

Chapter 8

PREPARATIONS FOR WAR

With the “breaking of the first seal,” came an increased vigor of preparation; not as though anything was to occur immediately, but rather that it was imminent. We had a target date for our day of “redemption” (redemption defined for us as to “feel and see”), which was May 3rd. Jeff interpreted this date from some of the symbols on the Temple doors, but it being his date of birth was probably the greater influence toward his *eisegesis*.

The second seal would require the delivery of a great sword (Revelation 6:4) to thereby arm the conqueror that the first seal had sent forth. We were a small and insignificant number of people, but with God for us, who could stand against us? Therefore, we had to become a military discipline. God would do the vast majority of the fighting for us in miraculous and earth-shattering ways. However, we were to make the stand for Him, in complete reliance to provide what we were clearly not capable of. In essence, we were preparing for war.

War is an amazing element of human behavior. Basically, it’s a struggle for dominance, yet those who do the fighting rarely receive any. Armies have sometimes been formed merely by payment for services rendered; but usually they are formed and motivated by a creed, with their actions at the time seen as authoritatively right and justified. The *Book of Mormon* is full of accounts of warfare. As we became more convinced of the destruction that lay ahead of us, both by war and by natural catastrophe, Jeff would speak of how scriptures were actually provided for that very purpose. “Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 14:4). He strongly emphasized that the *Book of Mormon* was truly the words of Christ and that the references concerning war tactics were provided that we might be prepared in all things. References to natural calamities were also provided to instruct the seer how such powers are to be called upon.

“And thus, if ye shall say unto this temple, It shall be rent in twain, it shall be done. And if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou cast down and become smooth, it shall be done. And behold, if ye shall say, God shall smite this people, it shall come to pass. And now behold, I command you that ye shall go and declare unto this people that, Thus saith the Lord God, who is Almighty, except ye repent, ye shall be smitten, even unto destruction.” (Helaman 3:121–124)

Next recorded is the manner in which Nephi accomplished these things.

“And it came to pass that in this year, Nephi did cry unto the Lord, saying, O Lord, do not suffer that this people shall be destroyed by the sword; but O Lord, rather let there be a famine in the land, to stir them up in remembrance of the Lord their God, and perhaps they will repent and turn unto thee; And so it was done, according to the words of Nephi. And there was a great famine upon the land among all the people of Nephi. And thus, in the seventy and fourth year, the famine did continue, and the work of destruction did cease by the sword, but became sore by famine. And this work of destruction did also continue in the seventy and fifth year.” (Helaman 4:4–7)

The drought of 1988 was noteworthy that year, as it caught the attention of both the media and a great number of farmers. Anyone with a Farmer’s Almanac could have prophesied the unusually dry weather conditions that summer. For us, it became an undisputable sign that we were coming into place, as the servants of God, and that times of tribulation lay ahead. Armed with the introduction of our revealed identities, we were a group with purpose—a quite benevolent one, in our minds. By that time, we were taught from the Book of Revelation only infrequently, so received only trickling issues of information about our servanthood over the seven churches. Nevertheless, we became steadily and increasingly intoxicated with our calling. The drought that year held more significance to us than unusually dry weather, and much more than merely a coincidence—it was the Commencement. To us, the drought was not only a product of the power Jeff had obtained from God, it was the beginning of a drought of another kind which would continue on in following years.

An interesting point about the passages quoted above from the book of Helaman is that an interpretation is made concerning a biblical principle. Verse 120 of chapter 3 states “whatsoever ye shall seal on earth, shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; and thus ye shall have power among this people.” The principle of binding and loosing is introduced in the New Testament book of Matthew. In chapter 16:19, we find this authoritative power bestowed upon Simon Barjona just at the time his name was changed to Peter. This was done by Jesus, whom Peter had just recognized as “the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”

Clearly, issues of miraculous power, as illustrated in New Testament chapters, are not always clear why they were revealed at those specific times. These amazing exhibitions, though truly wonderful, beautifully illustrate that we, through Jesus, have an awesome heavenly Father. But nowhere in the Bible do we find a wholesale transfer of power from God to man for the purpose of dominion over particular people. Now we fight a spiritual fight, no differently than in how we now worship in spirit. In 2 Corinthians 10:3–5 we read the following.

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exhalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

This is the type of warfare aimed toward the saving of souls that was intended along with the power to bind and to loose. It comes by way of the Holy Spirit’s revelation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and we have a voice at the right hand of the Father, through prayer. Jesus healed the sick, walked on water, caused a fig tree to wither and die, and passed through angry multitudes unharmed. He calmed stormy seas and turned water into wine. Yet at the close of these demonstrations of God’s will, miraculously active in a tangible, physical way, our Savior promised His disciples that they would do “greater works than these” (John 14:12). There’s no doubt that miraculous events occurred not only soon after the death and resurrection of Jesus, but that such blessings have continued to occur throughout the nearly two thousand years since that time. However, is there any record of events greater than those performed by Jesus? Surely, the greatest of works, the mightiest of warfare, and the most beneficial restorations would be that of a soul victoriously cleansed of all unrighteousness. We, as the body of Christ, have through prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit that intercessory capacity for the souls of men yet held captive by sin. Our warfare and our worship is “in spirit and in truth.” But this is not the perception of Christianity as offered through Mormon doctrines.

