

Repent & Come Unto Me

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Wise virgins who search God's word soon discover that much of what we have embraced comes from men, not God. In scripture the Lord defines what He calls "**my doctrine, my gospel, my church**" using just five words – "**repent and come unto me**" (see D&C 10:67-68; 1 Ne. 10:18-19; 2 Ne. 9:23-24; 28:31-32; Jacob 1:7; Alma 5:33-34; Ether 4:7-19; Mor. 7:34; D&C 93:1; 3 Ne. 9:14, 22, 51; 11:14; 12:19-20, 23-24; 27:5-21; 30:1-2). The Lord's definition of His *doctrine, gospel, and church* is what He calls "**my rock**." They eloquently *define* His great work and glory – to bring us salvation. To receive salvation is to literally receive Jesus Christ in this life – to see His face and know that He is. It is a promise given all those who forsake their sins and come to Him (D&C 93:1). Our Lord's Hebrew name is Yeshua, meaning "Salvation." We must all learn to recognize His voice and come to **know Him**. This occurs as we seek a *relationship* with Him, the professed focus of man's *religion*. He repeatedly invites us to seek His face, His love and wise counsel is – "**repent and come unto me**."

There appear to be three primary reasons why so few have taken His invitation literally; *deception* – leading to *ignorance*, and *unbelief*. If you desire to receive the Lord and His best gifts in this life, as Moroni invites us to do in the last testimony of the last chapter of the Book of Mormon (Mor. 10:30), we must let God's word say what it says, speaking truth. Reading the scriptures cited hereafter allows the Lord, the Master Teacher, to reveal unto you His truths and in His time and way. The words of this paper are meant to guide you to them.

The Blue Pill or the Red Pill Deception is rampant throughout our telestial world. It is present in advertising, fake news, and the corrupt governments, schools, and churches of men. Too many believe they are saved in these churches when they are not (D&C 45:2). Thus they are content and comfortable, and do not seek more. They have chosen the ways of men rather than God. They have chosen the blue pill in the movie *The Matrix*, keeping them in the bliss of deception (scripture calls it "sleep"). The red pill, on the other hand, reveals the truth of their awful situation, the lies, false teachings and traditions that they have embraced. Lies and deception are tools of Satan for controlling men. These lies lead many that are *asleep* carefully down to hell. Many will be asleep when the Bridegroom arrives. The wise hear the trumpeting call, recognizing the Master's voice. They awake. They will greet Him joyously because of their preparation.

Signs all around us reveal that we are in a very precarious situation today. Judgment is coming upon an increasingly wicked world. Only God provides hope in His truth. Those asleep are *deceived* by the vain and flattering words of men. They tell us "all is well," that we are safe because we are chosen, and that the coming judgment is for others. False prophets deceive even the elect in this way (JST Matt. 24:24). Too many honorable men and women are "*blinded by the craftiness of men*" (D&C 76:75, 99-102). The Lord's prophets in scripture have always cried repentance to the people. They are not popular because of it. God has proclaimed that, "all men everywhere must *repent*" (D&C 19:15-21; 3 Ne. 11:32, 37-39; Acts 17:30). The Prophet Jeremiah stated, "...the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times...but **my people** know not the [coming] judgment of the Lord..." In that day, they will say, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and **we are not saved**" (Jer. 8:7, 20). The Lord repeats this warning phrase in D&C 45:2 and 56:16. He adds thereafter, "But blessed are the poor who are *pure in heart, whose hearts are broken, and whose spirits are contrite*, for they shall see the kingdom of God coming in power and great glory **unto their deliverance**; for the fatness of the earth shall be *theirs*" (D&C 56:16-18). The sacrifice God requires of us is "*a broken heart and a contrite spirit*" (3 Ne. 9:20; 12:19). It is part of **His** doctrine, gospel, and church.

When the trumpeting call to awake, arise, and go out to meet the Bridegroom came in JST Matthew 25, virgins who were not wise had no **oil** in their lamps. They did not know how to receive revelation and the Holy Spirit. They thus relied on men to teach them and save them, those who supposedly had oil. It did not happen. While trying to purchase oil from others, the Bridegroom came and let in those prepared to receive Him. Too many today live on the milk of men, when meat is available in God's word, that of scripture *and* especially personal revelation. We must know how to receive it, recognizing God's voice – the oil in our lamps. If we seek Him with all our heart (broken and contrite) we will find Him. The unwise virgins were not let into the bridal chamber because they had *not* come to **know Him**. When they knocked, the Bridegroom kept the door shut, saying, "Ye never **know** me" (see JST Matt. 7:33; 25:10-11). They had ignored the repeated invitation to "**repent and come unto me**" in the Book of Mormon. It is an invitation to **know** God in this life. We are invited to *see* and *enter* Zion.

Work and practice is necessary for wise virgins to recognize God's voice and to come to **know Him**. The rewards are glorious; to have salvation – eternal life, and to see and enter heaven in vision while in mortality. At large, it is easier to trust men to teach us rather than applying faith and trust in God to give us light. To trust men is to bring *curses* upon us (2 Ne. 4:34; 28:31). One of these curses is *ignorance* – of God and His ways. In referring to false teachings and traditions that keep us from having a *relationship* with God, scripture tells us that they are given us by "*fathers, priests, and kings*" – imperfect mortals in the home, religion, and government (see Josh. 24:2, 15; D&C 93:39; Mos. 11:7; Matt. 15:9). Most of them provide milk instead of meat – God's glorious truth and light. Because of pride, the desire to get gain, and to be lifted up before others, men present their own wisdom, "*teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*" (Mat. 15:9). This result is

priestcraft. It corrupts God's simple truths over time, those found in what He calls "**my doctrine, my gospel, and my church**" (1 Ne. 22:23). His simple, sacred truths save us! They are often buried beneath men's teachings, traditions, and laws and become heavy, distracting burdens (see Matt. 11:28). In them we are "ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of *the truth*" (2 Tim. 3:7). Our Lord *is* that truth. He said, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life**: no man cometh unto the Father, *but by me*" (John 14:6). Diverted and distracted by the ways of men, rather than focusing on Christ, too many are kept in the bondage of ignorance. Such remain "asleep." Christ told the corrupt Rabbis and lawyers of His day, "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves [entering into my *rest*], neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (JST Luke 23:10). Note also JST Matthew 23:53. "Woe unto you, lawyers! For ye have taken away **the key of knowledge, the fulness of the scriptures**; ye enter not in yourselves *into the kingdom*; and those who were entering in, ye hindered." Meat is available in God's word. We can feast upon it. Too few Saints use the Joseph Smith translation of the the Bible, along with the Book of Mormon. God said that they together are "*the fulness of my scriptures*" (D&C 42:12, 15, 56 & 59, see the footnote for verse 56 in *older* scriptures. The newer LDS scriptures have eliminated the reference to the JST).

Removing Deception If we diligently search out God in His word (personal revelation and scripture, the rod of iron taking us to the Tree of Life), our ignorance, false teachings and traditions will be replaced with light and truth. A greater desire to come to **know** our Savior will then naturally develop. He said, "And whoso treasureth up **my word**, shall not be *deceived*" (JST Matthew 1:37). Matthew added that we should live, "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3). Scripture is a Urim and Thummim for each of us, especially when tied to the Spirit of revelation. The glorious light of our Lord's *doctrine, gospel, and church* unfold upon us in His word. It is true doctrine, His *doctrine*. He spoke of "**my doctrine,**" "**my gospel,**" and "**my church**" in this important *order* in 3 Nephi, adding that they are "**my rock.**" Note the summary of Christ's 3rd Nephi teachings below:

"Hearken, O ye Gentiles [us], and hear the words of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, which he hath *commanded* me that I should speak concerning you, for behold he *commandeth* me that I should write, saying: Turn, all ye Gentiles, from **your** wicked ways; and **repent** of *your* evil doings, of *your* **lyings** and **deceivings**, and of *your* whoredoms, and of *your* secret abominations, and *your* idolatries, and of *your* murders, and *your* priestcrafts, and *your* envyings, and *your* strifes, and from all *your* wickedness and abominations, and **come unto me**, and be baptized in **my name**, that ye may receive a **remission** of *your* sins, and be **filled with the Holy Ghost**, that ye may be numbered with **my people** who are of the house of Israel" (3 Ne. 30:1-2).

These words address **our** need to throw off deception, false traditions, and fear of man, and realize **our** need for (1) **repentance**. This must be followed by two baptisms, (2) one of water, (3) and one of fire. Only then are we through **the gate** and onto the path to *eternal life*, where we enter our Lord's presence – His rest. To do so, we must first learn to discern **truth** versus deception. Related statements by the Lord and the Prophet Joseph Smith include:

"For they that are *wise* and have received *the truth*, and have taken *the Holy Spirit for their guide*, and have **not been deceived**—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day" (D&C 45:57).

"the influence of that spirit . . . hath so strongly riveted the creeds of the fathers, who have *inherited lies*, upon the hearts of the children, and filled the world with confusion, and has been growing stronger and stronger, and is now the very mainspring of all corruption, and the whole earth groans under the weight of its iniquity. It is an iron yoke, it is a strong band; they are the very handcuffs, and chains, and shackles, and fetters of hell...For there are many yet on the earth among **all** sects, parties, and denominations, who are **blinded** by *the subtle craftiness of men whereby they lie in wait to deceive*, and who are only kept from *the truth* because they know not where to find it—Therefore, that we should waste and wear out our lives in bringing to light all the hidden things of darkness..." (D&C 123:7-8, 12-13; also 46:8; 76:75).

"A man is saved no faster than he gets *knowledge* [of truth] for if he does not get *knowledge*, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world..." (Joseph Smith, TPJS, p. 217). "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance" (D&C 131:6). God said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).

Ignorance God can be our personal mentor if we will allow Him to be. To choose men as our sources of light is to reject God and and walk in darkness at mid-day (D&C 95:6). Joseph Smith read James 1:5 as a youth and went straight to God for wisdom. He was confronted by darkness first. Then a pillar of light enveloped Him and truth was revealed. The Father and the Son are the source of all light and truth. Christ said, "I am the Light and Life of the World" (3 Ne. 11:11). All men are weak by comparison. We rely on academics, leaders, and others to teach us when God's word in personal revelation and scripture is available. When we receive the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, greater light is given us via the gift of the Holy Ghost. Revelation and this gift then takes us to the Tree of Life (2 Ne. 32:5), where we receive personal mentoring by the Lord Himself. These important events can thus offer us much more.

We begin this journey by feasting on the word of God already given us in scripture, and going to God in prayer with questions. In a 1829 revelation to Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer, the Lord said, “Behold I give unto you a *commandment, that you rely upon the things which are written*; for in them are all things written, concerning *my church*, *my gospel*, and *my rock*. Wherefore if you shall build up *my church*, and *my gospel*, and *my rock*, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you” (Chap. 15, verse 4 of the Book of Commandments, the early D&C). The Saints are very fortunate to have Joseph’s revelations, the Book of Mormon, and the JST version of the Bible to enlighten us. God calls them “*the fulness of my scriptures*” (D&C 42:12, 15, 56, 59). They teach us how to rely on Him for truth and guidance – how to receive revelation – and how to receive Him as our personal mentor. He invites us to receive Him and His best gifts when he repeatedly states, “*repent* and *come unto me*.” Too many are unbelieving. Too few apply this invitation.

Unbelief Ten of the twelve spies Moses sent into the Promised Land came back with “*an evil report*” (Num. 13-14) because of their *unbelief*. They didn’t *believe* they could defeat their powerful enemies who then inhabited the land of Canaan, even though they had God on their side. Joshua (of Joseph through Ephraim) and Caleb (of Judah) believed and doubted not. Both men were allowed to enter the Promised Land because of it. Their bloodlines were richly blessed thereafter for their **belief**, **faith**, and **trust in God** – the great Deliverer. These blessed bloodlines were given rights to *priesthood* and *kingship* respectively (see Gen. 49). Obedience, faith and trust lead to great gifts and blessings.

Unbelief in Christ is a great sin among us today (Morm. 9:6-37). We must believe in Him as little children (3 Ne. 9:22), if we are to *part the veil* of unbelief and **come to Christ** (see **Ether 4:11-16**). Mormon said unbelief causes the spiritual gifts to disappear, important gifts like revelation, prophecy, healing, tongues, and more. Too many live in unbelief today. They reap the sad loss of the gifts of the Spirit. Instead of trusting God who said, “**come follow me**,” many trust in a well-meaning modern mantra, “*follow the prophet*.” It is not found in scripture. Throughout God’s word we are continually warned that trusting in man, “the arm of flesh,” will bring **curses** upon us (see 2 Ne. 4:34, 28:3-13, 31). All mortals are imperfect. Nevertheless we should respectfully listen to leaders, but always check their words against the word of God given us in scripture and that of the Holy Ghost. God invites all of us to *come to Him* and *follow Him*. **He is “the way, the truth, and the light.”** The Lord said, “For **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” (Jer. 2:13). *Man is that broken cistern*. King David said, “It is better to trust in the Lord than put confidence in man” (Psalm 118:8). This is the exact, chiasmic center scripture of the Bible – and for good reason. God must be our center focus, our light. He must be our rock! The first great commandment is to love God with all our heart. The first principle of the gospel is *faith in Christ*. Nephi said, “O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. *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; see also 2 Ne. 28).

Christ repeatedly told His followers to be like little children and “and doubt not but *be believing*” – **in Him** (Mat. 18:3; Morm. 9:27; D&C 90:24). He said, “...whoso **repenteth** and **cometh unto me as a little child**, *him will I receive*, for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (3 Ne. 9:22). Children trust loving, wise parents. We must put our complete faith and trust in God, not men. He is our Creator, Redeemer and Deliverer. Throughout scripture it was the Lord who delivered His people, not weak man. If we sincerely seek God and His truth, we will find both. His truth is a dividing sword, both quick and powerful. It separates truth from error. The courageous and wise embrace it, even when it may be hard to accept. As we turn to God rather than the arm of flesh (2 Ne. 4:34; Jer. 2:13; Psalm 118:8) we begin to awaken to our “*awful situation*” (Ether 8:24), our *unsaved condition*, as we near the harvest time of souls (D&C 45:2, 56:16-17; Jer. 8:20). We see our great need to **repent** and **come unto Christ**. He is the Father of our salvation. He is “**the way**.” There is **no other way** (Mos. 3:17; Alma 38:9). I am grateful for *the fulness of scriptures* brought forth by the Prophet Joseph Smith, and for my membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Both have helped me find Him.

The fulness of the word of God (scripture and revelation) leads us to Christ and His greatest gifts (Mor. 10:30). They include the first comforter (the Holy Ghost), the gifts of the Spirit, the whole armour of God, and the Second Comforter (His presence, John 14:16-23). He is the True Vine. We are to be branches, bearing fruit. The gifts of the Spirit come from God alone. To receive them, we must be believing - in Him, like a child (3 Ne. 11:37-39), full of love for God and one another, and have complete faith and trust in Christ the Lord. He is the gate to heaven. Embracing the doctrine of Christ – His truth – sets us free (John 8:32).

Strong Delusion Three primary scriptures lead us to light and the Lord’s **rest**. Please read them (1 Nephi 14:10, D&C 10:67, and 1 Nephi 22:23). They are tied to *the right way* among two paths. We have choice as presented us in “the doctrine of *the Two Ways*” (Deut. 30:19).¹ They are opposing pathways to God or Satan, life or death, and are tied to progression or damnation – heaven or hell. They lead to a *sealing* - to God (Mosiah 5:15) or to Satan (Alma 34:35, 5:38-39). We may choose light and truth, or lies and deception. There is love and opportunity, or control and manipulation. Paul addressed this in 2 Thessalonians 2. “*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day (the great and dreadful day of Christ’s return – He who provides light and truth) shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son*

of perdition.” He will be revealed first (v. 3). He will come with deception, with “power and signs and lying wonders” (v. 9). And many will receive him as their “Lord,” “because they receive, “not the love of *the truth*, that they might be **saved**” (v. 10). Instead they choose the things of Babylon; getting gain, materialism, power, and the lusts of the flesh. “And for this cause *God shall send them strong delusion*, that they should believe a lie. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:3-12). Christ’s way is “**The Way**” – *of life and salvation!* Both receive the desires of their *hearts* (Alma 29:4; Isa. 66:2-4; Prov. 23:7; James 4:3; Ezek. 14:1-11). Nephi tells us:

“There are save **two churches** only” (1 Ne. 14:10).

