

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

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Christ's Seal of Approval

If you have examined the merchandise you're buying, you will note that various "seals" have been placed on the items. Commonly, there will be "UPC" or a bar code, or in the print media, "all rights reserved". I ask you, do you have a seal on you?

Our culture and law has, for the most part, abolished seals. There still are notary seals and corporate seals, but for the most part, the trend is moving away from seals. The substitute now is a computerized "seal", as our society is quickly moving into the digital age.

In olden times, (that's long before I was born) seals were placed on messages, goods and people. We still brand animals (and we have for over 4000 years), but in the "civilized" world, that custom has ended. I ask you again, do you have a seal on you? Are you an authentic Christian?

It is my testimony that when you accept Jesus Christ into your life, or in other words, by your covenant, place Him fully in charge of your life, there is a sealing that takes place. Most of us don't understand the scriptures what the scriptures have to say about sealing. But, the scriptures reveal that we are "sealed" by Christ. His sheep know His voice, and He knows His sheep.

When the Hebrews set up the Tabernacle, the power and glory of God rested upon it. In one sense, we could say that God showed by the Spirit that the tabernacle was His. He had absolute ownership of it. It was the genuine article. When the Romans placed

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TESTIMONIES AND SERMON NOTES

Zion Is In The Making! Will You Be There?

High Priest Robert Rolfe announced that he was reading the words of a man who had been dead for sixteen centuries and he presumed he was alone at the time he wrote. (Ether 6:1-14) "And now, I Moroni, proceed to finish my record concerning the destruction of the people of whom I have been writing. For behold, they rejected all the words of Ether; for he truly told them of all things, from the beginning of man; and that after the waters had receded from off the face of this land, it became a choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord; Wherefore the Lord would have that all men should serve him, who dwell upon the face thereof; and that it was the place of the New Jerusalem, which should come down out of heaven, and the holy sanctuary of the Lord.

"Behold, Ether saw the days of Christ, and he spake concerning a New Jerusalem upon this land; and he spake also concerning the house of Israel, and the Jerusalem from whence Lehi should come; after it should be destroyed, it should be built up again a holy city unto the Lord; Wherefore it could not be a New Jerusalem, for it had been in a time of old, but it should be built up again, and become a holy city of the Lord: and it should be built up unto the house of Israel; And that a New Jerusalem should be built up upon this land, unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph, for which things there has been a type; for as Joseph brought his father down into the land of Egypt, even so he died there;

"Wherefore the Lord brought a remnant of the seed of Joseph out of the land of Jerusalem, that he might be merciful unto the seed of Joseph, that they should perish not, even as he was merciful unto the father of Joseph, that he should perish not; Wherefore the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built up upon this land; and it shall be a land of their inheritance; and they shall build up a holy city unto the Lord, like unto the Jerusalem of old; and they shall no more be confounded, until the end come, when the earth shall pass away. And there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and they shall be like unto the old, save the old have passed away, and all things have become new. And then cometh the New Jerusalem; and blessed are they who dwell therein, for it is they whose garments are white through the blood of the lamb; and they are they who are

numbered among the remnant of the seed of Joseph, who were of the house of Israel.

“And then also cometh the Jerusalem of old; and the inhabitants thereof, blessed are they, for they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb; And they are they who were scattered and gathered in from the four quarters of the earth, and from the north countries, and are partakers of the fulfilling of the covenant which God made with their father Abraham. And when these things come, bringeth to pass the scripture which saith, There are they who were first, who shall be last; and there are they who were last, who shall be first.

“And I was about to write more, but I am forbidden; ...”

Now, as Alan told you, Eric Odida is planning on being here the last Sunday of this month, and I don't want to take his message away from him, because I have talked to Eric a little bit since he has been here. But I can tell you this, that it was a great miracle to get him to be here. We really take for granted how we can move around this land and do it without some government official in our face all of the time. I'll let Eric tell you the story, but it is almost unbelievable as he told it to me, the events that transpired that got him here. All I can tell you is that I have heard many people tell me concerning his message that they didn't understand some of the words that he said, but they sure didn't have any misunderstanding of what the message was. That came across loud and clear.

The Lord's Message Through Eric

And basically what the message is is this: you may have heard different things, but the thing that struck me is that we can no longer go on and be partially converted to the gospel. It's going to be either all important in our lives or we won't be a part of it. We have got to make that kind of commitment. So, if you are not willing to make that kind of commitment, then you are going to have some struggles here in the future. In fact, if there is any reason that we haven't built Zion, it's because we aren't committed to the gospel. It's not number one in our life. We have many other things that have moved up to higher prominence.

When I was praying about the meetings we have just had this past week, one of the things asked about was whether we could see the face of God. Perhaps sometimes when we pray, we don't really understand what the significance is of that, and I am afraid that in this age, we think more of it like you would turn on the TV and there's God on the TV, and you listen to Him, then you turn it off and go on doing the things you were doing before you turned the TV on.

I was reading in the Book of Ether about seeing God face to face. And one of the things it says in that account, which you can find in the first chapter of that book, is that Jesus said to him, “You are now redeemed from the fall!” Have you thought about what that might mean? Adam talked with God face to face while they were in the garden until after the fall, and Ether, (Rob, don't you mean the Brother of Jared?) because of His faith, was able to behold God face to face. Jesus says that He could not keep Himself from being seen. And so, if you were at the Auditorium this week, and you didn't see Jesus, if you read the first book of Ether, it would sound like the reason you didn't see Him was because you didn't have sufficient faith; because He couldn't keep Himself from being seen if you had that kind of faith.

