

Christ: The Prototype of the Saved Man

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The topic today is Christ. In the next talk we'll be addressing the subject of coming to Christ, but in this talk today, it is about Christ Himself. You know, very often it is easy to summon confidence in the Lord when something happens in your life to remind you. When some event gives you evidence He exists. For that moment you briefly feel close to Him. But as soon as the cares and troubles of this world interfere, the moment passes, and you begin wondering, "Is it all true? Am I just believing a myth?"

Jesus Christ came into the world unexpected, unannounced by men, unanticipated by His generation, but expected and announced by heaven. There were signs in heaven, but men were largely oblivious. When the shepherds keeping watch over the flocks by night were interrupted,¹ it was not by an earthly herald. There was none among men. It was from beyond the veil. The Savior crept into the world with heaven noticing, but precious few of us paying attention to what was afoot.

It is so easy to overlook Him because of the cares of the world. I want to assure you He is real. He exists. He was a man, every bit a man as any of us. He had flesh, He had blood, He dwelt among us. Don't doubt that. For the purposes of this talk, trust in Him, believe in Him, have confidence in His existence.

If I can help you better envision our Lord, let me describe His characteristics. Our Lord was and is, affable, but He is not gregarious. He was approachable, and He is approachable and is not aloof. He is patient. He is willing to guide and He is willing to teach. He is intelligent but

¹ Luke 2: 8-14.

He not overbearing. He is humble in His demeanor, even though His power is undeniable. He is therefore, both a Lamb and a Lion.

I want you to keep three truths about Him in your mind as we begin today. Those truths are:

- He is quick to forgive sin,
- He allows all to come unto Him,
- and He is no respecter of persons.

In most cases it is our disrespect for ourselves that impedes coming to Him. We tend to think we aren't good enough. However, because He is quick to forgive sins, it really doesn't matter if you are not good enough. One of the first orders of business when you come into His presence is that He forgives you. He cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance,² but He has the capacity and the ability to forgive sin. Therefore although your sins may be as scarlet, He can, He will and He does, make you white as snow,³ no longer accountable for your limitations. Therefore you needn't fear, but you can approach boldly, our Lord.⁴ So with that prelude, let us begin:

It was a little over 40 years ago when I finally began to take seriously, the material offered by the missionaries. They were trying to convert me to this Mormon oddity. But I'd grown up near Mormons in Idaho, and knew their church was populated by 'nut jobs.' When I finally took them seriously, I did so hesitatingly. It required a lot for me to pray about whether or not this stuff I had been hearing was true. I spent about nine months before this getting visited, pamphleted, and filmstriped without taking it seriously. I had already heard a lot of the message

² D&C 1: 31.

³ Isa. 1: 18.

⁴ Heb. 4: 16.

the missionaries wanted to deliver while giving very little regard to the content. It didn't persuade me because I wasn't particularly interested. I was merely polite, but I had heard a lot.

When I finally got around to praying about it, I had in my possession the personal journal written by the fellow who first spoke up defending Mormonism in a night class.⁵ He wanted me to read about his conversion because in his journal he wrote his testimony.

I was in the military at the time, and Steve's journal recorded how he was converted while serving in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. As I recall, he hadn't been in Vietnam proper, but in neighboring Cambodia. He had been in an outpost under fire at the time he got a testimony. It happened on the night of a firefight while he was on the perimeter praying to know if *the Book of Mormon* was true.

I had this journal, was alone in the military barracks at night, reading it. I felt again inclined to pray and ask if this stuff the Mormons were preaching was true. So I knelt, I prayed, and then I got up from the prayer hoping for an answer.

There was no pillar of fire,⁶ and there was no conduit into heaven.⁷ In fact it was uneventful at the moment. I sat on the bed and I thought about what the missionaries had taught. They claimed it was all true. I recalled the verses they encouraged me to read.

Back in those days, there were quite a few Bible verses used by the missionaries. If you haven't read *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* by LeGrand Richards, you should. He was at one time the Presiding Bishop of the Church, then later a member of the Quorum of the 12. His book, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* was developed while he was a mission president as a way to introduce and discuss systematically the Mormon faith. The missionary discussions in those days

⁵ I have previously identified him as Steve Klaproth.

⁶ JS-H 1: 16.

⁷ JS-H 1: 30, 43.

were derived from *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, the title of which is taken from a verse in Isaiah.⁸ If you read *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, you essentially get the missionary program of the Church from those days, and you will see the format I was taught.

After praying and nothing happened, I sat and contemplated what the missionaries had taught. I first concluded Joseph Smith couldn't be a prophet, because there weren't going to be any more prophets. I mean such things were from the Bible-era! That is not the program today, that doesn't happen anymore.

As I thought about my conclusion a verse and a question came to mind. The verse was, "*By their fruits ye shall know them*," from the New Testament.⁹ The question was, "Well, if there is a test to apply, in order to determine whether or not he was a prophet, the presence of the test suggests the possibility of a prophet." I thought that an interesting point. Why would you have a test if there is not going to be another prophet? So, "*By their fruits you shall know them*," suggests the possibility, that there will, in fact, be someone you better apply that test to, someone for whom the test will become both relevant and important. So I couldn't categorically dismiss Joseph Smith as a prophet for the reason there absolutely could never be more. Therefore, I needed to ask the next question: What are Joseph's fruits?

I had no universe to draw from to apply the test of Joseph Smith's fruits, other than the missionaries teaching me, and the families in whose houses I had been taught. You have to understand, at the time I was young, still a teenager. I sat in a barracks trying to figure this out. Therefore I had to apply the "fruits test" to what little sampling I had. Well, those missionaries were so earnest, and they were my age. They were giving up two years of their lives. I was serving in the military, but they were serving in a church organization without being paid.

⁸ Isa. 29: 14.

⁹ Matt. 7: 15-16.

They had the same military haircut I had. They had a disciplined life. They didn't smoke and they didn't drink, and I couldn't say that at the time about me, or my military associates. I could tell the difference between the lives of these young men, and the lives of those I served with and my own life. I also could see a difference between the families whose houses I had been taught in, and the families I knew while growing up.

While I had a wonderful family growing up, others I knew did not. I am the son of a man I regard as heroic. He was kind and intelligent, a good example his entire life. My father was really the exception, and not the rule, among my friends. My childhood friend's families included abusers and alcoholics, and a variety of other shortcomings. The rule was to expect poor parents and families in disorder, and the exception was my family. But I saw no problems in any of the Mormon families whose houses I had visited.

So my conclusion was that there is some good fruit from Joseph Smith. I had no idea how to apply the standard and measure "fruit," but there was some evidence I thought might qualify as fruit. It suggested Joseph Smith had a positive effect on people's lives.

Then I went on to think, Wait a minute! The last verse of the New Testament says you can't add to the Bible.¹⁰ And Joseph Smith added a whole lot to the Bible. When the Mormons carry their Scriptures, they bring the Bible, and then they bring this other thing that's almost the same size! Joseph added that in violation of this warning, so there's something wrong with that.

I got the verse out, discovered it was two verses, looked at them and thought about it. What it became apparent to me was it does not say God can't add more scripture whenever God chooses to do so. It only says man is not supposed to do this. So if God, using Joseph, chose to add, then He certainly has an opening to do that.

¹⁰ Revelation 22: 18-19.

I give an account of the evening I spent in the barracks in *The Second Comforter*, in vignettes at the start of several chapters.

I spent a little over two hours following the prayer sitting on the bed rehearsing my doubts, while each of them seemed to have an answer in the scriptures. I went through doubt and question, after doubt and question. But each time there was an answer in the scriptures for every doubt, every apprehension, every question.

My final question was, “How do I even know there is a God? I could be spending this whole wasted effort, and there isn't even any one up there!” As soon as I finished the thought, the response came to me: “Who do you think you've been talking to for the last two hours?” It was a startling idea and came with such clarity it took me by surprise.

This brings up a matter of weakness I need to confess. The account in *The Second Comforter* misquotes God. Because the question He posed, and I can still remember it distinctly, was "Who do you think you've been talking to for the last two hours?" I was so apprehensive and weak willed when I submitted the first book I'd ever written to a publisher that when they wanted to correct the English and change “to” to “with” I let them. It was better grammar. Therefore when you read the account in *The Second Comforter*, the question that comes into my mind is: "Who do you think you have been talking with these last two hours?"

The truth of that night shows God speaks to us in our own language, in our own tongue, according to our understanding. He doesn't use an editor. He talks to us the way we talk. If I ever do a third edition of *The Second Comforter*, I now have the confidence and the resignation to just tell the truth. I no longer fear what others think. I don't care if there is a modern Simons Ryder¹¹ who says, “Well it can't be God, because He would know better than to use incorrect grammar.”

¹¹ He was the man whose name was misspelled in a revelation dictated by Joseph Smith. He lost faith in the restoration because of the misspelling.

I don't care about that anymore. I am past the point where I fear what men think. I'm past the point where I worry about doubts. I'm simply willing to declare to you what I know to be true, and then leave it to you. Frankly, when I tell you the truth, you become accountable for your reaction.

But having confessed that weakness, and correcting the record of *The Second Comforter* account, let me return to that evening. The question posed the possibility I had received an answer from God. It was startling. That response meant God was even willing to talk to an obscure guy, sitting in a barracks in New Hampshire, a long way from where he grew up, on the question of whether Joseph Smith was a prophet, and therefore Mormonism was true.

Reflecting on the response I realized if I acted on it, becoming a Mormon would cost me every childhood friend I had, and every friend I had in the military at the time. About the only thing my friends and I had in common were beer and pizza. It was going to require my life to change. However, if I had not acted on the answer, I don't think any of the good that followed could have happened.

At the moment I had an answer from God, only the thinnest of threads existed for me to believe in the restoration of the Gospel, in *the Book of Mormon*, and in God's willingness to speak. It had all of the substance of a spider's web, easily broken. The only way I could hold onto that was to have faith and to trust it. And so I did.

But having faith and trusting this was an answer from God required me to act. I was going to have to follow through and do something because of the answer. I needed to be baptized. This, in turn, meant I was going to join a group of religious eccentrics I had grown up dismissing. I was going to have to become one of them, with all the insecurity of whether I could measure up to being like them.

With self-doubt about my own strength as a worthy convert to this new religion, I nevertheless had faith God had spoken, and that imposed an obligation; and so I acted. When I acted and was baptized, it was as if a light had suddenly been turned on in my life. Everything changed. From that moment until now, everything has been different.

It has not been a struggle for me to live the life of a Latter-day Saint. It has not been a struggle to be a disciple of Christ. My life has been easier as a disciple of the Lord than it had been as a godless Gentile. It has been more fun to live a life of faith than it was to hang with schlocks, getting drunk and behaving stupidly. I laugh as much now as I did then, except what I'm laughing at does not cause someone else pain. Now it is genuinely funny stuff. I do have a perverse sense of humor, I have to tell you that. I even find a great deal of humor in Mormonism. Not the faith, but in the various contortions of those who think they believe it.

So, after two hours of debating whether Mormonism was true I had my first encounter with God. Those first prayerful hours were spent going through answers from God found in the scriptures. Keep that always in mind.

On the day the Lord was resurrected, Luke tells us how He spent the better part of that day. Beginning at Luke 24: 13 we read He spent the day talking to two people while walking beside them to the village of Emmaus. These two were talking between themselves about the things they saw in the preceding days. While walking, *"Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?"*

This is the Lord, and although they didn't recognize or apparently know Him, He surely knew them. He didn't want them to recognize Him, so they did not.

This incident tells a great deal about our Lord. He sidles up beside them, walks with them, and asks, "What are you talking about?" as if He didn't know. You see how gently He inserts Himself into the conversation. You see how unwilling He is to come and pontificate. You see how amenable, and how approachable, and how utterly unpretentious our Lord is.

He asks; *"What manner of communications are these?"* That produces almost a rebuke from Cleopas. *"Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass therein these days?"* Are you utterly ignorant of what's been happening here? Are you inattentive? Or are you just a new stranger? He may have even bristled a little when He asked the question, as if, this guy who had been in this area, during these few days, had been so inattentive to the significance of the man who just died, that Cleopas took some umbrage.

Now read the Lord's mild reply. He asks, *"What things?"* as if He hadn't lived them, as if He hadn't accomplished them.

"And they," notice now it is in the plural, it is no longer just Cleopas, but it is both of them who start explaining to Him about this *"Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people."* So essentially they were acknowledging Him, as at least a prophet.

"And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not." So they thought Him a prophet, and hoped He was

something more. They “trusted that it should have been Him who would redeem Israel.” This was the day of His resurrection and they've heard rumors from women He was risen. But these were, first of all, merely rumors, and second of all, they were rumors attributable to women, and we all know that women are hysterical,¹² and therefore require hysterectomies in order to rein them in, and turn them into something credible and believable. I put a comment up on the blog a few days ago about women as witnesses, and this is a reflection of that same phenomenon. Doubt is easier when the source of the information is the testimony of a woman, even though it ought not be so.

Now ask yourself: if you trusted this was Him who should have redeemed Israel, did He? Did He redeem Israel? He came, He taught, He submitted, He was killed, and it was three days since. In that circumstance, even with the rumors from the women, could you see that He had redeemed Israel? If you were part of the population, in that group, on that day, sitting in that environment, how would you answer the question of whether He redeemed Israel? The Romans were still there, Annas and Caiaphas were still faring sumptuously, Christ was killed, His disciples had been scattered, so what evidence did they have He had redeemed Israel. There were many things to suggest the contrary. (Later, even after His disciples see Him, they would return to their everyday labor.) Did He redeem Israel? Could you have seen it then? When it was happening before the eyes of these disciples, they could not see it. They could not comprehend how it had taken place.

