

Repentance, Covenant and Sanctification

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Repentance, Covenant and Sanctification

Now this was a great evil, which did cause the more humble part of the people to suffer great persecutions, and to wade through much affliction; Nevertheless, they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God.

Helaman 2:30-31

When considering the six fundamental principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, many people might believe that faith is the first oracle of God. However, after careful reading, we find that repentance from dead works is in fact the founding principle. Subsequently, repentance also seems to be the principle that mankind struggles with the most. Paul explained in Hebrews, chapter five, that these six principles are the milk of the Gospel and admonished all the saints, including us today, by writing, “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one *teach you again* which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and *not* of strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is *unskillful* in the word of righteousness; for he is a *babe*. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of *full age*, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to *discern* both good and evil.¹”

It is important to remember that those who have covenanted with God to become His sons and daughters have been commanded to seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion. Therefore, we must be *skillful* in the word of righteousness, discern both good and evil, and grow in our spiritual maturity in order to fulfill the great commission of the Church, which is to build up the Kingdom of God. Nevertheless, “Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the *celestial kingdom*, otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself.²” We would ask the reader, if mankind never moves beyond the milk of the Gospel, especially including repentance, how will Zion ever be? “Therefore *not leaving* the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go unto perfection; *not laying again* the foundation of repentance from dead works.³”

In the first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul wrote, “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto *babes in Christ*. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were *not able* to receive it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal.⁴” The Lord has called on His fold to become spiritually born of God and to mature to “full age” in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, only then will the members of His Church be able to receive the meat and the law of the

¹ Hebrews 5:12-14

² DC 102:2c

³ Hebrews 6:1

⁴ 1 Corinthians 3:13

Celestial Kingdom. In order to do so, we must first learn true repentance and to be sanctified in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

True Repentance

Although repentance is a basic principle of the Gospel, it is something that we all unfortunately struggle with, and not us only, but even those stalwarts of righteousness that we find in the Scriptures. For example, David the son of Jesse, who the Lord said was “a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will,⁵” transgressed the commandments of God when he desired Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Moreover, Moses, whom the Lord spoke with “face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend,⁶” offended God when he did not circumcise his son, which caused the Lord to become “angry with Moses, and his hand was about to fall upon him to kill him.⁷” However, we know that these two men repented of their transgressions and were forgiven “because David did right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from all that he commanded him, to sin against the Lord; but repented of the evil all the days of his life,⁸” and “the Lord spared Moses and let him go, because Zipporah, his wife, circumcised the child.⁹”

The primary definition of the word repentance as found in the 1828 Webster’s Dictionary is “sorrow for any thing done or said; the pain or grief which a person experiences in consequence of the injury or inconvenience produced by his own conduct.” Nonetheless, we learn through Moses and David that repentance is more than simply experiencing and expressing sorrow, pain, or grief, but it is in fact a change in how we live our lives. For if David had not changed he might have well been consumed by his enemies, and if Moses had not changed with the help of his wife, God would have certainly laid His hand upon him. Thus, we find that the Scriptural definition of repentance is to “cease to do evil; [and] learn to do well.¹⁰”

Jesus Christ told the saints in the latter days, “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins. Behold, he will *confess them* and *forsake them*.¹¹” Perhaps the most discounted aspect of repentance is not the forsaking of our sins, but rather the claiming of them before God. After King Mosiah spoke to his people concerning the disadvantage of laboring under an unrighteous king, the people responded by relinquishing “their desires for a king, and became exceedingly anxious that every man should have an equal chance throughout all the land; yea, and ever man expressed a willingness to answer for his own sins.¹²” Please read the following testimony:

There have been many instances in my life where I struggled with owning up to my sins. In my mind I thought things such as, “That wasn’t all that bad,” “How could that be a sin,” or even, “That wasn’t my fault.” I don’t know why it is so hard for me to accept the things that have done

⁵ Acts 13:22

⁶ Exodus 33:11

⁷ Exodus 4:24

⁸ 1 Kings 15:5

⁹ Exodus 4:26

¹⁰ Isaiah 1:16-17

¹¹ DC 58:9d

¹² Mosiah 13:54-55

wrong. Usually my first reaction is to blame either someone or something else other than myself. Instead of acting like Jacob when he preached to the Nephites saying, “I know my guilt; I transgressed thy law, and my transgressions are mine,¹³” I try my absolute hardest to detach myself of any responsibility, which only makes things more difficult and painful.