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A COMMON ELEMENT OF RELIGIOUS CULT BEHAVIOR seems to be the persuasion of members away from New Testament teaching and back into Old Testament practice, all the while, under the illusion of grace through Christ. In other words, the Old Testament contains the view of belief in God through the practice of physical ordinances and ritual. This practice was good and essential and was at no time destroyed by Christ Jesus, but rather fulfilled by him (Matthew 5:17). There’s a fine line between the fulfillment of God’s law and the utter destruction of it. The law was done away in Christ. Through our Lord, we are now able to perform our worship of God in the intended spiritual way (1 Peter 2:5). Mormon teachings do not convey that message. In the book of Hebrews 10:18 we read: “Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.” Yet the account of 2 Nephi, in the *Book of Mormon*, recounts the receiving of the Holy Ghost parallel with the instruction to build a temple and perform ordinances according to the law of Moses, all at a time period around 600 B.C.

“And we did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord, in all things, according to the law of Moses. And I, Nephi, did build a temple, and did construct it after the manner of the temple of Solomon, save it were not built of so many precious things.”
(2 Nephi 4:14, 22)

“And notwithstanding we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled; for, for this end was the law given; Wherefore, the law hath become dead unto us, and we are made alive in Christ, because of our faith.”
(2 Nephi 11:45–46)

“And now, how could ye speak with the tongue of angels, save it were by the Holy Ghost? Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. For behold, again I say unto you, that if ye will enter in by the way and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do. Behold, this is the doctrine of Christ; and there will be no more doctrine given, until after he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh.” (2 Nephi 14:3, 6, 7)

Why would God bind them to a law which was dead, yet claim they were alive in Christ? The whole concept, now, seems a little “un-kosher” when compared to Jewish law (Lev. 11). What it does is provide a very works-oriented perception of grace, all under the guise of foreseeing a future grace through Jesus, the Messiah. A quote that precedes 2 Nephi 11, very subtly presents this works-oriented view of grace. “For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, *after all we can do*” (2 Nephi 11:44). This passage confuses the grace of God with the call to service. It implies that we can *earn* grace, but by failing to perform “all we can do,” we have no salvation. This does not agree with what Paul wrote to the Ephesians 2:8–10 even under the premise that Nephi, in 600 B.C., was instructing a Christian people with all the spiritual gifts of Pentecost. This view is not harmonious with the prophetic view of Christ as conveyed by Old Testament prophets, who spoke of His coming quite differently. The Nephi account speaks of how the Nephites had already received the Holy Ghost as manifested by tongues at this early date, yet in the biblical account those who walked with Christ throughout His ministry did not receive this manifestation until fifty days after His ascension unto the Father. The Mormon doctrines would apparently have us believe that the *Book of Mormon* characters were righteous beyond anything in the biblical record while the New Testament characters were all wickedly slow. “Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them, it is because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark” (2 Nephi 14:5). This chapter is a chastisement from Nephi toward his brethren. They were simply too wicked to receive the Holy Ghost and gift of tongues by sincere and faithful belief, resident within him.

Jesus said that He did not come to condemn (John 3:17) or to be our accuser (John 5:45). If any were to find themselves in the camp of Nephi prior to

the birth of Christ, the words He would yet utter would promise their sure destruction for not speaking in tongues. Apparently, the standards for righteousness were a bit higher on this continent than they were in Palestine. And according to the *Book of Mormon*, the vast majority of Israelites who lived from the time of the exile until Christ surely all perished due to their lack of faith. This mixture of scriptural issues distorts one's interpretation of doctrinal truth.

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DESPITE JEFF'S TWISTED INTERPRETATION of 2 Timothy 2:15, it is still true that we must "rightly divide the word of truth." Doctrines such as those in the *Book of Mormon* only make the issue more complicated by integrating diverse principles. Much like the shuffling of a deck of cards, the texture of God's total plan becomes confusingly emulsified. God's word is supposed to work as a refiner's fire. It therefore stands to reason that false doctrine exists to confuse and perplex what God's word is striving to purge away and reveal. The issue of prayer within our group required a literal form of communication with God by this integration of Old Testament ritual, along with a distorted, nearly nonexistent perception of New Testament grace. In this fashion, we were taught that the words to say were recorded within the text and that the seer, by chiasmus, could reveal these words to his people. Then, whether calling upon God, or in His actual presence, the seer's people would be prepared in "all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 14:4-6).

Despite the *Book of Mormon's* claim that it is an abridged record compiled from several separate writers, some terms appear repeatedly. Through the use of chiasmus, where we dissected the context of a chapter into small terms and phrases and then integrated them back in again, the context created the division itself. And of course, Jeff was the seer with the vision of all things necessary to rightly divide the text, in revelation of God's hidden plan. A series of clichés was developed by the chiastic reading of various dissected phrases. "Wherefore," "behold," and "and it came to pass" fell into the categories which redundantly popped up in nearly every division, and as they did, they began to be used as markers to give credence to the division, confirmation that it had been properly done. Following is an example from 2 Nephi 1:79-80.

A – Wherefore

B – they stand in the presence of him

C – to be judged of him

B – according to the truth and holiness which is in him

A – Wherefore

The “wherefores” mark the statements meant to be placed opposite one another. Working inward, “they stand in the presence of him” is opposite “according to the truth and holiness which is in him.” The center point, and main emphasis of the division is “to be judged of him.” Overuse of terms such as “wherefore” or “and it came to pass,” eventually became clichés with an increasing multiplicity of definitions.

