

Three Knocks, The Great Ascension (Two Part Series)

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Introduction

*“Almost everything about the Gospel plan is a process and not an event. Most people most of the time are only working through the process. A great deal of the scriptures has been written by those who have been through the process and who are trying to give mankind instructions of how to repeat it in their own lives. There are events which occur in the scriptures, as well, **but man will never arrive at the events unless he first realizes there is a process, and he begins to participate actively in that process.** In the April 1844 conference talk, Joseph Smith redefined the term “first principles.” Joseph wanted the saints to comprehend much more about the gospel and learn a new, higher ideal. **Christ’s gospel includes: [1] attaining to the resurrection from the dead, [2] becoming gods, and [3] walking the same path as our Lord walked. These are the real first principles of the gospel.** That is why he wished he had the trumpet of an archangel with which to declare it. His words were worthy of 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” (TPJS, 348; WJS, 358). “We have such a long way to go **even after this life** that we hardly comprehend how great a work remains. We will not learn everything needed ‘in this world.’ These are the basics of the gospel of Christ. This is the foundation upon which salvation itself rests. **This is the climb we must make to be like Him.** We can go from exaltation to exaltation, and from grace to grace, but we will only arrive at the end when we have learned all we will need to know to be like Christ. To understand Christ is to understand salvation. **He is the prototype, and therefore we must be exactly like that prototype to be saved.**”(A Glossary of Gospel Terms, Gospel of Jesus Christ, pp 667-668, emphasis added).*

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a process of ascension, from pre-mortality to godliness. Joseph Smith compared the process to climbing a ladder, suggesting we ascend to Godliness by advancing up rungs of the ladder or gradual steps, reaching for our full potential. Joseph makes clear we will not reach the top in mortality. The process continues after two separate but similar events. The first event Joseph mentions is passing through the veil in mortality or birth. This concludes our first estate and begins our second estate. The scriptures contain examples of people who broke free from the bonds of mortality to receive instruction from beyond the veil.

The second event Joseph Smith refers to is death. Our advancement up the ladder continues after our death. Death is a separate event but not the same as penetrating the veil while in mortality. In both conditions, one in mortality and one post mortality, passing into the eternal realm. God intends for us to penetrate the veil in mortality and continue our ascension in the afterlife if we learn and engage the process to ascend. God intends for all to engage in this process, both individually and collectively.

“You may think an isolated, faithful individual can have Zion, and they may well receive the Lord and associate with the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn, however, ***Zion will not be a solitary individual.*** Nor will the required covenant be established for only an isolated individual. ***This is about restoring God’s Family as at first.*** Zion will be composed of these kinds of individuals, but must be established as a city, the New Jerusalem” (*Plural Marriage*, Denver Snuffer Jr., p.36, emphasis added).

The process referred to must be pursued both individually and collectively. We are all at different stages of progression in this process, but the process intends to unite a group of individuals in Christ to form a Zion society in bonds of love and devotion.

Joseph Smith’s Description of the Process

“We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which ***may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the***

intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker and is caught up to dwell with Him. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment: he must have been instructed in the government and laws of that kingdom by proper degrees, until his mind is capable in some measure of comprehending the propriety, justice, equality, and consistency of the same . . . [the Lord speaking of Jacob] He found him in a desert land, and in the waste, howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye, etc.; which will show the force of the last item advanced, that it is necessary for men to receive an understanding concerning the laws of the heavenly kingdom, ***before they are permitted to enter it***: we mean the celestial glory . . . , but the conditions of God’s kingdom are such, that all who are made partakers of that glory, are under the necessity of learning something respecting it ***previous to their entering into it***” (TPJS. p. 51, emphasis added).

The process consists of a man or woman being instructed by Heaven in the laws of the kingdoms of God, celestial, and others. Our advancement is self-regulated or according to the heed and diligence we pursue the process. Like Jacob, if we exhibit interest in the process, the Lord searches and finds us in the spiritually desolate land that is mortality. As we discover the process, we are left to choose whether to engage it in our lives. If we give heed and diligence to what the Lord reveals, He, in turn, leads and instructs us, imparting knowledge, light, and spirit upon us. His manner of instructing us and providing greater “light” is the “process.”

The light the Lord imparts upon the penitent cleanses’ hearts from the effects of sin and chases darkness and the evil one away.

“The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth. ***Light and truth forsake the evil one***. Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning, and God having redeemed man from the Fall, man became again, in their infant state, innocent before God. And that wicked one comes and takes away light and truth, through ***disobedience***, from the children of men, and ***because of the tradition of their fathers***” (RE T&C 93:11, emphasis added).

“And again, verily I say unto you, and I say it that you may know the truth, that ***you may chase darkness from among you . . .***” (RE T&C 36:5, emphasis added).

Truth is a synonym for light and spirit.¹ Darkness cannot exist in the presence of light or truth. When a person receives light, it illuminates their mind to the degree darkness may be detected and “chased” away. As Joseph Smith explained, “the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin” (TPJS. p.51, emphasis added).

The Lord gave a concise description of this process to Joseph Smith:

“That which is of God is light, and he that receives light and continues in God receives more light, and that light grows brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (RE T&C 36:4, emphasis added).

The process objective is for mankind to increase in light and truth until they reach the “perfect day” or come to know God who is the embodiment of every aspect of truth and light, becoming like Him.