When I was younger, if I did anything to wrong someone else, my parents would first make me say what I had done wrong before I actually apologized. It is important that we do the same thing with God, otherwise we are simply blinding ourselves from the truth. In addition, we are making it impossible for us to repent. How can we truly repent of something that we don’t answer for or own up to? If we do not own our sins before God we are essentially leaving a thorn in our side that will never be healed, which is the last thing that the Lord desires.

In Genesis, chapter two, God commanded Adam, saying, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; Nevertheless, thou mayest *chose for thyself*, for it is given unto thee, but remember that I forbid it.¹⁴” Of course, as the reader assuredly knows, Adam did partake of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil after Eve, his wife, was beguiled by the devil, “which was the cause of their fall; which was the cause of all mankind becoming carnal, sensual, devilish, knowing evil from good, subjecting themselves to the devil. Thus all mankind were lost; and behold, they would have been endlessly lost, were it not that God redeemed his people from their lost and fallen state.¹⁵” Please read the account of Adam and Eve after they partook of the fruit from Genesis 3:11-19:

3:11 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it became pleasant to the eyes, and a tree **to be desired** to make her wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. **3:12** And the **eyes of them both were opened**, and they knew that they had been naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. **3:13** And they heard the voice of the Lord God, as they were walking in the garden, in the cool of the day. **3:14** And Adam and his wife **went to hide themselves** from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden.

3:15 And I, the Lord God, called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where goest thou? And he said, I heard thy voice, in the garden, and **I was afraid**, because I beheld that I was naked, and I hid myself. **3:16** And I, the Lord God, said unto Adam, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, if so thou shouldst surely die? **3:17** And the man said, **The woman whom thou gavest me**, and commanded that she should remain with me, she gave me of the fruit of the tree, and I did eat.

3:18 And I, the Lord God, said unto the woman, What is this thing which thou hast done? **3:19** And the woman said, **The serpent beguiled me**, and I did eat.

¹³ 2 Nephi 6:93

¹⁴ Genesis 2:19-21

¹⁵ Mosiah 8:74-76

It is both interesting and important to understand that after Adam and Eve’s transgression, they both sought to hide themselves from the presence of God. It was not their lack of belief in God that caused them to hide, but instead it was because they knew that they had done wrong. Sadly, it appears that mankind today reacts often in the same way, especially those who have covenanted with the Lord, and similarly to Adam and Eve, we occasionally attempt to avoid responsibility rather than answering for our sins. However, we do not attempt to condemn or judge Adam and Eve, for as we have discussed previously in other chapters, all they knew was that God had created them. Additionally, we know that after they partook of the forbidden fruit and before they were removed from the garden, they had not yet received the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps part of the reasoning behind our desire to evade responsibility for wrong actions curtails from a refusal to accept that our choices do have eternal consequences. In the second book of Nephi, Lehi wrote, “And after Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, they were driven out of the garden of Eden, to till the earth.¹⁶” Thus we see that their decision to eat of the forbidden fruit had a direct consequence, which was their removal from the garden and a separation from God’s presence. Nevertheless, because of God’s marvelous love, which He has demonstrated through His Only Begotten Son, we know that God desires for every soul to obtain everlasting life and to spend eternity with Him. “Wherefore, he prepareth a way to accomplish all his works among the children of men; for behold he hath all power unto the fulfilling of all his words.¹⁷” In particular, the way to obtain eternal life begins with the preparatory gospel, “which gospel is the gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins.¹⁸” Please read of Adam and Eve’s response to their transgression in the garden of Eden from Genesis 4:1-12, and Genesis 6:67-71:

4:1 And it came to pass, that after I, the Lord God, **had driven them out**, that Adam began to till the earth, and to have dominion over all the beasts of the field, and to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, as I, the Lord had commanded him, and Eve also, his wife, did labor with him.

4:4 And Adam called upon the name of the Lord, and Eve also, his wife; and they heard the voice of the Lord, from the way towards the garden of Eden, speaking unto them, and they saw him not; for they were shut out from his presence. **4:5** And he gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God; and should offer the firstlings of their flocks for an offering unto the Lord.

