

# Come and See

*A true story of Christ and His Apostles*

*Seen through the eyes of*

*"The disciple whom Jesus loved"*

by  
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*"And the multitude of the earth was gathered together; and I beheld that they were in a large and spacious building, like unto the building which my father saw. And the angel of the Lord spake unto me gain, saying: Behold the world and the wisdom thereof; yea, behold the house of Israel hath gathered together to fight against the twelve apostles of the Lamb." I Nephi 11:35*

*"And John saw and bore record of the fullness of my glory, and the fullness of John's record is hereafter to be revealed." D&C 93:6*

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## On the Lake

*“After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.”* John 6:1

“Where’s John?” asked Zebedee of his older son James, exasperated that his second son was off on another adventure and nowhere to be found, when there was work to be done. And to make matters worse, he had taken one of the family’s fishing boats and was out on the lake alone.

“He could have at least taken some men and some nets out with him, and improved his time by catching a few fish.”

Zebedee knew that his son enjoyed being out on the water contemplating heaven knows what. He could appreciate this quality in his son, for he liked to be alone and think as well. But Zebedee liked to be alone with his crew and a few choice fish, netted from the depths of the Sea of Galilee.

“Where’s John?” taunted James. “Where *is* John? That’s the question of the day! No, that’s the question of the month. In fact, that’s always the question.”

“Oh well, let him go.” said practical James. “I can handle things well enough without him. Besides, when he does come back, he’s ready to work, and can out-work the best of our hired men.”

“Fourteen years old, and already the boy has a mind of his own. I wonder where his dreams will take him.” Zebedee asked himself.

“He’s a good fisherman, and he handles a boat as if by second nature. He always seems to sense where the fish are, and he works well with the crew, but I can tell his heart isn’t in it. It’s almost like he was destined to do something else. But what? Every son follows in the footsteps of his father. But that boy... Well, I just don’t know.”

Out in the middle of the lake, I lowered the sail and laid back in the bottom of the boat. I just drifted around in the water, looking up at the clear blue Galilee sky. I knew I was supposed to be back on shore helping my father and brother and the workers, but the day was just too beautiful, and the call too luring. Besides, when I returned, I could make up for the lost time.

Finally, I had a chance to take a break from the rigorous monotony of life back on the land. My body relaxed as the boat rocked up and down on the gentle waves. Up and down. Up and down. I was half asleep and half awake. I could hear the sound of the usual wind, which had now calmed into a capricious breeze, first blowing this way, and then blowing that. I couldn’t tell which direction it came from, nor where it was going, as it bore me about, above the water.

Looking at the thin, lacey clouds of the sky, I imagined that they might be angels looking down, watching over me, or preparing to announce some great event of importance to Israel and the entire world.

Wouldn't that be something?

Things were pretty boring around this little land even since the Romans took over. I knew the Jews didn't like it because there was something simmering under the surface. I sensed that something was about to happen – to me and to my family and all my friends. Something. But what?

So, I thought that if something big was going to happen to me, I might as well get ready. But, how do you prepare for something when you don't even know what is coming. My father taught us to always be prepared out on the lake for a storm, an accident, or any eventuality. He said that you always had to keep your eyes and ears open, and observe what's going on around you.

But at that moment my eyes were half open and my ears were half-closed. I imagined I heard those cloudy angels singing on the breeze, and calling my name. "John....John, are you listening? John, are you ready?"

A chill went through me. "Yes, Lord, I am ready again." I said, almost instinctively, little realizing what I said or who I was talking to.

A sudden pick-up in the wind brought me quickly back into present time.

A fourteen year-old boy can hold onto a single thought for so long, no matter how well he thinks he can concentrate, and my thoughts took a more active turn. I stood up and was hoisting the sail, off on a pretend adventure.

But I already realized that this lake was too small for me. I had already sailed over every inch of what was called a "sea", but was actually a small fresh-water lake. I longed to be out on the western sea. I once asked some Greeks what lay out beyond the edge of that western sea, past Crete, past Rome, past some place which they called the "Pillars of Hercules".

"The Phoenicians and a few traders have been out into the great sea which lies beyond the western sea, but few have ventured very far out." they told me.

I resolved then and there that, if I ever had the chance in this lifetime or some other lifetime, I would travel out there – alone, if I had to. I couldn't stand the thought of something being there, and me not knowing about it, if I could.

My thoughts turned to the story of Noah and the ark. How he got the animals to trust him and come aboard his vessel and be delivered from the flood. Even those animals, which hated the water, came gladly along. How did he do it? I know how I would do it. I would just love the animals, like I do now, and if God told me to, I would talk to them, like I do now. They would feel that love and want to follow me to safety. Besides, I'm a good sailor. There wouldn't be any sea-sick giraffes or zebras. No. Not on my boat. And the lions wouldn't pick on the sheep. Well, at least for 40 days and 40 nights.

I loved thinking about old Father Noah. Lot's of people thought he was weird back then, and even now, but I think he was a great and godly man. He was my great grandfather, 20 times over,

and I had the records to prove it. But, then again he was everybody's great grandfather, 20 times over, whether they could prove it or not.

What would I do if I were Noah? After the years of preparation of the ark and preaching to the people, and having them all reject the message except for some of my family, I still couldn't bear to see them all perish in the flood. It makes me hope that God would provide a way for them to come back and make a fresh start when the world wasn't so filled with violence and they could see clearly the choices before them. I think, however, even at the end, rather than see somebody die I would offer him a ride on the ark, just to save his life. What if Noah made such an offer? And what if nobody accepted that offer? That was something to think about.

The Bible says that after Noah and his family came out on the dry ground after the flood, one of the first things Noah did was to plant a vineyard. Maybe the old boy loved his wine, but I also saw it as a symbolic act. Isaiah compared Israel, or the Lord's people, to a vineyard. He established it, planted it, and cared for it, in hopes of obtaining a harvest at the end of the age, just as Noah planted his children and the vineyard in the new land. But, grapes don't grow themselves, and they don't pick themselves, either. I wonder who will tend the vines, and who will harvest the grapes?

Noah not only saved the animals, but he saved much of his family, just like our ancestor Joseph ben Jacob, whom my brother was named after. When the Lord decreed a famine upon the land of their inheritance, Joseph had the vision to prepare a temporary place for them – a kind of “ark” – where they could survive the famine, and eventually return to this land in safety.

Well, speaking of taking care of one's family, and returning in safety, I decided I better head back home to see how my family was doing.

## A Wild Man in the Wilderness

*“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.”* John 1:6

I often went into our little town of Bethsaida to hear the news from other fisherman and travelers who passed through the village. One day there was talk of another teacher, another would-be messiah preaching in the hills and stirring up the people. My people were restless and easily aroused. Such was their resentment for the iron yoke of Rome. They yearned for a deliverer like David of old who would drive out their enemies and re-establish the Kingdom of Israel, and they gladly listened to anybody who came along who was willing to rouse up the rabble, and perhaps talk a little sedition.

“Who is this man?” somebody asked.

“He won’t say. He keeps referring to himself as ‘The Voice of One crying in the Wilderness.’ He doesn’t dress like the other teachers and rabbis. He wears camel hair and eats wild things that he finds out in the wilderness.”

“Not my idea of a leader.” said another. “I’m waiting for a great king who will come riding in on a great white horse, cutting asunder the enemies of Israel, smiting the Gentiles, and ruling with a rod of iron. That’s the man I would follow.”

Suddenly, I had an idea. “Didn’t the prophet Isaiah say of the Lord: ‘My thoughts are not your thoughts, and my ways are not your ways’? What if God sends another kind of deliverer who sets men free by setting their spirits free? Who says he has to kill all the Romans to do that? Look at them. They are as much in bondage to Caesar as we are to them. If we are all free men, who then needs a king to rule over us?”

Another man in the crowd spoke up, pointing his finger at me. “That kind of talk, young man, will get you in trouble with both the Pharisees and with the legions of Rome. I would advise you to keep your mouth shut and tend to your business. If you know what’s good for you.” We have no king but Caesar, and the sooner you accept that fact, the better for you.

Being only fourteen, and knowing what was good for me, I said nothing more. However, the image of this strange men crying in the wilderness intrigued me. Sure, I had heard of false prophets and false teachers before, but something about the phrase ‘The Voice of One crying in the wilderness’ struck me to the core. Who is this ‘one’, and what’s he crying about? And why the wilderness? Isaiah wrote something about this. He also wrote something about the glory of the Lord being revealed?

I wandered off alone, again, and started thinking. Something tells me that things aren’t always as they seem. A ‘wilderness’ doesn’t have to be a place. It can also be a people – a people deserted and abandoned; a people without a leader; like sheep without a shepherd. I knew more about fish

than I did about sheep, but I had heard that sheep always learn to recognize the voice of their shepherd.

It was then that I again heard a voice in my head. It was not a strong voice, neither was it a harsh voice, but I knew it because I had heard it before, and as before, it pierced me to the very center.

“John, listen to me. I am the Voice crying in the wilderness. The voice because my voice is Spirit. The wilderness because you are alone and cannot see me, but if you continue faithful, the day will come when you shall both see me, and know me. Yes, I will take up my abode with you, and you will sup with me and I with you.

“John, the man of whom you heard is a prophet sent from the Most High. He is not the shepherd, but neither is he a hireling. Listen to his voice, for he will lead Israel and the Gentiles to their true shepherd. You are to be his disciple and do as he instructs, and together you will find that which you seek.

“That which you see, you are to witness. You are to write down that which you both see and hear. Be thou my faithful witness.”

I was shocked. I didn't think I was seeking anything. I had a good life. I made a good living in little Bethsaida (the “house of fish”), working in the family business as a fisherman.

Sure, I was curious, as all young boys are. No, I was more curious than most, even for my age. I liked to take things apart to see how they worked. Sometimes, in doing so, I broke them, and other times I lucked out and fixed them. I wasn't afraid to talk to anybody, and I often asked questions -- which got me into “trouble”.

My mother always said that I continually carried a sense of mission and urgency about me. She also noted, without my realizing it, that I loved to write, and I never went anywhere without a scroll and quill, and a horn of writer's ink at my side. I wrote down everything: my thoughts, my hopes and dreams, my impressions of other people. I thought it would be a good skill to have someday. But, now I suddenly realized that I was looking for something which I lacked. And my sense of mission kicked in, along with a healthy (or unhealthy according to how one views it) dose of impatience.

I resolved to strike out on my own and find this strange teacher. After apologizing, and doing suitable “penance” for taking the boat out alone, he told me I was “grounded”.

Taking that to mean, I couldn't go out to sea again for a while, I then sheepishly asked my father for permission to leave for a day or so to see if I would find this teacher. Of course, he thought I was crazy, but he also knew what once I got an idea into my head, I would figure out a way to do it, one way or another, with or without his permission, so he quickly realized that he might as well agree to it. “Mind you, boy, if you are gone for more than two days, I will send your brother James after you, and I don't think you want that.”

No, I didn't particularly want James tagging along after me. I was an independent sort, but when my older brother was along, people would expect me to defer to him. I did so, naturally, but as

the youngest, I was always trying to assert my independence, and having a big brother around would just cramp my style. Besides, if and when I did meet this teacher, this “voice”, I wanted to ask him some very pointed questions. I am always curious, remember.

## By the River

*“The same man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might have faith. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. This is the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world.” John 1:7-9*

To make a long story short, I wandered around the area of Galilee asking people I met along the way if they had heard of this strange teacher and where he might be. My trail eventually lead me down to the Jordan River, at one of the few wide spots in the river, where the waters flowed slow and deep.

He stood out in the middle of the river with several followers, while others stood watching on the bank. He placed his left arm around a person, and with his right hand raised high above his head, he called out in a clear voice: “Having authority, I baptize you unto the remission of sins, ...” Then, he dipped them wholly into the water, and brought them straightway forth again, out of the water.

He repeated this process with each of the people out in the river, and then they all retired to the bank, and dried off their clothes. At this point, the man noticed me and came up to me.

“Who are you, young man, and what do you want with us? How did you find us?”

“My name is John, son of Zebedee, the fisherman”, I said. “I don’t know exactly why I am here. I heard there was a wild, crazy man teaching out in the wilderness, and I came to see for myself.”

“John’, you say. Son of Zebedee. Where to you hail from?”

“Bethsaida, of Galilee.” I said.

“Is Salome your mother?”

“Yes, but how did you know?” Was this man a prophet?

“Then, we are cousins! My name is John, as well. My father was Zacharias, and my mother is Elizabeth.”

“Why do you say your father WAS Zacharias? Is he not still your father?”

“My father is dead. He was murdered by a mob of angry priests when I was quite young. But, I’m getting ahead of myself. I need to explain who I really am, and how I came to be doing what I am doing today.”

He then gathered his little flock around him, and said:

“My friends, we have a newcomer in our midst. This is my distant cousin John of Bethsaida, son of Zebedee. He asked me a question which I would like to answer for all of you because there is much to be learned from this story.

“My father, Zacharias, was a priest who served regularly in the Temple. One day, while he was burning incense before the Lord in the Holy of Holies, an angel named Gabriel appeared to him. The angel told my father that he and my mother would conceive a son, whose name would be John. He would be filled with the Holy Ghost throughout all his life. And he shall go before the coming messiah in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

“My parents were old and stricken in years, so my father could not believe the words of the angel and asked for a sign. The sign that the angel gave was that he would be unable to speak until all these words should be fulfilled.

“Shortly after this, my mother conceived, and I was born. On the eighth day, the family and priests gathered to circumcise and name me. Those gathered wanted to name me after my father, but my father, who still could not speak, wrote on a tablet and insisted that my name should be John. And thus it was.

“Immediately, my father’s mouth was unstopped, the Holy Ghost came upon him, and he uttered a prophecy concerning my life.

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins and through his words, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.’

“I know that my father spoke as true servant of God, and that these words were inspired words from the Lord. I learned this prophecy word for word. It has been a guide for my life.”

“After my father uttered this prophecy, all the people wondered what manner of man I would become, but my faithful parents didn’t doubt my mission for a minute. They taught me and prepared me for it throughout my young life.

“However, the priests were outraged that an angel should appear to my father, but not to them. They accused him of conceiving a child by the power of the devil, and so they murdered him, even while he was about his priestly duties.

“Even at that tender age, I vowed that I would someday show people what vipers and hypocrites these false teachers were, but before that day came, I had to study the Law, and prepare for my future mission.

“Then, after many years of studying the Law and the Prophets, I felt a calling from God welling up in my soul. I prayed and asked: ‘Lord, what would you have your servant to do?’

“I was visited by the Spirit of the Lord step by step, not knowing before hand what I should do, or where I should go. When my preparation was nearly complete, I was instructed to come out of spiritual Babylon, to retire to the wilderness, and to gather and prepare a people to meet the coming Messiah. I was told to baptize those who had faith unto repentance. This baptism was an outward token of an inner spiritual cleansing. I was told by him who sent me that the Pharisees, the spiritual leaders of the Jews, would gather to hear me and mock at me, but from their number, the Christ would emerge and ask to be baptized. God’s Holy Lamb, the one without sin, without blemish or spot would ask me, I, who am not worthy to buckle his sandals, to baptize him, in order to fulfill all righteousness. I asked how I might recognize the man, and I was told: ‘Behold, the Lord does nothing, save he reveals His secrets unto His servants the prophets. You, John, are a prophet and a servant of the Most High God, who sends more witnesses and proves all His words. By this sign shall you know the Christ: after you baptize him, and he arises out of the water, the Holy Spirit shall descend upon Him in the sign of the Dove, by this sign shall you know him, and you shall bear witness that this is indeed the very Christ. You shall baptize with water, but He shall baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost.’

“I learned the lesson from my father not to seek for signs, but the Spirit told me the sign by which I could recognize the Christ. I am looking forward to seeing that sign, for I know that I shall see it in due time.

“I did all that I was commanded, and here we are today. We are now a small flock. The Greeks would call us an Ecclesia, a group of those who were called out, and who answered the call to gather. In future times, men will build up churches unto themselves, establish creeds, and teach for doctrines the commandments of men. They will set up bounds to exclude all those who do not think as they do. But you, little flock, are gathered in preparation for the coming of Messiah. We await his coming and await his doctrine, the Doctrine of Christ, which shall be the only doctrine we follow. As we prepare, you must, each of you, prepare to recognize the Lord. When the time of decision comes, you must each search your hearts and decide whether to leave and follow Him, or stay and follow me, and help prepare more souls to follow Him. He must increase, but I must decrease.”

I saw that many in the crowd were moved to tears as John spoke of his father, and of the coming Messiah. They asked him, “Teacher, how shall we prepare for him? How shall we know him?”

## Prayer

*“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see the Father, neither does it know the Father: but you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you.”* John 14:16-17

“Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation.” John said. “Give strict attention to the Spirit, for there will be many false messiahs sent to deceive you and you will want to follow them, but you will recognize the true messiah, just as I will, by his Spirit, and by his words, for his words will be the same words which the Spirit gives you through prayer.”

“What is this Spirit of which you speak? Why haven’t our teachers in the synagogue spoken of this ‘Spirit’? We do pray several times a day as taught by the traditions of our fathers, but we know nothing of this ‘Spirit’. What are we lacking, teacher?”

“You are indeed correct, my friends. You have been taught to pray, but you do not know how to pray correctly, and you do not know how to pray so that your prayers will be answered.”

“People think prayer is talking, but the first thing you need to learn about prayer is to listen. My young cousin, John, will teach us what it means to listen.”

What was this? Me teach? I could tell that John the “wild man” was a very good teacher because the people listened to him, and some even thought he was a prophet. Why would he ask me to teach when I have never spoken like this before? What did I, a fourteen year-old kid, know? What did I have to offer?

I stumbled and mumbled a bit.

“Just tell how them how you found us and why you came?” John said.

“Then tell us what’s in your heart.”

Somehow, I trusted this man. I knew that he would not ask me to do something that I couldn’t do, even though he hardly knew me. So, I tried my best, and the words just came. I told how I had been praying and listening, and when I found out about this ‘crazy man’ out here, I just had to go and see if the stories were true for myself.”

There were several chuckles of agreement from the audience, and several others told similar stories. Then John spoke again:

“My friends, what you heard is the voice of our Heavenly Father speaking through the Holy Spirit. I do not have the keys to explain this fully, but when the true Master comes, He will teach this principle in its fullness. But, what I can say is this. When we are following the commandments,

and the greatest commandment is to love your neighbor as you would be loved, this Spirit will be with you and will speak to you in a voice that you will understand and which will give you peace.

“When the spirit directs you to pray, this is the manner in which you should pray.”

”Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.”,

”We give glory to that Name by letting our light shine, and by doing the works of the Father.”

”Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

”In our Father's Kingdom, all are made equal by his love.”

”Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

”How can a man think about spiritual things unless the needs of the flesh are satisfied? How can a man think to come to the Lord and be reconciled to Him if he has aught against his brother. Take care of your physical needs and settle earthly entanglements, then you will be free to concentrate on the things of the Spirit, and to help others in need.

”As we pray together, we grow in our love and unity.”

”And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

”Father, give us the light and knowledge you promised that we may know and follow the true Messiah, when he comes.”

”For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.”

## Baptism

*“Jesus answered, Truly, I say to you, unless a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” John 3:5*

“Now, as you have heard these words, are there any more of you who have been pricked in your heart and moved to acknowledge your sins, repent of them, and desire to be baptized unto repentance? Have you felt a desire to be one with our little flock, to bear one another’s burdens that they may be light? Have you felt a desire to take upon yourselves the Name of Christ, to keep his commandments that you may always have His spirit to be with you, and to stand as a witness of that Name at all times and at all places? If you have these desires now, what have you against going down into the waters of baptism as a witness before God, angels, and your brothers and sisters gathered here that you are willing to take upon yourselves the Name of Christ with full purpose of heart?”

As he spoke these words, many in the crowd pressed forward. Encouraged by their desires to be baptized, I myself, though I had only been with the group for a few hours, felt a burning in my bosom that I wanted to be gathered with this flock and be Christ’s at his coming. I had an overwhelming desire to be His witness at all times and at all places.

What was I saying? I hadn’t even met the man yet, but I was certain that I would recognize Him immediately, dove or no dove. Everything sounded so strangely familiar – like I was supposed to be here hearing this. I realized that everything that had happened in my life, up till now, had prepared me for this moment.

I followed my cousin down into the river. It was a little cold, but I was warm with anticipation.

“Are you sure, you know what you are doing, my young friend?”

“Surer than I have been with anything for a long, long time.”

As he recited the prayer, I could sense by the Spirit, that he did indeed have authority from God, and that he was performing his mission as instructed. When he placed my head under the water and held me for a brief second, I realized how helpless I was, and how I trusted him to bring me forth again.

I also had to chuckle to myself. Here I was a fisherman. My occupation was taking things out of the water. And here was John. His occupation was putting things back into the water.

As I came forth, I felt totally clean, inside and out. I felt refreshed in body and spirit, and I knew that feeling was because of my faith and desires, and not because of any inherent magic in the ritual or because of any special power that John had. The power he wielded was the power of the Spirit which manifest in his words, and which I verified in my Soul. I knew I was clean, and while I knew that I didn’t know much, I just wanted to teach and baptize everybody I met.

As if he had read my thoughts, John said,

“Not so fast, my young fisherman. You have a lot of growing and learning to do. Your time will come soon enough. But now, it is enough for you to come here as often as you can, learn the things I teach, and do them, and above all, observe everything you see and hear.

“You see, while you were down there getting wet, I had a little conversation with God. It seems that your desire will be fulfilled, and you will have opportunity to teach both in Israel and in the nations. My time here is short, but your time has only just begun.”

## Behold, the Man

*“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.”* John 1:14

I stayed with John and his disciples as long as I could. I returned to my fishing village only occasionally to see my family and to pick up a few belongings.

One day, while back on the riverbank with John and his disciples, I saw a group of Pharisees coming down the path. I didn't really care to listen in on the conversation they were having, but they were talking and laughing so loudly, I couldn't help but listen.

“Why are we wasting our time going way out here to see this crazy man?”

“You know the high priest gave us specific instructions: seek out any would-be messiahs and pretenders.”

“Yes, and either silence them for good, or neutralize them by embarrassing them in front of their followers.”

“But, what if this man really have something to teach us?”

“I doubt it. We are the true teachers of Israel. If God should send any holy messenger to teach the people, he would send one of us, His chosen Pharisees.”

“Ho, there, you in the animal skins! What are you doing here?”

“I am preaching the coming of the Kingdom of God. I am the voice crying in the wilderness.”

“What? Do you think you are some kind of prophet? Who do you think you are, acting like some kind of Elijah? Or maybe you think you actually are Elijah, like the last impostor before you claimed to be.”

John ignored the Pharisees, in their fine clothing, and continued to teach the poor, huddled around him in their rags.

“Speak up man! I am a servant of the High Priest. Have you no respect for authority? Answer me when I speak to you.”

“I know no authority, except for the Spirit of God, which speaks within me.” answered John.

“Oh, so you follow only the Spirit of God. So, you do claim to be Elijah.”

“I make no such claims. I am a servant of the living God, but I am not Elijah.”

“Then, perhaps you claim to be the Messiah, or in other words, that Christ. It is said that He is a great prophet who will come to deliver the people.”

“I am not that prophet, but I have come in his name.”

“Stop wasting our time and playing games with us. We have to tell those who sent us who you are. What do you have to say for yourself?”