Because you sing on Sundays the hymn "*Redeemer of Israel*" you have confidence you know what Christ accomplished. He IS the Redeemer. You proclaim this as if it were so very

¹² This is an example of my twisted sense of humor. I tend to see humor in cultural oddities like this and hope, by pointing them out in a funny way to persuade people to think about them more carefully. Some times we are serious about foolish things. Foolish things deserve to be laughed at.

apparent. It is no more apparent in this account in Luke that the redemption of Israel had been accomplished, than it is apparent to you what God is doing now, today. You do not even hear what is now sounding in your own ears.

He came and He redeemed Israel, and all the world missed it! Even His closest disciples doubted what had happened. It would be hundreds of years before the world would come around to acknowledge Him. By the time the world would come around to acknowledge Him, what was then left was inadequate to still redeem.

The day of salvation appears tenuously, almost as gossamer as a spider web, and if you don't lay hold of it, it is lost. Then generations can come and go while singing hymns to the pride of their ancestry and the greatness of their religion, while they all go to hell. Because when the Lord sets His hand, He sets it exactly the same way every time. It always requires faith to come aboard, and requires faith to even see it is underway. The Lord does not work except by faith.¹³

"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" They and you do not understand. You do not understand because the prophets have said this is exactly what our Lord would do.

Should not Christ have suffered? Should not He have come in apparent weakness and vulnerability? Should not He have come in the very manner in which He appeared, and then to have suffered just as the prophecies foretold? Is not the pattern always the same? Does not God manifest Himself to the world through the weak things first?¹⁴

"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Right here is the pattern followed in the New

¹³ See Ether 12: 10-12.

¹⁴ D&C 1: 18-19.

Testament Gospels framework. Christ explained how to understand His ministry. You use the scriptures and the prophets to understand how the mundane events fit the foretold glory. He uses such small means they are unseen except through faith. Only when the small means accomplish what God foretold are they mighty to save. Only the scriptures are able to define what matters and how God's hand is moving to fulfill His promises.

It was this framework later used by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John when composing their testimonies of Christ. They also wove into their record how Christ fulfilled the prophecies. In each of the Four Gospels there is a format that mirrors what the Lord did as He spoke on the road to Emmaus with these two disciples. He proved Christ came and suffered as He ought to have done, because all the prophets were fulfilled in Him. Therefore He opened unto them Scriptures that they might understand.

Our Lord could have testified of Himself by revealing 10,000 new truths! Our Lord could have disclosed and preached and delivered practically any new content He chose to deliver! But instead our Lord expounded the scriptures concerning Him! That should tell you something about how He prefers for us to learn the truth.

When the Lord first spoke to me, He expounded the scriptures about the Restoration. When He appeared on the day of His resurrection, His visit with everyone that day but these two on the Road to Emmaus, was brief, even perfunctory, and included only a small amount of information. Essentially, He proved He had risen. But here we read of the Lord taking hours, walking and talking, opening up in a discourse in which *"he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."* They did not recognize who He was, but they were moved by the content of His sermon.

When they arrived at Emmaus, He came in because they asked Him to stay. If they had not asked, He would have passed by. That also tells you something important about our Lord. He does not force Himself upon you. You must invite.

Well, you can read the rest of the account in Luke's chapter. But at the end of this encounter, *"they said to one another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"* It was the exposition of the scriptures that let them know.

I do not believe it is necessary to reveal any new thing in order to be able to teach in a way that opens eyes to everything the Lord has, and is doing, apart from expounding the Scriptures. He didn't think it was necessary either.

Look at the Lord's first appearance to Joseph Smith. Go to verse 19 of the Joseph Smith History and read the words the Lord speaks to Joseph. He quotes or paraphrases Isaiah, Jeremiah and Paul. In just one short run-on sentence, the Lord talks about the doctrines being taught for commandments were the doctrines of men, *"they have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof, they draw near to me with their lips but their hearts are far from me."* You see, once again when He appears to Joseph in the First Vision, our Lord is expounding the scriptures.

He picks out from the language of His prophets phrasing to tell Joseph: This is the condition in which you find yourself. This is what the prophets were speaking about. This is when mankind would search the earth and not find the word of God.¹⁵

When Moroni came to visit with Joseph Smith, what did he do with Joseph? Remember this was to train Joseph for the ministry he was about to begin. Moroni quoted prophecies from Malachi, Isaiah, Peter, and Joel.

¹⁵ Amos 8: 11-12.

It took a long time for me to recognize the pattern. But now I know the pattern in which the Lord reveals and discusses new truth is the same in every generation.¹⁶ So when He came in answer to prayer and spoke to me sitting in the barracks, despite the fact there were no fireworks, no pillar of fire, no shining man in a robe, He used the scriptures and expounded them to increase my understanding. I grew to understand the Lord is indeed the same yesterday, today and forever. His path is straight and His course is one eternal round.¹⁷ Therefore today I want to use scriptures and the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith to bear testimony of who our Lord is, and how significant His example is for us. I've told you previously in Idaho Falls that *The Lectures on Faith* are scripture. They were adopted as scripture by the church, and we covered that before. This is from the 7th Lecture on Faith, paragraph 9, about Christ:

"Where shall we find a saved being? for if we can find a saved being, we may ascertain without much difficulty what all others must be in order to be saved. We think that it will not be a matter of dispute, that two beings who are unlike each other cannot both be saved; for whatever constitutes the salvation of one will constitute the salvation of every creature which will be saved; and if we find one saved being in all existence, we may see what all others must be, or else not be saved. We ask, then, where is the prototype? or where is the saved being? We conclude, as to the answer of this question, there will be no dispute among those who believe the bible, that it is Christ: all will agree in this, that he is the prototype or standard of salvation; or, in other words, that he is a saved being. And if we should continue our interrogation, and ask how it is that he is saved? the answer would be—because he is a just and holy being; and if he were anything different from what he is he would not be saved; for his salvation depends on his being precisely what he is and nothing else; for if it were possible for him to change, in the least

¹⁶ See also 3 Ne. 23: 14.

¹⁷ Alma 37: 12.

degree, so sure he would fail of salvation and lose all his dominion, power, authority and glory, which constitute salvation; for salvation consists in the glory, authority, majesty, power and dominion which Jehovah possesses and in nothing else; and no being can possess it but himself or one like him."

When you read this language do not succumb to the temptation to gloss over it. Do not think salvation consists of Christ magically applying ‘fairy dust’ to make us like Him. If Christ could “make” us like Him that would be Luciferian.¹⁸ It would abrogate free will. It would save without respecting agency.¹⁹ We have the freedom to choose because without that we would not exist.²⁰ Therefore, to preserve our existence there cannot be any magic elevation of man. Rather, man must ascend by degrees and through experience to become like God. And Jesus Christ is the prototype who has proven this ascent is possible.

This was taught by Joseph Smith in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. This is the material he spent his time editing and perfecting before its publication. His diary does not say he spent any time revising the revelations. That was entrusted to a committee responsible for getting those ready to publish. When the committee prepared the revelations they did some freelancing, embellishing and expanding. Some of the stuff they added to the revelations was remarkably more expansive than what Joseph had revealed. But the revelations are not where Joseph spent his time prior to publication of the 1835 D&C. He spent his time with *The Lectures on Faith*.

¹⁸ Moses 4: 1.

¹⁹ Moses 4: 3.

²⁰ D&C 93: 30-31.

This was relatively early in his ministry. The church was incorporated in 1830. He would spend fourteen years as its leader. While Joseph presided the church was “true and living” because Joseph spoke with and for God.²¹

The *Lectures* were prepared five years into Joseph’s church ministry. It is clear he wanted to make sure the doctrine was correct. This is the “doctrine” he prepared for that first publication of the “Doctrine” & Covenants. Yet, despite that, we tend to rarely read this, and when we do it is not taken seriously.

If you are going to be saved, you must be “exactly,” you must be “precisely” what Christ is and “nothing else.” You! At the moment when you are saved this is what you must be, “or else not be saved.” Christ is the prototype and we must mirror Him. He proved God the Father’s word by doing what the Father asked. This is how Christ identified Himself to the Nephites. He “suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.” (3 Ne. 11: 11.) Or, in other words, Christ was obedient before this world was, and this world started in its creation after Christ was first qualified to redeem it.

As a consequence of that doctrine, to speak of Christ is necessarily to speak of salvation. To understand Christ is to understand salvation. Your salvation is to be understood as requiring from you exactly what was required of Christ. You cannot be different from Christ and yet be saved, because your salvation depends upon you being precisely what He is and nothing else. Despite how plainly this has been put, we still stop short of comprehending this doctrine.

Joseph Smith publicly taught this topic again at the end of his ministry. April 1844 was the last General Conference of the Church Joseph would live to see. On April 7th of 1844, Joseph gave a talk that relied on this doctrine of the church found in the 7th Lecture on Faith.

²¹ D&C 1: 30.

I'm going to first read to you the version that appears in *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Then to make sure you realize how impressive the point was to those in attendance, I'm going to go back to the talk as recorded by those present that day. There is one important and curious matter picked up by every one of those diaries.

Joseph said: *I wish I was in a suitable place to tell it, and that I had the trump of an archangel, so that I could tell the story in such a manner that persecution would cease forever. What did Jesus say? (Mark it, Elder Rigdon!) The Scriptures inform us that Jesus said, As the Father hath power in Himself, even so hath the Son power--to do what? Why, what the Father did. The answer is obvious--in a manner to lay down His body and take it up again. Jesus, what are you going to do? To lay down my life as my Father did, and take it up again. Do we believe it? I you do not believe it, you do not believe the Bible. The Scriptures say it, and I defy all the learning and wisdom and all the combined powers of earth and hell together to refute it. Here, then, is eternal life--to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead..."*

Think carefully about those words: From "exaltation to exaltation." From "grace to grace." This is the process that lasts until you attain to "the resurrection of the dead." This is not what we generally take it to mean. We do not "attain" to this just by coming out of the grave. Your rise from the dead will be because Christ, not you, attained to the resurrection of the dead. Christ said, *"I am the resurrection and the life."* You must be precisely what He is and nothing else.

You hear those who say, “The Church has all the keys but we do not yet have the keys of the resurrection.”²² That is true enough. That is because even when you are resurrected, you will still not have “attained to the resurrection of the dead” nor hold the keys of resurrection until you, like Christ, have gone from exaltation to exaltation, until you likewise attain to the power to resurrect all that depends upon you. John 5:19 says, *"The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."* The Father went before, and the Son follows after.²³ If you think that you can at some point, like Him, attain to the status of godhood, then you are going to have to do precisely what it is that the Gods do. Therefore, to understand Christ is to understand the challenging destiny about which Joseph Smith is speaking in his last Conference talk in 1844. You too must progress, *"Until you attain to the resurrection of the dead and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power."*

Even what we envision as the highest heaven, is a condescension for those who sit enthroned, able to dwell in everlasting burnings. Else why in section 130 would you be given a white stone that reveals things that pertains to “a higher order of kingdoms,”²⁴ when you are in

²² See, e.g., President Spencer W. Kimball in General Conference, *Our Great Potential*, April 1977, quoting Brigham Young in the Journal of Discourses, “It is supposed by this people that we have all the ordinances in our possession for life and salvation, and exaltation, and that we are administering in those ordinances. This is not the case. We are in possession of all the ordinances that can be administered in the flesh; but there are other ordinances and administrations that must be administered beyond this world. I know you would like to ask what they are. I will mention one. We have not, neither can we receive here, the ordinance and the keys of the resurrection.” (Citing *JD* 15: 137.)

²³ I have previously explained how Christ, as well as the “noble and great” were all embodied and therefore resurrected beings before this world. They were “souls.” (Abraham 3: 23.) The definition of “soul” given through Joseph years prior to his translation of the Book of Abraham required both the “spirit and the body” together. (D&C 88: 15-17.) For more on this see my essay *The First Three Words*.

²⁴ D&C 130: 10.

the Celestial Kingdom?²⁵ This is because where you are now, at this moment, in this meeting, hearing my voice in this room today, is about halfway to where you need to grow. It has been almost infinite in the time that has been required to get you here today. Much more will be required before you will arrive at the point at which you will be precisely as Christ became.

I might add where Christ has arisen to dwell in everlasting burnings is about halfway to where things ultimately can go in this “higher order of kingdoms” spoken of in Section 130. You say it's necessary in this condition to have a physical body in order to come down here and perform, and you say that rightly. But there are other places beyond this. There are places where, in everlasting glory, the personages dwelling there are of “spirit, glory, and power” like The Father.²⁶

Joseph adds: “*And I want you to know that God, in the last days, while certain individuals are proclaiming his name, is not trifling with you or me.*” We hear preaching and exhorting which is so vain it will not raise anyone. It cannot advance anyone in the least, because it has no power. The preachers have not been asked, and therefore cannot teach what must be said to bring a soul closer to God.

But “*to attain to the resurrection to the dead*” it means you have the power to resurrect, not only yourself, but those who are dependent upon you. This is what the prototype of the saved man did. This is who we worship. This is what we must precisely and exactly become, and nothing else. It is still some distance from where we are today.

Now Joseph said something remarkable about this idea in his discourse: “*These are the first principles of consolation. How consoling to the mourners when they are called to part with a husband, wife, father, mother, child, or dear relative, to know that, although the earthly*

²⁵ This is given to “each of those who come into the celestial kingdom.” D&C 130: 11.

