

**DOCTRINAL  
NEW TESTAMENT  
COMMENTARY**

**Volume III**

**COLOSSIANS – REVELATION**

By  
Bruce R. McConkie

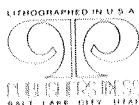


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SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

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2nd Printing, 1973



## Preface

Peter said: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."

Many of the answers and much of the inspired reasoning needed by the saints to comply with this counsel is found in the New Testament.

Peter himself recorded his testimony and preserved in writing his doctrinal explanations so "that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance."

There is a crying need in the Church today for more real gospel scholarship, for a knowledge of the doctrines of salvation.

We need to know the doctrines found in the Standard Works, to instil into our souls the inspired teachings of Holy Writ.

Volume III of this *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* is designed to help fulfil these needs. The New Testament contains a blueprint of the gospel; it charts a course leading to eternal life in God's kingdom. The Lord has preserved it for us so that we may enjoy the words of eternal life in this world and be led toward eternal glory in the next.

Since the New Testament was written to the saints, to members of the Church, to those who knew and understood the doctrines of salvation, there is no way to absorb its teachings except to have the background knowledge and the personal revelation possessed by the saints. Accordingly, this volume, which begins with Colossians and continues through the Book of Revelation, analyzes doctrinal truths in the light of latter-day revelation.

“We are commanded to be humble. (D. & C. 105:23; 112:10; 97, 103; Jas. 4:6, 10.) ‘Always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and his love towards you, unworthy creatures,’ King Benjamin saith, ‘and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith.’ (Mosiah 4:11.)

“Humility must accompany repentance to qualify a person for baptism (D. & C. 20:37); it is required of all engaged in gospel service (D. & C. 12:8); is an essential attribute for all who embark on the service of God (D. & C. 4:6); precedes the acquiring of wisdom from the Spirit (D. & C. 136:32-33); is needed to qualify a man righteous to see God (D. & C. 67:10); and without it no one can gain entrance to the kingdom of God hereafter. (2 Ne. 9:42.)” *Principles of Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 370.)

“Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by his hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers.” (D. & C. 112:10.)

8. **Your adversary the devil]** See Rev. 12:1-17.

10. **God . . . hath called us unto his eternal glory]** See 2 Pet. 1:10-19.

13. **Marcus my son]** Probably John Mark, Peter’s friend and companion, who wrote the gospel account which bears his name.

## *The Second Epistle General of Peter*

In his Second Epistle, the Chief Apostle discusses three doctrines of transcendent import:

1. Making our calling and election sure;
2. False teachers in the Church, who shall be damned for their heretical doctrines; and
3. Our Lord’s glorious return, amid the fires of heaven, whose heat shall melt the mountains and cleanse the vineyard of corruption.

Peter knew the doctrines of his Lord and had a blunt, rugged, emphatic way of presenting them that is marvelous to behold.

Nowhere else in ancient writ do we find the door so frankly opened to a knowledge of the course men must pursue to have their calling and election made sure; nowhere else in Biblical teachings is found such a plain, unvarnished recitation of the burning of the Lord’s vineyard at his return to earth. And as for false teachers—how better can they be rebuked than to equate their course with the madness of Balaam, whose dumb ass spoke out to rebuke his iniquity?

### “MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE”

II PETER 1:1-19.

1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth.

13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting *you* in remembrance;

14 Knowing that shortly I

must put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me.

15 Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

#### I.V. II PETER 1:19.

19 We have **therefore** a more sure **knowledge** of the word of prophecy, **to which word of prophecy** ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light **which** shineth in a dark place, until the day-dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts;

#### “MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE”

Among those who have received the gospel, and who are seeking diligently to live its laws and gain eternal life, there is an instinctive and determined desire to make their calling and election sure. Because they have tasted the good things of God and sipped from the fountain of eternal truth, they now seek the divine presence, where they shall know all things, have all power, all might, and all dominion, and in fact be like Him who is the great Prototype of all saved beings — God our Heavenly and Eternal Father. (D. & C. 132:20.) This is the end objective, the chief goal of all the faithful, and there is nothing greater in all eternity, “for there is no gift greater than the gift of salvation.” (D. & C. 6:13.)

It is little wonder then that the Prophet Joseph Smith, particularly during the latter and crowning years of his mortal ministry, repeatedly exhorted the saints to press forward with that steadfastness in Christ which would enable them to make their calling and election sure. “I am going on in my progress for eternal life,” he said of himself; and then in fervent pleading to all the saints, he exclaimed: “Oh! I beseech you to go forward, go forward and make your calling and your election sure.” (*Teachings*, p. 366.)

As a prelude to analyzing Peter’s words on this subject — and they rank in spiritual grandeur and insight with those in the Vision of the degrees of glory and the sermons of the Lord himself — as a prelude to this analysis, let us define and outline what is involved in having one’s calling and election made sure, taking cautious heed the while to anchor each thought and concept to the revealed word and the prophetic utterances.

Of necessity we must define some words and phrases in most pointed terms. Unless we know what they mean, in their scriptural contexts, we cannot comprehend what the Holy Spirit was teaching by the mouths of the prophets as he inspired those preachers of righteousness to use them. And since there is so much misunderstanding and misinformation where these glorious concepts are concerned, it will not be amiss to approach the subject in an organized and intelligent manner, building our house of understanding, brick upon brick, precept upon precept. The fact is that the doctrinal concepts in this field are fully set forth in the revelations,

and all that is needed is to put the whole subject together in one well built structure, so that it becomes clear how each separate part fits into the one united whole. One brick or one window by itself does not show forth what the whole house is like; but each part fitly framed together with its fellow parts soon becomes a marvelous mansion which is gratifying to behold.

*What is meant by calling? And who are the called of God?*

To be called is to be a member of the Church and kingdom of God on earth; it is to be numbered with the saints; it is to accept the gospel and receive the everlasting covenant; it is to have part and lot in the earthly Zion; it is to be born again, to be a son or a daughter of the Lord Jesus Christ; to have membership in the household of faith; it is to be on the path leading to eternal life and to have the hope of eternal glory; it is to have a conditional promise of eternal life; it is to be an inheritor of all of the blessings of the gospel, provided there is continued obedience to the laws and ordinances thereof.

