Our Lord desires that we literally come unto Him and know Him. Throughout scripture He has expressed this desire, inviting us to develop a close relationship with Him, often in connection with marriage symbolism. We are the Bride in scripture and He is the Bridegroom. As part of this symbolic relationship, He provides us two gifts tied to His great love for us. The first is a gifting or endowment of power from on high - the First Comforter or Holy Ghost. It is given to us as an engagement gift in the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost experience, when we are born again, becoming a new creature in Christ. With the Holy Ghost or first comforter gifted to us as our companion and guide, we are then more carefully directed on the way back to Him – towards the Tree of Life and its fruit – God’s love.

The second gift He gives us is greater, coming in our later marriage to Him. It is an event accompanied by even greater joy and the glory of His personal presence, symbolized in the marriage relationship, where we are brought to heaven and sealed His (Mos. 5:15). In this closer relationship, we are taught, guided, and directed by the Lord Himself as our mentor and teacher. He becomes our Second Comforter. Later we are brought by Him to Father and Mother in heaven. First, however, we must receive Christ as our Savior. He is the Heavenly Gift (Ether 12:8; 4 Ne. 1:3), the first of thirteen gifts of the Spirit He lists for us in D&C 46.

Hereafter this paper is organized into four parts to develop greater understanding of the importance of the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost. There is first an introductory summary of this important born again experience. Thereafter, there are three more detailed sections with scripture references. They include; (I) An Invitation to receive the baptism by fire; (II) A Summary of its Terms and Phrases and what they mean; And (III) How to receive this important fiery gift that we might be transformed into a new person by being “born again.”

**Summary - What is the Fiery Baptism?** *The testimonies of Christ, Joseph Smith, King Mosiah & Nephi*

**What Christ Taught**  
Christ gently chastised Nicodemus - a supposed “master” or Rabbi over his people for not understanding and teaching this important doctrine to his people. Christ told him that it is required to see and enter heaven. He said, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?—Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit [fire], he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:3-6).

**What Joseph Smith Taught**  
“The baptism of water, without the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost attending it, is of no use . . . They are necessarily and inseparably connected. An individual must be born of water and the spirit in order to get into the kingdom of God” (HC, 6:316). He added, “You might as well baptize a bag of sand as a man, if not done in view of the remission of sins and getting of the Holy Ghost. Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without the other half—that is, the baptism of [fire and] the Holy Ghost.

**What King Mosiah Taught**  
“And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters; And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God. I say unto you, unless this be the case, they must be cast off; and this I know, because I was like to be cast off” (Mosiah 27:24-27).

**What Nephi Taught**  
“…know the gate by which ye should enter [into the rest of the Lord]. For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost. And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have
received the Holy Ghost, which witnesses of the Father and the Son, unto the fulfilling of the promise which he hath made, that if ye entered in by the way ye should receive” (2 Ne. 31:17-18).

“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; 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 show unto you all things what ye should do. Behold, this is the doctrine of Christ…” (2 Ne. 32:2-6).

An Event

The baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost is a necessary event, marking the point at which we are reborn in Christ (Alma 5:49; 7:14; Mos. 27:24-27; Alma 36:18; John 3:5), coming to Him in humility and submission that we might be made clean – a new creature. It is the gateway onto the path to eternal life. In it we receive the Holy Ghost as our guide. It, with God’s help, then guides us on the way to His presence.

We arrive at this gateway event via the process of developing greater faith in Christ and repenting. It begins with full submission to God’s will. When we are baptized by fire, our sins are remitted, burned away like dross. With it, we have no more desire to sin. We become fully converted to Christ as our Savior. This normally happens as an older adult, when we finally have great desire to repent and change, marked by real humility. To do so we must seek the Lord and His mercy with all our hearts. The Lord tells us that to be born again - in Him - and receive the saving power of the Atonement, we must offer up as a sacrifice to Him of a broken heart and a contrite spirit (3 Ne. 9:20). Having a broken heart is to be humble, teachable, and fully submissive to the will of God – like a little child to a parent. To be contrite is to be fully and continually repentant. When we finally experience this rebirth, Christ then gives us an important, necessary gift to guide us further on the pathway back into His presence - the gift of the Holy Ghost (2 Ne. 32:3-6). With the gateway event, we are placed on the straight and narrow pathway – the way - to receive Him as our Second Comforter. He is the fruit on Lehi’s Tree of Life. Beside this pathway is the rod of iron that we must hold onto tightly to make it to the Tree. It is the word God in scripture and in personal revelation through prayer. They guide us to the Tree. Those who let go of this iron rod fall into forbidden paths and pits and are lost.

There are many good examples of being born again in the Book of Mormon. No book better details this process, as the baptism of fire is one of “the plain and precious things” removed from the Bible, as part of Satan’s attempt to keep us from God and His light (see 1 Nephi 13:26-28, 40). It is a simple, but sacred transitional event mostly taken out of the Bible, but given to us in the Book of Mormon. Together, both books contain the fulness of the gospel (D&C 42:12). The Lord tells us that the fulness of my scriptures is two books (D&C 42:12), but specifically the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (D&C 42:15, 56, 59). In them we find God’s word and His law.

Three good examples of those receiving the baptism of fire stand out in the Book of Mormon; that of Alma the Younger (Mos. 27; Alma 36), King Lamoni (Alma 18 & 19), and 300 Lamanites collectively receiving the fiery baptism (Helaman 5). They were part of 8,000 Lamanites baptized in water first by Lehi and Nephi. The patterns in these and other stories reveal consistency but with some variations, suggesting that within the patterns there is room for the differences in each of us. In these three examples, we see sincere repentance, a crying out to Christ for mercy, along with signs that accompany this necessary spiritual transformation. We often see the repentant falling to the ground in total submission to our Lord, for example. We also see the individuals receiving a mighty change in heart. Sometimes a pillar of fire is seen surrounding the individual, as they are cleansed by fire. Always there is great joy, as darkness is removed and God’s love is felt in an intense way. Some see God and His great glory. Many shout praises to Him as part of the experience. Some even speak with the gift of tongues. For many, this comes later.
The baptism of fire requires that we repent and come unto Christ (D&C 10:67, see verses 40-70). These four bolded words, representing two primary concepts, make up the very definition of Christ’s doctrine, gospel, and church. As we come to Christ in sincere repentance we are born again in Him (Alma Mos. 27:24-27; 5:49; 7:14; 36:23-26; John 3:3-6). John tells us that we can then see and enter heaven. Nephi tells us that we are not even through the gate and onto the path to eternal life if we are not born again (2 Ne. 31:17-18). Christ alone stands at this gate! He employs no servant there, as it is He who baptizes us with fire, granting us the Holy Ghost. This is revealed in at least nine scriptures (D&C 33:15; 3 Ne. 9:20; 12:1; 2 Ne. 31:12; 3 Ne. 11:35; JST Mat. 3:38; JST Luke 3:16; JST John 1:28; 15:26).

How the Holy Ghost is Given

The Lord does employ select mortal servants to impart the important gift of the Holy Ghost or “an endowment of power from on high.” They are His chosen and empowered “apostles” alone; those who have been called by Him, seen Him, and been empowered by Him to do this and other mighty works. In Greek the word “apostle” means “sent one.” When Latter-day Saints are baptized at age 8, they are invited to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is the first comforter. They are then confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by the laying on of hands ordinance. This ordinance does not give one the Holy Ghost, but is an invitation to receive it by the baptism of fire experience, or by the Laying on of hands by one empowered to do so. Sadly, this is not well-understood today. God’s word clears up the matter as we see by searching the following scriptures; Acts 8:9-22, 19:2-6 and Revelation 2:4-5. See also D&C 20:38:4-3, 3 Nephi 18:37, and Moroni 2:2 (re-baptism appears to accompany some of these events, see Acts 19:2-6; Rev. 2:4-5; Alma 5:62, 7:1-14; Mor. 6:1).

A Required Sacrifice

Three scriptures hereafter reveal much about this necessary experience for salvation. The first is tied to what is required for us to receive fiery baptism.

“And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites, because of their faith in me at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not” (3 Nephi 9:20).

Next, note below some of the patterns evident in the experience of the baptism of fire of 300 Lamanites in Helaman chapter 5, verses 42-49, those who knew something had happened to them, but did not know what it was. They had no previous experience with it to draw from, nor a formal “definition” for it via instruction.

“And it came to pass that they all did begin to cry unto the voice of him who had shaken the earth; yea, they did cry even until the cloud of darkness was dispersed. And it came to pass that when they cast their eyes about, and saw that the cloud of darkness was dispersed from overshadowing them, behold, they saw that they were encircled about, yea every soul, by a pillar of fire. And Nephi and Lehi were in the midst of them; yea, they were encircled about; yea, they were as if in the midst of a flaming fire, yet it did harm them not, neither did it take hold upon the walls of the prison; and they were filled with that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. And behold, the Holy Spirit of God did come down from heaven, and did enter into their hearts, and they were filled as if with fire, and they could speak forth marvelous words.”

And finally, note also 2 Nephi 32:5-6, tied to the ultimate purpose of this event – literally coming to Christ.

“For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show 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 [the Lord] shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh [your flesh]. And when he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh, the things which he shall say unto you shall ye observe to do.”
What Keeps us From Experiencing This Important Event & Gift? (See also p. 19.)

1. *Pride* We must be humble, and have a broken heart and a contrite spirit.
2. *Not Fully Coming to the Lord* We must fully repent, and sincerely submit unto the Lord.
3. *Unbelief & False Beliefs or Traditions* We must remove all things that stand between us and this gift, mainly our own unbelief, and the many false ideas, teachings, and traditions we have embraced. We must let the word of God (scripture and personal revelation) teach us, not men.

I. The Invitation

We must literally **come unto Christ** to be saved. Alma asked, “Have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts” (Alma 5:14)? We are aided on this journey to know God by having His Spirit (as promised in the Sacrament prayers) and the Holy Ghost with us. The companionship of the Holy Ghost can be elusive until we receive the important baptism of fire. In it we are born again, quickened, purged, and purified, becoming a new person, full of greater love for God and all men. The additional gifts of the Spirit can then attend us. They are signs following real faith in the Lord Jesus Christ - the first principle of the gospel.

Hereafter, the patterns addressed in the baptism of fire experience are markers of what may occur for many, not what must occur, as each of us may experience it in slightly different ways. The result is the same, however. We no longer have desire to sin, as real conversion to Christ is complete. The baptism of fire experience is the gate to the pathway leading to eternal life. It is the central or second baptism of three that are required to return to God’s presence. It is a critical step in coming to know the Lord. John stated, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). The Lord and His prophets have taught us about the fiery baptism in various ways in scripture, as found in the concepts below-left. Note too the different names for this experience by various groups below-right.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Way</th>
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<td>The Two Baptisms Christ spoke of to Nicodemus</td>
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**Christ’s Doctrine, Gospel & Church - “Come Unto Me”**

The baptism of fire experience is an essential feature of “the doctrine of Christ,” as found in His gospel and church! The Prophet Joseph Smith said that, “a man could get nearer to God by abiding by [the Book of Mormon's] precepts, than by any other book.” (DHC 4:461). This is because “the plain and precious things” removed from the Bible by evil and designing men (1 Ne. 13) have not been removed from the Book of Mormon. They include “the doctrine of Christ” which is the requirement to be born again in Him. The phrase “the doctrine of Christ” is used three times in the two Book of Mormon chapters that most clearly address the baptism of fire experience! It is placed at the start of 2 Nephi 31 in verse 2, at its end in verse 21, and a third time in 2 Nephi 32:6. Note also that this phrase is used nine times in 3 Nephi 11, when Christ first addresses His most important teachings to the people at Bountiful (see verses 28-41). There the baptism of fire is addressed in verse 35 in connection with being “like a little child” and in again in the next chapter, verses 1 and 2 (3 Ne. 12:1-2).

When our Savior speaks of “my doctrine” (3 Ne. 11:28, 30, 31, 32, 35, 39, 40), “my gospel” (3 Ne. 12:1-6; 27:11; D&C 33:11-13) or “my church” (3 Ne. 27:8-21), he does so clearly in connection with two concepts laid out in four simple words; “repent” and “come unto me” (D&C 10:67-68; see also 1 Ne. 10:18 & 2 Ne. 28:32).
This is a literal invitation to be born again first, and then later to enter His “rest” – the fulness of His glory (D&C 84:240). The baptism of fire puts on through the gate and onto this pathway – the pathway to eternal life. Christ’s doctrine includes the Father’s commandment that “all men, everywhere,” must repent and “believe in me [Christ].” Faith in Christ and real repentance lead to the watery baptism, and then the baptism of fire, an essential part of Christ’s doctrine, gospel, and church.

Earlier in 2 Nephi, the prophet Nephi also taught that the doctrine, the gospel, and the church of Christ are all tied to repentance, baptism by water, and then baptism by fire:

“Wherefore, the things which I have written sufficeth me, save it be a few words which I must speak concerning the doctrine of Christ; wherefore, I shall speak unto you plainly, according to the plainness of my prophesying” (2 Nephi 31:2; see also 3 Ne. 11:28-41 & 12:1-2).

Verses later he adds, “...the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost” (2 Ne. 31:17; see also Mat. 7:13-14).

Note that Nephi teaches that the baptism by water and fire are both events, whereas faith and repentance prior to them are processes that should continually be practiced throughout our lives until we obtain eternal life:

“And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have received the Holy Ghost, which witnesses of the Father and the Son, unto the fulfilling of the promise which he hath made, that if ye entered in by the way ye should receive. And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save. Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Nephi 31:18-20).

Nephi makes it very clear that there is no other doctrine of Christ, no other way to real salvation.

“And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end. Amen” (2 Nephi 31:21).

The fiery baptism is the first of two major experiences we are invited to have on our return journey to God after we are baptized in water. Both later events are tied to additional spiritual gifts from God. There is first the gift of the Holy Ghost (the First Comforter, endnote 4) and later the Heavenly Gift (Christ Himself as the Second Comforter, endnote 1 & D&C 46:13). Experiencing the baptism of fire is very important, as it places us on the pathway to eternal life. It is the gate (or the gateway ordinance) onto this pathway, also called “the way.” The way takes us to the Tree of Life in Lehi’s vision. Nephi tells us that there is no other way or means where we can be saved but through Jesus Christ.

In JST Matthew 5, the be-attitudes chapter, we see Joseph’s major changes (in italics and bold below). They are tied to the baptism of fire. Verses 3 to 10 are quoted below:

3 Blessed are they who shall believe on me; and again, more blessed are they who shall believe on your words, when ye shall testify that ye have seen me and that I am.
4 Yea, blessed are they who shall believe on your words, and come down into the depth of humility, and be baptized in my name; for they shall be visited with fire and the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins.
5 Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit, who come unto me; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
6 And again, blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.
7 And blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.
8 And blessed are all they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.
9 And blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.
10 And blessed are all the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

The Only True Doctrine  We must come to know Christ as part of His doctrine, His gospel, and His church (see 2 Ne. 31:2 & 21; 32:6; 3 Ne. 28:41, 12:1-2). Its essence to literally come unto Him, to return to His presence while in this life. We enter onto this pathway via the gateway of the baptism of fire experience. It is the gate to this straight and narrow path (2 Ne. 31:17-18) leading to eternal life – the Tree of Life in Lehi’s vision. Christ is the gatekeeper there. He employs no servant at this important gate (2 Ne. 9:41). It is He who baptizes us there in His fiery glory (3 Ne. 12:1). Our Lord said, “And whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon my rock” (see 3 Ne. 11:31-40; 2 Ne. 31:21).

In the Joseph Smith re-translation of Matthew 25, we read of our Lord’s rejection of five of ten virgins (good, pure people). They knock on the door to the Bridegroom’s wedding chamber but are not let in. Why? The Prophet Joseph gives us the reason for their exclusion. He changed the incorrect words attributed to Christ that read, “I know you not” in Matthew 25:12 to “ye know me not,” thus placing clear responsibility on us as “virgins” to come to know Him personally (JST Mat. 25:11; see also JST Mat. 7:33). Sadly, too few Saints read the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. This particular verse is also not included in the few JST verses found at the back of the LDS Bible, nor is it found on the LDS Church website (the complete JST can be bought in various settings).

We read in a revelation given Joseph in D&C 112, verses 24 through 26, “Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, or mourning, and of lamentation; and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord. And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord; First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord” (see also 1 Peter 4:17-18 & D&C 132:22-24).

Scripture reveals that baptism by water brings us to “the gate.” We go through the gate and are placed on “the path” or “the way” to eternal life – the Tree of Life (Christ) via the baptism of fire ordinance. It is “the way” that leads us to know the Lord intimately (2 Ne. 31:18). To come to know God, we must be clean, as accomplished via three baptisms addressed hereafter. After receiving the first two baptisms (water and fire), individuals must “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men [charity], wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ [His word in scripture and revelation from Him], and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Ne/ 31:20). Christ, His presence, and His sealing of us to Him - is “the way.” And “there is no other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end. Amen” (verse 21).

This true doctrine - tied to the fiery baptism – is an essential part of Christ’s gospel and church. Those in and out of institutional churches experience it. Nephi was told, “There are save only two churches,” that of the Lamb or the Firstborn, and that of the devil and his great and abominable church (1 Ne. 13:26-34; 14:10; 2 Ne. 26:29). It should be noted that good people in and out of institutionalized religions experience the baptism of fire, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and other gifts of the Spirit.

The Endowment of Power: Two Definitions

The Prophet Joseph Smith’s definition of “the endowment of power,” as given at Kirtland, Ohio, was a special
gift to be attained before many were to preach the gospel as missionaries with real power - with the convincing power of the gift of the Holy Ghost. The receipt of this gift or endowment is directly tied to the baptism of fire, when we are purified, becoming worthy of this connection (see endnote 4). Today, our definition of this “endowment” is mostly a symbolic one, in connection with two symbolic ordinances; (1) the invitation to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost via the laying on of hands ordinance at age 8 (after baptism in water); And (2) the temple ordinance we now call “the endowment.” Both of these symbolic ordinances point us to real events, an endowment of power from God Himself – given us first in the gift or endowment of the Holy Ghost in connection with the baptism of fire, and secondly in the greater power of the higher priesthood promised at the temple veil, given by God Himself via His voice or touch (see Pillars of the Priesthood, by the author, www.digitalegend.com). Both are events, which the educational symbols point to.

Some suggest Brigham Young’s later definition of the “endowment” was different than Joseph Smith’s earlier definition for it at Kirtland. As a result, our understanding of the importance of the baptism of fire and the endowment itself has changed. The earlier endowment of power provided by God appears to have been the gift of the Holy Ghost (and other attending gifts of the Spirit), given as part of a great outpouring of the Spirit to those preparing for later missions. The Lord said, “I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost” (3 Ne. 11:1). The gift of the Holy Ghost appears to be the first portion of the “endowment of power” Joseph Smith desired the Twelve and others to receive before they left on their missions. It is the same “endowment of power” Jesus Christ wanted His chosen Twelve and others to receive in the meridian of time in the New Testament. In both cases, those to receive it were to “tarry” or wait upon the Lord and His timing prior to receiving this gift of power. More of the Lord’s power was promised the early Saints in the higher priesthood, later obtained by some at Morley Farm near Kirtland, where the first High Priests in the Church were given this greater Priesthood power for the first time.

The Lord and His Prophet Joseph wanted those who were to teach the gospel to be empowered servants, not impotent ones prior to the start of their important missions. They were to have the convincing power of the Holy Ghost with them to teach with power and authority. Lehi and Nephi were empowered in this way, having great success in their work. They taught and baptized 8000 Lamanites, latter witnessing 300 of them receiving the baptism of fire (Helaman chapter 5). Our understanding of the baptism of fire and the endowing or gifting of the Holy Ghost is more complete with this view.

**Symbol Versus Reality**

The core purpose of the temple and its symbolic ordinances is our re-entrance into the glorious presence of God. Too often we get distracted by making the symbolic ordinance, rather than what it teaches, the focus of temple worship. In the Bible we read that over time, wickedness and resulting change in this book of scripture stopped the actual appearance of God to the High Priest in the Holy of Holies of the ancient temple. The outcome of this corruption was a reconstruction of the purpose of the temple. The outward symbolic ordinances became the focus of the temple rather than its core purpose, our individual parting of the veil to obtain an audience with God. The Lord’s invitation to “come unto me” is thus a literal one, that we should seek and obtain, for therein is eternal life.

In our Savior’s day, the events on the day of Pentecost began a restoration of this core purpose of the temple. It was the day He, as the Bridegroom, provided His followers an engagement gift – the gift of a great outpouring of the Spirit – including the gift of the Holy Ghost. We read in Acts chapter 2, “when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance . . .” (Acts 2:1-6).

According to the Prophet Joseph Smith, this was the first portion of the endowment of power given from on high, one designed to give the Twelve and others real power through the Holy Ghost prior to their missions. Additional signs would accompany this endowment, that of the gifts of the Spirit as found in 1 Cor. 12, Moroni
Prior to the day of Pentecost the Lord had commanded His followers to “tarry” or wait for this “endowment of power from on high” before leaving on their missions to preach the gospel. He said, “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued [endowed or gifted] with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

This same pattern tied to receiving the endowment of power occurred with the early Saints in Kirtland, Ohio in 1831 (see also p. 16). On January 2nd of that year, the Lord said, “Wherefore, for this cause I gave unto you the commandment that ye should go to the Ohio; and there I will give unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high; And from thence, whosoever I will shall go forth among all nations, and it shall be told them what they shall do” (D&C 38:32-33). In February of 1831, He added, “... hearken ye elders of my church, whom I have appointed: Ye are not sent forth to be taught, but to teach the children of men the things which I have put into you by the power of my Spirit; And ye are to be taught from on high. Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be endowed with power, that ye may give even as I have spoken” (D&C 43:15-16). Then later in the same month He added, “Behold, thus saith the Lord unto you my servants, it is expedient in me that the elders of my church should be called together ... And it shall come to pass, that inasmuch as they are faithful, and exercise faith in me, I will pour out my Spirit upon them in the day that they assemble themselves together” (D&C 44:1-2).

Note that this promise was fulfilled prior to the completion of the Kirtland Temple, though a great outpouring of the Spirit was also apparent at the Temple’s dedication later. This is evident on June 3 of 1831 in Kirtland. There a conference was held in 1833 where many experienced Pentecostal experiences. The Prophet Joseph stated, “The gifts which follow them that believe and obey the gospel . . . began to be poured out among us, as in the ancient days ... I spoke to the conference in another tongue and was followed in the same gift by Brother Zebedee Colton, and he by Brother William Smith, after which the Lord poured his Spirit in a miraculous manner until all the elders spoke in tongues, and several members, both male and female . . . Praises were sung to God and the Lamb; speaking and praying, all in tongues” (HC 1:277-78). Joseph Smith stated, “It was clearly evident that the Lord gave us power in proportion to the work to be done, and strength according to the race set before us, and grace and help as our needs required. Great harmony prevailed; several were ordained; faith was strengthened; and humility, so necessary for the blessing of God to follow prayer, characterized the Saints” (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 1:176-177).

The School of Prophets was also put in place at this time, all in connection with a great outpouring of the Spirit. All of this occurred prior to construction of the Kirtland Temple. Earlier, on June 1st of 1833, the Lord said to Joseph, “Yea verily I say unto you I gave unto you a commandment that you should build an house in the which house I design to endow those whom I have chosen with power from on high, for this is the promise of the Father unto you. Therefore, I commanded you to tarry even as mine Apostles at Jerusalem” (Kirtland Revelation Book, pp. 59-60). It was an outpouring of the Spirit event, not a symbolic, educational ordi

More gifts were to be given, and thus over the next three years construction proceeded on the Kirtland Temple. Over those three years the Lord repeated that the Elders would be “endowed with power from on high; for, behold, I have prepared a greater endowment and blessing to be poured out upon them...” (Kirtland Revelation Book, 97-98, 22 June 1834). It was at this time that the Twelve Apostles were chosen. In Oliver Cowdery's
charge to them, he stated, “you are not to go to other nations, till you receive your endowment. Tarry at Kirtland until you are endowed with power from on high” (Kirtland Council Minute Book, 14 Feb 1835).

Before the symbolic ordinances in the new temple began, Oliver Cowdery prayed, “O may we be prepared for the endowment, being sanctified and cleansed from all sin” (Oliver Cowdery's Kirtland, Ohio Sketch Book, 17 Jan 1836). Days later the brethren gathered at Kirtland washed their bodies and anointed their heads with oil. The Prophet Joseph then experienced the vision of the celestial kingdom recorded in D&C 137. The temple ordinances continued through the winter for all priesthood brethren (for deacons, teachers, priests, and elders).

The symbolic ordinances of the Kirtland Temple (washing, anointing, etc.) were not the endowment of power promised. Instead thy were symbols designed to help the brethren prepare themselves for their future missions via solemn repentance, so that the real endowment of power would follow – an endowment of God’s Spirit. They understand that their endowment would bring power to one day perform miracles, as recorded in the Ohio Atlas of that year. “They assure you, with the utmost confidence, that they shall soon be able to raise the dead, to heal the sick, the deaf, the dumb, and the blind...” (Ohio Atlas, 16 March 1836). Joseph Smith promised, “If you will obey the Gospel with honest hearts, I promise you, in the name of the Lord, that the gifts as promised by our Saviour will follow you, and by this you may prove me to be a true servant of God” (Joseph Smith, Journal History, October 16, 1834). Thus, servants in Christ’s gospel needed to first obtain the Spirit, and with signs following, prior to preaching the gospel and promising similar gifts to others.

Yet another endowment of the Lord’s power was evident at the dedication services of the Kirtland Temple in 1836. There, abundant signs of the Lord’s approval was apparent. David Whitmer bore testimony that he saw angels, and there “came a shock on the house like the sound of a mighty rushing wind, and almost every man in the house arose, and hundreds of them were speaking in tongues, prophesying or declaring visions, almost with one voice” (JD, 11:10). Addressing the same event, the Prophet Joseph Smith stated, “All the congregation simultaneously arose, being moved upon by an invisible power; many began to speak in tongues and prophesy; others saw glorious visions; and I beheld the Temple was filled with angels, which fact I declared to the congregation. The people of the neighborhood came running together (hearing an unusual sound within, and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple), and were astonished at what was taking place” (HC, 2:428). Note that all these signs are tied to believers and an event - the baptism of fire and the gift of the Holy Ghost in the Book of Mormon. It was an event, not an educational, symbolic ordinance. The outpouring of the Lord’s Spirit was the event the Kirtland Temple was built for. It was an important gift or endowment. The children of Israel were to receive something similar at Sinai.

God’s Spirit was poured out at Kirtland because the Saints there had made an appropriate sacrifice, of not only material things and their time and talents, but of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. With it the baptism and other gifts become evident, a sign following believers. It was a Pentecostal outpouring. Many spoke in tongues, angels were seen, and prophecies made. The Prophet Joseph said, “The Savior made his appearance to some, while angels ministered unto others, and it was a penticost and enduement indeed, long to be remembered...” (Joseph Smith diary, March 30, 1836). Milo Andrus exclaimed that he “saw the Spirit in the form of cloven tongues as fire descend in thousands, and rest upon the heads of the Elders...” (Autobiography of Milo Andrus, 1814-1875). No similar Pentecostal event has been recorded in church history since that day.

Summary As we look back into early LDS church history, we see the Lord speaking of “the endowment of power from on high” (D&C 38:32, 38; 43:16; 95:8; 97:14; Luke 24:49) in connection with the following “gifts” or “endowments” to the Saints from on high, or by and through Him:

1. Power in the First Comforter or the Holy Ghost is given in the baptism of fire experience by the Lord Himself (see 3 Ne. 9:20; 12:1; 2 Ne. 31:12; 3 Ne. 11:35; JST Mat. 3:38; JST Luke 3:16; JST John 1:28). He commissions His chosen “apostles” to also do this, not any other man (see Acts 8:9-22, 19:2-6; Rev. 2:4-5; D&C 20:38:4-3, 3 Ne. 18:37; Mor: 2:2). They have come into His presence and been empowered by Him for this and other mighty works.
2. The outpouring of the Lord’s power and gifts of the Spirit at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple on March 27th of 1836. There a pillar of fire stood over the temple as seen by some (sign of a collective or group fiery baptism). Some also saw others with a small flame over their heads (also a sign of the baptism of fire), described by some in scripture as “cloven tongues of fire” (Acts 2:3). Many spoke in tongues (typical sign also accompanying the fiery baptism). Some saw angels and heard choirs singing, etc. It was a day of Pentecost for the Saints like that in Acts 2.

3. The offering to give power in the greater Melchizedek priesthood to 23 “called” men invited to attend (by revelation through the Prophet Joseph Smith) the Morley Farm conference in Kirtland Ohio in June of 1831. The 23 men were “called” and ordained as High Priests. This was the first time the higher priesthood was offered to a group of men in this dispensation, and the first time men were ordained as high priests (see D&C 52). Only a few of the men proved worthy to actually be “chosen” to receive it, however. Joseph and Oliver received it earlier (see Pillars of the Priesthood, by the author, www.digitallegend.com). This “fulness” of the greater priesthood was rejected, along with God’s higher law in the Law of Consecration (D&C 42) at Kirtland. God’s fulness was again offered the Saints at Nauvoo, but again rejected through sin, etc. (see D&C 124, especially verses 28-48). The higher law of love in the Law of consecration and the greater priesthood are both needed to bring again Zion, along with righteousness and charity among the Saints (see D&C 113:8). For more on the important Morley Farm conference, see the 8-part blog post of the Watcher, or One Who is Watching or the author’s book, My Doctrine, My Gospel, My Church.

4. Coming into the presence of He who is Power, or entering the “rest” of our Lord Jesus Christ and receiving Him personally as our Second Comforter, a greater teacher and mentor (see John 14:18, 23). He is the Heavenly Gift (Ether 12:8), the first of 13 gifts of the Spirit He lists for us personally in D&C 46:13. The Lord defines His doctrine, gospel, and church in D&C 10:67-68. Those taking part in them heed God’s invitation to us to - “repent” and “come unto me.” In this process we receive three cleansing events; baptism by water, baptism by fire, and sanctification in Christ’s blood. They result in His best gifts; the First and Second Comforters, the gifts of the Spirit (see 1 Cor. 12; Mor. 10; D&C 46), and the promise of eternal life. Alma received this promise in Mosiah 26:20.

Have You Received the Gift or Endowment Known as the Baptism of Fire?

Evidence that we are born again via the fiery baptism includes the following seven personal characteristics, as part of a mighty change in our hearts (Alma 5:14). See also p. 18.

1. We have been forgiven of our sins, they are now remitted (2 Ne. 31:17). We have been purged and purified by the baptism of fire, accomplished by Jesus Christ, as it is He who baptizes us with fire (3 Ne. 12:1).
2. We are born again in this ordinance and event, becoming a new creature in Christ with no desire to sin (3 Ne.
12:2; 2 Ne 31:17). We are redeemed (Mosiah 27:24-29), becoming His sons and daughters (Mos. 27:25).
3. We are filled with much greater love for God and all men (Mos. 3:19).
4. We have been given the Holy Ghost or First Comforter as our guide (2 Ne. 31:18, 32:2, 5).
5. We have one or more additional spiritual gifts activated in our lives to bless us and others (D&C 46).
6. We experience unspeakable joy in the event (Alma 36:20, 21, 24, 25 [listed 5 times]; Hel. 5:44).
7. We have sincere desire to praise God (2 Ne. 31:13), sometimes with the tongue of angels (2 Ne. 31:14). This is evident in the desire to state or sing praises to God. These joyful praises in song are part of “the song of redeeming love,” expressed in our newly cleansed hearts - to that God who - out of great love - redeemed us (see Alma 5:26, 26:13, 36:20-28 [where in is 5 mentions of the word “joy”]; Rev. 5:9-14, 14:1-3; D&C 84:98-102). It is those who are redeemed that sing such songs, those promised eternal life (see 2 Ne. 8:11, 15:1; 3 Ne. 4:31-32, Morm. 7:7 & Rev. 14:1-3).

The baptism of fire is an event accompanied by great joy, because of the remittance of sins. Such are transformed by fire into a new creature (upper right). It is Christ who does this (3 Ne. 12:1). It comes after faith, repentance, and baptism by water (upper left). Some experience angels ministering to them. Others see God on His throne. Many speak in tongues as they shout praises unto God. These are additional potential signs tied to our rebirth (see p. 16 & 22).

The symbolic ordinance of the laying on of hands after baptism in water at age 8 to receive the Holy Ghost is a symbolic invitation to receive this transformation and the important endowment of the Holy Ghost. With this rebirth in Christ, we have no desire to sin thereafter. It can occur right after baptism in water. Most, however, experience the baptism of fire only after turning their hearts wholly to God as older adults, not as 8 year-olds. This is because the requirement for it is turn ourselves to God with “full purpose of heart,” (2 Ne. 31:13) meaning we have a “broken heart” and “a contrite spirit” (3 Ne. 9:20). Rarely does this occur in an 8-year old. One must be sincerely humble and repentant, typically a needful adult who has experienced much sin, one who has truly learned to love the Lord with all their heart (first and great commandment), one who cries out to Him for mercy and forgiveness. When we have removed our pride and asked God to remove the stains of sin upon us, He forgives us. We then receive the fiery baptism at His hands, an event of great joy, and a corresponding gift, an endowment of power we call the Holy Ghost. Such is the example of Alma in Alma 36 of the Book of Mormon.

Scripture informs us that the baptism of fire is not an optional event for salvation or eternal life. Jesus taught, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again” (John 3:5-7). Mosiah said, “And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters” (Mosiah 27:25). The Prophet Joseph Smith provided additional clarification, stating, “The baptism of water without the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost attending it, is of no use, they are necessarily and inseparably connected. An individual must be born of water and the spirit in order to get into the kingdom of God” (HC 6:316). This is the doctrine of Christ and of Joseph Smith, the founding Prophet of the Restoration. It is a doctrine running all throughout the Book of Mormon, the founding document of the Restoration.

The Lord’s Requirements for Receiving This Endowment

To receive this important fiery purging and the gift of the Holy Ghost, we must turn to God and experience a mighty change of heart (Alma 5:7-14). To do so we must come unto Christ and cry out to Him for mercy. We must love Him with all our hearts and turn to Him completely, in humble repentance as Alma and others did in the Book of Mormon.

Such then “have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2). Such are “changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness” (Mosiah 27:25).
Such are “awakened … out of a deep sleep” and “illuminated by the light of the everlasting word” (Alma 5:7). “They [have] humbled themselves and put their trust in the true and living God” (Alma 5:13).

In Alma 5, such are “sufficiently humble” (v. 27), “stripped of pride” (v. 28), and don’t “mock” their brothers (v. 30). Instead, the come unto Christ and eventually “partake of the fruit of the tree of life” (v. 34).

The Lord says that to be born again we must have a broken heart and a contrite spirit, two critical attributes of Godliness (see 2 Ne. 9:20). To have a “broken heart” is to fully submit to the teachings and will of Christ, to be aware of our sins before God, with a heartfelt desire to have them removed. It is the opposite of pride. It is to be humble, teachable, and receptive to God and His will. We must also be “contrite,” which is to be fully repentant, to be in a constant state of repentance, to be remorseful for our sins, having a sincere desire to have them remitted. It is to have full purpose of heart. Nephi taught, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism—yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word, behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel” (2 Ne. 31:13). Unlike the Apostles in Jesus’ day, the fiery baptism rarely accompanies members at the time of their baptism, but typically occurs later, when the member has fully submitted themselves to Christ.

Possessing these qualities motivates us to cry out to God in love for His mercy and forgiveness as did Alma (Alma 36:18). It is then that darkness is removed. And it is then that the fiery Spirit of God may descend upon us, quickening us, purging out the old self (the man of sin) - by fire. We are then reborn, becoming a new creature, with no desire to do evil. Our sins are remitted. The temple of our body then receives a greater portion of the fiery presence of God and the Holy Ghost to educate us, empower us, and help us in all we do. This influence and instruction is critical in later coming to the Lord and receiving Him as the Heavenly Gift.

The baptism of fire is a sacred, life-changing experience – an event. One individual who has received it wrote, “When we receive our baptism by fire, we become holy and become a new person (2 Cor. 5:17), a higher self, quickened in the Spirit. This increase in light enables us to speak with the tongue of angels (2 Ne. 31:13), to be holy and have an abundance of the Lord’s Spirit with us always. We are then given the mysteries of godliness as the doctrines of the priesthood distill upon our souls as the dews of Heaven (D&C 121:45). When we receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost, we also receive the Baptism by Fire (Luke 3:16). You are claimed by Christ as His [Mos. 5:15], and thereby are promised exaltation if you endure to the end (2 Ne. 31:18-20). All those who become exalted become “one with Christ and the Father.” “Which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God” (D&C 20:28, see also 3 Ne.11:35-37). “If ye are not one, ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27).9

Those receiving this important gift (the First Comforter) are redeemed from the Fall and are on the path to receiving Christ as the Second Comforter. This is the promise of God in His covenant with us, as found in John 14:15-16 and 23. Nephi informs us that without this endowment of power, we are not even through the gate and onto the path to the Tree of Life, as the gate itself is the baptism of fire experience (see 2 Ne. 31:17-18). Christ employs no servant at this gate (2 Ne. 9:41; 31:9), as he is the one providing the fiery baptism (3 Ne. 11:1).

An Event The baptism of fire is an event preceded by the process of demonstrating faith in Christ leading to real repentance. In it the First Comforter is given us as a guide with signs following. It is typically experienced by those who are older, those turning their hearts wholly to God, when they understand and embrace the doctrine of Christ via free will and choice. He has told us not to add to or subtract from this pure and undefiled doctrine, for it ultimately leads us to not only the First Comforter, but to Him as the Second Comforter – where we receive the fulness of His glory in this life. Christ is the author and finisher of our faith. He is our Redeemer, Savior, Judge, King and God, the Light and Life of the World. There is no other way to Salvation but through Him and the three baptisms addressed hereafter; one by water, the second by fire, and a third by way of His own blood.
They Knew It Not

Like the Nephites who heard the voice of God, but did not understand what the voice said, the Lamanites in 3rd Nephi experienced the fiery baptism of the Lord, but did not understand why or how. This matches the 1828 Webster dictionary definition of “to know”, which includes “to understand clearly.” When the 300 Lamanites received their baptism of fire they were surrounded by fire, saw angels, and spoke forth marvelous words (speaking in tongues or speaking with “the tongue of angels”). The testimony they gained that day caused them to immediately repent of their sins, go out preaching the gospel, and abandon the false traditions of their fathers. They knew something of significance had happened to them, but apparently they did not know what was happening, as they were new converts, inexperienced in the gospel path. The power in the event was there, but the information about it was not. One scripture seems to indicate that the baptism of fire can be a gradual thing rather than an event. It reads, “And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites, because of their faith in me at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not” (3 Ne. 9:20).

Although your heart may gradually become more broken (humble and teachable) and your spirit more contrite (sincerely repentant), until it is actually broken or contrite, the fiery baptism will not occur. But as soon as your heart is broken, and you sincerely repent – seeking the Lord’s mercy, the fiery baptism will occur as an event. Though the event is dramatic, the refinement leading to it may be more gradual. In our dictionary we read that “to know” is to “be aware of through observation, inquiry, or information.” It appears that Jesus meant “they knew it not” having no previous experience or knowledge of it. They had not been taught about it, nor did they observe another receiving the baptism by fire. Such individuals were baptized by fire but appear to have not understood the gift, what it was or where it had come from. Thus it can happen without one being fully aware of it, as they have no definition of it or experience to draw from. The evidence for having received the baptism by fire is experiencing the gifts of the Spirit more abundantly in your life. And because the baptism of fire requires a total, unconditional submission to God, the giving of this gift can be dramatic, like that of King Lamoni in Helaman 5, where God pours out His Spirit upon us in a fiery, joyful way. We read in Helaman 5:

“And it came to pass that the Lamanites said unto him: What shall we do, that this cloud of darkness may be removed from overshadowing us? And Aminadab said unto them: You must repent, and cry unto the voice, even until ye shall have faith in Christ, who was taught unto you by Alma, and Amulek, and Zeezrom; and when ye shall do this, the cloud of darkness shall be removed from overshadowing you. And it came to pass that they all did begin to cry unto the voice of him who had shaken the earth; yea, they did cry even until the cloud of darkness was dispersed. And it came to pass that when they cast their eyes about, and saw that the cloud of darkness was dispersed from overshadowing them, behold, they saw that they were encircled about, yea every soul, by a pillar of fire. And Nephi and Lehi were in the midst of them; yea, they were encircled about; yea, they were as if in the midst of a flaming fire, yet it did harm them not, neither did it take hold upon the walls of the prison; and they were filled with that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. And behold, the Holy Spirit of God did come down from heaven, and did enter into their hearts, and they were filled as if with fire, and they could speak forth marvelous words. And it came to pass that there came a voice unto them, yea, a pleasant voice, as if it were a whisper, saying: Peace, peace be unto you, because of your faith in my Well Beloved, who was from the foundation of the world” (Helaman 5:40-47).

Note the drama of the event. Those receiving the fiery baptism were surrounded by fire, saw angels, and spoke marvelous words. They immediately repented of their sins and went about preaching the gospel, abandoning the false traditions of their fathers. They knew something had happened to them. It was not a gradual process.

Marriage Symbolism: the Bride & Bridegroom

Our Lord and inspired prophets in the Book of Mormon have taught us the necessity of the fiery baptism in many ways, one of which is through marriage symbolism. After being delivered from Egyptian captivity by God, Israel (the virgin Bride) was invited to become one with God at the temple mountain Sinai. It was fifty days since their release as Slaves in the first Passover, delivered by the symbol of God’s blood, in innocent lamb’s blood spread on the gateway to their homes. At Sinai, the children of Israel were invited to enter into a
marriage covenant with God, to become one with Him as the virgin Bride Israel. It was to be an engagement event with their God as the Bridegroom. Had the children of Israel accepted God’s marriage proposal in an engagement with Him at Sinai, they would have been given a wonderful engagement gift, a great out-pouring of the Spirit. It was to be a precursor or harbinger of something much greater, His personal, glorious presence in the actual marriage later on, where there would be oneness with God. Instead, they rejected God’s marriage proposal and covenant, and did not receive the attending engagement gift, that of the Spirit to guide them (revelation). Instead, they chose Moses, a man – the arm of flesh, to be their intercessor with God atop Sinai. This was because of their fear and unbelief. They were thus given a lesser covenant and the lesser law. This is clearly evident in JST Exodus 34:1-2 and D&C 84:23-26.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two other tables of stone, like unto the first, and I will write upon them also, the words of the law, according as they were written at the first on the tables which thou brakest; but it shall not be according to the first, for I will take away the priesthood out of their midst; therefore my holy order, and the ordinances thereof, shall not go before them; for my presence shall not go up in their midst, lest I destroy them. But I will give unto them the law as at the first, but it shall be after the law of a carnal commandment; for I have sworn in my heart, that they shall not enter into my presence, into my rest, in the days of their pilgrimage. Therefore do as I have commanded thee, and be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me, in the top of the mount” (JST Exodus 34:1-2).

“Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God; But they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory. Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also; And the lesser priesthood continued, which priesthood holdeth the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel . . . And the whole world lieth in sin, and groaneth under darkness and under the bondage of sin. And by this you may know they are under the bondage of sin, because they come not unto me. For whoso cometh not unto me is under the bondage of sin. And whoso receiveth not my voice is not acquainted with my voice, and is not of me. And by this you may know the righteous from the wicked, and that the whole world groaneth under sin and darkness even now. 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 resteth 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 remaineth a scourge and judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion. For shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, I say unto you, Nay” (D&C 84:20-26, 49-59).

We have these and other scriptures as a type for our day, as we are doing the same thing the ancient covenant people did; rejecting Christ by rejecting His invitation to enter His presence in this life. Too many today choose men, programs, and churches over Him and His powerful, glorious presence. Instead of God Himself, and direct revelation from Him, and the gifts of the Spirit he provides (D&C 46), we exhibit unbelief (hard hearts), priestcraft, and idolatry. These are some of the great sins addressed in the Book of Mormon. They are tied to the worship of flesh in our leaders or the church itself and its programs, rather than the living God. He is the fountain of living waters and the purpose of the church and its programs.

The baptism of fire is of critical importance to our salvation, as with it we are blessed with the guidance of God Himself (revelation from Him), rather than the imperfect teachings of men. With the Lord’s Spirit to aid us, we can bear fruit meet for the father’s kingdom. We will not be cut down and burned in the fire of the our Lord’s vineyard (see Jacob 5; JST Matthew 21 & D&C 101:39-66). Quoted by Jeremiah, the Lord said, “My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” Man, the arm of flesh, is that imperfect broken cistern that cannot hold living water. He is influenced by filthy lucre, pride, and the praises of men.
God loves us and desires to direct us for our own welfare. We can be led by “every word that procedeth forth from the mouth of God” (D&C 84:44; Deut. 8:3; Mat. 4:4). We only need to turn to Him through repentance and then trust Him completely. Men, on the other hand, want our conformity, money, and praise. Nephi said, “I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh; for I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh. Yea, cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm” (2 Ne. 4:34). David, in the exact chiastic center scripture of the Bible, stated, “It is better to trust in the Lord than put confidence in man.” These two scriptures address one significant problem today, trusting in men, leaders, and churches, rather than the true and living God.

**How are we Baptized by Fire?**

*The Gate onto the Straight and Narrow Pathway to the Tree of Life* 

The fiery baptism purges us so that we might receive on-going revelation (God’s word in personal revelation and scripture). This revelation is the rod in Lehi’s vision that leads us to *the Tree of Life* (our Lord in His glory). After we receive the baptism of Fire by Christ, we then grab on to His word (the rod) more tightly so that we can make our way to the Tree of Life via “every word that procedeth forth from the mouth of God.” Having made it onto “the way” (2 Ne. 31:17-18), via entering in through the narrow gateway (the baptism of fire experience), we now have a straight path to the beautiful Tree – His presence. With God’s word, we can move through the mists of darkness in the dreary world and finally make it to the tree, tasting of its glorious fruit, the love and glory of God. Insightful references to the gate and the straight and narrow path (also known as “the way”) include, 2 Ne. 9:41, 31:18, 33:9; Hel. 3:29, and Matt. 7:14.

*It is Christ Who Baptizes us with Fire* 

Scripture teaches us that salvation comes only comes in a personal relationship with Christ. There is no other way (see Mos. 3:17). He employs no servant (mortal man) in the gateway ordinance called the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, where He baptizes us with fire. This is seen in seven scriptures (3 Ne. 9:20; 12:1; 2 Ne. 31:12; 3 Ne. 11:35; JST Mat. 3:38; JST Luke 3:16; JST John 1:28).

Our Lord does allow His chosen “apostles” to lay their hands on individuals to receive the fiery baptism and Holy Ghost – from Him [Christ] through them as His “sent ones” (this is the Greek meaning of the word “apostle”). As expressed earlier, God’s word reveals that real “apostles” had and have this responsibility (see Acts 8:9-22, 19:2-6; Rev. 2:4-5; D&C 20:38:4-3, 3 Ne. 18:37; Mor. 2:2). Christ alone is the “gate” or “door,” baptizing us with fire Himself as our Judge and Redeemer. John tells us that as useful as earthly servants are, “the servant is not greater than his master” (John 13:16). Note the follow three scriptures.

“And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites, because of their faith in me at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not” (3 Ne. 9:20).

“Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve whom I have chosen from among you to minister unto you, and to be your servants; and unto them I have given power that they may baptize you with water; and after that ye are baptized with water, behold, I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost; therefore blessed are ye if ye shall believe in me and be baptized, after that ye have seen me and know that I am” (3 Ne. 12:1).

“John the Baptist said, “I indeed baptize you with water, upon your repentance; and when he of whom I bear record cometh, who is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, (or whose place I am not able to fill), as I said, I indeed baptize you before he cometh, that when he cometh he may baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire” (JST Matt 3:38).

**Purpose of the Fiery Baptism: Called & Elected to Receive Eternal Life**

The purpose of this baptism is to preserve and purge (cleanse) a living mortal, preparing them for their missions, with empowerment via the companionship of the Holy Ghost thereafter. We are instructed by it to receive
another gift, that of another comforter, Jesus Christ as the Second Comforter (John 11:25-26). Presented in outline form, these three purposes are:

1. The baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost is the gate onto the pathway - to eternal life.
2. It is the ordinance and event where we are endowed with power from on high – the gift of the Holy Ghost.
3. In it we are “born again,” becoming a new creature in Christ. We are purified, our sins remitted.

Such individuals also become members of another, greater assembly here on earth - the church of Christ or the church of the Lamb of God, or the church of the Firstborn (D&C 76:67). Such will inhabit Zion, the virgin of the Bridegroom. We read in the Book of Mormon of only two churches. “Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth” (1 Ne 14:10). This is the great and abominable church.

All things are eventually given to those in the church of the Firstborn (D&C 76:58-60). They “speak with the tongue of angels” (Hel. 5:45). This suggests two things; (1) that they have more knowledge and inspiration from heaven, and (2) that may praise God in a new tongue, sometimes called “the prayer language” (see the author’s paper “The Gift of Tongues”). They are elevated by “fire” - the Lord’s Spirit, and the spiritual gifts generally. They are purged and purified by God’s fiery Spirit. They also receive a remission of their sins (3 Ne. 12:2). Such become more holy, their “spirit” or “ghost” having attained a greater connection with heaven. They are also “justified” by the Spirit. This connection is ultimately to the “mind of God” or to the Holy Son Jesus, and Father and Mother. They are one. We become more “one” with them.

The final key to receiving “all things” is the third step in receiving (or being sealed up to) eternal life – via sanctification by or in the blood of Christ. We read in 2 Neph 32, verses 5 and 6 that it is when we are in the way, and have the Holy Ghost with us, that we are guided and instructed in all things we must do to receive the last baptism - sanctification by Christ’s blood. We then have Him – the Second Comforter to guide and direct us from time to time, in addition to the Holy Ghost. This sanctification then prepares us for the greater presence of the Father (Alma 45:16; 1 Ne. 10:21), and then the Mother. It is Christ who takes us into their presence. He has stated that “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one cometh unto the Father except through me” (John 14:6). This is how one receives the fullness (D&C 93:19-20).

Receiving Your Calling and Election All believers have received a call to “come unto Christ.” This is the first stated purpose in the Handbook of Instructions for the LDS church. Too many get distracted by the things of the world, including the church and its programs, thus missing the whole point of it all - to literally “come to Christ” – the Tree of Life. To come to Him is to enter into the way.” It is to embrace the doctrine of Christ, which necessarily involves the baptism of fire experience. In it we are elected to receive Him in His time and way. It gives us hope, as in it we are promised eternal life. Thus, the initial invitation to come unto Christ (the marriage proposal) leads to an election (the engagement and its attending gift – an outpouring of His Spirit). This calling and election is then made sure or sealed upon us when we finally enter His rest – His fiery presence. It occurs as we are brought to heaven and there sealed His (Mosiah 5:15), in the wedding chamber. There we are quickened to spiritually behold the glory or fulness of His presence (D&C 84:24). To do so, we must be a clean, virgin Bride, that we might be finally married to Christ, the beloved Bridegroom. Only those who are fully repentant, those humbled to the dust, those fully surrendering to God and His will - in real love - experience these things. It is a real possibility for you and I. The sacrifice required is a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Thus, to have our “calling and election made sure” is a three-step process (see Moses 6:59-60):

1. The Call: Baptism by water (faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, and baptism by water, purification)
2. Election: Baptism by fire (elected to eventually receive Eternal Life – this is to be justified)
3. Made Sure: Baptism by blood (or redemption – being sanctified via the blood of Christ)

To take seriously Christ’s invitation to come to Him, and finally by embraced by Him, is to have your calling and election made sure.” It is to receive eternal life, having been judged worthy of it by our Judge and King.
Jesus Christ. Thus the baptism of fire is the event assuring us that we will eventually receive Christ at some future point in time, that we will have Him as our Second Comforter. Thereafter, Christ becomes our companion, teacher, and God to lead us further along the eternal progression pathway. We also become a sure witness of and for Him. As a result this mercy, our belief in Him then transitions to real knowledge. It is to know the Lord. Such are admitted into Zion or New Jerusalem, to walk the streets of the city with Him. Such have entered into “the way.” They are now part of the church of the Firstborn, those meek, redeemed souls who will inherit not only Zion, but the Earth.

Moroni has told us that those who receive the first two baptisms were “numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way” (Mor. 6:4). “And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; and there is none other way nor name give under heaven whereby man can be saved…and now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ” (2 Ne. 31:21, see also 2 Ne. 31:2, 32:6 & 3 Ne. 11:31-40).

Receiving Eternal Life Nephi taught that baptism by water (purification) and baptism by fire (justification) are both necessary events leading to another cleansing-event; receiving the promise of eternal life by God Himself. It is when we are finally sanctified in the blood of Christ in a personal audience with Him – our Second Comforter experience. Faith and repentance are continuing or on-going processes, not events. They must be practiced throughout our lives. Nephi taught that we must continue to practice them until God tells us that we have obtained eternal life (sanctification). They lead to three key events in our life, the three baptisms addressed in Moses 6:59-60. The third is a personal revelation from God that we have received eternal life. It is known as “the more sure of prophecy.” We are first called to live the doctrine of Christ within His gospel and church. As we have faith in Him and repent, we receive the purifying waters of baptism. We are elected to receive eternal life when we are then justified in the baptism of fire experience. As we endure to the end, we have our calling and our election made sure, through Christ’s prophecy or revelation to us that we will receive eternal life. This is the more sure word of prophecy – from Him.

Nephi explained that baptism by fire is the gate onto the path that leads to eternal life. It is required but remains insufficient in and of itself to obtain true salvation, as defined by the Prophet Joseph Smith. “For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost. And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have received the Holy Ghost, which witnesses of the Father and the Son, unto the fulfilling of the promise which he hath made, that if ye entered in by the way ye should receive” (2 Nephi 31:17-18).

The Way The justifying step of the fiery baptism begins the process of sanctification completed in and by Christ. “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....feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do. For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:1, 3, 5). Without the fiery baptism we do not have our sins remitted, nor do we receive the Holy Ghost to guide us down the straight and narrow way to eternal life – which is the fruit of the Tree of Life in Lehi’s vision. Joseph Smith taught that, “You might as well baptize a bag of sand as a man, if not done in view of the remission of sins and getting of the Holy Ghost. Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without the other half—that is, the baptism of the Holy Ghost” (History of the Church, 5:499).

Nephi taught that there is no other way to “come unto Christ” and be saved. “And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save. Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life. And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven
whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end. Amen” (2 Nephi 31:19-21).

The End Result – Eternal Life

Enduring to the end is not suffering through life and its trials, but proceeding through the tests of mortality until you have obtained the promise of eternal life from God Himself. “And I know that the Lord God will consecrate my prayers for the gain of my people. And the words which I have written in weakness will be made strong unto them; for it persuadeth them to do good; it maketh known unto them of their fathers; and it speaketh of Jesus, and persuadeth them to believe in him, and to endure to the end, which is life eternal” (2 Nephi 33:4). “And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7). Eternal life is to see the Christ in this life, where the promise is sealed upon us (Jon 17:3; D&C 132:22-24).

Real Salvation

The doctrines of calling and election and the Second Comforter are the end result of enduring to the end. Calling and election is the event where an individual receives the promise of eternal life from God, whereas the Second Comforter is his visitation to an individual. Both are part of our sanctification at the hands of Christ. Both doctrines are taught us in scripture and by Joseph Smith. God described them as follows; “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 accord to his own will” (D&C 88:68). He says nothing about a man or an institution providing this. He alone is the author of our salvation and employs no servant at this gate. Nephi tells us, “O then, my beloved brethren, come unto the Lord, the Holy One. Remember that his paths are righteous. Behold, the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him, and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name” (2 Ne. 9:41).

King Benjamin taught the people the doctrine of Christ. He helped lead them to their baptism of fire. He stated, “Therefore, I would that ye should be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works, that Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent, may seal you his, that you may be brought to heaven, that ye may have everlasting salvation and eternal life, through the wisdom, and power, and justice, and mercy of him who created all things, in heaven and in earth, who is God above all. Amen” (Mosiah 5:15). Eternal life is granted to all those who come unto Christ. “Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am” (D&C 93:1).

Joseph Smith said that our power to “behold [God] face to face” depends “upon [our] diligence and faithfulness in seeking after him” (see Lectures on Faith 2:55). Because God promised that He come to every soul who fulfills the requirements, we can use His promise to measure our spiritual progression. If we have not yet received a visit from the Lord, we can conclude that we are yet falling short on forsaking our sins, coming to our Lord, calling on his name, obeying his voice, and keeping his commandments.” Our Lord has described those who have obtained Celestial, Terrestrial, and Telestial glory in D&C 76. By simply matching our current experience with one of the three degrees of glory there, we can determine what we may merit thus far. Receiving one’s calling and election is required for those who will come forth in the first resurrection to inherit Celestial glory (D&C 76:53-62). Such have obtained the presence of the Father (D&C 76:71). Without calling and election, and having the presence of the Father in this life, you are not Celestial. If you were to die today, you would inherit a lower kingdom of glory. Those who are Terrestrial “receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fulness of the Father” (D&C 76:77). Without obtaining the presence of the Son, you are not Terrestrial. John 17:3 states, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” If you do not know God, you do not have eternal life. And if we do not know God here, how could we expect to be worthy to know him hereafter?

