

The Law of Sacrifice

By Elder M. Russell Ballard

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

From an address given on 13 August 1996 during a Church Educational System symposium at Brigham Young University.

The primary purpose of the law of sacrifice is twofold: to test us and to assist us to come unto Christ.

Section I (Andy)

A few years ago, my family and I visited Palmyra, New York; Kirtland, Ohio; and Nauvoo, Illinois. We reviewed the early history of the Church on that trip and were reminded of the overwhelming sacrifices the founders of the Church made to establish the kingdom of God in this last dispensation.

Reflecting upon their humble obedience focused my mind on the eternal nature of the law of sacrifice, a vital part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was practiced in Old Testament, New Testament, and Book of Mormon times. While its practice changed during the New Testament period, the purposes of the law of sacrifice remained in place even after the Atonement of Christ fulfilled the law of Moses.

Usually, the first thing people think of when they hear “law of Moses” is animal sacrifice. The somewhat gruesome nature of blood sacrifice has led some to ask, “How could such an activity have anything to do with the gospel of love?” We can better understand the answer to that question when we understand the two major purposes for the law of sacrifice. These purposes applied to Adam, Abraham, Moses, and the New Testament Apostles, and they apply to us today as we accept and live the law of sacrifice. Its two major purposes are to test and prove us and to assist us in coming unto Christ.

“I have decreed in my heart, saith the Lord, that *I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant*, even unto death, that you may be found worthy.

“For if ye will not abide in my covenant ye are not worthy of me” (D&C 98:14–15; emphasis added).

The law of sacrifice provides an opportunity for us to prove to the Lord that we love Him more than any other thing. As a result, the course sometimes becomes difficult since this is the process of perfection that prepares us for the celestial kingdom to “dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever” (D&C 76:62).

Next, President Ezra Taft Benson explained that “the sacred mission of the Church ... [is] to ‘invite all to come unto Christ’ (D&C 20:59)” (“Come unto Christ, and Be Perfected in Him,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 84; see also [Moro. 10:32](#)). In that light, the law of sacrifice has always been a means for God’s children to come unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

How does sacrifice help us come unto Christ? No one will ever accept the Savior without having faith in Him first. Hence, the first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Accordingly, the Prophet Joseph Smith explained an important relationship between the principle of faith and the principle of sacrifice: “Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; ... it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth’s sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not, nor will not seek his face in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life” (*Lectures on Faith* [1985], 69).

To summarize: we must know what we do is pleasing before God and understand that this knowledge comes to us through sacrifice and obedience. Those who come unto Christ in this way receive a confidence that whispers peace to their souls and that will eventually enable them to lay hold upon eternal life.

What Sacrifice Teaches

Sacrifice allows us to learn something about ourselves—what we are willing to offer to the Lord through our obedience.

Brother Truman G. Madsen tells about a visit he made to Israel with President Hugh B. Brown, an Apostle of the Lord who served as both Second and First Counselor in the First Presidency. In a valley known as Hebron, where tradition has it that the tomb of Father Abraham is located, Brother Madsen asked President Brown, “What are the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?” After a short moment of thought, President Brown answered, “Posterity.”

Brother Madsen writes: “I almost burst out, ‘Why, then, was Abraham commanded to go to Mount Moriah and offer his only hope of posterity?’

“It was clear that [President Brown], nearly ninety, had thought and prayed and wept over that question before. He finally said, ‘Abraham needed to learn something about Abraham’” (*The Highest in Us* [1978], 49).

Now let’s look at another way the law of sacrifice brought people unto Christ. Anciently, blood sacrifices brought the people to Christ through typifying and foreshadowing His life and mission.

Adam was taught that the sacrifice on the altar was a “similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father” ([Moses 5:7](#)). This teaches us that originally our Father’s children understood the relationship between the sacrifice of their offerings and the sacrifice of the Lamb of God (see [D&C 138:12–13](#)).

It is in the Book of Mormon that we find some of the clearest doctrinal teachings about the purpose of the law of sacrifice as practiced under the law of Moses. Nephi taught that it was done to typify the sacrifice of Christ (see [2 Ne. 11:4](#)). He wrote: “We keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ. ... For, for this end was the law given” ([2 Ne.](#)

25:24–25). In Alma we read: “They did look forward to the coming of Christ, considering that the law of Moses was a type of his coming; ... the law of Moses did serve to strengthen their faith in Christ” (Alma 25:15–16).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “Whenever the Lord revealed Himself to men in ancient days, and commanded them to offer sacrifice to Him, ... it was done that they might look forward in faith to the time of His coming, and rely upon the power of that atonement for a remission of their sins” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1938], 60–61; see also 58).

President Spencer W. Kimball once explained to a young man struggling with his testimony that effort and struggle are necessary if we are to be saved through Jesus Christ. He told my friend, “Through sacrifice and service one comes to know the Lord.” As we sacrifice our selfish desires, serve our God and others, we become more like Him.

Elder Russell M. Nelson has taught: “We are still commanded to sacrifice, but not by shedding blood of animals. Our highest sense of sacrifice is achieved as we make ourselves more sacred or holy.

“This we do by our obedience to the commandments of God. Thus, the laws of obedience and sacrifice are indelibly intertwined. ... As we comply with these and other commandments, something wonderful happens to us. ... We become more sacred and holy—[more] like our Lord!” (“Lessons from Eve,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 88).

In fact, the word *sacrifice* means literally “to make sacred,” or “to render sacred.”

Andy’s Thoughts:

Black = talk

Red = Scriptures, TPJS, Teachings of prophets and apostles

Blue = my thoughts

Section I

Why do we need the law of sacrifice?

Its two major purposes are to test and prove us and to assist us in coming unto Christ.

How will being tested and proved help us come unto Christ?

Webster Dictionary

Test: the means by which the presence, quality, or genuineness of anything is determined; a means of trial.

Prove: to establish the truth or genuineness of, as by evidence or argument:

to prove one's claim.

Law. to establish the authenticity or validity of (a will); probate.

to give demonstration of by action.

to subject to a test, experiment, comparison, analysis, or the like, to determine quality, amount, acceptability, characteristics, etc.:

Abraham 3

25 And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do **all things whatsoever** the Lord their God shall command them;

D&C 124

113 And when he shall **prove himself faithful in all things** that shall be entrusted unto his care, yea, even a few things, **he shall be made ruler over many;**

Mosiah 3

19 For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, **willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him**, even as a child doth submit to his father.

TPJS PG 150

When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the **man is determined to serve Him at all hazards**, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure

Testing and proving us is what allows us to have our calling and election made sure and to receive the second comforter. If the greatest gift of God is exaltation, which is to become like Him, then he needs to know if he can trust us. How can He know if we are trustworthy? We have to learn to trust Him.

Proverb 3

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2017/10/do-we-trust-him-hard-is-good?lang=eng>

Do We Trust Him? Hard Is Good

By Elder Stanley G. Ellis
Emeritus Member of the Seventy

In October 2006, I gave my first general conference talk. I felt an important message for the worldwide Church included the assertion “The Lord trusts us!”

He really does trust us in so many ways. He has given us the gospel of Jesus Christ and, in this dispensation, its fulness. He entrusts us with His priesthood authority, complete with the keys for its proper use. With that power we can bless, serve, receive ordinances, and make covenants. He trusts us with His restored Church, including the holy temple. He trusts His servants with the sealing power—to bind on earth and have it bound in heaven! He even trusts us to be the earthly parents, teachers, and caregivers of His children.

Now the question for this conference is “Do we trust Him?”

Do we trust His commandments to be for our good? **His leaders, though imperfect, to lead us well? His promises to be sure?** Do we trust that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ do know us and want to help us? **Even in the midst of trials, challenges, and hard times, do we still trust Him?**

Hard makes us stronger, humbles us, and gives us a chance to prove ourselves. Our beloved handcart pioneers came to know God *in their extremities*.

The hard things in our lives should come as no surprise. One of the earliest covenants we make with the Lord is to live the law of sacrifice. Sacrifice, by definition, involves giving up something desirable. With experience we realize it is a small price to pay in relation to the blessings that follow.

Few have suffered more undeservedly than the people of Alma. They fled from wicked King Noah, only to become slaves to the Lamanites! Through those trials the Lord taught them that He chastens His people and tries “their patience and their faith” (Mosiah 23:21).

During the terrible days in Liberty Jail, the Lord taught Joseph Smith to “endure it well” (D&C 121:8) and promised that if he did, “all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:7).

President Thomas S. Monson has pleaded, “May we ever choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong.”²

Through these examples, we see that hard is the *constant*! We all have challenges. **The *variable* is our reaction to the hard.**

Our world today is difficult. We have rampant evil, corruption in every nation, terrorism reaching even safe places, economic collapse, unemployment, disease, natural disasters, civil wars, despotic leaders, and so on. What should we do? Do we flee or fight? Which is right? Either choice can be dangerous. It was dangerous for George Washington and his armies to fight but also for our pioneer ancestors to flee. It was dangerous for Nelson Mandela to struggle for freedom. It has been said that for evil to prevail, it is only necessary for good people to do nothing.⁴

In whatever we do, we should not decide nor act out of a spirit of fear. Truly, “God hath not given us the spirit of fear” (2 Timothy 1:7). The Lord’s answer to hard times is to **go forward with faith**.

Each of us may have a different opinion about what is hard. Some may consider it hard to pay tithing when finances are tight. Leaders sometimes find it difficult to expect the poor to pay tithing. It may be hard for some of us to go forward with faith to marry or to have a family. There are those who find it hard “to be content with [what] the Lord hath allotted unto [them]” (Alma 29:3). It may be hard to be content with our current calling (see Alma 29:6). Church discipline may seem very hard, but for some it marks the beginning of the true repentance process.

Regardless of the issue, hard can be good for those who will move forward with faith and trust the Lord and His plan.

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“For if ye will not abide in my covenant ye are not worthy of me” (D&C 98:14–15; emphasis added).

These 2 scriptures are clear as to what God requires of us. He cannot accept everybody as they are. We have to come up to Him. If we don’t then we are not worthy of Him and cannot go where he is.

Add in how we have to be willing to fight for this. This isn’t a game but if we truly want exaltation then we have to stick with it and help others stick with it. That may require us to speak boldly to people or even judge people’s actions and invite them to change. These 2 scriptures alone show that we have to abide in His covenant no matter what. No matter what our circumstances are or what are weaknesses are. There is no exception but to stay in the covenant, period.

The law of sacrifice provides an opportunity for us to prove to the Lord that we love Him more than any other thing.

How does sacrifice help us come unto Christ? No one will ever accept the Savior without having faith in Him first. Hence, the first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Accordingly, the Prophet Joseph Smith explained an important relationship between the principle

of faith and the principle of sacrifice: **“Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; ...**

We must know what we do is pleasing before God and understand that this knowledge comes to us through sacrifice and obedience. **Those who come unto Christ in this way receive a confidence that whispers peace to their souls and that will eventually enable them to lay hold upon eternal life.**

If we want to eventually lay hold upon eternal life then we have to come unto Christ through sacrifice and obedience. There is no other way.

<https://abn.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1992/04/the-blessings-of-sacrifice?lang=eng>

The Blessings of Sacrifice

By Elder M. Russell Ballard

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Our commitment to the kingdom should match that of our faithful ancestors even though our sacrifices are different.

What did our faithful ancestors sacrifice? I like how he defines the ancestors we should look to and they were faithful. Not just part of the time but remained faithful to the end. Our faithful ancestors that gave up everything for the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our commitment should be the same as theirs. Not the same as the ones that for whatever reason fell away into strange paths. The question we all need to ask ourselves is “Am I willing to sacrifice everything for the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ?” If the answer to that is no, then we need to look ourselves in the mirror and ask some difficult questions to find out why and find out what is holding us back.

In this talk Elder Ballard shares about a ward he was Bishop over and how the ward needed to come up with the remaining \$30K for their ward building and how they sacrificed to raise the money.

Never have I lived among people who were more united, more caring, more concerned for one another than these ward members were when making their greatest sacrifice.