Three Knocks Symbolically Represents the Pattern for Ascent

The Temple endowment leads the participant through a series of covenants. These covenants symbolically lead the male or female participant to the “true order of prayer” and introduce them at the veil where they begin conversing with the Lord through the veil. The veil symbolizes the separation from God man experiences at birth. Introduction at the veil is when the person gains sufficient knowledge to begin inquiring for greater light through proper prayer. The “True order of Prayer” is when the person repeats tokens and signs suggesting they received and honor covenants, demonstrating their devotion and discipleship to Christ through humility [broken heart and contrite spirit] and obedience. The way they conduct themselves witnesses to the Father their devotion to Christ and desire to ascend to God’s presence. They

¹ “And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life, for you shall live by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God. For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatever is truth is light, and whatever is light is spirit, even the spirit of Jesus Christ. And the spirit gives light to every man that comes into the world, and the spirit enlightens every man through the world that hearkens to the voice of the spirit, and everyone that hearkens to the voice of the spirit comes unto God, even the Father. And the Father teaches him of the covenant which the Father has renewed and confirmed upon you, which is confirmed upon you for your sakes, and not for yours only, but for the sake of the whole world” (RE T&C 82:18, emphasis added).

keep and honor their covenants, mirroring the Savior's example. Once introduced at the veil, an angelic host leads them through the true order of prayer and after knocking three times at the veil introduces the participant to the Lord. The host represents a member of the "Powers of Heaven," Angels [Patriarchal Fathers] prepare participants prior to when tokens and signs of covenant adherence are repeated, and a united prayer² is given introducing them to the Lord at the veil. This begins the initiation of our re-introduction to the "Record of Heaven," or our personal record of prior cycle experiences³ and what lies ahead for them and the earth generally.⁴ Revelations of the Record of Heaven are initially overwhelming, requiring additional light and knowledge to achieve greater comprehension. The tutorial of new revelation is initiated by the presence of the holy ghost, which brings all things to our remembrance.⁵ The presence of the holy ghost is not the introduction of a third party between us and our relationship with Christ. Rather, it is the gradual [precept by precept, line by line] sanctification process of the individual's spirit as it gains light and truth. When the process is complete, their spirit is sanctified and holy, in effect, their spirit becomes a "holy ghost."⁶

² ". . . Again, I say unto you *that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, that they may not ask amiss, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in Heaven; for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*" (RE Matthew 9:14, emphasis added).

³ ". . . Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man, because that which was from **the beginning** [pre-mortality] is *plainly manifest unto them*, and they receive not the light, and *every man whose spirit receives not the light is under condemnation . . .*" (RE T&C 93:10, emphasis added).

⁴ "As this vision closed, the Heavens were again opened to their view, and they saw and beheld, and were endowed with knowledge from the beginning of this creation to the ends thereof. And *they were shown unspeakable things from the sealed record of Heaven*, which man is not capable of making known, *but must be revealed by the Powers of Heaven*" (RE T&C 157:30, emphasis added).

⁵ "And they were unable to take it in; therefore, *they were commanded to pray* [True Order of Prayer] *and ask to comprehend by the power of the spirit, to bring all things to their remembrance, even the Record of Heaven which would abide in them. Amen and Amen*" (RE T&C 157:32, emphasis added).

⁶ "*The holy ghost is most correctly understood as the individual spirit within each man or woman — it is the heavenly record from each one's prior experiences, although now veiled.* In that sense it is a *he* (or, if one is female, a *she*). The holy ghost is the light of truth. In that sense, it is an *it*. The holy ghost is also the received communication, inspiration, or light from above, and the source of that light can be *any number of holy beings sent to shed that light upon mankind*. In that sense, it is a *they*. But mankind wants it to be singular, because that makes it easier to grasp. The holy ghost is a personage. It is an individual. *It is a spirit that will dwell inside man. The holy ghost, which resides inside of each person, receives intelligence from Christ. The holy ghost is the record of heaven that man has lost contact with because of the veil.* It is a personage of spirit who resides inside each man or woman, and one must "receive" it *after baptism by finally listening to that inner truth of all things or record of the Father and the Son* (Genesis 4:9–10). The holy ghost bears record of the Father and the Son (see Genesis 3:4). *When the Son speaks to individuals through the holy ghost, they hear the words in the first person — hence, the holy ghost speaking that it is the Son* in Genesis 3:4. "Your spirit or your ghost is within you, connected to heaven

The process of conversing with the Lord through the veil begins when we ask the Lord to reveal the meaning of things restored to our consciousness. There is a difference between knowing and comprehending how the pieces fit. As we receive greater light and knowledge it chases darkness from us,⁷ transforming us into His image, like in the beginning. The process of conversing with the Lord through the veil continues through our mortal lives. It is not a destination, but a continuing process into eternity. The more familiar you become with His voice, the greater depth of conversation and increased light you receive from the Lord. Depth is determined by the level of your inquiries. In effect, there is a “no ask, no tell policy.” That is why Joseph Smith said:

“. . . the things of God are of deep import; and *time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out.* Thy mind, O man! If thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity—*thou must commune with God.* How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God, than the vain imaginations of the human heart! None but fools will trifle with the souls of men. . . We are called to hold the keys of the mysteries of those things that have been kept hid

to such a degree through this process that you are in possession of a ‘holy spirit’ or *a holy ghost within you.*” From Adam until Christ, *the holy ghost was the primary voice by which revelation was delivered from God to mankind.* It is active and has been active in delivering the words of prophecy to “holy men” throughout history. The scriptures have explained that the holy ghost which dwells in man — this personage of spirit — has the following other descriptions or attributes: *the Record of Heaven, the Comforter, the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, the truth of all things, that which quickens all things — which makes alive all things, that which knows all things, and has all power according to Wisdom, mercy, truth, justice and judgment* (Genesis 4:9). *This is a description of the personage of spirit that dwells inside each person. This is the holy ghost. This is something that can be in contact with the holy spirit, or the mind of the Father and Son*” (*A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, holy ghost, p.679, emphasis added).

