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SEEKING JESUS

Visuals With Points To Ponder
To Help You Find Jesus' Principles

THE SEARCH FOR SEEKING JESUS FOR YOUR ON YOUR

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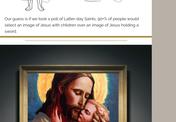
QUESTION

If asked to share with others your favorite picture of Jesus Christ and to tell why you like that picture the most, which picture would you choose?

Would you ever choose a picture of Jesus with a sword?

Put differently, we could ask ourselves this question: when you think of Jesus, do you think of the image on the left, or the image on the right?

Our guess is if we took a poll of Latter-day Saints, 90+% of people would select an image of Jesus with children over an image of Jesus holding a sword.



JESUS WITH A SWORD

Of course, Jesus does love little children, so it's not that the image on the left is wrong, but in this class, we'll explore an aspect of Christ that maybe we don't spend as much time with, and that is the Savior with a sword.

Let's first explore a scriptural pattern that appears in the Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants.

In Isaiah 66:16 we read:

"For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many."

Jesus says,

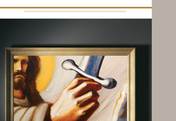
"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I come not to send peace, but a sword." Matthew 10:34.

Mormon tells latter-day readers:

"And when ye shall see these sayings coming forth among you, then ye need not any longer stand in doubt, for it is a sign unto you that the judgment of the Father is nigh hand, and behold, at that day, if ye shall scorn at his doings he will cause that it shall soon overtake you." 3 Nephi 29:2

Doctrine and Covenants 133 says,

And the anger of the Lord is kindled, and his sword is bathed in heaven, and it shall fall upon the inhabitants of the earth."



These are not the only verses that we could have picked—there are many other passages that show that Jesus has the power of the Savior with a sword. To be clear, we don't think that Jesus is walking around with a sword all day. Just as Christ isn't a Lamb, although he is called the Lamb of God, there is SYMBOLISM IN THE IDEA of a Savior with a sword.

Perhaps in the sword we see a symbol of Christ's JUSTICE AND POWER. It shows that he is mighty and can conquer all our foes.

LORD OF HOSTS

SAVIOR WITH A SWORD

We see the SAVIOR AS A WARRIOR, the Savior with a sword is synonymous with the title THE LORD OF HOSTS, which appears 305 times in scripture.

The Lord of Hosts **doesn't mean** the Lord of people who hosts guests or parties. If we were to go back to our friend the Blue Letter Bible, which we have used in previous videos, the Hebrew word that's translated as "hosts" is "armies."

So more than 300 times, Jesus is referred to in scripture as the Lord of Armies.

Here's one example: as David challenges Goliath he says,

*"You come to me with sword and spear and javelin: but I come to you in the name of **the Lord of hosts**, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied"* 1 Samuel 17:45, NASV.

So more than 300 times, Jesus is referred to in scripture as the Lord of Armies.

CONSIDER ANOTHER EXAMPLE

KING JEHOSHAPHAT

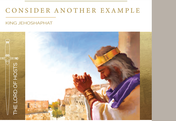
Consider one more example of the Savior as the Lord of armies. From a lesser-known Old Testament story. The nation of Judah was being attacked by multiple nations. the numbers of those who opposed them were so overwhelming that "a Chronicles 20:2 and Judah was powerless to stop their advance.

King Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast throughout the nation and sincerely prayed to God.

"We have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee." (2 Chronicles 20:12, emphasis added)

What a powerful prayer! When we don't know what to do, we can turn to God and say,

"Our eyes are on Thee."



After Jehoshaphat prayed, a spiritual impression came to a member of the congregation who said,

"King Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismay by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you" (2 Chronicles 20:15-17).

The Savior with a sword would fight Jehoshaphat's battles. The next day, the Lord "set ambushments" (2 Chronicles 3:20) against Judah's enemies. The different nations who had assembled to attack Jerusalem began fighting with each other.

The LORD OF HOSTS delivered Jehoshaphat and his people.

JESUS CHRIST AS A

DIVINE WARRIOR AND LORD OF HOSTS

Take a moment and think to yourself—why might this aspect of the Savior matter today.

Perhaps one application is to remember that JESUS IS POWERFUL! **In the past, in the future, and now in the present, he will help us fight our battles—whatever those may be.** No matter how bad things look, Jesus will be victorious.

For us, THINKING OF CHRIST AS A WARRIOR gives us hope for the future. We will experience hardships and failures, but ultimately, at the end of the day, Christ is there and if we are on his side, everything is going to work out.

CONSIDER THIS

We read that Jesus, "Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited. BUT EMPTIED himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And, being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death"— (Philippians 2:6-12).

CONSIDER HOW MUCH POWER JESUS HAD

Consider how much power Jesus Christ had. He was in the form of God—**but he emptied himself to take on human form**. He would have to learn how to walk and talk like other babies. **None of us would want to lose the meager abilities we have—even for a couple of years.** Christ gave up immense power and glory to come to earth.

There's so much that's embedded in the phrase, "He emptied himself"

Perhaps we sometimes take for granted that Christ was willing to come to earth, but when we remember what Jesus was willing to give up, it can increase our gratitude for him.

In this class, we've seen a pattern of the Savior with a sword, and explored some applications of this aspect of Christ's character—he models humility and can help us fight our battles. Let's look at a related pattern across the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.

JESUS
IS WAR WITH HIS SWORD

In Ephesians 5:6 we read, "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6)

Alma taught, "If ye persist in your wickedness, your days shall not be prolonged in the land, for the Lamanites shall be sent upon you, and ye shall be smitten with utter destruction; and it shall be according to the fierce anger of the Lord" (Alma 9:18)

Doctrine and Covenants 63:32 states, "I, the Lord, am angry with the wicked; I am holding my Spirit from the inhabitants of the earth."

And in Moses 5:56 we read, "God cursed the earth with a sore curse, and was angry with the wicked, with all the sons of men whom he had made" (Moses 5:56)

DIVINE ANGER
"RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION"

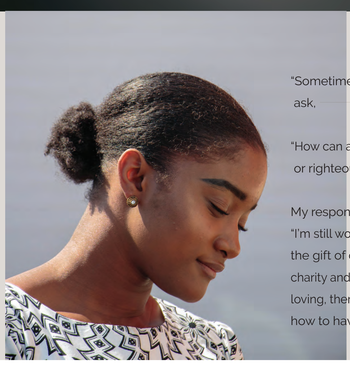
HIS ANGER TOWARDS THE WICKED

These verses demonstrate a clear pattern that Jesus Christ is angry with the wicked. That's probably not a theme we frequently focus on. Most of us probably think of Jesus as being loving and kind, and don't connect him with anger. After all, didn't Jesus teach in 3 Nephi to avoid contention and anger? How do we reconcile that we shouldn't get angry with the Lord being angry with the wicked?

CHRIST'S ANGER IS DIFFERENT THAN WHAT WE THINK OF AS HUMAN ANGER

One possibility is that Christ's anger is qualitatively different than what we think of as human anger. This divine anger, sometimes referred to as "righteous indignation" describes feelings that are different from our concept of anger. Christ's divine anger may be related to his feelings of frustration or disappointment when people hurt others or reject his teachings.

HOW CAN A PERSON HAVE DIVINE OR RIGHTEOUS ANGER?



"Sometimes I've had students ask,

"How can a person have divine or righteous anger?"

My response is always, "I'm still working on developing the gift of charity. Once I have charity and I've mastered being loving, then I'll start working on how to have righteous anger."

John Hilton

Although we're supposed to be like Christ, emulating him in terms of righteous anger could easily become a slippery slope to where we have the type of anger that he has forbidden in some sense of the word, the Lord is allowed to be angry with people because he has a position of power. It's his right, it's his prerogative to judge and to punish those who need it.

We can't apply this because we don't have any right to do that to others.

THE WICKED
WHO CHOOSE NOT TO REPENT

We can also note that these passages talk about the Lord being angry with the wicked **who consistently choose not to repent.** It's not like the Lord is angry because someone cut him off in traffic. Or that the Lord is angry with somebody who made a mistake but is trying. The Lord is angry with those who are persistently wicked.

To us this is a reminder that sin is real and Jesus does not like it. A phrase we hear in the world today is

"You do you."

You do you is certainly okay if we're talking about the hobbies you enjoy, the way you develop your talents, or your favorite way to eat a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup. But when it comes to keeping the commandments, Jesus does not say, "you do you."

He says, "Be like me."

STRIVE TO BE LIKE ME
AS YOU COME FOLLOW ME

VENGEANCE IS MINE I WILL REPAY

Here's one other thought on the Lord being angry with the wicked. This idea can sound harsh—especially if I'm worried that I'm one of the wicked and I don't want God to be angry with me. But imagine if you or someone you love has been the victim of a wicked act, and you feel deep hurt or betrayal. It might bring peace to your heart to know that Jesus isn't OK with those wicked acts.

He has said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay" (Romans 12:19).

To know that there's a powerful Lord who does not like wickedness, and will make wrong things right can bring healing when we face painful situations we cannot resolve on our own.

CHRIST EMPHASIZES

HIS JUDGEMENT

There are many other verses we could add. Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni all conclude their Book of Mormon writings with a message about final judgment. In the book of Matthew, Christ gives five extended sermons, and each one ends by speaking of judgment.

For example, in Matthew, Christ concludes his final discourse by saying that those who haven't served others "shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46).

These are some challenging teachings from the Savior. Why does he consistently emphasize judgment—including the wicked being cast into fire?

Perhaps it is to remind us that there are consequences for evil actions. God's love does not equal everyone returning to live with him. As Elder D. Todd Christofferson taught,

"Some are wont to say, "The Savior loves me just as I am," and that is certainly true. But He cannot take any of us into His kingdom just as we are, "for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence."

Our sins must first be resolved.

Be Not Afraid, by Michael Malm churchofjesuschrist.org

NO UNCLEAN THING CAN DWELL THERE

Another aspect of this principle is that it reminds us of Nephi's teaching that in the last days, one of Satan's strategies is to claim,

"There is no hell; and I am no devil" (2 Nephi 28:22).

In contemporary media we frequently see messages telling us that God is not real, there is no devil, and there are no consequences for doing wrong.

Even Elsa says, "No right, no wrong, no rules for me—I'm free."

It's tempting to give into whatever we want to do, but Jesus' consistent teachings on judgment remind us that there is a devil and there is a hell. There are absolute rights and wrongs—choosing the right brings happiness and choosing the wrong brings misery.

THERE ARE ABSOLUTE RIGHTS & WRONGS

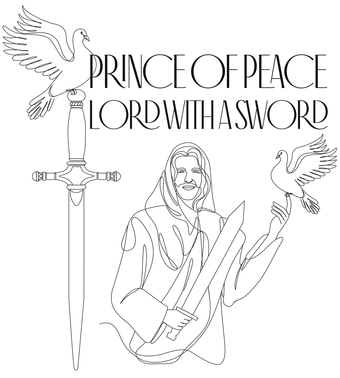
Let's conclude our discussion of the Savior with a sword with one more scripture passage. In Isaiah 27:1 we read,

"In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent...he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea."

We love the reminder from this verse that the Lord can and will fight our battles.

What's the Leviathan in your life right now? What's the sea monster that you're battling? We can find great comfort knowing that Jesus Christ, the Savior with a sword will help us fight our battles. When we're on his side, things will work out.

We love that Jesus is both the PRINCE OF PEACE and the LORD WITH A SWORD.



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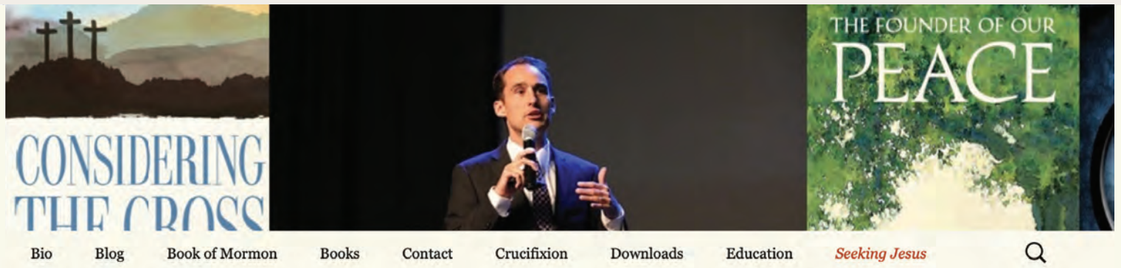

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