

Three Knocks, The Great Ascension (Part 2)

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Seek, Spirit of truth, Spirit of Elijah, Melchizedek Covenant

The second knock symbolizes seeking, the Spirit of truth or holy ghost, the Spirit of Elijah and the Melchizedek covenant. At this point one has asked and received answers. The process of asking and receiving answers is designed to increase faith in the process and encourage the idea answers can be obtained from Heaven.¹ Once an answer is given, one has confidence to seek additional light and truth. This is done by obedience to covenants and ordinances. We obey the commandment to repent and the Lord offers a covenant and ordinance through baptism. Obedience to the commandment by repenting and being baptized in the name of Christ becomes an outward witness of our inward commitment to follow the path of Christ. Observance of the sacrament thereafter becomes a perpetual testimony to the Father of our intention be the children of Christ, following His example.

Honoring covenants and ordinances is rewarded when the Father sends His Spirit, the holy ghost or Spirit of truth to be with us. Receiving the Spirit of truth has a threefold purpose:

1. It sanctifies our spirit by cleansing it from sin in preparation for opening lines of communication between us and Heaven. It is received “by finally listening to that inner truth of all things or record of the Father and the Son. 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.”² It is the beginning of God revealing to us ***the heavenly record from each one’s prior experiences, although now veiled.***³
2. “The holy ghost is also the light of truth. In that sense it is an it.”⁴

¹ “In consequence of these things, I often felt condemned for my weakness and imperfections. When on the evening of the above mentioned twenty-first of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me that I might know of my state and standing before him, *for I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I had previously had one*” (RE T&C1, Joseph Smith History 3:1, emphasis added).

² *A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, holy ghost, p.679).

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

3. “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.”⁵

The reception of the holy ghost is preliminary work to prepare us for conversing with the Lord through the veil. All communication with Heaven is received in the Lord’s voice, therefore, the method of delivery is considered conversing with the Him. Our conversations are not done through vibrations in the air received by the ear. Rather, the Lord’s voice is communicated through a variety of different mediums including thoughts and feelings.⁶ As I write this paper, thoughts not originating with me occasionally course through my mind providing explanations I’ve never considered. Those thoughts draw me to “*careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts.*”⁷

The holy ghost is sent to instruct us through various mediums, be it through the whisperings of the Spirit, angelic ministrant, seen or unseen, the Lord’s voice or His literal appearance. It is in this second stage we are commanded to seek greater light and knowledge. This type of knowledge can be obtained in no other way. The “*unspeakable things of immortal glory.*”⁸

⁵ Ibid

⁶ “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).

“The holy ghost is the conduit through which Christ will speak to you, now. Today. With the same guidance He provided to those 8 witnesses who wrote the New Testament” (*Reconciled to Christ, Part 6 blogpost*, Denver Snuffer Jr., emphasis added).

⁷ “A fanciful and flowery and heated imagination be aware of, because *the things of God are of deep import, and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out.* Your mind, O man, if you will lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost Heavens, and search into and contemplate the lowest considerations of the darkest abyss, and expand upon the broad considerations of eternal expanse. You must commune with God. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God than the vain imagination of the human heart? None but fools will trifle with the souls of men” (RE T&C 138:18, emphasis added).

⁸ “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).

The difference between ask and seek is the second requires direct questions of Heaven before an answer may be given. The answer in this context may include information that cannot be uttered or written for a number of reasons. It may be difficult to communicate in the persons language or contain sacred information from our record of heaven that can only be known by the person whose record it is.

Regardless of the reason, we are discussing a level of knowledge that is not commonly accessible and involves Heaven rather than earthly knowledge.

The host instructing the party in the prayer circle represents servants of God, Patriarchal Father's sent by God for the purpose of instructing participants.⁹ These

"It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knows), such an one caught up to the third Heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knows), *that he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.* Of such an one will I glory" (RE 2 Corinthian 1:40, emphasis added).

"And it came to pass that the disciples whom Jesus had chosen began from that time forth to baptize and to teach as many as did come unto them. *And as many as were baptized in the name of Jesus were filled with the holy ghost. And many of them saw and heard unspeakable things which are not lawful to be written.* And they taught and did minister one to another, and they had all things common among them, every man dealing justly one with another. And it came to pass that they did do all things even as Jesus had commanded them. And they who were baptized in the name of Jesus were called the church of Christ" (RE 3 Nephi 12:3, emphasis added).

⁹ "The spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is, that ye have power to hold the key of the revelations, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth; and to receive, obtain, and perform all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God, even unto the turning of the hearts of the Fathers unto the children, and the hearts of the children unto the Fathers, even those who are in Heaven . . . Elijah was to come and prepare the way and build up the kingdom before the coming of the great day of the Lord, although the spirit of Elias might begin it.... Elias is a forerunner to prepare the way, and the spirit and power of Elijah is to come after, holding the keys of power, building the temple to the capstone, placing the seals of the Melchizedek Priesthood upon the house of Israel, and making all things ready . . . when the Earth was threatened with violence and men were to be destroyed because of the wickedness upon the face of the earth, was able to gather people into a city of peace and to have the Lord come to their city of peace and remove them from the coming violence and destruction. Enoch is a type of the Spirit of Elijah, because it is the Spirit of Elijah that ascends into Heaven to prefigure the return of the Spirit of Messiah in the last day. The Spirit of Elijah is needed to gather a people to a place that God will acknowledge, will visit, and will shield from the coming violence at the destruction of the world . . . It will be Elijah and his spirit that, in the last days, will likewise prepare a city for salvation and preservation . . . This generation is now facing a crossroads in which it is possible to continue the work and move forward. Moving forward successfully, however, will require an acceptance of the Spirit of Elijah. This time, the Spirit of Elijah is not coming to prepare a people to ascend *into* Heaven, but instead to prepare a people so that *those who come will not utterly destroy them*. There must be a people prepared to endure the burning that will come. Just as Enoch's people were prepared, shielded, and then worthy to ascend (so as to avoid destruction by the flood), the Spirit of Elijah must prepare people to endure the day that *shall burn the wicked as stubble*. The Spirit of Elijah will gather people to a place of peace, to be the only people who are not at war one with another (see T&C 31:15). They must be people willing to accept the Lord's teachings and allow those teachings to govern their daily walk — with each other and with God. Being eager to receive *commandments, not a*

may be mortal angels, like a dispensation head or Heavenly angels who descend. In the example of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery at the Kirtland Temple dedication, it was multiple dispensation heads as Heavenly Angels acting in concert as the “Powers of Heaven.”¹⁰ Their purpose is to instruct us how to approach the veil and receive greater knowledge and achieve greater righteousness in mortality.¹¹

The seeking phase or second step in ascension, we are introduced at the veil where we receive light and truth reserved for those beyond the veil and the few mortals who qualify for this privilege. The Aaronic portion or the portion where angelic ministrants and mortal servants of God teach, testify and exemplify how they successfully approached the veil. We converse with the Lord through the veil when we heed their teachings and obey God’s commands.

few, and also *revelations* from the Lord is what the people of Zion must necessarily be willing to do . . . I expect *Elijah* to return the same way he departed. That’s one of the great assignments to him. He must return because he will reopen the way through which others will follow. It will be, I believe, the same person as departed and not someone who self-proclaims or self-identifies as being *Elijah*. It will be him. Not another . . . Elijah is the spirit and assignment to reconnect Heaven and earth; he who unites realms and initiates man’s access to ministering angels and the church of the Firstborn by opening the stairway of ascent [an *axis mundi* or *columna lucis*] into Heaven.” (A *Glossary of Gospel Terms*, Elias, Elijah, Messiah, pp.634-637).

¹⁰ “A title referring to a specific group with status on the other side of the veil; a proper noun, not just an abstraction. In the afterlife there are different rungs on Jacob’s ladder where different Powers are fixed: Angel, Archangel, Principality, Power, Dominion, Throne, Cherubim, and Seraphim — they may all be called Powers of Heaven. These Powers have no desire to control or compel others to rise on Jacob’s ladder. Each rung is a developmental stage of growth through which all must pass if they want to ascend nearer to God. Each individual on Jacob’s ladder should be moving toward perfection” (A *Glossary of Gospel Terms*, Powers of Heaven, p.755).

¹¹ “In the land of the Chaldeans, at the residence of my father, I, Abraham, saw that it was needful for me to obtain another place of residence. And finding there was greater happiness, and peace, and rest for me, ***I sought*** [seek] ***for the blessings of the Fathers and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same. Having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a Father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a high priest, holding the right belonging to the Fathers. It was conferred upon me from the Fathers: it came down from the Fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning (or before the foundations of the earth) to the present time, even the right of the firstborn (or the first man — who is Adam — or first Father) through the Fathers unto me. I sought*** [seek] ***for my appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the Fathers concerning the seed***” (RE T&C 145, Abraham 1:1, emphasis added).

The light and truth the Patriarchs impart can only be done when the Spirit of truth is sent by the Father to those who keep the commandments to repent and be baptized,¹² thereafter receiving the holy ghost or Spirit of truth.¹³

The Spirit of Elijah

The Spirit of Elijah is critical to our ascension because it marks the reopening of the conduit between Heaven and Earth. The content for this subject is adequately addressed in, “What Nephi Said to Joseph Smith.” I suggest you refer to my paper on the “*Saytothem*” website.¹⁴ Drawing from an excerpt from that paper, there is a quote pointing to the relevance of the Spirit of Elijah to our day.

“We are now facing a crossroads in which it is possible to continue the work and move forward. Moving forward successfully however, ***will require us to accept the Spirit of Elijah.*** This time the Spirit of Elijah is not to prepare a people to ascend into heaven, but instead ***to prepare a people so that those***

¹² “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. *But the Comforter, who is the holy ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance — whatever I have said unto you . . .*” (RE John 9:9, emphasis added).

“If you love me, stand ready, watching for every communication I will send to you. *Remember that I will ask the Father, and he will provide to you another Comforter, that he may be by your side endlessly. You will obtain the record of Heaven, the truth of all things which is denied to the world because the world refuses my Father, and therefore they do not know him.* But you know him, for he is with you, and shall provide answers to guide you. I will not leave you comfortless. I will stand at your side also” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:11, emphasis added).

¹³ “And now behold, my beloved brethren, I suppose that ye ponder somewhat in your hearts *concerning that which ye should do after ye have entered in by the way.* But behold, why do ye ponder these things in your hearts? Do ye not remember that I said unto you that *after ye had received the holy ghost, ye could speak with the tongue of angels? And now, how could ye speak with the tongue of angels save it were by the holy ghost? Angels speak by the power of the holy ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ.* Wherefore, I said unto you, Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, *the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.* Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them, *it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock [ask, seek, knock].* Wherefore, *ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.* For behold, again I say unto you that *if ye will enter in by the way and receive the holy ghost, it will shew unto you all things what ye should do.* Behold, *this is the doctrine of Christ,* and there will be *no more doctrine given until after he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh [knock, Spirit of Messiah].* And ***when he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh, the things which he shall say unto you shall ye observe to do***” (RE 2 Nephi 14:1, emphasis added).

¹⁴ The *Saytothem* website contains several articles I’ve written. It is formatted into three columns. It is possible to scroll down and search for articles I’ve written. “*What Nephi Said to Joseph Smith*” is found there. Accessing it by phone requires that you turn your phone horizontal for best results.

who come will not utterly destroy them. There must be a people prepared to endure the burning that will come. Just as Enoch's people were prepared, shielded and then worthy to ascend so as to avoid destruction by the flood, the Spirit of Elijah must prepare people to endure the day that shall burn the wicked as stubble. ***The Spirit of Elijah can prepare people to gather in a place of peace, to be the only people who are not at war one with another.*** (D&C 45:69) They must be people willing to accept the Lord's teachings and allow those teachings to govern their daily walk; with each other and with God. Being eager to receive "commandments, not a few," and also "revelations" from the Lord is what the people of Zion must necessarily be willing to do" (*Things To Keep Us Awake At Night*, Denver Snuffer Jr., emphasis added).

The Spirit of Elijah has relevance for us both individually and collectively. It opens a conduit between Heaven and Earth¹⁵ so the kingdoms of God in Heaven and Earth interact and establish relationships prior to the city of Enoch's collective descent and reunion with the kingdom of God on earth.¹⁶

¹⁵ "I know that... well... the fact is that a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of smoke by day is an allusion, an attempt to refer to things we are familiar with to describe things that we are not familiar with. *A conduit that reaches up into heaven as the temporary appearance of the Lord to Joseph in the First Vision is intended to be a permanent connection at some place.* It will be one of the reasons why people say, let's not go up against the people of Zion because Zion is too terrible. The presence of God is dreadful to the wicked, it's frightening to them. They get near it and it convicts them of their unworthiness. They dare not go up. But the pure and the humble and the noble are drawn to it. They will want to be there. And so that conduit, *that fiery pillar, that stairway to heaven, Jacob's ladder, the chariot of fire, all of those things are an attempt to describe that heavenly connection, that heavenly presence.* To the unworthy and the ungodly looking at it, they may or may not be able to see anything about it but they will sense extraordinary dread. It will frighten them. To the worthy there will be something enlightened about the very presence of the place. It will not seem to them to just be another place. *It will seem as though the God of heaven has some base established there. That's when you know that an ensign has been established in the tops of the mountains to which nations will flow saying, come, let us go up and learn from the god of Jacob, because that ensign is actually something godly, holy, edifying, instructive, revelatory, filled with light, and redemptive, and the god who dwells there is going to be the Lord.* So we don't have time... If you think about it, Enoch taught for 365 years before his people were prepared enough to go up, and *we have to be prepared enough for them to come down and not destroy us by the brightness of their presence"* (*Cursed-Denied Priesthood*, Denver Snuffer Jr., p.25, emphasis added).

¹⁶ "And the Lord said unto Enoch: As I live [this is covenant language—this is God swearing by His own life. This is God promising that if He lives, so shall this word live; if He's alive, He shall vindicate what He's about to say—As I live], even so will I come in the last days, in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfil the oath which I have made unto you concerning the children of Noah; And the day shall come that the earth shall rest, but before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be among the children of men, *but my people will I preserve; And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and*

Melchizedek Covenant

The Melchizedek or “*Greater*” Priesthood keys are described in the 82nd section of Teachings and Commandments. The “*seek*” phase of our ascension leads us to reception of this Priesthood and the rights and privileges associated with it. It is described as follows:

“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*” (RE T&C 82:12, emphasis added).

This greater Priesthood holds keys of the mysteries of God’s kingdom, including the key to the knowledge of God. To access these keys we must be given ordinances and Priesthood authority.¹⁷ The ordinances are given by the Lord and the dispensation

truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, [even] unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem. And the Lord said unto Enoch: Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there [these are they who, when they come, will burn up those unprepared for their coming so that it leaves neither root nor branch], ...we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other; And there shall be mine abode, and it shall be [called] Zion, which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made; ...for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest. And it came to pass that Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, in the last days, to dwell on the earth in righteousness for the space of a thousand years; But before that day he saw great tribulations among the wicked; ...he also saw the sea, that it was troubled, and men's hearts failing them, looking forth with fear for the judgments of the Almighty God, which [shall] come upon the wicked” (Covenants, Denver Snuffer Jr., p.16, Moses 7:60-66, emphasis added; see also Genesis 4:22-23 RE)

¹⁷ “Now Melchizedek was a man of faith who wrought righteousness. And when a child, he feared God, and stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire. And thus, *having been approved of God, he was ordained a high priest after the Order of the covenant which God made with Enoch, it being after the Order of the Son of God, which Order came not by man, nor the will of men, neither by father nor mother, neither by beginning of days nor end of years, but of God. And it was delivered unto men by the calling of his own voice, according to his own will, unto as many as believed on his name*” (RE Genesis 7:18, emphasis added).

head is granted permission to organize it.^{18 19} When ratified by the Lord it becomes “*scripture, the will of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.*”²⁰ Once ordinances are ratified by God they cannot be altered by man and remain in force. The consequences for altering ordinances are

¹⁸ “When God delivers a dispensation of the gospel to the earth, ***the head of that dispensation is granted the right and privilege of organizing the dispensation. As the head organizes their dispensation according to the righteous principles and receives God’s approval of the pattern, the dispensation is established and remains in effect until apostasy necessitates another restoration***” (RE T&C 154:1, emphasis added).

¹⁹ “The beginning and ending of a gospel epoch or order.¹ Dispensations have their bounds. *Beforehand, the prophets give, through prophecy, a limit on the things that are to come. When the prophesied events have unfolded and the measure has been met, then one Dispensation comes to an end while another opens.*² “It is in the order of heavenly things that God should always send a new Dispensation into the world when men have apostatized from the truth and lost the priesthood....”³ *Every Dispensation of the Gospel is the “last Dispensation” — until it fails.* Then another is sent, and it is the “last” — until it fails. This will continue for so long as man continues to fail.⁴ When a dispensation of the Gospel is conferred on mankind through a dispensation head (like Enoch, Moses, Joseph Smith), then those who live in that Dispensation are obligated to honor the ordinances laid down through the Dispensation head by the Lord. For so long as the ordinances remain unchanged, the ordinances are effective. When, however, the ordinances are changed without the Lord’s approval (*the critical question*), they are broken. At that point, the cure is for the Lord to bestow a new Dispensation in which a new covenant is made available.⁵ The Lord sends ministers with a commission to transition from one Dispensation of the Gospel to another.⁶ A new Dispensation occurs when some lost (or never completed) components of the work need to be dispensed to mankind, either anew or for the first time.⁷ “In Abraham we have an example of...an isolated, faithful individual who honored the Fathers and was doing everything that he could in his day but for whom there was no existing possibility for having it occur. God was able to fix that problem for that individual, not in order to establish a new Dispensation in which salvation proceeds with the gathering of a people, and a making of a people. But it was a dispensation to that individual for purposes of trying to call others to repentance.”⁸ When God gives a man a Dispensation from heaven, there is a labor to be done in His vineyard. The authority to complete the labor is implicit with the assignment given by God. When someone receives a Dispensation and discharges the assignment with honor, he holds the keys, owns the rights, enjoys the honors, and possesses the Dispensation of that assignment to all eternity. A new Dispensation is founded on knowledge from those who went before who *all [declare] their dispensations, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the Powers of their Priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; endowing them with knowledge, even here a little and there a little* (T&C 157:31) to the new Dispensation.⁹ Though this could be interpreted to suggest that every assignment from the Lord could be a “dispensation,” the broader statement clarifies that there is one dispensation supported, in turn, by many assignments. Man may have received power and authority to complete the labor assigned, and the inspiration from God to complete the assignment may have been provided to them, but that alone does not constitute a dispensation. For example, Nephi was sent to retrieve the plates of brass, but that was not a dispensation; it was an assignment, a request from the Lord. Many assignments are needed to fulfill a dispensation. All who complete an assignment with honor hold the keys of that work. But a dispensation is better understood as “restoring and making overall progression of the covenants, promises, and prophecies to advance and vindicate God’s work to reclaim the world from apostasy” (*A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, Dispensation, pp.623-624, emphasis added).

²⁰ “. . . And this is the example ***unto them that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the holy ghost. And whatever they shall speak, when moved upon by the holy ghost, shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation. Behold, this is the promise of the Lord unto you, O you my servants***” (RE T&C 55:1, emphasis added).

grave, even catastrophic.²¹ It may also be the ultimate statement of arrogance because it implies man can improve upon what the Lord Himself has given.

Included with the keys of the greater Priesthood is the ability to see the face of God.²² The Spirit of Elijah delivers the keys of the greater Priesthood. In addition it opens the opportunity for people to approach the Lord at the veil, receive instruction directly from Him, be drawn through the veil and into His presence. However, that is not the end of the journey. Seeing the Savior while in the flesh is preparatory for another journey. One that requires His personal involvement in directing us in the path leading to the Father.

Knock, Spirit of Truth, Spirit of Messiah, Patriarchal Priesthood

When a person is properly instructed by servants of God, seen or unseen, they are introduced at the veil to converse with the Lord through the veil. As they grow in light and truth the Lord extends His hand through the veil and draws the person into His presence.

Knock

After passing the ask and seek phases, a person now has sufficient knowledge and experience to know the Lord has more light and truth to share. There is also a transition from pursuing personal salvation to seeking the salvation of others. In

²¹ “Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty, and makes it waste, and turns it upside down, and scatters abroad the inhabitant thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. *The land shall be utterly emptied and utterly spoiled, for the Lord has spoken this word. The earth mourns and fades away; the world languishes and fades away; the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore has the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. The new wine mourns, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted do sigh. The mirth of tambourines ceases, the noise of them that rejoice ends, the joy of the harp ceases. They shall not drink wine with a son; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it. The city of confusion is broken down; every house is shut up, that no man may come in. There is a crying for wine in the streets, all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction . . .” (RE Isaiah 7:1, emphasis added).*

²² “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, 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*” (RE T&C 82:12, emphasis added).

essence you begin sharing God's desire to "*bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.*"²³

In addition to transitioning from fulfilling our desires, the Lord adapts our relationship with Him. His servants become friends and share the Savior's life, literally and figuratively.

Testimony of Saint John Explains the Pattern

"This is my commandment: That you love one another as I have loved you. ***No man loves more than when he is willing to sacrifice his life to save his friends. You are my friends if you do whatever I communicate to you.*** Beginning now, I will no longer call you my servants because a servant does not share his Lord's life. But I make you my friends because every thing I received from my Father I have shared and will yet share with you. You did not choose me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should progress and become fruitful, that your fruit will testify on your behalf forever, that whatever I direct you to seek from my Father you will be able to obtain. I have taught these things to you to enable you to share my love among one another" (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:19, emphasis added).

Before discussing the substance of this reference, the context must be understood. The Savior is preparing His disciples for their post resurrection ministry.²⁴ The Lord's servants seek His communications and devotion by showing a

²³ RE Genesis 1:7

²⁴ "*If you love me, stand ready, watching for every communication I will send to you [seeking phase]. Remember that I will ask the Father, and he will provide to you another Comforter, that he may be by your side endlessly [holy ghost]. You will obtain the record of Heaven, the truth of all things [restoration of pre-mortal memory] which is denied to the world **because the world refuses my Father**, and therefore they do not know him. But you know him, for he is with you, and shall provide answers to guide you. **I will not leave you comfortless. I will stand by your side also**" [knock]. Yet a little while, and the world will no longer see me, but **you will not lose sight of me** because I give life, and you shall **share** in endless lives. You will know that **I and the Father are one, and I am one with you, and you are one with me.** He that treasure my teachings, and stands ready, watching for every communication I send him, is he who shows love for me. To those who show love for me [willing to sacrifice their lives for their Friend, the Lord], my Father will show love to them, and I love all those, and **I will personally minister to them.** Judas (not Iscariot), asked, Lord, how is it you will manifest yourself to us, but not to the world? Jesus answered and said to him, *If a man loves me, he will stand ready watching for every communication I will send to him [seek]; and my Father will also love him, and **we will come visit him, and continually abide by his side** . . . These words have I spoken to you while I am still present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost that the Father**

willingness to follow His direction. As they sacrifice their lives for the Savior, their relationship with Him changes. Thereafter they cease being servants and become friends. Like the Savior, their works, their lives become sacrificial in the sense they place the salvation of others above their own interests. They join their Lord in becoming a sacrificial lamb for their brethren. Like God, they seek the immortality and eternal life of man selflessly. They are both called and chosen [ordained].²⁵ Many are called by God but few are chosen because the cares of this world are their primary concern. The Lord appoints those who choose Him over worldly advancements and personal gratification. He looks for people who share His values and His life of complete devotion to the Father and His work. To share His life is to be an active participant in His work of salvation. Participating in His work of salvation is preparation for a day when our work, like His, prepares others in the same manner.

Those actively seeking every communication from the Lord manifest their love for Him by their vigilance and obedience. They receive errands from the Lord requiring their sacrifice and means for the betterment of others. It transcends dying for others. It is a willingness to take the last step to lift the burden of others when the step requires all the strength we can muster. It is a willingness to not only carry our cross but do so up a steep hill of mockery and persecution.

For those few chosen to follow Christ in this course, the universe flows to them without compulsory means and they learn God has more than enough to satisfy their desires as they lift their fellow man. The Lord sought to lift the gaze of His disciples from focusing on mourning His suffering and death to focusing on life Eternal following thereafter. They rejoice in the prospect their Friend, who gave His all in life and death, and then rejoins them. Together they are led by Him into paths

*will send in my name, will teach you all things, and **restore to your memory all truth I have taught to you, and the record of Heaven itself***" (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:11-13 & 15, emphasis added).

²⁵ "Behold, there are *many called*, but *few are chosen*, and **why are they not chosen?** *Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that **they do not learn this one lesson**-that the rights of the Priesthood are inseparably connected with the Powers of Heaven and that the Powers of Heaven [seek] cannot be controlled nor handled, **only upon the principles of righteousness**. That they may be conferred upon us [called], it is true, but when we undertake to cover our sins or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control, or dominion, or compulsion, upon the souls of the children of men in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, *the Heavens withdraw themselves, the spirit of the Lord is grieved, and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man*. Behold, ere he is aware, **he is left unto himself**, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God. We have learned by sad experience that *it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Hence **many are called, but few are chosen***" (RE T&C 139:5, emphasis added).*

ascending toward the Father and a glorious destiny of saving and preserving others. This is the “*great while after we pass through the veil*” Joseph Smith spoke of.²⁶

Due to the mercy and grace of Christ we are given an account of the Savior ministering to His disciples post resurrection. After parting the veil and partaking of a sacred meal, Jesus spoke with Peter about his continuing mortal ministry. The following is the account of that sacred conversation:

“After the meal, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me above every thing else? He answered him, Yes, Lord. You know that I love you. He said to him, Take care of my lambs ***as they are growing*** [ask, Spirit of Elias]. He asked him again the *second time*, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me above every thing else? He said to Him, Yes, Lord you know that I love you. He said to him, ***Take care of my lambs as they increase*** [seek, Spirit of Elijah]. He said to him the *third time*, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me? And he said to Him, Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you. Jesus said to him, Care for my lambs ***as they are added upon*** [knock, Spirit of Messiah]. In the name of Father Ahman I tell you, when you were progressing [personally], you dressed yourself, and went where you chose to go; but as you approach ***the end of the path***, you will have to let others stretch out your hands and likewise nail you, even if you plead to have the bitter cup removed. This He said to ***foretell the sacrificial death that is required for endless glory***. And then He added ***you must follow me***” (RE T&C 171, The Testimony of Saint John 10:18, emphasis added).

Peter remained in the flesh but was empowered to part the veil, entering the Lord’s presence, and receive instruction regarding his earthly ministry. Before commissioning Peter, the Lord gave Peter the opportunity to reaffirm his devotion to Christ by responding to Savior’s three inquiries. “*Do you love me?*” With each of Peter’s affirmations the Lord committed Peter to shepherd the Lord’s sheep through their three step ascension. Doing so leads Peter towards the end of his mortal ministry as he guides the Lord’s sheep in their ascension. At the end of Peter’s path a sacrifice

²⁶ “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., p.348, emphasis added).

likened unto the Savior's is required. Peter's sacrificial death would be required for Peter to qualify for "*endless glory*."

At the last supper, where Christ washed the feet of His disciples, the Lord continued the post resurrection preparation of His disciples. In response to a question from Peter, the Lord said:

“. . . 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***.²⁷ And the path I follow upward you know,

²⁷ "The word that Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem; and it shall come to pass *in the last days, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains*, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, *Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths*. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (RE Isaiah 1:5, emphasis added).

"The paths of God lie in the heavens. So, if you're going to learn to walk in His paths, you're going to have to learn how to walk in the heavens . . . The "ensign" that is prophesied to be established—in the context, in the meaning of that day—had reference to a zodiacal, a constellation, a depiction of the heavens themselves. So, when an ensign is going to be reared and it's going to tell you about how to walk in the paths of God, this is talking about something very, very different than what most of us today would envision. Zion is going to be a connection between heaven and earth. And at that place, you will learn of the God of Jacob's ways, and you will walk in His paths—because Heaven and earth will be connected, and the stairway connecting the two will be open. And the heavens and the earth will be reunited again. And this is going to happen in the top of the mountains" (Zion, Denver Snuffer Jr., pp.32-33, emphasis added).

"Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, you that go down to the sea and all that is therein — the isles and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the

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 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&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:8-9, emphasis added).

The Lord revealed to Enoch He created "*millions of earths like this,*" so it should come as no surprise when the Savior tells Peter there are "*many realms,*" "*many stages*" and "*many abodes.*" Before the Lord's servants experience these places, the Lord must first prepare the place and person to inhabit them. The scope of information generated by creating millions of earth's like this is incomprehensible and endless. Access to this vast library is restricted to those who receive this Priesthood after the Order of His Son. People who are trusted not to misuse or abuse those less knowledgeable. There is nothing random or happenstance about it. Those who receive this privilege are diligent, thoughtful, teachable, obedient, and compassionate.

In a word, they are qualified through vast experience in numerous cycles of preparation. They "*seek*" every word the Lord sends down to them with the intent of receiving it and being obedient to all the Lord commands them. The Son ascended to the throne of the Father by doing exactly, precisely, what the Father commanded Him to do. We do the same by doing exactly, precisely what the Son commands us to do. In so doing we become sons and daughters of God because our lives testify to the Father we do follow the Son.

Learning One Lesson

villages that Kedar does inhabit. Let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord and declare his praise in the islands. The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war; he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have for a long time held my peace, I have been still and restrained myself; now will I cry like a travailing woman, I will destroy and devour at once. I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs, and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. *And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight.* These things will I do unto them and not forsake them. They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed that trust in engraved images, that say to the molten images, You are our gods" (RE Isaiah 15:9, emphasis added).

