

The Gospel News

A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

WE BELIEVE IN THE RESTORATION

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*Oh Holy
 Night*



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Restoration

- Bringing into existence again
- Bringing back to original condition, appearance, etc.
- Giving back something lost or taken away

In The Church of Jesus Christ, when we say that we believe in the restoration, we are typically saying that we believe in the Book of Mormon and the restored gospel. While that is true, the extent to which we believe in restoration actually extends well beyond that. We actually believe in many restorations, some of which have already occurred and some of which we look forward to in the future.

We believe in the restoration of the relationship between mankind and God

When man was first created, he had a close relationship with God:

- God created woman so the man would have a companion.
- God provided a beautiful garden with plenty to eat.
- God walked in the garden and conversed with them.

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever...he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16-17).

And, because Jesus was crucified and resurrected, we have the opportunity to dwell with God for all eternity when we depart from this life on earth.

However, that close relationship was lost when the man and woman disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit. They tried to hide themselves from God (Genesis 3:8-10) and God eventually banished them from the garden where they had all spent time together (Genesis 3:23-24).

For centuries, there was a barrier between God and man. They communicated by long-distance messaging between heaven and earth but they did not dwell together. Finally, in order to restore the relationship, Jesus Christ ("God the Son") was sent to be physically present among people, suitably being referred to as "God with us."

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

Even when Jesus departed, He sent the Holy Ghost to represent Him and dwell with us, such that the restored relationship between God and man could continue.

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MARCH
 When the waves of death compassed me... ..In my distress I called upon the Lord,... and he did hear my voice out of the temple, and my cry did enter into his ears.
 2 Sam 22:5,7



APRIL
 A Beatitude Bouquet:
 Matthew 5:4

Blessed are they that mourn:
 for they shall be comforted.

MAY
 ...yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them.
 Alma 56:47

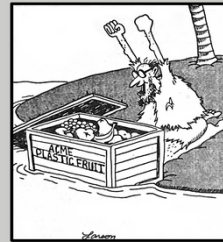


JUNE
 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes:
 and their net brake.
 Luke 5:6



JULY–AUGUST
 (The choir I long to be a tenor in.)
 II Nephi 8:11

 (Like Alma.)
 Alma 36:22



SEPTEMBER
TURN, TURN, TURN
 A time to get,
 and a time to lose;
 a time to keep,
 and a time to cast away;

OCTOBER
 Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.
 Jeremiah 18:6



NOVEMBER–DECEMBER
 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him:
 I Samuel 30:12



BFTP Blast From The Past

By Sister Kellie Speck



Sixteen years ago, on December 23, 2007, The Song of Zion, “They Never Saw It Coming” was given to Sister Arlene Buffington: “

“It was Sunday morning and I was listening to a CD of the Zionees while getting ready for church. They were singing the words, “I’m taking my freedom, I have to be free” from #110 of The Songs of Zion (“I’m Taking My Harp from the Green Willow Tree”). I felt the Spirit of God touch me very greatly as the words and music to this new song (#168) was given. (The second verse reads, “They never knew when Jesus came that freedom came to earth”.) The Lord gave Brother Steve Kerby the same message while speaking in Anaheim that morning. He recounted the time in the Book of Mormon where the people didn’t see or understand the day and time in which they lived. Even as the prophets proclaimed the birth of Christ in their day, so the birth of Christ’s kingdom of Zion here on earth is prophesied in our day with very little observation. The song says, “They never saw it coming.” It’s true that many can rehearse the past, some can foresee the future, but few can understand the day in which we live. Christ was born in a lowly place. Micah 5:2 says, “But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, “though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

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Purpose Statement

- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

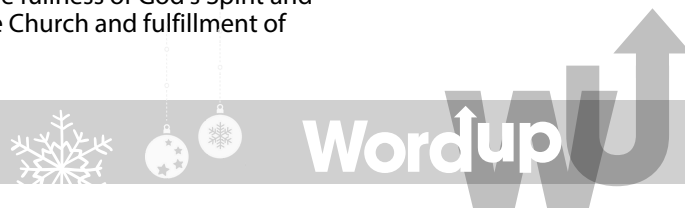
Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ, while working to draw Israel to Christ through efforts focused on the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America



Vision Statement

- Living and worshipping in unity and righteousness will result in the fullness of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, culminating in continuous growth of the Church and fulfillment of Christ's promises concerning His Kingdom on Earth.



“How Far Would You Go?”

By Brother Doug Obradovich

“Thou art not far from the kingdom of God” (Mark 12:34)

disciples to commit their loyalty to Jesus as well. Yet, just hours later, as Jesus prayed sorrowfully, the disciples slept. As Jesus negotiated for His life, the disciples slept. When Jesus needed them most, the disciples slept.