Within this over-all framework, there are individual calls to positions of trust and responsibility, but these are simply assignments to labor on the Lord's errand, in particular places, for a time and a season. The call itself is to the gospel cause; it is not reserved for apostles and prophets or for the great and mighty in Israel; it is for all the members of the kingdom.

The call originates with God, is available because of his grace and goodness, and is offered to various peoples and nations according to his will and on his divine timetable. From the day of Jacob to the coming of Christ the house of Israel was the called and chosen people of the Lord. During the day of his mortal ministry our Lord limited the call to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt. 10:5-7.) After his resurrection he commanded his ministers to make the call available to all men. (Mark 16:15-16.) But only those who actually receive the gospel, who make the everlasting covenant, who cleave unto the truth and strive to live in harmony with the revealed word, only these are numbered among those whom the scriptures name as the called of the Lord.

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Thus we find hosts of statements in holy writ telling who is called and what they have and may yet receive as a result thereof. For instance: On the day of Pentecost itself, as he began the ministry which would take the gospel from the house of Israel to the ends of the earth, Peter announced that the repentant, baptized converts "shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For," said he, "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:37-39.)

Later the chief apostle told members of the Church that they had been "called . . . out of darkness" into the "marvellous light" of the gospel (1 Pet. 2:9); that they were "called" to suffer in the cause of righteousness, that thereby they "should inherit a blessing" (1 Pet. 2:21; 3:9); that their call came from God, by his grace, through "Christ Jesus," and was a call unto "eternal glory." (1 Pet. 5:10.) And accordingly Peter exhorted the saints to be holy "as he which hath called you is holy." (1 Pet. 1:15.)

Our friend Paul proclaims the same principles. He speaks of members of the Church as "the called of Jesus Christ," as those who are "called to be saints" (Rom. 1:6-7; 1 Cor. 1:2); he says they are "called . . . into the grace of Christ" (Gal. 1:6); "called unto liberty" (Gal. 5:13); "called . . . to peace" (1 Cor. 7:15, 17); "called" to "the fellowship" of "Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:9); "called" to "holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7; Heb. 3:1); "called" to the Lord's "kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12); and that all these calls come by "grace." (Gal. 1:15.)

Like Peter he teaches that the saints are called to "eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:12), called to "the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15), but he explains also that the Lord's calls are the result of foreordination and grow out of faithfulness in pre-existence. (2 Tim. 1:8-9.) "God hath from the beginning," that is, from before the foundations of the world, "chosen you [his saints] to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. 2:13-14.) That is, the saints were foreordained in the councils of eternity to believe

the truth, to be sanctified, and to save their souls; and then in this life they are called to that gospel whereby these eternal promises can be fulfilled.

In another glorious passage, Paul says: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." That is, the Lord's hand governs and controls in the lives of those whom he, in his infinite foreknowledge, hath called to be his people. And then: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren," which is to say that God in his infinite wisdom foreordained the noble and great spirits in pre-existence to become like Christ, to gain glory, power and might like unto the Son of God, so that the Son becomes the firstborn, as it were, among many exalted sons. And then in glorious conclusion: "Moreover whom he did predestinate [foreordain], them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Rom. 8. 28-30.) Thus "the noble and great ones," who were chosen before they were born (Abra. 3:22-23), who were foreordained to have exaltation, are the ones whom God hath called in this life to be glorified through the gospel in due course.

With such a glorious hope before them, surely the saints should be encouraged to gain the promised rewards, and so Paul joins Peter in using the doctrine of calling as an occasion for exhortation. Let all the saints so "work" as to be "worthy of this calling," he says, in that day when the Lord "shall come to be glorified in his saints" (2 Thess. 1:10-11), and even of such a great one as himself he says: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philip. 3:14.)

In modern revelation the Lord confirms the doctrine of his ancient apostles, speaks of our "calling and election in the church" (D. & C. 53:1; 55:1), of the fact we "are called" to his "everlasting gospel" (D. & C. 101:39), and names the elders of his Church as among those "whom he hath called and chosen in these last days." (D. & C. 52:1; 41:2.)

Since men are foreordained to gain exaltation, and since no

man can be exalted without the priesthood, it is almost self-evident that worthy brethren were foreordained to receive the priesthood. And so we find Alma teaching that those who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood in this life were "called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God." (Alma 13:1-12.) And Joseph Smith said, "Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world," and this includes all who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, "was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose that I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council." (*Teachings*, p. 365.)

*Now what is meant by making a calling sure?*

All blessings promised in connection with the callings of God are conditional; they are offered to men provided they obey the laws upon which their receipt is predicated. (D. & C. 130:20-21.) "For all who will have a blessing at my hands," the Lord says, "shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world." (D. & C. 132:5.)

It follows, then, that when the law has been lived to the full, the promised blessing is guaranteed. "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise." (D. & C. 82:10.) Accordingly, when a man lives the law that qualifies him for eternal life, the Lord is bound by his own law to confer that greatest of all gifts upon him. And if by a long course of trial and obedience, while yet in this life, a man proves to the Lord that he has and will abide in the truth, the Lord accepts the exhibited devotion and issues his decree that the promised blessings shall be received. The calling, which up to that time was provisional, is then made sure. The receipt of the promised blessings are no longer conditional; they are guaranteed. Announcement is made that every gospel blessing shall be inherited.

*What is meant by election? Who are the elect of God? To what have they been elected? And why?*

Election is akin to and synonymous with calling, and in a general sense the elect comprise the whole house of Israel. (Isa.



5:4; 65:9.) Jesus and Paul and Peter speak of the elect as the saints, as the faithful believers, as those who love the Lord and are seeking righteousness. (Matt. 24:22; Mark 13:20; Luke 18:7; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:10; Titus 1:1.) And the Lord in our day has promised to gather and save his elect. (D. & C. 29:7; 33:6; 35:20.) Paul speaks of the elect along with the called, setting forth that they are foreordained to be like Christ, that their conduct here is justified, and that they shall be glorified hereafter. (Rom. 8:28-30.) Peter specifies that their high status is "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (1 Pet. 1:2), and Isaiah assures us that great blessings shall flow to them during the Millennial Era. (Isa. 65:22.)