⁷ “The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, *light and truth. Light and truth forsake that evil one.* Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning, and God having redeemed man from the Fall, man became again, in their infant state, innocent before God. And *that wicked one comes and takes away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers.* But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth” (RE T&C 93:11, emphasis added).

“And again, verily I say unto you, and *I say it that you may know the truth, that you may chase darkness from among you.* For he that is *ordained of God* [Called] and *sent forth* [Chosen], the same is *appointed to be the greatest* [noble and great], notwithstanding *he is least and the servant of all.* Wherefore, *he is possessor of all things, for all things are subject unto him both in Heaven and on the earth: the life and the light, the spirit and the power, sent forth by the will of the Father through Jesus Christ, his Son.* But no man is possessor of all things except *he be purified and cleansed from all sin.* And if you are purified and cleansed from all sin, you shall ask whatever you will in the name of Jesus, and it shall be done. But know this, *it shall be given you what you shall ask*” (RE T&C 36:5, emphasis added).

from the foundation of the world until now. Some have tasted a little of these things, *many of which are to be poured down from heaven upon the heads of babes*; yea, upon the weak, obscure and despised ones of the earth” (TPJS., Joseph Fielding Smith, p.137, emphasis added).

Time, experience, careful, and ponderous thought enable the Spirit of Christ to introduce to our consciousness questions we pose to Heaven. The Savior determines how, when and what we must know before we understand the answers He provides. The requirements of time and experience support the notion this is a process and not a destination.

Scriptures are where we become familiar with the Lord’s voice initially because they are spoken to our minds in His voice. The more we know the scriptures, the more familiar we become with His voice.⁸

The three knocks’ in the endowment point to three steps of ascension, as symbolized by the star of David. David’s star consists of two overlapping triangles pointing to three steps up and three down between God and man.⁹ Ascension by man, and condescension by Heavenly beings.

⁸ “And I, Jesus Christ, your Lord and your God, have spoken it. These words are not of men, nor of man, but of me. Wherefore, you shall testify they are of me and not of man, *for it is my voice which speaks them unto you, for they are given by my spirit unto you, and by my power you can read them one to another.* And save it were by my power, you could not have them; wherefore, *you can testify that you have heard my voice and know my words*” (RE JSH 15:35, emphasis added).

“And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, *to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life, for you shall live by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God. For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatever is truth is light, and whatever is light is spirit, even the spirit of Jesus Christ.* And the spirit gives light to every man that comes into the world, and *the spirit enlightens every man through the world that hearkens to the voice of the spirit, and everyone that hearkens to the voice of the spirit comes unto God, even the Father. . .*” (RE T&C 82:18, emphasis added).

“Verily, verily I say unto you who now *hear my words, which is my voice,* blessed are you inasmuch as you receive these things. For I will forgive you of your sins with this commandment — that *you remain steadfast in your minds, in solemnity and the spirit of prayer,* in bearing testimony to all the world of those things which are communicated unto you. . .” (RE T&C 82:21, emphasis added).

⁹ “We have a description of the Urim and Thummim from Lucy Mack Smith. She described it as follows: “[On the morning of September 22, after Joseph had returned from the hill, he placed] the article [the Urim and Thummim] of which he spoke into my hands, and, upon examination, [I] found that it consisted of two smooth three-cornered diamonds set in glass, and the glasses were set in silver bows, which were connected with each other in much the same way as old fashioned spectacles.” (Taken from Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration by Milton V. Backman, Jr., p.73. Backman, Milton V., Jr. Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1986.) *One of these “two smooth three-cornered” stones pointed upward. The other pointed downward. This pattern of two triangles pointing in opposite directions is what the Star of David is made from. One pointing up, and the other pointing down. It, too, is a kind of chiasm. Progression and regression set in a side-by-side pattern. The*

When we are introduced to the Lord at the veil in mortality, two of the three steps are complete and the third requires guidance by the Lord by conversing through the veil with Him and then passing through the veil into His presence, in life or death.¹⁰

The three knocks are present when the resurrected Lord appears to the Nephites following His crucifixion.

“And it came to pass that while they were thus conversing one with another, they heard a voice as if it came out of Heaven [1st knock]. And they cast their eyes round about, for *they understood not the voice* which they heard [1st knock]; and it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being a small voice, it did pierce them that did hear to the center, insomuch that there were no part of their frame that it did not cause to quake, yea, it did pierce them to the very soul and did cause their hearts to burn.¹¹ And it came to pass that again they

Urim and Thummim is a chiasm. The Star of David was modeled on the Urim and Thummim, and is also a chiasm” (Discoveries in Chiasmus: A Pattern in All Things, Denver Snuffer, Jr., pp.4-5, emphasis added).

