

D&C#07 "The First Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel"

Outline:

- I. Introduction
- II. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the First Principle
- III. Through Sincere Repentance, We Partake of the Blessings of the Atonement
- IV. Baptism is an Essential Ordinance
- V. Through the Ordinance of Confirmation, We Receive Gift of the Holy Ghost
- VI. To Receive Eternal Life, We Must Endure to the End in Faith
- VII. Conclusions

I. Introduction

Before the invention of modern warfare, battles were fought in hand-to-hand combat. The participants wore armor to protect them from injury. They were equipped with a metal sword that was often used to cause bodily harm upon their opponents and, if swung with sufficient strength, could penetrate their opponent's armor. In later year, helmets were worn that served to protect their heads from injury. Their last defense against injury was a shield. These were disc-shaped objects that were held by the individual and mobile enough to be used to deflect the blows their enemy may attempt to render. They were of sufficient strength that they could protect the individual from rocks, fiery arrows, as well as blows of the sword. It was often the shield, due to its mobility, that was the soldiers strongest line of defense.

So important was the shield of the warriors that Zarahemnah, a disgruntled general, who had lost a war with the Nephites, declared:

B/M, Alma 44:9

9 Behold, we are not of your faith; we do not believe that it is God that has delivered us into your hands; but we believe that it is your cunning that has preserved you from our swords. Behold, it is your breastplates and your shields that have preserved you.

As important as the breastplate and bodily armor was to the soldier, it was the mobility and durability of their shield that saved their lives.

Doctrine and Covenants 27:17

17 Taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked;

Leon R. Hartshorn states,

"How appropriate that faith is the spiritual shield that is a vital part of our armor. The shield of faith is the part of the armor that is out in front, pushing forward, quenching the flaming arrows of the wicked so they do not wound us or destroy us spiritually. A soldier without a shield would be in grave danger. A person without the spiritual shield of faith would be in grave danger" (*Put On The Whole Armor of God*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978, 54).

I. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the First Principle

Leon R. Hartshorn continues,

"The first principle of the gospel is not faith alone, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That make a lot of difference. For some, the concept of faith is abstract and difficult to understand. But faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is not abstract; it is concrete and understandable. Knowing that the first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ makes it much easier to know what path to follow to increase our faith. If we are going to increase our faith in Jesus Christ, we must first increase our knowledge of him." (*Put On The Whole Armor of God*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978, 54-55).

The restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints upon the earth in these latter days, began with faith. It was the faith of Joseph Smith that led him to utter his first prayer to God. It was also in faith, three years later, that his prayer for forgiveness resulted in the appearance of the Angel Moroni.

*What does it mean to have faith in Jesus Christ?

*Why is it important that we center our faith in Jesus

Christ?

*How can we strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ?

Doctrine and Covenants 19:23-24

**23 Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me.
24 I am Jesus Christ; I came by the will of the Father, and I do his will.**

In his history, the Prophet introduces section 19 as 'a commandment of God and not of man, to Martin Harris. The date for Section 19 in the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants is 'likely in the summer of 1829'. (see D&C 19 heading, 2013, 31.)

Doctrine and Covenants 88:118

118 And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out f the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.

B/M, Alma 32:27

27 But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can not more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words.

This verse is from Alma, the younger's mission to reclaim the apostate Zoramites (Alma 32:6-8). While he was preaching, a group of people who were poor in temporal goods, petitioned him for guidance and direction as they were not allowed in the local synagogue. Here, Alma gave them the formula for knowing spiritual truth. The first step is "to exercise a particle [slightest trace or speck] of faith, [or a] desire to believe" (Alma 32:27).

We strengthen our faith in Christ often gradually rather than through a single experience. Once we begin to believe or to have faith in God, we must continue to strengthen it.

*What are some circumstances in daily life that require us

to exercise faith in Christ?

*How has faith helped you overcome discouragement, weakness, or other difficulties?

*How can faith in Christ [help us] strengthen our relationships with others? (Ex: spouse, child, parent, a ward member, neighbor, co-worker).

*How can we demonstrate our faith in Christ?

Doctrine and Covenants 20:69

69 And the members shall manifest before the church, and also before the elders, by a godly walk and conversation, that they are worthy of it, that there may be works of faith agreeable to the holy scriptures--walking in holiness before the Lord.

Joseph Smith states,

"[Church members, above all others, should] be kindly affectionate, one towards another; that the fathers should be kind to their children, husbands to their wives,...children obedient to their parents, wives to their husbands..." (*History of the Church*, Vol. 2. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951, [Second Edition Revised, 1969), 263-264).

As members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints we believe that we are a family of believers, spirit children of Heavenly parents. Our relationship with each other is as brothers and sisters. Because of our family ties, we reach out to support and assist one another.

*How does our faith in Christ affect our desire to do good works?

James 2:14-17

**14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?
15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,
16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not**

those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

It is important to understand that in spite of all we can do, we are saved by the grace of Jesus Christ, not by our works. However, we demonstrate to our Savior our faith in Him, as we also strive to be compassionate and caring in our relationships with others just as He did.

Doctrine and Covenants 8:10

10 Remember that without faith you can do nothing; therefore ask in faith. Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not.

Section 8 was given on behalf of Oliver Cowdery at Harmony, Pennsylvania, in April, 1829. As Oliver assisted Joseph Smith through his transcription of the Book of Mormon, he desired to also receive the gift of translation.

