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### Watch and Pray

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*But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering. (Alma 13:28)*

Alma addressed the inhabitants of the city of Ammonihah with the words recorded in Alma 13:28, but they rejected his message. Leaving these wicked people to their fate, Alma then went to the land of Sidom, where he established the church and remained until he saw “that the people were checked as to the pride of their hearts, and began to humble themselves before God, and began to assemble themselves together at their sanctuaries to worship God before the altar, watching and praying continually, that they might be delivered from Satan, and from death, and from destruction” (Alma 15:17).

During a later missionary journey to the Zoramites, Alma’s companion, Amulek, who had heard him preach in Ammonihah, delivered the same message:

Yea, and I also exhort you, my brethren, that ye be watchful unto prayer continually, that ye may not be led away by the temptations of the devil, that he may not overpower you, that ye may not become his subjects at the last day; for behold, he rewardeth you no good thing. (Alma 34:39)

During his visit to the land of Bountiful, Christ also warned the Nephites: “Ye must watch and pray always, lest ye be tempted by the devil, and ye be led away captive by him” (3 Nephi

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18:15). “Ye must watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; for Satan desireth to have you, that he may sift you as wheat” (3 Nephi 18:18).

This was undoubtedly one of the Savior’s most important messages, for he had also told his Palestinian disciples to “watch and pray” (Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36). Indeed, it was the last message he gave to his apostles during his mortal ministry, in the garden of Gethsemane. Finding Peter, James, and John asleep, he awoke them and warned, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41; see also Mark 14:38).

Peter took the Lord’s words to heart and later wrote to the saints, “Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (1 Peter 4:7). Paul, after admonishing the Ephesians to gird themselves with the armor of God for protection against evil, added, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Ephesians 6:18). He also advised the Colossians to “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2).

Similarly, Christ’s Nephite disciples passed the word to those who came after. Moroni wrote,

And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith. (Moroni 6:4)

With the restoration of the Church in Joseph Smith’s day, it became the duty of home teachers to “visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret and attend

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to all family duties (D&C 20:47; see also verse 51), thus following in the footsteps of the Nephites of Moroni's day. The same section of the Doctrine and Covenants explains,

But there is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God; Therefore let the church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptation; Yea, and even let those who are sanctified take heed also. (D&C 20:32-34)

## *CONCLUSION*

The importance of the Lord's admonition to "watch and pray" is stressed by the fact that it appears in three volumes of scripture: the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants. The commandment is both timeless and timely.