In a revelation to Joseph Smith the Lord specifically notes a lesson mankind must learn if they desire to ascend, interact with Heaven, and be empowered by God. It is stated concisely in the following passage:

“Behold, there are *many called*, but *few are chosen*, and why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of *this world*, and *aspire to the honors of men*, that they do not learn this one lesson-*that the rights of the Priesthood are inseparably connected with the Powers of Heaven and that the Powers of Heaven cannot be controlled nor handled, only upon the principles of righteousness . . .*” (RE T&C 139:5, emphasis added).

Righteousness, not sinlessness alone is required to exercise Priesthood power from the Powers of Heaven. Righteousness is not defined by how well we conform to earthly standards established by men and institutions. It is determined by God when He examines the heart of a man or woman and sees conformity to His will and commands. Righteousness must follow forgiveness of sin. Forgiveness is the springboard off which righteousness launches. A righteous person is not content with obtaining their own salvation. In gratitude for God’s forgiveness, they actively seek to save the souls of others, even their enemies.

“*Conformity to the Divine Law*. God measures differently than does man. Being “righteous before God” may not mean the same thing one thinks “righteousness” means. Man wants outward signs, symbols, dress, grooming, and conformity. ***God looks at the intent of the heart. Righteousness comes by obedience.*** Obedience requires action. Without conforming conduct to the Lord’s commandments, it is impossible to enter into the kingdom of heaven” (*A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, Righteousness, p.779, emphasis added).

When God discerns these desires in the hearts of men and women, He knows they are candidates for parting the veil, conversing with those who dwell there and eventually stepping into the Lord’s presence. They prove they are trustworthy with further light and knowledge allowing them to follow the Savior’s ascent up Jacob’s ladder.

The Powers of Heaven

The “*Powers of Heaven*” is a proper noun referring to a particular class of Heavenly beings residing at different levels on Jacob’s ladder.

“A title referring to a specific group with status on the other side of the veil; *a proper noun*, not just an abstraction. In the afterlife there are different rungs on Jacob’s ladder where different Powers are fixed: Angel, Archangel, Principality, Power, Dominion, Throne, Cherubim, and Seraphim — they may all be called ***Powers of Heaven***. These Powers have no desire to control or compel others to rise on Jacob’s ladder. Each rung is a developmental stage of growth through which all must pass if they want to ascend nearer to God. Each individual on Jacob’s ladder should be moving toward perfection” (*A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, Powers of Heaven, p.755, emphasis added).

The Powers of Heaven are men, Patriarchs²⁸ ***ministering*** to those qualified as “*Heirs of Salvation*.”²⁹ The Heirs of Salvation are descendants of the righteous

²⁸ ***“The phrase turning the hearts of the children to the fathers is a reference to the restoration of sealing authority, allowing a connection between man living on the earth and the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). In this Dispensation, that restoration occurred when Joseph Smith was given the sealing authority and priesthood whereby he could ask and receive answers.³For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble; for they that come shall burn them, said the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. And again, he quoted the fifth verse thus: Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. He also quoted the next verse differently: And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming (JSH 3:4). “Everything about this prophecy differs from present LDS teaching. The prophecy mentions Elijah and priesthood. Children get plant[ed] in [their] hearts because the children are living. But what is to be planted are the promises made to the fathers. Who are the referenced fathers? What promises were made? When were they made? Then Nephi speaks of children’s hearts turn[ed] to their fathers. These prophecies lay at the very foundation of Zion, but traditions have taken away our understanding. The foundation of Zion requires reestablishing a connection between living children and those fathers to whom God made promises. There must be a welding link connecting the two. Contrary to the traditions, it does not involve connecting us to dead ancestors imprisoned in the Spirit World. Our dead and imprisoned ancestors are in desperate need of our connection to the fathers in heaven. That connection is the only way our ministrations will help them. If all we do is to connect ourselves to our imprisoned dead, then we are tied to the damned, the dead, and the disembodied, who look for a way to escape their fate. **The fathers who are in heaven are the ones with whom we instead must form the link. Our salvation and the salvation of our kindred dead depend on it. The purpose behind these promises given the fathers, and this prophecy given to Joseph by Nephi, was to fix this problem. Because if it were not so, the whole world would be utterly wasted at His (and their) coming.**”² The gulf which must be bridged through the work of Elijah — “to form a bond or connection,” in the words of Joseph Smith — **is not completed unless some group of people has been sealed to “the fathers in heaven.” Those there include Enoch’s City and Melchizedek’s City and extend further to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**” (*A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, Hearts Turned to the Father’s, p.675-676, emphasis added).***

²⁹ ***“Only those who have a testimony spoken to them by Jesus that they are heirs of salvation will be able to endure the glory of the Celestial Kingdom.*** As Joseph explained it: Now for the secret and grand key. Though they might hear the voice of God and know that Jesus was the Son of God, this would be no evidence that their election and calling was made sure, that they had part with Christ, and were joint heirs with Him. *They then would want that more sure word of prophecy, that they were sealed in the heavens and had the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God. Then, having this promise sealed unto them, it was an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast.* Though the thunders might roll and lightnings flash, and earthquakes bellow, and war gather thick around, yet this

Patriarchs who's hearts are turned to righteous Patriarch's for greater knowledge of how to ascend to God's throne. As "Heirs" turn their hearts to the Father's, the Father's turn their hearts to the heirs. Those heirs become recipients and beneficiaries of covenant promises God made with the righteous Father's while in mortality. The Patriarchs are symbolized by Peter, James, and John³⁰ in the endowment, directing Heirs in their preparations for approaching the veil and the Lord.

Contrast Between "Called" and "Chosen"

hope and knowledge would support the soul in every hour of trial, trouble and tribulation. *Then knowledge through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the grand key that unlocks the glories and mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.* (TPJS, p. 298.) *The testimony to them from Jesus, promising them eternal life, is the more sure word of prophecy. Christ provides it.* It is in this sense that the "testimony of Jesus" is used in scripture. It is not something one possesses, speaks or bears to another. *It is something Christ delivers by His own voice to them. Christ testifies; hence the phrase "the testimony of Jesus" (Passing the Heavenly Gift, Denver Snuffer Jr., pp.431-432, emphasis added).*

³⁰ *"The Fathers in heaven, among whom are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and (because of this Dispensation being what it is) Peter, James, and John. Elijah made a promise (see JSH 3:4) about reconnecting mankind to the Fathers. Joseph called them the Fathers in heaven. "These are not our kindred dead, because our kindred dead are required to be redeemed by us" (A Glossary of Gospel Terms, Father's, The, p.647, emphasis added).*

"A person could ask anything of Him [Christ]. In the case of John, however, the request was completely selfless (one of the reasons he is "Beloved" by Christ). It reflects the same heart as the Lord's." And I said unto him, Lord, give unto me power over death, that I may live and bring souls unto thee." (D&C 7: 2.) That is, John desired this not for his own sake, but *for the sake of those to whom he could minister. He wanted to bring souls to Christ.*" And the Lord said unto me, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, because thou desirest this *thou shalt tarry until I come in my glory, and shalt prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues and people.*" (D&C 7: 3.) The ministry of John would continue. *There would be "nations" who would receive his prophesy. What do you suppose it means for John to be able to prophesy before "nations?" Do "nations" mean modern states, or do they mean family divisions or subsets, like the ancient tribes of Israel, which were called "nations?" Do the terms "nations, kindreds, tongues and people" have a family meaning? What family? Has the gospel been intended primarily for one family of redeemed souls all along? If so, then, how does one connect to that family? What is John doing?* The Lord explained to Peter that, concerning John, "he has undertaken a greater work; *therefore I will make him as flaming fire and a ministering angel; he shall minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation who dwell on the earth.*" (D&C 7: 6.) It is an interesting question to ask what John has been doing. What do you suppose it means to be "as flaming fire and a ministering angel?" *What jurisdiction does John have if he "shall minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation who dwell on the earth?" Does this require John to be involved with all who are to become "heirs of salvation who dwell on the earth?"* In what way would he be involved? These are interesting things to contemplate. All the more so because these ideas are somewhat at odds with the idea that God has finished His work and given his power to men, as we claim. Nephi disagrees with the idea (2 Ne. 28: 5.), but that hasn't affected our views much. *We're really quite certain we have everything we need without John*" (Beloved blogpost, Denver Snuffer Jr., March 4, 2011, emphasis added).

The Savior explained to Joseph Smith there are many called but few are chosen. He continues His explanation by describing why some may be called but not chosen:

“Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men . . . , That they may be conferred upon us, it is true, but when we undertake to cover our sins or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control, or dominion, or compulsion, upon the souls of the children of men in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the Heavens [angels] withdraw themselves, the spirit of the Lord is grieved, and when it is withdrawn, ***Amen to the priesthood and authority of that man . . .***” (RE T&C 139:5, emphasis added).

Many called by the Lord succumb to worldly temptations and seeking honors of men. They are distracted from the promises ascension offers. Like a fly drawn by the glowing light in the dark, the called are drawn toward the colorful baubles of material wealth, positions of power and popularity, only to be distracted and destroyed by their misdirected ambitions.

The Lord said it has been His sad experience, “that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, ***they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Hence many are called, but few are chosen***” (RE T&C 139:5, emphasis added).

According to the Lord’s vast experience, it is a statement of fact most who are called or invited to receive the Priesthood of God rarely advance to being chosen due to worldly distractions, pride and covetousness. Hence the Lord says “. . . for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and ***many*** there are who go in thereat . . .” (RE Matthew 3:45, emphasis added).

The contrast between the called and chosen is the chosen do the opposite of those called. They care little for the things of this world and remain undistracted and unwavering from their desire to ascend,³¹ which is inseparably linked to doing God’s

³¹ “And now I, Nephi, do not speak all the words of my father. But to be short in writing, behold, he saw other multitudes pressing forward; and they came and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron. And they did press their way forward, continually holding fast to the rod of iron, until they came forth and fell down and *partook of the fruit of the tree*. And he also saw other multitudes pressing their way towards that great and spacious building. And it came to pass that many were drowned in the depths of the fountain, and many were lost from his view, wandering in strange roads. *And great was the multitude that did enter into that strange building*. And after they did enter into that building, they did point the finger of scorn *at me and those that were partaking of the fruit also*. ***But we heeded them not*** — thus are the words of my father — *for as many as heeded them had fallen away*. And Laman and Lemuel partook not of the fruit, said my father” (RE 1 Nephi 2:12, emphasis added).

will.³² They have no aspirations for the honors of men. They confess their sins rather than hide them.³³ They have no pride or vain ambitions to gratify. Like God,³⁴ they resist

³² “Truly I say unto you, it is not everyone that says unto me, Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, *but he that does the will of my Father who is in Heaven*. For the day soon comes that men shall come before me to judgment, to be judged according to their works. And many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, and in your name have cast out devils, and in your name done many wonderful works? And then will I say unto them, *You never knew me. Depart from me, you that work iniquity*” (RE Matthew 3:47, emphasis added).

³³ “. . . Behold, he that has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I the Lord remember them no more. *By this you may know if a man repents of his sins: behold, he will confess them and forsake them*” (RE T&C 45:9, emphasis added).

³⁴ “No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood; only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned, by kindness and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul; without hypocrisy and without guile; reproving betimes with sharpness when moved upon by the holy ghost, and then showing forth afterward an increase of love toward him whom you have reprov'd (lest he esteem you to be his enemy), that he may know that your faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death; your bowels also being full of charity toward all men, and to the household of faith; and virtue garnish your thoughts unceasingly. Then shall your confidence wax strong in the presence of God, and the doctrines of the Priesthood shall distill upon your soul as the dews from heaven. The holy ghost shall be your constant companion, and your scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth, and *your dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto you for ever and ever*” (RE T&C 139:6, emphasis added).

compelling others and have no interest in enforcing their will.³⁵ They have no disposition toward doing evil but seek to do good continually.³⁶

The righteous act as sentinels in their search for God and His word.³⁷ Throughout their lives they scour the earth searching for greater light and truth. Righteous men understand

³⁵ “. . . *These Powers [Patriarchal Fathers] have no desire to control or compel others to rise on Jacob’s ladder.* Each rung is a developmental stage of growth through which all must pass if they want to ascend nearer to God. Each individual on Jacob’s ladder should be moving toward perfection” (*A Glossary of Gospel Terms, Powers of Heaven*, p.755, emphasis added). ***One might reflect on why the Patriarchal Father’s emphatically state they have no desire to control or compel others.*** The reason goes to a revelation given Joseph Smith. “Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. *All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise, there is no existence.* Behold, *here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man*, because that which was ***from the beginning*** is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light, and every man whose spirit receives not the light is under condemnation. For man is spirit, the elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fullness of joy; and *when separated, man cannot receive a fullness of joy.* The elements are the tabernacle of God, yea, *man is the tabernacle of God, even temples, and whatever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple*” (RE T&C 93:10, emphasis added). In simple terms, mankind began as intelligence or light and truth. ***God placed it in a sphere to act for itself. When the agency God gave to man is lost, they cease to exist.*** In politics, it is said, “The third rail in politics is Social Security,” meaning, like a train powered by electricity from a third rail, anyone who touches Social Security will be electrocuted on contact. For the Godly, the agency of man is the third rail. Lucifer proposed removing the agency of man and fell from his position of a “son of the morning.” [RE Isaiah 6:6] The irony attached with agency is the object of your devotion, (mankind) is destroyed when their agency is removed. Like Lucifer, if we are the means by which agency is withdrawn, the perpetrator is destroyed with the object of their devotion. Fortunately, God intercedes in such instances, punishing the perpetrator and delivering the victim. The Patriarchal Fathers want nothing to do with anything approaching control or compulsion *in unrighteousness*. I suspect that is why the order of Heaven requires that we “ask” before we receive. Responding to inquiries protects the agency of the inquirer and the person sent to answer the question. “If asking must precede receiving, and if Joseph Smith was also required to ask before the great revelations of this dispensation unfolded to him, then you must ask also. If you do not ask, you hedge up the way and prevent Heaven from answering” (Jr. Snuffer, Denver C.. *The Second Comforter: Conversing With the Lord Through the Veil* (pp. 116-117), emphasis added).

³⁶ “And now it came to pass that when king Benjamin had thus spoken to his people, he sent among them, desiring to know of his people if they believed the words which he had spoken unto them. And they all cried with one voice, saying, *Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us! And also, we know of their surety and truth because of the spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. And we, ourselves, also through the infinite goodness of God and the manifestations of his spirit, have great views of that which is to come; and were it expedient, we could prophesy of all things. And it is the faith which we have had on the things which our king has spoken unto us that has brought us to this great knowledge, whereby we do rejoice with such exceeding great joy. And we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us, all the remainder of our days, that we may not bring upon ourselves a never-ending torment as has been spoken by the angel, that we may not drink out of the cup of the wrath of God*” (RE Mosiah 3:1, emphasis added).

³⁷ “Then the leaders retorted, When we refer to you as a Samaritan possessed by a devil we have accurately described you. Jesus answered, I have no devil guiding me; I obey my Father, and you dishonor both him and me. *I do not pursue acclaim or honor.* You are the ones that seek acclaim and wrongly judge me. In the name of Father

more as they are cleansed from sin, and the greater their clarity of understanding and direction becomes as they ascend.³⁸

Ahman I say to you, *If anyone stands watch awaiting direction from me, he shall not be overtaken even by death, throughout eons.* Then the leaders of the Jews said to him, Now we know that you are possessed by a devil. Abraham is dead, along with the prophets who were God's chosen. Yet you claim, If a man awaits direction from you, he shall not be overtaken by death through the eons. Do you claim you are greater than our father Abraham who was overtaken by death, greater than the prophets who are dead? Is there no limit to your vainglory? Jesus replied, If I honor myself, my honor is nothing. It is my Father who honors me, the one who you falsely claim is your God. Unlike me, you do not know him. If I were to say, I do not know him, I would be as much of a liar as you are when you falsely claim him as your God. *I not only know him, but I watch for his words like a sentinel always awaiting his direction.* Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad. Then the leaders of the Jews mocked him saying, You are not yet fifty years old, and yet you claim to have seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, In the name of Father Ahman I say unto you, ***Before Abraham was, he knew me as I am.*** Then they picked up stones to throw at him because they regarded his statement as blasphemy. But Jesus hid from their view and safely departed from the temple, bypassing the crowd undetected" (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 6:20, emphasis added).

"Christ's words *If you love me, keep my commandments* appear several times in the Gospel of John. *The words could be better translated to mean: "If you love me, act as a sentinel (or guard), ready to receive further instructions from me."* The current King James translation was based on the recognition that the canon of scripture had closed and revelation had ended. Therefore, they took those things into account as they rendered their translation. ¹*But recent revelation indicates that the canon of scripture is not closed; God is sending further instructions, and man must stand ready to receive it"* (A Glossary of Gospel Terms, If You Love Me, p.687, emphasis added).

"*If you love me, stand ready, watching for every communication I will send to you"* (RE T&C 171 Testimony of Saint John 10:11, emphasis added).

³⁸ "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 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 . . ."* (TPJS., p.51, emphasis added).

"Verily I say unto you, he that is ordained of me and sent forth to preach the word of truth by the Comforter, in the spirit of truth, does he preach it by the spirit of truth or some other way? And if by some other way, it is not of God. And again, he that receives the word of truth, does he receive it by the spirit of truth or some other way? If it be some other way, it is not of God. Therefore, why is it that you cannot understand and know that *he that receives the word by the spirit of truth, receives it as it is preached by the spirit of truth? Wherefore, he that preaches and he that receives, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together. And that which does not edify is not of God, and is darkness. 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).

"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).

Becoming Precisely as He Is

“ . . . He [Christ] wanted to ***make them like unto Himself***, and ***He was like the Father, the great prototype of all saved beings***: And for any portion of the human family to be assimilated into their likeness is to be saved; ***and to be unlike them is to be destroyed***: and on this hinge turns the door of salvation (Lectures on Faith 7:16). 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 (Lectures on Faith 7:10). “Salvation means a man’s being placed ***beyond the powers of all his enemies***” (TPJS, 301). Being saved means ***to have increase***. “There isn’t going to be any man or group of men who save you. There is literally a single way and a single source. ***That is Christ*** (Mosiah 1:16). Whether you are able to receive salvation or not ***is entirely dependent on how you respond to Him***, not to other people (2 Nephi 6:11).”⁴ There is no collective salvation. ***Each person comes to Him one at a time***” (*A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, Salvation, p.792-793, Emphasis added).

For us to be saved, we must become as Christ and the Father. Assisting us in our ascension are parents, family, extended family, friends and mentors to assist and guide us. As we progress, the Lord sends Heavenly help in the form of messengers³⁹ [mortal, 1st knock], angels [Patriarchal Fathers, 2nd knock], and the Lord Himself [Messiah, 3rd knock] to guide and assist in our ascension by guiding us to the Father’s throne. The last phase of our ascension may only be accomplished with the Savior’s assistance.⁴⁰ Until recently, addressing this subject would be extremely difficult because only those who experience ascension could explain the process. Because the

³⁹ “ I tell you, *if you want to ascend to the Heavenly Council, you must first acknowledge and give heed to the messengers sent by them*” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John, p.484, emphasis added).

⁴⁰ “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&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:9, emphasis added).

Lord elected to fulfill a promise He made to Joseph Smith in our day, we are given “*means*” to obtain greater understanding of a subject that is veiled from most people.

The promise the Savior recently fulfilled is the assurance one day we would be given more of the Testimony of John [the Beloved].⁴¹ It is fitting John’s record would be given because, it was John the Beloved who was shown the future of the world and translated, becoming a latter-day Elias who restores all things and gather’s Israel,⁴² through ministering to heirs of salvation.⁴³

It is because the Lord mercifully fulfilled this promise we are able to broach this subject.

“Philip said to him, Lord, reveal to us the Father and that will be all we ask. Jesus responded to him, Have I been with you this long and you still do not yet know who I am, Philip? ***Any who see me has seen my Father.*** How can you ask, Reveal to us the Father? Do you understand that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? Do you understand that the words that I speak to you came from the Father, who is one with me? ***Nothing I have done is mine.*** Understand that the Father, who is one with me, is to be given credit for all I have done

⁴¹“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 . . .*” (RE T&C 93:2, emphasis added).

⁴² “Question: *What are we to understand by the angel ascending from the east, Revelation, 7th chapter and 2nd verse [Rev. 2:13]?*

Answer: We are to understand that the angel ascended from the east is he to whom is given the seal of the living God over the twelve tribes of Israel. Wherefore, he cries unto the four angels having the everlasting gospel, saying: Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. *And if you will receive it, this is Elias, which was to come, to gather together the tribes of Israel and restore all things . . .*”

“Question: *What are we to understand by the little book which was eaten by John, as mentioned in the 10th chapter of Revelation [Rev. 3:13]?*

Answer: We are to understand that ***it was a mission and an ordinance for him to gather the tribes of Israel. Behold, this is Elias who, as it is written, must come and restore all things***” (RE T&C 74:9,14, emphasis added).

⁴³ “And for this cause the Lord said unto Peter, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to you? For he desired of me that he might bring souls unto me, but you desired that you might speedily come unto me in my kingdom. I say unto you, Peter, this was a good desire, *but my beloved has desired that he might do more, or a greater work yet among men, than what he has before done; yea, he has undertaken a greater work. Therefore, I will make him as flaming fire and a ministering angel. He shall minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation who dwell on the earth,* and I will make you to minister for him and for your brother James [Jacob]. And unto you three I will give this power and the keys of this ministry until I come. Verily I say unto you, you shall both have according to your desires, for you both joy in that which you have desired” (RE T&C 1, Joseph Smith History 13:19, emphasis added).

or will do. Believe me that I am one with the Father, and the Father is one with me; but if you do not, at least believe through these works. In the name of Father Ahman I declare to you, the individual who trusts me, ***what I have accomplished he will also. Followers will also accomplish the greater works I do next. Followers will also finish the path, as I am now concluding, at the place my Father dwells. As he helps me, I will help you, and you will accomplish what I have along with the greater sacrifice I have yet to finish.*** And whatever you shall ask in my name, I will answer, so that the Father may be glorified by the honor shown his Son. If you shall ask any thing in my name, I will answer” (RE T&C 171 Testimony of Saint John 10:10, emphasis added).

Jesus was approaching the close of His earthly ministry. As the end drew near He instructed His disciples in preparation for the next phase of their relationship with Him, His individual mentoring. His errand in doing what the Father had done before Him included preparation of His disciples. That was the reason for his declaration that those who trust Him will accomplish what He was now finishing. They too would finish the same path so they could become precisely what He and the Father are, saved beings. As the Savior was aided by His Father, so would the disciples be assisted by the Lord, their spiritual Father.⁴⁴ The Savior’s promise to those who trust Him is He will answer anything His disciples are inclined to ask. His disciples who love Him and were ready to receive every communication the Lord will send, received this promise:

“Remember that ***I will ask the Father, and he will provide to you another Comforter, that he may be by your side endlessly. You will obtain the record of Heaven, the truth of all things*** which is denied to the world because the world refuses my Father, and therefore they do not know him. But you know him, for he is with you, and shall provide answers to guide you. I will not leave you comfortless. ***I will stand at your side also.***

⁴⁴ “And now these are the words which king Benjamin desired of them, and therefore, he said unto them, Ye have spoken the words that I desired, and the covenant which ye have made is a righteous covenant. And now, *because of the covenant which ye have made, ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you. For ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name, therefore ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters. And under this head ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free; there is no other name given whereby salvation cometh. Therefore I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives.* And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called by the name of Christ” (RE Mosiah 3:2, emphasis added).

Yet a little while, and the world will no longer see me, but you will not lose sight of me because I give life, and *you shall share in endless lives*. You will know that I and the Father are one, and I am one with you, and you are one with me. *He that treasures my teachings, and stands ready, watching for every communication I send him, is he who shows love for me.*⁴⁵ To those who show love for me, my Father will show love to them, and I love all those, and *I will personally minister to them*” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:11-12, emphasis added).

One temple ordinance is referred to as an “*endowment*.” The endowment conveys knowledge to the participant throughout the ordinance. The ordinance is not the actual event but a type pointing participants to what should happen away from the temple personally, individually. The Savior’s promise that the Father will provide another “*Comforter*” is the fulfillment of the temple endowment. Those who love the Lord and remain vigilant in searching for His words receive the “*Record of Heaven*,” restoring to the individual their recollection of their pre-mortal knowledge⁴⁶ which is

⁴⁵ “And I beheld a rod of iron, and it extended along the bank of the river and led to the tree by which I stood. And I also beheld a straight and narrow path which came along by the rod of iron, even to the tree by which I stood; and it also led by the head of the fountain unto a large and spacious field, as if it had been a world. And I saw numberless concourses of people, many of whom were pressing forward that they might obtain the path which led unto the tree by which I stood. And it came to pass that they did come forth and commenced in the path which led to the tree. And it came to pass that there arose a mist of darkness, *yea, even an exceeding great mist of darkness*, insomuch that *they who had commenced in the path did lose their way*, that they wandered off and were lost. *And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press forward through the mists of darkness, clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partook of the fruit of the tree.* And after they had partaken of the fruit of the tree, they did cast their eyes about as if they were ashamed” (RE 1 Nephi 2:10, emphasis added).

“And after he had said these words, he said unto me, Look. And I looked, and I beheld the Son of God a going forth among the children of men; and I saw many fall down at his feet and worship him. *And it came to pass that I beheld that the rod of iron which my father had seen was the word of God, which led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life, which waters are a representation of the love of God.* And I also beheld that the tree of life was a representation of the love of God” (RE 1 Nephi 3:10, emphasis added).

⁴⁶ “These words have I spoken to you while I am still present with you. *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost that the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and restore to your memory all truth I have taught to you, and the record of Heaven itself*” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:15, emphasis added).

“There are many things I still have to teach you, but you are not able to understand it all as yet. When I am the *Spirit of Truth* [3rd knock], *I can then reveal to you the record of Heaven and knowledge will be poured into you. The spirit is the means to communicate my words, and my words will lead you on the upward path. The knowledge poured in to you will come from me.* I will depart, but only briefly because when I ascend back to the

withheld from the world because they refuse the light offered by the Father and consequently do not know Him. This event is the beginning of re-establishing our relationships with those beyond the veil.

Connecting to the “True Vine,” the Head of the Father’s Family

Head of the Household of Heaven, ***I will also be by your side to guide you by my voice from Heaven***” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:25, emphasis added).

“Nicodemus said to him, If I believe this, ***can I ascend in this life***, or will it be accomplished only in the afterlife? Jesus answered, In the name of Father Ahman I say to you, Except you *receive the ordinance of baptism to join the new dispensation, and thereby forsake your sins and receive forgiveness and an outpouring of the Spirit, you will not ascend to God’s presence in this life or the life to come. All who are devoted to the ambitions of the flesh remain imprisoned by the flesh, and those who are **born anew through the ordinances, receive the Spirit of Truth, and are able to know the record of Heaven by the Spirit of Truth.*** Do not question if what I say is true because ***the Spirit of Truth*** [3rd knock] *confers light, knowledge, and understanding of the mysteries of Heaven within every soul who receives it*” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 2:2, emphasis added).

“. . . You receive the *record of Heaven* or, more correctly, the Record of Heaven, for it is a proper name and title (Genesis 4:9). *When it has come to you, then this Record of Heaven will abide with you*.... You will know *the truth of all things* for ***it will reside within you*** (Genesis 4:9). You will understand Wisdom, ***for she*** [Heavenly Mother] will be with you. You will know mercy, possess truth, and ***be capable of performing judgment, for the judgment you judge will not be yours, but will be given to you*** (3 Nephi 13:1). ***God will dwell within you. When He appears to you, you will see Him as He is, for you will be at last like Him*** (1 John 1:13). ***If you can understand this, then you will purify yourself to receive it*** (1 John 1:13). ***For the baptism of fire and the holy ghost will purge and purify, refining you with that holy fire*** (Malachi 1:6).¹⁰ ***The purpose of the holy ghost is to allow you to see things in their true light with the underlying intent behind them and to allow you to do that without distortion and without confusion.***¹¹ “The holy ghost bears record. And record, *recordare*, means ‘to put back into the heart.’ It means ‘to intensify in the heart, ***to have knowledge and remembrance of what you had before.***’ ***This has to do with your previous existence.*** See, your heart is your core. *To record is to stir up again in the heart.* And [Christ] says this is why the Father will bear record of [Christ], and the holy ghost will bear record (3 Nephi 5:9). ***That will recall things to you. That’s what a record is.***¹² ***The holy ghost allows one to resonate with the same frequency as the writer and to “hear” what he is writing about.*** The process is far more abstract than logic, reason, rhetoric, and historic precedent will uncover. Capturing the thought of the inspired fisherman *requires an inspired reader. The holy ghost is a guide to speak to man as he studies the scriptures. It will lead each person to understanding, harmony, clarity, and truth.* If one has not experienced this kind of awareness while studying the scriptures, then it needs to be attempted” (A Glossary of Gospel Terms, Holy Ghost, pp.679-681).

“And now it came to pass that when king Benjamin had thus spoken to his people, he sent among them, desiring to know of his people if they believed the words which he had spoken unto them. And they all cried with one voice, saying, Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us! And also, we know of their surety and truth ***because of the spirit of the Lord Omnipotent***, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. ***And we, ourselves, also through the infinite goodness of God and the manifestations of his spirit, have great views of that which is to come; and were it expedient, we could prophesy of all things.*** And it is the faith which we have had on the things which our king has spoken unto us that has brought us to this great knowledge, whereby we do rejoice with such exceeding great joy. And we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us, all the remainder of our days, that we may not bring upon ourselves a never-ending torment as has been spoken by the angel, that we may not drink out of the cup of the wrath of God” (RE Mosiah 3:1, emphasis added).

“. . . Remember, I explained that *I will suffer because of my love for the Father*, and he requires me to pass through this ordeal for *your sakes*, and *I am ready to comply*. Now let us walk together from this place.

This statement by the Savior is more than a statement of fact. He willingly suffers because the Father asks it of Him for our sakes. His love for the Father and us is not compulsory. It is raw, genuine emotion enabling Him to give His life both literally and figuratively. If that is what the Father requires of Him, He will, at one time, in some eon, ask the same of us.

“Therefore, what manner of men had ye ought to be? Verily I say unto you, *even as I am . . .*” (RE 3 Nephi 13:1, emphasis added).

And:

“. . . Therefore, I would that *ye should be perfect*, even as I or your Father who is in Heaven is perfect . . .” (RE 3 Nephi 5:31, emphasis added).

When Christ makes these statements, they are not altruistic, approximate objectives. They are hard goals to be achieved if we are to be saved beings.⁴⁷ As unrealistic as this may seem, it is not likely to be fully accomplished in this life. It will take “*endless lives*”⁴⁸ long after we pass through the veil.

⁴⁷ “It is scarcely necessary here to observe what we have previously noticed, that the glory which the Father and the Son have *is because they are just and holy beings*, and that *if they were lacking in one attribute or perfection which they have, the glory which they have never could be enjoyed by them, for it requires them to be precisely what they are in order to enjoy it*. And if the Savior gives this glory to any others, *he must do it in the very way set forth in his prayer to his Father: by making them one with him as he and the Father are one. In so doing he would give them the glory which the Father has given him; and when his disciples are made one with the Father and the Son, as the Father and the Son are one, who cannot see the propriety of the Savior’s saying, The works which I do shall they do, and greater works than these shall they do, because I go to the Father?*” (RE T&C 110, Lectures on Faith, Lecture 7:15, emphasis added).

⁴⁸ “. . . We are the offspring of heaven, and *are capable of reuniting with heaven while mortal*. We also have the opportunity, *through eons of progression* [An eon equals one billion years], to become as our Parents, the Gods.” (*The Restorations Shattered Promises and Great Hope*, Denver Snuffer Jr., p.18, emphasis added).

“*How many eons of time were required in order for God—through the process that we see in nature—to form the Earth was the first day*. However long it took—through seismic and volcanic and other activities—to cause the dry land to appear was labor that took however long it took” (*Third Address To All Christians*, Denver Snuffer Jr., p.16, emphasis added).

“As for you, when the Comforter comes (or in other words the Spirit of truth emanating from my Father), that spirit will testify of me. Then you have the ability to also testify of me. *This is because you have followed me from the beginning or before the world was organized*” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:22, emphasis added).

“Now look at the beginning-

“Thus they become...” *These individuals [Melchizedek high priests] have become something.* The “high priests” about whom this material has been written *have been in the process of becoming something holy from before the foundation of the world. This is pre-earth or pre-mortal existence stuff. The history, or background leading up to finding a holy high priest in mortality is eons in the making. It goes back to before this world had been reorganized. “..high priests forever...” This priestly authority and holy order is not mortal. It is without beginning in this mortal phase of existence.*

Now comes the formula of the authority: “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” (*Alma 13:9 blogpost*, Denver Snuffer Jr., June 11, 2010, emphasis added).

“*The second form is the actual ascent, involving redemption and securing eternal life. It is a methodical process over eons of time to bring those who ascend to reside where God and Christ dwell.* (D&C 76:62, 112.) In the King Follett Discourse Joseph Smith said this:

“*Thus you learn some of the first principles of the gospel, about which so much has been said. When you climb a ladder, you must begin at the bottom and go on until you learn the last principle; it will be a great while before you have learned the last. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it is a great thing to learn salvation beyond the grave.*”

This is the growth, by degrees, which results in exaltation. “Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God. And you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves—to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done—by going from a small degree to another, from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you are able to sit in glory as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power . . . For mortals, the first form of ascent is possible. The scriptures, in particular the *Book of Mormon*, contain accounts of those who have ascended to God’s presence and overcome the fall of mankind. *Many Old Testament prophets did likewise, but their accounts were redacted by the Deuteronomists because of hostility to the doctrine. The reality is that most people, even very good believing people whose lives are filled with Christian charity and love for their fellow man, are not going to ascend even temporarily while they live in this fallen world. The first ascent is covenant-filled. God brings us before Him to establish a covenant assuring the eternal ascent. Most people will ascend over eons, because that process is based on the determination and commitment people have to follow God and His Christ*” (*Why A Temple blogpost*, Denver Snuffer Jr., April 29, 2016, emphasis added).

“When I hear from the casual observer of the LDS faith the stupidity about how we are going to “get exalted,” I wonder at what the reaction will be when they finally realize *how great the gulf separating us from that result is.* I have some appreciation for what will be required, *and know it will be eons before that end can be attained by any of us. It will not be magic. It will be through incremental improvement, being added upon, growing in light and truth, and perfectly natural in the process.* Joseph Smith put it in these words in the King Follett Funeral Sermon: “*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.*”

Christ Explains the Process of Ascension

After attesting to the suffering He is about to endure and His reason and willingness to do so, Jesus uses metaphor to explain the process His disciples begin following His death and resurrection. The process mirrors what He requires of us. Jesus explains how He will build the Father's family and the Father oversees the effort.

I am the true vine or head of the Father's family, and my Father is the husbandman over that family. Every branch [individuals] connected to me that does not produce fruit, he will remove, and every branch that produces fruit he will prune back so that it produces better fruit.⁴⁹ You will bear fruit if you follow the things I have taught you.⁵⁰

We are not left without warning about how great the gulf is we are to cover in this bridge we are to cross. Even now it seems *the best use of our time would be to meditate on the things of God day and night*. The revelations inform us that "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." (D&C 130: 18-19.) Yet we seem collectively often pedestrians in a crowd milling aimlessly about presuming Christ will furnish us an easy time of it. His atonement removes from us all guilt and shame. *But for perfection, we must acquire it bit by bit, grace for grace, line upon line, growing by accepting more until at last we have obtained what is needed. That will be our own doing. He provides the means, and His Father ordained the laws by which it can be done, and they provide us with free will and the capacity to choose, but we must choose. We must accept. We must press forward holding Their hands in order to arrive at last, after an infinitely long journey [eons], in the courts of Heaven itself, fit to reside there.* Be ye therefore perfect. And *start on that this moment.* For you haven't another moment to spare" (3 Nephi 12:48 blogpost, Denver Snuffer Jr., October 18,2010, emphasis added).

⁴⁹ "And when I had said this, the Lord spake unto me, saying, Fools mock, but they shall mourn. And my grace is sufficient for the meek, that they shall take no advantage of your weakness. And *if men come unto me, I will shew unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness, that they may be humble. And my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them. Behold, I will shew unto the gentiles their weakness. And I will shew unto them that faith, hope, and charity bringeth unto me, the fountain of all righteousness* (RE Ether 5:5, emphasis added).

"By mercy and truth, iniquity is purged; and by the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil" (RE Proverbs 2:190).

"Behold, the great day of the Lord is at hand, and who can abide the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For *he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap, and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness*" (RE T&C 151:21, emphasis added).

⁵⁰ "The parable reminds us that simply receiving the Gospel is not enough. Among those who have the Gospel in their lives, *fruit is borne in three quantities (degrees)*. Christ taught: "And others fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred." (Mark 4: 8.) When asked for the meaning, Christ explained: "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: ... The sower

Christ is the vine or the Head of the Father's Family. The Father is the Husbandman overseeing the gathering of the Father's family. All of us are born into the family of God. However, not all progress or develop the same. Those who fail in drawing strength from the Savior and starting their ascension are separated from the vine. They are unprepared to ascend. This is done so those drawing strength from the vine may draw greater strength and develop more fruit.⁵¹

soweth the word. ... And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred." (Id., vs. 11, 14, 20.)

Before "fruit" can be produced, *there must be "good ground."* Meaning, those who will bear fruit must receive the "word" (or teachings of Christ) and become His followers. They must accept the Gospel. They must follow the Lord as His believing Latter-day Saints. Three different qualitative quantities result from having good ground. All are "good ground," meaning they received the Gospel. However, *they are not all equally fruitful.* Some bear "thirtyfold," and others bear "sixty," and some "an hundred." The point of this parable is *we do not just "receive" the Gospel and then automatically bear "an hundred-fold" in fruit (or truth).* We must cultivate ourselves. We must search for light and truth, then reconcile our lives to the truths we receive in order to receive more. "Thirsting" for more, and a willingness to receive "water, wine and milk" are the hallmarks of those who will bear "an hundred" and enter into the rest of the Lord" (Snuffer, Denver C. Jr., Eighteen Verses (p. 23-24, emphasis added).

⁵¹ "What does it mean to be penitent? *Penitence is another way to describe repentance or the process of change and growing beyond sins limiting your happiness. It comes as you allow Christ to "succor" you through the power of the Atonement. Through penitence, people do away with the darkness in their lives and add light instead. Joseph Smith equated salvation with gaining knowledge. He describes sin as error caused by ignorance: "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 than many men who are on the earth.* Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God." (DHC 4: 588.) Joseph's equation also appears in the scriptures: "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." (D&C 130: 18–19.) *Penitence, therefore, involves pursuing greater "intelligence" or knowledge of the truth, by "diligence and obedience" to the commandments.* If you think about that for a moment, you will see something profoundly different from what most religions teach and most people believe. Instead of merely conforming to religious rites, Joseph is saying *you need to learn things to be saved.* You will realize "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance." (D&C 131: 6.) *The more penitent you are, therefore, the more you will try to learn.* You should be on a quest. *The quest is for light and truth. If you are not engaged in this search, then you are missing the point of this second estate.* There are Latter-day Saints who are actually biased against this quest. Instead of searching for the deep things of God, they proclaim: "leave the mysteries alone!" Yet Joseph Smith taught: "*I advise all to go on to perfection, and search deeper and deeper into the mysteries of Godliness.*" (DHC 6: 363.) If it is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance, then the folks who insist on keeping their ignorance are insisting on their damnation. In light of this, Christ's parable about the fellow who buried his talents makes more sense. We cannot rely on what we have. *We either increase it by our relentless search for more, or we will be damned.* It wasn't just good advice to search deeper and deeper into the mysteries; as it turns out, *that is the only way anyone can be saved.* Those who oppose deeper knowledge believe it is enough simply to have a testimony of the Gospel. They believe they can keep their talent, not invest it, and return it to the Lord at the end. Too late they will say: "I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow." (Id.) *They turn Paul's warning about the latter-days on its ear. For them they are 'never learning but always able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Penitence, on the other hand, requires curiosity and willingness to gain more light and truth. Unless you are increasing in light and truth, you are not progressing or accomplishing all that you should while on this earth. Here, you are supposed to be "added upon." You are intended*

“Stay connected to me as part of the Heavenly family, and ***I will nourish you.*** Just as a branch cannot produce fruit if it is not connected to the vine, neither will you be able to bear fruit ***unless you remain connected with me. I am the vine, and you are the branches. He that stays connected to me, and I to him, will be abundantly fruitful;*** but without the connection to me *you will perish.* If a man loses his connection with me, he is merely a withered branch; and *men* [not the Father or Son] take the withered branches, cut them away and burn them. If you stay connected to me, and ***my words live in you, you will ask according to my will,*** and you will be ***given the ability to accomplish my will.*** It will please and vindicate my Father if you produce abundant fruit, and ***that will prove you follow me.*** Just like the Father has loved me, I have in turn likewise loved you. Therefore, remain connected with me and my love will be with you. ***If you practice my teachings you will always remain connected with me; just as I have kept my Father’s teachings and have remained connected with him.***

I say these things to you so I will be able to rejoice ***at your triumph. You will overcome all obstacles if you follow what I have taught***” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:16-18, emphasis added).

We maintain our connection to Christ by accepting His teachings and applying them in our lives. This is how we fulfill the promise to “*always remember Him, that we may have His Spirit to be with us.*”⁵² Our lives become a living witness to the Father we remember the Savior. Our conduct is a testimony to the Father we have become the children of Christ because we do His works.⁵³

to explore learning, gain understanding and obtain light and truth, which is intelligence. It is obtained by obedience to the Gospel and experience, and not through study alone. Every one of us has the capacity to be penitent and increase whatever light and truth we have. Everyone can search into the mysteries of God to gain greater understanding of how God acts in their lives. However, only those who are sincerely penitent can make the discoveries available. Only the humble follow the Lord’s simple program for enlightenment. It requires someone who is willing to accept the Lord on His terms” (Snuffer, Denver C. Jr., Eighteen Verses (p. 308- 311, emphasis added). Mill Creek Press. Kindle Edition.

⁵² “The manner of their elders and priests administering the flesh and blood of Christ unto the church. And they administered it according to the commandments of Christ; wherefore, we know that the manner to be true. And the elder or priest did minister it; and they did kneel down with the church and pray to the Father in the name of Christ, saying, O God the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he hath given them, that they may always have his spirit to be with them. Amen” (RE Moroni 4, emphasis added).

⁵³ “I know that you are Abraham’s seed, but you seek to kill me because my word has no place in you. *I speak that which I have seen with my Father, and you do that which you have seen with your father.* They answered and said

Establishing a connection with Christ enables the faithful to have His words within us, inspire us to ask for things in accordance with His will and empower us to accomplish what He asks of us. Like a branch attached to a vine, only those who receive His words [nourishment] and internalize them are able to bear fruit. This is the acceptable fruit they bear for the Father's kingdom.⁵⁴

After the Savior's Atonement, death and resurrection, His disciples began this process in earnest. However, it is not limited to His disciples alone, but to all who claim Him as their Savior. All this is preparation for theirs and our ascension if we willingly accept instruction. We must establish a connection with Christ, and receive additional light and knowledge from Him. As we do, He guides and teaches us how to walk in His paths.⁵⁵ The speed of our ascension is determined by how quickly we

unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said unto them, *If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill me, a man that has told you the truth, which I have heard of God. This did not Abraham. You do the deeds of your father.* Then said they to him, We are not born of fornication. We have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from God. Neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do you not understand my speech? Even because you cannot bear my word. *You are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father you will do.* He was a murderer from the beginning and stood not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it. And *because I tell you the truth, you believe me not.* Which of you convicts me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do you not believe me? *He that is of God receives God's word. You therefore receive them not because you are not of God"* (RE John 6:15, emphasis added). [The opposite is also true. If you receive God's word and practice it, your conduct testifies to the Father you always remember Christ because your works testify His words reside within you and guide you].

⁵⁴ "And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received, which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation. And this condemnation rests upon the children of Zion, even all, and they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon, and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say but to do according to that which I have written, **that they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom.** Otherwise, there remains a scourge and a judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion, for shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, verily I say unto you, nay" (RE T&C 82:20, emphasis added).

⁵⁵ "The word that Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem; and it shall come to pass *in the last days, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.* And many people shall go and say, *Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths.* For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (RE Isaiah 1:5, emphasis added).

"But *in the last days, it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.* For the law shall go forth of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people and rebuke strong nations afar off. And they shall beat their

learn and do exactly what He commands us. Heed and diligence.⁵⁶ As He did only what the Father taught Him, we must also do as He directs us with precision. That is the way all who ascend reach the throne of the Father and learn they have become like Him.

Ascension Through Obedience and Sacrifice

As Jesus prepared His disciples for life after His resurrection, the Savior alluded to a new phase of progression they begin.

“This is my commandment: ***That you love one another as I have loved you. No man loves more than when he is willing to sacrifice his life to save his friends.*** You are my friends if you do whatever I communicate to you. ***Beginning now,*** I will no longer call you my servants because a servant does not share his Lord’s life [a friend does]. But I make you my friends because every thing I received from my Father ***I have shared and will yet share with you.*** You did not choose me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, ***that you should progress and become fruitful, that your fruit will testify on your behalf forever,*** that whatever I direct you to seek from my Father you will be able to obtain. I have taught these things to you to enable you to share my love among one another” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:19, emphasis added).

swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore, but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid. For the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken it. *For all people will walk everyone in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever. In that day, says the Lord, will I assemble her that halts, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted.* And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation. And the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And you, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto you shall it come, even the first dominion. The kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem” (RE Micah 1:9, emphasis added).

⁵⁶ “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).

In the next phase in the disciples progression, the Lord stresses all that happens next must be upon a foundation of love for one another.⁵⁷ The disciples are no longer servants, but friends. Friends, because they share His life, meaning they know Him and desire to be like Him and commit to His manner of living. It is this point in their progression that the Savior distinguishes them from those who are called and those chosen. Those who are not chosen are those who “*set their hearts upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men.*”⁵⁸ Not only must they forgo the praise and recognition of the world but also a materialistic life as well.⁵⁹ Going forward, the disciples relationship with

⁵⁷ “Yet a little while, and the world will no longer see me, but you will not lose sight of me because I give life, and you shall share in endless lives. You will know that I and the Father are one, and I am one with you, and you are one with me. *He that treasures my teachings, and stands ready, watching for every communication I send him, is he who shows love for me. To those who show love for me, my Father will show love to them, and I love all those, and I will personally minister to them*” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:12, emphasis added).

⁵⁸ “Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen, and why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson — that the rights of the Priesthood are inseparably connected with the Powers of Heaven and that the Powers of Heaven cannot be controlled nor handled, only upon the principles of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us, it is true, but when we undertake to cover our sins or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control, or dominion, or compulsion, upon the souls of the children of men in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the Heavens withdraw themselves, the spirit of the Lord is grieved, and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man. Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God. We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Hence many are called, but few are chosen” (RE T&C 139:6, emphasis added).

⁵⁹ “And it came to pass that he departed into the wilderness. And he [Lehi] *left his house, and the land of his inheritance, and his gold, and his silver, and his precious things, and took nothing with him save it were his family, and provisions, and tents, and he departed into the wilderness.* And he came down by the Borders, near the shore of the Red Sea, and he traveled in the wilderness in the Borders, which were nearer the Red Sea. And he did travel in the wilderness with his family, which consisted of my mother, Sariah, and my elder brethren, who were Laman, Lemuel, and Sam. And it came to pass that when he had traveled three days in the wilderness, he pitched his tent in a valley by the side of a river of water” (RE 1 Nephi 1:7, emphasis added).

“And now it came to pass that Alma having seen the afflictions of the humble followers of God, and the persecutions which were heaped upon them by the remainder of his people, and seeing all their inequality, began to be very sorrowful; nevertheless, the spirit of the Lord did not fail him. And he selected a wise man, who was among the elders of the church, and gave him power according to the voice of the people, that he might have power to enact laws, according to the laws which had been given, and to put them in force according to the wickedness and the crimes of the people. Now this man’s name was Nephiah, and he was appointed chief judge; and he sat in the judgment seat to judge and to govern the people. *Now Alma did not grant unto him the office of being high priest over the church, but he retained the office of high priest unto himself, but he delivered the judgment seat unto Nephiah. And this he did that he himself might go forth among his people, or among the people of Nephi, that he might preach the word of God unto them, to stir them up in remembrance of their duty, and that he might pull down, by the word of God, all the pride and craftiness, and all the contentions which were among his people, seeing no way that he might reclaim them save it were in bearing down in pure testimony against them. And thus, in the commencement of the ninth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi,*

the Lord will be pre-eminent in their lives. They surrender material comforts and the praise of the world for scorn and a modest life.

“The world will hate you, but you know that it hated me before it hates you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love its property. ***But because you are not a captive of the world, and I have freed you from the world,*** the world hates you.

Remember that I told you before that ***no servant is greater than his Lord. If many have persecuted me, many will also persecute you,*** but if some few have followed my teachings, some few will follow yours also. The world’s response to you will be ***because you will act in my name and on my behalf.*** Those who fight against you are strangers to my Father. If I had not come and testified of the truth to them, they would not be accountable for rebellion, but now they have no excuse for their rebellion. ***If they hate me, they hate my Father also.*** If I had not shown to them an example no other man has shown before, they would not be accountable. But they have rebelled after seeing with their own eyes and hearing with their ears the one sent by Father Ahman to them, and have rebelled against us both. Proving men in this way fulfills the prophecy, ***They hated me without a cause***” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:20-21, emphasis added).

Following the death and resurrection of Christ, the ire shown the Son of God turns from Him to His disciples. The persecution of the Lord’s disciples is an essential part of the ascension process. They and we must be immersed in the refiners fire⁶⁰ to be cleansed of our impurities, becoming godly through suffering. Devotion to God in

Alma delivered up the judgment seat to Nephiah, and confined himself wholly to the High Priesthood of the Holy Order of God, to the testimony of the word, according to the spirit of revelation and prophecy” (RE Alma 2:5, emphasis added).

⁶⁰ “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom you delight in. Behold, he shall come, says the Lord of Hosts. But who may endure the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appears? *For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.* Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old and as in former years. And I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers; and against those that oppress the hired hand in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless; and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, says the Lord of Hosts. For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed” (RE Malachi 1:6, emphasis added).

adverse times cleanses and “steels” our ability to endure adversity.⁶¹ Tribulation prepares us for events leading to the Second Coming of Christ.

Enduring persecution and tribulation is both public and humiliating to those called, but not those chosen. The Lord offers the chosen rewards privately and sustaining power while they endure suffering at the hands of the wicked unjustly. When our hearts are in greatest need of comfort, the Lord extends comfort. The comfort He provides is reassuring, while providing context to understand why suffering is an essential sacrifice for our ascension.

As for you, when the Comforter comes (or in other words the Spirit of truth emanating from my Father), ***that spirit will testify of me. Then*** you have the ability to also testify of me. This is ***because you have followed me from the beginning or before the world was organized*** [pre-mortality, noble and great].

Now I tell you beforehand what to expect to come upon you so you are not surprised, nor will you stumble and fall.⁶² They will excommunicate you. The time will even come that the self-righteous who kill you will think that they speak for God. And they will do these things ***because they cannot do what the Father and I have done.*** I warn you beforehand that you will face this opposition so that when it happens ***you will remember and be strengthened.***⁶³

⁶¹ “We have all been children, and are too much so at the present time; but *we hope in the Lord that we may grow in grace and be prepared for all things which the bosom of futurity may disclose unto us.* Time is rapidly rolling on, and the prophecies must be fulfilled. *The days of tribulation are fast approaching, and the time to test the fidelity of the Saints has come.* Rumor with her ten thousand tongues is diffusing her uncertain sounds in almost every ear; but *in these times of sore trial, let the Saints be patient and see the salvation of God. Those who cannot endure persecution, and stand in the day of affliction, cannot stand in the day when the Son of God shall burst the veil, and appear in all the glory of His Father, with all the holy angels*” (Smith Jr., Joseph. Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith (p. 45) emphasis added. Deseret Book Company). Kindle Edition.

“And blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake, for *you shall have great joy and be exceedingly glad, for great shall be your reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you*” (RE Matthew 3:14, emphasis added).

⁶² “But you have fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra — what persecutions I endured. *But out of them all, the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution; for evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived . . .*” (RE 2 Timothy 1:9, emphasis added).

⁶³ “Such was and always will be the situation of the saints of God: *that unless they have an actual knowledge that the course that they are pursuing is according to the will of God, they will grow weary in their minds and faint, for such has been and always will be the opposition in the hearts of unbelievers and those that know not God, against the pure and unadulterated religion of Heaven (the only thing which ensures eternal life), that they will persecute to the uttermost all that worship God according to his revelations, receive the truth in the love of it, and submit themselves to be guided and directed by his will, and drive them to such extremities that nothing short of an actual*

When I first taught, the anger and opposition was directed at me, and because of that, you were not their focus. But now I will return to the one who sent me [the Father] and ***they will turn their anger at you***” (RE T&C Testimony of Saint John 10:19-23, emphasis added).

Persecution and tribulation is and always will be the heritage of the faithful. Presumably as a rule of nature, it is certain the reaction to faithfulness by the faithless is to mock, criticize and find fault. It is in this segment Satan finds willing recruits to join him as accusers of their brethren.⁶⁴ These become occupants of the great and spacious

knowledge of their being the favorites of Heaven, and of their having embraced that order of things which God has established for the redemption of man, will enable them to exercise that confidence in him necessary for them to overcome the world and obtain that crown of glory which is laid up for them that fear God.

For a man to lay down his all, his character and reputation, his honor and applause, his good name among men, his houses, his lands, his brothers and sisters, his wife and children, and even his own life also, counting all things but filth and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, requires more than mere belief, or supposition that he is doing the will of God, but actual knowledge, realizing that when these sufferings are ended he will enter into Eternal rest and be a partaker of the glory of God.

For unless a person does know that he is walking according to the will of God, it would be offering an insult to the dignity of the Creator were he to say that he would be a partaker of his glory when he should be done with the things of this life. *But when he has this knowledge, and most assuredly knows that he is doing the will of God, his confidence can be equally strong that he will be a partaker of the glory of God.*

Let us here observe that *a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation.* For from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation *never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things: it was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life, and it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God.* When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth's sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know most assuredly that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not nor will not seek his face in vain. *Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life.*

It is in vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their all in sacrifice, and by this means obtained faith in God and favor with him so as to obtain eternal life, unless they in like manner offer unto him the same sacrifice, and through that offering obtain the knowledge that they are accepted of him” (RE T&C 110, Lectures on Faith, Lecture 6:4-8, emphasis added).

⁶⁴ “And now I, Nephi, do not speak all the words of my father. But to be short in writing, behold, he saw other multitudes pressing forward; and they came and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron. And they did press their way forward, continually holding fast to the rod of iron, until they came forth and fell down and partook of the fruit of the tree. And *he also saw other multitudes pressing their way towards that great and spacious building.* And it came to pass that many were drowned in the depths of the fountain, and many were lost from his view, wandering in strange roads. *And great was the multitude that did enter into that strange building. And after they did enter into that building, they did point the finger of scorn at me and those that were partaking of the fruit also.*

building in Lehi's dream of the Tree of Life. But for those who **know** there standing before God and receive assurances from Him their lives are pleasing in His sight, all sacrifice in this world is a pittance. Compared to God's promise of Eternal Life, sacrifice is a small price to pay.

What the Chosen Know- Returning to the "One" Who Sent Me

When the Savior completed His instructions to the disciples they were saddened and downhearted. The time to enlighten them regarding what they could look forward to had arrived. This was to be the counterbalance for the sacrifices they are to make. He encouraged His disciples by informing them what His return to the Father meant for them. His encouraging words are not limited to His contemporary disciples. They apply to future disciples as well. Ponder His words as if He were speaking to us individually.

"I said that I return to the one who sent me and none of you asked me to explain what I meant by that. Instead you have become saddened and downhearted. Understand this truth from me: It is for **your benefit** that I ascend to the Father. If I do not take up my position there **I cannot send the spirit of truth** [1st Knock, Spirit of Elias], **the record of Heaven** [2nd knock, Spirit of Elijah], **the peaceable things of immortal glory** [3rd knock, Spirit of Messiah] **to lead you upward. Once I ascend to the Father, I will send the Comforter** [holy ghost] **to guide you on the upward path.** The light is given to **shine upon the pathway, to expose wrongdoing, and let you decide matters correctly.** Those who refused to become devoted to me will not receive this. Because I will ascend to the Father, **you will be guided,** and they who follow the adversary will be rejected with the adversary they follow. He has already been rejected by the Father.

There are **many things I still have to teach you, but you are not able to understand it all as yet** [1st knock, Spirit of Elias]. When I am **the Spirit of Truth** [3rd knock], **I can then reveal to you the record of Heaven and knowledge will be poured into you** [2nd knock, Spirit of Elijah]. **The spirit** [holy ghost] is the means to communicate my words, and **my words will lead you on the upward path. The knowledge poured in to you will come from me.** I will depart, but only briefly because when I ascend back to the Head of the Household of Heaven, **I will also be by your side to guide you by my voice from Heaven** [3rd knock, Spirit of Messiah]. Then some of his disciples questioned among themselves, What does he mean he will depart briefly, then when he has ascended to the Father he will be by our side? What do these words mean? We do not understand.

But we heeded them not — thus are the words of my father — for as many as heeded them had fallen away. And Laman and Lemuel partook not of the fruit, said my father" (RE 1 Nephi 2:12, emphasis added).

Now Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him to explain and said to them, Do you discuss among yourselves what I meant when I said, I will depart, but only briefly, because when I ascend back to the Father, I will be by your side to guide you by my voice from Heaven? In the name of Father Ahman ***I forewarn you, You will grieve and mourn, but that will turn to joy and rejoicing.*** When a woman is in labor she suffers because the time to give birth has come, but after the child is born she forgets the pain and is joyful over her newborn child. You will mourn my departure, and ***celebrate my return, and that joy will never leave you.*** Then you will not need to ask of me, but you should ***ask Father Ahman in my name for what is needed. From now on, inquire from Father Ahman using my name and you will always receive an answer.*** [This is by definition “keys” to the mysteries of the kingdom⁶⁵ and to the knowledge of God, RE T&C 82:12]⁶⁶

⁶⁵ “To be able to ask and have God answer (see T&C 141:32; compare T&C 26:20; 82:12; 90:1; 131:5; and 151:12). Joseph Smith used the term *keys of the kingdom* to mean when a person can ask and receive an answer each time he asks. Those directed by God hold the keys of the kingdom because the kingdom belongs to God, and God must direct its affairs for it to be His.¹ Without revelation to obtain God’s answer, Mormonism is just as adrift in uncertainty as apostate Christianity. They are like Laman and Lemuel who could not understand a revelation given to their father. In response to Nephi’s inquiry as to why they did not ask God, they responded, *the Lord maketh no such thing known unto us* (1 Nephi 4:2). It takes revelation to understand revelation. That “key” is to sacrifice your life by obedience to God. Man must live humbly and meekly before God, obeying every word that proceeds from Him. They must do this, despite the rage of false religionists who will always condemn the things of God by pretending they, without revelation, can know what God meant, intended, or is doing. They are pretenders and are without authority. They fight against God. A man who has the “keys” must sacrifice all to know God.² Immediately following the two letters Joseph Smith wrote from Liberty Jail, he wrote the following (in one of the only talks he ever wrote out), *Thus we behold the keys of this Priesthood* [the priesthood that belonged to Noah before the flood, the priesthood that warned him about the coming flood and so on] *consisted in obtaining the voice of Jehovah, that he talked with him in a familiar and friendly manner, that he continued to him the keys, the covenants, the power, and the glory with which he blessed Adam at the beginning, and the offering of sacrifice which also shall be continued at the last time* (T&C 140:16). The keys of the Priesthood — the Priesthood that Noah held, the fullness of the Priesthood, the Holy Order, the version that came down then — consists in obtaining the voice of Jehovah, and He talked with him in a familiar manner. *Therefore it is given to abide in you, the Record of Heaven, the Comforter, the keys of the kingdom, the truth of all things, that which quickens all things — which makes alive all things, which knows all things, and has all power according to Wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment* (Genesis 4:9). It’s given to abide in man; it is the Record of Heaven, the keys of the kingdom — the ability to get the voice of Jehovah to tell one the truth of all things, the answer to what one needs. If there is a group of people who claim to hold all of the keys who will tell you plainly that *the Lord maketh no such thing known unto us*, like Laman and Lemuel (but unlike Nephi, who says, “Have you asked God? He talks to me”), then one can know for a surety that those claimants do not have the keys. If God won’t talk to them, they *cannot* have the keys.

⁶⁶ “Something used to open a lock; something that is important or central in importance. A “keystone” is the point in an arch that fits in the center, holding the arch together. Upon it all else rests. Keys are better viewed as a signal or a signpost along a pathway. Instead of “I hold keys and so I hold something of value,” holding a key is better viewed as being given a strong guide or route to take. If the word is viewed using these meanings, it suggests that holding a key implies using it in action. The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve use their key positions to manage and maintain the worldwide LDS church organization. If not for that constant oversight, the organization of the church would lapse into disorganization. Their keys are indispensable to hold the entire structure together. Without them at the center, like a keystone, the building would collapse. Offices belonging to others are their

Much of what I have said to you may seem like a riddle, *but the time will come when you will comprehend my words* and they will no longer seem a riddle, and *you will understand them plainly*. When I ascend and you ask the Father in my name, you will know that Father Ahman loves you *because you have been devoted to me, and have accepted that I came from the Head of the Household of Heaven and was sent by him into the world, and that I will return to be with him*” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:24-28).

responsibility. Each person receives keys that come to them in their own sphere. No one should be jealous of church positions; they do not matter and are not necessary.¹

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 (T&C 82:12). “The word *keys* is horribly misunderstood. I have made it a practice to not use the word because of all the foolish and vain ideas that have accumulated around it. Joseph used the term in a variety of ways: for example, to mean authority, or opportunity, and in others it refers to a correct idea. This is the most important meaning. The term in the context of priesthood is completely absent from the Book of Mormon, and that book is the keystone of our religion, containing the fullness of the gospel. The only time the word *keys* is referenced in the Book of Mormon, it refers to a physical set of keys to unlock a door to the treasury controlled by Laban (1 Nephi 1:18). Although Joseph used the term often and meant many things by it, the challenge is to understand priesthood without being distracted by a poorly defined, and often used term. Mormon institutions now use the term most often to connote their exclusive right, license or control. The LDS *Handbook of Instructions* states the following, ‘Priesthood keys are the authority God has given to priesthood leaders to direct, control, and govern the use of His priesthood on Earth.’ This definition is the opposite of the way scripture directs priesthood be used (see T&C 139:5–7). The LDS *Handbook* approach turns this scripture upside down and backwards: by virtue of priesthood keys they have the right to direct, control and exercise influence over others. Mormon institutions in general all use their preferred meaning of the term *keys* to denounce anything or anyone they view as a rival. That is nonsense, and I avoid using the term because of widespread abusive practice.”² If a Dispensation was given and the recipient failed to complete the work God assigned, then he acquires no key, no honor, no right, no authority from the Lord and therefore, has nothing to account for. The notion that someone can obtain keys without receiving a Dispensation from the Lord and successfully completing the work of God is a false idea that should be rejected” (*A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, pp. 704-705).

“Keys are knowledge. A particular key is knowledge or instruction received from the Lord on how to do something. If one has the key, then one has the ability or power to do something. And conversely, if one is powerless to do or accomplish something (bind and loose, request ministering angels, command the elements or spirits, etc.), then they do not possess a key. “Then knowledge through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the grand key that unlocks the glories and mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven...the key that unlocks the Heavens and puts in our possession the glories of the celestial world.”⁴ “There are many things which belong to the powers of the Priesthood and the keys thereof that have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world; they are hid from the wise and prudent to be revealed in the last times.”⁵ *Now the great and grand secret of the whole matter, and the summum bonum [highest good] of the whole subject that is lying before us, consists in obtaining the powers of the holy [Order of] Priesthood. For him to whom these keys are given there is no difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of facts in relation to the salvation of the children of men, both as well for the dead as for the living* (T&C 151:9). “The Melchizedek Priesthood...is the grand head, and holds the highest authority which pertains to [the Holy Order] and the keys of the Kingdom of God in all ages of the world, to the latest posterity on the earth; and is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from Heaven.”⁶ “In knowledge there is power. God has more power than all other beings because He has greater knowledge; and hence He knows how to subject all other beings to Him. He has power over all.”⁷ Joseph Smith also used the term *keys* to mean understanding, the greatest key being the ability to ask God and receive an answer” (*A Glossary of Gospel Terms*, pp. 702-704).

Jesus follows a pattern explained by Joseph Smith in the beginning of this dispensation. All disciples, ancient and modern, in accordance to the laws of Heaven must be instructed about a kingdom prior to entering in. The disciples of Christ received instruction they were not prepared to understand [1st knock, Spirit of Elias]. Following the Savior's ascension when He becomes the "*Spirit of Truth*" He sends the "*Record of Heaven*" to restore their pre-mortal recollection [2nd knock, Spirit of Elijah] and the holy ghost to teach and recall all the Saviors teachings in their recollection. The holy ghost is the means for hearing the Savior and explaining how we ascend. Joseph Smith taught:

“But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment [he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker and is caught up to dwell with Him, TJP.S., p.56] ***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.*** For further instruction we refer you to Deut. 32, where the Lord says, that Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste, howling wilderness; ***He led him about*** [1st knock, Spirit of Elias, messenger], ***He instructed him*** [2nd knock, Spirit of Elijah, Friend], ***He kept him as the apple of His eye*** [3rd knock, Spirit of Messiah, Son or daughter], 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. So dissimilar are the governments of men, and so divers are their laws, from the government and laws of heaven, that a man, for instance, hearing that there was a country on this globe called the United States of North America, could take his journey to this place without first learning the laws of governments; 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.*** (Smith Jr., Joseph. Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith (pp. 55- 56). Deseret Book Company. Kindle Edition).

It appears the pattern followed by the Savior to instruct His disciples is a three-fold process wherein He first instructs them prior to their comprehending His words. He shows them visually, through a visitation, an angel, a vision or a dream.⁶⁷ When they gain

⁶⁷ “The Father testified of Jesus also on the Mount, when He was transfigured before us, and the glory of Heaven was upon Him, and *we saw Him enter the Heavenly realm* [but the disciples did not at this time enter]. The Father testified also when our Lord prayed for those who do follow Him. And *the Holy Ghost has and does testify of Him to all who receive Him. Therefore, we know by irrefutable evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, sent to fulfill prophecy, and to lead all who will follow through the path of His Father*” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 12:13, emphasis added).

sufficient knowledge to enter what they've seen, the Lord guides and directs them until they have sufficient knowledge to enter in.⁶⁸

During His mortal ministry, Jesus often withdrew from His disciples to converse with His Father and receive direction.⁶⁹ On this occasion He called upon the Father in their presence presumably to “*share His life*” as His friends and witness what He says to the Father. His prayer was a continuation of their instruction as well as an admission He was prepared and committed to complete the Father’s will.

The Savior’s prayer to the Father should be read and pondered as if He speaks in our presence, setting the expectation of how all disciples should follow His instructions precisely. His prayer is presented without commentary:

“Then Jesus looked up to Heaven and said these words, Father, the hour has arrived. Let your light abide with your Son, that ***your Son may be filled by your light and illuminate others***. Because you have taught me to overcome the weaknesses of the flesh, ***you guide me*** to gain power to heal all weaknesses and redeem all creation. From your presence come Eternal lives, worlds without end, and ***you are the sole source of all truth***. Therefore, it is known and will be known that I am the Messiah sent by every obligation you have asked of me and now have completed this part of the work. ***Let what happens next finish your great work, so I may return to your Throne to be with you where I was before my descent here.***

I have explained your title to the men you gave to me from out of the fallen creation. ***They were yours at the beginning, and you have given them to me as my offspring.*** And they are devoted, prepared and always waiting to respond to your words. Now they understand and accept that every thing I have done and

“And there were *many other signs* [“*Faith is not produced by signs, but signs follow those who believe (see T&C50:3, Glossary)* that His disciples witnessed that testified of Jesus, but which are not contained in this account. But what is recorded is to testify that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, so that you may obtain Eternal lives, worlds without end through His name” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 12:7, emphasis added).

⁶⁸ “. . . because when I ascend back to the Father, I will depart, but only briefly, because *when I ascend back to the Father, I will be by your side to guide you by my voice from Heaven? . . .*” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:27, emphasis added).

⁶⁹ “And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. For truly I say unto you, they have their reward. *But you, when you pray, enter into your closet. And when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret shall reward you openly.* But when you pray, use not vain repetitions as the hypocrites, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Therefore, be not like unto them, for *your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask him . . .*” (RE Matthew 3:28, emphasis added).

taught ***comes from you***. For I have said to them the things you told to me. They are devoted to the truth and know ***I am your sent Messiah***. I pray for them, and what I ask is for them and not the world, for ***they are yours***. And all who are devoted to me are yours, and you share with me, and ***I am their light***. I am soon to depart from this creation, but these followers will remain here as I return again to be with you. Holy Father, please watch over these like a sentinel. Protect and guard them using your power, ***so that they may be united as one, as we are united as one***. While I accompanied them in the world, I shared light with them in your name. Every one you gave to me I have kept, and none of them will be lost to us, other than the son of perdition. Those who are kept and those who are lost are divided ***according to your covenant made from the beginning***.

And now I will be returning to you, and I declare these words in the world so these devoted believers can ***share in my coming joyful triumph***. I have taught them your word, and the world rejects them because they are not taken in by worldliness, even as I am not distracted by the world. I do not ask for you to remove them from the coming challenges here, but protect them from falling prey to temptations of worldliness. ***They are not worldly, even as I am not***. Sanctify them through your truth. Your words are truth. As you have sent me into the world, likewise I am sending them into the world. And for their sakes I sacrifice myself, that they might be sanctified through the truth.

I pray not only for these followers, but also for all believers who learn our words from them. I ask that all followers and believers may be united as one, as you, Father, are in me, and I am in you, ***that they also may be united as one in us. By them becoming one, the world will have reason to believe that you sent me***. And the light which you gave to me I have given to them. This allows them to become united as one, even as we are one: my light in them, and your light in me. ***The light will lead them to be made perfect in one***. That light I have given to them ***is evidence to the world that you have sent me***. I have loved them, as you have loved me. Father, I ask that those whom you have given to me ***may also ascend to live where I am ascending***, for this journey was established before the foundation of creation. O righteous Father, this fallen world does not know you, but I have declared that you have sent me to minister here. I have declared your message here and will finish the course. May the love you have for me be shown through the example of my love for them, and they may be saved through my sacrifice” (RE T&C 171, The Testimony of Saint John 10:30-33, emphasis added).

*Jesus is the Messiah, the Walker in the Path*⁷⁰

“In the name of Father Ahman I declare to you, the individual who trusts me, what I have accomplished he will also. Followers will also accomplish the greater works I do next. ***Followers will also finish the path, as I am now concluding, at the place my Father dwells.*** As he helps me, ***I will help you, and you will accomplish what I have along with the greater sacrifice I have yet to finish.*** And whatever you shall ask in my name, I will answer, so that the Father may be glorified by the honor shown his Son. If you shall ask any thing in my name, I will answer” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 10:10, emphasis added).

Following the death and Resurrection of the Messiah, the Lord began fulfilling promises He made to the disciples in the 10th chapter. They knew the Savior was sent by the Father because the Father so testified with His own voice on three occasions.⁷¹ The disciples knew by irrefutable evidence Jesus was the Messiah and the one sent “*to lead all who will follow through the path of His Father*” (Ibid).

From this account we know the Father bore witness the Savior was His Son when Jesus appeared to His disciples three times:

“ . . .This was now the ***third time Jesus ministered to His disciples*** following His rise from among the dead” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 12:17, emphasis added).

⁷⁰ “Now, therefore, know that *Jesus is the Messiah, the Walker in the Path* who has proven for evermore that Father Ahman sent Him into the world *to prove His Father’s path*” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 12:21, emphasis added).

⁷¹ “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 remained upon Him. *There came a voice out of Heaven saying: You are my Beloved Son, this day I have begotten you;* for I [John the Beloved] ***was there with John the Baptist when he baptized Jesus.*** And I, John, bear record that He received a fullness 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. The Father testified of Jesus also on the Mount, when He was transfigured before us, and the glory of Heaven was upon Him, and we saw Him enter the Heavenly realm. The Father testified also when our Lord prayed for those who do follow Him. And the Holy Ghost has and does testify of Him to all who receive Him. Therefore, we know by irrefutable evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, sent to fulfill prophecy, and to lead all who will follow through the path of His Father*” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 12:12-13, emphasis added).

Although John mentions three visits by the Savior following His Resurrection, John’s testimony at the conclusion of his record informs us there were many opportunities provided the disciples to receive the Father’s light and knowledge from Jesus.

“In addition to this account, many other things were done by Jesus, which, if they were all written, *that library would fill the entire cosmos*. Amen” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 12:22, emphasis added).

There is a tendency to think a library filling the entire cosmos has to be an exaggeration or overstatement of fact. One might entertain that conclusion until we consider the Father, Son and ourselves are beings taking “eons” of time, “Endless lives” and “worlds without number” in our ascension to perfection as the Testimony of Saint John suggests. If you cannot accept that as fact, at least remain open to the possibility it is reality.

Isaiah speaks of the Lord teaching a people in the last days to “walk in His paths.”⁷² The Testimony of Saint John confirms this notion in John’s account.

“After this Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. This is an account of that event: There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael from the city of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others, also disciples. Simon Peter said to them, *I ascend to the deep* [the Heavens/veil]. They responded to him, We go with you. They went forth, and entered *into the ark*;⁷³ and *they could not grasp anything*.

⁷² “The word that Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem; and it shall come to pass *in the last days, when the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore*” (RE Isaiah 1:5, emphasis added).

“[The paths of God are in the heavens. If you are going to learn to walk in His paths you are going to have to learn to walk in the heavens.]” (Snuffer, Denver. Preserving the Restoration, p.277, Mill Creek Press. Kindle Edition).

⁷³ “So now we should realize, I hope, that that city which Melchizedek, the King of Peace, was able to teach righteousness sufficiently so that it was taken up from the earth [walk in the Lord’s paths], *reserved to the last days of the end of the world— The next time we have such an event on the earth, the next time there is this kind of gathering and this kind of a population anywhere, it will not be for the purpose of going up. It will be for the*

But at the horizon of the morning star, Jesus stood at the sacred entry; however the disciples could not recognize it was Jesus for the glory about Him. Then Jesus asked them, Children, have you celebrated the ritual meal? They answered Him, No. And **He directed them** and said, Approach the veil to the east and you will find what you seek. They approached the veil as instructed, and now they were overcome by the multitude of what was received. Therefore the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he quickly clothed himself (for he did not wear the apparel), and cast himself into the great deep. And the other disciples came into the ark and parted also the veil (**for they were not bound by the limits of this world**). As **they ascended**, they saw a fire burning at the offering place and the Flesh Offering was upon it, **who** is also the Bread of Life. Jesus said to them, Rise above the flesh you now occupy, and **Simon Peter ascended, and drew the veil open**, and there were ministering a hundred, and then fifty, and then three; and for these many who they beheld, yet **the veil remained open**. Jesus said to them, Come and eat the food of the rising sun. And none of the disciples asked of him, What name is now yours? knowing that it was their Lord. Jesus then served to them His flesh and blood, and **they were filled by His Spirit . . .**” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 12:14-17, emphasis added).

John’s account of traveling in the great deep and being guided by the Lord contains many things unfamiliar to anyone who has not been there and experienced it. Ritual meals, Flesh Offerings and the Bread of Life. Sacred apparel and the prospect of

purpose of permitting those who have gone up to come back down. It will be for the purpose of having those who can endure the presence of those who come because those who come will burn up all those who are unworthy. And therefore, some few need to be gathered so that the earth is not utterly wasted at His coming. As it was in the days of Noah, so [also shall it be] at the [time of the] coming of the Son of Man (JS-M 1:41; see also Matthew 11:11 RE). How many people were required in order to have the Ark be an acceptable place in which God could preserve all of humanity? It was a portable Ark of the Covenant in which the family was preserved. And so, if it’s going to be as it was in the days of Noah— There is this net that has been cast out to gather together all manner of fish. But as the Lord tells the parable, the angels are going to come, and they’re going to pick through all manner of fish, and they’re going to keep the good, and the rest are going to be scheduled for burning. And so the question is, how diligent ought the search be into the things of God? How carefully ought we to consider the things that have been restored to us through the Prophet Joseph Smith? The fact is that this stuff is assigned to our dispensation. And I’m reading from the Book of Mormon, which the world does not have or accept. I’m reading from the Book of Abraham, which the world does not have or accept. I’m reading from the Joseph Smith Translation, which the world does not have and accept. All of you have this information in front of you. All of this material has been restored through someone that we claim we honor and regard as a prophet. Well, they who come will burn up those who are unprepared. And therefore, what should we be doing in order to make sure that we are included among those who are prepared?” (Covenants, Denver Snuffer Jr., pp.15-16, emphasis added). Like the Ark was a means of salvation for Noah and his people, the ark is the metaphor used by the disciples as the means for their travel through the “great deep” to their salvation and exaltation. In the end of this world, those who come down from Heaven to unite the kingdom of God on Earth with the kingdom of God in Heaven travel in a symbolic “ark.”

no longer being bound by the limits of this world can only be explained by the Savior to us through the 3rd knock and the Spirit of Messiah. I have never experienced this and make no pretense I understand all John shares in this account. I suspect it must be explained during the 2nd knock and the Spirit of Elijah before we have any hope of experiencing it in this life or next. Most of us are like Nicodemus when he met the Savior one evening.

“There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, [Equivalent of the Supreme Court in ancient Israel] who was in darkness and came to visit with Jesus. He sought wisdom from Jesus and said, Enlightened heavenly guide, *some of us know you have descended from the High Council of Heaven because signs confirm you have authority from God.* Jesus answered and said to him, In the name of Father Ahman I testify there is *a new dispensation begun. You must accept the ordinances of this new Light or you cannot hope to progress to know God.*

Nicodemus said to him, If I believe this, *can I ascend in this life, or will it be accomplished only in the afterlife?* Jesus answered, In the name of Father Ahman I say to you, *Except you receive the ordinance of baptism to join the new dispensation, and thereby forsake your sins and receive forgiveness and an outpouring of the Spirit, you will not ascend to God’s presence in this life or the life to come* [Doctrine of Christ]. All who are devoted to the ambitions of the flesh remain imprisoned by the flesh [*hearts are so set upon the things of this world and do aspire to the honors of men . . .*], and those who are born anew through the ordinances, receive the Spirit of Truth, and are able to know the record of Heaven by the Spirit of Truth. Do not question if what I say is true because the Spirit of Truth confers light, knowledge, and understanding of the mysteries of Heaven *within every soul who receives it.*

Nicodemus replied to him, Why is this not widely known [appropriate question for our day?] Jesus answered, *Why does a member of the Sanhedrin not recognize that a new dispensation has begun?* In the name of Father Ahman I confirm what was told by John the Baptist and I have begun a work that comes from Heaven. But you who lead Israel fight against it and you refuse to humble yourselves. If I offered you a position of respect and authority, *as you now hold, you would believe.* But because I testify only of heavenly things that require faith and sacrifice, you refuse to believe? I tell you, *if you want to ascend to the Heavenly Council, you must first acknowledge and give heed to the messengers sent by them.* You can refuse to believe, but you will see in me a sign and remember this saying: When Moses nailed a brass serpent upon a pole in

the wilderness, he prophesied of me. And I shall also be nailed upon a tree, and ***those who believe on me will receive deliverance through my sacrifice, even as Israel was delivered by looking with faith at Moses' serpent.***

Father Ahman loves the world, and like father Abraham, Father Ahman will allow His Son to become an offering for sin. Whoever believes and follows His Son will not be lost, but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world. ***Those who believe and follow His Son will escape the limitations of sin.*** The faithless are condemned already because they refuse to believe and obey the Only Begotten Son of God. ***Every thing about my assignment, which I am now performing, was foretold by the prophets sent earlier to teach Israel, for they all testified of me.*** They told you I would come, and I am now here doing what was prophesied, but you refuse to see it happening. ***Enough is underway that rejecting it means you prefer darkness to light.*** Humble yourself and admit the prophets foretold the very things now underway; repent and be baptized and ***the Spirit of Truth will open your eyes. If you want greater light, you will obey this instruction.*** If you refuse, then you never meant it when you greeted me as an enlightened heavenly guide” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of John 2:1-4, emphasis added).

A member of the Sanhedrin in ancient Israel was a position of prominence in the Jewish faith. It might be compared to an Area General Authority or higher in the gentile church. Nicodemus was sufficiently knowledgeable to recognize signs Jesus was a messenger from the “*Heavenly Council.*” The recognized signs attested to the Savior’s authority to Nicodemus and others in the Sanhedrin. He viewed Jesus as an “*enlightened Heavenly guide*” and, like most of us, wanted to know if one could ascend in this life or wait until the afterlife? The Lord overlooked the question posed by Nicodemus and went directly to what Nicodemus must do before considering ascension.

First, Nicodemus must recognize a new dispensation had begun. This statement by Christ posed great difficulties for a member of the Sanhedrin. In effect, the Savior was saying, “There is a new sheriff in town and the power you held is revoked and given to another by the Heavenly Council. You are being demoted.” John the Baptist told them as much and they refused him.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ “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 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 82:14, emphasis added).

Before the subject of ascending is discussed, one must comply with the Savior's requirements:

1. Acknowledge a new dispensation has begun.
2. Accept new ordinances associated with the new dispensation or you cannot progress to know God.
3. Baptism is the ordinance required to join the new dispensation.
4. Forsake your sins, receive forgiveness and an outpouring of the Spirit. Without these one cannot ascend to God's presence in this life or the life to come.
5. ***"Those who are born anew through the ordinances, receive the Spirit of Truth [Jesus Christ], and are able to know the Record of Heaven [pre-mortal memory] by the Spirit of Truth [Christ]. The Spirit of Truth [Christ] confers light, knowledge, and understanding of the mysteries of Heaven within every soul who receives it."***
6. ***"Every thing about my assignment, which I am now performing, was foretold by the prophets sent earlier to teach Israel, for they all testified of me. They told you I would come, and I am now here doing what was prophesied, but you refuse to see it happening. Enough is underway that rejecting it means you prefer darkness to light."***
7. ***"I tell you, if you want to ascend to the Heavenly Council, you must first acknowledge and give heed to the messengers sent by them."***

Stark Reality for the Gentiles

Joseph Smith introduced a new dispensation two hundred years ago. Joseph Smith was, like Moses and the greater Priesthood was taken from Israel.⁷⁵ Only the lesser priesthood remained.⁷⁶ After two hundred years it would seem a serious assessment of the gentile condition is long overdue.

⁷⁵ "And again, verily I say unto you, let all my saints come from afar, and send swift messengers, yea, chosen messengers, and say unto them, Come all of you, with all your gold, and your silver, and your precious stones, and with all your antiquities, and with all who have knowledge of antiquities that will come, may come. And bring the box tree, and the fir tree, and the pine tree, together with all the precious trees of the earth, and with iron, with copper, and with brass, and with zinc, and with all your precious things of the earth, **and build a house unto my name for the Most High to dwell therein. For there is not place found on the earth that he may come and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he has taken away, even the fullness of the Priesthood**" (RE T&C 141:10, emphasis added).

⁷⁶ ***"The spirit of Elias is first, Elijah second, and Messiah last. Elias is a forerunner to prepare the way, and the spirit and power of Elijah is to come after, holding the keys of power, building the Temple to the capstone, placing the seals of the Melchizedek Priesthood upon the house of Israel, and making all things ready; then Messiah comes to His Temple, which is last of all"*** (Smith Jr., Joseph. Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith (p. 390). Deseret Book Company. Kindle Edition, emphasis added). The Nauvoo Temple was never completed and the power of Elijah

In the context of the three knocks of ascension, the Restoration began by Joseph Smith is stalled at the first knock, which is Aaronic. Lip service is paid to the other knocks but little is understood or taught about the latter two knocks. In fact, the pattern described by the Savior in His day is repeated today.

“ . . . But you who lead Israel fight against it and you ***refuse to humble yourselves***. If I offered you a position of respect and authority, as you now hold, you would believe. But ***because I testify only of heavenly things that require faith and sacrifice, you refuse to believe?*** I tell you, if you want to ascend to the Heavenly Council, ***you must first acknowledge and give heed to the messengers sent by them . . .***” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 2:3).

When Jesus was sent to Jewish leaders of His day, there were few who acknowledged Him as the Son of God. Those like Nicodemus who recognized signs of His commission from the Heavenly Council were careful not to advocate their view publicly amongst their peers. Because the Savior offered no positions of respect and authority they remained hesitant to commit. By outward appearance these prominent Jewish leaders were pious men of knowledge, prominence and faith. To embrace the Savior and His ministry and advance His cause meant adversity, persecution, loss of standing and a threat to their livelihoods.

It should be noted that none of these considerations were entertained by Jesus in the seven requirements given to Nicodemus. These men were the scholarly class of the Jewish religion. Their knowledge was respected, admired, and obeyed among common Jews. Many devoted their lives to studying the scriptures and should have recognized the Messiah when He appeared. Jesus emphasized this point when He spoke with Nicodemus.

“Nicodemus replied to him, Why is this not widely known? Jesus answered, ***Why does a member of the Sanhedrin not recognize that a new dispensation has begun?*** In the name of Father Ahman I confirm what was told by John the Baptist and ***I have begun a work that comes from Heaven . . .***” (RE T&C 171, Testimony of Saint John 2:3, emphasis added).

The most knowledgeable and openly exercised in the Jewish faith failed to recognize the Son of God and a new dispensation in their day. It would be logical to

never given. All that remained was the spirit of Elias, which is associated with the Aaronic Priesthood. Like the Jews from Moses to John the Baptist, the lesser Priesthood presided over Israel and the latter-day gentiles following Joseph and Hyrum Smith’s martyrdom. In effect, history repeated, first with Israel’s covenant rejection and then the gentile rejection in Joseph Smith’s day.

expect the same among devout gentiles at the end of their covenant offer.⁷⁷ The faithful among the gentiles will not perceive the light when it breaks forth among them. Because the precepts of men keep them in the dark. Like the Jews before them, the traditions of Moses day and the compounding of false teachings keep them in the dark. If they, [Jew or gentile] have the scriptures, the interpretations of men keep them from recognizing events foretold in sacred canon as they transpire. An important question to contemplate is why in T&C 31 the prophecy about the fulness of the gentiles describes the gentile fulness as people sitting in darkness following Joseph Smith's dispensation opening? How could the gentiles remain blinded after the Restoration began? Like Jews in the Savior's day, the presumption is that those in darkness are everyone but those "chosen" by God to receive the Restoration. This conclusion ignores the fact both Israel and the gentiles rejected Moses and Joseph Smith. If the Restoration that began with Joseph Smith was sufficient to bring about Zion, why would it be necessary for God to bring forth more light at the end of the gentile fulfillment? As the Savior pointed Nicodemus to prophecy and its fulfillment as evidence of His mission and dispensation, the correct course is to do the same for the gentiles at the end of their dispensation. Joseph Smith's dispensation will of necessity close to prepare for the last dispensation which gathers for the last time, God's family, Israel.

⁷⁷ "And when *that day shall come* shall a remnant [Israel] be scattered among all nations; *but they* [Israel] *shall be gathered again*, but they shall remain *until the times of the gentiles be fulfilled*. And ***in that day*** [last days] shall be heard of wars and rumors of wars, and the whole earth shall be in commotion. And men's hearts shall fail them and shall say that Christ delays his coming until the end of the world, and the love of men shall wax cold and iniquity shall abound. *And when the times of the gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fullness of my gospel, but they receive it not, for they perceive not the light and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men.* And ***in that generation shall the times of the gentiles be fulfilled***. And there shall be men standing in that generation that shall not pass until they shall see an overflowing scourge, for a desolating sickness shall cover the land. But my disciples shall stand in holy places and shall not be moved; but among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices, and curse God, and die. And there shall be earthquakes also in diverse places and many desolations. Yet men will harden their hearts against me, and they will take up the sword one against another and they will kill one another" (RE T&C 31:6-7, emphasis added).