The other thing that struck me in terms of praying for things to happen was, the Lord's Spirit moved upon me and in His very gentle sort of way said, “Are you willing to do things differently if that happens?” And as I started looking in myself, I found that in terms

of my commitment, I am very much like Ananias and Sapphira. There's a part of me that I am not willing, and wasn't willing, to give because I knew the price that would be paid to give that kind of commitment.

And so, all I can tell you is that you all need to be suffering (Rob, this was surely not the word, but I couldn't understand what it was.) with that because if what has been presented at this conference is true, that we are going to be moving very quickly into that condition that we refer to as Zion. And if you don't make the kind of preparation on a daily basis that will qualify you to be there, you won't be there. And that means that you are going to be at a place that you don't want to be. I can just tell you that, because the Scriptures are pretty clear as to what the rest of the world is going to be like. And most of you will be prey rather than the predator, and Zion is the only place that you will be where you will have safety. We have just got to make that decision, and it's a decision that you make on a daily basis. We say, “Lord, I'm going to do it Your way here today.”

I would like to read a little bit from the twelfth chapter of Second Nephi which talks about Zion in our day, and I'm just going to talk about a couple of verses. Verse 13 says this, “Yea, they have all gone out of the way- they have become corrupted, ... because of pride they are puffed up.” And this chapter goes on to say that there are going to be churches that are built up that are not built up unto the Lord that are going to say, “I, I am the Lord's. I, I am the Lord's!” You know folks, when I used to read that, I thought it was talking about all those other churches, and now, I really think that it is talking about us! Why do I say that? Because so many other churches don't claim that they are the Lord's anymore. They don't even claim that! Who is the one claiming that? The ones in the Restoration still are - all those fourteen or fifteen different groups. You know. “Come to me.” You know, “I, I am the Lord's true church!” And it says very accurately in chapter twelve what the description is then, of those churches that are built up, not unto the Lord.

Zion: The Dream - The Reality

I just bring that to your attention because, as most of us in this room would think about Zion, I don't know about Titus, but we think of Zion as an American kind of way of life, probably because we live here. We don't think of Zion as being something that isn't American in the style and the way it's done. I would suggest to you that probably we are going to have a shock as to what it is actually going to be like and that we are going to be very surprised as to how that comes about.

I might point out to you that all peoples on this earth have very similar needs. That is, we need a house, some place to live in, and I don't mean in the sense of 20,000 square feet with 49 bedrooms and a swimming pool and so forth! I am talking about a place to keep us from the elements so we can be warm and secure and live there. We need food and water. For those in this latitude, we need heat. We may be able to get away without air conditioning, but it would be pretty hard to be without heat here in the winter time. And because we also live in this latitude, we need clothing. At least most of the people I know would be fried to a crisp if you were walking around without it here in the summer and we would be awfully chilly if you were walking around without it in the winter. Now, unlike many of you, I have waded through rivers when the ice floes were going down and was able to do that and sweat while I was in the process. But, unless you are like Alan and me, who can sweat in a snowstorm, you are going to need clothing.

The magic word we talk about in the government is infrastructure, and I might suggest to you, whether you are in Zion or not, you still need a way to get drinking water to wherever you are to drink. You will have to have something done with moving sewage or you will all kill yourselves. All of those things have to be taken care of, and some might say we probably need some education, too, because we don't want our children to grow up ignorant. Those are all matters of fact. We know all of those things. We know it now. Why is it, then, that we haven't been able to model that city? I would like to suggest to you that that is answered in the scriptures.

Do you know where it first talks about someone dreaming about the city of Zion? Abraham. A long time before Enoch -- maybe a couple of thousand BC -- Abraham dreamed of this city; and I might tell you that the things that he did were counted unto him for righteousness because of his faith. He was blessed because of that faith.

I would like to turn to Doctrine and Covenants 36:2h. I am just going to be reading short verses because they very well illustrate the point that I would like to make today. It says, "And the Lord called His people Zion because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them." Folks, we have set out at the wrong end of that. Many of the stewardship associations have started out trying to have everything being common, doing it with economic structure first rather than starting out being of one heart and one mind and dwelling in righteousness, and then "there was no poor among them". All of the stewardship associations in our church and others have failed because when it came right down to it, they could divide up their money and their goods, but they wouldn't make themselves of one heart and one mind, and so they would start to fight and the group would dissolve accordingly. The things that we have to do first, as the Patriarchs have called us to do, is to become of one heart and one mind. If that isn't done, we will never be able to be a part of Zion.

I don't know about you. There are some who just think that Zion will simply by and by come to pass whenever we as a people decide that we are going to get our act together and do it. The scriptures don't say that. The scriptures say that there is a time for this to occur, which worries me because that means that I've got to be ready when that day gets here. You know, it's like when the prophet talked about Jerusalem being destroyed. He said, when that day comes, you know, don't go back to the house. Flee! Run just as hard as you can! Hope that it's not winter and hope that you are not pregnant when it is going on. Otherwise, you are going to be destroyed. And I am afraid that when that day comes, there is going to be that kind of circumstance - that we will not have time to do any preparation. Just like the virgins, we will come and find the door closed. We will be on the outside and the bridegroom will be on the inside.

The Lord Knows When

Look for a moment at Doctrine and Covenants 49:5. It says, "But before the great day of the Lord shall come," (That's giving timing but starting from the other end.) "Jacob shall flourish in the wilderness; and the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose. Zion shall flourish upon the hills, and rejoice upon the mountains, and shall be assembled together unto the place which I have appointed." And if we look at those kinds of scriptures that deal with that, the Lord has in His mind when that is going to occur. He knows when it is going to occur. We may not have that fixed in our minds, but He does; and the only thing that we have a choice of doing is whether we are going to be there or not. Some of us are concerned about logistics and

those kinds of things and setting up associations, but it is my belief, and some of you know I have written a book on this subject, that Joseph Smith, Jr. said in Section 100, "The redemption of Zion must needs come by power, therefore I will raise up unto my people a man, who shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel, for ye are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham; and ye must needs be led out of bondage by power, and with a stretched out arm; and as your fathers were led at the first, even so shall the redemption of Zion be. Therefore, let not your hearts faint, for I say not unto you as I said unto your fathers, Mine angel shall go up before you, but not my presence; but I say unto you, Mine angels shall go before you, and also my presence, and in time ye shall possess the goodly land."

The reason that we talk about being like Moses is because the scriptures say that Moses talked with God face to face. God didn't talk to Moses like the other prophets. They had dreams at night and other kinds of symbols would come up and they would understand what God's will was. But when it came to Moses, he spoke to Him face to face, and that's the kind of prophet we are talking about that Joseph Smith is prophesying that would come forth. Are we not longing for that kind of a prophet? For those of you that were there and sang the song, "We thank you, O God for a prophet." I hadn't sung that song - the last time I was in that building when that song was sung, I didn't stand up, and I didn't sing, and I hadn't been back there since then. There were some bitter sweet memories when I heard that song, and I do long for a prophet; but I can tell you, that is not going to solve this dilemma of the Saints. And the reason is that the Israelites had a prophet. Did they follow Him? They followed Moses kicking and screaming all the way.

It was really a problem! And so Moses says to the people, "Wash your clothes and in three days you are going to come up and meet with the Lord." And when they got right up to it, they all said, "Moses, you go talk to the Lord. We are going to stay over here where it is safe. You do up and talk to Him. Then come back and tell us what He says. We will do what He says, but we don't want to go up and talk to the Lord!"

And I really feel like that's our dilemma today. So many of us don't have the kind of faith that is necessary to say, "If the Lord says, 'Come up. I would like to meet with you face to face', we would go. Rather, I'm afraid we would say, "I don't think that's a good idea, Lord. I would rather be back there at the back of the Auditorium. I don't want to get too close or something might happen." And as a result, Zion has not been redeemed.

God's Message For This Last Day

I would like to read you a passage that comes out of the first chapter of John. Most of you probably don't remember this part of John, because whenever we read the first chapter of John, we are always reading another part of it that is much more famous but not any more significant. Let me start with the 20th verse. (John 1:20-28). "And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him; Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not that he was Elias; but confessed, saying; I am not the Christ. And they asked him, saying; How then art thou Elias? And he said, I am not that Elias who was to restore all things. And they asked him saying, Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

"Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we man give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as saith the prophet Esaias. And they who were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him; Why

baptizest thou then, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias who was to restore all things, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying; I baptize with water, but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is of whom I bear record. He is that prophet, even Elias, who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose, or whose place I am not able to fill; for he shall baptize, not only with water, but with fire, and with the Holy Ghost."

Let me ask you, where did the Jews have the idea that there was a prophet who was going to come to restore all things? Is that one of those secret writings that we don't have in our Bible? The reason I ask you that is because this same account with a little application is found in the seventeenth chapter of Matthew, only this time it is the disciples talking to Jesus. This is right after the Mount of Transfiguration in which Moses and Elias were transfigured there on the same mount with Jesus. (Matthew 17:9-14). "And His disciples asked Him," (This is Jesus talking.) "Why, then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things, as the prophets have written. And again I say unto you that Elias has come already, concerning whom it is written, Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and they knew him not, and have done unto him, whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them.

"But I say unto you, Who is Elias? Behold, this is Elias, whom I send to prepare the way before me. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist, and also of another who should come and restore all things, as it is written by the prophets."

Now, Jesus said that it's going to happen. I believe it's going to happen. And the scripture that they bare referring to it is found in Malachi 4. This is what the scribes are saying. Remember the scribes are the nasty lawyers that you talk about. In other words, those were the ministers in their churches that were being criticized, because there weren't any lawyers like we have today. This says, (Malachi 4:5 and 6). "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet" (Elijah is the Old Testament name for Elias) "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

When the angel gave that same information to Joseph Smith when he visited him when he was a young man, he said that Elijah would turn the hearts of the fathers to the promises made in the scriptures and vice versus, that the promises that were made involved the Priesthood as well as those promises that were given to them. And if you want to read that, you can find that in the second chapter of the first volume of the Church History where Joseph had that experience. If you haven't read that lately, I would sure recommend to you that you do, because the angel is telling Joseph what to do and what is going to transpire on this land. And this is one of those things that he talks about.