4:6 And Adam ***was obedient*** unto the commandments of the Lord. And after many days, an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying, Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him, **I know not, save the Lord commanded me.** **4:7** And then the angel spake, saying, This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth; **4:8** Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest, in the name of the Son. And **thou shalt repent**, and call upon God, in the name of the Son for evermore.

¹⁶ 2 Nephi 1:105

¹⁷ 1 Nephi 2:101

¹⁸ DC 83:4c

6:67 And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water; and **thus he was baptized**. **6:68** And the Spirit of God descended upon him, and **thus he was born of the Spirit**, and became quickened in the inner man.

6:69 And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying, **Thou art baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost**; this is the record of the Father and the Son, from henceforth and forever; **6:70** And thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity. **6:71** Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons. Amen.

4:9 And in that day, the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, saying, I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and forever; that, as thou hast fallen, thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will.

4:10 And in that day Adam blessed God, and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth; saying, Blessed be the name of God, for, **because of my transgression** my eyes are opened, and in this life ***I shall have joy***, and again, in the flesh ***I shall see God***. **4:11** And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying, **Were it not for our transgression**, we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the **joy of our redemption**, and the eternal life which God giveth unto **all the obedient**. **4:12** And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God; and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters.

In the third chapter of Genesis, both Adam and Eve placed the blame of their transgression on someone other than themselves. However, in the verses above, they expressed ownership for their sin. It is crucial that we follow their example that we too might know and experience the joy of our redemption, for Jesus taught the disciples, saying, “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. For every one who doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he *who loveth truth*, cometh to the light, that his deeds **may be made manifest**. And he who obeyeth the truth, the works which he doeth they are of God.¹⁹”

If it is the desire of our hearts to keep the everlasting covenant [read Genesis 9:17-24], which is the cause of Zion, then we must first begin with a true repentance, and a true repentance requires confessing and forsaking our sins. In so doing, we will be as Moses, as David, and as Adam and Eve, who all suffered from sin, but because of their response toward God and subsequent obedience to His commandments, were redeemed by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, which is the only way and means whereby man can be cleansed from their sins. Please read the following Scripture from Helaman 2:71-73:

¹⁹ John 3:19-22

2:71 O remember, remember, my sons, the words which King Benjamin spake unto his people; yea, remember that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the **atoning blood of Jesus Christ**, who shall come; yea, remember that he cometh to redeem the world. **2:72** And remember also, the words which Amulek spake unto Zeezrom, in the city of Ammonihah; for he said unto him, that the Lord surely should come to redeem his people; but that he should not come to redeem them in their sins, but to redeem them ***from their sins***. **2:73** And he hath power given unto him from the Father, to redeem them from their sins, ***because of repentance***; therefore he hath sent his angels to declare the tidings of the conditions of repentance, which bringeth unto the power of the Redeemer, unto the salvation of their souls.

Only on the conditions of repentance are the promises of the Lord extended to us.²⁰ For Jesus Christ has said, “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say, but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.²¹” As sons and daughters of God who have taken upon us the name of Jesus Christ, it is essential for the Kingdom of God to go forward so that the Kingdom of Heaven may come. “Therefore ***not leaving*** the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go unto perfection; ***not laying again*** the foundation of repentance from dead works.²²”

Our Covenant with God

The Lord told Adam in the sixth chapter of Genesis that all mankind might become His sons by choosing to covenant with God in the baptism of the water and the baptism of the Spirit. In so doing, God has promised that if we keep this covenant that we “shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.²³” [Read more about being a peculiar people in **Chapter Twelve**] In addition, God has said, “And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God.²⁴” Therefore, with this covenant, the Lord God has pledged to each soul that He will never leave us nor forsake us, but instead that He will be our shield and buckler, our strong arm, our high tower, our fortress, our rock of salvation, and our God. Nevertheless, the Scriptures do not promise that in taking this covenant that we will never have another bad or cloudy day. Instead, the Scriptures say the opposite. “Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith. Nevertheless, whosoever putteth his trust in him, the same shall be lifted up at the last day.²⁵”

After four hundred years in captivity, we read in the second chapter of Exodus that God heard the cries of His people, Israel, while they were held in bondage in the land of Egypt. “And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.²⁶” Thus the Lord God sent the prophet Moses and his brother Aaron to stand before Pharaoh and demand that he let God’s people go. Of course we know that Israel was not delivered from their bondage until God showed forth His power

²⁰ Alma 12:25

²¹ DC 81:3b

²² Hebrews 6:1

²³ Exodus 19:5

²⁴ Exodus 6:7

²⁵ Mosiah 11:23-24

²⁶ Exodus 2:24-25

through many wonders and marvelous works. Following their exodus out of Egypt, God commanded Israel through His servant Moses to keep His statutes and judgments with all their heart and with all their soul. The Lord promised that if the people walked in His ways and hearkened unto His voice that He would be their God and would make them “high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor.”²⁷ In response, “Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.”²⁸

The children of God often take great strength and consolation in the promises that the Lord will be our God and that He will never forsake His people. Nonetheless, it appears that we too easily forget that there are two sides in covenant. Not only has God covenanted with His people to be their God, but the saints have also covenanted with God that they will be His people, which means that they will keep the commandments of God without murmuring and without complaint. Notwithstanding the mighty miracles God had showed the children of Israel, including the ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, bringing forth water out of a rock, and even appearing in a cloud of glory upon Mount Sinai, it was not enough to keep them from doubting God’s power or His word, and it was not enough to keep them obedient. However, we would ask the reader, are we any different from Israel today? Please read from Numbers 14:1 following Israel hearing a false report of the strength of the people in the land of Canaan, also referred to as the Promised Land.

14:1 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

14:2 And all the children of Israel **murmured** against Moses and against Aaron; and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God that we had died in this wilderness! **14:3** And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? **14:4** And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. **14:6** And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes; **14:7** And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land.

14:8 If the Lord delight in us, ***then he will*** bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. **14:9** Only ***rebel not ye against the Lord***, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us; fear them not. **14:10** And all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.

²⁷ Deuteronomy 26:16-19

²⁸ Exodus 19:9

14:11 And the Lord said unto Moses, **How long will this people provoke me?** and how long will it ***be ere they believe me***, for all the signs which I have showed among them? **14:12** I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.

14:13 And Moses said unto the Lord...**14:17**...I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, **14:18** The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, **forgiving iniquity and transgression**, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. **14:19** Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

14:20 And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word; **14:21** But as truly as I live, all the earth **shall be filled with the glory of the Lord**. **14:22** Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now ***these ten times***, and **have not hearkened to my voice**; **14:23** Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it; **14:25** (Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley.) Tomorrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea.

14:26 And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, **14:27** How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, ***which murmur against me***? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. **14:28** Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you; **14:29** Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, **14:30** Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

14:31 But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, **them will I bring in**, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. **14:32** But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. **14:33** And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. **14:34** After the number of the days in which he searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know ***my breach of promise***. **14:35** I the Lord have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me; in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

14:39 And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel; and the ***people mourned greatly***. **14:40** And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, **we be here**, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised; for we have sinned. **14:41** And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord? but it shall not prosper. **14:42** Go not up, for the Lord is ***not among you***; that ye be

not smitten before your enemies. **14:43** For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword; **because ye are turned away from the Lord**, therefore the Lord will not be with you.

14:44 But they ***presumed to go up*** unto the hilltop; nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. **14:45** Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and **smote them, and discomfited them**, even unto Hormah.

Instead of keeping their covenant, the children of Israel doubted, complained, and murmured against God when they faced adversity and trials. How do we react when we encounter tribulations? Do we trust in the Lord as Alma the Younger did? “And I have been supported under trials and troubles of every kind, yea, and in all manner of afflictions; yea, God has delivered me from prison, and from bonds, and from death; yea, and I do put *my trust in him*, and he will still deliver me; *And I know* that he will raise me up at the last day, to dwell with him in glory.²⁹” Do we seek for God as Enos did? “And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication, for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came, I did still raise my voice high, that I reached the heavens.³⁰” If not, then we would ask the reader why not? For this is the path to true repentance as well as to sanctification.

In Numbers, chapter fourteen, the Lord also commanded Moses to inform the people that because of their “breach of promise” all but Caleb, Joshua, and their children would perish in the wilderness. Therefore, it is plainly evident that God truly does punish all those that breach their covenant with Him, and this He does by separating them from His presence and by barring them from entering into the Promised Land, or in other words, eternal life with Him and Jesus Christ, as the Lord did with Israel. As Alma told his sons, “give ear to my words; for I swear unto you...that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God, ye shall prosper in the land; and inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God, ye shall be cast off from his presence.³¹”

Nevertheless, we can also witness in the testimony from the fourteenth chapter of Numbers that God does continually stretch out His arm of mercy to all those who desire it. For rather than simply holding His silence and bringing down justice on the people, God commanded Moses to *tell*, or even to *warn*, the people that because they did not hearken to the word of God, they would perish. Thus, the Lord gave Israel an opportunity to repent. However, unlike David, Moses, and Adam and Eve, the children of Israel did not repent nor did they change their way of life so that they might walk in the statutes and the commandments of God and become a high and holy nation. For in response to Moses’ warning the people simply “mourned greatly,” and instead of keeping the commandments of the Lord, the people arose the next morning and said, “Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised; for we have sinned.” In other words, Israel confessed their sin, but they did not forsake it, much like a young child does after being punished or grounded from an activity. Rather than behaving

²⁹ Alma 17:25-26

³⁰ Enos 1:5-6

³¹ Alma 17:1 and 18:1

correctly on the first occasion, or waiting for the opportunity to behave rightly at the next, the child usually replies, "Okay, I'm sorry; I promise I won't do it again."

The Lord God provided Israel forty years in the wilderness in order to repent, but they would not. Similarly the Lord has given the saints in the latter days a little season to repent. "And my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer...Therefore, in consequence of the *transgression of my people*, it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for *a little season* for the redemption of Zion, that they themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be *taught more perfectly*, and have experience, and know more perfectly, concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands...And now I give unto you a word concerning Zion: Zion shall be redeemed, although she is chastened for a little season."³²

Let us learn from the example of Israel and remember our covenant that we have made with the Lord, that not only is He our God, but we are His people. When we are faced with trials and afflictions of every kind our response should not be one of contempt, but a promise that we will never abandon the Lord and that we will place our trust in Him who is mighty to save. Please read the testimony of Moroni and his men as they were faced with adversity of Amalickiah, who desired to destroy the Church of God, from Alma 21:47-53:

21:47 And he [Moroni] said, Surely God **shall not suffer** that we, who are despised because we take upon us the name of Christ, shall be trodden down and destroyed, until we bring it upon us by **our own transgressions**. **21:48** And when Moroni had said these words, he went forth among the people, waving the rent of his garment in the air, that all might see the writing which he had written upon the rent, and crying with a loud voice, saying, **21:49** Behold, whosoever will maintain this title upon the land, let them come forth in the strength of the Lord, and ***enter into a covenant*** that they will maintain their rights, and their religion, that the Lord God may bless them.

21:50 And it came to pass that when Moroni had proclaimed these words, behold, the people came running together, with their armor girded about their loins, rending their garments in token, or as a covenant, that ***they would not forsake*** the Lord their God; **21:51** Or, in other words, if they should transgress the commandments of God, or fall into transgression, and be ashamed to take upon them the name of Christ, the Lord should ***rend them*** even as they had rent their garments.

21:52 Now this was the covenant which they made; and they cast their garments at the feet of Moroni, saying, We covenant with our God, that we shall be destroyed, even as our brethren in the land northward, if we shall fall into transgression; **21:53** Yea, he may cast us at the feet of our enemies, even as we have cast our garments at thy feet, to be trodden under foot, ***if we shall fall into transgression***.

³² DC 102:2d, 3c, and DC 97:4a

Are we willing to approach God and say, “Lord we promise that we will keep our covenant, and if we transgress thy commandments, rend³³ us from your holy presence and love?” If not, then why not? The Lord has said, “Be strong and of a good courage...Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness...behold, this is the promise of the Lord unto you, O ye my servants: wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I, the Lord, am with you and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come.³⁴”

Sanctify Yourselves

The purpose of the milk of the Gospel, especially the principle of repentance, is not for mankind to continually *relearn* the six fundamental principles over and over again, as Paul said, “For when the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one *teach you again*,³⁵” but to go onto perfection, which can only be done by learning the principles of the Celestial Kingdom. Of course the Celestial principles are not only for us as individuals, but as we have mentioned previously, “Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the *celestial kingdom*, otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself.³⁶” In order for the cause of Zion to be established in the world, it must first be established in our own hearts, and this can only be accomplished by purifying and sanctifying ourselves before the Lord.

In a general sense, the word sanctify means “to cleanse, purify or make holy.” Nevertheless, it is important to understand that we cannot sanctify ourselves without Jesus Christ, as we read in Genesis, chapter six, “For, by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified; and by the blood ye are sanctified.³⁷” The Lord also told the children of Israel, “Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am the Lord your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them; I am the Lord which sanctify you.³⁸” We cannot be cleansed of sin by our own power, but only through the power and atoning blood of the Son of God can we become pure. For “could ye say, if ye were called to die at this time, within yourselves...that your garments have been cleansed and made white, through the blood of Christ, who will come to redeem his people from their sins?³⁹” “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.⁴⁰”

However, if the Lord God in His infinite mercy and grace has once washed us clean of all our transgressions, how ought we to live? “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?⁴¹” After the Anti-Lehi-Nephi’s covenanted with the Lord and were cleansed from their unrighteousness, they said, “Now my best beloved brethren,

³³ Rend means to separate any substance into parts with force or sudden violence; to tear asunder; to split; as, powder rends a rock in blasting; lightning rends an oak.

³⁴ Deuteronomy 31:6, Isaiah 41:10, and DC 68:1d

³⁵ Hebrews 5:12

³⁶ DC 102:2c

³⁷ Genesis 6:6-8

³⁸ Leviticus 20:7-8

³⁹ Alma 3:48-49

⁴⁰ 1 John 1:9

⁴¹ Romans 6:1-2

since God hath taken away our stains, and our swords have become bright, then let us stain our swords *no more* with the blood of our brethren: Behold, I say unto you, Nay, let us retain our swords, that they be not stained with the blood of our brethren: For perhaps *if we should stain our swords again*, they can *no more be washed bright* through the blood of the Son of our great God, which shall be shed for the atonement of our sins.⁴²

In the sixth chapter of Joshua, the Lord delivered the city of Jericho into the hands of the Israelites after they had encamped themselves about the city for seven days. For the first six days, God commanded Israel to march around the city one time for each day. On the seventh day, they were commanded to compass the city seven times and for the priests to blow seven trumpets of rams' horns, after which the walls of Jericho fell down. However, before the city walls fell, Joshua gave a warning to Israel, saying, "And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein...And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, *lest ye make yourselves accursed*, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord."⁴³

In the succeeding chapter, Joshua sent a group of scouts to the city of Ai in order to discover the strength of the city. When the scouts returned, they said to Joshua, "Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labor thither; for they are but few."⁴⁴ Joshua listened to his scouts and dispatched three thousand men out of the entire army which was available to him in order to conquer the city Ai. Nonetheless, we read that despite the city's weakness, the hearts of the Israelite army melted and became as water, which caused them to flee before their enemy. Please read the following Scripture passage from Joshua 7:7-15

7:7 And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! **7:8** O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! **7:9** For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth; and ***what wilt thou do unto thy great name?***

7:10 And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? **7:11** Israel hath sinned, and they have also ***transgressed my covenant*** which I commanded them; for they have even **taken of the accursed thing**, and have also stolen, and dissembled⁴⁵ also, and they have put it even among their ***own stuff***. **7:12** Therefore the children of Israel ***could not stand before their enemies***, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed; neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. **7:13** Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow; for thus saith the

⁴² Alma 14:34-36

⁴³ Joshua 6:17-19

⁴⁴ Joshua 7:3

⁴⁵ Dissembled means to conceal under a false appearance; disguised.

Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel; thou canst not stand before thine enemies, **until ye take away** the accursed thing from among you.

7:14 In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes; and it shall be, that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man. **7:15** And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and **all that he hath**; because he hath **transgressed the covenant** of the Lord, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.