Now educated in the process for dividing, we were finally worthy to be taught the words to utter in specific situations, in accordance with our purpose and calling. Whether it was to perform a healing, level a mountain, or call upon the Lord for the purpose of redemption (to feel and see), these words had been previously recorded by our brethren and forefathers, so that by similar esoteric means we might learn them and accomplish our foreordained task. This principle, we were taught, was the interpretation to Malachi 4:6. “And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

Jeff, as another Elijah, had been designated to be the one once again declaring from the wilderness “make straight the way of the Lord.”

“Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist, and also of another which should come and restore all things, as written by the prophets.” (Matthew 17:14, *Inspired Version*; compare this verse to all other translations of Matthew 17:13)

The mention of “another which should come,” added by Joseph Smith, is quite a successful distraction in that it destroys the emphasis of how John paved the way for what Jesus restored, and turns the reader’s eyes to look to the future for an Elijah yet to come. These additions to the authorized text send the reader in search of a seer, not the Messiah, with the illusion that all things have not yet been restored. Though many may disagree, I’m quite convinced that this passage, as distorted by Joseph Smith, typifies what is spoken in 1 John 4:3, denying what Christ fulfilled by His death and His resurrection in the flesh. How can we stand strong in our salvation by a belief in our heart and a confession from our mouth (Romans 10:9), if we only glance at the glory of our risen Lord, while all along gazing for yet another? It makes my heart sick as I consider the years of anxiety I’ve experienced by believing in this doctrine. But now I’m truly “restored” by the Lord’s blessing in having finally found truth.

Our warfare was not so much spiritual as it was supernatural. These two are often difficult to distinguish. Improper interpretation of passages such as 2 Timothy 3:5 can enslave a person into feeling a desperate need for the supernatural. To Jeff, there was no other definition to the word *power* than that which is associated with tangible, supernatural activity. Yet, interestingly enough, 2 Timothy 3:1–4 spells out a very clear definition of Jeff. I must confess that I, too, was blinded to any other definition of the word *power* as it related to God.

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” (2 Timothy 3:1–4)

“Where is the power today?” was a question I asked, even before meeting Jeff. Displays of power as prophesied in the *Book of Mormon* through the choice seer seemed imminent and exceedingly necessary. But these things occur “by faith,” according to “Mormon” nearly four hundred years after Christ.

“Behold I say unto you, Nay, for it is by faith that miracles are wrought; and it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men; Wherefore if these things have ceased, woe be unto the children of man, for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain; for no man can be saved, according to the words of Christ, save they shall have faith in his name; Wherefore, if these things have ceased, then has faith ceased also; and awful is the state of man: for they are as though there had been no redemption made.” (Moroni 7:41–43)

True enough is the fact that we must have faith on the name of our blessed Lord Jesus. Likewise, faith plays a major role in the working of miracles. But according to Mormon, if such signs are not happening, then we have no redemption.

Once again, we have the coercion 3 Nephi 12:1–4, in that by not having the greater things we were all under condemnation. To whom do these angels appear, mentioned in verse 41 of the chapter quoted above?

“For behold, they are subject unto him [Christ], to minister according to the word of his command [or the command revealed in his word], showing themselves unto them of a strong faith and a firm mind, in every form of godliness.” (3 Nephi 12:1–4)

Every form of godliness became defined as we learned all things from feasting upon the words of Christ. By the translation, or transformation of becoming every form of godliness, we were to also become of strong faith and firm mind in the forms of godliness revealed through the seer. “Feast upon the words of Christ, for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 14:4). By continual study of the words of Christ we were to learn all things we should do. This would increase our faith, due to the continual witness that the words were true.

In chiasmus, passages became so ambiguous that eventually they appeared to be saying the same thing over and over. Terms like *pattern*, *manner*,

and *plainness* became synonymous with chiasmus. Therefore, the following would take on an altogether new interpretation.

“Wherefore hearken, O my people, which are of the house of Israel, and give ear unto my words: for because the words of Isaiah are not plain unto you, nevertheless, they are plain unto all those that are filled with the spirit of prophecy. But I give unto you a prophecy, according to the spirit which is in me; wherefore I shall prophesy according to the plainness which hath been with me from the time that I came out from Jerusalem with my father. For behold, my soul delighteth in plainness unto my people, that they may learn...and I know that the Jews do understand the things of the prophets, and there is none other people that understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews, like unto them, save it be that they are taught after the manner of the things of the Jews. But behold, I proceed with mine own prophecy, according to my plainness; in that which I know that no man can err.”
(2 Nephi 11:5, 8, 11)

Both the “manner of the things of the Jews,” and “the manner of plainness” became identified as chiasmus. This was a way of interpreting prophecy, which one could be taught. Once the seer’s people are taught this manner, they then cannot err. “And now my brethren, I have spoken plain, that ye can not err” (2 Nephi 11:37).

A reference from the *Doctrine and Covenants* provided a clue to the synonymous nature between plainness and pattern. Notice that in this passage, the word “language” might be chiastically confused with the pattern.

“And again, I give unto you a pattern in all things, that ye may not be deceived; for Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations; wherefore he that prayeth whose spirit is contrite, the same is accepted of me, if he obey mine ordinances. He that speaketh, whose spirit is contrite, whose language is meek, and edifieth, the same is of God, if he obey mine ordinances.” (D&C 52:4b–d)

By way of the pattern, from which we may not be deceived, we speak in truthful meekness of His language, thereby becoming knowledgeable of His ordinances and strengthened in faith to perform all things.

We had to divide the words of Christ in order to learn all things. And without the pattern, the manner of plainness, we were certain to err and become deceived, as similarly did the early apostasy that necessitated the Restored Church in the first place. Why were all churches an abomination in God’s sight? Because they did not have the manner of plainness by which to show themselves approved, spoken of in 2 Timothy 2:15. They did not have a seer to reveal all things to them, in accordance with this pattern. The pattern was identified as being the method of writing, straight from the finger of God as used in an ancient book of remembrance. “For a book of remembrance we have written among us, according to the pattern given by the finger of God; and it is given in our own language” (Genesis 6:47, *Inspired Version*). Chias-

mus was identified as the pattern of writing from which God writes by his own finger, by which His word can be divided for interpretation, no matter which language it is recorded in. In other words, the pattern was a tool to be used in one's own language. And who, of course, could reveal this pattern from the finger of God?: Another Elijah who would come with a book of remembrance. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (Malachi 3:16). While this passage is taken from the King James translation, with instruction received from the *Inspired Version* in Genesis 6, the book of remembrance, and an applied pattern, a mystical necessity for a seer is created. Bear in mind, that the return of Elijah as prophesied in Malachi 4 had been redefined away from fulfillment by John's preparation for Jesus and turned in search for another who should come (*Inspired Version*, Matthew 17:14). The other who should come would turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, by teaching them the pattern from the finger of God, thereby revealing to them their own name and identity as recorded in the book of remembrance. Jeff became this choice seer provided to us for the restoration of all things.

The Joseph Smith translation of the Bible confusingly redefines 2 Timothy 2:15. To "study to show thyself approved unto God," is performed not only by rightly dividing the word of truth, but by displays of supernatural power.

"Now Melchizedek was a man of faith, who wrought righteousness; and when a child he feared God, and stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire. And thus, having been approved of God, he was ordained an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch." (Genesis 14:26–27, *Inspired Version*)

Certain aspects of the blessings are also recorded in the book of Daniel, to be signs of approval rather than to teach us spiritual principles of God's saving grace. All this leaves one feeling as though the whole story about Daniel and the other three Israelites is missing—perhaps they were showing themselves approved by what happened to them and that we are to do likewise.

What does any of this have to do with our preparation for warfare? Warfare would be proof of our faith; without faith, it is "as though there had been no redemption made" (Moroni 7:43). In order for redemption to be complete we had to feel and see as defined by the account of the Nephites.

"And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto them, saying, Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands, and in my feet, that you may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world. And it came to pass that the multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the

nails in his hands and in his feet; And this they did do, going forth one by one, until they had all gone forth, and did see with their eyes, and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety, and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, should come.”
(3 Nephi 5:14–16)

This account turns Thomas’ doubt into an issue of necessity (John 20:25). Frankly, I am not comfortable criticizing Thomas. Perhaps it was indeed necessary for him, as one who was required to bear an express witness to the resurrection that we might have a testimony of which to look to in faith. Consider Luke 24:39. Someone had to be assured that He was flesh and bone and not a ghost. How else but through their testimony would we today be able to exercise faith in His immortal flesh? 1 John 1:1 was written from one who was able to give first hand testimony, that we, through faith, might please God (Hebrews 11:6). Either way the account is perceived, we should be thankful that by the way of the testimonies of those who were there, we have opportunity, by faith, to please God with the assurance of our hearts that our Salvation lives.

I’ve introduced a considerable amount of terms, definitions, and scripture passages. These precepts were not taught us in so swift a manner as I’ve presented them here. I’m certain the interpretations to which we slowly became accustomed may appear openly ludicrous to the reader. In fact, the manner in which I’ve just related them would be “boiling water” principles, causing even an unsuspecting frog to leap. Our speech became saturated with clichés. Each cliché kindled expansive analogies, reflected through hour upon hour of class indoctrination. This discourse has not been presented as an excuse for my actions in this group. My intention is to provoke thought and recognition of a devastating issue that is generally incomprehensible by way of rational expectations in behavior. These are more than misinterpretations and word games; they are influences that cause death. It is as old as society itself. Chiasmus became our reality and there was no reality without it. We were strangers in a strange land. With no basis or footing to compare, these interpretations and daily routines of study and chores became accepted as normal to us. Using the interpretation of the watchman parable in *Doctrine and Covenants* 96, we were to be God’s servants with the mission of retaking the lost vineyard.

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I HAVE NEVER BEEN A GUN ENTHUSIAST, but it became essential that I familiarize myself with some of the basics. Even our wives were held responsible to be familiar with the type of ammunition used in Jeff’s weapons. We would separate ammunition by bullet type and load clips accordingly, all this while blindfolded. I recall struggling with guilt. Guns were not of great interest to me, yet they were critical to our mission. Sorting bullets and loading clips was the extent of what the women were trained to do. However, the discipline of following orders was paramount. As *Book of Mormon* Israelites wandered,

they fought battles with their wives and children nearby. The book teaches that we men would literally be the only barrier between our families and the world. We were not actually to have much interaction with the world. The men, as heads-of-households, were to be the buffer between their families and outside influence.

