

Zion's Advocate

*"And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day,
for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost;"*

1 Nephi 3:187

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By These Things Examine Thyself

By whose rules am I acting; in whose
name; in whose strength; in whose
glory?

What faith, humility, self-denial, and
love of God and to man have there
been in all my actions?

—*J. Mason*

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ZION'S ADVOCATE IS...

To promote Jesus Christ as our only Saviour;
To promote His Teachings & His Church, the Church of Christ
To be a voice of warning to His people; to be Zion's advocate.

EDITORIAL

HALLOWEEN: A Holiday for God's People?

By Elder Adam Porter

I have been concerned for some time now about this subject and Christian participation in it. I preached a sermon about it almost a year ago at the Bradley and Flint locals. I would like to restate my assertion and scriptures concerning the subject of Halloween.

First, I believe that no child of Christ should observe, participate or acknowledge this day—it's a field day for Satan. We can find many alternatives for the children, like get together with Christian friends. If the kids want candy, buy them some. If they like games, there are some good Christian games that are certainly a better influence. It's hard for some parents to not give in to a child who is pleading or whining that their friends get to go trick or treating, and they're so cute when they're dressed up. Even when dressed like Bible characters, it's still participating in Satan's Holiday and keeping a bad thing going.

Deuteronomy 18:9-13 states that, *"When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God."*

Well, you may say, "Brother Adam, we don't do those things particularly or practice them." If you're participating in the activity you're upholding the practice. By having our chil-

...No child of Christ should observe, participate or acknowledge this day [Halloween]—it's a field day for Satan.

dren have part in it, it is the same as making them, or encouraging them to pass through the fires of evil and temptation, and also passing the legacy of darkness on to the next generation.

In the book of Romans 12:1-2 it states, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect,*

will of God."

How can we be transformed and renewed when we blend in with the crowd so nicely? In ancient times it was believed that the souls of the departed dead would come back on Halloween night to revisit their homes and warm themselves by the fire. Also, as far as trick or treat, the ancient people believed that the dead required food, so the best food was left outside to appease the passing spirits, or face disaster and intrusion. In different countries the wearing of costumes and masks imitating these dreadful creatures became more common until today.

On the eve of Samians festival in Europe, humans and animals were burnt in huge fires; watching them die would give them a glimpse of the future. Today, we have animals and humans being sacrificed by cultists on this night, and cities of this nation burn literally to appease the Prince of Darkness. 1st Thessalonians 5:21-22, tells us to, *"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."* Hits it right on the head, doesn't it? 2nd Corinthians 6:14-15, 17 tells us to, *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"*

Verse 17, *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and*

We cannot serve the master of sin, even for one night. Can you let your children tell Jesus, "I'm going to go play at Satan's house tonight. It's only one night. We will only be having fun; I'll be back soon, okay?"

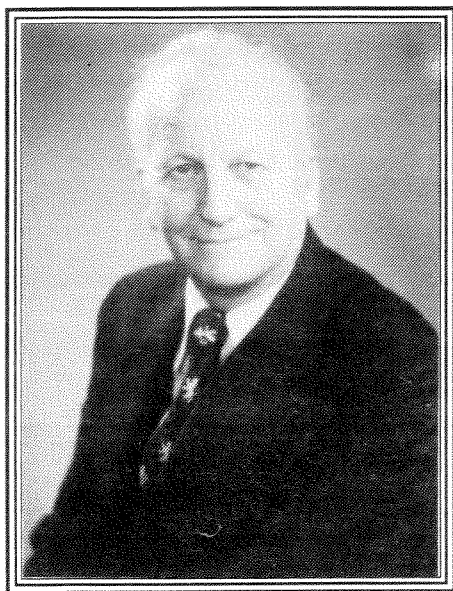
I will receive you." So we have an interesting question to ask ourselves: who do we want to be received by, Christ or Lucifer? Alma 3:98 (Book of Mormon) echoes the same advice, as does Moroni 10:27. In Isaiah 5:20 and 2nd Nephi 8:90 we read, *"Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"* Can we truly find good things to promote and advocate the Gospel message in Halloween? Let's not be fooled. In Ephesians 5:8 we also find, *"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light."*

This ritual usually begins when it starts to get dark. Should we, the children of Christ, be lurking in the dark

dressed for evil or walking along with it? Should we be out extorting for candy? Yes, we nicely teach the kids extortion—candy or else—go ahead and laugh, but it's true. Don't go along with the crowd and what's popular. We find in 1st Thessalonians 5:5: *"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."* 1st John 1:5 says, *"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."* Can we accept to do something displeasing, possibly sinful, to God and let your children wade through it also? I would like to submit one other scripture verse from 2nd Timothy 2:19, which says, *"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."* We cannot serve the master of sin, even for one night. Can you let your children tell Jesus, "I'm going to go play at Satan's house tonight. It's only one night. We will only be having fun; I'll be back soon, okay?" Well, I'll tell you this, if it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck, looks like a duck, guess what it is? It's a duck. I'll close with this: wrong is wrong even if everyone is doing it; right is right even if nobody's doing it.

God bless your conviction.

Repentance



By Apostle William A. Sheldon

Repentance is one of six fundamental principles of the gospel of Christ (Heb. 6:1-2), and yet some personal observations might indicate a lack of understanding to some degree within the Church, or even of indifference as an essential connected with the hope of salvation. This same attitude seems to prevail somewhat, also, in the Christian community as a whole: only believe and accept Jesus Christ as your Savior; one is not saved by works; Christ paid it all if we will only confess His name! Admittedly, some of these co-religionists will emphasize repentance in a general

way, but will scarcely even use the term.

In the same vein, the principle of baptism, as a saving ordinance, or as a means through which one may have his sins washed away, is hardly ever acknowledged outside the so-called Latter Day Saint faith, or otherwise, the "Restoration Movement" instituted through Joseph Smith and others.

Yet the principles of faith, repentance and baptism are vitally connected in the Word of God. Indeed, the hope of salvation through Jesus Christ (which is the only name given to mankind by which it may be attained [Acts 4:12]), is not possible except through adherence to all three of these principles. They are mandatory steps into the kingdom of God.

"But God did call on men, in the name of his Son (this being the plan of redemption which was laid), saying: If ye will repent, and harden not your hearts, then will I have mercy upon you, through mine only begotten Son. Therefore, whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy through mine only begotten

What is repentance? It is a godly sorrow for sin, and a determination to put away such things from our lives.

Son, unto a remission of his sins; and these shall enter into my rest. And whosoever will harden his heart, and will do iniquity, behold, I swear in my wrath that he shall not enter into my rest" Alma 9:54-56.

However, we are sown also the mercy of God extending unto them who have not been exposed to the divine law of God:

"Wherefore, he hath given a law; and where there is no law given there is no punishment; And where there is no punishment, there is no condemnation; And where there is no condemnation, the mercies of the Holy One of Israel hath claim upon them, because of the atonement" 2 Nephi 6:51-53 (see also verses 54-56).

