

In the Answer to Prayer for Covenant, the Lord explained that, “There will yet be records restored from all the tribes, that will be gathered again into one, and also as I have said, there is some truth in the Apocrypha, including the Pseudepigrapha and scrolls recovered at Nag Hammadi, and other New Testament texts uncovered since the time of Joseph Smith, and findings at Qumran, and there are other records yet to be recovered, and whoso is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit by their careful study.”

More on Communal Confession

In the community of Christians who compiled the scrolls at Qumran around the time of Christ, a text appears called the “Confession Ritual” which describes a communal confession of the people. It reads in full:

Fragmentary remains of a communal confession of sins, spoken in the first person plural, recall the language of Psalm li, Jeremiah and Deuteronomy, and resemble confession prayers in Ezra 9:5-15; Daniel 9:4-19; 1QS 1, 24-11, 1. In the latter text, the parallel confession is part of the ceremony of the renewal of the Covenant. The script is dated to mid-first century BCE. For the editio princeps, see Daniel Falk, DJD, XXIX, 45-61.

I ... in order that Thou be justified by Thy wor[ds] ... we were poured out through our iniquities ... they [stiff]ened the neck. Our God, hide Thy face from [our] si[ns and] blot out [al]l our iniquities and create in us a new spirit, O Lord.... [do not] withhold faithfulness and to rebels ... and bring back sinners to Thee. And [do not] reject from Thee the broken [spir]it, O God. According to Thy people in order to ... and always on ... nations and kingdoms ... their word[s] ... to Thy peoples in order to ... II ... the faithful God who keep [the] covenant and loving-kindness to those who love [Thee and who keep Thy commandments which Thou didst command] to Moses. Do not forsake Thy people [and] Thine [in]heritance. And let no man walk in the stubbornness of his [evil] heart. O God, in Thy goodwill ... Thy people and Thine inheritance shall not be forsa[k]en and let no man walk in the stubbornness of his evil heart. And where is Strength? And on whom shalt Thou cause Thy face to shine without his being purified? And they shall be sanctified and exalted above everything. It is Thou O Lord who hast chosen our fathers from of old. Thou hast caused us to stand for them as a remnant to give us (the covenant) which Thou hast established with Abraham for Israel that they might possess the proud ... mighty men, the hosts of those who are powerful, giving us houses filled with ... water, vineyards and olive trees [and] an inheritance of the people ...”

¹These same people created what we might identify as a guide and standard. It has been named the “Community Rule”. In it we read:

“On entering the Covenant, the Priests and Levites shall bless the God of salvation and all His faithfulness, and all those entering the Covenant shall say after them, ‘Amen, Amen!’ Then the Priests shall recite the favours of God manifested in His mighty deeds and shall declare all His merciful grace to Israel, and the Levites shall recite the iniquities of the children of Israel, all their guilty rebellions and sins during the dominion of Belial. And after them, all those entering the Covenant shall confess and say: ‘We have strayed! We have [disobeyed!] We and our fathers before us have sinned and acted wickedly in walking [counter to the precepts] of truth and righteousness. [And God has] judged us and our fathers also; II but He has bestowed His bountiful mercy on us from everlasting to everlasting.’ And the Priests shall bless all the men of the lot of God who walk perfectly in all His ways, saying: ‘May He bless you with all good and preserve you from all evil! May He lighten your heart with lifegiving wisdom and grant you eternal knowledge! May He raise His merciful face towards you for everlasting bliss!’”

In the first chapter of the book of Jubilees, the Lord complains to Moses about the wickedness of his people who have gone astray. Moses make intercessions for his people, and the Lord responds by prophesying about the people who will work with Him to bring Zion:

“I know their contrariness and their thoughts and their stiffneckedness, and **they will not be obedient till they confess their own sin and the sin of their fathers**. And after this they will turn to Me in all uprightness and with all (their) heart and with all (their) soul, and I will circumcise the foreskin of their heart and the foreskin of the heart of their seed,

¹commentary from the Complete Dead Sea Scrolls: *From the Book of Jubilees, where, as has been said, the same calendar is followed, it is clear that Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks), together with the Feast of the Renewal of the Covenant, were celebrated on the fifteenth day of the third month (Jub. VI, 17-19; cf. also 4Q266.fr. II ii; 270.fr. 7 ii). An outline of the ceremony performed on this holy day, with its confession of sin and its blessings and curses, is preserved in the Community Rule (IQS I, 16-11, 25; cf. also 4Q280, 286-7). The sectaries assemble for the service in strict hierarchical order: the priests first, ranked in order of status, after them the Levites, and lastly ‘all the people one after another in their Thousands, Hundreds, Fifties and Tens, that every Israelite may know his place in the Community of God according to the everlasting design’ (IQS 11, 22-3). Blessing God, the priests then recite his acts of loving-kindness to Israel and the Levites recall Israel’s rebellions against him. This recognition of guilt is followed by an act of public repentance appropriate to a community of converts. We have strayed! We have [disobeyed!] We and our fathers before us have sinned and acted wickedly in walking [counter to the precepts] of truth and righteousness. [And God has] judged us and our fathers also; but He has bestowed His bountiful mercy on us from everlasting to everlasting.*

and I will create in them a holy spirit, and I will cleanse them so that they shall not turn away from Me from that day unto eternity.

And their souls **will** cleave to Me and to all My commandments², and they **will** fulfil My commandments, and I **will** be their Father and they **shall** be My children. And they all shall be called children of the living God, and every angel and every spirit shall know³, yea, they shall know that these are My children, and that I am their Father in uprightness and righteousness, and that I love them -

(And do thou write down for thyself all these words which I declare unto thee on this mountain, the first and the last, which shall come to pass in all the divisions of the days in the law and in the testimony and in the weeks and the jubilees unto eternity, until I descend and dwell with them throughout eternity. And He said to the angel of the presence: Write for Moses from the beginning of creation till My sanctuary has been built among them for all eternity.)

- And the Lord will appear to the eyes of all⁴, and all shall know that I am the God of Israel and the Father of all the children of Jacob, and King on Mount Zion for all eternity. And Zion and Jerusalem shall be holy.

And the angel of the presence who went before the camp of Israel took the tables of the divisions of the years -from the time of the creation- of the law and of the testimony of the weeks of the jubilees, according to the individual years, according to all the number of the jubilees [according, to the individual years], from the day of the [new] creation

² JSH 15:6; T&C 29:10; T&C 26:8; T&C 32:4 T&C 93:1

³ See Helaman 3:19: "...it came to pass as he was thus pondering in his heart, behold, a voice came unto him, saying, Blessed art thou, Nephi, for those things which thou hast done. For I have beheld how thou hast with unweariness declared the word which I have given unto thee, unto this people. And thou hast not feared them, and hast not sought thine own life, but hath sought my will and to keep my commandments. And now because thou hast done this with such unweariness, behold, I will bless thee for ever. And I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works, yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will. Behold, thou art Nephi, and I am God. Behold, **I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels** that ye shall have power over this people and shall smite the earth with famine, and with pestilence, and destruction, according to the wickedness of this people. Behold, I give unto you power that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven. And thus shall ye have power among this people. And thus, if ye shall say unto this temple, It shall be rent in twain — and it shall be done. And if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou cast down and become smooth — and it shall be done. And behold, if ye shall say that God shall smite this people, it shall come to pass. And now behold, I command you that ye shall go and declare unto this people that thus saith the Lord God, who is the Almighty: Except ye repent, ye shall be smitten, even unto destruction.

⁴ T&C 158:15; Hebrews 1:23, and others

when the heavens and the earth shall be renewed and all their creation according to the powers of the heaven, and according to all the creation of the earth, until the sanctuary of the Lord shall be made in Jerusalem on Mount Zion⁵, and all the luminaries be renewed for healing and for peace and for blessing for all the elect of Israel, and that thus it may be from that day and unto all the days of the earth.” (Jubilees 1:21-28, punctuation edited)

It appears here that confession is the hinge point for the people who would be the Lord’s children. The Lord explains that after this, He will circumcise their heart (singular), create in them a holy spirit (singular), causing them to be clean, to cleave to the Lord, fulfill **all** His commandments, know Him, and build His temple.

Confession and the Atonement

The atonement came in paired waves⁶ – In the first of each of the waves, the Lord suffered the pains of those who had offended another. These, after seeing themselves aright, felt the guilt and shame of their sin. The Lord was able to overcome this, finding peace with his Father and all mankind.

In the second portion of each wave, He suffered the pains of those who had been the victims of the offenses, and had to overcome the likely justified anger and forgive the offenders. He accomplished this, finding peace with his Father and all mankind.

It appears that one of the great purposes of the suffering in Gethsemane was to gain the knowledge to reconcile two people together, not separate from one another, but with each other. He can teach the offender to confess and forsake the offense, and can teach the offended to confess the anger and forgive.⁷ And both can be healed in a restored relationship with the Lord and each other, not separate and apart from one another.

Despite the ideal, if one of the two parties will not confess, or will not forgive, then individuals can still be healed in their own sphere, but I believe this is the lesser of the two options.

The atonement is at work when two people allow the spirit to reconcile them *together*.

⁵ T&C 141:12; T&C 157:49

⁶ See Chapter 12 in *Come, Let Us Adore Him* by Denver Snuffer; See also T&C 161

⁷ This can be simple for the forgiver if they determine to forgive all ahead of time.