United, caring, concerned for each other. That sounds a lot like a Zion type of people. So I guess sacrifice is required to be a Zion people.

In the midst of our greatest sacrifice, our ward members became bonded together in the true spirit of the gospel of love and service.

Sacrifice is a demonstration of pure love. The degree of our love for the Lord, for the gospel, and for our fellowman can be measured by what we are willing to sacrifice for them.

We must realize that decreasing these needs for financial contributions gives birth to enlarged opportunities for us to live a higher law. By this I mean that on our own initiative we can find ways to extend ourselves in helping others and contributing to the building of the Lord's kingdom. The Lord has instructed us that we "should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of [our] own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; For the power is in [us], wherein [we] are agents unto [ourselves]." (D&C 58:27–28.)

Some of the Lord's choicest blessings await those who practice this eternal principle through extending themselves in service to God and to their fellowmen. **The sacrificing spirit and the happiness that come through service to others can bring peace and joy even amid trials.**

The principle of sacrifice should be taught in every Latter-day Saint home and should be practiced in many simple yet important ways.

What Sacrifice Teaches

Sacrifice allows us to learn something about ourselves—what we are willing to offer to the Lord through our obedience.

Go over the importance of obedience. We need to look ourselves in the mirror. Look ourselves in the eye and ask ourselves, "What am I willing to offer to the Lord through my obedience? What am I willing to sacrifice to the Lord?"

Brother Madsen writes: "I almost burst out, 'Why, then, was Abraham commanded to go to Mount Moriah and offer his only hope of posterity?'"

"It was clear that [President Brown], nearly ninety, had thought and prayed and wept over that question before. He finally said, 'Abraham needed to learn something about Abraham'" (*The Highest in Us* [1978], 49).

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"This we do by our obedience to the commandments of God. Thus, **the laws of obedience and sacrifice are indelibly intertwined.** ... As we comply with these and other commandments, something wonderful happens to us. ... We become more sacred and holy—[more] like our Lord!" ("Lessons from Eve," *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 88).

<https://abn.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1975/04/obedience-consecration-and-sacrifice?lang=eng>

Obedience, Consecration, and Sacrifice

By Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Of the Council of the Twelve

We are thus in a position to receive and **obey some of the higher laws which prepare us** for that eternal life which we so sincerely seek.

Accordingly, I shall now set forth some of the **principles of sacrifice and consecration to which the true saints must conform if they are ever to go where God and Christ are** and have an inheritance with the faithful saints of ages past.

It is written: “He who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory.” ([D&C 88:22](#).) **The law of sacrifice is a celestial law; so also is the law of consecration.** Thus to gain that celestial reward which we so devoutly desire, **we must be able to live these two laws.**

Sacrifice and consecration are inseparably intertwined. The law of consecration is that we consecrate our time, our talents, and our money and property to the cause of the Church: such are to be available to the extent they are needed to further the Lord’s interests on earth.

The law of sacrifice is that we are willing to sacrifice all that we have for the truth’s sake—our character and reputation; our honor and applause; our good name among men; our houses, lands, and families: all things, even our very lives if need be.

How can we prove our willingness to sacrifice all things, if need be, if we do not make the small sacrifices of time and toil, or of money and means, that we are now asked to make?

We are commanded to live in harmony with the Lord’s laws, to keep all his commandments, to sacrifice all things if need be for his name’s sake, to conform to the terms and conditions of the law of consecration.

We have made covenants so to do—solemn, sacred, holy covenants, pledging ourselves before gods and angels.

We are under covenant to live the law of obedience.

We are under covenant to live the law of sacrifice.

We are under covenant to live the law of consecration.

With this in mind, hear this word from the Lord: “If you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you.” ([D&C 78:7](#).)

It is our privilege to consecrate our time, talents, and means to build up his kingdom. We are called upon to sacrifice, in one degree or another, for the furtherance of his work. Obedience is essential to salvation; so, also, is service; and so, also, are consecration and sacrifice.

We can consecrate a portion of our time to systematic study, to becoming gospel scholars, to treasuring up the revealed truths which guide us in paths of truth and righteousness.

And every member of his church has this promise: **That if he remains true and faithful—obeying, serving, consecrating, sacrificing, as required by the gospel—he shall be repaid in eternity a thousandfold and shall have eternal life. What more can we ask?**

I really enjoyed this talk but also found it difficult to break it down further as the talk itself was in my opinion really well done. As I studied the law of sacrifice more it helped solidify for me how inseparable sacrifice, obedience, and consecration really are. I know that in order to reach exaltation we need to be perfectly obedient and be willing to sacrifice everything. Looking at the early saints or prophets in the scriptures you can clearly see the ones who were obedient and were willing to sacrifice everything for God they are the ones that made it. Unfortunately we see examples of ones that short changed themselves by not going all in. I know that in my life when I have sacrificed or gone through hard times I've been able to come to know my Savior on a more personal level and I've come to know myself better. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Micah's Thoughts:

Talking about the pioneer Saints, their sacrifice and faith, my mind was taken to:

2 Nephi 28

3 For it shall come to pass in that day that the churches which are built up, and not unto the Lord, when the one shall say unto the other: Behold, I, I am the Lord's; and the others shall say: I, I am the Lord's; and thus shall every one say that hath built up churches, and not unto the Lord—

4 And they shall contend one with another; and their priests shall contend one with another, and they shall teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance.

5 And they deny the power of God, the Holy One of Israel; and they say unto the people: Hearken unto us, and hear ye our precept; for behold there is no God today, for the Lord and the Redeemer hath done his work, and he hath given his power unto men;

6 Behold, hearken ye unto my precept; if they shall say there is a miracle wrought by the hand of the Lord, believe it not; for this day he is not a God of miracles; he hath done his work.

7 Yea, and there shall be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us.

8 And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God.

9 Yea, and there shall be many which shall teach after this manner, false and vain and foolish doctrines, and shall be puffed up in their hearts, and shall seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord; and their works shall be in the dark.

10 And the blood of the saints shall cry from the ground against them.

11 Yea, they have all gone out of the way; they have become corrupted.

12 Because of pride, and because of false teachers, and false doctrine, their churches have become corrupted, and their churches are lifted up; because of pride they are puffed up.

13 They rob the poor because of their fine sanctuaries; they rob the poor because of their fine clothing; and they persecute the meek and the poor in heart, because in their pride they are puffed up.

14 They wear stiff necks and high heads; yea, and because of pride, and wickedness, and abominations, and whoredoms, they have all gone astray save it be a few, who are the humble followers of Christ; nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err because they are taught by the precepts of men.

15 O the wise, and the learned, and the rich, that are puffed up in the pride of their hearts, and all those who preach false doctrines, and all those who commit whoredoms, and pervert the right way of the Lord, wo, wo, wo be unto them, saith the Lord God Almighty, for they shall be thrust down to hell!

16 Wo unto them that turn aside the just for a thing of naught and revile against that which is good, and say that it is of no worth! For the day shall come that the Lord God will speedily visit the inhabitants of the earth; and in that day that they are fully ripe in iniquity they shall perish.

If anyone is wondering why the blood of our ancestor Saints are going to be crying from the ground against us... Look no further than the state of the church membership today and ask yourself “are we at the point in time in which Nephi was describing here?”

Brigham Young (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 10, p. 335, June 26, 1864)

There is one principle I would like to have the Latter-day Saints perfectly understand—that is, of blessings and cursings. For instance, we read that war, pestilence, plagues, famine, etc., will be visited upon the inhabitants of the earth; but if distress through the judgments of God comes upon this people, it will be because the majority have turned away from the Lord. Let the majority of the people turn away from the Holy Commandments which the Lord has delivered to us, and cease to hold the balance of power in the Church, and we may expect the judgments of God to come upon us; but while six-tenths or three-fourths of this people will keep the commandments of God, the curse and judgments of the Almighty will never come upon them, though we will have trials of various kinds, and the elements to contend with—natural and spiritual elements. While this people will strive to serve God according to the best of their abilities, they will fare better, have more to eat and to wear, have better houses to live in, better associations, and enjoy themselves better than the wicked ever do or ever will do.

Do we still hold the “balance of power” in the church? When we talk of “modern day Pioneers” who do we point to? Do we point to Zion, or Sodom? Then it shouldn’t be any wonder why the “blood of the Saints does cry against us”...

To save time, the only other thing I’d like to mention in this section is Elder Ballard quoting “Joseph Smith Jr” here... and what was the reference? You guessed it, “The Lectures on Faith”... The lectures in their entirety were either penned by Joseph Smith or approved by Joseph Smith, so we can quote Joseph Smith “as saying” in The Lectures on Faith. Those that wish to pick and choose which sentences from The Lectures on Faith to pen to Joseph Smith and

others they wish to pretend like they don't exist, are holding a position that is completely unprincipled- either it all was approved by Joseph Smith or none of it.

Section II (Kelly and Ryan)

A Law from the Beginning

Our first lessons about the law of sacrifice, as well as other gospel principles, began in our premortal life. We were taught the fulness of the gospel and the plan of salvation (see [D&C 138:56](#)). We knew of the Savior's mission and of His future atoning sacrifice, and we willingly sustained Him as our Savior and our Redeemer. In fact, we learn from Revelation 12:9, 11 [[Rev. 12:9, 11](#)] that it is by "the blood of the Lamb" (Christ's atoning sacrifice) and our testimony that we are able to overcome Satan. President Joseph F. Smith explained: "The Lord designed in the beginning to place before man the knowledge of good and evil, and gave him a commandment to cleave to good and abstain from evil. But if he should fail, he would give to him the law of sacrifice and provide a Savior for him, that he might be brought back again into the presence and favor of God and partake of eternal life with him. This was the plan of redemption chosen and instituted by the Almighty before man was placed on the earth" (*Gospel Doctrine* [1939], 202). Adam and Eve were taught the law of sacrifice and were commanded to practice it by giving offerings. These included two emblems: the firstlings of the flock and the first fruits of the field. They obeyed without questioning (see [Moses 5:5–6](#)). President David O. McKay pointed out: "The effect of this [law] was that the best the earth produced, the best specimen in the flock or herd should not be used for self, but for God" ("The Atonement," *Instructor*, Mar. 1959, 66). At a time in history when it was a struggle to make sure the family had food, those who sought to worship the Lord were asked to sacrifice the best part of their source of life. It was a real test of Adam and Eve's faith, and they obeyed.

Likewise, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the holy prophets from Adam to Moses offered to the Lord sacrifices in a similar way.

The Law of Moses

Because of the rebellious nature of the children of Israel in the days of Moses, the practice of the law of sacrifice was changed; it became a strict law requiring daily observance of performances and ordinances. During the time of Moses there was an expansion in the number and variety of offerings under the law of sacrifice. The Mosaic sacrifices consisted of five major offerings that fell into two primary categories—obligatory and voluntary. The difference between the obligatory and the voluntary offerings might be compared to the difference between the law of tithing and the law of fast offerings.

One thing remained the same in all of these offerings: everything about Mosaic sacrifice focused on Christ. Like Christ, the priest acted as the mediator between the people and their God. Like Christ, the priest had to have the right parentage to officiate in his office. Like Christ, the offerer through obedience willingly sacrificed what was required by the law.

The part of sacrifice that most strongly paralleled the Savior was the offering itself. Notice with me some of these parallels.

First, like Christ, the animal was chosen and anointed by the laying on of hands. (The Hebrew title *Messiah* and the Greek title *Christ* both mean “the Anointed One.”) Second, the animal was to have its life’s blood spilt. Third, it had to be without blemish—totally free from physical flaws, complete, whole, and perfect. Fourth, the sacrifice had to be clean and worthy. Fifth, the sacrifice had to be domesticated; that is, not wild but tame and of help to man (see [Lev. 1:2–3, 10; Lev. 22:21](#)). Sixth and seventh, for the original sacrifice practiced by Adam and the most common sacrifice in the law of Moses, the animal had to be a firstborn and a male (see [Ex. 12:5; Lev. 1:3; Lev. 22:18–25](#)). Eighth, the sacrifice of grain had to be ground into flour and made into breadstuffs, which reminds us of our Lord’s title the Bread of Life (see [John 6:48](#)). Ninth, the firstfruits that were offered remind us that Christ was the firstfruits of the Resurrection (see [1 Cor. 15:20](#)). (See also Bible Dictionary, “Sacrifices”; Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. [1992], 3:1248–49.)

