

Sharing the Light of Jesus Christ

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Editor in Chief:

Gary Whiting

Graphic Designer:

Tara Broadway

Editorial Staff:

Warren Bennett

Hugh Caldwell

Barbra Jordison

Joy Muir

Chad Nestman

Alan Smith

Mission Statement:

This magazine is dedicated to proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and bearing witness to the everlasting promises of God. Our intention is to inspire the Saints to walk faithfully in the name of our Savior, bearing fruit worthy of the Kingdom of God.

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The Latter Day Saints' Beacon is published under the editorial responsibility of the Books, Tracts, and Periodicals Division of the Communications Committee (Gary Whiting, division chairman). The magazine is mailed from Independence, Missouri (USA).

www.conferenceofbranches.org

Editor's Letter

Salt and Light

By Gary R. Whiting

Jesus came into the world to make an impact. Regardless of whether one agreed or disagreed with what he said, everyone knew that Jesus had been among them. Jesus collided with the Pharisees with his words of truth. Among the poor, Jesus was known for his compassion and his miracles. Even among his disciples and those that believed his words, Jesus stirred awe and wonder. Through the process of his crucifixion and triumph over the grave, Jesus put to shame the power of the adversary and his lies. Spiritually and temporally, Jesus impacted the world. The church set up by Jesus is called to have the same kind of impact.

The book of Acts records multiple examples of the church in the early days of the New Testament era making a significant impact. It can be especially interesting to hear what the opponents of the gospel have to say about the impact of the church

of Jesus Christ. This insightful event was recorded in Acts,

And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also (Acts 17:6)

Jason and his brethren were Christians who had been associated with Paul's ministry. The missionary work of Paul and the believers in the city were described as people who were turning the world upside down. This statement was made by the enemies of the work and shows the dramatic impact of the preaching of the word of God among the Gentiles.

Jesus used the picture of the Saints acting like salt in the world to illustrate the impact the gospel ought to make through the lives of his disciples. Salt, used as a seasoning, makes a dramatic impact on the taste of food. When I was a young child at

(Continued on page 2)

Welcome, new committee members

We are pleased to introduce Yvonne Hursh to our team of proofreaders. We appreciate her ready response to our call for proofreaders for the magazine.

It is with pleasure that we announce that Chadwick Nestman has agreed to serve on the Editorial Committee.

We still have a need for one or two people more on our editorial committee. The position of editor requires attendance at monthly planning meetings, recruiting and assisting authors and occasional contributions to the magazine. The monthly meetings are held through an internet-based meeting software and last about 90 minutes each. At least once a year we hold a meeting in Independence, Missouri, to which the editors and proofreaders are invited for fellowship, training and planning. Travel expenses can be arranged for those who are out of town.

(Continued from page 1)

home we ate a lot of oatmeal. It was always made fresh on the stove by one of my parents. Oatmeal comes out best with a little salt in the water when the oats are boiled. I could tell when the salt was left out because the taste was flat. A little salt in the mix helped the oatmeal go down for me.

In this issue of *The Beacon* you will read about the call of Jesus to the church to be salt in the world. Through references to history and chemistry you will learn about salt and what Jesus was talking about in this important word picture. There can be no doubt that Jesus expected his people to make an impact for righteousness in the world. He has not relented in that expectation for this generation. †

We want to meet you!

If any of you are able to attend the General Conference in April 2016, we invite you to look us up. We appreciate the feedback and support from our readers. All of you are a major part of the success of the magazine.

We appreciate the response many of you have made to our request for paid subscriptions to the Beacon. We hope that many more of you will respond to our request and will provide at least a \$15 donation to help keep the Beacon in print and ministering with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I Have Found the Glorious Gospel!

By Irene Power

My dad was a priest, converted to the gospel in Oklahoma. My mother belonged to the “round church where the devil can’t corner you”—which meant she did not attend church anywhere. Even so, I was raised in a home with morals and had opportunity to learn about God.

In 1944 we moved to Vancouver, Washington, where we were able to attend the RLDS church with my father. I was the seventh of eight children and often the only other member of our family to attend church with him. Years later when I was attending Graceland College, several of my friends were getting baptized. When I went home that summer I told a church mother how “maybe it was wiser to make a baptismal decision when older, rather than as I did at eight years old.”

She said, “Irene, I remember what you were like at eight and you knew what you were doing.” I thought back to that period of time. I not only went to the RLDS church, but when summer time came I also went to Baptist Bible school on the

bus, the Methodist Bible school and the Holiness camp meeting at the end of our road. At the Baptist Bible school they sent all the kids who wanted to be baptized into a room together. When they asked me if I wanted to be baptized, I said “Yes, but I am being baptized in my own church.” I knew they baptized by immersion but did not follow it with a confirmation, or the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Still, I wanted to hear what they had to say about baptism.

The sixty plus years I have spent in the church have been well spent. All the blessings, comfort, direction, knowledge and friends I received from that decision have meant so much to me. The knowledge of daily repentance has kept sins from piling up and weighing me down. All I can say is, thank you Father, thank you Jesus for your plan of salvation. I found the glorious gospel that was taught in former years with its gifts and blessings all so full and free. What a privilege and what opportunities and responsibility I have been given. †

Salt of the Earth

By Steven Smith

When Jesus offered the Sermon on the Mount, he used this metaphor about being the salt of the earth:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the salt of the earth; but if the salt shall lose its savor, wherewith shall the earth be salted? the salt shall thenceforth be good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men (Matthew 5:15).

This word picture can be a little difficult to understand. It is much simpler to see the Master's point when we know some background on salt, its history and its uses.

In chemistry the term salt is generic, but in common speech we think of salt as the substance we put on food. A salt is a compound of a cation (+) and an anion (-) connected by a strong ionic bond (which refers to positive and negative charges joining together).

When an acid and a base are mixed, a chemical reaction occurs which causes the release of water, hydrogen gas, and a precipitate of a salt. An example of this is the chemistry experiment often done in elementary school science class. An acid, like vinegar, is mixed with a base, like baking soda. The reaction that occurs makes a lot of bubbles and a salt.

Table salt is sodium chloride, a mixture of sodium and chloride ions. For the rest of this article, salt will refer specifically to sodium chloride, unless otherwise noted.

History

Salt is a word that permeates many languages with very little change. In Greek it was called "hal." In Welsh it was called "halen." Salt prior to being mined, in its natural state is called "halite."

In Old English it was "sealt." In Proto-Germanic it was "salta." In Dutch it is "zout." In Swedish, "salt." In Proto-Indo-European, "seh2l." The French say "sal" and the Irish "salam." In Latin it was "sal," which literally means "to jump" as our taste buds jump when salt is introduced.

Early towns were named after their relation to salt and include Salzburg (Austria) meaning "salt castle," Salzberg (Germany) which is "salt mountain," and Hallstatt (Austria) refers to the site of the first European salt mine.

Words using salt includes the words like "salary" from when salt was traded pound for pound with gold in North Africa and salt was used as a wage barter. A slackard was said to not be "worth his salt." The Romans favored their raw greens to be eaten with salt and called them salted which became salad.

The flavor jump that resulted from adding salt to food was pleasant. The word "assault" also came from salt, indicating that a person was jumped. Finally, we find that the word for one who sails the sea was an "old salt" or a "sailor".

Salt had high value among ancient peoples. In the Middle East it was used to seal an agreement. The Hebrews made a "covenant of salt" to show their trust in God, and salted their sacrifices ... then ate them. In

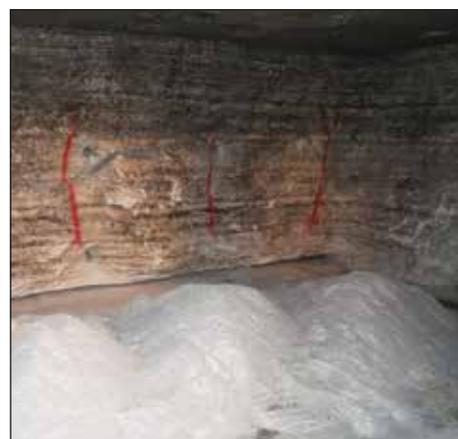
Strataca: Salt in Hutchinson, Kansas



Only 230 miles from Independence, Missouri, lies one of the world's largest deposits of rock salt. The Hutchinson Salt Company mine was founded in 1923 and still produces 500,000 tons of rock salt per year. This salt is not pure enough for human consumption, so most of it is used for de-icing roads and other industrial uses. The inactive part of the mine contains a museum called Strataca and is one of the few places in the world where visitors can tour an active mine.

Top: Sandy Whiting (l) and Carol Swain (r) tour the mine.

Below: Layers of salt form a wall 10 feet high and 600 feet below ground. In front are piles of finely ground rock salt.



times of war, salt was scattered around a conquered city to stop plant growth and curse the inhabitants.

Early Semites and Greeks would throw salt on a fire during the new moon to hear the crackling noises of God. Early Egyptians, Greeks and Romans invoked their gods with offerings of salt and water ... the genesis of the use of holy water in the Catholic church.

Color

Salt is found in a variety of colors. Salts are used to color most paint pigments, and fireworks. Historically, red mercury salts were used to color lipstick and over time become the “kiss of death” because it caused mercury poisoning, creating a dementia and eventual death.

Red paint often has iron or cobalt nitrate salts. Bright orange is caused by potassium chromate salts. Yellow can be seen in potassium chromate. Green comes from nickel chloride, blue from copper sulfate, purple from potassium permanganate, and metallic from iron disulfide. Black paint comes from salt precipitated in charcoal containers or precipitated in smoke. White color in paint comes from lead salts.

Table salt is a transparent salt that does not filter out the infrared range of radiation. This property makes it useful in the manufacture of lenses on infrared lasers.

Salt and water

Table salt or sodium chloride is made of a positive charged ion that is attracted to a negatively charged ion. In table salt, a sodium ion is stacked surrounded with six chloride ions in a cube around it, with six sodium ions surrounding each chloride ion, creating a cubic structure. When you break down the crystalline salt into small particles, they refract light to look like they are white, which is what you see in the salt shaker.