Sometimes, like Oliver, we are not satisfied with what we have been given by the Lord. During these times, if we are wise, we will come to realize that our inner dissatisfaction was driven by our failure to sincerely appreciate the blessings we had already been given. Oliver learned this important lesson. Hopefully, we will also learn to ask in faith for understanding so we may focus our efforts upon those things that will enable us to help build the kingdom of God on earth.

*What can we accomplish *without* faith?

*What can we accomplish *with* faith?

Doctrine and Covenants 35:9

9 And whoso shall ask it in my name in faith, they shall cast out devils; they shall heal the sick; they shall cause the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk.

Four missionaries, (D&C 32:1-3, Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Parley P. Pratt and Zeba Peterson) were called in September, 1830, to serve a mission to the

Lamanites. Through the prompting of Parley P. Pratt, they went through Ohio where they visited with one of Parley's friends, Sidney Rigdon, who was the minister of a religious group known as the Disciples of Christ or Campbellites. The four missionaries were granted permission to preach at one of their four churches. Sidney Rigdon was given a copy of the Book of Mormon which he studied and gained a testimony and was baptized. In less than one month, 127 individuals had joined the church. (see Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler. *Revelations of the Restoration*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 251-252).

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 35 states, "Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon, at or near Fayette, New York, December 7, 1830. At this time, the Prophet was engaged almost daily in making a translation of the Bible. The translation was begun as early as June 1830, and both Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer had served as scribes. Since they had now been called to other duties, Sidney Rigdon was called by divine appointment to serve as the Prophet's scribe in this work (see verse 20). As a preface to the record of this revelation, Joseph Smith's history states: 'In December Sidney Rigdon came [from Ohio] to inquire of the Lord, and with him came Edward Partridge... Shortly after the arrival of these two brethren, thus spake the Lord.'" (Heading: Section 35. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 59).

Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl state,

"Miracles are not given as a foundation for faith, but to confirm the faith that has been built already upon the word of God. The promise is given that those who, in faith, ask for the gift of miracles shall cast out devils and heal the sick, but without faith no other miraculous manifestations shall be given..." (*Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951, [Revised Edition, 1962], 185).

Doctrine and Covenants 42:48-51

48 And again, it shall come to pass that he that hath faith in me to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed.

49 He who hath faith to see shall see.

50 He who hath faith to hear shall hear.

51 The lame who hath faith to leap shall leap.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 42 states, "Revelation given in two parts through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, February 9 and 23, 1831. The first part, consisting of verse 1 through 72, was received in the presence of twelve elders and in fulfillment of the Lord's promise previously made that the 'law' would be given in Ohio (see section 36:12). The second portion consist of verses 73 through 93. The Prophet specifies this revelation as 'embracing the law of the Church.'" (Heading: Section 42. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 69).

The power of the priesthood, or the authority to act in God's name, is part of the restoration of all things in these latter days. It is through the priesthood, the faithful can be healed, whatever their malady may be. In each instance, the healing of the individual is not only dependent upon the desire and faithfulness of the individual, but also the mind and will of God.

Doctrine and Covenants 63:7-11

7 And he that seeketh signs shall see signs, but not unto salvation.

8 Verily, I say unto you, there are those among you who seek signs, and there have been such even from the beginning;

9 But, behold, faith cometh not by signs, but signs follow those that believe.

10 Yea, signs come by faith, not by the will of men, nor as they please, but by the will of God.

11 Yea, signs come by faith, unto mighty works, for without faith no man pleaseth God: and with whom God is angry he is not well pleased; wherefore, unto such he showeth no signs, only in wrath unto their condemnation.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 63 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet at Kirtland, Ohio, August 30, 1831. The Prophet, Sidney Rigdon, and Oliver Cowdery had arrived in Kirtland on August 27 from their visit to Missouri. Joseph Smith's history describes this revelation:

'In these infant days of the Church, there was a great anxiety to obtain the word of the Lord upon every subject that in any way concerned our salvation; and as the land of Zion was now the most important temporal object in view, I enquired of the Lord for further information upon the gathering of the Saints, and the purchase of the land, and other matters." (Heading: Section 63. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 114).

In the above verses, the Lord clarifies the position of signs as they are made manifest. They follow, not precede, the exercise of faith on the part of the individual. Signs are often sought as evidence of God presence and may, therefore, be used by Satan to mislead those whose faith is weak. It is faith in God exercised by the believer, which most frequently opens the door to manifestations of the Spirit of the Holy Ghost. Those who seek signs as a condition of their belief are often condemned by the Lord.

B/M, Moroni 7:33

33 And Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever things is expedient in me.

The exercise of faith is the prerequisite to being able to exercise the power of God for the benefit of man. Without faith, Moroni taught,

B/M, Ether 12:12

12 For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them; wherefore, he showed not himself until after their faith.

*How have you seen the power of faith manifested?

A repeated concept in the Doctrine and Covenants, is combining our faith with our prayers. The following scripture references the prayers offered by ancient prophets as they prayed that the records of the Book of Mormon would be preserved for those in the latter days.

Doctrine and Covenants 10:46-52

46 And, behold, all the remainder of this work [Book of Mormon] does contain all those parts of my gospel which my holy prophets, yea, and also my disciples, desired in their prayers should come forth unto this people.