I recall recently asking one of the former members of the group why she'd left. Shar had been a member shortly before Susie and I moved to Ohio, but left about six months after our arrival. After we were extradited to the Lake County, Ohio, jail she visited those of us who were there. I didn't know her well because I worked nights during most of the time she was there. But in my need to try to sort out all that had happened, I wanted to ask why she had left. Her discussion led me to believe she saw too much too fast. Jeff was not the buffer between her and the world, which he claimed himself to be. He was taking her paychecks with the promise that he would pay off some debts she had before coming to Ohio. Within time, the bill collectors avoided the smokescreen Jeff was providing and pursued Shar directly at work. This exposed Jeff's lies about having taken her money to pay her bills. More importantly, it exposed his failure to be the barrier between her and the world. The final straw would be his expression of sexual intentions toward her, which woke her up to the fact that Jeff was not at all what he claimed to be. I can't help but envy Shar's experience of rapid exposure. Perhaps such rapidity of the process could have awakened me. However, the past cannot be changed.

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SOME FORM OF MILITARY CHAIN OF COMMAND WAS ESTABLISHED, though not very consistently. Jeff assigned weapons in accordance with how he wanted us armed. I recall on several occasions that Jeff would divvy out an assortment of weapons with an organized chain of command, only to change it later. Little has been said about the Avery family's participation in these drills. Although peace-loving, they too, were trained in preparation for the task at hand and provided with a weapon. The media exposed that Dennis Avery had probably purchased the very gun that killed he and his family. It may have been the day I drove Jeff and Dennis to a gun shop. Jeff instructed Dennis what he was to buy. Trina Avery, at 15 years of age, was old enough to be in attendance at Jeff's classes on weaponry. Younger Karen and Becky were not. I mention this only to present a complete picture of what all of us were subjected to. I doubt we'll ever know why, aside from the fact that Satan seeks only to steal, to kill, and to destroy. My fervent hope would be that by studying the manner in which unacceptable activities evolve, their pursuit will be avoided in the future.

The summer days of 1988 flowed into one continuous and indistinguishable haze. I don't believe our military training was ever as important to Jeff as he made it out to be. It never took priority over other projects, even though

other projects, too, seemed to fall by the side. I've concluded that his projects, including the military façade, were merely ways to keep us busy, subdued, and off balance. From project to project we developed new dreams of businesses for pulling each of us out of the world's workforce and into full time employment toward God's purposes. Jeff had been quite immune from any need to work. But then he found the scripture that spoke to him. "And I will give unto him a commandment, that he shall do none other work save the work which I shall command him" (2 Nephi 2:13). Jeff's interpretation of this new finding meant that he would actually be in a state of sin to pursue any means of employment within the world. However, for the rest of us, it was expected that we do both. Looking back now, the sad fact is that we were more than willing to perform such labor. In fact, for me it was considered my "reasonable service," and I felt as though I was fulfilling God's purpose in my life. I was fervently willing to sacrifice time away from my wife and children. But now I'm faced with the memory of the foolish little robotic slave—me.

Dennis and Cheryl Avery had a dreadful time with employment. Dennis was never able to find employment of the type that he left in Missouri, which Jeff used against him. Apparently Jeff had drained them of whatever funds they had brought with them. When we moved to Ohio, the Averys were living in a very nice duplex only a few miles from the Temple. They appreciated it as a blessing that they were able to find such a place to begin with. The apartment complex where I lived had become somewhat run down and was in the process of new ownership. Where we lived was also a factor utilized by Jeff to his own convenience so when Dennis Avery ran into financial trouble and came to Jeff for help, the source of his trouble was identified as sin.

Identified as the servant over the church of Pergamos, one of the descriptive details (as earlier noted) was that the place where I dwelt was "where Satan's seat is" (Revelation 2:13). The poor condition of my neighborhood became identified as "Satan's seat." So, when the Averys were forced to move to a different location this, too, became an occurrence for scrutiny by Jeff. The three-bedroom house they moved into was nice enough, but it was a considerable distance from Jeff and the Temple. I remember how, at the time of our second visit, Jeff said that the command was to go to "the Ohio" (*D&C* 38:7b), meaning that close proximity to Kirtland was not essential. However, this changed in time, and even location of residence became an issue to be used at Jeff's discretion.

With the Avery's move labeled as an indication of sin, though unaware of it, they became outsiders. Jeff began to slander them on a regular basis. His expressions, while less than favorable towards them, even from the first time we met, were growing worse. I didn't understand these petty criticisms, since it was clear they were sincere and zealous about their service to God. I had no comprehension of the underlying agenda at work within Jeff's mind. It should have been perceived as an indication of Jeff's character, in that he seemed to have such an unnecessary and irrational dislike for them. But at the time I noticed it, I was not yet looking at Jeff as the seer. By the time he had taken

control over our thinking, I saw equally the burden that we all, in some way or another, brought with us.

Not wanting to be a burden, I began to scrutinize myself and my family for any such indications. The area of employment and income was obvious. One of the issues I find most troubling today, as an incarcerated person, is the reality of myself as a burden to the taxpayer. I'd been an asset throughout my life, both to my employer and to my country, but that is not now my situation. Pulling your own weight is a principle that I believed in then, and still do today. However, despite what Jeff promoted as a burden, by way of the Avery's financial struggle, I didn't view as an indication of sin. I had no idea Jeff had already drained thousands of dollars from them.

With Jeff's encouragement of a negative view of Dennis and Cheryl, he and Alice one day told Susie and me that they suspected Dennis of sodomizing his daughter Becky. Their story was that they had been watching the children after school, while both Dennis and Cheryl were working at minimum wage jobs that barely supported them. The only reason Jeff and Alice were available to watch the girls was that they had nothing else to do. They claimed that Becky was anorexic and also claimed to suspect sexual assault was the reason for this. Not introduced as mere suspicion, they said they noticed physical indications of this when Becky took a bath one day. They went on to say that they were trying to get Dennis and Cheryl to take their daughter to a counselor about the anorexia, in hopes that it would lead to expose what had been happening.

While I know that my own activities are beyond the comprehension of many people, there are many things in this world I naïvely have no comprehension of. The scenario introduced by Jeff and Alice that day, that a man could sexually violate his own daughter, is clearly beyond my ability to grasp. I now understand how the mind can justify and even precipitate some unnecessary and unjustified acts of war. I have myself become involved in that which I once could not have imagined possible for me. Therefore, I know that God is mighty to heal even the most horrendous of follies. I'm an extremely monogamous man, and have never been intimate with anyone other than my wife. We consummated our relationship on our wedding night. So such an accusation of sexual misconduct did not work so much to enrage me as it completely confused me by the incomprehensibility of it. Until it could be proven, it meant little to me. But the seed was planted and the sought-after effect was realized. The seed for speculation of blame had been planted. It could have been "someone else," yet the purpose behind the accusation was accomplished, in that it sought to separate the Averys from the rest of us. Suspicion is always a good tool for promoting an "us and them" mentality, and for this purpose, it was quite successful.

In an attempt to recall why the murders occurred, it dawned on me that just "perhaps" Jeff was the person responsible for the abuse, and by being the first to accuse, diverted attention away from himself. If this were true, it would also show motive for the annihilation of the Averys. However, by the

time the bodies of the Avery family were discovered, there was no way to tell whether or not any of the girls had been abused.

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THE PROCESS OF PRAYER, as we perceived it, was the desire in our hearts that spoke to God in ways that no tongue could ever utter.

“And it came to pass, that when Jesus had thus prayed unto the Father, he came unto his disciples, and behold, they did still continue, without ceasing, to pray unto him; and they did not multiply many words, for it was given unto them what they should pray, and they were filled with desire.”

(3 Nephi 9:24)

The emphasis was that desire was the real source of communication, and that the words they used were few. Jeff became bold, eventually to say, “I will give you two words to think about and ponder upon. When I think you are ready, then I’ll give you three words.” The words were to be continually thought upon chiasmically, and thereby spoken in prayer without adding to them. Chiasmus was provided that we might have a way to speak at all—any other speech being unclear—prayer included.

Therefore, it became our desire that if sexual mistreatment by the father were true, it would come to light and be repented of so healing could occur. Nonetheless, the Averys became less active in our purpose of restoring Zion. The most significant reason for this was that they weren’t told when the majority of classes were held. This was a gradual occurrence, as in other situations, but eventually to the point that they were being notified of only about a class per week. By the sheer appearance of lack of participation, along with the other rumors, slander, and accusations, it looked as though they might not make it to the Temple by the appointed day. Media speculation, fed by the legal system, has it that the Averys were planning to leave the group and that this was the reason for their deaths. Considering the decreased amount of exposure they eventually came to have to Jeff’s teachings, it is an understandable conclusion, yet I know that this was not the case.

Once Jeff assigned the responsibility to each of the men in the group to prepare a class of their own—to divide a certain area of scripture and walk the rest of the class through the chiasm. The end result was that it provided Jeff with a means to ridicule our efforts and illustrate his finesse as seer. I was impressed, however, with Dennis Avery’s division and was somewhat surprised with how well he did considering his rejection by Jeff. Jeff, too, expressed a degree of appreciation toward Dennis’ class, then turned it around in such a way as to make it sound as though Dennis knew better, but willingly sinned.

After having escaped the controlled setting I’ve conveyed here, I found similar forces at work after my arrest. First held in the Jackson County Jail in Missouri, the first article I read in the newspaper contained the promise that

we were all going to fry in the electric chair. After that, I pretty well stayed clear of news sources. Later, a member of the Lake County community stated, “They should take them all out and hang them—they shouldn’t even get a trial.” From the sound of that statement, I gathered the very strong presumption that there had already been a trial—trial by media. These personal statements should not discredit the intentions of the media, nor our necessity for it. While I was in the Lake County Jail, a series of interviews aired after Jeff’s trial and conviction. Watching this first night’s disgusting display of Jeff’s ego I didn’t tune in for the complete series of reports. He had caused death and tragedy in so many lives. After the first segment, the news anchor asked the reporter who had interviewed Jeff what it was like to talk to him. What the reporter said really caught my attention, “It was a good thing that I didn’t have to work the day following the interview, because I would have had to call in sick.” He went on to say that he felt completely drained and that it was as though he had been bathed in a sewer of logic. The interview had a definite impact on him. Consider that he did not meet Jeff Lundgren, the priesthood member, church sponsored tour guide, and sister’s friend; he met Jeff Lundgren the cult leader, the mass murderer. He did not meet the “cool water” schemer, but rather, the “boiling water” prisoner.