Salt crystals, when exposed to water, readily allow two water molecules to be more closely attracted to the sodium and chloride isolating them from the main crystal. This can then be diluted further until the sodium dissociates from the chloride. The anions and cations are then called electrolytes and make it so the water can conduct electricity.

If salt is placed on one side of a water permeable membrane with water on both sides, the salt will draw the water from the non-salted side. Meat is such a permeable membrane, so salting raw meat causes the water inside the meat to cross the cell membrane, dehydrating the meat which in turn preserves it. The salty solution on the outside evaporates, leaving a salt precipitate that further hinders microbial growth. This is the basis for “salt pork” and “salt fish.”

Water with salt added requires more energy to make it boil. If you are cooking spaghetti, and add salt to the water, it boils hotter, and allows you to cook your spaghetti without it getting soggy. If you add salt to ice, it requires a lower temperature to keep the ice solid. Therefore we see that it is put on icy roads to melt the ice. It is put in ice cream makers to lower the temperature, so the energy in the ice cream mix is removed and your ice cream is colder faster.

The oceans are about 3.5 percent salt. It has long been known that if you make large shallow pools with sea water left in the sun to evaporate the water, the solid residue left behind is salt.

All life requires salt. Animal tissues require more salt than plant tissues to sustain life. This explains why meat eating cultures require less added salt than cultures depending on a vegetable diet.

Taste

Salt is an essential for life, and God gave us a way of detecting it and a drive to seek it out. Many salts have a taste. Lead diacetate is sweet (and also poisonous). Potassium bitartrate is sour. Magnesium salts are bitter. Monosodium glutamate has a umami flavor. Sodium and lithium salts give what we recognize as a salty flavor.

The “salty” flavor occurs when sodium cations break apart from the chloride anions in a solution, such as saliva. Your mouth is covered with receptors, but the tip and sides of your tongue tend to have a higher concentration of salt responsive taste buds. These have holes or channels where sodium can enter the cell.

The sodium has a positive charge which causes an imbalance in the charge of the taste bud cells that we call depolarization. This causes the taste bud to release chemicals that stimulate nerves that go through a chain of nerves to the gustatory center of the brain, causing it to interpret the sensation as “salt” taste.

Scientists have found that you can stimulate the nerve chain, and taste salt without having any salt present. They have also found chemicals that can block the sodium channels or holes in the taste bud, so you cannot taste the salt.

The taste of salt causes a thirst reaction. You have heard the old saying that you can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make them drink. Well, you can make them drink if you slip them a salt tablet first.

Salt as a Metaphor

That background about salt leads us to salt as the metaphor Jesus used. He said we are to be the salt of the earth. We are the salt tablet that makes others want

him. We are to present all that is positive and negative about us and he will separate the positive, so that others can taste of his love ... and it will be pleasing.

We are to be the preservative that keeps his love fresh. We are the salt that curses evil from growing up around us. We become the pigment that makes life interesting. We can be the salt of the earth.

Section 98 of the Doctrine and Covenants, a revelation brought through Joseph Smith Jr., speaks of the same metaphor:

When men are called unto mine everlasting gospel, and covenant with an everlasting covenant, they are accounted as the salt of the earth, and the savor of men. They are called to be the savor of men. Therefore, if that salt of the earth lose its savor, behold, it is thenceforth good for nothing, only to be cast out and trodden under the feet of men (D&C 98:5k-l).

In other words, we become the salt of the earth by remembering the everlasting covenant. God told Moses the everlasting covenant made with Enoch was:

And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant, which I made unto thy father Enoch; that, when men should keep all my commandments, Zion should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I have caught up unto myself. And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy; And the general assembly of the church of the firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine everlasting covenant, which I made with thy father Enoch (Genesis 9:21-23).

When we choose to covenant with God to embrace the truth, keep all his commandments and look upward, we have covenanted with the everlasting covenant.

Paul says:

Let your speech be always with

grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man (Colossians 4:6).

The words we say should be a seasoning to our actions, like salt is a seasoning to food, making both our words and actions more delectable and desirous, causing others to want to keep his commandments and embrace the truth and look to God as well.

Losing the Savor

Sodium chloride retains its properties as long as it remains sodium chloride. Salt in Jesus' day was mined from dried sea beds. Along with the sodium chloride (table salt), there were many other salts with cations like boron, cesium, barium, magnesium, even gold, and anions such as bromides and sulfates, which were also present in small amounts.

When salt was left out where condensation could form on it, the sodium chloride leached away from the less soluble salts and washed away. The other remaining salts were often bitter—the salt had lost its savor.

When we forget to embrace the truth, keep the commandments, and look to God, we lose our savor. We no longer function as metaphoric salt. We leave a bitter taste in the mouth of others and we are good only for being trampled underfoot. We lose the ability to influence change for the kingdom of God to come on earth.

Let us remember to be the salt of the earth by:

- Embracing the truth
- Keeping his commandments
- Looking to God always
- Speaking in grace to others

In so doing, we become the salt tablet that makes others want him. We present all that is positive and negative about us to God and he can separate the positive, so that others can taste of his love—and it will be pleasing.

We can be the preservative that keeps his love fresh. We can be the salt that keeps evil from growing up around us. We can be the pigment that makes life interesting. We can be the salt of the earth. †

Let us remember to be the salt of the earth by:

- Embracing the truth
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Four Things You Should Know About Salt in the Scriptures

By Tara Broadway

1. In ancient times, salt was precious.

Salt is necessary to human life, but is poisonous to plants. Ancient people built population centers in areas that were hospitable to their crops. This meant that cities were often far away from salt deposits. Anthropologists believe the first trade routes developed in order to bring salt to population centers. Salt was so valuable that some people, including the ancient Romans, used it instead of coins, leading to the word “salary” in modern English.

Salt was so plentiful in Israel that it was customary to rub newborn babies in salt, perhaps to symbolically purify them. Israelites relied on salt for one of their major food crops: olives, which are inedible until they have been soaked in a salty brine. Today, the Dead Sea is still famous for its salt and the nation of Israel still exports it.

2. The Dead Sea Makes Salt Plentiful in Israel.

Called the Salt Sea in the Bible, the Dead Sea is considered to be the lowest body of water in the world. Because it has no outlet to the ocean, water entering the sea can only evaporate, leaving any minerals it contains behind. As a result, the water of the Dead Sea is nine times saltier than ocean water and will kill any fish that is swept into it from the Jordan river within minutes. In addition, the shores of the sea and even some nearby hills and mountains contain large deposits of rock salt, making the surrounding lands inhospitable to plant life. When the Bible describes a land of salt or salt pans (Deuteronomy 29:23; Zephaniah 2:9; Ezekiel 47:11; Jeremiah 17:6), it means a land that is so desolate that even plants cannot grow there.

Ancient Israelites harvested salt by digging shallow pits called salt pans, filling them with sea water, and waiting for the water to evaporate, leaving the salt behind. They exported salt and bitumen, which is also found in the Dead Sea, to Egypt for their mummies, and Rome’s interest in conquering Israel was probably due to its value as a salt producer.

3. Salt Was Part of God’s Covenant with Israel

Salt was included in the sacrifices of the old law, including the rations given to the priests for their support (Leviticus 2:13; Numbers 18:19; Ezekiel 43:24; Ezra 6:9). Sacrifices were considered meals served to God, and therefore must include salt, like any good meal. God’s promise to David that his son would inherit the kingdom was called a “salt covenant” (2 Chronicles 13:5). This seems to mean it was an especially sacred and permanent promise, one which could not be revoked, even if the human beneficiary broke God’s laws.

4. Unusable Salt Was Thrown in the Streets

Before modern times, most people recycled their trash by composting it. Salt does not break down in compost. When it was no longer useful, it was a Roman custom to throw it in the streets, where it would help prevent the growth of weeds. Jesus referred to this custom when He told His disciples that salt which had lost its savor was only good for being “cast out and trodden upon” (Matthew 5:15) †.

How Is Salt like the Gospel?

Both were precious and rare in the ancient world, but plentiful in Israel.

Both are necessary for the continuance of life but also make life more pleasant.

Salt preserves food, as the Gospel preserves our souls.

Salt “loses its savor” by becoming mixed with other minerals, as the Gospel becomes ineffective when mixed with other religions.

Covenant of Salt

How to progress from servant to bride

By Yvonne Galusha



What is a salt covenant?

Salt is essential for physical life. In ancient times salt was used as a seasoning, a preservative, a disinfectant, a component of ceremonial offerings, and as a unit of exchange. Thus, it was a precious commodity and was treated with great care. A salt covenant meant that salt was used to seal an agreement. Salt was mixed from each party's pouch, and then bread was dipped into the salt and consumed. The remaining salt was then split and returned to the pouches. It was impossible to separate the fine grains of salt back to the original owners once it was mixed; therefore, this practice exemplified, because of their agreement, that the parties could also no longer be separated. The salt covenant signified a level of deep, abiding, unbreakable friendship.

Where is the salt covenant in scripture?

The first explicit mention of the salt covenant is recorded in Numbers 18:19, which says, "All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the Lord, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute forever; it is a covenant of salt forever before the Lord unto thee and to thy seed with thee." Here we see that God extended his hand of deep friendship to Aaron and his seed. Since God does not change, we can infer that with the priesthood covenant comes the opportunity of deep friendship with God.

A second reference that confirms this understanding of the salt covenant is found in 2 Chronicles 13:5, "Ought ye not to know that the Lord

It was impossible to separate the fine grains of salt back to the original owners once it was mixed; therefore, ... the salt covenant signified a level of deep, abiding, unbreakable friendship.

When we first accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, we enter into a blood covenant relationship with him as his servant. We witness this covenant in the waters of baptism.

God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David forever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?” Nathan conveying this covenant to David is recorded in 2 Samuel 7:16. Clearly an abiding friendship with God has wonderful, eternal ramifications.

How does the salt covenant fit with other covenants?

When considering the salt covenant, one must ask how does this fit with the baptismal covenant or everlasting covenant? These are covenants that are more commonly understood among Restorationists. The ancient Hebrew marriage covenant, where four cups of wine were drunk signifying the coming to stronger and stronger agreement on the terms of the marriage between the bride’s and groom’s families, provides insight. Since we are to be the bride of Christ, does it not follow that Jesus and his Father are bringing us to full agreement with the marriage terms as well?