Similar to how the Lord commanded Israel to not touch anything of the accursed city of Jericho, He has commanded the saints in the latter days, saying, "Prepare ye, prepare ye, O my people; *sanctify yourselves*; gather ye together, O ye people of my church, upon the land of Zion, all you that have not been commanded to tarry. *Go ye out from Babylon*. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord...Go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the *midst of wickedness*, which is *spiritual Babylon*... and go ye straightway unto the land of my vineyard, and redeem my vineyard, for it is mine, I have bought it with money. Therefore, get ye straightway unto my land; break down the walls of mine enemies, throw down their tower, and scatter their watchmen; and inasmuch as they gather together against you, avenge me of mine enemies; that by and by I may come with the residue of mine house and possess the land.⁴⁶"

If the sons and daughters of God do not sanctify themselves and remove everything of that spiritual Babylon from their lives they will not be able stand before their enemies, just as Israel was not able to stand before theirs. Akin to the testimony in Numbers, chapter fourteen, if we do not keep our covenant with God He has promised us as He promised Joshua, "Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you." Therefore, it is imperative that the sons and daughters of God learn true repentance and sanctification, which comes by yielding and surrendering our hearts to God. Please read from Helaman 2:30-31:

2:30 Now this was a great evil, which did cause the more humble part of the people to suffer great persecutions, and to wade through much affliction; **2:31** Nevertheless, they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the **filling their souls with joy and consolation**, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their **yielding their hearts unto God**.

Please the read the following testimony from Elder Eric Odida:

I know that you accept this gospel because that's why you are here. But sometimes, as a sister of mine one time shared with me, over a story that she had read on how the Son of Man went to visit a home and found this lady in that home. As a guest He was allowed into this first room. He was told that you can come and occupy this one here and when you are tired you can go and

⁴⁶ DC 108:2a-b, 4b, and DC 98:7e-g

rest in this other room here, and when you want to study you can go to this room here. And when it is time for eating you can come to the kitchen and occupy this. But this one room she never mentioned, and one time the Lord asked, "But what of this one room here? Can I come into this one room?" And however much she loved Him, yet that one room she was not willing for Him yet to go in.

Is there one room, just one room, that you still don't allow the Son of God to come in? That you allow Him everywhere in your life, everywhere He can access, but just one little room, just one small room that you are still holding the key to and you like her say not yet, just not yet, just for a little while to keep Him away from that room. Is there such a room in your life? Brothers and sisters He paid for the total, for the whole. Which is this one room in your life? Just this small room that you wish for Him just to hold on a little while, to leave you just for a short time. You would allow Him, just not yet.

The only way for mankind to become sanctified and prepared is by opening up every corner of our heart to Jesus Christ, and to allow His light to shine forth and touch every fissure. Only then can the Lord bind up the broken hearted. God has promised that if we will give Him a sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them...Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the holy Messiah: for he is full of grace and truth. Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a *broken heart and a contrite spirit*; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.⁴⁷"

Conclusion

The atoning blood of Jesus Christ only has power on the conditions of true repentance, which is not to continually lay the foundation of repentance from dead works, but to bring our sins into the light of Jesus Christ, not only to confess, but also to forsake. In so doing, we find that true repentance occurs only once as we cease to do evil and learn to do well, and therefore have no more disposition to transgress the commandments of God. Additionally, it is impossible for the sons and daughters of God to stand before their enemies if we do not hold true to our covenant in the waters of baptism. It is only on the principles of the Celestial Kingdom that we can truly build up the Kingdom of God on this earth, and in order for us to be a part Zion we must be sanctified. Jesus Christ has commanded the latter day saints to "purge ye out the iniquity which is among you; sanctify yourselves before me, and if ye...Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be *endowed with power*, that ye may give even as I have spoken."⁴⁸ In closing, please read the following Scripture from Mormon 4:93-94 and DC 6:16:

⁴⁷ Ezekiel 36:25-27 and 2 Nephi 1:71-72

⁴⁸ DC 43:3d and 4d

4:93 Doubt not, but be believing, and begin as in times of old, and come unto the Lord **with all your heart**, and work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before him. **4:94** Be wise in the days of your probation; strip yourselves of all uncleanness; ask not, that ye may consume it on your lusts, but ask with a **firmness unshaken**, that ye will yield to **no temptation**, but that ye will serve the true and living God.

6:16a Therefore fear not, little flock, do good, let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my Rock, **they can not prevail**. **6:16b** Behold, I do not condemn you, go your ways and sin no more: perform with soberness the work which I have commanded you; look unto me in every thought, doubt not, fear not: **6:16c** behold the wounds which pierced my side, and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet; be faithful; keep my commandments, and ye shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. Amen.