We should have been aware of the importance of repentance as being an initiatory requirement before baptism as a means

Beware lest the continuance in sin causes the Holy Spirit to withdraw and we become subjected to the power of the devil.

of entrance into the Church of Christ; but having come thus far, we may slacken our determination to guard against further temptation to sin. The principle of repentance must be a continuing process throughout ones life, for there is no guarantee that, having entered in by the gate of baptism, having truly been "born again" through a living faith in Christ, he will thus be secure from falling again, or again, or again. He could, in fact, without true repentance, continue in rebellion to God, and ultimately become a "son of perdition," like unto satan, the prince of devils, by denying the Holy Ghost he had received. See Heb. 6:4-8; 10:26-29, 38-39.

Again, we emphasize the point that faith, repentance and baptism (which is two-fold, including the baptism of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands of the eldership) must be intertwined in the conscious-

ness of the believer in Christ so as to become a fixed unit of persuasion for entrance into the kingdom of God. Preaching of the gospel is designed to impress the hearer to: (1) Believe upon the name of Christ as the Redeemer and Saviour of the world; (2) Convince him of a need for humble obedience to the righteous principles advocated by Christ; (3) Become a witness for Him, both in word and by example in righteousness; (4) Endure in faith to the end of this mortal life.

There are a number of elements bearing upon these principles to which I wish to call the reader's attention, and which focus upon repentance. The apostle Paul said—

"...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" Rom. 10:17.

One may hear the Word, and yet not believe. To believe is an essential step toward repentance. One will take that step if he allows that planted seed to find root in his breast, having seen that it is a good seed. Please read Alma 16:153-169. However, as one continues to nurture it and to receive more fully "with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls" (James 1:21), he must necessarily be convicted of the weight of his sins; and the more he hears and reads that Word, he comes to a greater realization of need to have that crushing weight lifted by the

only One who can do so: Jesus Christ.

It is sad to say: Our national social structure has dete-

...If we hope for and expect divine forgiveness, we must also forgive those who transgress against us.

riorated from the consciousness of sin as was had by the progenitors of this nation (largely speaking), so that light has become darkness, and darkness, light: "they call evil, good and good, evil" (see Isa. 5:20). Thus many in this generation have little concept of sin. If the deed is not detected or objected to, than it is all right; and some are so genuinely ignorant, or have seen the practice of corrupted morals so frequently that it is considered a norm of life; they think there is nothing really wrong with such things. Please read 2 Ne. 12:19-28.

There must be a recognition of personal sin, and having become aware, confession is required: confession to God and/or confession to another whom one may have sinned against.

The term "confession" has a double meaning as it applies with God. If we humbly acknowledge Him as God, the One

in whom we trust, and do really intend to keep His commandments (the teachings of Christ), we must speak of it in prayer; to truly express or confess our love for Him. To confess our sins is to express our determination to forsake them, whether it be toward God or mankind. Perhaps there is too little recognition of this factor in our preparations for baptism, and it would be well to encourage a candidate to do this openly, to testify of his willingness and desire to follow Jesus Christ.

If we truly believe in Christ, to humbly confess His name and sorrow for our sins, then we are ready to repent. What is repentance? It is a godly sorrow for sin, and a determination to put away such things from our lives. Now, we may have done all this; we may then have entered the waters of baptism and have received the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, yet, still, through the frailty of the flesh, may fall back into the same or other temptation to sin.

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" 1 John 2:1-3.

The advocacy of Jesus Christ is secured by a REAL SORROW AND REPENTANCE for sin, with determina-

This is perhaps the greatest test of our faith and repentance toward God: to really forgive and love each other despite our human failings.

tion that, by his grace, to yet overcome the flesh, or the world in us. Beware lest the continuance in sin causes the Holy Spirit to withdraw and we become subjected again to the power of the devil.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" 1 John 1:9.

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" 2 Cor. 7:10.

However, if we hope for and expect divine forgiveness, we must also forgive those who transgress against us.

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive

you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" 3 Ne. 5:107.

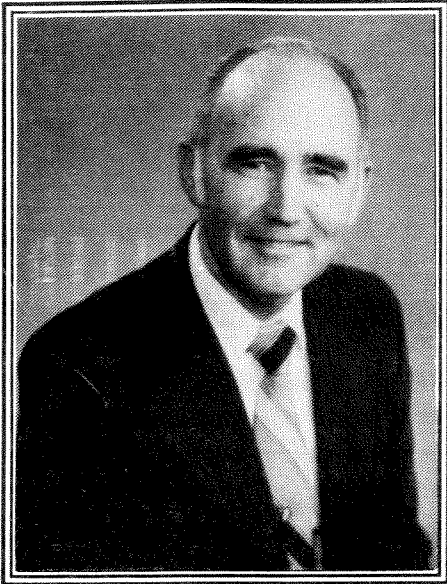
This is perhaps the greatest test of our faith and repentance toward God: to really forgive and love each other despite our human failings. Forgiveness and love does not ignore the sin, but prays for the sinner.

If repentance has truly found lodging in our bosom, and we become convinced (as we are warranted by divine mercy) of God's forgiveness, it will generate a fuller commitment to follow Jesus Christ, to do as He has said and exemplified.

"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" Matt. 7:21.

Hearing, we must believe; believing, we must confess; confession leads to repentance; repentance brings forgiveness; forgiveness should cause increased commitment to follow the Christ, in obedience to divine commandment; and to obey our Master can only produce joy and eternal salvation. True repentance increases our hope in Christ and ought to be pursued with greatest diligence.

A Message for our Special Day



By Apostle Don McIndoo

The mount of Olives loomed above the eastern walls of the great city of Jerusalem and its temple. On the Jericho road below travelers passed, unaware of the unfolding drama being played out around them. From their vantage point on the mount, Jesus and His disciples gazed upon the great temple Herod had restored. One day, the Master had told them, this Jewish center of worship would be utterly cast down. Now the disciples asked Jesus to tell them of those things which would take place and be recognized as **"...the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"** Mat. 24:3. His re-

sponse to their question fills the remainder of Chapters 24 and 25. It describes what is commonly termed as the "time of tribulation". Since we find ourselves living at the beginning of, or very near, this special time, it is important that we know something of it.

The very first thing which Jesus told them may well be of prime importance: **"Take heed that no man deceive you"** (verse 4). Let's briefly consider some of the ways people might be deceived about this time of tribulation and the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Although I shall only consider four of these ways, there surely are many others which need to be explored.

1 Many refuse to believe in the deity of Christ and give no heed to His commandments. It is upon all such that **"...the day of vengeance of our God..."** (Isaiah 61:2) shall fall. We must avoid all manner of humanistic theology and materialistic ideologies.

2 Even among Christian denominations there are many who think that "business will go on as usual" for many centuries to come. These are comparable to the five foolish virgins of Matthew 25; those who were not prepared for the coming of the bridegroom. We should become as spiritually prepared as if His coming were tomorrow.

We should become as spiritually prepared as if His coming were tomorrow.

3 There are many today who subscribe to a relatively new belief, something never taught by their Christian forefathers. They are lulled into the false security that all believers will be "raptured" from the earth prior to the great tribulation. As the time draws nearer for His coming, there will appear more and more new theologies. Be grounded in the true doctrine.

4 Many times the dangers and fearfulness of the Lord's day of vengeance are vividly impressed upon us (For example, **"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."** Mat. 24:21. *Now that is really scary!*), without emphasizing the wonderful promises of God to faithful believers. This can lead to a fear and hopelessness which have very negative effects upon people. So, ministers, always try to leave your audience on a positive, encouraging note.