²⁶ See Lecture 5, ¶2.

tabernacle is laid down and dissolved, they shall rise again to dwell in everlasting burnings in immortal glory, not to sorrow, suffer, or die anymore; but they shall be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. What is it? To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of a God, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before. What did Jesus do? Why; I do the things I saw my Father do when worlds come rolling into existence. My Father worked out his kingdom with fear and trembling, and I must do the same; and when I get my kingdom, I shall present it to my Father, so that he may obtain kingdom upon kingdom, and it will exalt him in glory. He will then take a higher exaltation, and I will take his place, and thereby become exalted myself. So that Jesus treads in the tracks of his Father, and inherits what God did before; and God is thus glorified and exalted in the salvation and exaltation of all his children. It is plain beyond disputation, and you thus learn some of the first principles of the Gospel, about which so much hath been said."

You heard that right. "*It is plain beyond disputation, and you thus learn some of the first principles of the Gospel, about which so much hath been said.*" No doubt you have heard all your life the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: faith, repentance, baptism and laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. We know that because Joseph wrote that in the *Wentworth Letter*. We lifted it out of there and we put in the back of *The Pearl of Great Price* and it's now *The Articles of Faith*, right? But here, near the end of his life, Joseph has just redefined the first principles of the Gospel.

He mentions the "first principles" as something about "*which so much hath been said.*" This must be put into context. There was a "restorationist" movement that began before Joseph's birth. This movement sought to "restore" a New Testament church. All the various congregations involved were talking about the first principles of the Gospel.

Long before Sidney Rigdon was baptized a member of the Church of Christ (which was the name of the church originally),²⁷ he was preaching the “first principles were faith, repentance, baptism” as a Campbellite minister.²⁸ Likewise Parley P. Pratt was a fellow Campbellite and believed in these “first principles of the Gospel” before converting to Mormonism. This “first principles of the Gospel” idea became a mantra among all the restorationist movement churches.

Before becoming Mormon Parley Pratt would have told you the same things as we find in Joseph Smith’s much later *Wentworth Letter*. The “first principles of the Gospel” became a rallying cry for people who wanted to have a New Testament church return to life. They claimed the first principles of the Gospel could be found in the New Testament, and any restored church would practice them. The overwhelming majority of early Mormon converts were drawn out of the same restorationist religious landscape. They were all familiar with and talking about “the first principles of the Gospel.” Joseph was conceding the point, and he used that as a reference to structure his own explanation of “the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel” as found in the *Wentworth Letter*.

But in this General Conference talk given April 1844, the restoration through Joseph Smith was then far along. Further, Joseph was speaking to an audience who had been converted to the restoration through him. At the time of this talk, Joseph was about 67 days away from his death. This was the end of his ministry, not the beginning. Further, the audience he was

²⁷ It went from the “Church of Christ” (as commanded by 3 Ne. 27: 8) to the “Church of the Latter-day Saints” to “the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (as permitted by D&C 115: 4).

²⁸ Thomas and Alexander Campbell were leaders in this movement, and Sidney Rigdon was originally a disciple-preacher in Alexander Campbell’s

addressing had been aboard the church for a while. They had listened to his sermons, and they knew something more about God than John Wentworth and his readers.²⁹

Joseph Smith's audience for this sermon had *the Book of Mormon*. His listeners were largely converted through *the Book of Mormon*. They had Joseph's revelations. Joseph had been their Prophet, and he had taught them a great deal before April 1844. So when he returned to the "first principles about which so much hath been said" he was speaking to those inside the church, not to the unconverted and untaught. He was able to tell them much more about what the Gospel really included. He opened up and declared they really are this:

- Attaining to the resurrection from the dead,
- becoming Gods, and
- walking in the same path as our Lord walked.

These are the real first principles of the Gospel! That's why he wished he had the trumpet of an archangel with which to declare it. He didn't have that. But I read his words as if they came from an archangel.

"You thus learn some of the first principles of the Gospel, about which so much hath been said. When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel--you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave."

²⁹ He was the editor of the *Chicago Democrat* when Joseph Smith wrote to him.

This is all from *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. But this is an amalgamation of the various accounts written by those in the audience that day. One of those was Wilford Woodruff. He recorded the same talk. I am not going to read all of his notes, but only a few excerpts which confirm the substance of Joseph's sermon.

Reading the Wilford Woodruff account: *"You've got to learn how to make yourselves God, king and priest by going from a small capacity to a great capacity, to the resurrection of the dead, to dwelling in everlasting burnings. I want you to know the first principle of this law, how consoling it is to the mourner when they part with a friend to know that they lay down this body, it will rise and dwell in everlasting burnings to be an heir with God and joint-heir with Jesus Christ and join the same rise and exaltation and glory until you arrive at the station of a God. What did Jesus Christ do? The same thing as I see the Father do. See the Father do what? Work out a kingdom. When I do so too, I will give the Father which will add to His glory, He will take a higher exaltation and I will take His place, and I'm also exalted. These are the first principles of the Gospel. It will take a long time after the grave to understand the whole. If I should say anything but what was in the Bible, a cry of treason will be heard."* Again we see the same first principles of the Gospel:

- the resurrection,
- becoming gods, and
- walking in the same path as those who went before.

The Thomas Bullock report of the same sermon confirms: *"This is eternal life to know the only wise and true God. You have got to learn how to be Gods yourself, and be kings and priests to God, the same as all have done by going from a small capacity to another, grace to grace until the resurrection and sit in everlasting power as they who have gone before. And God in the*

last days, while certain individuals are proclaiming His name is not trifling with us. All earthly tabernacles should be dissolved, that they shall be heirs of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ to inherit the same power and exaltation until you ascend the throne of eternal power the same as those who have gone before. You thus learn the first principles of the Gospel. When you climb a ladder you must begin at the bottom." The same theme is recorded here.

These are the basics of the Gospel of Christ. This is the foundation upon which salvation itself rests. This is the way you must climb in order for you to be like Him. But it will be a great while after you leave this life before you will arrive there. No one will do this for you. You can go from exaltation to exaltation, and from grace to grace, but you will only arrive at the end when you have learned all you will need to know to be like Christ.

If you understand Christ, you understand salvation. He is the prototype, and therefore you must be like that prototype in order for you to be saved. Go to D&C Section 93 and you read something similar to Joseph's April 1844 General Conference talk. Section 93 beginning at verse seven restores a part of John's record. The fullness of the record is yet to be revealed.

Let me add that despite the fact this reads very much like John the Beloved, somehow the position was taken by a number of Church leaders (then ultimately declared to be so by Bruce R. McConkie), that this was the testimony of John the Baptist. This view maintains that John the Beloved was a disciple of John the Baptist and got his first lessons from him. Therefore when John the Beloved wrote his testimony he incorporated what he learned earlier from the Baptist. Therefore, the reasoning goes, when you read John the Baptist's testimony here you are reading the source from which John the Beloved would draw when he wrote his Gospel of John.

I did not take any issue with Bruce R. McConkie in one of the books I wrote earlier. It wasn't important to do so. I simply accepted the view that this was the testimony of John the

Baptist. Once again, it's one of those things that I did and now later regret. I wish I hadn't done that. At the time I wrote earlier, and still today, I don't believe this is the testimony of John the Baptist.³⁰ I think it is the testimony of John the Beloved, and a restoration of part of John the Beloved's record. But be that as it may, it's the testimony of John.

"And he bore record, saying: I saw his glory, that he was in the beginning, before the world was; Therefore, in the beginning the Word was, for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation—The light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world, because the world was made by him, and in him was the life of men and the light of men. The worlds were made by him; men were made by him; all things were made by him, and through him, and of him. And I, John, bear record that I beheld his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, even the Spirit of truth, which came and dwelt in the flesh, and dwelt among us. And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace; And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness; And thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fulness at the first." (D&C 93:7-12) This is the testimony of John bearing record of what he saw concerning our Lord before He entered this world.

This is a description of what Christ did before He became flesh to dwell among us. This is who He was before the world was. He went from grace to grace, until He was “called the Son of God.” This is very important. Our Lord Jesus Christ advanced by degrees, from grace to grace, before He entered this world, long before He took upon Him mortal flesh here, He

³⁰ Earlier I thought my obligation to support church leaders even extended to the obligation to avoid contradicting them, even when wrong. See, e.g., Dallin H. Oaks, *Criticism*, Ensign Magazine February 1987. I no longer have that obligation and therefore feel free to weigh the question independent of the LDS Church's preferences. I believe it is unhealthy to pretend there are no problems with church claims and teachings when they are false. Therefore I believe it is wrong to advance falsehoods as if they were true. It offends God.

experienced a long period of development. He acquired through that development sufficient grace to be “called the Son of God.” And this is the prototype of the saved man!

This is what you must be, or else not be saved. These are the first principles of the Gospel, on which we will now focus so that you can understand who it is that you worship, and how to worship Him.

As long as you are here in this mortal venue, clothed in mere flesh, you have the great endowment and capacity to offer a sacrifice to God. You are in the ideal condition to develop the ability to exercise faith in Him. You couldn’t do it if you were continuously living in His presence. You will not return to His presence until you first develop that faith. Therefore you are in an ideal, even enviable place here.

You will be amazed at the grace it is possible to acquire, if you will only do so while in this dark place. You are here to accomplish great deal, and I hope by the time we are finished today you will be more fortified to accomplish it. This creation was designed as an opportunity to sharply contrast good and evil. It is a testing or proving ground. That is exactly why you are here. This is a glorious opportunity. You wanted it. You shouted for joy at the idea of coming here to experience this veil of flesh.³¹ Therefore you should rejoice again now, because salvation is free³² and offered to us all.

This description of “the prototype of the saved man” raises the question of the “saved woman.” There have been differences between man and woman from the beginning.³³ There remain differences throughout the afterlife, as well. If I were to reduce the differences to one word, the role of the man is to become knowledge, so as to be able to fulfill a role that is eternal.

³¹ Job 38: 4-7.

³² 2 Ne. 2: 4.

³³ The results of the Fall of Adam were different for Adam and Eve. See Gen. 3: 16-19.

The role of the woman is to become wisdom, because creation will only move forward if guided by wise counsel and prudent adaptations. Only together do they become complete, and therefore “one.” Alone they are sterile, but joined they are infinite because they continue. Knowledge alone may provide the spark of creation, but it is potentially dangerous when merely energetic. Creation must be wisely assisted to avoid peril. Wisdom alone is not an agent of action. Knowledge can initiate action, but wisdom is necessary to guide and counsel. The physical is a mirror of the spiritual. The seed of man provides the spark of life, but it is the womb of women in which life is developed to become viable. Likewise, the role of the woman in nurturing new life here is akin to the role of wisdom in eternity. Together these become whole, capable of both producing and then guiding creation. The woman sacrifices her blood to bring new life here. This physical world reflects the spiritual. This is the best I can think of to differentiate their eternal roles. In scripture wisdom is feminine.³⁴ In Hebrew it is called “chokmah” (phonetically khok-maw’), which is a feminine noun. In Greek it is “sophia” which is likewise a feminine noun.

Without stating something inappropriate, Christ could not have done what He did, if He had not had a woman to fulfill a role in relation to Him. She anointed Him preliminary to His death, burial and resurrection. She was the first one to greet Him when resurrected. It was not possible, under the process required for salvation of a God, for Him to accomplish all that was needed without the presence of the woman. There is no Father without a Mother. There is no God without a Divine Consort at His side. She has a distinct role to accomplish some needful things in connection with finishing the path to godhood.

³⁴ For example: “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars. She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the highest places of the city,” (Pro. 9: 1-2); “for they will not seek wisdom, neither do they desire that she should rule over them!” (Mosiah 8: 20.)

If it were important for the details of those kinds of things to be available now, then the scriptures and temple rites would include them. Paul wrote of the Father and Son possessing “all riches” through what he calls “a mystery” by which both God the Father and Christ held “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”³⁵ Such things are best left vague in the present state of mankind.

Because of where this generation has sunk, none of that is germane to us. The challenges we face and the burdens we must bear to get from where we are to where we need to be are great enough. There is no reason to be distracted by what is far beyond this generation’s present reach. Therefore the scriptures wisely allude to, but do not elaborate upon, these events in the Lord’s life. And so far, those few who have been in a position to talk about it have never felt they had any right to do so.

Our Lord, before the world was, *“received not the fullness at first but received grace for grace.”* It is foolish to think “grace for grace” consists of merely choosing to obey some commandment to secure some blessing. There is, of course, something to that.³⁶ But this description of the process Christ followed to rise up involved far more. It is truer and more accurate to say, in connection with the long preparation that preceded the call of Christ to be “the Son of God,” that His achievement of “grace for grace” was something involving the ladder Joseph said we must climb.

Christ was “called the Son of God,” because He “received not the fullness at first.” He was “called” to be the Son of God because that was not His status before achieving grace for grace. Therefore He had to first qualify to be “called” to be the Son of God. Therefore it is self-evident that He “received not the fullness at first.”

³⁵ Coloss. 2: 2-3.

³⁶ See D&C 130: 20-21.

"And I, John, bear record, and lo, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my beloved Son.³⁷ And I, John, bear record that he received a fulness of the glory of the Father; And he received all power, both in heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with him, for he dwelt in him. And it shall come to pass, that if you are faithful you shall receive the fulness of the record of John. I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness. For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace." (D&C 93: 15-20) This is testimony worthy of an archangel. Only a great light could have seen these things while mortal, having qualified to bear witness of such wonderful things.