John replied calmly: “Just who I am is not important. It’s what I am going that is important, and I have already told you why I am here. I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. If names and authority are so important to you, then go back and tell you masters that I am fulfilling the mission foreseen by the prophet Isaiah, to make straight the way of the Lord. In other words, to prepare the path before his coming.”

“Why are you baptizing your followers if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah?”

“I baptize them with water, as an outer sign of their inner repentance and cleansing, but He who comes after me will baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost. Would you also be baptized?”

The Pharisees started laughing and mocking and pointing the finger of scorn at John and his followers. Some of his followers hung their heads in shame and would gladly have left if they could. But, John called out to the priests: “You vipers! Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? You look in vain for the Messiah, but you know not what you look for, so leave us in peace!”

Then John paused a moment before continuing.

“Yet, I say that there is one among you whom you know not. He it is, who will bring the Kingdom of God to Israel!”

“Such sacrilege!” retorted one of the Pharisees.

“We have heard enough! Let us return and bring our report to the Sanhedrin, the true men of God and leaders of Israel.”

The Pharisees turned their back on John and his disciples and set their faces as if to return to Jerusalem, but to our astonishment, one of them returned and came up to John.

“I believe your words, brother. I have come to be baptized that I might receive the Kingdom.”

“No.” said John. “I cannot give you the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is within you. You must be pure in heart in order to see that kingdom. My baptism is but a symbol that you have purified your heart, but there comes one after me who will cleanse you with fire and with the Holy Ghost.”

“Well spoken, brother.” said the stranger. “Now I know that you are a true servant of God. I have cleansed my heart in preparation for my mission unto the children of men, and I have come to be baptized by you.”

I could tell that John sensed something special about this stranger who requested baptism, and I could feel it too. I sensed that he was testing John, and I sensed also that John has passed the test.

The stranger appeared to be a plain, ordinary man, but after a few minutes listening to him talk and looking in his eyes, I could tell that there was far more than met the eye. I had only the briefest inkling that I might be getting to know him much better.

John asked the stranger to remove his sandals and robe and asked me to take care of them while the two of them went down into the water.

John spoke: “I, John, having been sent of God, do baptize you unto repentance.”, and then he dipped the stranger into the water. Then I saw John do something I never saw him do before: he dipped himself under the water as well.

I watched the two of them as they arose from the water. It seemed to me that the two of them were wrapped in a circle of bright, glorious light.

John brought the stranger up the bank and called his disciples around him. Holding up the stranger’s hand, he called out to the crowd: “Behold the man! This is he of whom I spoke. Truly, I tell you, when I brought this man out of the water, I saw the heavens open, and I saw the Spirit of God descend upon him as if it were a dove. I also heard a voice from heaven saying: ‘This is my beloved son. Listen to his words.’”

We all wanted to meet him, but the stranger seemed very anxious about something as if he had to leave and perform an important errand somewhere else. He came up to me and asked for his robe and sandals. I told him that I, too, felt that he was a man of God. I helped him on with his robe and asked if I might honor a servant of God by lacing up his sandals. He agreed to let me do this.

Though I was usually shy by nature, I grew bold and spoke straight out: “I desire to serve the coming Master – he whom John told us would come. I perceive that you are the One whom he spoke of, and I desire to serve you.”

Then he taught me his first lesson, as he chuckled to me: “A true servant of God comes not to be served, but to serve. I know you, John, and I knew your desires. And this is why I suffered you to serve me in this way, but he that is greatest among you, must serve the others and be the least of many brethren.”

I was amazed that he knew my name.

“You will not serve me, but you will serve others with me.”

I was amazed that he knew what I wanted.

“But do you really know what you are asking? Are you ready to walk the same road that I walk?”

“Yes.” I hesitated, but then quickly added. “I am committed to walk that road. I don’t know what lies ahead, but a promise is a promise.”

“Well said. I need disciples like you to assist in this work. My mission is to teach a group of disciples and prepare them to receive the kingdom of God and teach them, that they may likewise prepare others. Some of these disciples will be called upon to be witnesses of my Name in all the earth. Tell me, John, are you prepared to die for what you believe in?”

“I-I think so.” I stammered. This guy didn’t waste any time, getting to the point, I thought.

“I know you are ready.” he said.

Then, without giving me time to think how he might know that, yet knowing in my heart-of-hearts that he was right, he caught me off-guard with another question.

“OK John, are you prepared to live for what you believe in?”

“I don’t know what you mean. I’m alive now, aren’t I?”

“In time you will know what I mean. You will choose this course yourself. And, you will count it worse than death. But you will choose it because it will be your heart’s desire, and I will grant it because you have greatly desired it.”

“You are talking in riddles, Master. I don’t understand what you mean.”

“You will in time.” he replied. “In the meantime, I feel the need to follow the Spirit that is in me. It is leading me someplace where I must go alone. But, I will return soon.”

By now, I was getting more and more interested in this stranger. I wanted to know where he was going and if I could walk that road with him now.

“Not just yet.” he said, and then he chuckled: “If you are going to follow me, you are really going to have to learn to be patient and pace yourself. You want everything to happen at once.”

Then he grew serious, as serious as any man I ever saw.

“You saw the light when I was baptized, didn’t you?”

I nodded, amazed that even my very thoughts were open to him.

“While I am gone, learn about the light. Learn all you can about the light. Remember what you already know about the light. Look to the light within yourself, and when you see it, look for me.”

“Also, I want you to take the time to think and remember everything that happened today, and everything that John taught you. He is a great prophet. You must record everything that happens. If you are faithful and record everything as you witnessed it, you will be serving me.”

I realized that this man truly knew me. He not only knew me, but he knew me better than I knew myself. How could he know all this?

Well, better do what he said, and learn to follow the light.

Then, I suddenly realized that we were walking down the road together, away from John’s encampment. Where had the time gone? He was getting ready to say good-bye and send me back, and I didn’t even know his name.

“You are wondering what my name is? It’s Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth.”

## The Light

*"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came to be a witness -- to bear witness of the Light, that all men, through following the example of Christ, who so personified the Light, that all men might have power to become the sons of God. John was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light -- the True Light, which lights every man who comes into the world." John 1:6-9*

"Jesus – Joshua." I thought to myself as I walked back to John's camp. "Jehovah is salvation."

All the rest of the day I pondered over the experience of meeting this Jesus and how he knew not only my mind, but also my heart. That night as I went to bed, I prayed for an understanding of what had transpired that day.

"O, God of our fathers, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I John, your servant, kneel before you to ask for knowledge and understanding..."

"What did you see today?" A voice came to me, from within my soul.

"I saw the man come, whom John prophesied would come and redeem all Israel."

"What is your witness?" the voice asked.

"What do you mean by witness?" I asked.

"What will you write?"

This startled me. In all the excitement, I had nearly forgotten that I was supposed to be recording all that I saw and heard.

"I will write that I saw the man Jesus descend into the waters of baptism, and when he came forth, I beheld the Spirit of God descend upon him as a shining light."

"Who do you say this man is?" the voice pressed me for an answer.

"I will say that I believe this man is a great teacher sent to Israel. I feel that I should follow him and learn from him as his disciple."

"That is right." said the voice. "When you say that you believe he is a great teacher, you are a faithful witness to that which you truly know – no more, and no less. If you continue to faithfully follow this man, and to faithfully bear witness of that which you see and hear, you will come to speak from an even greater knowledge than that which you have now. You had first a desire to believe, then a belief. Continue to nourish that belief, through faith, and it will grow up unto a veritable "tree of knowledge.

“You will obtain a sure knowledge, and will bear a true witness to the world, and if men do not add to that witness, nor take away from it, the Holy Spirit will confirm you witness and burn your words into the hearts and minds of the world.

“And if men hear your witness and become disciples of Christ, and continue to feast on His words, they will come to know the truth, and through this knowledge of the truth, they will be set free from whatever presently binds them in darkness.

“Now, what did you learn from him today?”

“I learned that I should seek to understand the light. Will you help me understand the light?”

“Very good, said the voice. You are to about to receive instruction, and when you have received the lesson, you are to record what you saw and heard, and also the thoughts and feelings of your heart. Now, kindly give your attention.”

At that I suddenly felt sick and in so much pain that I could stand it no longer. I either passed out or fell asleep – I could not tell which. All I know is that I had a dream. Upon awakening from the dream, I prayed for an interpretation and a confirmation of the interpretation. I received both. I know the dream was sent from the Lord in answer to prayer. Then, I prayed and asked the Lord to shine His Light upon me. I placed myself totally in His Hands to do with me what He willed, whether the light was for knowledge or for healing or for both. I received both. Following the experience I am about to relate, I felt much better and was able to resume my daily life.

At first, I was lying on my side with my hands cupped. My physical eyes were closed, but with my spiritual eyes, I could see that within my cupped hands, there was cradled a quality of light. Then, I turned on my back and was totally enveloped in light. I felt the Spirit strongly and felt knowledge and intelligence surge into my being.

I received a vision. In the vision, I was shown the creation. It began with light. Then the light was divided into two parts: pure intelligence, and the less refined material substance. Both were concentrated into the central part of what is now our galaxy. The material substance was hurled out across the cosmos by the action of the light. This substance formed all the stars and the planets. Then in like manner, intelligence was hurled out across the universe. The original light was God, and we are all pieces of this light, which was hurled out; we are all pieces of God.

But as the pieces of light radiated out from the presence of God, they did not completely leave their home, never to return. No, they were still connected to God and to each other by the power of love, which will one day draw all of them back again.

Just as there is a hierarchical arrangement in the material world with the galaxy, the stars, and planets, right down to the atoms, there is a corresponding arrangement of kingdoms among the family of mankind. There is a greater light, and a greater intelligence, just as there are lesser lights and lesser intelligences, and so on up and down the line from the vastness of God, to the tiniest atom. There is a chain of command among the heavenly bodies from this earth right on up the line to the place where God dwells. From what I saw, I suppose I saw what our father Abraham saw. As one progresses from world to world, “worlds without end”, on the way to Godhood, a person may travel up and down this hierarchy of worlds until one comes to God, but normally a

person does not venture outside of this chain of command until after the person becomes like God.

For a brief second, I was allowed to see through the eyes of God, and this is what I saw. I saw that while each world differed in glory, I saw that the inhabitants thereof were equal in the eyes of God, and that God loved them all equally. I saw the inhabitants of those worlds climbing, as it were, on ladders. They were all at different places on the ladder, and they were all climbing at different speeds. God looked at it all, through my eyes, and saw that it was all good.

I, then, saw the world in which we now live – a mixture of light and darkness. The darkness was powerful, but it was not able to overcome or envelop the light. But I saw the kingdoms of this world and they were enveloped in darkness: killing, violence, hatred, and division. Little children were born into the world with no opportunity to choose light over darkness, so great was the evil. I saw the people who had chosen light over darkness were carried up to one of the higher realms, together with their leader Enoch, and all their cities, lands, flocks, and all their possessions.

I saw the remainder of mankind lost in the darkness with little hope of redemption except for our father Noah and some of his family, who were just and perfect, but had chosen to remain behind and teach mankind. Noah and his sons labored for many years to teach mankind and bring them to the light, but their words were rejected. Eventually, God chose to destroy that world while preserving the lives of Noah and his family so that they could begin a new race where the children of men could begin again and at least have an opportunity to choose light after darkness.

I saw that right up until the flood came, God was willing to preserve the lives of the people who trusted in him, for after all the animals were on board the ark, Noah and his wife invited all who would be saved to join them in safety. But the people refused to believe that a flood would come, and they refused to trust a true servant of God who offered temporal salvation to them. Thus, they perished in the sins of their lives.

However, I saw after many years that men again began to love darkness more than light, and this, I was given to know, was because they came not unto God, but instead rose up in the imaginations of their hearts and choose for themselves kings to rule over them, and priests to position themselves between them and God – priests who imposed burdens upon the people that were grievous to be borne, yet they cared not for the sick, or the poor, or the widows, or the orphans.

I cried out within my soul: “Lord, when will the people see the light and choose light over darkness?”

“Look! Tell me what you see!” cried the voice.

I looked and saw, one who had been in the beginning with god, who was not created or made. He was now as we once were, but he had overcome the darkness and was no longer corrupted by it. I saw this one become flesh and dwell among us, manifesting the light to all who would receive him. I also saw that this one would be the very personification of the supreme love of God, and that he would manifest this for all who had eyes to see, and ears to hear, and broken hearts that could be penetrated. I saw also that he came unto his own, but most of his own would not receive

him, but unto such as did receive him, he taught them how to obtain the power within themselves to become as he – even the sons of God.

I felt a love for this person. I wanted to be with him. I wanted to be like him. I wanted to teach others how to be like him. I didn't even realize what I was saying. All I knew that that my whole life had been a preparation for this moment, and now I had a reason to live, besides just being a fisherman in Galilee.

I pondered who this wonderful person could be, and suddenly I was given to recall the baptism of Jesus in intimate detail. I saw him come out of the water. I saw the light descend upon him, and abide with him.

I asked the voice with whom I spoke: "Is this the manifestation of the light and love of God? Is this he whom I seek to serve?"

The voice didn't bother to answer this question, but instead, anticipated my next question and answered that question instead. I later learned that this was to be a pattern when I had conversations with this voice -- this invisible teacher.

"You may choose to follow him if you will, but remember the choice is yours to freely make."

I was next shown a bit of the future life and mission of the man called Jesus. He was to be a teacher, traveling about the land of Israel teaching the people and doing signs and wonders. He chose twelve disciples and called them out as Apostles – meaning "ones called and sent". These Twelve followed him whithersoever he went.

I was shown the mission of The Twelve. These special individuals are special witnesses of God. These individuals are advanced souls who have already overcome many of the trials and temptations of mortality and are embracing the light. They have returned to earth many times, sometimes being born as mortal men, and sometimes appearing suddenly as glorious messengers or angels of God.

Even when coming as mortal men they serve as messengers of God in all times and in all ages. They were the Twelve Patriarchs before the Flood. They were the Twelve Patriarchs over the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Each had a special mission at one time or another as a Deliverer, or "Redeemer", or "Savior" in the House of Israel. Daniel was one. So was David; and so was Noah; and so was Joseph. Each, in their own turn, was a prophet to Israel. Each will be a watchman upon the towers of ZION.

They were the Twelve Apostles who served with the Lord Jesus Christ during His mortal ministry. These are those whom He promised would return with Him to judge the Twelve Tribes of Israel. These are those whom you have known and loved, and whom you will yet come to know and love.

The vision left me unclear as to whether all the Twelve would participate in all these missions, but I do know that there are at least two who are designated as the Lord's Witnesses. For, it is

said in the scriptures that there will be two anointed ones, who serve before the Lord of all the earth.

On Judgment Day, mankind will stand before the Throne of God with Christ as Advocate and Satan as Accuser. Just as Christ continually pleads the cause of mankind before the Throne of the Father, Satan likewise stands and continually accuses men for all their sinful acts. These twelve independent witnesses will be called upon to bear witness of the acts of men upon the earth. They will also provide independent testimony of the fall of Adam, the suffering, atonement, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They will bear independent witness of all the good and evil which mankind has committed upon the earth, both as individuals, and as nations.

I now knew what I was going to write:

“In the beginning God uttered the word, and light was manifest, and life was manifest, and in that life was the light of truth. And this was according to the will of God, who made the decision to become.

“That light of truth, which lights every man who comes into the world, struck a tent in human flesh that he might manifest the light to those who have hidden themselves in darkness.

“And we beheld his glory, even the glory of the first born of God. The first born of many brethren, for as many as received him, he showed them the way to grow in life and light, even as he did. And thus may all become the sons and daughters of God, even those called of the first born.

“And he makes them equals in his kingdom.

“And he places his name upon them, even his father’s name, for they are his.”

And thus I wrote.

And the voice came unto me again saying, “Write what you have seen, for your words are true and faithful, and you shall be one my witnesses. A portion of your words shall come forth among your brethren, the Jews, but a portion of your words, you shall seal up to come forth in a day when the Lord shall set his hand a second time to gather the outcasts of spiritual Israel, a day when the kingdom of God shall be established on the earth in its fullness.”

“Will not the kingdom be restored to Israel in our day?” I asked.

I was confused because I had supposed that the Christ has come to gather Israel and bring about the kingdom in the near future.

“This will not yet be. The Son of Man has come to plant the seeds of the kingdom and to gather unto himself those who will be gathered. You and your fellow servants will be called to assist in this preparatory work. But though its fruits will not be visible for many years, think not that this work is unimportant to the plan. Truly, I tell you that you are laying the foundation of this king-

dom even now, and the City of our God will be built on this earth, and it will be built upon the foundation of the testimony of you and your fellow servants, the Apostles.”

“When can I meet these Apostles?” I stumbled over the strange word. Having been born to a family of some means, I knew some Greek, but it was not my native tongue, and I was less than comfortable with the term.

“The Christ will call and choose you and your brethren, but he will not call you ‘Apostles’. Later writers will call you that. To him, you will simply be known as his disciples.”

I could live with that. Not seeking any special office, or wanting to set any one person above another, I preferred to simply call them “disciples”, as Christ would. This I did in my Gospel.

“As for when you will meet them, the Lord will call them one by one.”

“Are you prepared for the Lord to call you?”

“Yes!” I said, for that was the desire of my heart. Something jumped inside my chest. If I were a woman, I would swear I was pregnant. I was a man, and a young one at that, but something was being born, deep within me.

“That is well, for you will be among the first to follow him. But remember, you cannot truly choose him without him choosing you. You must each choose the other. You must choose to serve together as brethren with purity and with full purpose of heart.”

“If you have desires to serve God, you are called to the work; and by their desires and by their works shall the twelve be known. When the Lord chooses his own, he will look into their hearts and know them again.”

“Why are you telling me this?” I asked.

“I am telling you this because you are to record how he calls each of them. You are to bear witness of this call, and to the calling of these apostles as a whole. There is more, but you need to take your rest for tonight.”

I was exhausted, yet at the same time excited by the events of the day. I couldn’t wait for the stranger to return and to begin his work. As I wondered where he left in such a hurry, I dropped off into a sound sleep.

## In the Wilderness of Temptation

*“...the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.”* John 14:30

The next few days were relatively uneventful. I continued in John’s camp, conversing with him and the occasional seekers, both of the spiritual and the curiosity kinds, who happened to pass by. In the back of my mind, I kept mulling over the events of my encounter with Jesus, and the profound impression he made on me. I hoped he would return soon, and I wondered what he was doing and where he was.

One afternoon, the camp grew silent. Few, if any, visitors came, and few people were milling about. We had just eaten our lunch, and were in a wistful, sleepy mood. Most people retreated to the shade or to their tents in order to take a break from the heat. I laid down in the shade of a palm tree, and started letting my mind wander.

I closed my eyes and thought about what Jesus was doing at this very instant. As I do so, a warm feeling swept over me, and then I started feeling hungry – as though I hadn’t eaten for days. I also felt that while my body was in a weakened condition, I was strong of spirit, open and receptive to whatever light and knowledge I might receive. Wondering what all of this meant, I opened my eyes and was back in the here and the now.

A few days later, I was again contemplating where my new chosen master was and what he might be doing. I had the same impressions as before, but I felt something new. There was a stranger in my presence – a very powerful stranger. I could feel him, but I couldn’t see him. However, I felt great intelligence and great cunning, but at the same time, enormous fear and unbounded hatred.

I thought to myself: “Why should I hate something that I can’t even see?”

But then I realized that the hatred wasn’t coming from me, but it was coming from this new, strange presence.

This presence wanted to bargain with me. He told me that I had suffered long enough, and it was time to relax my vigil and satisfy the needs of my physical body. He tried to make me doubt my own spiritual strength and inner knowledge and seek affirmation from other people. He challenged me to prove that I was more powerful than he was. All this having failed, he demanded that I cast all knowledge and reason aside and show absolute obedience to him in exchange for what he tried to convince me he had to offer.

I sensed that he has little more to offer than fear and intimidation, and that the only power he had was that which I gave him, so I told him to be gone, and he left.

As the dark presence left me, I felt another glorious presence nearby, lifting me up and comforting me. I felt myself sobbing tears of joy at my deliverance. The new, bright being felt like me – only it was another me – a better version of myself. I welcomed his presence and his vital energy. I felt a certain confident relief I could clearly discern between the energies of the two presences

or personages and was glad that I had chosen the latter. I felt like I had passed some kind of test or a milestone of some sort.

“Wait a minute. That wasn’t happening to me, or was it?”

I’m still here, sitting under this tree. But I thought I was in a cave, in the side of a cliff, overlooking the Dead Sea. I stopped and wondered what I was thinking about when all this happened.

Oh yes, I was thinking about the master. Could it be that I was somehow able to tune into his thoughts?

“Yes.”, another voice came to me and shook me to the center of my being. “I have permitted this so that you could witness my preparations for my ministry. Treasure up your thoughts and feelings and when the time comes you may share them with your fellow servants. I will return shortly and call you to follow me. In the meantime follow John, as I must finish my preparations.

Then I will join you shortly.”

## The Call

*"And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and asked them, What are you looking for? They said to him, Master, where do you live? He said to them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour."* John 1:37-39

Days passed slowly in John's camp, waiting for Jesus to return. He said he would call me for something, but exactly what, I did not know.

I struck up a closer friendship with a man I already knew, named Andrew, who had recently joined up with John as one of his disciples. We had a lot in common. We were both fisherman from the Galilee. We each had brothers who were likewise fisherman. And, we were both very interested in the teachings of John and in learning more about the man Jesus, whom John proclaimed as the Coming One.

Then the day I thought would never come finally came. Jesus came walking up the road, seemingly without a care in the world. He paused briefly to chat with us, and quickly said: "Well, I'll be off now." And with that, he turned into the lane and started heading back in the direction of Galilee.

"What is this?" I asked myself. I thought he was going to ask me to follow him, or call me. Or something. But here he goes, just taking off, with hardly a good-bye.

Andrew and I both stood there dumbfounded for a second. Then we decided to go for it. We started running and finally caught up with him.

"Master, where are you going? Where do you live?" Andrew asked.

"Come along and see."

We both stared at each other with that questioning look; then we both decided to put our doubts and concerns aside and just follow him.

"OK," We agreed.

Looking back on this, we realized that this was our call. Jesus wasn't looking for people who had to have lengthy explanations, who had to be convinced to follow him. He was a busy man. He was looking for people who were already prepared to follow him and who knew deep down in their soul that he was the Promised One and were ready to forsake everything and follow him.

As, I pondered upon this, his words came back to me: "You have not truly chosen me, without me choosing you." This is not the exact wording. You really need the Spirit to understand this

sentence and its various levels of meaning, or more correctly, you really need to hear the Voice of Christ calling **you** through the Spirit, before you can understand its correct meaning for you.

Let me try it again: “You would not be able to choose me, unless I had also chosen you.” Still not completely correct, but that will have to do.

And as for up and leaving us on the road, this came to be something we just expected. Following Jesus required us to re-think a lot of old ideas, but we also had to expected sudden twists and turns both in the road and in the ministry.

It could be quite frustrating at times. He appointed one of us to go ahead and set up appointments and keep a schedule. He could never keep on the schedule he asked us to keep, but somehow we always had enough time to do everything that needed to get done.

He would often send a couple of us out to buy food, and when we returned, he either said that he had already eaten, or he gave the food away to the poor. But we always had enough to eat.