The Church of Christ – built on the Rock (D&C 10:67)

1. **Repent** and
2. **Come unto Me**

The Church of Men & Satan – built on sand (1 Ne. 22:23)

1. Seek **gain** *selfishly*, often at the expense of the people
2. Seek **power** *over flesh*
3. Seek to be **popular** *in the eyes of the world*
4. Seek the **lusts** *of the flesh*
5. Seek the **things** *of the world*
6. Seek *to do all manner of* **iniquity**
7. **Such** *belong to the kingdom of the devil*

Names for God’s Church

The Church of the Firstborn or Lamb (1 Ne. 14:10; D&C 76:54; Heb. 12:23)
 The Virgin Bride of the Lamb, His wife (Rev. 19:7)
 The Kingdom of God (Jacob 2:18)
 The Church of Christ (3 Ne. 27:8; 4 Ne. 26)
 The Holy Church of God (Morm. 8:38)
 The True Faith (3 Ne. 6:14) & Fold of God (1 Ne. 15:15)

Names for the other Church

The Great and Abominable Church (1 Ne. 22:23)
 The Whore, The Whore of Babylon (Rev. 14:15)
 The Kingdom of the Devil (2 Ne. 28:21)
 MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,
 THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
 AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH (Rev. 17:3)
 The Great Harlot (Rev. 17:1-2)

Primary Scriptures

D&C 10:67-68; 1 Ne. 10:18-19; 2 Ne. 28:32;
 Jacob 1:7; Alma 5:33-34; 3 Ne. 9:14, 20-22;
 3 Ne. 12:19-20, 23-24; D&C 93:1; Mos. 5:15

Primary Scriptures

1 Nephi 14:10 & 1 Nephi 22:23
 Alma 5:38-39 & 34:35

God’s Will & Word

The following twelve scriptures address “*the only true doctrine of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*” (2 Ne. 31:21). In the first four scriptures below we learn that those who refuse God’s *invitation* and *command* to “**repent** and **come to me** [Christ]” are (1) led into **temptation**; (2) They are under *the bondage of sin*; (3) They are finally **cut off** from among His people; (4) If we do *the will of the Father*, we will **come unto Christ** and be **saved**. There is no other way (see 2 Ne. 31:21; John 10:1).

I have **commanded**...*that ye should come unto me, that ye might feel and see*; even so shall ye do unto the world; and *whosoever breaketh this commandment suffereth himself to be led into temptation* (3 Ne. 18:25).

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...(D&C 84:50-53).

For it shall come to pass, saith *the Father*, that at that day *whosoever will not repent and come unto my Beloved Son, them will I cut off* from among **my people**, O house of Israel (3 Ne. 21:20).

No man can come unto me, *except he doeth the will of my Father who hath sent me*. And this is the will of him who hath sent me, that ye **receive the Son**; for the Father beareth record of him; and he who receiveth the testimony, and doeth the will of him who sent me, *I will raise up in the resurrection of the just*. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that **no man can come unto me**, *except he doeth the will of my Father who hath sent me* (JST John 6:44 - 45).

In the next eight scriptures we read of the invitation to enter the Lord’s **rest**, rather than being **cut off** from his presence.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and *I will give you rest* (Matt. 11:28).

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** (D&C 84:23-25).

And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two other tablets 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 wrath, 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 Ex. 34:1-2).

Harden not your hearts, as in **the provocation**, in **the day of temptation** in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their heart*; and they have not known **my ways**. So I swear in my wrath, *They shall not enter into my rest*. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an **evil heart of unbelief**, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called **Today**; lest any of you be **hardened** through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ [the heavenly gift, the Tree of Life], if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; While it is said, **Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation**. For some, when they had heard, did **provoke**: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swore he that **they should not enter into his rest**, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could **not enter in because of unbelief** (Heb. 3:8-19).

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of **entering into his rest**, any of you should seem to **come short of it**. For unto us was **the rest** preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with **faith** in them that heard *it*. For **we who have believed do enter into rest**, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, **if they harden their hearts they shall not enter into my rest**; also, I have sworn, **If they will not harden their hearts, they shall enter my rest**; although the works of God were prepared, (or finished,) from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, **If they shall harden not their hearts they shall enter into my rest**. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached **entered not in because of unbelief**: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, **To day**, after so long atime; as it is said, **Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts**. For if **Jesus had given them rest**, then *would he not afterward have spoken of another day*. There remaineth therefore a **rest** to the people of God. For he that is **entered into his rest**, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to **enter into that rest**, lest any man fall after the same example of **unbelief** (JST Heb. 4:1-11).

Note Paul's use of the word "**today**" in the scriptures above - meaning *in this life, this particular day of probation*, or *now*, and that we must "**hear his [God's] voice**" and "**harden not your hearts**" with "**unbelief**," if we are to enter our Lord's presence. The Lord in D&C 64:25 states, "Wherefore, *if ye believe me*, ye will **labor while it is called today**." Note also His words in D&C 45:6, "Hearken, O ye people of **my church**, and ye elders *listen together*, and **hear my voice while it is called today, and harden not your hearts**." Note also D&C 76:73-78; 2 Ne. 9:27; Alma 34:33; 40:3-5 and 42:4, 13. Finally, note Jacob and Alma's words hereafter relative to entering the Lord's rest.

Wherefore we labored diligently among our people, that we might persuade them to **come unto Christ**, and **partake of the goodness of God**, that they might **enter into his rest**, lest by any means he should swear in his wrath **they should not enter in**, as in **the provocation** in **the days of temptation** while the children of Israel were in the wilderness (Jacob 1:7).

Therefore, whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on *mercy* through mine Only Begotten Son, unto a **remission of his sins**; and **these shall enter into my rest**. And whosoever will **harden his heart** and will do *iniquity*, behold, I swear in *my wrath* that **he shall not enter into my rest**. And now, my brethren, behold I say unto you, that **if ye will harden your hearts ye shall not enter into the rest of the Lord**; therefore your iniquity **provoketh** him that he sendeth down his wrath upon you as in the first **provocation**, yea, according to his word in the last **provocation** as well as the first, to the everlasting destruction of your souls; therefore, according to his word, unto the last death, as well as the first. And now, my brethren, seeing we know these things, and they are true, **let us repent**, and **harden not our hearts**, that we **provoke** not the Lord our God to pull down his wrath upon us in these his second commandments which he has given unto us; but **let us enter into the rest of God**, which is prepared according to his word (Alma 12:34-37).

And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might **enter into his rest**—Now they, after being **sanctified by the Holy Ghost, having their garments made white**, being pure and spotless before God, could not look upon **sin** save it were with abhorrence; and there were many, exceedingly great many, who were made pure and **entered into the rest of the Lord their God**. And now, my brethren, I would that ye should **humble yourselves before God, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance**, that ye may also **enter into that rest** (Alma 13:6, 12-13; see also Matthew 11:28).

How do we Come to the Lord & Enter His Rest?

The words of the song *Amazing Grace* reveal the fruit of our belief in Christ. “Where once I was lost and blind, **now I see**.” To receive the Lord literally is to *see, feel*, and **know** of His reality, as did all those in the first verses of 3rd Nephi 11. The marks of the atonement in His body are “*the infallible proofs*” or the “*signs and tokens*” of His love for us. It is to receive real **knowledge** of the reality of God and His love for you and I. And this is how we return to Him, by having real love for Him. It is the secret weapon in *parting the veil* – of our *unbelief*, and “*prevailing*” with the Lord. He said, “If ye continue in **my word**, then are ye **my disciples** indeed; And ye shall **know the truth**, and *the truth* shall make you free” (John 8:32). God frees us from **sin, death**, and **hell** as we feast upon His word. Hell is separation from God. Christ stated, “I am the way, *the truth*, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father, except by me” (John 14:6). It is adhering to the first, great commandment – **to love God** with all our heart, mind, and strength that will bring us home! This is the great secret.

Too many are “*ever learning* but never able to come to the **knowledge of the truth**” (2 Tim. 3:7). That *truth* is the reality of Christ Jesus, our Savior, and His great love for us. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that we must receive truth (**knowledge**) or we will be deceived, brought into captivity (TPJS, p. 217). Joseph was referring to two types of **knowledge**, that of the reality of God and that of dark forces that keep us from Him. Both are real. Joseph sought **knowledge of God from God** – not man. He experienced both darkness and light in His first vision. We have come to this earth to learn by experience. At least eight key phrases in scripture refer to receiving our Lord literally – to **come to Him**.

To “**know the Lord**” (JST Matt. 7:33, 25:10-11; John 10:4; 17:3; Mos. 5:13; D&C 93:1; 112:26; 132:22)

To “**come unto Christ**” (D&C 10:67-68; 93:1; 1 Ne. 10:18-19; 2 Ne. 28:32; Jacob 1:7; Alma 5:33-34; 3 Ne. 9:14, 20-22; 3 Ne. 12:19-20, 23-24)

To “**enter His rest**” (Alma 12:34-37; 13:6, 12-13; D&C 84:24; JST Ex. 34:1-2; Heb. 3:8-19; 4:1-11)

To receive “**the heavenly gift**” (4 Ne. 1:3; Ether 12:8; Heb. 6:44)

To receive “**another**” or “**Second Comforter**” (John 14:16, footnote 16a, older LDS scriptures, now says Holy Ghost)

To have “**the testimony of Jesus**” (Rev. 12:17; 19:10; D&C 46:13-14; 76:51, 101; 88:4, 74-75; Mor. 10:8)

To be a “**partaker of the Tree of Life**” and its fruit (Alma 5:62)

To receive the promise of those making the Nazarite vow: “The Lord **make his face shine upon thee** and be *gracious* unto thee. The Lord **lift up His countenance upon thee** and **give thee peace**” (Num. 6:25-26)

3 Sacrifices & Altars – to negate Sin, Death & Hell

In ancient Israel, God put in place three special offerings in the older covenant or law that symbolized the required sacrifices needed to return to Him. There was (1) the *sin* offering [atonement], (2) the *burnt* offering [sanctification], and (3) the *peace* offering [fellowship]² (Lev. 9:22-24). See illustration on page 25. These three offerings were made in sequence by the priest in a number of important Bible settings, to negate the effects of *sin, death*, and *hell* (separation from God). These sequential offerings were followed by the coming of the fiery glory or presence of the Lord on four separate occasions in the Bible; (1) at Sinai (Ex. 24:1-10); (2) when Moses’ Tabernacle was dedicated later (Lev. 9:22); (3) when David dedicated the first altar at Jerusalem (4 Chron. 3:1); And (4) when his son Solomon dedicated the finished Temple (it included David’s altar, see 2 Chron. 7:1). In Numbers 6, Nazarites who *dedicated* and *separated* themselves unto God (becoming “holy unto the Lord”), also offered up these same three offerings (if they were defiled by contact with *death*). Note in verses 25 and 26 of Numbers 6 that those who chose to make themselves “*holy unto the Lord*” in the Nazarite Vow were blessed with a special promise, that; “The Lord **make his face shine upon thee**, and *be gracious unto thee*. The Lord **lift up his countenance upon thee**, and **give thee peace**.” Like Nazarites, today we can choose to become “holy unto the Lord” through the modern sacrifice he has asked us to present to Him – *a broken heart and contrite spirit*. We can then **come to Him** on his holy hill – with *clean hands* and a *pure heart* (Psalm 24:3-6).

Christ fulfilled the blood sacrifice portion of *the older covenant* (see 3 Ne. 9:19-22). We are to make a *new covenant* with God today with *related offerings* – that we might **come to Him**. With them we can re-enter His presence and eventually that of Father and Mother. They include three modern offerings leading to our salvation, and are: (1) *faith* in Christ, leading to *repentance*, and then a *watery baptism*. We are **purified** in them through Christ’s atonement and our repentance and the covenant we make with God in the baptism. This is followed by, (2) the *baptism of fire* and *the Holy Ghost*. In this important event we are **sanctified** and redeemed of God by His fiery *Spirit*, receiving “the first comforter” or the gift of the Holy Ghost as our guide thereafter. It is the culmination of *the invitation to receive it* at confirmation following baptism. Then (3) holding

tightly to *the iron rod*, **God's word** in direct **revelation** and the gift of the Holy Ghost, we are given knowledge of *how* to come to the Tree of Life and Fountain of Living Water in further repentance and prayer – crying out to God for His mercy. We then receive Christ literally, “*the heavenly gift*” (4th Ne. 1:3; Ether 12:8; Heb. 6:44), as our face-to-face “*Second Comforter*.” We now have **fellowship** with God.

The Lord commanded us, to teach this important three-step pathway **to Him** – to our children. He did so three times; (1) in Moses 6:57-58, (2) in JST 1 John 5:6-8 & 18, and most clearly in (3) 2 Nephi 31:14-17. There we read:

“...**know** *the gate* by which ye should enter. For *the gate* by which ye should enter is [1] *repentance* and [2] *baptism by water*; and [3] then cometh *a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost*.

These scriptures reveal our need to; (1) **have faith in Christ** sufficient to **repent**, leading to *purification*. This is followed by **baptism** in water, leading to *justification*. This is made complete in step (3) the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, leading to *sanctification* via the blood of Christ. These three steps are “**the way** of salvation” and provide *redemption* for mankind in connection with our Lord's atonement. The Lord requires us to come to Him in *repentance* – with a *broken heart* and *contrite spirit*. It is God's great work and glory, bringing us immortality and eternal life (Moses 1:39). Speaking of these three steps, God stated, “Wherefore **teach it unto your children**, that *all men, everywhere, must repent*, or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence...Therefore I give unto you a **commandment, to teach these things freely unto your children, saying**” –

“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, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory; For by the *water* ye keep the commandment; by the *Spirit* ye are *justified*, and by the *blood* ye are *sanctified*” (Moses 6:61-68, see also John 5:4-8, 18).

These three steps put us on the path or “**the way**” to the Tree of Life – who is Jesus Christ, whereby we receive salvation or eternal life at His hands. Only those holding tightly to *the rod of iron* (the word of God in scripture & revelation from Him) make it to the Tree. These three steps make up what the Lord calls “**my doctrine**” as outlined in 3 Nephi, chapters 9-30 – when he personally instructed His people at Bountiful. His “doctrine”, “gospel”, and “church” are defined and addressed in other parts of the Book of Mormon as well, such as 2 Nephi 31 and 32, where we read, “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*” (2 Ne. 31:21).

The Way – of SALVATION Too few understand and embrace Christ's simple, saving **doctrine** (see 3 Ne. chapters 11, 21, 27), involving these three essential steps. The harvest is near, yet many will not be saved (D&C 45:2), even though they think they will be because of laws, ordinances, and works of men employed. They will not save us. It is by the *grace* of Christ that we are saved, after all we can do (2 Ne. 25:23). First, we must come to the knowledge of our Redeemer, and develop **faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ**. Then we must **repent** and literally **come unto Christ**. This is **how** we are **saved** (see 1 Ne. 15:14). Too many cannot get past step 1 - **faith in the Lord Jesus Christ**. It is heartfelt faith in Christ that leads to real **repentance**. Modern idolatry is to blame. Christ has become a “*stumbling block*,” a “rock of offense” for many. He is the “*stone*” which “*the builders*” continually “*reject*” (Psalm 118:22) in favor of men, churches, and programs – man's religion. Christ as a stumbling block is addressed in 2 Nephi 18:14, 1 Corinthians 1:23, and Romans 9:33. He is replaced with the learning of men (2 Ne. 26:20), whereas the simplicity or easiness of “**the way**” is all that is necessary to save us. We have only to look to Christ to be saved – to believe in Him (see 1 Ne. 17:41; John 6:26-48; see also 1 Nephi chapters 13 and 14, D&C 10, 3 Nephi 9-12, Alma chapters 32 & 33, Alma 5, and 2 Ne. 10:24).