To receive Christ here, we must know that it is necessary and possible for us. We must seek His face with all diligence and sincerity. We must remove our unbelief and express real faith in Christ, for He is mighty to save.
Elder George Q. Cannon explained, “… we find, even among those who have embraced the Gospel, hearts of unbelief. How many of you, my brethren and sisters, are seeking for these gifts that God has promised to bestow?...How many of you ask the Father, in the name of Jesus, to manifest Himself to you through these powers and these gifts? Or do you go along day by day like a door turning on its hinges, without having any feeling upon the subject, without exercising any faith whatever; content to be baptized and be members of the Church, and to rest there, thinking that your salvation is secure because you have done this? I say to you, in the name of the Lord, as one of His servants, that you have need to repent of this. You have need to repent of your hardness of heart, of your indifference, and of your carelessness. There is not that diligence, there is not that faith, there is not that seeking for the power of God that there should be among a people who have received the precious promises we have....I say to you that it is our duty to avail ourselves of the privileges which God has placed within our reach. If we have done wrong, repent of our wrong and feel after God, and not be satisfied till we have found Him, and He hears and answers us, and He speaks by His divine power in our hearts, bearing testimony to us in such a manner as cannot be doubted that He hears us, that He is near to us, and that He is watching over us and ready to bestow upon us all the blessings that are necessary for our happiness here and hereafter....Let us seek for these gifts. Let us be exhorted this day in this Tabernacle, and bear in mind that these gifts are for us; and let us seek for them with all our might, mind and strength (Elder George Q. Cannon, Millennial Star, Apr. 1894, pp. 260–61.)

**Idolatry & Priestcraft result in Darkness and a Lesser Portion**

“The fulness” of Christ’s presence is what is rejected by so many today in 3 Nephi 16:10. As we read earlier, this same “fulness” was rejected at Mount Sinai by the children of Israel. They were invited into God’s holy presence there. Sadly, rather than going to God directly (as Joseph Smith taught us [James 1:5]), Israel rejected God - their stone, rock, capstone, or the sure foundation stone, and instead chose an imperfect man – Moses to be a mediator for them with God. They were thus given the lesser law and the lesser priesthood. God then vowed that they would not enter His presence or “rest” during their forty years of wandering in the desert (see D&C 84:23-26; JST Ex. 34:1-2). Because they rejected Him and His engagement proposal, they did not receive His engagement gift, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the attending spiritual gifts. They were left with a man to guide them, though a good one in Moses.

Joseph Smith stated, “When God offers a blessing or knowledge to a man, and he refuses to receive it, he will be damned. The Israelites prayed that God would speak to Moses and not to them; in consequence of which he cursed them with a carnal law” (History of the Church, 5:555).

In the New Testament we read that many Jews did come fully to Christ in the meridian of time. He poured out His Spirit upon them after He left (following His resurrection, that they might not be alone). They were given a great outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2, a baptism by fire. Some three thousand people there experienced the fiery baptism. The sign of a fiery flame was seen above the heads of many then. In the Book of Mormon we read of Alma teaching his son Helaman about this fiery gift in Alma 36. In the chiastic center verses of that chapter (verse 18 of Alma chapter 36) we read, “Oh Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me.” King Lamoni also begged for God’s mercy prior to his baptism by fire (see Alma 18:41)

Alma’s son Helaman then taught his sons about coming to Christ fully too. They, Lehi and Nephi, were fully converted to Christ in the same experience, receiving the power of the Spirit in their lives to teach the Lamanites with great power. They eventually witnessed the watery baptism of 8000 souls, and later the second necessary baptism, that of the baptism of fire of 300 of the Lamanites (Hel. 5:49). In Helaman 5:12 we read, “And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall.” Man – the arm of flesh, is not that foundation, nor is the church and its programs, only Christ. He is our Redeemer, Savior, Judge and King.
Christ is the fountain of living waters often rejected by man in favor of man (see Jeremiah 2:13). His living waters are the gifts of the Spirit. They are the signs that follow believers – those receiving the baptism of fire. Though Article of Faith 7 states that we as Saints believe in gifts like revelation, prophecy, tongues, etc., because of our unbelief, idolatry and priestcraft, these gifts are withheld and have nearly vanished among us. This is one reason for stagnant or decreasing numbers among Christian churches in North America generally, including our own.

The Pentecostal movement is different, however, with phenomenal growth. This is because they embrace Christ openly, and believe in, seek, and practice the charismatic gifts of the Spirit. Most have not rejected Christ as the Bridegroom and the gifts of His Spirit as part of an engagement to Him.

Lifting man up to be our mediator with God is a form of idolatry. It leads to priestcraft, men setting themselves up as a light for filthy lucre or gain and the praise of men (2 Ne. 26:29). Christ said, “I am the light which ye shall hold up – that which ye have seen me do” (3 Ne. 18:24). It is impossible to receive the Second Comforter without baptism of fire, as it is impossible to be saved without Christ as our Second Comforter.

Too many today are distracted by the false traditions and teachings of men, never able to come to the truth, and literally come to Christ. Those receiving the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost have access to the rod of iron that will take them through the mists of darkness and on to the Tree of Life. That guiding rod is God’s word in direct revelation via the Holy Ghost, along with scripture. Joseph Smith taught that no man can be saved without knowledge, the light and knowledge revealed to those with the gift of the Holy Ghost, which then leads one to the fruit of the Tree of Life, where is granted a perfect knowledge of Christ as our Second Comforter.

How do I know if I have Received the Baptism of Fire?

Alma asked if we have received the mighty change of heart in Alma 5:14. When we have the baptism of fire, we experience an intense, overwhelming purging event that changes us spiritually and physically. We have our sins remitted. Our hearts are purified. We are new creatures in Christ. We are filled with joy and the love of God and our fellowman. We have no more desire to sin (3 Ne. 12:2; 2 Ne 31:17; JST 1 John 3:9, 5:18). We desire instead to shout or sing praises to our Redeemer (“the song of redeeming love,” Alma 5:26, see also Alma 26:13, 36:20-28; Rev. 5:9-14, 14:1-3; D&C 84:98-102). A review of the seven characteristics that now accompany us on page 7 is useful.

In addition to these seven personal characteristics, a number of signs typically accompany this transformative event. One of the most important of these is that the gifts of the Spirit also accompany them, in connection with the gift or endowment of the Holy Ghost. Thus, if you enjoy one or more of the gifts of the Spirit you have probably received the fiery baptism by our Lord. The baptism of fire was common among the Nephites at one time in the Book of Mormon, but later it disappeared due to unbelief, sin, and apostasy. They once had “been visited by the Spirit of God; having conversed with angels, and having been spoken unto by the voice of the Lord; and having the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and also many gifts, the gift of speaking with tongues, and the gift of preaching, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the gift of translation” (Alma 9:21).

In 3rd Nephi 19:9 we read that the greatest desire of the newly chosen twelve Apostles of Christ was that they receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. They prayed for this gift at the water’s edge of baptism and it was granted them. Verse 13 states, “And it came to pass when they were all baptized and had come up out of the water, the Holy Ghost did fall upon them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost and with fire. And behold, they were encircled about as if it were by fire; and it came down from heaven, and the multitude did witness it, and did bear record; and angels did come down out of heaven and did minister unto them” (3 Ne. 19:13-14).

The disciples were justified by receiving the fiery baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost. It was and is an event always accompanied by both internal feelings and outward signs. At the very minimum, every person receiving the Holy Ghost will receive the gift of revelation. That is its purpose. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “no man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations” (TPJS, p. 328). Those without spiritual gifts can know that they have not yet received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Elder Orson Pratt stated, “Whenever the Holy Ghost takes up its residence in a person, it not only cleanses, sanctifies, and purifies him, in proportion as he
yields himself to its influence, but also imparts to him some gift, intended for the benefit of himself and others. No one who has been born of the Spirit, and who remains sufficiently faithful, is left destitute of a Spiritual Gift. A person who is without a Spiritual Gift, has not the Spirit of God dwelling in him, in a sufficient degree, to save him; he cannot be called a Saint, or a child of God; for all Saints who constitute the Church of Christ, are baptized into the same Spirit; and each one, without any exception, is made a partaker of some Spiritual Gift.” (Orson Pratt, Masterful Discourses and Writings of Orson Pratt, comp. N. B. Lundwall [1946], pp. 539–41.)

The 7th Article of Faith states that we believe in the gifts of the Spirit. The internal fruits of those with the gift of the Holy Ghost are faith, knowledge, wisdom, joy, peace, patience, temperance, long suffering, brotherly kindness and charity. Its external gifts are manifested in prophecies, visions, discernments, healings, miracles, power over evil spirits, speaking in various tongues, interpretation of tongues, etc. These are some of the “signs” that shall follow them that believe as stated and then listed in D&C 84:65-72.

When is the last time you saw someone speaking in tongues or providing prophecy? When was the last time you saw an angel or someone healed miraculously? Signs follow belief and faith – in Christ. Patterns in scripture provide evidence of receiving the baptism of fire. The chart on page 24 (with scriptures examples) lists various traits that often accompany this gift (though your experience may be different). An 8-part summary includes:

1. Some see or feel an encircling fire or a pillar of fire around them, like a tube of light or plasma (Hel. 5:45, 48). Others may see a small fiery flame over the head of the individual.
2. We often fall to the ground in a feeling of total submission to God, doing so willingly (see Alma 19:15-16). We thus lay prostrate on the earth. The word “worship” in Greek is tied to the word “prostrate” or submission.
3. We may feel a burning sensation, where we receive a complete remission of our sins via a spiritual and physical purging via fire or the Spirit of God. We are then cleansed and “justified” (3 Ne. 12:2; 2 Ne 31:17). Our broken hearts are purged by fire (Hel. 5:45). We have become a “new creature” in Christ and are “born again” in Him. We have no desire to sin (3 Ne. 12:2; 2 Ne 31:17; JST 1 John 3:9, 5:18).
4. We receive, are filled, and are now empowered by the Holy Ghost (2 Ne. 31:17; D&C 39:6; 33:11-12).
5. We are also filled with unspeakable joy (Hel. 5:44) and feel to shout or sing praises to God and the Lamb (see Alma 5:26, 36:20-28; Rev. 14:1-3; D&C 84:98-102).
6. We may see God on His throne surrounded by concourses of angels, also praising God (Alma 36:22).
7. We may receive the presence and ministration of angels then or later (Hel. 5:48), and show forth one or more of the gifts of the Spirit thereafter (see D&C 46). This may include speaking with a new tongue, that of Angels by the power of the Holy Ghost, especially during sincere praise of God then, or thereafter (2 Ne. 32:2-23; Hel. 5:45).
8. We are now on the path to eternal life and God’s presence, and have become part of “the church of the Firstborn” – Christ’s Church (D&C 76:67).

Why Have I not Received this Important Gift?

Satan distracts us from more weighty matters. Though useful, we often get caught up in symbolic physical or earthly ordinances more than the point of them, the spiritual, transformational events which they point to! And in many cases, we are full of unbelief, pride, idolatry, and materialism. We must not worship churches, programs, and men, but our Redeemer. We must place our faith and trust in the living God and Him only. God has told us that too many of the Saints have taken the covenant of the Book of Mormon too lightly, including the invitation to literally “come unto Christ” and receive of His fulness. The single biggest problem is often unbelief, not only in God, but in themselves. They simply don’t believe they can experience such things, or are worthy of it. Prophets in scripture tells us that Christ is mighty to save. He has paid the price for all sin. He will forgive us. We simply need to remove false traditions and unbelief and turn to Him, and have faith and trust in Him! And we must sincerely repent.

1. Humility “And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy
This is the Lord’s stated requirement to receive the baptism of fire. God loves those who are humble, teachable, and repentant. He said, “And again, more blessed are they who shall believe in your words because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me, and that ye know that I am. Yea, blessed are they who shall believe in your words [spiritual gift #2 in D&C 46:14] and come down into the depths of humility and be baptized, for they shall be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins” (3 Nephi 12:2). Earlier in Mosiah He was quoted as saying that we must, “becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father” (Mosiah 3:19).

2. False Traditions, Teachings & Assumptions

Too often we set up stakes, walls or boundaries, not allowing the truth to enter in because of the false traditions, teachings, and beliefs of men. We rely too much on fathers, priests, and kings – leaders in these three areas who are the arm of flesh. This leads to idolatry and priesthood. Joshua said, “your fathers” (because of their traditions) were led to serve other Gods. He stated, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Josh. 24:15). Christ said, “And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers” (D&C 93:39). Additional scripture tells us that in addition to “fathers” (leaders in the home), civil and religious leaders also set traditions, for better or worse. Speaking of people being led astray, Zeniff of the Book of Mormon said, “Yea, and they also became idolatrous, because they were deceived by the vain and flattering words of the king and priests.” The Prophet Joseph said, “To all those who are disposed to say to set up stakes for the almighty will come short of the glory of God. To become a joint heir of the inheritance of the Son he must do away all his [false] traditions” (Words of Joseph Smith). Brigham Young added, “The early customs and teachings of parents and friends...influence the minds of children, but...when their minds are enlightened by the Spirit of truth, so that they can see things that are unseen by the natural eye, they may then be corrected in their doctrine and belief, and in their manner of life, but not until then” (JD 1:2, Brigham Young, January 16, 1853).

Too many also assume that because of their age, experience, or activity in many high callings in the Church, as well as their confirmation at age 8, that they have the gift of the Holy Ghost, and thus have experienced the baptism of fire. The information on these pages should generally reveal otherwise. The most profound of these patterns, suggesting one has received this experience, is the great, overpowering joy felt when one finally receives the fiery baptism. It is an intense experience where God’s love is profoundly felt, accompanied by a great desire to shout praises to Him. I know individuals who experienced this “mighty change of heart” at age 12, 20 and 45. I have been with some when it has happened. My own experience came in my late 50’s, when I finally humbled myself to God sufficiently to receive it. I had many church callings in years of service. I had authored many books (14), but until I became aware that there was such a thing as a “baptism of fire,” and diligently sought it by humbling myself to the dust and fully repenting, this event and its great joy eluded me.

3. Fully Submit to God

We often persist in sin. Alma stated, “I say unto you come and fear not, and lay aside every sin, which easily doth beset you, which doth bind you down to destruction, yea, come and go forth, and show unto your God that ye are willing to repent of your sins and enter into a covenant with him to keep his commandments, and witness it unto him this day by going into the waters of baptism” (Alma 7:14-15). Christ is mighty to save. Believe it.

We must be willing to sacrifice all in coming to God. To receive His gifts, we must completely surrender to Him, and give away all things to know him in a covenant with God, as Lamoni did, and as all who really love God have done and have then received this gift. King Lamoni said, “Yea, what shall I do that I may be born of God, having this wicked spirit rooted out of my breast, and receive his Spirit, that I may be filled with joy, that I may not be cast off at the last day? Behold, said he, I will give up all that I possess, yea, I will forsake my kingdom, that I may receive this great joy” (Alma 22:15). In the 5th and 6th lectures on Faith, originally part of the Doctrine and Covenants, we see that real love of God requires real sacrifice, all that we have, if necessary. Real “joy”, a key word for experiencing the presence of Christ personally, is the result of such a sacrifice.
How this and other Gifts of God are Given (the First & Second Comforters, gifts of the Spirit, etc.).

**God Controls His Gifts, Not Men or Churches**

The church, gospel, and doctrine of Christ all lead us to Christ and then Father and Mother in heaven. Institutions professing to teach Christ’s doctrine, as part of His gospel and church are to provide individuals the pathway (instruction) to receive God’s greatest gifts; (1) the first and Second Comforters, (2) the gifts of the Spirit, and (3) the promise of eternal life – God’s greatest gift. Men and institutions do not control or give these important gifts. Only God does, how, when, and to whom He desires. This is a comforting thought, as men want money, control, and praise and often hold back on the really important gifts. They hold themselves up as lights. This is called priesthood in scripture (see 2 Ne. 26:25-31). God is the one we must hold up as our light, and things he does (see 3 Ne. 18:24). He offers us His greatest gifts freely - if we will come to Him and seek them. No matter who you are, you can have them. God alone grants them to individuals in and outside any Christian church, in His time and way. The pathway to eternal life is straightforward; faith in Christ, repentance, and then baptism by water, followed by baptism by fire, and finally receiving Christ personally. Too few understand this transformative pathway, involving three cleansings; by water, by fire, and by Christ’s blood (see page 21).

**Fruit – Gifts of the Spirit**

Scripture tells us that “signs follow them that believe” (Mark 16:17; D&C 84:65). The spiritual gifts are listed in 1 Cor. 12, Moroni 10, and D&C 46 (partial listings). They accompany those who have had the baptism of fire, those who have received the Holy Ghost. Elder Orson Pratt stated, “Spiritual gifts are those blessings given by the Holy Spirit to all who are made partakers of it. Whenever the Holy Ghost takes up its residence in a person [after the baptism of fire], it not only cleanses, sanctifies, and purifies him, in proportion as he yields himself to its influence, but also imparts to him some gift, intended for the benefit of himself and others. No one who has been born of the Spirit, and who remains sufficiently faithful, is left destitute of a Spiritual Gift. A person who is without a Spiritual Gift, has not the Spirit of God dwelling in him, in a sufficient degree, to save him; he cannot be called a Saint, or a child of God; for all Saints who constitute the Church of Christ, are baptized into the same Spirit; and each one, without any exception, is made a partaker of some Spiritual Gift” Orson Pratt, Masterful Discourses, pps. 539-41. He added, “First, miraculous signs should be claimed in all ages by the believers in the Gospel, because Jesus promised them, and has never intimated any repeal of that promise. All Gospel promises should be claimed by Gospel believers, until divine revelation repeals them. For instance, in the same verses, where Jesus promises these signs, he also promises salvation. As both of these Gospel blessings are promised, both should be claimed. None have the right to hope for the promised Salvation who have not the promised Signs. Indeed, those who have not the Signs, are not believers ; and, therefore, instead of having a right to Salvation, Jesus says expressly, that all such ‘shall be damned” (Orson Pratt, “Necessity of Miracles”).

**How the Holy Ghost is Given**

As addressed earlier in brevity, many believe they have the gift of the Holy Ghost as a result of the laying on of hands ordinance at age 8. Like other church ordinances, the laying on of hands is a symbolic invitation to receive the real thing (power in the gifts of God). The Holy Ghost is given in two ways; (1) It is obtained from Christ directly in the baptism of fire experience, as found in seven scriptures (see 3 Ne. 9:20; 12:1; 2 Ne. 31:12; 3 Ne. 11:35; JST Mat. 3:38; JST Luke 3:16; JST John 1:28).); And (2), The Lord provides the Holy Ghost through one of His empowered and authorized servants, those who have come into His presence – a special witness of Him, also known as an “apostle.” Today’s definition of this office has been changed.12 Christ said to His chosen Apostles in the Book of Mormon, “Ye shall call on the Father in my name, in mighty prayer; and after ye have done this ye shall have power that to him upon whom ye shall lay your hands, ye shall give the Holy Ghost; and in my name shall ye give it, for thus do mine apostles” (see Acts 8:9-22, 19:2-6; Rev. 2:4-5; D&C 20:38:4-3, 3 Ne. 18:37; Mor: 2:2). The key to God’s definition of Apostle (not man’s version today) is understanding that it is one who has come into the presence of the Lord personally, a literal “special witness” of His reality (see endnote 12). To be “anointed of the Lord” means to be empowered by Him personally, not by another man. They have been touched by the Lord, receiving a portion of His power, or they have received this power by His spoken word to them (see 3 Ne. 18:36-37; Mor. 2:2). His touch or word is also how His priesthood power (rather than man’s “authority”) is given to man13 (see JSH 1, p. 59, D&C 84:42, 128:2-21, and pages 30-33 the book, Pillars of the Priesthood, by the author).
How did the Lord's Apostles receive the Holy Ghost in the New Testament? Speaking to His Apostles immediately following His resurrection, our Lord said to them, “Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them [or spoke to them] and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:21-22).