It is important that each of us be aware of God's providential plans for His people during such trying times; else how could we do as Jesus has com-

manded: **“And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh”** Luke 21:28. So let the meditations of your heart be upon the promises of your God to His people, especially concerning the days of His wrath which are to come upon the world. I shall present but four of the many promises God has made to you. Why don't you look for others?

1 **“For the time speedily cometh, that the Lord God shall cause a great division among the people; and the wicked will he destroy; and he will spare his people, yea, even if it so be that he must destroy the wicked by fire”** II Nephi 12:90.

2 **“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord”** Isaiah 54:17.

The two following promises should be considered no less miraculous than what happened on that dark night in Egypt when the “destroyer” passed through the land and smote **“all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast”**, sparing only those homes where God's people trustingly waited. But let it be remembered that in those homes which were passed over by this terrible plague, the faithful had met the conditions of safety as set forth by the

Lord.

3 **“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the**

Just as the Israelites had to comply with God's instructions to be passed over by the terrible plague long ago, so God's people today must comply with our Lord's commandments to have their part in Zion.

indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity” Isaiah 26:20,21.

4 **“Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you. Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger”** Zephaniah 2:2,3. I am confident the “chambers” of safety spoken of by Isaiah and the “hiding place” referred to by Zephaniah refer to the place of Zion, or the New Jerusalem, which shall be built upon this land, as prophesied in the Book of Mormon and latter-day revelation. Just as the Israelites had to comply with God's

instructions to be passed over by the terrible plague long ago, so God's people today must comply with our Lord's commandments to have their part in Zion. So, child of God, give your attention to righteousness, meekness, patience, humility temperance, diligence, **“faith, hope, charity, and love with an eye single to the glory of God.”** (See Book of Commandments III.)

Having the promises of God firmly planted in our thinking, let's return to a sticky part of this subject. Read the question put to Jesus by the disciples again: **“...what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”** Not only the fearful aspects of the tribulation, but the concept of **“the end of the world”** can become a heavy burden on the hearts of many a young person (and perhaps adults as well). I have heard our youth make remarks like the following:

“I get tired of hearing about how terrible things will be. What's the use of living?”

“Why worry about grades and college anyway. Everything is just going to end.”

“I'll never have a chance to get married, have a happy life and really live.”

Have any thoughts like this ever crossed your mind? When you were younger, did you ever have any thoughts like these? Many did, and still do. The important thing for you to remember and focus upon is that this “end of the world” spoken of

here **is not** the end of the world. There are three Greek words used in the New Testament which have been translated as "world". One of them, *oikoumene*, refers to the land or, more specifically, the Roman Empire. More commonly found is *kosmos*, which refers to the actual physical world and the universe of which it is a part. The other Greek word is *aion*, which is the word used in this text. It refers to an age, or era of time.

What were the disciples really asking the Lord? I think they were saying, "Tell us about the end of this age when evil men and Satan are in control of the world." So Jesus answered, and told them how God was going to bring an end to evil and man's dominion over the affairs of the world. This will be man's last opportunity to repent and turn to God. Revelation 7:9-17 indicates that many will do so.

At the end of this time of tribulation Christ shall return to the world to gather His people about Him. The righteous dead will be resurrected and they shall come with Him. The righteous who are living shall meet them with joy. (See Revelation 20:4-11 and I Thessalonians 4:14-17.) In verse 18 of this epistle the Apostle Paul reminds us to "**comfort one another with these words.**" These wonderful events will be the beginning of what we term the "millennium", or a one thousand year reign of Christ upon the earth. We shall now

describe this marvelous age which God has prepared for His people by listing some of the things you can expect during this time.

1 The righteous dead shall be resurrected and join the righteous saints living on the earth. (See Revelation 20:4 and I Thessalonians 4:17.)

2 Satan will be bound for a thousand years. There will be no evil power or tempter around. (See Revelation 20:1-3 and II Nephi 12:99.)

3 Those who live with Christ shall be a kingdom of priests and minister to the nations. (See Revelation 5:7-10; 20:6 and I Peter 2:9.)

4 Peace, love and righteousness shall be in all the earth. (See Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:2-3.)

5 Deserts will bloom, waste places shall become productive and the earth shall return to its original state of beauty. (See Isaiah 35:1-7.)

6 Even the nature of animals shall be changed. Life shall be as it was in the Garden of Eden. (See Isaiah 65:25; 11:6-9.)

7 The marvelous glory of God will be manifest continually. (See Isaiah 4:4-6 and II Nephi 9:132-137.)

8 The reins of government will be in the hands of Christ. Justice and equality will fill the earth. (See Zariah 14:9; Revelation 11:15 and II Nephi 9:117-120.)

9 Life's activities will go on during this time. People will marry, have children, build homes and be productive. Any true knowledge you can gain in education will continue to be useful—just

don't major in military science or criminal justice, for they won't be needed. (Read Isaiah 65:21-24.)

10 At the end of those thousand years the kingdom will be delivered unto God, to remain in His presence forever. (Read Revelation 21:1-27.)

This is the heritage of the true saints of God. The promises of God to His people, the things which He has prepared for them surpass our greatest imagination. Let us be faithful to Him in all that shall come to pass. There is a great work to be done and you have been chosen in this special dispensation of time when the Gospel is to go back to Israel. There shall be marvelous things the Lord will call us to do. No doubt great sacrifices will be required and certainly many trials and much tribulation must be faced. Through these times let us, even as the Apostle Paul admonished, "**comfort one another with these words**" of promise God has so graciously provided His people.



ARTICLE—ZION

A STUDY of ZION AND ITS COMING REDEMPTION



By **Harvey E. Seibel**

1. WHAT IS ZION?

Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith and Joseph Knight were all commanded by revelation to seek to bring forth the cause of Zion (Book of Commandments 5:3, 10:3, & 11:3). David Whitmer was himself commanded of the Lord to seek to establish Zion (Book of Commandments 12:3). The promise given to them as well as to us today was that all who work to bring forth Zion would have the gift and power of the Holy Ghost (3 Nephi 3:187).

But when we talk of establishing the cause of Zion what do we mean? Is it the building of a city called the New Jerusalem? Or is it not rather the establishment of a condition of perfect righteousness among a people, to raise up a holy people unto God, a people living in total obedience to the Lord? It is truly the pure in heart, a people dedicated to the work of the gospel, a people full of righteous zeal toward the Lord, a people unable to bear the thought that any soul should perish, and whose concern is for the covenant people of the Lord.

2. WHERE IS ZION?

In Old Testament times Zion was one of the four hills upon which the city of Jerusalem was built. In the days of King David it was the city of David. Says the Psalmist, "The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O CITY OF GOD." But it was more, for according to Psalm 87:2-3, "...He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: But chose the tribe of Judah, THE MOUNT ZION which he loved."

The work of the Father was to commence with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Yet we shall not see eye to eye UNTIL THE LORD BRINGS AGAIN ZION. Still we are to earnestly, not slothfully, seek to establish righteousness in the earth.