Fulfillment of the Law

The law of sacrifice with its system of offerings given to Moses was still being practiced in New Testament times. Jesus Christ of the New Testament was Jehovah of the Old Testament—He who gave the law of Moses in the first place, prescribing elements of the law that specifically pointed to His future atoning sacrifice. He was, then, the one with authority to fulfill that law, and His final words—“It is finished” ([John 19:30](#))—indicate that this had been done. Amulek explained the fulfillment of the law this way:

“Therefore, it is expedient that there should be a great and last sacrifice, and then shall there be ... a stop to the shedding of blood; then shall the law of Moses be fulfilled. ...

“And behold, this is the whole meaning of the law, every whit pointing to that great and last sacrifice; and that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal” ([Alma 34:13–14](#)).

Now, here is a very important truth: We should understand that the law of Moses is not the same thing as the law of sacrifice. While the law of Moses was fulfilled, the principles of the law of sacrifice continue to be part of the doctrine of the Church. The primary purpose of the law of sacrifice still is to test us and assist us in coming unto Christ. After the Savior’s ultimate sacrifice, two adjustments were made in the practice of this law. First, the ordinance of the sacrament replaced the ordinance of sacrifice; and second, this change moved the focus of the sacrifice from a person’s animal to the person himself. In a sense, the sacrifice changed from the *offering* to the *offerer*.

As we contemplate the replacing of animal sacrifice with the sacrament, we cannot help but notice a strong relationship between the two. Both sacrifice and sacrament:

- Are affected by a person’s attitude and worthiness (see [Amos 5:6–7, 9–10, 21–22; 3 Ne. 18:27–29; Moro. 7:6–7](#)).
- Were designed to be performed by priests officiating in the Aaronic Priesthood (see [D&C 13:1; D&C 20:46](#)).
- Focus on Christ (see [Luke 22:19–20; Alma 34:13–14](#)).
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- Are the only saving ordinances in which members participate for themselves more than once.
- Provide an important step in the process of repentance (see [Lev. 19:22](#); [3 Ne. 18:11](#); [Moses 5:7–8](#)).

President Joseph F. Smith said that the purpose of the sacrament “is that we may keep in mind continually the Son of God who has redeemed us from eternal death, and brought us to life again through the power of the gospel. Before the coming of Christ to the earth, this was borne in mind ... by another ordinance [blood sacrifice] which was a type of the great sacrifice that should take place in the meridian of time” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 103).

Kelly and Ryan’s Thoughts:

A Law from the Beginning

Our first lessons about the law of sacrifice, as well as other gospel principles, began in our premortal life. We were taught the fulness of the gospel and the plan of salvation (see [D&C 138:56](#)).

Why is it so important that we know who we are and why we are here?

2000–O:35, Neal A. Maxwell, *The Tugs and Pulls of the World*

The tugs and pulls of the world are powerful. Worldly lifestyles are cleverly reinforced by the rationalization, “Everybody is doing it,” thus fanning or feigning a majority. Products are promoted and attitudes engendered by clever niche marketing.

Peter counseled, “Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage” 2 Pet. 2:19 Brothers and sisters, there are so many personalized prisons!

Scoffers display the shoulder-shrugging attitude foretold by Peter: “Where is the promise of [Christ’s] coming? for ... all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” 2 Pet. 3:4 Such cynicism mistakes the successive casts on the mortal stage for the absence of a Director or a script.

Like goldfish in a bowl, some are mindless of who changes the water and puts in the pellets (see [Jacob 4:13–14](#) or, like a kindergarten child whose retrieving parent seems a little late, concluding, “Man is alone in the universe.”

Granted, some sincerely wish for more power in order to do good, but only a few individuals are good enough to be powerful. But craving power and the spotlight sucks out the spiritual oxygen, leaving some “past feeling” (see Eph. 4:19 1 Ne. 17:45 Moro. 9:20 Strangely, though desensitized, some are still able to hear the beckoning click of a TV camera at a hundred yards. Doesn’t the churning over the places of mortal power remind us of the childhood game of musical chairs?

Like Jesus, we can decide, daily or instantly, to give no heed to temptation (see D&C 20:22 We can respond to irritation with a smile instead of scowl, or by giving warm praise instead of icy indifference. By our being understanding instead of abrupt, others, in turn, may decide to hold on a little longer rather than to give way. Love, patience, and meekness can be just as contagious as rudeness and crudeness.

We can also allow for redemptive turbulence, individually and generally (see 2 Ne. 28:19 Hearts set so much upon the things of the world may have to be broken (see D&C 121:35 Preoccupied minds far from Him may be jolted by a “heads up” (see Mosiah 5:13)

Let us adopt the attitude recommended by President Brigham Young: “Say to the fields, ... flocks, ... herds, ... gold, ... silver, ... goods, ... chattels, ... tenements, ... possessions, and to all the world, stand aside; get away from my thoughts, for I am going up to worship the Lord” (Deseret News, 5 Jan. 1854, 2). There are so many ways to say to the world, “stand aside.”

It also helps in resisting the tugs and pulls of the world if we, though imperfect, know that currently the course of our life is generally acceptable to the Lord (see Lectures on Faith [1985], 67). With sufficient dedication, those quiet assurances can come!

The validation of our worth really comes from knowing who we are, not solely from what we do. Jesus’ searching words remain: “What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am” 3 Ne. 27:27 see also Matt. 5:48 3 Ne. 12:48

Of course, worthwhile doing enhances our character and capacity, but mortal circumstances and opportunities differ so greatly. But amid these differences, we can still become more like Christ in our capacity to be—more loving, meek, patient, and submissive.

By paying more attention to what we are rather than exclusively to what we do, our public and our private persons will be the same—the man or the woman of Christ. Our intrinsic value is not dependent upon mortal acclaim anyway; in fact, the world may actually see us as weak and foolish (see 1 Cor. 1:27 Countering, however, are divine affirmations, including this one: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” Rom. 8:16

God is infinitely more interested in our having a place in His kingdom than with our spot on a mortal organizational chart. We may brood over our personal span of control, but He is concerned with our capacity for self-control. Father wants us to come home, bringing our real résumés, ourselves!

Even so, our mortal jealousies still occur regularly over money, turf, a slight, or the “robes” and the “fatted calf” given to others (see Luke 15:22–23)

True belonging occurs when we know who we are and to whom we really belong! Remember the popular lines in *Fiddler on the Roof* about Anatevka? There, “everyone knows who he is and what God expects him to do” (Joseph Stein, *Fiddler on the Roof* [1964], 3; emphasis added), to which might be added “and what God expects him to be.”

Yes, we are free to choose the mortal perks with their short shelf life. However, ahead lies that great moment when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ! (see Mosiah 27:31 D&C 88:104 Then the galleries and the mortal thrones will be empty. Even the great and spacious building will fall—and resoundingly! (see 1 Ne. 8:26–28 Then, too, those who have lived without God in the world will confess that God is God! (see Mosiah 27:31 Meanwhile, His character and attributes should evoke adoration and emulation from us.

Isn't it marvelous, brothers and sisters, that God, who knows everything, still spends time listening to our prayers? Compared to that cosmic fact, what does the world really have to offer us? One round of applause, one fleeting moment of adulation, or an approving glance from a phantom Caesar?

May God bless us to see things as they really are and as they really will be (see Jacob 4:13 D&C 93:24 and may we give the glory and honor and praise unto God, which I now do. In the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen!

We knew of the Savior's mission and of His future atoning sacrifice, and we willingly sustained Him as our Savior and our Redeemer. In fact, we learn from Revelation 12:9, 11 [Rev. 12:9, 11] that it is by “the blood of the Lamb” (Christ's atoning sacrifice) and our testimony that we are able to overcome Satan. President Joseph F. Smith explained: “The Lord designed in the beginning to place before man the knowledge of good and evil, and gave him a commandment to cleave to good and abstain from evil. But if he should fail, he would give to him the law of sacrifice and provide a Savior for him, that he might be brought back again into the presence and favor of God and partake of eternal life with him. This was the plan of redemption chosen and instituted by the Almighty before man was placed on the earth” (*Gospel Doctrine* [1939], 202). Adam and Eve were taught the law of sacrifice and were commanded to practice it by giving offerings. These included two emblems: the firstlings of the flock and the first fruits of the field. They obeyed without questioning (see [Moses 5:5–6](#)). President David O. McKay pointed out: “The effect of this [law] was that the best the earth produced, the best specimen in the flock or herd should not be used for self, but for God” (“The Atonement,” *Instructor*, Mar. 1959, 66). At a time in history when it was a struggle to make sure the family had food, those who sought to worship the Lord were asked to sacrifice the best part of their source of life. It was a real test of Adam and Eve's faith, and they obeyed.

Likewise, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the holy prophets from Adam to Moses offered to the Lord sacrifices in a similar way.

The Law of Moses

Because of the rebellious nature of the children of Israel in the days of Moses, the practice of the law of sacrifice was changed; it became a strict law requiring daily observance of performances and ordinances. During the time of Moses there was an expansion in the number and variety of offerings under the law of sacrifice. The Mosaic sacrifices consisted of five major offerings that fell into two primary categories—obligatory and voluntary. The difference between the obligatory and the voluntary offerings might be compared to the difference between the law of tithing and the law of fast offerings.

One thing remained the same in all of these offerings: everything about Mosaic sacrifice focused on Christ. Like Christ, the priest acted as the mediator between the people and their God. Like Christ, the priest had to have the right parentage to officiate in his office. Like Christ, the offerer through obedience willingly sacrificed what was required by the law.

The part of sacrifice that most strongly paralleled the Savior was the offering itself. Notice with me some of these parallels.

First, like Christ, the animal was chosen and anointed by the laying on of hands. (The Hebrew title *Messiah* and the Greek title *Christ* both mean “the Anointed One.”) Second, the animal was to have its life’s blood spilt. Third, it had to be without blemish—totally free from physical flaws, complete, whole, and perfect. Fourth, the sacrifice had to be clean and worthy. Fifth, the sacrifice had to be domesticated; that is, not wild but tame and of help to man (see [Lev. 1:2–3, 10](#); [Lev. 22:21](#)). Sixth and seventh, for the original sacrifice practiced by Adam and the most common sacrifice in the law of Moses, the animal had to be a firstborn and a male (see [Ex. 12:5](#); [Lev. 1:3](#); [Lev. 22:18–25](#)). Eighth, the sacrifice of grain had to be ground into flour and made into breadstuffs, which reminds us of our Lord’s title the Bread of Life (see [John 6:48](#)). Ninth, the firstfruits that were offered remind us that Christ was the firstfruits of the Resurrection (see [1 Cor. 15:20](#)). (See also Bible Dictionary, “Sacrifices”; Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. [1992], 3:1248–49.)

Fulfillment of the Law

The law of sacrifice with its system of offerings given to Moses was still being practiced in New Testament times. Jesus Christ of the New Testament was Jehovah of the Old Testament—He who gave the law of Moses in the first place, prescribing elements of the law that specifically pointed to His future atoning sacrifice. He was, then, the one with authority to fulfill that law, and His final words—“It is finished” ([John 19:30](#))—indicate that this had been done. Amulek explained the fulfillment of the law this way:

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sacrifice still is to test us and assist us in coming unto Christ. After the Savior's ultimate sacrifice, two adjustments were made in the practice of this law. First, the ordinance of the sacrament replaced the ordinance of sacrifice; and second, this change moved the focus of the sacrifice from a person's animal to the person himself. In a sense, the sacrifice changed from the *offering* to the *offerer*.