As Jesus was arrested, statements of courage forgotten, the disciples ultimately fled. Peter covertly returned, hiding in the periphery of Jesus' abusive arraignment, but was soon exposed and questioned on three different occasions concerning his allegiance to Jesus. Three different times Peter denied any association, even swearing an oath in one instance and cursing to exhibit no connection to Jesus' righteousness. And just as Jesus had prophesied, the rooster crew immediately. And Peter knew. So he fled in shame, then wept in blame. Peter traveled much further than 1,187.2 miles to save his life, yet never journeyed any significant physical distance.

How far would you go? With opportunities to show your alignment with Jesus, will you withstand temptation or mocking to resist the need to fit in? Peter came to realize his salvation was not lost through His denial, as this experience enlightened him to

finally and fully understand God's mercy had kept Peter's soul intact. Rather than God's grace becoming a license to sin, Peter used it to serve God with a newfound clarity. He discovered it wasn't his own soul that was jeopardized by his weakness, but his sin placed others at risk. His poor judgment could leave potential converts questioning: "How could he who claims a relationship with Jesus be as impure as I am?" or "Why should I believe in Jesus' touch if he who felt it acts the same as I do?" or "His life is just as much a mess as mine is, so why follow Jesus?"

Would you travel further than 1,187.2 miles? The journey for those who have claimed their salvation moves them from the waters of baptism to the Mountain of the Lord. This glorious expedition involves sacrificial servitude, the purest evidence to a love for God and others. The passage is a transition from natural choices to spiritual lifestyle, or from "Who I was when left to my own devices," to "Who I am under God's magnificent influence."

Consider the great distance Jesus Christ traveled for you. So, just how far would you go for Him?

She traveled 1,187.2 miles for the opportunity to save her life. She weighed the risks of such an intense surgery and after much contemplation and prayer, determined it worth the effort. How far would you go? Before you answer, consider that "far" is not simply defined by a measure of physical distance, as evidenced by Peter:

Matthew 26 records Jesus' warning to His disciples concerning His own impending death. Peter brazenly scoffed, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Jesus measured Peter's words, and responded soberly, "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Peter's naïveté to his own awaiting threat, reiterated, "Though I should die with thee, yet I will not deny thee." Peter's words inspired the other

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“For were it not for the redemption which he hath made for his people, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, I say unto you, were it not for this, all mankind must have perished. But behold, the bands of death [are] broken, and the Son reigneth, and hath power over the dead; therefore, he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead. [Believers] are raised to dwell with God who has redeemed them; thus they have eternal life through Christ, who has broken the bands of death.” (Mosiah 15:19,20,23)

We believe in the restoration of each individual’s relationship with God

Each person who is born is born as a child of God—created in His image and loved as a member of His family. But then, the day comes for each when they reach the age of understanding and human tendencies cause them to choose sin, thereby separating them from God. However, God is always seeking an opportunity to restore that relationship, bringing each son or daughter back into the family of God. When that happens, there is great rejoicing in heaven—a broken relationship has been restored!

The parable of the “prodigal son” depicts this. In the parable, a young man chooses to separate himself from his father’s household and go out on his own. The young man lives a sinful lifestyle, wasting what his father had given him. Finally, the young man realizes that he was better off in his father’s household. He returns, perhaps wondering if he will even be welcome.

“But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. [The father said] this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.” (Luke 15:20,24)

Mosiah 27 gives the account of a young man named Alma, the son of the chief priest, who became a very wicked man and went around trying to destroy the church that his father was leading. His father prayed diligently for his son and God then sent an angel who spoke to Alma with a voice of thunder and convinced him that he was wrong and needed to repent. Alma said, “I rejected my Redeemer, and denied that which had been spoken of by our fathers; but...he remembereth every creature of his creating.” (Mosiah 27:30)

“And his father rejoiced, for he knew that it was the power of God. And he caused that a multitude should be gathered together that they might witness what the Lord had done for his son.” (Mosiah 27:20-21)

Today, each person in the world who is living a sinful lifestyle has the opportunity to be restored to the family of God. They just need to repent of their sins and be baptized in the name of Christ to have their relationship with God restored.

“There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” (Luke 15:10)

We believe in the restoration of the priesthood authority of Jesus Christ

A key belief of The Church of Jesus Christ is that the priesthood authority was taken away when men altered the Church from the way Jesus and His original Apostles set it up.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.” (Amos 8:11-12)

Also prophesied in Revelation 12:1-6, the period of time that the priesthood authority was gone (approximately 1260 years) is known as the Apostasy.

“And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.” (Revelation 12:5-6)

Finally, in 1829, the priesthood authority was restored to mankind, which is how the priesthood of The Church of Jesus Christ is authorized to act on behalf of Jesus Christ today.

We believe in the restoration of the fullness of the Gospel

One of the causes of the Apostasy (during which the priesthood authority was removed) was that people changed or eliminated the ordinances of the Church that Jesus had instituted.

“The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.” (Isaiah 24:5)

The coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the restoration of the priesthood authority resulted in the fullness of the gospel being restored, including the restoration of the ordinances as they were originally performed:

Baptism - Originally performed by immersion in natural bodies of water, baptism was changed such that it was performed in pools or by sprinkling or it was even made optional altogether. The ordinance was restored to its original method per the specific instructions of Jesus in 3 Nephi 11:23-26. Baptism was originally for adults only, tied to repentance, but was later changed to be performed on babies or little children who were incapable of repenting. The original purpose of baptism was restored to be consistent with the teaching in Moroni 8.

Bestowal of the Holy Ghost – Originally performed as an ordinance by laying on of hands of the ministry (see Acts 8:18), the bestowal of the Holy Ghost later became something that was supposed to just happen automatically when a person accepted Christ. The ordinance was restored per the specific instructions in Moroni 2:2-3.

Communion - Originally performed the way that Jesus did it with His Apostles at the Last Supper (breaking bread and eating it and drinking wine from a single cup, as described in the

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Prepare Him Room

By Brother Anthony Scolaro

When we consider Christ's coming to Earth, we see that it was attended by lowliness of one sort or another. The humble estate of Mary, a vessel chosen to carry the Son of God; the submissive spirit of Joseph, who harkened to the angel of the Lord, and who likely faced embarrassment and perhaps even questions about their circumstances. The lowly place where Jesus's birth occurred, and the shepherds, occupying the lowest place in that day's social order, being first to hear the good news from the angels.

For the wise men from the east to watch for and observe the signs of His birth, journey to a foreign land, bring precious gifts, and seek out and worship the child Jesus, speaks volumes about their inherent meekness, open-mindedness, and thirst for truth. The Bible tells of Simeon and Anna, whose quiet patience and consistent service were rewarded with the privilege of seeing the Lord Jesus brought to the temple and recognizing through the Spirit that prophecy was being fulfilled.

In contrast, we read of many, including religious leaders in Judea at the time of Christ's ministry, who despite His fulfillment of so many Old Testament prophecies, either did not recognize who He was, or refused to acknowledge Him as Messiah. With few exceptions, the governing powers of the day felt equally threatened by this quiet Teacher who won the hearts of so many poor and oppressed people.

The scripture teaches that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Corinthians 1:26). The contrast between proud and humble is illustrated again and again in both the Old and New Testament, and in the Book of Mormon. People's willingness or unwillingness to hear and obey the commandments of God and receive the gift of Salvation through the sacrifice of His only begotten Son has been and continues to be a function of our individual state of humility (or lack thereof). Micah 6:8 states, "...what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

I pray the concept is not lost on any of us today. In a world that has become more and more polarized by ideological and spiritual differences, let us open ourselves daily to Jesus Christ and stand fast in that liberty wherewith we have been made free. Let us consider our Savior's example of meekness and humility, and how He led with them amid a world torn even in His day by political and religious strife. As we follow His example, we will allow the Spirit and love of God to work in and through us to bring the message of hope and joy to those around us.

Mankind's only hope is Christ, the Messiah—the Anointed One—Emmanuel—God with us.

*Let every one of our hearts prepare
Him room, and heaven and nature sing!*

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gospels and 1 Corinthians 11), communion was later changed to consist of other things (wafers, grape juice, water) or was made optional altogether. When the gospel was restored, the ordinance was restored to its original form.

Anointing with Oil - The method of anointing the sick (as described in James 5:14-15) was eliminated but was restored when the gospel was restored.

Feet Washing - The ordinance of Feet Washing, as instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper (as described in John 13) was eliminated but was restored when the gospel was restored.

Blessing of Children - The ordinance of blessing children, based on what Jesus did with the children in Mark 10:13-16, was eliminated and/or replaced with baptism of little children. The ordinance was restored to be consistent with how Jesus blessed the little children in 3 Nephi 17:21-24.

In addition to the restoration of the ordinances, the restoration of the fullness of the gospel also restored knowledge of the identity of a portion of the House of Israel as well as prophecies of future events regarding them.

“Many generations after the Messiah shall be manifested in body unto the children of men, then shall the fulness of the gospel of the Messiah come unto the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles unto the remnant of our seed – And at that day shall the remnant of our seed know that they are of the house of Israel, and that they are the covenant people of the Lord.” (1 Nephi 15:13-14)

We believe in the restoration of Israel

The scriptures and history note that the various tribes of the House of Israel have been scattered throughout the world as a result of not recognizing Christ as the Savior. However, there are many prophecies that indicate that God will eventually restore Israel, gathering them together in the kingdom of God on earth, known as Zion.

“I have read these things that ye might know concerning the covenants of the Lord that he has covenanted with all the house of Israel – That he has spoken unto the Jews, by the

mouth of his holy prophets, even from the beginning down, from generation to generation, until the time comes that they shall be restored to the true church and fold of God; when they shall be gathered home to the lands of their inheritance, and shall be established in all their lands of promise” (2 Nephi 9:1-2)

We believe in the restoration of the soul and body after death

For each of us, the time will come when we will depart from this life—our soul will separate from our corrupted earthly body. However, if our relationship with God has been restored, we can look forward to eternal life with God when our soul will be restored to a spiritual body (a restored version of our earthly body that will live forever. See 1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

“The soul shall be restored to the body, and the body to the soul; yea, and every limb and joint shall be restored to its body; yea, even a hair of the head shall not be lost; but all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame. And now, this is the restoration of which has been spoken by the mouths of the prophets – And then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of God.” (Alma 40:23-25)

Why do we believe in restoration?

Our God is not one who loses people or is satisfied to have them remain separated or corrupted. He is always seeking to restore. So, we believe in restoration because our God is a God of restoration.

In the love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

James Crudup, Joel Gehly, Pete Giannetti, John Griffith, Scott Griffith, Paul Liberto, Thomas M. Liberto, Leonard A. Loalvo, Frank Natoli, Paul A. Palmieri, Peter Scolaro, Jerry Valenti

To learn more about The Church of Jesus Christ, with Headquarters in Monongahela, PA, please visit our website. The World Operations Center for world-wide missionary efforts is in Greensburg, PA.

www.thechurchofjesuschrist.org

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Words to Songs of Zion #168 “They Never Saw it Coming.”

*Freedom’s such a wondrous thing that men the world around,
They have fought for it and died for it and wondered where it’s found.
They have sung of it and dreamed of it and searched thru all the earth,
But they never saw it coming in Christ’s kingdom here on earth.
They never saw it coming in Christ’s kingdom here on earth.*

*Christ was born among the cattle in a lowly little town.
And His kingdom sprang to life one day ‘midst cities all around.
But they never saw it coming, never recognized its birth.
And they never knew when Jesus came that freedom came to earth.
They never knew when Jesus came that freedom came to earth*

*Men have searched thru’ all the ages for a little peace on earth,
But they never placed importance on the Savior’s lowly birth.
And they never searched for Jesus, so they searched for peace in vain.
And they never saw it coming in the blessed Peaceful Reign.
They never saw it coming in the blessed Peaceful Reign.*

*There’s a little town that’s growing on a little country hill,
And it seemed to spring up suddenly as far as men could tell.
But they didn’t see it coming, Christ’s own kingdom here on earth.
While its citizens and countrymen were singing of its birth.
Its citizens and countrymen were singing of its birth.*

At what point or moment in Jesus's life would you have liked to be present?



O come let us adore Him

"I would like to see Him change the water into wine." -Sister Joann Cottelesse, Pinetop, AZ Branch

"Out of all of His miracles I would love to have been at the scene when He raised Lazarus from the dead." -Brother Michael Zaino, Edison, NJ Branch

"I would have liked to be with Jesus in the wilderness to really understand all He had to go through to be prepared for what was going to come." -Sister Heather Escobar, Forest Hills, FL Branch

"I would most be excited to witness the miracle of Christ feeding the 5,000 with five loaves of bread and two fishes because I'm always ready for a good meal." -Brother Andrew Tenorio, Edison, NJ Branch

"I believe I would like to have been present when Jesus went to Lazarus' burial site and He was so moved with compassion for his friend that he wept. After a short prayer, He called Lazarus by name to come forth." -Brother George Kovacic, Middle Tennessee Mission

"The sermon on the mount is where I'd want to be. Being able to listen to Him would be wonderful." -Sister Zoey Devore, Charlotte, NC Branch

"I always imagine being a part of the multitude that Jesus visited on this land in 3 Nephi 17. He was filled with compassion and mercy for all that were before Him that were afflicted in any manner. He asked for them to be brought to Him and He healed them all. What a glorious scene!" -Sister Marilyn Scolaro, Detroit, MI Branch #1.