But in the most express and proper usage of terms, "The elect of God comprise a very select group, an inner circle of faithful members of the Church. . . . They are the portion of church members who are striving with all their hearts to keep the fulness of the gospel law in this life so that they can become inheritors of the fulness of gospel rewards in the life to come.

"As far as the male sex is concerned, they are the ones, the Lord says, who have the Melchizedek Priesthood conferred upon them and who thereafter magnify their callings and are sanctified by the Spirit. In this way, 'They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.' " (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 217.) See *Commentary II*, pp. 267-269, 271-278, 283-285.

*What is meant by making an election sure?*

It is with election as with calling: the chosen of the Lord are offered all of the blessings of the gospel on condition of obedience to the Lord's laws; and they, having been tried and tested and found worthy in all things, eventually have a seal placed on their election which guarantees the receipt of the promised blessing.

*What is meant by having one's calling and election made sure?*

To have one's calling and election made sure is to be sealed up unto eternal life; it is to have the unconditional guarantee of exaltation in the highest heaven of the celestial world; it is to receive the assurance of godhood; it is, in effect, to have the day

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of judgment advanced, so that an inheritance of all the glory and honor of the Father's kingdom is assured prior to the day when the faithful actually enter into the divine presence to sit with Christ in his throne, even as he is "set down" with his "Father in his throne." (Rev. 3:21.)

*What is the relationship between baptism and having one's calling and election made sure?*

Baptism is the beginning of personal righteousness; it opens the door to celestial exaltation; it puts us on the path leading to eternal life. As Nephi expressed it, when we enter "the gate" of "repentance and baptism" and receive "a remission" of our sins "by fire and by the Holy Ghost," we are then on the "straight and narrow path which leads to eternal life."

Nephi then asks if we have thereby done all that is necessary to gain that glorious reward, and answers with an emphatic, No! "Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ," he says, "having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life." (2 Ne. 31:17-21.)

That is to say, after baptism, after being called out of darkness into the light of the gospel; after having been numbered with the elect of God, we must receive the guarantees to which we have been called, and the assurances that appertain to our election, and which are given on a conditional basis only in baptism. We must have our calling and election made sure, and this high achievement grows out of and is the crowning reward of baptism.

*What is the relationship between celestial marriage and having one's calling and election made sure?*

In the same sense that baptism opens the door and starts repentant persons traveling on the path leading to eternal life, so also does celestial marriage. This holy order of matrimony also opens a door leading to celestial exaltation. "In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; And if he

does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase." (D. & C. 131:1-4.)

As everyone who has been married in the temple knows, those who are united — by the power and authority of the holy priesthood and by virtue of the sealing power restored by Elijah — are promised an inheritance of glory, honor, power, and dominion in the kingdom of God. But, as with baptism, all the promises are conditional; they are specifically and pointedly stated as being contingent upon the subsequent faithfulness of the participating parties. If they keep the commandments after celestial marriage, their union continues in the life to come; if they do not conform to the standards of personal righteousness involved, their marriage is not of force when they die and they revert to their separate and single status.

Unfortunately some are confused on this point because of a misunderstanding of some of the truths revealed in the revelation on marriage. Because no person can gain exaltation or eternal life alone; because exaltation includes the continuation of the family unit in eternity; because the whole thrust of revealed religion is to perfect and center everything in the family; and because having one's calling and election made sure is the receipt of a guarantee of eternal life — it was the most natural thing in the world for the Lord to reveal both the doctrine of eternal marriage and the doctrine of being sealed up unto eternal life (meaning having one's calling and election made sure) in one and the same revelation. In effect one grows out of the other. The one is a conditional promise of eternal life; the other is an unconditional promise.

Thus in Section 132, verse 19 begins by talking of celestial marriage in these words: "If a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood," but then proceeds to consider the matter of having their callings and elections made sure by saying: "and it shall be said unto them [meaning that in addition to the marriage sealing, it shall be said unto them] — Ye shall come forth in the

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first resurrection; . . . and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths — then . . . they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever."

That is to say, after celestial marriage; after entering into sacred covenants in the house of the Lord; after receiving the conditional promise of the continuation of the family unit in eternity; after receiving power to gain kingdoms and thrones — we must so live as to receive the guarantees to which we have thus been called, and the assurances that appertain to our election, and which are given on a conditional basis only in celestial marriage. As with baptism, so with celestial marriage; after the glorious promise of eternal life that is part of each of these covenants, we must press forward in righteousness until our calling and election is made sure; and this high achievement grows out of and is the crowning reward of celestial marriage.

*What is the relationship between holding the holy Melchizedek Priesthood and having one's calling and election made sure?*

The Melchizedek Priesthood is conferred with an oath and a covenant — a covenant on man's part that he will receive the priesthood and magnify his calling therein, and an oath on God's part that man shall, as a consequence, be "made like unto the Son of God, abiding a priest continually." (*Inspired Version*, Heb. 7:3; D. & C. 84:33-44.) See Heb. 7:1-3; 7:18-22. In other words, those who magnify their callings shall gain eternal life. But one cannot keep a covenant before it is made; a calling in the priesthood cannot be magnified until it is received. The covenant is the contract which sets forth the terms and conditions by obedience to which eternal life may be won; the obedience comes after the call; and when it is whole and complete, the worthy son has his calling and election made sure, and he inherits the promised reward.

*Is having one's calling and election made sure the same as being sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise?*

The Holy Ghost is the Holy Spirit; he is the Holy Spirit



promised the saints at baptism, or in other words the Holy Spirit of Promise, this exalted name-title signifying that the promised receipt of the Holy Spirit, as on the day of Pentecost, is the greatest gift man can receive in mortality.

The gift of the Holy Ghost is the right to the constant companionship of that member of the Godhead based on faithfulness; it is bestowed with a promise that we shall receive revelation and be sanctified if we are true and faithful and so live as to qualify for the companionship of that Holy Spirit who will not dwell in an unclean temple. (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19; Mosiah 2:37; Helaman 4:24.) The receipt of the promise is conditional! If after we receive the promise, we then keep the commandment, we gain the companionship of this member of the Godhead, and not otherwise.

One of the functions assigned and delegated to the Holy Spirit is to seal, and the following expressions are identical in thought content:

- To be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise;
- To be justified by the Spirit;
- To be approved by the Lord; and
- To be ratified by the Holy Ghost.