As we contemplate the replacing of animal sacrifice with the sacrament, we cannot help but notice a strong relationship between the two. Both sacrifice and sacrament:

- Are affected by a person's attitude and worthiness (see [Amos 5:6–7, 9–10, 21–22](#); [3 Ne. 18:27–29](#); [Moro. 7:6–7](#)).
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President Joseph F. Smith said that the purpose of the sacrament “is that we may keep in mind continually the Son of God who has redeemed us from eternal death, and brought us to life again through the power of the gospel. Before the coming of Christ to the earth, this was borne in mind ... by another ordinance [blood sacrifice] which was a type of the great sacrifice that should take place in the meridian of time” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 103).

1975–A:50, Bruce R. McConkie, *Obedience, Consecration, and Sacrifice*

Accordingly, I shall now set forth some of the principles of sacrifice and consecration to which the true saints must conform if they are ever to go where God and Christ are and have an inheritance with the faithful saints of ages past.

It is written: “He who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory.” D&C 88:22 The law of sacrifice is a celestial law; so also is the law of consecration. Thus to gain that celestial reward which we so devoutly desire, we must be able to live these two laws.

Sacrifice and consecration are inseparably intertwined. The law of consecration is that we consecrate our time, our talents, and our money and property to the cause of the Church: such are to be available to the extent they are needed to further the Lord's interests on earth.

The law of sacrifice is that we are willing to sacrifice all that we have for the truth's sake—our character and reputation; our honor and applause; our good name among men; our houses, lands, and families: all things, even our very lives if need be.

Joseph Smith said, “A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary [to lead] unto life and salvation.” (Lectures on Faith, p. 58.)

We are not always called upon to live the whole law of consecration and give all of our time, talents, and means to the building up of the Lord's earthly kingdom. Few of us are called upon to sacrifice much of what we possess, and at the moment there is only an occasional martyr in the cause of revealed religion.

But what the scriptural account means is that to gain celestial salvation we must be able to live these laws to the full if we are called upon to do so. Implicit in this is the reality that we must in fact live them to the extent we are called upon so to do.

Now I think it is perfectly clear that the Lord expects far more of us than we sometimes render in response. We are not as other men. We are the saints of God and have the revelations of heaven. Where much is given much is expected. We are to put first in our lives the things of his kingdom.

We are commanded to live in harmony with the Lord's laws, to keep all his commandments, to sacrifice all things if need be for his name's sake, to conform to the terms and conditions of the law of consecration.

We have made covenants so to do—solemn, sacred, holy covenants, pledging ourselves before gods and angels.

We are under covenant to live the law of obedience.

We are under covenant to live the law of sacrifice.

We are under covenant to live the law of consecration.

With this in mind, hear this word from the Lord: “If you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you.” D&C 78:7

It is our privilege to consecrate our time, talents, and means to build up his kingdom. We are called upon to sacrifice, in one degree or another, for the furtherance of his work. Obedience is essential to salvation; so, also, is service; and so, also, are consecration and sacrifice.

It is our privilege to raise the warning voice to our neighbors and to go on missions and offer the truths of salvation to our Father's other children everywhere. We can respond to calls to serve as bishops, as Relief Society presidents, as home teachers, and in any of hundreds of positions of responsibility in our various church organizations. We can labor on welfare projects, engage in genealogical research, perform vicarious ordinances in the temples.

And every member of his church has this promise: That if he remains true and faithful—obeying, serving, consecrating, sacrificing, as required by the gospel—he shall be repaid in eternity a thousandfold and shall have eternal life. What more can we ask?

Micah's Thoughts:

First thought, Elder Ballard says, “In fact, we learn from Revelation 12:9, 11 [[Rev. 12:9, 11](#)] that it is by “the blood of the Lamb” (Christ's atoning sacrifice) and our testimony that *we are able to overcome Satan.*” Most people when teaching Revelation 12 teach it “we learn that we *were* able to overcome Satan...” Those familiar with Joseph Smith's teaching regarding the Book of Revelation will understand the importance of this distinction. I appreciate this statement from Elder Ballard, it is a correct statement of fact.

The last thing I will add here just in case it doesn't get mentioned, is this quote from Joseph Smith Jr. on animal sacrifices that we need to remember when talking about this subject so that we don't teach something that isn't actually accurate on the subject:

Sacrifice to Be Part of Restoration (TPJS 172)

It will be necessary here to make a few observations on the doctrine set forth in the above quotation, and it is generally supposed that sacrifice⁴ was entirely done away when the Great Sacrifice⁵ [i.e.,] the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus was offered up, and that there will be no necessity for the ordinance of sacrifice in future; but those who assert this are certainly not acquainted with the duties, privileges and authority of the Priesthood, or with the Prophets.

The offering of sacrifice has ever been connected and forms a part of the duties of the Priesthood.⁶ It began with the Priesthood, and will be continued until after the coming of Christ, from generation to generation. We frequently have mention made of the offering of sacrifice⁷ by the servants of the Most High⁸ in ancient days, prior to the law of Moses;⁹ which ordinances will be continued when the Priesthood is restored with all its authority, power and blessings.¹⁰

Section III (Mason)

The Sacrifice of Ourselves

After His mortal ministry, Christ elevated the law of sacrifice to a new level. In describing how the law would continue, Jesus told his Nephite Apostles that He would no longer accept burnt offerings but that His disciples should offer “a broken heart and a contrite spirit” ([3 Ne. 9:19–20](#); see also [D&C 59:8, 12](#)). Instead of the Lord requiring our animals or grain, now He wants us to give up all that is ungodly. This higher practice of the law of sacrifice reaches into the inner soul

of a person. Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “Real, personal sacrifice never was placing an animal on the altar. Instead, it is a willingness to put the animal in us upon the altar and letting it be consumed!” (“Deny Yourselves of All Ungodliness,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 68).

How is it we show the Lord that we have symbolically put ourselves upon today’s sacrificial altar? We show Him by living the first great commandment: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” ([Matt. 22:37](#)). When we overcome our own selfish desires and put God first in our lives and covenant to serve Him regardless of the cost, we are then living the law of sacrifice.

One of the best ways to be sure we are keeping the first great commandment is to keep the second great commandment. The Master Himself taught that “inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” ([Matt. 25:40](#)) and that “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” ([Mosiah 2:17](#)). The degree of our love for the Lord and for our fellowman can be measured by what we are willing to sacrifice for them. Sacrifice is a demonstration of pure love. Sometimes the most effective way to teach a principle is to give an example of its use in practice. Let me share two examples with which I am personally acquainted, knowing as I do that many other Church members could share such significant stories of sacrifice by members of their own families.

My great-grandfather, Henry Ballard, joined the Church in England, came to America, and suffered great privation while making his way west to Utah. Likewise, my great-grandmother, Margaret McNeil Ballard, endured much hardship crossing the plains as an 11-year-old girl. As I traveled along the pioneer trail with my family a few years ago, I found myself wondering how my faithful great-grandparents ever survived that trek and how it was possible for them to do what they did throughout their lives. Surely they came to know God and His Holy Son as they willingly gave all that they had to serve them. Henry Ballard served faithfully as bishop of the Logan Second Ward for just a few months under 40 years. His devoted wife Margaret served as Relief Society president for 30 years.

Our commitment to the kingdom should match that of our faithful ancestors even though our sacrifices are different. Today in the Church we can find many examples to help us understand that sacrifice for the gospel is still essential and that coming unto Christ requires as much commitment and devotion now as it ever has.

Not long ago, for example, I was assigned to preside over a regional conference in La Paz, Bolivia. Some members came from small towns and villages far away, showing great sacrifice and commitment to attend the meetings. Prior to the priesthood leadership training session, I greeted the brethren as they gathered. I noticed that one older brother’s shirt was a different color from the middle of his chest down; the upper portion was white, while the lower part was brownish-red. He and three of his companions, all Melchizedek Priesthood holders, had traveled for many hours, walking most of the way and fording two rivers where the brownish-red water came up to their chests. They had flagged down a truck and stood in the back of it for the last two hours of their journey.

Their sacrifice and their attitude about it made me feel extremely humble. One of these faithful men said to me: “Elder Ballard, you are one of the Lord’s Apostles. My brethren and I would do whatever was required to be taught by you.”

Do we have a similar attitude when we are asked to attend stake and ward leadership meetings?

The Blessings of Sacrifice

We sing, “Sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven” (“Praise to the Man,” *Hymns*, no. 27). This is a true principle. Let me illustrate with a personal experience.

I was named bishop of a suburban Salt Lake City ward in 1958, in the days when local members paid 50 percent of the cost of constructing a building. One of the most important leadership experiences in my life came several weeks before the dedication of our building. Our ward of young families, struggling to make ends meet, still needed to raise \$30,000. I fasted and prayed to know what I should say to them regarding this obligation. We already had pressed them very hard.

As the brethren gathered for priesthood meeting, I was impressed to read to them the testimony that Elder Melvin J. Ballard, my grandfather, bore when he was ordained to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on 7 January 1919. I quote a small portion recounting his experience in 1917 when he had sought the Lord pleadingly in a situation where there were no precedents for guidance:

“That night I received a wonderful manifestation and impression which has never left me. I was carried to this place—into this room. I saw myself here with you. I was told there was another privilege that was to be mine; and I was led into a room where I was informed I was to meet someone. As I entered the room I saw, seated on a raised platform, the most glorious being I have ever conceived of, and was taken forward to be introduced to Him. As I approached He smiled, called my name, and stretched out His hands towards me. ... He put His arms around me and kissed me, as He took me into His bosom, and He blessed me until my whole being was thrilled. As He finished I fell at His feet, and there saw the marks of the nails; and as I kissed them, with deep joy swelling through my whole being, I felt that I was in heaven indeed. The feeling that came to my heart then was: Oh! If I could live worthy ... so that in the end when I have finished I could go into His presence and receive the feeling that I *then* had in His presence, I would give everything that I am and ever hope to be!” (Melvin R. Ballard, *Melvin J. Ballard: Crusader for Righteousness* [1966], 65–66).

The Spirit of the Lord touched the hearts of the faithful brethren in my ward’s priesthood meeting that day. We all knew that with greater faith in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, we could reach our goal. During that same day, family after family came to my office with money, making personal sacrifices that were far beyond what I, the bishop, would ever have asked of them. By eight o’clock Sunday evening, the ward clerk had written receipts for a little more than \$30,000.

Sacrifice truly brought forth the blessings of heaven to the members of our ward. Never have I lived among a people who were more united, more caring, more concerned for one another than

those members. In our greatest sacrifice, we became bonded together in the true spirit of the gospel of love and service.

Sacrifice is still necessary if we are to develop faith strong enough to lay hold on eternal life. I believe we should increase our spiritual devotion and service to the Lord and others in order to demonstrate our love for Him and our Heavenly Father.

Mason's Thoughts:

Elder M. Russell Ballard words – Black

Mason's words and thoughts – Blue

Scriptures – Black & highlighted yellow

Quotes from Prophets & Apostles – Purple

Church Manuals - Green

Removing Babylon

Elder Ballard Mentions that “Christ elevated the law of sacrifice to a new level. He would no longer accept burnt offerings but that His disciples should offer “a broken heart and a contrite spirit...Instead of the Lord requiring animals or grain, now He wants us to give up all that is ungodly.”

3 Nephi: 19-22

19 And ye shall offer up unto me “no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings.

20 And ye shall offer for a “sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I “baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites, because of their faith in me at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not.

21 Behold, I have come unto the world to bring “redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin.

22 Therefore, whoso “repenteth and cometh unto me “as a “little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. Behold, for such I have “laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved.

What is the Lord truly asking of us when He says to give up all that is ungodly? Two words come to my mind when I think of the word ungodly. Those words are Sin, and Babylon. I'd like to take a few moments to focus on the word Babylon to help further drive home my points on the meaning of the sacrifice of ourselves. Bruce R. McConkie gives us a great insight as to what Babylon was and what it means today.

“Anciently Babylon was the chief and capital city of the Babylonian Empire. Founded by Nimrod and built astride the Euphrates, it is claimed to have been one of the largest and most magnificent cities of all time. The name is the Greek form of Babel and means confusion. The

city was taken by Cyrus and again by Alexander the Great and has now become a desolate heap as prophesied by Isaiah and Jeremiah.