Three steps are further present in the metaphorical examples of leaven hidden in the three measures of meal parable of Christ, (RE Matthew 7:7), The Good Samaritan, (RE Luke 8:8), Jonah in the belly of the fish (RE Jonah 1:5), Alma’s suffering for his sins three days and nights, (RE Alma 17:3), Christ’s Atonement, (RE Matthew 12:9), Christ’s Resurrection, (RE Matthew 12:33), Peter denying Christ three times, (Matthew 12:70), Christ asking Peter if he loves Him, three times, (RE John 11:9 & Testimony of Saint John 12:18).

¹⁰ “Simon Peter asked him, Lord, where are you going? Jesus answered him, The steps I take next on the path, you will not be taking *for now*, but *you will take those steps later on as you travel the same path*. Peter responded to him, Lord, why can I not follow you right now? I am willing to lay down my life for you. Jesus answered him, Will you lay down your life for me? In the name of Father Ahman I tell you, The rooster will not crow tomorrow morning before you have denied me three times. Do not allow your heart to be troubled. *You are devoted to God and are also devoted to me. In the journey through my Father’s realms are many stages with temporary abodes. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare an abode for your upward journey. And when I arise, I will prepare places for you, but I will be your companion again and visit each of you, so that where I travel, you may journey to also. And the path I follow upward you know, and the way of ascent you also know.* Thomas said to him, Lord, we don’t know where you are going; how can we know the way? You have not told us. Jesus said to him, *I am the way, the record of the truth, and the means for Eternal lives, worlds without end: no man comes to the Throne of the Father without me. If you follow me, you will come to the Father’s Throne through me and will thereafter be like him forever”* (RE T&C171, Testimony of Saint John 10:8-9, emphasis added).

¹¹ “Behold, *that which you hear is as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, in the wilderness because you cannot see him, my voice because my voice is spirit.* My spirit is truth, truth abides and has no end, and if it be in you, it shall abound. *And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole body shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you, and that body which is filled with light comprehends all things.* Therefore, *sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God and the days will come that you shall see him, for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time and in his own way, and according to his own will”* (RE T&C 86:12, emphasis added).

heard the voice [2nd knock] and *they understood it not*. And again the third time [3rd knock] ***they did hear the voice and did open their ears to hear it***, and their eyes were towards the sound thereof, and they did look steadfastly towards Heaven, from whence the sound came. And behold, the third time ***they did understand the voice which they heard***, and it said unto them, Behold my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name; hear ye him” (RE 3 Nephi 5:2, emphasis added).

Three knocks represent three levels of progression in the ascension process. The levels are explained in four categories of three, associated with three levels of action [ask, seek, knock], spiritual advancement [spirit of truth, Spirit of truth, and Spirit of Truth], led by Spirits [Spirits of Elias, Spirit of Elijah, Spirit of Messiah] through Priesthood advancement [Aaronic covenant, Melchizedek covenant, Patriarchal covenant]:

1. Ask, spirit of truth, Spirit of Elias, Aaronic covenant.
2. Seek, Spirit of truth, Spirit of Elijah, Melchizedek covenant.
3. Knock, Spirit of Truth, Spirit of Messiah, Patriarchal covenant.

Ask, Seek, Knock

The first category represents actions we take to ascend nearer to God. An explanation of these categories is provided in *A Glossary of Gospel Terms* found in the Teachings and Commandments of the Standard Works.

“***Ask*** and it shall be given unto you, ***seek*** and ye shall find, ***knock*** and it shall be opened unto you; for ***everyone*** that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh, ***it shall be opened***” (3 Nephi 6:3). “Just after the caution to not give holy things to the unworthy, Christ reminds all of their obligation to ask, seek, and knock. If you will ask, it will be given to you. If you seek, you will find it. If you knock, things will be opened to you. But be careful not to give what is holy to the unworthy. These ideas are related in two ways: First, if you want what is holy, then stop being a dog or a swine. Ask, seek, and knock. Second, if you are one who is qualified and will receive holy things by your willingness to be repentant, then press forward by asking,

seeking, and knocking. If you do, ***the things which are most holy will be given***. For everyone that asketh, receiveth. Really? Everyone? Even you? That is what Christ is saying. However, the manner in which you will receive is illustrated by 'The Missing Virtue' in *Ten Parables*.¹ Meaning that the effort to receive what you have asked the Lord could take nearly two decades, and a great deal of internal changing before you acquire what you lack. Receiving may include not only what you've asked to receive, but also everything you do not have in order to finally qualify to receive what you seek. What do you associate with findeth? Does it suggest to you active effort, or passive receipt?

To find something you are missing (even a small thing) what must you do? If searching is required to locate, then what do you suppose the Lord is implying by the word findeth? What does it mean that it shall be opened?

