



the powers of darkness prevail

dc 38.¹⁰⁻¹⁵

¹⁰Verily I say unto you, ye are clean, but not all; and there is none else with whom I am well pleased; ¹¹for all flesh is corrupted before me; and the powers of darkness prevail upon the earth, among the children of men, in the presence of all the hosts of heaven—¹²Which causeth silence to reign, and all eternity is pained, and the angels are waiting the great command to reap down the earth, to gather the tares that they may be burned; and, behold, the enemy is combined.

¹³And now I show unto you a mystery, a thing which is had in secret chambers, to bring to pass even your destruction in process of time, and ye knew it not; ¹⁴but now I tell it unto you, and ye are blessed, not because of your iniquity, neither your hearts of unbelief; for verily some of you are guilty before me, but I will be merciful unto your weakness. ¹⁵Therefore, be ye strong from henceforth; fear not, for the kingdom is yours.

In a previous homily on DC 38.⁷⁻⁹, we found that God wants to be known, understood, and seen for who He is. We also found that He is not known, understood, and seen because of a “veil of darkness” that covers the mind and heart. That veil, as we discussed, is no light thing. Today’s passage informs us just how heavy and pervasive the “veil of darkness” is.

“All flesh is corrupted before me; and the powers of darkness prevail upon the earth, among the children of men.”

The “latter days” are not so different from “former days,” indeed, from “all days and every day.”

The Psalmist observed that

“YHWH looked down from the heavens

upon humankind

to determine, “Are there any in possession of knowledge;

any who consult ’ēlohîm?”

The whole lot of them had rebelled;
as one, they had become morally tainted.
There were none among them who did good.
None! Not even one!”¹

The apostle Paul would later latch on to this and other passages like it to characterize not only his own day but human history from beginning to end.² While Paul did not use this one, he could have.

“...The heart of the sons of men
is full of evil,
and madness is in their heart
while they live...”³

Having said all that, we should point out that the language used here in DC 38—“All flesh is corrupted before me; and the powers of darkness prevail upon the earth, among the children of men”—is remarkably and unsettlingly similar to that found in Genesis 6.

“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.”⁴

We should not be surprised by the similar language. As we have discussed in previous meditations, DC 38 comes on the heels of Joseph Smith’s “translation” work on Genesis. What he discovered in the process of “translating” is felt throughout DC 38. But more, what Joseph learned there dramatically impacted his thoughts, his intentions, and actions to the very end of his life.⁵

¹ Psalm 14.²⁻³, author’s translation

² See Romans 3.⁹⁻¹⁸

³ Ecclesiastes 9.³

⁴ Genesis 6.¹¹⁻¹²

⁵ See our meditation on DC 37.¹⁻⁴ and homily on DC 38.¹⁻⁶.

This is especially true of the Enoch material that is today found in the Book of Moses. The cosmic reaction to the latter-day corruption and darkness—“Which causeth silence to reign, and all eternity is pained”—reminds us of the cosmic reaction to the corruption and violence found immediately before the flood as recorded in Moses 7.

“The God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people and he wept.”⁶

“The whole heavens shall weep over them, even all the workmanship of mine hands; wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these shall suffer.... Wherefore, for this shall the heavens weep, yea, and all the workmanship of mine hands.”⁷

The description of latter-day corruption and darkness seems patterned after that found about the era just before Genesis’ flood. The cosmic response to the latter-day corruption and darkness seems patterned after the cosmic response to the corruption and violence of the pre-flood era. Can there be any doubt that the consequences of unchecked latter-day corruption and darkness might be as dire as the consequences of pre-flood era corruption and violence? Though it be not a flood, the Doctrine and Covenants is chock full of dire warnings of devastating consequences for latter-day corruption and darkness. Here is but a sampling.

“For a desolating scourge shall go forth among the inhabitants of the earth, and shall continue to be poured out from time to time, if they repent not, until the earth is empty, and the inhabitants thereof are consumed away and utterly destroyed by the brightness of my coming.”⁸

“But without faith shall not anything be shown forth except desolations upon Babylon, the same which has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”⁹

⁶ Moses 7.²⁸

⁷ See, Moses 7.³⁷⁻⁴⁰

⁸ DC 5.¹⁹

⁹ DC 35.¹¹

“For I, the Almighty, have laid my hands upon the nations, to scourge them for their wickedness. And plagues shall go forth, and they shall not be taken from the earth until I have completed my work, which shall be cut short in righteousness...”¹⁰

“And verily I say unto you, the rest of my servants, go ye forth as your circumstances shall permit, in your several callings, unto the great and notable cities and villages, reproofing the world in righteousness of all their unrighteous and ungodly deeds, setting forth clearly and understandingly the desolation of abomination in the last days. For, with you saith the Lord Almighty, I will rend their kingdoms; I will not only shake the earth, but the starry heavens shall tremble.”¹¹

“And thus, with the sword and by bloodshed the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn; and with famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God, until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all nations...”¹²

“For behold, and lo, vengeance cometh speedily upon the ungodly as the whirlwind; and who shall escape it? The Lord’s scourge shall pass over by night and by day, and the report thereof shall vex all people; yea, it shall not be stayed until the Lord come; for the indignation of the Lord is kindled against their abominations and all their wicked works” (97.²²⁻²⁴).

“Mine indignation is soon to be poured out without measure upon all nations; and this will I do when the cup of their iniquity is full.”¹³

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face. Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of

¹⁰ DC 84.⁹⁶⁻⁹⁷

¹¹ DC 84.¹¹⁷⁻¹¹⁸

¹² DC 87.⁶

¹³ DC 101.¹¹

desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation; and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord.”¹⁴

Noah’s generation, it seems, has nothing on ours. Noah was told to build a boat. Joseph Smith was told to build a city; to establish a new form of governance and a new economic system. The new form of governance and the new economic system are meant to undo the prevailing corruption, darkness, and violence of the old systems of governance and the old economic systems that have flooded the earth in suffering and blood since Cain killed Abel.

Notwithstanding all that has been said in DC 1-37, DC 38 represents a more concentrated and practical response and solution to the corruption, darkness, and violence that floods the earth today as it always has. The solution has gone largely unheeded even by those who utilize the Doctrine and Covenants. How much longer can the scourge be put off when even the house of God is full of those whose minds are veiled with darkness, corruption, and violence?

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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¹⁴ DC 112.²³⁻²⁴