



# Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Restored Gospel

---

Volume 11 | Number 1

Article 5

---

4-1-2010

## The War in Heaven and Satan's Continuing Battle for Power

Kevin M. Bulloch

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/re>

---

### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Bulloch, Kevin M. "The War in Heaven and Satan's Continuing Battle for Power." *Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Restored Gospel* 11, no. 1 (2010). <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/re/vol11/iss1/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Restored Gospel* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).



In the Council in Heaven, Jesus offered to redeem us, saying,  
“Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever” (Moses 4:2).

# *The War in Heaven and Satan’s Continuing Battle for Power*

KEVIN M. BULLOCH

Kevin M. Bulloch (kbulloch@ldschurch.org) has been an institute teacher in Cedar City, Utah. He is currently serving as president of the New York Utica Mission.

.....

**M**any parents, as they have labored through the process of raising a teenager, may have wondered at times if Satan’s idea of destroying agency was such a bad idea. However, most parents have learned from experience that trying to control a child’s decision, even in the right direction, can often result in the child’s rebellion. Very few, if any, like to be forced to do something, even if it is good. Having the right to live according to our personal desires and to exercise our agency, even if what we choose is not wise or good for us, is very precious to us. We prize our moral agency so highly that any attempt to undermine, circumvent, manipulate, control, or eliminate it often leads to conflict. These battles have spanned heaven and earth and have included both individuals and great assemblies.

## **The War in Heaven**

In one of the most significant of such conflicts, Lucifer “became Satan” (Moses 4:4). When Satan “rebelled against [God], and sought to destroy the agency of man” (Moses 4:3), there was “war in heaven” (Revelation 12:7). That

conflict led to Satan being “thrust down from the presence of God” (D&C 76:25), for God had given “unto man his agency” (Moses 7:32) and would not allow it to be destroyed. Sadly, Satan was able to amass a large following to his cause, which resulted in the loss of “a third part of the hosts of heaven” (D&C 29:36; Revelation 12:4), the first casualties of an ongoing war.<sup>1</sup>

It seems baffling that Satan was so successful in enlisting “many” (Abraham 3:28) in a cause that would lead to the loss of something as precious as agency. An examination of Satan and his tactics in relation to the doctrine of agency may reveal some possible answers as to how he could have done so. We must remember that even today his arguments are very convincing to some. We hope some of the lessons we learn will help reduce the casualty count as the war rages on.

The scriptures do not give much detail about what Satan proposed or how he promoted his ideas in the war in heaven. However, they do reveal significant information in regard to his motives and character, which is very helpful in understanding his tactics. We know that Satan was “an angel of God who was in authority . . . who rebelled” against God and his Son (D&C 76:25). He desired the “honor” and “power” (D&C 29:36) of God for himself. He wanted not only to “exalt [his] throne above the stars of God” (Isaiah 14:13) but also to exalt himself above all, including God (see 2 Thessalonians 2:4).<sup>2</sup> President Ezra Taft Benson taught that Satan’s pride created in him a desire not only to be honored, but “to be honored above all others. In short, his prideful desire was to dethrone God.”<sup>3</sup> The Doctrine and Covenants tells us that Satan wanted “to take the kingdom of our God and his Christ” (D&C 76:28). This was not just a resentful resistance to God’s authority, not just a strong aversion or opposition, but a desire to take over. Satan wanted to overthrow our Father in Heaven.

It appears that Satan felt there was an opportunity to attain his desires when our Heavenly Father presented a plan that would result in the loss of some souls. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “Jesus said there would be certain souls that would not be saved; and the devil said he could save them all, and laid his plans before the grand council who gave their voice in favor of Jesus Christ. So the devil rose up in rebellion against God, and was cast down, with all who put up their heads for him.”<sup>4</sup>

## How Agency Could Be Destroyed

The scriptures are silent in regard to *how* Satan proposed to “redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost” (Moses 4:1). Yet Satan presented an argument that was so convincing that many preferred it over the Father’s plan. The scriptures tell us that Satan’s proposal would “destroy the agency of man” (Moses 4:3). Just how Satan’s plan would destroy agency is not explained. The most often taught theory is that Satan wanted to force mankind to live the gospel.<sup>5</sup> However, nowhere in scripture are the words “force” or “compel” used in connection to Satan’s plan. In addition, the scriptures teach that Satan “persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one” (Moroni 7:17) and that he is “the father of all lies” (Moses 4:4; 2 Nephi 2:18) and has been so “from the beginning” (D&C 93:25).<sup>6</sup> To be “forced” does not seem to be very appealing, nor is it likely that such an argument was compelling enough to rally a large following. As mentioned previously, most people not only resent being forced, but usually oppose it vigorously. Robert J. Matthews taught:

I think we often miss the major issue of the contention in premortality that eventually led to the war in heaven. We talk about it as though Satan were going to force everybody to obey when he said, “I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost”—we interpret that as meaning that he was proposing forced obedience.

It seems strange to me that a third of all the spirits that had the potential to be born into this world would have favored a proposal of forced obedience. Most of us do not like to be forced. As I see it, the issue was not so much one of force as it was that Satan said he would *guarantee* salvation for his spirit brothers and sisters. He promised salvation without excellence, without effort, without hard work, without individual responsibility, and without obedience to righteous laws. That is the lie he promulgated in the pre-earth councils.<sup>7</sup>

President J. Reuben Clark Jr. suggested that Satan’s proposal may have involved something other than simple force. He said, “Satan’s plan required one of two things: Either the compulsion of the mind, the spirit, the intelligence of man, *or else saving men in sin.*”<sup>8</sup> This second option has some interesting implications, which we will examine later. Forcing people “to do good” may be one way to destroy agency, but it is not the only way.

To understand how Satan may have sought to destroy agency, we must understand what agency is and what is required in order for it to operate. Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained it this way:

Agency is the ability and freedom to choose good or evil. . . . Four great principles must be in force if there is to be agency: 1. Laws must exist, laws ordained by an Omnipotent power, laws which can be obeyed or disobeyed; 2. Opposites must

exist—good and evil, virtue and vice, right and wrong—that is, there must be opposition, one force pulling one way and another pulling the other; 3. A knowledge of good and evil must be had by those who are to enjoy the agency, that is, they must know the differences between the opposites; and 4. An unfettered power of choice must prevail.<sup>9</sup>

The most common conclusion seems to be that Satan's desire was to eliminate point 4, the "unfettered power of choice" by forcing mankind to "be good." However, agency required all four conditions to be in place. The removal of any of them would destroy agency. As one considers the options, it is difficult to imagine even those wicked spirits that made up the "third part" that followed Satan being amenable to being forced.

### **The Need for a Redeemer**

To appreciate some of the options that may have been more appealing to those that chose to follow Satan, let us briefly examine the heart of the gospel plan—the need for a redeemer. Satan sought this position, for which Christ had been chosen "from the beginning" (Moses 4:1). The need for a redeemer is abundantly spoken of in scripture. We can capsulize these teachings by referring to just a few scriptures.

Because of the Fall of Adam, we all need a redeemer. From the Fall, the natural man has become "an enemy to God" (Mosiah 3:19). When we break the laws of God, we sin, "for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Because "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), we all find ourselves unfit to dwell in God's presence, for "no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom" (3 Nephi 27:19) or "dwell in his presence" (Moses 6:57). And "by reason of transgression . . . man became fallen [and] were cut off from the presence of the Lord. Wherefore, it must needs be an infinite atonement—save it should be an infinite atonement this corruption could not put on incorruption" (2 Nephi 9:6–7). Thus without a redeemer man would have become "lost forever," and there would be "no means to reclaim men from this fallen state" (Alma 42:6, 12).

Our Father in Heaven's plan required the suffering and death of a redeemer "who did no sin" (D&C 45:4). Obviously, Satan would not have qualified, yet he selfishly aspired to the glory and honor of the position, with little or no regard for those for whom the plan was laid. He also knew that Christ, as God's "Firstborn" (D&C 93:21) would be God's heir.<sup>10</sup> Satan's request of the Father to "send me, I will be thy son" (Moses 4:1) was just the beginning of his

aspirations, for Satan did not want to settle for being God's heir; he wanted God's throne.

### **Agency and Law**

In Father Lehi's great discourse to his son Jacob, he explained the need for a redeemer who "offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law" (2 Nephi 2:7). He also explained that there is a "punishment which is affixed" (v. 10) unto the law. He then taught, "If ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is no sin" (v. 13). In other words, if there is no law there is nothing forbidden, and if nothing is forbidden there can be no such thing as sin nor agency. "How could [there be] sin if there is no law?" asked Alma (Alma 42:17; see also Romans 4:15).<sup>11</sup> If there is no sin, there is no need for a redeemer to offer himself a sacrifice for sin. Jacob later taught that "where there is no law given there is no punishment; and where there is no punishment there is no condemnation" (2 Nephi 9:25).<sup>12</sup> If Satan could destroy the law, he would also destroy both agency and the need for a sinless redeemer.

Lehi explained to Jacob that if there is no law there is no opposition, and if there is no opposition "man could not act for himself" (2 Nephi 2:16), meaning that man could not have agency, for there are no alternatives from which to choose. Speaking on this subject, Elder Dallin H. Oaks said, "In other words, if we did not have opposition, we could not exercise our free agency by making choices."<sup>13</sup> In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord said, "And it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves" (D&C 29:39). If there is no law there can be no temptation to break a law. The result would be the loss of agency.

Satan's boast that he could "redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost" (Moses 4:1) may have been made on the premise that there would be no law and therefore no sin. President Brigham Young said, "There is no being in all the eternities but what is governed by law. Who is it who desires to have liberty and no law? They who are from beneath. This is what Lucifer, the Son of the Morning, wanted. He wanted to save the world without law, to redeem the world without order."<sup>14</sup> If there was no law and, as a result, no sin, there would be nothing that would prohibit entrance into the kingdom of God. Satan was fabricating the impression that any conduct would be permitted without any negative consequences. In essence, he was camouflaging the misery that would naturally follow sin.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote:

When the Eternal Father announced his plan of salvation—a plan that called for a mortal probation for all his spirit children; a plan that required a Redeemer to ransom men from the coming fall; a plan that could only operate if mortal men had agency—when the Father announced his plan, when he chose Christ as the Redeemer and rejected Lucifer, then there was war in heaven. That war was a war of words; it was a conflict of ideologies; it was a rebellion *against God and his laws*. Lucifer sought to dethrone God, to sit himself on the divine throne, and to save all men without reference to their works. He sought to deny men their agency so they could not sin. *He offered a mortal life of carnality and sensuality, of evil and crime and murder, following which all men would be saved.* His offer was a philosophical impossibility. There must needs be an opposition in all things. Unless there are opposites, there is nothing. There can be no light without darkness, no heat without cold, no virtue without vice, no good without evil, no salvation without damnation.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Propaganda of Satan**

The proposal of a life of sin and indulgence, followed by salvation, would seem much more appealing than a proposal to force mankind to keep God's commandments. Elder Orson Pratt taught that Satan's proposal was one to save mankind *in* their sins, rather than saving them *from* their sins.<sup>16</sup> President Brigham Young also taught that, "If you undertake to save all, you must save them in unrighteousness and corruption."<sup>17</sup> Doesn't that idea sound familiar? The very persuasion used so successfully today by Satan may be very similar to the one used by him in the premortal life. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us" (2 Nephi 28:7). "Do this, or do that, and it mattereth not, for the Lord will uphold such at the last day" (Mormon 8:31). The tactics that Satan uses with such great success to gather souls to him in this life may well have been used in his first great gathering in the pre-earth life. President Howard W. Hunter taught that the temptations used by Satan "in leading one-third of the hosts from heaven" continue "to direct his miserable efforts against the children of men here on earth."<sup>18</sup> History seems to indicate that Satan has very few new strategies but successfully uses the same old half-truths packaged a little differently for a particular time or setting.