At the seat of the world empire, Babylon was the persistent persecutor and enemy of the Lord's people. To the Lord's people anciently, Babylon was known as the center of iniquity, carnality, and worldliness. Everything connected with it was in opposition to all righteousness and had the effect of leading men downward to the destruction of their souls.

It was natural, therefore, for the apostles and inspired men of New Testament times to apply the name Babylon to the forces organized to spread confusion and darkness in the realm of spiritual things. In a general sense the wickedness of the world generally is Babylon.

As Babylon of old fell to her utter destruction and ruin, so the great and abominable church together with all wickedness shall be utterly destroyed when the Lord comes. Before that great day the servants of the Lord are calling, "Go ye out from Babylon" ... (Mormon Doctrine Pg. 68-69.)

For a more modern look at how we can see Babylon and recognize that which is ungodly today let us read some insights from the Old Testament Student Institute Manual. "In [Isaiah 14](#) the Lord condemned the wickedness of the house of Israel and prophesied that it would be brought into great judgments because of its evils. Generally, these judgments were to be carried out by other nations. We could say: "Granted that Israel was wicked, but even at her worst she was no worse than her heathen neighbors, and often was much better. Why should she be destroyed, and the others escape?"

The Lord showed through these burdens that the world too would be brought to judgment. Here, as in the previous chapters, Isaiah often used dualism to prophesy simultaneously to his own people and to us in modern times. Though chapters 13–23 were given to nine different nations, giving them notice that the divine timetable for their repentance had run out and that they were to reap the judgments of God, each nation was also a symbol of the modern world. You may feel a spirit of doom associated with the condition and future of Babylon and the other nations, but you should also realize that ancient Babylon with its evil and judgment was a shadow and a type of present-day Babylon, or the world. It is to present-day Babylon that Isaiah delivered the sharpest warnings.

Isaiah foresaw the graphic destruction of Babylon, the degradation of its nobility, and the universal wickedness of its masses. In his characteristic way he also uses the term *Babylon* to typify a latter-day condition and judgment. Each era of the earth has known its own Babylon, but the Babylon of the latter days was seen by the prophets as being among the most wicked of any era and the object of destruction at the coming of the Lord.

Though at the time Babylon was only a province in the mighty Assyrian Empire, Isaiah accurately foresaw that Babylon and not Assyria would bring judgments upon the kingdom of Judah. He prophesied that Babylon would eventually come into a judgment of its own. At the same time Isaiah used Babylon as a symbol of the world and its wickedness. So when Isaiah speaks of Babylon he refers to both the empire of that name and spiritual Babylon.

God issued a call for His forces to gather together to overthrow Babylon. In this case, these forces were the Medes (see [Isaiah 13:17](#)). The call was answered about 130 years later when an

alliance of Medes and Persians under Cyrus the Great dammed the Euphrates River and marched through the riverbed and under the walls of Babylon to capture the city and overthrow the empire. The significance of the incident is more clearly indicated by considering the imagery of the term *Babylon* in a spiritual sense. The call is for the “sanctified ones” ([Isaiah 13:3](#)), the Saints of the latter days, to gather together and join with God in overthrowing wickedness (Babylon) from the world.”

Isaiah 13:19-22

19 ¶ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

20 It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.

21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

22 And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in *their* pleasant palaces: and her time *is* near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

“Isaiah’s description of Babylon in these verses was literally fulfilled. (Remember that at the time Isaiah wrote, Babylonia was not a world empire.) Under Nebuchadnezzar, Babylonia overthrew Assyria and took over the reins of world power. Nebuchadnezzar undertook a building program which made Babylon one of the most remarkable cities of the ancient world (see [Enrichment G](#)). To predict the total devastation and desolation of such a city was remarkable, for some ancient cities, such as Jerusalem, Damascus, and Jericho, have continued through the centuries and still exist today. But after its conquest by Cyrus, Babylon steadily declined. Several hundred years passed before Babylon was abandoned, but by the first century after Christ it lay deserted and in ruins, and so it has remained. The silent ruins stand as an eloquent witness that Isaiah spoke with divine accuracy.

Spiritual Babylon shall likewise become a waste and desolation when God comes upon the world in judgment and ushers in the millennial reign of Christ.” (Old Testament Student Manual Institute. Pg 153.)

“We know that the world will go on in wickedness until the end of the world, which is the destruction of the wicked. We shall continue to live in the world, but with the Lord’s help we shall not be of the world. We shall strive to overcome carnality and worldliness of every sort and shall invite all men to flee from Babylon, join with us, and live as becometh Saints.

As the Saints of the Most High we shall strive to “stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world” Our only hope is to free ourselves from the bondage of sin, to rid ourselves from the chains of darkness, to rise above the world, to live godly and upright lives. Relying always on the Lord, we must become independent of the world. We must be self-reliant. Using the agency God has given us, we must work out our own economic and temporal problems.

We are here on earth to work—to work long, hard, arduous hours, to work until our backs ache and our tired muscles knot, to work all our days. This mortal probation is one in which we are to

eat our bread in the sweat of our faces until we return to the dust from whence, we came.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Stand Independent above All Other Creatures*, 1979.)

What can we do today as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints to rid the ungodly from our lives, to remove ourselves from Babylon? We must hold true to the promises that God has made and kept with His Chosen people, with Israel. Elder David R. Stone of the Seventy gives us a remarkable way in which we can focus on building up the City of our God, rather than dwelling in the cities of the adversary.

“Too many of the people of the world have come to resemble the Babylon of old by walking in their own ways and following a god “whose image is in the likeness of the world.”

One of the greatest challenges we will face is to be able to live in that world but somehow not be of that world. We have to create Zion in the midst of Babylon.

“Zion in the midst of Babylon.” What a luminous and incandescent phrase, as a light shining in the midst of spiritual darkness. What a concept to hold close to our hearts, as we see Babylon becoming more widespread. We see Babylon in our cities; we see Babylon in our communities; we see Babylon everywhere.

And with the encroachment of Babylon, we have to create Zion in the midst of it. We should not allow ourselves to be engulfed by the culture which surrounds us. We seldom realize the extent to which we are a product of the culture of our place and time.

During the days of ancient Israel, the people of the Lord were an island of the one true God, surrounded by an ocean of idolatry. The waves of that ocean crashed incessantly upon the shores of Israel. Despite the commandment to make no graven image and bow down before it, Israel seemingly could not help itself, influenced by the culture of the place and time. Over and over again—despite the prohibition of the Lord, despite what prophet and priest had said—Israel went seeking after strange gods and bowed down before them.

How could Israel have forgotten the Lord, who brought them out of Egypt? They were constantly pressured by what was popular in the ambience in which they lived.

Our culture tends to determine what foods we like, how we dress, what constitutes polite behavior, what sports we should follow, what our taste in music should be, the importance of education, and our attitudes toward honesty. It also influences men as to the importance of recreation or religion, influences women about the priority of career or childbearing, and has a powerful effect on how we approach procreation and moral issues. All too often, we are like puppets on a string, as our culture determines what is “cool.”

There is, of course, a zeitgeist to which we should pay attention, and that is the ethos of the Lord, the culture of the people of God. As Peter states it, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light”.

It is the ethos of those who keep the Lord's commandments, walk in His ways, and "live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God" If that makes us peculiar, so be it. There may be a lesson here for us. We can create the real Zion among us by limiting the extent to which Babylon will influence our lives.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 Jn. 2: 14-15)"

We do not need to adopt the standards, the mores, and the morals of Babylon. We can create Zion in the midst of Babylon. We can have our own standards. We can live in accordance with the Lord's moral laws. We can limit how much of Babylon we allow into our homes.

We can live as a Zion people, if we wish to. Will it be hard? Of course it will, for the waves of Babylonian culture crash incessantly against our shores. Will it take courage? Of course, it will. If we are to have Zion in the midst of Babylon, we will need courage.

But the opportunities to stand for that which is right—when the pressures are subtle and when even our friends are encouraging us to give in to the idolatry of the times—those come along far more frequently. No photographer is there to record the heroism, no journalist will splash it across the newspaper's front page. Just in the quiet contemplation of our conscience, we will know that we faced the test of courage: Zion or Babylon?

Make no mistake about it: much of Babylon, if not most of it, is evil. And we will not have the pricking of our thumbs to warn us. But wave after wave is coming, crashing against our shores. Will it be Zion, or will it be Babylon?

If Babylon is the city of the world, Zion is the city of God. The Lord has said of Zion: "Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom" (D&C 105:5) and, "For this is Zion—the pure in heart". (D&C 97:21)

Wherever we are, whatever city we may live in, we can build our own Zion by the principles of the celestial kingdom and ever seek to become the pure in heart. Zion is the beautiful, and the Lord holds it in His own hands. Our homes can be places which are a refuge and protection, as Zion is.

We do not need to become as puppets in the hands of the culture of the place and time. We can be courageous and can walk in the Lord's paths and follow His footsteps. And if we do, we will be called Zion, and we will be the people of the Lord.

I pray that we will be strengthened to resist the onslaught of Babylon and that we can create Zion in our homes and our communities—indeed, that we may have "Zion in the midst of Babylon."

(Zion in the Midst of Babylon, 2006 GC. Elder David R. Stone)

We must learn to make those Personal sacrifices in our lives to keep Babylon at bay, and let the spirit, strength, and zeal of Zion always be found within us. If we keep the true desires of hearts focused on Zion, we can and will prevail. And we will not be led down strange paths, and into false promises of desolate rewards. Do not succumb to Babylon's calls and teasing's. Learn to "Hear Him", and you will be able to truly repent and cut the ungodly out of your life. By ridding ourselves of these distractions we can focus on truly letting God prevail in our lives.

Let God Prevail

In a thread in Discord last week that was dedicated to discussing the Spirit of Prophecy, Micah brought up an interesting question, with an interesting answer that is something I have been deeply studying over the past year. The Question he asked was in response to understanding what a “testimony of Christ really is”? “It is more than simply knowing Christ or believing in Him”. “So how would we define that in as few words as possible? “Those that have testimonies of Christ”? hint: Christ uses only one word, “Israel”. Micah’s answer;

“Someone who had a testimony of the Savior is someone who is “Israel”, someone who “lets God prevail” in their lives, one who “is on the watchtower”, who “hears Him” ... bottom line, “someone who knows Him and walks with Him”...

”It means a lot more than simply “Knowing of the Savior” or believing He is the Savior, it is someone who has taken upon the cross and followed Him, someone who is like Him and can see eye to eye with Him”...

“Someone like that who has “paid the price for priesthood power”, who then says “I know...” you can feel the difference...(Micah’s words in Gold.)

“President Nelson taught us that one meaning of the word Israel is “let God prevail.”

(Elder Russell M. Ballard, Lovest Thou More than These, Oct 2021 GF.)

Throughout my studies of the Old Testament this year I have taken President Nelson’s Challenge to learn more about our covenants, and the power that comes from the promises that God has made with us. Letting God prevail is one of those lessons that I have greatly learned about the most. I have learned that God always keeps his promises with Israel. When God’s people listen and learn to follow his prophets they are blessed. And when they give up all they have and sacrifice everything to follow Him, the promised blessings are amazing. But how does one learn how to Let God Prevail in their lives?

President Joseph Fielding Smith gives is a great answer to this question. “Now if we want to become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, possessing the blessings of the kingdom, there is only one thing required of you and of me, and that is that we keep the whole law, not a part of it only. Do you think it would be fair, just, proper, for the Lord to say to us: “I will give unto you commandments; you may keep them if you will; you may be indifferent about the matter if you will; keep some, reject others; or partially keep some; and I will punish you, but then I will make it up to you, and all will be well.” (Doctrines of Salvation Pg. 37)

In the Old Testament Student manual, we learn the need for making covenants and keeping them. Making a covenant with the God is one way that we show him that we are willing to let him prevail in our lives. But to keep those promises it takes work and it takes sacrifice. “In a gospel covenant, we enter into sacred agreements with God, promising our obedience to his will. In turn, he has promised glorious blessings to us if we obey and serve him.