Long before the Lord assumed the role and responsibility of descending here and being the Redeemer of this world, He was qualified by acquiring grace, through doing things to prove Himself, while He was behind the veil, just as you presently find yourselves situated. This is not the place for an experiment to learn whether mankind will be rescued from the grave. It must be certain before there is a Fall, that there will be an adequate atonement to rescue mankind. If man were not rescued, they would be eternally subject to captivity in the same condition as the devil.³⁸ This catastrophe could only be avoided by perfect foreknowledge.

Only by first proving He had the grace to overcome all through His obedience to the commandments of God could He be "called the Son of God." Even though it would be a great

³⁷ This happened at His baptism. (See Matt. 3: 13-17; Luke 3: 21-22; John 1: 32-34.) Since John the Baptist was there, this has led to some LDS leaders attributing the testimony to the Baptist.

³⁸ 2 Ne. 9: 8-9.

while before He, and now you, would rise up to that level, still He has lived His life with such grace that He qualified to receive more, and to develop and to move up. He became “the Word of God”³⁹ because He followed “every word [or instruction] which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”⁴⁰

When you think of Christ as “the prototype of the saved man” you should also remember Christ “attained to the resurrection” by “breaking the bonds of death.”⁴¹ Justice requires man to die.⁴² When I die it will be deserved. The same is true for all mankind from Adam to the present.⁴³ However, when Christ died it was unjust. The “wages of sin” is death, but He did not earn those wages.⁴⁴ He never submitted to sin,⁴⁵ and therefore the law of justice was offended by His death.⁴⁶ Because of this, He was able to take His body up again, and the law of justice could not prevent it.⁴⁷

³⁹ D&C 93: 8.

⁴⁰ Matt. 4: 4. In this declaration Christ distinguished Himself from the devil, who was tempting Him. The course these two had taken determined their respective destinies. One rebelled, the other submitted. Therefore Christ’s declaration to live by every word of His Father clearly distinguishes between Him, and His tempter on the one essential requirement to acquire grace.

⁴¹ “And thus God breatheth the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men—“ Mosiah 15: 8.

⁴² “And thus we see that all mankind were fallen, and they were in the grasp of justice; yea, the justice of God, which consigned them forever to be cut off from his presence.” Alma 42: 15. “[B]ut it was appointed unto men that they must die; and after death, they must come to judgment[.]” Alma 12: 27.

⁴³ “[A]ll mankind were in a lost and in a fallen state, and ever would be save they should rely on this Redeemer.” 1 Ne. 10: 6.

⁴⁴ Romans 6: 23.

⁴⁵ Christ “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Heb. 4: 15. “He suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them.” D&C 20: 22.

⁴⁶ “Yea, behold, this death bringeth to pass the resurrection, and redeemeth all mankind from the first death—that spiritual death; for all mankind, by the fall of Adam being cut off from the presence of the Lord, are considered as dead, both as to things temporal and to things spiritual.” Helaman 14: 16.

⁴⁷ “For the atonement satisfieth the demands of his justice upon all those who have not the law given to them, that they are delivered from that awful monster, death and hell, and the devil, and

Christ's death was not only unjust, but it was an eternal offense. When the life of a man who should have lived forever has been taken, what He gave up was infinite.⁴⁸ Therefore the price He paid was infinite.⁴⁹ Whatever justice demanded had been satisfied, and He could then intercede for all mankind.⁵⁰

Christ's resurrection, therefore, came as a matter of right to Him because the grave could make no just claim upon His life.⁵¹ In turn, this allows Him to make an infinite intercession and likewise bring us and together with all creation back into a restored state.⁵² He paid the price to reverse Adam's fall.⁵³ All of His creation benefits.

This is what Joseph was referring to as "attaining the resurrection" in his last talk in General Conference. This is the trek that every saved man must take to complete the process. Hence Joseph's saying, "it will be a great while after the grave before" we will rise up to be gods ourselves. Do not sleep away this life. Awake and arise! There is a great deal to be done.

There is no magic to this process. There is only progression and refinement. It will be required for each of us, just as has been required of all who went before, that we "learn to be gods" by what we experience. Part of that learning must eventually include the ability to break

the lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment; and they are restored to that God who gave them breath, which is the Holy One of Israel." 2 Ne. 9: 26.

⁴⁸ "Wherefore it must needs be an infinite atonement." 2 Ne. 9: 7.

⁴⁹ "[F]or it shall not be a human sacrifice; but it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice." Alma 34: 10.

⁵⁰ "And thus, God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men—Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice." Mosiah 15: 8-9.

⁵¹ "[H]aving redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice." Mosiah 15: 9.

⁵² "Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law[.]" 2 Ne. 2: 7.

⁵³ "[A]s in Adam, or by nature, they fall, even so the blood of Christ atoneth for their sins." Mosiah 3: 16. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15: 22.

the bonds of death, as Christ did.⁵⁴ But we develop during mortality, and receive *from* this life exactly what we develop into while mortal.⁵⁵

God’s patience for us is infinite. It will require going “from exaltation to exaltation” before we ascent to the place of Christ, “the prototype of the saved man.” But we have all eternity to work out our salvation.

Those who think it is enough to merely “get into heaven” are really talking about “the deaths”⁵⁶ and not what God offers His children. God offers eternal lives.⁵⁷ Those who will endure to the end,⁵⁸ worlds without end,⁵⁹ will receive eternal life and obtain the resurrection.

We must be exactly and precisely like Christ to receive all power in heaven and earth, including the power of the resurrection. It was only after His resurrection Christ claimed this power.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ “But behold, the bands of death shall be broken, and the Son reigneth, and hath power over the dead; therefore, he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead.” Mosiah 15: 20.

⁵⁵ When we rise from the dead, “they who are righteous shall be righteous still, and they who are filthy shall be filthy still[.]” 2 Ne. 9: 16. “[T]he spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow.” Alma 40: 12.

⁵⁶ See D&C 132: 25: “Broad is the gate and wide the way that leadeth to the deaths; and many there are that go in thereat, because they receive me not, neither do they abide in my law.”

⁵⁷ “For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me. But if ye receive me in the world, then shall ye know me, and also receive your exaltation; that where I am ye shall be also. And this is eternal lives—to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent.” D&C 132: 22-24.

⁵⁸ “And the words which I have written in weakness will be made strong unto them; for it persuadeth them to do good; it maketh known unto them of their fathers; and it speaketh of Jesus, and persuadeth them to believe in him, and to endure to the end, which is life eternal.” 2 Ne. 33: 4.

⁵⁹ Those who will not rise up and mirror “the prototype of the saved man” will not be able to be like Him. “And they shall be servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end.” D&C 76: 112.

⁶⁰ “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” Matt. 28: 18.

Turning to Alma chapter 13, we learn more about the process. This helps define what it takes to move from grace to grace. Beginning in chapter 13 of Alma, verse one. *"I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of **his Son**, to teach these things unto the people. And those priests were ordained after the order of **his Son**, in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to **his Son** for redemption. And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world"*

Did you get that? We're talking about priests. Notice it is repeated three times: *"his Son...his Son...his Son."* We think there are a great deal more priests "after the order of his Son" than there are or ever have been. This kind of priest belonging to this holy order is infrequent in the world. On the few occasions when they appear, they are here so that you may understand who *"his Son"* is. They are not here to control others or profit from religion. They kneel and serve, but do not preside and conduct. The imposters always occupy those seats and only the proud seek for them. Our Lord descended below all things here, and let others exercise authority over Him.

These are those few who became qualified *"before the foundation of the world."* They qualified because of what they did before coming into this life. But they certainly did not and could not have qualified unless they had been "proven" by what they experienced and how they responded. They are sent to teach in a manner that will make others look forward to Christ coming. Whether before His birth in Bethlehem or before His final triumphant return, they teach in a manner that will cause others to look forward to God's Son for redemption.

They were called before the foundation of this world, just like His Son was called before the foundation of the world, to point to "his Son" who likewise came into the world. This

qualification process was before the world where we presently live. This has been done so you can understand and have faith in the Son.

"Being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God," Why does God have foreknowledge of these things? Why does God know that, if He gives His trust to such persons they will be true to it? Why does God know these are the very people who will not break His trust in them?⁶¹ Why does God have such foreknowledge? His foreknowledge is not based upon conjecture but proof. It is not based upon merely hope, it is based upon God's knowledge of them. He will never ask soft lead to do what He knows will require iron to endure. Therefore He chooses a suitable instrument based upon His foreknowledge that has been *"prepared from the foundation of the world."*

And what does God foreknow about them? He knows this: *"On account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place."* That is, He knows they exercised exceeding faith and based on that performed good works before the foundation of this world. This was in the first place. This was long ago on some other rung of the ladder of progression. It was long ago, a great while in the past, when they were previously "proven."

"In the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such." Did you get that? They have already been the beneficiaries of a "preparatory redemption" given to them before. They were redeemed before this, so they could be reclaimed for this ministry. They had chosen good rather than evil, and exercised great faith. They qualified to become something greater and minister to others so they, too, could look forward to their redemption by the "Son of

⁶¹ See Helaman 10: 4-5 to see what is required to qualify.

God.” But now we find ourselves here, in this cycle of creation, and once again the game’s afoot. Once again we are left to choose between good and evil. Once again we are asked to exercise great faith and to rise up. We are once again in a position in which it is possible to qualify here and now for what will come after. You have the opportunity before you today. Choose good.

At this moment you have the opportunity to exercise exceeding faith. Choose faith.

You have the opportunity at this moment, in this dark place where we presently reside, to be identified by your good works, to become proven to God. Then, for the next cycle of creation, His foreknowledge of you will include the record of your exceeding faith and good works from here.

Do not think this is a peculiar doctrine. This is part of the Gospel and set out in the scriptures. Creation is cyclical.

"And thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith, while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren."

Don't have a hard heart. Don't be blinded by the lies, the half-truths, and the incomplete things that you are taught by those who are trifling with your souls. You may disagree with me, and you are entitled to do so, but I declare the things He has declared to me. The truth matters while I do not. God cares about your salvation and offers it to you. But you must rise up to become like Him, and have no time to idle away with foolish cares. You have no time to waste participating in false, vain and foolish religion.

I know there are arguments against me. There are also reviews written about the things that I have said. There is no criticism made against me, no scriptural exegesis an orthodox member of the Church can advance that I did not advance in argument with the Lord. I have

made better scriptural arguments against doing what I've done than those that have been leveled at me. I had more scriptural proof to discourage the Lord from asking that I do any of this stuff. I argued with Him! And the Lord has explained to me, using the scriptures, the things I now declare to you. I'm not here on my own errand. If I were doing what I wanted to do today, it wouldn't include any of you! Well, I guess it would include my wife and she is here.

I was a careful and devoted student of the LDS Church. I trusted Joseph Fielding Smith and Bruce R. McConkie. I was a disciple of the Brethren. I could quote them, because I was converted to follow them. There was nothing written by Bruce R. McConkie I didn't own and hadn't studied. When he came to BYU to criticize Brother Pace, I was in attendance at the devotional. I felt bad for George Pace, but I believed Elder McConkie.

In my faith I was the strictest of true believing Latter-day Saints. Therefore when the Lord appeared to me, He appeared to a faithful, devoted member of the LDS Church. At first I believed He did so *because* I was a faithful Latter-day Saint! But the Lord knows more than do I. I've never won an argument with Him. I labored to reconcile all I knew with all that was asked of me, and found it impossible to please both Christ and the LDS Church. I made my choice. None of you are more devoted to the Brethren today than I once was. You say you are in "the Lord's true church" and I say unless you know Him, no institution or gathering will substitute. Life eternal comes from knowing Him, not another man. Even if a man is sent to declare Him to you, focus should be on the Lord, not on His messenger. Only a false messenger, who seeks approval, and who hopes for gain, will divert attention from the Lord to himself.⁶² A true messenger would not dare do so.

⁶² This is priestcraft. See 2 Ne. 26: 29.

I am not explaining these scriptures to you because I think they *might* fit together in this way. Like Paul I can declare, "*Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.*" (Acts 17: 23.) I have read all of the accounts Joseph Smith left behind of his visits with the Lord. If you add them all together, still the Lord has spent more time with me than with Joseph. I attribute that my poor understanding, the harness of my mind, my inadequacy as a pupil, my stubbornness and my stupidity. I defended the Church to the Lord. I was a latter-day "Pharisee," like Paul. I explained to Him why He needed to honor the Church, and asked that He let me do so also. He told me that they, not I, would sever the relationship. He told me they, and not I, would be accountable for that. And He told me that was in His heart for a long time beforehand to let the scriptures be fulfilled. I was His instrument to accomplish His purpose, which He has now done.

Therefore when people shake their head and say, "What a shame! What a shame! He fell off the rails. He went his own way. He's filled with pride." Look, growing up in Idaho I would have said that's utter bullshit. Here, I will say it is bovine feces. There is nothing at all true to that. That is not who I am. That is not what is in my heart. It has never been what's in my heart. I was as faithful a Latter-day Saint as any who ever belonged to the LDS Church. I dare not depart from what the Lord requires, even when I find it painful to do His will. Someone must.

And I know what I'm talking about. I don't care about your theories to the contrary, because He who is "more intelligent than them all"⁶³ has declared to me the truth of these things. Resist it if you want, reject it if you want, but you can read right here what the consequences are:

"Others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege

⁶³ Abraham 3: 19.

as their brethren. Or in fine, in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren;" That is, before they ever got here, the first place, long ago far away, they were on the same standing with their brethren. The exact same place proved some worthy of priesthood after the holy order of the Son of God, while others were faithless, hard hearted and blind. They continue along worlds without end, to all eternity, never rising up to lay claim on the same privilege.