47 And I said unto them, that it should be granted unto them according to their faith in their prayers;

48 ...This was their faith...gospel...might come unto their brethren the Lamanites...

49 Now,...their faith in their prayers...gospel should be made known...

50 And...did leave a blessing upon this land...whosoever should believe in gospel...might have eternal life.

51 Yea, that it [this land] might be free...

52 And now, behold, according to their faith in their prayers will I bring this part of my gospel to the knowledge of my people...

Through the prayers of the ancient prophets, who prayed in faith, the inhabitants of this land in the latter days would be blessed to have the gospel preached to them and would be free from oppression.

*What is the role of faith in our prayers?

III. Through Sincere Repentance, We Partake of the Blessings of the Atonement.

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"Repentance is a major theme in the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord teaches the doctrine of repentance and repeatedly emphasizes the need [for his children] to repent. He promises great blessings to those who repent--and punishments for those who do not." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 36).

In Section 58, we learn the ingredients of repentance.

Doctrine and Covenants 58:42-43

42 Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.

43 By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins— behold, he will confess them and forsake them.

True to the Faith, A Gospel Reference, states,

"Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, Heavenly Father has provided the only way for you to be forgiven of your sins. Jesus Christ suffered the penalty for your sins so you can be forgiven if you sincerely repent...

"Repentance is much more than just acknowledging wrongdoings. It is a change of mind and heart that gives you a fresh view about God, about yourself, and about the world. It includes turning away from sin and turning to God for forgiveness. It is motivated by love for God and the sincere desire to obey His commandments...Repentance is a painful process, but it leads to forgiveness and lasting peace." (*True To The Faith, A Gospel Reference*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004, 132-133).

*What is the difference between true repentance and merely breaking a bad habit or changing a behavior?

Ezra Taft Benson states,

"Repentance means more than simply a reformation of behavior...True repentance is based on and flows from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way. True repentance involves a change of heart and not just a change of behavior (see Alma 5:13)" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [5th Printing, 1993], 71).

The simple steps of repentance, at times referred to as the 5 R's, are: (1) Recognition of sin; (2) Remorse for sin; (3) Report sin to authority; (4) Restore to offended; and (5) Resolve not to repeat.

Boyd K. Packer states,

"To earn forgiveness, one must make restitution. That means you give back what you have taken or ease the pain of those

you have injured.

"But sometimes you *cannot* give back what you have taken because you don't have it to give. If you have caused others to suffer unbearably--defiled someone's virtue, for example--it is not within your power to give it back.

"Restoring what you cannot restore, healing the wound you cannot heal, fixing that which you broke and you cannot fix is the very purpose of the atonement of Christ.

"When your desire is firm and you are willing to pay the 'uttermost farthing,' (Matthew 5:25-26), the law of restitution is suspended. Your obligation is transferred to the Lord. He will settle your accounts." ("The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness," in *Ensign*, November 1995, 19-20).

Neal A. Maxwell adds,

"Repentance requires both turning away from evil and turning to God." ("Repentance," in *Ensign*, November 1991, 30).

Doctrine and Covenants 18:11-13

11 For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.
12 And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him, on conditions of repentance.
13 And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!

These verses given by revelation to both Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, clarify the purpose of the suffering of Jesus Christ. He suffered the pain of the sins of all mankind that they would come unto Him, repent, and receive His gospel. It is His express desire that mankind, through obedience to His commandments, become His sons and daughters. Thereby, they become recipients of the blessings of eternal salvation in His Father's kingdom.

Doctrine and Covenants 19:16-19

16 For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

17 But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

18 Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit--and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink--

19 Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.

In these verses, the Savior describes the degree of pain He suffered in order to bring to pass the salvation of all mankind. In turn, He gives a warning to those who refuse to repent that "if they would not repent they must suffer even as I" (Doctrine and Covenants 19:17). In other words, when we refuse to repent from sins we have committed, we place ourselves temporarily outside of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, and thus we must then bear the suffering required by the law of justice ourselves, as long as we remain in sin.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler state,

"Only a God can atone for the sins of another... The Savior uniquely merited the ability to suffer for the sins of others because he was sinless, and justice, therefore, could not demand that he suffer punishment for sin. When he suffered for sin, it was not for his own sins; rather, his suffering met the demands of justice for the sins of others. He was not constrained by law to suffer for the sins of others but did so out of his mercy and loving kindness to them. The concept of grace indicates aid that comes from a divine source. Therefore, Christ was uniquely qualified to offer grace through the atoning sacrifice because as a member of the Godhead he condescended to become the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh. His divine sonship as the Only Begotten Son of God enabled him to suffer 'more than man can suffer, except it be unto death" (B/M, Mosiah 3:7).

"The unrepentant suffer a spiritual death in which they are cut off from the presence of God, and the Spirit of the Lord is withdrawn from them. Those who inherit the telestial kingdom are numbered among those who must suffer the demands of justice for sin in the spirit world.

"The suffering referred to by the Savior is not a quantity of punishment meted out and experienced for a predetermined length of time. Individuals suffer as long as they remain in sin. When they repent, the atonement of Christ has claim upon them.

"There are those who have falsely supposed that Christ's suffering supplants on the part of those who repent. This simply is not the case. There is no repentance without suffering." (*Revelations of the Restoration*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 147-148).

The blessing of the Savior's atonement are available to us only on the condition of our repentance. (see B/M, Alma 7:14).

