

## The Holy Spirit of Promise – Nelson Whiting

The scriptures are brimming with evidence that we must have a relationship with Christ. Not simply to know about Him, but to know Him as a man knows his friend. The following citations show this to be the case, and through what medium we may know that Christ has approved our efforts.

According to Joseph Smith, this is the most important pursuit to understand and have realized in our own personal lives. I am still seeking and striving, and pleading to the Lord to make this level of relationship with Christ a reality, as per the few scriptural exhortations and examples below. I have no superior spiritual prowess or credential to qualify me to be worthy of your attention on this topic, but everything I believe on this topic is anchored in the scriptures.

These citations are taken from the Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith (TPJS), Words of Joseph Smith (WOJS), Lectures on Faith (LOF), and one from the History of the Church (HC).

Read the entire document and pray to know whether it is true. Follow the pattern in Moroni 7:16 to judge this matter. There is no reason to simply rely on my word that these scriptures are written for us, today, now, for our eternal improvement and salvation.

**All covenants**, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, **that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise**, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred), **are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.**  
(D&C 132:7)

All things entered into for our salvation, even when obtained from an anointed servant, must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise to have efficacy when we are dead. So what is the Holy Spirit of promise? Christ tells us:

Wherefore, I now send upon you another Comforter, even upon you my friends, that it may abide in your hearts, even **the Holy Spirit of promise; which other Comforter is the same that I promised unto my disciples, as is recorded in the testimony of John. This Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life**, even the glory of the celestial kingdom; Which

glory is that of the church of the Firstborn, even of God, the holiest of all, through Jesus Christ his Son— (D&C 88:3-5)

The Holy Spirit of promise is the comforter and promise to man that they have been given eternal life. Where does this promise come from? Who is the Holy Spirit of promise? Who is this “other” comforter in the testimony of John as referenced in the above D&C 88 verse?

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you **another Comforter**, that he may abide with you for ever; *Even the Spirit of truth*; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. **I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.** Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. (John 14:16-20)

The Greek translation from the KJV New Testament makes it clear that “he” to whom Christ is referring is Himself, not the Holy Ghost. The “he” in these verses is reflexive, or in other words, third person speech, i.e. third person personal pronoun. Christ had already made mention of the Holy Ghost as the first comforter in the beginning of this chapter (John 14). The idea that Christ is this “Spirit of Truth” or other comforter can be proven by the following verse where Christ tells us He is the “Spirit of Truth,” as referenced in the above scripture in the Gospel of John.

The Spirit of truth is of God. I am the Spirit of truth, and John bore record of me, saying: He received a fulness of truth, yea, even of all truth; (D&C 93:26)

Christ is the “other” comforter, and according to D&C 88:3, therefore, the Holy Spirit of promise. The Holy Ghost is the first comforter, and Christ is the second comforter and Holy Spirit of Promise. If that explanation were not enough, Joseph Smith clarified even further:

[After Joseph quotes John 14:16-23] Now **what is this other comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself**; and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter; that when any man obtains this last Comforter, **he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him**, or appear unto him from time to time, and even He will manifest the Father unto him, and **they will take up their abode with him**, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and **the Lord will teach him face to face**, and he may have a **perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God**; (HC, 381).

And what does it mean that the Father and His Son will take up their abode with you as stated in John 14:23? Joseph also clarified this in D&C 130:1-3:

When the Savior shall appear we shall see him as he is. We shall see that he is a man like ourselves. And that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy. John 14:23—**The appearing of the Father and the Son, in that verse, is a personal appearance;** and the idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man's heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false.

The promise of eternal life must ultimately come from Christ to have efficacy and validity. Not from the Holy Ghost nor from an anointed man. The ordinance may come through an anointed servant as seen in D&C 132, but the promise must still be sealed by Christ's own voice to the individual. Besides Christ's own words above as recorded by John, Joseph Smith taught the following in his discourses to the saints:

**We have no claim in our eternal compact, in relation to eternal things, unless our actions and contracts and all things tend to this.** But after all this, you have got to make your calling and election sure. If this injunction would lie largely on those to whom it was spoken, how much more those of the present generation! (TPJS, p. 306).