"This holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared—And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest—This high priesthood being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things." It has been underway a long time. This process has been underway a long time. It was through this means God obtained the knowledge necessary to identify who would have faith and choose to do good. These experiences happened before this cycle of creation. Therefore in the present world it is called "foreknowledge" because it was learned before *this* creation where we presently live.

"Now they were ordained after this manner—being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end." You say a man must be ordained by someone here, while in the flesh, and have a line-of-authority and I say that may be true enough. But if he was not ordained before this at some point in eternity—that is "without beginning"—then you might as well ordain a sack of flour. Because if the priest is not

one of the holy order, who qualified some place in eternity “without beginning or end,” it is inadequate. Something conferred only in this world cannot handle or confer eternal things. Anything subject to time will be destroyed by time. You can only handle eternal things if your authority reckons from eternity.

You say you want to obtain an “expectation” here that will follow you into the next life.⁶⁴ I say if the authority to seal this did not first exist and was not handed down from before the world was, then it will not last in the afterlife.

Joseph held up a ring and said, There is no beginning and there is no end, it is one eternal round.⁶⁵ I'm telling you, you're only on part of the cycle here. But, you *are* on part of this endless cycle, here. Now. Today matters a great deal. Therefore what you do here matters, infinitely, eternally, everlastingly. It matters! You have your doubts, but you should weigh them in the balance. Why not exercise faith? Why not change your eternal destiny? Why not choose good today?

The Gospel is delicious. Get rid of that stale wretched stuff you consume as part of an organized and stifled herd, and go on to find the Life, the Light, and the vigor contained in the words of scripture. The doctrine in our scriptures is delicious! Stop putting barriers around the scriptures. Stop forcing them to mean what you have been told they *must* mean. Let them tell you what they say without your preconceptions distorting their meaning. There is no rigid “orthodoxy” that governs or correlates their meaning. You will discover they are filled with a new religion altogether. In that religion God is speaking to you directly. He is alive, and He is involved in your life. If you will partake of it and prepare yourself, you can improve this estate in a way that will reflect credit into the next estate. Don't forfeit the opportunity.

⁶⁴ See D&C 132: 7.

⁶⁵ *TPJS*, p. 354.

"Thus they become high priests forever." They become high priests, and when they have exercised faith and shown good works that status lasts forever. They qualified before the foundation of this world. They come here, into this cycle, and they have authority here. But their authority began before the foundation of this world, and they can confer blessings that will continue into the next life. Therefore they can bless and you are blessed indeed.

"Thus they become high priests forever, after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth. And thus it is. Amen. Now, as I said concerning the holy order, or this high priesthood, there were many who were ordained and became high priests of God; and it was on account of their exceeding faith and repentance, and their righteousness before God, they choosing to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish; Therefore they were called after this holy order, and were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb." Do you see what is before you?

You say you want to be baptized and to be cleansed from all sin? I say have at it! But in addition, the "prototype of the saved man" requires you do something more. You may only achieve a limited amount of grace in this life, but to that limited amount of grace you must hold fast. You cannot receive more if you will not receive what is offered to you now. But if you will receive what is offered now, you will be added upon forever and forever.⁶⁶ Or, in other words, you move up the ladder by how you conduct yourself in this cycle of creation, and in the next cycle you will have so much the advantage.⁶⁷ You can choose to move upward and be added upon, or you can choose instead to remain as you are, worlds without end. The scriptures speak of things that happened "before the foundation of the world" or "in the first place" or "from the

⁶⁶ Abraham 3: 26.

⁶⁷ D&C 130: 18-19.

foundation of the world.” These statements make it clear what went on before this creation mattered and affected who you now are. In like manner what you achieve in this life through your heed and diligence will affect what comes after. The course we are on has been ordained by God and is “one eternal round.”⁶⁸

God has been at this a long time. Christ has, likewise, been involved for many repeated cycles of creation. Moses was told: “*by the word of my power have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth. And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten.*”⁶⁹ It is endless and it is cyclical. “*For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them.*”⁷⁰ This is God’s great work. It has been going through cycles of creation, fall, redemption, judgment and re-creation forever. It is endless.

The Lord told Moses just how vast this process has grown: “*The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine. And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works; neither to my words.*”⁷¹ This is a continual, endless cycle, worlds without end.

Man falls into the cold realm of the temporal, but is returned again to the spiritual. The process allows development to occur in increments as we choose for our development. When a cycle begins, man is spirit. When it is underway, man is temporal and physical. But when a cycle

⁶⁸ See Alma 7: 20; Alma 37: 12; D&C 3: 2 and 35: 1, among other places.

⁶⁹ Moses 1: 32-33.

⁷⁰ Id. v. 35.

⁷¹ Id. vs. 37-38.

ends, man is spirit again. We are nearing another turn of the wheel when wickedness ends. As modern revelation describes it, *“For the hour is nigh and the day soon at hand when the earth is ripe; and all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that wickedness shall not be upon the earth. ...For I will reveal myself from heaven with power and great glory, with all the hosts thereof, and dwell in righteousness with men on earth a thousand years, and the wicked shall not stand.”*⁷²

Then, *“when the thousand years are ended, and men again begin to deny their God, then will I spare the earth for but a little season; And the end shall come, and the heaven and the earth shall be consumed and pass away, and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth.”*⁷³ As one ends, another begins. The cycle repeats, but nothing is lost. The old passes away, but everything is kept to be used again, *“both men and beasts, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea; And not one hair, neither mote, shall be lost, for it is the workmanship of mine hand.”*⁷⁴ It all continues on in one eternal round, worlds without end.

When men are judged and condemned they are sent away into *“everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”* They go away and cannot ascend to God’s presence, because where God is *“they cannot come, for they have no power.”* But, God cautions us, *“remember that all my judgments are not given unto men; and as the words have gone forth out of my mouth even so shall they be fulfilled, that the first shall be last, and the last shall be first, in all things whatsoever I have created by the world of my power, which is the power of my Spirit.”*⁷⁵

God set out how this cycle begins and ends: *“For by the power of my Spirit created I them; yea, all things both spiritual and temporal—First spiritual, secondly temporal, which is*

⁷² D&C 29: 9, 11.

⁷³ Id. v. 22-23.

⁷⁴ Id. v. 24-25.

⁷⁵ Id. vs. 29-30

*the beginning of my work; and again, first temporal, and secondly spiritual, which is the last of my work—Speaking unto you that you may naturally understand; but unto myself my works have no end, neither beginning; but it is given unto you that ye may understand, because ye have asked it of me and are agreed.”*⁷⁶

So, in the first place before this world was organized from an already existing and previously used prior creation, the condition was “spiritual.” But it fell and became the temporal place where we presently reside; though patterned after the earlier world where we used to live while in its spiritual state. Its present condition will be destroyed and returned again to a spiritual state. It will be “quickened” and no longer the cold place it is today.

Have you ever noticed how the descriptions of the pre-earth organization and the Millennium seem alike? Have you ever wondered what “worlds without end” means? Have you ever considered how God’s work “never ends” and yet it has definite increments separating things from one cycle and the next?

God’s works do not end. You are the developmental work God has chosen as His greatest accomplishment. He intends to bring to pass your immortality and eventual eternal life.⁷⁷ How long that requires for any given individual depends upon how long it takes you to become like the prototype of the saved man. How long you will delay attaining to the resurrection is within your own control. I am hoping to awaken you to the great work lying before you.

It was E.B. Grandin who printed the first copies of the Book of Mormon. He had an employee named John H. Gilbert the young man who did the typesetting for *the Book Mormon*.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Id. vs. 31-33.

⁷⁷ Moses 1: 39.

⁷⁸ John H. Gilbert was born April 13, 1802 and would have been twenty-six when he set the type for the Book of Mormon. He had five years experience in typesetting before working on the project.

You can see a picture of him in the *Joseph Smith Papers, Documents Vol. 1: July 1828-June 1831*, p. 87. The picture was taken in 1890, over six decades later. John Gilbert took the handwritten printer's manuscript of the *Book of Mormon* and, as he set the type, he was forced to punctuate it. Today we still look at his punctuation. The commas in the text are primarily the creation of this man. Therefore I do not believe the punctuation was or is necessarily inspired. I'm going to suggest another way to read a few verses. I want to lift out his commas, and throw them on the floor. I'm not going to use them anymore. I'm going to read you a description of Christ in 2 Nephi 25:12. I will give two different ways to read the passage. First Gilbert's then mine.

Gilbert's:

"The Only Begotten of the Father, yea, even the Father of heaven and of earth."

Now mine:

"The Only Begotten of the Father yea even the Father of heaven and of earth."

Gilbert's suggests Christ is the Only Begotten of the Father and that Christ is the Father of heaven and of earth.

Mine suggests Christ is the Only Begotten of the Father. The Father is both Christ's and also heaven and earth's Father.

There are questions we cannot answer today. The Nephite authors used the learning of the Hebrews and the language of the Egyptians⁷⁹ to compose the plates Joseph Smith translated. We do not know if that means the sentence construction reflected Hebrew grammar, or if it reflected Egyptian grammar, or was some hybrid of the two, or something else which was entirely of Nephite development. If I were translating from German into English the common

⁷⁹ 1 Ne. 1: 2.

phrase we understand as “How are you doing?”⁸⁰ a literal translation of the German would be “How goes it you?” If I am translating this into English I can either render it literally or according to its message using a substitute phrase. What did Joseph Smith do? We don’t know.

We also don’t know the rules for this hybrid language. We do not know if modifiers are before or after the subject. In Hebrew there are only two tenses: perfect and imperfect. In Greek there are four moods (indicative, imperative, subjunctive and optative) and three voices (active, middle, and passive) as well as three persons (first, second and third) and three numbers (singular, dual and plural) which affect word structures. What, exactly, did the Reformed Egyptian language have and how exactly did the writer intend the description given in the Book of Mormon plates to be divided into phrasing?

Left to his own, John Gilbert would undoubtedly have drawn on his own background at the time. He, like anyone then or now who considered himself Christian, would believe in a Trinitarian God. Therefore the punctuation would follow a Trinitarian format. As a result, we should expect “Trinitarian comas”⁸¹ in the *Book of Mormon*.

If you throw out the comas and replace them with another alternative way to punctuate that removes Trinitarian fingerprints, the result undermines the arguments of those who want to claim Mormon theology was originally Trinitarian.

Throw out the commas. Then 2 Nephi 25:12 tells us Christ is the Only Begotten of the Father. He was and is the Only Begotten of the Father. His Father is the Father of heaven and of the earth.

⁸⁰ In German: Wie geht es Ihnen? (In slang it is reduced to: Wie ghets, literally “how goes?)

⁸¹ This is a term I have coined to try to make this problem apparent in a short-hand way.

We can do the same with Mosiah 3:8. *"And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary."*

These commas suggest Christ is both the Son of the Father and Christ is also the Father of heaven and earth.

But if we move the commas around we can instead say: *"And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father of heaven and earth the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary."*

This suggests Christ is the Son of God the Father. And God the Father is the Father of heaven and earth, and the creator of all things from the beginning.

In the first layout, we are forced to view the content of these verses as essentially Trinitarian, because Christ is both the Father and the Son. In the second, instead we have two personages, one of whom was the Father of heaven and earth and the other who is His Son. This is consistent with the *Lectures on Faith*, which defines the Godhead as “the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”⁸² The Father is a personage of “spirit, glory, and power.” The Son is “a personage of tabernacle made or fashioned like unto man.” The Holy Spirit, the third member of “the Godhead” being “the mind of the Father and Son.”⁸³ Therefore it is clear there are two: both the Father and another who was “called the Son” as we saw in D&C 93: 14.

In the declaration of Abinadi he uses language that also tends to make Christ the same person as God the Father. Here is Abinadi’s statement:

"Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people. And because he dwelleth in flesh

⁸² 5th Lecture ¶2.

⁸³ Id.

he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son—The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son—And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth. And thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God, suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation, but suffereth himself to be mocked, and scourged, and cast out, and disowned by his people."
(Mosiah 15: 2-5.)

Abinadi likewise says Christ will be “called the Son of God.” He qualified to be “called” because He “subjected the flesh to the will of the Father.” You cannot be the Son of God the Father unless you reflect Him. You are His “Son” when you are like Him. To be like Him you must subject your will to the will of the Father. This is how Christ defined Himself.⁸⁴

When Christ subjected Himself entirely to the will of the Father, He was in every deed, thought and action “the Father” even though He was flesh and blood and living among us. They were “one.”⁸⁵ If you beheld Christ, you would behold the image of His Father.⁸⁶

Christ subjected Himself to the Holy Spirit, or “mind of the Father” which made His will swallowed up in the will of the Father. He models what He asked us to likewise do. He prayed that we would allow the Spirit to make us “one” with them, so we become “perfect” as They are perfect.⁸⁷ Each week the two sacrament prayers ask God the Father to send His (Christ’s) Spirit to be with those who take the bread and wine in remembrance of Christ’s body and blood.⁸⁸ If you have His (Christ’s) Spirit then you have also the Father’s Spirit; or according to the *Lectures*

⁸⁴ See 3 Ne. 11: 11.

⁸⁵ John 10: 30.

⁸⁶ John 14: 9.

⁸⁷ See John 17: 20-26.