Does opening imply merely a view? ***Does it suggest also entering in?*** If it opens to view, and you then fail to enter in, has opening been worthwhile? Has anything been accomplished? Does it suggest that there is activity required of someone who has something opened unto them? It is my view that the words chosen all imply a burden upon the one who asks, seeks, and knocks. They are not entitled to anything just by speaking the words. They must make the effort to search into and contemplate the things they seek. Then they must change and repent of everything amiss in their lives that is revealed to them. ***This is to be done before they can see what is to be shown to them***. If, for example, a person wants to see the other side of the mountain, they can ask daily for a view to be opened to them without ever seeing the other side. But if the Lord prompts them to take the path to the top, the Lord has given them the means to find and have opened to them the very thing they seek. Provided, of course, they are willing to walk in the path to the top of the mountain. When they remain on the valley floor, asking or demanding more, ***they are not really asking, seeking, and knocking***. They are irritating and ungrateful. The Lord's small means are capable of taking the one who seeks to the very thing they desire (Alma 17:8). ***But without cooperation with Him they can receive nothing***. The Lord's small means are how great things are brought to pass (1 Nephi 5:8). But for some people the Lord's answers are never enough.

However, when the humble who ask, seek, and knock follow Him in these small means, they will eventually stand in His presence and partake of eternal life. ***But not until they have done as all others have done before them*** [sacrifice].

Mankind is impatient, wanting quickly what can sometimes ***only be obtained in patience***. Human nature is to rush, but development requires patience. Some things require time and persistence to prepare one for the blessings they seek. Joseph remarked: The things of God are of deep import, and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out (I&C 138:18). This is the way of God. It is adapted to give all what they lack, even if they are unaware of what they lack. The Father always intends to

give to those who ask, seek, and knock, just as Christ explained; the Father knows much more how to give good things to them that ask (3 Nephi 6:3). He will not merely give the thing requested. He will add to it such things as are needed to prepare them to be received. "This, then, is the process: We ask. Without a request, the laws governing things prevent bestowal. ***We can't be given until first we ask.*** When we have asked, the Father will give. He will give every good gift needed, and not just what has been asked (3 Nephi 6:3). If there is (as is almost always the case) a gulf between what you have asked of Him and your capacity to receive it, then He will set about giving you every needful thing to enable you to receive. If you ask for strength, He will provide you with that experience necessary to develop the strength you seek. If you seek for patience you will be given Divinely ordained experiences by Him that are calculated to develop in you what you have sought. He knows you and knows what you need. Whatever is asked of Him, He will set about to ordain. It will come in a perfectly natural progression. It will occur in accordance with both natural and eternal law. If you fight against it, you prolong the time when you will receive what you have asked of Him. If you cooperate, it will flow unto you without compulsory means in a natural progression (T&C 139:6). If you do not ask, it will not be given. If you do not seek, you cannot possibly find. If you are unwilling to knock, the door will remain shut to you. But if you do these things, then you must cooperate with Him as He prepares you to receive what He will bestow. After asking, seeking, and knocking, then a process is invoked in which the Father prepares you to receive. You will receive as soon as He can prepare you by experience, by careful, thoughtful, ponderous thought through time and experiences adapted to give you what is asked. When, at last, you have been adequately prepared, you will have gone through exactly what every other soul before you has experienced to prepare them. There are no shortcuts. There are no exceptions. It is in accordance with laws ordained before the foundation of the world. ***Everyone who has obtained what you seek will have done so in conformity with the very same laws.*** The Father will work with you to prepare you to receive what you seek. This is a reaffirmation by Christ of the process and the Father's role in bringing it to pass. If you trust Him, trust also His Father's deliverance of you. You will be delivered. You will receive from Him who knows how to bestow every good gift what you have asked of Him" (*A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, Ask, Seek, Knock, pp.576-578, emphasis added).

spirit of truth, Spirit of truth, Spirit of Truth

There are three variations of three words representing three steps of spiritual progression. The variation is found in the capitalization or lack thereof for each

category. Each represents an ascending level of spiritual progression as we seek to return to God's presence.

“Capitalization and context of how this term is used result in three different meanings:

spirit of truth — the light given to everyone; a description of something sought after to help guide or answer [Ask].

Spirit of truth — an event in which the holy ghost ministers (as in an ordinance), or when Christ takes ownership over something as His [Seek]; and

Spirit of Truth — a proper noun; ***a formal name for Christ***, in the context of scripture” [Knock] (*A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, Spirit of Truth, p.810, emphasis added).

spirit of truth

A title given to all who transition from pre-mortality to mortality where their minds are veiled from pre-mortal recollections.

“And now verily I say unto you, I [Christ] was in the beginning [pre-mortality] with the Father, and am the Firstborn [Spirit of Truth], and ***all those who are begotten through me are partakers of the glory of the same***, and are ***the church of the Firstborn*** [Spirit of truth]. You were also in the beginning [pre-mortality] with the Father, that which is spirit, even the ***spirit of truth***, and truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come; and whatever is more or less than these is the ***spirit of that wicked one*** who was a liar from the beginning” (RE T&C 93:8, emphasis added).

All who come to earth arrive as the “spirit of truth.” We are the spirit of truth from “the beginning” or pre-mortality. All mankind receives light from Christ from the beginning.¹²

“The Jews argued among themselves, demanding, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them, In the name of Father Ahman I say unto you, Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you will never have endless life in you. Those who eat my flesh, and drink my blood, will obtain endless life. I will raise him up in the resurrection of the just at the last day. Just as the Father provided this life for me [Spirit of Truth], I will provide it for you [Spirit of truth] if you have faith in me. For ***my flesh will fill you with light, and my blood will quench you with truth. If you receive these, I will fill you with light and truth and we will be brothers, sons of God.*** My sacrifice is the bread I descended from Heaven to provide, not like the manna eaten by your deceased ancestors who rejected greater light and truth in their day. ***The light and truth I offer leads to endless lives, worlds without end***” (RE T&C 171, *The Testimony of Saint John* 5:19, emphasis added).

spirit of truth to be added upon

Before our mortal existence we were in our first estate as spirits of truth, intelligence given life and light from Christ. Like light bulbs with the capacity to illuminate, spirits of truth are receptacles of light and truth. God made us with the intent of adding to our capacity to increase ever expanding stores of knowledge, truth, light or spirit.¹³

¹² “I was in the world and received of my Father, and the works of him were plainly manifest. And John saw and bore record of the fullness of my glory, and the fullness of John’s record is hereafter to be revealed. 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*” (RE T&C 93:2, emphasis added).

¹³ “And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to *give diligent heed to the words of eternal life,* for you shall live by *every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God. For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatever is truth is light, and whatever is light is spirit, even the spirit of Jesus Christ.* And the spirit gives light to every man that comes into the world, and the spirit enlightens every man through the world that

Prior to birth, we dwelt with God in a pre-mortal realm. We were tried and tested in prior cycles with the objective of being “added upon.” When we are proven faithful to the light, truth and spirit we were given in each realm, we drew nearer to God and like God.

“And there stood one among them that was *like unto God* [Christ prior to receiving His sonship], and he said unto *those who were with him, We* [noble and great] *will go down*, for there is space there, and we [noble and great] will take of these materials and we [noble and great] will make an earth whereon *these* [those who were not yet noble and great] may dwell. And we [noble and great] will prove them [those who were not yet noble and great] herewith to see if they [those who were not yet noble and great] will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them. And they [those who were not yet noble and great] who keep *their first estate* [pre-mortality] shall be *added upon*, [increased light, spirit and truth] and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate;¹⁴ and they who keep their *second estate* [mortality] ¹⁵shall have *glory added upon their heads for ever*

hearkens to the voice of the spirit, and everyone that hearkens to the voice of the spirit comes unto God, even the Father. And the Father teaches him of the covenant which the Father has renewed and confirmed upon you, which is confirmed upon you for your sakes, and not for yours only, but for the sake of the whole world” (RE T&C 82:18, emphasis added).

¹⁴ “Well, before you got here, you lived somewhere else in something that is called a “first estate.” It’s called the first estate because it was “before this one.” *It may not have been your first estate: It may have been your 100th; it may have been your 10,000th; it may have been your 100,000th. But as to here, it was first—before here. How much went into that beforehand? It’s not important; we aren’t told about that. It’s not included in the Scriptures, and it’s anyone’s guess”* (*Understanding Your Soul Part 2*, Denver Snuffer Jr., p.3, emphasis added).

¹⁵ “Abr. 3:26: Qualifying to come here happens in a “first estate.” But qualifying to have glory added “for ever and ever” can only happen here, in the “second estate” *where the marriage covenant is obtained* by those who are otherwise separate and single” (*Preserving the Restoration*, Denver Snuffer Jr., footnote 1103).

“. . . *We needed this second opportunity in a new existence to develop and to be “added upon.”* We lacked vital understanding which could only be gained by the physical experiences here.

Mortality, or the Second Estate, *is absolutely essential in the creation process*, even though God continues to sustain us from moment to moment by lending us breath. We all think we are independent of Him. He is so far veiled from us that everything is now reversed! *It takes an act of faith to believe in His existence. We have to be taught about Him before we believe in Him. It is now more challenging to believe in His existence than it is to believe in our own.* Mortality is the venue in which we acquire a *fulsome faith in our separate existence*. Even atheists are being “added upon” by the mortal experience; though they take their claimed independence from God too far. This second estate is brief but vital. *Faith is required for daily life here. From this second estate we all gain faith in our separate existence. Some of us will go on to develop faith sufficient to finally become self-existent beings. That is, some few will develop the faith necessary to do as all the gods have done before and to exist in our own right, under the power of our own faith, through the grace shown us by God.* Without faith it is impossible to develop properly. *Proper development has the goal of making the individual personality possible to exist through his or her own faith. Until the individual has sufficient faith to exist independently, they cannot receive “all the Father has.”* (See D&C 84: 38, RE T&C 82:17.) *The process of growing into self-existence requires each of us to conform to the pattern revealed by God. Since the substance from which we were originally organized was the*

and ever [noble and great, gods]” (RE T&C 145, Abraham 6:2, emphasis added).¹⁶

When the scriptures speak of the spirit of truth, they refer to those who entered mortality in a basic state. They had prior experience before they came here and now seek to be faithful in the second estate and possibly ascend to becoming noble and great. The process begins when they ask for greater light, spirit, truth or added intelligence. Knowledge, when applied is what leads the soul to salvation.