The patriarch Abraham committed himself unwaveringly to the Lord’s service and was privileged to enter into a covenant with him. The Bible describes the blessings the Lord promised Abraham because of his faith and obedience.

Among the promises of the Abrahamic covenant is the one whereby faithful heirs will possess the gospel and the power of the Lord's priesthood. Covenant descendants of Abraham and Sarah have a right, by virtue of their inheritance, to these blessings. However, as with other covenantal blessings, they actually realize the blessings of their birthright only on the basis of personal worthiness. (Old Testament Student manual.)

"The submission of one's will is really the only uniquely personal thing we have to place on God's altar. The many other things we 'give,' brothers and sisters, are actually the things He has already given or loaned to us. However, when you and I finally submit ourselves, by letting our individual wills be swallowed up in God's will, then we are really giving something to Him!" (Neal A. Maxwell "Swallowed Up in the Will of the Father," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 24).

Only true conversion to Christ and strict adherence to His example and teachings can bring significant and lasting renewal and reconstruction to a people. Only true conversion to Christ can do more than offer mere stop-gap measures to solve problems. President Ezra Taft Benson said:

"The Lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would take people out of the slums. Christ takes the slums out of people, and then they take themselves out of the slums. The world would mold men by changing their environment. Christ changes men, who then change their environment. The world would shape human behavior, but Christ can change human nature." (Ezra Taft Benson,)

A Tried People

While reading over Elder Ballard's words concerning sacrifices made by early saints, I was prompted to do some research into some of my ancestors who sacrificed greatly and showed that they were willing to do what ever it took to be obedient to a Prophet of God and to follow God's will, letting Him prevail in their lives. Though they were tested and tried they remained faithful to their divine missions and remained obedient. I'd like to share with you two stories from my progenitors who sacrificed much and made it possible to be where I am today.

But first I'll start off with a quote from the Prophet Joseph Smith. "And now, beloved brethren, we say unto you, that inasmuch as God hath said that He would have a tried people,²⁶ that He would purge them as gold,²⁷ now we think that this time He has chosen His own crucible, wherein we have been tried; and we think if we get through with any degree of safety, and shall have kept the faith,¹ that it will be a sign to this generation, altogether sufficient to leave them without excuse;² and we think also, it will be a trial of our faith³ equal to that of Abraham,⁴ and that the ancients will not have whereof to boast over us in the day of judgment, as being called to pass through heavier afflictions; that we may hold an even weight in the balance with them; but now, after having suffered so great sacrifice and having passed through so great a season of sorrow, we trust that a ram may be caught in the thicket⁵ speedily, to relieve the sons and daughters of Abraham from their great anxiety, and to light up the lamp of salvation⁶ upon their countenances, that they may hold on now, after having gone so far unto everlasting life." (TPJS Pg 135.)

Powell Family

John and Elizabeth Powell were from Radnorshire, South Wales. John Powell was a stonecutter by trade (He was a Mason). They ended up having seven children together. Six years after

joining the Church, they felt an impression that they needed to leave Wales and head to Salt Lake City to join up with the Saints there and help in the construction of the Salt Lake Temple. Before leaving their home John became very ill. He asked the proselyting Elders for a blessing before he left. In that blessing they promised John that he would stand on the dedicated grounds of the Salt Lake Temple and the Lord would give him the strength needed cut stone for use in the Temple building process.

Elizabeth was pregnant with their 7th child prior to making their voyage. During their 5-week voyage across the Atlantic their 5-year-old daughter Sarah Ann became ill and passed away. The faithful family had to bury their youngest daughter at sea.

When they arrived at the Iowa campgrounds, they banded together with other Saints looking to make the same trek North and began constructing handcarts for their journey. Elizabeth had their 7th child prior to their trek and was extremely weak and had not yet regained her strength from the birth of their son. While on their trek Elizabeth began to realize that they were severely under prepared for the journey and with 6 kids, one being a newborn baby, she would often forego her meal portions, so her children would have more to eat. Elizabeth would go with out food for days at a time. Mary, their 12-year-old daughter took notice of how ill her mother and new baby brother were becoming and without being asked, she took it upon herself to do all the cooking, cleaning, and washing of their camp. This way her mother could rest and focus and getting her and the baby's strength up. The saints in their group were finding it increasingly difficult to supply enough water for the camp. Every night when they rested John would dig holes in the ground sometimes up to 4 or 5 feet deep just to find damp soil that the children could suck the moisture out of to try and keep hydrated.

Six months into their journey from Wales, John had again become extremely ill and was worried that he would not be able to get his family Salt Lake. He was worried that he would never be able to see his promise fulfilled of cutting stone in building the Salt Lake Temple. As John and Elizabeth were starting to lose faith, their 12-year-old daughter Mary prayed and pleaded with the Lord for all in their group to be blessed with the strength to just go a little further that they might see the Valley of the Mountains and know that their journey's end was within reach. The following day they ran into a group of missionaries from Salt Lake City that were headed east. One of the missionaries in the group was named Bernard Snow. After looking upon the sun burnt and weary travellers, he jumped upon the tongue of one of their Wagons and made a rousing speech welcoming the group to the valleys of the mountains. This valiant band of early saints were filled with the spirit of God, and with the strength of Zion they prayed and sang as one in thanksgiving to their God, forgetting the weary miles they had traveled and renewed themselves in faith and courage to press onward in their journey which was so close to being completed.

President Brigham Young upon hearing that these weary and weak saints were close to the end of their journey immediately left his home and rode out to welcome them with food and water and to help them along the rest of their way. John and Elizabeth's 8-year-old daughter Hannah was the first of their group to meet President Young. Upon their meeting, President Young picked Hannah up and placed her upon his shoulders. He asked how her, and her family fared along their journey. To which Hannah replied "I did not complain one bit because I knew that God was with us." She then asked President Young if she could have a piece of bread for being

so good. To which President Young replied. “I will get you the biggest piece that I can find.” And he gave her an entire loaf of bread.

John Powell, now having reached their destination, was determined to see the fulfillment of the promise he received from the Elders prior to their voyage. When Orson Hyde learned of John’s stone cutting skills and promised blessings, he immediately found a home for the Powell’s, and put John to work. Two weeks after tirelessly working on his assigned task John succumbed to his illness and passed away in his sleep after a long day of cutting stone for the Temple.

The story of the Powell family is just one of the many examples of true sacrifice and trusting in the Lord that his promises will be kept. Knowing that God keeps His promises can help us make those necessary sacrifices to keep us aligned with Gods will. This family gave up everything to obey the Lord even at the risk of losing their children, and their own lives. The blessings of their living sacrifices and fulfilled promises will last for generations.

(Treasures of Pioneer History: The Powell Family, Emma McDowell Jacobson, *summarized)

Sarah Ann Meeks

“The power and influence one person can have is enormous. It was one Sarah Ann Meeks who paid what seemed to be her ultimate sacrifice as she stood alone on the doorstep of her home in far-off England nearly a century and a half ago. Her father met her there with a small bundle containing a few of her belongings and with these words, “You join that church and you must never set foot in my home again.” Unfortunately that was the last she saw of her family. Alone? Very much alone! She could have bowed to that impossible, heart-wrenching rejection. But no—she loved the Lord. She had been touched by the Spirit and knew that the gospel of Jesus Christ had been restored to the earth in its fulness. She knew that she must stand as a witness to the truthfulness of this message. She knew that she could make a difference.

From that one stalwart woman has sprung a progeny of faithful Latter-day Saints difficult to number. Literally hundreds of her descendants have stood as witnesses all around the world testifying to the reality of the Restoration of the gospel—the same message she embraced as she stood alone. One of those descendants now stands here as an especial witness of the Savior Jesus Christ, bearing solemn testimony to all the world that God the Eternal Father lives, that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, and that leading The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today is a living and loving prophet of God, serving with all the meaning that sacred title implies.

It is this testimony I leave with you, praying that we will treat each one of our Heavenly Father’s children lovingly, tenderly, and individually, as He would have us treat them; and praying also that we will always be mindful of the power each one of us has to make a difference and to influence the world in which we live.”

(“Behold Your Little Ones” Elder Wm. Rolfe Kerr Of the Seventy, **1996 GC**)

Many early saints and modern saints still today are consecrating their lives to the building up of the Kingdom of God on this Earth. As we have seen from these two pioneer examples, it is no simple task following the will of the Lord and truly letting God prevail in our lives. As members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints if we are to truly claim that we have taken

Christ's name upon us and have a testimony that He lives, we must do more than just simply stating it. We must labor diligently and consecrate all we have spiritually and temporally to the Lord. He gave us everything we have. We must give all praise to Him, be willing to submit to His will, and let Him prevail in our lives no matter the cost. For our eternal rewards are far greater than anything this Babylonian world can offer us. Elder Christofferson teaches us further how we should consecrate ourselves unto the Lord.

“A consecrated life is a life of labor. Beginning early in His life, Jesus was about His Father’s business (see Luke 2:48-49) God Himself is glorified by His work of bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of His children (see Moses 1:39) We naturally desire to participate with Him in His work, and in so doing, we ought to recognize that all honest work is the work of God. In the words of Thomas Carlyle: “All true Work is sacred; in all true Work, were it but true hand-labour, there is something of divineness. Labour, wide as the Earth, has its summit in Heaven.

God has designed this mortal existence to require nearly constant exertion. I recall the Prophet Joseph Smith’s simple statement: “By continuous labor [we] were enabled to get a comfortable maintenance”. (Joseph Smith-History 1:55) By work we sustain and enrich life. It enables us to survive the disappointments and tragedies of the mortal experience. Hard-earned achievement brings a sense of self-worth. Work builds and refines character, creates beauty, and is the instrument of our service to one another and to God. A consecrated life is filled with work, sometimes repetitive, sometimes menial, sometimes unappreciated but always work that improves, orders, sustains, lifts, ministers, aspires.

A consecrated life respects the incomparable gift of one’s physical body, a divine creation in the very image of God. A central purpose of the mortal experience is that each spirit should receive such a body and learn to exercise moral agency in a tabernacle of flesh. A physical body is also essential for exaltation, which comes only in the perfect combination of the physical and the spiritual, as we see in our beloved, resurrected Lord. In this fallen world, some lives will be painfully brief; some bodies will be malformed, broken, or barely adequate to maintain life; yet life will be long enough for each spirit, and each body will qualify for resurrection.

Those who believe that our bodies are nothing more than the result of evolutionary chance will feel no accountability to God or anyone else for what they do with or to their body. We who have a witness of the broader reality of premortal, mortal, and post mortal eternity, however, must acknowledge that we have a duty to God with respect to this crowning achievement of His physical creation.

As our body is the instrument of our spirit, it is vital that we care for it as best we can. We should consecrate its powers to serve and further the work of Christ. Said Paul, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” Romans 12:1”

(Reflections on a Consecrated Life, By Elder D. Todd Christofferson)

“Today other biographies of faith are being written—Saints who, like Job, suffer physical pain, emotional sorrow, and even disloyalty from friends—yet remain faithful; Saints who, like Jacob, see sons and daughters not so valiant as they should be, but who bless them for their potential;

Saints who, like Paul, endure great ridicule and endure to the end; Saints who, like Nephi, must separate themselves from family because of their commitment to the gospel. There are those who know pain and sorrow because of loss of loved ones; who know spiritual sorrow because children go astray; who experience loss of health, financial reverses, and emotional distress, and yet, like Job, resolve, “When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold”(Job 23:10) (God Will Have a Tried People, Elder Howard W. Hunter. 1980 GC)

“In the sermons and writings of the last few years of the Prophet’s life, there is a sense of urgency in his words. Knowing that his time was short, he labored earnestly to teach the Saints the things that God had revealed to him and encouraged them to prepare to receive these truths. He also expressed his great love for the Saints, even declaring that he was willing to lay down his life for them: “I am ready to be offered up a sacrifice in that way that can bring to pass the greatest benefit and good.”³

(History of the Church, 5:159; from a letter from Joseph Smith to James Arlington Bennet, Sept. 8, 1842, Nauvoo, Illinois; James Bennet’s last name is incorrectly spelled “Bennett” in History of the Church. Teachings of the Presidents of the church, Joseph Smith. Chapter 45)

“It was by faith that Brigham Young looked over [the Salt Lake] valley, then hot and barren, and declared, “This is the place.” Again by faith, four days later, he touched his cane to the ground ... and said, “Here will be the temple of our God.” The magnificent and sacred [Salt Lake Temple] is a testimony of faith, not only of the faith of those who built it but of the faith of those who now use it in a great selfless labor of love.