There was a change coming, however, concerning Zion, for we read, "O ZION, that bringest good tidings, GET THEE UP INTO THE HIGH MOUNTAIN..." (Isaiah 40:9). What mountain can this be but the mountain (or nation) of the Lord's house which is to be established in this land? For "...it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isaiah 2:2). Thus

the Zion of the last days was to reside in the land choice above all other lands, the land given to Joseph, a tabernacle previously refused. Is this not so? Consider: "And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles: and there shall be no kings upon the land, which shall raise up unto the Gentiles. And I will fortify this land against all other nations; And he that fighteth against Zion, shall perish, saith God; for he that raiseth up a king against me, shall perish" (2 Nephi 7:18-20). This scripture positively identifies this land with Zion. Zion and America are therefore one and the same.

Formerly Zion was identified with Judah. But now it is to be associated with Joseph. Is there a Biblical reference verifying this change in identity? Yes, for we read, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!" (Amos 6:1). There certainly can be no argument that we today are at ease in Zion and have generally trusted in our government or nation. And yes we have been named *CHIEF* of the nations for many years, and yes the house of Israel did come to this land in the form of Ephraim and Manasseh. It is interesting to note, first, that Samaria was the name of the northern kingdom of Israel, second, that ancient Israel did not come to this Samaria. Rather, they founded that kingdom following the days of Solomon, and

third, ancient Samaria was never named chief of the nations, it having an unbroken succession of wicked kings from

The long looked for gathering...will not really begin to take place until the Holy City is built.

its inception until its captivity. Therefore our land is the modern Samaria of prophecy, the land of Israel, Joseph's land, the land promised to David by Nathan the prophet, the land choice above all others.

The Book of Mormon identifies our land as the land of Zion as we have seen. Ether 6:1-8 directly informs us that the city New Jerusalem is to be built up upon this land unto the remnant of the house of Joseph. It requires latter day revelation to pinpoint the location for this city. It was given in July, 1831 as follows:

"Hearken, O ye elders of my church, saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land which is the land of Missouri, which is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the Saints: wherefore this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion. And thus saith the Lord your God, If you will receive wisdom here is wisdom. Behold, the place which is now

called Independence, is the centre place, and the spot for the temple is lying westward upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse" (*Times and Season, vol. 5. P. 434*).

3. WHEN WILL ZION BE?

The work of the Father was to commence with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Yet we shall not see eye to eye UNTIL THE LORD BRINGS AGAIN ZION. Still we are to earnestly, not slothfully, seek to establish righteousness in the earth. The long looked for gathering, however, will not really begin to take place until the Holy City is built. Further, the redemption of Zion will not take place until a time of great trouble has arrived.

Some have felt that Zion could have been established back in the 1830s. That may have been so; however, we, like the children of Israel, missed our opportunity to inherit the promise. The children of Israel could have entered the promised land right then, but because of unbelief they were forced to wander in the wilderness for 40 long years until all of that generation had died out. Then, and only then, were they permitted to enter. Latter day Israel likewise lost the promise for their lack of obedience in calling forth the twelve in the church as commanded, and setting up a one man leader in their stead. Zion could not, in such circumstances, be redeemed,

and so the time for the people's inheritance was delayed. And so we have wandered in the wilderness for the past 165 years. During this interim the words of Nephi have seen a long and continuing fulfillment for, says he, "And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say, All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well...Therefore, **WO BE UNTO HIM THAT IS AT EASE IN ZION**" (2 Nephi 12:25, 30). This is the time that we have been at ease in Zion. And so we have slept and slumbered, and will continue to do so according to the scriptures until the midnight cry shall go forth announcing the coming of the bridegroom.

Because of God's foreknowledge of these matters, the prophecies concerning the ultimate redemption of Zion are therefore recorded as we find them today in the scriptures. Had Zion been redeemed back in the 1830s many scriptural statements as we find recorded in the Bible and Book of Mormon would have little or no application. Consider: "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land (America, HES) tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand" (Joel 2:1). And here follows a description of terrible destruction from a terrible desolating army in which all faces shall gather blackness, and the earth quaking before them; the heavens

trembling, and the sun, moon and stars being darkened, etc. And what then will be the word to the inhabitant of Zion?

The redemption of Zion will not take place until a time of great trouble has arrived.

"...TURN YE EVEN TO ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH FASTING, AND WITH WEEPING, AND WITH MOURNING: AND REND YOUR HEART, AND NOT YOUR GARMENTS, AND TURN UNTO THE LORD YOUR GOD..." (Joel 2:12-13). Could this be because we have been sleeping and slumbering and been at ease in Zion? Is this why the Lord in another place said, when He came again, 'shall I find faith in the earth?' And where is Zion when the great tribulation spoken of in Matthew 24 comes? Nevertheless the instruction from the Lord continues in Joel by again telling us to "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: **LET THE BRIDEGROOM GO FORTH OF HIS CHAMBER, AND THE BRIDE OUT OF HER CLOSET. LET THE PRIESTS, THE MINIS-**

TERS OF THE LORD, WEEP BETWEEN THE PORCH AND THE ALTAR, AND LET THEM SAY, SPARE THY PEOPLE, O LORD, AND GIVE NOT THINE HERITAGE TO REPROACH, THAT THE HEATHEN SHOULD RULE OVER THEM: WHEREFORE SHOULD THEY SAY AMONG THE PEOPLE, WHERE IS THEIR GOD? THEN WILL THE LORD BE JEALOUS FOR HIS LAND (America, HES) AND PITY HIS PEOPLE. Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people, Behold...**I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen: But I will remove far off from you the northern army...**" (Joel 2:15-20).

Such condition could not have existed in Zion had Zion been redeemed prior to the events described here in this prophecy. How could the heathen have been able to rule over them? But the priests will weep between the porch and the altar to beg the Lord for deliverance. In any case, when this is done, **THEN WILL THE LORD BE JEALOUS FOR HIS LAND** and not before. Thus it is at this most critical juncture that Zion is saved. And this is borne out in many other scriptures. And so we read, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together..." (Isaiah 1:27-28). "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely

purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin" (Isaiah 1:25). "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy...When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion" (Isaiah 4:3-4). "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17). "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matthew 13:41).

These scriptures show plainly that all is not well in Zion but before its redemption judgment must come and a cleansing of evil. But as the prophecy in Joel indicates, the saving of Zion comes only at the moment of its greatest danger. And so we further read, "Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jeremiah 30:7). "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered" (Daniel 12:1). "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day?

Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the

Had Zion been redeemed back in the 1830s many scriptural statements as we find recorded in the Bible and Book of Mormon would have little or no application.

birth, and not cause to bring forth? Saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? Saith thy God" (Isaiah 66:7-9). From this we can see that at the very moment of Zion's travail she brought forth her children, or at the time of her greatest stress she shall bring forth her children. She shall be redeemed. But as for the wicked we are given this further word, "For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many" (Isaiah 66:15-16).

Again, "**When** the LORD shall build up Zion, **HE SHALL APPEAR IN HIS GLORY**" (Psalm 102:16). "Then the moon shall be confounded, and

the sun ashamed, **WHEN THE LORD OF HOSTS SHALL REIGN IN MOUNT ZION, AND IN JERUSALEM, AND BEFORE HIS ANCIENTS GLORIOUSLY**" (Isaiah 24:23). "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; **for they shall see eye to eye, WHEN THE LORD SHALL BRING AGAIN ZION**" (Isaiah 52:7-8).

We will conclude this study by considering the words of Christ to his disciples in this land concerning the words of Isaiah just quoted above. "And when the words of the prophet Isaiah shall be fulfilled, which saith, Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing, for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion..." (3 Nephi 7:43). The Lord here opened the subject but seeing the weakness of the people to understand He deferred for the time but came back to it in the 9th chapter. Says He, "Ye remember that I spake unto you, and said that when the words of Isaiah should be fulfilled, behold they are written, ye have them before you; therefore search them...verily, verily I say unto you, that **WHEN THEY SHALL BE FULFILLED,**

THEN IS THE FULFILLING OF THE COVENANT WHICH THE FATHER HATH MADE UNTO HIS PEOPLE, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL" (3 Nephi 9:47-48).

"...**THEN** SHALL THE REMNANTS WHICH SHALL BE SCATTERED ABROAD UPON THE FACE OF THE EARTH, BE GATHERED IN FROM THE EAST, AND FROM THE WEST, AND FROM THE SOUTH, AND FROM THE NORTH" (3 Nephi 9:49).

But "...if the Gentiles do not repent, after the blessing which they shall receive, **after** that they have scattered my people, then shall ye which are a remnant of the house of Jacob, go forth among them...as a lion...and none can deliver...yea, I will make thy horn iron, and...thy hoofs brass. And thou shalt beat in pieces many people...And it shall come to pass...that the sword of my justice...shall fall...upon all the nations of the Gentiles... And...I will establish my people, O house of Israel...And...this people will I establish in this land...and it shall be a new Jerusalem. And the powers of heaven shall be in the midst of this people; yea, even I will be in the midst of you" (3 Nephi 9:51-59).

"...**When** the fullness of my gospel shall be preached unto them, and they shall believe in me, that I am Jesus

Christ, the Son of God, and shall pray unto the Father in my name. **THEN** SHALL THEIR WATCHMEN LIFT UP THEIR VOICES; AND WITH THE

...At the very moment of Zion's travail she brought forth her children, or at the time of her greatest stress she shall bring forth her children.

VOICE TOGETHER SHALL THEY SING; FOR THEY SHALL SEE EYE TO EYE" (3 Nephi 9:69-70).

"**THEN** WILL THE FATHER GATHER THEM TOGETHER AGAIN, AND GIVE UNTO THEM JERUSALEM FOR THE LAND OF THEIR INHERITANCE" (3 Nephi 9:71).

"**THEN** SHALL THEY BREAK FORTH INTO JOY" (3 Nephi 9:72).

"...**THEN** SHALL BE BROUGHT TO PASS THAT WHICH IS WRITTEN, AWAKE, AWAKE AGAIN, AND PUT ON THY STRENGTH, O ZION; PUT ON THY BEAUTIFUL GARMENTS, O JERUSALEM, THE HOLY CITY" (3 Nephi 9:74).

"...**THEN** SHALL THEY SAY, HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS ARE THE FEET OF HIM THAT BRINGETH GOOD TIDINGS UNTO THEM, THAT PUBLISHETH PEACE: THAT BRINGETH GOOD TIDINGS UNTO THEM OF GOOD, THAT PUBLISHETH SALVATION; THAT SAITH UNTO ZION, THY GOD REIGNETH!" (3 Nephi 9:78).

"...**THEN** SHALL A CRY GO FORTH, DEPART YE, DEPART YE, GO YE OUT FROM THENCE, TOUCH NOT THAT WHICH IS UNCLEAN; GO YE OUT OF THE MIDST OF HER; BE YE CLEAN, THAT BEAR THE VESSELS OF THE LORD. FOR YE SHALL NOT GO OUT WITH HASTE, NOR GO BY FLIGHT: FOR THE LORD WILL GO BEFORE YOU; AND THE GOD OF ISRAEL SHALL BE YOUR REARWARD. BEHOLD, MY SERVANT SHALL DEAL PRUDENTLY, HE SHALL BE EXALTED AND EXTOLLED, AND BE VERY HIGH..SO SHALL HE SPRINKLE MANY NATIONS..." (3 Nephi 9:79-81, 83).

"...**THEN** SHALL JERUSALEM BE INHABITED AGAIN WITH MY PEOPLE" (3 Nephi 9:85).

To reiterate, "...**WHEN** THESE THINGS COME TO PASS, THAT THY SEED SHALL BEGIN TO KNOW

THESE THINGS, IT SHALL BE A SIGN UNTO THEM, THAT THEY MAY KNOW THAT THE WORK OF THE FATHER HATH ALREADY COMMENCED UNTO THE FULFILLING OF THE COVENANT WHICH HE HATH MADE UNTO THE PEOPLE WHICH ARE OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL" (3 Nephi 9:93).

"AND **WHEN** THAT DAY SHALL COME, IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT KINGS SHALL SHUT THEIR MOUTHS; FOR THAT WHICH HAD NOT BEEN TOLD THEM SHALL THEY SEE; AND THAT WHICH THEY HAD NOT HEARD SHALL THEY CONSIDER. For in that day, for my sake shall the Father work a work, which shall a GREAT AND A MARVELOUS WORK among them; and there shall be among them which will not believe it, although a man shall declare it unto them" (3 Nephi 9:94-95).

But "...whosoever will not believe in my words...which the Father shall cause him to bring forth unto the Gentiles...they shall be cut off from among my people...AND MY PEOPLE WHICH ARE A REMNANT OF JACOB, SHALL BE AMONG THE GENTILES, YEA, IN THE MIDST OF THEM, AS A LION...AND NONE CAN DELIVER" (3 Nephi 9:98-99).

Continuing with 3 Nephi chapter 10 we learn that after

the building of the New Jerusalem they, the Gentiles, shall assist 'my people' that they may be gathered in, which are scat-

"And then shall that which is written come to pass. Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord"

tered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the power of heaven come down among them and Christ also will be in the midst. Then at that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of His people and among all nations in preparing the way whereby his people may be gathered home to the land of their inheritance. "And they shall go out from all nations; and they shall not go out in haste, nor go by flight; for I will go before them, saith the Father, and I will be their rearward. **And then shall that which is written come to pass.** Sing, O barren, thou that didst not

bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord" (3 Nephi 10:8-9).

It has come to the attention of the Council of Apostles that certain correspondence has been circulated among various church groups which has indicated that this church, the Church of Christ, is involved in uniting with some other church groups. We have felt it necessary to make a statement to allay any concerns that might be aroused due to that correspondence.

STATEMENT of REAFFIRMATION

The Council of Apostles of the Church of Christ wishes to reaffirm the position of this church relative to its origin, its continuance and its right to individuality. We claim divine guidance and providence throughout the existence of this church since it was restored in these latter days. Our greatest claim is that of the favor of the Lord in preserving us as an independent organization whereby this church has escaped being swallowed up by those who would take possession of our property and seek to control our rights and freedom of worship.

This church, in its infancy, was pure, but by the designs and wills of men unauthorized offices were added bringing the threat of apostasy. The critical state of its existence was not obvious to the members until it fragmented, leaving the body of saints vulnerable to ambitious men to lead groups away into various places whereby they

might continue their works of apostasy.

Those who were given discernment stayed firm in their convictions and sought the Lord for guidance. It was evident that the Lord favored certain ones but all were under a cloud of false teachings and practices for a time. It was no coincidence that a group of saints were preserved in a remote area during that critical time. At the command of the Lord they returned to Independence, Missouri, and became established in that community.

Being aware of the false doctrines that were being taught in various groups of the "Restoration" this group was caused to renounce those teachings and practices and to declare its independence from all the other "Restoration" churches as early as 1852. Apostle Arthur M. Smith wrote in "A Brief History of the Church of Christ" thus: *So this group of the Restoration, now known as the*

Church of Christ, has steadily retraced its steps back to the original foundation of April 6, 1830; back to the organization that was "by the will and commandment of God;" back to the original name, "Church of Christ;" back to the original order of the priesthood, as it was established in the beginning of the church which we find agrees with the New Testament in all its teachings.

He also wrote: *We believe in the organization as set forth in a revelation given to Joseph Smith in March, 1829, as it was originally published. "And thus if the people of this generation harden not their hearts, I will work a reformation among them, and I will put down all lyings, and deceivings, and priestcrafts, and envyings, and strifes, and idolatries, and sorceries, and all manner of iniquities, and I will establish my church, like unto the church which was taught by my disciples in the days of old" BofC 4:5.*

Taking that revelation to heart the members of this church have declared this statement in the "Articles of Faith and Practice": *We believe in the same church organization as existed in the time of Christ and His Apostles. The highest office in the church is that of an apostle, of whom there are twelve, who constitute special witnesses for Jesus Christ. They have the missionary supervision and the general watchcare of all the churches.*

The Church of Christ has never been a part of any of the groups that separated after the death of Joseph Smith, Jr. We have the unique claim that this church never rebaptized its members, it was never reorganized and it never split off from any other group. Therefore we are not a part or a fragment of a church. Historically this church is in direct line of the original church.

Again we quote from Apostle A. M. Smith: *We believe there are many within the membership of the different groups of the Restoration Movement that have been deceived in the teaching of the doctrines of men, who would welcome the truth if it were possible to reach them; to*

such we offer an open door to come "ask for the old paths, wherein is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" Jer. 6:16.

The return and establishment of the saints in Independence, Missouri, has long since been heralded as an act of God. As a result of obeying the will of God those saints were able to purchase the property commonly known today as the temple lot. Apostle A. M. Smith writes concerning that property: *The Church of Christ holds the Temple Lot property today by right of purchase; there is no mortgage or lien of any kind against this property; we do not hold this property by "squatter's rights," or any other right, except a clear title of purchase; neither are we holding this property for any other group of people, save the Church of Christ.*

For any who might suppose that this church, the Church of Christ whose headquarters are located at River and Lexington Streets in Independence, Missouri, would involve itself in any kind of merger at this point in time, let it be known that from the beginning, April 6, 1830, this church has retained its in-

dependence from all other church organizations. Further the Council of Apostles wishes to clarify the fact that this church body is not in any way involved in any act of joining or uniting with any other church or group of churches officially or otherwise. Neither have we commissioned anyone, minister or lay member, to represent this church in an effort to unite with any other church or group of churches.

Finally we wish to declare that any minister representing this Church of Christ who joins another church or group of churches no longer represents this church. His membership with this church ceases and he has no rights in this church when he joins another church organization.

The primary function of this church is missionary, i.e. converting souls to Christ. Jesus Christ is the head of the church and His church is not divided into factions. He has preserved His church intact for His own purposes and we are assured that in time He will prepare it as His bride for His return.



1997 Referendum Results

The vote on Bill #1 of 1997, which in effect allows the August Minister Conference to schedule its own meeting time each year, was 405 in favor and 12 opposed.

The vote on Bill #2 of 1997, rescinding the 1937 referendum Bill #17 concerning "Temporal Plans" was

354 in favor and 58 opposed.

Both of these bills met the 2/3 favorable vote needed for passage.

Smith N. Brickhouse

Secretary, Council of Apostles

Testimony

Greetings to my dear Brothers and Sisters:

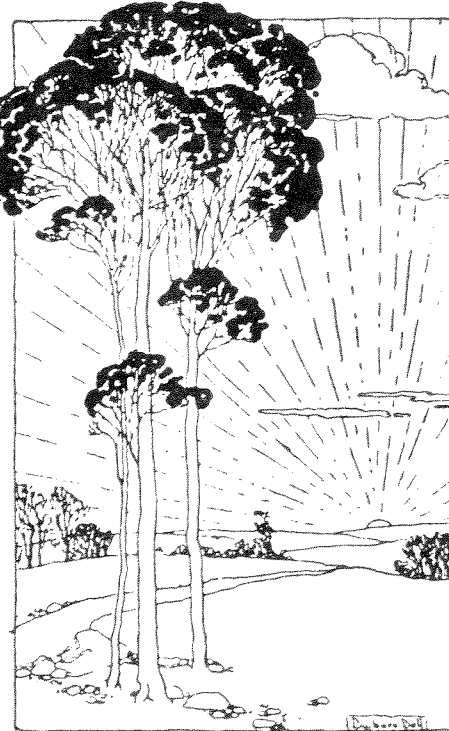
When my mother, Esther Caviness, was a little girl, she went with her family from Guthrie, Oklahoma, to Phoenix, Arizona, by covered wagon. As the family was packing up things to take, my mother wanted to take her doll. My grandfather, James E. Yates, told her they could not take it, as the horses had all they could handle just taking the necessary family possessions. My mother said, "But Papa, the horses won't have to carry it, I will!"

Aren't we thankful that the Lord is able to carry ALL our burdens, even the little ones some would not think as important as others.

The summer I was six, I had the usual children's diseases of measles, chicken pox and scarlet fever, which left me in a weakened state, physically. So when school started and I entered the first grade, even though I loved it, I had to drop out because I got double pneumonia and was too ill to continue.

In those days, all the doctors could do for you was give aspirin and mustard plasters! And a person had to go through a "crisis" before they began to recover. So, needless to say, I was very ill and my mother was

worn out taking care of me. My Aunt Patsy and Uncle Hubert Yates, Sr. took care of me during the night so that my mother could get her rest.



Even though I had been administered to many times, I was still not getting well. The night I was to go through the "crisis," the doctor, as well as my aunt and uncle, were with me. I was having such a difficult time breathing; it was soon too much for me to even try. I heard the doctor say, "She's gone!" But just then, my uncle laid his hands on my head and administered to me one more time. And

I tried as hard as I could to breathe once more, and did take another breath. The doctor said, "No she's not; she is still with us!" From that day on I began to get well.

But before I could get out of bed, I got pleurisy in both lungs. The doctor told my mother that I would have to go to the hospital the next morning to have my lungs tapped and drained of the fluid that was there. My mother was afraid of hospitals; she thought people went there to die. The elders came to our house again and administered to me. I remember they formed a circle around my bed and each said a prayer before anointing my head.

My older sister, Lorraine, had just gotten over a bad case of whooping cough. That night I came down with a mild case of it, too. I began to whoop and I coughed up all that was in my lungs, and when the doctor came the next day and listened to my lungs, they were clear! And I did not have to go to the hospital.

Of course, I had to learn to walk all over again. But I was able to go to school the following year. How thankful I am that the Lord hears and answers prayer!

Your Sister in Gospel Bonds, Velma J. Wheaton

PRAYER REQUEST

PRAYER REQUEST

(from the 1997 Solemn Assembly)

The following is a list of some specific needs for which we should pray:

1. Pray for the continuing conference year, that the Lord's will might be accomplished and that unity might prevail in our midst.
2. Pray for a greater outpouring of the love of God in our hearts. (Moroni 7:52-53)
3. Pray for greater humility in our lives. (Mosiah 1:119-120)
4. Pray to God for forgiveness of our sins, and that the Lord would purify and sanctify our hearts so that we can accomplish His will.
5. Pray for the ministry that they might be faithful in their responsibilities.
6. Pray for the young families and the whole family structure that we might have strong families who can endure the stress of the world and the problems of life.
7. Pray for the responsibility of parents to God and to their children. (Ephesians 6:4 and Mosiah 2:25-27)
8. Pray for our little children and our young people that they might have the strength to resist the temptations of the world.
9. Pray for the duties of our youth toward God and their parents. (Ephesians 6:1-2)
10. Pray for the endurance of faith and Christian unity in service to our God. (Matthew 24:13; Colossians 3:12-15; 1 Corinthians 15:58)

Civilized and **Savage**

We would thank anybody to define these two terms and tell exactly what makes a savage, and what a civilized person. Among savages, every man is regarded as honest; in civilized society, we are taught to regard all as rogues. Among savages, if a family left their wigwam to visit a neighbor, they put a stick against the door on the outside, to show the passerby they are absent; in civilized society, bars and bolts, and locks, are hardly sufficient security. Savages manage their matters without prisons; civilization fills the country with them.

Which, then, deserves to be considered barbarians? We have learned to read—and savages have not; but we delight more in reading things that tend neither to make us wise, or improve our morals, than in those which do—and where are we the better? The fault, however, is not in civilization—but in want of it; in our semi-savage love of frippery and nonsense; in our ungoverned appetites, and uncultivated morals.

—from *The Evening and the Morning Star*, April 1833

NEWS

PHOENIX NEWS

Greetings from Phoenix! We've seen some changes in our local since the last news.

Easter found us on the Navajo Nation sharing the story of Christ's resurrection through music, story telling, puppet shows and sermonettes. We held programs in Fort Defiance at the home of Bruce and Sylvia Harvey and at the Chapter house in Nazlini.

On both Mother's and Father's Day we closed our special programs by sharing memories of our parents. Some stories were funny, some were sad. Several told how their parent's lives had shaped their faith. Some shared sad memories of painful childhoods. They told us how Christ and the family of Christ had filled a void in their life.

We alternate Wednesday night Prayer Meeting with Worship Services. In one Worship Service many shared their personal testimonies of the truth of the Book of Mormon. Some began to study and slowly grew in a quiet knowledge. Others had miraculous experiences, seeing a light or a Heavenly personage. We pray that each of our young people will find their own testimony.

At another service we shared thoughts and testimonies about the impact of certain scriptures on our lives.

In one service we all filled out questionnaires about career choices. We were encouraged to ask ourselves: Will this job or school strengthen or weaken me spiritually? Is my

personal testimony strong enough to withstand academic attacks on my beliefs? If college is right for me, should future benefit to the gospel be an important factor in my career choice? And perhaps most important, is my work or school near a local? The closing thought seemed to be that we should diligently seek the Lord for guidance, wait for Him before making life changing decisions, and do our part by looking and trying on our own.

In the last months we've welcomed four new members into our local. Melissa Briggs, Amanda and Kelly Pinder and Bob Orsted. Each baptism was very special in its own way. Melissa found the gospel as a young adult through the love and witness of friends. Amanda and Kelly Pinder chose to serve the Lord in their youth. Bob Orsted learned of the gospel later in life through the testimony of his son Glen. Too weak to walk on his own, Bob was carried into the water for baptism. We've all grown to love Bob and his family. We mourn his passing on July 21, but we rejoice in his entrance to the Kingdom of God.

A few thoughts from sermons:

- ◆ *We have to find healing ways to speak and healing ways to instruct our children.*
- ◆ *We make the choice between loyalty to our possessions and loyalty to Christ. If you go for days and days and don't bring your family together in prayer, you'll stay apart in other ways.*
- ◆ *I hope the persecution that we suffer doesn't come from within. Let the persecution come*

from without, not from our own midst.

- ◆ *Teach those who are young so they have the scriptures to hang on to. Even if as a young adult you stray, you'll have those around to pick you up if you will.*
 - ◆ *We can't stand on our own intuition. We can't stand on our own power. We depend on Jesus Christ.*
 - ◆ *You're the final outpost. By being that light on the hill, if someone's looking they will see.*
 - ◆ *It's not what we didn't get done this week, but what we didn't get done this life.*
 - ◆ *He predestines moments in your life when you stand alone and you are called to faith.*
 - ◆ *If we don't take care of an offense we don't have the love of Christ in our hearts. In our spiritual lives we have to play taller than we are. We have to give our all.*
 - ◆ *If you're going to be children of light, you need to understand what has taken place to understand what is going to take place.*
 - ◆ *It's easy to lose your focus. We can be distracted by things that seem like a good cause but don't serve the gospel of Christ.*
 - ◆ *Once we set our feet on the path Christ has set for us, we enter into an arena of warfare.*
 - ◆ *Man's own pride in himself is a great tool. That's why you have friends in the gospel to help you sort out your emotions.*
- Until next time, may God bless you and may we all grow in service to Him.
Marlene Oar

BRADLEY, MICHIGAN

Bonjour! From the Bradley Local The Michigan Reunion turned out excellent this year, and we're already looking forward to next year! Saturday morning through Sunday afternoon was filled with many spiritual meetings and song service. To help out, the young ladies decorated aprons and served beverages during the meals. Saturday afternoon, the young people went to the lake to cool off and eat hot dogs. For dessert we went to Larry Lee's house and had sundaes.

Sunday, June 15, Joni Austen was baptized. A week later on June 22, Alicia Lee was

baptized. Alicia Lee, Kevin Lee, and Matthew Lee, all cousins, got their driving permits this summer.

Tony Jones, son of Mike and Laurie Jones, graduated from Belding High School in May. They had a really nice open house.

On July 19, we had our business meeting. Afterward we fellowshiped while we ate lunch. The results are that Laverne Lussenden will continue being our pastor and Adam Porter will continue being our Assistant Pastor. I was elected to be our local's *Zion's Advocate* reporter. Duane Lee is our Sunday School superintendent, and the Intermediate Sunday School teacher. Joyce Lee was elected to teach the Elementary Sunday School class. Joyce is

also taking classes at Western Michigan University to get a degree in Elementary Education. Adam Porter is going to teach the Adult Sunday School class. My dad is also going to Flint once a month to preach. Lester Walthorn got the job of being our local's historian.

Kallie Jones, Tina and Alicia Lee, and my sister and I will be coming to Tenn Challenge this summer!

The Porter family is getting ready for the second annual Porter's Pig Roast! It will be held at Spring Park in Middleville on Saturday, September 20. All are welcome! Plenty of hog! Plenty of fun!