Involvement in the senseless deaths of an entire family should evoke a sincere rage. What I was witnessing, was not unlike the heavy doses of mind control that I had just been exposed to, and therefore, appeared amazingly familiar to me. It became so very important to me then, and since, that we truly hate the crimes which occur, but that rage should never blind us from trying to understand how senseless crimes happen. Without an attempt at understanding, they’re prone to be repeated.

Many people we’d never met openly expressed their passionate opinion about us. I don’t fault strong opinions, but it was frustrating. Prior to my trial, prospective jurors were asked to place their personal opinions aside. Had it not been for the heavy saturation of prejudiced media to which they had been subjected, they might have been able to do just that. The result of this saturation was a jury that could not be seated. “Divers weights are an abomination unto the Lord; and a false balance is not good” (Proverbs 20:23). No matter the final outcome of our judgments, we should never lose sight of the very essential necessity for a balanced view. I had no anger nor dislike toward the Averys, yet shamefully must confess that given the highly strong indoctrination in and out of classes by Jeff, I perceived their deaths as being justified and necessary. What a terrible opinion to be wrong about.

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PROVERBS 18:17 SHOULD BE APPLIED TO OUR PREPARATION FOR WAR, not so much that we were preparing to actually fight battles (either physically or spiritually), but, not unlike the Waco Davidians, the perception was being formed within us that war raged about us at every turn. In time, this perception

would be narrowed to the view that the Averys would be casualties of that warfare, warfare being an extremely prevalent theme within the *Book of Mormon*. Our brethren and forefathers had valiantly fought to preserve the record and we were called to do likewise at all costs. The mighty men of the *Book of Mormon* are not only the main prophetic characters within the text, but also the chief captains of the righteous armies.

“Now it was the custom among all the Nephites, to appoint for their chief captains, save it were in their times of wickedness, someone that had the spirit of revelation, and also prophecy; therefore this Gidgiddoni was a great prophet among them, and also was the chief judge.” (3 Nephi 2:24)

Even as the book begins, it is being recorded by a man named Nephi who, though young at the time, fits an image that remains consistent throughout each account. “And it came to pass that I, Nephi, being exceeding young, nevertheless being large in stature, and also having great desires to know of the mysteries of God” (1 Nephi 1:47). Chiastically, the statement of his being large in stature would quite immediately fall opposite his great desires to know the mysteries of God. Therefore, the interpretation provided would define men of God as being physically capable of warfare, along with hearts full of desire to know God. What a shame, the beauty of Jeremiah 31:34 was so incredibly opaque to us. Provided for in the Bible is a historical purpose which prepared the way for a new and better covenant (Hebrews 8:6). The *Book of Mormon* claims this covenant all along. Its primary message is to preserve the record since the wicked Lamanites were out to destroy it. I have to restrain myself from going into detail on this issue, because it is an exhaustive principle throughout the entire text, which even the most inept of students should be able to recognize. Yet this is not a principle that is in harmony with Christianity, despite the *Book of Mormon*'s claim to be the words of Christ throughout its message.

The beauty of the Bible message is that it provides a means for each of us, individually, to establish a relationship with God and to communicate with Him through our Mediator, Christ Jesus. But the “plainness” boasted about in *Book of Mormon* writings seeks to elaborate and to provide explanations for issues which require individual revelation, thereby stealing away our opportunity for a personal relationship with our personal Savior, while subjecting us to the interpretations provided. Forming the perceptions of the devotee, these interpretations prohibit him from establishing his own view of God through the workings of the Holy Spirit. Within the Bible are a number of vague areas that give little detail. What does it mean that Enoch was taken away by God (Genesis 5:24), or that he was translated (Hebrews 11:5)? Why did Moses' face shine, and what does that mean to us today (Exodus 34:35 and 2 Corinthians 3:13)? What is the book of Jashar mentioned in Joshua 10:13, and what does it contain? These are questions a true believer might ask—and questions which crafty, surreptitious people provide answers to.

Doctrine and Covenants 36 (and *Inspired Version*, Genesis 7:1–78) is an account by Joseph Smith to explain the unwritten history of this man named Enoch. The *Book of Mormon* elaborates upon the miracle of one's face shining, as Moses' did, and gives hint that it is to be expected of us as well.

“And it came to pass that he turned him about, and behold, he saw through the cloud of darkness the faces of Nephi and Lehi; and behold, they did shine exceedingly, even as the faces of angels.” (Helaman 2:100)

“And it came to pass that Jesus beheld them, as they did pray unto him, and his countenance did smile upon them, and behold they were as white as the countenance, and also the garments of Jesus; And behold the whiteness thereof did exceed all the whiteness, yea, even there could be nothing upon earth so white as the whiteness thereof.” (3 Nephi 9:25–26)

If these passages are believed as scripture, then they aid in interpreting the Biblical passages that are similar, yet not so detailed (i.e., Numbers 6:22–27). Compare the passage previously quoted from Helaman with following verse from Acts. “And all that sat in the counsel, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as if it had been the face of an angel” (Acts 6:15). Perhaps the angelic face of Steven that day was as the account the *Book of Mormon* portrays as the two men in Helaman, or perhaps there's no correlation between the two. Driving forces that form our view of God often interpret His word for us in subtle ways which we sometimes fail to recognize. But such elaborate explanations develop not only a questionable and distorted view of God, but progressively build a dependency within the disciple for doctrines that provide an interpretation of God's scripture. *Doctrine and Covenants* section 22, much like section 36, provides additional detail about Moses' relationship with God. This allows the point of view that those who perceive themselves as righteous have access to privileged information the rest of the world does not have. Soon it becomes a small wonder that one would see all other churches as an “abomination in His sight.”