Spirit of Elias

The Spirit of Elias is associated with the Aaronic Priesthood. Its purpose is to prepare people for ascending to the next level. Israel rejected the “*greater priesthood*”¹⁷ and the Aaronic covenant became a lesser, preparatory covenant.

faith, or word, or intelligence, or light and truth of God, it is impossible to become self-existent unless we conform to that light and truth, that intelligence, that faith or word of God. Self-existence flows from conforming to the purity of holiness to which all gods conform. If we are unholy, we are unworthy. We cannot contradict the light from which we originated. The great Plan of Happiness, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the commandments, the rites, the ordinances of God (whatever terms you use to describe them) are all designed to teach us the way to conform to the perfect faith and grow in light until the perfect day. They are the path which has been taken by all of the gods. Joseph said we have to go on to learn how to become gods ourselves. Faith is essential “because without it there was no salvation, neither in this world nor in that which is to come. When men begin to live by faith they begin to draw near to God; and when faith is perfected they are like him; and because he is saved they are saved also; for they will be in the same situation he is in, because they have come to him; and when he appears they shall be like him, for they will see him as he is.” (Lectures 7: 8.) (Beloved Enos, Denver Snuffer Jr., pp.24-26, emphasis added).

¹⁶ “When the various groups are identified by highlighting, it becomes apparent that *there are two kinds of mortals here. One type has already been called “Gods” in scripture. They are among those who have a calling to teach truth here. They are “noble and great” because they teach truth. They teach truth, and know truth, because they were of such a character before they came here that they had accepted, obeyed and received the results of following truth. In a word, they were exalted before they were born here. Hence the need for the word “Elohim” to be plural*” (*The First Three Words*, Denver Snuffer Jr., p.17, emphasis added).

¹⁷ “And this *greater Priesthood administers the gospel and holds the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest, and without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the Priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto man in the flesh, for without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live. Now, this, Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God, but they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence. Therefore, the Lord, in his wrath (for his anger was kindled against them) swore that they should not enter into his rest — which rest is the fullness of his glory — while in the wilderness. Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also. And the lesser priesthood continued, which priesthood holds the key of the ministering of angels, and the preparatory gospel, which gospel is the gospel of repentance, and of baptism, and the remission of sins, and the law of carnal*

Israel labored under the Aaronic covenant until John the Baptist, whom the Lord sent to prepare the Jews for a new dispensation, with Christ. Prior to John the Baptist, Jewish rabbi's taught strict obedience to the lesser covenant. In effect, the Jewish faith became a tradition each generation sought to preserve but remained in a perpetual preparatory state rather than ascend.

The Spirit of Elias was introduced to the gentiles by Joseph Smith¹⁸ with the Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ beginning two hundred years ago.

I wrote a paper extensively covering the Spirits of Elias, Elijah and Messiah called "***What Nephi Said to Joseph Smith,***" with a detailed explanation of these spirits including explanations of where the gentiles are prophetically in this day.¹⁹ It further explains how each of these spirits are associated with the Aaronic, Melchizedek and the Patriarchal Priesthoods.

Conclusion to Part 1

commandments, which the Lord in his wrath caused to continue with the house of Aaron, among the children of Israel, until John, whom God raised up, being filled with the holy ghost from his mother's womb. For he was baptized while he was yet in his childhood, and was ordained by the angel of God at the time he was eight days old unto this power: to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews, and to make straight the way of the Lord before the face of his people, to prepare them for the coming of the Lord, in whose hand is given all power" (RE T&C 82:12-14, emphasis added).

¹⁸ "In the first place, suffice it to say, I went into the woods to inquire of the Lord, by prayer, His will concerning me, and I saw an angel, and he laid his hands upon my head, and ordained me to a Priest after the order of Aaron, and to hold the keys of this Priesthood, which office was to preach repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, and also to baptize. But I was informed that this office did not extend to the laying on of hands for the giving of the holy ghost; that that office was a greater work and was to be given afterward; but that my ordination was a preparatory work, or a going before, which was the spirit of Elias; for the spirit of Elias was a going before to prepare the way for the greater, which was the case with John the Baptist. He came crying through the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." And they were informed, if they could receive it, it was the spirit of Elias; and John was very particular to tell the people, he was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. He told the people that his mission was to preach repentance and baptize with water; but it was He that should come after him that should baptize with fire and the holy ghost. If he had been an impostor, he might have gone to work beyond his bounds, and undertook to have performed ordinances which did not belong to that office and calling, under the spirit of Elias. The spirit of Elias is to prepare the way for a greater revelation from God, which is the Priesthood of Elias, or the Priesthood that Aaron was ordained unto. And when God sends a man into the world to prepare for a greater work holding the keys and power of Elias, even from the early ages of the world . . . What I want to impress upon your minds is the difference of power in the different parts of the Priesthood, so that when any man comes among you, saying, "I have the spirit of Elias" you can know whether he be true or false; for any man that comes, having the spirit and power of Elias, he will not transcend his bounds" (TPJS., pp.335-336, emphasis added).

¹⁹ The website, "***Saytothem***" currently has "***What Nephi Said to Joseph Smith,***" on their website. An aggregator of religious content, I recommend you take time to peruse its content.

Joseph Smith began the Restoration nearly two hundred years ago. When Joseph and Hyrum Smith were martyred, established the time the Church began replicating the pattern established by the Jews with the death and Resurrection of Christ and His apostles. The concept of a “*process*” and ascending back to God’s presence was replaced with rote obedience, authoritarian rule and doctrinal innovation to suit the time and circumstances. Temple ordinances became fluid and perceived as an end in themselves. Participants are promised Heavenly sealings and exaltation through participation in ordinance work alone. The original ordinances were intended to instruct patrons on events they should strive for and expect outside the Temple. They were expected to entertain angels, approach the Lord through a “true order” and converse with the Lord through the veil and then face to face. That standard became too high a bar for even the leadership to reach and so the bar was lowered, as when the Jews rejected Moses and the greater covenant. The grace of Christ became a best-efforts process with the grace of Christ covering any shortfall as long as members remained compliant to leaderships dictates. This, in contrast to the concept of grace being the acquisition of greater light, knowledge, spirit and revelation is now understated and de-emphasized.