The four cups represent four levels of covenant relationship—servant-hood, friendship, son-ship, and bride. The Bible is replete with examples of, and counsel on, each of these. For the sake of brevity I will cut to the conclusion of the matter. When we first accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, we enter into a blood covenant relationship with him as his servant. We witness this covenant in the waters of baptism. For most, it takes a while to achieve consistent obedience to his laws, but once this happens, we enter into a friendship covenant relationship with him. When and how this happens may not be known or recognized, but with hindsight it becomes more apparent as our walk and interaction with the Lord has changed. With more time, if we lay down self, we continue to grow spiritually, in greater intimacy and understanding of Jesus and his ways. This brings us into a son-ship relationship, where we can be trusted with his authority, to use to do the things

that he would do in the earth. Eventually there will be a body of people prepared, through great sacrifice, to be equally yoked with Christ as his bride. This will be realized once Zion is redeemed, when a people live continually according to the Celestial law. Then will a people function in full endowment with a power that enables protection and preservation of Zion, just like Enoch of old manifested for the sake of Zion.

Other scriptural witnesses of this type of progression can be seen in the glories (Doctrine & Covenants 76), the parable of the sower (Matthew 13, Mark 4, Luke 8), or the parable of the marriage supper (Matthew 22). In each of these we see people grouped in four groupings, where some end up with greater reward or glory than others. What the Lord is saying to us through these various passages is that we must continue to come unto him, submitting fully ourselves, if we want to receive his fullness, even a place with him and his Father for eternity.

Thus, the salt covenant follows the baptismal covenant, but precedes the everlasting covenant, which is synonymous with the bride covenant in the marriage cup paradigm.

Where is the covenant pattern of progression or grouping found in scripture?

As we are to hold fast to the word of God, we must look to see whether this covenant pattern is further developed in scripture. The Hebrews were given practices that embodied spiritual things, so they could come to understand. One place where the covenant pattern is concisely, neatly inferred is Ezra 6:9, which says, “young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests.” Here it speaks of things that the priests and workers on the temple are to receive in order

to perform their duties. The use of wheat is a reference to the body of Christ, hence the first covenant. Salt is a reference to the second covenant of friendship. Wine is a reference to the third covenant, where fruit is brought to the Father in son-ship. Finally, oil is a reference to the last covenant, where the bride is completely immersed in the Spirit, fully one with Christ her Bridegroom.

Another similar concise scriptural inference to the covenant pattern is found in Ezekiel 16:4, “And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all.” Here we see a pattern of four, and the salt is rather conspicuous. We do not know why they would have salted a newborn baby, but perhaps it was done to disinfect or to toughen the outer skin. Although not quite in order, we see here an inference to the covenant pattern. This is even more interesting in light of the entire chapter, which speaks of Israel’s terrible state before and after her national covenant with YHWH. This was given to help the Jews understand why they were captive in Babylon. The navel cut refers to the circumcision cut, which alludes to the blood covenant. Washed in water refers to the son-ship covenant, when one is more thoroughly washed in the word. Salt refers to the friendship covenant, and swaddled refers to the bridal covenant. These things are not chance, the Lord God continually seeks to help us understand, that we may come fully unto him.

Now, the place that best exemplifies the progression, not just the grouping, is found in 2 Kings chapter 2, where Elijah was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire. This passage has a wealth of meaning. Let’s take a closer look. I will first outline the chapter and then explain it.

Elijah and Elisha depart from Gilgal. Then the Lord told them to go to Bethel. Next they were to go to Jericho, and, finally, they were to cross the Jordan River. They met with prophets at Bethel and Jericho. Fifty came to watch as they went to the Jordan River, for all knew that Elijah was to be taken to heaven that day. At

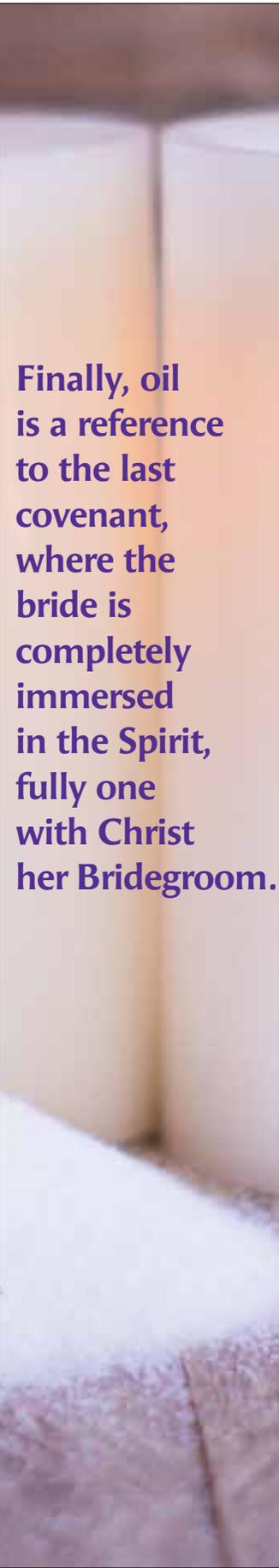
the Jordan River, Elijah smote it with his mantle; it parted, and Elijah and Elisha walked through on dry land. Then Elijah asked Elisha what he could do for him, and Elisha asked for a double portion of his mantle. Elijah said that he asked a hard thing, but if he saw when he was taken, he would receive it. The chariot came from heaven and took Elijah, Elisha saw it, and the mantle was left on the ground. Elisha picked up the mantle and used it to smite the Jordan River, it parted, and he returned, on dry land, to the watching prophets on the other side. These men knew that the spirit of Elijah was given to Elisha, so they asked him to help with their water problem at Jericho. Elisha took a crucible of salt and poured it into the water, and it was repaired. Next he went back to Bethel, where children mocked him.

He cursed them, and two she bears came and 42 children were killed. The chapter closed with Elisha going to Carmel.

This passage is a type of the Lord’s people in the path that they must tread, if they are to come unto him fully. Elisha was allowed to walk the path, yet, he was asked to return and help his brothers and sisters. They left from Gilgal, because this is where Joshua first brought the people into the land of promise, the beginning of the covenant relationship.

Each one must find their way on this same path. They must first overcome the sins of the flesh, represented by the priests of Baal. They must next come to the Lord and learn to walk as a servant, and then become a friend, once they are able to walk in consistent obedience. This is shown in the progression to Bethel, where Jacob was received as a friend of the Lord. Next they must continue in learning humility and patience if they are to become trusted with more authority of the Spirit to walk as a son, even with the authority of the Father at times. This is represented by the going to Jericho, for Jericho was taken by the authority of the Spirit.

Finally, once a servant has shown himself to be a friend and son, some will learn to walk in complete submission to the Lord, and these will be brought to his land of promise, to share in the Celestial King-



Finally, oil is a reference to the last covenant, where the bride is completely immersed in the Spirit, fully one with Christ her Bridegroom.

We are to be the salt of the earth, meaning the friend to all in the earth; and, as a friend, we should help everyone receive the most important thing we have, our relationship with Jesus Christ.

SALT & LIGHT



Are you a woman of salt and light for Christ? Do you have an idea of what it means to be “the salt of the earth” or the “light of the world”? The 2016 Restoration Women’s Ministries study will help women to understand what Christ has called all to be. The theme for the study is “Women as Salt & Light.” Early in 2016 the study will be posted on the JCRB website. Click on ‘Special Ministries’ and select ‘Women’s Ministries’ from the left menu. You can download the study and use as a group or individual study.

dom. Thus, we see that Elijah crossed over the Jordan, a type of entering therein, and was received by a chariot from heaven, as part of the bride of Christ.

If this is not enough, the chapter is organized as a chiasm, with Elijah going to heaven in the center. In Hebrew writing, the center of the chiasm is the most important part. Elisha returns the same way that they came, but, of course, in reverse order, hence the chiasm. Elisha shows forth great power and authority as a son of God in also parting the waters of the Jordan. At Jericho, the prophets received him and acknowledged his authority and place with God. His assistance to them, in healing the water, magnifies the friendship relationship, but when he travels to Bethel it is another story. In chiasms it is sometimes the opposite that shows forth in the inverse, and this is the case at Bethel, when the children are cursed and die horrifically. Here we see what will happen, eventually, to all who reject Jesus Christ’s blood covenant offer. Finally, Elisha goes on to Carmel, the place where other servants reside, even the school of the prophets, that he might assist them.

Closing

We are to be the salt of the earth, meaning the friend to all in the earth; and, as a friend, we should help everyone receive the most important thing we have, our relationship with Jesus Christ. This calling is clearly stated in modern day revelation, “When men are called unto mine everlasting gospel, and covenant with an everlasting covenant, they are accounted as the salt of the earth, and the savor of men” (D&C 98:5k). And when we do not magnify our calling, we suffer, the church suffers, and the whole earth suffers. “But inasmuch as they keep not my commandments, and hearken not to observe all my words, the kingdoms of the world shall prevail against them, for they were set to be a light unto the world, and to be the saviors of men; and inasmuch as they are not the saviors of men, they are as salt that has lost its savor, and is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men” (Doctrine & Covenants 100:2c-d).

Let us carefully consider these things. I will leave you with one final scripture, found in the Doctrine & Covenants, “Therefore, care not for the body, neither the life of the body; but care for the soul, and for the life of the soul, and seek the face of the Lord always, that in patience ye may possess your souls, and ye shall have eternal life” (D&C 98:5j). †



A Salty Life: Making a Difference Around Us

By Doug Smith

*(Testimony taken from a sermon at the Seventy
Missionary Family Reunion June 2015 and
edited for publication)*

What difference can it make in our lives when we come to know Jesus? What difference can it make in the lives of others when this change comes into our lives? Being the salt of the earth can bring change to our families, communities and beyond—this is the testimony of a good friend of mine, Wilson Oyata of Kenya. Here is his story.

Wilson had five brothers and five sisters.

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

His parents, his brothers, and some of his sisters all died of AIDS. His surviving sisters had moved away, so no one was left at the family place and Wilson inherited it. He thought he was going to die there too as the rest of his family had. He was living a life with no hope.