Accordingly, any act which is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is one which is justified by the Spirit, one which is approved by the Lord, one which is ratified by the Holy Ghost. One of Paul's great concerns was that the saints in his day should be justified by faith, through grace, because of the shedding of the blood of Christ. (*Commentary II*, pp. 224-240.) In other words, he sought to perfect the lives of those souls put into his care and custody so that, as a result of good works, all their acts would have divine approval and be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise.

As revealed to Joseph Smith, the Lord's law in this respect is: "All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth

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to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred), are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead." (D. & C. 132:7.)

By way of illustration, this means that baptism, partaking of the sacrament, administering to the sick, marriage, and every covenant that man ever makes with the Lord — plus all other "contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, associations, or expectations" — must be performed in righteousness by and for people who are worthy to receive whatever blessing is involved, otherwise whatever is done has no binding and sealing effect in eternity.

Since "the Comforter knoweth all things" (D. & C. 42:17), it follows that it is not possible "to lie to the Holy Ghost" and thereby gain an unearned or undeserved blessing, as Ananias and Sapphira found out to their sorrow. (Acts 5:1-11.) And so this provision that all things must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, if they are to have "efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead" (D. & C. 132:7), is the Lord's system for dealing with absolute impartiality with all men, and for giving all men exactly what they merit, neither adding to nor diminishing from. See *Commentary II*, pp. 493-495.

When the Holy Spirit of Promise places his ratifying seal upon a baptism, or a marriage, or any covenant, except that of having one's calling and election made sure, the seal is a conditional approval or ratification; it is binding in eternity only in the event of subsequent obedience to the terms and conditions of whatever covenant is involved.

But when the ratifying seal of approval is placed upon someone whose calling and election is thereby made sure — because there are no more conditions to be met by the obedient person — this act of being sealed up unto eternal life is of such transcendent import that of itself it is called being sealed by the Holy Spirit

of Promise, which means that in this crowning sense, being so sealed is the same as having one's calling and election made sure. Thus, to be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is to be sealed up unto eternal life; and to be sealed up unto eternal life is to be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. And of this usage of terms, the usage which is wholly misunderstood unless the whole concept of the sealing power of the Spirit is understood, the scriptures and other prophetic utterances bear repeated witness.

Thus Joseph Smith says that when Peter "exhorts us to make our calling and election sure," it is the same thing as "the sealing power spoken of by Paul in other places." (*Teachings*, p. 149.) The illustrative quotation from Paul which the Prophet then quotes is: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory," that we may be sealed up unto the day of redemption. (Eph. 1:13-14.) That is, the calling and election of Ephesian Saints had been made sure because they were sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise.

Those who gain exaltation in the celestial kingdom are described in the Vision of the degrees of glory in these words: "They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given — That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power; And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true." (D. & C. 76:51-53.) That is, they first believed the gospel, received all the conditional promises of eternal life, including the gift of the Holy Ghost, and then having "overcome by faith," having kept the commandments, having proved themselves worthy, they finally had their calling and election made sure.

"This principle" — that of having one's calling and election

made sure and of being sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise — "ought (in its proper place) to be taught," the Prophet said, "for God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what he will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them, for the day must come when no man need say to his neighbor, know ye the Lord; for all shall know him (who remain) from the least to the greatest. How is this to be done? It is to be done by this sealing power, and the other Comforter spoken of, which will be manifest by revelation." (*Teachings*, p. 149.)

The scriptural passage alluded to by the Prophet in this statement is from Jeremiah and is as follows: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31:31-34.) Complete realization of the blessings here promised is Millennial, and the knowledge of God spoken of shall be manifest by the receipt of the Second Comforter, as the Prophet then proceeds to state, and as we shall now consider.

*Is having one's calling and election made sure the same as receiving the Second Comforter?*

It is the privilege of those who have their calling and election made sure, meaning those who are sealed up unto eternal life, meaning those who are "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13), to receive the Second Comforter.

"There are two Comforters spoken of," says the Prophet in one of his most profound and enlightening discourses. "One of

These is the Holy Ghost, the same as given on the day of Pentecost, and that all saints receive after faith, repentance, and baptism. The first Comforter or Holy Ghost has no other effect than pure intelligence. It is more powerful in expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding, and storing the intellect with present knowledge, of a man who is of the literal seed of Abraham, than one that is a Gentile, though it may not have half as much visible effect upon the body; for as the Holy Ghost falls upon one of the literal seed of Abraham, it is calm and serene; and his whole soul and body are only exercised by the pure spirit of intelligence; while the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile, is to purge out the old blood, and make him actually of the seed of Abraham. That man that has none of the blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost. In such a case, there may be more of a powerful effect upon the body, and visible to the eye, than upon an Israelite, while the Israelite at first might be far before the Gentile in pure intelligence.

“The other Comforter spoken of is a subject of great interest, and perhaps understood by few of this generation. After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. 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, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the saints, as is recorded in the testimony of St. John, in the 14th chapter, from the 12th to the 27th verses.” (*Teachings*, p. 149-150.) The Prophet then quotes verses 16, 17, 18, 21, and 23, and asks that they be noted in particular.

In a revelation to certain selected saints in this dispensation, the Lord said that the alms of their prayers were “recorded in the book of the names of the sanctified, even them of the celestial world” (D. & C. 88:2), which is to say that they were among

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those who had “overcome by faith,” and were “sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.” (D. & C. 76:53.)

“Wherefore,” the Lord said to them, “I now send upon you another Comforter, even upon you my friends, that it may abide in your hearts, even the Holy Spirit of promise; which other Comforter is the same that I promised unto my disciples, as is recorded in the testimony of John. This Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom; Which glory is that of the church of the Firstborn, even of God, the holiest of all, through Jesus Christ his Son.” (D. & C. 88:3-5.)

These saints, like their Ephesian Brethren before them, had been called and chosen “before the foundation of the world” that they “should be holy and without blame” before the Lord, through baptism and obedience (Eph. 1:4-7), which is the sole course by which men can sanctify their souls (3 Ne. 27:19-20), thereby qualifying to have their names recorded “in the book of the names of the sanctified.” (D. & C. 88:2.) They had then earned the right by faith and devotion to have the seal of divine acceptance placed on the conditional promises which they had theretofore made. They now had the sure “promise . . . of eternal life” (D. & C. 88:4), which eternal life is the name of the kind of life which God our Heavenly and Eternal Father lives, and they were prepared to receive the Second Comforter.