Joseph Smith elaborated on "this" that all things must tend to on the next page of his teachings. It has to do primarily with knowledge regarding the promises made to us through Jesus Christ:

1<sup>st</sup> Key: Knowledge is the power of salvation. 2<sup>nd</sup> key: Make your calling and election sure. 3<sup>rd</sup> key: It is one thing to be on the mount and hear the excellent voice, etc., and another to hear the **voice declare to you, You have a part and lot in that kingdom** (May 21, 1843, TPJS, p. 306)

Now, there is some grand secret here, and keys to unlock the subject. Notwithstanding the apostle [Peter] exhorts them to add to their faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, etc., yet he exhorts them to make their calling and election sure. And **though they had heard an audible voice from heaven bearing testimony that Jesus was the Son of God, yet he says we have a more sure word of prophecy**, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light shining in a dark place. Now, wherein could they have a more sure word of prophecy than to **hear the voice of God** saying, This is my beloved Son. Now for the secret and grand key. **Though they might hear the voice of God and know that Jesus was the Son of God, this would be no evidence that their election and calling was made sure, that they had part with Christ, and were joint heirs with Him. They then would want that more sure word of prophecy, that they were sealed in the heavens and had the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God. Then, having this promise sealed unto them, it was an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast.** Though the thunders might roll and lightnings flash, and earthquakes bellow, and war gather thick around, yet this hope and knowledge would support the soul in every hour of trial, trouble and tribulation. Then knowledge through our

Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the grand key that unlocks the glories and mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. (TPJS, p. 298)

**A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge**, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as **evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power.**" (TPJS, p. 217)

D&C 132:8-13 Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion.

**9 Will I accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name?**

**10 Or will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed?**

**11 And will I appoint unto you, saith the Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father ordained unto you, before the world was?**

12 I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment—that **no man shall come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law**, saith the Lord.

13 And everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not **by me or by my word**, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God.

We should never fear learning and understanding, only ignorance. And as is defined below, the more sure word of prophecy as referenced above by Joseph is the voice of Christ promising to you that you have a place and part with Him in the Kingdom. Hearing the voice of a servant or angel, Hearing the voice of God, or having an open vision of His glory is insufficient. The voice of God must declare to you that you are sealed in the heavens and have the promise of eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

It is one thing to receive knowledge by the voice of God, (this is my Beloved Son &c.) & another to know that you yourself will be saved, to have a **positive promise of your salvation is making your calling and election sure. viz the voice of Jesus saying my beloved thou shalt have eternal life.** Brethren never cease struggling until you get this evidence. Take heed both before and after obtaining this more sure word of prophecy. (WOJS, p. 208)

Third and last is how to make our calling and election sure. Ans, it is to obtain a **promise from God for myself that I shall have Eternal life. That is the more sure word of prophecy** (WOJS, p. 209)

And what shall others receive who do not labor faithfully, and continue to the end? **We leave such to search out their own promises if any they have;** and if they have any they are welcome to them, on our part, for the Lord says that every man is to receive according to his works. Reflect for a moment, brethren, and enquire, whether you would consider yourselves worthy a seat at

the marriage feast with Paul and others like him, if you had been unfaithful? Had you not fought the good fight, and kept the faith, could you expect to receive? (TPJS, p. 64)

**It is vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their all in sacrifice,** and by this means obtain faith in God and favor with him **so as to obtain eternal life,** unless they, in like manner, offer unto him the same sacrifice, and through that offering obtain the knowledge that they are accepted of Him. (LOF 6:8)

I say unto you, ye will know at that day that ye cannot be saved; for there can no man be saved except his garments are washed white; yea, his garments must be purified until they are cleansed from all stain, through the blood of him of whom it has been spoken by our fathers, who should come to redeem his people from their sins. And now I ask of you, my brethren, how will any of you feel, if ye shall stand before the bar of God, having your garments stained with blood and all manner of filthiness? Behold, what will these things testify against you? Behold will they not testify that ye are murderers, yea, and also that ye are guilty of all manner of wickedness? Behold, my brethren, **do ye suppose that such an one can have a place to sit down in the kingdom of God, with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and also all the holy prophets, whose garments are cleansed and are spotless, pure and white? I say unto you, Nay; except ye make our Creator a liar** from the beginning, or suppose that he is a liar from the beginning, ye cannot suppose that such can have place in the kingdom of heaven; but they shall be cast out for they are the children of the kingdom of the devil. (Alma 5:21-25)