Consequences of Not Repenting:

Doctrine and Covenants 1:33

33 And he that repents not, from him shall be taken even the light which he has received; for my Spirit shall not always strive with man, saith the Lord of Hosts.

This section constitutes as a "voice of warning" to all people of the world. It contains specific consequences for those who refuse to repent from their sins.

When we fail to strengthen the light that we have received, from the Holy Ghost, through daily prayer, reading of the scriptures, and obedience to the commandments, our testimonies begin to decrease. We become more susceptible to the influence and temptations of Satan. Through our own neglect and lack of attention to nourish the Spirit that the light within begins to grow dim.

Doctrine and Covenants 19:17-18, as noted, states that those who chose not to repent will be required themselves to suffer the effects of their own sins.

Doctrine and Covenants 29:17

17 And it shall come to pass, because of the wickedness of the world, that I will take vengeance

upon the wicked, for they will not repent; for the cup of mine indignation is full; for behold, my blood shall not cleanse them if they hear me not.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for section 29 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, in the presence of six elders, at Fayette, New York, September 1830. This revelation was given some days prior to the conference, beginning September 26, 1830." (Heading: Section 29. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 49).

Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl state,

"*My blood shall not cleanse them.* This indicates that, at the time of the end, the children of men would appeal to the atonement of Christ in vain. Perhaps there never was a time when professed Christians rested in greater security that they do today, hoping that the blood of the Lamb will be their shield. Here is a warning that His atoning blood does not cleanse them, unless they are willing to obey Him. Destruction will go forth, for the day of vengeance has come." (*The Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951, [Revised Edition, 1962], 152).

Reflecting upon this verse, one recalls the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). There were five who discovered as the night passed, their lamps had gone out while waiting for the bridegroom to come. They are noted as being foolish, for they, unlike the other five, had brought no extra oil. When they could not obtain oil from the other five, they left the procession in order to secure the required fuel. When the five finally returned to the place of the bridegroom, they found the door shut. The King James Bible states, "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not (Matthew 25:11-12). The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible renders this verse as, "yea know me not." The difference [I and yea or you] clarifies that is not the Lord who doesn't know us, for in truth He knows us all, but that there are some who have not made the necessary preparation to meet Him. These may include those who are unwilling to submit their will to His and follow His teachings. These may include those who are estranged from God and others, guilt, low feelings of

self-worth, rationalizing other sins, being unforgiving, even failing to read their scriptures.

Blessings of True Repentance:

Doctrine and Covenants 1:32

32 Nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven;

The Lord knows our weaknesses and sins. He stands ever ready to assist us in overcoming them. He waits patiently for us to call upon Him in prayer for His assistance and strength as we are ready to repent. Once we have repented, He then stands ready to forgive us, and help us further up the slope. His plea is for us to come unto Him and receive His blessings.

Doctrine and Covenants 58:42

42 Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.

Steven C. Harper states,

"With great expectation for Zion, the Prophet Joseph Smith, Bishop Edward Partridge, and others were disappointed on their arrival in Independence, [Missouri]. They anticipated a thriving branch, but only a few convert awaited them...

"A few days after Joseph's arrival in Independence, Sidney Rigdon, Issac Morley, Ezra Booth, Sidney and Elizabeth Gilbert, and the Saints from Colesville, New York, arrived as well. Joseph received Doctrine and Covenants 58 to reveal to the Saints assembled in Missouri what they should do." (*Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2008, 202).

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 58 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, in Zion, Jackson County, Missouri, August 1, 1831. Earlier, on the first Sabbath after the arrival of the Prophet and his party in Jackson County, Missouri, a religious service was held, and two members who had been received by baptism. During that week, some of the Coleville Saints from the Thompson Branch and others arrived (see section 54). Many were eager to learn

the will of the Lord concerning them in the new place of gathering." (Heading: Section 58. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 104).

At this time in the History of the Church, there are two centers of the Church: Ohio and Missouri. As a result of persecution and under the direction of the Lord, the members of the Church have left New York and have now gathered in the Ohio Valley. The gathering of some members of the Church to Missouri in 1831, is in its beginning stages.

As noted in Doctrine and Covenants 58:42, the Lord stands ready to forgive those who are willing to repent. The words in the Doctrine and Covenants are almost exactly those found in Jeremiah 31:34, and similar to the thought expressed in Isaiah 1:18. The main emphasis is "and I, the Lord, remember them no more" (D&C 58:42).

One of the greatest difficulties many individuals have is being able to forgive someone who has offended or hurt them. As one individual stated, "I can forgive, but not forget." The teachings of the gospel as recorded in the

Doctrine and Covenants states,

Doctrine and Covenants 64:9-10

9 Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

10 I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 64 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to the elders of the Church, at Kirtland, Ohio, September 11, 1831. The Prophet was preparing to move to Hiram, Ohio, to renew his work on the translation of the Bible, which had been laid aside while he had been in Missouri. A company of brethren who had been commanded to journey to Zion (Missouri) was earnestly engaged in making preparations to leave in October. At the busy time, the revelation was received." (Heading: Section

64. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 119).

To those who have been guilty of transgressions, and then gone through the repentance process, the sweetest words in the scriptures are, "and I the Lord remember them no more" (D&C 58:42). For the sinner to hear these words from the Lord, is like the relief found by drops of water falling upon the parched lips of the stranger who had been beaten and then abandoned in the scorching heat of the desert.

Doctrine and Covenants 109:53

53 But inasmuch as they will repent, thou art gracious and merciful, and wilt turn away thy wrath when thou lookest upon the face of thine Anointed.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 109 states, "Prayer offered at the dedication of the temple at Kirtland, Ohio, March 27, 1836. According to the Prophet's written statement, this prayer was given to him by revelation." (Heading: Section 109. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 222).

By 1836, the number of the Saints in Missouri had increased in number. As the members sought to become established in Missouri, as a result of the major differences between the members of the Church and the citizens of Missouri, contention, followed by persecutions were increasing. Two years previously, in May, 1834, Joseph had led a group of men known as Zion's Camp to Missouri in order to bring relief to the saints who had been expelled from Jackson County. Tensions remained high among the saints and citizens of Missouri.

Sidney B. Sperry states regarding Doctrine and Covenants 109:50-53,

"Mercy [is] asked upon wicked Missouri mobocrats if they repent; Lord requested to show His power otherwise." (*Doctrine and Covenants Compendium*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960, [3rd Printing, 1965], 595).

In the Dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, the Lord reveals to the Saints that is aware of the action of those in Missouri who are persecuting the Saints. He will forgive

those who repent, while those who do not will experience His wrath.

Stephen E. Robinson and H. Dean Garrett add,

"The 'a' in anointed was first capitalized in the 1921 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. The capitalization clarifies that Jesus Christ, the Messiah (Hebrew, 'anointed one'), is meant here rather than the Saints who are anointed in the temple (see v. 80). It is Jesus' atoning sacrifice that turns away the wrath of God from those who repent (compare D&C 45:4-5)." (*A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2005, 51).

IV. Baptism is an Essential Ordinance

The Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual states,

"In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord revealed the purpose, qualifications, and instructions for baptism. Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, John the Baptist restored the priesthood authority that is necessary to perform this ordinance." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 37).

*What are the purposes of baptism?

B/M, 2 Nephi 31:17-18

17 Wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen that your Lord and your Redeemer should do; for, for this cause have they been shown unto me, that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter. For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.

18 And then are ye in this strait [narrow and restricted] and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have received the Holy Ghost, which witnesses of the Father and the Son, unto the fulfilling of the promise which he hath made, that if

ye entered in by the way ye should receive.

Baptism, combined with the receipt of the Holy Ghost, symbolically represents the gate through which each individual must pass in order to gain entrance to the path that leads to salvation. Without partaking of these ordinances, performed by one of the Lord's authorized servants, one cannot gain eternal salvation, as taught by Jesus to Nicodemus.

John 3:5

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Being "born of water and of the Spirit," are understood to represent the authorized baptism of an individual, followed by the laying on of hands for the receipt of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Doctrine and Covenants 18:22

22 And as many as repent and are baptized in my name, which is Jesus Christ, and endure to the end, the same shall be saved.

This verse is part of the "instructions relative to building up the Church" (D&C 18:22).

Doctrine and Covenants 49:13-14

13 Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, according to the holy commandment, for the remission of sins;
14 And whoso doeth this shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of the hands of the elders of the church.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 49 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, and Lemam Copley, at Kirtland, Ohio, May 7, 1831. Lemam Copley had embraced the gospel but still held to some of the teachings of the Shakers (United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing), to which he had formerly belonged. Some of the beliefs of the Shakers were that

Christ's Second Coming had already occurred and that He had appeared in the form of a woman, Ann Lee. They did not consider baptism by eater eseential. They rejected marriage and believed in a life of total celibacy. Some Shakers also farbade the eating of meat. In prefacing this revelation, Joseph Smith's history states, 'In order to have [a] more perfect understanding on the subject, I inquired of the Lord, and received the following.' The revelation refutes some of the basic concepts of the Shaker group. The aforementioned brethren took a copy of the revelation to the Shaker community (near Cleveland, Ohio) and read it to them in its entirety, but it was rejected." (Heading: Section 49. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 88).

Susan Easton Black states,

"Leman Copley did not gather with the Saints to Missouri, but choose to remain in Ohio. In 1849, he joined apostates John C. Brewster and Hazen Aldrich in their Church of Christ (Brewsterites). He left that church to join another religious organization led by Austin Cowley." (*Who's Who in the Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997, 69).

Verses 13-14, reinforce the importance of one receiving baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost, but if one is to obtain eternal salvation, they must continue in obedience to the faith and endure to the end.

The following scriptures confirm other purposes for baptism.

B/M, 2 Nephi 9:23 [underline added]

23 And he commandeth all men that they must repent, and by baptized in his name, having perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God.

B/M, 2 Nephi 31:10-13

10 And he said unto the children of men: Follow thou me. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father?

11 And the Father said: Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my Beloved Son.

12 And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying: He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, like unto me; wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do.

13 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism--yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word, behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel.

B/M, Mosiah 18:8-10

8 And it came to pass that he said unto them: Behold, here are the waters of Mormon (for thus were they called) and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;

9 Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life--

10 Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?

The Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"[The additional purposes for baptism] "include showing our commitment to the Savior, receiving a remission of sins, becoming members of the Church, entering the path that

leads to exaltation, and preparing to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 37-38).

Additional purposes include: Speaking tongues of angels, standing as a witness to others, be numbered in the first resurrection, following the example of Jesus Christ, and have His Spirit more abundantly.