### **Promoting the Impossible**

Whatever Satan's idea was, it was not only "evil before God" (2 Nephi 2:17) but indeed impossible—impossible because without law there would be more than



chaos, confusion, and anarchy; indeed, “all things must have vanished away” (2 Nephi 2:13). Forcing people to live the gospel is just as impossible. First, it is virtually impossible to force another to choose anything.<sup>19</sup> There is always another option, even if the alternative is death. Those who say, “I had to do it” are actually saying, “I chose to do it rather than face the consequences.”<sup>20</sup> Second, even a person who performs good deeds, if void of righteous intent, “is counted evil before God” (Moroni 7:8).<sup>21</sup>

The fact is that none of the options we have discussed that could have been promoted by Satan would really work. Neither compulsion nor sin are possible ways to save all mankind. President J. Reuben Clark Jr. said, “I question whether the intelligence of man can be compelled. Certainly men cannot be saved in sin, because the laws of salvation and exaltation are founded in righteousness, and not in sin.”<sup>22</sup> Yet these impossibilities did not matter to Satan, who “deceiveth the whole world” (Revelation 12:9). He continues still to deceive many into thinking they can “take happiness in sin” (Mormon 2:13), knowing full well that “wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). His intent, however, is not to save mankind but rather to “bring [mankind] into subjection unto him” (Alma 12:6). It is consistent with his character to seek to deceive mankind into believing they can “enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Hebrews 11:25), thinking “there is no harm in this, . . . and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God” (2 Nephi 28:8). To Satan, like others who are motivated by pride, the fact that his plan would not only fail to “redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost” but would have the opposite effect—that not one soul would be saved—was irrelevant as long as he could obtain his desires.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Archetype of Pride**

There are numerous examples of men like Amalickiah, who follow the model that Satan set up as the prototype, and who have as their only “intention to gain favor with” the masses, “that [they] might place [themselves] at [the] head and dethrone the king and take possession of the kingdom” (Alma 47:8). To them, it matters not whether they have to employ pretense, lies, deceit, fraud, murder, war, or any other means, so long as they can gain “the hearts of the people” and eventually obtain “the kingdom” (Alma 47:30, 35). They “care not for the blood of [the] people” (Alma 49:10) and become “exceedingly angry” when they do not obtain their own selfish desires (Alma 49:26; see also Abraham 3:28).

Those who seem to pattern their effort to gain power and control after Satan provide us with a basis for understanding why so many could be deceived into thinking that a premise that would destroy agency was desirable. Consider the argument espoused by Korihor that the need for a Christ was “a foolish and a vain hope” and “the effect of a frenzied mind” (Alma 30:13, 16). He taught that the “foolish traditions” of the gospel of Christ “bind” the people to laws and ordinances, preventing them from enjoying “their rights and privileges” (v. 27). According to Korihor, who was both tutored and deceived by the devil (v. 53), those that live by the laws of God are not “a free people” but “are in bondage” (v. 24). The notion that the laws and ordinances of God are restrictive and prevent us from enjoying true freedom has been used successfully by the adversary to bring souls into captivity for a very long time. The lie that true freedom means “freedom from all unpleasantness: from hardship, from discipline, from the stern voice of duty, from the pain of self-sacrifice”<sup>24</sup> is a philosophy so “pleasing unto the carnal mind” that it can be promoted with “much success” (v. 53). If real freedom means that there are no restrictions whatsoever, no laws to bind us down, then “whatsoever a man [does is] no crime,” and it would not be necessary for an “atonement [to be] made for the sins of men” (v. 17).