He had a job as a community policeman. The way he made much of his living was through bribes. If you did something wrong, you paid the policeman not to arrest you. If you wanted someone arrested, you went to the police and said, “Go arrest that guy,” but if the guy you were to arrest paid you more money, you still would not arrest them. It was a very corrupt system that led to the total disarray in the area they were living, which is called Southwest Nyakach.

Because of the hopelessness in his life, Wilson began drinking, using drugs and living a corrupt life. One day, Eric Odida came to visit Wilson and said, “Wilson, if you had a job, and when you finished working at the end of the day, instead of paying you, the boss refused and stole the money you already had and, besides robbing you, he beat you up, what would you do?”

Wilson said, “Well I’d get a new boss.”

Eric said, “Look at your life. The boss you are following now is eating you up. He’s stealing from you. He’s killing you. You need a new boss.”

For the first time, Wilson said, it hit him. “That’s right. I need a new boss. I want Jesus Christ as my boss now, not the guy I’ve been following.”

Wilson decided he was going to follow Jesus. He was baptized and the Holy Spirit began to work with Wilson. The gospel saved Wilson’s life, but it also transformed him.

Instead of being a corrupt policeman, he became an honest policeman. Not only was he an honest policeman, he began to share what he had found with his coworkers. Four of the other policemen on the force also were converted to the Lord and became honest people.

We were having a service in Nyamarimbaba one day, and near the close of the service, a man walked in. In Kenya, unlike the United States, everyone wants to be at the front of the church. He made his way to the front of the church and people scattered to let him through. They gave him a place of honor in the front row and after the service was finished he asked if he could share a testimony. We said, “yes.”

“My name’s Paul,” he said. “I’m the police commissioner of this area and I want to tell you of a remarkable thing that has happened here. Southwest Nyakach used to have the worst crime rate in all of Kenya. Gun crimes are almost unheard of in Kenya, but in our area people were walking into homes in the middle of the day and stealing things at gunpoint—even stealing cattle.

“I’d send my policemen and they’d just say we went there and couldn’t find anything. Or I’d send two police-

men and they’d both come back with a different story about what happened. They would never investigate the crime because they were being paid off. One of my men came to your gospel and he became honest and he converted my other policemen. And because of that everything has changed.

“Not only has the crime rate fallen in Southwest Nyakach in the last six months, there has been absolutely no crime whatsoever. And the people in Kenya are calling it the Southwest Nyakach miracle. Now I’m supposed to go to a police commissioner’s meeting in Nairobi next week and explain to them how the Southwest Nyakach miracle took place—how you can go from having the highest crime rate in all of Kenya to having no crime in six months. The only thing I know to tell them is to get this man, Eric Odida, to come and convert their policemen too. Because it’s been this gospel of yours that has made the difference in Southwest Nyakach.”

The change in Wilson’s life grew to make a difference in the whole police force of his area, but God was not through yet. The promise of Christ is that those who believe will speak with new tongues.

Wilson was a priest and he came with me down to a place called Utegi, Tanzania. It was the first time he had been to Utegi. There was a man named Albert with whom an elder named Paul Makawiti had shared the gospel. Albert had family members in Utegi that he wanted to hear the gospel. Wilson and I went with Paul to Albert’s home. After we arrived at the home, Paul got called away and he asked Wilson to do the translating.

We sat down with Albert and his family, and several of the neighbors who had come over to hear, and spent the whole day sharing the gospel. I was speaking English and they only spoke Swahili. Wilson was translating for my words into Swahili and translating their questions for me into English. We went the whole day sharing the gospel with Albert and his family.

At the end of the day as we were saying our good-byes, I understood Wilson to say, “Two years ago when I was baptized I couldn’t speak any English.”

The people were amazed. “Wow, you’re doing such a good job now.”

I thought that was really neat that the Lord had blessed him with the ability to learn another language. As we were leaving I said to Wilson, “So, how’s your family doing?”

He said, “What?”

I said, “How’s your family doing?”

He looked at me like he did not understand the question. He had spent the whole day translating and he was having trouble with this question. I couldn’t carry on a simple conversation with him, so I was thinking this was weird.

About two weeks later we were at a women's retreat and Wilson stood up to share his testimony. There was translation this time, so I really understood what he was saying. The miracle was not that Wilson had learned English in two years. The miracle was that Wilson did not know English at all. And beyond that, Wilson did not know Swahili either. He only knew Luo.

The Lord had given him the ability to speak both English and Swahili fluently so that the people in that Tanzanian town could hear the gospel and could come to know Christ too. Albert and his family were baptized and a congregation grew up there. The salt that Wilson had become was enough to help bring a whole family to Christ.

The story does not stop there, though. I was back in Utegi a year or two ago and this time I was with Kennedy, Wilson's nephew.

"Kennedy, we had a real neat experience one time here with your uncle," I said.

He said, "Oh, that Uncle Wilson."

I said, "What do you mean?"

"Oh, Uncle Wilson always scared me," Kennedy said.

"Well, what do you mean?" I replied.

"Growing up, you know, Uncle Wilson was kind of the black sheep of the family. He was the guy on drugs. He was an alcoholic. We didn't like Uncle Wilson very much," Kennedy said.

"Well, what happened to change your mind?" I asked.

"I'll tell you what it was," Kennedy said. "Last year I had gotten very sick. I was in my senior year of high school." (In Kenya students go year around to school and in their senior year students all over the country take a final exam. Your score on that exam determines where you go to college. It's very important how you do on the exam.)

"The exam is given in November and in February I developed malaria," Kennedy went on. "I went to the infirmary at my boarding school and I got a little better, but then I got worse again. They sent me to the hospital and I recovered a bit, but I still wasn't well so they sent me home."

His mother put him in the hospital at home and they tried to treat him there but they could not get the malaria under control. The malaria went to his brain—his

central nervous system—and Kennedy ended up a paralyzed. He could not move his arms or legs. He had to quit school. He was just laying at home, and even needed to be fed and that is where he lay for months.

It got to be August and his mother came to him and said, "Kennedy, I want your Uncle Wilson to come and pray for you."

Kennedy said, "Who? Uncle Wilson?"

"Yes, I want your Uncle Wilson to come pray for you," his mother said. "He's not like that anymore. He's come to know Jesus Christ."

Kennedy was still a little suspicious but he felt if his mother thought it was what he should do, he would go along with it. So Wilson, who by now was an elder, and my brother, Ron Smith, came over to administer to Kennedy.

Kennedy said, "When those hands were laid upon my head I felt this warm feeling start at my head and run down through my body. I felt my limbs receiving strength as the prayer was offered. After the prayer I was able to sit up. I thought if I could sit I could stand. I tried to stand up and found I had strength in my legs. The amazing thing was I could move my arms again. I thought, if I could move my arms, maybe I could write and maybe I could write my exam."

He grabbed a pencil and though he did not have control of it, he could make a few marks. He decided to work at it. He got a newspaper and traced the letters in the newspaper. When he got to where he could do that, he would look at the newspaper and copy the letters. Over the course of the next two months he taught himself to write again. When it came time to take his exam, he was able to take it, and he scored very well, despite not being in school since February.

The difference made in Wilson's life by the gospel of Christ was the salt that led to changing the life of a community when the police force was transformed. The life of a family in another country was redeemed as he was used to bring the gospel there. It was the influence of the gospel in Wilson's life that allowed him to be useful in granting healing and hope in the life of his nephew. Wilson was changed from being the "black-sheep" uncle to the bearer of light through the grace of Jesus Christ. †.

"After the prayer I was able to sit up. I thought if I could sit I could stand. I tried to stand up and found I had strength in my legs. The amazing thing was I could move my arms again."

2016 General Conference: Zionic Mission in Action



The General Conference of the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches will meet from April 10-16, 2016. Almost all of the General Conference activities (Monday through Saturday) will occur in the Conference Center at the Remnant Gathering Place in Independence, Missouri (no activities will occur in the Worship Center this year). The Inn will also be available for those wishing to stay overnight on-site. We are grateful for the opportunity to rent this facility once again.

An invitation to register was emailed out in early March. A link to on-line registration was also added to the home page of the JCRB website. Saints may pick up their badges and conference notebooks on Saturday, April 9th from 2-4 pm at the JCRB Office (1100 W. Truman Road, Independence, MO 64050) or daily beginning 8:00 am Monday morning during the conference.

Conference activities will begin on Sunday evening, April 10, 2016 with a Sacrament Service. It will begin at 6:00 pm at the Zarahemla Branch in Blue Springs, Missouri. Seating for this service will overflow to the basement, if needed, where close circuit cameras will allow those seated there to view the service. Details and parking instructions may be found on the maps and graphics in this announcement. Parking will be supervised by the Zarahemla Branch with adequate parking spaces anticipated.

On Monday morning, the conference center will open at 7:45 am. A prayer and testimony service will be held from 8:30-9:30 am on this day. Following this worship service,

the Conference will meet in formal session to officially open the conference and begin considering the business for the week.

There will be Saints from four continents at this conference. On Monday evening we will spend time welcoming those in attendance and getting to know one another as we participate in organized activities and refreshments. This night is a time to make friends of God's children. This night is a time to make friends of God's children.

Tuesday through Saturday will begin with an opportunity for the Saints to again share in prayer and testimony, with an eye toward inward reflection and the purposes that God has for his people. Afterwards, on Tuesday through Thursday, the various priesthood quorums will have time to meet together until 11:45 am, after which we break for lunch.

Preaching ministry will be available on Tuesday through Thursday nights (song services begin at 6:45 pm), and on Saturday morning, with the closing worship service beginning at 10:00 am. The final schedule will be included in the conference notebooks and available on the conference website, as always, is subject to change.

Meal breaks throughout the conference are designed to allow sufficient time for everyone to have a good meal. This is another opportunity for local area Saints to meet people they may not know by inviting them to lunch or into their homes for an evening meal. Is there anything that defines Restoration Saints fellowship more than good food and time spent together?

After lunch on Monday through Thursday, the Saints will assemble for a series of classes, workshops and discussions which will center on various aspects of our Zionic mission. These sessions will begin at 1:00 pm and dismiss at 5:00 pm, Monday through Thursday. The Quorum of Seventy will lead the sessions on Monday and Tuesday and will help us to understand what God is doing in the world today, and offer training and insight to help each member to be effective witnesses of the gospel in the world. Wednesday afternoon will focus on our mission as it relates to adults and families, and Thursday afternoon will focus on our mission to youth and young adults.