As set forth by the Lord Jesus himself to the ancient Twelve, in one of his most loving and gracious sermons, the doctrine of the Second Comforter, noting particularly the verses quoted by the Prophet, is this:

**Verse 16:** “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” That is, in their case they are going to receive a Comforter in addition to the Holy Ghost already promised, and this Comforter will abide with them forever, for they shall have membership in the Church of the Firstborn in celestial exaltation.

**Verse 17:** “Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot

ceive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." All that is said in this verse, if taken out of context, could apply to the Holy Ghost, whom the world cannot receive, and who figuratively dwells in the hearts of the righteous, for the title, "Spirit of truth," applies to this Spirit member of the Godhead. (John 14:13.)

But as spoken by Jesus, as recorded by the Beloved John, and as interpreted by the Prophet Joseph Smith, the verse has application to Jesus himself. "I am the Spirit of truth," is his latter-day declaration (D. & C. 93:26), which is but another of the many instances in which the same name-title applies to more than one member of the Godhead. Thus the Lord Jesus is telling his ancient apostles that he will dwell in them in the figurative sense stated three sentences later in the same sermon: "I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (Verse 20.)

**Verse 18:** "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." I will come! The Lord Jesus Christ himself will do it! He will appear to them and be with them! And what an eternal comfort it will be, in days and years to come, to see the face of their Beloved Lord! And verses 19 and 20 then reaffirm that when the world no longer sees him, yet because he continues to live in glorious immortality, his beloved disciples shall continue to see him — "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

**Verse 21:** "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Again the Master Teacher affirms that because of love and obedience he personally will hereafter manifest himself to his disciples. And then, one of the Twelve, hearing the words but not comprehending the deep spiritual truths they convey, asks Jesus: "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (Verse 22.)

**Verse 23:** "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we

will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Can this be possible that the Father and the Son, as resurrected, glorified persons, will come to and make their abode with those who love and serve God with all their hearts? (D. & C. 93:1.) Such seems almost beyond comprehension, but so gracious and infinite is God's grace that such is verily the case, and so we find the Prophet, writing by the spirit of prophecy and revelation: "John 14:23 — The appearing of the Father and the Son, in that verse is a personal appearance; and the idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man's heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false." (D. & C. 130:3.)

Having thus set forth the doctrine that he and his Father will manifest themselves to those who are sealed up unto eternal life — and for that matter, why should they not come to such persons, since all who gain eternal life shall dwell in their presence and be like them? — having so taught, Jesus says: "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost" — the First Comforter, the initial Comforter, the one "that all saints receive after faith, repentance, and baptism," the one that "has no other effect than pure intelligence" (*Teachings*, p. 149) — this Comforter, "whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (Verses 25 and 26.)

After quoting the named verses from the 14th chapter of John, the Prophet continues his own inspired analysis: "Now what is this other Comforter?" he asks. "It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ himself; and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter; that when any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even he will manifest the Father unto him, and they will take up their abode with him, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and the Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; and this is the state and place the ancient saints arrived at when they had such glorious visions — Isaiah, Ezekiel, John upon the Isle of Patmos, St. Paul in the three heavens, and all the saints who held communion with



the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn." (*Teachings*, pp. 150-151.)

Speaking in November, 1831, to those whose calling and election would in due course be made sure, and whose "privilege" it would then be to receive the Second Comforter, the Lord said: "Verily I say unto you that it is your privilege, and a promise I give unto you that have been ordained unto this ministry, that inasmuch as you strip yourselves from jealousies and fears, and humble yourselves before me, for ye are not sufficiently humble, the veil shall be rent and you shall see me." (D. & C. 67:10-14.)

*What if those whose calling and election has been made sure thereafter commit grievous sins? Suppose they backslide and walk in the ways of wickedness? Or fight the truth and rebel against God — what then?*

That all men commit sin, before and after baptism, and for that matter, before and after their calling and election is made sure, is self-evident. There has been only one Sinless One — the Lord Jesus who was God's own Son.

Thus in the revelation announcing the setting up of the restored church in this day, the Lord says: "There is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God; Therefore let the church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptation; Yea, and even let those who are sanctified take heed also." (D. & C. 20:32-34.)

The prophets and apostles from Adam and Enoch down, and all men, whether cleansed and sanctified from sin or not, are yet subject to and do in fact commit sin. This is the case even after men have seen the visions of eternity and been sealed by that Holy Spirit of Promise which makes their calling and election sure. Since these chosen ones have the sure promise of eternal life, and since "no unclean thing can enter into" the Father's "kingdom" (3 Ne. 27:19), "or dwell in his presence" (Moses 6:57), what of sins committed after being sealed up into eternal life?

Obviously the laws of repentance still apply, and the more enlightened a person is, the more he seeks the gift of repentance, and the harder he strives to free himself from sin as often as he

falls short of the divine will and becomes subject in any degree to the Master of Sin who is Lucifer. It follows that the sins of the godfearing and the righteous are continually remitted because they repent and seek the Lord anew every day and every hour.

And as a matter of fact, the added blessing of having one's calling and election made sure is itself an encouragement to avoid sin and a hedge against its further commission. By that long course of obedience and trial which enabled them to gain so great a blessing the sanctified saints have charted a course and developed a pattern of living which avoids sin and encourages righteousness. Thus the Lord said: "I give unto you Hyrum Smith to be a patriarch unto you, to hold the sealing blessings of my church, even the Holy Spirit of promise, whereby ye are sealed up unto the day of redemption, that ye may not fall notwithstanding the hour of temptation that may come upon you." (D. & C. 124: 124.)

But suppose such persons become disaffected and the spirit of repentance leaves them — which is a seldom and almost unheard of eventuality — still, what then? The answer is — and the revelations and teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith so recite! — they must then pay the penalty of their own sins, for the blood of Christ will not cleanse them. Or if they commit murder or adultery, they lose their promised inheritance because these sins are exempt from the sealing promises. Or if they commit the unpardonable sin, they become sons of perdition.

As we have already seen, making one's calling and election sure comes after and grows out of celestial marriage. Eternal life does not and cannot exist for a man or a woman alone, because in its very nature it consists of the continuation of the family unit in eternity. Thus the revelation on marriage speaks both of celestial marriage (in which the conditional promises of eternal life are given) and of making one's calling and election sure (in which the unconditional promise of eternal life are given) in one and the same sentence — which sentence also says that those who commit sins (except "murder whereby to shed innocent blood") after being sealed up unto eternal life shall still gain exaltation. This is the language: "Then" — that is, after their calling and election has been made sure — "shall it be written in the Lamb's Book of

life, that he shall commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, and if ye abide in my covenant, and commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity; and shall be of full force when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. Then shall they be gods," because they have eternal life. (D. & C. 132:19-20.)

Then the revelation speaks of that obedience out of which eternal life grows, and still speaking both of celestial marriage and of making one's calling and election sure says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man marry a wife according to my word, and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, according to mine appointment" — that is, if they are both married and have their calling and election made sure — "and he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, and all manner of blasphemies, and if they commit no murder wherein they shed innocent blood, yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation; but they shall be destroyed in the flesh, and shall be delivered unto the buffetings of Satan unto the day of redemption, saith the Lord God." (D. & C. 132:26.)

This matter of being destroyed in the flesh and delivered over to the buffetings of Satan until the day of redemption is the doctrine of blood atonement, whereunder those here involved are not cleansed by the blood of Christ, but must pay the penalty for their own sins. This principle can only operate in a day, as that of Moses, when there is no separation of Church and state and when the Church has power to take life. Of conditions in our day, and as to how this law applies to us, President Joseph Fielding Smith says: "We cannot destroy men in the flesh, because we do not control the lives of men and do not have power to pass sentences upon them which involve capital punishment. In the days when there was a theocracy on the earth, then this decree was enforced. What the Lord will do in lieu of this, because we

cannot destroy in the flesh, I am unable to say, but it will have to be made up in some other way." (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, p. 97.)

As to the shedding of innocent blood, within the meaning of this revelation, the Lord says: "The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven in the world nor out of the world, is in that ye commit murder wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death, after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant, saith the Lord God; and he that abideth not this law can in nowise enter into my glory, but shall be damned, saith the Lord." (D. & C. 132:27.) That is, the innocent blood is that of Christ; and those who commit blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which is the unpardonable sin (Matt. 12:31-32), thereby "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." (Heb. 6:6.) They are, in other words, people who would have crucified Christ, having the while a perfect knowledge that he was the Son of God.

Following the pattern set by the Lord of speaking both of celestial marriage and of being sealed up unto eternal life in the same context, Joseph Smith said: "Putting my hand on the knee of William Clayton, I said: Your life is hid with Christ in God, and so are many others. Nothing but the unpardonable sin can prevent you from inheriting eternal life for you are sealed up by the power of the priesthood unto eternal life, having taken the step necessary for that purpose. Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection. But those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory. The unpardonable sin is to shed innocent blood, or be accessory thereto. All other sins will be visited with judgment in the flesh, and the spirit being delivered to the buffetings of Satan until the day of the Lord Jesus." (*History of Church*, vol. 5, pp. 391-392.)



Perhaps this matter of being "visited with judgment in the flesh" — whatever it may be in an individual case — is the Lord's way of handling things when it is not possible for a person to be destroyed in the flesh." (D. & C. 132:26.) In this connection, also — and having in mind that the sealing power was given by Elijah to Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration (*Teachings*, p. 158), and again to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple (D. & C. 110:13-16) — we should note these words of the Prophet: "This spirit of Elijah was manifest in the days of the Apostles, in delivering certain ones to the buffetings of Satan, that they might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. They were sealed by the spirit of Elijah unto the damnation of hell until the day of Lord, or revelation of Jesus Christ." (*Teachings*, p. 338.)

As to the fact that the sealing power cannot seal a man up so as to keep him from being a son of perdition, if that is the course he chooses to follow, the Prophet says: "The doctrine that the Presbyterians and Methodists have quarreled so much about — once in grace, always in grace, or falling away from grace, I will say a word about. They are both wrong. Truth takes a road between them both, for while the Presbyterian says: 'Once in grace, you cannot fall;' the Methodist says: 'You can have grace today, fall from it tomorrow, next day have grace again; and so follow on, changing continually.' But the doctrine of the scriptures and the spirit of Elijah would show them both false, and take a road between them both; for, according to the scripture, if men have received the good word of God, and tasted of the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, it is impossible to renew them again, seeing they have crucified the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame; so there is a possibility of falling away; you could not be renewed again, and the power of Elijah cannot seal against this sin, for this is a reserve made in the seals and power of the priesthood." (*Teachings*, pp. 338-339.) Thus, even though a man's calling and election has been made sure, if he then commits blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, he becomes a son of perdition, because when he was sealed up unto eternal life it was with a reservation. The sealing was not to apply in the case of the unpardonable sin.

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As to the fact that the sealing power cannot seal a man up unto eternal life if he thereafter commits murder and thereby sheds innocent blood (not in this case the blood of Christ, but the blood of any person slain unlawfully and with malice) the Prophet says: "A murderer, for instance, one that sheds innocent blood, cannot have forgiveness. David sought repentance at the hand of God carefully with tears, for the murder of Uriah; but he could only get it through hell; he got a promise that his soul should not be left in hell.

"Although David was a king, he never did obtain the spirit and power of Elijah and the fullness of the priesthood; and the priesthood that he received, and the throne and kingdom of David is to be taken from him and given to another by the name of David in the last days, raised up out of his lineage." (*Teachings*, p. 339.) Thus, even though a man's calling and election has been made sure, if he then commits murder, all of the promises are of no effect, and he goes to a telestial kingdom (Rev. 21:8; D. & C. 76:103), because when he was sealed up unto eternal life, it was with a reservation. The sealing was not to apply in the case of murder.

And as to the fact that the sealing power cannot seal a man up unto eternal life if he thereafter commits adultery, the Prophet says: "If a man commit adultery, he cannot receive the celestial kingdom of God. Even if he is saved in any kingdom, it cannot be the celestial kingdom." (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, p. 81.) Thus, even though a man's calling and election has been sure, if he then commits adultery, all of the promises are of no effect, and he goes to a telestial kingdom, because when he was sealed up unto eternal life, it was with a reservation. The sealing was not to apply in the case of subsequent adultery. In other cases, through repentance, there is forgiveness for this sin which is second only to murder in the category of personal sins. (1 Cor. 6:9-11; 3 Ne. 30; D. & C. 42:24-26.)