Too many of us have been taught to place our faith and trust in men rather than God. This influences what we believe. Many from other denominations accuse Latter-day Saints of not being Christian, as they perceive Christ is not the center of worship for many of the Saints. This is something we must **repent** of. We must *turn* completely to God (Jesus Christ) in full *submission* to Him – doing so with a *broken heart* and *contrite spirit*. Turning to Him involves three cleansing steps, all part of “**the way**” of *salvation*. We have been commanded to teach **the way** to our children in Moses 6:56-80. In it we are cleansed by *water*, *fire*, and *blood*. Hereafter, these three cleansing steps are separated into five for greater clarity.

A. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ Faith in Christ is the *first* principle of the gospel. We must come to a true knowledge of our Redeemer, His character and attributes, that we might develop strong faith, trust, and love in Him. By doing so we can receive Him and the great blessings of His gospel.

B. **Repentance** Real faith in Jesus Christ leads us to **repentance** – a desire to *turn* to Him. It is “**faith unto repentance**” (Alma 34:15-17), or faith leading to heartfelt **repentance**, which is characterized by “*a broken heart and contrite spirit*” (2 Ne. 2:7; 3 Ne. 9:20; Ether 4:15; Mor. 6:1-4; D&C 59:8, 97:8; Psalm 34:18 & 51:17). Real repentance involves *confessing* to all involved and to God, and then *forsaking* the sin (not repeating it). It involves submitting our will to God.

C. **Baptism by Water** The next step on *the way* is **baptism** by immersion in pure, living waters. The writers of the Book of Mormon call this step “*baptism unto repentance*,” meaning it is to be preceded by *real repentance* (Mos. 26:22; Alma 5:62; Hel. 5:17, 19; 3 Ne. 1:23; 7:25-26). Steps A, B & C lead to our **purification** via Christ’s atonement, combined with our heartfelt repentance, and our covenant with God in the outward act of physical baptism in *water*.

D. **Baptism by Fire and the Holy Ghost** The fourth step is where we are “*born again*” in Christ (John 3:3-6; Mos. 27:24-26), receiving a *remission* of sins and a *mighty change of heart*. It is to be **redeemed** from our sins or *saved* through Christ’s blood, to have them fully *remitted* (2 ne. 31:17-18). We are **sanctified** by God’s fiery *Spirit* in this event, and receive the precious *gift of the Holy Ghost* as the first comforter - our teaching companion. When we pass through *this gate*, we enter onto “**the way**” to *eternal life* (as characterized by the beatitudes Christ taught in 3 Nephi chapter 12). The revelatory gift or endowment of the Holy Ghost then becomes our “*iron rod*” (along with Christ’s direct word) taking us to the Tree of Life. Holding it tightly, we **press forward** in faith until we finally **receive the presence of the Lord personally** and His choicest gifts and blessings (2 Ne. 31:19-21). This is to be fully **redeemed from the fall** (of Adam and Eve, when they were expelled from God’s presence), returning to the Lord’s presence in this life as did the brother of Jared (see Ether 3:13). In 2 Nephi 32:4-6 we are encouraged to seek God and ask questions relative to our progress along “**the way**” of salvation. If we do not understand the written word or impressions from the Spirit, “...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** [the gate of the baptism of fire] 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 [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**” (2 Ne. 32:4-6). God requires a specific sacrifice to receive this priceless blessing. It is *a broken heart and a contrite spirit* - our willingness to fully submit to His will (3 Ne. 9:20).

E. **Hold Tight to the Iron Rod and Arrive at the Tree of Life** The gift or endowment of *the Holy Ghost* (the first comforter), along with direct *revelation* from God and the *written word* of God, is *the iron rod* that will take us to **the Tree of Life**, including the glory and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. He, as *the Heavenly Gift* (see 4th Ne. 1:3; Ether 12:8; Heb. 6:44), then becomes our personal mentor in this life as the Second Comforter. We are then connected to Him as a fruit-bearing branch in the Tree of Life. To receive Him here, we must part the veil of *unbelief* through our **love of God**, not through our works or the law (Eph. 2:2-3; 2 Ne. 25:23). It is *relationship* that matters, not religion or ritual. We then have **fellowship** with God as one of His sons or daughters, rightful heirs of the promised blessings of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph sold into Egypt. This is to be fully **redeemed from the fall** (Ether 3:13). To receive this greatest of blessings, we must fully submit to the will of God in all things. There must be real, heartfelt desire to progress to this point in our lives.

Plain and Precious Things Instruction tied to “**the way**” of salvation makes up “*the plain and precious things*” removed from much of the Bible by evil and designing men. It has been placed in the Book of Mormon for you and I. The Lord refers to it as “**my doctrine, my gospel, my church, and my rock**” in the Book of Mormon and the D&C (see D&C 10:67-68; 1 Ne. 10:18-19; 2 Ne. 9:23-24; 28:31-32; Jacob 1:7; Alma 5:33-34; Mor. 7:34; D&C 93:1; 3 Ne. 9:14, 22, 51; 11:14; 12:19-20, 23-24; 27:5-21; 30:1-2).

Are You Saved or Redeemed? The Lord said, “Hearken, O ye people of my church, to whom the kingdom has been given; hearken ye and give ear to him who laid the foundation of the earth, who made the heavens and all the hosts thereof, and by whom all things were made which live, and move, and have a being. And again I say, hearken unto my voice, lest death shall overtake you; in an hour when ye think not **the summer shall be past, and the harvest ended, and your souls not saved**” (D&C 45:1-2). Note also D&C 56; “Wo unto you rich men, that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls; and this shall be your lamentation in the day of visitation, and of judgment, and of indignation: **The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved!** Wo unto you poor men, whose hearts are not broken, whose spirits are not contrite, and whose bellies are not satisfied, and whose hands are not stayed from laying hold upon other men’s goods, whose eyes are full of greediness, and who will not labor with your own hands! But **blessed are the poor who are pure in heart, whose hearts are broken, and whose spirits are contrite, for they shall see the kingdom of God** coming in power and great glory **unto their deliverance**; for the fatness of the earth shall be theirs” (D&C 56:16-18). Let’s review the five steps of salvation in more detail.

1. Faith in Christ Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is *the first principle and ordinance of the Gospel*. Faith in Christ is where real **power** originates. The words “*faith*” and “*power*” are interconnected. There is no *power* without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lectures on Faith teach us the power of faith – that *strong faith* is **POWER**. The Lectures on Faith

were the “doctrine” portion of the Doctrine and Covenants until 1921, when a committee removed them from the D&C *without* the vote of the whole church. Today, too many fail in this very first step of having faith and trust in the Lord Jesus. Instead we place our trust in the arm of flesh; men, churches, and their programs instead of the living God. Christ alone has redeemed us. Throughout scripture it is He who continually delivers man, not other men. Note that it is the *wise* who are let into the bridal chamber – those **not** “deceived by *the craftiness of men*” (D&C 76:75). It is they who come to **know** the Lord. They love Him and place their faith and trust and love in Him as their Savior, Deliverer, Judge, King, and God. The wise are wary of man. **Turn** to God instead with your whole heart, in faith and with full submission. We must **not fear** (respect and honor) any man more than God. Christ alone is *the gate* or door to heaven (John 10:9). He employs **no servant** there (2 Ne. 9:41). There is **no** other way (Mos. 3:17; Alma 38:9). Too often men set themselves up as lights between us and God, doing so to get gain and praise of the world (1 Ne. 22-23). This is called *priestcraft* in the Book of Mormon (2 Ne. 26:29). It has led to the downfall of nations. Such men desire us to be ignorant of God’s ways and word (see Matt. 23:13 & JST Luke 11:53), that they might control us for gain, power, and praise. Jesus said we are to hold **Him up as our light** before men, and the things He did and does (see 3 Ne. 18:24).

Two very good sources for developing greater faith are Ether chapters 3, 4 and 12, and the Lectures on Faith, lectures 3 and 4. In them we are taught that to have faith in God, we must understand His character and attributes, that we might love, honor, respect, and **trust** Him completely. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Lectures on Faith then help us build strong *faith* in Him, *faith* sufficient to part the veil of our unbelief and literally come to Christ. **Faith is that power**. Study these resources and incorporate their wisdom into your worship and your *faith* will grow significantly. It can then bare *sweet fruit*.

2. Repentance

A true definition of **repentance** involves *turning* to the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, and *turning* away from sin. We must develop **faith** and **trust** in Him, that we might be redeemed from our sins and become clean. Even those already on “**the way**” must continually *re-turn* or correct their course to maintain proper focus or orientation on our Savior. We must also have *faith unto Repentance*. To receive our Lord and His word, influence, and teaching, we must be clean and worthy of Him. God commanded “*all men everywhere to repent*” (Acts 17:3). He helps us become clean through His merciful atonement. Three times Alma used the phrase “*faith unto repentance*” in Alma 34:15-17 to describe how real faith in Christ leads to sincere, heartfelt **repentance**. To receive our Lord’s mercy we must sincerely **repent** of our sins. We must *confess* them to God and then *forsake* them (D&C 58:43). This means complete submission to Him, **crying out to Him with heartfelt remorse** for our errors, sins, idolatry, unbelief, etc. Eight times in Alma 34 he uses the word “**cry**” when addressing *heartfelt prayer*. Alma used this word again a single time in Alma 36:18 in connection with his fiery baptism and seeing God (vs. 22 & 26). Real **repentance** requires us to change by first seeing the reality of our awful situation. Seek forgiveness first from those you have offended here on earth (3 Ne. 12:24), then cry out to God for mercy. Complete remission of sins can then follow.

What do Believers Repent of & How? Like the Pharisee’s at the time of Jesus, we are often very busy keeping many **laws** given us by men and churches. They are part of **the Tree of Knowledge** and the **deadness** of **the law** (see Ne. 25:27). Regular church and temple attendance may provide useful symbolic instruction, but they will not save us, nor will home and visiting teaching and other works of men. We are saved by Christ’s **grace** after all we can do (2 Ne. 25:23). Callings keep us very busy and may become a distraction, keeping us from what matters most – a *relationship* with God – **the Tree of Life**. Good people like Martha in Luke 10:38-42 were busy doing lesser things. Martha believed she was serving the Lord in her busy-ness. Her sister Mary, however, was focused on the better part. She sat at the feet of the Master, learning from Him personally. Martha learned much *about* the Lord, but Mary came to **know** Him, spending time *with* Him. She eventually had the great privilege of anointing His feet and head with sacred things, symbolizing her deeper relationship with our Savior. His title as the Bridegroom symbolizes the heartfelt *relationship* He desires with us, not the **deadness** of the **law** in man’s religion.

Repentance is often tied to the concepts of **remove** and **replace**. Each “*re*” word signals being *re-born* or made new.

1. **Turn** fully to God. The stated purpose of the church in the LDS handbook of instructions is – to “**come unto Christ**.”
2. Come out of **Babylon**. Replace trivial things with those of greater light.
3. Remove **idolatry** tied to men and things and focus instead on God.
4. Remove **unbelief**. Replace it with faith and trust in the living God, our Savior and Redeemer.
5. **Repent** of all your sins and iniquities, those not previously taken care of. Start with family. This involves confessing your error to those all involved, forsaking the sin (not repeating it), and submitting our will to God. We must cry out to Him for mercy and forgiveness.

1. Turn or Re-turn to the Lord fully The Hebrew definition of “repent” is to turn or re-turn - to God. We are to seek His face, the light and countenance of the true and living God. He is the source for all things of worth. Scripture continually speaks of us as the bride (the body of believers) and the Bridegroom (Christ). Focus on developing a heartfelt *relationship* with God rather than practicing *religion*, which is often tied to pleasing and fearing men, who want money, control, and

status. God wants our heart. We must give Him our whole heart, one that is broken, along with a contrite spirit. This is the full submission required to have our sins remitted, to receive the fiery baptism of the Holy Ghost.

2. *Remove Darkness and Come out of Babylon* Seeking the light of the Lord means removing darkness first. Start by limiting the intake of the worldly influences into your body, mind, and heart via an excess of more trivial things like entertainment (TV, movies, sports, computers) and the “busy ness” of various responsibilities (work, church, etc.) that often take you away from what really matters – a relationship with God and family. May I suggest replacing a greater portion of them with consistent “holy time” each day, time apart with the Lord, where you concentrate on Him in prayer, reading, developing the gifts of the Spirit, etc., all without distraction. For me, this is early morning (5-7 am). Doing so provides focus on learning to hear God’s voice in revelation, via prayer, meditation, writing answers, etc. Don’t forget sincere worship. This can include good music, singing, and even dancing before the Lord to show your love and gratitude for him. There is no substitute for time with Him, if you are to come to **know** Him. Show Him you are serious about your growth. He will respond. Don’t fear man more than God. This may involve removing yourself from the “hamster-wheel” of busy-ness with lesser things, *the dead things of the law*, rather things helping you come “**alive in Christ**,” important things like revelation and the gifts of the Spirit. Without goals, focusing on things that really matter, and change, you will remain in the same old rut.

3. *Remove all Idolatry* The first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Savior, our Light, the Fountain of Living Waters. He must be our Rock (Hel. 5:12), our sure foundation, not men, churches, programs, etc. We must believe in Him and have Faith and Trust in Him (Psalm 118:8; 2 Ne. 4:34), not the dead things of men and the law. Though there is good in the church, temple, and leaders, etc., they should not replace God as our source of light and worship. The temple provides symbolic teaching tied to parting the veil, but it is not the real thing. Christ spoke to the Pharisees about the deadness of the law alone, rather than being “alive” in Him (2 Ne. 25:26-29). We should seek His Seal of approval, not that of men. To “**fear**” God is to show **respect** and **honor** for Him. We must raise Him up as our *high tower*, our *source of light* and *living water*. Broken cisterns (imperfect man) cannot hold *living water* (Jer. 2:13).

4. *Remove Unbelief* The great sin of *unbelief* is addressed throughout the Book of Mormon (Morm. 1:14, 9:20; 3 Ne. 19:35; Ether 4:13; D&C 63:17). Replace it with it with child-like belief, faith, and trust in God. Christ used little children as our example in this regard. They are eager to believe and trust in loving parents. Believe that God will help you and cleanse you - that He will speak to you. He is mighty to save. We can be made perfect in Him (forgiven). As we seek this, our lives will be transformed. If you desire the baptism of fire or a particular gift of the Spirit, consider giving up something as a sacrifice for a specific time period. Consider making personal covenants with God, much like Nazarites in Numbers 6, men and women who desired to be “*holy unto the Lord*.” Many have made personal vows or covenants with the Lord in this way. Personal vows or covenants help us stay on track in reaching worthy goals.

5. *Repent* Pray for strength and resolve to remove the things in your life that are holding you back. **TURN TO GOD**, then make changes, and sincerely ask God for forgiveness, along with those unresolved things in your past. There may be unresolved words and actions with your spouse and your children that have stained you. Ask their sincere forgiveness one by one. Then proceed to friends, associates, neighbors, etc., until you have made peace with all those you have offended or hurt. Don’t forget to forgive all those who have hurt you. The Lord will then freely forgive you, and make you clean via a complete purging and burning out of all sin in the baptism of fire and Holy Ghost addressed hereafter. **Confess** your sins to God. **Forsake** the sins (D&C 58:43). It must not be repeated. **Submit** your will to the living God and seek His approval and seal (Mos. 5:15). Note in scripture how those who really loved the Lord Jesus often prostrated themselves on the ground willingly before Him (3 Ne. 11:12, 17), some *crying out for mercy* (Alma 36:18). One meaning of the word “*worship*” is “to lay prostrate.” True worship involves *submission*, along with knowing who and what we worship, and how to worship (see D&C 93:19). Purity of our **heart** is the goal. Come to God with *clean hands* (actions) and pure heart (intention) – a broken heart, and a contrite spirit (3 Ne. 9:20). You will then be made new. Our Savior will redeem you. You will be saved. We are to be cleansed in this life, that we might be **sealed** to God (Mos. 5:15), rather than to Satan³ (see Alma 34:32-35), and be given the Holy Ghost as our guide. We can then make it to the Tree.