"A day in the life of a simple carpenter. See him as a young man learning his natural father's trade." -Sister Anita Znoy, Creekside, MI Branch

"When he resurrected Lazarus from the dead." -Sister KarenJo Pandone, Farmington Hills, MI Branch

"I would've loved to have witnessed Lazarus being risen from the dead! How much more miraculous can you get than that? Other than Jesus' resurrection, of course. To see the look on Martha's and Mary's faces would be priceless." -Sister Dienna Rogers, Irvine, CA Branch

"I would have loved to be present any time during His 33 years, but I would love to have been there to witness Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. That moment when Lazarus emerges from the tomb and he is alive must have been a marvelous moment to witness. The feelings of pure joy and wonder that our Lord proves to all who are there that He truly is the Son of God by simply saying, "Lazarus, come forth." -Sister Kathy Natoli, Detroit, MI Branch #1

"Though unworthy I would desire to be present when Jesus established the Church on this land teaching all things to the people, healing their sick, praying unspeakable words, and performing great miracles." -Sister Donna Bogle, Aliquippa, PA Branch

"At one of his miracles. When he turned the water into wine." -Sister Sharon Sloan, Forest Hills, FL Branch

"My time would be slightly in the future, in Zion." -Sister Lynne Alcaraz, Hemet, CA Branch

"During the miracle with the woman with the blood disease, and how after many years of suffering she was healed by just the touch of her hand to His garment." -Sister Kim Morle, Atlanta, GA Branch

"At His feet during the sermon on the mount. I'm always reminded to lay up my treasures in heaven and not in things of earth. Matt 5:19-21. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." -Sister Kathleen Pastorelli, Lake Worth, FL Branch

"If I have to choose I'd say His birth. In a world full of struggles and unrest, how wonderful to experience the birth of Jesus who came to offer us salvation and hope. The long-awaited Savior and witness his arrival! To feel such joy and peace and hope first hand at the very beginning would be amazing." -Sister Jan Offet, Bell, CA Branch

"When He raised Lazarus from the dead." -Brother Anthony Micale, Mt. Laurel, NJ Branch

"His healing of the leper. He was an outcast by the Levitical law, and it says Christ had pity on him. He before was not allowed to have friends, family, or community. He lived on the outside. He was made whole and clean and his future was made whole and restored to his family, friends, and community. Thank Jesus for his compassion on us!" -Sister Gabriella Strong, Irvine, CA Branch

"In the Upper Room with Jesus." -Sister Sandy Capone, Irvine, CA Branch

"All of His life I would have loved to be present because He has been present in mine always. To choose just one though, I would say in the wilderness being tempted by the enemy and standing firm not doubting while being tempted. Staying true and faithful to God while tuning out the distraction by anything, especially a natural feeling of being hungry." -Sister Heather Escobar, Forest Hills, FL Branch

"I would have loved to be present when Jesus called for Lazarus to come out of the tomb!" -Brother Mark Kovacic, North Georgia Mission

"I'd like to attend the last supper, to have communion served to me by Jesus and to know what the hymn was that they sang at the end of the meal." -Sister Dianne Maddox, Lake Worth, FL Branch

"I would love to have been at the tomb of Jesus when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, and Jesus told them to go tell the disciples that He had risen. What joy must have replaced their grief!" -Sister Cathy Gentile, Farmington Hills, MI Branch

TEMPERANCE

Faith PEACE GOODNESS MEEKNESS
JOY LONGSUFFERING GENTLENESS *Love*



Temperance *By Sister Cindy Henderson*

TEMPERANCE, the last Fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:23, is mentioned in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, and is often recorded along with other fruit in the same verses. The Book of Mormon has a few references using the derivative, temperate. In Alma chapter 7:23, the people of Gideon are encouraged to walk after the holy order of God, “being temperate in all things.” In Alma 38:10, Shiblon is taught by Alma to “be diligent and temperate in all things” as he goes about teaching.

The fruit of temperance is not mentioned as often as the other fruits and is possibly least understood; at least for me, there was much to be learned in studying its meaning and applications in the scriptures.

Dictionary definitions classify temperance as a noun that means moderation and self-restraint, as in behavior or expression. People manifesting temperance would be exercising self-control over their emotions, attitudes, words, and actions. There would also be moderation in regard to the indulgence of the natural appetites or passions. Such individuals regularly moderate what is ingested into their body, mind, and spirit, to the point of sometimes avoiding excesses or tempering something.

The opposite of temperance would be self-indulgence, uncontrolled lack of restraint, incontinence. The ability to control appetites, emotions, and attitudes is lost as individuals become lazy and drop their guard instead of keeping themselves under control (physically, mentally, and spiritually). Historically, the Temperance Movement, rooted in America’s Protestant churches, promoted moderation and offered support for drinkers to resist temptation; the movement ultimately demanded the prohibition of alcohol outright.

So why is temperance an important trait to have? In the scriptures, it wasn’t only paired with drunkenness, gluttony, or indulgence to excess. It sometimes referred to restraint on ungodly thoughts (i.e., lust), behaviors (i.e., anger), words (i.e., bitter), etc., as well as control over unwise desires.

Modern comforts have helped to cultivate an insatiable craving for pleasure, often of the instant gratification type. Numerous people, products, places and toys vie for our attention. If we can’t say ‘no’ to these distractions, then how will we say ‘yes’ to the things that really matter?

Now someone may retort, “If I am not hurting anyone else, why do I

need to practice self-control or self-restraint?”

Romans 13:13-14 warns us to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh and its lusts.” Our goal should be to allow only the Holy Spirit to have control over us—not a food, drink, or thought.

We could also ask ourselves when, where, and with whom are we most tempted to accommodate our flesh and gratify its desires. The flesh wants only to please itself, but self-control is required to please the Lord and live Godly lives. (Romans 8:5) Exercising caution and wisdom assists us in refraining from sinful behaviors that easily overcome us. Living temperate lives does not mean we can commit sin as long as it is only a little bit. Paul reminds us of the discipline it takes to win the race and the prize of an incorruptible crown in 1 Corinthians 9:25-27. “And every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.”

In Mosiah 4:30, King Benjamin warns us, “But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God...ye must perish.”

Philippians 4:5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.” (Many references describe this moderation as a restraint of passions, longsuffering and forbearance.) Do we have the capacity to turn down opportunities for the excess of good things? There is no need to be anxious about anything. With thanksgiving, our requests can be brought before God and His peace will keep our hearts and minds.

Proverbs 25:16 warns about consuming too much of a good thing. “Hast thou found honey? Eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.”

People and nations without temperance or self-control are described as a “city without walls” in Proverbs 25:28. “He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls” and in Jeremiah 2:21, the “degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me.” Each of these scriptures conveys the unbridled passions and pleasures that the people partook of that led to their destruction.

Instead, have temperance, as in Proverbs 16:32: “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.”

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Gifts *By Brother Dean Longrie*

We are in the middle of the holiday season. Kids of all ages are thinking about the gifts they want to receive. Parents and other adults may be worrying about what gifts they are going to give to family and friends.

1 God was planning the greatest gift for mankind before mankind was. That gift is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, God's son. One man, Adam, sinned so death reigned. How appropriate that God's gift, one man, Jesus, atoned for our sin and made eternal life with God available to all who repent and believe in Christ and are baptized and obey God's commandments to the end (Romans 5: 4-19). God prepared a way, more excellent than the laws of Moses, through the gift of His son and by faith, it is fulfilled (Ether 12:11).

2 The gift of the Holy Ghost; it is offered to all at no financial cost. The Apostle Peter tells the crowd to repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and they will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38). The gifts of God are shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost (Roman 5:5). The power of the Holy Ghost is a gift of God to those who

diligently seek him (1 Nephi 10:17).

3 Gifts of the spirit are given to all. The many gifts of God are given by manifestations of the Spirit of God to profit man (Mormon 10:8). We want to remember that every good gift comes from Christ (Moroni 10:18). Every man has his proper gift of God (1 Corinthians 7:7). These gifts are diverse but are of the same spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4) and we are nothing if we do not have the greatest gift, Charity (1 Corinthians 13:2). Other fruits of the spirit include, Joy, Peace, Meekness, Longsuffering, Temperance, and Gentleness.

4 Gifts of the Gospel are many and substantial. The Gospel is the word of God and the word was God. (John 1:1). Jesus answered the devil when he asked Jesus to turn a stone into bread saying Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God (Luke 4:4). We are told it is by grace we are saved through faith and not by ourselves: it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). Each of us is given grace according

to the measure of the gift of Christ (Ephesians 7: 4-13). He gave gifts to man. He gave some to be Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry and for edifying the body of Christ. We are told to not neglect the gift that is in us (1 Timothy 4:14). Every good gift and every perfect gift comes from the Father (James 1:17).

5 Grateful giver and grateful receiver. I have learned over time that giving requires not only my wanting to give a gift to show someone I care about them, it takes the receiver's willingness to accept the gift as it was intended. I am not sure where in my life this first happened, but I suspect I was reluctant to accept a gift, feeling offended because I thought it would mean "an obligation" to return a "favor." I later had a gift I offered refused, I later learned, for the very same reason. For me, the lesson was twofold: First, look inside myself and be sure my purpose for the gift-giving was honorable. Second, be thankful for any good gift, it comes from God.



Remember Your Roots *By Sister Ruth Gehly*

At this time of year, once again our focus is on Christmas and the coming new year. We delight in hearing the beautiful story of Christ's birth and marvel at the happenings as both heaven and earth herald His birth. Then December 31st approaches and we look forward with excitement to the adventures that await in the new year, and yet reflect on the past year with some happy memories and some disappointments. Knowing that every day is a gift from God and that our busy lives will soon replace the holiday season, take a moment to stop and take note as I encourage you to **"Remember Your Roots"**.

When my boys were born, they had seven living grandmothers and three living grandfathers. During those very busy years of raising our children, we did our best to actively visit and incorporate those precious gems into our life, as well as to help the boys understand and appreciate the wonderful natural and spiritual heritage into which they were born. The dynamic of that heritage became even more precious when the boys

became the sixth generation of the Cadman family to be baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ.

Recently, it was a great pleasure for Brother Joel and I to join the Aliquippa Branch for the celebration of its 100th Anniversary. We witnessed dramatizations of the establishment of both the Ladies' Circle and the MBA. Eyewitness accounts of active missionary work that spanned the globe demonstrated the countless hours of selfless dedication put forth by our brothers and sisters to ensure that the good news of God's love was (and continues to be) shared. Displayed memorabilia and information presented about ordinations, baptisms, children's blessings, fellowship activities, weddings, and fundraisers provided true insight into the rich history and personality of this very special branch.

Marvelously woven into the tapestry of the weekend events were photos—hundreds of photos—of the beautiful faces of

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When God Sent an Angel to Protect Baby Jesus

Dear Friends,

It's so interesting that God, the Creator who can do anything, often lets people go through hard, scary things! This included baby Jesus and His parents. In those old, old days, everyone had to travel to a faraway city to pay taxes that went to the rulers from Rome. It did not matter that young Mary was pregnant and the only way to travel was days of hard travel, on a donkey, or walking. This wonderful young mother and her loving husband, Joseph, had to leave their home and go a long way to the city of Bethlehem. But an angel, God's messenger, had visited both of them. An angel came to see Mary. He told her she was blessed among all women and was told not to fear but she was going to have the baby Jesus who would grow up to be the Messiah! In those days being pregnant and not married could result in death. The Angel told her that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and not to fear. She was highly favored by God! (See Luke Chapter 1.)

When Joseph learned Mary was pregnant he was going to quietly put her away and not marry her. But God sent an angel to Joseph in a dream and told him (See Matthew 1: 18-25) not to fear, that the baby was from God's Holy Spirit. So Joseph knew how special Mary, whom he loved, was, and they got married.

As the days passed it was time for them to go pay those taxes. When they made the hard trip to Bethlehem, the city was full of other people paying taxes. There was not one inn (hotel) or place for them to sleep. But the innkeeper saw how pregnant Mary was and offered for them to stay in his stable, where the animals slept. That night, Mary's little baby Jesus was born.

Shepherds were out in the field when a glorious shining angel came upon them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel told them "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which will be for all people! Tonight, in Bethlehem, a Savior which is Christ the Lord, was born!" And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill towards men!" (See Luke 2) These excited shepherds ran into the city and found baby Jesus lying in a manger, and they told everyone about the glory of God and what

they'd seen.

Meanwhile, a group of wise men from somewhere East of Israel had studied ancient prophecies and knew that the Messiah, our baby Jesus, was born. They were following a special star to find Him. When they came to where mean King Herod was, they went to him and asked where this child, the King of the Jews, (and everyone else) was.

King Herod was furious. He was King, not some new baby! He tried to trick the wise men. He told them "Go and find this child and come and tell me where He is so I can go and worship him also." (See Matthew Chapter 2)

They followed the star and it shone down on the place where Mary and baby Jesus were. They found the Mother and baby! They rejoiced with great joy. They fell down and worshiped baby Jesus. And then they presented the little family with gifts that were of great value! They gave them gold, frankincense, and myrrh, which are rare saps from trees that can be used for medicines or perfumes.

When the wise men left, God warned them in a dream not to trust the hateful, dangerous King Herod. So they went home another way. But King Herod wasn't waiting for their news. He had his people searching the scriptures from hundreds of years earlier, which prophesied about a Messiah, this Baby Jesus!

Herod decided to just murder any little baby under the age of two in hopes of getting rid of the Messiah, the King of the Jews!

But God had a plan to protect the little family. He sent an angel that night in a dream to Joseph! "Get up! And take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt! (a country far away.) Stay there until I bring you a message, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him!" Then Joseph immediately got up and took the young child and Mary by night and left for Egypt! They stayed there for years until evil King Herod died and the angel told them it was safe to return. (See Matthew 2.)

Wasn't it also wonderful they had the rich gifts from the wise men to use, to live on? God thinks of everything. He has a great big plan! When they were scared, God sent angels to direct them. When they had to hurry and leave the country to save Baby Jesus, God had already sent the wise men with gold and gifts that would support the family. God's great big plan included Baby Jesus and He has a plan for each of us too. God can always protect His children. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow!

With love,
Your friend and Sister in Christ,

Sister Jan

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The Bible teaches that the last days will be characterized by many sins, including incontinence. "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good" (2 Timothy 3:2-3).

The challenge for us will be to rise above sin through the fruit of temperance; deny ourselves and say 'no' to sin, despite the countless pleas to join the sinful crowd.

Why should temperance be a priority?

1. It's necessary for our leaders. Titus 1:7,8 teaches that it is the desirable behavior of our leaders. "...not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine... sober, just, holy, temperate." (Sadly, many world leaders sanction or justify intemperate behaviors.) 1 Timothy 3:2 "...vigilant, sober, of good behavior..." Titus 2:12, "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world"

2. Temperance gives you the power to resist sin and strengthen your spiritual walk with God. 2 Peter 1:6, "And to knowledge [add] temperance/ and to temperance patience/ and to patience godliness"

3. Jesus requires it of his followers. Matthew 16:24: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Daily denial of sinful appetites and desires will lead us closer to Jesus' teaching and example.

The following are just a few examples where temperance was manifest:

Job 31:1 Job wouldn't let his eyes wander in lust. Esther 4:16 Esther controlled her desire for self-preservation and risked her life to save others. 1 Samuel 10:27 The children of Belial despised Saul and brought him no presents. Instead of fighting his enemies, he managed to keep his emotions in check. 1 Samuel 24:6 David resisted the opportunity to kill King Saul in the cave, knowing he was the Lord's anointed. It is not hard to find scriptural examples of moments of intemperance either.

Temperance will help us say 'no' to the temptations, distractions, and sins of this life. Clinging to His word enables us to make decisions about our life that are acceptable. When our lives are filled with the Spirit of God, we choose to be like Jesus in our appetites, emotions, and attitudes. Becoming more like the Master is possible when we make TEMPERANCE a priority in our life.

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the saints of God, precious gems, whose very lives were, and continue to be, rooted in the restored gospel.

Early Sunday morning the Spirit spoke these words to me: "cloud of witnesses."

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1)

What a treasure is found in the family of God! What a priceless heritage has been paved by the saints who laid the groundwork for the gospel to be planted in this part of God's vineyard!

Over the past 39 years, eight of the ten grandparents alive when my sons were born have now joined Christ and that "great cloud of witnesses." Nearly 13 years ago, Brother Joel and I advanced to the rank of "Nana" and "Pop" to five beautiful grandchildren, our precious legacy. It is good to remember our roots.

It is good to remember the lives and work of our brothers and sisters.

It is good to be a saint living in these latter days.

Truly, it is good to be part of the kingdom of God here on earth...

The Church of Jesus Christ.

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And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. — Luke 2:12

The Blessings of Christmas

Question: What about Christmas is such a blessing for you?

BB I enjoy seeing people show the love of Christ to others. Being able to be part of the joy of celebrating Christ's birth and giving to those in need warms my heart. - Sister Erin Palposi

BB I love having my family gathered together at Christmastime.-Sister Lynda Sgro

BB Christmas is a time when I am especially grateful for the gifts God has given to me. My husband, children, grandchildren, and extended family all bring unconditional love and joy into my life.- Sister Nancy Hemmings

BB I've always loved the hymn "O Come, All Ye Faithful" at Christmastime. - Sister Elizabeth McDonnell

BB Christmastime is full of fun and joy and love. I love the lights, decorations, and carols. They remind me that Jesus is the Light of the world and gives hope to everyone.-Sister Lisa Alessio

BB I love putting out the manger, listening to the Christmas story, and remembering what God did for us by sending His Son in the form of a baby—to teach us, love us, and sacrifice Himself for us.- Sister Tami Jardine

Send us your Blessing Bits by contacting Sister Elizabeth McDonnell at eksanchor@gmail.com. [in approximately 150 words]. Answers to Question of the Month to gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org.

Q

Question for this month:

What is one thing you want to improve on in your service to God or one thing you want to add to your daily routine to bring you closer to God?

A

Answer from last month:

At what point or moment in Jesus's life would you have liked to be present for- His birth, during one of the great miracles He performed, His resurrection, or any other time? Tell us why.

Turn to page 7 for answers.



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