⁸⁸ See D&C 20: 77, 79 and Moroni 4: 3; 5:2.

on Faith, you have the Holy Spirit to be with you. This Holy Spirit is “a personage of Spirit”⁸⁹ which dwells within you. Or, in other words, when you receive the “mind of the Father and the Son” by listening to the Holy Spirit, you become sanctified by Their presence in you. You become “one” with them. You gain access to “*the record of heaven; the Comforter; the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment.*” (Moses 6: 61.)

We have looked at the language in *The Lectures on Faith*. We have looked at Joseph’s sermon in the April 1844 General Conference, and we have looked at D&C section 93. All of them speak of the Father coming to “dwell in Christ.” Every week you hear the sacrament prayers petitioning for God the Eternal Father to send Christ’s Spirit come and dwell in you.⁹⁰ The Spirit that came to dwell in Christ was the Spirit of the Father. Christ's Spirit is to dwell in you. Who's Spirit dwells in Christ? And so we all become one.

Go to Helaman 14:12 and you see the same thing: “*And also that ye might know of the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and of earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and that ye might know of the signs of his coming, to the intent that ye might believe on his name.*”

Again, what if we changed the commas?

“*And also that ye might know of the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father of heaven and of earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and that ye might know of the signs of his coming.*” I try to read these scriptures in a way that makes sense.

⁸⁹ D&C 130: 22.

⁹⁰ See D&C 20: 73-79

This mind of God, this Holy Spirit that emanates from Them fills the immensity of space.⁹¹ It is part of God. It is as accessible to you, if you will receive it, as it was accessible to Christ, which is how you can become one with Them. *"Father I pray for these whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as thou and I are one."*⁹² They may be "one" just as we may be "one" because They share the same mind. And you likewise can do so.

Christ said of Himself in Ether chapter 3 verse 14: *"Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters."* This is the way in which you also might become a son of God. As the One who redeems you becomes your Father, so that He who is the Only Begotten of the Father, in turn begets many sons and daughters Himself.⁹³

If you will receive it, faith in Him comes by hearing the word of God.⁹⁴ Not by a pretender, not by someone guessing, not by someone offering up their theory of how the scriptures ought to be understood. Faith does not come by hearkening to someone citing you a bibliography. Faith comes only by hearing the word of God delivered as He would have it delivered, by whomever it is that He may choose to deliver it.⁹⁵

If you receive God's word sent by someone He sends, then you might have faith, and that too in the Son of God. Then you also might receive Him. But if you will not, if you will harden your hearts, if you will blind your minds, if you will not receive what He offers from His mouth

⁹¹ D&C 88: 11-13.

⁹² John 17: 21-23.

⁹³ See Heb. 2: 10; 1 John 3: 1-3.

⁹⁴ Romans 10: 17.

⁹⁵ Romans 10: 14-17.

in your day, then you do not have faith in Him. You will fall short of that faith required to become His son and His daughter.

It is that way, it has always been that way, it will always be that way. There is no other test.

Therefore, either I am a liar and you ought to forget everything I've said, or I have been sent by someone greater than I am. If I have been sent and you reject and quibble over the things I declare to you, it is at your peril!

It ought to be that way. I ought to be damned if I'm a pretender, and I ought to be damned and rejected by God if I'm saying things about which I know nothing! But I bear witness to you I know what I'm talking about. I have no reason to lie to you. I have no reason to pay to reserve a place to speak to you, and ask nothing of you but to listen. It requires a sacrifice to do what I am doing. I have no other reason to do this than to tell you the truth. Joseph Smith testified to these things and I am come as a second witness. Therefore you now have two proclaiming the same doctrine.

He (Christ) was in the world and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. Why did the world not know Him? The world did not know Him for the same reason people would not know a messenger when one is sent today.

Our Lord was so very ordinary in His time. He seemed for all the world to be just another itinerant preacher. There had been so many pretenders in the days before the Maccabean rebellion. The family of David had fallen into great disrepute by the time the Lord arrived. When the census was taken and everybody had to go to their own city,⁹⁶ His mother Mary and Joseph

⁹⁶ Luke 2: 1-4.

went to the city of David to be enumerated, there was no room for them in the inn.⁹⁷ It was in His days just as it is in ours. If you want to find the Lord look for Him among the outcast, for it is only there you will find Him at work.

"The Lord Omnipotent who reigns, who was and is from all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay." Father is a tabernacle of Spirit and Glory, the Son descended to be among us in the tabernacle of clay. The only way you could have distinguished between the Lord and other men was He declared things filled with light.

How was the Lord able to accomplish all He did? In Abraham 3:19 the Lord explains: *"I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all."*

Why is the Lord qualified to say He is more intelligent than they all? Because our Lord went from grace to grace to the point He understood all things, because He had been through all things, He had descended below all things, and He had risen above all things, therefore He comprehends all things. He is more intelligent than us all because He is more experienced than us all. He has arrived at a state in which He is worthy, holy, and sanctified. Having been left to choose between good and evil He has chosen the good. He declared who He was when He introduced Himself to the Nephites and He said, He suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.

From what beginning? For you, why cannot that be a beginning starting now? For you, why can you not from this beginning, at this moment, in this place, go forward saying you will follow the will of the Father in all things, from this beginning? Why will you refuse to rise up and receive grace for grace?

⁹⁷ Luke 2: 7.

This is how you worship who you worship,⁹⁸ because He was the Word of God, the embodiment of the Father's will. The Father declares what is right and true and the Son obeys. Thus the Son became the Word of God, because He did what the Father asked Him. Would you also want to be a son or daughter of God? Do what He bids you do. This is how the Son lived. This is who the Son is. This is what you must do to worship Him.

"I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all." This leads in turn to D&C 93:36: *"The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth."*

The light shines in darkness and the darkness comprehends it not,⁹⁹ because in the darkness there are things that are forgotten, but in the light there are things that are exposed and seen. Light and Truth; because you see things as they really are,¹⁰⁰ because you judge things as they really are, not after the manner of men, but according to the light God shines upon it. So that you can see and you can feel that the heart that is speaking to you is pure. You can comprehend that the words spoken are given by the grace of God. You will realize it does not matter how flawed a vessel the Lord chooses, He can cleanse any of us every whit. He has such power that He can take what is broken and mend it. He can take what is unclean, even scarlet in color, and make it white as snow by His word,¹⁰¹ which is the word of the Father, because the two of Them are One.

Then we come to these sobering verses in D&C 130:18-19: *"Whatever principle of intelligence..."*

Remember, *"I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all."* *"The glory of God is intelligence or another words light and truth."*

⁹⁸ D&C 93: 19.

⁹⁹ D&C 10: 58.

¹⁰⁰ Jacob 4: 13.

¹⁰¹ Isa. 1: 18.

So now: *"Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come."*

How can you gain intelligence? How will you gain knowledge? It says right here, you gain knowledge and intelligence by your "diligence and obedience." The words from the Lord spoken to you are always intended to cause you to act. When that answer came to me in the barracks, if I had done nothing, my life would have continued as it began. There would have been no difference the next day. Today I would be in a far different place than I am at this moment.

Hearing the Lord's word without giving heed, diligence and obedience to what God asks of you yields nothing. What good does it do you to know more about the scriptures than another, if it does not affect your behavior? What good does awareness alone give you, if your understanding is not employed to bring you and others who hear closer to the Lord? Knowledge can be used for the sake of vanity. It can be used to make you seem bigger, better, brighter. It can be a point of pride. It is power, and wielded in the wrong hands, it abuses, it subjugates, it humiliates.

The Lord is not like that. He lifts, He raises, He elevates, He endows you. He blesses your lives. If you receive truth from Him and act upon it, it can bless you. If you will soften your heart, if you will allow His Spirit to enter in, if you will receive the light that comes from Him, you will receive grace. You will become a great deal more like Him. You will be more gracious and patient with others. You will view them in their fallen state and you will hope for them better. To the extent that you are able to do so, you will offer them better.

Joseph Smith, in *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* says: *"Knowledge saves a man; and in the world of spirits no man can be exalted but by knowledge."* (TPJS p. 357) *"So it is with the principles of the Gospel--you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation."* (TPJS p. 348) *"A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power."* (TPJS p. 217) I read those to you on the very first day we began this series of talks in Boise, Idaho. Now that we've come to the subject of our Lord, we get back to the topic of intelligence: *"A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge,"* but knowledge requires you to act, because it doesn't become part of you until you have lived it. Therefore, unless you're willing to live it, you can't receive it.

Our religion is centered in Christ, therefore our religion is centered in intelligence. It is not enough to know what Christ knows, we must also be loving or charitable as He is. He not only created this world, He also suffered to save it.

Turn to Isaiah chapter 53 and let's look at some familiar verses. This is Isaiah, writing long before the event, but the context is almost an echo of the quizzical nature of Christ on the road to Emmaus saying, "What you talking about?" And they said: "Are you dumb? Are you ignorant? Are you oblivious to what's been happening?" Likewise Isaiah 53: *"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"*

You see it is always delivered in a manner to make it possible to dismiss. For truth to be spoken here, there will need to be an entire chorus of people yelling in opposition. There needs to be smooth arguments. There needs to be dignified opponents. There needs to be institutional opposition. There needs to be rejection. There needs to be an entire army of skeptics, opposed to whatever the Lord is doing, to make the test always be equal. Who is going to believe the report?

Who is going to see the arm of the Lord? Certainly not those who sat in the seats of authority during His life. Christ was a threat to them. They knew He was a threat to their craft.

For Christ was going to grow up before God *"as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."* I really dislike the way in which that has been translated. Those meanings are possible with those words, but that is not how I would render them.

Almost the entire Hebrew vocabulary is based upon a three-letter root. The root of the word translated as "beauty" is talking about something to be coveted, desired, or some kind of precious thing you want. I looked to see how Avraham Gileadi translated this verse in the *Apocalyptic Book of Isaiah*. Gileadi wrote: *"He had no distinguished appearance that we should notice him no pleasing aspect that we should find him attractive."* I would render it differently still. There was something more social, cultural and religious at play in this prophecy.

I would say, *"He had no bona fide authority that we should submit to it."* Or perhaps, *"He had no standing, credibility, bona fides, he had no position that we should acknowledge him."* You can examine carefully the words of the Hebrew text, and look at the third, fourth, fifth and sixth definition of the words. There are many alternatives and you can consider. However, you should not miss the fact this a description of Christ. It talks of Him growing up in a desolate place. This desolation is not merely that the ground is dry. The landscape is mankind. That generation is barren, devoid of the knowledge of God. We are told of Him coming to those in this barren wasteland. In Him will be a new "shoot" or "branch" or "tender plant" because He brings life again. In the presence of death, He is life. Those who see Him will ask, "Why should we believe you?" They do not want what He offers. Then you can consider the alternative definitions that let you use "authority, majesty or desirable thing."

What does society covet more than position, rank and authority? Christ did not come with such things. He came “beneath all things” and therefore society would have no regard for His authority. He came as someone considered a renegade, an outsider. He was easy to dismiss. He was easy to consider and say, "I'm having none of it. It's too great a risk to believe this stuff."

This is the seventh of ten talks I will give. In these I bear testimony as a witness to the truth. I would not blame you for thinking I am doing this to get noticed. That is not true, but it is the obvious thing to accuse. Unless, of course, what I declare to you is Truth and is Light. If I am telling the truth, then how you respond is important. I would ask you, for your own sake, to not falsely accuse me.

You do not need to respond to me. You do not need to like me. You do not ever need to mention my name again. But if what I am saying is the truth, you need to respond to it. This is between you and God, not you and me.

You need to choose how you will live your life from this day forward. The Lord is coming to judge the quick and the dead. You need to get right with Him. I am not going to be your leader. I am not going to form a church. I am not going to do that because it would not work anyway. But you can be healed, you can come to the Lord, and you can live your life differently. Look at the same scriptures in a new light and let His Spirit fill you and make a difference in the lives of others.

I do not trust myself to innovate. I will only say what I have been told. I fear my weakness, and my inadequacy. I fear offering up my own ideas. I do not want you to rely on me. Do not do that, when I am asking you not to do so. You rely on Him.

Just remember, when He speaks, I have described how He came! He is not going to do it differently. He is not going to make it easy for you. He is not going to tell you: “I'm going to put

my thumb print on this, and here's the hall pass. Who wants the hall pass?" Nor is He going to declare about some leader: "He's got the hall pass! Follow him! He can never lead you astray! And were he to do so, I will remove him!" These are lies and false doctrine offered by institutions who to claim to possess keys of salvation. They claim God has finished His work, given His authority to men, and therefore they have the power to redeem you.¹⁰²

I offer to save you using no such pretended keys. I only offer you the Lord. I ask you to give heed to Him. I will tell you no man can be trusted for all men are weak.¹⁰³ Even Peter, the night of the Lord's trial,¹⁰⁴ was a broken reed. If you put your weight on that, it would pierce your hand.¹⁰⁵ That is what men are, but not who our Lord is, for His course is straight. He does not even cast a shadow to the right or left, for His course is true.¹⁰⁶

He was "*despised and rejected of men,*" and that will always be true of both Him and His word! That will be true of whoever follows Him! They, like their Lord, will be despised and rejected of men.

He was "*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*" It was necessary for Him to be so, that He might know how to understand us. He grieved because He knew what He offered mankind, and none were (or are) willing to receive it. It was necessary for Him to experience sorrow and be acquainted with grief.

"We hid as it were our faces from Him," that is, we turned from Him. We will not give heed to what He offers. We prefer vanity to truth, pride to humility and we refuse to repent and return to Him.