Friday, April 15 will be dedicated to conducting the business of the Conference. This includes approving the budget for 2016/2017 and consid-



Conference activities on Sunday, April 10, will take place at Zarahemla branch (502 SW 17th Street, Blue Springs, MO 64015). The branch is a short 15- to 20- minute drive from Independence.



We will return to the Gathering Place (2820 S. 291 Highway Frontage Road, Independence, MO 64057) for conference activities from Monday, April 11, to Saturday, April 16.

ering any calls to Seventy or High Priest, which may be presented to the body. Any resolutions submitted to the Conference for consideration will be posted on the Conference website as soon as they become available (www.ConferenceOfBranches.org), where a direct link to the 2016 General Conference web page has already been added. Just prior to the conference, content will be uploaded to this web page so that Saints around the world may follow along as they are able.

On the last day of the conference, Saturday, April 16, the Saints are invited to again gather for prayer and testimony. Immediately following a worship service will begin, which will include an ordination service (as needed) and preaching ministry. This worship service will conclude the activities of the 2016 General Conference.

Before departing for home, please consider spending some time helping clean the spaces we have used during the week. This is one final opportunity to fellowship together. If everyone helps, the task will be quickly completed.

Daily Themes

Sunday, April 10: “In Covenant with Christ”

Monday, April 11: “Testifying of Christ”

Tuesday, April 12: “Witnessing of Christ”

Wednesday, April 13: “Maturing in Christ”

Thursday, April 14: “Young in Christ”

Friday, April 15: “Alive in Christ”

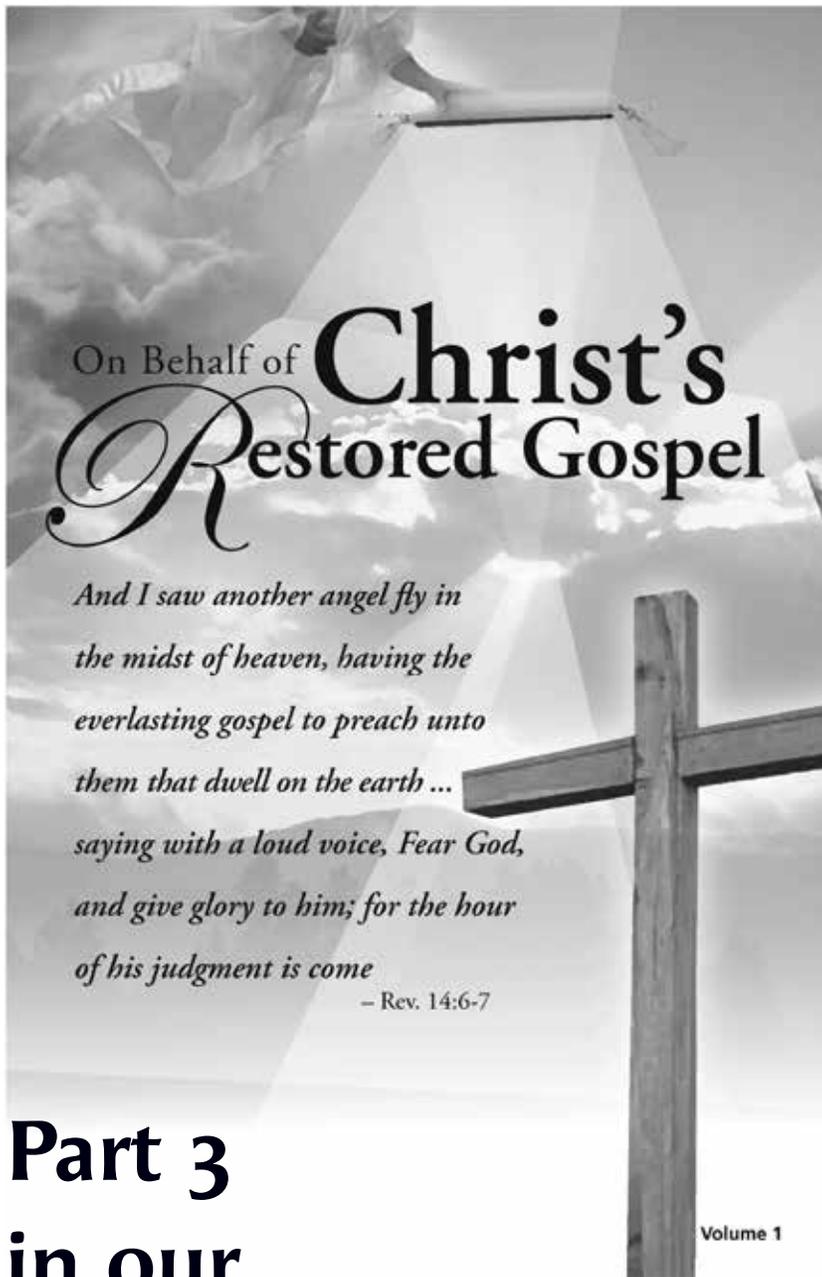
Saturday, April 16: “In Service With Christ”

We anticipate a variety of displays in the foyer of the Conference Center. A little different this year, Paul Ludy will be bringing NEW books (with an option to request OLD books), including the new three-in-one scriptures that are for sale. Please take the time to visit these displays and chat with the people representing the various ministries and activities.

This is a conference for the Saints. Your participation is critical to its success. The activities and worship are designed to edify, empower, equip and encourage you to be an effective emissary for the work of the Lord today—right where you live.

With the exception of prayer and testimony services, we will be live streaming activities from the conference center (www.ustream.tv/channel/joint-conference-of-restoration-branches). You may also follow the business meetings on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/jointconference>) or learn more on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/jointconference>). †





**Part 3
in our
continuing
series**

The Biblical Canon

An often quoted passage is Revelation 22:18-19, which tells us not to add to, or take away from, the word of God. A person outside of Christianity would have a great deal of trouble knowing which Bible to believe in. Should it be the Bible that is based on the Byzantine manuscripts (King James Version), the Alexandrian (NIV), or should they embrace the Catholic Bible (which has 11 more books than the Hebrew canon, 12 if Baruch is separated from Jeremiah)?

All of these represent Christian perspectives, but obviously not all are without error. And what about Luther's idea that we should remove the book of James from the Bible entirely, because he felt that it militated against his concept of sola fidei, or faith alone? Eusebius did not think that 2 Peter should be part of the canon [Norman Geisler and William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1986) 183] At one time or another, the books of Esther, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Ezekiel, Proverbs, Jude and James were questioned or entirely removed from the canon of scripture. That presents a bit of a problem for evangelicals who are intent on preserving canonical purity and who rail against additional scriptures.

In trying to uphold the evangelical theory that the present-day Bible is now complete and that it contains every possible inspired writing, Geisler and Nix point to at least one scriptural reference that could potentially work against that view. In 1 Corinthians 5:9, it mentions a letter that was sent to the saints in Corinth prior to the letters we presently call First and Second Corinthians.

The so-called "real" 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 5:9). This book poses a much more serious threat to the theory that all truly prophetic writings are in the present canon of Scripture. For it was definitely written by an accredited apostle (Paul), and it did contain religious instruction and exhortation (1 Cor. 5:9-13). Hence, either this so-called "real" 1 Corinthians must be contained within one of the existing books of the Bible or else the theory fails" [Norman Geisler and William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1986) 215].

In saying “or else the theory fails,” Geisler and Nix are talking about their theory that all truly prophetic writings are in the canon of scripture. The wording in 1 Corinthians 5:9 indicates that there is potentially other inspired writing that is not contained in the Bible.

Filters

In pressing the point about sola Scriptura, evangelicals have historically accused Catholics of using the teaching magisterium (i.e., interpretation by the papacy) as a filter to view the Bible. In recent times, ex-RLDS members have adopted this approach in trying to convince Restoration adherents that they are seeing the Bible through the “filters” of the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants. The same argument could be made that evangelicals view scripture through the filter of Luther and Calvin’s teachings.

Of course their filter analogy crumbles when fundamentalists, faced with a difficult question, respond that they will need to ask their pastor to interpret a particular passage. Evangelicals’ dependency on their pastors to interpret the Bible for them also begs my earlier question about the formal sufficiency of the Bible. If the Bible is all that we need, why do so many of our evangelical friends tell us that they need to ask their pastors for an interpretation? The point here is that every believer should individually seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in understanding the Bible, but the concept of *sola Scriptura* should not lead believers to abandon help in the form of commentaries, lexicons, pastoral guidance and priesthood counsel in attempting to interpret scripture.

Priesthood

Priesthood is a subject that has nothing to do with determining whether RLDS believers adhere to orthodoxy. The scriptural test of orthodoxy found in 2 Corinthians 11:4 addresses Jesus and the gospel but not ministerial priesthoods. A statement commonly attributed to Augustine is that “in essentials there should be unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things charity.” Evangelical denominations disagree about church governance among themselves, but they view this as a non-essential area where they are free to disagree.

It seems ironic for fundamentalists to claim that Restoration views about ministerial priesthoods somehow make them cultic. Though Hank Hanegraaff believes that ministerial priesthood ended at the cross, I doubt that he would subscribe to the position of more extreme evangelicals on this point. Believing that ministerial priesthoods continued after the cross does not make the Catholic Church a cult, and our similar belief does not make us a cult either. Ms. Hansen should afford the Restoration the same Augustinian tolerance in this matter that she does the various evangelical denominations that cannot agree about church governance.

Test of a Prophet

Since fundamentalists often object to our use of the Old Testament to make a point, it seems peculiar that they place such importance on the following passage as being the test of a prophet.

When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him (Deuteronomy 18:22).

The point here is that every believer should individually seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in understanding the Bible, but the concept of *sola Scriptura* should not lead believers to abandon help in the form of commentaries, lexicons, pastoral guidance and priesthood counsel in attempting to interpret scripture.

