



The “dark teachings” of the endowment

The LDS endowment is an amazing bit of ritualistic theater. Those who would dismiss it as careless copying of Masonic rituals are short-sighted. While such influences are not to be doubted, the endowment is a complex interplay between the mind of God and the mind of Joseph Smith. While the endowment reflects some of the best of Joseph’s mind, it is but a tiny glimpse into the majesty and glory of the mind of God.

It is easy and understandable to become captivated by the endowment’s beautiful portrayal of and instruction concerning the wise plan of a loving God, who seeks to fulfill his greatest desire—the salvation and development of his children.

But the endowment also brilliantly portrays and instructs us concerning another plan—an ugly and destructive plan. Nibley once commented that “We can’t discuss Zion very long without running into Babylon, because Babylon is, in all things, the counterpart of Zion.”¹ So it is with the two plans presented in the temple endowment. Awareness of the darker reality is important if those who wish to be followers of God are to be faithful followers of Christ in their own lives, and faithful witnesses to the world around them. They must not only know the good after which they should seek, but the evil that they must shun.

As I understand it, Lucifer offers his own plan for humankind in the endowment. It has many facets. Here are the four that stand out most powerfully to me. We will not take the time, here, to

¹ Approaching Zion, p. 14

examine each of them in detail, but will, no doubt, find opportunities to do so elsewhere.

1. *God is not to be trusted. He does not have your best-interest in mind.*

This, it seems to me, is the point of the “instruction” he offers Eve. We have a tradition of seeing Satan teach “half-truths” to tell one big whooper. Not here. There is no half-truth to it. It is all lie. It goes something like this:

There is some really, really good fruit growing on a tree placed smack dab in the middle of the garden. But God does not wish to share the fruit. The warning of “death” upon eating it is mere pretext for the real reason for denying the fruit: God wants it all to himself. He doesn’t want you to “know” what he knows.

This first satanic “teaching,” is, of course, false. It stands in opposition to the endowment’s entire message—that God is all about developmental sharing. The endowment will demonstrate the falseness of this teaching throughout.

2. *“I will buy up armies and navies... and reign with blood and horror on this earth.”*

There is truly no lie here. No half-truths. This is one hundred percent fact. He has been true to his word. He has practiced and encouraged violence everywhere and at all times.

We have pointed out elsewhere that it is no accident that the very first post-Eden story told in the Bible is the story of the death of one brother at the hands of another brother—the first death, then, a violent death. This is Genesis’ way of telling us what the endowment has told us about the satanic plan for this planet. It is to be a place where violence “springs forth spontaneously.” Nor is it accidental that this first death was the result of distrust toward God (this insight from Genesis), and concern for the acquisition of material wealth (this insight from Moses).

(This much, I have preached and taught for years. In doing so, I spoke in parables, hoping my audience would hear the rest of the story. I no longer speak in parables. So...)

How much money has the United States spent in the generation since the 2nd World War

to “buy up armies and navies”? As others have pointed out, America has engaged in its fair share of “blood and horror” throughout its history. In pre-World War II times, these violent spasms were followed by a brief peace, when the military returned to a state of inactivity. But not so since the 2nd World War. Somehow, we learned all the wrong lessons from that war. We decided to play Empire. As of today, American “special forces” are active in over 125 countries. That’s right, Roman legions are everywhere. What the H-E-double I? We spend more on weapons than something like the next six highest countries combined. And we are wasting away “buying up armies and navies”—wasting away economically and wasting away spiritually. Martin Luther King once preached,

“A nation that continues year after year to spend more on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.”

Who is at the heart of all this, do you suppose?

We would dismiss it as mere waste, if it weren’t so destructive, evil, murderous, and idolatrous. We are the modern-day version of ancient Israel, who, turning on God, put our faith in a fallible and fickle human institution—the military industrial complex. Shame on America. Shame on so-called Christians who have participated in this apostacy—either through their silence or their energetic support.

3. *“You can have anything in this world for money.”*

Never were truer words spoken!

Oh, how we miss the meaning and import of this simple declaration! To imagine that this is a statement only about revealing hand and body motions, is to miss the point entirely. There is another way to “sell [out] signs and tokens”—representative of covenants made. Those initiated into the mysteries of godliness “sell” their signs and tokens when they engage in the gross materialism of our day—especially when they do so with the sort of gusto so often exhibited. Engagement in modern materialism is the selling of signs and tokens.

It is bad enough when an unsuspecting and uninitiated world does so. But what of those of us who have “taken out our endowment”? What’s our excuse? We were warned—right off the bat, first thing. “Do you sell your soul for money?”

How often we have been warned about the dark truth that “you can have anything in this world for money.”

“Their land also is full of silver and gold,
neither is there any end of their treasures;
their land is also full of horses,
neither is there any end of their chariots:
Their land also is full of idols;
they worship the work of their own hands,
that which their own fingers have made.”²

“They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”³

4. *“They will be in my power.”*

Again, we shout out a loud “Amen!” Those who distrust God, thus being led to “buy up armies and navies,” and sell their signs and tokens in order to buy the things of this world are indeed, day after day after day, in his power, under his sway, under his spell, under his curse, slaves to his perverted values.

It is tempting to ignore this, but it is part of the truth and must not go unsaid: this is not the final word. After the idolatrous disloyalty of all this “buying and selling,” there is One who makes the ultimate payment through which he releases all from their satanic overlord, and “saves all the works of his hands.”⁴

² Isaiah 2.⁷⁻⁸

³ 1 Timothy 6.⁹

⁴ DC 76.⁴³

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”⁵

We can wait until such time as God, by burning man’s work, finally “saves all the works of his hands” from the satanic overlord. But, why wait? Why go through the fire and suffer loss? Why not accept the deliverance today? After all, Christ Jesus gave himself for our sins, that he might “deliver us from this *present evil world*.”⁶

Why not heed the endowment’s clear instruction? Why not transfigure the “present evil world” of “buying and selling” into the world created and intended by God.

“Come, my brethren, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore, do not spend money for that which is of no worth, nor your labor for that which cannot satisfy. Hearken diligently unto me, and remember the words which I have spoken; and come unto the Holy One of Israel, and feast upon that which perisheth not, neither can be corrupted, and let your soul delight in fatness.”⁷

⁵ 1 Corinthians 3.¹¹⁻¹⁵

⁶ Galatians 1.⁴

⁷ 2 Nephi 9.⁵⁰⁻⁵¹