¹⁰² See 2 Ne. 28: 4-5.

¹⁰³ Ether 12: 27.

¹⁰⁴ See Luke 22: 54-62.

¹⁰⁵ A metaphor, taken from Isa. 36: 6, to warn against an unreliable source for support.

¹⁰⁶ Alma 7: 20.

"He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." The only person who has ever lived who deserved respect, and we "esteem him not." Still today we do not value what He offers to us. We prefer worldly success and proof that "Zion prospers" to satisfy our pride. We think only the respectable and prosperous can be true. Therefore we have no regard for what He offers.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." See He was, "smitten of God," because He was cast out of the synagogue. They were looking to stone Him. Why would they have expected God would honor a man who had been cast out of their synagogue? How could they know when He departed salvation likewise departed from them?

"Smitten of God and afflicted, But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Do not think you can follow that Master and be spared His path. He will let you understand what it means to follow Him. That understanding will come through experiences to help you relate to, and understand our Lord. You will endure affliction to know Him. If you are comfortable, He will make you uncomfortable. Then come to comfort you. If you are certain, He will make you uncertain. If you think you have it all figured out, He will offer up a contradiction, and leave you to struggle. Then when you can bear the contradiction no more, in the agony and anguish of your uncertainty He will delay the answer a little further still. He will delay until your heart is finally soft enough to come to Him in meekness. Then He will speak to you the words you need to hear. Sometimes, only just in time.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." All those variances we have taken off of the correct path, He paid the price to forgive.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him;"

Notice the astonishing statement, *"it pleased the Lord to bruise him."* Can you imagine! This seems so surprising at first. However, it is not.

In the account of Enoch account, this topic is explained from the viewpoint of heaven. Enoch was in heaven looking at the events of the earth. He was shown in vision the events to follow his time. Enoch saw the destruction of the wicked and spoke in the bitterness of his heart. We read in Moses chapter 7 verse 44: *"Enoch saw this, he had bitterness of soul, and wept over his brethren, and said unto the heavens: I will refuse to be comforted; but the Lord said unto Enoch: Lift up your heart, and be glad; and look. And it came to pass that Enoch looked; and from Noah, he beheld all the families of the earth; and he cried unto the Lord, saying: When shall the day of the Lord come? When shall the blood of the Righteous be shed, that all they that mourn may be sanctified and have eternal life? And the Lord said: It shall be in the meridian of time, in the days of wickedness and vengeance. And behold, Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, even in the flesh; and his soul rejoiced, saying: The Righteous is lifted up, and the Lamb is slain."*

Enoch was weeping in the bitterness of his heart. *"I will refuse to be comforted."* All this loss, all this waste, all this death, all this wickedness! So much reason to mourn, *"I will refuse to be comforted."* He beheld men killing one another until God ended the bloodshed by destroying

the wicked. It was so awful a scene Enoch determined nothing could possibly comfort him about the ruin of mankind.

But then the Lord says to Enoch, in effect, "No, no, no! Be happy! See! The Lamb is slaughtered!" This suffering and death of the Lamb will undo the destruction. Where there was now death before Enoch, the scene is transformed by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Through that sacrifice, hope is provided.

This is why Isaiah declared; *"It pleased the Lord to bruise him."* Is there no other way? No, there's no other way. God must offer Himself as a sacrifice.

Isaiah explained; *"He hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."* (Isaiah 53:10-11)

Christ gained the knowledge by which redemption comes to man by what He suffered. This is because through suffering for sin Christ found the path back from sin. As far as He was cast out, that is how far He knows the path back. There is no burden you bear He does not know how to carry. There is no dilemma you will confront He has not already found the way to resolve. From whatever distant place you fall away from God, He knows how to bring you back to peace with God.

Read the chapter on "Gethsemane" in *Come Let Us Adore Him*, and you will read an eyewitness account of how our Lord was smitten and afflicted, even beyond what man can endure. Each time He was able to find peace and reconciliation through love. There are only two great emotions: fear and love. Despite what He was put through, He overcame through love.

Mankind allows their fears to control them. This is why we began in Boise speaking of courage and valiance.

This is the Son of God about whom the scriptures speak. This is the Lord who is asking you to come to Him. He is not aloof and He is not distant. If He will speak to someone in the military barracks, He will speak to you, every one of you. What He has to say to you is far more important than anything I can say. But I can bear testimony of Him, and I can assure you He will not leave your petitions unanswered. I can also assure you today is once again a day of salvation, and He has set His hand again.

No matter how unlikely it may appear, no matter how much reason there is to be skeptical, no matter how many more signs you think may need to be fulfilled, I'm telling you He has set His hand again. The heavens are opened for business, and the question is whether you are interested in becoming a customer or not.

Christ's suffering was redemptive. It lifted the Creation as a result of what He was able to do. If you think about it in physical terms, using a fulcrum to lift an object it is necessary to put the fulcrum underneath the whole thing. You cannot lift unless you put the fulcrum beneath. Christ is, in effect, the fulcrum that lifted the entirety of Creation. In order to lifting the entirety of the Creation, Christ needed to be bonded to all of creation. Therefore to lift all of you Christ likewise needs to be part of you.

Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 88. This is a marvelous transcript. It has a description you should keep in mind when trying to understand our Lord. Beginning in verse six we read:

"He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth; Which truth shineth.

This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made. As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made; As also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made; And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand. And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things. Now, verily I say unto you, that through the redemption which is made for you is brought to pass the resurrection from the dead. And the spirit and the body are the soul of man. And the resurrection from the dead is the redemption of the soul. And the redemption of the soul is through him that quickeneth all things, in whose bosom it is decreed that the poor and the meek of the earth shall inherit it."

Verse 6 and verse 13 are bookends. The statement Christ is “in all things” appears seven times. It appears throughout. Christ is in all things. Everything in this creation is sustained by the Light of Christ. He occupies it all by His light. He brings the light into it that powers all of this creation. He is more intelligent than all of it. He keeps it organized by the Light emanating from Him. This is why redemption is possible through Him. When He descended below it all, including death, He had the power to bring it all back to life with Him. He is the fulcrum. He is the one who must permeate all things, in order for Him to be able to lay hold upon all things, and in order therefore to bring back you back from the grave. This means at this very moment, you are in contact with Him through His Spirit. He is giving you the life you are presently living.

He is not a distant God. He is an immediate and an intimate God. You say He knows your thoughts, and that is true enough! That is because He is giving you the ability and the freedom to think. Therefore He knows how to judge you, because everything you have done, has used His power. He lends you life and light. We have only the illusion of privacy. We have the freedom to act and choose, our “agency,” but our agency operates inside a creation powered by and dependent upon Him.

The scriptures make it clear this is the case. Mosiah chapter 2 verse 21: *"I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another—I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants."*

Therefore the energy powering your life is borrowed from Him. Your life comes from Him. It is His light you use to think. It is His light, His truth, and His intelligence that powers this present creation. He is sustaining you from moment to moment.

Verse 25 poses this question to us: *"And now I ask, can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were created of the dust of the earth; but behold, it belongeth to him who created you."*

So this mortal body you temporarily occupy, belongs to Him. Ultimately He will take it back, convert it to dust, and use the dust to reform something else. Nothing is lost. He will continue to do something else with all of this creation’s material. Then someday He will resurrect your discarded body. But when He powers that, it will remain His still, because it will be a long time before you also “attain to the resurrection of the dead.” Until then you will only borrow from Him, or someone like Him, for some time yet. The cycle will continue for so long

as is needed for you to finally attain to the resurrection, as Christ has now done. He is the prototype and we are to follow Him.

Look at Alma chapter 7 beginning at verse 11. This declares He descended below all things. *"And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people. And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities. Now the Spirit knoweth all things; nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh that he might take upon him the sins of his people, that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance; and now behold, this is the testimony which is in me. Now I say unto you that ye must repent, and be born again; for the Spirit saith if ye are not born again ye cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore come and be baptized unto repentance, that ye may be washed from your sins, that ye may have faith on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, who is mighty to save and to cleanse from all unrighteousness."*

He did this so that whatever is infirm in you and I can be repaired. He can, indeed has, overcome it all. Whatever you need for succor He can provide. He is the remedy for all this estate's limitations and infirmities. He has the knowledge now to do all that.

He is not experimenting as He deals with us. He knows what He to do and how to do it. He descended below it all in order to acquire the capacity to lift it all. The things He intends to lift back and repair include all of us. He intends to save everything. By saving everything, He will allow it to continue on in its course of development.

Those who are willing to receive less will continue in their lesser course. Those who are willing to receive more will continue on in their greater course. But all will continue on, freely using what God freely gives to both the righteous and the wicked. He makes the sun to shine on the righteous and the wicked, He makes the rain to fall on both the righteous and the wicked.¹⁰⁷ He only asks you to repent and turn to Him. He does not compel obedience. He offers you, if you will obey, grace for grace, that you too might receive more of Him in you. This is for your good. He wants us to be animated by a higher source than our own selfishness. He offers to have us become “one” with Him and His Father. No matter how you have developed at present, He continuously offers to you still more.

Now we return to Abinadi. I said a few moments ago he knew what spoke about. Let me read you just how very much Abinadi knew. This is Mosiah chapter 15 verse eight: *"And thus God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men—Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice. And now I say unto you, who shall declare his generation? Behold, I say unto you, that when his soul has been made an offering for sin he shall see his seed. And now what say ye? And who shall be his seed? Behold I say unto you, that whosoever has heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord—I say unto you, that all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and*

¹⁰⁷ Matt. 5: 45.

have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins, I say unto you, that these are his seed, or they are the heirs of the kingdom of God."

In the talk given about Priesthood in Orem I read a quote from Joseph Smith about what is needed for the kingdom of God. Joseph said, "Whenever men can find out the will of God and find an administrator legally authorized from God, there is the kingdom of God; but where these are not, the kingdom of God is not."¹⁰⁸ If you can find anyone sent by God, there is the kingdom of God.¹⁰⁹ It was good doctrine when Joseph declared it. It is good doctrine when Abinadi declared it in the Book of Mosiah. It is still good doctrine when I declare it.

Any of you who will hear, and then hearken to their words will become His seed. Someone must be sent. Then you must hear it. Even then it does you no good if you will not hearken to it by acting in faith. It is by harkening you obtain faith, and faith permits you to meet God. You will find redemption, you will hear His voice, and you will become a holy vessel because His word will reside in you.

You will have no doubt about your salvation because you will hear Him declare it in His own voice. You will know He is no respecter of persons. You will know that you, like any other person, can come and look to Him and Him alone for your salvation. You needn't be dependent upon any other person or system for salvation. You too can join in singing the song of redeeming love.

We will discuss more of this as the discussion moves along. For today it is only necessary to introduce the fact Christ is the redemption of all things. When this His religion is here on the earth, it is the same in every age. Men receive only as much as they will tolerate, and we learn

¹⁰⁸ *TPJS*, p. 274.

¹⁰⁹ See *TPJS*, p. 272-273 where Joseph explains that since John the Baptist was sent by God, "the Kingdom of God for a season seemed to rest with John alone."

only what is kept in incomplete records. But the religion of Christ is always the same, yesterday, today and forever.

Turn to Mormon chapter 9 and begin at verse seven: *"And again I speak unto you who deny the revelations of God, and say that they are done away, that there are no revelations, nor prophecies, nor gifts, nor healing, nor speaking with tongues, and the interpretation of tongues; Behold I say unto you, he that denieth these things knoweth not the gospel of Christ; yea, he has not read the scriptures; if so, he does not understand them. For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing? And now, if ye have imagined up unto yourselves a god who doth vary, and in whom there is shadow of changing, then have ye imagined up unto yourselves a god who is not a God of miracles. But behold, I will show unto you a God of miracles, even the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and it is that same God who created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. Behold, he created Adam, and by Adam came the fall of man. And because of the fall of man came Jesus Christ, even the Father and the Son; and because of Jesus Christ came the redemption of man. And because of the redemption of man, which came by Jesus Christ, they are brought back into the presence of the Lord."*

It is true this will happen as the Lord resurrects you, but I want to pause on that. *"Because of the redemption of man which came by Jesus Christ they are bought back presence of the Lord, yea this is wherein all men are redeemed."* If I were punctuating it, I would put a period there and I'd start a new thought in a new verse.

"Now is the day of redemption. Because of the redemption of man which came by Jesus Christ they are brought back into the presence of the Lord, yea this is wherein all men are redeemed." What was the Fall of man? It was to be cast out from the presence of God. What is

the redemption of man? It is to be brought back into the presence of God. Today is the day of redemption. Today is the day of salvation, if you come back into His presence.

Look at Ether chapter 3 beginning at verse 13: *"When he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you."*

This is the gospel of Christ. What is it you must know to have eternal life? You must know Him. "And this is life eternal that you might know Him." This passage in Ether affirms that because the Brother of Jared knew these things, Christ came to him. Christ returned him to His presence. Christ redeemed him from the Fall *"Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall."* This is Christ speaking in the first person. He is defining what it means to be redeemed. Who is better qualified to define what it means to be redeemed than the Redeemer? Reconciliation comes through Christ. Reconciliation comes with Christ. Reconciliation is by Christ. And Christ has the power to redeem you all.

I want to look at how the return of the Lord has been foretold by the prophets. Read about His return in the Doctrine and Covenants. We will pick out only a couple of these to consider.

In D&C 45 verse 16 He says: *"And I will show it plainly as I showed it unto my disciples as I stood before them in the flesh, and spake unto them, saying: As ye have asked of me concerning the signs of my coming, in the day when I shall come in my glory in the clouds of heaven, to fulfil the promises that I have made unto your fathers."* This is how He intends to return. He will come "in His glory in the clouds" to fulfill the promises.

Go to D&C 49 beginning at verse 22: *"And again, verily I say unto you, that the Son of Man cometh not in the form of a woman, neither of a man traveling on the earth. Wherefore, be not deceived, but continue in steadfastness, looking forth for the heavens to be shaken, and the*

earth to tremble and to reel to and fro as a drunken man, and for the valleys to be exalted, and for the mountains to be made low, and for the rough places to become smooth—and all this when the angel shall sound his trumpet." This is how He promises to come. It will not be as a man traveling on the earth. In His present state of ascent that would be problematic. He has "attained to the resurrection" and therefore any further descent into mortality is no longer possible.

He may send messengers walking as men on the earth. He may send people to say something from Him. But when He returns He will do so in glory.

In Section 133, beginning at 46 we read: *"And it shall be said: Who is this that cometh down from God in heaven with dyed garments; yea, from the regions which are not known, clothed in his glorious apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? And he shall say: I am he who spake in righteousness, mighty to save. And the Lord shall be red in his apparel, and his garments like him that treadeth in the wine-vat."*

I should add parenthetically, that His apparel is red, period. He will be clothed in red, period. I do not correct other people's "prophecies" because I have not been asked to do so. Therefore I remain silent. But I can tell you that if someone tell you of a vision that varies from this description, I will add my voice to Joseph's. When He appears, His apparel will be red.

"And so great shall be the glory of his presence that the sun shall hide his face in shame, and the moon shall withhold its light, and the stars shall be hurled from their places." This does not sound to me like an event to take place in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, Utah. They would never rent it out for that purpose anyway. But you are free to hearken to whatever voice you choose. Chase every tempting tale you hear.

As for me, the Lord has expounded to me the scriptures. I have no interest in telling you all the things I have been shown. I am interested in letting Him show you, too. He's the Keeper

of the Gate.¹¹⁰ He is the One who is Mighty to Save.¹¹¹ He can tell you what you need to know, as He has told me what I need to know.

There will always be 10,000 voices that rise up in opposition to say, "lo here and lo there," and "come and hearken to my precept." I don't ask you to hearken to anything other than what is in the scriptures. You should ask yourself the same question that Malachi posed, *"Who may abide the day of his coming? Who shall stand when he appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire and like a fullers soap, and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."* Yes, who shall stand? *"The day comes that shall burn them up so that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."* And who shall abide that day?

Well, we have an answer to that question. *The Book of Mormon* was designed as the scripture, as the foundation, the keystone for our day. Go to chapter 9 of third Nephi and read what is said there. This is the Lord speaking. 3 Nephi 9: 12-13: *"And many great destructions have I caused to come upon this land, and upon this people, because of their wickedness and their abominations. O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they, will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?"*

The people who survived the destruction preceding His appearance to the Nephites were more righteous. We must be likewise. The Book of Mormon is the great prophecy for our day. We should look at it as warning us, not merely as history of a fallen people. It was intended as a warning to us based on their history, and not merely as history.

The "more righteous" survived then, and will likewise survive His Second Coming. The "more righteous" were not sin free. They were more righteous because they hearkened to what the Lord told them.

¹¹⁰ 2 Ne. 9: 41.

¹¹¹ Alma 34: 18.

This did not mean they weren't a work-in-process with weaknesses and frailties. They were willing to hear His voice in the messengers He sent, and to respond to Him. These were the few people spared. They were “more righteous” because they received His message from an authorized messenger. They had faith in the word declared to them.

Go to chapter 10 and read verse 12: *"And it was the more righteous part of the people who were saved, and it was they who received the prophets and stoned them not; and it was they who had not shed the blood of the saints, who were spared."* Please notice the criteria. This is the definition of “more righteous.” That was how they, and in turn you, get spared from destruction. This is how you become “His seed” (to use Abinadi’s description): *"They who received the prophets and stoned them not."* Please understand this is Christ speaking.

Keep in mind the timeframe He spoke. Read 3 Nephi chapter 9 verse 22 to fix the timing: *"Therefore, whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. Behold, for such I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved."*

The Lord had achieved His triumph of the resurrection by the time He spoke these words. In that triumphant state He destroyed the wicked. I repeated Joseph Smith’s words a little previously in this paper. Read his words again: *"I want you to know that God in his last days while certain individuals are proclaiming his name is not trifling with you or me."* We all need to take seriously the Lord’s warning to us.

Christ is coming again to judge the world. There will be those who refuse to listen to His message. They will pay this same price. He has told us all how to be the more righteous and therefore spared.

Do not think for one moment, Christ's coming judgment will not be terrible. Do not think its scope will not be cosmic. Do not think all things will continue as they always have been. Do not be misled by thinking you can hearken to just any principle, listen to any false or incomplete gospel proclaimed by any pretender, and survive the day of His coming. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. The word of God comes only when He is the author of it.

Remember not to look for a Messiah to come who has already come, and *"the Son of Man cometh not in the form of a woman, neither a man traveling on the earth."* (D&C 49: 22.) He is going to *"come down in heaven from the presence of God and consume the wicked with unquenchable fire."* (D&C 63: 34.)

Religion is, or ought to be, deeply personal. Religion is not something at its most intimate level can even be shared.

Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 76. The closing verses in the Vision beginning at verse 114 tell us: *"But great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpass all understanding in glory, and in might, and in dominion; Which he commanded us we should not write while we were yet in the Spirit, and are not lawful for man to utter; Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him; To whom he grants this privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves; That through the power and manifestation of the Spirit, while in the flesh, they may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory."* There are things both unlawful and impossible to make known. But they are neither unlawful nor impossible for God to make known. You are invited to receive them "while in the flesh" or, in other words, now, in mortality. This is not kept from us until the afterlife. This is what God offers now.

I have been in that world of glory. I have abided in His presence. I know things not lawful to be uttered. But everything I have said today is lawful, is contained in scripture and is the Lord's invitation to you. You need to realize this language in Section 76 is your invitation. God did not say, "There are people I do not love." He loves us all. The difficulty is that we do not love Him.

He says He can bestow this knowledge on any who love Him. The question isn't His love of us because that is a given. Those few of you who are sitting in this room with a hard heart, rejecting what I have to say, He loves you every bit as much as those of you whose hearts are soft, opened and believing.

It is not that God loves one more than another, it is that some of you love Him and others do not. By this He knows whether you love Him: It is whether your heart is soft and willing to receive, or you deliberately choose to be blinded by the false traditions handed down to you, to which you hold fast because you have no faith.

Religion is intended to be between you and God, deeply personal and individually redemptive. Christ is as accessible to you as He was to Moses on the mount. And what was Moses' ambition? It was to bring everyone up on the mount to likewise see God. What did the children of Israel say? "No, you go talk to Him. We don't want to." And today why don't we want to see God? Because instead of us meeting Him it is easier to have pride, to study the subject of God, and not change your heart. You can become a respected authority without ever knowing Him. You can expound history, can parse through the vocabulary of the Restoration, can pretend to prove what God is going to do next, without ever knowing Him. All this is vanity.

I will tell you what God is going to do next. You may find it hard to believe and that is your right. But what God is doing next is what is going on right now, today in Ephraim, Utah.

In the pride of your heart, blindness of your mind, and in the hardness of your soul, some of you will not receive God. But God is saying to each of you, "Ignore the man with a microphone and come to Me." Although I speak as He has asked today, I am not important. The message is, because it is not mine. Joseph bore testimony of God. I bear testimony of Joseph. If Joseph was one witness, I am a second. I have used Joseph's revelations and sermons to teach today. Believe in them, for they are true.

Some of you refuse to say, "Perhaps the words of scripture means something different and more intensely personal than I have ever taken them to mean before." They do. They are for you. God wants you to respond to them.

I recognize that I am not the best messenger. I wish I had the voice of an archangel. I wish I could do something to soften the hearts of you all. Some of you will never respond to the Lord because you cannot overcome your preoccupation with me. That saddens me and I regret that deeply. But that is your choice, and you can choose differently.

Christ is in fact holy, and I am deeply aware of the fact that I am not. I can't redeem any of you, but He can. I can testify of Him, but when it comes down to it, you should be able to feel faith. You should be able to feel something important was communicated by God today. Some of you know that. In the Doctrine and Covenants you are warned it can be taken from you. The wicked one comes, and he takes away the light from you. He does this through your disobedience. What is the source of your disobedience? *"That wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers."* (D&C 93:39.)

My voice will fall silent in your ears in a few moments. You are going to leave and go on. There are going to be a thousand voices and traditions galloping to intervene and take away

your attention. Come the morrow, you are going to attend meetings in which you hear a lot of things expounded that just aren't true. Their traditions will take over, and your families are going urge upon you the tradition they have handed down. You will sing about blessed noble pioneer ancestors, and the cacophony of voices will arise and the critics will chirp up. Through all these the wicked one will come and take away Light and Truth.

I cannot be with you always, and if I were, it would only cripple you. And I'm not here to cripple you. You must study these things. You must ask God.

I hate the fact these 10 talks will all be given by me. I wish they were 10 talks given by 10 different people. That way you would not say, "Well, he is something important." I am nothing. I am keenly aware of my own limitations. But I am also keenly aware of our Lord. When I have had discussions with Him, they have invariably involved parsing through the scriptures and Him explaining things to me. When I have inquired and gotten answers, it is because there are things in the scriptures I did not understand.

I bear witness of Christ. I have seen Him! I know He lives! I know He is coming in judgment, and I know that before His coming, He has wanted some things to be declared. I have been as faithful as I can be in declaring the things asked of me. I sense keenly my own inadequacy. I beg you to overlook all that and not let me become a stumbling block. Look at the scriptures, look at the words of Christ, look at the explanations we got from Joseph, look at the things that are true, and go to Him in faith believing.

I began with a description of Him. I want to repeat that. The Lord is affable, but He is not gregarious. He is approachable. He is not aloof. He is patient and He is willing to guide and willing to teach. He is intelligent, but He not overbearing. He is humble and approachable in His demeanor, even though His power is absolutely undeniable. Therefore, He is both a Lamb and a

Lion. If you come to Him in the day He offers redemption to you, you will be coming to the Lamb. But if you wait for His coming in judgment, you are waiting on the Lion, and you will not like what you will see.

I asked you to remember He is quick to forgive sin. He allows all to come to Him. He is no respecter of persons. I said that when I began, I'm saying it again as we end today.

He is real! He lives! His work of redemption continues right now, just as it continued throughout His mortal life, just as it continued as He hung on the cross, just as it continued in His resurrection in Palestine, and as He came to visit with the Nephites. He ministered to other sheep, and He has called other people. There are, in fact, holy men who ye know not of who still remain on earth.

If there was anything more I could do or say that I thought would convince or persuade you to believe in Him, I would do it or I would say it. But despite it all, I realize some of you are going to walk out of here thinking that I'm just another one of these latter-day blowhards. That is all good and well. Please however, give heed to the scriptures I've read, the words of Joseph I quoted, and the fact I do have a witness that Christ is approachable. He is every bit as much alive today as when He was when He walked on the road to Emmaus. He is every bit as willing to come and redeemed you from the Fall as He was willing to redeem others before. His work and His glory culminates with your redemption. His success is redeeming you. You think the scriptures give you hope of eternal life. That is true. I have used them today to show you how great things the Lord has done. The scriptures testify what I am saying is true.

If you think, "Well, He is aloof and He is distant, and this is an impossible high thing to achieve." The fact of the matter is, it is a greater achievement on His end to redeem you, than

your end to be redeemed. There is more anxiety, more desire, and more rejoicing in heaven when He redeems someone from the Fall than there is here.

He came, He suffered, He lived, He died, He did what He did in order to lift all of Creation, and you are inextricably connected to Him. Therefore, trust that. Receive Him. It may start very slow, very small, very distant. Act on that, hearken to that, it gets louder. You will never wind up in the company of Gods and angels, if you are not willing to have faith in those preliminary things you first receive. Ask. Then go and do what He asks.

When I first got an answer to prayer sitting in a barracks in New Hampshire, if I hadn't acted on that I would never have beheld the Lord, much less been taught by Him. But I did, and I do. Whatever He still asks of me, I do. It does not matter how unpleasant I find it, or how reluctant I may be. I go and I do. You need to do likewise. It may not even make much sense to you when you're going and doing. You may think you are offending when you absolutely do not intend to do so. You may find the people you love rejecting you.

I lost friends and was rejected when I converted to Mormonism. Then I found a new family in the faith I accepted as a nineteen year old. After forty years I was rejected by that new family. I have laid everything on the line for the Lord twice now in a single lifetime. I cannot tell you what sacrifices He may ask of you, but whatever He asks of you, that do you.

Let me end by bearing testimony and witness to you, that the things I've been saying, beginning in Boise and going on through Phoenix, the beginning date, the ending date, the content, the fact that there are 10 of them, the timeframe in which they are being delivered, the fact He wanted us to begin on the first day of the 40th year, and He wanted us to end on the last day of the 40th year, those things are not my doing. He is the author of this all.

Hearken to the word of the Lord. End your days on this barren treadmill and rise up. There is no reason to fail when the Lord offers you His word, and even His presence, today. He will not leave you here comfortless, but He will come and take up His abode with you. The idea this is only to happen “in your heart” is an old sectarian notion, and is false. Joseph Smith declared that, and I declare he spoke the truth.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.