*Who has had their calling and election made sure and how can they be identified?*

In the providences of the Lord, there is no question that many of the saints of all ages and dispensations have attained this high

status, a fact which can be known in individual cases by applying the principles above set forth to the individual situation.

In this present discussion we have named Isaiah, Ezekiel, John the Revelator, Paul, William Clayton and "many others" of the Prophet's day, the Ephesian Saints, and "all the saints who held communion with the general assembly and Church of the First-born." (*Teachings*, p. 151.)

For our day, the Prophet Joseph Smith is the classical example of one who was sealed up unto eternal life. Of him the revelation states: "I am the Lord thy God, and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father." (D. & C. 132:49.)

Obviously if it applies to Isaiah and Ezekiel, it applies also to Jeremiah, Samuel, Moses, Joshua and all of the prophets; if it applies to Joseph Smith and William Clayton and "many others" in the Prophet's day, certainly a great many of the later worthies of this dispensation are also included; and if a sizeable number of the Ephesian Saints were so classified, then surely the same applies to like groups of the saints in Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Philippi, Colosse, Thessalonica, and in all the places where the Meridian Saints were congregated. If Paul and John are part of the group, so also are Peter, James, Titus, Jude, Matthew, the other apostles, and many of the preachers of righteousness of that ancient day.

And can there be any question that the same was true among the Nephites? And Jaredites? That it included all of the City of Zion and those who were thereafter caught up to heaven to dwell with Enoch and his translated brethren? And if this glorious principle has always operated in days past, is it beyond reason that it is still sealing blessings upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints? Verily, such is the case now — a situation which we anticipate shall be increasingly so as the Millennium approaches, during which period the sealing power and all its attendant blessings will abound on every side.

As with all the blessings of the gospel, the glorious reality

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of having one's calling and election made sure is within the power of the faithful saints to obtain, including both men and women.

*How many of the saints have or shall make their calling and election sure?*

There is no more an answer to this question than there was to the query put to Jesus: "Lord, are there few that be saved?" to which he answered: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:23-24), by which he meant to teach that though the total saved will be many they are few as compared to the masses of men. And so it is among the saints with reference to being sealed up unto eternal life: though many shall so obtain, they will be few compared to the total population of the Church.

It is in this sense that Jesus used the enigmatic expression, "Many are called, but few are chosen." (Matt. 22:14.) Called to what? Chosen for what? Called into the Church, called to the holy priesthood, called to receive all of the blessings of the gospel, including the crowning blessing of eternal life. Chosen to inherit the blessings offered through the gospel and the priesthood; chosen for eternal life and exaltation. Called to the Church, but chosen to be sealed up unto eternal life and to have one's calling and election made sure.

"How many will be able to abide a celestial law, and go through and receive their exaltation," the Prophet said, "I am unable to say, as many are called, but few are chosen." (*Teachings*, p. 331.)

And from the Lord himself we have these words: "There are many who have been ordained among you, whom I have called but few of them are chosen. They who are not chosen have sinned a very grievous sin, in that they are walking in darkness at noon-day. . . . If you keep not my commandments, the love of the Father shall not continue with you, therefore you shall walk in darkness." (D. & C. 95:5-6, 12.) Also: "There has been a day of calling, but the time has come for a day of choosing; and let those be chosen that are worthy. And it shall be manifest unto my servant, by the voice of the Spirit, those that are chosen; and they shall be sanctified." (D. & C. 105:35-36.)

And, finally, as to reason why so few of the saints shall be saved, we have this great and inspired utterance of the Prophet: Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson — That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man. Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God. We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Hence many are called, but few are chosen." (D. & C. 121:34-40.)

And now to return to Peter's pleading that the saints make their calling and election sure.

1-19. "There are three grand secrets lying in this chapter," the Prophet said, "which no man can dig out, unless by the light of revelation, and which unlock the whole chapter, as the things that are written are only hints of things which existed in the prophet's mind, which are not written concerning eternal glory. I am going to take up this subject by virtue of the knowledge of God in me, which I have received from heaven." (*Teachings*, p. 304.) And it is these teachings of Joseph Smith which we have essayed to put forth in the foregoing discussion.

These are the three secrets: "1st key: Knowledge is the power of salvation. 2nd key: Make your calling and election sure: 3rd key: It is one thing to be on the mount and hear the excellent voice, etc., and another to hear the voice declare to you, You have a part and lot in that kingdom." (*Teachings* p. 306.)

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1. **Like precious faith with us]** Peter is writing to those who believe as he and the other apostles believe. The doctrines he is about to present are beyond the comprehension of uninspired men; they can only be understood by the power of that Spirit which the saints receive at baptism.

2-10. The Prophet taught: "It is not wisdom that we should have all knowledge at once presented before us; but that we should have a little at a time; then we can comprehend it . . . Add to your faith knowledge, etc. The principle of knowledge is the principle of salvation. This principle can be comprehended by the faithful and diligent; and every one that does not obtain knowledge sufficient to be saved will be condemned. The principle of salvation is given us through the knowledge of Jesus Christ." (*Teachings*, p. 297.)

Also: "Contend earnestly for the like precious faith with the Apostle Peter, 'and add to your faith virtue,' knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity; 'for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Another point, after having all these qualifications, he lays this injunction upon the people 'to make your calling and election sure.' He is emphatic upon this subject — after adding all this virtue, knowledge, etc., 'Make your calling and election sure.' What is the secret — the starting point? 'According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.' How did he obtain all things? Through the knowledge of him who hath called him. There could not anything be given, pertaining to life and godliness, without knowledge. Woe! woe! woe to Christendom! — especially the divines and priests if this be true.

"Salvation is for a man to be saved from all his enemies; for until a man can triumph over death, he is not saved. A knowledge of the priesthood alone will do this." (*Teachings*, p. 305.)

3. **All things that pertain unto life and godliness]** The true saints have every doctrine, law, key, and power needed to gain eternal life and become like God.

**Called us to glory and virtue]** Called us to that eternal life

which none but the clean can inherit, for "no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom." (3 Ne. 27:19.)

**4. Exceeding great and precious promises]** Promises of eternal life, which is "the greatest of all the gifts of God." (D. & C. 4:7.)

**Partakers of the divine nature]** Become as God is, enjoying to the full every characteristic, perfection, and attribute which he possesses and which dwell in him independently.

**5-19.** Joseph Smith said: "Now, there is some grand secret here, and keys to unlock the subject. Notwithstanding the apostle exhorts them to add to their faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, etc., yet he exhorts them to make their calling and election sure. And though they had heard an audible voice from heaven bearing testimony that Jesus was the Son of God; yet he says we have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light shining in a dark place. Now, wherein could they have a more sure word of prophecy than to hear the voice of God saying, This is my beloved Son.

"Now for the secret and grand key. Though they might hear the voice of God and know that Jesus was the Son of God, this would be no evidence that their election and calling was made sure, that they had part with Christ, and were joint-heirs with him. They then would want that more sure word of prophecy, that they were sealed in the heavens and had the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God. Then, having this promise sealed unto them, it was an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast. Though the thunders might roll and lightnings flash, and earthquakes bellow, and war gather thick around, yet this hope and knowledge would support the soul in every hour of trial, trouble and tribulation. Then knowledge through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the grand key that unlocks the glories and mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

"Compare this principle once with Christendom at the present day, and where are they, with all their boasted religion, piety and sacredness while at the same time they are crying out against prophets, apostles, angels, revelations, prophesying and visions,

etc. Why, they are just ripening for the damnation of hell. They will be damned, for they reject the most glorious principle of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and treat with disdain and trample under foot the key that unlocks the heavens and puts in our possession the glories of the celestial world. Yes, I say, such will be damned, with all their professed godliness. Then I would exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until you make your calling and election sure for yourselves, by obtaining this more sure word of prophecy, and wait patiently for the promise until you obtain it." (*Teachings*, pp. 298-299.)

**5-7.** The attributes of godliness here listed are the ones which qualify the Lord's ministers for effective service on his errand, and all his saints for eternal life in his kingdom. Salvation must be won, and to go where God is, we must be like him; and to be like him we must possess the character, perfections, and attributes which he possesses. "And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work. Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence." (D. & C. 4:5-6.)

**5. Faith]** See *Commentary I*, pp. 523-525; *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., pp. 261-267.

**Virtue]** Moral excellence and rectitude in every field, including personal chastity. To his saints the Lord decrees: "Ye must practise virtue and holiness before me continually." (D. & C. 46:33.)

**Knowledge]** An understanding of and familiarity with gospel truth; a clear perception of eternal truth; enlightenment and learning about God and his laws. Thus, "A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge" (*Teachings*, p. 217), of God and his laws; and "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance" (D. & C. 131:6), of Jesus Christ and the saving principles of the gospel. Accordingly, "the word of knowledge" (1 Cor. 12:8) is one of the gifts of the Spirit.

**6. Temperance]** See *Commentary II*, pp. 482-484.

**Patience]** See Jas. 5:7-11.

**Godliness]** See 2 Tim. 2:14-26.

**7. Brotherly kindness]** "In their pursuit of godly graces the saints are exhorted, 'And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' (Eph. 4:32; D. & C. 4:6; 121:42.) Kindness embraces an interest in another's welfare and a disposition to be helpful. The kind are tender, gracious, benevolent, well-disposed, and exhibit sympathy and humaneness toward their fellow men." (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., pp. 413-414.)

**Charity]** See *Commentary II*, pp. 377-380.

**8.** None can comprehend the knowledge of God, of Christ, and of the gospel unless he himself possesses the attributes of godliness, for the knowledge of spiritual things comes only by revelation, and until a person gains godly attributes he cannot receive the Spirit from whom revelation comes.

**9. Purged from his old sins]** By baptism and the receipt of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

**10.** Those who keep the commandments shall be saved; they cannot fall; and every saint who walks continually in paths of truth and righteousness shall have his calling and election made sure.

**11.** Those saints who keep the commandments shall gain an inheritance in the highest heaven in the celestial kingdom.

**13. I am in this tabernacle]** **14. Shortly I must put off this tabernacle]** Peter is a spirit child of an Eternal Father; the living, intelligent, sentient part of his personality is his spirit; and shortly he shall be slain for the word of truth and the testimony of Jesus. (John 21:18-19.)

**16-19.** Peter here recounts his experience with James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration when those chosen three were eyewitnesses of our Lord's transfiguration and when they heard the voice of the Father, and then says there is something even greater than this. "And what could be more sure? When he was transfigured on the mount, what could be more sure to them?" the Prophet asks. (*Teachings*, p. 303.) The answer is to gain the personal revelation that one is sealed up unto eternal life.

**19.** "The more sure word of prophecy means a man's knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the Holy Priesthood." (D. & C. 131:5.) "The anointing and sealing is to be called, elected and made sure." (*Teachings*, p. 323.) "Let us suppose a case," the Prophet says. "Suppose the great God who dwells in heaven should reveal himself to Father Cutler here, by the opening heavens, and tell him, I offer up a decree that whatsoever you seal on earth with your decree, I will seal it in heaven; you have the power then; can it be taken off? No. Then what you seal on earth, by the keys of Elijah, is sealed in heaven; and this is the power of Elijah, and this is the difference between the spirit and power of Elias and Elijah; for while the spirit of Elias is a forerunner, the power of Elijah is sufficient to make our calling and election sure; and the same doctrine, where we are exhorted to go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, etc. . . . Here is the doctrine of election that the world has quarreled so much about; but they do not know anything about it." (*Teachings*, p. 338.)

**Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts]** Until the Second Coming of the Lord; until the Millennial day dawns; until the day when "the root and the offspring of David" who is "the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16) shall reign personally on earth and be the companion, confidant, and friend of those whose calling and election is sure and who are thus called forth as "kings and priests" to live and "reign on earth" (Rev. 5:10) with him a thousand years.

## PROPHECY COMES BY POWER OF HOLY GHOST

II PETER 1:20-21.

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man:

but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

I.V. II PETER 1:20.

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scriptures is given of any private will of man.