3. Baptism

We make a *covenant* to remember our Lord and keep His commandments in the baptism ordinance (and in the Sacrament ordinance thereafter). God’s commandments are written in scripture, with others given us personally by way of revelation. The outward token of this covenant is *baptism* in water, where the old person is laid in a watery grave. A new person can then come forth because of the combination of our faith in Christ leading to heartfelt *repentance*, and the power of His blood to cleanse us. The Lord said that we must be “baptized in **my name**” (3 Ne. 12:37-38). This means it must be tied to faith **in Him** and **repentance first**. Alma and others used the term, “**baptized unto repentance**” (see Mos. 26:22; Alma 5:62, 7:14; Hel. 5:17, 19; 3 Ne. 1:23; 7:25-26). This type of *repentance* is “*the fruit*” mentioned in Moroni 6:1-2, where *members* of the church there (“elders, priests, and teachers”) were baptized again, but not until they proved “*worthy*” of it (see also Mor. 8:10). Many are baptized *into churches* without three important things; (1) sufficient **faith or belief in Christ**, (2) without real **repentance first**, and (3) without **making a covenant with God** to stand for Him in all places and all times, to remember Him, and to bear one another’s burdens (see Mosiah 18:8-10). Without these things, baptism by water is an empty rite.

Some churches practice infant baptism. The child has no choice in the matter and certainly does not express faith in Christ, nor does he or she *repent* in a heartfelt way. Children are not capable of sin in the first place. Many Latter-day Saints are baptized at eight years old. Few at this age demonstrate sufficient faith, belief, and trust in Christ. Few have a broken heart and contrite spirit. Baptism is not often their choice, but comes because of tradition from well-meaning parents or leaders. “**Baptism unto repentance**,” on the other hand, is “John’s baptism” (Acts 19:3-4). It is *choosing* to be baptized by *free-will*, doing so in what the Lord calls, “*my name*.” It is more about a real desire to *come to Christ*, than joining a church. It is about devotion, love, faith, and trust *in Him*, leading to heartfelt repentance – all *prior* to being symbolically buried in the water. *Commitment* and *conversion* to Christ must be center stage in the baptism covenant, not church membership.

Alma was a priest in Noah’s court of priests. He heard the powerful words of Abinadi and was *converted* to Christ. He was inspired by them, and through personal revelation. Both motivated him to be baptized again at the waters of Mormon. It was part of a new commitment to God. Alma sought the same for others too. He understood that there must be a full conversion to Christ prior to both repentance and the covenant of baptism. He also saw a need for a *reformation* and *restoration* of truths among his people, those who had already been baptized (see Alma 5:62). They had either drifted away from their commitment to the Lord, or they never had it in the first place. Thus, he had them baptized again as part of real commitment to Christ and His doctrine, gospel, and church.

Both Alma the elder and Alma the younger were preaching to *members of the church* in their day. In Alma chapter 5 we note Alma the younger’s effort as leader over the church in helping his people *renew* or *reform* their covenants with God (see Alma 5:14, 26 & 62). In this same chapter he also spoke of the necessity of the *baptism of fire* experience or being “**born again**” in Christ *after* the watery baptism. He had experienced this fiery spiritual rebirth himself and taught it to his people, that they too might be brought to Christ (see also chapter 36). The Twelve Disciples of the Master in 3 Nephi 19:9-21 experienced the watery baptism first, and then the baptism of fire immediately afterwards. This occurred because they were “**baptized unto repentance**” initially. For many today, the fiery baptism comes later, when we finally realize there is need for this *full submission* to our Redeemer, along with heartfelt repentance. It occurs when we finally turn our **heart** wholly to God in humility. The entire multitude at Bountiful witnessed the fiery baptism of the twelve disciples of Christ, those He chose to lead them (see 3 Ne. 19:9-24). Mormon and Moroni placed the words of Christ and Alma in the Book of Mormon because they saw our day and our needs. They knew we would have similar need to **come fully to Christ and be saved** (3 Ne. 12:20). The Book of Mormon teaches us that there is *no other way* (Alma 38:9; Mos. 3:17). It is a manual for coming unto Christ with clear teachings that our Lord calls “*my doctrine*” – eight times in 3 Nephi 11, a number symbolizing being *re-born* in Him!

Alma’s **born again** sermon was given to *church members* (Alma chapter 5) perhaps because so many had not experienced the fiery baptism, one our Lord said was necessary to **see** and **enter** heaven (John 3:5). Too many today are caught up in the vain things of men and this world (see also Alma chapters 32 and 33). Today, many are baptized at a young age, without full conversion to Christ first, and without real repentance. In addition, those baptizing them may not be authorized to do so, not fully converted and cleansed themselves. Prayer should precede determination of who is to perform this important ordinance.

In Alma’s day, Noah and the priests were deceiving the people for gain. Unbelief, idolatry, and priestcraft had risen up among them, much like today. Awakened by Abinadi’s words, Alma’s eyes were opened and his heart changed. He saw wickedness in the church (Alma 4:11). He had been part of it. Later, as a wise converted servant of God, he sought recommitment among his people and “**baptism unto repentance**” as part of a general *reformation* among the believers. After preaching the necessity of being **born again**, Alma gave the following *command* to those *in the church*, an invitation to make a new covenant with God.

I speak by way of *command unto you that belong to the church*; and unto those who do not belong to the church I speak by way of *invitation*, saying: Come and **be baptized unto repentance**, that ye also may be partakers of the fruit of the tree of life (Alma 5:62, see also *Baptism unto Repentance*, www.7witnesses.com).

Those who refused to **repent** and **come unto Christ** in this manner had their names blotted out of the church record at that time (Alma 5:58; 6:1-4). In Mosiah 26:22, the Lord said, “For behold, this is *my church*; whosoever is baptized shall be **baptized unto repentance**. And whosoever ye receive shall *believe in my name*; and *him will I freely forgive*.” We must have *child-like belief, faith, and trust in God* – leading to (1) real **repentance**. This is followed by (2) the **covenant of baptism** (see 3 Ne. 11:37-38). We can then have (3) a full *remission of sins* in the **fiery baptism** thereafter, where we are purged and made new – *sanctified* from all sin via the blood of Christ. Alma and others in the Book of Mormon taught this important, plain and precious **doctrine**. It is one of the main reasons we have the Book of Mormon today. *In it we receive the gift and power of the Holy Ghost - the first comforter*. It is the iron-rod taking us to the Tree; a pathway not well understood today.

4. Baptism by Fire & the Holy Ghost - Sanctification

The baptism of water is useless without the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost following it. So taught the Prophet Joseph Smith (see Joseph’s words below). This is another plain and precious doctrine removed from the Bible, one clearly taught us in the Book of Mormon. It is the **doctrine** of Christ, one not addressed well today. There can be no **gospel** or **church** without first establishing correct, true **doctrine**, given us of God. Christ told Nicodemus that to *see* and *enter* heaven, he must be

born again (John 3:3-6; see also Mos. 27:24-26). When we are baptized by fire and receive the Holy Ghost, our **sins** are fully *remitted* by the Lord in a fiery purging. The change is both spiritual *and* physical.⁴ We become clean before God, made new. With a new heart, we have no more desire to sin. We also have more power to overcome addictions. We thus have greater ability to overcome the natural man in us. To be clean is to be **redeemed or saved**! We are **born again**! This event is *the gate* onto the strait and narrow path to the Tree of Life and the gift of eternal life from God. Scripture tells us that in this experience, the wise and pure in heart are placed on the path to the Tree of Life. It is there – at the Tree – that we *see and feel* the marks of the atonement in our Lord’s body. Such come to **know**⁵ our resurrected Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – that He is real. Such obtain **“the testimony of Jesus”** (Rev. 12:17, 19:10; D&C 46:13-14; 76:51, 101; 88:4, 74-75; Mor. 10:8). The gift or endowment of the Holy Ghost follows this joyful, cleansing event. It serves as our *guide* on the path to the Tree (2 Ne. 32:3-6), along with direct revelation from the Lord. With it there is a greater measure of hope and charity in our lives, more love. In our rebirth, we also become “the sons and daughters” of Jesus Christ, the Father of our salvation (see Mos. 5). Receiving the fiery baptism *and* the Holy Ghost requires *sacrifice* – one the Lord has clearly identified. “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*...” (3 Ne. 9:19-20, see also 3 Ne. 11:35 & 12:1).

Like all of God’s greatest gifts, it is God that does it, not another man (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; 15:26; D&C 33:15). Have you been baptized by fire and the Holy Ghost? Have you been **sanctified** by the Holy Spirit and **redeemed** of God? Ask the Lord. Note His words and those of prophets about it hereafter.

What Christ Taught Christ gently chastised Nicodemus – a supposed “master” or Rabbi over his people, for not understanding and teaching this important, saving 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.” 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*” (HC, 6:316). Speaking of these two baptisms while addressing John the Baptist in JST Matthew 3:38, Joseph Smith altered it to read, “I baptize you with water, **upon your repentance**, but when Jesus Christ – of whom I bear record – comes, who has the power and keys, **He will administer the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost**.” See also JS History 1:73-74. This *doctrine* must be understood. It must then be sought and received.

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). The *doctrine* is clear here...

What Nephi Taught “...**know** the gate by which ye should enter. For the gate by which ye should enter is [1] **repentance** and [2] *baptism by water*; and [3] 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). Christ is the keeper of that *gate* and employs **no** servant there (see 2 Ne. 9:41). “...*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). These statements make Christ’s doctrine very clear.

What Alma Taught “Now I say unto you that ye must **repent**, and be **born again**; for the Spirit saith if ye are **not born again** ye cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore come and be **baptized unto repentance**, that ye may be washed from your **sins**, that ye may have *faith* on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the **sins** of the world, who is *mighty to save* and to cleanse from all unrighteousness” (Alma 7:14). We must seek and obtain forgiveness from Christ the Lord.

The Doctrine of Christ

The fiery baptism is an essential part of “*the doctrine of Christ*.” It is too often ignored today. Instead we often dwell on less important, and the more complicated works of men, instead of Christ’s grace and gifts. This critical doctrine is taught in a number of places, including 2 Ne. 31:2 and 21, 32:6 and 3 Nephi 11. The Lord said that it is “*the only doctrine which is in me*” (D&C 10:62). Being “**born again**” (3 Ne. 11:35) is the **gate** portion of “**the way**” and “the only and *true doctrine* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (2 Ne. 31:21). After the Father introduced

Christ to the people gathered at Bountiful in 3 Nephi 11, our Lord first commanded that all the people **come to Him**, where one by one, they individually were invited to *see* and *feel* the marks of the atonement in His side, feet, and hands. Following this important event, he taught them what He called “**my doctrine**,” mentioning the word “*doctrine*” 8 times in 3 Nephi 11 alone. He then taught them the beatitudes, the first one being, “blessed are the poor in spirit who **come unto me**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (3 Ne. 12:3). The beatitudes in 3 Nephi 12 are the needful steps taking us into our Lord’s presence at the Tree. They are thus **THE WAY** to Him. We should pay more attention to them and study them.

After providing essential **doctrine** first, the Lord then addressed “**my gospel**” in 3 Nephi 20. He then concluded His remarks stating that those who accepted and lived His doctrine and gospel were part of what He called “**my church**.” He explained that those embracing these things are founded upon what He called “**my rock**” in 3 Nephi 21. The *order* is significant. We cannot be part of *His* gospel or *His* church without first knowing and embracing *His* true doctrine! Collectively they are *His rock* (3 Ne. 11:40; D&C 10:69), the *sure foundation* we must build upon! He promised that those established on this **rock** would not be swept away when the great storms come, with their rains, winds, and floods beat down upon us. Note God’s use of the phrases “**my doctrine**,” “**my gospel**,” and “**my church**” 8 times each in the scriptures below. We are **reborn** in them.

My Doctrine 8 times in 3 Ne. 11:28, 30, 31, 32, 35, 39, 40 (see also D&C 10:62, 63, 67)

Doctrine is defined as a set of “beliefs or teachings”

My Gospel 8 times in D&C 10:45, 46, 48, 49, 50, 52, 62, 63; see also 3 Ne. 27:10, 11, 13, 20-21; 33:11-12; 39:6

*The “good news” of Christ’s gospel is defined well by Him in 3 Ne. 27. “Behold I have given unto you **my gospel**, and this is **the gospel** which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me. And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil...And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.* (3 Ne. 27:13-14, 19).

My Church 8 times in D&C 10:53, 54, 55, 67, 68, 69, see also 3 Ne. 27:8, 10

The church of Christ is a body of believers taking upon them God’s name, those who adhere to His voice and commandments.

My Rock Collectively, these are *The Rock*, the firm foundation that we must build on to survive coming storms!

The number **8** is intimately associated with our Lord and the concepts of our **rebirth** or **renewal** through His mediating mission – His Atonement and Resurrection. He said, “*I make all things new*” (Rev. 21:5). It is only through Christ that we are cleansed and made **new**, not our works, the deadness of the law, the temple, or leaders. He alone is the Mediator between heaven and earth. No one *sees* or *enters* heaven, coming to the Father or Mother, except through **Him** (John 14:6). The 8th time our Lord addressed what He calls “**my doctrine**” in 3rd Nephi, He stated that those who proclaim more or less than what He presented as being “*my doctrine*,” “*cometh of evil*” and are “*not built upon **my rock***” (3 Ne. 11:40). The 8th time He addressed “**my gospel**” in D&C 10, He stated that He was establishing it to do away with, “*contention concerning the points of my doctrine*” (D&C 10:63). And the 4th through the 8th time He addressed “**my church**” in D&C 10, He did so in connection with those embracing His doctrine and gospel – which is to “*repent and come unto me*” (v. 67). He concluded, stating, “*whosoever is of **my church**, and endureth to the end, him will I establish upon **my rock**, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them*” (v. 69). “*And now, remember the words of him who is the life and light of the world, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Amen*” (v. 70). The phrases below point to being **reborn** in Christ in the fiery baptism.

Born of God (John 5:1; Mos. 5:7, 27:25; Alma 36:5)
 Born again (John 3:3; Mos. 27:25; Alma 5:49)
 Born of the Spirit (John 5:5, 8; Moses 6:65; Mos. 27:24)
 Spiritually born of God (Alma 5:14)
 Quickened in the inner man (Moses 6:65)
 Baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost (2 Ne. 31:13)
 Baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost” (Moses 6:66)
 Mighty change (Mos. 5:2; Alma 5:12) of heart (Alma 5:26; 19:33)
 Redeemed of God (Mos. 27:25), becoming his sons & daughters,
 new creatures in Christ (v. 26)

Awoke unto God (Alma 5:7), awakened out of a deep sleep
 Received His image in your countenance (Alma 5:14, 19)
 Garments washed white (Alma 5:21, 27)
 Felt to sing the son of redeeming love (Alma 5:26)
 No more desire to do evil (Mos. 5:2; Alma 19:33)
 Joy (Alma 19:6, 13, 14, 30; 36:20-25, 2 Ne. 31:13)
 The gate (2 Ne. 31:18)
 The Doctrine of Christ (2 Ne. 31:2, 21; 32:6)

The Book of Mormon is a step-by-step guide for the **born again** experience. We must offer up the sacrifice our Savior has called for – a *broken heart* and *contrite Spirit* (3 Ne. 9:20; 12:19). The Holy Ghost, given as an important endowment in the **born again** experience, guides us on “**the way**” until we finally receive God and *eternal life* at the Tree (see 2 Ne. 32:3-6). We are not on the path to knowing God and receiving eternal life until we enter in at *this gate* (2 Ne. 31:17; Mat. 7:13-14). The Lord employs *no servant or man* there because it is He or the Father who baptizes us with fire, granting us the Holy

Ghost (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; 15:26; D&C 33:15). We must also remember that the servant is *not* greater than his master (Matt. 10:24; John 13:16; 15:20).

When we are **born again** in Christ, He becomes the Father of our Salvation through the atonement. Note that after the twelve disciples of Christ in 3rd Nephi 19 received the fiery baptism and the Holy Ghost – and before the eyes of the very people they were called to serve – they then prayed to the Lord Jesus (3 Ne. 19:18-22). King Benjamin revealed that this event was how his people became Christ’s sons and daughters. They had taken *His name* upon them and were **sealed His** (Mos. 5:15). Being **born again** is the second of three events necessary for our salvation. It provides *justification*. We become just men or women, made perfect, cleansed in the blood of Christ. There is first, (1) *purification* in **water** (baptism), then (2) *justification* by the Spirit or **fire**, and finally (3) full *sanctification* via Christ’s atoning **blood**. To repeat, we have been commanded to teach this three-step process to our children (see Moses 6:58-68; 1 John 5:6-8). It is “**the way**” of salvation – *the only way*. God stated, “Behold, *this is my work and my glory*, to bring about the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

Event or Occurrence

Accompanying Signs following belief

1. We are **born again**, becoming a new creature in Christ with no desire to sin (3 Ne. 12:2; 2 Ne 31:17). We are **redeemed** in it (Mos. 27:24-29), becoming *the sons and daughters* of Christ, the Father of our salvation. We are **sealed His** (Mos. 5:15 & 27:25). The disciples prayed to Christ thereafter (3 Ne. 19:18-26).
2. Our sins are **remitted** (2 Ne. 31:17) as Jesus or the Father purge us with fire (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). The best gifts **come from God** directly (1st & 2nd comforters, gifts of the Spirit, whole armor of God, power in the priesthood, the promise of eternal life, etc.).
3. We are filled with **love** for God and men (Mos. 3:19), expressed as unspeakable **joy** (Alma 36:20, 21, 24, 25 [listed 5 times, the number of *grace*]; Hel. 5:44). With it there is desire to **praise** God (2 Ne. 31:13), sometimes with the tongue of angels (2 Ne. 31:14) or “*the song of redeeming love*,” via a newly **cleansed heart** (Alma 5:26, 26:13, 36:20-28; 2 Ne. 8:11, 15:1; 3 Ne. 4:31-32, Morm. 7:7 & Rev. 14:1-3).
4. We are given *the Holy Ghost* or first comforter as our guide (2 Ne. 31:18). It is our guide, leading us to the Tree of Life (God’s presence, 2 Ne. 32:3, 5). Additional *spiritual gifts* may be activated at this time to bless us and others (D&C 46).
5. We become part of Christ’s church, the church of the Lamb or the Firstborn (D&C 76:67). Such have “*entered in through the gate*” and are on the path to eternal life & God’s presence.
1. Many feel a **burning sensation** as their sins are completely remitted. Such are cleansed and “**justified**” (3 Ne. 12:2; 2 Ne 31:17). The broken heart is purged by **fire** (Hel. 5:45). We become a “*new creature*” in Christ “**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).
2. Some see or feel an encircling **pillar of fire** around them (Hel. 5:45, 48). Those gifted with seeing in the Spirit may see a **fiery flame** or **cloven tongues of fire** over the head of others receiving the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost.
3. Most experience **unspeakable joy** (Hel. 5:44) and feel to **shout** or **sing praises** to God and the Lamb (Alma 5:26, 36:20-28; Rev. 14:1-3; D&C 84:98-102). Some do so with a *tongue* – that of Angels – *by the power of the Holy Ghost* (2 Ne. 32:2-23; Hel. 5:45).
4. We are filled and empowered by **the Holy Ghost** (2 Ne. 31:17; D&C 39:6; 33:11-12). To receive this gift and power is to receive “**the promise of the Father**” (Acts 1:4; Luke 24:49; D&C 95:8-9; Mor. 10:3-7).
5. Many **fall to the ground** willingly (Alma 19:15-16), laying prostrate on the earth. The Greek word “worship” means “*prostrate*” or *submission*. Some **see God** on His throne surrounded by numberless concourses of praising **angels** (Alma 36:22). Others have the **ministration of angels** then or later (Hel. 5:48), and **show forth** one or more *of the gifts of the Spirit* thereafter (D&C 46).

We are **born again** or **redeemed** (the *first part*, our sins *remitted*, receiving *the Holy Ghost*) as individuals or as part of a group. There were 3000 souls experiencing a Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit in the New Testament in Acts 2. There was also the fiery baptism of 300 Lamanites in Helaman 5:41-51, and that of many at the Kirtland Temple dedication on March 27th, 1836. In the Kirtland experience, a *pillar of fire* was seen above the temple and *cloven tongues of fire* above the heads of those **born again**. A forgotten example includes the multitude witnessing the baptism by water *and* then by fire of the twelve disciples of Christ in 3 Nephi 19:9-15, 20-21. There are other examples in the Book of Mormon. Moroni and his father Mormon provide a list of the characteristics present in those **born again** in Moroni chapters 6 and 7, and Mormon chapter 8. Ask God if you have received this important gift. Seek this *mighty change of heart* and the important *gift and power* of the Holy Ghost as your constant companion. It is a life changing, purging event that we must have to be saved! With the Holy Ghost comes a greater measure of hope and charity (see Mor. 8:25-26).

The Holy Ghost is the “*endowment of power from on high*,” the one promised by God to those who were to “*tarry*” at Jerusalem, that they might receive it on the day of Pentecost prior to their service as missionaries (see Luke 24:49 & Acts 1

and 2). The early Saints were also told to “*tarry*” at Kirtland before they received this same gift or endowment of real power from on High (or from God, see D&C 38:32, 38; 43:15-16; 105:10-12). Early missionaries in both groups needed this **power** before they were sent out to *teach*, that they might do so with *convincing power*. Note also that Christ’s disciples in the Book of Mormon said they wanted the Holy Ghost more than any other thing at that time in 3 Nephi 19:9. They then received it in their *fiery baptism* (see verses 9-22). We should remember that the laying on of hands in the confirmation ordinance was and is *only an invitation to receive it* in most cases, not the gift itself. Few have the baptism of fire experience right after their watery baptism. Note the patterns associated with this event in the Book of Mormon hereafter. Search them, feasting upon the words of Christ found therein. Evidence that one has been **born again** typically includes one or more of the *signs* presented on the following page. They *follow* believers. They are part of “*the mighty change of heart*” (Alma 5:14).

The five-step chart below encapsulates the “born again” experience. It is followed (on the next page) by scriptures in the Book of Mormon that reveal those signs that follow those who believe. Note the *signs* (below left) that follow *those who believe*. The scriptures tied to them in the Book of Mormon are at right.

Signs Follow Believers	Hel. 5	2 Ne. 31-32	Alma 5	Alma 18 /19	Alma 36	3 Ne. 17 / 19	Mosiah 5
Faith in Christ	41, 47	13	4-7, 15	41	17, 18	8	8, 10 (4:5, 20)
Repent, Cry for Mercy	29, 32	11	32-34, 49-52	41	18	2	
Heavens Open	48	15		/34, 48	22	24 / 14	
See God				/13	22	25 / 15	
Spirit Sent Down	45	12, 15, 18		/6	24	/13, 20	3
Quickening / HG given						/9,13, 20-21	
Fire Present	44, 45	13, 14		/43-45	24 /14	/13-14	
Angels Minister	39, 48			/34, 48	24 /15	/14	
Joyful Praise	44, 45	13	26	/14, 30, 33	20, 21, 22, 28	17, 18	3
(see also Alma 5:26-34)							
Gift of Tongues	45	13, 14		/30, 45	13, 14	/ 24	3
Fall Down - Submission				42 /15, 16	7, 11		(4:1) 1
Reborn, Sins Remitted	50, 51	17	12-14, 19	/51	5, 23	/ 33	2, 7, 15
Heart purified, gifted with charity (see Mor. 7:48)							

5. Making it to the Tree

Are we done after being sanctified in the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost? No. We are now through the gate and on the path to the Tree. We must now *press forward* and *endure to the end* – or to **THE final destination** (*not* the end of our life), but *the point of our life* – to make it to **the Tree of Life** – to **receive God** (or **enter into His rest**) and there receive His greatest blessings – **in this life**. It is to see His face and know that He is.

The Lord Jesus has repeatedly invited us to **receive Him** while in the flesh. It is to literally **come unto Christ** and receive Him as our **Second Comforter**, our face-to-face mentor. Nephi stated:

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 Ne. 31:19-20). Could it be any more clear?

The beatitudes Christ gave us in chapter 12 of 3 Nephi serve as an instruction manual, helping us develop the necessary qualities to take us further along **the way** until we finally partake of *the fruit of the Tree of Life*. It is to experience the great love of our Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ, as we enter His sacred, glorious presence and feel the marks of the atonement in His body. This is addressed in more detail later on. Included below are additional details of the *signs* associated with the baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost, the gateway event providing *redemption* from our sins in this life.

Holding Tight to the Iron Rod

The gift or endowment of *the Holy Ghost* (the first comforter), along with direct *revelation* from God, and the *written word* of God, are all part of *the iron rod* that will take us to **the Tree of Life** - the glory and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is *the Heavenly Gift* (see 4th Ne. 1:3; Ether 12:8; Heb. 6:44). He then becomes our personal mentor in this life as the Second Comforter. We then connect to Him as a fruit-bearing branch in the Tree of Life.

To receive Him here, we must first be fully obedient to His superior wisdom and will for us. This comes because we love Him with all our heart. We must also part the veil of our fleshy *unbelief*. These things accompany real, heartfelt desire to progress to this point in our lives. Being born again in Christ gives us a new heart, along with the remission of sins and the Holy Ghost. Together, these help us to keep progressing until we can fully abide in the Lord Jesus Christ. After being born again, we must change! We must do as Jesus did, and as Abraham and Sarah did. There is no other way, no quick fix. We must remove the idols of our heart (Proverbs 23:7; 2 Thess. 2:10-12, Isa. 66:2-4, Ezek. 14:1-11; Jacob 4:14; Alma 29:4; Morm. 9:28) and seek earnestly the will of God in all things. This earnest desire translates to obedience to the direction He gives us, that we might continue in our progression. This means one sacrifice after another in our flesh until we come to know God and receive of His greater blessings and His full presence. Experiencing the Lord comes in degrees. His full glory and the related blessings are not possible without real desire on our part. We must choose Him and His wise ways. Doing so is to obey the first and great commandment, to love God with all our heart, might, mind, and strength. The initial place to start is the Ten Commandments. Go over them one by one, seeking God's direction for how to obey them perfectly. There is also direct personalized commands from Him. Those He gives you and I through the Holy Ghost after receiving "the mighty change of heart" (see 2 Ne. 31:3-6). As we obey what He then reveals to us personally, after being born again in Him, He will reveal more and more to us – to refine us. We are obligated to obey these commands (2 Ne. 31:6).

Fortunately, our new heart will give us greater capacity to obey. If we continue faithful, the Lord will reveal more and more to us. God will then increase the difficulty of each commandment to correspond with our increasing spiritual desire and strength. This is clearly evident in the life of Abraham (2 Ne. 8:1-2). In time, God reveals to us all those things that we must do to be comfortable in His holy presence (John 14:15- 16, 21, 23). Because He has promised that He will never give us a commandment that we do not have capacity to obey, we can know that the only reason for our lack of progression is our disobedience, our lack of real desire and commitment. God gives us everything necessary to become truly saved. If we fail in this goal, after having been corrected by Him as instructed in His gospel, it is only because of our lack of desire (see the doctrine of the two ways, 2 Nephi 2:27-29, 10:23-24; Deut. 11:26-28, 30:16-19; Isa. 55:8-9; Jer. 21:8; Ezek. 18:25-30; John 14:6). And thus, it should be apparent that most of us as Christians or Saints do not actually desire to obey God. Our actions reveal exactly where we are in our progression. Too often our actions or our inaction reveals that we are only *interested* in obeying God, while we sadly allow desire for other things to dictate our sinful behavior. We should instead be firm and steadfast (see Alma 24:19; Mark 8:34-35; Rev. 12:11). The sacrifices God asks of us are different for each person, yet a common element among them is that each of us must be willing to obey God in all things, in all circumstances, until the end of our lives. It thus comes down to the desires in our heart and our ability to obey God and change (see 1 Ne. 15:33-36; 2 Ne. 9:27; Alma 41:7-13, 21). We must thus reconcile ourselves to God and His commandments completely in this life (1 Ne. 10:21; Mos. 15:26; Alma 34:33-36). We cannot be saved *in* our sins, but only *from* all of them via God's mercy and atoning blood and our sincere repentance (2 Ne. 9:38; Mos. 15:26; Alma 5:15-25, 11:3; 3 Ne. 5:3). It involves real changes in us. Anything else involves willfully sinning against God (Mos. 2:36-40, 3:12, 16:1-5).

Come to Me – *Partake of the Fruit of the Tree of Life*

The Book of Mormon, the Holy Ghost, and direct revelation from God are guides for getting to the Tree of Life – or coming into the Lord's presence – after we are cleansed by **water, fire or the Spirit**, and our Lord's **blood**. The Book of Mormon re-introduces us to the plain and precious things - including "**the doctrine of Christ**," the doctrine of "**how**" we **repent** and **come to Him** and receive **salvation** at **His hands** (1 Ne. 15:14). To do so is to enter His "**rest**" or "**the fulness of His glory**" (D&C 84:24). Three father and son teams in this special book experienced the gifts they teach about. There are two at its beginning, two in the middle, and two at its end. They teach us how to do the same. They are Lehi and Nephi (1 Ne. 1:9 & 2 Ne. 11:2), Alma the Elder and Alma the Younger (Mos. 26 & Alma 36:22 and 26; Mos. 27), and Mormon and Moroni (Mormon 1:15 & Ether 12:39). Others in the book bare similar witnesses.⁶ If we remove our *unbelief* and act, we too can receive God in this life and His promise of eternal life. It is the whole purpose behind the symbolism of the temple.

In addition to receiving the first comforter (the Holy Ghost), we are invited to seek the face of God (D&C 101:38) and receive Him as our **Second Comforter** – our face-to-face mentor in all things thereafter. This is accomplished as we turn our HEARTS fully to Him – in **love** - and with great **faith**, *faith* sufficient to part the veil of our unbelief. The phrase "**repent** and **come unto me**" throughout 3rd Nephi is an *invitation* to receive Christ as **the Heavenly Gift** (4th Ne. 1:3; Ether 12:8; Heb. 6:44), the *first* of the 13 gifts of the Spirit **He** Himself lists for us in D&C 46:13-26. Mormon saw our day when so many deny this and other gifts of the Spirit. They are absent because of our *unbelief* – a lack of faith - that it is possible and necessary for **us**. **Unbelief** is also accepting false teachings and traditions in place of truth. Mormon addressed this condition perfectly in Mormon 8:22-41. In verse 32 he spoke of men and their "churches built up that shall say, "*Come unto me [instead], and for your money you shall be forgiven of your sins.*" Men lift themselves up as our lights – positioning themselves between us and God. They want money, control, and praise – "gain" (1 Ne. 22:23). God just wants our **heart - relationship**. Christ's eloquent five-word definition of "**my doctrine, my gospel, and my church**" (in the Book of Mormon and the D&C) is to "**repent** and **come unto me**" (see D&C 10:67-68). It is called "**the way**" throughout scripture.

Collectively His teachings represent the only solid foundation to build upon, one He calls “**my rock**.” Helaman taught this doctrine to his sons Nephi and Lehi, saying:

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.

Brought into the Light

God loves us and continually invites us to **repent** and **come to Him**. Receiving the guidance of *the first comforter* is essential to receiving Christ as our **Second Comforter** (2 Ne. 32:5). Nephi stated:

...*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** [being *born again*], 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** [Christ] **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 (2 Nephi 32:3-6).

D&C 132:22-23 informs us that exaltation requires us to receive God *in this life* (see also Mos. 26:24-27). The primary obstacle for not doing so is our own “*unbelief*” – a **hard heart** – that we can do it. We must have **faith** like the brother of Jared (Ether 3:9-13, chap. 4 & chap. 12; see also Lectures on Faith chaps. 3 & 4). One of the most important qualities we must have to come to **know** God is simple child-like **belief, faith, and trust** in Him, made complete in our **Love** of and for Him. Christ repeatedly told His followers to be *as little children* (3 Ne. 11:37-38; Mat. 18:3), to “**doubt not but be believing**” (Morm. 9:27; D&C 90:24). Too few have sufficient *love, faith, trust, and belief in Christ* and His words to receive the blessings He has in store for us. It need not be so. **Ignorance** of **true doctrine** and our **hard hearts (unbelief)** keep us from trying. It is much easier to *trust in men* and follow their uninspired instruction. To do so is to **reject, forsake, and deny** our Lord and practice **idolatry** instead, raising up men as our lights in place of Him (for *rejection* scriptures, see 1 Sam. 8:7; 2 Ne. 1:10-11; Jacob 4:15-17; Psalm 118:22; Hosea 4:6; For a good *forsaking* scripture, see Jer. 2:13; Christ said we will *deny* Him in 2 Ne. 28:32). Scripture tells us raising up men brings **curses** upon us (2 Ne. 4:34; 2 Ne. 28:31). We must worship the heavenly king Jesus Christ our Savior (2 Ne. 10:14; Mos. 2:19; Alma 5:50; D&C 45:52; Moses 7:52). If we seek His face and endure **to this end**, we will be greatly blessed. We are then described as “*blessed*” ones.