The book of Jashar is one of several books either mentioned or quoted from in the Bible, but that are not a part of it. To my knowledge, Joseph Smith never built upon this particular mystery of the Bible. However, I've come to know instances where this book of poetry has been used, despite the evidence from researchers indicating that it no longer exists.⁷ I mention it only as an example of what false prophets use as an open door for deception. With Joseph Smith's fascination and association with the occult, I'm surprised he did not make use of more fabrications. Isolation and separation are important in creating untrue perceptions of God, and thereby reality as well. By way of this perception, with war raging about us at every turn, it was the eventual culmination of these teachings which demanded the deaths of the Averys.

⁷ New Bible Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Tyndale, p.552

A precept Jeff had taught and embellished upon from time to time was the issue of “delighting” in warfare. The Nephites were said to not delight in it, while the Lamanites were recorded as those who did delight in war. In this scenario, the term was interpreted to literally mean delight. But before Jeff introduced this to us, a series of classes had to be taught on the process of redemption, to feel and see, and becoming a fair people. Apparently Joseph Smith intended to exploit the racial distinctions to accommodate his agenda for this great and marvelous work. The *Book of Mormon* Nephites, considered righteous people, were of fair skin color. The Lamanites were cursed with apparently unnatural darker skin.

Whatever racial views Jeff had, he did not expound on them in what he taught. In fact, he would comment on how ridiculous it was for anyone to consider themselves as white in light of what he had claimed to have seen, by viewing Christ and others of His angels. In other words, the variations of pigment that we see as racial divisions were basically nonexistent when compared to the “glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). He considered this a great burden; he had seen what he was to be, yet could not acquire it due to us (his brethren), who were not ready to be redeemed. While in West Virginia, Alice mentioned in class one night how she had seen Jeff’s face shine when they were, appropriately, away from us. This was told to us as yet another substantiation that all was well with Jeff—it was we who kept him from dwelling with God. It was never stated that a redeemed person be always aglow, but that our spiritual eyes would be equally transformed to enable a degree of perception.

“Now, for this cause, I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed; but now mine eyes have beheld God; but not mine natural but my spiritual eyes, for mine natural eyes could not have beheld, for I should have withered and died in his presence; but his glory was upon me, and I beheld his face, for I was transfigured before him.” (D&C 22:7b&c)

The fair ones were primarily considered to be the righteous Nephites. When the Lamanites were converted from the wicked traditions of their fathers, they too, were a “fair and delightful” people. Mormon laments the depravity of his people near the close of the book as they become steeped in wickedness, after having known such righteousness.

“And my soul was rent with anguish, because of the slain of my people, and I cried, O ye fair ones, how could ye have departed from the ways of the Lord! O ye fair ones, how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you! Behold, if ye had not done this, ye would not have fallen. But behold, ye are fallen, and I mourn your loss. O ye fair sons and daughters, ye fathers and mothers, ye husbands and wives, ye fair ones, how is it that ye could have fallen.” (Mormon 3:18–20)

This was not to have been unlike the fallen countenance of Cain, as mentioned in Genesis. “But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell” (Gen. 4:5; 5:8, *Inspired Version*). We were to be God’s fair ones, having been redeemed from our fallen state. It’s clearly a ridiculous play on words, but we were to hold fast to the light which we, as dark vessels, would receive. We were not to allow that light to be lost in warfare (to de-light).

“Now they were sorry to take up arms against the Lamanites, because they did not delight in the shedding of blood; yea, and this was not all; they were sorry to be the means of sending so many of their brethren out of this world into an eternal world unprepared to meet their God.” (Alma 21:146)

The task would not be an enjoyable one, but rather an affliction that must be endured. To delight in warfare would mean that our desire would no longer be toward God and His will, but that we would be filled with desire for our own will instead. The same would hold true for love. Even during battle, love was strongly resident within God’s mighty men. The epitome of such love is expressed in the 15th chapter of Alma, verses 32–34, where a faction of newly converted Lamanites were no longer able to go to war, due to their extreme compassion and willingness to die rather than cause the death of their enemy (how fortunate that was an option for them).

Even so, this area speaks quite differently when interpreted through the use of chiasmus. War raged about us at every turn. The enemy was out there seeking every opportunity to destroy us and thereby to destroy the holy record as well. Whether or not it is perceived as such, this is the same passion at work in most Mormons today as they tenaciously hold fast to their “rod of iron” against all persecution and all evidence. The seer was able to bring forth the sealed portion, which was the essential purpose behind all God’s word. Without revealing this, there was no hope for mankind and all would perish at the glorious return of Jesus. We were His chosen, but not because we were so righteous. We were daily humiliated by Jeff’s exposure of our sin, thereby clearly expressing that we were not chosen due to our extreme worthiness, but possibly the complete opposite.

When we were later presented to the world as monstrous demons, with promises that we would fry in the electric chair, it only helped enhance the identity and shame Jeff had so meticulously created regarding us. We had fallen the farthest, and therefore would be lifted up to the heights of His Holy Mountain as an example of His undaunted ability to cleanse away all sin. But in this warfare there would be casualties. Eventually, the division came where it was taught: “And it came to pass that there were ten more who did fall by the sword.”