Fundamentalists and Restoration Christians agree that David committed reprehensible sins We both recognize God's mercy on his behalf, and we embrace his writing as prophetic. Fundamentalists simultaneously pretend to be aghast at sins that Joseph Smith is alleged to have committed and claim that these sins are enough to discredit him as a prophet of God.

Of course, this is in the context of predictive prophecy, something we address in the paper "Evidences that Joseph Smith was a Prophet." However, we must be able to harmonize the above passage with other scriptures. On more than one occasion, I have asked my evangelical friends to reconcile Deuteronomy 18:22 with 1 Kings 13:11-32. The King James Version tells us of an old prophet who spoke on behalf of God falsely on one occasion and then later, in verse 21, delivered a true revelation from God. I have never received an explanation from them on this question.

Later, I came across Norman Geisler's suggestion that it is possible to have what he refers to as "occasional inspiration." This is an interesting concept, but reconciling Ms. Hansen's rigid interpretation of Deuteronomy 18 and Mr. Geisler's more liberal concept of occasional inspiration is problematic at best.

Scripture clearly states that David, a prophet of God, was guilty of killing Uriah and of adultery. In explaining how 1 Kings 11:4 could say that David's heart was loyal to the Lord, Geisler and Howe say:

It must always be remembered that a person's acceptance with God is not based on his or her own works, but upon God's grace. David was not a man after God's own heart because of any acts of righteousness which he had done. Rather, David's heart was loyal to the Lord his God because of his faith in God [Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1992) 184].

Both fundamentalists and Restoration Christians agree that David committed reprehensible sins that are clearly documented in scripture. We both recognize God's mercy on his behalf, and we embrace his writing as prophetic (Acts 2:29-30). Fundamentalists simultaneously pretend to be aghast at sins that Joseph Smith is alleged to have committed and claim that these sins are enough to discredit him as a prophet of God. We agree with Geisler's view that God's grace should apply because of faith in God, but we believe that such grace should apply both in the case of King David and Joseph Smith.

Interpreting Scripture

There is a basic difference between evangelicals and Restoration members in our approach to interpreting scripture. In attempting to harmonize various passages, it is commonly understood that scripture interprets scripture, but there are times when one passage must be given primacy over another. In discussing salvation, the Reformation gives greatest importance to the Pauline epistles and weighs all other scriptural injunctions in light of those writings. This view is clearly evident in Luther's writing.

In a word, St. John's Gospel and his first Epistle, St. Paul's Epistles, especially Romans, Galatians and Ephesians, and St. Peter's first Epistle are the books that show you Christ and teach you all that is necessary and good for you to know, even though you were never to see or hear any other book or doctrine. Therefore St. James' Epistle is really an epistle of straw, compared to them; for it has nothing of the nature of the Gospel about it [*Works of Martin Luther*, C.M. Jacobs, trans. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Muhlenberg Press, 1932) 6:443-444].

On the other hand, the Restoration places the greatest importance on the sayings of Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, and we weigh all other teaching according to what he taught. For our evangelical friends who would like to understand our views on salvation, it might be helpful for them to read Matthew 7:21, Matthew 19:16-25 and Matthew 25:31-46 in conjunction with other scripture. As one example, here is the text from Matthew 19 that is often ignored by evangelicals in discussing God's plan of salvation:

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:16-26).

Knowing the Date and Hour That One Was Saved

It is not unusual for fundamentalists to ask if you can name the exact date and time of your conversion to Christ. Some mistakenly use this criterion to determine the authenticity of a conversion experience. Restorationists do not point to a specific date in past experience as the time when they were “saved” but rather place much more importance on the on-going development of their relationship with Jesus Christ. They are often criticized by evangelicals for not “knowing when they were saved.”

At one time, Adrian Rogers was the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. He is presently the pastor of a Baptist church in Memphis, Tennessee [*Editor’s note: Pastor Rogers died November 15, 2005*]. This is what he had to say about this subject:

I’ve often heard it said that if you can’t name the day, the hour and the place where you were saved, you’re not saved. You ever heard that? Sure you have. I’ve heard it too, but I’ve never found it in the Bible. The Bible does not say, “he that believed”—past tense. It says “he that believes”—believes right now ... I mean, folks, salvation is in the present tense ... It doesn’t say “he who kept the commandments,” it says, “he who keeps them.” It doesn’t say “he who loved the brethren,” it says “he who loves the brethren.” It doesn’t say “he who believed,” it says “he who believes.” ... And the question I’m asking you right now: Is there in your heart, right now, this moment, in that seat that assurance, that faith in your heart that you’re a child of God? [Adrian Rogers, “Dealing With Doubt,” Love Worth Finding radio program].

How Will I Know the Truth?

Doctrine and Covenants 9:3 and Moroni 10:4-5 are frequently derided by fundamentalists who suggest that our testimony rests entirely on esoteric experience rather than reason. But this is patently false. Nothing in these passages instructs the reader to ignore their reasoning faculties.

Closely allied with the evidence of the prima facie authority of Scripture is

Restorationists do not point to a specific date in past experience as the time when they were “saved” but rather place much more importance on the on-going development of their relationship with Jesus Christ.

the witness of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God is confirmed to the children of God by the Spirit of God. The inner witness of God in the heart of the believer who reads the Bible is evidence of its divine origin [Norman Geisler and William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1986) 194].

We would encourage every believer, like the men on the road to Emmaus, to ask themselves, “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” (Luke 24:32). You must have that same experience with Jesus. You must study these things out and decide for yourself. When you read the testimonies of Book of Mormon witnesses that were given decades later, does it sound like they wavered or doubted regarding their experience?

We asked David Whitmer in regards to his faith in the Book of Mormon. He smiled and his countenance lit up, saying, “As I know the sun shines so I know an angel appeared while Joseph, Oliver and myself sat upon a log in a clearing about 11 o’clock in the morning,” a light first appearing which grew brighter until the angel stood before them and placed upon a table before them the plates of gold, also the brass plates, the Urim and Thummim (or interpreters) the ball or compass and the sword of Laban. He said there could be nothing to induce him to deny these things [Interview with Edward Stevenson on December 22-23, 1877, Richmond, Missouri; quoted in *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness*, Lyndon W. Cook, ed. (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book Company, 1991) 15].

Conclusion

I have attempted to briefly describe a number of recurring themes that arise in my discussions with evangelical friends. I hope that this will be of benefit to those who have encountered fundamentalist critics. It is important to remember that there is more than one evangelical viewpoint regarding the RLDS faith. After several years of discussions with my evangelical friends, I am more convinced than ever that the RLDS faith worships the Jesus of the Bible and that it teaches the gospel that Jesus taught. †

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2000 Strong

By Nikki LeDoux

The sound of gravel crunches underneath my feet as I walk on the winding road into the Tabernacle. Loci in the tall trees screaming and communicating to one another on on this humid afternoon in July. I reach the destination and open the door and enter into the sounds of my fellow campers and counselors conversing with each other. I sit down and wait patiently for the service to begin.



The entrance door creaks open as the priesthood files in at the front. The whole camp stands as the sound of chairs screech and slide back on the concrete floor. We invoke the service by singing hymns that stream seamlessly out of our yearning souls for the Spirit of the Lord to be invited and present with us on this glorious day. The Spirit of the Lord immediately touches everyone's beating hearts as the sound of sniffles are scattered among the audience. Tears of joy are rolled down many faces as we all hear the souls of others bear witness of the marvelous works The Lord has played in their life.

Such a place that I love coming to each year to hear the stories of faith and how the sound of a rejoicing voice rejuvenates my soul. This environment brings me peace and understanding. This environment is Camp 2000 Strong. †

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An Influence for Righteousness

By Gary R. Whiting

Have you ever wondered why Israel is located where it is? God could have put it anywhere he desired. Knowing that God never does this randomly, but always for a specific purpose, why did he put Israel where it is?

Israel means the people and the land. Israel is primarily a reference to the people in this article. It was with the people God made a covenant. Abraham was the patriarch of the covenant. Through his descendants, the covenant continued until they were miraculously delivered into the land God had prepared for them.

In Leviticus 25 the Lord, through Moses, gave detailed instructions on particular sins that would defile the land of Israel. He concluded with a warning about why they should avoid these sins,

And the land is defiled; therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you; (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spew not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spewed out the nations that were before you (Leviticus 25:25-28).

The sin of the people living on the land will cause the land to be defiled. It was previously defiled by the people who lived in the land before Israel was invited in. It was because of the sins of the previous tribes that God used the people of Israel to drive out the previous inhabitants. They were vomited out of the land.

Israel would be held to standards no higher nor lower than previous inhabitants. The land was holy to God and he would not tolerate anyone living in a manner that made

his land unholy.

God sees the land upon which Israel lived as holy. Why was this important to him? Beyond the obvious and real reason that God wished to dwell in the midst of a people on this land and unholiness is not conducive to this relationship, why is this land so important to God? What was his purpose in having them there?

Several years ago a man named Ray Vander Laan produced a series of video faith lessons called *That the World May Know* (Focus on the Family). While leading a group of visitors around the nation of Israel, Vander Lann gave a series of classes based on the bible passages related to each site they visited. During this excellent study, the teacher described the importance of Israel's location in the world of that day.

Israel, the people in the land, was located between the two major centers of trade and political power in the world of that day. Egypt was south and west of Israel and the nations of Assyria, Babylon and Persia (depending on the time in history) were located north and east of Israel. All of the goods produced in these two major areas were transported by land to the other regions of the world. In the days of ancient Israel, the two major trade routes passed through the land of Israel.

God placed his people in a land in a strategic location enabling the people of God to exert an influence for righteousness on the rest of the world. God set his people on the literal crossroads of the world. The covenant people of God were in position to exert the power of their testimony on the rest of the world by showing what it was to live in covenant with the one True and Living God.

Their testimony would have been spiritual, philosophical, economic and political. All of the then known world would have seen and tasted the power of God through a people living for and in the presence of God. Sadly, the people of Israel failed in this task

Israel was called to be salt and light in a world of darkness, but they failed in their task. They became good for nothing but to be trodden under the feet of their enemies.

repeatedly. Although given many chances to repent and start afresh, their final testimony to the presence of the Living God was the barren and desolate land. People of other lands could see that the God of Israel was jealous and holy and he did not tolerate a continued pattern of rebellion.