Two Hundred Years

In the two hundred years since Joseph Smith’s life and ministry it may be time to take a prophetic inventory of what progress has been made toward establishing Zion. The church has grown in wealth and population but beyond that, there are prophetic milestones that remain unfulfilled. Is there anyone in the church who articulates a clear path explaining how we advance from where we are now to how Zion will be established? In two hundred years of the Restoration have the records of Judah and Joseph grown together to confound false doctrine, lay down contention, establish peace among Joseph’s seed, bring them to a knowledge of their fathers and the Lord’s covenants?²⁰ At what point beyond two hundred years do we begin to ask if the fact

²⁰ “And again, a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of your loins. And unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of your loins — and not to the bringing forth my word only, says the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word which shall have already gone forth among them in the last days. Wherefore, the fruit of your loins shall write, and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and *that which shall be written by the fruit of your loins and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah shall grow together unto the*

the sealed portions of the Book of Mormon have not been revealed is evidence of the Lord's condemnation of current efforts.²¹ When should one become concerned when other prophecies in the Book of Mormon concerning adverse attributes of the latter-day gentiles appear fulfilled?²²

confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of your loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of my covenants, says the Lord. And out of weakness he shall be made strong in that day when my work shall go forth among all my people, which shall restore them who are of the house of Israel in the last days" (RE Genesis 12:39, emphasis added).

²¹ "And now *there cannot be written in this book even an hundredth part of the things which Jesus did truly teach unto the people. But behold, the plates of Nephi do contain the more part of the things which he taught the people. And these things have I written, which are a lesser part of the things which he taught the people, and I have written them to the intent that they may be brought again unto this people from the gentiles, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken. And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first to try their faith, and if it should so be that they shall believe these things, then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them. And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them unto their condemnation . . .*" (RE 3 Nephi 12:1, emphasis added).

²² "Woe unto them that turn aside the just for a thing of naught, and revile against that which is good and say that it is of no worth, *for the day shall come that the Lord God will speedily visit the inhabitants of the earth. And in that day that they are fully ripe in iniquity, they shall perish.* But behold, if the inhabitants of the earth shall repent of their wickedness and abominations, they shall not be destroyed, saith the Lord of Hosts. But behold, *that great and abominable church, the whore of all the earth, must tumble to the earth, and great must be the fall thereof. For the kingdom of the Devil must shake, and they which belong to it must needs be stirred up unto repentance, or the Devil will grasp them with his everlasting chains and they be stirred up to anger and perish.* For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men and *stir them up to anger against that which is good. And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say, All is well in Zion, yea, Zion prospereth, all is well. And thus the Devil cheateth their souls and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.* And behold, *others he flattereth away and telleth them there is no hell. And he saith unto them, I am no devil, for there is none. And thus he whispereth in their ears until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance. Yea, they are grasped with death and hell; and death, and hell, and the Devil, and all that have been seized therewith must stand before the throne of God and be judged according to their works, from whence they must go into the place prepared for them, even a lake of fire and brimstone, which is Endless torment. Therefore, woe be unto him that is at ease in Zion"* (RE 2 Nephi 12:4, emphasis added).

"O ye wicked, and perverse, and stiffnecked people, why have you built up churches unto yourselves to get gain? Why have ye transfigured the holy word of God that ye might bring damnation upon your souls? Behold, *look ye unto the revelations of God, for behold, the time cometh at that day when all these things must be fulfilled.* Behold, the Lord hath shewn unto me great and marvelous things concerning that which must shortly come at that day when these things shall come forth among you. Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, *Jesus Christ hath shewn you unto me, and I know your doing, and I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts.* And there are none, save a few only, who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envying, and strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquity. *And your churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts.* For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted. O ye pollutions, ye hypocrites, ye teachers who sell yourselves for that which will canker, *why have ye polluted the holy church of God? Why are ye ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ? Why do ye not think that greater is the value of an endless happiness than that misery which never dies? Because of the praise of the world? Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no*

The answer to this dilemma is to return to the Restoration Joseph Smith began and renew our embrace of the ascension process. At this point we wallow in false traditions of the Restoration remnant with little evidence of striving to ascend. We like Christ, must advance grace for grace, growing in greater light and truth. It begins with asking the Lord and now we must become proactive in seeking what the Lord offers. Part two explains steps two and three of the process.

life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick, and the afflicted to pass by you and notice them not? Yea, why do ye build up your secret abominations to get gain? And cause that widows should mourn before the Lord, and also orphans to mourn before the Lord, and also the blood of their fathers and their husbands to cry unto the Lord from the ground for vengeance upon your heads? Behold, *the sword of vengeance hangeth over you, and the time soon cometh that he avengeth the blood of the saints upon you, for he will not suffer their cries any longer*" (RE Mormon 4:5, emphasis added).