Receiving the Holy Ghost in the Book of Mormon (300 souls converted) In 3 Nephi 9:20 we read that the primary requirement for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost was a “broken heart and contrite spirit.” The 300 souls in Helaman 5 possessed these two qualities. Each of them had a pillar of fire surround them (verses 43-44). Each was filled with unspeakable joy, full of glory (verse 44). In this pillar of fire (which did not hurt them) “the Holy Spirit of God came down from heaven and did enter into their hearts,” filling them as if with fire. This allowed them to “speak forth marvelous words” - as with the tongue of angels (verse 45). Then the Father's voice was heard. In a pleasant whisper He stated, “Peace, peace be unto you because of your faith in my Well Beloved, who was from the foundation of the world” (verse 46). Then, casting their eyes up to heaven, the direction from whence the voice came, they then saw the heavens open, “and angels came down out of heaven and ministered unto them” (verse 48).

Joseph Smith's Kirtland Temple Dedication Prayer (D&C 109:35-39) At the dedication of the Kirtland Ohio Temple, Joseph Smith prayed, “Let the anointing of thy ministers be sealed upon them with power from on high. Let it be fulfilled upon them, as upon those on the day of Pentecost; let the gift of tongues be poured out upon thy people, even cloven tongues as of fire, and the interpretation thereof. And let thy house be filled, as with a rushing mighty wind, with thy glory. Put upon thy servants the testimony of the covenant, that when they go out and proclaim thy word they may seal up the law, and prepare the hearts of thy saints for all those judgments thou art about to send, in thy wrath, upon the inhabitants of the earth, because of their transgressions, that thy people may not faint in the day of trouble. And whatsoever city thy servants shall enter, and the people of that city receive their testimony, let thy peace and thy salvation be upon that city; that they may gather out of judgments thou art about to send, in thy wrath, upon thy people on thy people.

Pentecost-Like Events in 1836 After disciplined repentance, schooling and purification, including those in the School of the Prophets (who were cleansed “every whit” via the washing of feet), Pentecost-like events occurred at the Kirtland Temple dedication and for the entire period from Jan. 17 to May 1, 1836. Joseph Smith and other leaders prepared the Saints to expect the heavens to be opened as part of “an endowment [of power] from on high” (D&C 105:33; 110:9-10). Joseph Smith called this period, “a pentecost...a year of jubilee, and a time of rejoicing” (HC 2:432-33). Many Saints reported manifestations at this time, including the gift of tongues, the sound of mighty wind, a pillar of fire resting down upon the temple roof, prophesying, and the voices of angels. Over one thousand people attended these various meetings, many testifying of sacred experiences in letters and journal entries (see Karl Ricks Anderson, Joseph Smith's Kirtland, Deseret Book, p. 174).

Three Baptisms and Three Liberty Colors

The return pathway back to God is comparable to developing a relationship of real love with the opposite sex. It requires love, dedication, and commitment. We begin the serious dating process with some commitments (watery baptism). We become engaged and receive a special gift (fiery baptism). Finally there is marriage and a closer relationship (sanctification via the blood of Christ). In Moses chapter 6 we read of purification via baptism by water, justification by fire to receive the Holy Ghost, and sanctification by the blood of Christ to finally be redeemed and receive eternal life. These three “baptisms” are found in Moses 6:59-63 and are represented visually in three colors tied to the concept of “liberty” provided by Christ and His Atonement. These three colors include; (1) the color blue (purifying water); (2) the color white (justifying fire in the Holy Spirit); And (3) the color red (the sanctifying blood of Christ). The three baptisms grant us liberty from sin, death and hell - if we repent and come to know Christ as our Redeemer, doing so by offering up a broken heart and contrite spirit as our sacrifice.
Moses 6 tells us, “That by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world [the words of Christ] and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory; For by the water ye keep the commandment [purified]; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified; Therefore it is given to abide in you; the record of heaven; the Comforter, the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment...this is the plan of salvation unto all men” (Moses 6:59-62).

1. Baptism by water (called) Purification Faith in Christ, real repentance
2. Baptism by fire (elected to rec. Eternal life) Justification Receipt of the Holy Ghost & gifts of the Spirit
3. Sanctified by Christ’s blood (made sure) Sanctification Promise of eternal life given by God

Christ as the Good Samaritan
Note also that three life-giving fluids, water, oil, and wine are tied to these concepts and the three colors. The story of the Good Samaritan features a symbolic variation of the three baptisms in connection with charity, in caring for a needy stranger on the roadside via the application of cleansing water and healing oil and wine to his troubled body - a type for our Savior who heals us through His blood Atonement. He was and is our Good Samaritan. He too received care in the garden of Gethsemane from an “angel,” another Good Samaritan who served Him there (perhaps the Father). There the Lord's own blood oozed from every pore, perhaps a type of baptism for Him. He is believed to have been washed with water thereafter. Healing oil and wine may have then also been applied to soothe His troubled body – like that of the wayside traveler. Note that water, milk, and wine representing our salvation in the three baptisms, are obtained freely in 2nd Nephi 9:50. “Come, my brethren, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price.” False and corruption religion makes man pay for that which Christ offers freely. Priests and religious leaders are to work for their own support. Few do. Only such men and women have the power of God with them (see 2 Ne. 26: 24-26; Mos. 2:12-14, 18:26; D&C 24:18, 84:78; Mark 6:8; Luke 9:3, 10:4).

II. Summary of Terms and Phrases tied to the Baptism of Fire
The fully committed path to our Lord has a number of descriptive names and phrases in scripture. It is a pathway most clearly presented us in the Book of Mormon - in the experiences of Nephi, Alma, and Lamoni, for example. There, and in other scripture, we see that Salvation comes only at the hands of Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. It is a pathway ending at the Tree of Life. It requires three baptisms along the way; one by water,
another by fire, and a final one by blood. This paper has concentrated on the middle baptism, the one where we are purged of dross or sin by the fiery Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Descriptive Names for the Return Journey to God:
The Way, The Doctrine of the Two Ways, The Gospel of Jesus Christ, The Doctrine of Christ Salvation, the Way of Salvation, the Plan of Salvation
Through the Gate and onto the Straight and Narrow Path
The Three Baptisms

Seven Names for the Baptism of Fire Event or Experience:
Being Born Again, Reborn, Born of God
Being Quickened by the Spirit
Becoming a New Creature (Mosiah 27:26)
Having Hope in Christ
Having a Mighty Change in Heart
Receiving the Baptism of Fire, the Fiery Baptism, or be Encircled by Fire
Being Elected to receive Eternal Life at some future point / being Justified. This election to receive eternal life is made Sure or Sealed in the Second Comforter experience, when he or she is finally Sanctified in Christ’s blood.

Words or Phrases Associated with the “Mighty Change of Heart” thereafter:
There is great Joy (Alma 36:20, 21), expressed in praise and worship of God, sometimes with the “tongue of angels,” or speaking “marvelous words” (Hel. 5:45). To have this joy is to experience the Spirit or presence of God in abundance, it is to shout or sing praises to He who redeems us. These heartfelt, joyful praises are from the heart and are part of “the song of redeeming love” (Alma 5:26; Rev. 14:1-3; D&C 84:98-102).
We are Convinced (Helaman 5:50).
We are Converted (Helaman 6:3, 4 – “manner of their conversion”).
We are Redeemed (Mosiah 27:25).
We are Firm (Helaman 6:1).
We are Steadfast (Helaman 6:1).
We are Justified (3 Ne. 12:2; 2 Ne. 31:17), which is to receive a remission of our sins.
We have Hope in Christ (2 Nephi 31:20), which comes from receiving the promise of Eternal Life, which enables us to hold fast, firm, and be immovable and steadfast to the Rod. The word “steadfast” [or “firm”] describes what we have become upon receipt of the fiery baptism).
We have no desire to sin, but instead desire to lay down our weapons of war (Helaman 5:51).
The heavy cloud of darkness is removed from us (Helaman 5:41-43).
We receive “marvelous light” in place of darkness (Alma 36:20).
We become a “son or daughter of God” (Mosiah 5:7) and are “sealed His” (Mosiah 5:15).
We have gotten onto “the straight and narrow path” or “the way” (2 Nephi 31:18, 21; 31: 32; 5) to Eternal Life, where we cling to the “Rod,” which is God’s word to us in revelation and that of the Holy Ghost, and will make it to the Tree of Life.
We become a fruitful olive tree with sweet, natural, tame fruit – the gifts of the Spirit – the oil in in the olive (Jacob 5). It is the “fruit meet for the Father’s kingdom” as addressed in D&C 84:58, otherwise there is condemnation for our vanity and unbelief (see verses 46-59). Our Lord stated that a fullness of joy is available only in Him. He is the true vine. All who abide in Him are branches and will bear delicious fruit. Christ said, “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full (John 15:10-11).

For the seven characteristics we now possess, see page 7. See also pages 18, 36, and the patterns on the next page.
III. How to Receive the Baptism of Fire - Patterns in Receiving this Gift in the Book of Mormon (p. 38 also)

The chart on the previous page was created to reveal patterns and possibilities, not create expectations. It shows that many in the Book of Mormon experienced this important rebirth experience, a manual for us to do the same. Readers are encouraged to examine and study each of the scriptures that the Spirit might confirm the truths presented in them. We must then seek this fiery baptism, praying for it! But we should not expect the Lord to “baptize” each of us in the same way, though there are patterns in the experiences in scripture. We know that Christ alone controls this event, and how and when it occurs. As each of us is different, its effects upon us may proceed differently, and according to the Lord will.

How Might I Receive the Baptism of Fire?

The following five-step process has proven useful for many.

1. Turn your heart wholly to God  This often begins by getting rid of false traditions and beliefs about this and other true doctrines. Our Lord called His teachings relative to this gift, “the doctrine of Christ.” We must not worship false doctrines by hanging on to them. The most “true” of all doctrines is that we can receive our Lord, His presence, and His fellowship in this life! It is necessary for Joseph Smith’s definition of Salvation. He taught us this, providing the example by going directly to God, as James 1:5 states. Idolatry and priestcraft - placing false gods before Him – is typically that of men and the church for most latter-day Saints. We must be willing to get out of any boat that holds us captive to false traditions and belief. Peter was willing to get out of the safety of his boat and walk towards the Master – the father of our salvation (see the author’s paper “Joseph’s Last Three Dreams”). We must have real faith in Christ and act upon it!

2. Love God  We must seek the Lord with all our heart, mind, might, and strength. This is the first and great commandment. We can do this by devoting time to get to know Him every day. It will help us become “holy unto the Lord” (Numbers 6). It is not a chore, but a joy to do so.

3. Believe and Trust in Him  We must believe that we can know God and receive Him. This requires us to have complete trust in Him, rather then in the arm of flesh (see Psalm 118:8; 2 Ne. 4:19-35). Part of this trust should include joyful praise to Him, along with gratitude. We can reach out to Him with uplifted hands like a humble, meek child. We should cry mightily to Him with fervent feeling, emotion, and love. It should be a joyful process. King David and the Psalms provide good examples.

4. Surrender to God  We must be willing to sacrifice all to know God. We must surrender to Him. This includes our will, the only thing we can really give Him. Like Lamoni, we must give away all things to know Him (see Lectures on Faith 5 and 6). We must approach God with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. This is the sacrifice necessary to have the fiery baptism and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and other gifts of the Spirit thereafter.
5. Repent We must also sincerely repent in a heart-felt way, crying out to God for His mercy and forgiveness, like Lamoni did in Alma 18:41 and like Alma did in Alma 36:1. We must approach God with full purpose of heart (2 Ne. 31:13), acting no hypocrisy in our repentance.

Sanctification in the Blood of Christ - the Culminating Step of Jacob's Ladder

Those who have had the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost have passed through the gate and are on the pathway to eternal life, on their way to receiving the fruit of the Tree of Life. It is to receive sanctification via the blood of Christ (because of His Atonement) in an ascent vision experience, where we enter God's holy presence, to there receive Him as our Second Comforter. In it individuals are “quickened” or “transfigured” as mortals, that they might withstand the great light and glory (higher vibrational frequency of light and energy) of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Yeshua Messiah. Such blessed souls spiritually ascend into His sacred presence and there receive a sure witness of His reality, by touching the prints of the nails in His feet and hands, and other wounds in His body (see 3 Ne. 11:14-17). They receive Him – the precious “heavenly gift,” and can then bear powerful testimony of Him with real knowledge, not just faith. This is to know the Lord.

Though a “spiritual” visionary experience, it is real and tangible. Joseph Smith stated that all spirit is matter, though a higher form or frequency of it. “Ascending” into God's presence is experienced via the third eye, the eye of faith, the eye single to His glory – or “in the Spirit” (see Ether 12). We read in D&C 76:118, “That through the power and manifestation of the Spirit, while in the flesh, they may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory” (see also Mosiah 5:15).

More Than Once Can these three baptisms occur more than once? In early Church history baptism by water was performed frequently before a significant new commitment was made, like before a mission, at marriage, or when entering the Salt Lake Valley. Joseph and Oliver were baptized before the Church was organized. Later, when it was organized on April 6th of 1830, they were washed again (see Eight Reasons for Repeated Washings, and Washing Rites in Scripture, www.7witnesses.com). The baptism of fire is an event where the Holy Ghost is given, yet we can experience a return of the Holy Ghost and feel the Spirit wash over us again in a great outpouring, as we recommit to God after a time difficulty. It is a worthy challenge to enter to the Lord’s presence for the first time, but thereafter He can become our more frequent teacher.

Summary Christ is the stone which the builders - throughout time, have rejected. The Israelites rejected Him at Sinai and again in Jerusalem. The Gentiles reject the fulness of His gospel today, which is the fulness of His glory (3 Ne. 16:10; D&C 84:24). The builders substitute themselves as the saviors of men. It is God that remains in control of these two transitional events, however, offering to the those who seek Him directly, both of His marriage-related gifts. These are the First and Second Comforters - the baptism of fire (2 Ne. 31 & 32) and the Heavenly Gift (Ether 12:8). Both are delivered by God directly to those who seek Him, independent of man’s institutions (see Jacob 5:47-48; Luke 11:52). If we would have His salvation, we should do everything in our power to seek His face. He is the Heavenly Gift.

Speaking in Tongues

True Worship – In Spirit and Truth The baptism of fire is often associated with the gift of tongues, a misunderstood gift of the Spirit among most of the Saints. It is addressed in this paper on the baptism of fire because a primary characteristic tied to experiencing it, is the intense joy one feels when it occurs. One desires to shout praises to God in gratitude for the outpouring of love they feel! Thus, as part of the fiery baptism, some often speak, sing, or pray in an unrecognizable language as they praise God in private or public worship. Although tied to “singing the song of redeeming love” – in that it is often tied to praising God, the gift of tongues has its own unique characteristics. Speaking in tongues appears to have five different purposes, divided into two categories; private worship and public instruction.
Outside of the baptism of fire experience - such as missionary work, it is typically tied to instruction – a type of edification. This is the typical Latter-day definition of “speaking in tongues.” More frequently, however, it is tied to praise, blessing and even spiritual warfare. The Prophet Joseph Smith experienced “wondrous words” or “speaking in tongues” in Kirtland, Ohio. He personally spoke in tongues and witnessed many others doing so as well, as this author has. In his case and mine, it was not for instruction purposes in connection with a foreign language or tongue. Instead, early experiences for Joseph Smith with this gift at conferences, the School of the Prophets, and the dedication of the Kirtland Temple - involved those present who primarily spoke English. There was no need for the gift of interpretation of a foreign tongue. Instead, the primary reason for this unique form of the outpouring of the Spirit was collective sincere, heartfelt praise. God desires that the righteous worship Him “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23), as part of “true worship” (D&C 93:19). Many shout “praises to the Holy One of Israel” (2 Ne. 31:13).

The gift of tongues - as a special form of praise - was widespread at the dedication services of the Kirtland Ohio Temple. David Whitmer stated that, “almost every man in the house arose, and hundreds of them were speaking in tongues, prophesying or declaring visions, almost with one voice” (JD, 11:10). Of this same event, Joseph Smith stated, “All the congregation simultaneously arose, being moved upon by an invisible power; many began to speak in tongues and prophesy; others saw glorious visions; and I beheld the Temple was filled with angels, which fact I declared to the congregation” (HC, 2:428). Oliver Cowdery added, “The Spirit was poured out – I saw the Glory of God, like a great cloud, come down and rest upon the house, and fill the same like a mighty rushing wind. I also saw eleven tongues, like as of fire rest upon many, (for there were 316 present), while they spake with other tongues and prophesied” (Leonard J. Arrington, Oliver Cowdery, Kirtland Ohio Sketchbook, BYU Studies, 12:426). To repeat, there appear to be five primary purposes evident in this unique gift.

1. Pure praise and worship of God privately in His tongue or in His preferred method
2. Speaking God’s word in a foreign tongue for instruction purposes in a public setting
3. Hearing God’s word in a foreign tongue in public settings with interpretation
4. Blessing others in God’s tongue or way (a private method, when interpretation is not given)
5. Spiritual warfare – battling the forces of evil using God’s words, language, or method

For Believers The Prophet Joseph stated, “…The gifts which follow them that believe and obey the gospel…began to be poured out among us, as in ancient days; for as we…elders were assembled in conference on the twenty-second day of January [1833] I spoke to the conference in another tongue and was followed in the same gift by Brother Zebedee Coltrin, and he by Brother William Smith, after which the Lord poured out his Spirit in a miraculous manner until all the elders spoke in tongues, and several members, both male and female. Great and glorious were the divine manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Praises were sung to God and the Lamb; speaking and praying, all in tongues, occupied the conference, until a late hour at night, so rejoiced [joy] were we at the return of these long absent blessings. On the twenty-third, we again assembled in conference; when, after much speaking, singing, praying and praising God, all in tongues, we proceeded to the washing of feet…” (HC 1:277-78). Why are we not experiencing these things today? Unbelief, idolatry, and priestcraft appear to be the answer.

The early saints rejoiced in “…these long absent blessings.” They spoke and sang in tongues, they praised God way into the night. They shouted praises, lifting their hands to heaven, and at times rejoiced in His Presence into the “…greater part of the night.” Joseph said that, “…great and glorious were the divine manifestations of the Holy Spirit.” So great was the outpouring that our beloved Prophet was constrained to write, “…It was a Pentecost and an endowment indeed, long to be remembered…as the day of Pentecost, so shall this day be numbered and celebrated…” (HC 2:432-33).
In the Times and Seasons, Joseph Smith said, “...We believe in the gift of the Holy Ghost being enjoyed now, as much as it was in the Apostles’ days; we believe that it [the gift of the Holy Ghost] is necessary to make and to organize the Priesthood, that no man can be called to fill any office in the ministry without it...” He added, “…we also believe in prophecy, in tongues, in visions, and in revelations, in gifts, and in healings, and that these things cannot be enjoyed without the gift of the Holy Ghost. We believe that the holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and that holy men [and women] in these days speak by the same principle...We believe in it [this gift of the Holy Ghost] in all its fullness, and power, and greatness and glory...” (see also Article of Faith 7).

In public settings there is normally the gift of interpretation of tongues present that instruction and edification take place. In private settings, however, there is sometimes no interpretation provided. There it is often part of pure worship alone in an unknown tongue. Some Latter-day Saints say it tied to the Adamic language. In other situations it may occur in another language as circumstances merit.