The power that moved our gospel forebears was the power of faith in God. It was the same power which made possible the exodus from Egypt, the passage through the Red Sea, the long journey through the wilderness, and the establishment of Israel in the Promised Land. ...

We need so very, very much a strong burning of that faith in the living God and in his living, resurrected Son, for this was the great, moving faith of our gospel forebears.

Behind us is a glorious history. It is bespangled with heroism, tenacity to principle, and unflagging fidelity. It is the product of faith. Before us is a great future. It begins today. We cannot pause. We cannot slow down. We cannot slacken our pace or shorten our stride.⁸⁾ (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley Chp 4. Pg 83.)

Why was it in Brigham Young’s nature to be so committed to getting the Saints to a place where they could freely worship in a Temple built to show God that they truly knew the meaning of the word sacrifice. It was because Brigham Young, understood this saving doctrine found within the Temple and the importance of covenants that is so wonderfully taught by Joseph Fielding Smith.

“The Lord has given unto us privileges and blessings, and the opportunity of entering into covenants, of accepting ordinances that pertain to our salvation beyond the principles of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance from sin, and baptism for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the Gift of the Holy Ghost; and these principles are received nowhere else but in the temple of God.

If you would become a son or a daughter of God and an heir of the kingdom, then you must go to the house of the Lord and receive blessings which there can be obtained and which cannot be obtained elsewhere; and you must keep those commandments and those covenants to the end...

The ordinances of the Temple, the endowment and sealings, pertain to exaltation in the celestial kingdom, where the sons and daughters are. The sons and daughters are not outside the kingdom. The sons and daughters go into the house, belong to the household, have access to the home. "In my Father's house are many Mansions." (John 14:2) Sons and daughters have access to that home and you cannot receive that access until you go to the temple. Why? Because you must receive certain key words as well as make covenants by which you are able to enter. If you try to get into the house, and the door is locked, how are you going to enter, if you haven't your key? You get your key in the temple which will admit you.

I picked up a key on the street one day, and took it home, and it opened every door in my house. You cannot find a key on the street, for that key is never lost that will open the door that enters into our Father's mansions. You have to go where the key is given. And each can obtain the key, if you will; but after receiving it, you may lose it, by having it taken away from you again, unless you abide by the agreement which you entered into when you went to the house of the Lord."

(Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, Pg 40-41.)

The Purpose of our dispensation is to move the cause of Zion. God needs a people who are truly Israel. Let our Faith burn strong that we may be able to be elevated to living a higher law, even that of Celestial Law. As we realize this purpose and prepare for that sacred cause we learn how to become pure in heart. A people that are pure in heart, will see eye to eye, will learn from each other, help each other, are obedient the Lord's servants and their councils. They know how to "Let God Prevail". As we begin to understand this and put these teachings into practice in our own lives, we understand what it means to truly sacrifice ourselves to the purposes of God. How eternally blessed will all of us be who are trying everyday to be better. Trying everyday to cast off another tether of Babylon. So that we may keep evil behind us and the purposes of God in front of us. Let us see through a true disciples' eyes that the promises of Zions redemption are close at hand, that we like so many of the early saints, we can arrive at the Valleys of the mountains and know that the journey towards Gods true promises are about to be fulfilled. Let us continue to do all we can to work together with the strength of Zion to complete that voyage and get ourselves there. We must continue to learn and prepare to be able accept all that the Lord requires of us. I know that we are in the promised time to see these promises fulfilled. I know that God keeps his promises, and I know that through our own sacrifices if we are willing to lay everything we have, including ourselves upon the Altar, God will smile down on our labors and accept them. He will guide us through those Valleys of Zion, up even unto the gates where He will let us enter to personally dwell with the One who truly sacrificed all, even Jesus Christ. Amen.

Micah's Thoughts:

My favorite quote in the talk comes in this section: "The degree of our love for the Lord and for our fellowman can be measured by what we are willing to sacrifice for them. Sacrifice is a demonstration of pure love." Do we really believe this? Do we believe that those who lack this

love will be in The New Jerusalem of our God? If we believe this, and we don't believe those that lack this love will be in The New Jerusalem of our God, then why do we say the things we say? If we show that we are not even willing to sacrifice the simplest of things for each other, our time, our attention, our friendship... If we "cut those ties" without provocation and clearly show by our actions that we only love ourselves- for that is the only person we ever make sacrifices for... I will sacrifice these people over here, I will sacrifice this food, etc. because it will benefit me and only me, ergo "all I am showing is that I love myself"- and if we are clearly showing that, that we only love ourselves, what makes us think that Christ has some magical wand that he will wave and make all things right for us in The New Jerusalem of our God? I believe this statement of fact, our actions are a reflection of our love, watch what people sacrifice in their actions and you will see whom they love- their fellow men, their God, or themselves... If we want to be in the New Jerusalem we have to be like Christ, and if we want to be like Christ we have to broaden our circle outward and care about more than just ourselves, and in some cases our immediate families... Imagine how far this gospel would have grown without men and women looking beyond themselves and their family and sacrificing like they did to reach outwards? We would have fallen, we would not have been able to stand... Three quotes I want to share and I'll end there for the sake of time:

Joseph Smith (TPJS 241)

The nearer we get to our heavenly Father, the more we are disposed to look with compassion on perishing souls; we feel that we want to take them upon our shoulders, and cast their sins behind our backs. ... if you would have God have mercy on you, have mercy on one another.

Perfect Love a Safeguard Against Falling from Grace (TPJS 9)

Brother Joseph Smith, Jr. said: That he intended to do his duty before the Lord and hoped that the brethren would be patient as they had a considerable distance (to go). Also said that the promise of God was that the greatest blessings which God had to bestow should be given to those who contributed to the support of his family while he was translating the fulness of the Scriptures. Until we have perfect love we are liable to fall and when we have a testimony that our names are sealed in the Lamb's book of life we have perfect love and then it is impossible for false Christs to deceive us; also said, that the Lord held the Church bound to provide for families of the absent Elders while proclaiming the Gospel; further, that God had often sealed up the heavens because of covetousness in the Church. The Lord would cut short his work in righteousness and except the Church receive the fulness of the Scriptures that they would yet fail.b—FWR, p. 16. (Oct. 25, 1831.)

Elder Holland (Waiting on the Lord)

With apologies to Elder Neal A. Maxwell for daring to modify and enlarge something he once said, I too suggest that "one's life ... cannot be both faith-filled and stress-free." It simply will not work "to glide naively through life," saying as we sip another glass of lemonade, "Lord, give me all thy choicest virtues, but be certain not to give me grief, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor opposition. Please do not let anyone dislike me or betray me, and above all, do not ever let me feel forsaken by Thee or those I love. In fact, Lord, be careful to keep me from all the experiences that made Thee divine. And then, when the rough sledding by everyone else is over, please let me come and dwell with Thee, where I can boast about how similar our strengths and our characters are as I float along on my cloud of comfortable Christianity."

Moroni 7

44 If so, his faith and hope is vain, for none is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly in heart; and if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity.

45 And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

46 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail—

47 But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.

48 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen.

Section IV (Debbie and John)

The Test of Abundance

Now as we contemplate the law of sacrifice in our lives, let us contemplate the environment in which we live. The blessings that have come to us in our times are monumental. We have need to guard carefully against ingratitude. The Lord said: “And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things” ([D&C 59:21](#)). The spirit of the law of sacrifice promotes gratitude.

We are living in a period of great prosperity that may, when history is written, prove to be as devastating to our souls as the effects of physical persecutions were upon the bodies of our pioneer ancestors. President Brigham Young warned: “Poverty, persecution and oppression we have endured; many of us have suffered the loss of all things in a worldly point of view. Give us prosperity and see if we would bear it, and be willing to serve God. See if we would be as willing to sacrifice millions as we were to sacrifice what we had when in comparative poverty” (*Deseret News Weekly*, 26 Oct. 1870, 442).

We would do well to remember the prosperity cycle found in the Book of Mormon when those persons blessed for their righteousness became wealthy and then forgot the Lord. Let us not forget the Lord in our day of prosperity. Let us maintain the spirit of the law of sacrifice and always thank Him for what we have, even if it is not as much as some others have.

Listen to the language of the scriptures as they describe the level of sacrifice the Lord requires of us: “Offer your whole souls as an offering unto [God]” ([Omni 1:26](#); see also [Mosiah 2:24](#)).

“Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” ([Rom. 12:1](#)). The Lord Himself has said that we should keep our “covenants by sacrifice—yea, every sacrifice which I, the Lord, shall command” ([D&C 97:8](#)). The sacrifice the Lord asks of us is to wholly rid ourselves of the “natural man” ([Mosiah 3:19](#)) and all the ungodliness associated with it. When we completely surrender ourselves to the Lord, then He will cause a mighty change in us and we will become a new person, justified, sanctified, and born again with His image in our countenances (see [Mosiah 5:2](#); [Alma 5:14](#); [Moses 6:59–60](#)).

As in all things, our Lord and Savior manifested the supreme example of sacrifice. His divine mission was culminated as He gave His life for our redemption. Through His personal sacrifice, He provided a way for us to have our sins forgiven and return to the presence of our Father.

I stand as a special witness today of this most singular event of all time. I testify of the far-reaching effects of this most holy of all offerings. In a future day of another life when our finite reasoning will be expanded, we will more fully understand the penetrating powers of the Atonement and feel moved even more with gratitude, admiration, worship, and love toward our Savior in ways not possible in this present state.

If I have a fear, it is that the principle of sacrifice may be slipping away from us. This principle is a law of God. We are obliged to understand it and practice it. If being a member of this Church becomes too easy, testimonies will become shallow, and the roots of testimony will not go down into the soil of faith as they did with our pioneer forefathers. May God grant each of us an understanding of the law of sacrifice and a conviction that it is necessary today. It is vitally important that we understand this law and live it.

Debbie and John’s Thoughts:

The Law of Sacrifice Part IV – [The Test of Abundance](#)

Let’s start out by addressing the title given this section – The Test of Abundance. Abundance is talked about in the April 1991 conference address “Beware Lest Thou Forget the Lord” by Elder Dean L. Larsen of the Pres of the Seventy where he says:

“Historically, the abundance with which the Lord has blessed his people has proved to be one of their greatest tests. The cycles of their acquiring worldly wealth and their subsequent spiritual decline are well documented in scriptural and historical records.

Moses’ concern for his people proved to be justified in the years following their entry into the land of Canaan. It was when they became settled in this goodly land that they began to take their abundance for granted and to forget the real source of these blessings.

In his inspired wisdom, President Young felt some of the same apprehensions for his people that Moses had felt for the tribes of Israel.

Brigham Young, sensing feelings that circulated among some of the people, said, “I hope that the gold mines will be no nearer than 800 miles. ... Prosperity and riches blunt the feelings of man.” (Journal History of the Church, 8 July 1849.)

And then, in his customary candor, he added at a later time: “The worst fear I have about this people is that they will get rich in this country, forget God and His people, wax fat, and kick themselves out of the Church and go to hell. This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution, and be true. But my greater fear ... is that they cannot stand wealth.” (James S. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer*, Salt Lake City: Geo. Q. Cannon and Sons Co., 1900, pp. 122–23.)

History repeatedly confirms that the abundance of earthly possessions can be both a blessing and a curse, depending upon the way these things are viewed and used. When we consume them on our own lust, we invoke tragedy.

