

THE IMPORTANCE OF “ASKING AND KNOCKING” by Margaret Heide

Our present dilemma seems to be as follows: we know that to continue on as we have been doing since 1830 will not save us from conditions ahead (such as are prophesied in scripture), but we don't quite know how to make that “quantum leap” from where we are (spiritually) to the endowment. And the endowment is necessary so that Zion can come into being. Zion, the kingdom of God is, of course, the only real answer to the world's problems. Our difficulty seems to be that we are pretty satisfied with the spiritual level we're on, and have little “felt need” for all that God has for us. God knew this when He designed His Plan of Redemption or Salvation and then sent His Son to earth to die that we might receive the Spirit of Truth to “lead us into all truth.” (John 16:7-15 I.V.) I believe this Spirit to be the New Covenant, for it opens the way to the endowment and Zion and all that God has for us. Remembering that Jesus said that He would build His Church on the Rock of revealed knowledge about Himself (Matthew 16:14-20 I.V.), it seems clear that experiencing a revelation in some form (a vision or an “opening of the eyes of our understanding”) of God's great works is the way we can make that quantum leap from where we are to the endowment.

God knew it would take a really profound spiritual experience to build up our faith in Christ to knowledge. The brother of Jared had faith that had become knowledge because God had revealed to his understanding “many great works” (Ether 1:83); and he had also touched the sixteen stones with His finger, which the brother of Jared saw, causing them to produce light. And because of his knowledge, he received the endowment or “partial redemption.” Abraham's great faith was based on God's revelation of His Kingdom on earth, for, “(Abraham) looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” (Hebrews 11:10 I.V.) We read in Romans, chapter 4, that the Lord counted Abraham's great faith for righteousness and gave him the promises. Alma II “fasted and prayed many days” to know “these things” (the mysteries) for himself. (Alma 3:79) And in receiving what he asked for, he also apparently received the Spirit of revelation and prophecy. (Alma 3:80) This is reasonable because, “. . . the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.” (Revelation 19:10) Let us note here that the great mysteries of resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment are the testimony of what Jesus did for us when He sacrificed His life for mankind on the cross. (The mysteries are knowledge of God—D.C. 83:3b; and knowledge of God is defined in Words of Mormon 12 as knowledge of the redemption of Christ). A vastly greater degree of knowledge of Christ and His redemption is therefore what we must acquire in order to receive the endowment, and this knowledge can only come by His Spirit. Peter tells us, “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 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; Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature . . .” (II Peter 1:2-4) And Paul's prayers for the Ephesians included, “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him” (Christ) (Ephesians 1:17), and Paul gave the ideal spiritual condition as, “Till we, in the unity of the faith, all come to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:13) Mosiah 2:7-12 also states how vital knowledge of God is to our endowment and salvation.

Nephi, early in his account, tells us that he desired to see the vision his father had seen, for he states this “. . . is the gift of God to all those who diligently seek him, as well in times of old as in the time that he should manifest himself to the children of men; for he is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And the way is prepared from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come to him. For he that diligently seeks shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded to him by the power of the Holy Ghost. . . Wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round.” (1 Nephi 3:26-32) This scripture tells us this is how God works to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. We notice also from D.C. 22:23 that His work brings Him glory. What an accomplishment He achieves by His New and Everlasting Covenant (even that which was from the Beginning—D.C. 20:1a and 49:2d), for by means of its provisions, man can receive a divine nature (the endowment) without the least violation of his agency! Nephi states that God’s eternal round of work is always the same, and He does His work by revealing wonderful things to us. That never changes.

Then, at the close of Nephi’s second book, he advises us to “Feast upon the words of Christ . . .” (II Nephi 14:4) The other day I was reading this, and the next several verses, seemed to really stand out on that particular occasion. Nephi said if we do not understand how feasting upon the words of Christ will tell us all things we need to do (to receive celestial glory), it is because we don’t ask or knock. And the next words came to my attention very powerfully: Nephi continues by saying if we don’t ask or knock, we must “perish in the dark” (not inherit celestial glory).

If we pray and fast that, like Alma, we can “know these things (the mysteries) for ourselves,” our faith in Christ will become knowledge, and the Lord will count our faith for righteousness and give us the promise of His Spirit (the Spirit of Truth or Holy Spirit of Promise) and endow us. Then the ordinances of the Melchisedec Priesthood will “show forth the power of godliness,” and priesthood and members alike will all be able to pray in the name of Jesus, and what we ask will be done, for we will only ask according to God’s will, having received the New Covenant. What great possibilities and prospects are before us as we increase in faith through revealed knowledge of Christ as we diligently “ask and knock!”