

LESSON 35
“Be Ye Reconciled To God”
2 Corinthians

OVERVIEW: What does it mean to be reconciled to God? How is our tithing sanctified? How do Church funds become holy?

Overcoming tribulation. Forgiving others. Feeling godly sorrow for our sins. Becoming reconciled to God. The purpose of this epistle is to defend his work in the ministry, to commend the Corinthian saints for their improvements since he last wrote, to defend his personal character and conduct, to encourage a generous financial gift for the impoverished saints of Jerusalem, and to speak of an impending third visit to Corinth. The grand theme of 2 Corinthians is the reconciliation of God to his children and of brother to brother through the Atonement of Christ. Paul teaches three key doctrines about the Atonement: The promise of the Atonement is the key to overcoming adversity, we must forgive others if we expect to be forgiven, and Godly sorrow for our sins enables us to claim the promises of the Atonement.

(“Second Corinthians is not a definitive epistle; it does not analyze and summarize gospel doctrines as such. Instead it applies already known doctrines to the circumstances of the Corinthians, much as an inspired sermon applies the gospel to the congregation in which it is preached. “Yet, wise counselor that he was, Paul wove in sufficient doctrinal data to leave modern readers with a great sense of thanksgiving for the epistle. In it we read, among other things, of how God comforteth and careth for his saints; of the law of reconciliation; that there is no second chance for salvation for the saints; of how God's ministers gain approval; of the true principle of glorying in the Lord; of false apostles and the signs of true apostles; and we learn that Paul, like the three Nephites, was caught up into heaven and heard and saw things beyond mortal comprehension.” (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 2: 407.)

SCRIPTURES:

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE
CORINTHIANS
CHAPTER 1

God comforts and cares for his saints—The saints are sealed and given assurance by the Spirit in their hearts.

1 PAUL, an ^aapostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:

2 Grace *be* to you and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (Paul is here acknowledging that God the Father is the literal father of Jesus.) the Father of ^amercies, and the God of all ^bcomfort; (Marion D. Hanks said: “He waits to be gracious! He loves to be merciful! The prophets call him ‘the Father of mercies.’ (2 Cor. 1:3.) They speak of his ‘abundant mercy,’ (1 Pet. 1:3), and declare that ‘whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy’ (Alma 12:34). They declare his ‘wisdom ... mercy, and grace.’ (2 Ne. 9:8.) And crowning all of this is the testimony that our Father ‘delighteth in mercy.’ (Micah 7:18.) “The specialty of the Father is mercy.” (“My Specialty Is Mercy,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 74) On a plaque on the wall of my office is this choice statement: "To believe in God is to know that all the rules will be fair and that there will be wonderful surprises." Marion D.

Hanks, Building Relationships with Self, Others, and God, talk given at the BYU Women's Conference. (*Woman* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979], 113.)

4 Who comforteth us in all our ^atribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the ^bcomfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

5 For as the ^asufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

6 And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is ^aeffectual (active, operative) in the ^benduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.

7 And our hope of you *is* stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the ^asufferings, so *shall ye be* also of the consolation.

8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we ^adespaired even of life:

9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which ^araiseth the dead:

10 Who ^adelivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

11 Ye also helping together by ^aprayer for us, that for the gift *bestowed* upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

12 For our rejoicing is this, the ^atestimony of our conscience, that in ^bsimplicity (plainness, singleness of heart) and godly sincerity, not with fleshly ^cwisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

13 For we ^awrite none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end;

14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also *are* ours in the ^aday of the Lord Jesus.

15 And in this confidence I was minded to ^acome unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit; (Sidney Sperry said: "In his original plans, the Apostle had purposed to visit Corinth twice by going directly from Ephesus to Corinth and thence into Macedonia and back to Corinth again, from whence he would set sail for Judea. (2 Cor. 1:15-16) This plan had been made before Paul had written I Corinthians, and his intentions had been made known to the saints at Corinth either by a messenger or through a Corinthian letter now lost to us. The Apostle would probably have never made any mention of his original plan had not his critics in Corinth charged him with being fickle. In defending himself against their accusations, he tells us about his first plan, which later underwent revision." (Sidney B. Sperry, *Paul's Life and Letters* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955], 140.))

16 And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea.

17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I use ^alightness (light-mindedness, levity)? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there ~~should~~ (shall) be yea yea, and nay nay?

18 But *as* God *is* true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. ("At the heart of the contention in the church at Corinth are those who have ridiculed Paul and denied his authority. His necessary response is a bold and vigorous defense of his apostolic authority and his work in the ministry. (2 Cor. 10:1-13:10.) Some had accused him of 'walk[ing] according to the flesh' (2 Cor. 10:2), and others had ridiculed his physical appearance and his inelegant speech (10:10). Elsewhere in the same letter he addressed the charges that he was vacillating and indecisive. (2 Cor. 1:17-18; 4:1-2.)" (David R. Seely, *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 6: Acts to Revelation*, ed. by Robert Millet, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987], 77 - 78.))

19 For the ^aSon of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and ^bSilvanus and ^cTimotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

20 For all the ^apromises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath ^aanointed us (given us the Holy Ghost), is God;

22 Who hath also ^asealed us, and given the earnest (a guarantee or caution money) of the Spirit in our hearts. (An “earnest” is “something of value given by a buyer to a seller, to bind the bargain” or a “token or installment of what is to come” (*Webster’s New International Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 1934). “[God] communicates to us that we are following a proper course by sending his Spirit. The Holy Ghost thus represents God’s ‘earnest money’ on us, his down payment, his goodwill gesture and assurance to us that he is serious about saving us and that one day he will own us and claim us fully as his.” (Robert L. Millet, *Alive in Christ: The Miracle of Spiritual Rebirth* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 170-171.) Paul speaks of a three-step process, being first anointed, second sealed, and third being ‘given the earnest of the Spirit.’ It is one thing to be anointed and another to be sealed. An anointing without the sealing means nothing, ‘All covenants...that are not...sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise...are of no efficacy’ (DC 132:7). On the other hand, once the anointing is sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, the contract is valid in the next world, almost without exception (DC 132:26-27). The next step is to be given the knowledge that the anointing has been sealed. **The ‘earnest of our inheritance,’ as Paul calls it, is to know that you have been ‘sealed with that holy Spirit of promise’** (Eph. 1:13-14). We can be ‘given the earnest of the Spirit’ in two ways, indirectly through the companionship ‘of the Spirit in our hearts,’ or as a direct promise of the Lord. “...there is a way we can know that our efforts are acceptable, that our covenant is recognized and valid before God. If we experience the gifts of the Spirit or the influence of the Holy Ghost, we can know that we are in the covenant relationship, for the gifts and companionship of the Holy Ghost are given to none else. This is one reason why the gift of the Holy Ghost is given—as a token and assurance of our covenant status and as a down payment to us on the blessings and glory to come if we are faithful. Paul refers to the Holy Ghost as ‘the earnest of our inheritance’ (Eph. 1:14), a reference to ‘earnest money,’ which, though only a token payment, makes a deal binding when it changes hands. Thus the ‘earnest [money] of the Spirit in our hearts’ (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5) assures us of the validity and efficacy of our deal, our covenant, with God. “Do you feel the influence of the Holy Ghost in your life? Do you enjoy the gifts of the Spirit? Then you can *know* that God accepts your faith, repentance, and baptism and has agreed that ‘[you] may always have his Spirit to be with [you].’ (D&C 20:77.) This is perhaps one reason why the Holy Ghost is called the Comforter, because if we enjoy that gift, we can know that our efforts are acceptable—for now—and that we are justified before God by our faith in Christ. And that is comfort indeed.” (Stephen E. Robinson, *Believing Christ: The Parable of the Bicycle and Other Good News* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992], 94.) “The Holy Spirit of Promise is, of course, the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit promised the Saints. The Lord continued: ‘This Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom’ (D&C 88:4). It is by that Holy Spirit of Promise that the Saints of the Most High receive what the Apostle Paul called the ‘earnest of our inheritance’ (Ephesians 1:13-14; see also 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 5:5), by which they come to know that their lives are in order, that they are on course and in covenant, that they are ‘in Christ’ and thus in line for eternal life. It is through that Holy Spirit of Promise that the people of God receive their reward, ‘even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come’ (D&C 59:23). **Elder Marion G. Romney** observed that ‘the fulness of eternal life is not attainable in mortality, but the peace which is its harbinger and which comes as a result of making one’s calling and election sure is attainable in this life.’ That peace, unlike anything the world has to offer (see John 14:27), a peace that ‘passeth all understanding’ (Philippians 4:7), comes through the Spirit.” (Robert L. Millet, *Selected Writings of Robert L. Millet: Gospel Scholars Series* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000], 201.) **“But is there any way to know we are saved other than receiving the more sure word of prophecy? I think there is. That same Holy Spirit of Promise that searches the hearts of men and women, that ratifies and approves and seals ordinances and lives, that same Holy Spirit serves, as Paul indicates, as the ‘earnest of our inheritance’ (Ephesians 1:14). Though this passage refers specifically to being sealed up unto eternal life, I believe the principle is also**

true in regard to our qualifying for and cultivating the gift and influence of the Holy Ghost. That is, the Lord sends to us ‘the earnest of the Spirit’ (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 5:5) as an evidence that our lives are in order. The Lord’s ‘earnest money’ on us, his down payment, his indication to us that he will save us, is the Holy Spirit. We know that we are on course when we have the companionship of the Spirit. We know that our lives are approved of God when we have the companionship of the Spirit. We know that we are in Christ, in covenant, when we have the companionship of the Spirit. And we know, I suggest, that we are saved when we truly have the constant companionship of the Spirit.” (Robert L. Millet, *Within Reach* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995], 78.) **Joseph Smith: Now for the secret and grand key...[to be] sealed in the heavens and [have] the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God. Then having this promise sealed unto them, it was an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast. Though the thunders might roll and lightnings flash, and earthquakes bellow, and war gather thick around, yet this hope and knowledge would support the soul in every hour of trial, trouble and tribulation. TPJS, p. 298)**
23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.
24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by ^afaith ye stand.

CHAPTER 2

Saints should love and forgive one another—They always triumph in Christ.

1 BUT I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness.
2 For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?
3 And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having ^aconfidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all.
4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.
5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. (“This verse and those that follow it provide an interesting insight into the love and compassion of Paul. We do not know whether the transgressor Paul refers to here is the fornicator mentioned in his first letter (1 Corinthians 5:1) or one of the false teachers in the church who had led a revolt against Paul and his teachings. But it is evident that the church has taken action against the man, and now Paul cautions them against withholding their love from him. In verse 5 he hastens to point out that he was upset with the news of this brother, not because his own feelings were hurt but because the man was doing damage to the entire church in Corinth. Now Paul encourages them to forgive and comfort this man so that he will not be lost from fellowship (vss. 6-12). This attitude of firmness on adherence to church rules and procedure, but loving forgiveness when the transgressor shows true repentance and corrects the errant behavior, is a mark of the church of Jesus Christ today as well as in former times.” (Institute Manual, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus & his Apostles*, 2nd ed., p. 302))
6 Sufficient to such a man *is* this punishment, which *was inflicted* of many.
7 So that contrariwise ye *ought* rather to ^aforgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. (Neal A. Maxwell has written: “The guidelines for reproof are clear: ‘Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.’ (D&C 121:43-44.)“But sharp reproof should come as a matter of inspiration, not to meet an ego need which requires putting someone else in his place! ‘So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.’ (2 Corinthians 2:7-8.) “Paul stresses the need to reassure the reproved individual beyond the usual levels of love and affection. Verbal putdowns can create a

sense of defeat and despair that only the most resilient can rise above—unless the reassurance comes quickly. When we know we are loved by the reprover, we are more likely to consider the merits of his criticism; otherwise, we may live out our lives inside a fortified view of ourselves, with a network of tripwires alerting us to the probes of friend and foe. The passwords which permit the friend's words to be heard are 'love unfeigned,' which let him inside with his sometimes precious communiques which we need to hear." (*A Time to Choose* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972], 79.)

8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm *your* love toward him.

9 For to this end also did I ^awrite, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be ^bobedient in all things.

10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave *it*, for your sakes *forgave I it* in the ^aperson (presence) of Christ; (Paul teaches an important principle in this regard. As a General Authority he forgives any individual who has been forgiven by the local authorities in Corinth. He sustains the decisions of the local leaders. He is not going to overturn the decision of a lower court just because he can. He is willing to forgive anyone whom they have forgiven. Not only that, he has the boldness to grant forgiveness 'in the person of Christ.' As an apostle of the Lord, he has the right to declare forgiveness on behalf of the Savior. If we apply this principle to our repentant member, we are to understand that the General Authorities and even the Savior will support the decisions of a Bishop in matters of church discipline. Therefore, if the Bishop says you are forgiven, the General Authorities say you are forgiven, and the Lord himself says you are forgiven, 'whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same' (D&C 1:38). Otherwise, the Lord's house is not a house of order, but a house of confusion. This is just the sort of confusion Satan tries to infuse into the church. That is why Paul is so careful to support the local leaders, 'Lest Satan should get an advantage of us' (v. 11). D&C 64: 8 My disciples in days of old sought occasion against one another and forgave not one another in their hearts; and for this evil they were afflicted and sorely chastened. 9 Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to ^aforgive one another; for he that ^bforgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin. 10 I, the Lord, will ^aforgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to ^bforgive all men.)

11 Lest ^aSatan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a ^adoor was opened unto me of the Lord,

13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. ("Titus emerges as a seasoned assistant in disciplining the Corinthian branch of the Church. The story is found here and there in 2 Corinthians. Paul had expected to meet Titus to hear his report in Asia Minor (2 Cor. 2:12-13) but crossed to Northern Greece, where his fears were replaced with the comforting news that the branch as a whole had repented (2 Cor. 7:7). Titus obviously had done his work with courage and capacity, but Paul goes further to show another critical ingredient in his success—his love for the people that he sought to help. 'And his heart goes out all the more to you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, and the fear and trembling with which you received him' (2 Cor. 7:15, RSV)." (Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Understanding Paul* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983], 342.))

14 Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to ^atriumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

16 To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* ^asufficient for these things? (Bruce R. McConkie said: "Those who partake of the spirit breathed by the saints, the spirit of the gospel, the sweet influence that results from obedience to God's laws, gain eternal life; those who reject it inherit eternal death. That is, the gospel is an instrument of life and of death, of life to the obedient, of death to the disobedient." (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 2: 413))

17 For we are not as many, which ^acorrupt the ^bword of God: but as of ^csincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. (Hugh Nibley wrote: “It is entirely possible for important churchmen of high position (a number are pointed out by name in the New Testament) to ‘preach another Jesus’ and to ‘pervert the gospel of Christ’ and to ‘corrupt the word of God’ (2 Corinthians 2:17), and to ‘wrest . . . the . . . scriptures’ (2 Peter 3:16). And it is quite possible for these to enjoy great success and become the leaders of the church after the apostles are gone (2 Timothy 4:2-5). This is the process the apostles and the Lord predicted.” (*Mormonism and Early Christianity*, edited by Todd M. Compton and Stephen D. Ricks [Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1987], 286.))

CHAPTER 3

The gospel surpasses the law of Moses—Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

1 DO we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you? (Bruce R. McConkie: “It appears from 2 Cor. 3:1 that the practice prevailed among the primitive saints of introducing faithful members of the Church from one group of saints to another by means of epistles of commendation or letters of commendation. That is, the saints were commended, introduced, or recommended to the various local churches by these written certifications. These would correspond to ‘recommends’ in modern times.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], 230.))

2 Ye are our ^aepistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

3 **Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, ^awritten not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in ^btables of stone, but in ^cfleshy tables of the ^dheart.** (Paul is speaking about a process of internalization, whereby discipleship is defined not by our ability to follow a set of rules, but by our ability to internalize all the principles of righteousness. Only the Lord can soften our hard hearts so he can write the law in our hearts by the power of the Spirit. Jeremiah and Ezekiel both prophesied that this would happen in the latter-days. ‘I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: And they shall be my people, and I will be their God’ (Ezek. 11:19-20). ‘After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people’ (Jer 31:33). (see commentary for Luke 11:20) How can the law be written in our hearts? To me, this has reference to temple work. When we go to the temple and hear the same things over and over again, what is happening? Isn’t the Lord writing his law in our hearts? And why is the repetition so important? Isn’t it because we can’t write down the temple ceremony? Hence, the new and everlasting covenant is ‘written not with ink.’ Rather, the repetition allows the law to be written in our minds and in our hearts. Benjamin makes a similar temple reference when he reminds the people to ‘retain the *name* written always in your hearts’ (Mosiah 5:12, emphasis added). The temple is where the Lord writes his law upon the fleshy tables of our hearts, because this is where the Lord can teach us how to walk in his statutes and keep his ordinances that we will be worthy to be called his people.)

4 And such trust have we through Christ ~~to God ward~~ (toward God):

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our ^asufficiency is of God;

6 Who also hath made us able ^aministers of the new testament (new covenant); not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the ^bspirit giveth life. (Neal A. Maxwell said: “Clearly... perspective... includes learning how to distinguish between what is big and what is small. The eminent historian Will Durant wrote of that human yearning for the perspective ‘to know that the little things are little, and the big things big, before it is too late; we want to see things now as they will seem forever—

`in the light of eternity`.' Thus, without passing through mortality, how else will we learn to discern successfully what the 'weightier matters of the law' really are (Matthew 23:23)? How else, too, will we get the practical and needed experience showing us that 'the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life' (2 Corinthians 3:6)?" (*If Thou Endure It Well* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], 8.))

7 But if the ministration of ^adeath, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the ^bglory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away:

8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

9 For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

11 For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious.

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great ^aplainness (**boldness, frankness**) of speech:

13 And not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

14 But their ^aminds were ^bblinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the ^creading of the old testament (**Mosaic Law**); which ^dvail is done away in Christ.

15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their ^aheart.

16 Nevertheless when it (their heart) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

17 Now the Lord is ^athat Spirit (**the Spirit**): and where the ^bSpirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* ^cliberty.

18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a ^aglass the ^bglory of the Lord, are changed into the same ^cimage from ^dglory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord. (Elder McConkie noted: "As a mirror reflects the likeness of a person, so the saints should reflect the image of Christ, and as they progress in obedience and personal righteousness, they attain this image; by the power of the Spirit, they become like Christ." (Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:416))

CHAPTER 4

Gospel light shines on the saints—Mortal trials are nothing as contrasted with eternal glory.

1 THEREFORE seeing we have this ministry, as we have received ^amercy, we faint not;

2 But have ^arenounced the hidden things of ^bdishonesty (**shame, disgrace**), not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God ^cdeceitfully (**Twisting and perverting the scriptures; preaching false doctrine**); but by manifestation of the ^dtruth commending ourselves to every man's ^cconscience in the sight of God.

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: (Bruce R. McConkie said: "What is the mystery? It is that Christ dwells in the hearts of those who have crucified the old man of sin, and that as a consequence they have a hope of eternal glory! Such is what the Lord requires of his children in working out their 'own salvation with fear and trembling' before him. (Phil. 2:12.) And it is in this connection that Paul says, somewhat caustically, 'But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.' (2 Cor. 4:3.) Hidden from the world, but revealed in the hearts of those who are enlightened by the Spirit, this doctrine becomes the measuring rod by which the saints determine whether they are faithful and true." (*The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], 125.))

4 In whom the ^agod of this ^bworld (John Taylor said: "[Satan] exerts an invisible agency over the spirits of men, darkens their minds, and uses his infernal power to confound, corrupt, destroy and envelope the world in confusion, misery, and distress; and, although deprived personally of operating with a body, he uses his influence over the spirits of those who have bodies, to resist goodness, virtue, purity, intelligence, and the fear of God; and consequently, the happiness of man; and poor erring humanity is

made the dupe of his wiles. The Apostle says, 'The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them.' 2 Corinthians 4:4. But not content with the ravages he has made, the spoliation, misery, and distress, not having a tabernacle of his own, he has frequently sought to occupy that of man, in order that he might yet possess greater power, and more fully accomplish the devastation." (*The Government of God* [Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1852], 32 - 33.)) hath ^cblinded the ^dminds of them which ^cbelieve not, lest the ^flight of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the ^gimage of ^hGod, should shine unto them.

5 For we ^apreach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your ^bservants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who ^acommanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath ^bshined in our hearts, to give the ^clight of the knowledge of the ^dglory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the ^apower may be of God, and not of us. (Paul had seen 'the face of Jesus Christ.' By such a divine manifestation, Paul had learned firsthand of 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.' This firsthand knowledge is the treasure spoken of. It is a privilege that can be enjoyed in mortality—while still inhabiting an 'earthen vessel.' Of all the treasures of godliness, of all the rewards of righteousness, this is the greatest—even a personal knowledge of 'the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom [he] hast sent' (Jn. 17:3). It is interesting how indirectly Paul speaks of such a profound experience. His words can be interpreted in other ways, but those sensitive to the Spirit will understand the veiled meanings. Similarly, in our day, when the apostles and prophets speak of their testimony of the Savior, their language is slightly different than ours. The difference is subtle, but a discerning heart understands that they speak of a personal knowledge, obtained through a holy interaction with the Savior himself. They have the same treasure Paul spoke of, for they have personally gained a 'knowledge of the glory of God' while yet inhabiting an 'earthen vessel.' Such is the Second Comforter—a needed comfort when 'troubled on every side...perplexed...persecuted...[and] cast down' (v. 8-9).)

8 We are ^atroubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in ^bdespair;

9 ^aPersecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not ^bdestroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 For we which live are always delivered unto ^adeath for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our ^bmortal flesh.

12 So then death (it) worketh in (death unto) us, but life in (unto) you.

13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I ^abelieved, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore ^bspeak;

14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. (Christ was resurrected, and so will we.)

15 For (we bear) all things ~~are~~ for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the ^athanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the ^ainward man is renewed day by day. (Born again)

17 For our light ^aaffliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and ^beternal ^cweight of glory; (Orson Pratt said: "Having been married for eternity, we die and our spirits go into celestial paradise. We come forth in the morning of the first resurrection as immortal males and immortal females. Our wives, married to us for eternity, come forth, and they are ours by virtue of that which God has pronounced upon them through those whom he has appointed, and to whom he has given authority. We have a legal claim upon them at the resurrection. But here comes forth a person that is married outside. She comes up without a husband, he without a wife, or any claim upon any of the blessings. Here is the difference between these two classes of beings...one having lost what they might have obtained and enjoyed if they had had faith in God and been willing to obey his commandments. But the others are worthy, as the Apostle Paul has said, to obtain a far more exceeding and eternal

weight of glory, while the others will be angels or servants, to go and come at the bidding of those who are more exalted.” (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 15: 252 - 253.) Brigham Young said: All intelligent beings who are crowned with crowns of glory, immortality, and eternal lives must pass through every ordeal appointed for intelligent beings to pass through, to gain their glory and exaltation. Every calamity that can come upon mortal beings will be suffered to come upon the few, to prepare them to enjoy the presence of the Lord. If we obtain the glory that Abraham obtained, we must do so by the same means that he did. . . . We must pass through the same experience, and gain the knowledge, intelligence, and endowments that will prepare us to enter into the celestial kingdom of our Father and God. . . . Every trial and experience you have passed through is necessary for your salvation. (At Provo, Utah, Aug. 26, 1860, JD8:150) TLDP:426-27. It is recorded that Jesus was made perfect through suffering. If he was made perfect through suffering, why should we imagine for one moment that we can be prepared to enter into the kingdom of rest with him and the Father, without passing through similar ordeals? 8:66. Words of John Taylor: I heard the Prophet Joseph say, in speaking to the Twelve on one occasion: "You will have all kinds of trials to pass through. And it is quite as necessary for you to be tried as it was for Abraham and other men of God, and (said he) God will feel after you, and He will take hold of you and wrench your very heart strings, and if you cannot stand it you will not be fit for an inheritance in the Celestial Kingdom of God." (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. 24:197) President George Q. Cannon taught: Every Latter-day Saint who gains a celestial glory will be tried to the very uttermost. If there is a point in our character that is weak and tender, you may depend upon it that the Lord will reach after that, and we will be tried at that spot for the Lord will test us to the utmost before we can get through and receive that glory and exaltation which He has in store for us as a people. *Gospel Truth*, p. 103. Orson F. Whitney: "No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude and humility. All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts, expands our souls, and makes us more tender and charitable, more worthy to be called the children of God . . . and it is through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we come here to acquire and which will make us more like our Father and Mother in heaven." (Quoted in Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, 98.)

18 While we look not at the things which are ^aseen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not ^bseen *are* ^ceternal.

CHAPTER 5

Saints walk by faith and seek tabernacles of immortal glory—Gospel reconciles man to God—His ministers carry the word of reconciliation to the world.

1 FOR we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle (our bodies) were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (a resurrected body). (Brigham Young said: “When the faithful Latter-day Saints come to the end of their earthly existence, ‘we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.’ [2 Cor. 5:1.] The faithful Latter-day Saint knows that the dissolution of this mortal house will introduce his immortal spirit to freedom from death and punishment, and to the enjoyment of the society of the spirits of just men made perfect. To a person who has such a glorious hope everything is bright and beautiful.” (Roy W. Doxey, comp., *Latter-day Prophets and the Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978], 1: 61 - 62.))

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be ^aclothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

4 For we that are in *this* tabernacle do ^agroan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but

clothed upon, that ^bmortality might be swallowed up of life. (Those who keep the new and everlasting covenant are promised that they will come forth in the morning of the first resurrection, clothed with glory, immortality and eternal lives. Paul has reference to this when he speaks of being 'clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.' Nephi saw the day when the righteous would be 'clothed with purity, yea, even with the robe of righteousness' (2 Ne. 9:14). The greatness of such a moment is the earnest desire of the righteous. They long for a glorious resurrection. As Paul says, 'we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon.' The root of the Greek term "to be clothed upon" is endusis, translated into English as endowment. To be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven is to be endowed with the same kind of glorified body Christ enjoys and to be enrobed with the same robes of power, as indicated in the D&C; Mine apostles shall stand at my right hand at the day of my coming in a pillar of fire, being clothed with robes of righteousness...[for] they shall come forth – yea, even the dead which died in me, to receive a crown of righteousness, and to be clothed upon, even as I am, to be with me, that we may be one. D&C 29:13. Breck England, Meridian Magazine, lesson 35.)

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Therefore *we are* always ^aconfident (of good courage, of good cheer), knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (We are 'at home in the body' when we gratify the requests of the carnal man.)

7 (For we walk by ^afaith, not by ^bsight:)

8 We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we ^alabour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the ^ajudgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive (a reward of) the things (deeds) done in ~~his~~-(the) body, (things) ^baccording to ~~that~~ (what) he hath ^cdone, whether ~~it be~~ good or bad. (Spencer W. Kimball wrote: "The Book of Life (see Revelation 20:12) will show the earthly activities of all of us, and the book of the angels will give the entire story of every man and what he did in the light and in the shadows, in the open and in the corners, all that is said in the secret places and from the housetops, all that was thought and expressed, whether good or bad. There will be no escape. The honest judge will give full value to all for their good works and will not overlook the other. "God is just. I know that every man will enjoy every blessing which he has earned and I know that every man will receive no blessing through mercy as that word is often connotated. Justice will be tempered with mercy but not replaced by it. I am positive that no man will ever be judged without opportunity, blessed beyond his deserts, nor punished for something for which he was not responsible." (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, edited by Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], 46))

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; (Joseph Smith said: "The disappointment of hopes and expectations at the resurrection would be indescribably dreadful [for those who have ignored or rejected revealed truths]." (*Encyclopedia of Joseph Smith's Teachings*, edited by Larry E. Dahl and Donald Q. Cannon [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], "Disappointment".))

but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your ^aconsciences.

12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to *answer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

13 ^aFor ~~whether~~ (we bear record that) we ~~be~~ (are not) beside ourselves (; for whether we glory), *it is* to God: or whether we be sober, *it is* for your ~~eause~~ (sakes).

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if ^aone ^bdied for all, then ~~were~~ (are) all dead:

15 And ~~that~~ he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth ^alive unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

16 ^aWherefore henceforth ~~know we no man~~ (live we no more) after the flesh: yea, though we (once lived after the flesh, yet since we) have known Christ ~~after the flesh, yet~~ now henceforth ~~know we him~~ (live we) no more (after the flesh).

17 Therefore if any man ^be (live) ^ain Christ, he is a ^bnew creature (born again): ^cold things are ^dpassed away; behold, all things are become ^enew.

18 And (receiveth) all (the) things ~~are~~ of God, who hath ^areconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was (is) in Christ, ^areconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ^aambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (Hugh Nibley wrote: "The word *atonement* is only found once in the New Testament. It's found a number of times in the Old Testament, but only once in the New Testament. And it's not found at all in the Revised Standard Version. They don't use *atonement* at all. The word doesn't even appear in the New Testament. They use instead reconciliation, keeping it quite literal, from *reconcilio*. **Reconciliation means 'to return and sit down beside somebody again.'**...**You return and then you sit down. You sit down by the side of the Lord, and you sit down again because you've been there before. It's reconciliation.**" (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon--Semester 1: Transcripts of Lectures Presented to an Honors Book of Mormon Class at Brigham Young University, 1988—1990*, p. 214.) Reconciliation is the process of ransoming man from his state of sin and spiritual darkness and of restoring him to a state of harmony and unity with Deity. Through it God and man are no longer enemies. Man, who was once carnal and evil, who lived after the manner of the flesh, becomes a new creature of the Holy Ghost; he is born again; and, even as a little child, he is alive in Christ. "Reconcile yourselves to the will of God, and not to the will of the devil and the flesh and remember after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved. 2 Ne. 10:24)

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21 For he hath made him to be ^asin for us, who knew no ^bsin; that we might be made the ^crighteousness of God in him. ("I would like to draw attention to a few aspects of the Savior's vicarious suffering that often escape notice, but that are important for understanding our relationship with him. First, Jesus Christ did not just assume the *punishment* for our sins—he took the *guilt* as well. The sin, the experience itself with all of its negative consequences and ramifications, and not just the penalty for sin, became his. This is a crucial distinction. In the Atonement, **Jesus does not just suffer our punishment for us, he becomes the guilty party in our place—he becomes guilty for us and experiences our guilt:** 'For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' (2 Cor. 5:21.) In Christ there is a real transfer of guilt for innocence. Through the oneness of our covenant relationship, my guilt becomes Jesus' guilt, which he experienced and for which he suffered. At the same time, his innocence and perfection become mine, and I am rendered clean and worthy. In Christ our sins cease to be ours, and as far as the justice of God is concerned, we never committed them. **Through the Atonement, we are not merely forgiven—we are rendered innocent once again.**" (Stephen E. Robinson, *Believing Christ: The Parable of the Bicycle and Other Good News* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992], 117.))

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CHAPTER 6

Now is the day of salvation—God's ministers must walk uprightly and bear all things—Saints should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.

1 WE then, as ^aworkers together ^bwith him (Christ), beseech you also that ye receive not the ^cgrace of God in vain.

2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a ^atime accepted, and in the ^bday of ^csalvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.) ('For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors' (Alma 34:32) The doctrine of salvation for the dead, great and glorious as it is, does not mean

that those who reject the truth, or who disobey their gospel covenants in this life, shall have a second chance to gain salvation by accepting and living the law in the spirit world. Salvation for the dead is for those who die without a knowledge of the gospel and who would have received it, with all their hearts had it been presented to them in this mortal life. To Joseph Smith the Lord said that those who reject the gospel in this life and receive it in the spirit world shall go, not to a celestial, but to a terrestrial kingdom. DNTC, 2:423-4)

3(Attributes of missionaries – see D&C 4) Giving no ^aoffence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

4 But in all *things* approving ourselves as the ^aministers of God, in much ^bpatience, in ^cafflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in ^atumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

6 By ^apureness, by knowledge, by ^blongsuffering, by ^ckindness, by the Holy Ghost, by ^dlove unfeigned, (O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength...Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence' (D&C 4:2,6).)

7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the ^aarmour of ^brighteousness on the right hand and on the left,

8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and *yet* true;

9 As unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

10 As ^asorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as ^bpoor, yet making many ^crich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is ^aenlarged.

12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own ^abowels. (“As used in scripture, the word *bowels* very often refers to the center of pity or kindness. When we feel love or compassion for someone or something, we usually experience pain within. ‘Let thy bowels be full of charity towards all men’ (D&C 121:45) means, ‘Demonstrate a Christlike love for others.’ As used here the word *bowels* is part of a larger expression, ‘ye are straitened in your own bowels’ It is simply Paul’s way of telling the Corinthians that they had not been restricted by any lack of affection on his part but rather by their own failure to show a proper love and compassion. Similar uses of the word in the New Testament are found in Philippians 1:8; 2:1; Colossians 3:12; and 1 John 3:17.” (Institute Manual, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus & His Apostles*, 2nd ed., p. 303))

13 Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto *my* children,) be ye also enlarged.

14 Be ye not unequally ^ayoked together with unbelievers (Ezra Taft Benson said: “If someone wants to marry you outside the temple, whom will you strive to please—God or a mortal? If you insist on a temple marriage, you will be pleasing the Lord and blessing the other party. Why? Because that person will either become worthy to go to the temple—which would be a blessing—or will leave—which could also be a blessing—because neither of you should want to be unequally yoked (see 2 Corinthians 6:14).” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 351.)): for what ^bfellowship hath righteousness with ^cunrighteousness? and what communion hath ^dlight with darkness?

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial (**Satan**)? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what ^aagreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the ^btemple of the living God; as God hath said, I will ^cdwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Lev 26:12)

17 Wherefore ^acome out from among them, and be ye (the) ^bseparate, saith the Lord, and touch not the ^cunclean thing; and I will receive you. (Isa 52:11)

18 And will be a ^aFather unto you, and ye shall be my ^bsons and daughters, saith the Lord ^cAlmighty. (Hosea 1:10) (The Corinthians already understood this concept, so Paul did not elaborate. However, this is the third example (see v. 2-6) of a doctrine briefly referenced by Paul, which is nonetheless very important and clearly taught in the Book of Mormon, ‘And now, because of the covenant which ye have

made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters' (Mosiah 5:7). Historically, Paul may be the most misinterpreted of all the authors in the scriptures. Yet, he taught the same doctrines that we find in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants. The fact that he only briefly mentions many important concepts indicates that he had previously expounded on these principles in depth among the Corinthians. Therefore, in his epistles, he makes only brief mention, knowing their level of understanding. This is crucial to understanding Paul. Otherwise, we will be like the 'unlearned and unstable', who wrest the scriptures 'unto their own destruction' (2 Pet. 3:16).)

CHAPTER 7

Godly sorrow for sin leads to repentance—The sorrow of the world worketh death.

1 HAVING therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us ^acleanse ourselves from all ^bfilthiness (pollution, stain, defilement) of the flesh and spirit, perfecting ^choliness in the fear of God. (Is it the body or the spirit that commits sin? In pre-existence it was the spirit only. In this life the spirit is clothed with a tabernacle which is subject to the lusts of the flesh; that is, mortal appetites encourage sin. But the mind of man and the will to act are in the spirit. Hence, body and spirit join in the commission of sin and both become unclean thereby. DNTC, 2:429)

2 Receive us; we have ^awronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have ^bdefrauded no man.

3 I speak not *this* to condemn *you*: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with *you*.

4 Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my glorying of you: I am filled with ^acomfort, I am exceeding ^bjoyful in all our ^ctribulation.

5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were ^atroubled on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* ^bfears.

6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was ^acomforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

(“Paul’s anxiety about the affairs at Corinth were finally relieved when Titus arrived and informed him that the Corinthians had mourned and repented of their past behavior. (2 Cor. 7:6-7.) Probably sometime in the fall of A.D. 57, the same year in which he had previously written 1 Corinthians, Paul wrote the epistle preserved in 2 Corinthians (actually his third or fourth letter to the Corinthians) to express his love and concern for the saints at Corinth and his relief and joy that they had responded to his rebuke, and to further encourage those who had remained rebellious to repent.” (David R. Seely, *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 6: Acts to Revelation*, ed. by Robert L. Millet, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987], 72 - 73.))

8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season.

9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made ^asorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

10 For ^agodly ^bsorrow (This includes an honest, heartfelt contrition of soul, a contrition born of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. It presupposes a frank, personal acknowledgement that one’s acts have been evil in the sight of Him who is holy. There is no mental reservation in godly sorrow, no feeling that perhaps one’s sins are not so gross or serious after all. It is certainly more than regret either because the sin has been brought to light or because some preferential reward or status has been lost because of it. MD, p. 292) worketh ^crepentance to ^dsalvation not to be repented of: but the ^esorrow of the world worketh death.

11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourselves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was ^arefreshed by you all.

14 For if I have ^aboasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our ^bboasting, which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth.

15 And his ^ainward affection (heart, tender affections, compassion) is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the ^bobedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

16 I rejoyce therefore that I have confidence in you in all *things*.

CHAPTER 8

True saints impart of their substance to the poor—Christ out of his poverty brought eternal riches.

1 MOREOVER, brethren, ^awe (we make known (or declare) to you the grace) ~~do you to wit~~ (would have you to know) of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

2 How that in a great ^atrial of ^baffliction the abundance of their joy and their deep ^cpoverty abounded unto the riches of their ^dliberality (sincerity, purity of mind).

3 For to *their* power, I bear record, yea, and beyond *their* power *they were* willing of themselves;

4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the ^afellowship of the ministering to the saints.

5 And *this they did*, not as we ~~hoped~~ (required), but first ^agave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

7 Therefore, as ye abound in every *thing*, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all ^adiligence, and in your love to us, *see* that ye abound in this grace also. (Bruce R. McConkie said: “Those who abound in faith and the attributes of godliness are the ones who impart liberally of their substance for the temporal welfare of their brethren in the kingdom.” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 2:433))

8 I speak ^anot by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the ^bsincerity of your love.

9 For ye know the ^agrace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was ^brich, yet for your sakes he became ^cpoor, that ye through his ^dpoverty might be rich. (In terms of riches, the Great Jehovah, the Creator of innumerable worlds, the law Giver, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had all that the Father had. Prior to his mortal advent, he was richer than any mortal. As Craig J. Ostler noted, “If the glory of the premortal Messiah is likened unto riches, then he was truly the richest of all.” (*The Apostle Paul, His Life and His Testimony: The 23d Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1994], 161.) From this exalted station, he descended to be born in a lowly manger, to be raised in humble circumstances, and to come forth from the despised town of Nazareth.)

10 And herein I give *my* advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

11 Now therefore perform the doing of *it*; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which ye have.

12 For if there be first a ^awilling ^bmind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not. (James E. Talmage wrote: “In the accounts kept by the recording angels, figured out

according to the arithmetic of heaven, entries are made in terms of quality rather than of quantity, and values are determined on the basis of capability and intent. The rich gave much yet kept back more; the widow's gift was her all. It was not the smallness of her offering that made it especially acceptable, but the spirit of sacrifice and devout intent with which she gave. On the books of the heavenly accountants that widow's contribution was entered as a munificent gift, surpassing in worth the largess of kings. 'For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.'" (*Jesus the Christ*, 520))

13 For *I mean* not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:

14 But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their want, that their ^aabundance also may be *a supply* for your want: that there may be ^bequality: (United Order, Law of Consecration)

15 As it is written, He that *had* ^agathered much had nothing over; and he that *had gathered* little had no lack. (All contributions in the Church should be based on ability to pay. The rich pay more tithing than the poor and similarly should give more to succor the needy, to aid the missionary cause, and to build houses of worship. Thus fast offering collections from areas where the saints have in abundance supply the needs of those who for a time and a season are less blessed temporally. DNTC, 2:433)

16 But thanks *be* to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.

18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches;

19 And not *that* only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and *declaration of* your ready mind:

20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:

21 Providing for ^ahonest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the ^bsight of men.

~~22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great~~ ^aconfidence which *I have* in you. (Therefore we send him unto you, in consequence of the great confidence which we have in you, that you will receive the things concerning you, to the glory of Christ;)

~~23 Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ~~ (whether we send by the hand of Titus, my partner and fellow-laborer, or our brethren, the messengers of the churches).

24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf. (David O. McKay said: "Titus seems to have been one of the chief men in collecting contributions for the relief of the poor in Judea. When he returned to Corinth, he continued to make collections for Paul to take to Jerusalem in the near future." (*Ancient Apostles* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1964], 215.))

CHAPTER 9

God loves and rewards a cheerful giver—Thanks be to him for his unspeakable gift.

1 FOR as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:

2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I ^aboast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath ^bprovoked very many.

3 Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready:

4 Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your ^abounty (gift, blessing, benevolence), whereof ye had notice before, that the same

might be ready, as *a matter of* bounty, and not as *of* covetousness. (“Paul explains at some length that his purpose in going to Judea was to take a welfare donation from Macedonia and Achaia to the ‘poor saints which are at Jerusalem.’ ...in 2 Corinthians 9:1–15...Paul urges the Corinthian saints to get their donation ready beforehand so that he could obtain it when he arrived. The emphasis on these things brings us to another significant feature. Acts 11:27–30 makes scant reference to Paul as a welfare worker and mentions one occasion when with Barnabas he took a donation to the saints in Jerusalem. This was about A.D. 41 or 44 and was possibly Paul’s earliest experience with welfare as a Church program. However, as indicated above, his epistles give evidence that in the years that followed he became a diligent welfare worker, collecting donations throughout Galatia (see 1 Cor. 16:1), Macedonia (see Rom. 15:25–26), and Greece (see 2 Cor. 9:1–5) for the Judean saints.” (Robert J. Matthews, “St. Paul Writes about the Church,” *New Era*, Apr. 1977, 33, 35))

6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall ^areap also sparingly; and he which ^bsoweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Every man according as he ^apurposeth in his heart, so let him give; not ^bgrudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a ^ccheerful ^dgiver. (Brigham Young said: “We say to the Saints, do not pay Tithing, unless you want to; do not help to build up this Temple unless you want to; do not put forth your hands to one day’s work, unless you want to. . . . If you grudgingly put forth your means to help to gather the Saints, it will be a curse to you.” (Hugh Nibley, *Brother Brigham Challenges the Saints*, p. 460) According to **Dr. James E. Talmage**: ‘**The spirit of giving makes the tithe holy; and it is by means thus sanctified that the material activities of the Church are carried on.**’ Moroni 7:6-8 For behold, God hath said a man being ^aevil cannot do that which is good; for if he ^boffereth a gift, or ^cprayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real ^dintent it profiteth him nothing. **7** For behold, it is not counted unto him for righteousness. **8** For behold, if a man being ^aevil giveth a gift, he doeth it ^bgrudgingly; wherefore it is counted unto him the same as if he had retained the gift; wherefore he is counted evil before God.)

8 And God *is* able to make all ^agrace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work:

9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for *your* food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your ^arighteousness;)

11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us ^athanksgiving to God.

12 For the ^aadministration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

13 Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal distribution unto them, and unto all *men*;

14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.

15 ^aThanks *be* unto God for his **unspeakable ^bgift.** (There is a difference between ‘the gift of the Holy Ghost’ (D&C 33:15) and ‘**the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost**’ (D&C 121:26). The gift of the Holy Ghost is administered by the laying on of hands to those who have been baptized. It teaches the individual spiritual knowledge. By this Spirit we understand that Jesus is the Christ; we learn that the Book of Mormon is the word of God; we are taught to pray and to do good. While the joy we feel from this Spirit may be inexpressible, the doctrines we learn are not unspeakable. We may freely speak of them to anyone who understands the things of the Spirit. **The unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost is different.** All those who receive the gift of the Holy Ghost are entitled to the gifts of the Spirit, one of which is the unspeakable gift. It is a gift of revelation, prophecy, and knowledge whereby an individual is taught about things that ‘cannot be written, neither can they be uttered by man’ (3 Ne 19:34). This knowledge is so sacred that it is unlawful to speak of it. It is knowledge ‘which has not been revealed since the world was until now’ (DC 121:26). **By this unspeakable gift, Paul ascended to the third**

heaven and ‘heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter’ (2 Cor. 12:4). **By this unspeakable gift, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw ‘great and marvelous’ things which God commanded them not to write because it was ‘not lawful for man to utter; Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit’ (DC 76:114-116). By this unspeakable gift, the Nephites were taught great and marvelous things, declaring ‘eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father’ (3 Ne. 17:15-18). By this unspeakable gift, those who have purified themselves and ‘endured valiantly for the gospel of Christ’ will someday have all things revealed unto them. This is the time when ‘nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest. All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth’ (DC 121:28-29). All of this and more will be revealed and understood by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost.)**

CHAPTER 10

Bring every thought into obedience—Paul glories in the Lord.

1 NOW I Paul myself beseech you by the ^ameekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you:

2 But I beseech *you*, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not ^awar after the flesh:

4 (For the ^aweapons of our ^bwarfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every ^athought to the ^bobedience of Christ; (Let virtue garnish your thoughts unceasingly. D&C 121: 45)

6 And having in a readiness to revenge all ^adisobedience, when your ^bobedience is fulfilled.

7 Do ye look on things after the outward ^aappearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ’s, let him of himself think this again, that, as he *is* Christ’s, even so *are* we ^bChrist’s.

8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our ^aauthority, which the Lord hath given us for ^bedification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:

9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

10 For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* ^abodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech ^bcontemptible. (Neal A. Maxwell said: “Paul, in his epistles, indicated at least one reaction to his outward appearance and to his personality. Some people regarded his letters as powerful and weighty, but his bodily presence as weak (see 2 Corinthians 10:10). His speech was regarded as rude, or contemptible (see 2 Corinthians 11:6)...Thus the absence of a commanding physical presence—or, in modern political terms, the absence of charisma—can cause people to disregard or dismiss one actually sent of God, even though the substance of the individual or his message is exceedingly important.” (*Sermons Not Spoken* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985], 45.) “These hints of Paul’s physical unimpressiveness but his power in writing seem to be reflected in a statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith, given January 5, 1841, at the organization of a school of instruction: ‘He is about five feet high; very dark hair; dark complexion; dark skin; large Roman nose; sharp face; small black eyes, penetrating as eternity; round shoulders; a whining voice, except when elevated, and then it almost resembled the roaring of a lion. He was a good orator, active and diligent, always employing himself in doing good to his fellow man.’ (Joseph Fielding Smith, comp. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976, 180.)” (Robert J. Matthews, *Behold the Messiah* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994], 333.))

11 Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *will we be* also in deed when we are present.

12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

13 But we will not ^aboast of things without *our* measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. (Bruce R. McConkie said: “Boasting is of two kinds: either righteous, or unrighteous; either in the arm of flesh, or in the Lord and his gracious goodness and power. ‘He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord,’ Paul said in summing up a sermon on boasting, ‘For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.’ (2 Cor. 10:7-18; Ps. 44:8.) Ammon spoke similarly: ‘I do not boast in my own strength, nor in my own wisdom; but behold, my joy is full, yea, my heart is brim with joy, and I will rejoice in my God. Yea, I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak; therefore I will not boast of myself but I will boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things. Therefore, let us glory, yea, we will glory in the Lord; yea, we will rejoice for our joy is full; yea, we will praise our God forever. Behold, who can glory too much in the Lord?’ (Alma 26:8-16, 35.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], 93.))

14 For we stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ:

15 Not boasting of things without *our* measure, *that is*, of other men’s ^alabours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,

16 To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man’s line of things made ready to our hand.

17 But he that glorieth, let him ^aglory in the Lord.

18 For not he that ^acommendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

CHAPTER 11

Maintain the simplicity that is in Christ—Satan sends forth false apostles—Paul glories in his sufferings for Christ.

1 WOULD to God ye could bear with me a little in *my* folly: and indeed bear with me.

2 For I am ^ajealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have ^bespoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.

3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the ^aserpent ^bbeguiled Eve through his ^csubtilty, so your minds should be ^dcorrupted from the ^esimplicity that is in Christ. (The Gospel message is simple, understandable by everyone.)

4 For if he that cometh preacheth another ^aJesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another ^bgospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him* (me).

5 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

6 But though *I be* ^arude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.

7 Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God ^afreely?

8 I ^arobbed (despoiled other churches, having taken provisions for you) other churches, taking ^bwages of *them*, to do you service.

9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was ^achargeable to no man: for that which was ^blacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia ^csupplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*.

10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.

12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they ^aglory (boast; so in chapters 11 and 12), they may be found even as we.

13 For such ^aare false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. (False prophets always arise to oppose the true prophets and they will prophesy so very near the truth that they will deceive almost the very chosen ones. TPJS, p. 365)

14 And no marvel; for ^aSatan himself is transformed into an ^bangel of light. (Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: “There is no doubt about Satan having great power and that he can appear as an angel of light. In this form he appeared on the banks of the Susquehanna River to oppose the restoration of keys, and was detected by Michael, and his plans were thwarted. (See D. & C. 128:20. Compare also Section 129:8.) Jacob, son of Lehi, in his teachings, stated that if there had been no atonement, our spirits ‘. . . must have become like unto him [Satan], and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself; yea, to that being who beguiled our first parents, who transformeth himself nigh unto an angel of light, and stirreth up the children of men unto secret combinations of murder and all manner of secret works of darkness.’ (2 Nephi 9:9.) “Korihor, who tried to deceive the Nephites, admitted that Satan appeared to him as an angel and told him what to teach the people. (Alma 30:53.) “When the Prophet Joseph Smith and a company of brethren were journeying to Kirtland from Missouri, they camped at McIlwaine's Bend on the Missouri River. There Elder William W. Phelps ‘in open vision by daylight, saw the destroyer in his most horrible power, ride upon the face of the waters; others heard the noise, but saw not the vision.’ (D.H.C., Vol. 1, p. 203.) The Savior declared that Satan had the power to bind bodies of men and women and sorely afflict them. (Matthew 7:22-23; Luke 13:16.) If Satan has power to bind the bodies, he surely must have power to loose them. It should be remembered that Satan has great knowledge and thereby can exercise authority and to some extent control the elements, when some greater power does not intervene. Paul, writing to the Ephesian Saints called Satan ‘The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.’ (Ephesians 2:2.)” (Answers to Gospel Questions, 5 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957-1966], 1: 178.) Joseph Smith said: “There have also been ministering angels in the Church which were of Satan appearing as an angel of light. A sister in the state of New York had a vision, who said it was told her that if she would go to a certain place in the woods, an angel would appear to her. She went at the appointed time, and saw a glorious personage descending, arrayed in white, with sandy colored hair; he commenced and told her to fear God, and said that her husband was called to do great things, but that he must not go more than one hundred miles from home, or he would not return; whereas God had called him to go to the ends of the earth, and he has since been more than one thousand miles from home, and is yet alive. Many true things were spoken by this personage, and many things were false. How, it may be asked, was this known to be a bad angel? By the color of his hair; that is one of the signs that he can be known by, and by his contradicting a former revelation.” (History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 7 Vols. 4:581) “If Satan should appear as one in glory, who can tell his color, his signs, his appearance, his glory—or what is the manner of his manifestation? Who can drag into daylight and develop the hidden mysteries of the false spirits that so frequently are made manifest among the Latter-day Saints? We answer that no man can do this without the Priesthood, and having a knowledge of the laws by which spirits are governed; for as ‘no man knows the things of God, but by the Spirit of God,’ so no man knows the spirit of the devil, and his power and influence, but by possessing intelligence which is more than human, and having unfolded through the medium of the Priesthood the mysterious operations of his devices; without knowing the angelic form, the sanctified look and gesture, and the zeal that is frequently manifested by him for the glory of God, together with the prophetic spirit, the gracious influence, the godly appearance, and the holy garb, which are so characteristic of his proceedings and his mysterious windings. A man must have the discerning of spirits before he can drag into daylight this

hellish influence and unfold it unto the world in all its soul-destroying, diabolical, and horrid colors; for nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the Spirit of God.” (*Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Alma P. Burton [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977], 113.) “When a messenger comes, saying he has a message from God, offer him your hand, and request him to shake hands with you. If he be an angel he will do so, and you will feel his hand. If he be the spirit of a just man made perfect, he will come in his glory; for that is the only way he can appear. Ask him to shake hands with you, but he will not move, because it is contrary to the order of heaven for a just man to deceive; but he will still deliver his message. If it be the devil as an angel of light, when you ask him to shake hands he will offer you his hand, and you will not feel anything; you may therefore detect him. These are three grand keys whereby you may know whether any administration is from God.” (D&C 129:4-9.) This is demonstrated in the Temple.)

15 Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose ^aend shall be according to their works.

16 I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool ^areceive (listen to, bear with, follow) me, that I may ^bboast myself a little.

17 That which I speak, I speak *it* not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.

18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.

19 For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye *yourselves* are wise.

20 For ye suffer, if a man bring you into ^abondage, if a man devour *you*, if a man take *of you*, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.

21 I speak as concerning ^areproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. (When Paul says, ‘I speak foolishly’ or ‘I speak as a fool’ (v. 23), he is acknowledging that he is bragging as a fool would brag about his accomplishments. In effect, he is saying, “I know I am boasting as a fool boasts, but bear with me while I try to make this point.”)

22 Are they ^aHebrews? so *am* I. Are they ^bIsraelites? so *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so *am* I.

23 Are they ^aministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) ^bI am more (so am I); in ^clabours more abundant, in ^dstripes above measure, in ^eprisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

24 Of the Jews five times received I ^aforty stripes save one.

25 Thrice was I ^abeaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26 *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* ^acountrymen, *in* perils by the ^bheathen, *in* ^cperils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; (Joseph Smith said: “I, like Paul have been in perils, and oftener than anyone in this generation. As Paul boasted, I have suffered more than Paul did. I should be like a fish out of water, if I were out of persecutions. Perhaps my brethren think it requires all this to keep me humble. The Lord has constituted me so curiously that I glory in persecution. I am not nearly so humble as if I were not persecuted.” (*The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, compiled and edited by Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook [Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980], 373.))

27 In ^aweariness (toll, trouble) and ^bpainfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

29 Who is weak, and I am not ^aweak? who is offended, and I ^bburn (anger) not?

30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to ^aapprehend me:

33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

CHAPTER 12

Paul caught up to the third heaven—The Lord gives men weaknesses that they may triumph over them—Paul manifests the signs of an apostle.

1 IT is not expedient for me doubtless to ^aglory. I will come to ^bvisions and ^crevelations of the Lord.
2 ^aI knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago), (whether in the ^bbody, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the ^cthird ^dheaven. (“Then he says, still contrasting himself to the false apostles, ‘I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord’ (see 2 Cor. 12:1). And here, surprisingly, the account suddenly shifts to understatement. After a dozen or more examples of dramatic persecution, we might expect a half a dozen episodes of dramatic revelation just to drive his point home. Instead, Paul’s awe, humility, and gratitude for having received those revelations turn him from aggressiveness to reverence—even reticence. The fact that he describes the vision as happening to ‘a man in Christ’ is such an evidence of that humility, though he is obviously speaking of himself. The passage makes no sense if it isn’t his own revelation, since he’s reminding the Corinthians of his credentials contrasted to those of the ‘false apostles.’” (Richard L. Anderson, *Literature of Belief: Sacred Scripture and Religious Experience*, Neal A. Lambert, ed., [Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1981], 71.))

3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) (Sometimes prophets go into trances in connection with the receipt of visions. That is, they are so completely overshadowed by the Spirit that to all outward appearances normal bodily functions are suspended. Such was the case with Balaam when he saw the coming of Christ and the triumph of Israel (Num. 24.) Peter ‘fell into a trance’ when he received the vision commanding him to take the gospel to the Gentiles. (Acts 10:9-48.) Paul ‘was in a trance’ when the Lord came to him with the command to leave Jerusalem and carry the message of salvation to the Gentiles. (Acts 22:17-21.) “A similar experience happened to the Prophet Joseph Smith in connection with the First Vision; he was not in control of all his bodily powers when the Father and the Son appeared to him. ‘When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven,’ he said. ‘When the light had departed, I had no strength; but soon recovering in some degree, I went home.’ (JS-Hist. 1:20.)” “...Similarly, when the Three Nephites ‘were caught up into heaven, and saw and heard unspeakable things,’ they were transfigured. ‘Whether they were in the body or out of the body, they could not tell; for it did seem unto them like a transfiguration of them, that they were changed from this body of flesh into an immortal state, that they could behold the things of God.’ (3 Ne. 28:13-17.) Paul had a similar experience (2 Cor. 12:1-4), as also did Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon. (D. & C. 76; Teachings, p. 107.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], 802-803.))

4 How that he was caught up into ^aparadise, and heard ^bunspeakable (ineffable) words, which it is ^cnot ^dlawful (possible, permitted) for a man to utter. (Paradise is different than the third heaven (v. 2). In verse 1, Paul promised to discuss ‘visions and revelations’ (both in plural). So we may safely assume that Paul is speaking of two different visions—one of the celestial kingdom and another of Spirit Paradise. The difference is not hard for Latter-day saints to comprehend. With only one exception in the scriptures (Rev. 2:7), the word *paradise* refers to the spirit world (see Lu. 23:43; 2 Ne. 9:13; Alma 40:12). LeGrand Richards noted, “From this scripture, it is evident that paradise is not the first, second, or third heaven.” (*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1950], 177.)

5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not ^aglory, but in mine infirmities.

6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but *now* I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth ~~me to be~~ (of me), or *that* he heareth of me.

7 And lest I should be ^aexalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, (caught up in pride because of his spiritual abilities) there was given to me a ^bthorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. (Ether 12: 27 And if men come unto me I will show unto them their ^aweakness. I ^bgive unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my ^cgrace is sufficient for all men that ^dhumble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make ^eweak things become strong unto them.)

28 Behold, I will show unto the Gentiles their weakness, and I will show unto them that ^afaith, hope and charity bringeth unto me—the fountain of all ^brighteousness.)

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. (“No one really knows what Paul’s ‘thorn in the flesh’ was...All we know for sure is that whatever it was, it kept Paul humble and forced him to his knees. His inabilities and his impotence in the face of this particular challenge were ever before him. I rather think that when Paul states that he ‘besought the Lord thrice’ for the removal of the thorn, he is not describing merely three prayers but instead three seasons of prayer, extended periods of wrestling and laboring in the Spirit for a specific blessing that never came. Indeed, as he suggests, another kind of blessing came—a closeness, a sensitivity, an acquaintance with Deity, a sanctified strength that came through pain and suffering. It was up against the wall of faith, when shorn of self-assurance and naked in his extremity and his frightening finitude, that a mere mortal received that enabling power we know as the grace of Christ. As the Savior explained to Moroni, when we acknowledge and confess our weakness—not just our specific weaknesses, our individual sins, but our weakness, our mortal limitation—and submit unto him, we transform weakness into strength (see Ether 12:27).” (Robert L. Millet, *Selected Writings of Robert L. Millet: Gospel Scholars Series* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000], 502.) “Indeed, some thorns in the flesh call forth prayers of great intensity (see 2 Corinthians 12:7-10), supplications and pleading that are certainly out of the ordinary. Such vexations of the soul are not typical, not part of our daily prayer life. Just as it would be a mistake to suppose that Jacob or Enos wrestled with God in prayer every day, so you and I are not expected to involve ourselves with the same tenacity, to be involved in the same bending of the soul on a regular basis. But now and then in the eternal scheme of things, we must pass through the fire in order to come through life purified and refined and thus prepared to dwell one day in everlasting burnings with God and Christ and holy beings.” (Robert L. Millet, *Selected Writings of Robert L. Millet: Gospel Scholars Series* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000], 438 - 439.)

9 And he said unto me, My ^agrace is sufficient for thee: for my ^bstrength is made perfect in ^cweakness. James E. Faust said: “Here, then, is a great truth. In the pain, the agony, and the heroic endeavors of life, we pass through a refiner’s fire, and the insignificant and the unimportant in our lives can melt away like dross and make our faith bright, intact, and strong. In this way the divine image can be mirrored from the soul. This pain is part of the purging toll exacted of some to become acquainted with God. In the agonies of life, we seem to listen better to the faint godly whisperings of the Divine Shepherd. Into every life there come the painful, despairing days of adversity and buffeting. There seems to be a full measure of anguish, sorrow, and often heartbreak for everyone, including those who earnestly seek to do right and be faithful. The apostle Paul referred to his own challenge: ‘And lest I should be exalted above measure . . . there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.’ (2 Corinthians 12:7.) “The thorns that prick, that stick in the flesh, that hurt—these often change lives that may seem robbed of significance and hope. This change comes about through a refining process that often seems cruel and hard. In this way the soul can become like soft clay in the hands of the Master in building lives of faith, usefulness, beauty, and strength. For some, the refiner’s fire causes a loss of belief and faith in God, but those with eternal perspective understand that such refining is part of the perfection process.” (*To Reach Even unto You* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1980], 98.) Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may ^drest upon me. (Trust in the Lord in spite of our weaknesses.)

10 Therefore I take pleasure in ^ainfirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in ^bpersecutions, in distresses

for Christ's sake: for when I am ^cweak, then am I ^dstrong.

11 I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very ^achiefest apostles, though I be nothing. (“As you know, Paul was, sadly, required to spend a significant amount of time defending his apostolic calling. Having been a zealous Pharisee and even a persecutor of the Christians before his conversion, and not having been one of the original witnesses of the Resurrection of Christ, he felt the need to testify to his detractors that his call had indeed come from God.” (Robert L. Millet, *Selected Writings of Robert L. Millet: Gospel Scholars Series* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000], 501 - 502.)

12 Truly the ^asigns of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

13 For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not ^aburdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.

14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I ^aseek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

16 But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.

17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you?

18 I desired Titus, and with *him* I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? *walked we* not in the same steps?

19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your ^aedifying.

20 For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and *that* I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, ^astrifes, ^bbackbitings, whisperings, swellings, ^ctumults:

21 *And* lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

CHAPTER 13

Saints should test themselves as to righteousness—Be perfect, of one mind, and live in peace.

1 *THIS is* the third *time* I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three ^awitnesses shall every word be established. (Henry B. Eyring said: “In our own time, we have been warned with counsel of where to find safety from sin and from sorrow. One of the keys to recognizing those warnings is that they are repeated. For instance, more than once in these general conferences, you have heard our prophet say that he would quote a preceding prophet and would therefore be a second witness and sometimes even a third. Each of us who has listened has heard President Kimball give counsel on the importance of a mother in the home and then heard President Benson quote him, and we have heard President Hinckley quote them both. The Apostle Paul wrote that ‘in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established’ (2 Cor. 13:1). One of the ways we may know that the warning is from the Lord is that the law of witnesses, authorized witnesses, has been invoked. When the words of prophets seem repetitive, that should rivet our attention and fill our hearts with gratitude to live in such a blessed time.” (“Finding Safety in Counsel,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 25))

2 I told you before, and foretold you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare:

3 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.

4 For though he was ^acrucified through weakness, (He was able to die because Mary was his mother and from her he inherited the power of mortality. DNTC, 2:451) yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

5 ^aExamine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that ^bJesus ^cChrist is in you, except ye be reprobates? (Bruce R. McConkie said: "I propose some simple tests that all of us may take to determine if we are true to the faith. They consist of a few basic questions, all of which must be answered correctly in order to gain the full blessings of the gospel in this life and inherit eternal life in the realms ahead. Our well-beloved brother Paul, an Apostle of old, counsels us in these words: 'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.' (2 Cor. 13:5.) And we may well ask ourselves: Do we believe all of the doctrines of salvation? Are we keeping the commandments? Are we valiant in the cause of truth and righteousness? Will we be saved in the kingdom of God? "From among many questions that all of us must one day answer, let me test you on these:

Test one: Do I worship the only true and living God?...

Test two: Do I believe in the fall of Adam? ...

Test three: Do I believe in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ? ...

Test four: Do I accept the true plan of salvation? ...

Test five: Do I believe the gospel as it has been restored in this final dispensation of grace? ...

Test six: Am I a faithful member of the true Church? ...

Test seven: Do I honor Joseph Smith as the great prophet of the Restoration? ...

Test eight: Am I enduring to the end, growing in grace, and gaining the attributes of godliness?...

Test nine: Do I put first in my life the things of God's kingdom? Is it with me and mine the kingdom of God or nothing? ...

Test ten: Am I so living that I will be saved in the kingdom of God?

"This is our goal and aim and purpose in life. Everything we do should please the Lord and further our strivings for salvation. And, the Lord be praised, there comes a time in the lives of faithful Saints when, having kept the faith and been true and faithful at all hazards, the Lord says to them: Thou shalt be exalted. These, then, are a few of the many tests of true discipleship." ("The Caravan Moves On," *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 82, 85)

6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is ^ahonest, though we be as reprobates.

8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

9 For we are glad, when we are ^aweak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, *even* your perfection.

10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the ^apower which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be ^aperfect, be of good comfort, be of ^bone ^cmind, live in ^dpeace; and the God of ^elove and peace shall be with you.

12 Greet one another with an holy ^akiss (salutation).

13 All the saints salute you.

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen.