

My Conversion to Jesus Christ

Loyalty First to the Lord, Then the Church

While on my mission I was told by a fellow missionary that if Jesus Christ Himself appeared to him, and it was without any doubt God, and if God said, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints was no longer the true church on earth," he would not believe God because he has his "testimony" in the Church. He said this quoting the mission president from his home ward who taught him this perceived principle of what a testimony is. Bless the missionary's heart, but this sort of placing of one's trust and faith in a group of men (religious organization) before placing it in the God we claim to love and worship is false and cannot produce salvation unto the soul.

Now you are probably thinking, "No duh. That's crazy! Of course I would follow the Savior before following an organization." But read on. Sadly this kind of teaching, whether it is intentional or unintentional, is what is being taught in the curriculum of the church: Absolute loyalty to the Church and its leaders.

...and under this head ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives. (Mosiah 5:8)

There is no other way but through Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth, and the life and no man cometh unto the Father but through Him. (John 14:6)

Therefore, it is my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in whom I shall place my full faith, and not in the "arm of flesh" or any group of men or organization. They cannot save me. Salvation comes only through Christ, therefore I take absolute caution when any one attempts to place man, an organization, a church system, or the "arm of flesh" between me and my relationship with God.

O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh; for I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh. Yea, cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm. (2 Nephi 4:34)

When I returned home from my mission I made it a priority to attend the temple as much as possible because I sought for further light and knowledge from God and to renew covenants with Him. One Saturday morning, within an hour after I returned home from worshiping in the temple, I received a phone call to come in to my Stake President's office and speak with him. In the interview I was asked to surrender my temple recommend after someone reported to my Stake President that they saw me in the temple that very day. When called in to speak with my Stake President, I was told that after I came home from my mission and during my interview prior to being released from my mission, I did not include in my testimony that President Monson is a prophet, and therefore it was assumed that I understood that I was no longer worthy to enter the temple.

My worthiness to enter into the house of the Lord should not have anything to do with proclaiming loyalty to a man, or testifying that he is anything more than a man. My worthiness to enter into the Lord's house should be contingent upon my relationship with and my testimony of the Savior and my Father in Heaven, not my relationship with or my testimony of what the President of the Church and the Brethren may or may not be. There is nothing in the covenants that we make in the temple that mention having to proclaim that any man is anything. We do not covenant with Monson, or any other person, except our spouse and God. Salvation comes only through Jesus Christ. He is the gatekeeper of our salvation. Not Thomas S. Monson. It will be our Lord Jesus Christ whom we shall converse with at the veil and it is He who shall take us into the presence of our Heavenly Father. Attending the temple and learning of God and covenanting with Him are the desires of my heart, and I know in my heart without a doubt that I am worthy to have that right to do so. So I attended the temple regularly until I had my temple recommend taken away that day.

I told my Stake President that I sustain President Thomas S. Monson and the Quorum of the 12 in their efforts *to become* prophets, seers, and revelators, but I do not believe that they have shown forth the fruits that would demonstrate that they are. I pray for them that they may seek to do the will of God and lead the Church in righteousness. Although they may have been *called* by the Church to hold Church positions, that does not automatically make them prophets, seers, and revelators. Being *chosen* by God and receiving their calling and election made sure will make them prophets, seers, and revelators. Hence the term, "*Behold there are many called, but few are chosen...*" (Doctrine and Covenants 121:34) How does one become chosen by God for the responsibility to which he has been called? By learning and diligently magnifying their duty as given in the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 107. Contrary to popular and cultural belief, we should not suppose that any man or woman is automatically entitled to the gifts and blessing required for their calling, or why else would the Lord give us this warning at the end of Section 107 after the Lord explained the duties of church positions:

Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence. He that is slothful shall not be counted worthy to stand, and he that learns not his duty and shows himself not approved shall not be counted worthy to stand. Even so. Amen. (Doctrine and Covenants 107: 99-100)

This is inferring that leaders, including the First Presidency and the Brethren, have a duty they need to fulfill. We are to look for these gifts in our leaders, and if they are not there we are to count them unworthy. Why else would the Lord have his church governed by the common consent of those governed? (Doctrine and Covenants 26:2) Why is there even a sustaining vote? When we choose to exercise our free agency in not voting in favor for the actions of the President of the Church, why are we denied temple rights and even faced with excommunication? Whose temples are they? Whose church is this, President Monson's, or Christ's? God expects His church to be governed by the common consent and sustaining vote with the expectation that we judge righteously and "count worthy" our leaders.

God has given us a measuring stick which we should use to hold our leaders accountable. That measuring stick is the Holy Scriptures. Here is one example from the words of Christ from the Sermon on the Mount about how to judge leaders:

Ye shall know them by their fruits... (Mathew 7:15-16, 3 Nephi 14: 15-16)

What are the fruits of a prophet, a seer, a revelator? Turn these nouns into verbs. In short, a prophet is someone who has been in the presence of the Lord and who is charged with the responsibility of teaching others that they *must* also attain the same blessing, *while yet in the flesh*, and with telling others how that is possible. It is the testimony of a true prophet who has stood in the presence of God that “...*God became an object of faith among men after the fall; and what it was that stirred up the faith of the multitudes to feel after him- to search after a knowledge of his character, perfections, and attributes, until they became extensively acquainted with him, and not only commune with him and behold his glory, but be partakers of his power and stand in his presence.*” (Lectures on Faith 2:34). A prophet gives us the correct knowledge of the characteristics and attributes of deity so that we may know and trust the God in whom we place our faith. And with that faith rooted in the correct knowledge of God, we can have faith sufficient enough to lay hold upon salvation and eternal life, which comes from personally knowing our Savior Jesus Christ. That’s all a Prophet is, *a special witness* of Jesus Christ. They never want people to follow them; instead they point others to the Lord to follow Him. They are not people we are to idolize and celebrity-worship. They don’t invest tithing money to build multi-million dollar shopping malls. They simply have something great – the correct knowledge of God and a personal relationship with Christ, because they speak with him face to face – and they wish for us to have that same privilege with God. The Holy Scriptures are the records written by those exact people and contain the instructions of how to obtain that same privilege. Study their words. Study the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and tell me this isn't so. The Holy Scriptures are the truth. They lay out the way we must go to achieve salvation through Christ. They are the measuring stick of what is of God, and what is not. The Holy Scriptures are the law.

Do leaders place higher value in the Holy Scriptures, or in the Handbook of Instructions, a book written not by men and women who have claimed to have stood in the presence of God, but by a committee in Salt Lake City? What do the leaders use as their measuring stick when they minister and judge? They refer to their handbook of policies and regulations which are not canonized as scripture.

“...Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the scriptures and do not understand them.” (Doctrine and Covenants 10:63)

“Now I need not rehearse the matter; what I have said may suffice. Behold, the scriptures are before you; if ye will wrest them it shall be to your own destruction.” (Alma 13:20)

This is why I have had my temple recommend taken away - because although I am found innocent before God and the doctrine found in the Holy Scriptures, according to the Brethren and the Handbooks I am an unworthy apostate.

Wo unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered. (Luke 11:52)

I seek to do the will of the Father. Yes, I am very imperfect and full of many flaws and I do stumble and make mistakes often, but as I turn and come unto Christ, to learn of Him and to covenant with Him, it is Him, my loving Lord, Savior, and Redeemer to Whom I am forever in gratitude, Who strengthens me. I seek only a stronger and more intimate relationship with God and to “*enter in*” into His presence. By teaching and requiring that you must place a man between yourself and the Lord and not making the Savior the sole focus of your worship, leaders in the Church have taken away the “key of knowledge” and have not “entered in” themselves. And by having my temple recommend taken away, I have been hindered from entering in.

Despite me be denied these blessing, I know these blessings come from God only and I have not lost faith in my Savior Jesus Christ. I told my Stake President that although I may not have a temple recommend, I have faith God will provide a way for me to receive those covenants and to one day be sealed to my future wife. I have no doubt in my mind the Lord will provide, because He always fulfills His promises. Getting married in the temple does not automatically insure that a couple will be sealed for time and all eternity, because everything in the endowment session is only a type and shadow for what really needs to happen. Getting inside the temple with your spouse is not the end goal in life. There is more a couple needs to do if they want to be together forever, which is why I seek to have that future sealing made *sure* by God himself through the Patriarchal Priesthood.

What is Faith if it’s Never Tested? What is Truth if it’s Never Questioned?

The start of my path to God began when I was very young. I can't remember my exact age, I must have been 11 to 13 years old, but I already had doubts about the Book of Mormon, if Joseph Smith really saw what he saw, and if God was even real. I doubted the whole religion concept, thinking that it all could be made-up stories by really smart crazy people. So I took the challenge of reading the Book of Mormon and asked God if it is true or not as directed in Moroni 10:4-5:

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.

Even at a young age I labored upon the word of God and read the entire book. I then asked God in prayer if it were true or not, believing that if it were true I would receive an answer. I wanted to know if He was real or not. I received an answer through the power of the Holy Ghost that it is true, that Joseph Smith really did speak with God the Father and Jesus Christ, and that God loves me. It wasn't what I would call a "warm feel good fuzzy" feeling or goose bumps you get when you feel emotionally happy or feel fulfilled. It started with a very powerful burning in my bosom which I felt from the Holy Ghost which grew stronger and stronger. There was no way my body could naturally produce that kind of feeling on its own. It came from an actual presence outside myself which I could feel all around me, as if the Holy Spirit was hugging me. God, or at least His Holy Spirit, was in that room with me and God answered me and testified of the truth. I knew at that moment and I know now within my heart and within my mind, that what I experienced is real and true. I can never deny that. I believe I received that kind of manifestation because although I had doubts, I also had full faith that if God were real He would answer, because I was honestly seeking. If anyone asks God, having faith that He will answer, He will answer. God is no respecter of persons, He loves each and every one of His Children, and He wants to establish a very personal, loving, individual relationship with anyone that is willing to turn themselves to Him.

September 2013 I received my mission call to serve in the Philippines Baguio Mission, the same mission both my parents served in during the early 1990s. The Mission President was a good man whom I love very much. His wife is a very sweet woman who just so happened to grow up in the same stake my mother attended in the Philippines. I reported to the Provo MTC December 4th, 2013. I was called by the First Presidency of the Church to serve until November 18th, 2015, but looking back I believed God had a different time frame in mind. I served for 16 months and loved every minute I spent with the Filipino people whose blood and culture runs deep through my veins.

My mission was AMAZING. It certainly is the best mission and I couldn't have been more blessed to have been called to where I served. It was in the Philippines where I connected with my Pinoy side. It was in those moments while in the service and company of the Filipino people that I saw and felt God's love for His children. My heart grew as I learned to love and serve others and God. God taught me so many things and He changed me in ways I never thought possible in those short 16 months. He was able to do so because I earnestly sought for that personal relationship with Him.

In November of 2014, after almost a year in the mission, I received an email from my father addressed to his family. It contained many concerns about the current state of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Even though I did not and never knew any of the details of my family's decisions concerning their actions in relation to the church, I could tell that my family was on a new path, and whether or not it was God's path, I knew not. This stressed me immensely to the point where I hit "rock bottom" during Christmas week. The Lord humbled me, but He was always there ready to lift me up when I was ready to turn to Him. During my time of great worry I came to the conclusion that *I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs (James 1:5), that is, ask of God.* I made a conscientious decision that I would no longer rely solely on my family for answers pertaining to doctrinal issues or my spirituality, nor would I rely on the organization and leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints for the same thing. I made a decision and commitment to myself that I would remain independent of all religious and theological ideas and philosophies of anyone and instead rely solely upon God and my relationship with Christ for answers and direction. I knew, because of the witness I received at a young age, of the reality of a God and the truth of the Book of Mormon and the Prophet Joseph Smith, that I could trust Jesus Christ and His words in the Holy Scripture. That was the message I sought to deliver to the people of the Philippines. I never once doubted my testimony of what I know to be true, but just because the Book of Mormon is true, and Joseph Smith is a Prophet of God, does not mean that the Church that holds the printing and copy rights of that book is infallible or perfect, immune to corruption or apostasy.

So I prayed and asked God for guidance. I did as Joseph Smith did in Joseph Smith History 1:11 and I **labored** upon the word of God. I searched the scriptures diligently and fasted often. You can't expect to receive any type of revelation from God of knowledge of truth unless you first exercise faith. And we know *faith if it hath no works, is dead..* (James 2:17). Faith requires action, works, *labor...* Therefore, to obtain knowledge from God, you must first exercise that particle of faith by asking, seeking, knocking. Then it shall be given you, then shall you find, then shall it be opened unto you. (Mathew 7:7-8) God's not just going to give you knowledge or experiences of Him unless you have the faith to diligently seek Him.

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

God does not want you to be simply satisfied and content with the words and testimony of what truth is from another person. Simply hearing and believing does not require faith, therefore without that faith it is impossible to please him. You must diligently seek God to obtain your own testimony, revelation, knowledge of truth about everything, and an individual relationship with Him. That's what God wants each of His children to have, and that is what I sought for. And because I sought by faith, by faith I obtained.

The revelations didn't come to me in a sudden manifestation of the Holy Spirit or an angel and "Bam!" I knew everything there is to know about the mysteries of heaven. But revelations did come over the course of several months as I pondered and searched the scriptures and diligently sought by faith to commune with my Father in Heaven. My eyes were opened and the scriptures were unfolded to me to

a perfect new understanding as I fasted diligently for that further light and knowledge of Jesus Christ. As I obtained greater understanding of the characteristics and attributes of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, joy began to fill my soul and I could feel the love of God in my life constantly. I obtained this knowledge not from any other man's teachings, but by the power of the Holy Spirit. And that is how we must all learn of God.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 2: 9-11)

My father did not convince me any of the things I have learned recently, nor did any other person, although seeds were planted in my heart by them. It is the Spirit of God who is my teacher. While I was on the plane ride home from the Philippines I sat next to a man who was professor in theology with several degrees from some nice university. We discussed the nature of deity and how man comes to a knowledge of God. He argued that in order to learn of God we must go to man-made institutions and the best universities and acquire the best education possible. He was baffled when I suggested that we should do as the prophets of old have done which is seek by faith for that holy communion with Deity and learn of Him through His Holy Spirit - that the holy men in the Bible were not "well educated" by the world's measurement of success and education, nor did they attend prestigious universities, but that they sought by faith for the knowledge they obtained. He told me it's not necessary to go and pray on a mountain like Moses, and that we have the Bible, which is good enough. But then why was Moses trying to get the children of Israel to come up the mountain to see God? Moses wanted the people to have a stronger personal relationship with Jehovah (Christ) and to learn of God from God (Exodus 20:18-21, 24:1-18). Read the words of others who have stood in presence of God and see if they are not inviting us to come unto Christ and learn of Him from Him. To learn about the things of God we must seek directly from God, not from man, because *the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God*, which Spirit we can become partakers of through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Of course God will place people in our lives who, through the power of the Holy Spirit, will serve as messengers from God to us, but that message will always relay the same obligation to us: "Take what has been said to the Lord and ask Him yourself. Don't take my word for it; learn of it for yourself from God!! Don't follow me, follow God." That requires much more faith on our part, the kind of faith that is rooted directly in Christ.

The problem the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are faced with today is that mainstream members are not taught to diligently seek knowledge and wisdom directly from God and are content with having it given to them by a President of the Church and the quorum of Brethren. "Let the leaders talk to God and we will just listen to what they have say." Why? Because it's much easier to place faith in a good man than it is to place your faith in the God you cannot see.

Humans naturally want to have leaders to lead them and take responsibility for their welfare in temporal and spiritual aspects. People just want to be told what to do so they don't have to think too much about it and devote resources to it. It's what we call in economics *specialization*. "You worry about researching and learning of God and his ways, I'll worry about something else, and then you can give me a quick checklist of ordinances, rituals, and routines I need to do" People want a list of rules, of dos and don'ts. They want a handbook of instructions and manuals and easy-to-read monthly magazines subscriptions to tell them how to live, instead of laboring in prayer and studying the scriptures. They want a commandment so they can have a blessing. God doesn't want a hierarchy system, kings, or even presidents of a church to tell us how to live our lives. God warns against it in the Book of Mormon (Ether 6:22-30, Mosiah 23:7, Alma 51). Salvation doesn't come through a pastor, or a pope, or a prophet, or a king. It comes through Christ. (John 14:6) Therefore, come unto Christ. You want to know your standing with God? You want to know for yourself if God loves you and cares for you? Don't seek that knowledge from a man or a religious organization. You will only be feeding yourself false hope. Seek for that relationship with God and ask Him yourself.

What I Learned

The Gospel of Jesus Christ Starting with Faith

So what exactly did the spirit teach me over the course of several months after I first began to diligently seek God's will for me? I was simply taught the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its purest form: faith, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, enduring to the end, the end which is to enter into the presence of and covenant with God.

Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins (repent) and cometh unto me (baptism), and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am; (endure to the end) (Doctrine and Covenants 93:1)

Everything in the Gospel of Christ starts with faith, and continues with faith. Therefore my diligent search of God's will for me began with the principle of faith. While I was fasting and deeply pondering the scriptures I was led to this scripture in the Book of Mormon. This is the account written by Moroni of the brother of Jared about how the brother of Jared saw God and spoke with Him. To learn more about the background story of the brother of Jared read the first 4 chapters of Ether.

And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are. (Ether 4:7)

The things which the brother of Jared saw, the unfolding of all the revelations, was part of seeing and knowing Christ. This is how we are redeemed from the fall, by knowing Christ because we have entered into His presence.

And when he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you. (Ether 3:13)

As Christians, and especially members of The Church of Jesus Christ who profess The Book Mormon to be the word of God and Joseph Smith to be the Prophet of the Restoration, we must not only seek to be like Christ, but we must seek to know him, even as the brother of Jared did – face to face. As Moroni gives his commentary on the Book of Ether he commends us to do just that:

39 And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things;

41 And now, I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide in you forever. Amen. (Ether 12:39,41)

Moroni saw Christ and spoke with him face to face, Joseph Smith saw Christ and spoke with Him face to face, and they are both telling us to seek for that same relationship with God, to “seek this Jesus”.

After reading these scriptures and pondering the absolute depth of these passages the Holy Spirit testified to me that this is what is meant by “end” in the term “enduring to the end” of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: to stand in His presence even while in the flesh in mortality. Reading the scriptures with that new perspective, everything in those pages started to make sense. Honestly this stressed me out because I knew that the path I was starting on was going to require a lot more faith on my part. I knew I could not rely on the Church for my salvation anymore. It had to come from my relationship with Christ. It stressed me out because I knew that my life was forever going to be different than I had expected it to be, yet I was filled with hope and joy from my Savior and Lord as I was filled with light and truth. Ether 4:7 got me to ask several more questions which only led to more answer as I sought from God.

1. Why don't people see Christ today even as the brother of Jared and Moroni did?
2. Ether 4:7 states “that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did”. How does one exercise faith even as the brother of Jared did?
3. The scripture then states, “that they may become sanctified in me...” What does it mean to be sanctified in me (Christ)? How does that work exactly?

Question 1. So why don't people see Christ? Christ explained in the passage of verses in John 14:16-23: “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” (18) “..I will love him (he who hath Jesus's commandments, keeps them, and loves Christ), and I will manifest myself to him.” (21) and “we [the Father and Christ] will come unto him, and we will make our abode with him.” (23) Before you judge me crazy for believing that Christ can appear to you, because you are interpreting these scriptures as Jesus just referring to the presence of the Holy Ghost, read the revelation given to Joseph Smith concerning John 14:

John 14:23—The appearing of the Father and the Son, in that verse, is a personal appearance; and the idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man’s heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false. (Doctrine and Covenants 130:3)

So if Christ said that he will manifest himself unto us, and since Christ is “*a God of truth and canst not lie*” (Ether 3:12), He has to do what He says He will do - which means we are doing something wrong if we have not received this Second Comforter. I found my answer to why we don’t have this relationship with Christ, as we are commanded to, in the following verse of Ether 4:

Come unto me, O ye house of Israel,* (that’s us! The covenant people! He is not referring to those who have not accepted the Book of Mormon, He is referring to those who have already accepted it and have covenanted through baptism by proper authority.) ***and it shall be made manifest unto you how great things the Father hath laid up for you, from the foundation of the world; and it hath not come unto you, because of unbelief. (Ether 4:14)**

The answer is unbelief. Unbelief is what is holding the world back. It’s what holds each and every one of us from coming closer to God. It’s what has always held back the people in the Book of Mormon: 2nd Nephi 32:7, Mosiah 1:5, Alma 19:6, Alma 32:28, 3rd Nephi 19:35, Ether 4:13, Mormon 1:15, Moroni 10:2. What is unbelief? Its “*that’s impossible*” “*I don’t care*” “*I’m not good enough*” “*I’m a bad person*” “*I’m not worthy*” “*I know no other way*” “*I can never see myself like that*” “*God only needs to speak the prophet, not me, and if he does I don’t need to know about it*” “*the brethren will never lead you astray*” “*this is how it’s been done in the church and my family for generation after generation, they can’t possibly be wrong*” “***...traditions of their fathers, which are not correct.***” (Mosiah 1:5) Unbelief is closed-mindedness, false traditions, lack of confidence, fear of being incorrect, fear of having to change. Complete unbelief is a complete unwillingness to accept the slight possibility of something being true, or untrue. Both atheists and religionists are guilty of unbelief. In order to obtain any truth we must first seek for it. God rewards those who diligently seek after him, and to seek for something is to first believe in its possibility. God won’t manifest himself to you if you are blinded by unbelief. The world is full of it, and that is what keeps the heavens closed.

Or have angels ceased to appear unto the children of men? Or has he withheld the power of the Holy Ghost from them? Or will he, so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved?

***Behold I say unto you, Nay; for it is by faith that miracles are wrought; and it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men; wherefore, if these things have ceased wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain.* (Moroni 7:36-37)**

Nothing is impossible with God. He loves all. It doesn’t matter what the world says, what matters is what He says, and He wants a close relationship with you. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is for everyone. It doesn’t matter who you are or what you have done, God can fix you if you’ll let Him. Anyone can have what the brother of Jared had with God, what Joseph Smith had with God. That

experience is neither exclusive to nor an automatic privilege of those who are called to the First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve.

...God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. (Acts34-35)

It's for anyone who first believes, then exercises faith. There is however a huge difference between mere belief and faith. Not just anyone who simply believes in Christ can have a close relationship with Deity. They must first exercise faith, even as the brother of Jared.

Question 2 is, "How does one exercise faith in God even as the brother of Jared?" Now you need to know that there is a huge difference between belief and faith. There is technically no such thing as invalid beliefs because a belief is just an idea that belongs to an individual who believes in it. Everyone has beliefs, but few people have faith. I can believe as hard as I want to that if I go to the gym and work out and diet properly I will be buff, but unless I get off my butt and do something, nothing will happen. I can still believe as hard as I want, but it won't make a difference. The same principle applies to God and our salvation. You can believe in Christ as hard as you can. You can say, "I BELIEVE, I BELIEVE!" but unless you act, or exercise faith, you will never know for yourself if there even is a God despite how many times you tell yourself there is one. So what is Faith? It is a principle of action and power.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1)

And now as I said concerning faith—faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true. (Alma32:21)

For example: you are a good student and you enroll in a class. You *hope* that by the end of the course you will pass and you learn the material required for your degree. You don't have a guarantee or *evidence* or *perfect knowledge* that you will pass or learn anything at that moment you enroll, but you have a *hope* or a *belief* that is what you will accomplish. Anything can happen during the course which could stop you from passing or learning. Therefore you won't have a 100% *perfect knowledge* until after you complete the class. So based on your hope, you act. You go to class, you study, and you work hard. Then you will have the *evidence* or *perfect knowledge* if you passed or learned anything.

The same concept applies to whenever you get behind a steering wheel. You don't have the hard scientific *evidence* the moment you start the engine and pull out of the drive way that you will make it to your destination, but you *hope* you will and are pretty dang sure you will. You don't know for sure yet because it hasn't happened. After you exercise faith by driving all the way to your destination, then you will have a *perfect knowledge* that you made it.

"Think back and reflect upon the history of your entire life, from the period of your first recollection, and ask yourself what principle excited you to any kind of action or what was it that makes you get up and try to do anything? Is it not your belief or hope that if you attempt to do something, something will happen as a result of your actions. Would you knock, unless you believed

that it would have been opened unto you? Would you sow, unless you believed you would reap? Would a farmer plant, unless he believed he would gather? Would you have ever asked, unless you had believed you would receive? Is there anything that you would have done, either physical or mental, if you had not previously believed? Are not all your exertions of every kind dependent upon your faith? Or, I could ask, what have you not obtained by reason of your faith? Faith is then the moving cause of all actions in all intelligent beings, including God.” (Paraphrased from *Lectures on Faith* 1:11). Faith is action. It is the action that results from your belief. The farmer won’t harvest unless he farms. He won’t farms unless he believes. If there is no action, it’s not faith. Hence the term, “*Faith without works is dead.*” (*James 2:17*)

Faith is also a principle of power.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (Hebrews 11:3)

By this we understand that the principle of power which existed in the bosom of God, by which the world were framed, was faith; and that it is by reason of this principle of power existing in Deity, that all created things exist; so that all things in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, exist by reason of faith as it existed in Him.... Take this principle or attribute—for it is an attribute—from the Deity, and he would cease to exist (Lectures of Faith 1:15,16)

Priesthood

Faith is the power by which God works. God created everything and runs the universe by this power. Priesthood is not the power. Priesthood is a fellowship or communion with God which gives man the “perfect knowledge” needed for faith to be sufficient and therefore powerful. It is by faith that prison walls can be rent, hearts can be softened and changed, miracles are wrought, and mountains moved. (Ether 12:13-17,30). This power comes only from God and no other, and it is wrought by faith, not necessarily priesthood. So I am going to sidetrack for a little bit here and talk about another important doctrine which goes hand in hand with the principal of faith.

What is priesthood? It is not a calling or office in the church. It is not the priesthood of deacon, teacher, priest, bishop, etc... Those are church positions of leadership and quorums. The priesthood and power of God cannot be passed around by placing hands on heads and saying words and “Boom” you have the authority of God. There is a difference between being called by the church and being chosen by God. Although we have callings in which we are to exercise the priesthood that does not mean we have been chosen by God to do so... ***Hence many are called, but few are chosen.*** (D&C121:34-40). The power and authority to minister belongs to God. Therefore we must seek by faith to know the will God and to be *chosen* by him to use that power. Below is a passage from the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis chapter 14. This is how Melchizedek was called by God to the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God, which we now refer to as just the Melchizedek priesthood (D&C107:3-4).

26 Now Melchizedek was a man of faith, who wrought righteousness; and when a child he feared God, and stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire. (He first had exceedingly strong faith, even as a child)

27 And thus, having been approved of God, he was ordained an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch, (Enoch walked and talked with God. He received his covenants directly from God)

28 It being after the order of the Son of God; which order came, not by man, nor the will of man; neither by father nor mother; neither by beginning of days nor end of years; but of God; (Melchizedek's father had the priesthood, but he didn't get it from his father Noah, or a bishop, or any other man. He was ordained directly by God)

29 And it was delivered unto men by the calling of his own voice, according to his own will, unto as many as believed on his name." (God will call you by his own voice when you receive this highest priesthood, he needs to call you, not a church leader)

This is Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God, known as Melchizedek Priesthood, is a personal, direct, real relationship with God. It's a fellowship with Christ. Through this *sure* knowledge of God your faith becomes perfect. And through this perfect faith in God, and by his will, you will have access to unlimited power and **nothing shall be impossible unto you** (Mathew 17:19-20).

For God having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed with an oath by himself; that every one being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course; To put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God; to do all things according to his will, according to his command, subdue principalities and powers; and this by the will of the Son of God which was from before the foundation of the world." (JST Genesis 14:30-31)

The Aaronic priesthood is what has remained in the *world* from the time it was restored to Joseph Smith and will *never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.* (JS History 1:69) The Aaronic priesthood is not a fellowship between man and God. It is a fellowship between man and man. That is why it is the lower priesthood, the preparatory priesthood. This priesthood holds the keys to the ministering of angels (Doctrine and Covenants 13:1) . It can be a fellowship with angels, but not God. The purpose of having a fellowship between man and angels is to prepare us to enter into the presence of God and receive that higher priesthood. For you Mormons who are familiar with the temple session, think Peter, James, and John - what were they? Certainly heavenly messengers, angels! What were they preparing Adam and Eve to receive? Was it not to receive the highest level of the Melchizedek Priesthood, the Patriarchal Priesthood, which is to converse with the Lord and have Him take you into the presence of the Father? I'll talk more about this when I explain baptism by fire and gift of the Holy Ghost

How to Exercise Faith

So back to the question “How does one exercise faith even as the brother of Jared?” How does one obtain the faith necessary to enter into the presence of the Lord? The answer is found in the *Lectures on Faith* written by Joseph Smith. The *Lectures on Faith* were originally published and canonized, ratified by the general assembly of the Church by common consent, vouched for by the Prophet Joseph Smith and God as scripture. It was considered the “Doctrine” of the Doctrine and Covenants, while the revelations we have today are the “Covenants”. It was removed in 1921 by a committee of men, without the common consent of the church, who thought they knew more about the nature of Deity than the man who boldly claimed to have stood in the presence of God the Father and Jesus Christ in these latter-days. The entire book talks about faith. I would expound upon the whole book, but It would be much easier for you to obtain a copy of it and labor upon it, ponder it, and pray about it. Read it and learn from God through the Holy Spirit; you will be enlightened. The book presents the subject of faith in the following order:

1. Faith itself, what is it. (I just briefly explained in this document)
2. The object on which it rest. In order for faith to have power, we must have the correct knowledge of the God we place our faith in - his nature, attributes, characteristics, how He works, His plan for us, our relationship as mortal humans to Him, and how to have faith in Him. Without a correct knowledge, faith will not work. That is why God sends us messengers, or Prophets, who have stood in His presence to give us, or in Joseph Smith’s case, *restore* the correct knowledge we need to so that we may exercise faith until salvation properly. Because they have been redeemed, or other words, because they have stood in the presence of God, they can tell us the how to do the same. You can find the most correct knowledge about God in the Book of Mormon. There is no such thing as being saved in ignorance. You can’t be saved by blindly following leaders because you may be placing faith in the wrong concept of Deity. One must know for himself, not merely believe, the course of life they are pursuing is in accordance with the will of God, therefore you must know for yourself the correct characteristics and attributes of Deity for faith to work. Joseph Smith states, ***A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge and consequently more power than many men who are on the earth. Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God. (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith pg. 217)*** I do, however, know that God is a God of mercy; He provides a way for those who have died in ignorance to learn the correct knowledge for their faith to be sufficient unto salvation.
3. The effects which flow from faith: Miracles, the heavens opening, restoration of correct knowledge and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, salvation, redemption, exaltation.

Repentance and The Atonement

My **third question** was, “How does one become *sanctified* as mentioned in Ether4:7?” As we know from the scriptures, *No unclean thing can enter into the kingdom of God, No unclean thing can dwell in God’s presence (Moses 6:57, Alma 11:37, 1st Nephi 10:21, 1st Nephi 15:34, 3rd Nephi 27:19).*

And I say unto you again that he cannot save them in their sins; for I cannot deny his word, and he hath said that no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore, how can ye be saved, except ye inherit the kingdom of heaven? Therefore, ye cannot be saved in your sins. (Alma 11:37)

In order to be saved we must inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Wherefore teach it unto your children, that all men, everywhere, must repent, or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence... (Moses 6:57)

In order to inherit the kingdom of heaven, aka the Kingdom of God, we must also be able to bear His presence, but no unclean thing can enter into His presence. The brother of Jared did, however, because he repented and was sanctified. To be sanctified is to be completely cleansed from all sin, which is an impossible task by ourselves. We as natural human beings cannot be perfect, yet God has commanded that we be perfect.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God. (Moroni 10:32)

We cannot perfect ourselves. Only Christ can perfect us, but first we must come unto Him. Repentance is much less behavioral and much more about what goes on in your mind and heart. Repentance is not just about abstaining from drugs, alcohol, pornography, and bad behavior. What I mean is, it’s not about telling yourself, “I won’t sin, Darn it I’m sorry I won’t do it anymore, I’ll try, I’ll try, I’ll try harder!” Repentance is simply turning away from sin and turning to Christ, opening your heart to Him so that He will fix you. You can’t fix yourself. Don’t get down on yourself about your bad behaviors and imperfections. Learn about God and his will for you and He will fix you faster than any addiction recovery plan could. *Repentance is a change of mind, a fresh view about God, about oneself, and about the world. (Bible Dictionary: Repentance)* As we turn to Christ with faith, we learn of Him through the scriptures and personal revelation as we develop a stronger relationship with Christ, and as a result our perspective changes. Therefore repentance is not “I say sorry to God after I sin and He forgives me.” It is not, “Phew, I said sorry. I *repented*. I can do whatever I want to now so long as I do not break that commandment or rule, and I am safe!” Repentance is a process of constantly turning yourself, your will, your thoughts, and your heart to God. Repentance is having that broken heart and contrite spirit which allows Christ to cleanse you (2nd Nephi 2:7). If you are trying to forsake sin, or conquer an

addiction, without Christ, it can be near impossible and very painful. If you are the “goody Mormon” and are always obedient to Church standards for anything but a true love for Christ, it is not true repentance. It’s just living life guided by moral standards that dictate your behaviors. As we allow Christ in our lives He changes our hearts and as a result our desires change to where we will have no more disposition to do evil.

***And they all cried with one voice, saying: Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually.* (Mosiah 5:2)**

This happens because Christ fills us with light and truth which cause the powers of temptation to flee. Why?

***Light and truth forsake that evil one.* (Doctrine and Covenants 93:37)**

***The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.* (Doctrine and Covenants 93:36)**

As you receive light and truth, you also obtain a higher “intelligence”, which is the glory of God. You become partakers of the Glory of God, or in other words become more intelligent, in portions as you receive “grace for grace” until you receive the fullness. You become more godly and, as a natural consequence, godly people don’t have a desire to do the unimportant immoral things of the world (D&C93:11-14). And what exactly is truth?

***And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come.* (Doctrine and Covenants 93:24)**

It is knowledge, which is why “A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith pg. 217*). Knowledge, *perfect knowledge* of God, is what saves us. And perfect knowledge comes by means of faith.

Perfect knowledge of all things pertaining to God past, present, future = truth, and light and truth = intelligence, and intelligence = the glory of God. Then when we gain perfect knowledge of God through our faith, we become, in a portion or degree, gods ourselves.

***...line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little ... and unto him who receiveth God will give more, and from them which shall say, we have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have.* (2nd Nephi 28:30)**

That is why:

Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence

and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come. (Doctrine and Covenants 130:18-19)

This scripture is not necessarily referring to worldly knowledge. It is referring to, though not exclusively, heavenly knowledge of God. This is the kind of knowledge that gives one an *advantage in the world to come*. Why?

“A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge and consequently more power than many men who are on the earth. Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith pg. 217)

So when we become sanctified we become cleansed or purified by Christ from the sins, imperfections, and everything that makes us fall short of the glory of God. We are then able to become partakers of the glory of God (aka intelligence, knowledge, truth). How are we sanctified?

And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.” (Moroni 10:33)

For by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified. (Moses 6:60)

It is by the blood that was shed by Christ for every person in the world, or in other words, it is the Atonement of Jesus Christ. What is the Atonement? It is not just a payment made by Christ for the price of sins. It is to become “at one” with God. Jesus Christ made it possible for us to become “one” with God. Because we are all imperfect and have sin, we cannot enter into the presence of God and become one with Him. Christ shed His blood so that we may become sanctified of all imperfections and become perfect, even as Christ is, and become one with Him and the Father. Here are the words of Christ in His intercessory prayer to the Father found in John chapter 17:

17-19 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. (What is truth? What does truth do to the evil one?) As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. (Christ is the mediator between us and the Father; because He is God and is sanctified, He can sanctify us.)

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; (This atonement is not just for the Apostles, but for all those who will believe.)

21-23 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory (light and truth) which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in

me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

We become one with Father and Christ, even as they are already one. Not physically one, because we all have separate bodies, but literally in the sense that we become one with the Godhead through the spirit of God, which can be referred to as the “mind” of the God. We become partakers of that spirit through the baptism of fire when we receive the Holy Spirit. We become one with Them because we have the same glory as They do, which can only be given to us by Jesus Christ, which glory, or in other words intelligence, or in other words light and truth, or in other words that perfect knowledge of God, makes it possible for us to be made perfect in Them as one. This is the true purpose of the atonement. It is becoming one with The Father and Christ! To ascend to their level of glory and progression and become gods ourselves, while in the flesh.

Baptism

While on my mission a new policy was initiated concerning the requirements of baptism. In a Zone Conference it was announced that before an investigator could be baptized he/she must fill out their “My Family” booklet. They would have to do their genealogy work and prepare names for the temple before they would be allowed to covenant with God for themselves through baptism. As little as this additional requirement may be, it didn’t feel right to me. I opened up my scriptures to 3 Nephi chapter 11. This is the chapter where Christ first visits the people of ancient America. The very first thing Christ does is set the forth the manner of baptism and the requirements necessary for the ordinance. **Read 3 Nephi 11:21-41.** Repeatedly Christ lays down the doctrine of baptism saying *there shall be no disputations among you.* (v.22, 28)

And again the Lord called others, and said unto them likewise; and he gave unto them power to baptize. And he said unto them: On this wise shall ye baptize; and there shall be no disputations among you.

Verily I say unto you, that whoso repenteth of his sins through your words, and desireth to be baptized in my name, on this wise shall ye baptize them—Behold, ye shall go down and stand in the water, and in my name shall ye baptize them. (3 Nephi 11:22-23)

The requirement for baptism is repentance, which means to turn to away from sin and turn to Christ, and desire. There are no disputations to the requirements. There are only 2: repentance and desire. I then shared the following scripture from 3 Nephi 11 with first my Zone Leader at the conference:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

And whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon my rock; but he buildeth upon a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell stand open to receive such when the floods come and the winds beat upon them. (3 Nephi 11:39-40)

Jesus Christ Himself in 3 Nephi 11 just explained the Doctrine of the Gospel of Jesus Christ concerning baptism and then said not to add any more or less and to establish it as doctrine. By adding additional requirements to baptism the Church has added to the doctrine, which cometh of evil, and is not built upon the rock of Christ. My Zone Leader told me that because the Mission President has “keys” and revelation he can change things. Sorry, but keys are a charge, responsibility, ministry to carry out a duty. They do not give a man authority or power to change or add upon doctrine established by God Himself. God is *the same today as yesterday, and forever*. (D&C3:2) God doesn’t change His mind about doctrine or the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He doesn’t change His mind about the doctrine He established, even in the pre-existence, from the ***foundation of the world*** (1 Nephi 10:18, Mosiah 4:6-7, Alma 12:25). Yes, certain laws will be fulfilled (law of Moses, 3 Nephi 9:17-20), but the doctrine of Christ can’t change. Things which the Church has taught as doctrine, claiming that God simply changed His mind about it, like polygamy and blacks being denied the priesthood, were not God’s will or doctrine to ever begin with! They were falsely established by men as doctrine because of racism and sexual immorality within the leadership of the Church following Joseph’s death. I can assure you Joseph Smith was not racist because he knows God is no respecter of person (Acts 10:34-35) and he was not a polygamist nor did he support it - he sought to abolish it.

So I brought up the baptismal requirement issue, along with the scriptures from 3 Nephi 11:39-40, with my mission president. I found out that the Philippines Baguio Mission was the lowest of all the 21 missions in temple names inputted and one of the lowest in baptisms. So the new requirement was implemented as a means to get higher stats, which is a great tactic if you are running a business, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not a business. It’s the eternal salvation and exaltation of individual souls. My Stake President and I had a long conversation where I expressed my worry about how the sacred baptismal covenant has become polluted with too many regulations, policies, and agendas. Baptism is a sacred personal promise and witness to God. You can’t use something as sacred and personal as that as a means to obtain higher statistics. We came to no conclusion. We only shared our viewpoints on the issue.

It was shortly after my conversation with my Mission President when I received a very surprising revelation that I needed to go home immediately. I was getting transferred to a new area, yet God was telling me that my work in service to the Filipino people was complete. I looked deep into my heart to make sure that it was the voice of the Lord calling me home and not something else. I would have stayed in the mission despite the doctrinal issue of baptism. I would have stayed despite my family issues. In fact, I LOVED the Philippines and I did not want to leave. I wanted to stay, but God wanted me to come home. It broke my heart, but the voice of the Lord was calling me home. I prayed and fasted much and I know that it was His voice calling me. I know my mission was honorable in the sight

of our Lord, and I learned and accomplished everything that the Lord needed me to learn and accomplish in those 16 months.

So I went in for an interview with the Mission President and told him what the will of God was for me. This was a Monday morning. My Mission President asked me to call home. I believe it was divine grace that I was able to reach my family, who were out camping high in the mountains in an out-of-cellphone service area. Now my family did not normally go on camping trips, but they felt that particular Sunday (Monday Philippines time) that they needed to spend the Sabbath Day away from the city in order to do some soul searching about their relationship with God and with the Church. My parents came to a decision that they would not resign from the Church or go inactive until I had returned home. They felt that it would not be fair to put me in that position. It was shortly after they made this decision that my mother's phone received a call from me from the Philippines. They were shocked when I told them that God wants me to come home. It was the Lord's hand moving us. They knew it was time to act. Shortly after returning from their trip they asked to be released from their callings and ceased activity in the Church. They have shared their story, and so I will not attempt to do so here.

Sacrament and Baptism by Fire

I returned home April 1st and on the morning of April 4th I was baptized by my father at the river. Yes, I was baptized at 8 years old, and yes, I have been re-baptized and yes, the ordinance was performed by the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood and power of God. Of course the re-baptism was not sanctioned by the Church, but it was recognized by God. Why was I baptized again? I can assure you I did not get baptized into any other church or religious organization. I wanted to repent and the first fruits of repentance is baptism! (Moroni 8:25) I was baptized again because I had a desire to come closer to God and witness unto Him that I want to follow Him. I wanted to renew my baptismal covenant with Christ. Nowhere in the scriptures does it say we cannot be baptized again by proper authority. When Christ came to the people of America in 3rd Nephi, those were the people that were spared though the horrible destructions because they did not reject the prophets (3 Nephi 10:12). These people who did not reject the prophets were the people who were baptized by Nephi (3rd Nephi 7:25-26). Yet it was these very same people which Christ commanded repeatedly that they should be baptized.

And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and become as a little child, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in nowise receive these things. And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God. (3 Nephi 11:37-38)

Rebaptism was practiced in the early Church up until the 1900s. The idea that the sacrament renews your baptismal covenant is false. Search the scriptures and try to find where it says the sacrament can renew your baptismal covenant and give you a remission of sins. I personally think that the reason rebaptism was removed from the church and replaced with the idea the sacrament renewed

covenants was a tactic used to increase church attendance. The purpose of the sacrament is to simply have God's spirit with us. Christ defines the purpose of the sacrament after he breaks and blesses the bread:

And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you. (3 Nephi 18:7)

Again Christ defines the purpose of sacrament after administering the wine:

And this shall ye always do to those who repent and are baptized in my name; and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you, that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you. (3 Nephi 18:11)

In fact the purpose of the sacrament is defined in the actual sacrament prayer itself:

O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it; that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he hath given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen. (Moroni 4:3)

The purpose of the sacrament is to take it in remembrance of Him, to witness unto the Father that we are willing to take upon the name of Christ, remember Him ALWAYS, and keep the commandments. We do this so that we may have His Spirit to be upon us, which spirit is the Holy Spirit.

So after Jesus defines the purpose of the sacrament He gives us this warning in verse 13:

But whoso among you shall do more or less than these are not built upon my rock, but are built upon a sandy foundation; and when the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon them, they shall fall, and the gates of hell are ready open to receive them.”(3 Nephi 18:13)

More would be making the sacrament something it is not, like saying it gives you forgiveness of sins because it's renewing your baptismal covenant. Less would be not kneeling down in humility before your Maker as a congregation when you ask the Father to bless and sanctify the emblems (***Moroni 4:2... "and they did kneel down with the church..."***) Less would be using water instead of wine. Drinking alcoholic wine for the sacrament is not contrary to the Word of Wisdom (***Doctrine and Covenants 89:5-6***). There is a reason why wine is supposed to be used. It is symbolic of the Savior in so many ways which helps us remember Him. Yes, I drink alcoholic grape juice, but only for the sacrament. For those of you Mormons who have never tasted wine and are wondering what it tastes like... it's disgusting and bitter. Kind of what you would expect for something to taste like that represents the blood that was shed for each one of us.

After we are baptized we are to receive the Holy Ghost. This doesn't come to us by default when we have hands placed on our head, but it comes as we diligently seek it. Hence the command in the blessing "...and I say unto you, receive the Holy Ghost." Just like the priesthood, we do not obtain it by default from an ordination by man. We don't receive it unless we do something to qualify for it and it comes from God. The Lamanites were baptized by fire and with the Holy Ghost and they didn't even know it! (3 Nephi 9:20). Therefore laying on of hands does not guarantee one's baptism by fire. So why is baptism by fire essential? Let's turn to 2 Nephi 32 and read the entire chapter:

And now, behold, my beloved brethren, I suppose that ye ponder somewhat in your hearts concerning that which ye should do after ye have entered in by the way. (the way being baptism) But, behold, why do ye ponder these things in your hearts? Do ye not remember that I said unto you that after ye had received the Holy Ghost ye could speak with the tongue of angels? And now, how could ye speak with the tongue of angels save it were by the Holy Ghost? (so after we are baptized we receive the Holy Ghost, which allow us to speak with the tongue of angels... what the heck is that?)

Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do. (2 Nephi 32:1-3)

To speak with the tongue of angels mean that we are literally able to commune with heavenly angels. That is why it is "***by the Spirit ye are justified***" (Moses 6:60). Being justified by the spirit gives us that power to commune with heavenly messengers. It also enlightens and expands the mind to the scriptures. Because the Holy Ghost gives us the tongue of angels which allows us to understand angels. And because angels speak the words of Christ, and the words of Christ can also be found in scripture, then the Holy Ghost also opens up the scriptures to a greater and deeper understanding. This is the reason that since I was baptized again and received the baptism of fire through the Holy Ghost I have been able to comprehend the scriptures like never before. The plain and precious things are so clear to me. I feel the exact same way Joseph Smith did after he was baptized.

Our minds being now enlightened, we began to have the scriptures laid open to our understandings, and the true meaning and intention of their more mysterious passages revealed unto us in a manner which we never could attain to previously, nor ever before had thought of. (Joseph Smith History 1:74)

I am humbled by the increase of light and knowledge I have received through the power of the Holy Spirit. I have gained this knowledge because the Holy Spirit has taught it to me through the scriptures. This is the role of the Holy Ghost. To enlighten us with understanding. We need the Holy Spirit in order to understand the scriptures so that we can obtain the correct knowledge of Deity, so that we can be like Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses, and be able to exercise faith properly unto salvation. This is why we take the sacrament - so that we may have *his* spirit to be with us. Because when we have His spirit, we are filled with an understanding of the things of God, which is perfect knowledge, which is light and truth, which is intelligence, which is the glory of God.

Remember how I said the Aaronic priesthood is the preparatory priesthood of a fellowship among men, which is to prepare us to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, which is a fellowship between God and man? Remember how Aaronic priesthood holds keys to the ministering of angels? Well, what is the job of an angels? They do the work of the God, which is ***“to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”*** (Moses 1:39), which immortality and eternal life come only through being redeemed by Jesus Christ, which comes through entering into His presence (*Ether 3:13*). So angels prepare us to enter into the presence of God, from whom we will receive the highest priesthood. That is what the job of Peter, James and John was as they ministered unto Adam and Eve (endowment session). They were angels and they ministered the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which gospel is to prepare us to enter into the presence of God. This is the Doctrine of Christ and this is why no further doctrine will be given until Christ himself gives it to you personally.

Behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and there will be no more doctrine given until after he (Christ) shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh. And when he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh, the things which he shall say unto you shall ye observe to do. (2 Nephi 32:6)

Nephi wrote 2nd Nephi as plainly as he possibly could, yet people don't understand it because of unbelief as I had mentioned earlier.

And now I, Nephi, cannot say more; the Spirit stoppeth mine utterance, and I am left to mourn because of the unbelief, and the wickedness, and the ignorance, and the stiffneckedness of men; for they will not search knowledge, nor understand great knowledge, when it is given unto them in plainness, even as plain as word can be. (2nd Nephi 32:7)

Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark. (2 Nephi 32:4)

If you don't understand what I am writing and the scriptures I have shared, *please* do as Nephi suggests and ask. If you don't ask you will perish in the dark. Take the scriptures I have shared, read them, ponder them, and please PRAY about it for an understanding!

And now, my beloved brethren, I perceive that ye ponder still in your hearts; and it grieveth me that I must speak concerning this thing. For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray, ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray. But behold, I say unto you that ye must pray always, and not faint; that ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul. (2 Nephi 32:8-9)

Ultimately I was left with a decision: be brought into a church disciplinary council to be excommunicated, or ask to have my name removed from the records of the Church. Because I love my

Bishop and Stake President, and because they are such wonderful and great men, I did not want them to be brought under condemnation for judging me falsely. So on May 27, 2015 I had my name removed from the membership records of the Church. It is those leaders in Salt Lake City who do err. But I am not the one with the authority to accuse or condemn anyone. I am only in authority to judge the doctrines proclaimed and the policies enforced. We are all commanded and have the obligation to do just that. I would ask that you judge what I have written in these pages, but that you judge so righteously in the way prescribed in **Moroni 7:14-19**. I do have an obligation to say that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is no longer true because it does not follow the teachings in the Book of Mormon. It has a form of godliness, but lacks the power thereof because it does more and less than what God would have it do (**3 Nephi 11:39-40, 3 Nephi 18:12-13, Doctrine and Covenants 10:67-68**). The Gospel of Jesus Christ however is true. It is the most beautiful and wonderful thing. I am full of gratitude to my Savior Jesus Christ and will love Him for all eternity. I will place my faith and trust in Him. The priesthood is alive on the earth and I thank God for that marvelous blessing. It doesn't come from man, but it comes from God when we ask for it. The prophet Joseph Smith saw God the Father and Jesus Christ in 1820 and he was given the power to translate the Book of Mormon. That book is true. The gospel of Jesus Christ was restored, but the restoration is not complete. Joseph Smith was murdered before the complete fullness and truths were revealed. It is up to us to repent, put aside all pride and worldly idols and humbly open our hearts to God, and come unto Christ. Let us not procrastinate the day in which we turn to Christ to develop our personal relationship with Him. *Blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble* (Alma 32:16). Don't wait for God to humble you. Because He will, but He will do so out of love, in an attempt to open your heart up to Him because eternal salvation is far greater than any earthly or temporal blessing. It is up to us to rise up and rescue the restoration. This is a great and dreadful time to live in. For the trials which lay ahead for our nation we will need God more than ever. We must learn now how to have faith in Him. Only He can save us. Blessed be the name of the most high God. He is wonderful, He is all powerful, He is truth, He is just, He is merciful, He is patient, He is eternal, He is love, and He is my Heavenly Father. In the Holy name of Christ, Amen.

Khaden Pettingill