To repeat – to receive Him is to *see, feel*, and come to **know** that He is our Savior – that He lives! **Love** for God and strong **faith** in Him will part the veil separating heaven and earth. Only those who **love** Him and **know** Him will be admitted to Zion and His heavenly kingdom. John tells us that to **know** God is to receive Him and the promise of eternal life *in this life* (John 17:3; see also JST Mat. 25:10-11; 7:33; D&C 132:22-23; Mos. 26:22-28; D&C 93:1 and 101:38). They inherit the Celestial Kingdom. Those who do so in the next life life, inherit the Terrestrial Kingdom, as they were deceived by the craftiness of men (D&C 76:75), who used them for “*gain*” (1 Ne. 22:23). In 1 Nephi 15:14 we read that a primary purpose of the Book of Mormon is *the return* of the Book of Mormon Remnant of Lehi – through Joseph, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham – **to Christ**, that they might be **saved**; for to **know** God is to **know Salvation** and *receive Salvation*. It is the very meaning of our Lord’s Hebrew name *Yeshua*.

And at that day shall *the remnant of our seed* know that they *are of the house of Israel*, and that *they are the covenant people of the Lord*; and then shall they know and come to the knowledge of their forefathers, and also to the knowledge of the gospel of their Redeemer, which was ministered unto their fathers by him; wherefore, *they shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer* and the very points of **his doctrine**, that they may know **how to come unto him and be saved**. And then at that day will they not rejoice and give praise unto their everlasting God, their **rock** and their **salvation**? Yea, at that day, *will they not receive the strength and nourishment from the true vine*? Yea, will they not come unto **the true fold of God**?

In D&C 93:1 the Lord provides a simple five-step covenant path to receive Him *in this life*. He stated:

“Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who [1] **forsaketh his sins** and [2] **cometh unto me**, and [3] **calleth on my name**, and [4] **obeyeth my voice**, and [5] **keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am**” (D&C 93:1).

There is one thing that helps us above all others in receiving the Lord. It is **Love**, the great qualifying trait we must possess to receive Him, not obedience to law or our works. The two great commandments are to **love** God with all our heart, *and to love* one another (see Matt. 22:36-40). Moroni said, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love [**charity**], which he hath bestowed upon all who are *true followers of his Son*, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that *when* he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen” (Moroni 7:48).

Receiving God: *The Eye of Faith in an Ascent-Vision*

The simple and sacred (“plain and precious”) pattern given us throughout God’s word – of **how** we **come to Him** – is in *vision* – an *ascent vision* in connection with *heartfelt mighty prayer*. This is evident in the experiences of Enoch, Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, John the Beloved, Joseph Smith, and many others, including those who believe among us today. Lehi in chapters 1 and 8 of the Book of Mormon, and his son Nephi in chapters 11-14 of 1st Nephi both had a vision of the Tree of Life and much more. If we believe, we can do the same. Visions make use of “*the eye of faith*.” It is the method wherein most pluck the sweet fruit from **the Tree of Life** (see Alma 32:40-43); “*fruit meet* for the Father’s kingdom” (D&C 84:58). It is a spiritual experience, one in which God’s Spirit comes upon us (Ether 3:17). With it we are *transfigured* or *quickened*, allowing us to endure God’s presence as a weak mortal and be taken **to Him** in the world of glory. It is to be “*caught up unto God and His throne*” or “*caught away*” - “*on eagles wings*” to Him (D&C 124:99; Ex. 19:4; Isa. 40:31; JST Rev. 12:14). He may also present Himself to us here. The heavenly ascent to God is much more common, however. Each of us has been invited to “*awake and arise*” and go out to meet the Bridegroom. To do so we must *awake*, or come out of Babylon first, and then **repent**, be **baptized**, be **born again**, and then come to the Lord, literally via mighty, **faith-filled prayer**, resulting in vision. We do so by “*arising*” in the *heavenly ascent*. King Benjamin hints at going to God in heaven. He explains that those who become our Lord’s sons and daughters (Mos. 5 & 27:25-28) are “*taken to heaven*” and “**sealed his**” (Mos. 5:15). The Lord said, “at my command the heavens are opened and are shut” (Ether 4:9).

Purpose The reason for the blessed *ascent-vision* is knowledge of God and our salvation. In it we enhance our relationship with God in the heavenly realm. We become connected as a fruitful branch to our Lord as **the True Vine** – THE source of nourishment, strength, and truth, as He is the Light and Life of the world, the Fountain of Living Waters. He, Father, and Mother are **the Tree of Life**. In their presence, we are blessed, receiving knowledge of who we are, and what our future mission will be. Christ the Lord said, “**Come unto me**, O ye Gentiles, and **I will show unto you the greater things, the knowledge** which is hid up because of **unbelief**” (Ether 4:13). God can become our source of radiant light in this life, rather than the mere sparks given us of imperfect men, books, and academia. They are “*broken cisterns* that can hold no water.” He, on the other hand, is “the fountain of *living waters*” (see Jer. 2:13). We must seek His face to obtain Him, with faith and trust.

Joseph Smith said, “If we have any claim on our Heavenly Father for anything, it is for *knowledge*...Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to them, can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God...*Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject*” (TPJS p. 324). Joseph added, “It is *knowledge* which will save us, and that is **the knowledge of God**, gained by **coming to Him**, conversing with Him face-to-face, and receiving **the seal** upon our heads” (King Follett Discourse, April 7th, 1844). The Lord said “inasmuch as you strip yourselves from jealousies and fears [and **unbelief**], and humble yourselves before me, for ye are not sufficiently humble, **the veil shall be rent** and you shall see me and know that I am—not with the carnal neither natural mind, **but with the spiritual**. For no man has seen God at any time in the flesh, except *quickened by the Spirit of God*...(D&C 67:10-12; 76:12; Rom. 8:11). In D&C 76:19-22, and speaking of himself and Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith said that, “while we *meditated* upon these things [John’s teaching about the resurrection, in John 5:29], **the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings and they were opened**, and *the glory of the Lord shone round about. And we beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness.*”

The Brother of Jared had great faith, faith needed to part the veil of unbelief and mortal flesh. He was redeemed from the fall, re-entering the Lord’s presence in this life (see Ether 3:9-14). Following repentance, we must heed the Lord’s invitation, to:

“**Come unto me**, O ye Gentiles, and I will show unto you the greater things, **the knowledge** which is hid up because of *unbelief*. **Come unto me**, O ye house of Israel, and it shall be made manifest unto you how great things the Father hath laid up for you, from the foundation of the world; and it hath not come unto you, because of *unbelief*. Behold, when **ye** shall **rend** that *veil of unbelief* which doth cause you to *remain in your awful state of wickedness, and hardness of heart, and blindness of mind*, then shall the great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from you—yea, when ye shall call upon the Father in *my name*, with **a broken heart and a contrite spirit**, then shall ye know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he made unto your fathers, O house of Israel...Therefore, **repent** all ye ends of the earth, and **come unto me**, and *believe in my gospel*, and *be baptized in my name*; for *he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*; but he that believeth not shall be damned; and *signs shall follow them that believe*

in my name. And blessed is he that is found faithful unto my name at the last day, for he shall be lifted up to dwell in the kingdom prepared for him from the foundation of the world. And behold it is I that hath spoken it. Amen" (Ether 4:13-19).

Scripture uses the following phrases and words to signal an ascent-vision; "*eye of faith, imagination* (our "mind's eye"), *pondering, visualization, vision, revelation, divine teaching, third eye, in the Spirit, wings of His Spirit, on eagles wings, caught up unto God and his throne*" and "*knowledge*." The last-days "man child" and "the company of Josephs" who work with him (many of whom are the 144,000) will be "*caught up to God and his throne*" (JST Rev. 12:3). It is there that they are blessed and empowered for their missions. These collective phrases reveal that we too must step forward in **faith - believing, focusing, pondering, and imagining** being in God's presence. Yes, we must initiate this experience in many cases, as God will **not** force Himself upon us. We are invited to come to Him and must seek Him by choice and by love. At some point in our preparation, meditation, and imagination, and with practice – primarily through praise and worship, the Lord will then take over our *visualization*, creating a visionary experience for us in His time and way, as we exercise **faith and trust** in Him. It is that simple, as seen in the visionary experiences of Lehi (1 Ne. 1:6), Nephi (1 Ne. 11), and Joseph Smith (D&C 76:113-19).

The Lord stated, "*And at my command the heavens are opened and are shut*" (Ether 4:9). "*I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it*" (Rev. 3:8). Lehi (1 Ne. 1:6-12), Nephi (1 Ne. 11:1; 2 Nephi 4:23-26), and many throughout scripture *pondered, meditated, or focused* upon the things of the Lord in quiet personal time with Him (read 1 Nephi 11:1). Visions then opened to them. The phrase, "*whether in the body or out of it*" was used by Paul to express that his vision was very real to him (2 Cor. 12:2-3; see also 3 Ne. 28:15; Moses 1:11). We read in Ether 12:17-19, "And there were many whose **faith** was so exceedingly strong, even before Christ came, *who could not be kept from within the veil, but truly saw with their eyes* the things which they had *beheld with an eye of faith*, and they were glad" (see also 2 Cor. 5:6; 12:2-4; Rom. 8:9; 1 Ne. 11:19; 3 Ne. 28:15; D&C 46:31). Like Alma the Younger's experience of being **born again** and seeing God upon His throne, his father used descriptive words in chapter 5 to describe his visions. They include "*image*" (v. 14), "*eye of faith*" (v. 15), "*imagine*" (v. 17), "*image of God*" (v. 19), "*think*" (v. 20), "*know*" (v. 21), and "*feel*" (v. 22 & 26, see also Alma 32:33, 40-41). Alma the younger stated, "But now I behold *the marvelous light of God*" (Mos. 27:28). Later he added, "I saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels...singing and praising their God" (Alma 36:22). They "*saw*" God in vision. You can too. It begins with removing our **idolatry** and **unbelief**.

Many today *exercise faith* by visualizing themselves knocking on a door and asking the Lord in prayer if they may come to Him. This belief, combined with repentance, and focused prayer and imagination – an "*eye of faith*" (see Alma 5:15-18; 32:33, 40-41; Ether 12:18-19), eventually becomes "*fruitful*." With prayer, practice, patience, and the Lord's will, our effort can eventually transition to an "*ascent-vision*" experience, where God intervenes on our behalf, after we first step forward in **faith**. He then leads the vision from there for our benefit. Step forward in **faith**, like a little child, and with practice. Note the words of hope God gave William Law in D&C 124, stating that, "he shall mount up *in the imagination of his thoughts* as upon *eagles wings*" (D&C 124:99, see also v. 18). King Benjamin said we are "*brought to heaven*" and "**sealed His** [to the Lord]." For many, it is there that they *see, feel*, and come to *know* the Lord, handling the marks of the atonement in His body, as did the 2,500 people in 3rd Nephi 11. These are "*the infallible proofs*" of His reality (Acts 1:3), and the reality that He **loves** us! They are the real "*signs and tokens*" of His love for us which the temple point to. You are invited to **know** and experience God, to become a sure witness of His reality - that **He lives!** You too can obtain "**the testimony of Jesus**" – the promise from Him of **eternal life** (see Rev. 12:17, 19:10; D&C 46:13-14; 76:51, 101 & 88:4, 74-75).

Summary God's work and glory is to save and exalt His children, a goal that requires us to receive Him in this life, to **know** Him (D&C 132:22-24). It becomes possible as we leave Babylon and our false traditions from it behind. It is to choose **Him** over all other things (belief, faith, trust) in this world. It is to love Him and one another (Moses 7:33). These are the two great commandments on which the law and the Prophets are based (Mat. 22:36-40). We have been invited to *awake and arise*, by removing deception and false beliefs from our lives. We can then embrace **Truth**. Christ is that **truth** – He is "*the way, the truth, and the life*" (John 14:6-7). I bare testimony that you can come to **know** the Lord and receive salvation at His hands, becoming His son or daughter – being *sealed His* in this life (Mos. 5:15). The opposite is to be sealed to Satan via rejecting Christ (Alma 34:35). The path to Light requires us to actively seek a relationship with Christ the Lord, the Father of our salvation, and embrace **His** doctrine, as presented in the three steps of Moses 6:57-68 (*purification, justification, and sanctification*). The third step involves being "**born again**" in the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost experience. It is the *gateway ordinance* putting us through the gate and onto the path to Him as the Tree of Life. In it our sins are fully *remitted*. It is where we receive; (1) *redemption*, and (2) guidance in the gift or endowment of *the Holy Ghost*. God's word teaches us that the Holy Ghost then tells us what we need to do thereafter (see 2 Ne. 32:5-6), that "**I may receive you**" (Alma 5:33).

Many have rejected "**the way**" of salvation, God's way, in favor of men and their churches. They and their false traditions cannot save us! We read in Jeremiah, "My people are fools; they do not **know** me" (Jer. 4:22, NIV). Speaking of our day and us, the Prophet Mormon said, "Jesus Christ hath shown **you** unto me, and I know **your** doing...there are none *save a few only* who do not lift them-selves up in the *pride* of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envying, and strifes,

and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquities; and **your churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted** because of *the pride of your hearts*. For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted. O ye pollutions, ye hypocrites, ye teachers, who sell yourselves for that which will canker, **why have ye polluted the holy church of God? Why are ye ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ?** Why do ye not think that greater is the value of an endless happiness than that misery which never dies—*because of the praise of the world?*” (Mormon 8:36-38).

Coming Judgment In D&C 76, we read of three classes of people who are eventually judged and placed in three different realms in the next life, based on choices we make here. Many are “deceived by the *craftiness* of **men**,” thus inheriting lesser glory and kingdoms (see D&C 76:75). Some choices are not good, especially those where we **reject, deny,** or **forsake** Christ in favor of substitutes. Such never receive “**the testimony of Jesus**,” here (verses 81-86). They inherit Telestial or Terrestrial glory only. Those of telestial level are **not** redeemed, but are thrust down to hell. Those who inherit the greater Terrestrial glory (verses 71-78 & 88-91) do not come to **know** Jesus here, either. They have not heeded **His wise counsel** to **repent** and literally “**come unto me**” [Christ] *in this life* (see D&C 132:22-24), but they do so later in the next life (vs. 74), there finally receiving “**the testimony of Jesus**.” Thus, they receive a *lesser reward*, as they were not “*valiant*” HERE in “**the testimony of Jesus**, being **deceived by the false traditions and teachings of men and their religion** (verses 75-79). Note verses 99-102 as well, where there are many “*who say*” or *profess* that they follow Christ, but in reality they are following men like Moses, Isaiah, or some charismatic man among us (insert who you will). They do not receive what the Lord calls “**my doctrine, my gospel, and my church**,” but rather they teach for *commandments* the *doctrines* and *precepts* of **men** (see Matt. 15:9; 2 Ne. 28:14; D&C 45:28-40). Such receive “**not the gospel** [of Christ] **neither the testimony of Jesus** [His promise of **eternal life**], **neither the prophets, neither the everlasting covenant**” (vs. 101). This is the state of many who believe they are “*religious*,” that they are doing what God wants, when in reality they are not (see D&C 45:2). The *harvest* is coming, and sadly too many of them believe they are *saved* when they are *not* (see D&C 45:2; 56:16; Jer. 8:20).

Those “*awake*,” on the other hand, turn to **Jesus Christ** for their light rather than **man**, and thus receive greater Celestial rewards (D&C 76:50-70, 92-96). They seek the face of God in this life and press into the veil with strong faith until it is parted. They come into Christ’s presence, His joyful **rest**. They are then taught personally by the Holy Spirit and by Christ in this life. Such dwell with Him, Father, and Mother in the next life in Celestial glory and are members of a greater church, what the Lord calls “**my church**” - **the church of the Firstborn**. Note the choices below and the kingdoms we may inherit.

Telestial	Terrestrial	Celestial
Little interest in learning of God	Those that Learn about God	Those Engaged & Married to the Bridegroom
The Rebellious	Martha	Mary
No interest in God	Go to Church & the Temple	Come unto Christ
Satisfy the Flesh	Pay Tithing & Fast Offerings	Help the poor personally
Reject the Commandments	Keep Many of the Commandments	Keep All The Commandments
Reject, Deny, Forsake Jesus	Receive Testimony of Jesus in Next Life	Seek & Receive Testimony of Jesus Here
Embrace the world - Babylon	Deceived by <i>crafty men</i> in this life	Enlightened by God’s Light
Embrace the World	Eventually Embrace God in the next life	Embrace God in this Life

1. Church of the Firstborn	Celestial - wise virgins	Love & worship God / Resurrected on the first morning	The just	D&C 76:50-70
2. Churches of men	Terrestrial - unwise virgins	Idolatry / Deceived by men’s craftiness / Res. 1 st afternoon	The just	D&C 76:71-80
3. Non-believers	Telestial - wicked	Reject God / Resurrected at the end of the Millennium	The unjust	D&C 76:81-89, 98-107
4. Sons of Perdition	No glory - evil	Fight against God & His people, only ones not redeemed	The unjust	D&C 76:28-30, 44

Too many are worldly, and may not even know it. They reject God out right for the sake of *religion*, just as the Jews did anciently. They were obsessed with **the Law** (the Tree of Knowledge) because of the Rabbis, believing they were saved, and rejected **the Tree of Life**. They had “*zeal without knowledge*” – knowledge of God! Others do so in more subtle form, embracing man’s religion and their own choices, rather than God. Many are good people, but often they behave as Martha, keeping busy with many things that they think will save them. Her sister Mary chose “*that good part*” instead. She chose Christ (Luke 10:38-42). Busy-ness does not equal *salvation*. **The idols we set up in our hearts** (our *desires* and *perceptions*) **determine what we want, believe, and receive**. *Who* we believe and trust determines *what* we believe. God often gives us the things we desire most as a test, to see if we learn from them and eventually conform to His greater wisdom and will. Seeking **His will** rather than our own keeps us from being *deceived* generally. Full submission to Christ eliminates **the idols** in our heart (see Prov. 23:7; 2 Thess. 2:10-12, Isa. 66:2-4, Ezek. 14:1-11; James 4:3; Jacob 4:14; Alma 29:4; Morm. 9:28).

The Lord, the Prophet Ezekiel, James of the New Testament and others all spoke of the important condition of our heart and how it influences the things we receive. Ezekiel stated, “...these men have set up their **idols** in their heart, and put **the stumblingblock of their iniquity** before their face” (Ezek. 14:3). Such are consumed *upon their lusts*. The righteous desires of our heart, those consistent with *God’s will*, rather than our own will, lead us to Salvation – to Christ Himself. In revelation,

we may hear three voices; (1) the voice of God, (2) our own voice, or (3) those of darkness; Satan and false or familiar spirits. The one we hear is entirely dependent upon *the desires or idols of our heart*. For *truth's* sake, we must seek **God's will** to actually receive it, rather than the false things often given in the other two voices. *Deception* comes when our *heart's desire* dominates our thinking and prayers, rather than *the will of God*.

The first and great commandment is to love God with all our heart, might, mind and strength (Matt. 22:34-40). Too many **stumble** on Christ the Lord. They do not turn to Him – our Redeemer - in the fulness of their heart. He is **“the stone”** which *“the builders”* [of the temple] **reject**. He is now **“the head stone”** or **chief cornerstone** “of the corner” (see Psalm 118:22). The second of the great commandments is *charity* for one another. Marriage symbolism throughout scripture suggests that God desires us to **know** and **love** Him. He wants a *relationship* with us, rather than man's religion. Who do you turn to for wisdom? Who leads you, men or God? In the following three scriptures, the Lord shares His definition of His great work of salvation. The Prophet Joseph then adds his testimony to them.

“Yea, **repent** and *be baptized*, every one of you, for *a remission of your sins*; yea, *be baptized even by water*, and then cometh *the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost*. Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, this is **my gospel**; and remember that **they shall have faith in me** or *they can in nowise be saved*; And upon **this rock** I will build **my church**; yea, upon **this rock** ye are built, and if ye continue, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you” (D&C 33:11-13).

“nothing entereth into his **rest** save it be those who [1] have washed their garments in **my blood**, because of [2] their *faith*, and [3] the **repentance** of all their sins, and [4] their *faithfulness* unto the end. Now *this is the commandment*: **Repent**, all ye ends of the earth, and **come unto me** and *be baptized in my name*, that *ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost*, that *ye may stand spotless* before me at the last day. Verily, verily, I say unto you, *this is my gospel*; and *ye know the things that ye must do in my church*; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do; Therefore, if ye do these things blessed are ye, for *ye shall be lifted up at the last day*” (3 Ne. 27:19-22).

“And this is **my gospel**—**repentance** and *baptism by water*, and then cometh *the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost*, even the [first] Comforter, which showeth all things, and teacheth the peaceable things of the kingdom” (D&C 39:6).

“There is *no other way* beneath the heavens *whereby God hath ordained for man to come to Him to be saved* and *enter into the Kingdom of God* except **faith in Jesus Christ**, **repentance**, and **baptism for the remission of sins**, and *any other course is vain*; then *you have the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost*” (TPJS, p. 198).

This simple important doctrine has been placed in the Book of Mormon *and* the revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants for you and I. The Lord calls it **“my doctrine,”** using the word **“my”** in connection with other important *saving* truths as well.⁷ They are the *plain and precious things* removed from the Bible by evil and designing men, wherein He invites us to **“repent and come unto me.”**⁸ Once again - these five words eloquently summarize what He calls **“my doctrine,” “my gospel,” “my church”** and **“my rock.”** In them, *and with charity* for one another - *we can be redeemed!* The Lord stated:

“Repent all ye ends of the earth, and **come unto me**, and be baptized in my name, and have faith in me, that ye may be saved” (Mor. 7:34). Brothers and sisters, *there is no other way* to salvation (2 Ne. 31:21; Mos. 3:17; Alma 38:9).

Receive **“the testimony of Jesus”** in this life. It is to be **“blessed.”** I pray that this may be your heartfelt focus and reward, in HIS HOLY NAME, *Ahmen*.

Endnotes

¹ **The Doctrine of the Two Ways** The divided blood covenant trail between the carcasses of three large animal sacrifices, walked by both God and Abraham between the two halves of a ravine – is an important pattern first seen in Genesis 15:9-21; a pattern for making covenants with God. Covenants lead to blessing or cursing, life or death. This inspired pattern continued with Moses and the Israelites. After being released from captivity in Egypt, Moses lead Israel as they wandered in the desert for forty years, the people having rejected a personal audience with God at Sinai (see JST Ex. 34:1-2; D&C 84:21-26; Heb. 3 & 4; Jacob 1:7). Once this unbelieving generation had died out, and just prior to the remaining obedient ones entering the Promised Land of Canaan, Moses provided final instruction to Joshua and the Israelites. He told them to *“keep all the commandments,”* adding special instruction involving *two opposing mountains* and *“the doctrine of the two ways.”* On the day they crossed over the Jordan River and into the Promised Land, they were to set up “great stones, and plaister them...And thou shalt write upon them all the words of *this law*” (Deut. 27:1-4). The stones with the law upon them were to be set up on *Mount Ebal*, a mountain *opposite* and to the northeast of *Mt. Gerizim* in the land of *Moriah*. “And there [on Mt. Ebal] shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord thy God” (v. 5). The unhewn stones of the altar were also to have the law upon them. Upon this altar, *covenants* were then to be offered up to the Lord, symbolized in the rising smoke (vs. 5-8). The sin offering altar was positioned on the higher mountain to the east. Years later the northern tribes built a temple on the lower western mountain, Mount Gerizim, a pattern mirrored in Jerusalem at the

time of our Lord's atonement on the Mount of Olives, a sin offering. This setting was opposite Herod's Temple on the lower hill known as the Ophel to the west (see also endnote 2).

Moses instructed Joshua (after entering the Promised Land) to place six of the Tribes of Israel on each of two *opposing* mountains there; six Tribes on Mt. Gerizim to the southwest ("the mount of *blessing*"), and six Tribes on Mt. Ebal to the northeast ("the mount of *cursing*"). Joshua (of the tribe of Ephraim through Joseph) was then to position himself in the valley between the *divided* tribes, reciting **the law** "with a loud voice" to the whole "House of Israel," placing them under *covenant* with God. The *division* of the covenant people on the two opposing mountains symbolized "the doctrine of the Two Ways" and the opposing sides of all covenants in scripture – *blessing* or *cursing*, *life* or *death* (see 2 Nephi 7:27-29; 10:23-24; Deut. 11:26-28; 30:16-19; Isa. 55:8-9; Jer. 21:8; Ezek. 18:25-30; John 14:6). Note that the tribes of Judah (kingship) and Joseph (priesthood) were placed in the *southwest*,² in association with *blessing* (see Gen. 49), along with Simeon Levi, Benjamin and Issachar (Deut. 27:11-12). The Tribes positioned to the *northeast* were Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali (verse 13). Moses then told Joshua and all Israel, "I call heaven and earth to record this day *against you*, that I have set before you *life* and *death, blessing* and *cursing*: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. 30:19).

The Doctrine of the Two Ways

The Way - of Life & Salvation

God
Tree of Life
Alive in Christ
Light
Life
Spirit
Good
Obedience
Blessing
Knowledge of God
Founded upon the Rock
Broken Heart & Contrite Spirit
Sheep / Lambs
Joy

The Path to Sin, Destruction & Death

Satan
Tree of Knowledge
Deadness of the Law
Darkness
Death
Flesh
Evil
Rebellion
Cursing
Ignorance of God
A Foundation of Sand
Pride, Vanity, Unbelief
Wolves
Despair

Moses' directions to Joshua provide clear understanding of the two opposing mountains pattern in connection with covenant making for Israel; it was a matter of *life* and *death*. At *Rosh Hashanah*, Ezra read the Law to all Israel. He too positioned 6 men on either sides of him as he spoke (Neh. 8:4). Anciently covenants had this dual nature – the law of opposition in all things (2 Ne. 2:27-29). Each covenant had a blessing or a *curse* attached to it. The curses (or "penalties") were tied to dividing or cutting – as in the "*cutting off*" off of blessings, the greatest of which was **God's presence** and the promise of *eternal life*. In His covenant with each of Israel's early "fathers" (Abraham, Moses, Joshua and other leaders), God revealed that if covenants were honored, there would be *blessing* – *liberty* on *promised* lands, with *endless posterity*. If broken, there would be *cursing* – to be *cut off from God's presence*. Serious *sin* led to *captivity* and eventually **death** (spiritually and physically), represented by the *blood* of the sacrifice (wherein is "*life*"). Few fully understand this covenant pattern today, as the covenant of the Old Testament is not searched today by many of the Saints. Blood related penalties were also removed from the temple endowment in 1990, when other changes were also made (see D&C 1:15; JST Gen. 17:4; Isa. 27:1 & 66:15-16). See also the paper, *The Way, the Rod & the Tree*, www.7witnesses.com

² **The Three Altars & the Atonement** There is no salvation or returning to God's presence without our Savior's atonement. At the Jerusalem temples there were *three altars* tied to returning to God's presence, symbolically represented in the all-gold Holy of Holies, located in the western most area of the temple (where the Ark of the Covenant was placed). Our Lord gave the Law and came here to fulfill it perfectly in the atonement. The three sacrifices in the old covenant are tied to it. Sacrifices were offered up on them in sequence from east to west (1, 2 & 3, see illustration at the end of this paper, p. 26). Most are familiar with altars 2 and 3 located *at the temple*; altar 2 being the "*burnt offering*" altar of sacrifice positioned near the east entrance of the temple, and altar 3 inside the temple nearest the veil, "*the peace offering*" altar of incense. Most, however, have forgotten about altar 1, "*the sin offering*" altar, located farthest away on the Mount of Olives, some 2000 cubits directly east of the temple and in line with it. It was positioned at the farthest point eastward from the temple (direction of sin in scripture), and outside the boundary of "the camp of Israel," so as to not defile the temple, as this offering was tied to *sin*, *blood*, and *death*. Lepers, Gentiles, and and defiled Israelites were to remain "*without the camp of Israel*" (Num. 19:3) – or outside the outer, sacred boundary surrounding the Tabernacle (2000 cubits away), while the Israelites traveled in their 40 years of wandering in the Sinai desert. These same expanding circular boundaries, three of them (surrounding 1. Holy of Holies, 2. the Holy Place, and then 3. the Camp of Israel), were also used when the architectural temples were built by Solomon, Zerubbabel, and Herod (see chap. 7 of *Seven Heavenly Witnesses of the Coming of Jesus Christ*, or chap. 7 of *The Original Location of the Temple and the Atonement*).

The Jerusalem Temple and its 3 Altars Later in Jerusalem, the setting for altar #1, "*the sin offering*" altar or "*miphkad altar*," meaning "*the appointed place*," was again outside "the camp of Israel" directly eastward on the higher Mount of Olives. The rare and very important all red heifer sacrifice was one of these "*sin offerings*." It was slayed, burnt, and offered up to God on the Mount of Olives by the High Priest there. Altar 1 was directly east of the temple, in line with it, allowing the High Priest to look towards the Holy of Holies (God's presence) as he made this special sacrifice. The red heifer is a clear type for Christ, covered in His red blood in *Gethsemane* (Luke 22:44; Mosiah 3:7; D&C 19:18), and later in the *scouring* and upon the *cross*. In them, His blood was *sprinkled* on the ground, *poured out* in the brutal lashing, and *smeared* on the wood of the cross. These are the three ways the ancient High Priest used animal blood in the temple on *the Day of Atonement* (one time per year), in an atonement ritual that he might be cleansed, along with the temple, and all Israel (he *sprinkled* the blood on the Ark, *poured it out* at the base of the Altar of Sacrifice, and *smeared* it on its horns).

Our Lord's sacrifice, and the red heifer sacrifice, both took place on the Mount of Olives at "*the appointed place*" for this and other special offerings, as Paul explains in Hebrews 13. "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the *high priest* for sin, are *burned without the camp*. Wherefore *Jesus* also, that he might *sanctify* the people with **his own blood**, *suffered without the gate*" (Heb. 13:11-12). The grayish-white ash from the burned animals on this altar, especially the red heifer, was used to purify priests and lepers anciently, after the ash was mixed with the living waters of the Gihon Spring. A similar ash mixture (of the nine previous red heifer sacrifices - Christ being the 10th - a number tied to perfection) will again be mixed with living water from the Gihon Spring, for the purpose of cleansing the place of the new temple in Jerusalem. It will be built there soon.

Christ is "the Great Deliverer." His sacrifice in the meridian of time delivers us all from the effects of **sin** (*sin offering* - altar 1), **death** (*burnt offering* - altar 2), and **hell** (separation from God - *peace offering* - altar 3). Prior to His sacrifice as the Lamb of God, Christ delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt in the first Passover, when lamb's blood was *smear*ed in three places upon the lintel and side posts of Israelite doorways to their homes in Egypt. It was a rudimentary **Tau** mark, a *sealing mark* for those passed-over by the destroying angel this Passover evening, a full moon on Nisan 14. The Israelites left Egypt quickly the next day. This day (Nisan 15) later becoming the Feast of Unleavened Bread, day 1 of a 7-day celebration of "*deliverance*" and freedom from slavery (for a sealing to Christ or Satan, Mos. 5:15 & Alma 34:35).

The *miphkad altar* setting on Olivet (the 3rd, southern peak of the Mount of Olives) was "*the appointed place*" for not only *the sin offering* of Christ for all of us, but the appointed place for the counting of heads in a census for the armies of Israel. They were mustered there before and after battles - for the purpose of *counting heads*. It was "*the place of the head*," not "*the place of the skull*" ("Golgotha"). It was also the appointed place for both executions (by stoning) and sacrifices tied to blood, sin, and *death*. Today it is the site of many Israelite graves. Nearby was Gethsemane and the site of the crucifixion of our Lord. It was the setting of sin, blood, and death.

Before the Lord's Face All three sacrifices (*sin*, *burnt*, and *peace* offerings) had to be done "*before the LORD*" or "before the LORD's face" (Lev. 4:4-7; Num. 6:25, 19:3; 1 Sam. 5:3; Luke 10:1), which was directly east of the Holy of Holies of the temple, where God (the Father in this case) was symbolically positioned on His throne to observe them (the Ark was a footstool for the throne behind it). These sacrifices and their altars were part of the *old covenant*, fulfilled in Christ's atonement, that we might return to Christ, the Father of our Salvation, and to Father and Mother in heaven. These offerings coincide with the *three modern freewill offerings* we are to make today in a *new covenant* with God, wherein we "**repent** and **come unto Christ**" as addressed in Moses 6:57-60. They are: (1) faith in Christ leading to **repentance** (*purification*); (2) baptism in pure living water (*justification*); and (3) baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost (*sanctification*). In them we take Christ's name upon us and we become His sons and daughters. He becomes the Father of our salvation (see Mos. 5). Note also that Christ's baptism in the River Jordan at the hands of a legitimate Levite priest - John the Baptist, occurred at the border into the Promised land, a fourth sphere of sacred space marked by the river itself, separating land east and west. Note, that like each of the three altars, the Jordan River was outside the next holier space - the Promised Land given Abraham as an eternal inheritance. See illustration p. 26.

³ **Sealed to God or Satan** When we are born again and come to Christ, we are *sealed* to Him (see Mos. 5:15). If we don't repent sufficiently in this life and come to Christ, we are *sealed* to Satan. So says Alma 34:32-35. "For behold, **this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God**; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors. And now, as I said unto you before, as ye have had so many witnesses, therefore, I beseech of you that ye *do not procrastinate the day of your repentance* until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed. Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world. For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and **he doth seal you his**; therefore, the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and *the devil hath all power over you*; and this is the final state of the wicked."

⁴ **A Fiery Purging in the Holy Ghost** The primary attribute of the Holy Ghost is to provide **knowledge** - *ideas* rather than *feelings* - via *revelation*. There is too much talk of *emotions* and *feelings* (evident in Hollywood movies) in connection with the Spirit, and not enough about **pure intelligence** or **knowledge**. No man can be saved except by **knowledge**, *the most important knowledge* being that of God. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "... A man is saved no faster than he gets **knowledge**, for if he does not get **knowledge**, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more **knowledge**, and consequently more *power* than many men who are on the earth. Hence it needs *revelation* to assist us, and give us **knowledge of the things of God**" (HC 4:588).

Knowledge versus Feelings The Prophet Joseph added, "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).

Baptism of Fire The importance of the baptism of fire - the mighty change of heart - is that we are purged and changed in it, spiritually and physically - we are **born again**, becoming a *new creature* - in Christ. Our spirit or ghost is made holy. 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). See also Appendix 2: The Joseph of Egypt Connection and Believing Blood, in Alexander T. Paulos, Native Israelites: The Search for Joseph of Egypt's Genetics Among the Native Americans, Civilisation Publishers, pps. 355-66.

In JST Matthew 5, the be-attitudes chapter, we see Joseph's major changes (in italics and bold below) that are clearly tied to the baptism of fire experience, the purging and changing (sins remitted) that occurs when we are **born again**.

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**.

⁵ **Knowing God** Knowing the Lord is an essential part of the New and Everlasting Covenant. Only those who know Him will enter Zion and the heavenly setting where He dwells. We read of "the New Covenant" practiced in the last-days in Jeremiah 31:31-34, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel [Joseph], and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day [that] I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this [shall be] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, **Know** the LORD: for they shall all **know** me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained this "New Covenant," telling the Saints, "God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them, for the day must come when no man need say to his neighbor, Know ye the Lord; for all shall know Him (who remain) from the least to the greatest. How is this to be done? It is to be done by this *sealing power*, and *the other Comforter* spoken of [John 14:16-18], which will be manifest *by revelation*" (HC 3:380; TPJS, p.149). See also Mosiah 26:21-28.

In D&C 77:9A we learn that the four destroying angels will not unleash their destructive power on the four corners of the earth until the servants of God are *sealed in their foreheads*. According to Joseph Smith, this *sealing* is that "which signifies sealing the blessing upon their heads, meaning *the everlasting covenant*, thereby making their calling and election sure" (Joseph Smith, HC 5:530; TPJS, p. 321).

The Lord tells us in D&C 84:57, that – "the New Covenant" is contained in the Book of Mormon. It is a handbook on how to receive the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, and Christ as our Second Comforter thereafter.

Oliver Cowdery delivered what is called "The Charge" to the Twelve in his day, stating, "Never cease striving till you have seen God face to face. Strengthen your faith; cast off your doubts, 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 hands upon you. We require as much to qualify us as did those who have gone before us; God is the same. If the Saviour in former days laid his hand on his disciples, why not in the latter days?" (Parley P. Pratt, Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, Deseret Book, p. 100).

⁶ **Witnesses of Christ in the Book of Mormon** Many said they saw the Lord in the Book of Mormon. Lehi did so in 1 Nephi 1:9, Nephi in 2 Nephi 11:2, Jacob in 2 Nephi 2:4; 11:3, Lamoni in Alma 19:13, Alma the younger in Alma 27:28 & Alma 36:22, Mormon in Mormon 1:15, the brother of Jared in Ether 3:14, and Moroni in Ether 12:39, along with the multitude and the Lord's disciples in 3 Nephi. Others like King Benjamin, Amulek, and Samuel the Lamanite said they saw an "angel of the Lord" (Mosiah 4:1 & 27:11; Alma 10:7; Helaman 13:7). This may be a euphemism for seeing the Lord as the difference between the "angel of the Lord" and Jehovah in various Bible verses as is difficult to discern (see Gen. 16:7–11; 22:11–15; Ex. 3:2; and Judges 2:1–4). These testimonies are given us to encourage us, giving us hope that we too can do the same.

⁷ **My Work and My Glory** The Lord uses the word "**my**" with various topics of note in scripture, separating His teachings from those of men. They point to His important truths, undefiled by man. Our salvation and exaltation is His work and glory. These phrases include:

My doctrine	My gospel	My church	My rock
My work(s)	My glory	My strange act / work	My people / covenant people
My sheep	My Saints	My warriors	My sons / daughters
My servants	My disciples	My friends	My will
My word	My scriptures	My law	My commandments
My authority	My power	My Spirit	My seal
My name	My voice	My mouth	My judgments
My body	My blood	My wisdom	My salvation
My ministry	My messenger	My Beloved	My Son
My Father	My storehouse	My holy order	My Zion
My kingdom	My vineyard	My house	My temple
My joy	My grace	My rest	My presence / coming

⁸ **The Way** The Lord's statements inviting us to "**repent** and **come unto me**" are prominent in the Book of Mormon, where "the plain and precious things" have not been edited out by evil and designing men. "Repent and come unto me" statements given personally in the 3rd Nephi include:

3 Nephi 9 14 Yea, verily I say unto you, if ye will **come unto me** ye shall have *eternal life*. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and **whosoever will come, him will I receive**; and *blessed* are those who **come unto me**.

17 And as many as have *received me*, to them have I given to become *the sons of God*; and even so will I to as many as shall believe on my name, for behold, *by me redemption cometh*, and in me is the law of Moses fulfilled.

20 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.

22 Therefore, **whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child**, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. Behold, for such I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore **repent**, and **come unto me** ye ends of the earth, and *be saved*.

3 Nephi 11 14 Arise and **come forth unto me**, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may *feel* the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may *know* that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world.

32 And this is *my doctrine*, and it is *the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me*; and I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me; and I bear record that *the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me*.

37-41 And again I say unto you, ye must **repent**, and become as a little child, and *be baptized in my name, or ye can in nowise receive these things*. And again I say unto you, ye must **repent**, and *be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God*. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that *this is my doctrine*, and *whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock*, and *the gates of hell shall not prevail against them*. 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*; but he buildeth upon a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell stand open to receive such when the floods come and the winds beat upon them. Therefore, go forth unto this people, and declare the words which I have spoken.

3 Nephi 12 1-3 ...after that ye are baptized with water, behold, *I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost...and shall receive a remission of their sins*. Yea, *blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*.

6 And *blessed* are all they who do *hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost*.

8 And *blessed are all the pure in heart, for they shall see God*.

19, 23-24 And behold, I have given you the law and the commandments of my Father, that ye shall *believe in me*, and that ye shall **repent** of your sins, and **come unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit**. Therefore, if ye shall **come unto me**, or *shall desire to come unto me*, and rememberest that thy brother hath *ought against thee*—Go thy way unto thy brother, and *first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I will receive you*.

3 Nephi 30 1 Hearken, O ye Gentiles, and hear the words of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, which he *hath commanded me that I should speak concerning you, for, behold he commandeth me that I should write, saying*:

2 Turn, all ye Gentiles, from your wicked ways; and **repent** of your evil doings, of your lyings and deceivings, and of your whoredoms, and of your secret abominations, and your idolatries, and of your murders, and your priestcrafts, and your envyings, and your strifes, and from all your wickedness and abominations, and **come unto me**, and *be baptized in my name, that ye may receive a remission of your sins, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, that ye may be numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel*.

Additional “**repent** and **come unto me**” statements in scripture include:

“Behold, doth he cry unto any, saying: Depart from me? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but he saith: **Come unto me** all ye ends of the earth, buy milk and honey, without money and without price” (2 Ne. 26:25).

“Wo be unto the Gentiles, saith the Lord God of Hosts! For notwithstanding I shall lengthen out mine arm unto them from day to day, they will deny me; nevertheless, I will be merciful unto them, saith the Lord God, if they will **repent** and **come unto me**; for mine arm is lengthened out all the day long, saith the Lord God of Hosts” (2 Ne. 28:32).

“**Come unto me** and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life; yea, ye shall eat and drink of the bread and the waters of life freely; Yea, **come unto me** and bring forth works of righteousness, and ye shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire” (Alma 5:34-35).

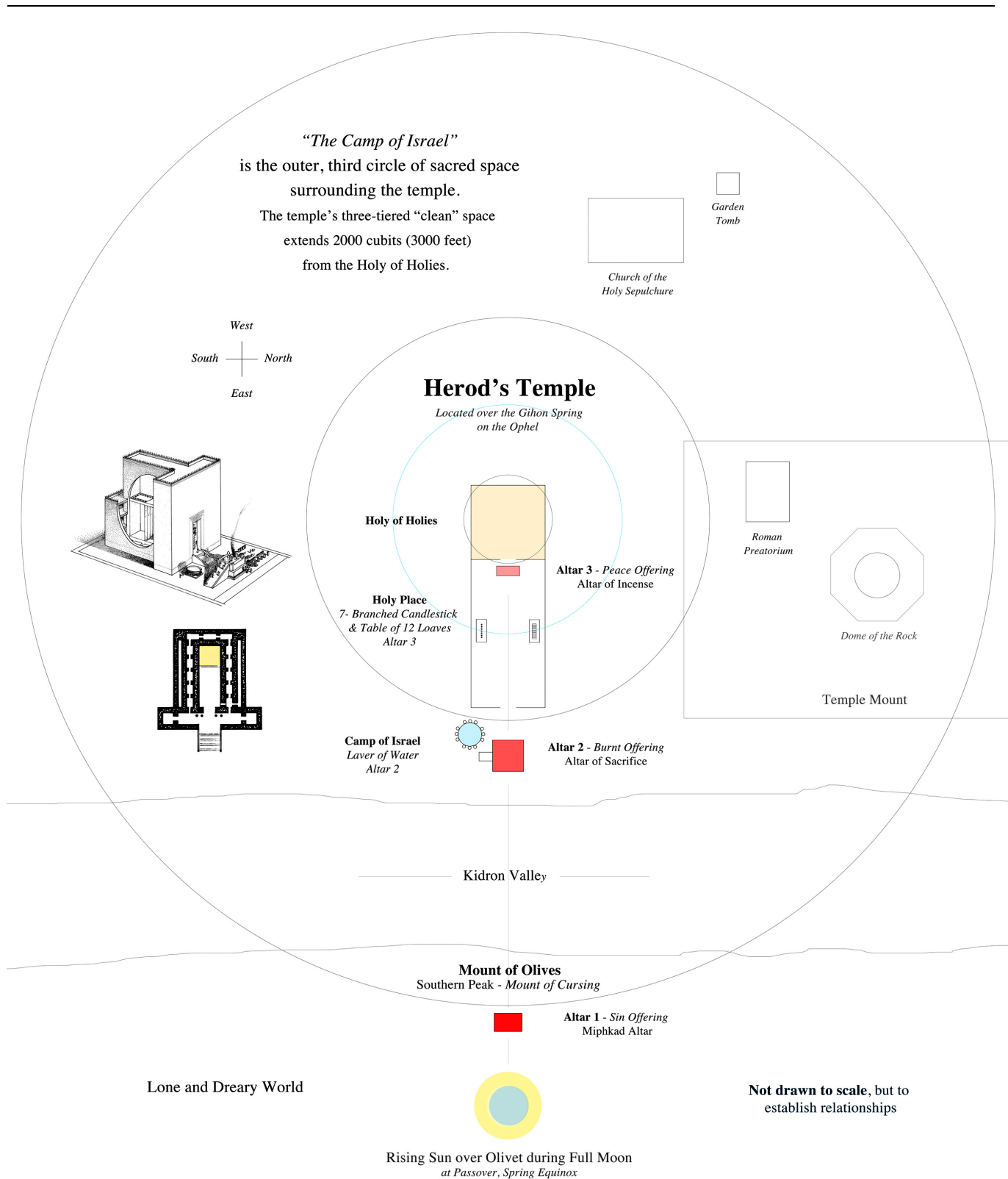
“**Come unto me**, O ye Gentiles, and I will show unto you the greater things, the knowledge which is hid up because of unbelief. **Come unto me**, O y house of Israel, and it shall be made manifest unto you how great things the Father hath laid up for you, from the foundation o f the world; and it hath not come unto you, because of unbelief...Therefore, **repent** all ye ends of the earth, and **come unto me**, and believe in my gospel, and be baptized in my name; for he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned; and signs shall follow them that believe in my name” (Ether 4:13-14, 18).

For primary “**repent** and **come unto me**” scriptures, see D&C 10:67-68; 1 Ne. 10:18-19; 2 Ne. 9:23-24; 28:31-32; Jacob 1:7; Alma 5:33-34; Ether 4:7-19; Mor. 7:34; D&C 93:1; 3 Ne. 9:14, 22, 51; 11:14; 12:19-20, 23-24; 27:5-21; 30:1-2. See also Omni 1:26, Mor. 10:30; 1 Nephi 10:18-19, Jacob 1:7, Matthew 11:28, and the paper *Baptism unto Repentance*, www.7witnesses.com

Recommended Resources

The Lectures on Faith
 The Standard Works (LDS scripture)
 The complete Joseph Smith re-translation of the Bible, the Community of Christ (copyright holder)
Seek Ye This Jesus, by Robert Smith, upwardthought.blogspot.com
How to Have Your Second Comforter, by Anonymous (www.digitalelegend.com)
Heaven Can't Wait, by Lewis Clementson, amazon.com
Wait as Eagles, by Sadhu Sundar Selvaraj, jesusministries.org

See the illustration tied to the three altars of the Lord's atonement on the next page (p. 26).
 More on these altars and the atonement of Christ is available in the following two books by the author (www.digitalelegend.com):
The Original Location of the Temple and the Atonement
Seven Heavenly Witnesses of the Coming of Jesus Christ



*The Three Altars of the Jerusalem Temple (in red): Note the three light gray circles originating in the centrality of the Holy of Holies, representing the presence of God, symbolically sitting on His throne facing east. All rites of the temple are before God the Father's face, or "before the Lord." This includes those special rites carried out on the Mount of Cursing farthest east, including the Red Heifer sacrifice, the animal covered in red, as was Christ in Gethsemane. His crucifixion most likely occurred in this area on the Mount of Olives. A fourth larger sacred space was the Promised Land itself. Christ was baptized in the Jordan River, lying at its eastern most boundary. See chapter 7 in *The Original Location of the Temple and Atonement or Seven Heavenly Witnesses of the Coming of Jesus Christ*.*