Let's turn back to Second Nephi again, verses 82-83 in Chapter 12. 'And the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; wherefore, they shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which was had among their fathers. And then shall they rejoice; for they shall know that it is a blessing unto them from the hand of God;"

Saints, all that I can tell you about what occurred this past week is simply that the Lord has made it pretty clear to those who are working hard to bring this about that spiritual preparation that we have made the last two or three months needs to continue every day,

and it needs to intensify if we want to share in the establishment of Zion which is underway right now. And I hope that I will see all of you there. I hope that you won't be excluded and that when the door is shut, we will be on the inside looking out rather than on the outside looking in!

May God bless you and your prayers and your preparation is my prayer.

The Time is Now

"And now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called His people and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light; yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those who stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times, and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life. Now I say unto you, If this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before Him that you have entered into a covenant with him that you will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you." Mosiah 9:39 - was the scripture Elder Norman Nelson chose with which to open his sermon on April 17.

Then he said, "I think I have a different question to ask you. How many of you really believe that Jesus Christ has the power to forgive your sins? - That you believe He will forgive YOU, your sins" He repeated the question with emphasis on the pronoun, YOU. There was a ready response on the part of many in the congregation. Then Brother Nelson questioned, "Are we going to start acting like it and repent and be the people He wants us to be?"

Holding up the brochure the Patriarchs distributed for our guidance in preparation for the gathering recently held at the Auditorium in Independence, Missouri, our speaker asked, "Are you still using this? Do you still have this? If you don't, we have copies back there. Are we doing the work we are supposed to be doing? Are we spending our time studying the scriptures? Are we spending our time in prayer and fasting? Are we seeking to do the Lord's will every day, and help others? Or are we still self centered people interested in me and mine and a few friends. Are we really reaching out and - what did Jesus come to do? He came to bring sinners to repentance. Are we not all sinners? And are we not all daily needing to repent?"

Know and Do What the Records Say

Let's look at King Benjamin speaking to his people. The first thing he says is that they had to have the records in order to know what to do. If they didn't have the Plates of Brass, they would not have known how to live before God. We have lots of records, but if we don't study them, we still don't know, and they are of no value to us. So, the number one thing we have to do is to spend time studying - not just glancing over but really studying the scriptures to know what they say we need to do.

And once we know, we need to do them. As has been said, the church is under condemnation because we treat lightly - in fact, they don't know - what the books say, and that's even worse because we have them, we don't use them, we don't know what they say and if we know what they say, we don't do it. And these records are for your profit and to teach you what to do and how to know what you should do. So, number one, search the scriptures. Know what they say, and then put yourself in a situation where you can do

according to that which you have learned. "For I have not commanded you to come up hither to trifle with words which I shall speak, but as you should hearken unto me, and open your ears that you may hear, and your hearts that you may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded unto you." (Mosiah 1:39).

Remember, we are trying to serve God so that we can be with His church, the Church of the Firstborn, we can be the people that are able to be comfortable, or to be happy in His presence. Isn't that what we are trying to do? We are trying to be the people that can be happy in His presence. Unless He can give us the mysteries, the understanding of what He is trying to do, we can't be happy there, for it takes a lot more than most of us are willing to commit.

Know That He Will Forgive Our (YOUR) Sins

He will forgive us for our sins. We have to know that. We have to know that Christ is able and willing and will do it just like He said He would. "And I have not commanded you to come up hither, that you shall fear me or that you should think that I, of myself, am more than a mortal man; But I am like unto yourselves, subject to all manner of infirmities in body and mind; ... Yet I say unto you, that as I have been suffered to spend all my days in your service, even up to this time, and have not sought gold nor silver nor any manner of riches of you; neither have I suffered that you should be confined in dungeons, nor that ye should make slaves of one another, or that ye should murder, or plunder, or steal, or commit adultery, Or even I have not suffered that ye should commit any manner of wickedness, and have taught you that ye should keep the commandments of the Lord, in all things which he hath commanded you;" That is King Benjamin speaking to his people in that day. (Mosiah 1:40,41,43-45)."

Reports From The Gathering

A group of us were in Independence last week, and we had a very special time together there. I would like to have a couple of you, if possible give us some idea of what you felt and were able to understand from those meetings. Will someone help us a little bit? (There were several responses, some of which were caught on tape.) Lynda Rolfe said, "I was able to go only on Sunday, and I felt like what Eric (Odida) was saying to me was that taking the Communion was more than asking God for forgiveness for our sins. It was like keeping our minds, ourselves cleansed so that He (God) could work through us. To me, it was a really humbling experience. I had never thought about it in that depth before, and I will never forget it."

Mildred Smith spoke of the unique experience of such a large group fasting and praying for such a long time daily. Even the very small children and youth worshipped both in the Auditorium and on the Temple Lot across the way.

Colleen Wilcoxson said her father's father had been a preacher who felt that the preachers of today aren't really preaching. So often they try to preach, but they are just talking. After going to the conference, she felt she should let the Priesthood of our congregation know that they should learn to really preach so we could all learn how to prepare and know what is really going on.

George Knotts said he was anticipating more on April 6 than happened but especially appreciated the Seventy's part of the meeting on Thursday night.

Michael Jordison spoke to confirm what Colleen said in regard to the fact that often Priesthood and teachers don't really know how to preach and how to share the gospel in terms that the common person fully understands. He was able to attend only the Communion Service on Sunday, but gathered from Brother Eric's sermon that

we need a common vision of our goal, even of Zion. He felt that we needed to come together more often to share with each other, to confess to each other, to witness to each other, to be able to take criticism and admonishment in love so we could understand what that vision is so we can all be striving for a common goal and be a support system for each other. He expressed a desire that if any saw him falling away, they would love him enough to warn him and help him get back on the right path.

Jesus Came As A Lamb

This will be a little ways a long way around to get to what I want to say, but let's start with Luke 19:28-40, and it's quite a long reading. "It came to pass when they had come near to Bethphage and Bethany at the mount called the mount of Olives, He sent two of his disciples; Saying, Go ye into the village over against you in the which your entering you shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat; loose him and bring him to me. And if any man ask, Why do you loose the colt? Thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

"And they who were sent, went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him. And they brought him to Jesus; and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they sat Jesus thereon, And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

"And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen, Saying, Blessed is the king who cometh in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest! And some of the Pharisees said, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. And when he was come near, he beheld the city, he wept over it."

Even as Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, and He wept over it because they didn't recognize him for who He was. They thought He was going to be a ruler who would by force bring their nation to power again. Even so, many of us in this meeting thought this was the time when Jesus would bring forth His power and speak forth the words that would make us the mighty church that we want to be. Jesus didn't come to Jerusalem with that kind of power. He came as a lamb, a sacrifice, and any of you who really went with the proper spirit knew that was exactly how He came to that meeting. He came as a lamb, and those who were ready felt His presence and the need of love and worship and understanding that He wanted you to see. Those who wanted to see Him in power were disappointed, although the power was greater than any had ever imagined, it wasn't the power that brought glory to His people. It was a power that gave us a chance to be the people we want to be. And He promised to all of us that if we would do the things that we promised to do, that that authority could be ours to bring the Kingdom of God on earth, not in the kind of power we think of as "my glory", but the kingdom of God on earth, if we are willing to sacrifice ourselves and give the presence of God to those who need it, to bring repentance and love and understanding to all. It has to start with us. We have to start by study, and prayer and fasting and seeking the presence of God among us. We cannot share what we don't have.

When you come to church, have you prepared to meet Christ here or do you expect somebody to bring something wonderful to you so you will feel good and go home feeling fine? That's not what it's for. When you come, you should come fasting and praying that

the Spirit of God will be with you, will be with your congregation. There is nobody that can stand here and tell you what you need to do. There is nobody that can do that for you. Only as you are prepared to receive the Spirit of God can it be brought into your life. It isn't what I do. It's what the Spirit of God does in your life. Now you may be able to help me to say the words that will help you understand a little better, but only as you yourself come in contact with God's Spirit and accept it into yourself does it have any value. He comes as a lamb of sacrifice, and He expects us to be the same. We must study, pray, repent, seek to be of service, and His Spirit can do everything we ever wanted; but you have to have it in you. Not what I say - not what anybody else says, but it is as you worship and are willing to accept what God gives you that these things can be.

We Were Promised

As a group we were promised that in the very near future wise men would come forth and the gifts of prophecy and all the gifts that God has given would be among us - of those who would repent and would continue to follow as the Patriarchs have asked us to do. And then, in time there would again be prophets and the church would be organized, but not by us, but by God Himself. The other promise that was given is Zion is not something of the future. Zion is now in the process of beginning. If you want to be part of it, you will do according to the commandments and according to the advice given, and you will accept Christ in your life daily.

Every morning - remember, I told you a long time ago- every morning unless you start out by seeking the voice of God, in your life - unless you do that, you are subject to Satan. There is no other way. You must be able to hear the voice of God in your life each morning, each day of your life, if you want to be the person that can hear and be with Him. If you don't hear His voice, you will hear the enemy, and all kinds of things can happen to you that way. It's a dangerous world! There is an enemy. He's real, and he is working hard. Your only salvation is to believe in Jesus Christ, to practice what you know, to study and to diligently seek to be His.

This is the truth. Thank you!

True Belief Leads to Oneness With Christ Jesus

(Section one of the sermon is in this issue)

Elder Eric Odida of Nairobi, Kenya was introduced as "God's missionary to the United States". When he addressed the congregation in Mount Ayr on April 24, 2005. He first read from Ether 1:109-112: "Come unto me, O ye Gentiles, and I will shew unto you the greater things, the knowledge which is hid up because of unbelief. Come unto me, O ye house of Israel, 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. Behold, when ye shall rend that vail of unbelief which doth cause you to remain in your awful state of wickedness and hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, then shall the great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from you; Yea, when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then shall ye know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he made

unto your fathers, O house of Israel;"

Elder Odida then expressed his joy at being among us, thanked the Lord God for the opportunity to be with us to worship today and expressed his concern that his language would not be easily understood because of the speed with which he speaks and his Kenyan accent. There are places in the text that have this figure (___).. This means there is a word, or words, missing that the translator of the tape could not understand.

Moroni was writing, reporting what Ether had written in the book of Ether 1:109-111, and he is talking about unbelief. He says, "Come unto me, O ye Gentiles, and I will shew unto you the greater things, the knowledge which is hid up because of unbelief." He goes ahead to speak the same for the House of Israel. He tells us here that there are many things that our Creator, the God who loves us, and man from the time He created man, whenever man wanted him that He should come to be a part of man's life. But since man fell down, and man has not desired to get close and to be one God, these things are still hidden, they have still not been brought forth. Our Lord is saying, If you will come unto me, I will make these to be made manifest unto you and it shall become a part of your life. He is saying that things are taking place in your lives to the extent that your hearts have become hard and that your minds have been blinded. You can't see. You can't perceive, and you can't feel with your heart; so however much I talk to you, I know it is going to be difficult for you to understand because your minds are blinded and your hearts will not yield much; and He is saying the reason is because of unbelief.

This led me to go to start looking at the meaning of the word, unbelief from which this blindness and hardness have come into our hearts. I looked at Noah Webster and I found believe to have two clear meanings coming up. One of them would mean, "Yielding of the will and affection, an assent of mind accompanied by humble reliance on Christ for salvation." Another one can mean merely to think or support. I think with regard to the scriptures, the one that I will choose to look at this morning, the one I think the Lord was interested in when He made these statements, is that one which means yielding of the will and affection, and the assenting of our mind, accompanied by humble reliance on Christ for salvation. Believe is a word that I know is mentioned many times in the scripture. In the New Testament we see believe almost as frequently as we go to the next paragraph. In the Book of Mormon, we find the word believe to be almost everywhere. And sometimes this is one word that you can read and pause and not take time to look back and say, "There is the word, believe here, and what does it mean with respect to me and with respect to my study and the work that I have to work with the Lord?"

One time I was serving with a work mate, and I asked her, because I wanted to know, and I wanted to share with her my belief in Zion and the hope in the coming of Christ, I said, "What do you believe? Do you believe in going to heaven?" And she shared with me somethings about her hope of going to heaven. And she told me where the scripture say as long as you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth, you shall be saved. And I wondered, "Well, believe with your heart and confess with your mouth. What does it mean to believe with your heart?" As I looked more into the picture, I found believe to be not just a word that would believe and leave me where I am. Believe is a word that has to transport me from one point to another. To believe is not just saying that you support, at least not with regard to the future - not with regard to salvation. Believe that is just support of things, we do not look at very much.

We look at the believe that means yielding of our will and affection - this that means assenting with our minds, accompanied by humble reliance on Christ for salvation. Looking at this belief, I find that belief actually is a powerful covenant term. It is belief that will make our life pattern and our personality to change. Belief, in this case, will be a vehicle that will transport me from one person to another.

In looking at belief, I have tried to go through the scriptures to find out people whom I could get who believed, and there are very many. But broadly known and mostly uncommon were people like Noah. Noah believed in what the Lord told him. He had to have taken orders fast, a difficult task of going some time and alone to be able to build the ark. But he believed, and because he believed, he was not going to be deterred by the hardness of the task and the loneliness and rejection and all that he had to face. He believed, therefore Noah was moved to the accomplishment of the goal which the Lord had set for him. And because of that Noah was saved, but not just him but the people who were with him and those that the Lord wanted him to be saved with.

Abraham, when he believed, he was moved. He didn't remain within his kingdom. He didn't remain where he was born. He had to move on to the place that the Lord God wanted him to go to. Believe did not leave Abraham where he was. He had to move. Lehi, when he believed and shared the vision of his belief with his family, had to move and he had to leave the riches that he had worked for for many years, things he had labored to put together for the security of his family; but he knew that he had to obey the voice of the Lord. Lehi had to move. And we know that belief has also moved some people in different circumstances. When it came to the point where it was required that belief would be able to make David to move the whole nation of Israel, he had to do that. He had to take up the faith in God, and because he believed that God is and that God and who God was, David could not go back and take the comfort of the rest of the Israelite army that was standing with him, but he had to take up that belief that he knew made him one with God and with Christ so he could have the whole nation of Israel to be saved on that day.

So belief is not a word that is going to leave us where we are. Belief is a word or a covenant term that could move us. And I want us to look at this word, and we got to look at it later on what meaning we are able to make of it. We realize here that when you believe, you are probably most likely to be moved to be alone in your work. You have to choose to be moved and to be moved from among your family and from among the body that you have been comfortable to be a part of. Believe will make you to start on a path of a journey that possibly only God will be able to lead you, but even your family may not be able to accompany you in, depending on your resolve and the extent of your belief, you may feel discouraged. Joshua and Caleb were such men who when they went with the rest of the people who came with God up the mountain, and when they had seen clear enough what was ahead of them, in spite of the discouragement and in spite of the loneliness that they felt in the congregation of Israel, yet, because they had believed, they could not be deterred, and they had to move on.

In the church that we all are a part of right now, I have looked sometimes, and I wonder, "How much do we believe that this church is different? How much do we believe that this church is a vehicle that the Lord set apart for a social purpose? How much do you want to be a part of that which the Lord wants to be accomplished with this body that is set apart - this body that is different?

Do we in the first case know that this church was set up to be able to move the entire body of humankind to a greater height with God - to a greater and higher relationship with the Father? Do you realize that we occupy a very important position in history of humankind today as we anticipate the coming forth of the Lord Jesus Christ in a very short time? Do you see our position as unique and realize that each and every one of us has a role to play, and that role must be defined for us as teachers, and we must find out our role and to be a part of that."

As I work with people in my country, Kenya, there are many times that I move into homes from one family to another and I have seen their need. And I have seen the suffering of many. I have seen sicknesses. I have seen poverty. I have seen breaking up of families that are (words are missing here) that are not very common in our society. I have seen death - death from AIDS and the like. I have seen children turned into the streets having no parents. You know, when I look at that, I know God is not happy at what He is seeing. I know our Father wants people to be happy. I know it is clear to us that He means for joy to be belonging here, because of all this beauty that is around us was given for us as we are as we are one with Him in achieving that which He wants us to achieve. And I know as he sees, as He looks at what is going on in the rest of the world - of course it is not very common here - He is not happy at all. But I wonder whether we know that we occupy a very unique position here - in this place here - in that the Lord would wish to take us - the Lord would wish to use us that there could be a difference in the lives of many people out there. And I am not just talking about the temporal things. I am talking about whatever the Lord would wish to do with them, because they are not happy. They are suffering. I don't think the Lord meant suffering to be. But I feel that unless this we covenant that this church here - this glorious Gospel that we sing of - was not just meant to be sung of and to comfort us as we sit in our seats and back and to go back home and be happy waiting for our next meeting.

We are called out, brethren, to a greater and a higher work. The Gospel to which we have been called is that of sacrifice - is that of oneness with Jesus Christ. There is a great work that is awaiting you and me out there. There is a great work that requires young boys and young men and women out there. There is a great work that is requiring older men and older women out there; and you are the people whom the Lord wants to go and do His work here. But there is one thing that you have to realize. He promises here that there are greater things that are yet to come forth to you and me when, "You shall only give your hearts in My keeping" - when we shall believe! Looking at the book of Mosiah, chapter 2:13-17, here is what King Benjamin had to share with his people. King Benjamin said, "Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things both in heaven and in earth; Believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; Believe that man doth not comprehend all things which the Lord can comprehend." And when you read all these, I wonder what you think. Do you think that he was just telling his subjects and brethren to believe that God is great - that He has all the power - that He comprehendeth all things? I don't think so. I think King Benjamin had something else actually to go ahead and say. Again he says, "And again: Believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you: And now, if you believe all these things, see that ye do them." And that may not be very clear, too, because as I look at this belief that King Benjamin is talking about - we believe that God is all powerful, that

He crated all things, that He has wisdom, that He comprehendeth all things - I believe that the king is talking to his brethren and is drawing them to the different source of life - is drawing their minds to a different source of power - is lifting them up from looking down on the ground and looking upon what they know - what they are familiar with, to making them look up to the greatness which is awaiting for them. He is telling them the situation in which you are keeping yourself is much less than what is there awaiting for you. He is telling them the knowledge, the intelligence that you are looking for is not just a pie up there. This is God, and he is telling them, these things are for you. they are not yet there but will be there. The power of God is not yet there for it is different and it is there for you that you may be a part of it. The knowledge of God and His wisdom is not yet there, for it is different and it is for you that you may be a part of it for some work to be done here. And I think what the King was doing was that he was making his people asking themselves. He was moving their eyes from themselves and was asking them to look up to God. It appears to me that what he was talking about was what Jesus was doing. One time John the Baptist, when His apostles were here with Him on the earth, and they one time went and told him, the one whom you baptized the other side of Jordan is baptizing people. You know what John told them. Go and ask Him whether He is the one to come. And in that John was not just telling them. John knew who Jesus was. He was not telling them so they could come and tell him, "That is what I believe." I think John was removing their eyes from him. He was telling them, "Stop looking at me. The Master is over there. Go and find out for yourself." He was redirecting them to the source of life, the reason for which he came.

And this is what King Benjamin was doing. He is telling them that there is wisdom, a greater wisdom. There is power, a greater power. There is knowledge, a greater knowledge. There is all this that you need, and it's out there with God, and it's all waiting for you that you may become one and the same thing with me. Let me have part of you. That is what he was telling them. And indeed when his people realized what he talked to them, when you come to chapter three, after he had shared with them greatly on these things, he asked them whether they believed on these things, and the people, with one voice said, "Yea! We believe, because already as you spoke to us, we already felt the impact of that in our hearts. We already found a greater change take place in our hearts. The Holy Spirit has come upon us, and He has said the same thing unto us; and we want to make a covenant with God." And the king told them, "Yea, and the covenant that you have entered into is a righteous covenant. And now if you have your names to be changed. If you have the name of Christ beating in your hearts - if that will take place, then you shall be sons and daughters of His." And indeed, if He is inside of their hearts and they have decided that they wanted to enter that covenant that shall make them one with Christ, one with Christ, do you know the difference? Do we even have a hint of it? I look at this and I think, "Oh, God. Do I understand why the Son of God did this? Was it just to walk around and greet people who had died alone? Or did He actually perform miracles so that people could rejoice and tell everybody else that Jesus performed miracles?. Was that the reason for which He left His Father's side? I don't think so." I thought..

Jesus came that we may see a side of God that we haven't known. He came that He may show us that side that we may desire that we may be a part of that. He came that we may desire a change. He prefers so that we can come and praise, and sing and share and

be happy and go home. Brethren, we have been good for long! We have been good men, good women, good girls, good boys for long, but I don't think that's what the Master wants of us. He wants a changed people. Christ wants to come and dwell in your life and in your heart. He wants you to have the piece of Godliness in you. And you know what the scriptures tell us? He grew from grace to grace. He obtained one by one. It was not all at one time. No! It has been told to us plainly, here in this group, in this church here, more than any other people, that He obtained grace by grace, and He grew. And after this it was until He received of His fullness; and He says, "If only you shall come to that". That means, if you could have even the desire to be one with the Son of God, then that's the reason for which Jesus came, that we might achieve something of that.

News and Notes

Services Canceled Gathering at Auditorium

The congregation was well represented at the April 3 Lord's Supper service in the Auditorium in Independence, Missouri and at the Gathering that followed April 6-9. Services for both the Sunday and Wednesday services of that week at Mount Ayr were necessarily canceled to allow the exodus. Many of those who remained in the area, however, did assemble for a Wednesday evening service at the home of Di Smith. Ronald Smith was in Independence for the service there. While there was no actual count released of those attending the Auditorium services, the estimate for the Sunday service was between 3,500 and 4,000. High Priest Robert Rolfe was in charge of that service.

The Conference of Restoration Elders was in progress at Centerplace Restoration School in the Waldo Avenue restoration Congregational facility from the first of the week. That conference moved to the Auditorium for the Communion Service on Sunday and concluded its program on Wednesday to join the General Assembly at the Gathering. The entire Gathering was an experience of a lifetime as the Saints gathered in fasting and prayer unequalled in any recent memory, if it has ever occurred before. Reports from the week are mentioned in the sermons of Brothers Rob Rolfe and Norman Nelson elsewhere in this newsletter.

Two Youth Give Recitals

Cessaries Galusha will have performed her piano recital at the Conservatory of Missouri University, Kansas City, Missouri April 29 at 2:30, unfortunately, before this letter is published. It is hoped there will have been a good representation of congregational support for her at that time.

Anan Smith will give his opera recital at Graceland University, Shaw Center May 7 at 4 p.m. Again the congregation is invited, along with the public, to support him in his performance. His program will consist of operatic numbers sung in German, Italian, Russian and English. He will be accompanied by pianist, Dr. Charlie Schmidt.

Youths Win Honors in Competition

Jared Beck received a number two rating for his solo in State competition.

Aquilla Galusha placed second in an especially difficult judo tournament.

Cody Rowland's Lamoni track team has won first place in each of its recent meets, at Corydon and Melcher-Dallas. In each meet Cody has won first place in the open eight and has run with his team placing first in the 4 by 8 relay at Corydon and second in the

4 by 100 and 4 by 400 in both competitions.

Heidi Winkler has received the most improved basketball player award of her team at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri.

Wedding Shower Planned

A congregational wedding shower is being planned for Melissa Winkler on May 25. Melissa and Aaron Ballantyne are to be married on Saturday, June 11 at the Buckner Restoration church, Buckner, Missouri.

Hymn Festival Announced

A Hymn Festival has been announced for September 18 at the Auditorium in Independence, Missouri, to celebrate Joseph Smith, Jr.'s 200th Birthday. Richard Clothier is in charge of the event. Anyone who wishes to participate in singing special numbers, giving readings, etc. need to let it be known.

CPRS Students Hosted by Mount Ayr Congregation

Junior high students and their chaperones from Center Place Restoration School in Independence, Missouri are to be guests of the Mount Ayr congregation the first weekend of May. They will be in Lamoni visiting Graceland University, Liberty Hall, Rose Hill cemetery and other historic places. They will provide the early morning family worship and the special music for the services May 1.

Prayers for Barb Jordison

The congregation is uniting in fasting and prayer for Barb Jordison, who is battling cancer.

From the Pastor's Desk

Continued from front page

a seal on Jesus' tomb, it made the contents secure. No one in their right mind would break that seal, by pain of death. The same thing was done by King Darius when Daniel was thrown into the lion's den.

Do you have a seal on you? Do you have the "Holy Spirit of Promise" permanently affixed to your soul? If you claim that you do, can other people see the authenticity of the "seal"? Now if the parallel's not real obvious, let me spell it out to you. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"! Romans 8:9 For further reading on "seals", see: Mt. 27:67; Lk 3:8; Jn 3:33, 6:27; Rom. 4:11, 15:28; I Cor. 9:2; II Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1-13, 4:30; II Tim. 2:19; Rev. 5:1-9, 6:1-12, 7:2-8, 8:1, 9:4, 10:4, 20:3, 22:10; I Nep. 3:250, 9:54; 2 Nep. 11:86, 126-131, 136-139, 143-144; 12:80, 97; 15:18; Mos. 3:21, 9:27; Alma 16:233; Hel. 3:120; 3 Nep. 3:6; Ether 1:87-88, 92-93, 99; 2:1; Moroni 10:2; DC 1:2c; 27:2d; 34:4f; 68:1h; 76:5c-d; 85:23a; 95:1b; 98:8b; 101:11-b-12a; 108:13b

**CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
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