

Repentance^[213]

Repentance requires remembrance. We get “lost” when we forget God’s commandments and promises. Once lost, it is not possible to return until we remember.

After the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum, forgetfulness and revising Joseph’s work has made it all the more important to see across a divide. In the overall context of the restoration, the first step for all of us to take is to accurately remember Joseph’s position in relation to us. It was unique.

In the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants^[214] sections are numbered differently. Below are cross-references to both versions. Joseph’s doctrines, teachings, revelations, and counsel were supposed to be kept and hearkened to by the church. In the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants section XIV:1 [today Section 43] it says, “*Ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church through **him** who I have appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations from my hand.*” (Emphasis added.) [The identity of “him” is Joseph Smith. It is clear from this language that Joseph spoke for the Lord and we are told to regard what came through **him** as commandments and revelations from God.]

In section XXXII:2 [today Section 5] it says: “*I have entrusted unto **you, my servant Joseph**, for a wise purpose in me; and it shall be made known unto future generations, but this generation shall have my word through **you**.*” (Emphasis added.) [In this context the word “generation” would refer to everyone living in or after Joseph’s time. Therefore, it would include all of us.]

In section XLIV:1-3 [today Section 21] it says: “*Behold there shall be a record kept among you, and in it **thou** [meaning Joseph] shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ...Wherefore, meaning the church, **thou** [referring to the church] “shall give heed unto all **his**” [singular personal pronoun, meaning Joseph’s] “words, and commandments, which **he**” [singular personal pronoun] “shall give unto you, as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me: for his word ye shall receive, as if from my own mouth, in all patience and faith; for by doing these things, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you” (emphasis added) [The “gates of hell” will not prevail only if we give heed to Joseph’s words. The bastion established by the Lord, the rock upon which the winds and rains can beat without causing any harm to the foundation, is the rock of revelation given to us in this generation through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Everything else turns to sand.] “*For thus saith the Lord God, **him**” [a singular personal pronoun, referring to the individual man, the Prophet Joseph Smith]**

*“have I inspired to move the cause of Zion in mighty power for good: and **his** diligence I know, and **his** prayers I have heard; yea, **his** weeping for Zion I have seen, and I will cause that **he** shall mourn for her no longer, for **his** days of rejoicing are come unto the remission of **his** sins, and the manifestation of my blessing upon **his** works”* (Emphasis added). [It does not promise to Joseph that he will obtain Zion. It only promises him rejoicing because his sins are remitted. His sins, of course, are not ours. At this point in 1835, the church was already under condemnation for three years, but Joseph was not. His sins are remitted, and that will cause Joseph to rejoice] *“...they shall believe on **his** words, which are given **him** through me, by the Comforter, which manifesteth that Jesus that was crucified by sinful men for the sins of the world;”* (Emphasis added). [Only Joseph has occupied this position. These words refer to a specific, single individual. It is a mistake to assume that the words can be readily re-interpreted to mean others; even those who were subsequently elected to be church presidents. Successor church presidents are equally obligated to respect God’s words through Joseph. If they fail to do so, they have rejected the covenant God offered through Joseph.]

In the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, to the extent the church could be called “a true and living church”[\[215\]](#) at that moment, it was because God owned the words that came through Joseph and God was then speaking through him. God vouched for the words that came through Joseph, and God cautioned them, and us, about ignoring His words given to all through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Section LI:2 (today Section 28): *“No one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church, excepting **my servant Joseph Smith, jr.** for **he** received them as Moses; and thou shalt be obedient unto the things which I shall give unto **him**.”* (Emphasis added.) [Again, there can be no question these words mean only the single individual Joseph Smith. It does not refer to successors, assigns, claimants, or some office.]

Section LIIIV:1-4 (today Section 90) is a revelation given in March 1833 in which Joseph Smith was called by the Lord: *“My son... Verily I say unto **you**”* [A personal individual pronoun, identifying only an individual by the name of Joseph Smith.] *“the keys of this kingdom shall never be taken from **you**, while **thou** art in the world, neither in the world to come:”* [Until God gives someone else other “keys,” these are Joseph’s alone. But even if another is given keys to do other work, Joseph will still retain his, for they will not be taken from him even in the world to come.] *“nevertheless, through **you** shall the oracles be given to another; yea, even unto the church. And all they who receive the oracles of God, let them beware how they hold them, lest they are accounted as a light thing, and they are brought under condemnation thereby, and stumble and fall.”* [The “oracles” are to be given by Joseph to the church. It does not refer to a license for leaders to begin enforcing transient, changing, shifting alterations. It cannot mean the commandments and revelations given to Joseph can be discarded or forgotten. It must refer to the doctrines, the commandments, revelations, and words of God given as an oracle to guide us. The oracles are contained in the *Book Mormon, Lectures on Faith* and the revelations given to Joseph.]

We must be careful in how we interpret our restoration scriptures. It is easy to convert an unchanging God[216] into a changeable Being[217] who has given His power unto men.[218] We must be careful about believing the God who is the same today, yesterday, and forever,[219] is now so whimsical that one day He asks one thing of you, and on the next something different. Beginning in 1852 and continuing until at least 1890 (and perhaps 1904), salvation depended on plural wives. After that the LDS Church reversed itself and began to excommunicate for the practice. Granting priesthood to black members will cause the church to forfeit any claim to priesthood, but later those who taught that are unequivocally condemned for a false teaching. Why is there shifting sand beneath the feet of LDS leadership? Ask, where might I go to find the rock upon which to stand so that the winds and the rains do not cause me to fall? God vouched for Joseph Smith, and God vouched for the revelations given through him. If there is a Prophet whose words we need to heed, it is Joseph Smith. All other things: all the rules, instructions, revelations, attitudes, and notions—everything ought to be measured against what was received through him. God vouched for his words. I vouch for his words. He was a prophet of God and stood in the God’s presence. God vouched for him and the revelations given through him. Therefore, the leading points and teachings called *Lectures on Faith* should remain as a law to guide us. Repentance should begin by returning to Joseph’s work to guide us. Nothing since him should be permitted to divert us away from what God gave through Joseph.

The gospel fullness is obtained by entering God’s presence. *Lecture Seventh*, ¶9 explains we must obtain the faith sufficient to enable us to act in the presence of the Lord, otherwise we cannot be saved. This idea is also found in D&C 93:1: “*Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am;*”

Every soul who “*forsaketh his sins...*” [To repent we must turn from our sins, or forsake them. Turning from sin to face God is what the act of repentance entails. Man must prefer Him over everything else.]

“*...cometh unto me...*” [Coming to God involves prayer, seeking, and asking. The closer we approach Him the more godly we become. The only repairman in the universe is Christ whose assignment it is to repair, redeem and heal us. But He can use us to help others. We can be part of the Lord’s blessing of mankind.]

“*...calleth upon my name....*” [We must call to Him, not just by our voice but also by our deeds.]

“*...and obeyeth my voice...*” [Even if this puts us into conflict with others. Not merely by being obedient to the things given through Joseph Smith, but obeying His voice here and now. We all need to listen to the voice of God and respond. The guidance He will give to one will be different than the guidance needed by another. He deals with our individual circumstances. God’s assignment to one will be uniquely theirs. Our circumstances are a gift from God.]

Understanding God’s hand sometimes requires us to look squarely at troubling

events and realize how failure is not only part of our past, but an important part. We can and will fail too, and their struggles will be in vain if we are so arrogant as to not deal with these events truthfully.

The scriptures explain that John the Beloved lingers still.[\[220\]](#) Assuming John would like to know our hearts, how might he best do that? An obvious test would be to come as a beggar, smelling foul and in obvious need, asking for relief. That is the perfect way for an angel to find out[\[221\]](#) if that same spirit animates us as animated King Benjamin. King Benjamin said not to suffer the beggar to put up their petition in vain, because we are all beggars.