Baptist minister Lynn Ridenhour (who uses the Book of Mormon in his congregation for instruction, with the Bible) has addressed the misconception about the gift of tongues among restoration-minded saints (believers in God, who desire a full restoration of the spiritual gifts, as addressed in D&C 46, 1 Cor. 12 & Moroni 10). He stated, “The majority of the “saints” [believers, LDS and non-LDS] today do not recognize and distinguish the different kinds of “tongues” as Joseph did. They lump all tongues together.” Joseph Smith recognized the distinction between; (1) tongues of instruction or prophecy (interpretation of languages in a public setting), and (2) tongues of comfort, praise, and worship (in a private worship setting).

Ridenhour adds, “I like the distinction: tongues of PRAISE and tongues of PROPHECY. I'm saying the same thing as Joseph; just using different terms. Tongues of praise are what Joseph refers to as tongues of comfort; tongues of prophecy are what Joseph distinguishes as tongues of instruction [or revelation]. Tongues of praise are found in the book of Acts; tongues of prophecy are found in I Corinthians. Tongues of praise are for every believer and are for the purpose of ministry overflow and spiritual warfare. Tongues of praise require no interpretation. Some refer to tongues of praise as: releasing your prayer language. Jude referred to it as “…building up yourselves...” (vs. 20). Tongues of prophecy require an interpretation and are experienced in public settings. He added, ‘Not all believers have the gift of tongues. All believers do (or can) have ‘tongues of comfort,’ to use Joseph's term. The ‘gift of tongues’ is different from, not the same as, ‘tongues for your own comfort.’ One is to be exercised freely, not requiring an interpreter to be present; the other is not to be indulged in too much, and requires an interpreter present. One is for personal edification; the other, to edify the Body of Christ. One is public; the other, private.”

My Idol - Doctrinal Correctness versus Being Filled with the Spirit

Lynn Ridenhour stated, “There was a time in my Christian life when my doctrine was my idol. I actually enjoyed a good fight more than I desired to bless others... Well, God put up with my nonsense for just so long. He got me a job working in a welding shop with a bunch of Pentecostal preachers. I was a welder's helper, assigned to Dennis Barnes. One day he asked... ‘Lynn, have you received the Holy Ghost [enabling one to speak in tongues] since you believed?’ I responded (almost yelling) ‘yes!’ in an angry tone. He couldn't tell if I was joking. ‘YES, I have!’ I looked him straight in the eye. I made sure he heard me. Then he knew he'd better drop it. The implication to me was--Dennis thought he had something I didn't. And I wasn't so sure he was any closer to the Lord than I. I didn't like the question. Or the implication. Of course, I wasn't displaying much, if any, of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost.

Anyway, I wanted to prove to my friend in the worst way that I could be just as filled with the Spirit, just as spiritual as he, without speaking in tongues... One morning during my prayer time the Lord spoke to me. He kindly asked, “…Are you willing to speak in tongues in order to fellowship with me?” I answered, “But Lord, I don't believe it's theologically correct.” He responded kindly, “I didn't ask you that. I said, are you willing to speak in tongues if it will bring me closer to you?” “But Lord, I don't believe I have to speak in tongues.” “I didn't ask you that. I said...” and He repeated the question, “Are you willing to speak in tongues if it will bring my presence?” I was beginning to get it (but I didn't like it)... As much as I hated to face it, my doctrine was my
idol. Now, an idol is not intrinsically evil. I mean--there's nothing evil about the wood that a totem pole is made from. It's putting the totem pole ahead of the living God that's evil. And there was nothing intrinsically evil about my doctrine. I was desiring to hold on to my doctrine more than desiring his presence, his fellowship, that's evil! And that's what the Lord was putting his finger on: my doctrine had become my idol! I'd rather be right than rightly related. That hurt. Deep.

I was learning--God will have no other gods before him, including my . . . theology. You see, God wanted to use me. Or wanted to get me ready to be used, but I'm convinced God has to do two things to each of us before he can use any of us: 1) he must cross each of us at our points of rebellion (often times our doctrine), and 2) he must kill our gods! In order that we may meet and fellowship with the living God. I finally surrendered my god, my . . . theology, and said, “...Master, I want your presence more than anything. If it takes speaking in tongues, I'll do it.” You say, what happened? I spoke in tongues and Jesus kept his word. I was overjoyed, filled, surprised, thrilled, enraptured, astonished, amazed...and (I don't have enough words.) Yes, the old songwriter was right, I stood amazed in his presence!” Addressing the gift of tongues, Ridenhour concluded, “As I enter into my prayer closet and begin my devotion in my native tongue, but shift over into my prayer language, I sense in my spirit that I am communing with my Heavenly Father in ways that are, in my own native tongue, indescribable. I am simply telling my Heavenly Father in ways that are inexpressible to my native tongue that I love him, appreciate him, am in constant need of his love and mercy. Paul said it best: “...he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God...” (1 Cor.14:2).

Early Latter-day Saints at Kirtland experienced a great outpouring of the gift of tongues. That same experience should be sought for and enjoyed today, poured out like living water in our midst. It is a Pentecost-like experience often tied to the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, and appears to be a precursor to receiving Christ as our Second Comforter – an effective method to open the heavens. Like having a vision, to begin speaking in tongues we must desire this gift, pray for it, and try to initiate or practice it by moving forward in faith - like a little child - doing the best we can, then allowing God to then take over from there. This child-like faith and belief, with a sincere desire to praise, worship, and thank God in more heartfelt, open ways, can then proceed without being self-conscious, instead focusing on our love of God. Here are three steps to speaking in tongues:

1. Don’t over think things. Don’t inhibit yourself our others from experiencing “tongues” (1 Cor. 14:39).
2. Have faith and trust in God that He will take over as you begin making sounds.
3. Take action by opening your mouth, uttering sounds and syllables that God might attach meaning to them and then let it flow...

See Lynn Ridenhour, How to Receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, at:
http://www.greaterthings.com/Ridenhour/me_in_restoration/HolySpiritBaptism.htm
For instruction, see http://www.divinerevelations.info/tongues/
And for an example, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsrcgd7rmR0&feature=em-share_video_user
Additional help
http://www.achristiancounselor.com/tongues.html
http://www.ihopkc.org
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9s7ixXcDY&feature=em-share_video_user

End Notes

1 The Second Comforter The Prophet Joseph Smith stated, “Now what is this other Comforter? It is no more or less than the Lord Jesus Christ himself & this is the sum & substance of the whole matter, that when any man obtains this last Comforter he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him or appear unto him from time to time. & even he will manifest the Father unto him & they will take up their abode with him, & the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him & the Lord will teach him face to face & he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, & this is the state & place the Ancient Saints arrived at when they had such glorious vision Isaiah, Ezekiel, John upon the Isle of Patmos, St Paul in the third heavens, & all the Saints who held communion with the general Assembly & Church of the First Born &c” (Words of Joseph Smith, 27 Jun 1839, original spelling).
This doctrine is taught plainly in scripture and in the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He explained the process of receiving these events as follows: “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 accord to his own will” (D&C 88:68). Christ is the Heavenly Gift (Ether 12:8; 4th Ne. 1:3), the first gift of the Spirit listed in D&C 46:13. See also the book, How to Receive Your Second Comforter, by Anonymous, www.digitalegend.com

2 There Are Save Two Churches Only An angel told Nephi, “Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth” (see 1 Nephi 14:1-30). God has provided the criteria by which all can determine whether any organization may be classified as His church, with His gospel and doctrine. It is found in two places, 1 Nephi 14 and 3 Nephi 27. First, it must be called by His name. Second, it must be built on His gospel and His doctrine. And Third, it must demonstrate the fruits or gifts of His Spirit, those things Article of Faith 7 state we believe in. And they are the dramatic, pentacostal, charismatic outward display of God’s “wonderful works” - the spiritual gifts. They include healing the deaf, blind and dumb, revelation, prophecy, visions, the gift of tongues, casting out devils, and drinking poison without harm (see Christ’s listing of them in D&C 46. See also 1 Cor. 12 and Mor. 10, and “Gifts of the Spirit” by the author, available at www.7witnesses.com).

The Way or The Doctrine of the Two Ways

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In a Sept 13th 2015 broadcast to 235 Stakes of the Utah Area South (Marriott Center Conference, BYU, Sept. 13, 2015), Elder M. Russell Ballard stated, “In greeting you, I will paraphrase Paul’s words: ‘Unto the Church of God in the Utah South Area, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints, grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.’” Elder Ballard cited a Gallup poll in his remarks, stating that the Utah South Area is one of the most religious areas in the United States, revealed in a flourishing religious landscape. It was praise for accomplishments that included seven things, falling under mostly “material” fruits, not spiritual ones:

- A nationwide polling service found Utah to be the most religious state
- Three missions
- Six temples with two under construction (the Payson & Provo City Center temples)
- The largest religious university in America (BYU)
- Vibrant institutes of religion programs associated with the great colleges and universities in the area
- An expanding Missionary Training Center in Provo

3 A Temple Endowment One author believes the early purpose of the temple in Joseph Smith’s day was to provide a Pentecostal experience for outgoing missionaries – an endowment of real power, rather than the repetitive symbolic teaching introduced by Brigham Young many years later. Robert Smith suggests that this coincides with the baptism of fire of many at Pentecost in the New Testament and with the experience of early Saints at the dedication of the Kirtland, Ohio Temple in 1836, both groups experiencing a dramatic outpouring of the Lord’s Spirit prior to missionaries being sent out into the world.

Smith states, “The purpose of the Kirtland temple was not to expose members to a symbolic lecture or to make promises to God. It was to provide a Pentecostal experience for outgoing missionaries. Similarly, the purpose of the Nauvoo temple was to provide a place for Elijah to return and restore the high priesthood and sealing powers (Joseph additionally taught that the Nauvoo temple would continue after that event to be a place where people would come to be baptized for the dead). Temples were not spaces dedicated for repetitive experiences, but places set apart for an explicit one-time event. (After the dedication of the Kirtland temple, which brought the fulfillment of the purpose of the building in the Pentecostal experiences of those who attended, the temple was used for normal meetings. The church did not build a single chapel during Joseph’s life.) After all, the purpose of these events was to dispense knowledge that would empower the people to
come into the consistent presence of God in the normal course of their lives.” See Temples, p. 295, in Robert Smith, Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.

The Presence of God in our Lives

In the early days of the Church, members were expected to possess both the Holy Ghost – an endowment of power, and the spiritual gifts, both of which came by way of the fiery baptism – or being “born again.” The additional spiritual gifts were dramatic and undeniable external evidences of the presence and power of God in their lives.

The Holy Ghost

The primary attribute of the Holy Ghost is to provide knowledge (including ideas) via revelation. Joseph Smith stated, “The Spirit of Revelation is in connection with these blessings. A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas, so that by noticing it, you may find it fulfilled the same day or soon; (i.e.,) those things that were presented unto your minds by the Spirit of God, will come to pass; and thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the principle of revelation, until you become perfect in Christ Jesus” (TPJS, p.151).

Joseph Smith added “The Holy Ghost has no other effect than pure intelligence. It is more powerful in expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding, and storing the intellect with present knowledge, of a man who is of the literal seed of Abraham, than one that is a Gentile, though it may not have half as much visible effect upon the body; for as the Holy Ghost falls upon one of the literal seed of Abraham, it is calm and serene; and his whole soul and body are only exercised by the pure spirit of intelligence; while the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile, is to purge out the old blood, and make him actually of the seed of Abraham. That man that has none of the blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost. In such a case, there may be more of a powerful effect upon the body, and visible to the eye, than upon an Israelite, while the Israelite at first might be far before the Gentile in pure intelligence” (TPJS, pps. 149-150).

The Holy Spirit Versus the Holy Ghost

The Lectures on Faith define the Holy Spirit as the unified mind of the Father and the Son, the Son “possessing the same mind with the Father, which mind is the Holy Spirit” (Lecture 5). The personal beings of the Godhead - the Father and Son, become one God through the noncorporeal presence of a shared mind. In the fall of 1898, because of some confusion over this doctrine, the First Presidency asked James E. Talmage to rewrite the Lectures on Faith and present them for approval as an exposition of Church doctrines. In the process, Elder Talmage reconstructed the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. By January 1915, Apostle Charles W Penrose had completed a revision of Parley P. Pratt’s Key to the Science of Theology, further modifying our current doctrine on the Holy Ghost.

What is the Holy Ghost?

Three different phrases are tied to God’s influence by way of the gifts of the Spirit in D&C 46. They are: 1. The Holy Spirit (D&C 46:2). 2. The Spirit of God (D&C 46:17), and 3. The Holy Ghost (D&C 46:13, 15-16). The “Holy Spirit” and the “Spirit of God” may both be tied to God’s influence, power, and revelation. The definition for “God” can be Father (Knowledge & Understanding), the Holy Son Jesus (Charity), as well as Mother (Wisdom). Any one of the three may speak to us, move us, and inspire us, though more typically it is Christ or the Father. Some suggest the Spirit of God is masculine (Father), where the Holy Spirit is feminine (Mother). Christ’s Spirit (a part of the Holy Spirit – the oneness of Father, Mother, and Son) is not thought to be the Holy Ghost, however. The phrase “Holy Ghost appears 89 times in the New Testament, 24 in the 4 gospels. In the Greek the word “spirit” is used instead of “ghost” in all instances. This sets up confusion (see Matt 1:18, 12:31-32, Mark 1:8, 3:29, 13:11 Luke 1:35, 1:41, 2:25 & 26, 3:16 & 22, 4:1, 12:10 & 12, John 1:33, and note that the same root word is used in the Greek for Holy Spirit in every instance).

Jacob in the Book of Mormon separates “Holy Ghost” from “Holy Spirit” in Jacob 6:8 (see also Lectures on Faith 5). Note the word Spirit in the books of Galatians and Romans; “God has sent forth the Spirit of His son into your hearts” (Gal. 4:6). “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ [be] in you, the body [is] dead because of sin; but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Rom. 8:11).

The Higher Self or the I Am Presence

While some suggest that the Holy Ghost is an office fulfilled by different valiant souls over time, others claim that it may be a higher form of ourselves, left in heaven like a luminous robe to put on again in our return to the heavenly realm. In this second definition and perhaps more accurate version of the Holy Ghost, the “ghost” – our spirit or soul, is a collection of all that we are; our experiences, intelligence, and personality, refined over many eons of time, the greater portion of which is left behind while a lesser portion descends here to experience mortality, gain experience, learn, and progress more. What we learn as mortals is then added to our garment of light – the soul – our collective experience and ingelligence. Some suggest this occurs in multiple mortal experiences. Many thus refer to the soul left behind as the “higher self” or the “I Am presence.” The ancient Egyptians referred to the different stages of its development as “the Ka, Ba, and Da”.

Our Savior Jesus Christ or Yeshua has great light, experience, intelligence, and love. He grants us a portion of His influence in various ways and events. We are promised a portion of His Spirit in both of the Sacrament prayers (if worthy), for example. He has also stated, “I will baptize you with fire…” (3 Ne. 12:1, see also 2 Ne. 31 & 32; Alma 36:18-26; Mos. 33
5:2-15 & Hel. 5:42-49). This is comparable to the engagement gift at Pentecost, when we commit ourselves to Christ via an oath, covenant, or vow of fidelity to Him. Repentance and baptism begin the process leading to this engagement gift, the First Comforter, which appears to be a greater connection to the higher self, and then marriage, where we receive Christ as the Second Comforter, the personage of Christ Himself as our Teacher to guide and direct us thereafter.

**Additional Gifts of the Spirit**

Our Savior taught that “signs follow those who believe” (D&C 84:65). He reaffirmed this in Joseph Smith’s day in multiple places, including words in the Book of Mormon and two revelations given Joseph in the D&C. He stated, “For I am God, and mine arm is not shortened; and I will show miracles, signs, and wonders, unto all those who believe on my name. And whoso shall ask it in my name in faith, they shall cast out devils; they shall heal the sick; they shall close their eyes to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk” (D&C 35:8-9). He added later, “Therefore, as I said unto mine apostles I say unto you again, that every soul who believeth on your words, and is baptized by water for the remission of sins, shall receive the Holy Ghost. And these signs shall follow them that believe—In my name they shall do many wonderful works; In my name they shall cast out devils; In my name they shall heal the sick; In my name they shall open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the deaf; And the tongue of the dumb shall speak; And if any man shall administer poison unto them it shall not hurt them; And the poison of a serpent shall not have power to harm them” (D&C 84:64-72).

Joseph Smith stated that “true servants” of God possess them. “If you will obey the Gospel with honest hearts, I promise you, in the name of the Lord, that the gifts as promised by our Saviour will follow you, and by this you may prove to me to be a true servant of God” (Joseph Smith, quoted in Hyrum Andrus, “Joseph Smith's Idea of the Gospel”). Apostle Orson Pratt taught, “Whenever the Holy Ghost takes up its residence in a person, it not only cleanses, sanctifies, and purifies him, in proportion as he yields himself to its influence, but also imparts to him some gift, intended for the benefit of himself and others. No one who has been born of the Spirit, and who remains sufficiently faithful, is left destitute of a Spiritual Gift. A person who is without a Spiritual Gift, has not the Spirit of God dwelling in him, in a sufficient degree, to save him; he cannot be called a Saint, or a child of God; for all Saints who constitute the Church of Christ, are baptized into the same Spirit; and each one, without any exception, is made a partaker of some Spiritual Gift” (Orson Pratt, Masterful Discourses, pp. 539-41). Elder Pratt equated those promised salvation with those possessing the spiritual gifts, “First, miraculous signs should be claimed in all ages by the believers in the Gospel, because Jesus promised them, and has never intimated any repeal of that promise. All Gospel promises should be claimed by Gospel believers, until divine revelation repeals them. For instance, in the same verses, where Jesus promises these signs, he also promises salvation. As both of these Gospel blessings are promised, both should be claimed. None have the right to hope for the promised Salvation who have not the promised Signs. Indeed, those who have not the Signs, are not believers; and, therefore, instead of having a right to Salvation, Jesus says expressly, that all such ‘shall be damned’” (Orson Pratt, “Necessity of Miracles”).

Pres. Sidney Rigdon stated that where there is corruption and apostasy, the spiritual gifts are not found. “There is no society of which we have an account in the revelations of God, that he acknowledged as his own, except they had visions among them, and that as long as they continued to walk according to the directions of the Holy Spirit....We readily admit that a corrupt religion can exist, and false prophecies exist, and sectarian dogmas abound; men-made worshipers increase, and the world abound in a religion that the Lord was not the author of, and yet no visions be among them; but wherever the truth of heaven abounds, there will visions abound also; for it is a part of heaven’s scheme to save men, and without it, we are not authorized to say there is salvation” (Sidney Rigdon, “Faith of the Church,” Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate, 1:9, p. 133).

Joseph Smith stated, “Because faith is wanting, the fruits are. No man since the world was had faith without having something along with it. The ancients quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, women received their dead, etc. By faith the worlds were made. A man who has none of the gifts has no faith; and he deceives himself, if he supposes he has. Faith has been wanting, not only among the heathen, but in professed Christendom also, so that tongues, healings, prophecy, and prophets and apostles, and all the gifts and blessings have been wanting” (Joseph Smith, TPJS, p. 270).

Moroni explained that the gospel of salvation contains the spiritual gifts, whereas men’s churches don’t have them. Speaking to us today, Moroni asked, “...have angels ceased to appear unto the children of men? Or has he withhold the power of the Holy Ghost from them? Or will he, so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved? Behold I say unto you, Nay; for it is by faith that miracles are wrought; and it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men; wherefore, if these things have ceased wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain. For no man can be saved, according to the words of Christ, save they shall have faith in his name; wherefore, if these things have ceased, then has faith ceased also; and awful is the state of man, for they are as though there had been no redemption made. (Moroni 7:35-38.)

5 _Enduring to the End – is Enduring Until We Receive Eternal Life_  
Baptism by fire is not an optional event. Our Lord taught, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said
unto thee, Ye must be born again” (John 3:5-7). Neither is the third baptism optional if we are to inherit eternal life. After faith, repentance, and the first two baptisms comes “endurance to the end,” which “end” or goal is the third baptism, sanctification in the blood of Christ. Too many believe that “enduring to the end” means to continue as a faithful church member until death. “The end” is not death and faithfulness to church programs and men, but progression through the tests of mortality until we obtain the promise of eternal life from God Himself in this life (see D&C 132:22-24). This is confirmed in many places. Nephi tells us, “Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Nephi 31:20). Nephi adds, “And I know that the Lord God will consecrate my prayers for the gain of my people. And the words which I have written in weakness will be made strong unto them; for it persuadeth them to do good; it maketh known unto them of their fathers; and it speaketh of Jesus, and persuadeth them to believe in him, and to endure to the end, which is life eternal” (2 Nephi 33:4). The Lord said, “And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7).

6 Joseph Smith said, “The endowment was to prepare the desiples for their mission into the world” (WOJS, 22 Jan 1843).

7 At this point in Church history the understanding of what “the endowment of power was” was common and widespread. Elder Orson Pratt of the Twelve taught, “Spiritual gifts are those blessings given by the Holy Spirit to all who are made partakers of it. Whenever the Holy Ghost takes up its residence in a person, it not only cleanses, sanctifies, and purifies him, in proportion as he yields himself to its influence, but also imparts to him some gift, intended for the benefit of himself and others. No one who has been born of the Spirit, and who remains sufficiently faithful, is left destitute of a Spiritual Gift. A person who is without a Spiritual Gift, has not the Spirit of God dwelling in him, in a sufficient degree, to save him; he cannot be called a Saint, or a child of God; for all Saints who constitute the Church of Christ, are baptized into the same Spirit; and each one, without any exception, is made a partaker of some Spiritual Gift.”

8 The Prophet Joseph noted the increase in the spiritual gifts around Him in his day. It was also very apparent in Him. He prophesied that, “John the Revelator was then among the ten tribes of Israel who had been led away by Salmaneser, king of Assyria, to prepare them for their return from their long dispersion, to again possess the land of their fathers. He prophesied many more things that I have not written.”

Holy Order Implemented John Whitmer stated, “After he [Joseph Smith] had prophesied he laid his hands upon Lyman Wight and ordained him to the high order of Priesthood, after the holy order of God. And the spirit fell upon Lyman, and he prophesied, concerning the coming of Christ, He said that there were some in the congregation that should live until the Savior should descend from heaven with a shout, with all the holy angels with him. He said the coming of the Savior should be like the sun rising in the east, and will cover the whole earth....He saw the heavens opened and the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the Father” (John Whitmer, History of the Church 1:176). Some curious things took place. The same visionary and marvelous spirits, spoken of before, got hold of some elders; it threw one from his seat to the floor; it bound another, so that for some time he could not use his limbs nor speak; and some other curious effects were experienced, but, by a mighty exertion, in the name of the Lord, it was exposed and shown to be from an evil source. The Melchizedek Priesthood was then for the first time introduced, and conferred on several of the elders. In this chiefly consisted the endowment—it being a new order—and bestowed authority (John Corrill, History of the Mormons,1839,p.18). This was the time the Melchizedek Priesthood was first given to others in the Church in connection with other events at the Morley Farm, not addressed here.

School of the Prophets In January 1833, the school of the Prophets at Kirtland opened with Joseph's washing of the Elders' feet. Fasting and prayer followed the ordinance, and the participants witnessed Pentecostal experiences. Zebedee Coltrin reported “many powerful manifestation [sic] of the holy spirit...the gift of tongues and the interpretation thereof” (Zebedee Coltrin Diary, 24 January 1833). In 1883, Coltrin reminisced, “At one of these meetings after the organization of the school... a personage walked through the room from east to west, and Joseph asked if we saw him. I saw him and suppose the others did and Joseph answered that is Jesus, the Son of God, our elder brother. Afterward Joseph told us to resume our former position in prayer, which we did. Another person came through; he was surrounded as with a flame of fire. He (Brother Coltrin) experienced a sensation that it might destroy the tabernacle as it was of consuming fire of great brightness. The Prophet Joseph said this was the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. I saw Him” (Source: Minutes, Salt Lake City School of the Prophets, October 3, 1883.)


The State of Christianity in America & the World Has “the fulness [wickedness] of the Gentiles” come in?

Decline According to the 2015 Pew Research Center report, “the United States remains home to more Christians
than any other country in the world, and a large majority of Americans – roughly seven-in-ten – continue to identify with some branch of the Christian faith” (70% of the U.S. population). But the numbers are falling . . . “the percentage of adults (ages 18 and older) who describe themselves as Christians has dropped by nearly eight percentage points in just seven years, from 78.4% in an equally massive Pew Research survey in 2007 to 70.6% in 2014. Over the same period, the percentage of Americans who are religiously unaffiliated – describing themselves as atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular” – has jumped more than six points, from 16.1% to 22.8%. (See http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/ ) See chart above.

Flat-Line Once a fast growing church, Mormonism’s growth has essentially flat-lined (see charts next page), with only 1.6 % growth in 2015. Though there continue to be many convert baptisms, many are also leaving the faith; (1) The 1.6% growth in 2015 was the lowest growth in the last 40 years. This number was 1.7 in 2007, revealing a flat-line for some time; (2) 257,402 convert baptisms were down 13.28% from 2014, the lowest since 2005; (3) There were 74,079 missionaries serving in 2015, down 11,000 since 2014 (85,000); (4) There were 3.47 convert baptisms per missionary in 2015, down from 8 converts per missionary in 1989 (the time of Pres. Benson and the push to read and value the Book of Mormon, and his speaking out against pride); And (5) There were 232,993 members lost (death, names removed from records, etc.) in 2014 & 15 / 230,959 member of record baptisms in 2014-15 (neg. 2,034 + 257,402 converts = Net Gain 255,368 members, 1.7% growth).

Real Growth The real news is that Pentecostal or “charismatic” Christian churches are seeing rapid, phenomenal growth (Assemblies of God & independent churches). In the same period of 1970 to 2014, we an increase from 63 million Pentecostals worldwide in 1970 to 631 million Pentecostals in 2014, or nearly 1/4 of all Christians. It is expected that this number will reach 800 million by 2025. Classic Note however, that Pentecostalism only accounts for 4% of North American Christians and only 2% in Europe. Why the increase? According to Allan Anderson, Pentecostalism “emphasizes personal experience of the Spirit, recognition of the human need for divine involvement in the everyday world, and a refusal to separate spiritual/physical or sacred/secular.” There is also “pentecostalism’s ability to tap into ancient religious beliefs about the reality and power of the supernatural, its tendency to subvert convention by empowering lay leaders, its willingness to “translate” Christianity into the language/idioms/customs of various cultures, and its history of engaging issues of gender, race and class.” (See http://marccortez.com/2014/04/16/growth-global-pentecostalism-wheaton-theology-conference-4/)

Mormon Support for Gay Marriage Doubles from 2008-2015 This same Pew research report reveals that Latter-day Saints have been the fastest changing religious group relative to gay rights. In the 7-year period between 2007 and 2014, the percentage of Mormons believing that society should accept gay marriage doubled. Only 7 years separate Proposition 8 (2008), where California Saints were encouraged by the LDS Church to spend time and money lobbying against homosexual marriage as an immoral threat to families, to Elder Christofferson’s March 2015 statement that supporting homosexual marriage was merely an issue, not a doctrine, and that the church would not discipline those who advocated for it. He stated, ‘We have individual members in the church with a variety of different opinions, beliefs and positions on these issues...In our view, it doesn’t really become a problem unless someone is out attacking the church and its leaders...trying to pull people, if you will, out of the church or away from its teachings and doctrines.’ In a KUTV interview, Elder Christofferson acknowledged that Mormon leaders have evolved in their thinking about homosexuality. “This is not a
doctrinal evolution or change, as far as the church is concerned. It’s how things are approached” (see http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/17/d-todd-christofferson-gay-marriage_n_6887730.html).

**Christ as the High Tower Rejected**

In Moroni’s final testimony in the Book of Mormon, he once again invites us to “come unto Christ.” This statement is followed by “…and lay hold upon every good gift. Receiving the gifts of the Spirit is dependent upon seeking out our Lord first, and placing Him at the center of our lives. In D&C 101 the “high tower” at the center of our Lord’s last-days vineyard is mentioned 9 times (tied to “judgment” in number symbolism). There we read that the stewards placed over the vineyard became “very slothful, and they hearkened not unto the commandments of their lord” (D&C 101:50). They originally began to build the high tower, but eventually stated, “what need hath my lord of this tower . . . seeing this is a time of peace” (vs. 47-48). They believed “all was well.” They had everything under control. What is the high tower they failed to build? It is Christ, removed from the vineyard in D&C 101. He is the high tower in 7 scriptures; Psalm 18:2, 61:3, 144:2; 2 Sam. 22:3 & 51; Prov. 18:10, and D&C 97:20. We read in D&C 97:20, “He hath sworn by the power of his might to be her salvation and her [Zion’s] high tower.” Psalm 18:2 states, “The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.” Without Christ at the center of our worship, the Lord’s vineyard is laid waste. This is the message of Isaiah 5, where the Lord then removes the protective hedge surrounding it. The enemy then enters in. This is our fate as expressed in five sets of scripture tied to the Lord’s last-days vineyard. They are:

1. **D&C 101: Servants Fail to Build the High Tower – who is Christ - at the Center of the Vineyard**

In verses 44-65, the high tower (Christ) is rejected and not built up in the last-days (Christ is the “high tower” in Psalm 18:2, 61:3 & 144:2; 2 Sam. 22:3 & 51; Prov. 18:10, and D&C 97:20). They reject the invitation to enter to the Lord’s “rest,” “the fulness of His glory” or presence (D&C 84:24). This is the “fulness” rejected by too many in our day as addressed in 3 Nephi 16:10. It is tied to the lack of fruit on the trees of the vineyard, “fruit meet for the Father’s kingdom” (D&C 84:58).

2. **Isaiah 5: The Lord Removes His Hedge of Protection & the Enemy Advances**

In verse 5 of Isaiah 5, the hedge protecting the Lord’s grape vineyard is removed by Him, the vineyard then laid waste by the enemy. This is because the grape vines in this vineyard are baring “wild grapes.”

3. **JST Matthew 21: Last-days Gentile Husbandmen are Destroyed and Replaced by the Righteous Remnant**

In verses 43-49, the kingdom of God is taken from wicked Jews and given to the Gentiles in Christ’s day because of the wickedness of the leaders (priestcraft). They are salt that has lost is savor. In verses 26-56, the latter-day Gentile husbandmen of the vineyard are also destroyed and replaced by those who help the trees of the vineyard finally bare good fruit (“fruit meet for the Father’s [Celestial] kingdom” in D&C 101). Their motivation is not business (getting gain). Thus the first is last and the last is first, as the natural branches of the house of Israel (those the Lord calls “my people” in the Book of Mormon) once again receive the fulness of the gospel, after the Gentiles reject it.

4. **Jeremiah 12: Many Pastors have Destroyed the Lord’s Vineyard**

In verse 10, we read that many pastors are responsible for destroying the Lord’s vineyard (see also 1 Ne. 21:1; 2 Ne. 14:2; 15:24; 19:16; 27:1). They have not cared for their flocks as mortal shepherds should have (see Jer. 23). The Good Shepherd (Christ) has a plan for this (the Jacob 5 allegory and JST Mat. 21).

5. **The Jacob 5 Allegory: Special Servants are Sent to Gather the Righteous Remnant in the Last-days**

In verses 52-75, the unfruitful olive trees are burned in the final pruning and gathering of the vineyard. The “loftiness” of the branches are the cause of many being cast into the fire. This is because of pride and dependence upon the arm of flesh, rather than God and the Holy Ghost (2 Ne. 28:26, 31), both of which are rejected in the last-days. Christ and His special last-days servants gather out the righteous Remnant before the great burning, the great day of the Lord. The Jacob 5 allegory reveals that God will replace the corrupt, polluted, lofty Gentile branches with the natural branches, the American Indians. This is because the Gentiles are bringing forth bitter fruit. They reject the fulness of His gospel (3 Ne. 16:10; D&C 113:8; 124:28). It is the Native American people, fully converted to Christ (with the help of Joseph, the Indian Prophet (2 Ne. 3) that will save the life still left in the root of the tree, and bring forth good fruit “meet for the Father’s kingdom” (D&C 84:58). The Sabbatical Year of release (2015) and the Jubilee Year of restoration reveals that the timing is now.

**Christianity in Russia – The Moral Superiority of the Invader**

In the last 17 years, Christianity in Russia as doubled, going from 31% of the population to 72% of the population. China’s population of Christians is also rapidly growing, whereas that in America is diminishing. With the legalization of sexual depravity officially, by societal acceptance, and overturning the Lord’s form of legal and lawful marriage, it appears that God, as a matter of covenant and Eternal Law, must withdraw from us and leave us powerless to defend ourselves. The hedge of protection that once protected the Lord’s vineyard will no longer stand. Jerusalem's wall's were breached by the King of Babylon and his army on Tammuz 8 (our June 26th in 2015). One month later Solomon's Temple was destroyed. Addressing our day, Isaiah stated that our walls will also be breached (Isaiah 5:5, 13; 2 Nephi 15:5) and the vineyard destroyed (by burning, see Jacob 5:77).
The 911 disaster in 2001 and the Supreme Court decision of June 26, 2015 re-defining marriage represent two important walls that have come down, revealing our declining protection from God. Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed by heaven-sent fire for their immorality (Genesis 19). The same is promised for modern Babylon in Revelation, Jeremiah, and Isaiah.

Modern “Assyria,” to our north, or Russia today (Isaiah 10:5) may receive power from God to invade our land and cleanse it. This is the prophecy of Isaiah 5, 19, and 28 (see also Joel 2). They are the nation from the “north” spoken of throughout Jeremiah that will destroy the wicked. Ancient Assyria and Babylon both invaded ancient Israel from this northern direction. Isaiah calls this the powerful army “the rod of my anger”, the “staff”, “my wrath in their land” (Isaiah 10:5-7; 13:9; 63:6).

Invasion  In the last 17 years, Christianity in Russia as doubled, going from 31% of the population to 72% of the population. In America, organized religion is failing. China’s population of Christians is also rapidly growing, whereas that in America is diminishing. With the legalization of sexual depravity officially, by societal acceptance, and overturning the Lord’s form of legal and lawful marriage, it appears that God, as a matter of covenant and Eternal Law, must withdraw from us and leave us powerless to defend ourselves. The hedge of protection that once protected the Lord’s vineyard will no longer stand (see Isa 5:5; D&C 101:51). Jerusalem’s walls were breached by the King of Babylon and his army on Tammuz 8 (our June 26th in 2015). One month later Solomon’s Temple was destroyed. Addressing our day, Isaiah stated that our walls will also be breached (Isaiah 5:5, 13; 2 Nephi 15:5) and the vineyard destroyed (by burning, see Jacob 5:77). The 911 disaster in 2001 and the Supreme Court decision of June 26, 2015 re-defining marriage represent two important walls that have come down, revealing our removed protection from God. Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed by heaven-sent fire for their immorality (Genesis 19). The same is promised for modern Babylon in Revelation, Jeremiah, and Isaiah.

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Russia stands on higher moral ground in reference to marriage, as her leaders and people have not embraced the same moral wickedness as our leaders and half our population. They have in fact enacted national laws to protect the sanctity of marriage. According to the Associated Press, the Russians rejected the new morality of the west, their lower house in the Russian Parliament voting 436 to 0 in favor of an anti-gay bill on June 11 of 2013. This bill was signed into law by Vladimir Putin, their powerful leader (he was baptized a Christian at 1.5 years old and wears a cross given him by his mother). In addition, Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, stated that recent Western “legislation of single-sex marriages is bringing the apocalypse closer” (NBC World News story at: http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/07/27/19699629-homosexual-propaganda-law-signals-latest-russian-crackdown?lite).

Contrast this with Pres. Obama who openly supports gay rights and third trimester abortion standards. Larry Sinclair claims he had a sexual encounter with a young Barak Obama just before he became an Illinois Senator (listen to the 2nd and 3rd hours of the 3-hour radio broadcast at: http://www.blogtalkradio.com/cfp-radio/2013/06/14/the-hagmann-hagmann-report ). The Russians may thus have a legal claim to “moral superiority” in their destruction of our country, as we have become a modern-day “Babylon” with worldwide influence. We are the largest supplier of the world’s pornography, for example. It is on the ashes of sinful and wicked nations like our own, that Zion will finally be built, a phoenix rising from the ashes (see the returning capstone [left] and eagle [right] on the back of our one dollar bill). But before such a restoration can occur, with a new millennial, just government in place, righteous servants will help clean things up prior to our Lord’s return (Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:22-27; Hosea 3:45; Jeremiah 23:1-5; 30:9; Isaiah 42:19-20; 2 Samuel 7:12-16, 25-26, 29). A lead Servant will apparently be directed by the King of kings, Jesus Christ. This Servant prepares the way before Christ (see D&C 77:9 & 14). There is cleansing and judgment first. “And now there began to be a great curse upon all the land because of the iniquity of the people…And thus we see that the Lord did visit them in the fullness of his wrath, and their wickedness and abominations had prepared a way for their everlasting destruction” (Ether 14:1, 25).

In the first few verses of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord states, “And the arm of the Lord shall be revealed; and the day cometh that they [the Saints] who will not hear the voice of the Lord, neither the voice of his servants…shall be cut off from among the people; For they have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant (symbolized by the token of the rainbow, JST Genesis 9). They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall” (D&C 1:14-16, see also D&C 19:1-5). Nephi stated, “But behold, when the time cometh that they [the gentiles, including many modern Saints] shall dwindle in unbelief, after they have received so great blessings from the hand of the Lord…knowing the great and marvelous works of the Lord from the creation of the world; having power given them to do all things by faith…having been brought by his infinite goodness into the precious land of promise — behold, I say, if the day shall come that they will reject the Holy One of Israel, the true Messiah, their Redeemer and their God, behold, the judgments of him that is just shall rest upon them. Yea, he will bring other nations unto them, and he will give unto them power, and he will
Therefore call upon him wishes, you latter days?

God. Strengthen your faith; cast off your doubts, your sins, and all your arrives, you shall be able to bear of Mormon, and that you have seen the face of God. That is more than the testimony of an angel. When the proper time necessary that you receive a testimony from heaven to yourselves; "We are prepared to the Apostles of Jesus Christ, for you have seen both the Father and the Son, and know that They exist, and that They are two separate personages" (JS Papers, Documents, Vol. 3. P. 43, footnote 259). It was real knowledge of God – seeing Him (or them) – that thus originally defined the word “apostle” in early LDS church history (and the New Testament). We see this in all notes, minutes, revelations, and preaching before 1835. Today the word “apostle” is placed upon 12 men in a quorum who may or may not be an official “sent one” of the Lord, one who has seen God (Jesus and potentially the Father). The Lord has told us that we can know His servants by their “fruits” – their actions. We are to judge. In a revelation to Joseph Smith on September 11th of 1831, the Lord said, “For it shall come to pass that the inhabitants of Zion shall judge all things pertaining to Zion. And liars and hypocrites shall be proved by them [those of Zion], and they who are not apostles and prophets shall be known.”