He appointed Judas to keep the purse, and contrary to what many would think, Judas was absolutely trustworthy with our common funds, but he, like the rest of us would cringe and scowl when Jesus dipped into the coffers to give alms to the poor, but we always had enough money.

Jesus could be deep in conversation, teaching his trusted disciples some inner truth, but he was always alert to see the small child who was naturally attracted and came running up to greet him, or to help an injured animal in need of assistance. He could be teaching a crowd of people on the mountainside about the shepherd leaving the flock of ninety and nine to take care of the one, and be suddenly interrupted by a woman screaming out in pain. And, without a sign of irritation, and with much love, he would see to the needs of the woman, and then continue with his talk. We could see the living example in his words. He was the True Shepherd and he knew and loved His sheep – all of them.

## The House of Peter

*“One of the two which heard John, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.” John 1:40-41*

We continued our trip back to Galilee. Along the way Andrew spotted Simon, his brother tending his boat by the seaside.

“Master, it is my brother Simon.”

“I know.”

“Simon, we have found the Lord.”

“Shimeon”, called Jesus. “Come with us. Today we will stay with you.”

Simon was so busy that he mumbled without looking up, “But, rabbi, I am but a humble fisherman. I am not dressed to receive such company. And, besides I have much work to do, and without my brother Andrew here to help me, I have twice as much work to do.”

Then Simon looked up and realized that his own brother Andrew was standing on the shore with the new rabbi, and that I, John, a longtime friend of his family and fellow fisherman was standing there as well.

“Come, my friends. You are fisherman all, but I will teach you how to be fishers of men.”

Simon didn't say another thing. He picked up his robe and led us off to his home. He told me later that there was something about Jesus that made him just want to follow him wherever he went. And, Jesus, for his part told me later that there was great strength in Simon, and that it needed to be developed. He taught us that our names ought to reflect who we truly are and inspire us to develop even further. And that is why he started called Simon “the Rock”.

We walked a little further toward Simon Peter's house, when who should we run in to but my own brother James?

“So, where are you three going without me? And who is the rabbi who is leading you?” my brother asked.

“Come and see.” I said, recalling the lesson I learned earlier.

We arrived at Simon Peter's house. He had a spacious home and a lovely wife who was happy to welcome us and make us comfortable.

All day Jesus taught us in Simon Peter's house.

"I have much fish to catch in this city", he said.

The next day, Jesus found Philip, and he said. "Follow me."

"Wait." Philip said, and he went and found his friend Nathanael. Now, normally whenever Jesus asked somebody to follow him and they asked him to wait, he would tell them they were not fit for the kingdom, but Jesus knew of Nathanael, for he had seen him setting under a fig tree and knew that he was truly a man without guile.

It was then that I found out that while I had been visiting John in the wilderness that there was a certain group of men that met often and discussed the things of God, and also those things of the church, which they knew were not the things of God. And they were Andrew and his brother, who was called Simon, who was also known as Peter, and Philip and Nathanael, who was also known as Bartholomew. And they would meet together often and become distressed in the spirit because of the things that they witnessed of the people of the church at Jerusalem. And they spoke of the scriptures and searched them when they could that they might gain a better understanding of the words of the prophets than that which the leaders of the church had taught them.

And these were being wrought upon by the Spirit and by the ministrations of the spirit world to prepare them for their foreordained callings as apostles of Jesus. They were being prepared even as I. Little did any of us realize that eventually we would form Jesus' circle of disciples, or "shepherds" as he often called us, even the twelve who would be commissioned to preach the gospel of Christ after his ascension to the Father.

So, when Philip returned with Nathanael, Jesus embraced us all, and as we stood in a circle, he said:

"You are my first six disciples. There are six more. You are of those of whom I will build my kingdom, of those who my Father has given me. What manner of men ought you to be? Truly, I tell you, even I am. You shall learn of me, and as I do the deeds of my Father, you shall do my deeds, and even greater, for I am with you always. Even unto the end of the age."

At that time, none of us understand what he meant, though we would come to understand it in time. All we knew was that he believed he was the promised Messiah, and we wanted to leave all and follow him.

## Cana and “the Double”

*“His mother said to the servants, Whatever he tells to you to do, do it.”* John 2:5

The next day we took off down the road for the little town of Cana, which was near Jesus’ home town of Nazareth. We were all invited to attend a wedding held in honor of a member of his family – Philip and Nathanael included. Actually, since Nathanael was a native of Cana, he already knew many of the members of Jesus’ family.

At the festivities, we met another who would become a dedicated disciple. We never knew his real name, but since he looked so much like Jesus, we called him Didymus, “the double”, commonly known as Thomas. He was obviously part of the family and because he so willingly followed the Lord, he quickly became part of our family. He is called Didymus only in my Gospel. While the purpose of this Gospel is to glorify Christ, I also wanted to add enough details so that you could get to know of His closest disciples, and to provide enough detail, but not too much, so that you know that my account was witnessed with my own eyes and written with my own hand, and not through that of another.

Speaking of family, in our little group we had two sets of brothers, plus Thomas whom some of us suspected might be Jesus’ twin brother though some of us were afraid to ask. (I found out the truth later.) Soon were added to our number three brothers of the same family – sons of Alphaeus: James (whom we called the lesser), his brother Judas (not to be confused with Judas, the son of Simon), and Matthew, also known as Levi, who left off tax collecting to become a full-time disciple.

Soon, we added two more to our numbers: Simon Kanaites (the Zealot) and Judas Iscariot. Most of us were from the Galilee and were related either by blood or by trade, but Judas, coming from the city, never did quite fit in with his rustic brethren from the country. Nevertheless, we accepted him as one of our own and even gave him charge of the community purse, never doubting his integrity and trustworthiness, right up to the end.

Jesus loved us all and gave us all nicknames such as “the rock”, “the double”, and “the zealot”.

The Lord gave Peter a lot of different nicknames. Once, Jesus called Peter "Satan" when Peter was acting like Satan and trying to stop the Lord from fulfilling his ministry. The rest of us cringed and hoped nobody else ever got called Satan! Jesus also called him "Simon" when he was acting like his old self and "Peter" when he was fulfilling his potential and being the "rock" that Jesus knew he could be.

My brother James and I got to share the nickname “Boanerges” or “sons of commotion” or “sons of thunder”. People might think this would be on account of our tempers, or our zeal, but this is a mistake. We were called thus because any time there was a commotion or anything going on, we were usually at the center of it. We couldn’t be content just to sit and watch. We wanted to be involved.

Thomas, on the other hand, was quite detached from it all. He always seemed to know what was going on, but he also seemed to be observing all of us from a distance, as if watching for the right moment to step in if necessary. But we never questioned his devotion to the Lord, nor his understanding of the Lord's mission. He could not bear the thought of being separated from the Lord and was even prepared to die with him, if necessary.

He didn't say much, but we always felt that he knew much more than he let on. At least, I felt that way about him. I took the time to get to know him, as you can read in my Gospel.

## The Name of Christ

*"I have come in my Father's name, and you receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive."* John 5:43

Speaking of names, the Lord told us that we were to be sent to carry His Name throughout all the earth. But, before we could carry His Name, which was the Name of Christ, we needed to take that name upon ourselves. He then spent the rest of His time with us patiently teaching us what it meant to take upon oneself the Name of Christ. He taught us in word and by example, and you will see this throughout this story and my Gospel.

But to quickly sum up what it means is to take upon oneself the name of Christ is do the works of Christ, in the spirit of Christ.

I will explain this more in detail later.

If the principle of taking upon yourself the Name of Christ means that you do the works of Christ, then you could also turn that around and say that if you do the works of Christ and keep the commandments of Christ in letter and spirit, then you have done the same as take that name upon yourself whether you choose to accept that name, or out of humility and desire for lack of recognition choose not to apply that name to himself. Nevertheless, Christ is the name by which you are known of the Father, who loves us all equally, and he who does the works of Christ will receive the same reward as the one we know as Jesus Christ.

The same principle applies to any other name or office, such as a deacon or a teacher. In ancient times, a name wasn't just a title. A name either described the works and character of a person as he was, or as he could become.

Christ called us "shepherds" because he saw an important job that needed to be done, and he chose and sent us because he saw in us the potential to act as shepherds, and to feed the flock. This title was not given as an honor, but as a calling. And, as there are many lost sheep, each wandering off on his or her own way, so are there are different shepherds, each with his or her unique personality and ability to feed each of the lost sheep according to their desires for happiness.

As disciples, we would often look at ourselves and "know" why Jesus chose us, but we would look at our brethren and question the wisdom of the Lord in choosing another disciple who was not like us. But, we came to know that the Lord loved us all equally and had a task for each of us.

In the beginning, we had trouble accepting the idea that Jesus loved us each equally. When he spoke to each of us, it was like we were the only person in the world. Each of us felt we were special, because we thought He loved us better than anybody else.

Peter thought he was special because he received revelation from the Spirit and testified that Jesus was the Christ, the son of the living God. Jesus praised him for being in tune, but Peter took

that to mean that he now had the right to stop listening to the Holy Spirit, and to counsel the Lord according to his own knowledge and opinions. As stated, Jesus rebuked him and said: “Get behind me, Satan.” Peter finally learned his lesson of Christ’s love for us all, and he eventually became the rock that the Lord knew he could be.

My brother James and I also thought we were the Lord’s favorites. In my Gospel, I call myself “the disciple that Jesus loved” because I did not want to call attention to myself, though it’s a fitting description because I love Him with all my heart, and wherever He goes in eternity, that’s where I want to be. It would be hell for me to be separated from Him and His love. However, Jesus truly loved me as he loved us all.

One of the things I hoped to show in my Gospel, and in this personal account is that you could put yourself in my place. YOU could be “the disciple that Jesus loved”. Follow along with us. Put yourself in our places. Pick the disciple who best resonates with your personality, and find out how you, too, can be “the disciple that Jesus loved”.

Of course, He loves you now, but do you truly know that? Or do you just believe it?

Anyway, back to James and me. Because of Jesus’ expression of love for us, we thought we were special and were entitled to seats of honor at his left and right hand when he came in his kingdom. When the others heard that, they were indignant, because they thought they deserved those seats of honor instead of us. We also thought we had the right to invoke the power the Lord had given us to call down fire from heaven and destroy those who did not receive us, or accept his message. There was never a doubt in our mind that we had this power, and we also asked permission before using this power. However, the very thought that we could take away the agency of our brothers and sisters and destroy them in this manner would have been grievous to the Spirit, had we been listening, and not caught up in the pride of our abilities and of our “special relationship” to the Lord.

This was a particularly hard lesson for me to learn. I wanted to put new wine in new bottles, but occasionally, in my misdirected zeal and devotion to the Lord’s cause, I would slip up and return to the old wine.

## Understanding Jesus' Mission

*“But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”* John 5:17

On one occasion we observed a woman healing others and casting out devils in the name of Jesus. Because we had been brought up in the traditions of the Jewish church, we supposed that only men could do such things as healings and miracles, and only men who had been ordained by a priest could do such things. But when we saw this woman, was not ordained by the Lord to do such things we had supposed, not understanding these things, we were shocked.

And I said to the Lord: Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and she is not one of your disciples, for you have not given this authority unto a woman. And we went to her and forbade her from doing that which she did, because she did not have the authority to do these things. We acted first, and then thought we had better check back with the Lord to make sure we had done the right thing. We thought he would be proud of us and commend us. But Jesus, being perplexed by our lack of understanding, answered me, saying: Do not forbid her. For there is no man or woman who shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me; because this power is given unto any of the children of God according to their faith in Him and their obedience to His commandments.

I finally learned my lesson to not think I was “special”, and to recognize the good in all men and women, and also to not seek approval or special recognition from the Lord for my supposed acts of valor and devotion.

Other apostles were of the opinion that the coming Messiah would make himself king and overthrow the Romans. Jesus also loved them, in spite of their misguided opinions. These disciples thought that because Jesus treated them with such love and respect, that he would support their plan, and at the appointed time overthrow the government and declare himself king. They were sorely disappointed when Jesus demonstrated to them that his kingdom was not of this world, and they began from that very hour to conspire with the priests how they might betray him.

Jesus called many other disciples, and many others who heard him speak followed him for a time. But these disciples who were closest to him, and who remained with him, were the men who were given to him of his father's hand. He showed us great and marvelous wonders pertaining to the kingdom that now was, of which we were a part, and of the kingdom that will be, when he returns to the earth in the last day, and we will return with him.

We traveled and learned from the Master for three years. Many of his acts and miracles have been recorded by Matthew, my fellow disciple. They were also recorded by other disciples who came along later, and by me. But, in my gospel, I also wanted to write the words that the Lord taught us. I also wanted to reveal some of the works and personality of my fellow servants so that history would know them and honor them as I did – as servants of the true and living God.

I was given to know that in the latter-days, many would be gathered together to fight against the “lamb of God”, as he grew to be known, and against his apostles. They would fight against us by teaching a false Christ, a larger-than-life God who was unknowable and unapproachable, and that somehow his life and sufferings removed from the rest of mankind the responsibility for their own lives, and by teaching that the apostles were a group of ignorant men who knew nothing of the Christ or his mission, but sought only to build up churches unto themselves.

Nothing could be further from the truth. As these pages will show. Jesus was a friend to all, and he loved us all till the end. I loved my fellow disciples, and I know that they loved me and would give their lives for me, as I would give my life for them. In this, my personal account, I will show that in spite of our weaknesses and failings, the Lord was able to make true shepherds of us so that we might do his works and serve others as he served us. And perhaps, by reading of the accounts of these men, future disciples might learn how to be good shepherds, as they serve the Good Shepherd.

In this, my personal account, I will also touch upon those teachings, which have not been written elsewhere, and to leave with you my own personal testimony and witness. It may be that many of the true servants of the Christ who do not yet know who they are or Whose they are might awaken by these words to a remembrance of their calling and mission. Such is my prayer, and such was the promise given me when I embarked upon this work of testimony and remembrance. Amen.

## The Gospel

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”* John 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. So begins my Gospel. The Word is intelligence, or the light of truth, which was not created, neither can be. The Word is not truth. It is the light of truth. Before truth, there was the light of Truth, which enlightens even all. To know truth is to fully see (or perceive, or experience, or know) all things as they are, as they have been, and as they will be.

Before the beginning was the decision, or the postulate.

In the beginning, that decision took expression as the Word, which Word was with God. Yet the Word was God. Does this now seem any clearer?

Creation is a fact not to be described, but to be experienced – in that Great Beginning when matter, energy, space, and time all came into being at once, and in all of those “small beginnings” that we take for granted every day. If you can begin to comprehend the acts of creation which you participate in every day, and then let your comprehension expand so that you can see all things in their true light, then the day will come that you will comprehend even God, moving in majesty, power, and purpose, acting in the Beginning and acting through you every day.

That you cannot now understand these truths means that you are yet in darkness and cannot yet comprehend the light. But, the day will come when you will comprehend all things and you will understand the true light which enlightens all men who take upon themselves flesh and enter into this world. You will even come to know that the light has been with you always, otherwise you could not abound.

Everything that was made, was made by God. Man was in the beginning with God, as God.

It is a lie to teach that man is a created being. Man is a creator. Can you say “I created that”? To everything?

To whoever reads this, if there is one message that I can bring forth to you from this book, this is the message I would bring forward above all others. Man is co-eternal with God. Man is a partner with God in working out the vast Plan of Salvation. Do you believe this? Have you experienced it in your life?

When you know who you are, and when you know how all things came to be, then you know how the problems of life came to be, and how to overcome them.

Jesus was sent to earth in order to demonstrate what man was capable of, and in so doing, bear witness of the light. He struck his tent in human flesh, just as we all do, but unlike us, the grace of God so abounded in him that he was able to clearly demonstrate a fullness of light and love.

And, those disciples whom He taught were those whom He knew, and those who knew Him. They were sent to be witnesses of His life and teachings, and of the blessings which flow from following His as a disciple.

Your servant considers himself very fortunate to have associated with this man of all men, to have learned and loved at His feet, and to have received the promptings from the Holy Spirit to prove the worth of His commandments by living them. I am a witness to you that what has been written of Him in the Gospels is a true witness, and that which is written in this book is a true witness, as accurately as I can tell it.

No one can write all his works, for all the books in the words would not be enough to contain all his teachings and his acts of love, but what you have is true, and the record you have in your hands is sufficient testimony upon which you can build your faith, which will soon grow up unto knowledge, so that you can know for yourself, and witness for yourself and behold that light which been, from the beginning.

You, too, will come to know the Father, for he brings you to the Son, and they will take up their abode with you, as they did with Jesus, with the Apostles, and with all true disciples.

We had barely known Jesus before we attended the wedding at Cana, but already he was teaching us about miracles and how they could be used not to satisfy our own desires, but to bless the lives of others.

We all had an idea that “something” might happen at the wedding, even before he turned the water into wine. This was his first public miracle, and quite a miracle at that. I like to think that we were all there “rooting” for Him and supporting Him, whatever it was he was going to do, but not really knowing beforehand just what it was He was going to do. He enjoyed teasing us and keeping us a little off balance, and on our toes. “Never take anything for granted. Nothing is ever as it seems.” He was always telling us.

Speaking of keeping us off balance, somehow when things seemed the most off balance, the more things really were in balance.

The little children, of course, loved Him. The other gospels go into this in great detail, but the truth is, He was literally mobbed by the children, wherever he went. They had a feeling that He was special and they were instantly attracted to Him, wherever He went. It was mostly their parents, not my fellow disciples, who were pulling their youngsters away and telling them not to bother the “nice rabbi”.

## The Mount

*"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ... And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your own hearts:" 2 Peter 1:16-19*

*"He who endures in faith and does my will, the same shall overcome, and shall receive an inheritance upon the earth when the day of transfiguration shall come; When the earth shall be transfigured, even according to the pattern which was shown unto my apostles upon the mount; of which account the fullness ye have not yet received." D&C 63:20:21*

Jesus wanted to test us. He was always testing us to see how much we had learned, and we were always eager to show Him. We asked him a lot of questions, and eventually he showed a few of us the Keys whereby we could ask and receive answers from the Spirit. One day, He asked us who He was. We knew that others didn't truly recognize him as the Messiah as we did, and they came up with all manner of explanations that seemed believable to them: Elijah, or John the Baptism, or one of the prophets of Israel reborn in the flesh. There were even some masters who came to visit him from the East, to discover what new and curious thing they could learn from him. They thought that Jesus was a reincarnation of their prophet Buddha, whom they had made into a god. But Jesus wasn't interested in what any of them thought. He wanted to know what his Apostles thought and what kind of witness we would bear of him when we went out into the world following His death and resurrection.

Who do you say that I am?

Peter, without thinking, suddenly blurted out: "You are the Christ; The Son of the Living God!"

Peter looked surprised at having said that. He couldn't even believe his own ears.

"Peter." Jesus said. "You have been receiving revelation. Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but the Holy Spirit has revealed it to you."

After reassuring Peter and calming him down, He continued: "All those who choose to take up their cross and follow me must seek after and bear this same testimony. This is the rock upon which you must build, and by so doing, the gates of hell will not be shut against you, holding you captive."

"If you continue in my word, you, each of you, shall truly be my disciples. You shall come to know the truth, and the truth will make you free. Because you know the truth, unto you, my witnesses, shall come the keys, or in other words the knowledge, of the kingdom. You shall have the authority to open and no man can shut; to shut and no man can open, so that whatsoever you seal on earth, in My name, shall be sealed in heaven."

He told us that all those who gave their lives in his service would receive their reward many-fold in the world to come. He also taught us that we twelve would sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Hearing all this, we became puffed up and boastful one to another, seeking who should be greatest in the Kingdom. Peter even rebuked the Lord when He said that He would be go to Jerusalem to be turned over to sinners and killed. Jesus called him “Satan” and said that he did not understand the nature of the mission He was to perform.

James and I felt that we each deserved places of honor on His left and right hand. We assured him that we would be willing to drink of the same cup He drank of and be baptized with the same baptism which he would be baptized with, but the places of honor would be reserved for those whom the Father choose.

We saw the wisdom in this, and repented of our vanity.

“Nevertheless”, He told us, “There are those among you will not taste of death until they see Son of God coming in glory, with his kingdom.”

I have pondered this passage greatly over the years. My brother, James, was indeed the first to drink of the cup of Christ, as he was the first martyr. My “cup” was to be different. Instead of dieing for the Christ, my mission was to live for Christ – to tarry on the earth until He returned. I know that when I see him return in the flesh, that I shall be changed. I will instantly go through the death process and resurrect and be like him, and see him as He is; and through the grace of God, be pure even as he is pure.

This, he taught us while we were in the Spirit while upon the Mount. He showed us the pattern through which the entire earth would be transfigured. The account in your Bible has it wrong. Jesus was not transfigured; it was Peter, James, and I who were transfigured so that we could behold Jesus in his true character and also behold Moses and Elias. This transfiguration is a special gift given to those that they may bear the presence of beings of a higher order, yet still remain in the flesh. These are they who are sanctified in the flesh, by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies. These are they who are redeemed from the fall. They are the seers who are able to behold all the spirits that God has created, whether or not those spirits are clothed with bodies.

And thus, in time, all may obtain this gift. Here is the pattern for the latter days, as much as I am permitted to describe it. The transformation will begin with a faithful disciple who has been prepared. The change will be gradual at first, but then he will be utterly changed as an example to show how it is done and that it can be done, and then the change will spread to other disciples, and from then to the earth itself. And, all will go through this change in order to prepare for him when he returns to earth again. Moses and Elijah will come again as great latter-day prophets and assist in this transformation.

## Cleansing the Temple

*“And Jesus found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said to them that sold doves, Take these things out of here; do not make my Father's house a house of merchandise.” John 2: 14-16*

Jesus was deeply hurt and offended by the spectacle, which the Jewish authorities caused to take place in his father's house. It is one thing when you are hurt personally, but when you see someone else that you love being hurt or offended, it's even worse.

And when Jesus beheld these things, his spirit groaned exceedingly within him and he left that place and withdrew himself a ways off from among the people. And he cried unto the Father, saying:

“O My Father, how is it that Thou canst suffer such wickedness of Thy children. Behold, they are taught to believe that by their money they shall buy their salvation and assure a place in Thy kingdom because of the things of the world that they believe they give unto Thee as tithes and offerings.

“O My Father, forgive me, Thy Son, for my sorrow and that which I am about to do. Behold, I cannot bear to see the people do this thing and disgrace that which should be sacred and available to all of Thy children for their instruction, but which their leaders have turned into a den of thieves.”

And Jesus became aware of his own indignation which he had for the people who were desecrating the temple. But he did not act upon the emotions of his anger, and held all these things within him in control according to the commandment of the Father. For the Spirit of God allows us to reprove at times with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; but then a showing forth afterwards of an increase of love towards them who have been reproved, lest they esteem him that reproves to be their enemy.

But Jesus was already hated by the Jews, even though he had showed forth exceeding love for them. And he thought in himself that perhaps a reproof of their sins with sharpness, might be the cause of some of them listening better to his words. And after he had prayed to the Father, Jesus made a scourge of small cords and took the time to ponder on that which he was about to do.

And with the whip that he had made, he drove them all out of the temple with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the money of the changers and overthrew their tables. And he could not drive out the doves that were in cages, but had compassion on them in their state of captivity and did not overturn them, but commanded those who sold them, saying: “Take these things hence; make not the house of my Father a house of merchandise.”