“...and keep my commandments...” [The words, *“my commandments,”* refers to those given to the Prophet Joseph Smith and entrusted to us. These should be respected by all. They were delivered to Joseph by the voice of the Lord. Therefore we must heed them before we can expect to receive more.]

Sometimes, the relief other people need can only come from you. Under the inspiration of the Spirit, we can relieve the burdens of those around us. God cares about the widows and the orphans, the poor and the infirm. Pure religion before God is to care for them.[\[222\]](#)

Who at Bountiful appreciated the Lord’s appearance most? Was it those who were called to preside, whose names are in the record? Or would it have been the nameless group He asked to have brought to Him to be healed?[\[223\]](#) Unto whom did the Lord minister the most?[\[224\]](#) Those we relieve in the Lord’s name will bless God’s name because of us.

Be like our Master. Bless the infirm. They are here in abundance; the brokenhearted, the families who are in need. If we want to be saved, then we should help the Lord save others, by giving to them our helping and charitable hands. The most powerful sermon is in the effort and time we take to let people know we care about them.

Do these things, and “you shall see God’s face and know that He is.” We can “know,” not merely believe, but know.

For all Joseph Smith did accomplish, and all the Lord gave us through him, he did not see Zion. Zion will require a city, and cities require people. Achieving a Zion community requires us to consider and understand what others did in response to the opportunity available through Joseph.

The promise in D&C 93:1 to see the Lord’s face and know Him had been accomplished a month-and-a-half before that revelation.[\[225\]](#) In a meeting of the school of the prophets March 18, 1833, those present prayed together “in secret.” The minutes of the meeting record, “several exertions were given to faithfulness and obedience to the commandments of God and much useful instruction given for the benefit of the saints with a promise that the pure in heart that were present should see a heavenly vision and after remaining for a short time in secret prayer the promise was verified to many present having the eyes of their understanding(s) opened so as to behold many things after which the bread and wine was distributed by Bro Joseph after which many of the brethren saw a heavenly vision of the savior and concourses of angels.”[\[226\]](#) The official minutes

report, but do not elaborate on the event. Fifty years later, in Salt Lake City, Zebedee Coltrin who had been present on this occasion described it in greater detail. “When asked about the kind of clothing the Father had on, Bro. Coltrin said: I did not discover His clothing, for He was surrounded as with a flame of fire, which was so brilliant that I could not discover any thing else but His person. I saw His hands, His legs, his feet, his eyes, nose and mouth, head and body in the shape and form of a perfect man. He sat in a chair as a man would sit in a chair, but His appearance was so grand and overwhelming that it seemed I should melt down in His presence, and the sensation was so powerful that it thrilled through my whole system and I felt it in the marrow of my bones. The Prophet Joseph said: Brethren now you are prepared to be the Apostles of Jesus Christ, for you have seen both the Father and the Son, and know that They exist, and that They are two separate Personages.”[\[227\]](#)

This joyful event did not advance the participants toward Zion, however. Instead it seemed to have the opposite effect. Although the particulars are not available, the problem is clear. These men did not become “one” because of the shared experience, but became contentious and divided. The contention among them was so pronounced that three-and-a-half months later the school was disbanded and the participants sent on missions to cool down and reconsider themselves. The Lord rebuked them in a revelation June 1, 1833, calling their contention a “very grievous sin.”