The Apostolic Charge According to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ must have the “special” and sure witness of being in Christ’s presence, or “that He is” (3 Nephi 12:1). This was the important “Apostolic Charge” they spoke of in early Church history. It was given to all of the early Twelve – as a charge to do everything possible to see God, and thus be empowered by Him, becoming a “sent one.” Oliver Cowdery stated, “It is necessary that you receive a testimony from heaven to yourselves; so that you can bear testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon, and that you have seen the face of God. That is more than the testimony of an angel. When the proper time arrives, you shall be able to bear this testimony to the world. When you bear testimony that you have seen God, this testimony God will never suffer to fall, but will bear you out; although many will not give heed, yet others will. You will therefore see the necessity of getting this testimony from heaven. Never cease striving until you have seen God face to face. Strengthen your faith; cast off your doubts, your sins, and all your unbelief; and nothing can prevent you from coming to God. Your ordination is not full and complete till God has laid his hand upon you. We require as much to qualify us as did those who have gone before us; God is the same. If the Savior in former days laid his hands upon his disciples, why not in latter days? . . . The time is coming when you will be perfectly familiar with the things of God. . . . You have our best wishes, you have our most fervent prayers, that you may be able to bear this testimony, that you have seen the face of God. Therefore call upon him in faith in mighty prayer till you prevail, for it is your duty and your privilege to bear such a testimony for yourselves” (History of the Church, 2:192-98). Has this “charge” disappeared?
Lecture of Faith 1:34 nearly demands that we, and certainly our leaders, become “acquainted with him [God]; and not only commune with him and behold his glory, but be partakers of his power, and stand in his presence.” The Lectures on Faith were once a part of the Doctrine and Covenants, a move voted on by the whole Church. They were later removed by a small Church committee, without the vote of people (the Church).

In the Be-attitudes in the Book of Mormon we read, “…more blessed are they who shall believe in your words [those of the Twelfth just called, see D&C 46:14] because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me, and that ye know that I am” (3 Ne. 12:2). I AM should be capitalized, as it is the sacred name-title of our Creator God, Jesus Christ (Ex. 3:14). It means, “He Who Causes To Be, He Who Creates” (see Margaret Barker, Atonement: The Rite of Healing, p. 10).

There are too many assumptions among us today. We are to judge those who serve over us. In D&C 64 the Lord said, “the inhabitants of Zion shall judge all things pertaining to Zion. And liars and hypocrites shall be proved by them, and they who are not apostles and prophets shall be known. And even the bishop, who is a judge, and his counselors, if they are not faithful in their stewardships shall be condemned, and others shall be planted in their stead” (see D&C 64:37-42).

Many Saints assume leaders, our “apostles and prophets” have the earlier witness addressed by Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and that the reason they don’t share such a testimony is that it is “too sacred.” Those in the Bible and Book of Mormon openly shared their eyewitness accounts of Christ to build faith and hope in Him. It was and is the requirement for “special witnesses” to do so! Open testimonies of Him also build confidence in the authority of their leaders as the Lord’s servants. Historian D. Michael Quinn has suggested that the Twelve today have abandoned the earlier charge to come to know the Lord, and now only require an inward prompting by the Holy Ghost to merit their calling as “special witnesses” of the Lord, rather than an actual audience with Christ (Michael D. Quinn, Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power, Signature Books, pps. 4-5). Some suggest it was too difficult for early Apostles like Senator Reed Smoot or Heber J. Grant to obtain the witness. The change to a “Holy Ghost” witness rather than an eye-witness testimony, is supported by three statements made by Joseph Fielding Smith (see The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve, Improvement Era, Nov. 1966, p 979; Doctrines of Salvation 3:153; and The Life of Joseph Fielding Smith, by Joseph Fielding Smith Jr. and John J. Stewart, pps. 387-88).

Elder Dallin Oaks, confronted by one individual with the claim that, “current apostles have no right to run the affairs of the church since they do not meet the New Testament standard of Apostles because they do not testify of having seen Christ,” Elder Oaks responded by saying, “The first answer to this claim is that modern apostles are called to be witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world, Doctrine and Covenants 107:23. This is not to witness of a personal manifestation. To witness of the name is to witness of the plan, the work, or mission such as the atonement and the authority or priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, which an apostle who holds the keys is uniquely responsible to do (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, Boise, Idaho, June 17, 2105). Elder Oaks revealed that, in his view, what is special about his witness is his assignment in the church, not his experience with or of God.

In a more direct statement, Pres. Boyd K. Packer stated, “President McKay explained that one of the responsibilities of an Assistant to the Twelve was to stand with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as a special witness and to bear testimony that Jesus is the Christ. What he said next overwhelmed me: “Before we proceed to set you apart, I ask you to bear your testimony to us. We want to know if you have that witness.” I did the best I could. I bore my testimony the same as I might have in a fast and testimony meeting in my ward. To my surprise, the Brethren of the Presidency seemed pleased and proceeded to confer the office upon me. That puzzled me greatly, for I had supposed that someone called to such an office would have an unusual, different, and greatly enlarged testimony and spiritual power. It puzzled me for a long time until finally I could see that I already had what was required: an abiding testimony in my heart of the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith, that we have a Heavenly Father, and that Jesus Christ is our Redeemer...Some years ago, I was with President Marion G. Romney...He told them that 50 years before, as a missionary boy in Australia, late one afternoon he had gone to a library to study. When he walked out, it was night. He looked up into the starry sky, and it happened. The Spirit touched him, and a certain witness was born in his soul. He told those mission presidents that he did not know any more surely then as a member of the First Presidency that God the Father lives; that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father; and that the fulness of the gospel had been restored than he did as a missionary boy 50 years before in Australia. He said that his testimony had changed in that it was much easier to get an answer from the Lord. The Lord’s presence was nearer, and he knew the Lord much better than he had 50 years before. There is the natural tendency to look at those who are sustained to presiding positions, to consider them to be higher and of more value in the Church or to their families than an ordinary member. Somehow we feel they are worth more to the Lord than are we. It just does not work that way! (“The Weak and the Simple of the Church,” Oct. 2007 General Conference.)

**Holy Ghost Testimony** Historian D. Michael Quinn has suggested that the Twelve today have abandoned the charge to come to know the Lord, and now only require an inward prompting by the Holy Ghost to merit their calling as “special witnesses” of the Lord, rather than an actual audience with Christ, as required in the statements of Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith. Quinn states, “repeatedly, the message of the twentieth-century LDS church is that inward conviction
rather than outward vision is the basis for being a special witness of Christ” (Michael D. Quinn, Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power, Signature Books, pp. 4-5).

The obligation of personal revelation for individuals remains of paramount importance. Each of us a wise virgins must all have oil in our lamps. Brigham Young said, “What a pity it would be if we were led by one man [or men – the arm of flesh] to utter destruction! Are you afraid of this? I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire of themselves of God whether they are led by Him. I am fearful they settle down in a state of blind self-security, trusting their eternal destiny in the hands of their leaders with a reckless confidence that in itself would thwart the purposes of God in their salvation, and weaken that influence they could give to their leaders, did they know for themselves, by the revelations of Jesus, that they are led in the right way. Let every man and woman know, by the whispering of the Spirit of God to themselves, whether their leaders are walking in the path that the Lord dictates, or not. This has been my exhortation continually” (Journal of Discourses, vol. 9, pp. 149-50).

**Knowing God**

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that we must each come to “know” Christ to receive salvation, and to enter Zion when the Lord finally creates it. The five “wise virgins” had this reward, those who were allowed to enter into the Bridal Chamber – with Christ - in JST Matthew 25:10-11. To the unwise virgins that had no oil in their lamps, the Lord declared that they had not come to “know” Him, thus they did not “enter in” (see also JST Mat. 7:33). These five virgins were not “wise.” JST 25:11 is not found on lds.org or in our current set of scriptures (it and JST Mat. 7:33 were quoted by Elder David Bednar in his Oct. 2016 General Conference address). Verses 10-11 read, “Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. But he [the Lord] answered and said, Verily I say unto you, Ye know me not” (JST Matthew 25:10-11). This is the great gift of entering our Lord’s “rest.” Such are empowered to bear witness of Him and do His work as He directs. It also has ties to our salvation at His hands – the promise of eternal life (see 3 Nephi 12:12). With the promise of eternal life we become the sons and daughters of God, heirs of God, not just friends or slaves. To receive this “salvation” we are brought to heaven in this life via vision and “sealed His” (Mos. 5:15). It is to be sanctified through our Lord’s redeeming blood. Do you “know the Lord”? Such are the “blessed” in 3 Ne. 12:8, who “shall see God.” According to the Prophet Joseph Smith, if you have not this third, last testimony – “the testimony of Jesus” [that you have seen Him and felt the wounds in His body] then you have little assurance of salvation or eternal life in this world (see TPJS, pp. 298 & 306; Rev. 12:17, 19:10; D&C 46:13-14; 76:51, 101 and 88:4, 74-75).

**Apostolic Duties**

In addition to knowing the Lord and bearing witness of His reality to others, D&C 20 - verses 38 to 45 provide their additional duties. They are “administer bread and wine” (v. 40), to “confirm those who are baptized...by the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, according to the scriptures” (v. 41), “to teach, expound, exhort, baptize, and watch over the church” (v. 42), and “to confirm the church by the laying on of the hands and the giving of the Holy Ghost” (v. 43, see also 3 Ne. 18:36-37; Mor. 2:2; Acts 8:9-22; 19:2-6), and “take the lead of all meetings,” and these elders are to “conduct the meetings as they are led by the Holy Ghost, according to the commandments and revelations of God” (v. 45). To give the Holy Ghost, they must first have access to it by their own baptism of fire experience. Scriptures tied to Apostles giving the Holy Ghost include 3 Ne. 18:36-37; Mor. 2:2 & D&C 76:52, 56 (Apostles who are sealed).

1) **The Empowering Voice of God**

An important, overlooked pattern in the overall restoration of priesthood (all three orders) is first seen in Oliver Cowdery’s eloquent testimony at the back of our scriptures (Joseph Smith History 1). The voice of Jesus Christ was first heard by both men in delivery of the Aaronic priesthood restoration, empowering them with the God’s priesthood (see JST Gen. 14:27-29). Cowdery states, “...but one touch with the finger of his love, yes, one ray of glory from the upper world, or one word from the mouth of the Savior, from the bosom of eternity, strikes it all into insignificance, and blots it forever from the mind. The assurance that we were in the presence of an angel, the certainly that we heard the voice of Jesus, and the truth unsullied as it flowed from a pure personage, dictated by the will of God, is to me past description” (JSH1, p. 59). Power in priesthood as supplied first by God’s voice, is consistent with JST Genesis 14, which states, “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.” This power wasn’t given or transferred by the will or hands of man, nor from father to son. Hearing the voice of the Lord was prior to their ordination by John the Baptist, an authorized servant.

John then delivered keys of authority in the Levitical or Aaronic order, but apparently not God’s power – the priesthood itself. That was and is God’s prerogative alone. He “calls” all men everywhere to receive His gospel and priesthood, but only a very few are “chosen” to receive real power in it via His own voice. This early important pattern showcases the difference between priesthood power given of God and authority via ordination given of man, and between those called versus those eventually chosen to receive an endowment of power in it.

Church Historian Andrew Ehat asserts that Peter, James and John did not bestow the higher priesthood power on Joseph and Oliver. That transfer was and is accomplished only by the voice of God – in revelation (D&C 128:21). This is consistent with JST Genesis 14, Alma 13, and Joseph’s own words about how real power in the priesthood is given – only by God. Peter, James and John appear to have come later to confer keys of authority upon Joseph and Oliver, in a
commission God gave them to act on His behalf, and to confirm them as Apostles. This confirmed the prior conferral of power by God. For more on this subject, see Pillars of the Priesthood, by the author, www.digitalegend.com

 Seek the Face of God “This has come in our day. Yet we find, even among those who have embraced the Gospel, hearts of unbelief. How many of you, my brethren and sisters, are seeking for these gifts that God has promised to bestow?...How many of you ask the Father, in the name of Jesus, to manifest Himself to you through these powers and these gifts? Or do you go along day by day like a door turning on its hinges, without having any feeling upon the subject, without exercising any faith whatever; content to be baptized and be members of the Church, and to rest there, thinking that your salvation is secure because you have done this? I say to you, in the name of the Lord, as one of His servants, that you have need to repent of this. You have need to repent of your hardness of heart, of your indifference... There is not that diligence, there is not that faith, there is not that seeking for the power of God that there should be among a people who have received the precious promises we have....I say to you that it is our duty to avail ourselves of the privileges which God has placed within our reach. If we have done wrong, repent of our wrong and feel after God, and not be satisfied till we have found Him, and He hears and answers us, and He speaks by His divine power in our hearts, bearing testimony to us in such a manner as cannot be doubted that He hears us, that He is near to us, and that He is watching over us and ready to bestow upon us all the blessings that are necessary for our happiness here and hereafter...Let us seek for these gifts. Let us be exhorted this day in this Tabernacle, and bear in mind that these gifts are for us; and let us seek for them with all our might, mind and strength” (Elder George Q. Cannon, Millennial Star, Apr. 1894, pps. 260–61).
BAPTISM OF FIRE & THE HOLY GHOST

**Faith (Hearing the word of God by an Angel)**
- Gain Understanding (2 Ne 31:13; Alma 5:10-13)
- Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit (3 Ne 9:20)
- Expect Intelligence (WOS p. 4)
- Believe, Faith, Repentance, Baptism by Water, full purpose of heart, no hypocrisy, no deception, real intent, willing to take the name of Christ (2 Ne 31:13; Alma 5:10-13)
- Willing to give everything for Jesus (JST of Matt 10:30-38; Matt 16:14-31; Mark 8:36-44; Luke 9:22-27; Luke 17:33; John 12:25; Alma 22:15)
- Believe, Fall, Cry to Jesus, Desire. At least 6 BOM accounts contain these elements showing how BOFHG was received: Mosiah 27; Alma 36; Alma 18; Alma 22: Mosiah 5:3-7, 4:1-3; Hel 5:34-51; 3 Ne 11
- Repent, Humility, Call on God continually, Avoid temptation, let Spirit guide, Meek, Submissive, Patient, Full of Love of God (Alma 13:28)

**DURING (the experience)**
- Water Baptism (2 Ne 31:12; Alma 36:23)
- Dying Feeling (2 Ne 14:4; 3 Ne 9:19-20; 13:3; Hel 5:45)
- Angels (Alma 19:34; Hel 5:48; Alma 36:22)
- Fire (Hel 5:45)
- Christ declaring Himself (3 Ne 11:14; Alma 19:13)
- Spirit of Prophecy, gift of the spirit (JS-H 1:73; Mosiah 5:3)
- Spirit of Revelation, gift of the spirit (JS-H 1:74; 1 Ne 15:23-24)
- Joy (Alma 36:20-21; Hel 5:44)
- Peace (Hel 5:47)
- Understand scriptures/mysteries (JS-H 1:74)
- Praise, sing song of redeeming love (JS-H 1:73)
- No desire for evil (Alma 19:33; Mosiah 5:2)
- Feeling of new identity, changed (Mosiah 27:25-26)

**Hope (Receipt of the First Comforter)**
- Born Again (Mosiah 27:24-27; Alma 36:23)
- Redeemed (Mosiah 27:24-29)
- Receive title of Sons and Daughters (Mosiah 27:24-27; 3 Ne 19:7; DS)
- Preserve and Purge a “living soul” (DS, 2 Pet 1:9)
- Render one inestimable, Allows Eternal life, Never Die, Sanctifies (DS)
- Brings greater contact with God, Elevates the individual, Makes one Holy (DS)
- Receive Calling and Election, though not yet sure (Moroni 7:2-3; Heb 3:1-6; Isaiah 64:9; Rom 9:4, 11; Rom 11:7-8; 28:29; Mosiah 15:15; WOS p. 4; DC 53:1; Alma 5:37; Titus 1:1-2; 1 Pet 1:24-9; 1 Thess 1:1-10)
- Become a Peacable follower of Christ (Moroni 7:2-3)
- Quicks the body (Moses 6:65-66)
- Brings Hope (1 Pet 1:2-6; 22-23; 2 Ne 31:20; Ether 12:4; Mor 7:41-44; Mosiah 5:15; Alma 13:29)
- Makes one Steadfast and Firm (Heb 3:14; 6:19; 2 Ne 31:20; Mosiah 5:15; Hel 6:1; 1 Cor 15:58; Helaman 1:5-8; 3 Ne 6:14; 11:5)
- Sins Remitted (DC 19:31; 3 Ne 12:2; 2 Ne 31:17; Moroni 8:25-26)
- Makes one a “living soul” (Matt 22:32; Ezek 37; Gen 2:7; Moses 3:7; Abr 5:7; John 6:51; Ecle 9:5; Rom 12:1-2; DC 88:108)
- Delivers (Alma 5:6-10, 14)
- Changes heart (Alma 5:6-10, 14)
- Awakens (Alma 5:6-10, 14)
- Illuminates (Alma 5:6-10, 14)
- Loses Chains of Death (Alma 5:6-10, 14)
- Sing Redeeming Love (Alma 5:6-10, 14)
- Saves (Alma 5:6-10, 14)
- Receive His image (Alma 5:6-10, 14)
-adopts to Israel, i.e election (Rom 8:11-17:23-25; Rom 9:4; WOS p. 4; Mosiah 5:7)
- Endowment of Power necessary to preach? (WOS p. 158; Luke 24:49; DC 38:32-33)
- Makes us members of church of the firstborn in lowest degree (DC 99:22)
- Makes us Children of God begotten of Christ (D&C 39:22; Mosiah 5:7; Rom 8:11-17)
- Makes one free (Mosiah 5:7-8; Rom 8:2, 6:22)

**Charity (the Person of Jesus Christ)**
- We still sin (Helaman 15:6-11)
- Prolonged time to repent (Helaman 15:6-11)
- Guaranteed to partake of the presence of God (1 Ne 8:24-30)
- Must now fulfill the “second commandments” (Alma 12:33-37; 13:29)
- Endure to the end (2 Ne 31:20; Mosiah 5:15)
- We are still judgmental, need to learn to pray, and receive Charity (Moroni 7)
- Enter the rest of the Lord (Alma 12:33-37; Moroni 7:3)
- Speak with the tongue of angels (2 Ne 31:14)
- We must attain unto Charity, the personage of Christ (Moroni 7:3; 8:26; 1 Thess 1:9-10; 2 Ne 32:5-6)
- Seek in patience to see God and have eternal life (DC 101:38)
- Continue to have BOFHG (Alma 5:26)
- Beware of pride, vanity, knowledge, deception, forgetting His voice (Alma 5:37; 53-54, 60)
- Still must exert effort to obtain revelation (Alma 5:46)
- Care for the poor (Alma 5:54)
- Separate yourself from the wicked (Alma 5:56)
- Feast upon the word (2 Ne 31:20)

Note: Jesus Christ Himself gives this gift by the will of the Father (3 Ne 11:35, 12:1)

chart by Nelson Whitin