us the way to learn and know essential spiritual truths: we learn them through the holy scriptures, through our personal prayers and our own experiences, through the counsel of the living prophets and apostles, and through the guidance of the Holy Ghost, who can help us to "know the truth of all things."<sup>8</sup>

## Truth Is Spiritually Discerned

We can know the things of God as we seek them spiritually. Paul said, "The things of God knoweth no man, except he has the Spirit of God. ... [For] they are spiritually discerned."<sup>9</sup>

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Look at this art by Michael Murphy. From this perspective, you would hardly believe that it is an artistic rendition of a human eye. However, as you look at the dots from a different perspective, you see the beauty of the artist's creation.

Likewise, we see the spiritual truths of God through the perspective of an eye of faith. Paul said: "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."<sup>10</sup>

The scriptures, our prayers, our own experiences, modern prophets, and the gift of the Holy Ghost bring us the spiritual perspective of truth necessary for our journey here on earth.

# The Proclamation through the Eye of Faith

Let's look at the proclamation on the family through the eye of faith.

President Gordon B. Hinckley introduced "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" with this statement: "With so much of sophistry that is passed off as truth, with so much of deception concerning standards and values, with so much of allurements and enticement to take on the slow stain of the world, we have felt to warn [you]."<sup>11</sup>

The proclamation begins: "All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny."

These are eternal truths. You and I are not an accident of nature.

I love these words: "In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan."<sup>12</sup>

We lived before our birth. Our individual identity is stamped in us forever. In ways we don't fully understand, our spiritual growth there in the premortal world influences who we are here.<sup>13</sup> We accepted God's plan. We knew that we would experience difficulties, pain, and sorrow upon the earth.<sup>14</sup> We also knew that the Savior would come and that as we proved ourselves worthy, we would rise in the Resurrection, having "glory added upon [our] heads for ever and ever."<sup>15</sup>

The proclamation is direct: "We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan."

Our Father's plan encourages a husband and wife to bring children into the world and obligates us to speak in defense of the unborn.

## Principles of the Proclamation Are Beautifully Connected

If we pick and choose what we accept in the proclamation, we cloud our eternal view, putting too much importance on our experience here and now. By prayerfully pondering the proclamation through the eye of faith, we better understand how the principles are beautifully connected, supporting one another, revealing our Father's plan for His children.<sup>16</sup>

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Should we really be surprised when the Lord's prophets declare His will and, for some, questions remain? Of course, some reject the voice of the prophets immediately,<sup>17</sup> but others prayerfully ponder their honest questions—questions that will be settled with patience and an eye of faith. If the proclamation had been revealed in a different century, there would still have been questions, just different questions than those of today. One purpose of prophets is to help us in resolving sincere questions.<sup>18</sup>

Prior to being the President of the Church, President Russell M. Nelson said: "Prophets see ahead. They see the harrowing dangers the adversary has placed or will yet place in our path. Prophets also foresee the grand possibilities and privileges awaiting those who listen *with the intent to obey*."<sup>19</sup>

I testify to the truth and spiritual power of the united voice of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

## The World Walking Away

In my lifetime, we have seen a dramatic change in the world's beliefs about many of the principles taught in the proclamation. During my teenage and early married years, many in the world walked away from the Lord's standard we call the law of chastity, that sexual relations are to occur only between a man and a woman who are lawfully married. In my 20s and 30s, many walked away from the sacred protection of the unborn, as abortion became more acceptable. In more recent years, many have walked away from God's law that marriage is a sacred union between a man and a woman.<sup>20</sup>



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Watching many walking away from the boundaries the Lord has set reminds us of that day in Capernaum when the Savior declared His divinity and sadly “many of his disciples ... walked [away].”

The Savior then turned to the Twelve: “Will ye also go away?”

Peter answered:

“Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

“And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”<sup>21</sup>

## Not All Fit Neatly inside the Proclamation

There are so many, young and old, who are loyal and true to the gospel of Jesus Christ, even though their own current experience does not fit neatly inside the family proclamation: children whose lives have been shaken by divorce; youth whose friends mock the law of chastity; divorced women and men who have been gravely wounded by the unfaithfulness of a spouse; husbands and wives who are unable to have children; women and men who are married to a spouse who does not share their faith in the restored gospel; single women and men who, for various reasons, have been unable to marry.

One friend of nearly 20 years, whom I admire greatly, is not married because of same-sex attraction. He has remained true to his temple covenants, has expanded his creative and professional talents, and has served nobly in both the Church and the community. He recently said to me, “I can sympathize with those in my situation who choose not to keep the law of chastity in the world in which we live. But didn’t Christ ask us to be ‘not of this world’? It is clear that God’s standards are different from those of the world.”

The laws of man often move outside the boundaries set by the laws of God. For those desiring to please God, faith, patience, and diligence are surely needed.<sup>22</sup>

My wife, Kathy, and I have known a single sister, now in her mid-40s, who is gifted in her professional abilities and serves valiantly in her ward. She too has kept the laws of God. She wrote:

"I dreamed of the day I would be blessed with a husband and children. I am still waiting. At times, my situation brings feelings of being forgotten and alone, but I try to keep the focus off what I don't have and instead on what I do have and how I can help others.

"Service to my extended family, in my ward, and in the temple has helped me. I am not forgotten or alone because I am part of, and we are all part of, a larger family."

## There Is One Who Understands

Some will say, "You don't understand my situation." I may not, but I testify that there is One who does understand.<sup>23</sup> There is One who knows your burdens because of His sacrifice made in the garden and on the cross. As you seek Him and keep His commandments, I promise you that He will bless you and lift the burdens too heavy to bear alone. He will give you eternal friends and opportunities to serve. More important, He will fill you with the powerful Spirit of the Holy Ghost and shine His heavenly approval upon you. No choice, no alternative that denies the companionship of the Holy Ghost or the blessings of eternity is worthy of our consideration.

I know the Savior lives. I witness that He is the source of all truth that really matters and that He will fulfill all the blessings He has promised to those who keep His commandments. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.