Israel was called to be salt and light in a world of darkness, but they failed in their task. They became good for nothing but to be trodden under the feet of their enemies.

This insight was eye-opening to me. It helps open up the Bible and the Old Testament to my understanding. A little while after viewing this video series, the Lord opened my understanding again. Lest we think that God set his people in a strategic place only once in history, he did it more than once.

Through the missionary efforts of the New Testament church and the persecution inflicted upon the church, Christianity spread across the Roman empire. The gospel went from Jerusalem to the world.

God had the same plan in the Restoration. Over the opening months of the Restoration, the Lord slowly but continually began to unveil his plan for a city of righteousness, Zion. By 1831 the church learned that the city of Zion was to be established on the frontier of Missouri. Latter Day Saints know this story, but the full impact of what God intended may have escaped our collective understanding.

The place designated as Zion was in Jackson County, Missouri. In 1831 that was as far west as the United States went. No states or organized territories were beyond the western border of Missouri. Settlers were beginning to leave the east and go west in those days. Travel through the western countries was dangerous and primitive. Most people traveled in large groups on established trails. The most commonly used trails began in Jackson County, Missouri.

In the courtyard of the Courthouse in Independence, Missouri, are markers identifying the origin of the Santa Fe and Oregon trails. Thousands of people would winter in the Independence area in order to stock up supplies and prepare to leave as early as the spring weather would allow them. There was a great deal of economic trade between the western frontier of Missouri and the eastern states also. A great deal of this activity would center in the Independence, Missouri, area.

By the time the western expansion was well under way, the Latter Day Saints had already been driven from the land of Zion and were on their way out of Missouri. Nevertheless, the Lord's plan become clear when we remember how he placed Israel of old.

Zion was to be organized and settled in the hub of the western expansion of the United States. Thousands of people and families would travel to the area to make the jump off for the new lands in the west. If Zion had succeeded in her mission, the Lord would have had a large population of the church, living under the protection and blessing of God, giving testimony to the things of righteousness and holiness.

The rush to the western lands began later in the 1830s. There was plenty of time for Zion to be built up as a testimony to righteousness. Just imagine the influence for good Zion could have had on the United States and the world. Alas, we will not know because the church's witness became not salt and light, but was trodden under the foot of the world.

Instead of living up to the great calling of being the savor of men, through disobedience and unrighteousness, the Saints became the agents of making the gospel unattractive and distasteful to their neighbors.

Will the dream and mission of Zion ever be fulfilled? Yes, it will, because God has declared it. Will we be part of the salt that enlivens the spiritual palate of the world? If our desire is to be that kind of people, the time to start is now. There is no longer a margin for error or room for delay. †



Into All the World

India

Seventy Bob Moore will be traveling through part of India with Seventy Ananda Rao in February. He will preach and teach there and will help the branches develop sound organization and priesthood ministry.

Brother Rao has kept busy with visits and ministry to many areas of India. In November he visited the churches in Orissa and shared in a worship and the Lord's Supper with over 75 families.

Soon thereafter, Seventy Rao visited with Brother Ashely in Bangalore, India. The church there is poor and scattered across a city of 10 million souls. There is much work to do there.

Presidents of Seventy

The Presidents of Seventy held a weekend retreat for fellowship, planning and to consider any calls to the Seventy. It was a cold, wintry weekend, with a dusting of snow on the Sunday morning they left. They were hosted by Brother Fred Hallier and his wife.

The weekend was a wonderful time of discussion and worship. We felt the guiding hand of the Spirit of God in all of the meetings together. Before leaving the Hallier farm on Sunday morning, the Presidents had a prolonged time of prayer and ministered to one another in the Spirit.

After breaking camp, all of the seven Presidents drove to Holden, Missouri, and attended the inaugural meeting of the Eastgate branch in their new church home. They are located in a storefront which provides them more room and flexibility for ministry.

The Presidents were asked to provide ministry in the 11:00 hour. They obliged by singing "Wonderful Savior" as a special music piece. Seventy Ron Smith provided guitar accompaniment. Seventies Ron Johnson, Ron Smith and Gary Whiting preached and gave testimonies that morning. It was a wonderful time of worship with the Saints.



The presidents of Seventy attended the Eastgate Restoration Branch in Holden, Missouri, to inaugurate their new building.

England and Southern Africa

At the time of this writing, three of the Seventy are out of the United States performing ministry as the witnesses of Jesus Christ. Seventy Randy Vick is following up a number of contacts he has made through the internet. He is now traveling in England. He will join Seventy Rex Curtis in South Africa for ministry there. Before returning to the United States, they will travel to Mozambique to visit a contact there.

Seventy Doug Patterson

Seventy Doug Patterson spent seven days traveling through Missouri, Illinois and Iowa in early August 2015. He visited with members of the Restoration Branches and members of other Restoration groups. He was working to build up the scattered Saints and reach out to other Restoration members.

In Deerfield, Missouri, he provided ministry through teaching and preaching. He was able to administer the Sacrament to the Saints there. At least one of the Saints there was blessed through the laying on of hands for administration to the sick.

His next stop was in Colona, Illinois. He was invited to present a series of classes on baptism. This ministerial opportunity has the potential for cottage meetings in one or two homes in the future.

In Moline and Rock Island, Illinois, he visited with some Saints in their homes. Brother Patterson presided over prayer services in Moline and Rock Island that brought together Saints from the Restoration branches, the Remnant church, the Community of Christ and some inactive members of the Reorganization.

Brother Patterson made a stop in Lamon, Iowa, to visit some Saints. While he was there he was able to lay on hands for the sick.



Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a large island off the southern tip of India. It is in the Indian Ocean. The population is about 20.4 million people. The majority of the population are Buddhists, but Islam is the fastest growing religion. 1.7 million people are listed as Christian, but only 243,000 as evangelical Christians. Thus, Christianity is a minority religion.

The nation was torn by civil war between 1983 and 2009. It has a parliamentary democracy and has been an independent state since 1948. The economy is driven by textiles, tea, tourism and money sent from home by family members working in other countries, especially in the Gulf region. The nation still suffers from ethnic and religious discrimination.

Operation World (operationworld.com) reports that there are 25,000 villages in the country in which no Christian witness has been given by anyone. There is still the potential for ethnic strife and the economy has been slow to recover from the civil war.

Source: Pray for the World, editor Molly Wall, IVP Press Downers Grove, IL, 2015.

Sri Lanka

Bob Moore and Rex Curtis ministered in Sri Lanka in mid-November of 2015. They were accompanied by local priesthood in their travels, primarily Elder Henry DeSilva. During the missionary journey the two brethren met in several homes and with several gatherings of the Saints. They met and ministered many who are not members of the Restoration.

In part of their report they met with a woman whose home was attacked in the past by Buddhists because she had allowed the church to meet on her property. Another sister worked at a non-Christian school and was working on the production of a Christmas program. She enjoyed telling the story of choosing two Muslim boys to act as wise men in the program. The irony of having

them kneel before the Christ child was one way of exhibiting her witness of Christ.

The brethren traveled a great deal during the visit. Sometimes they walked and other times they traveled in vehicles like cars and in three-wheeled motorized vehicles. Tremendous rains fell while they were in Sri Lanka. Floods hampered their activity, but they suffered only small delays.

Through multiple home visits and worship with the Saints, the two Seventies preached, taught and ministered through the laying on of hands to the Saints there. They also prayed blessings upon the homes where they visited. Their teaching also included priesthood instruction.

Brother DeSilva has long ministered in Sri Lanka and for many years he was with the Community

of Christ. One of the efforts he has organized for outreach is through Peacemaker's Clubs. Brothers Moore and Curtis observed one of these meetings.

People from the neighborhood are invited to a gathering of fellowship, fun and learning. The meeting was opened with prayer. There were activities that included English vocabulary and some which taught Christian concepts. The formal meeting was followed by refreshments.

The brethren have an invitation to return in August 2016 and the plan is to have multiple classes on the Book of Mormon. Brother DeSilva is working on having portions of the Book of Mormon printed and distributed by then. If the Lord shows favor, a delegate from Sri Lanka may be present at the April Conference. †

Restoration Women's Ministry

Women as Salt

By Debbie Newman

And Jesus, seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain; and when he was set down, his disciples came unto him; And he opened his mouth, and taught them ... Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:1-2, 15).

The fifth chapter of Matthew begins the teachings of Christ known as the Sermon on the Mount. When Christ spoke to his disciples, he first taught them the Beatitudes. We often call them “be-attitudes” of the heart. We will receive great rewards when we live out each of these Beatitudes.

Immediately following the Beatitudes, Christ shifts his emphasis of teaching from what we may receive to what we are called to be. He said, “I give unto to you to be the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:15a).

The group of disciples gathered around Christ while he taught included the men that Christ would charge with leadership in building up his church and other men, women and children that were his followers. All of the people who follow Jesus are called “his disciples.” Christ calls all of his disciples to be the salt of the earth. This is especially manifest when the whole body of scripture is studied.

Jesus uses the ordinary affairs of daily life to speak to us so that we may understand how his words apply in daily life. This principle is as true today as it was in times past and will be in times yet to come.

Christ knew that salt was an important commodity to the people of

his day. It was used to transact trades for goods and buy land. It was especially used for preservation of foods like vegetables and meats. Without salt, fresh meat like fish would not have been safe to eat after a few hours in the heat of the day. The food would spoil quickly without refrigeration or freezers.

Salt was also used to season foods to bring out their flavor, making it more appealing to the taste buds.

Salt has a savor—a smell and a taste to it. However, over use of salt, either in preservation or seasoning, can ruin the flavor of the food and thus it would not be appealing to consume.

Christ warned about salt losing its savor and becoming worthless.

But if the salt shall lose its savor, wherewith shall the earth be salted? the salt shall thenceforth be good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men (Matthew 5:15b).

There is a story of a wealthy family that lived in Bible times. The wealthy man bought up large amounts of salt to insure his wealth for future years. In fact they had so much salt it had to be stored. The salt was placed in the basement of his large home. Over time the unused salt bags sat on the cold, damp stone floor absorbing its moisture and in a process of time the salt be-



came hardened. The salt lost its savor and became “good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”

As the disciples of the Master, women are called to be salt, seasoning with the word of God as we present Christ to the souls of the earth in such a way that he becomes appealing and pleasing to their spiritual taste buds. We are also to be salt for the preservation of the body of Christ as we support one another and minister unto every other member at their point of need.