Have a great summer! God Bless!
Written by: Emily Jane Porter

EAST LOCAL REPORT

The preachers of the month of July were Brothers Buzz Brickhouse, Mike McGhee, Larry Beem, Marvin Case, Ron Temple, Robert Oldham, and Randy Sheldon. I'm sorry to report that I was not present on the first of the month when Brother Brickhouse spoke, nor did the tape recorder work, so I do not have a synopsis of his sermon.

Song number 278 in the *Zion's Hymnal* was sung as the second song of the service, and the speaker used the last line to introduce his comments, "give us ears to hear," continuing, when we come here it should be with ears open to hear the word of God, and we should be not only a hearer but a doer also. Jacob 1:17: Jacob says he entered the temple having first obtained his errand from the Lord. And in Alma 1:37, it also says that when the priest left their labors to impart the word of the Lord, the people also left their labors to hear the word.

Moroni 6:9: The meetings are to be conducted according to the workings of the Holy Ghost. Sometimes silence can be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The lesson of a flock of geese flying overhead was given. They have learned that by flying in formation they can fly higher and go further, the foremost acting as a wind break for those following. When the lead tires it falls back and another assumes its place. Our services can reflect that "V" form. Also, if we drift from the flock, we lose the spiritual strength engendered by it.

No man comes to Jesus Christ except drawn by the Father, but one must respond to that drawing influence (John 6:44). 2 Nephi 13:3: There is no other name given whereby man can be saved. Galatians 5:1: We are to stand fast in the liberty wherein we are made free, not to become entangled again in that yoke of sin we've been freed from. James 1:22-25: We need to become doers, lest we falter and become a forgetful hearer. As the Spirit points out our imperfections we need to get rid of them, not excuse them.

Romans 8:13: To live after the desires of the flesh means death. Sin not only hurts oneself but also those one loves the most, like mates, parents and children. Moroni 7:13-18: All that invites to do good is of God. To turn from sin takes self-denial. We pray for the Spirit to abide in the body of Christ's church, but each must take responsibility for that Spirit to be in himself, praying for it, too, in order that it be full in the body.

It is foolish as well as dangerous to think that we are ever invincible to sin. Luke 15: The parable

of the prodigal son; he asked for and received his inheritance, and departed for a far country, a temptation when one becomes of an age to do so.

Our far country may simply be outside of the will of God! The choice is ours. And the responsibility is ours. We will alone will have to answer if we are wasting our inheritance; that knowledge we have been given of Christ and the way of salvation. A true Christian can't live a disorderly life, a life of sin. The final result of sin, according to the story of the prodigal son, is a pig pen. A good illustration. But there is a way out even for the prodigal; it is to return to the Father, repentant and humble, confessing. The Father waits for the return of the prodigal to forgive with a new robe of righteousness for him to put on. We need to learn that life is all about serving and pleasing God. Joy and peace are not outside of the will of God.

A sister's testimony of the milkweed was rehearsed. She had transplanted some milkweed into her garden. It seemed such a nice plant. But its roots took over and spread through the whole garden, becoming almost impossible to remove. This was likened to those enticing, seemingly harmless little things, which yet are sin, which when indulged in get rooted in our lives, being deadly to righteousness if not rooted out. Things that do not seem like sin on the surface, like weeds can look beautiful, but become stumbling blocks to a life of righteousness. The Spirit will guide us if we seek that guidance.

1 Peter 5:3: Jesus set us an example of always doing what pleased His Father. Matthew 3:15: When He came to be baptized of John He said, It behooves us to fulfill all righteousness. This a pattern of conduct, from the Father, as the way for the remission of sin following repentance. Obeying the commandments of God is what we are talking about, being rooted into the will of God by a broken heart and a contrite spirit. It is not possible for man to understand all the mysteries of God, but it is possible to understand what is required for the salvation of ones soul.

The visage of Christ was marred more than any other, the revelation-knowledge of Christ has gone out over the world, and been marred by misrepresentation. We cannot measure ourselves by our fellow man; Jesus said except our righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Matthew 5:20: He is our example, we must not let unbelievers, in or out of the church, talk us out of the need of obedience to the Lord's commandments and counsel. Only obedience will achieve His purposes.

Courage is needed to face what is to come. Many wars have been since 1900, and great earthquakes, with warnings of more to follow. There have been pestilences; outbreaks of cholera, black plague, the Iranian war syndrome, aids and others. Matthew 24:21 says great tribulations such as never has been up to this time will occur. Luke 21:25 adds that there will be distress of nations and men's hearts failing them for fear. Isaiah 24:7 prophesies that the joy of the heart ceaseth, the mirth of the land is gone. When these things occur can the Lord protect us? Yes, if! Jeremiah 30:7: We shall be saved out of it if we are prepared. Daniel 12:1: How do we get our names written in the book? Hebrews 2:1-4: we must give more earnest heed, lest we let the things we've been taught slip from us. How should we escape if we neglect to do what we've been so privileged to learn? Luke 21:36: we must be watchful so that we be worthy of His protection when these things take place.

We've been called to be a peculiar people; to serve the God we claim to believe in should make us peculiar in the eyes of the world. We are so prone to put other things first, to let them take His place in our lives. We need to become more united with God. Do we let the privileges of the land rob us of that relationship? If so, we are the ones who choose to let it be so. The devil can only tempt. We are the ones who choose. God's purpose is to have a unique people, a righteous people who deny or refuse ungodliness, worldly lust (Titus 2:12), a people who live Godly in this life. Every word of Christ becomes part of His law.

If the church is not fulfilling His will it is our fault. There shall be save two churches, one that does God's will and one that doesn't. We need a revival. We may think we are a loving people, but in whose concept? Ours or His? 2 Nephi 11:89-92 says that the Gentiles are lifted up in pride, and preach their own wisdom and learning. We place our own stumbling blocks in front of us. If we are not living according to His commandments we are not in harmony with His will; we are just playing church. 1 Peter 2:9 mentions a chosen generation, a peculiar people. Are we? We need to go to our closets, to our knees, to seek that direction needed to make us one as They are one.

Amy Schrader



Sarran-Bell

On June 15, 1997, at 3 p.m. at the Orchard Mesa Local, Church of Christ, Grand Junction, Colorado, John F. (Jack) Bell and Katherine Sue Sarran were united in marriage. Joe E. and JoAnn Toole of Marshall, Texas, are parents of the bride and John E. and Enid Bell of Clifton, Colorado, are parents of the groom. The groom's father performed the double ring ceremony and Abby and Andrew Bell, children of the groom, attended the couple.

The bride wore an ivory satin street-length dress and the groom wore a grey pin-stripe suite. The Church was decorated with baskets of flowers. Kathy and Abby carried mixed bouquets of roses, daisies and mums.

Cousins of the groom provided the wedding music. Margaret Gill played traditional wedding music on the piano and

accompanied the vocal numbers. The couple requested that the congregation sing *O Master, let me walk with Thee*, at the beginning of the ceremony. After the vows, Gerald and Cindy Case sang *Blest be the Tie*.

The reception following the ceremony was held in the new dining room of the church. The wedding cake, made by Enid Bell, was served by Karen Bell, Irene Case and Alice Larsen.

Russell Bell and Jane Pennell, brother and sister of the groom, attended the wedding along with many friends and relatives who had come for the Colorado Reunion. The couple make their home at 206 E. Tuttle, White Oak, Texas, 75693, where Kathy operates a day-care business and Jack has an oil production company.



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