You, no doubt, will agree with us, and say, that **you have no right to claim the promises** of the inhabitants before the flood; that you cannot found your hopes of salvation upon the obedience of the children of Israel when journeying in the wilderness, **nor can you expect that the blessings** which the Apostles pronounced upon the churches of Christ eighteen hundred years ago, were intended for you. Again, if **others' blessings are not your blessings,** others' curses are not your curses; you stand then in these last days, as all have stood before you, agents unto yourselves, to be judged according to your works. Every man lives for himself. (TPJS, p. 12)

Reading the experience of others, or the revelations given to them, can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. Knowledge of these things, can only be **obtained by experience** in these things, through the ordinance of God set forth for that purpose. **He [Joseph] remarked that the disappointment of hopes and expectations at the resurrection would be indescribably dreadful.** (WOJS, p. 253)

Can any man, even the Lord's anointed, pronounce salvation upon another man and such pronouncement have any efficacy after this life without God's own voice sealing it upon the recipient? No. In reference to Ezekiel chapter 14, Joseph in 1842 to the relief society explained we cannot rely on the prophet or men for a guarantee of our progression or salvation. More than a discouragement from relying on men for salvation, he says that such dependence on men leads to darkness:

..the people should each one stand for himself, and **depend on no man or men in that state of corruption... applied it to the present state of the Church** of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—said if the people departed from the Lord, they must fall—that they were depending on the Prophet, hence were darkened in their minds, in consequence of neglecting the duties devolving upon themselves. (TPJS, pp. 237-238)

A thorough study of D&C 76 in relation to the criteria for the Terrestrial Kingdom will further reveal the truth that following any man or group of men is not doctrinal, nor is it salvational. The scriptures tell us to receive the prophets, thus we know there is a place for a prophet, messenger, servant. But a study of the scriptures will reveal their true place, seat, or position in the grand scheme of *your* progression to Godhood. Is mere belief or trust sufficient that all will be well with us? Is it enough to merely believe that we have done what the Lord has asked of us? Joseph Smith says no:

For a man to lay down his all, his character and reputation, his honor, and applause, his good name among men, his houses, his lands, his brothers and sisters, his wife and children and even his own life also – counting all things but filth and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ – **requires more than mere belief or supposition that he is doing the will of God; but actual knowledge**, realizing that, when these sufferings are ended, he will enter into eternal rest, and be a partaker of the glory of God... For, from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things. It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life; and it is **through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know** that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God... Under these circumstances, then he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life... But those who do not make the sacrifice cannot enjoy this faith, because men are dependent upon this sacrifice in order to obtain this faith; therefore, they cannot lay hold upon eternal life, because the revelations of God do not guarantee unto them the authority so to do... But **those who have not made this sacrifice to God do not know** that the course which they pursue is well pleasing in his sight; for whatever may be their belief or their opinion, it is a matter of doubt and uncertainty in their mind. (LOF 6:5-12)

It is not sufficient to make a covenant to sacrifice, which all endowed saints have done and can continue to do for the dead any day a temple is open. We must observe our covenants *by* sacrifice, not simply make a covenant *to* sacrifice.

Verily I say unto you, all among them who know their hearts are honest, and are broken, and their spirits contrite, and are willing to **observe their covenants by sacrifice—yea, every sacrifice which I, the Lord, shall command—they are accepted of me.** (D&C 97:8)

And in the last days, before the Lord comes, he is to **gather together his saints who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice**. Psalm 1:3,4,5: “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above and to the earth, that he may judge his people. **Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice** (LOF 6:9)

How do we obtain the voice of God testifying to us that we are His? By doing His will. Doing mighty works in His name is not enough. Living societally accepted ethical norms is not enough. Living general righteous principles is not enough. Casting out devils and prophesying are not enough. Doing His will (following personal revelation through our relationship with Christ), is the only thing guaranteeing unto us eternal life with God. Matthew 7:21-23 makes this clear:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that **doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you**: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

The Lord works with His children to their level of progression. One person may be in a position to receive an assignment/sacrifice from the Lord which is very different than another person, and seemingly in contradiction to previously held beliefs/traditions, and even church policies, procedures, and commandments as a whole. This “strange act” of the Lord, is always in action among the righteous “that men may discern the righteous from the wicked” (D&C 101:95). Evidence that the Lord asks specific sacrifices of individual children, each with their own purpose sometimes, indeed necessarily different from each other, is found in another statement from Joseph:

...we cannot keep all the commandments without first knowing them, and we cannot expect to know all, or more than we now know unless we comply with or keep those we have already received. **That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be and often is, right under another**. God said, “Thou shalt not kill;” at another time He said, “Thou shalt utterly destroy.” **This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. Whatever God requires is right**, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire. If we seek first the kingdom of God, all good things will be added. So with Solomon: first he asked wisdom, and God gave it him, and with it every desire of his heart, **even things which might be considered abominable to all who understand the order of heaven only in part, but which in reality were right because God gave and sanctioned by special revelation**. (TPJS, p. 276)

We must, therefore, do His will given us through “special revelation” in order carry out necessary sacrifices. And this that we may know Christ and be where He is. This requires compliance to the commandments we have already received. Then we will receive more commandments from God Himself, for whatever He requires is right, and we will receive no more until we have complied to the commandments we have been given. Nephi taught this principle/doctrine in his explanation of Christ’s doctrine in 2 Nephi 31-32, specifically chapter 32 verses 4-6:

Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, **if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not**, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark. For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do. Behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and **there will be no more doctrine given until after he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh. And when he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh, the things which he shall say unto you shall ye observe to do.**

There is no other condition by which we may be given the gift of eternal life. Christ Himself tells us in John 17:3 that the conditions of eternal life require knowing Him.

And this is life eternal, that they might **know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ** whom thou hast sent.

From the scriptures we have looked at previously, we may know with a surety that this knowledge is not regarding general spiritual facts or attributes or characteristics of God, but to know Him personally. And again Christ tells us of this requirement to **receive His testimony to us of our salvation** in D&C 76:74, 82. If we do not receive it, we can only obtain the terrestrial or telestial kingdoms:

Who [terrestrial level individuals] **received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh**, but afterwards received it. They [telestial level persons] are they who **received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus** (telestial).

Christ bears testimony to His servants, of their salvation. This testimony to them is the more sure word of prophecy, and is also called the “spirit of prophecy” (see D&C 131:5). Revelations 19:10 tells us that the “testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.” Joseph Smith clarified:

Many of the sects cry out O I have the testimony of Jesus, I have the spirit of God But away with Jo Smith he says he is a Prophet But their is to be no Prophets nor revelations in the last days; But stop sir the Revelator says that **the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of Prophecy** So by your own mouth you are condemned. (WOJS p. 214)

The confusion as to what this “testimony of Jesus” might refer to, is apparent by some who claim that to have a testimony that Jesus is the Christ is equivalent to having the spirit of prophecy, and thus all who have a testimony of the divinity of Jesus, are therefore prophets because they have the spirit of prophecy. This erroneous belief is further clarified by Joseph Smith by his statement that **the testimony of Jesus is not your testimony of Him, but His testimony to you that you have eternal life:**

Peter was writing to those of like precious faith with them the Apostles First **to be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise that is the testimony of Jesus** (WOJS p. 209)

Once we have kept His commandments and sacrificed what He has required, how do we know if we “know” Christ? By witnessing of Him. How do we know if we are a witness to Christ? Christ tells us what it means to be a witness of His resurrection in 3 Ne 11:14-17.

And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto them saying: Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may **thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know** that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world. And it came to pass that the multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and **did feel the prints** of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did do, going forth one by one until they had all gone forth, and **did see with their eyes** and **did feel with their hands**, and **did know of a surety** and **did bear record**, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, that should come. And when they had all gone forth and had **witnessed for themselves**, they did cry out with one accord, saying: Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they **did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him.**

This then is what it means to know Christ. Feel the prints of the nails, see with our eyes, and know with a surety that He is Christ. We cannot be saved on the principle of knowing *about* Him. Rather, we must *know* Him as we know our own family members here on earth. And not only must we know Him, we must do His will, and the will of our Father which is in heaven. We must receive Christ, the second comforter, if we wish to be where He is. As Joseph Smith taught:

...for any portion of the human family to be assimilated into their [Christ and the Father's] likeness is to be saved; and **to be unlike them is to be destroyed; and on this hinge turns the door of salvation.** Who cannot see, then, that salvation is the effect of faith? (LOF 7:16)

If we are not like Christ, the great prototype of the saved man, how can we expect to be where He is? We have seen that it is vain for us to fancy that we can be heirs with Him if we have not offered our all in sacrifice. It would be offering an insult to the Creator of all things, and calling Him a liar, to propose to Him that we are to be saved on any other principle than being like Him and hearing His voice declare unto us the gift of eternal life. Moroni reiterated the truth that we will not receive Christ unless we have become purified as He is pure, and the level we must attain in order to see Him as He is:

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that **when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is**; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen. (Moroni 7:48)