What does it mean to you to be the salt of the earth? Do you find ways to season and preserve souls unto Christ? Are you involved in sharing what you have for the benefit of the souls of others, or do you hoard your salt—your talents, abilities and possessions? As women we need to be about our Father's work and be salt. I encourage you to ask God to show you ways you can become salt for Him. †

Tithing

By Joseph Smith III

Excerpted from the original with edits.

Tithing and consecration are designed of God as the means whereby his people are to be made equal in temporal things, without which they cannot be equal in spiritual things.

Their design is to take the riches of the rich, and give what is needed to the poor; and inasmuch as the priesthood are called to be examples to the flock of God, they should be the first to practice, as well as teach those lovely, heaven-born principles. God is no respecter of persons—he loves all the workmanship of his hands—and, “black and white, bond and free, male and female; are alike unto God” (2 Nephi 11:114-115).

The word of God has ever taught that his people should be one. Jacob says,

Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all, and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you (Jacob 2:22).

The Lord, through Joseph the martyr, said,

Let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practice virtue and holiness before me (D&C 38:5c).

Again,

Nevertheless, in your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld (D&C 70:3d).

And again in another revelation,

I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and builded the earth as a very handy work; and all things

therein are mine; and it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine; but it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way, that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints; that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low; for the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves. Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor, and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment (D&C 101:2d-g)

And to the foregoing agrees the teachings of Enoch, the New Testament, and the Book of Mormon.

The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of liberty, of love, of unity, of righteousness, and of equality, both in temporal and in spiritual things. Holy men and women of every age have practiced, as well as taught these things. Bad men have both taught and practiced the opposite.

What are we to think of men who profess to be God's ministry, who will, under the sacred name of TITHING and CONSECRATION, take constraint, of the penury of the poor, and add it, year after year, to their abundance? Can we still claim them as the Lord's shepherds? Verily, no!

The authorities have taken by exaction, and in some instances by

force, what they have been pleased to call tithings and consecrations, even from the poor. Many of the poor in Europe, have been cut off for not paying tithing, when they could scarcely get bread for their young and helpless families. There is not one item of law to warrant the collection of tithing from the poor.

The tithing should be collected for the poor, instead of from them. They are to receive needed aid from the tithing, instead of paying any. The poor, who are worthy to belong to the church, are worthy to be aided by the rich. This is according to the word of God, and the Spirit of Christ, and the great principles of love and unity which must ever actuate the church of God, and mark the teachings of its priesthood.

The poor may contribute of their mites, as did the poor widow, but this is not tithing, it is simply an offering.

All are under obligations to build up the church, in righteousness, with their might, mind, and strength; but the law of tithing takes means only from those who have to spare, and not from those who can with difficulty supply their ordinary wants.

The law of tithing, when faithfully executed, oppresses no one, deprives no one of anything they really need. It is designed to supply want, instead of creating and increasing it. It proposes to take means from where it is not needed, and put it where it is, and thus bring about an equality for the common good. It is a principle by which one member of the body of Christ manifests its care, and love, for all the others. †

This is My Joy

By Joy Muir

Sister Lynn Cowan is a dear sister who truly cares for others. I first became aware of Lynn when she put out an appeal on FaceBook for household goods for a family that lost everything in a fire. Every so often she puts out an appeal for someone else who is in need. In this way, she exemplifies what love is. She told me that one night she went to bed thinking about what it means to truly love one another. These thoughts were impressed upon her mind upon waking.

Loving One Another

By Lynn Cowan

Love is patient, love is kind. It has no envy, nor does it boast itself and is never proud. Love protects, preserves and allows for hope for the positive aspect of life. The depth of love cannot be measured, but it can be created. Love is defined as a high form of tolerance. With humans the feeling of love at times loses its strength. Love involves feelings and with real love it demands sacrifice that cannot be found in self-centeredness.

Sacrificial love requires that we give what we value most, which is our heart, mind, soul and strength. When we talk about love we speak of God who is love. God is love because He deliberately chose to reveal the very nature of himself. God extends the wealth of his kindness even when we humans are undeserving of his love. Even in the most extreme circumstances God's love for us remains the same.

God did not need to create the universe. He made that choice as an expression of His ultimate love for us. Jesus the son of God, who lived a sinless life, loves us so much that he died for our sins. Are we able to say that about us as humans?

No matter how love is defined

it will always hold a common trait, which is caring. Love can be the discovery of ourself in others. Love is when the other person's happiness is more important than our own. Love always has open arms when they are needed. Love is a promise that once given is never forgotten, and what is important about love is that one is capable of love and it is perhaps the only glimpse as humans we are permitted to feel what eternity is all about.

As humans we need to stop withholding our love because every day that we are alive is a special occasion. Every minute and every breath we take is a gift from God. When we complain, find fault with what others do, are unkind with our words and do not show love as God commanded all humans to do, we lose the meaning of what love is.

As humans, if we really know what love is, it has taught us that love is not just gazing at each other but looking outward together in the same direction and with the same purpose in life. Love works miracles every day, and to love another person is to see the face of God. We can cure illness with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair and

hopelessness is love. In our world today there are many dying for a bite of food, but there are many more in the world that just want to be loved.

Love can build bridges where there are none. When we have true love it will begin when nothing is looked for in return. Love is energy that neither can be created nor destroyed—it is and will never die.

As humans we need to start to love the whole person just as they are and not as we would like them to be. We need to love with the example that God has given us to live by. He gave us his Only Begotten Son and allowed him to be beaten, spit upon, have a crown of thorns sunk into his forehead and long sharp nails pounded into his hands and feet. Finally, before death, a long spear driven into his side—and all because of his love for us. Could we do the same?

This is what true love is; this is what it means for us to love one another. When we as humans get to this point, we will no longer see wars, hunger, sadness, hopelessness, anger and everything that is not true love.

When we have true love for others we will be able to see the face of God and his son, Jesus the Christ, because they are waiting for us to show our love. This is what love is all about. †

As humans we need to stop withholding our love because every day that we are alive is a special occasion.

Moses and the Passover

By Genie Simmons

The Hebrews (the people of the 12 tribes of Israel) had been slaves in Egypt for generations. The Egyptians were mean to the Hebrews. The rough treatment caused the Israelites to pray to God for deliverance.

Many years earlier God began to prepare Moses, a Hebrew who had been born in Egypt, to save Israel from slavery. From a burning bush, the Almighty God sent Moses to bring the people out of Egypt.

Moses was assisted by his brother Aaron and together they asked Pharaoh (king of Egypt) to allow the Hebrews to go to the desert to worship God. They asked Pharaoh, "Let our people go." Each time Pharaoh refused, God sent a plague to make life miserable in the land. With each event, Pharaoh asked Moses to stop the plague. Moses asked God and the Lord removed the curse. This happened nine times and once the plague ended, Pharaoh hardened his heart against the God of Israel. Pharaoh still did not let the people go to the desert to worship God.

God told Moses there would be one more plague and then Pharaoh would let them go. For the last time Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh. He threatened them saying, "Go away and don't come back, for in that day you will die." Moses said, "I won't be back," and left the palace.

This was God's plan: At midnight the firstborn from every Egyptian house would be killed. This would include Pharaoh's house and the lowest servant's house. It would include their animals. Everyone would be afraid. The Hebrew slaves would

be spared if they followed God's commandments to them, but if they did not, they would also suffer.

God's plan to spare the Hebrew homes from the death that would afflict the Egyptian homes involved the blood of a perfect lamb. Every house was to select a lamb and sacrifice it on the tenth day of the first month. The lamb must be perfect and without a scar. There were told to kill



the lamb in the evening. Two things would then happen.

The blood of the lamb was to be painted on the doorframe of the houses. When the angel of the Lord came to kill the firstborn sons, the Hebrew houses with the blood of the lamb on the door will be passed over and no one inside will die.

They were also to prepare a meal for that night and eat the lamb's meat. It must be eaten with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs. They were told not to eat the meat raw or

boiled, but roasted. Leftovers must be burned in the morning until there was no meat left. Be sure to do these things on time, it is the Passover!

Moses called a meeting of all the leaders of the Hebrews and told them what God meant to do. Moses said, "God says we are to observe this event every year, forever." When children ask, "Why are we doing this?" teach them about these days, the plagues and how the Hebrews escaped Pharaoh.

That evening, they used a branch of hyssop (a plant) dipped in the lamb's blood. They painted it on the two sides and on the top of every door at each house sacrificing a lamb.

Everything happened just as God told Moses.

In the morning there was great sorrow in the Egyptian households. People mourned loudly. All the firstborn sons were dead as the Lord had said through Moses.

Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron back to his palace. "Get your people out into the desert and worship your God. Take your flocks and be gone!" The Pharaoh and Egyptians really wanted them out of Egypt.

The Hebrews were in a big hurry. They took their bread unleavened, wrapped their things in their clothing, made packs out of them and put the packs on their shoulders and were gone. God had protected them!

They were free to worship their God! And the Hebrews continue to perform this ordinance every year as the Passover.

Read the full story in Exodus 1-13 and especially Exodus 10:28-29 - 13:22. †

The Latter Day Saints'
Beacon
Sharing the Light of Jesus Christ
c/o JCRB
1100 W. Truman Road
Independence, MO 64050

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A Book of Mormon Symposium

The Miracle of the Book of Mormon

May 6-7, 2016

The symposium will be held in Independence, Missouri. It will feature scholars and ministers from various Restoration heritages teaching and bearing their testimonies. You will hear a

variety of presentations on the miracle that is the Book of Mormon. This event will increase your knowledge and strengthen your testimony of the authenticity and truth of this scripture. This is also an excellent opportunity to meet with a wide range of Book of Mormon believers and be encouraged together.

Final details about the speakers, topics to be presented, location and times will be announced soon. Beginning in March, a Facebook page for the symposium will be online. Search for "The Miracle of the Book of Mormon 2016 Symposium" for Updates and more information can be found there.