Doctrine and Covenants 20:37

37 And again by way of commandment to the church concerning the manner of baptism--All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church.

Section 20, a revelation on Church organization and government, contains the directions from the Lord regarding the qualifications and manner of baptism regarding membership in His Church. The exact wording of this ordinance is included in verses 73-74. This revelation regarding baptism provides clarity regarding the ordinance of baptism as practiced in Christ's Church.

*What qualifications, as provided in this verse, must a person meet to be baptized?

*What covenants do we make with God when we are baptized? (Refer to B/M, Mosiah 18:8-10).

B/M, Mosiah 18:8-10

18 ...and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light; 9 Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even

until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life--

10 Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?

*How can we improve our commitment to keep the promises we made to the Lord when we were baptized?

*What does baptism symbolize? [See the following scriptures]

Doctrine and Covenants 76:50-51 [underlined added]

50 And again we bear record--for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ concerning them who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just--

51 They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believe on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandments which he has given.

These verses from Section 76, are a vision given to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon at the John Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio, on February 16, 1832. Many others, as stated by Philo Dibble were present in the room. Both Joseph and Sidney were able to have the heavens opened to them in vision and they learned many important and glorious truths. Most importantly it includes the glory and reward of those who will inherit the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial kingdoms.

Hoyt W. Brewster states,

"The resurrection of the just includes both celestial and terrestrial beings, the latter being the 'honorable men of the earth' (D&C76:75)." (*Doctrine and Covenants Encyclopedia*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2012, [Revised Edition], 469).

John 3:3-5 [underline added]

3 Jesus answered and said unto him [Nicodemus],
Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born
again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when
he is old? can he enter the second time into his
mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee,
Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he
cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Romans 6:3-4 [underline added]

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized
into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into
death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead
by the glory of the Father, even so we also should
walk in newness of life.

Baptism by immersion symbolized the death, burial, and
resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also symbolizes the burial
of our old self and our rebirth in Christ. It also
symbolizes our being cleansed from our sins to a new life.

*Why is it necessary to be baptized by one who has the
proper authority?

Doctrine and Covenants 22:1-2, 4

1 Behold, I say unto you that all old covenants have I
caused to be done away in this thing [baptism]; and
this is a new and an everlasting covenant [baptism by
proper authority], even that which was from the
beginning [prior to apostasy].

2 Wherefore, although a man should be baptized an
hundred times it availeth him nothing, for you cannot
enter in at the strait gate by the law of Moses,
neither by your dead works.

4 Wherefore, enter ye in at the gate [baptism], as I
have commanded, and seek not to counsel your God.
Amen.

In the 2013 edition, the heading for Section 22 of the
Doctrine and Covenants states, "Revelation given through

Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Manchester, New York, April 16, 1830. This revelation was given to the Church in consequence of some who had previously been baptized desiring to unite with the Church without baptism." (Heading: Section 22. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 41).

This is the Lord's answer to those individuals who had previously been members of other churches and had been baptized as part of their membership. The Lord clarifies that with the restoration of the His Church in the Latter day also came the restoration of His authority which previously had been lost through the apostasy. It was, therefore, necessary for all individuals who wished to be members of His Church to be baptized by one holding the restored authority to act in his name. In this manner, the Lord reaffirmed the importance of baptism by his authorized servants.

*Why is it necessary to be baptized by immersion?

Doctrine and Covenants 20:72-74

72 Baptism is to be administered in the following manner unto all those who repent--

73 The person who is called of God and has authority from Jesus Chris to baptize, shall go down into the water with the person who has presented himself or herself for baptism, and shall say, calling him or her by name: Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

74 Then shall he immerse him or her in the water, and come forth again out of the water.

*Why is it not appropriate to baptize a person before he or she reaches age eight?

Doctrine and Covenants 20:71 [underline added]

71 No one can be received into the church of Christ unless he has arrived unto the year of accountability before God, and is capable of repentance.

Doctrine 29:46-47 [underline added]

**46 But behold, I say unto you, that little children are redeemed from the foundation of the world through mine Only Begotten;
47 Wherefore, they cannot sin, for power is not given unto Satan to tempt little children, until they begin to be accountable before me;**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 29 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, in the presence of six elders, at Fayette, New York, September 1830. This revelation was given some days prior to the conference, beginning September 26, 1830." (Heading: Section 29. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 49).

Verses 46 and 47 confirm that not only are little children redeemed through Jesus Christ, but Satan does not have the power to tempt little children until they become accountable.

Doctrine and Covenants 68:25 [underline added]

25 And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading of Section 68 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Hiram, Ohio, November 1, 1831, in response to prayer that the mind of the Lord be made concerning Orson Hyde, Luke S. Johnson, Lyman E. Johnson, and William E. McLellin. Although part of this revelation was directed toward these four men, much of the content pertains to the whole Church. This revelation was expanded under Joseph Smith's direction when it was published in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants." (Heading: Section 68. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 125).

From Section 68, it became clear that the age of accountability for sin and the necessity of children being baptized by the Lord, was at the age of eight.

LDS Bible Dictionary states,

"[The age of eight years] was also the age given in Old Testament times (JST Gen. 17:11)." (LDS Bible Dictionary. *Holy Bible*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, 619).

The words recorded in this scripture were spoken by the Lord Jehovah to Abraham.

Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 17:11 [underline added]

11 And I will establish a covenant of circumcision with thee, and it shall be my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations; that thou mayest know forever that children are not accountable before me until they are eight years old.

B/M, Moroni 8:9, 11-12 [underline added]

9 ...it is solemn mockery before God, that ye should baptize little children.

11 And their little children need no repentance, neither baptism. Behold, baptism is unto repentance to the fulfilling the commandments unto the remission of sins.

12 But little children are alive in Christ, even from the foundation of the world; if not so, God is a partial God, and also a changeable God, and a respecter to persons; for how many little children have died without baptism!

Mormon's letter to his son, Moroni, clarifies that little children need neither repentance nor baptism, because baptism is for the forgiveness of sins. Little children are not capable of sins, according to the word of the Lord, until they are eight years of age. Prior to age eight, little children are blessed by the atonement of Jesus Christ. Only at the age of eight are children then accountable for their sins and therefore need to be baptized.

V. Through the Ordinance of Confirmation, We Receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost

Doctrine and Covenants 130:22

22 The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 130 states, "Items of instruction given by Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Ramus, Illinois, April 2, 1843." (Heading: Section 130. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013]. 264).

The Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"The Holy Ghost is a member of the Godhead and 'a personage of Spirit' (D&C 130:22). After [an individual is baptized], they receive the gift of the Holy Ghost through the ordinance of confirmation.

Doctrine and Covenants 33:15

15 And whoso having faith you shall confirm in my church by the laying on of the hands, and I will bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost upon them.

Doctrine and Covenants 35:5-6

5 Thou [John] didst baptize by water unto repentance, but they received not the Holy Ghost.

6 But now I give unto thee a commandment, that thou shalt baptize by water, and they shall receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on the hands, even as the apostles of old.

"This ordinance is also called 'baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost' (D&C 20:41)." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 38).

Joseph Smith states,

"Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without...the baptism of the Holy Ghost." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, [1977], 314).

The bestowal of the gift of the Holy Ghost follows the baptism of the candidate and is bestowed by the laying on of the hands. Together, they are referred to as 'being born of water and of the Spirit' (John 3:5).

Stephen E. Robinson and H. Dean Garrett state,

"Millions of people now living on the earth have been confirmed and given the gift of the Holy Ghost. It should be noted that it is not the single Holy Ghost who attends all these persons simultaneously, but rather the power or influence of the Holy Ghost.

"...a spirit is an actual person, an individual like we were before we received mortal bodies. A spirit is not just some undefined power, force, or non-dimensional abstraction. This emphasizes once again the likeness of the Godhead to human beings...the Holy Ghost is [therefore] a spirit who has not yet received a physical body." (*A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2005, 231).

*What is the difference between a manifestation of the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost?

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"Manifestations of the Holy Ghost are given to lead sincere seekers to gospel truths that will persuade them to repentance and baptism. The gift of the Holy Ghost is more comprehensive...[It] includes the right to constant companionship, that we may 'always have his Spirit to be with [us].'" ("Always Have His Spirit," in *Ensign*, November 1996, 60).

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"The testimony [of the Holy Ghost] before baptism, speaking by way of analogy, comes as a flash of lightning blazing

forth in a dark and stormy night; it comes to light the path on which earth's pilgrims,...must walk if they are to return to the Divine Presence...If the devout truth seeker receives a testimony before baptism and does not step forward and receive the gospel, the light is soon gone; the testimony fades away, for one flash of lightning does not show the path ahead for any great distance...The companionship of the Holy Ghost after baptism is as the continuing blaze of the sun at noonday, shedding its rays on the path of life and on all that surrounds it." (*A New Witness of the Articles of Faith*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984, {1985}, 262).

One may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, but it does not automatically remain with them.

*What must we do for the Holy Ghost to be with us continually?

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"The Holy Ghost will not dwell with that person who is unwilling to obey and keep the commandments of God or who violates those commandments willfully." (*Church News*. 4 November, 1981, 14).

*What are some of the functions of the Holy Ghost?

Chart 1: Several Functions of the Holy Ghost

1. He is a Teacher.	D&C 79:2
2. He is the Comforter.	D&C 39:6
3. He is a Testifier	D&C 42:17
4. He leads us to do good, walk humbly, and judge righteously.	D&C 11:12
5. He enlightens our minds, and fills our souls with joy.	D&C 11:13
6. Through Him, we are sanctified [process of becoming pure and spotless before God].	D&C 84:33
7. He inspires us in where to go, what to do, and what to say.	D&C 31:11; D&C 84:85

Reference: (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 39).

Parley P. Pratt states regarding the gift of the Holy Ghost,

"The gift of the Holy Ghost...quickens all the intellectual faculties, increases, enlarges, expands, and purifies all the natural passions and affections, and adapts them, by the gift of wisdom, to their lawful uses. It inspires, develops, cultivates, and matures all the fine-toned sympathies, joys, tastes, kindred feelings, and affections of our nature. It inspires virtue, kindness, goodness, tenderness, gentleness, and charity. It develops beauty of a person, form and features. It tends to health, vigor, animation, and social feeling. It invigorates all the faculties of the physical and intellectual man. It strengthens and gives tone to the nerves. In short, it is, as it were, marrow to the bone, joy to the heart, light to the eyes, music to the ears, and life to the whole being." (*Key to the Science of Theology*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1855, [Tenth Edition, 1973], 101).

Joseph Fielding Smith adds,

"The mission of the Holy Ghost is to lead those who are entitled to the gift, which is conferred by the laying on of hand, in all truth and righteousness... Therefore, a person who will walk in the light as that light is revealed by the third member of the Godhead will know with a positive and unerring understanding that Jesus is the Christ and the Redeemer of the world, and the plan of salvation will be plainly comprehended.

"The Spirit of God speaking to the spirit of man had power to impart truth with greater effect and understanding than the truth can be imparted by personal contact even with heavenly beings. Through the Holy Ghost the truth is woven into the very fiber and sinews of the body so that it cannot be forgotten." (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1. Compiled by Bruce R. McConkie. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954, [24th Printing, 1980], 47).

These words confirm the extent and the depth the power and influence of the Holy Ghost can have upon man. Of the three members of the Godhead, the blessing and influence the Holy Ghost can have upon those who qualify themselves to receive His gift is one of the greatest blessings the recipient enjoys.

*How has the Holy Ghost blessed your life?

*What must we do in order to more fully enjoy His blessings?

VI. To Receive Eternal Life, We Must Endure to the End in Faith

The receipt of the ordinances of baptism and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, allow us to pass through the gate which leads to exaltation. We are now on the path, but as the Lord frequently admonishes us, we must continue to keep the covenants we made at baptism and serve faithfully to the end of our lives, if we are to return to Our Heavenly Father's kingdom.

*What does it mean to "endure to the end?"

B/M, 2 Nephi 31:19-20

19 And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.

20 Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.

Doctrine and Covenants 14:7

7 And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.

Enduring to the end to me means that after having entered into the waters of baptism, having faith in the redemptive power of Jesus Christ and repenting of our sins, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost to be our strength and revelator, we go forward in this sin-filled world doing all the good we can. Like those who held firm to the iron rod in Lehi's vision, meaning the word of God as found in the scriptures and with obedience to the words of our modern

day Prophet and Apostles, we heed not the taunting of the world or its various temptations. We understand that adversity and trial will come and strive to grow from them. We repent of our shortcomings, so we may be worthy to partake anew of the sacrament each week. We often attend the temple so we may receive the sacred covenants and blessings that can only be gained in the House of the Lord. We love our family and do all we can to bring joy and happiness to their lives. We accept opportunities to serve in the Lord's Church as well as show kindness to others who are in need. Each day, we strive to go forward in faith as we endeavor to become like our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

VII. Conclusions

Our focus has been to increase our understanding and knowledge of the first principles and ordinances of the gospel so that we might be able to more fully enjoy the blessings that come to those who faithfully receive them. These include: (1) Faith in Jesus Christ; (2) Repentance; (3) Baptism; (4) The gift of the Holy Ghost; and, (5) Enduring to the End in faith.

Faith in Jesus Christ: Our faith in Jesus Christ is increased as we "increase our knowledge of Him." (Lean H. Hartshorn. *Put on the Whole Armor of God*, 54).

While learning about Jesus Christ is a beginning step to strengthening our faith in Him, it is as we serve Him that we draw even closer to Him. As we manifest acts of kindness, friendship, and love toward all others, we come to exemplify His deeds and actions. As we grow in faith and obedience, we may even be able to perform miracles to those who also believe when our actions are in accordance with God's will.

Repentance through the blessings of the Atonement: As we do our part to acknowledge, restore, and forsake our sins, we then qualify for God's forgiveness. This is only possible as the law of justice has been satisfied through the atonement, that through His grace, we may receive his forgiveness. Our true repentance always results in a change of heart.

If we choose not to repent, we will experience a withdrawal of His Spirit, and will then become more susceptible to the temptations of Satan.

It is important that we understand the importance of forgiving others. It may be said that our very forgiveness for our sins will be determined by our willingness to forgive others. We have been commanded to forgive all men.

Baptism is an essential ordinance: Baptism is the gate through which we must pass in order to be on the path that leads to eternal life. (see 2 Nephi 31:17-18.)

Being "born of water and of the Spirit," is the ordinance of baptism combined with the receipt of the Holy Ghost.

The blessings of baptism and our observance of the commandments includes: speaking with the tongues of angels, being a member of the fold of God, our standing as a witness, being numbered among those of the first resurrection, our following the example of Jesus Christ and having the Spirit of Christ more abundantly in our lives.

Ordinance of Confirmation, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost: The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead. He does not have a physical body, but is a personage of Spirit. It is His power and influence that we feel in our lives. The important difference between the witness of the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost is that His witness is given only to lead us to the truth. If we do not heed His promptings, He will not abide with us. The gift of the Holy Ghost enables us, through our continued obedience, to have his continuing influence in our lives.

We also noted seven functions of the Holy Ghost under Chart 1, with their supporting references in the scriptures.

To Receive Eternal life, We Must Endure to the End in Faith: As we continue on the path leading to eternal life, during our mortal journey, we will be tempted to stray from the path in response to dissident voices. Our task is not to heed the promptings, but to continue on the path ever striving to become like our Savior, Jesus Christ. If we are diligent and persevere, doing the best we can, someday will reach the end of our journey and receive the acceptance of

both the Father and the Son. In the process, we will have become more like them in word and deed.

Our next lesson [D&C#08] will focus upon the restoration of the priesthood in these latter days. We will learn of both the responsibilities and blessings that accompany the receipt of God's authority given to man to act in His name. We will also learn of the various offices within the priesthood.