In 1833 the saints failed in two respects: First, they had been told to build a temple and had failed to take any meaningful steps to begin. This was “a very grievous sin.” Second, they had become contentious in the school of the prophets, which was likewise a “very grievous sin.” The revelation states, *“I have loved you therefore ye must needs be chast[e]ned and stand rebuked before my face. for ye have sinned against me a very grievous sin in that ye have not considered the great commandment in all things that I have given unto you concerning the building of mine house[\[228\]](#) for the preparation wherewith I deign to prepare mine Apostles to prune my vineyard for the last time that I may bring to pass my strange act that I may pour out my spirit upon all flesh. But behold verily I say unto you that there are many who have been ordained among you whom I called but few of them are chosen. they who are not chosen have sinned a verry grievous sin in that they are walking in darkness at noon day... my servants sinned a verry grievous sin and contentions arose in the school of the prophets, which was verry grievous unto me saith your Lord, therefore I sent them forth to be chastened.”*[\[229\]](#)

The first “very grievous sin” involved a failure to keep the commandment to build a temple. The project required a group of only about 150 saints in Kirtland[\[230\]](#) to labor on the structure. They responded and made “rapid progress” according to Joseph Smith. The Kirtland temple was completed and dedicated 34 months later, on March 27, 1836.[\[231\]](#) Between the time of the commandment to build the temple and the dedication, 40 months passed.[\[232\]](#)

The failure to obey the command to complete a temple was repeated. The command to build a temple in Nauvoo was given in January 1841. The Lord warned the church He would give them “sufficient time”[\[233\]](#) to complete the building and if they failed, they

would be rejected.[234] The number of people in Nauvoo dwarfed the Kirtland population that built the temple. Nauvoo grew to be approximately 100 times larger during the relevant time frame.[235] Forty-two months after the command to build a temple in Nauvoo, the structure was only built with outside walls to the second floor. Joseph and Hyrum died June 27, 1844 without a usable temple. The city had completely finished a Masonic Lodge, a Seventies Hall, numerous homes and business buildings that diverted resources away from completing the temple. Many of these early structures have been restored through Nauvoo Restoration, Inc.[236]

The second “very grievous sin” of contention among the participants in the school of the prophets is a stark reminder of the obligation saints have to “be one.”[237] The Lord apparently means it when He said, “if ye are not one, ye are not mine.”[238]

The people of Enoch were called “Zion” because they “were of one heart and one mind.” They “dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.”[239] It was contrary to Christ’s command in the *Book of Mormon* for those who knew Him to never contend against each other. “*And there shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there have hitherto been. For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another. Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.*”[240]

Joseph accomplished great things. But he did not live to see Zion. When the Lord took both Joseph and Hyrum it was an indication of failure. The revelations God gave us through Joseph Smith command us to remember and respect them. That has not been done. Until we repent and value Joseph’s words above all others except Christ, we will never see Zion. Repentance begins first with remembering.

A series of letters in 1833 between leaders in Missouri and the presidency of the church in Kirtland reflected the tensions, disagreements and in-fighting then underway. In responding to three letters dated June 7, 1833,[241] Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon and Frederick Williams observed, “if we by our own wickedness bring evil on our own heads the Lord will let us bear it till we get weary and hate eniquity[.]”[242] The delay to bring Zion that began during Joseph Smith’s lifetime has now lasted generations. There is no reason to let it continue generations longer.

In March 1833 the school of the prophets managed a remarkable breakthrough. Many who were present saw God the Father and Jesus Christ. It did not produce the anticipated result because Zion cannot exist among the proud and contentious.

We *can* be Christ-like. We can provide relief to those around us. We can clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and visit those who are in prison.[243] Service elevates the servant. The servant’s heart is moved with compassion. Our bowels[244] must become like Christ’s; “moved with compassion” for others.[245] This may only be imitative at first. Then after it is informed by the experience, when we have acted consistent with His laws, what begins as imitation, grows within to become genuine compassion for others.

Christ is the prototype, but we *can* be like Him. There are godly people all around. They have long since forgotten their own needs and spend their lives in service of others. We can serve all serve others as an example of Christ's love and compassion.

Christ taught us to expect others to speak all manner of evil against us falsely for His name's sake.[246] This happens because no one believes the genuine thing exists. Everyone has been disappointed, and therefore we must be different. We must prove that faith exists here.

Doctrine and Covenants 93:36 says: "*The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. Light and truth forsake that evil one.*" Repentance involves acquiring light and truth—meaning intelligence. Repentance is abandoning a foolish error, a vain tradition, or a false belief and replacing it with truth. Returning and remembering Joseph's teachings will liberate us from errors, and empower us to gather light and truth. We at last arrive at a point we look upon our sins and say. "I have no more disposition for that. I know enough to abandon this because I prefer the light. I prefer God's intelligence and glory."

The *Book of Mormon* was abridged by Mormon while he lived in an utterly depraved and corrupt environment. The people were filled with idolatry, hatred, sadism, sex and violence. Mormon was untouched by it. He was a man of righteousness. He preserve himself in an abhorrent environment by filling himself with light and truth. He educated himself, and had learned truth. The glory of God is intelligence. Be intelligent.

At one point Christ told Abraham that He (Christ) was "more intelligent than them all." [247] The Lord was comparing Himself to all other pre-earth intelligences, spirits and souls.[248] Joseph Smith talking about the Holy Ghost said, "I am learned, and know more than all the world put together. The Holy Ghost does, anyhow, and He is within me, and comprehends more than all the world: and I will associate myself with Him." [249]

Like Joseph, we *can* fill ourselves with the mind of God. If we fill yourself with the mind of God, we will find ourselves in the position where we, as the scriptures recite, have no more disposition to do evil but only to do good continually.[250] That kind of repentance is as a consequence of the things we know. Such repentance comes as a consequence of the light and truth in us. That repentance causes temptation to disappear because we give it no heed.[251]

The problem is not the desires, appetites and passions of the flesh. God intends for us to eat. He intends for us to sleep. He intends for us to reproduce. He intends for all of the appetites and passions in us to be intelligently organized and gratified in a sacred manner, in which the purposes of God are advanced. We are to find holiness in everything. Repentance is the process of figuring out exactly how and why God made all the things available to us. Each of the things provided to us is to be used with prudence and with skill.[252]

There is a promise in D&C 132:19: "*Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths-*" [These are not just words. These are descriptions of various levels of the afterlife. This promise is for

those who repent and acquire light and truth. People seeking for this will become Zion.]

Isaiah gives us an example of God's forgiveness in Isaiah 6:1-6: "*In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims, and each one had six wings; And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*" [Isaiah felt himself unworthy to behold this holy scene and declared:] "*Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:*" [Often that is read to say the seraph used the tongs to touch the coal to Isaiah's lips. It does not say that. The seraph used the tongs to take the coal off the altar. He brought it to touch Isaiah in his hand. Being one of the flaming ones,[\[253\]](#) he is able to bear the heat of fire because of his glory.]

Continuing in verse 7: "*And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.*"

This seraph that dwells in glory improvised an ordinance using the coals from the altar of incense. This was the golden altar before the Holy of Holies,[\[254\]](#) upon which incense was burning. The ascending smoke symbolized the prayers of the saints ascending to heaven.[\[255\]](#) The prayers are the worthy speech that ascends to heaven uttered by all the faithful. Priests placed incense[\[256\]](#) upon the coals from this a column of smoke would rise. The column would reach the temple ceiling and spread out. It symbolized the Tree of Life, with a smoky column for the trunk, and the spreading cloud he branches and leafy top. These images were familiar to Isaiah from the temple of Solomon where the vision took place. The seraph's ordinance removed Isaiah's uncleanness. Once Isaiah's "iniquity is taken away, and [his] sin purged" he could boldly respond to the Lord, "Here am I; send me."[\[257\]](#) This example of forgiveness contrasts the weakness and cowardice of sin[\[258\]](#) with the confidence of the forgiven in God's presence.[\[259\]](#)

It requires effort to learn, but we must gain knowledge to obtain glory from God. God's glory is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth.[\[260\]](#) There is no glory in darkness, error, or incomplete and inadequate information. God wants to bring us back into a state of reconciliation with Him. This comes only from bravely facing light and truth, the glory of God, or the power of godliness. This is the very thing Christ said was missing in the Christian world when He spoke to Joseph in the First Vision.

It will require valiance to do what is required. This is not easy. It can be lonely. We will be misunderstood, and people will charge us with pride when instead it is meekness. The scriptures will come alive. We can see how the ancients were similarly tested and refined. It does not change in any generation. To find God is to lose the world.

The reason to rejoice and be exceeding glad when they say all manner of evil against one falsely[\[261\]](#) is because it affords us the opportunity for both compassion and understanding. Be like our Lord who forgave those in the act of killing Him, not of their brutality, but of their ignorance.[\[262\]](#) When the day arrives that they see things as they

were and realize what offense they gave God, they will be shocked. They had no intention of offending their Redeemer. They believed they were carrying out the execution of a criminal. He had compassion on them for their ignorance.

Have compassion for all those who are ignorant. Use gentleness and meekness to persuade.[\[263\]](#) Sometimes the truth offered will offend them. When offense is given or taken, make sure it comes from a place of love; love for them, love of God, and sincere faith in God's great work. Be kind. Bear a testimony filled with light and truth; intelligence.[\[264\]](#) They do not know what they are doing when rejecting truth. They do not understand yet. So help them.

Joseph said, "*When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel--you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them.*"[\[265\]](#) [Be diligent because this ascent up the ladder is the same for everyone. Do not leave this world without beginning the climb, and do not leave others without encouragement to begin the climb.]

The purpose of the gospel is to give us knowledge. The way to get knowledge is to repent. We are required to search into, lay hold upon, and obtain knowledge that saves. Not just in theory. Not just by reciting words and symbols in the temple endowment. We are not enlightened merely because we understand symbols in the temple rites. 'This symbol represents this, and this stands for that' is NOT what we must seek. Trivia is not light and truth. Light and truth will exalt us. Trivia can make us prideful.

Scholarship is not a reliable source for intelligence because reason is not the same as revelation. Study guided by the Spirit is critical. As Oliver Cowdery learned, mere study is not enough. God must be involved.[\[266\]](#) Hyrum Smith was commanded to "study [God's] word which hath gone forth among the children of men, and also study [God's] word which shall come forth among the children of men."[\[267\]](#) The Lord commanded us to "search these things diligently, for great are the words of Isaiah."[\[268\]](#)

If knowledge saves, then it follows that repentance requires us to learn something. We must begin with the first and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. D&C 130:18-21 explains: "*Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come. There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.*" [These laws cannot be changed, avoided, or opposed with any success. They can be learned and implemented, and the benefits harvested.] Blessings from God are obtained by diligence in what? Obedience to what? Knowledge and intelligence. Diligent at exactly what? Obedient to whom? Were the Nazis both diligent and obedient? Are the jihadists both diligent and obedient? Are the drug cartels both diligent and obedient? Are the 'masters of the universe'[\[269\]](#) on Wall Street diligent and obedient? None of these

examples of diligence and obedience involve gaining intelligence from God. What will rise from such things in the resurrection will leave the participants poor and weak and miserable. Virtues are meaningless apart from righteousness. We must have both to begin to repent.

A description of millennial glory is given in 2 Nephi 30:8-15. *“And it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall commence his work among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, to bring about the restoration of his people upon the earth. And with righteousness shall the Lord God judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. For the time speedily cometh that the Lord God shall cause a great division among the people, and the wicked will he destroy; and he will spare his people, yea, even if it so be that he must destroy the wicked by fire. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. And then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling, together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”*

It requires preparation to stand in that day. The preparation is repentance. Repentance requires us to gather light and truth. We must gain knowledge. Only knowledge saves us. The description continues in verse 16-18: *“Wherefore, the things of all nations shall be made known; yea, all things shall be made known unto the children of men. There is nothing which is secret save it shall be revealed; there is no work of darkness save it shall be made manifest in the light; and there is nothing which is sealed upon the earth save it shall be loosed. Wherefore, all things which have been revealed unto the children of men shall at that day be revealed; and Satan shall have power over the hearts of the children of men no more, for a long time. And now, my beloved brethren, I make an end of my sayings.”*

People will have revealed to them in that day everything that has been sealed or hidden from man since the fall of Adam. These people will have faith to qualify for the coming revelation. But from time to time there have been those who qualified to have the revelations opened to them. There is no difference between the revelations given to Enoch, or to Moses on the mountain, or to Joseph Smith, and the revelations to be given in the Millennium. Therefore it is possible to receive this blessing before the Millennium. This is our dispensation. What are we going to do with it?

The Lord lamented in the First Vision to Joseph that men have merely a form of godliness - insubstantial, un-redeeming, incapable of saving. We can do something about it. The angel Moroni foretold things God intends to happen. But we decide whether to receive what heaven offers or to remain content and in the dark. Here we are still awaiting a great outpouring. The prophecies cannot be fulfilled unless those who are free to

choose decide to repent and do something about this. We need to know *how* great things the Lord intends to do. The gospel was intended to be delicious, exciting, awe-inspiring, filled with wonder, rejoicing, causing us to sing in our souls a song of redeeming love for Him who has rescued you. Instead we are content in our conceit and act as if everything is as it should be. It is not.

In Joseph's letter from Liberty Jail he gave an appraisal of the saints: "*...the things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man! if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity--thou must commune with God. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God, than the vain imaginations of the human heart! None but fools will trifle with the souls of men. How vain and trifling have been our spirits, our conferences, our councils, our meetings, our private as well as public conversations--too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for the dignified characters of the called and chosen of God.*" [\[270\]](#)

How are we to change this? When we are called on to teach, do we act as one of the dignified characters called of God? When we teach, are our lessons still too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for those called of God? The gospel is delicious. We ought to return to it. The glory of God is intelligence and we are absolutely unintelligent in our councils, lessons and conferences; dumber through our curriculum year-by-year.

Nephi pondered about the things he had seen and heard. He constantly meditated, [\[271\]](#) and wrote his conclusions approximately 40 years after his visions. [\[272\]](#) The revelations that Joseph Smith received, including the First Vision in the sacred grove, could not be fully understood at the beginning and without reflection and pondering. The things of God are of deep import. They are understood more fully when we ask: Why did God reveal it? Why was it revealed in that order? Was He building a pattern? What came first and why? What came next and why? Reflection and pondering are required for us all.

We are in exclusive control of our own thoughts, reflection and meditation. We determine how much light and truth we receive and how quickly it will be given. It is predicated upon a law ordained before the foundation of the world. Anyone of us can obey it. God is no respecter of persons, and we are all authorized to exercise faith in Him unto salvation. We are authorized to exercise faith in Him until we know Him as the ancients knew Him. We are authorized to see His face and know that He is. If we intend to survive His return, we must be able to bear His presence. Hence the need to study these things.

Each of us should view these topics only as the beginning point and then go on to discover *how* great things the Lord intends to do. A neglected volume of scripture deserving study is *Lectures on Faith*. They remain scripture.

The Lord vouched for Joseph Smith. The Lord vouches for Joseph Smith again. If nobody will say it, I will declare: If we ignore Joseph's words, we do so at our peril. If we allow any man, or men, any committee, institution, or organization to claim they have the

right to alter, neglect, or discard the words of revelation given by God through the Prophet Joseph Smith, they will damn us if we accept their false claims. They will surely be damned for doing so.

God's work is the same yesterday, today and forever. Those who would like to throw us about by every wind of doctrine are teaching merely the commandments of men, as if they were doctrine. They are not. God spoke through Joseph and expects us to remember and study what was given. God will do no more to move the restoration forward until we repent. The first order of repentance is to remember what God gave to us through Joseph. If we do that, we will find God is willing to resume the restoration and move it forward to completion. When we fail to honor what was given, God will simply wait for another generation more humble and meek than ours.