And it came to pass that immediately after the Lord had cleared the temple, he threw the whip that he had made to the ground and smiled upon us, his disciples, having once again regained his countenance of peace and tranquility that exuded from his soul continually.

And in a smiling humility he said to us:

“Behold, and now shall my enemies become greater because of that which I have done herein. Well did David prophesy a song unto me when he wrote, saying:

“They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head; they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty. For I have restored that which I took not away.

“O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee. Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake. Let not those who seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel, because for Thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.

“I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto the children of my mother, for the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of they who reproached thee are fallen upon me.”

And Jesus said this to us because he knew of those things which would come because of his actions in the temple that day. And we kept in our remembrance what Jesus said to us and that it was written: “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.”

While Jesus was loving and tolerant most of the time, he also took occasion to rebuke and to reprove with sharpness. As I recall, Jesus never turned away a seeker who was searching for knowledge, no matter how ignorant or foolish or misguided they were. Nor did he turn away those who asked him sincere questions not intended to lay a snare for him. He never turned away a sinner who was seeking forgiveness. He never turned away a sick person who had the faith to be healed. And he never turned away a child, who saw in him a friend.

But, let’s look for a moment at those times where he did rebuke and condemn. As mentioned, he condemned those who made a mockery of his father’s house. He also condemned hypocrites – those people who are dishonest with themselves, who say one thing, but do another. He would work with any sinner who was honest enough to see his mistake and repent, or in other words, choose again. But for those who thought they were already perfect, and had blinded themselves to their own weakness, he could do nothing for them. The blind man who came to Jesus to be able to see knew that he was blind, but the Pharisees who claimed that they saw, had the kind of blindness that cannot be cured.

These were the people he condemned outside his little flock of disciples. But, the ones who received his correction the most often were his closest disciples, the ones he called his friends. He rebuked us when we displayed intolerance toward other teachers, or wanted to call fire down from heaven to destroy unbelievers, or tried to set ourselves one above another.

And that was just my brother James and me! He rebuked us all on many occasions for a lack of faith, or when we tried to stop little children from coming to him, or when we in our ignorance tried to stop him from performing his appointed mission. Though he gently corrected us, his words were like darts to our souls, and we often found repentance through many tears. But, through it all he loved us, and we knew that he loved us and had faith in us – more faith than we had in ourselves or in each other. And this is the single reason why all of us were and are so devoted to him.

## Seeking for Miracles

*"Now when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, after they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not place any trust in their professed belief, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." John 2:23-25*

He came to Jesus by night for fear of being seen by the Jewish authorities. But when Nicodemus told Jesus that he and others knew that Jesus was a teacher from God, I became suspicious. If he knew that Jesus was a teacher from God, why didn't he come see the Lord in the daytime, like everybody else? And, who were the others? He said, "We know that you are a teacher from God." Did he mean the other rulers of the Jews? And if they all knew he was a teacher sent from God, why all the secrecy?

Jesus and all us disciples were staying overnight at a house together in Jerusalem. We were all a little nervous because of Jesus clearing the temple and feared retaliation from the Jewish authorities. Then, immediately after that incident, to have one of the leading Jewish authorities pay us a midnight visit. This told us that the authorities were watching Jesus at all times, and they knew where we were.

But, the real key to his false claim that he knew Jesus was a true teacher was because Jesus performed many miracles. None of Jesus' closest disciple followed Him because of miracles. We followed Him because of His teachings and because of the testimony of John that He was the Lamb of God. And, though we did not yet understand it in its fullness, the Spirit was spoken to us, and confirmed that testimony. We understood it a little better after listening in on Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus.

Jesus told Nicodemus that unless he was completely born anew from above, he could not truly know who Christ was, nor understand the nature of the power which Christ held, nor what was the source of that power was. All Nicodemus saw were the superficial miracles, but without the knowledge, which only comes of the Spirit, he could not even understand the earthly manifestations of Christ. This is why Jesus chided him and said: "You claim to be a teacher in Israel, but you don't even understand earthly things. What if I taught you about heavenly things?"

Nicodemus couldn't even understand the Kingdom of God, which had come to the earth, let alone the Kingdom of Heaven, which was to come.

This was a hard idea for even us, His disciples, to grasp at this time, for we had not as yet received the endowment of the Holy Spirit, and we could not yet see the "kingdom of God", either, but we had insights from time to time that this was no ordinary man, and that we must follow Him.

This passage in my Gospel is one of the most misunderstood in the Bible. What false teachings have sprung up around the teaching of being “born again”? What self-righteous and arrogant claims! What excuses for hatred and exclusion!

Here is a test you can try. Next time you meet somebody claiming to have been “born again”, ask them to describe the Kingdom of God for you in their own words. If a man has been born again, he will be able to see the Kingdom of God, and he will also be able to see the King and all his subjects, and know them for who and what they are.

But, those who claim to be “born again” forget the second part of Jesus’ teaching. Except a man be born of the water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. So, **seeing** the Kingdom of God is one thing, and **entering** the Kingdom of God is quite another.

Claiming to see or to be a member of the Kingdom of God means nothing if a person has merely taken this upon himself. Both John and Jesus taught that a man can receive nothing (or in other words, claim nothing for himself), unless it be given him from heaven. In other words, after a person has exercised faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and has repented of his sins, and turned from his old life to a new life, he can then begin to see that there is such a thing as the Kingdom of God, and more importantly, that up to this point in his life, he has lived outside of that Kingdom. This realization is a sign of having been born again, or born from above, and is a gift of the Spirit, not something which a person takes upon himself in order to impress or exclude others.

Then, to be born of the water and of the spirit means to symbolically witness before others the death to things as to the flesh, and the birth as to the things of the Spirit. And after this, the person enters the Kingdom of God. He knows the King over that Kingdom, and he recognizes his fellow servants.

These are they who press forward feasting on the words of Christ through the Spirit. These are they who come and go as the wind. More cannot be said, for these things are only to be understood through the Spirit, which speaks to us of heavenly things, while we are yet in the flesh. All things must be done in order. Once you understand the earthly things that Jesus taught, then you will begin to understand the heavenly things as the Spirit teaches.

Jesus then taught Nicodemus things that all those who have been “born again” should know. He taught Nicodemus of the great love which the Father had in sending his only begotten son to the world so that whoever exercises faith in Him should not continue to perish in the sins of his lives, but have everlasting life.

Christ came not to the world to pronounce a sentence of judgment upon the world, as so many of the “born again” crowd pronounce sentences of judgment upon others taking the Name of the Lord in vain as they do so, but he came so that the world, through Him, might be rescued from the endless cycle of sin and judgment, condemnation and correction.

Whoever does not even take the first step to exercise faith in Christ is living under condemnation even now, until he begins to follow the Gospel and take those steps that will ensure him eternal life. And the way we know that a man is living under condemnation is that his deeds are evil and

they are done secretly in the dark, and he does not want them to come to the light of day where they can be brought before the Lord and his fellow saints and be corrected.

When the Lord said this, I thought again of why Nicodemus came to visit by night, and not by the light of day. Was this a deed that Nicodemus did not want to be brought into the light?

In any case, Nicodemus began to secretly believe the words of Jesus, and later proved to be a friend to Jesus on more than one occasion.

## Training the young Shepherds

*“The sheep follow him: for they know his voice.”* John 10:4

Much of our time spent with the Lord could be called on the job training. He taught us that He was the way. That is, by following the pattern he set forth of following his words and his works, could man lay hold upon eternal life. Therefore, we set about learning his words and his works. But, this was unlike studying the dead law at the synagogue school. No, we were taught living works through his living example. Then he sent us out to teach and baptize.

The most important lesson that we learned that I can bring you today is how important it is for a teacher to be an example of what he teaches. Jesus taught love, and he embodied love. Jesus taught truth, and he embodied truth. Jesus taught that all men should be free to choose the path he would follow, and he allowed us, his disciples, the freedom to think and act for ourselves, and the freedom to make mistakes, though He was there to correct us.

Anybody who wants to go in unto the sheep and lead them out to pasture, must enter the sheep-fold by the door, which door, as I said is the works and words of Christ. Only a thief or a robber tries to break into the barn by climbing in through a window. Christ is the door. Christ is the way.

Also, the sheep recognize the voice of their shepherd. If the teacher speaks by the Spirit, the true sheep will listen with the ear of the Spirit, and both will be edified. If the Gospel is taught any other way, then it is not the Gospel.

The shepherd goes before the sheep and leads them with the sound of his voice. The shepherd does not drive the sheep from behind. Maybe that works with goats; I don't know. Don't ask me; I'm a fisherman, not a goatherd. But I do know that you can drive a school of fish into a net to be snared and caught, but sheep must be lead.

If the sheep are in danger from a wolf, the shepherd stands his ground and protects the sheep, giving his own life if necessary. The difference between a true shepherd and a hired hand, is the hired hand will look out for his own skin first and forget about the sheep.

The true shepherd also leaves the ninety and nine and goes searching after the one lost sheep. The ninety and nine know that they are also safe and if one of them gets lost, they can depend on the shepherd to go looking for them as well.

The middle part of my Gospel illustrates how the true shepherd seeks after his lost sheep and protects them from attacks by predators. Consider well the stories of the woman at the well, the nobleman with the sick child, the lame man at the pool, the feeding of the multitude, the daily teaching in the temple, the forgiveness of the woman taken in adultery, the healing of the blind man, the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and his dealings with Mary, who sought to honor him at the feast with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. We even see this shepherding principle exemplified in the story of Nicodemus. Nicodemus, with all his priestly authority and knowledge of the law,

was forced to admit, in his own way, that he was lost, and needed the Good Shepherd to help him regain his bearings, and instead of getting lost in pursuit of the law, to lose himself in pursuit of the Kingdom. These are all living examples, not to be studied and discussed, but to be lived.

Besides looking after the sheep, a true shepherd recognizes, respects, and honors the work and callings of his fellow shepherds. Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were both true servants of God, and they recognized each other as such. John identified Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world. Jesus said of John that there was not a greater prophet born of woman. John confessed that he was not the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, who took delight in the hearing the voice of his friend. Jesus must increase, but John must decrease.

Contrast this to the multitude of pastors, preachers, and teachers, which we see today, starting churches, founding organizations, writing books, teaching over the mass media or over the Internet, each claiming to be the only true servant to lead the people to prepare for the second coming of Christ, or for the establishment of Zion, or other utopian society. Some of their teachings cover the same ground, and some of their teachings are unique. But there is one thing that they have in common, and that is that none of them seem to recognize one another as true servants, working toward the same goal. If some or all of them are true servants, wouldn't they at least acknowledge one another, learn from one another, and work in cooperation, as did Christ and John the Baptist?

It seems like every teacher is a world unto him/herself, and their followers seem to either cling tenaciously to one teacher and ignore all the others, or drift from one teacher to another, picking up a little here or a little there, never able to apply the teachings in their lives, or able to relate one set of teachings to the other.

Another thing the latter-day guru's have in common, especially those who claim to be servants of Christ, is the inability to bear a personal, complete, apostolic witness for Christ. That is, to testify from personal, first-hand, eyewitness knowledge of the reality of the existence of God and of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

What are the possibilities? Either all these guru's are wrong and unable to recognize the truth in anyone else because they have not the truth themselves, or one of the guru's is a true servant who would recognize the truth if he saw it, but is simply not seeing any.

“Will we ever have any apostles?”

This is a question which has been asked before, and which should be asked again in this day. Those of the LDS faith learn that in the kingdom, which Satan would like to set up on the earth, there will **never** be true apostles. They also learn that followers of Satan are taught to challenge all who profess to be true apostles by demanding that they demonstrate their authority and power by putting on a spectacular show of magic.

The truth is that true apostles, or in other words, those especially sent by the Christ to be His servants upon the earth will and do recognize one another, and work in cooperation to bring about a common goal. They do not come in their own names, and they do not seek to demonstrate their

own power. They come in the name of Him who sent them, and the only power which they will gladly demonstrate is the power of the words they teach, as their words find root in the hearts and minds of their hearers, and as the Holy Spirit confirms their witness, with its own powerful and unmistakable witness.

The D&C speaks of the Telestial Kingdom, or "the world in which we now live" as follows:

"And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one; for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory in the telestial world;

"For these are they who are of Paul, and of Apollos, and of Cephas.

"These are they who say they are some of one and some of another--some of Christ and some of John, and some of Moses, and some of Elias, and some of Esaias, and some of Isaiah, and some of Enoch;

"But received not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets, neither the everlasting covenant." (D&C 76:98-101)

We are living in a day when many of God's great and mighty ones will incarnate on the earth preparatory to establishing Zion and ushering in the second coming. If and when they come, wouldn't they possess enough of the Spirit of Christ to recognize their fellow servants? Wouldn't they seek to cooperate with one another instead of trying to make individual quantities out of themselves for the purpose of selling books and gathering followers?

I'm not here to make little of any of these teachers because I can see some light in all of them, but I fear that the light they bring is not sufficient to raise us to the level where we should be headed.

And, where should we be headed?

"Last of all, these all are they who will not be gathered with the saints, to be caught up unto the church of the Firstborn, and received into the cloud." (D&C 76:102)

Perhaps the Lord is giving us at this time all the light we are prepared to receive.

## The Last Supper

*“Then Jesus said to them, yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walks in darkness does not know where he is going.”*  
John 12:35

There are many accounts given and many pictures painted of the last time Jesus and the Apostles broke bread together. I hope to give you some insights which you might have read or seen any place else. First, lets put the rumor to rest that story about “the disciple whom Jesus loved leaning on his breast”. All that means is that Jesus loved this disciple with the love of God, and that love was reciprocated. There was nothing erotic or sensual in this love. It was the spiritual love that a devoted disciple has for his teacher, and that a true teacher has for all his disciples. And that part about “leaning on his breast”. All that means in the original Greek is that I sat next to him and was close enough to whisper questions in his ear. OK, can we stop the gossip now?

When the Lord taught the Jews at Jerusalem his gospel, he said to them: “Unless you eat of my flesh and drink of my blood, you shall in no wise inherit the kingdom of God.”

And those that heard this were angry with him and did not understood what he meant, because the Lord taught them in parables. But, on the night of this supper, the Lord taught us in plainness and used no parables.

As Jesus took the bread, he broke it and blessed it, and gave it to us to eat. And he taught us:

“This bread represents my flesh. By eating of this bread, you witness that you are willing to take upon yourselves My Name, and always remember me and keep my commandments, which I have given you.

“And if you take upon you My Name, then you will do the same works that I have done, and have the same desires that I have, and have the same responsibilities towards your neighbor that I have. This is what is means to bear the Name of the Son, or in other words, to do His works. And when you eat my flesh you covenant that you will also remember the works that I do, and keep my commandments which I have given you.”

Then, Jesus held up a cup of wine and blessed it, and gave it to us to drink. And he taught us:

“This cup represents my blood. The blood is symbolic of the spirit, which gives life unto the body of the flesh. By drinking of this blood, you witness that you are doing the works that I did for the same purpose, or with the same intent. This represents the spirit or the attitude in which I performed my works. And what was the attitude in which I performed my works? I worked as I saw my Father work. I worked not to be seen of men, but that my works might glorify my Father and your Father. I worked to serve the least of these, our brethren.

“If you do the works of Christ without the spirit of Christ, how can they be my works? And if ye have the spirit of Christ, you shall do his works. And if you do not drink the blood of Christ, then the works that you do are not his works. And these works are done in vain. In other words, you have taken the sacrament of the Lord unworthily and have presented yourselves before him as hypocrites.”

He then passed the bread and wine among us. And these were not small portions as is commonly thought. We ate and drank of his flesh and blood in abundance, until we had our fill.

Then he reminded us: “When you feed my sheep, see that you teach these things, concerning the ordinance of the bread and the wine. And, see that you teach that these things are not my gospel, but that they administer the gospel unto the church, which are my people.”

After supper had ended, Jesus, even though he knew these things, which should shortly come to pass, rose from the table, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. And after that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of his disciples, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded. He started with me, because he knew that I would accept this washing, and this would help put the others at ease. I recalled back to the time when he told me that he came not to be served, but to serve, and I realized that this was yet another time where he was demonstrating his teachings for us, his disciples.

The servant of all is indeed worthy to undo the latchet of the shoes of those whom he serves, and to anoint their feet, and if he whom is thus served, can fully accept the full import of this ordinance and of this cleansing, then he is clean every whit.

But, when he came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, “Lord, why are you washing my feet?”

Jesus answered and said to him, “You don’t understand what I am doing now because you do not yet have the spirit of understanding which the Father shall send you when I am gone. But you shall know hereafter why I do these things, because it shall be revealed unto you by the Spirit which ye shall receive of the Father.”

Then, Peter said to him, “You shall never wash my feet!”

But Jesus answered him, saying, “If I do not was you, they you can have no part with me. For this thing I do in similitude of that which ye must do for one another when I am gone.

“For behold, your feet have carried you forth wherever you have gone all the days of your life. And I wash from you the sins which you have done in the path that these feet have followed. Therefore, these things are in similitude of the new path, on which these feet, which are now clean by my works, shall carry you forth unto righteousness, which righteousness is the example that I have set for you.

“Therefore, go forth, all of you, with the clean feet that you now have and follow this path that will lead you to eternal life.”

You see, when you do as I often do, and accept things without asking questions, you don’t learn

as much as when you ask questions. Peter was never afraid of asking “dumb” questions or of challenging the Lord on any issue. Jesus was only too happy to answer his questions without scolding or upbraiding him. Jesus did this because Peter was a sincere seeker and could see the truth when things were explained to him, though he often missed the deeper truths, and needed several explanations.

On the other hand, I could see the truth and accept it immediately, and though I could see the deeper truths, I didn’t question as much, so I didn’t learn as much. In many ways, Peter and I were opposites, but, the Lord could use both of us, and he often assigned us to work together so that we could “cross-train” one another. Somehow, I was supposed to teach him how to be a leader, and he was supposed to teach me how to be more loving and caring. It wasn’t so much that we instructed one another. We educated one another. In other words, we drew these characteristics out of one another, which is the true meaning of “education”. We became the best of friends.

But, getting back to the story, Simon Peter answered him back, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head, because my hands have done not the works of righteousness and my head has not thought always of the example that you have shown me.”

And Jesus said to him, “He that is washed needs only to wash his feet, but is clean every whit. For the feet are those that have carried you forth from the works that ye have done in your past. And your former sins have been forgiven you and shall come no more against you, if it so be that ye follow in cleanliness the path that I have set before you.”

And looking around the room, he said, “And you are clean, but not all.”

For he knew who should betray him, and that’s why he said, “You are not all clean.”

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, “Do you know what I have done to you?”

“You call me Master and Lord; and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash the feet of one another, even that you should support one another in your tribulations as I have supported you. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

“Truly I tell you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither is he that is sent greater than He that sent him, for we are all, every one of us, equal to the Father. And if you know these things, happy you are if you will do them.

## One of You Shall Betray Me

*“He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.”* John 13:18

“I speak not of you all, for I know whom I have chosen.”

“Now, I tell you this thing before it happens, so that, when it is come to pass, you may believe that I am he of whom all of the holy prophets have written and of whom the scripture speaks.”

And, he said this because some of us still doubted who he truly was and did not fully understand why he had come, though they still believed in him and were willing to follow him till the end.

He continued, “Truly I tell you, He who receives whoever I have sent before me, receives me; and he that receives me, receives Him who sent me. And the words of those whom I have sent before have testified of me.

“And if you receive their words, then you shall believe in me and receive all of my words. And if you receive all of my words, then shall the Father send forth His Spirit unto you and you shall be one with the Father as I am one. And if you are one with me, then shall I send you forth to find those who shall receive my words through you. And he that receives you, whom I send forth, receives me. And he that receives me, receives the Father and shall also be one with us.”

And when Jesus had said this, he was troubled in spirit, and, looking around the room, he said,

“Truly I tell you, that one of you shall ... betray me.”

Suddenly the room grew very quiet as we looked around at one other, hardly believing our ears. And, in spite of our occasional jealousies, we still respected one another, and in our three years' journeying around with the Lord, and in our private talks together, we came to greatly trust one another. So, we could scarcely believe that any of us was capable of betraying our Master.

I was sitting right next to Jesus at the table. I sensed that something terrible or momentous was going to happen later that night, and I wanted to be as close to him as I could before the unexpected happened.

I had just finished whispering my disbelief in Jesus' ear, when Peter motioned to me with his hand that I should ask the Lord who the betrayer might be. Peter and I, having worked closely together, had our own body language with which we communicated to one another. I immediately sensed that Peter was anxious to know who it was, so I whispered to Jesus, “Lord, who is it?”

This was an interesting twist of fate. Usually I immediately believed everything the Lord said, whereas Peter doubted, but then eventually believed. This time it was the other way around.

Jesus answered quietly, saying, “He it is, to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it.”

And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop was given to Judas, Satan entered into him. And Jesus knowing this said to him: that which is your heart to do, do quickly, for my time is at hand.

Now, nobody else at the table knew why he said this, except for Peter who had asked the question, or more correctly, given the sign, and me, who had received the answer from the Lord.

Some of the others thought that, because Judas was appointed by the Lord to be the treasurer and had the bag, that Jesus had told him to buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

For Jesus had taught his disciples that the money, which they received should only be used for their simple needs and to help the poor and the needy.

Judas, then having received the sop went immediately out from among us at the word of the Lord.

And it was night.

## The Comforter

*“As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.”* John 17:18

We who remained, had been pronounced clean, and, what’s more, we **knew** that we were clean from the blood and sins of this generation.

After Judas left, Jesus was able to teach us many more things, preparatory to our taking upon us the same mantle which he willingly took upon himself – that mantle of bearing the sins of this generation, or in other words, taking upon us the responsibility of teaching this generation, that thereby, we might be the means of bringing some of them to deliverance.

Jesus taught us about the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, even the spirit of truth, who would teach us all things and bring all things to our remembrance. He taught us that if we loved him and kept his commandments, that he and the Father would come unto us and take up their abode with us. He told us that he was going to the Father to prepare a place for us.

He taught us that he was the true vine and that we were the branches and that with him we could bear much fruit, but that without the vine the branches would be good for nothing except to be cast out and to be burned. He also taught us the Father prunes the branches that they may bring forth even more fruit. I noticed that each branch is attached directly to the vine, just as we need to be directly connected with the Lord, and not branch upon branch, but branch upon vine so that we may be one with him, and that not go through another.

He taught us that we were no longer his servants, but his friends, because a servant does not know what his master is doing, but a friend knows that his master is doing. He warned us that the world would hate us as it hated him, but when the Spirit came, we should bear witness of all that we had seen and heard.

I felt in my robe to make sure my quill and scroll were still there.

Thinking back on this, I realized that Jesus was giving us last-minute instructions and preparing us for the future when we would be tempted to scatter to the four winds instead of gathering together to serve in His Name.

And, we also sang a hymn before going out into the night air.

It happened like this. The Lord asked us all to stand up and gather into a circle, as if in a dance. He instructed us that only the best of feelings should bear sway in the circle, and that there should be no unkind feelings toward any other member of this circle, and if any held such feelings, he should withdraw, so that the Spirit of the Lord would be unrestrained. I realized later that this was kind of a backward way of reminding us that in this special gathering, love and unity should abound so that the Spirit of Lord could be present in abundance.

Those of you who believe you know and understand the Spirit of the Lord, I will ask you, have you ever felt the Spirit of the Lord **unrestrained**? Do you have any idea of the workings of the Spirit of the Lord when it is completely free to come and go, and manifest as it will? If so, then you have somewhat of a taste of what happened to all of us later on the Day of Pentecost.

Since the only one who held negative feelings toward the others was Judas, and he had already voluntarily withdrawn, we asked another of the disciples present to take Judas' place so that we would have twelve in the circle.

We then held each others' hands while Jesus stood in center of the circle. He said many things which I cannot explain in this treatise, and then he explained to us that the symbolism behind this manner of gathering was symbolic of gathering in His Name. He taught to us the true order of prayer, which is explained in fullness in other writings. After giving us the proper instructions, he prayed to the Father and had us in the circle repeat after him the words of the prayer.

In the prayer he thanked the Father and gave glory to his name for those whom the Father had lead out of the world and brought to him. He prayed for us and for all those who would believe on him though our words and our witness. He prayed that we might all be one, even as he and his Father are one.

After the prayer He taught us that whenever we thus gathered in His Name, whether united in prayer, or gathering as a community of saints, and were agreed as touching one thing, and called upon His Name, as he had shown us, that there He would be, even in our midst. This witness can bear testimony that his words were true.

Philip, one of the disciples, asked when Jesus would manifest the Father to them. Jesus chided him and wondered how Philip could have been with him for such a long time, not knowing the Christ, and not knowing the Father. In the Circle, both the Father and the Son were plainly manifest to all who had eyes to see and ears to hear.

## The Garden

*“For as the earth brings forth her bud, and as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”* Isaiah 61:11

After this we left the upper room where we had eaten supper and walked over to the garden where we were wont to go. Many important things throughout history have happened in a garden, and many important things will yet happen in a garden.

Then Jesus separated himself from the disciples and took with him into a more secluded part of the garden Peter, James and myself. And he commanded us to watch with him for those whom he knew were coming for him.

As usual, Jesus' commandments to us contained several layers of meaning. He was not only asking us to stand guard over his privacy, but he was also saying to us that we should watch with him and pray, thus lending our support and comfort to him in this his hour of suffering. He meant that we should focus our attention on the spirit and not distracted by the physical needs of the flesh (for we were very tired), nor the flurry of our emotions (for we were very frightened), nor on the illusions of the mind (for we were still confused and lacked an understanding of all the events of the evening).

So, we tried our best to stay awake and give our Lord the comfort and support he needed, but the spiritual intensity of the moment drained us in all ways and we were powerless to help him.

Now, he can truly say that he bore this suffering alone, and there was none to help him. I was as disappointed in myself for my inability to help in that hour, as Peter was for denying him later on in that night of all nights. Nerveless, he forgave us, and as we later received an endowment of the Holy Spirit, we were able to remember and record the words of his prayer in our behalf and on behalf of all those who would believe in our words. And we, who should have comforted him, what comfort we took from these words, and did not our hearts burn within us when we heard Jesus pray unto the Father for us?

And Jesus left us and went off a ways and knelt before the Father. And Jesus wept exceedingly and sorrowed greatly because of the great wickedness of the world, and that he had been rejected by so many whom he loved so dearly. And his agony because of these things was so great that he did weep exceedingly and every fiber of his being trembled; and he began to sweat because of his anguish. And the stress of his soul upon his body caused him to bleed from his nose and his ears, even his eyes did issue forth tears of blood because of the turmoil of his spirit. And now, I would that you should understand that the Lord was not suffering because he was paying the penalty for the sins of others as many have supposed—and this doctrine is what has become a great stumbling block for you—for all those who sin shall suffer for their own sins. But he suffered because of these sins, or because of the wickedness of men and their inability to love each other and search for the Father who had created them.

And this is not the doctrine of Christ desired by those who shall canonize the accounts of the eye-witnesses of the life and ministry of Christ into scripture, who would twist our accounts to their own ends. For they shall believe that Christ suffered and died for the sins of all men, even that all man might be saved if they would only accept Jesus into their hearts and believe in him, taking no thought or responsibility for their own actions – good or ill.

And this they shall believe that they might justify their own wickedness, because they shall not love each other as they would have another love them. And they shall set themselves up above the people and they shall desire glory and praise from the people whom they lead, and in many other ways shall they disobey the words of the Father given through Christ. And for these reasons shall they change the truth regarding the mission and purpose of the life of Christ.

And now, if a man has accepted Jesus as his Savior, then that man would obey the commandments that Jesus has given him. And if this man does not obey the commandments, yet professes to have taken upon him the name of Jesus, then has he sinned, in that this man has taken the name of the Lord in vain, and he shall not be held guiltless who takes the name of the Lord in vain. And this man can profess the name of Jesus forever, but he shall not be saved in the kingdom of God unless he can abide by the laws that govern the kingdom of God; and these laws are the commandments that Jesus taught to the people, and are the commandments that the apostles taught to the people, and are the same commandments that were given by the Father in the beginning, which He also gives unto all of His children through the ministrations of the Holy Ghost, if it so be that they listen to His Spirit.

Therefore, I want you to know, that Christ did not suffer **for** your sins, but he suffered **because** of them. And because of the great love that Jesus had for all men, he did suffer exceedingly in the garden because of their wickedness.

I testify to you, my brothers and sisters who will read this account, that at a later date, I was permitted to witness this suffering first-hand for myself, so that I might relate it to you. So great was his suffering that the powers of darkness came upon him and tried to overcome him. Yet, he knew that through this suffering there was a strait and narrow way, and that he must watch – or in other words, focus his attention and hold steady in the Spirit – that his faith fail not and that he enter not into temptation and be overcome by the darkness. Yes, the Lord had perfect knowledge of all things, but in order to be tempted in all things as we are, he needed to experience what it means to walk by faith through the darkness, focusing on the lighted path before him, until he came to its end.

For, this was not endless suffering because the suffering had a beginning, and it, therefore, also had an end. But how eternal, how deep, how profound, how exquisite, no one can know until such has been revealed to him personally. Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, Jesus endured this suffering and he finished his preparations unto the children of men.

And after he had suffered exceedingly, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and prayed, saying:

“Father, the hour is come that Thou shalt glorify Thy Son, and that Thy Son also may glorify Thee. And Thou art glorified through Thy Son because Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given him.

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

“I have glorified Thee on the earth by teaching the things that Thou hast commanded me to teach unto Thy children; that they might repent of their sins and do that which Thou requirest of them to prepare them to live in the kingdoms of glory that Thou hast prepared for them.

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

“I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them me; and they have kept Thy word as I have commanded them. Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given me are of Thee and are not for mine own glory, but for Thine.

“For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send me.

“I pray for them, O Father. I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me out of the world; for they are Thine. And all mine are Thine, and Thine are mine; and I am glorified in them because they do the works that they have seen me do.

“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world. And I come to Thee, Holy Father, and pray that Thou keepest through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one.

“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name by teaching them the things which Thou hast given me for them. And those that Thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

“And now come I to Thee and leave them in the world. And these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

“I have given them Thy word and the world hath hated them because of Thy word, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou should take them out of the world, but that Thou should keep them from the evil of the world. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

“Sanctify them, Holy Father, through Thy truth, which is given unto them by Thy Spirit. For they have received Thy word, and Thy word is truth.

“As Thou hast sent me into the world to save it from all sin, even so have I also sent them into the world to save all of Thy children from the sins of the world.

“And for their sakes I sanctify myself by my example and by my word, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word.

“And if they believe on me through the word of those who Thou hast given me out of the world, then they shall believe in Thee and keep Thy commandments which they shall receive through these; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me to make all of Thy children one with their Father.

“And the glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; yea, I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hath loved them, as Thou hast loved me.

“And that the world might know that Thou hast sent them, as Thou hast sent me to bring salvation unto all men according to their words, which is Thy word. That all men, Holy Father, might be one with us.

“O Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me; for Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world; and Thou lovest them also in the beginning and have called them as Thou hast called me.

“O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it always unto them that they might give glory to Thee and not to me; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and the love wherewith I have loved them may be in the world.”

And, after this prayer, we three were awakened by a bright light and by other voices. For, as had happened previously on the mount, an angel came to comfort the Lord, and we three were again transfigured so that we could behold and witness it.

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with us over the brook Cedron. And Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place: for we often came there. And this garden was the secret place of hiding for him because of the warrant for his arrest that had been obtained by the High Priest of the church at Jerusalem. For Judas had gone unto the High Priest and revealed to them where Jesus and the other apostles were hiding. Judas then, having been paid the money, received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

And they were led by Judas to the place of hiding. And when they came into the garden, Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, “Who are you looking for?”

“Jesus of Nazareth.”

“I am he.”

And Judas also, who has betrayed him, stood with them. And as soon then as he had said unto them, ‘I am he’, the apostles went backward, and fell to the ground taking with them by force Jesus also to the ground that he might not be discovered among them.

But Jesus stood upon his feet and said again unto them, “Who are you looking for?”

And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth”

“I have told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these go others their way.”

And this he said that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spoke, saying: ‘Of them which Thou gavest me have I lost none.’

And Judas drew close to the Lord and kissed him on the cheek, which was the sign he had given to the priests and the soldiers, who were there to arrest him, of which among them was the Christ. And this kiss was also the sign of greeting, which we used amongst ourselves; therefore, we all felt that our friendship and brotherhood had been betrayed, but we remained silent and held our ground for fear of being arrested, as well.

And as the guard came forth to take Jesus, Simon Peter having a sword, drew it, and smote the servant of the High Priest, and cut off his right ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus, who was later converted unto the Lord by the apostles after he had received the Holy Ghost, and who was stoned by the Jews for apostasy.

Then Jesus said to Peter: “Put your sword back into its sheath and do not sin in your anger by keeping me from doing the will of my Father. And remember, as it is written, that he who lives by the sword, shall by it die. Behold, the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”

Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him.

## Judas

*“Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful”*. Proverbs 27:6

This was the last we saw of Judas. Having received his money, he quietly slipped away and was never seen alive again. But, I cannot speak much better of the rest of us at this time. Thanks to Jesus’ persuasion and quick thinking, not one of us was taken, though a few of us followed him at a distance. The rest scattered. I have since wondered about our dear brother Judas. We later found out that he deeply regretted his betrayal, for he returned the thirty pieces of silver and then did away with his own life, so that he might not be of further harm to Jesus, or to us his brethren.

But, each one of us had his moment of doubt and uncertainty, where we deserted the Lord, denied Him, failed to give comfort when needed, and disappointed Him by not understanding His words.

So, of what have any of us to boast? As stated before, Jesus knew each one of us, and He knew why He has chosen each of us, though we ourselves did not know. He chose us for both our strengths and for our weaknesses. He taught us that strength in Christ is perfected in weakness, and He knew how each of our weaknesses would play to His and our advantage. Here is an important fact to know: God builds his kingdom on strength, but Satan builds his kingdom on weakness. If men come unto God, He will make weak things become strong.

It also seems that God’s plans always take Satan into account, but Satan’s plans never take God into account. Jesus chose Judas because He knew that in spite of all Judas’ admirable strengths (and he had many, and we all respected him as our brother), Judas would – in the end – betray him. It was necessary that this offense come (and Jesus knew that we would all be offended by Him), but woe to Judas, by whom the greatest offense came.

His work of betrayal was necessary, but he also paid the price in so many ways. He forfeited the money, which he had gained. He forfeited his witness of Christ in his death – instead of being a martyr, he died an ignominious death, which was a witness of his own treachery.

But, in a way, his betrayal and death was a witness to the great love and tolerance of the Master, who knew all things, and yet lived and served together with this man for three years, loving him as he loved all the others.

Some say that the betrayal began on the night in the garden, but the betrayal was in Judas’ heart from the beginning. And Jesus knew it, but He loved the man anyway.

I believe that eventually Judas will have paid the whole price for his betrayal. I know the Lord has forgiven him, and I pray that each of my brethren will find it in their heart to forgive him. I also pray that mankind will forgive him. And most of all, I pray that Judas, after having paid the price for his evil, will find it to forgive himself.

## The Trials and Crucifixion

*"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Are you a king then? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears my voice."* John 18:36-37

*"Jesus answered, you could have no power at all against me, except it were given to you from above."* John 19:11

In this section, I will put to rest the false teachings that Jesus committed suicide, or that he resisted his suffering and death in any way. Had Jesus had wanted to commit suicide by surrendering to the Jewish authorities, he could have done so on any number of times when he appeared publicly at the temple to teach and to attend the Jewish festivals. Through His teachings, he gained new disciples and provoked the authorities to move against Him, but until His hour fully came, He managed to deliberately elude their grasp. While the Jewish authorities seethed in their hatred and plotted ways to take Him, Jesus continued His teaching ministry and our training as shepherds in His service.

But, when His hour had fully come, He did nothing to prevent his capture and death. Not even we, however misguided our attempts were, could deter Him from fulfilling His mission and fulfilling the testimony of the prophets who spoke of him.

Jesus suffered and died on his own terms. The Master was in control at all times.

## Resurrection Morning

*“Jesus and stood in their midst, and said to them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”* John 20:19-21

And after the body of Jesus lay in the tomb for three days, on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to be close to him whom she loved with all of her soul. And she came when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, so that the Jews and others might not know of the place where they had laid the body. And she saw the stone taken away from the sepulcher.

Then she ran, and came to Simon Peter and me, and said to us: “They have taken away the Lord from the sepulcher, and we do not know where they have laid him.”

Peter and I ran over to the sepulcher. I outran Peter, and got there first. I stooped down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying, but I didn't go in. I was crying for what I thought was a desecration of the grave of my Lord and best friend. I didn't know what to think. I just wanted to stay outside, walk around, and clear my head so that I could take it all in. Then Simon Peter came running up, a little out of breath, and went immediately into the sepulcher, and saw the linen clothes lying, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. I am providing you this detail so that you may know that it was Peter and I who were there, and were eyewitnesses.

I finally drew up my courage and walked into the sepulcher with Peter. I saw how the linens and napkin had been neatly folded and placed, and I now believed that the grave had not been desecrated, but that the body had been carried off by one who loved Jesus.

Now, I want you to understand one thing concerning the record that I wrote, even my testimony of Jesus Christ. My name is not mentioned in that record, and the reason for this is that I might give glory to God, and not to myself. However, I do refer to myself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved”. Indeed, though he was my best friend, yet He loved us all, as He loves all of us and desires us all to be His disciples. Why don't you live close to Him, so that you could write your own name in this Gospel? You, too, could be “the disciple whom Jesus loved”.

You might also notice that nowhere in my Gospel are my brethren and I called “Apostles”, though we were sent of the Lord. We are simply called “disciples” so as not to set any distinction between us and our other brothers and sisters who are also “disciples”.

Also, I wrote very little of his death and resurrection, and also but a few of the many miracles which He performed. And I did this so that that you might turn your attention and your minds and your hearts more towards the words of Christ, which he has given unto you, giving glory to the Father for all things.

And again, this is the way you are commanded to pray unto the Father in the name of Christ for all things, even that you shall give glory to the Father by doing the things that Jesus did in the flesh, and having the same desires that Jesus had, and having the same responsibilities one to another of which Jesus spoke—this is praying in the name of Jesus.

Now, Peter and I had not yet received the Holy Ghost that would testify unto us concerning that which had taken place. We did not yet know that the scripture was fulfilled, which said that he must rise again from the dead. So, we went away again unto our own homes. But Mary stood outside the sepulcher weeping. And as she wept, she stooped down and looked once again into the sepulcher where they had buried her Lord. And when she looked in this time, she saw two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

And they said to her, “Woman, Why are you weeping?”

And she said to them, not knowing that they were angels, but believing that they were men who had come with Peter and John: “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.”

And when she had said this, she turned herself back out of the tomb. And when she turned around she saw Jesus standing there, and knew not that it was he because of her exceeding mourning and tears.

And Jesus said to her: “Woman, why are you weeping? Are you looking for somebody?”

She, supposing him to be the gardener, said to him: “Sir, if you have taken him from this place, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.”

And Jesus said to her: “Mary, look now upon me.”

And she turned herself and recognized him from his words, and said to him, “Rabboni”; which is to say, “Master.”

And she wanted in her joy to throw herself upon him, but Jesus said to her: “Do not cling to me; for I have not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.”

Many suppose that the resurrection is a sudden process. It is true that we shall be changed in the “twinkling of an eye”, as it were, but it is also true, that it takes some time for the spirit and body to adjust to the new energy flowing between them. Jesus was, at this time, in the midst of this transition. Once the transition was complete, once he was able to obtain the same degree of glory to which his Father obtained, and to ascend bodily to that plane whereon his Father dwelt, He would then be able to manifest himself to his disciples so that we might be eyewitnesses of the glory which he obtained, and to bear that same witness to the world.

After Christ’s resurrection from the grave and before his ascension to present himself to the Father, only one person saw him: Mary Magdalene. This was an experience unique to her in all of

history. Nobody else on earth witnessed Christ's body in this intermediate state. This was one of the few moments in the life of Christ that even I was not permitted to witness. Later, all of us, and several of the other disciples saw the risen Christ, but only after he had ascended to the Father.

And Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. And many more things did they speak of which she did not tell us, and we, knowing her special relationship with our Master, respected her privacy in these matters.

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, we disciples met behind closed doors for fear of the Jewish authorities, and as we formed a circle and prayed as we had been taught to pray, Jesus came and stood in our midst, and said to us:

“Peace be unto you.”

And, then, embracing us one by one, and chatting with each one of us, he showed us his hands and his side and the marks of his death. And he commanded us that we should come forth and feel his flesh that we might know of assuredly that it was he. And when we had all come forth and touched him, and witnessed for ourselves, then we were glad, for we had seen our Lord again.

Then Jesus said to us again: “Peace be unto you. As my Father hath sent me to the world to deliver it from sin and darkness, even so I send you to be saviors of men.”

And when he had said this, he looked at us and placed his hands on each of us and ordained us, saying:

“Receive the Holy Ghost, by doing the works which these hands which are placed upon you have done. For you have seen my works and know of the commandments that I have been given by the Father to give to all of His children throughout the whole earth.

“And you shall go forth into the world and do the things that ye have witnessed that I have done among you in the flesh. And you shall teach the things that I have taught and show the way of salvation unto those who shall hear your words, which by your mouth, or by my own, it is the same.

“Even as I have overcome the world, so shall you overcome the world, whether in life, or in death, it is the same.

“And you shall teach those who listen to your words how they might also overcome the world, that we might all sit down together in the Kingdom of my Father.

“But remember always the words which I spoke unto you in the flesh, even the final words that I gave to you. Behold, you shall be known as my disciples if you love one another. And this you shall teach to all men, that they should love one another.

“And now, I leave you and go unto the Father.”

But we begged him to stay among us.

And there were some women among us who were also ordained by the Lord, and bidden to keep these things to themselves because of the Jews, but that they, too, should do what he had commanded them. But because of the Jews and their traditions, even the beliefs of the world, which esteem men above women, the Lord commanded their ordinations to be held in secret.

And he commanded all of his disciples that they should show unto the world of the example that he had set for them by their works. But, to us twelve he gave specific instructions concerning the Jews, and also a charge that we were to bear special witness of his Name to the whole world. And after he had given these instructions, a pillar of light shown above him and he left us and returned to the Father.

## Feeling the Prints in His Hands

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with us when Jesus came the first time. And when we told him, “We have seen the Lord”, he did not believe us.

It would be easy to dismiss the claims of one or two disciples as being the illusions of a distraught mind, but ten of his brethren and many others witnessed the resurrected Lord.

However, there are a few things you need to know about our dear brother Thomas. He had a deep love for the Lord, which he never spoke of, but showed in his actions day to day, and in his willingness to follow the Lord wherever he went – even to die with him, if necessary. He couldn’t bear the thought of the Lord going anywhere that he couldn’t come. When Christ was led to the cross, Thomas was so disheartened that he could not join his Lord in death that he could also not bear to witness to crucifixion, so he returned to his home, and was not seen of us for several days.

When he missed our weekly gathering – the one at which the Lord appeared to us – I took it upon myself to go looking for him. Jesus always taught us that a true shepherd goes out looking for the lost sheep, and that we were to do his works and follow his words. I reasoned that if Thomas felt anything like the rest of us felt before we saw the Lord, he would indeed feel lost and alone.

Or, maybe he was testing us all. Maybe he knew what had happened, and he just wanted to see who would come and invite him back.

Anyway, when I found him, I told him what happened. Thomas didn’t believe me.

Many would have condemned him, but I saw things a little differently.

“Thomas”, I said, “we all doubted the Lord until we saw him for ourselves.”

I asked him to please come back and join us because we all missed him and the spirit which he carried with him.

“But, what will the others think of me? I deserted him in his hour of need!”

“We all deserted him.”

“Even you and Peter?”

“After He was taken in the garden, most of the brothers ran off their separate ways. Peter and Nathanael and I followed the Lord at a distance so we could see what happened, but not be arrested ourselves. Peter denied the Lord three times. Nathanael was cast out of the synagogue for defending Jesus according to our law. I was able to continue to follow the Lord because I was a relative of the high priest. But, later on, I ran off and hid in a cave, until I could bear it no more and ran back to the foot of the cross just before the Lord died. He asked me to take care of his

mother, since she had no other family. What if I hadn't returned to the cross? I would have missed his final instructions and his dying words. Anyway, none of us has done anything to be proud about. But, at least, we still have each other."

"What will happen to me if I come back?"

"We will love you and accept you as one of our brothers, just as we always have."

"But, you are now ordained to do his works and are witnesses of his resurrection. I know that He wants me to do his works and bear witness of him, but my personal fears held me back. What shall I do now? Without this witness, I am as 'the salt which has no savor'. In order to be one with my brothers, I must bear the same witness as you, my brothers. Unless I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe that which you tell me."

I tried to think of some words of wisdom to tell him, but it was difficult seeing as how I was in the same situation as Thomas before I saw with my own eyes and felt with my own hands. But, thinking of the ordination which we received to do the works of Jesus and to teach the words of Jesus, I gave Thomas the same words which Jesus first gave to Andrew and me when we first desired to follow him, and the same words which our dear brother Andrew often repeated:

"Come, and see!"

And then, after eight days, all of us met again behind closed doors, including Thomas. All week long, we had been talking about all the things which had occurred.

We met and prayed as we had done before, then, as before, Jesus came again into our midst, and said: "Peace be unto you."

Then he walked right over to Thomas, looked him in the eye and smiled upon him, saying: "Reach forth with your finger, and feel the prints in my hands; and reach forth with you hand, and thrust it into my side; and do not be faithless, but believing."

And Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God," and fell to his knees and wept for his lack of faith.

And Jesus said to him: "Thomas, because you have seen me, as have all the others, you have believed. But more blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed. And they will believe because the Father has testified to them by the power of the Holy Ghost."

And Jesus patiently repeated for Thomas all the instructions which He had given to us when we gathered the week before, and He laid his hands upon a trembling Thomas and gave unto him the same commandments and charge which He gave to us when we gathered the week before the week before.

And Jesus did many other signs in our presence, which are not written my Gospel But the Lord commanded us to write only those things that would turn the hearts of the people to his words, and not to the greatness of the miracles that were wrought before them.

If you read my Gospel, you will see that those people who readily believed on Christ were not those who saw the miracles, but those who followed him and did his works. But these things are written, that you might also come to the knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by knowing this you might have life through his Name.

And it has already been explained unto you in my Gospel, and in this record what the Name of Christ represents; it represents His works. And unless you do the works of Christ, you shall not have eternal life. And if you do the works of Christ, you will always have his Spirit to be with you, then you will also his beloved disciple, and the Father and the Son will take up their abode with you, and be your welcome guests. You will know them, for you shall be in them, and they shall be in you. And, by knowing this, the only true God, you will surely pass from death unto life and partake of the fellowship which is freely offered to all who would be his disciples.

And this small volume is meant to be a further account of His love for his disciples and for all men, that you might gain a small taste of this most precious of all gifts – the love of God, and seek this gift above all other gifts.

## I Go a Fishing

This was the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples after his resurrection. This was one of the last opportunities for Jesus to teach us. And he taught us not only in word and deed, but also in symbols. Let's follow along with the account as written in my Gospel.

*21:1 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he himself.*

*21:2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.*

That would be Peter, James, John, Andrew, Thomas, Nathanael, and Philip. These were seven men out of the twelve, or to be more accurate, the remaining eleven. We were all good friends because we were all fisherman and because we all came from the same town. All, that is, except for Thomas. He was no fisherman, but he reluctantly agreed to come along as moral support. Jesus has told us to wait in Jerusalem for "the promise of the Father", otherwise known as the Holy Spirit. We didn't understand what He meant by that at the time, but we had to do something because we got tired of hanging around Jerusalem all the time.

We disobeyed the Lord's instructions to "tarry", but when He saw us again, He was glad to see us, and he did not scold us. Instead, he used the opportunity to be alone with us, out in our native element, in order to teach us some final lessons.

*21:3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.*

We were going back to the life we knew best – "fishers of fish", while we waited for the understanding of how to be "fishers of men". This fishing work symbolized our eventual apostolic work of bringing people to Christ. Teaching the Gospel is a lot like casting out your net to see what you can "catch". The fish we caught experienced death, but the men we caught experienced life everlasting.

*21:4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.*

We had been out fishing all through the night and had caught no fish. Our work during the spiritual night had been vain and unproductive. But now, it was morning -- the dawning of a new day -- a new age.

The water under our boat symbolizes the physical world, and the emotions and illusions that ensnare and bind mankind. The fish that we were attempting to catch symbolize mankind. We were in a boat floating on the surface of the water, symbolizing that we were in the world, but not of the world. Jesus was standing on the shore waiting for us, symbolizing he was in a higher world,

a greater reality awaiting our return to him with our harvest of fish, or in other words, the souls of men which we would bring back to him.

*21:5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.*

We could hear his voice but we didn't recognize him. But, he recognized us. He didn't actually call us "children" even though we were acting like children. A better translation might have been "Hey, guys, have you had anything to eat?" He knew we were hungry and that we hadn't caught any fish. Our spiritual labors had begun to take their toll on us.

*21:6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.*

We fished all night, but caught nothing. This symbolizes that in all our own work of gathering we brought no souls to Christ. The reason for this was explained in the parable of the vine and the branches. The branch can do nothing by itself, but together the branch and the true vine to which the branch is joined can bring forth much fruit. But when we cast their nets as directed by the Lord, we reached a bounteous harvest. This was an object lesson for us.

Note, also, that so used to His voice were we, that we instantly obeyed him without questioning and without hesitation.

*21:7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.*

I then recognized Christ immediately and told my dear friend Peter. Peter abandoned the work of gathering to be with the Lord as soon as possible. This was symbolic of his desire to return and be with his Master again in the Father's kingdom as soon as his ministry was complete. My decision to remain in the boat and help bring in the harvest was also symbolic of my decision to remain on the earth and continue to bring souls to Christ until he returns again.

But, it is also interesting to note that none of us recognized the Lord, until we listened to his words, and obeyed them. Only then, could we begin to recognize him.

Peter was more concerned with showing his **devotion to the master**, than he was with his **devotion to silently going about the work** of the master. He dove into the water and swam for shore, leaving us other six to finish up the work of the gathering.

Christ later needed to ask Peter if he loved Him more than he loved fishing, even after this "show" of devotion.

Peter claimed to love Christ the best out of all the disciples, because he was the only one to jump out of the boat and swim to shore, so Jesus decided to put Peter to the test. Jesus told Peter that if he really loved him more than fishing, and more than the other disciples, then Peter should feed his sheep.

*21:8 And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.*

It was Peter's idea to go fishing, but he gave up on it as soon as he was told the Jesus stood on the shore. The other disciples, including me, stayed behind in the physical world to complete the work, which we, under the leadership of Peter, had set out to do when he said "I go a-fishing".

*21:9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.*

*21:10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.*

*21:11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.*

We were all wondering where the bread came from? But, we didn't dare ask. In this story, however, it symbolizes the bread of eternal life, which Christ was offering to us after completing our work. Also, where did the fish on the fire come from? We had not yet hauled in our catch. These fish were other "men" which Jesus had himself gathered. Symbolically speaking, we joined Christ in his Father's kingdom and brought our harvest of souls with us.

Of course by now, Peter was feeling a little sheepish (no pun intended) leaving us to bring the fish in alone, so he was only too happy to help with the hauling the catch ashore. He started the work, and assisted with the finishing of the work, giving the appearance that he had been working all along, but at the last minute, when the Lord appeared on the shore, and acting on my word alone, he abandoned his task in order to blindly swim ashore to meet his master. Jesus didn't condemn Peter for coming, nor did he condemn the rest of us for finishing our work instead of coming.

This is an interesting and prophetic observation about Peter and John and how the work will play out in the last days.

You will notice that the account says there were exactly 153 fish caught in the net. Normally, we fishermen are not in the habit of counting our fish, but we were so amazed that we caught so many fish so quickly without breaking the net, so we wanted to know the number more out of curiosity than anything else.

But notice the symbolism here also. The account states that there were 153 "great fishes". The catch was mature, adult fishes. The harvest of men was a group of spiritually mature people, not spiritually, immature "babies".

The number 153 is interesting. The word for this number in Hebrew is **Abiasaph** (Aviasaf) "my father will gather". The Hebrew phrase Beni Ha-Elohim, which means SONS OF GOD, is 153.

Recall that at the beginning of my Gospel, I stated that as many as received Him (and were gathered), to them He gave the power to become the "sons of God".

*21:12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.*

*21:13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.*

*21:14 This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.*

We joined Christ on the shore to partake of the feast, which we had gathered together. It was both a feast of food and a feast of hearing His words of eternal life once again. But we weren't to dwell long in this blissful situation. We soon departed from that place and continued our work of preparation and gathering.

## Feed My Sheep

*“Truly I tell you, when you were young, you would gird yourself, and go wherever you wanted: but when grow older, you shall stretch forth your hands, and another shall gird you, and carry you where you do not want to go” John 21:18*

Jesus never told us to establish churches patterned after the organizations of man. It was later generations of men who built up their own churches, not on the revelations of the Holy Ghost, nor upon the works of Christ, but upon the works of men – namely, the works of the apostles.

These men were not called of Christ as we were – that is by taking His Name upon themselves and in this way choosing Him, and by Christ placing His Name upon them, and in this way choosing them, doing living works of love and service, and speaking the living words as given by the Spirit. No, this they did not do. They choose to imitate us, and in this way they built their works upon the dead works and dead words of Peter, or upon the dead works and dead words of Paul, or upon my works and words, and not upon the living works and living words of Christ. And, in this way, they have strayed from the Gospel, and have deceived themselves, not following Christ, the one True Shepherd.

Jesus said that he would found his true church upon the rock of his works and words. That is, all who obey His voice through the Holy Spirit and keep his commandments would be numbered among those of his church. He taught that he gave us to feed his little flock with the words of eternal life, as He fed us.

*“But you know the things that bring true happiness and which shall also bring eternal life. It is this food that my sheep desire. Therefore, have I said to Peter that if you love me, then feed my sheep. For my words are meat indeed unto all those who shall receive them. And if they eat of my flesh, which I have given them, then shall they never hunger again.”*

*“Do not fear the world, for the world cannot give unto you of this meat. For you fished all day and could not find a fish to eat. But I have given you more fish than you are able to eat; and even of them which you caught with your one net by my command, I have not given unto you to eat, but had already prepared for you that which you should eat with me. And this I did that it might be in similitude of that which you shall now do for me, if you truly love me. And I know that you love me, but the other apostles also love me, and therefore, I would that you all go into the world and give unto my sheep the feed that they need that they might have eternal life. As I told you before: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and have faith on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”*

## What Shall this man do?

*“And when he had spoken this, he said to him, follow me.”* John 21:19

When I first heard those words concerning eternal life, they sank deep into my soul and I desired with all my heart that I might be a true disciple that I might truly hear his word and have faith in the Father, and glorify His Name by my life that I might “pass from death unto life”, as Jesus said. I wanted nothing more than to be with my Lord always, and I prayed unto the Father to grant unto me this eternal life that I might receive the desire of my heart.

But, then Jesus taught us that after He sent the Holy Spirit, it would remind us of all He taught us, and also recall to our memories the true relationship we had with our Lord before the world was. He taught us that when we received the Holy Spirit, we would learn for ourselves that the light of truth, which was in Christ was also the same light of truth which was within us, otherwise we could not abound. We would at that time know that we were in Him and He was within us, even as He was with the Father.

None of us could understand this at the time, but I had faith in His promise of the Comforter. I took comfort unto my soul, and I lost my concern about being separated from my Master, because I knew, through this faith, that nothing in life or death could separate Him from his friends and his beloved, and that we would always be one with Him and with the Father, regardless of what happened.

Then one day, just before the end, while Jesus and we of his closest disciples were sojourning in the land of Ephraim, he took us aside, one by one, and asked each of us what, in exchange for our service to him, would be the desire of our hearts, and that he would fulfill.

When it came my turn to ask, the Lord said.

“John, my beloved, what do you desire? For if you shall ask what you will, it shall be granted unto you.”

The answer came blurring out of my mouth, without a moment’s hesitation:

“Lord, give unto me power over death, that I may live and bring souls unto thee.”

Being separated from the Lord was no longer a concern for me, so I asked for the opportunity to continue to serve him in the world.

And the Lord said unto me:

“John, I am surprised at your answer. I thought that you loved me so much that you would never be separated from me and would ask what Peter asked – that he might speedily come unto Me in My Father’s kingdom, when his testimony was completed.”

Now, I thought I had really disappointed Jesus because I didn't ask for the same as the others. I thought that perhaps he would scold me because I had asked for the wrong thing. But, Jesus just smiled at me as if to say. 'What am I going to do with you? I knew you'd ask what you asked.'

Then he spoke:

"Truly I tell you, because you desire this, you shall tarry until I come in my glory, and shall prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues and people."

And this is why the Lord later said to Peter:

"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to you? For he desired of me that he might bring souls unto me but you desired that you might speedily come unto Me in my kingdom.

"I tell you, Peter, this was a good desire; but my beloved has desired that he might do more, or a greater work yet among men than what he has before done.

"He has undertaken a greater work; therefore I will make him as flaming fire and a ministering angel; he shall minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation who dwell on the earth,

"And I will make you to minister for him and for your brother James: and unto you three I will give this power and the keys of this ministry until I come.

"Truly I tell you, you shall both have according to your desires, because you both joy in that which ye have desired. And it is my good pleasure to grant all my disciples' desires for happiness. For if you have desires to be with me, or if you have desires to serve me, it is the same, for he that serveth the least of these thy brethren has done it unto me."

At the time, I had no idea how this could happen or what would happen. He never promised me that I would not die, but that I would have power over death. How is it possible to die, but to have power over death, or in other words, to never taste of death?

In many ways death is a blessing. Not having immortal bodies, death gives us a chance to renew our physical bodies. It also gives us the body which is the most adapted and the most suitable for the current phase of our mortal probation, whether incarnated in Italy as a monk, or Germany as a college professor, or as a farmer in America, a sailor in the navy, or whenever and whatever may be required.

Somebody who lived physically forever, or who had supernatural powers to appear and disappear at will would soon attract attention and would interfere with the agency of those with whom he was trying to work. There are a lot of amusing legends concerning this, but the best explanation is usually the simplest explanation.

The true power which death holds over us is the fear of death, also the power is in the pain of dying and the uncertainty over what happens between lifetimes -- the state of happiness or misery into which we are received in the Spirit World, and the forgetfulness which is drawn over our

memory because of our flesh, when we re-enter mortality again. The power of death also creates a veil between the world of men in the flesh and the world of spirits. To have power over death is also to have overcome the fear and uncertainty of death. To not be affected by all these things is what it means to have power over death.

In the *Book of Mormon*, a testament of Christ and an account of his visit to the Americas, Christ appointed disciples in that land and also granted to them the desires of their hearts. Three of them had desires similar to mine and went through the same change that I experienced. To help understand this change better, I quote a short passage:

“And it came to pass when Jesus had said these words, he spake unto his disciples, one by one, saying unto them: What is it that ye desire of me, after that I am gone to the Father?”

“And they all spake, save it were three, saying: We desire that after we have lived unto the age of man, that our ministry, wherein thou hast called us, may have an end, that we may speedily come unto thee in thy kingdom.

“And he said unto them: Blessed are ye because ye desired this thing of me; therefore, after that ye are seventy and two years old ye shall come unto me in my kingdom; and with me ye shall find rest.

“And when he had spoken unto them, he turned himself unto the three, and said unto them: What will ye that I should do unto you, when I am gone unto the Father?”

“And they sorrowed in their hearts, for they durst not speak unto him the thing which they desired.

“And he said unto them: Behold, I know your thoughts, and **ye have desired the thing which John, my beloved, who was with me in my ministry**, before that I was lifted up by the Jews, desired of me.

“Therefore, more blessed are ye, for **ye shall never taste of death**; but ye shall live to behold all the doings of the Father unto the children of men, even until all things shall be fulfilled according to the will of the Father, when I shall come in my glory with the powers of heaven.

“And ye shall never endure the pains of death; but when I shall come in my glory ye shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye **from mortality to immortality**; and then shall ye be blessed in the kingdom of my Father.

“And again, ye shall not have pain **while ye shall dwell in the flesh**, neither sorrow save it be for the sins of the world; and all this will I do because of the thing which ye have desired of me, for ye have desired that ye might bring the souls of men unto me, while the world shall stand.” (3 Nephi 28:1-8).

There have been many false teachings concerning this spread abroad in the world. One teaching says that these men cannot die, but Jesus never said that they would not die – only that they would never taste of death. Another teaching says that these men are immortal, but the above

passage states clearly that they will be changed from mortality to immortality. Therefore, if they were already immortal, then they could not be changed. It appears to be a riddle unless you read all the words at their face value.

There is also a profound difference between the missions of Peter, James, and John (the three Biblical disciples), and of the three Book of Mormon disciples. Peter and James were called to assist John in ministering to those on the earth who shall be heirs of salvation. This is done most effectively by the three working as angels (or messengers) on different levels or planes of existence (i.e. heaven and earth). The mission of the three Book of Mormon disciples (AKA “The Three Nephites”) is to all remain on the earth and witness the “doings of the Father”, or in other words, the “work of the Father” going forward on the earth until all things shall be fulfilled, and Christ returns.

## The Acts of the Apostles

After his resurrection, Christ appeared to his disciples many times and taught them his words. There were about 120 of us who witnessed his final ascension from the Mount of Olives, where he was taken up and received into a cloud.

He actually never really left us because he also promised that he would be with us always -- even until the end of the world, or in other words, the end of the age. Nevertheless, there are many who seek Him, but do not find him because their eyes are still focused on the cloud, and not on the Lord within the cloud.

After this time, the eleven Apostles met together often as we had been commanded, and Peter recommended that we find a replacement for Judas who had betrayed Christ and killed himself. The Bible tells how we chose that replacement, but we had not yet received the Holy Ghost at that time. Therefore, not having the guidance of the Spirit, we were unable to obtain the will of the Lord directly, so we had to consult scripture for how to proceed, and then after several days of intense prayer, we selected two candidates and then drew straws to see which candidate "the Lord" had selected.

While we needed to find a replacement, the process which we followed was not inspired, and not the way in which we conducted business in the future once we received the Holy Spirit. For, after we received the Spirit, we were of one heart and one mind, and the Lord spoke to each of us concerning His will, and there were no differences of opinion and no debate, no consulting dead scripture, and no divining through physical objects, and no selection by chance.

However, as I said previously in this record many men who followed our in our footsteps built churches upon the works of the Apostles, and not upon the works of Christ, for if they had done the works of Christ, then they would have received the words of the Christ through the Holy Ghost to guide them, instead of choosing chief leaders to rule and reign over them, and choosing them by the uninspired method which we, in our darkness, resorted to.

I will now describe an event, which has been completely misunderstood by the churches of this day. This event has been the basis for many false teachings about the Holy Spirit, about how the Spirit is given, and about the fruits of that Spirit. It is a great sin to worship the Holy Spirit or to worship the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit never leads a man to worship it, only to give glory unto the Father. The belief in glorifying the Holy Spirit, or the manifestations of the Holy Spirit is grievous to the Spirit, and opens the door for darkness to enter.

It so happened that when the Apostles were again fully organized into our places, and when the Day of Pentecost, a traditional feast day of the Jews, which occurs 50 days after Passover had fully come, the disciples were gathered together "of one accord" as we were accustomed to doing.

The phrase "of one accord" is very important. It means that we were gathered with one heart and one mind, or that we were in agreement or unity with one another. Jesus taught that when his dis-

ciples gather together in His Name, and when they agree as touching one thing, there, he will be in our midst.

The power of Christ was truly manifest in our midst on that day. Our intelligence was enlightened; our memories were sharpened; and our tongues were loosed so that men of all tongues and nations could all understand the words, which we spoke, in their native language. Many stood up and bore powerful witness of the work of Jesus Christ, while others stood up and prophesied regarding the future of this work. We saw tongues of fire; heard the rushing of wind as the Spirit passed through, and many saw angels. Many of the people who gathered and heard us were penetrated to the inner core of their beings, by the Spirit which taught them. Then they cried out, and desired greatly to know what they should do.

The promptings of the Holy Ghost teach and confirm true principles, and they inspire action.

Peter, speaking as one voice, yet speaking for all, stood up in our midst and commanded them to obey the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, the laying on of hands for the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

A wise man builds his house on ROCK not on SAND. These principles and ordinances are the four foundation stones of the Gospel, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

The first principle is not just faith. It is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The New Testament uses faith in two ways. Paul used it as a noun. I used it as a verb – action word. But since English has no direct verb form of this word, it is rendered "to believe," a much weaker form of the action word which the Greek uses. To exercise faith is to take positive action. James makes the distinction clear: "Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith BY my works." Salvation comes by faith, not dead works. Showing forth works does not prove faith, but is evidence that faith may be present. Somebody can have works without faith, but if somebody claims to have faith, then the works must be present because works are the fruit of faith. If a man says he loves God (has faith) and does not keep His commandments, then he is a liar and the truth is not in him. Faith leads to knowledge.

Repentance means to choose again or to turn again. We need to repent and improve every day of our lives. We need to watch our works to make sure that we are doing the works of Christ. We need to watch our thoughts to make sure that we are performing the works of Christ for the right reasons. We need to be sensitive to the Spirit so that even if we deviate ever so slightly as mortal men are wont to do, we can immediately put the principles of repentance into practice and steer back onto that strait and narrow way that leads to eternal life. Faith provides the direction and the forward motion, but repentance provides the adjustment to make sure that we stay on course.

Baptism is an outward sign of inward faith and repentance. It is a symbol of the covenant that we renew whenever we partake of the bread and wine. In this covenant, we promise to take the Name of Christ upon us by keeping His commandments with full intent of heart and mind. The Lord fulfills his part of the covenant, with the promise of eternal life and that His Spirit will always be with us.

Churches are mistaken in that they think they can give the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Only God can give the Gift, which **is** the Holy Ghost. But, of what use is a gift if it is not received? The Father is willing to give the Holy Ghost to all, but it is we who must receive this gift.

In fact, the priesthood holder who “confers the gift of the Holy Ghost”, actually commands us in the Name of Jesus Christ to **receive** the Holy Ghost. Christ said that whether by His voice or by the voice of His servants it is the same, so therefore it is as if Jesus himself placed His hands upon your head, as He did with His Apostles and commanded them to receive the Holy Ghost.

To truly receive the Gift of Holy Ghost, we need to listen to it, and from that time forth live by every word that comes from the mouth of God. When we have received this gift, we experience a “mighty change of heart”, a heightened intellect, and an elevation of consciousness. One could say that we have put off the natural man, and become a new creature.

Looking at it from a higher perspective, we have actually changed **back** into that state of being in which we existed before the fall, but retained the experience and wisdom gained through lifetimes of trial and experience.

Receiving the Holy Ghost is not a one-time event. We must continue to feast on the words of Christ as we receive them through Voice of the Spirit. We may read the words of scripture, or hear the word of men, but in order to learn the Father’s way, we must learn by the Spirit. Those who neglect or ignore this gift do so at the peril of their salvation. The prophets have made this point very plain -- as plain as words can be.

If you do the works of Christ without the spirit of Christ, how can they be his works? And if you have the spirit of Christ, you shall do his works.

And this is the Doctrine of Christ, to which I referred in my Second Epistle. This is how to tell the difference between true servants of Christ and one who is a deceiver and an antichrist. Does he teach the Doctrine of Christ, or some other doctrine?

Note that I said **an** antichrist. Other writers in the New Testament give the mistaken impression that there is only one antichrist. This false teaching causes people to look for some all-powerful being, but, this is not true. There are many antichrists working unnoticed in the world. Their strength lies in the fact that they are not recognized for who and what they are. An antichrist is any substitute for the true Christ, or in other words, an idol. You may recognize Christ, or one who bears the Name of Christ by his works and by his words. And by the same test you may know an antichrist.

## Rise of the Early Church

*"The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth." II John 1:1*

*"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." III John 1:4*

Jesus never organized a church, but he often spoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Kingdom of his Father. When he referred to a church, he was referring to those disciples who gathered together and who desired to keep the covenants made at baptism. These were numbered with the church. There were no other membership requirements. We had no organization and no hierarchy. The Holy Ghost was our guide and the gifts of the Spirit were manifest in abundance. Each person served the others according to the gifts and callings of God within him, receiving his keys and calling from God and not from man. And we saw the anointing of Christ upon each of our brothers and sisters. And as we were equal in obtaining heavenly things, so were we equal in obtaining earthly things, and there was no poor among us.

Even those who were not members of our little flock remarked about the love which we had one towards another. They also wondered at how a group of ignorant fishermen and common people could devise such a remarkable and cohesive society in such a short time. But they quickly understood how we were able to do this when they took note that we had been with Jesus.

However, the church changed in time, as more and more people joined the church who knew not Christ from the beginning. Some came as wolves proclaiming themselves to be apostles. They crept into our midst unawares, seeking fame and popularity, teaching a gospel of belief not works, and a gospel built on the signs and miracles of Jesus instead of a gospel built on His works and words.

Many of the church began to be lifted up in their pride and to seek the chief seats and callings so that they might have preeminence over each other. They preached love, but hated their neighbors who were not like unto them in every way, whether in race, or station in life, or in their personal beliefs and habits. For God did not care what personal beliefs or traditions a person observed as long as he observed the commandments of Christ and did not preach his own personal traditions as the doctrine of Christ. But the would-be leaders of the church took it upon themselves to enforce their own personal beliefs and began to concoct creeds, to which all members must subscribe in order to be accounted worthy to belong to the church and worthy to partake of our agape feasts and sacraments. They spoke of the church, not as a body of believers gathered together in unity and love, but as a "holy faith", and an orthodoxy (a body of right thinking) which must be defended against all those who disagreed with it.

All of this, the Lord suffered because of His desires to grant agency unto the children of men that each might learn and choose for himself. The Holy Ghost continued to strive with us for a time notwithstanding the Spirit was sorely grieved. The gifts of the Spirit were not as evident and in abundance as they were at the first. So, little by little, the light slipped away from us, so gradually

that few, if any, noticed the darkness. The Apostles were powerless to stop this because they were out on missions teaching the word and testifying to the world of the works of Christ. I remained behind to care for the Lord's mother.

But, in the church, there remained some who remembered Jesus and who remained humble, peaceable followers of Christ. But, those who were lifted up in their pride began to persecute them and drive them from within their midst. A few of the persecuted ones gathered together and asked me what should be done. I explained that I felt that we should remain with the main body of the church and be the leaven that leavens the whole loaf, but the hatred and persecution became so unbearable that eventually we decided to break away and establish our own community in the town of Ephesus.

We established our community and lived the Law of the Gospel, or in other words, we followed the Doctrine of Christ. It was here that I wrote my Gospel, my witness of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. This small Gospel together with the Holy Ghost provides all that a person needs to obtain salvation, but because of the weakness of men, we require more explanation and examples before we finally understand. Our little flock continued as the original church had begun with unity of heart and mind and rich outpourings of the Spirit because each person loved his neighbor as himself.

It was our desire to build the Kingdom of God on earth in our midst so that that Jesus might come again to us and bring with Him his bride, the heavenly Zion. Many of us, through the Spirit, were able to behold that city, and we sought to pattern our society as much as possible after that heavenly order. However, the time was not right, and the society surrounding us was so wicked that we could not establish a Celestial Order amongst us without drawing upon us much persecution. Therefore, we were instructed to wait until the times of Restoration in the latter days when the dreams which we sought after would be fulfilled. And we confessed that we were strangers and pilgrims wandering the earth.

But there were many of us who truly knew God, and because of this knowledge they were redeemed from the fall of Adam and were able to bear the Presence of God while yet in the flesh. These held communion with the general assembly and church of the firstborn, or in other words the Holy Order of God, having been received into fellowship with such. Great were their joys in the love of their brothers and sisters in the higher worlds, and great was their knowledge, which God reveals only to his faithful, and those who seek to serve him in righteousness. Upon such he bestows the promise of eternal life and reveals unto them the mysteries of the kingdom.

Nevertheless, they are commanded not to speak of such things while in the world. Many of these faithful saints received the fulfillment of their hopes as they passed directly from death into life and were taken up by the powers of heaven, while others of us, having attained to the same glories, elected to remain behind and assist through the ages, our fellow brothers and sisters in their continued struggle upward toward eternal life, sustained and supported by those who have passed beyond. I pray for the day when Zion will be brought up from beneath on the earth and brought down from above, and when our Lord will reign in our midst. Every day is my prayer: "Even so, Lord Jesus, come!"

## Epistle to the Early-day Saints

I wrote an epistle to our Ephesian church and to the other churches. I'm going to share it again with you – you of the modern day who claim to know and serve God and worship him in your churches. I pray that these writings give you some glimpse of how the true followers of Christ lived back in our day. The early saints understood the power of God and lived by the Spirit, and were not as concerned about proper church organization as you are today. It might come as a shock to you, but your “perfect organizations” will not save you, as long as you have but a form of godliness, but you deny the power thereof. The Gospel is the **power** of God unto salvation. If there is no power, there is no salvation. You lack faith and its attendants: the gifts of the spirit. It is as there was no atonement made, and all is vain. But let me show you how it was in the beginning.

That Word of life which was with God in the beginning manifested himself in our midst. Our eyes have looked upon him, and our hands have handled him. And we bear witness of that Word and also that the Father's gift of eternal life was manifested to us.

And we declare this to you that you might have the same communion as we have, for truly we have communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, who have taken up their abode with us, as promised to us. And this promise is unto every soul who forsakes his sins and comes unto Christ, and calls on His Name, and obeys His voice, and keeps His commandments: “They shall see my face and know that I am.”

And we are writing these things to you that your joy might be as full as ours. Even greater, for as each soul is added to the circle of fellowship the light burns that much brighter, and the love is that much sweeter, and the Spirit begins to be unrestrained.

When you come to know the workings of the Spirit, you will perceive that **God is light**, and in him is no darkness at all.

Many come claiming that they “know” God or that they have “fellowship” with God. But if they walk in darkness, they lie, and do not tell the truth. This fellowship of which we speak is not an empty expression. It is literal communion with God. And, if you have once received this fellowship, it will change your life forever.

And if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and know each other as we are known. We will see our sins and freely repent of them, confessing them to one another, and forsaking them. The shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from the false guilt associated with sin, for knowing that He forgives us, makes it possible for us to forgive ourselves and one another and not hide our sins and pretend that we have no sin.

If we say that we have no sin, then we are committing the greatest sin of all because we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But, if we confess our sins, the Lord, the Faithful one, forgives us our sins, and cleanses us from all unrighteousness, so we can walk uprightly and judge a righteous judgment.

But, if we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. For if His word was in us, we would freely come to the light that our mistakes may be known for what they are – mistakes. And, we can choose better and move on.

Little children, (and I am calling you little children for such is of the kingdom of heaven, and I love you all as if you were my little children) I am writing these things to you so that you can avoid these mistakes and not make the biggest mistake of all – which is to deny that you have made mistakes (sins).

But if we sin, know that we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ. He is the one who judges us rightly. He is our mediator with the Father, and He is here to remind us that it is our sins which separate us from the Father, and it is not the will of the Father that any of His children should be lost, but he sends his servants out to seek after that those sheep which were lost in their sins and bring them home safely into the fold.

Many people who are not familiar with the voice of the Spirit ask “How can I know?” The true answer to this question is to seek the Spirit. Any other answer is not a complete answer, nor an honest answer. But I will give you some tests to use so that you will know how to judge your own progress, until you come to know the Spirit, which will tell you all the things you should do.

So, how do we know that we know the Father? We know the Father, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him”, but doesn’t keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His commandments, the love of God is perfected in him, and we will be in him as he is in us, even as he is in Christ and Christ is in him. If a man says that Christ is in him, then he will do the works of Christ, and walk, even as Christ walked.

Brothers and Sisters, I am not writing any new commandment, but I am reminding you of the same old commandment which we have had from the beginning. However, I am writing this to you in a new moment of time, and I ask you consider this command anew, as if you were hearing it for the first time, that your understanding may be enlightened, and that you may live this commandment more completely. The darkness is past and a new light is shining in our midst. Can you see it? Are you walking in it, or are you stumbling around in the darkness?

Whoever says he is walking the light, but esteems his brother as less than himself, or who esteems his brother as greater than himself is, in reality, walking in darkness. Whoever loves his brother as himself abides in the light. He does not stumble; nor does he give his brother occasion to stumble. He who does not walk in the light doesn’t know where he is going because darkness has blinded his eyes.

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

I write unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning.

I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one.

I write unto you, little children, because you have known the Father.

I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning.

I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.

Do not love the world or focus your attention on the world or the material things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. The world with all of its lusts and desires is temporary and will pass away, the Father abides forever, and you who are the children of the Father abide forever. Therefore, your desire should be to know His will, and abide in Him forever.

Little children, these are the last days, and since you have heard that antichrist shall come, know this that even now there are **many** antichrists, as was prophesied concerning the latter days. These antichrists have gone out from our midst, but they were never really part of us, for if they had been part of us, then they would no doubt have continued with us; but they left us, and made it clear to one and all that they have no part with us.

I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, for you have an anointing from the Holy One and know the truth of all things. You know that Jesus is the Christ, and you know the Father because that which you have heard from the beginning abides in you. And if you continue in the Father and the Son, you will come to know them, and you will receive Their promise of eternal life.

Our god is a god of truth, and cannot lie, so you can trust in this promise. And you also know that no lie can come from the truth.

So, who is the greatest liar, and how does he lie? A liar is he who denies these things and worships some other Christ in his place. And this is the spirit of an antichrist.

Some of those who left us will come back to try to seduce you into following them, in an attempt to justify their own deeds by which they have sought to harm us. But the anointing which you have received of the Spirit, abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you, for the same anointing of the Spirit teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie. And even as it has taught you, so you should abide in the Spirit.

And now, little children, abide in Christ; in order that, when He shall appear, you may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you know that every one that does righteousness is born of him. So, there is no need to be ashamed, whether you are standing before Christ, himself, or facing our enemies.

What marvelous love that the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons and daughters of God! But, the world doesn't know us or understand us, because it does not know or understand God.

My beloved brothers and sisters, we are now the sons and daughters of God our Father, who sees us as we truly are, even though we cannot see who we truly are. But we know this, that when Christ shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall then see him as He is, and He shall see us as He has always seen us.

And it is this hope within each of us that causes us to purify ourselves, even as he is pure.

And what is purity except that you love your brother and sister as yourself with **all** you heart, might, mind, and strength? Nothing wavering. Nothing held back in reserve. No hidden motives. No expectations. No conditions.

And now, my beloved, I must speak to you in plainness.

Whoever commits sin is breaking the law, because sin, by definition, means to break the law. And we know that Christ was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin. Whoever abides in him will not sin, but whoever commits sin has not seen him, neither known him.

Don't let anybody deceive you. He who does the works of Christ in the spirit of Christ is righteous, even as Christ is righteous. But, he who commits sin is of the devil, because the devil is a sinner from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Whoever is born of God does not commit sin, because the Spirit of Christ abides in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this, the children of God are manifest, and so are the children of the devil. For he who does not do the works of righteousness is not of God. Neither is he that does not love his brother.

For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

Do not be like Cain, who was that wicked one, who murdered his brother. And why did he kill him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's works were righteous. Cain killed his brother in order to justify his evil works, that his own works might receive the praise of men, and that his righteous brother's works would be seen no more.

Don't be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you for the same reason.

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love one another. He, who does not love his brother, remains in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer: and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

This is how we can understand the love of God: because he laid down his life for us. And, therefore, to truly manifest the love of Christ we ought to be willing to lay down our lives for one another.

But, here is a greater test of love. Whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how can the love of God abide in him?

My little children, it is too easy to speak of dieing for one another – something which is unlikely that we will ever be called upon to do, but will we pass the test of living for one another?

Therefore, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

And we will know if we are being honest and truthful with ourselves and with our neighbors if we experience peace in our hearts and in our conscience. And if our conscience accuses us, God is greater than our conscience, and he knows all things.

Beloved, if our conscience is clean, we can approach God in confidence, knowing that whatever we ask of Him we will receive, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

And this is his commandment, that we should exercise faith in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. Whoever keeps His commandments dwells in him, and he in him.

And the way that we can know that he abides in us, is by the Spirit which he has given us.

Beloved, there are many false prophets going out in the world, and there are many false spirits guiding them and would gladly guide you if they could. Do not believe every spirit or every teacher who comes to you, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God

Here's the test to determine the true Spirit of God: Every spirit that teaches the words of Christ which you have already received and who testifies that Jesus Christ, (who came and who will come in the flesh), is of God, is a true Spirit sent from God.

But, any spirit which does not bring you these same words and does not bear this same testimony is the spirit of antichrist, a substitute for Christ, which you have heard should come; and even now already is in the world.

You are of God, little children, and have overcome these evil spirits and false teachers: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They who are of the world have been overcome of the world: therefore they speak about the world and the things in the world, and the world gladly listens to them.

We are of God. He who knows God listens to our message, but he who is not of God will not listen to us.

And this is the way to tell the difference between the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God, even charity, or the pure love of Christ; and every one who loves with the love of Christ is born of God, and knows God. But, he who does not love, does not know God; for **God is love**.

The Father manifested his love for us because he sent us his only begotten into the world, that though him we might have life eternal. This is godly love in that although we did not yet know Him or love Him, still He sent His Son to the world, knowing that the world would not receive Him, but would reject Him and kill him.

If the Father can love us so greatly, we ought also to love one another.

We don't need to see the Father in order to experience His love. If we love one another, the Father dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us. And we know we that we dwell in him, and He in us, because He has given us of his Spirit.

And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever bears this testimony, and speaks from a deep knowledge and great conviction that Jesus is the Son of God, then God dwells in him, and he in God.

We have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God dwells in him.

And we will know that our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, and have no fear of torment or embarrassment when we are called to account for our deeds done in the flesh.

Because as he is, so are we in this world.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.

He who fears is not made perfect in love.

We love him, because he first loved us. If a man says, 'I love God', but hates his brother, he is a liar: for if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

And this is the commandment, which have we received from him: he who loves God loves his brother also.

Whoever has faith that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loves him that begat loves him also that is begotten of him.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not burdensome, though they are exacting.

And whoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Who is able to overcome the world except he that has faith that Jesus is the Son of God? For He has shown us the way, and through faith on His Name, we shall overcome and sit down on His throne, even as He overcame and is sat down on His Father's throne.

This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

We can receive the testimony of men through their words, but, the testimony of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he has testified of his Son.

Whoever exercises faith on the Son of God by doing his works has this witness within himself from the Spirit. For him that does not have faith in God, God might as well be a liar, for unto such, the promises of God are not extended, because he does not believe the witness that God gave of his Son. And this is the witness: that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

It's as simple as this: he that has the Son has life; and he that does not have the Son of God does not have life.

I have written these things to you who have faith on the Name of the Son of God; that you may know that ye have eternal life.

And we have this confidence, that if we ask anything according to His will, He will hear us. And we know that whatsoever we ask according to His will, our petition will be granted.

And, if we see a brother commit a sin which is not a sin unto death, we should help to bear his burden and pray for him, that he may repent and come back into life and light, and again partake in our fellowship.

We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; and he that is begotten of God keeps himself unspotted from the world, and that wicked one cannot touch him.

And we know that we are of the Father, and the whole world lies in wickedness because they do not come to the Father, that He may draw them to Christ. And we know that the Son of God has come to us, and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.

This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep away from idols. Amen.

## Idols

What is an idol? Do you think you know an idol if you saw one? The only power that an idol has is that it is not seen for what it truly is. An idol is an image of reality which you value more than reality itself. As *A Course in Miracles* states: “An idol can be a body, a thing, a place, a situation or a circumstance, a performance or practice, an object owned or wanted, or a right demanded or achieved, they are all the same”.

Do not get caught up in to form of an idol, as if it were “reality”. Idols are nothing more than substitutes for your reality of who you truly are, no more, no less. In some dark way, you believe that without them you are incomplete, and lacking in whatever you believe the idol will supply: fame, purpose, personal worth, pleasure. Looking outward at idols instead of looking inward for the truth of who and what you are makes you a slave to your own perceived inadequacies.

An antichrist is an idol, because it is a false belief in Christ – a substitute for the real Christ. It is a thought-form which you have created with your mind. It is a cloud which obscures your view of the true Christ. But, the false always depends for its existence upon the true, and the idol will always exist in opposition to the genuine.

It is our false beliefs that feed the idol. This is why false religions are based on belief, not action. For belief feeds the illusion and keeps it alive and keeps us blind to the truth. True religion is based on action, not belief, for by action, or in other words, by keeping the commandments, we see the light of the Holy Spirit to show us the veil which we have drawn between us and the truth, and with that light, we can see clearly to lift the veil that we might have knowledge of the truth. The truth does not need belief to be itself, for the truth is perfect knowledge of things as they are, as they have been, and as they will be.

We have each created our own idols to give us that which we think we need. We each think that our own particular idol will give us more than what other men possess: more wealth, more beauty, more intelligence, or even more pain and suffering that we might gain the sympathy of the world. The operative word is “more”. But, no matter what forms the idol takes, it seeks to distinguish us set us apart from our other brothers and sisters and to, therefore, separate us from God. But, God has said: “If you are not one, you are not mine.”

Any idol which you worship and call "God" cannot give you anything which you do not already possess. Try the spirits. If such a teacher or spirit comes making this claim, either for himself or for another, offering you freedom, power, or knowledge in exchange for following him, to receive such a one is to look for salvation where it is not, and is to receive the anti-Christ.

## Epistle to the Latter-day Saints

Dear Fellow Saints:

There are some things that I have wanted to express to you for a long time. I send this epistle by way of counsel and greeting, and in the same spirit with which the ancient Apostles addressed the former day Saints.

First, I would like to talk to you about holiness. In case that Old Testament word offends you, we could use another word instead. Another word for holiness is *wholeness* or *integrity*. Another word is *perfection*. The ideas of holiness and perfection are not some “way-out” characteristics reserved for prophets, priests, and popes. They are achievable by all of us. In the Old Testament we are commanded to be holy, even as God is holy. In the New Testament, we are commanded to be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect. We would not be given a commandment that we could not follow, so let’s take a look at what this commandment really means, and what it means to follow it.

### What is Holiness?

There are three things which make up holiness. They are (1) unity and (2) love, both of which are (3) empowered by the Holy Ghost. Individuals can be holy, and groups can be holy.

Man, as an individual, is also composed of three major parts: body, spirit, and mind. We each need to become whole **within** our own body, spirit, and mind. And, then, when this occurs, to seek to become one in body, spirit, and mind **with one another**. This teaching has been described by the Lord as “The Law of the Gospel”, which simply stated means to love God and your neighbor as you would be loved – with **all** your heart, might, mind, and strength.

The Bible is replete with examples of people who were not holy. Jesus condemned the hypocrites – those who professed a belief, but didn’t live up to it. James condemned those who waver in their faith. He wrote that a “double-minded man is unstable in all his ways”. Paul admitted that he had this problem – “The good that I would do, I do not.” He recognized the law in his members warring against the law of his mind. Recognizing the problem is the first step. As stated, he who says he has done no wrong is a liar, and the truth is not in him. Paul was being truthful.

The purpose of living the Law of the Gospel is become perfect (or complete, or whole) even as the Father and the Son are perfect (or complete or whole). As they have revealed themselves to mankind, they have shown us the ideal relationship: that which they have one with another. And we should be one with one another, even as the Father and Son are one.

Again, so that there is no misunderstanding, holiness doesn’t mean “holier than thou”. If we seek to set ourselves one above another, we are in no way holy, or complete, because we believe that in order to complete ourselves, we need to “be better” or to “have more”. This is complete false-

hood. We stand and rise together, and we cannot ourselves be “complete”, unless we also see our brothers and sisters as “complete”.

### **What is Personal Integrity?**

Since this needs to start with ourselves, I will offer a few ideas about personal integrity or wholeness.

The reason we have not developed personal integrity is because we do not understand what personal integrity is. A person is said to have “personal integrity” if he follows a long list of man-made commandments – a set of “do's” and “don't's”. However, following the commandments of man merely enables one man to set himself above another and bask in his own personal righteousness while condemning all others, but the true commandments which Christ taught in the Sermon on the Mount, lead to true personal integrity, and make all men equal in the eyes of God.

But, keeping the commandments is not the same thing as integrity. Integrity comes as a **result** of keeping the commandments, or in other words, doing the right things for the right reasons.

So, integrity is not something you DO, but something which you ARE. There is a subtle shade of difference. Do you see it? Let is not confuse action and results. Both are necessary, but let's not confuse them.

Integrity, then, can be properly defined as: (1) The condition of having no part or element taken away or wanting; undivided or unbroken state; wholeness. (2) The condition of not being marred or violated; unimpaired or uncorrupted condition; soundness. (3) Soundness of moral principle; the character of uncorrupted virtue, especially in relation to truth and fair dealing; uprightness, honesty, sincerity.

### **Personal integrity is being true to what you know.**

What is true for you is what you have observed yourself, and when you lose that you have lost everything. What you know is what you know. What is personal integrity? Personal integrity is knowing what you know - and having the courage to know and say what you have observed. And that is integrity. And there is no other integrity. Nothing is true for you unless you have observed it, and it is true according to your observation. That is all.

When Joseph Smith came out of what was later to become the Sacred Grove, he said: “I had seen a vision and I knew it. And I knew that God knew it.” In relating his story then as well as today, the only problem the prophets of God run into are those self-appointed critics who are not willing to grant to the prophets the power to observe what the prophets have observed and to know what the prophets know. Moreover, these critics refuse to observe for themselves. They lack personal integrity because they lack the courage to know. And since they refuse to know, they deny that some do know and prevent still others from ever knowing.

“If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things through the narrow chinks of his cavern,' speaks William Blake. But the doors of perception are hung with the cobwebs of thought, prejudice,

cowardice and sloth. Eternity is with us now, inviting our contemplation perpetually. But we are too frightened, lazy, and suspicious to respond; too arrogant to still our thought and let divine sensation have its way.” Evelyn Underhill

### **Personal integrity is living true to what you know**

To truly take upon ourselves the Name of Christ, we must do the works of Christ according to the letter and the spirit of his commandments. In other words, we must do the right things for the right reasons. If we do the right things for the wrong reasons, or the wrong things for the right reasons, we are being a hypocrite and dishonest with ourselves.

If it is true that, as stated above, the only truth a person knows is that which he has taken as his own personal truth, then the only moral code which a person truly lives by is that which he has, in the course of his lifetime, experienced as that code which best helps him get along in life.

A person who acts contrary his own, personal moral codes or contrary to the highest light which he can perceive, or contrary to the moral codes of any group to which he belongs, violates his integrity. He, thus, becomes less than whole or less than holy. He is at war against himself. This, and only this, is sin or a falling short of the mark.

A person, having committed such an act, and then withholding the fact that he has committed that act and withholding himself from committing further such acts will tend to isolate himself from himself and from the group to which he belongs. The group itself will then lose integrity as it becomes divided and lacks wholeness. This is exactly what happened to the early church when steps were not taken to correct this error.

### **Why people leave groups**

We often experience a sudden, and often angry, departure from a relationship or a group. People leave because of their own harmful acts and withholds. A man with a clean heart can't be hurt. The man or woman who must become a victim (and perceive themselves as receiving harmful acts in return) is departing because of his or her own harmful acts and withholds. It doesn't matter whether a person is departing from a town, a job, or a church. The cause is the same.

Almost anyone, no matter what his position, can take responsibility and remedy a situation if he wants to. When the person no longer wants to remedy it, his own harmful acts and withholds against others involved in the situation have lowered his ability to be responsible for them. Therefore he does not remedy it. Departure is the only answer. To justify the departure the person dreams up things done to him in an effort to minimize the harmful act by degrading those it was done to. The mechanics involved are quite simple.

It is a rather noble commentary on man that when a person finds himself, as he believes, incapable of restraining himself from injuring a benefactor he will defend the benefactor by leaving.

An understanding of these principles can help us grow in integrity and holiness and thus become closer to God. We can put a stop to having the same problems occur over and over again which have plagued most human organizations.

What we need to do is to create an environment within the group in which a person, within the reality of his own personal moral codes and those of the group, can reveal or confess these acts so that he no longer required to withhold and so enhances his own integrity and that of the group. This principle is taught in D&C 59:12, James 5:16, 1 John 1:9, Moro. 6:5-6.

Confessing our sins is a true principle. Many people have not understood, and therefore, have not taught it correctly, if they have taught it at all. I am asking you to take a fresh look at it.

I am not talking about witch hunts, or about rending accusations, or condemning individuals. I am talking about creating an environment within a church, a business, a family, or any kind of group where we realize what sin truly is and that we all fall short of the mark. We are not administering punishment or dishing out condemnation. We are just giving people the space to be themselves and make a few mistakes, and then clean up those mistakes with the love and understanding of all concerned.

In order to accomplish this, confession must be voluntary and must originate from the person who has committed the offense, as he is moved upon by the Spirit to so confess. For the person or the group which has been offended to expect or demand confession is to violate the free agency of the offending person. The offended person or group can and should do all possible to encourage the offending person to come forward and admit his mistakes without fear of recrimination, and it should listen to the confession, acknowledge the offense, and forgive. But, it can and should do no more than this.

### **Confession is good for the soul**

If the sin is against the group and its mores, it should be confessed to the group. If against an individual, it should be confessed in private. The discussion should center on what that person has done, not what others have done. We are not interested in why the person did it. The purpose is not to enforce public morals or administer punishment. It is simply to confess. Confession is the first step of repentance. Confession is a sign of repentance. (D&C 58:43) If a person has not confessed, he has not repented.

In the Book of Mormon, church, the members met often to speak with one another concerning the welfare of their souls. Their church services were really support groups for those preparing to receive the Kingdom of God. In the Doctrine & Covenants, early church members were encouraged to meet together on the Lord's Day and confess their sins "unto thy brethren and before the Lord". (D&C 59:12)

This practice of confession has its roots in early Christianity and Judaism as manifested in the rites of the Feast of the Passover and in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Sacrament has degenerated into a simple act of worship whereby you "get" something - a shot of spiritual STP to tune you up and help you get better mileage out of life and be more resistant to "sin".

The original practice was to recall the covenants made at baptism to keep the commandments which Jesus has given us and always remember him that we may always have His Spirit to be with us.

## **The Message of the Apostles**

We cannot also forget the fact that the church had the benefit of the witness of living apostles and prophets who were commissioned to bear eyewitness of the resurrection of Christ and to manifest Christ to the people in the same way that Jesus manifested the Father unto them.

This was their message as recorded in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles: “O you men of an untoward generation ...” this might better be translated as: “O you men who aren't going anywhere in particular, put on you the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.” The natural question one might ask is: “Saved from what?” The answer is the same now as it was then: From the endless round of human existence, from the traditions of men which bind us to the plane of mortal probation. Come up unto the mountain of the Lord! You are a slave. Do you want to be a King? Come with us.

When the early saints met together, they also reenacted the Last Supper. They believed that through the breaking of the bread and the blessing of the cup, they would be agents by which their Lord would reenter human life. This was expected to be an upsetting and unsettling experience to say the least. In our present-day sophistication all this may strike us as naive, but, nevertheless, it was a reality to them ever since he had returned to them at the breaking of the bread on that first Easter night.

## **Personal integrity is unity with the Saints**

Repentance consists of confessing our sins and forsaking them. A sin is defined as any act which brings us out of unity and love with ourselves or to any other person or group to which we owe allegiance. Unity is defined as a set of agreements or expectations between two parties in any kind of relationship. In reality each person has his or her own set of expectations for himself and others. This becomes the person's individual code of moral conduct. Thus, a sin is a violation of that code of conduct.

Let's say someone in the church violates one of the covenants taken at baptism. This is clearly a harmful act since it is an act which detracts from the person's relationship with the church. It is also a harmful act against the person himself since he violates his own standard of moral conduct.

If this sin is withheld (lied about) or swept under the rug, eventually the person falls out of full communion with the rest of the church, to say nothing of the Spirit of God. When this happens, the person tries to come up with an excuse or a reason to justify his improper conduct. Rather than take responsibility himself for the act, he blames others. He may then commit other harmful acts against those persons or the church - anyone whom he supposes has done him wrong.

Eventually, the person subconsciously restrains himself and withholds himself from activity within the church so as not to commit any more harmful acts. The reason for this is because man is basically good and does not want to continue hurting himself or his fellows.

Another manifestation is that the person tries to justify the act itself in an attempt to lessen its impact: he tries to put himself down, or he puts down the person receiving the injury, or he tries to minimize the seriousness of the act.

He makes excuses for himself and expects everybody else to feel sorry for him and excuse his actions as well. He says things as: "I'm not yet perfected." or "I'm just naturally a loser." or "What can you expect from a person like me. I really have physical or psychological problems." or "Well, the church had it coming. I don't like brother X and don't agree with anything Sister Y does." or "What I did wasn't so bad. It happens all the time." or "Well, I have my point of view and that's that."

### **Taking responsibility leads to integrity**

The solution for this blame game is to take responsibility for having committed the act. I said "responsibility" not "blame". Blame assigns cause to others. Responsibility assigns cause to self. Blame gets us stuck in guilt. Guilt says you are a bad person and cannot change; therefore, you should be cut off from the group. Responsibility presumes free agency. Free agency says you can choose to do (or not to do) harmful things. This does not mean that you are not a bad person; just a good person who occasionally does bad things. Taking responsibility gives you the power to change yourself, if you choose to. And, responsibility shows you the way back to close communion and fellowship with the group.

Responsibility says: "I am willing to assume cause for that effect". That is all. Many times we are not even willing to assume responsibility for the good effects which we cause.

God is the most responsible person in the universe because He is willing to assume cause for everything that occurs. Of Himself He says: "I am in all things and through all things." and "There is no end to My works neither to My words."

Second Nephi Chapter 2 says there are two types of things in the universe: things which act and things which are acted upon. To the degree that we are willing to assume responsibility for our actions, we are taken out of the category of things which are acted upon and become that which acts of itself. Two things happen: (1) Our free agency increases. (2) We become more like the God whom we worship.

This obviously doesn't happen all at once. We grow from grace to grace.

According to D&C Section 93, this not only is how we worship, but what we worship. The best way to worship God is to become more and more like Him. So, in taking more and more responsibility for our actions, we become more and more like God.

Contrast this idea to the typical idea that worshipping God is simply mouthing high-sounding praises to God and assigning cause for all things to God, assuming no responsibility ourselves, and asking Him to take over our lives and make us more than we really are. When we do that, which god are we really worshipping?

## **Build the church on the rock**

The claim that we, as followers of Christ, make to the world is that we are **not** a human organization – we claim that we are a “church” – a body of believers united by our faith in Jesus Christ. However, when we attempt to cover our sins, and gratify our pride, that we as individuals, and I would add as a church, are left to our human devices and are without power or authority.

Please note that in Section 121 of *The Doctrine & Covenants*, the Lord recognizes that we are going to sin, and that the only thing condemned is **covering up** our sins, on in other words withholding knowledge of what we have done.

A church without power in the Priesthood is the same as any other human organization. So, let's stop kidding ourselves. Let's stop hiding our sins for fear that we will be found out. Let's start taking real responsibility for our actions and for the shortcomings of others and grow together in unity and love.

The true church of Jesus Christ is more than just a wishful claim; it can be a reality. Here's why.

Every gathering or group or organization of mortals bonds with one another in some way, and also attracts an attendant Spirit. Christ promised that whenever two or three are gathered together in His Name, that there He would be in the midst. This is more than a euphemism. This is a promise.

When we build our “church” or group upon the rock of serving one another and keeping the commandments, we are building upon the same rock which the Lord told Peter about. He told Peter that the gates of hell shall not prevail against such a church. But if the church is built upon sand instead of upon rock, the gates of hell will prevail. What do the gates of hell do? They don't keep people locked out of hell. They keep people locked **into** hell.

But the work of the spirit of Christ, whether present in individuals or present in groups is to destroy the works of the devil. When you give heed to that light which is within you, as I stated in the first part of my Gospel, that light will shine in the darkness, and the darkness will not be able to put it out.

## **Forgiveness and allowances**

Christ said: “I, the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance, but where men sin, there must be allowances made.” What kind of allowances? Allowances for the individual to take responsibility; an allowance or space granted for confession and repentance; and most of all: an allowance for love to express itself.

Christ loved us not because of who we were or even in spite of what we were. He loved us because of who he was.

If we are to be true “Christians”, can we do less? But, remember this kind of love is not something you just “will” to happen or “strive after”. Christ-like love is given as an endowment of the Holy Spirit, which we receive when we obey the commandments.

None of us is perfect. Each of us is a work in process. Perhaps we should all walk around with a bag over our head and a sign that says: “Still Under Construction”.

Saints, we are all “Still Under Construction”. We all need to make allowances for one another while we allow the Spirit and our fellow Saints to work with us and help perfect us for the work of the ministry. Indeed, we can do a great deal to help one another for, as the Proverb says: “As iron sharpens iron so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend”.

Friends, I want you to know that I support you in all your righteous desires. I want to stick by you in your times of trouble and need. Not making excuses but making allowances.

Little Children, Love one another for love is of God.

## **Dreams**

And now I share with you some of my dreams and visions.

## ***Power in the Priesthood***

I was in a park on a warm Sunday afternoon. There were lots of tall trees and green grass in this park, and in the middle of the park stood a large open air pavilion or gazebo. The pavilion was round in shape and open at the sides. Its roof was held up by huge pillars around the edge.

Inside the building, a group of people was holding what I was given to know was a worship service. The congregation consisted of several hundred people all seated in circular rows of seats around the center of the building. In the center of the building was a huge flat rock which served as a platform. On top of the platform near one edge stood a huge rock. It was long and narrow and stood up on one end.

Standing beside the platform was a man dressed as a priest, leading the religious service. The service was like nothing I had ever seen before in this life, yet, somehow, I knew what was happening and why. The priest was performing some sort of chanting ritual which was supposed to symbolize a miracle, or cause a miracle to take place at the end of the ceremony. The priest waved an object in the air before the congregation and chanted a fixed prayer or some kind of incantation. The congregation chanted along with him. After five minutes, the chant ended and the priest waved the object in the air, and then placed it on his chest, directly between his breasts.

I was given to know that the sole purpose of this service was the performance of this chant. At the end of the chant, when the object was placed between the breasts, a miracle was supposed to occur: the object was supposed transform or change in some manner. This was seen as a sign from God, that He was pleased with the priest and the congregation, and that the miracle was accepted.

However, this chant was repeated again and again, and no miracle occurred. The object did not change, but nobody seemed to care as it was all considered empty symbolism anyway. As I asked why this happened, I was given to know that this same ritual was repeated week after week and year after year with the same lack of result. I was also given to know that the people believed that this miracle took years to accomplish because God would not show His approval unless the priest and the people exerted great efforts to win it.

I knew what was wrong, and also knew I could work the miracle on the first try without any trouble. As I thought this, I remarked to myself:

“These poor people! They just don't understand!” I knew that they also needed to have the right spirit and attitude. They were merely going through the motions for a show. There was no genuine faith in God. There was no desire to serve and glorify God, and there was no love one for another.

At this time I realized that I was seated in the pavilion among a group of my friends. We were not dressed as the others. We were very casually dressed for a religious service and pretty much kept to ourselves because the rest of the congregation considered us outcasts because of our clothing. After a time, we left the pavilion together and went to another part of the park within earshot and view of the large pavilion.

There were twelve others there beside myself. They stood in a circle under the trees. I stood a short distance away and observed everything. Two of my friends, having the same authority as the priest, without consulting with each other beforehand, each took the same object out of their pockets, faced each other, and in unison with each other and with the larger group, began repeating the ceremony. However, there was no chanting. The two men were silent and simply made what I understood to be the proper signs. Just as I knew I could perform the miracle, I knew they could do it too, and so, I began exerting faith in their behalf.

And then something happened! Right as the moment when the priest over in the pavilion placed between his breasts, and the congregation let out a shout, and the object was supposed to change, both objects which my friends held actually did change, as expected, and with little or no exertion or effort on their part!

I next saw that my friends and I had closed our little service. No one mentioned what had happened. None of my friends said anything about the larger group and the fact that they had failed to produce the same miracle. We simply continued with our normal activities. We were playing ball together and holding a picnic on a sunny Sunday afternoon.

There were three other things I noticed in the dream:

First, I was apart from everything that was going on. I saw what was happening and knew what would happen next, but nobody noticed that I was there. I don't even think my friends know I was there with them.

Second, I saw a great love and fellowship and genuine concern between my friends.

Third, some of my friends had no idea what was going on. They stood in the circle, but didn't understand what the two men were doing or why they were doing it. These people were only in the group to partake of the love and fellowship. However, these were welcome in the group and enjoyed the same fellowship as those who did know what was happening and why.

When I awoke, I realized what great parallels existed between the dream and what was happening in this dispensation of Priesthood. However, as I thought about the dream later, I realized that I was viewing the entire scene from another person's perspective.

## ***The Animals***

I was in a small house in the middle of a desert. I looked out the window and on a nearby hill, I saw a flock of beautiful deer grazing in the desert. The deer each had two twisted horns. I called a friend to come look and he came and looked. Then he left.

I looked again and this time I saw some sheep amongst the deer. I called my friend again to come look, and he came and looked and then left again.

I looked again and this time I saw a wolf attacking the sheep and the deer. Again I called my friend to come look and he came and looked and then left.

I looked again and this time I saw a huge, ferocious lion guarding the sheep. The lion reared up on his hind legs and let out a huge roar, trying to scare or warn the wolf, but the wolf kept attacking. Then I saw the lion pounce upon the wolf, and just when I thought the lion would kill the wolf, he did not. Instead the lion kept slamming the wolf down to the earth and holding the wolf so that it could not attack the other animals. Again I called my friend to come look and he came and looked.

Meanwhile, while the lion was attacking the wolf and preventing the wolf from attacking the sheep, I realized that the deer and sheep were lost and their owners were looking for them. They obviously did not belong in the desert. In fact only the wolf could have been native to that desert.

Next, I saw overhead a helicopter flying around searching for the lost animals. When the helicopter found them, it landed amidst the herd of deer and sheep. Men came out of the helicopter and began herding the animals aboard. Then the helicopter took off. All this while the lion was holding down the wolf so that the wolf would not attack the animals.

I also thought of this scripture in Isaiah 31:4-5:

*“For thus has the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of him: so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount ZION, and for the hill thereof.*

*“As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.”*

## ***The God of this World***

Early one morning I had a dream or a vision. The president of a company I used to work for came to me and asked me to come back and work for his company, a company of extremely elite professionals. I had worked for him at one time, and he wanted me to return and plan a city for him. He was building a new city somewhere out in the wilderness and was transferring the entire company there.

I agreed to return to work for him, so he sent me over to look over the site where the new city would be built. Next thing I knew I was taken down to the site. However, instead of wilderness, I found a city already in place. The city covered the entire valley.

As I wandered up and down its streets looking things over, I was very surprised at the crimes going on there. There was a huge street gang which had taken over the entire city. They dressed up in military uniforms and went about looting and robbing at will. They beat up people, took seats away from people on busses, kicked people out of their homes, shoplifted, and caused all kinds of violence.

They also recruited other people to join their group as a form of protection from their crimes. When persuasion would not work, they would inject a drug into the palm of the hand of the person when they were not looking. The drug was supposed to make a person desire to join their band and forget everything they learned about what was right and wrong. They tried to get me to join, but I refused. Then they forcibly injected me with the drug, but it had no effect on me. However, the gang thought the drug was working, so when I still refused to cooperate, they simply thought I was stupid and held me captive. When I found an opportunity, I broke away from the gang that had captured me and went wandering the streets.

I met another religious leader whom I recognized as once having been the president of a Restoration church. He was homeless, but found refuge sleeping in a building lobby. He asked me to spend the night with him, and I agreed. We curled up in the lobby, huddling under a shared blanket.

He tried to explain to me what was going on. He then tried to convince me that the activities of this gang were not all that bad and that this was how society was supposed to operate and there was little I could do about it. I refused to listen to his arguments and turned my back to him. When I wasn't looking, he also injected me with this drug. It was then that I realized that he, too, was on the side of this gang. The only difference was that most of them were militant, whereas he was more of a passive intellectual. I left him to find out more about this gang.

I found members of the gang handing out a newsletter or a publication or some kind of flyer. At the top of the flyer was the name of a man (the leader of the gang), suffixed by the word "God". This man was calling himself God. He exercised total control over this town, having usurped control from the civil authorities. He tried to gain new followers to enforce his will. His followers were either militant street-fighters or passive intellectuals.

I searched the streets until I found the headquarters of this man. It was the largest building in

town, located right in the center of Main Street. It had the man's name on top of the building, again followed by the word "God". He was a businessman, just like my former employer, and just like I now was. After all, I had been an independent contractor before rejoining my former employer in this enterprise. Strangely enough, the building looked very much like a gothic church building, but it also looked like a large department store.

Again, while wandering the streets, I was taken captive by another gang. They tried to inject me with the drug again, and again it didn't work. They were on the way to the next two cities they were going to conquer. They were angry because the mayors of the two cities promised them they could enter the city and the city would cooperate with them. Now, however, they got word that the mayors found out their true motives and refused them entrance. The gangsters were going to break into the cities because they had been "double crossed". In fact everything they did was because they were angry and had been "double crossed", and were trying to avenge themselves.

Again, I escaped by jumping off the bus that was carrying us. I ran and hid in a nearby house expecting to be picked up by the gang again. After a time, somebody broke into the house. I supposed that it was the gangsters who had come to get me again. Then I realized that it was one of my co-workers who came to help me out of this situation. It was at this time, that I woke up.

I believe this was a vision because I was also conscious of everything going on in the room around me.

This is the interpretation of the dream. The employer was the True God, calling me on a special mission to the earth. He is preparing it as a gathering place for His Elect. He sent me down to observe conditions and then report back. I found Satan ruling there, but I was impervious to his power so that I could conduct my mission. I met some of those who had succumbed to him along the way. Apparently, when I awoke, I was taken back to the presence of God so that I could make my report.

## ***The Establishment of Zion***

This evening I had a dream. During the previous week I had read where the Lord promised the apostles in Wilford Woodruff's day that it was their right, duty, and privilege to inquire of the Lord concerning themselves, the inhabitants of ZION, and their interests.

Therefore, I had been praying for that which the Lord was willing to give me concerning the growth of the Kingdom and of the establishment of ZION.

This evening I had a dream. In the dream I saw the peoples of all the nations of the world coming forward nation by nation and people by people swearing their allegiance to the government of ZION.

I was impressed with the fact that all these people - and it seemed as if I could see all the peoples of the earth - were climbing a broad staircase shaped like a pyramid. That is, the stairs were very wide at the bottom and gradually grew narrower toward the top. Each nation came forward one by one as a group and took their place on the stairs or the side of the pyramid.

Then the nations came forward one by one - and it seemed as if all the people in each nation came forward as a group - and swore their allegiance to the council which constituted the government of ZION.

Then that council turned upward and swore its allegiance to ZION and the principles that ZION stood for. The government of ZION had already been established and the Saints were living according to its principles, now the rest of the world was acknowledging ZION and its glory, and the people were all individually, and as nations, of their own free will (and I really want to emphasize this as it was impressed to me in the dream—of their own free will) submitting to the laws of ZION.

The very top of the pyramid was yet empty, for the Lord had not at this time come to His Temple, but I realized that His coming would be soon. The feeling I received was of glad anticipation and rejoicing and also that the nations, weary of warring and contending one with another were now desirous to acknowledge the ZION of our God.

I was then taken to the United Nations building. It was deserted. I went into the General Assembly chamber where a few people were having a brief informal meeting attended by a mere handful of public. They were shutting the whole operation down because there was no longer a need for the United Nations any more.

## ***A Vision of the City of Zion***

I received a vision of the creation of the universe, when the light was divided from the darkness. I was then shown how that same light, which was in the beginning with God manifests in all the creations of God, each in its own order and sphere, and that same light manifests in each of us.

I was shown the mission of The Twelve in their various roles serving the Plan of the Father down through the ages.

Next, I was taken to the future City of ZION, established on this earth. I saw the Holy City spread out upon a broad plane. It filled the valley where it was located. The valley was surrounded by low hills. The hills were not particularly lush. The climate seemed to be that of a desert or semi-desert. The picture presented to me looked very similar to the picture of the evil city which I saw earlier, but this city was ZION, not Babylon.

As I looked out over the city, the buildings seemed to glow with a small sparkle. The primary architectural feature I noticed was that all the buildings and the roofs were quite horizontal. There were no buildings higher than two or three stories, but all their roof lines were horizontal.

Then my eyes were lead over to the Temple which stood in the center of the City. In stark contrast to the flat buildings, the primary feature of the Temple was its vertical towers. I began to count the towers. At first I saw only one tower, but as I began counting the towers, more towers sprang up one by one, until I saw were thirteen towers. One for the Lord and one for each of the Twelve. The towers were arranged in parallel rows running north to south. If you were up in the air, looking down, the towers would look like this, with each tower represented by a letter "X", with four towers on the east, four towers on the west, and another four towers surrounding a single tower in the center. I was given to know that the twelve towers represented The Twelve, and the center tower represented Christ:

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+-----+
| X           X |
|             |
| X X       X X |
|           X   |
| X X       X X |
|             |
| X           X |
+-----+
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I wanted to know what the people in the City were like. I was told that they were not like those in today's society. Each person was holy. Each person was pure in heart and knew God. Each person relied on the power of God and not on the arm of flesh. There was love and unity and a caring atmosphere like that of a large family.

I looked into a home as a mother taught her young son how to say his evening prayers. As they were praying, the Lord appeared to them as a glorious being and taught and comforted them. The scene appeared to be quite an ordinary occurrence in that household, and the Savior was as welcome as any member of the family.

Next, I was taken to a public market place where several men had gathered to discuss the Gospel. While they were teaching and instructing one another, again Jesus appeared in their midst and began teaching them and taking part in the discussion.

I was next taken to an ordinance room of the Temple where a large body of people had gathered for instruction. During the service, the Savior again appeared behind the altar.

I was given to know that there were several gatherings taking place all over the city at any given time, and these were usually attended by a visit from the Lord or one of the Twelve.

These Thirteen governed the city. Or, in other words, they served as advisors, because the people were free and governed themselves. The people were mortal, but these Thirteen had glorified bodies.

The people had gathered to ZION of their own accord because they sought to live in a society that was peaceful and free. They voluntarily subjected themselves to sit at the feet of these Thirteen to learn wisdom and knowledge.

From these Thirteen they learned how to organize themselves into a ZION society and how to be glorified like the Thirteen and like the angels of heaven who also appeared from time to time.

I cannot speak for the rest of the world, but these were a happy people. They were tired of the man-made systems of the world which only sought to glorify mortal man and the works of man. Here they came of their own free will to learn the ways of God and how they might become more like Him by glorifying Him, thus bringing out the best of their own natures, which had originally come from God.

I could not help but realize that THIS is the time of the true Restoration of the Gospel of the Kingdom and when the Priesthood is organized as it was in the beginning under Father Adam.

THIS is the chosen remnant, gathered out of all the tribes of Israel, out of all creation.

THIS is the time spoken of by all the Holy Prophets.

THIS is the Holy City referred to in the Book of Revelation.

THIS is when the temple will not function as a house of worship, for all the world is God's holy place, but the temple will function in its true role as a school in which the mysteries of godliness will be taught.

Temple Ordinances will be taught in all their power and not just as mechanical rituals or symbolic ceremonies. The powers of heaven will truly be in the midst of this people during the 1000 year period in which they prepare for the total Celestialization and glorification of the earth.