Promoting a similar philosophy of indulgence, Nehor used the very same words Lucifer used in the pre-earth life when he told the people “that *all mankind should be saved* at the last day, and that they need not fear nor tremble, but that they might lift up their heads and rejoice; for the Lord had created all men, and had also *redeemed all men*; and, in the end, *all men* should have eternal life” (Alma 1:4; emphasis added). Such teachings are so “flattering unto the people” (Jacob 7:2) that those who promote them often draw “away much people after [them]; even so much that they [begin] to be very powerful” (Alma 2:2). Their hope is to “gain the voice of the people” (Alma 2:4) and eventually obtain the kingdom. The Book of Mormon gives repeated examples of prideful individuals who, through their cunning and flattering words, lead all who will follow them through a pattern of rebellion, mutiny, and war. Wars thus instigated are an effort of the wicked to obtain “power and authority over the people” (Alma 5:18). Nehor, Amlici, Amalickiah, and a multitude of others have followed this pattern, which Satan established for manipulating the minds and “the hearts of many people to do wickedly” (Alma 46:10). They have led men into thinking, as Cain did, “I am free” (Moses 5:33), when in reality they become “bound down by the chains of hell” (Alma 13:30; see

also 2 Nephi 1:13). It seems to be a pattern of ancient date; perhaps it even existed from the very beginning.

## Conclusion

Although information found in scripture is quite limited in regard to what took place in the War in Heaven, we have tried to draw on a few sources and examples to expand our perspective of the possibilities. Although we may not completely understand exactly what Satan proposed, in understanding his motives we can perhaps find significant lessons for our own battles with the adversary. For example, C. Terry Warner provided a thoughtful insight as he scrutinized his own “self-seeking” in his efforts to follow the Savior:

In the way I went about my quest, I found resemblances to Lucifer's method of waging the great war he began in heaven against his own brothers and sisters. He had proposed a scheme that he maintained would benefit us all, but it was really for his own glory. So when his self-nomination was rejected, he smarted with disappointment and resentment and set out to make anyone and everyone pay for his defeat. Unwilling, like many of us, to take responsibility for his sin, he sought to shift it elsewhere; as John beheld in vision, he “accused [his righteous brethren] before our God day and night” (Revelation 12:10). He spread his discontent to throngs of others, stoked their indignation, and marshaled them into a coalition sustained by their shared resentment.<sup>25</sup>

Whether Satan's plan to destroy the agency of man was a proposition to force righteous behavior, a scheme to allow sinful conduct without consequence, or some other agency-destroying proposal we have not discussed, the intent and result is the same. His prideful resentment and anger caused him to seek “that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27). His rebellion caused him to lose that which he wanted most—the honor and power of God. The sad irony is that the honor and power that Satan sought was available to him and all those that overcome their pride and humbly honor God and keep his commandments. For God has said, “If ye are faithful ye shall be . . . crowned with honor, and glory, and immortality, and eternal life” (D&C 75:5). Our Heavenly Father loves his children and “delight[s] to honor those who serve [him] in righteousness” (D&C 76:5). However, being overcome by pride, Satan rejected the plan that could have made him “equal with” God (D&C 88:107) because he wanted “the pleasure of being above the rest.”<sup>26</sup> Having “sought that which was evil before God” (2 Nephi 2:17), he “kept not his first estate” (Abraham 3:28) and lost all opportunity for the honor and power he sought.

As we study and ponder these things, we should hope for more inspiration than speculation, to the end that we might come to appreciate the goodness of our God and avoid the snares of the adversary. Whatever Satan's reasons and methods, this much we know: "Lo, he is fallen!" (D&C 76:27). And so will we fall if we believe that anything proposed by Satan and his followers is preferable in any way to the teachings of God and his prophets. For the day will surely come that Satan shall be cast "into the bottomless pit, . . . that he should deceive the nations no more" (Revelation 20:3). **RE**

---

## Notes

1. The scriptural term "third part" is often misapplied as the fraction *one-third*. As one author put it, "When John speaks of the war in heaven, his description of Lucifer's activities is slightly different from the typical interpretation in Latter-day Saint circles. He states that the devil drew away a 'third part' of the hosts of heaven with him (see Revelation 12:4; D&C 29:36–38). The distinction between 'one-third' and a 'third part' may seem subtle, yet it is real. The fraction one-third implies 33 1/3 percent, whereas the phrase 'third part' implies a numerically undetermined segment of the population who symbolize the fact that Satan's power over the premortal spirits was limited. Thus, the numerology in the passage implies that we have no knowledge of the fraction or percentage of the Father's children who followed the adversary. All we know is that Satan had a limited influence over those in the presence of God" (Alonzo L. Gaskill, *The Lost Language of Symbolism* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], 118–19). For further explanation of the symbolic use of the term *third part* as meaning "limited" or its use in reference to meaning "partial and incomplete," or what has been termed "remnant theology," see Richard D. Draper, *Opening the Seven Seals* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991), 95–96, 108; Jay Parry and Donald Parry, *Understanding the Book of Revelation* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998), 110.

2. Although 2 Thessalonians 2:9 seems to imply that this may be a reference to a specific individual in the Christian Church, Elder McConkie taught that "Lucifer is the man of sin, spoken of by Paul who was to be revealed in the last days before the second coming of the Lord. (2 Thess. 2:1–12)" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1974], 3:63). See also Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 1:175; Joseph Smith Translation, 2 Thessalonians 2:7–9.

3. Ezra Taft Benson, "Beware of Pride," in Conference Report, April 1989, 4. President Harold B. Lee also taught that "Satan sought power and glory for himself . . . [by] the dethroning of God Himself" (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], 38).

4. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 357.

5. It is evident that Satan has used force and coercion at times, and would have others "exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men" (D&C 121:37). However, there is little or no scriptural evidence that such was his intention in the pre-earth life. There have been occasional statements by early Church leaders that may imply such a conclusion. For example, in 1881 President John Taylor taught that Satan "sought to take away the agency of man, to make man a poor miserable self" (in *Journal of Discourses* [London:

Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–96] 22:300). In 1885 Elder Moses Thatcher referred to Satan's proposal as a "coercive scheme of human redemption" and a "coercive, agency destroying plan" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 26:305). But the topic of *how* Satan had planned to destroy the agency of man is seldom mentioned in gospel writing until the twentieth century. At least two different schools of thought have been suggested as possibilities by leaders of the Church. This article examines the less common prospect that Satan may have proposed that mankind could be saved in sin, as alluded to by President Brigham Young, Orson Pratt, and President J. Reuben Clark, Jr. The idea that is most often taught in the Church today is doctrine that Satan was going to "force" the human family to do his will. After the publication of Elder James E. Talmage's *Articles of Faith* in 1899 and *Jesus the Christ* in 1915, this became the most common idea of how Satan proposed to destroy agency (see *Articles of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983], 57, and *Jesus the Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984], 8). Since that time it has been taught on a regular basis (see Conference Reports, April 1917, 144; April 1926, 77; October 1936, 60; October 1938, 134; April 1949, 27; April 1950, 24–25; October 1987, 42; May 2008, 40; and Chauncey C. Riddle, "Devils," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow [New York: Macmillan, 1992], 1:379; to cite just a few). Elder Bruce R. McConkie also taught the more common idea of "force," as well as implying the possibility that Satan proposed the idea of salvation after a life of sin (*Mormon Doctrine* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], 27, 153 and *The Millennial Messiah* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982], 666–67).

6. The question that arises here is that if Satan "persuadeth no man to do good," and has been evil "from the beginning," was there ever a time when he was a righteous person who was interested in promoting the cause of righteousness? Although the answer to this question may not be definitive, there is information that sheds light on the subject. That the name Lucifer means "shining one," "light bringer" or "son of the morning" (Bible Dictionary, "Lucifer," 726) implies that at some point he did bear the gospel light. Lehi taught that the devil was "an angel of God" (2 Nephi 2:17). President George Q. Cannon, commenting on Satan's title as a son of the morning, said: "This angel was a mighty personage, without doubt. The record that is given to us concerning him clearly shows that he occupied a very high position; that he was thought a great deal of" (*Millennial Star*, September 5, 1895, 563–64). Orson Pratt called Satan "an angel of light, and holy angel, prior to" his standing in opposition to God (in *Journal of Discourses*, 21:288). Stanza 21 of the poetic version of Doctrine and Covenants 76 refers to Satan as "an angel of light" ("The Answer to W. W. Phelps Esq. a Vision February 1843," *Times and Seasons* [February 1, 1843] 4:83). It would seem logical to believe that Satan's prominence as "an angel of God" would naturally assume a degree of righteousness, not just the typical qualities such as intellect or natural leadership ability that generally assist individuals to rise to leadership positions. The scriptures say nothing about Satan prior to his rebellion, other than those already quoted and some inferences that could be made from a few others. For example, if we were to use the same comparison that Isaiah used to connect Satan and the king of Babylon (see Isaiah 14:12c, 2 Nephi 24:12a), with Ezekiel's condemnation of the king of Tyrus, we could conclude that Satan, at least at one time, was righteous enough to be considered by Ezekiel as "perfect"—meaning *whole*, *complete*, or *sound*. He said, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezekiel 28:15). Moses 4:4 says, "And he became Satan, yea, even the devil" (emphasis added), implying that he was not at first in his adversarial role to the degree that he was after his rebellion. The Book of Mormon makes it clear that after a person has been "enlightened by the Spirit of God, and have had great knowledge of the things pertaining to righteousness, and then have fallen away into sin and transgression, they become more hardened" (Alma 24:30), which certainly seems to be the case with Satan. To what

degree that state of enlightenment (which is generally associated with the “light and truth” that comes with worthiness) is related to righteousness rather than just “having the same instruction and the same information” (Alma 47:36) is difficult to determine (see also Alma 9:19, 23; 21:3; 3 Nephi 6:17–18; D&C 82:3; Smith, *Teachings*, 67). There seems to be no question that Satan had great knowledge, for without it he could not have become “perdition” (see Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973], 2:225), but knowledge does not always mean righteousness. The point is that by the time of the great council in heaven, Satan’s pride had cast a dark shadow on any gospel light he may have had. His greatest interest seems to have been himself rather than promoting the personal development and progress of Heavenly Father’s children by encouraging righteousness.

7. Robert J. Matthews, *Selected Writings of Robert J. Matthews*, Gospel Scholars Series (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 485.

8. J. Reuben Clark Jr., in Conference Report, October 1949, 193; emphasis added.

9. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 26.

10. This may have been one of the factors that motivated Satan to rebel. Brigham Young taught, “There was a devil in heaven, and he strove to possess the birthright of the Savior” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 8:279).

11. Daniel H. Ludlow taught, “What if [God] had never given us any law? It is true that in such a condition we never could have broken a law (committed sin), and thus there would have been no evil” (*New Era*, September 1973, 14).

12. President Boyd K. Packer pointed out that both the New Testament and Lehi teach that “if there is no moral law, there is no sin” and that “moral law assumes accountability; no accountability, no penalties!” (“The Law and the Light,” in *The Book of Mormon: Jacob Through Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy*, papers from the Fourth Annual Book of Mormon Symposium, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. [Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1988], 5–6).

13. Dallin H. Oaks, “Free Agency and Freedom,” in *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, the Doctrinal Structure*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), 8.

14. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 14:280–81.

15. McConkie, *Millennial Messiah*, 666–67; emphasis added.

16. Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet note, “In the premortal councils of heaven, by stating that he would save them all Lucifer essentially proposed the redemption of all men and women in their sins. ‘If you undertake to save all,’ said Brigham Young, ‘you must save them in unrighteousness and corruption’ [in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:282]. Elder Orson Pratt also taught the difference between the Father’s plan to save his children from sin and Lucifer’s design to save all mankind in their sins. ‘There must be an agency wherever intelligence exists, and without agency no intelligent beings could exist; and . . . Satan sought to destroy this . . . and to redeem them all in their sins’ [ *Journal of Discourses*, 21:288]” (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987–92], 3:354; emphasis added).

17. McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 3:354.

18. Howard W. Hunter, in Conference Report, October 1976, 22.

19. Joseph Smith taught, “The devil could not compel mankind to do evil. . . . God would not exert any compulsory means, and the devil could not; and such ideas as were entertained [on these subjects] by many were absurd” (*History of the Church*, 4:358).

20. For further explanation on the doctrine of agency compared to freedom, see Oaks, “Free Agency and Freedom,” 1–17.

21. This is not to imply that no good ever comes from doing the right thing for the wrong reasons. The following commentary on Moroni 7:6–13 may be helpful: “These verses could easily be misunderstood. It is not that evil persons—or persons with less than noble motives—cannot do good things. They certainly can. It is just that their deeds prove in the end to be a blessing neither to themselves nor to those they serve. That is, so long as good deeds are motivated by selfish or malicious desires they cannot transform and enrich either the giver or the receiver” (Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987–92], 4:334). Righteousness is not a by-product of forced obedience.

22. Clark, in Conference Report, October 1949, 193.

23. President Ezra Taft Benson taught, “In the pre-earthly council, Lucifer placed his proposal in competition with the Father’s plan as advocated by Jesus Christ (see Moses 4:1–3). He wished to be honored above all others (see 2 Nephi 24:13). In short, his prideful desire was to dethrone God (see D&C 29:36; 76:28). . . . The scriptures abound with evidences of the severe consequences of the sin of pride to individuals, groups, cities, and nations” (in Conference Report, April 1989, 4). To thoroughly examine the consequences of pride on the heart of man, and particularly on Satan, is a study that is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is made clear in President Benson’s marvelous message that the prideful often promote and even begin to believe things that are absolutely false! Pride overcomes wisdom, right thinking, and sound judgment, replacing them with self-interest and enmity. It prevents us from seeing things clearly. The prideful “won’t change their minds to accept truths, because to do so implies they have been wrong” (in Conference Report, April 1989, 5). Pride is deceptive (see Obadiah 1:3). It makes its victims believe they can obtain the impossible. In Satan’s case that was obtaining the “honor” and “power” of God (see D&C 29:36) in ways that are contrary to truth. It creates illusions that lead those possessed by it in the opposite direction of all that is good. It is indeed an “ugly” and “damning sin” (in Conference Report, April 1989, 5). “In the premortal council, it was pride that felled Lucifer” (in Conference Report, April 1989, 3).

President Benson also taught that “the antidote for pride is humility” (Benson, in Conference Report, April 1989, 6), and the “opposite of pride is humbleness, meekness, submissiveness (see Alma 13:28), or teachableness” (in Conference Report, April 1986, 5). The author has come to believe that the opposite of pride can be best characterized by one word—charity—which includes all of the virtues mentioned by President Benson. Charity is the antithesis of pride. Charity is “the greatest of all” virtues (Moroni 7:46), and pride is appropriately referred to by C. S. Lewis as “the great sin” and “the utmost evil.” According to Lewis, “it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: [and] is the complete anti-God state of mind” (*Mere Christianity* [New York: Macmillan, 1960], 108–9). Jesus Christ is the epitome of charity, and Satan is the epitome of pride. To understand Satan and his motives, one must understand pride and its effects, just as one must understand charity to understand Jesus Christ. Perhaps the best window through which we can see and understand Satan is through those who love that which he loves, and who do what he does, and are possessed by pride as he is, for they are “but mirroring our ego-saturated brother in the premortal world who wanted things his own way” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977], 46).

24. Arthur Gordon, “Freedom Is a Two-Edged Sword,” *Reader’s Digest*, July 1966, 38.

25. C. Terry Warner, “Honest, Simple, Solid, True,” BYU devotional address, January 16, 1996, as quoted in *Brigham Young University Magazine*, June 1996, 35.

26. Benson, in Conference Report, April 1989, 4.