Wealth is a relative thing. Conditions vary dramatically from place to place in the world today. That which some consider to be the necessities of life, to others would be abundance, and even extravagance. In any set of circumstances, the challenges related to an improvement in material prosperity remain the same. The message that echoes to us from the pages of history and from the counsels of the Lord and his prophets is clear:

- Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven.
- Seek not for riches to consume them on your own lusts.
- Thou shalt not covet.
- Clothe the naked.
- Feed the hungry.
- Relieve the sick and the afflicted.
- Pay tithes and offerings.
- In all things acknowledge the Lord.
- Be grateful.
- Be humble.

His counsel to the early Saints reflects the sentiments expressed by Jacob in the Book of Mormon. These men felt there was nothing inherently wrong in acquiring wealth. The danger lay in its obscuring the need for acknowledging the Lord’s hand in these blessings, and in failing to use the abundance to bless others and to accomplish the Lord’s purposes. Jacob said, “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.”

Now as we contemplate the law of sacrifice in our lives, let us contemplate the environment in which we live. The blessings that have come to us in our times are monumental. We have need to guard carefully against ingratitude.

“I believe,” said President Joseph F. Smith many years ago, “that one of the greatest sins of which the inhabitants of the earth are guilty today is the sin of ingratitude, the want of acknowledgment, on their part, of God and his right to govern and control. We see a man raised up with extraordinary gifts, or with great intelligence, and he is instrumental in developing some great principle. He and the world ascribe this great genius and wisdom to himself. He attributes his success to his own energies, labor and mental capacity. He does not acknowledge the hand of

God in anything connected with his success, but ignores him altogether and takes the honor to himself; this will apply to almost all the world. In all great modern discoveries in science, in the arts, in mechanics, and in all the material advancement of our age, the world says, 'We have done it.' The individual says, 'I have done it,' and he gives no honor and credit to God. Now, I read in the revelations through Joseph Smith, the prophet, that because of this, God is not pleased with the inhabitants of the earth but is angry with them because they will not acknowledge his hand in all things." (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, pp. 270–71.)

[The spirit of the law of sacrifice promotes gratitude.](#)

From Marion G. Romney's conference address October 1982 "Gratitude and Thanksgiving".

"Great men have always recognized the greatness of God and their dependence upon him, and they have with regularity rendered to him gratitude and thanksgiving.

Consider these words written by Abraham Lincoln as part of a resolution in 1863:

"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in number, wealth, and power as no other Nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of *redeeming and preserving grace*, too proud to pray to the God who made us."

It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended power, to confess our ... sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness." (John Wesley Hill, *Abraham Lincoln, Man of God*, 4th ed., New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, p. 391.)

[We are living in a period of great prosperity that may, when history is written, prove to be as devastating to our souls as the effects of physical persecutions were upon the bodies of our pioneer ancestors.](#)

I think we should note here that this address was given in 1996, shortly after the introduction of the Proclamation On the Family. An inspired document (although at the time I don't think we realized how truly inspired it was) which reaffirmed the eternal model and nature of the family. When applied to the quotes above you see how the 'knowledge' and 'wisdom' of man is currently being used to break down and discard the basic and eternal family unit as ordained by God. I know that many members have left the church in the last few years because they disagree with the stance of the church on the divine nature of the nuclear family. Their opinion on what constitutes obedience is no longer in harmony with the teachings of the Savior or his prophetic mouthpieces. They no longer acknowledge God's hand in everything and instead rely on their own wisdom and 'feels'. They are in effect "cursing God and dying".

In Elder L. Tom Perry's talk during the October 1980 conference titled "For Whatsoever a Man Soweth, So Shall He Reap." He gave the scriptural example from the Book of Mormon where Jacob addressed the Nephites about their iniquities after becoming prosperous.

"In the book of Jacob we find the scriptures recording, "And now it came to pass that the people of Nephi, under the reign of the second king, began to grow hard in their hearts, and indulge themselves somewhat in wicked practices" Jacob 1:15 Jacob warned the people to mend their ways and cautioned them about what would occur if they did not return to the ways of the Lord.

First he cautioned them concerning their pride. Then he turned to a more troublesome problem, saying,

"And now I make an end of speaking unto you concerning this pride. And were it not that I must speak unto you concerning a grosser crime, my heart would rejoice exceedingly because of you." Jacob 2:22

"Behold, ye have done greater iniquities than the Lamanites, our brethren. Ye have broken the hearts of your tender wives, and lost the confidence of your children, because of your bad examples before them; and the sobbings of their hearts ascend up to God against you. And because of the strictness of the word of God, which cometh down against you, many hearts died, pierced with deep wounds." Jacob 2:35

Unless we would turn from the course too many are pursuing today, we too must stand the same judgments of God."

The people of today, just like numerous examples throughout history have become hardened in their hearts and lifted up by their own pride. They have turned away from the Lord and ceased to strive with him. To be able to obey the Law of Sacrifice we must become humble and teachable and willing to be led by the Lord.

From Bruce R. McConkie's conference address April 1975 titled "Obedience, Consecration and Sacrifice"

"When it costs us but little to give, the treasure laid up in heaven is a small one. The widow's mite, given in sacrifice, weighs more heavily in the eternal scales than the bulging granaries of the rich man.

There came to Jesus, on a certain occasion, a rich young man who asked: "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?"

Our Lord's answer was the obvious one, the one given by all the prophets of all the ages. It was: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

The next question was: "Which commandments?"

Jesus listed them: "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."

Then came this response and query—for the young man was a good man, a faithful man, one who sought righteousness: "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?"

We might well ask, "Isn't it enough to keep the commandments? What more is expected of us than to be true and faithful to every trust? Is there more than the law of obedience?"

In the case of our rich young friend there was more. He was expected to live the law of consecration, to sacrifice his earthly possessions, for the answer of Jesus was: "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."

As you know, the young man went away sorrowful, "for he had great possessions." Matt. 19:16–22 And we are left to wonder what intimacies he might have shared with the Son of God, what fellowship he might have enjoyed with the apostles, what revelations and visions he might have received, if he had been able to live the law of a celestial kingdom. As it is he remains nameless; as it might have been, his name could have been had in honorable remembrance among the saints forever.

Now I think it is perfectly clear that the Lord expects far more of us than we sometimes render in response. We are not as other men. We are the saints of God and have the revelations of heaven. Where much is given much is expected. We are to put first in our lives the things of his kingdom.

We are commanded to live in harmony with the Lord's laws, to keep all his commandments, to sacrifice all things if need be for his name's sake, to conform to the terms and conditions of the law of consecration.

We have made covenants so to do—solemn, sacred, holy covenants, pledging ourselves before gods and angels.

We are under covenant to live the law of obedience.

We are under covenant to live the law of sacrifice.

We are under covenant to live the law of consecration.

With this in mind, hear this word from the Lord: “If you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you.” D&C 78:7

It is our privilege to consecrate our time, talents, and means to build up his kingdom. We are called upon to sacrifice, in one degree or another, for the furtherance of his work. Obedience is essential to salvation; so, also, is service; and so, also, are consecration and sacrifice.”

[Listen to the language of the scriptures as they describe the level of sacrifice the Lord requires of us:](#)

Many scriptures are given here that in and of themselves could be a topic for a Sunday fireside and if we delved into each one, we could easily be here for another three hours. These scriptures use the words of “offer your whole souls”, “present your bodies a living sacrifice”, “keep our covenants by sacrifice”, “wholly rid ourselves of the “natural man”, “completely surrender ourselves to the Lord”, “mighty change, new person, justified, sanctified, born again”. Suffice it to say that none of these can be achieved by any half-hearted efforts on our part. The level of sacrifice that the Lord requires is no less than all of our efforts... completely, honestly, enduringly, whole-heartedly... we must be ALL IN!

[If being a member of this Church becomes too easy, testimonies will become shallow, and the roots of testimony will not go down into the soil of faith as they did with our pioneer forefathers.](#)

Over the years being a Church member has been relatively “easy” and we have seen the results that these shallow testimonies have caused in many who have left the church in recent years. I think we can all agree that being watchmen on the tower is getting more difficult and that we all pray for the day that Zion will be redeemed! Good counsel for us all can be found in the Book of Mormon where Helaman admonished his sons, Nephi and Lehi:

“Remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall” [Helaman 5:12](#)

As in all things, our Lord and Savior manifested the supreme example of sacrifice.

In “What Think Ye of Christ?” by Elder Douglas H. Smith of the First Quorum of the Seventy in April 1988, he says:

“As Jesus approached that fateful hour when he would give himself as the supreme sacrifice for all mankind, he asked those who challenged him, “What think ye of Christ?” [Matt. 22:42](#) I have pondered many times that searching inquiry as it applies to my life and to all of us in this time of history. I wonder, as the register of our lives is indelibly written, and from which we will be judged, what that heavenly record will say of us in this generation of time. Do we fully accept him as the only begotten Son of God sent to earth to redeem the world?

The Holy One of Israel sought no earthly personal gain or glory. He strove only to serve his Father and to show forth eternal love to the children of God on earth.

The sacrifice of the Lamb of God, so prophesied by the prophets for centuries, had come. Quietly, and without further utterance in his own defense, he gave his life as a ransom for us, that through him and by him we might have blessed immortality—to be resurrected, body and spirit united forever. He further provided the way that through obedience to his commandments and reception of the sacred ordinances, we might have eternal life. His life was evidence of his consciousness for all of his father’s children.

Again, I ask the question, “What think ye of Christ?” [Matt. 22:42](#) I bear you my solemn testimony and stand by the side of the disciple Peter who, when asked the direct and pointed question, “But whom say ye that I am?” answered, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” [Matt. 16:15–16](#) italics added). I witness it unto you, that he is the divine Savior of the world, the promised Messiah. I reiterate the bold utterance of the disciple, “Thou art [truly] the Christ, the Son of ... God”; and I beckon to all to come unto Christ and receive the blessings of heaven which await those who will keep his commandments and endure to the end.”

In a future day of another life when our finite reasoning will be expanded, we will more fully understand the penetrating powers of the Atonement and feel moved even more with gratitude, admiration, worship, and love toward our Savior in ways not possible in this present state.

I love this statement and look forward to the day when we will all be living in it. In the meantime, my prayer is that we can so live our lives to grow in the wisdom needed to be as close to that as humanly possible in this earthly probation.

Micah's Thoughts:

Orson Pratt (JD 3:12, Orson Pratt, Trials of the Saints, Etc.)

Should all this people here in Utah be called to pass through such scenes as some of us have been called upon to encounter, I believe there would be many who would say, "Let us endure these things with all submission and patience before God."

In order to do this, it is necessary for us, in our prosperity, to remember the Lord our God, for if men and women will not remember the Lord, when the heavens smile upon them, and when health is in their habitations—if they will not acknowledge the hand of God then, and be thankful for the blessings that they receive, you may be sure that they will not be so well prepared to endure trials, and to pass through adversities, as those who have, in the days of their prosperity, humbled themselves before the Lord, and acknowledged His hand in all things.

There are individuals in this Territory, of a careless disposition, and you may mark them, and those that have waxed fat, and their hearts are upon the things of this world, that when tribulations come, they will be the ones to quake and fear, while those who have taken a different course will be able to stand.

I heard brother Joseph, when speaking of those that were sick in Nauvoo, make remarks similar to those that I have now made. He said, that those who would not, when in good health, call upon the Lord, and acknowledge His hand in all things, and remember him, would not have faith when it was needed—he said that those individuals would have but very little faith in the days of their calamities and affliction.

Then seek to get faith and spirit sufficient to assist us in the days of our afflictions, that we may be prepared for all the vicissitudes of life. We ought to know that we are well off at the present, but all do not realize this fact.

How often I have thought of the remark made by the Prophet; nothing can be more true than that remark; it carries its own evidence with it, that those individuals who have wealth and riches in abundance, but do not remember the Lord, when troubles come, they will be in the greatest distress, generally speaking.

END QUOTE

Luke 21

29 And he spake to them a parable, saying, Behold the fig tree and all the trees.

30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

32 Verily, I say unto you, This generation, the generation when the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.

33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

34 ¶ Let my disciples, therefore, take heed to themselves, lest at any time their hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come upon them unawares.

35 For as a snare it shall come on all them who dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 And what I say unto one, I say unto all: Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, and keep my commandments, that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things, which shall come to pass

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen