

Zion's Hierarchy

Reading from Genesis, Chapter 4 of the restoration edition scriptures:

“And it came to pass that Enoch journeyed in the land, among the people, and as he journeyed the Spirit of God descended out of heaven, and abode upon him, And he heard a voice from heaven, saying, Enoch, my son, prophesy unto this people, and say unto them, Repent, for thus saith the Lord, I am angry with this people, and my fierce anger is kindled against them, for their hearts have waxed hard, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes cannot see afar off. And for these many generations, even since the day that I created them, have they gone astray, and have denied me, and have sought their own counsels in the dark, and in their own abominations have they devised murder, and have not kept the commandments which I gave unto their father Adam. Wherefore, they have forsworn themselves, and by their oaths they have brought upon themselves death. And an hell I have prepared for them, if they repent not, And this is a decree which I have sent forth in the beginning of the world, from mine own mouth, from the foundation thereof, and by the mouths of my servants, thy fathers, have I decreed it, even as it shall be sent forth in the world, unto the end thereof.

And when Enoch had heard these words, he bowed himself to the earth, before the Lord, and spake before the Lord, saying, Why is it that I have found favor in thy sight, and am but a lad, and all the people hate me, for I am slow of speech, wherefore am I thy servant? And the Lord said unto Enoch, Go forth, and do as I have commanded thee, and no man shall pierce thee. Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance, for all flesh is in my hands, and I will do as seemeth me good. Say unto this people, choose ye this day to serve the Lord God who made you. Behold, my Spirit is upon you, wherefore all thy words will I justify, and the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course, and thou shalt abide in me, and I in you, therefore walk with me.”

God did not send the leader of the country. He sent the most unlikely of men to preach His word and call repentance among the people.

It is this world society that loves a hierarchy. It is this world society that values classes, ranks, attention, ambition, and money. It is this world that values ambition in all these things.

Here is another passage from the same chapter of Genesis –

“And it came to pass, that Enoch went forth in the land, among the people, standing upon the hills, and the high places, and cried with a loud voice, testifying against their works. And all men were offended because of him, and they came forth to hear him upon the high places, saying unto the tent-keepers, Tarry ye here and keep the tents while we go yonder to behold the seer, for he prophesieth, and there is a strange thing in the land, a wild man hath come among us. And it came to pass when they heard him, no man laid hands on him, for fear came on them all that heard him, for he walked with God.

And there came a man unto him, whose name was Mahijah, and said unto him, Tell us plainly who thou art, and from whence thou comest.”

It sounds like Mahijah wants to know Enoch’s pedigree. Possibly, he is thinking he will listen if he is a great noble leader or from some other impressive background. Enoch gives him an answer and it gives us a clue as to what is of true value.

“And he said unto them, I came out from the land of Cainan, the land of my fathers, a land of righteousness unto this day, and my father taught me in all the ways of God. And it came to pass, as I journeyed from the land of Cainan by the sea east, I beheld a vision, and lo, the heavens I saw, and the Lord spake with me, and gave me commandment, wherefore for this cause, to keep the commandment, I speak forth these words. And Enoch continued his speech, saying, The Lord which spake with me, the same is the God of heaven, and he is my God and your God, and ye are my brethren, and why counsel ye yourselves, and deny the God of heaven? The heavens he made, the earth is his footstool, and the foundation thereof is his, behold, he laid it, and hosts of men hath he brought in upon the face thereof. And death hath come upon our fathers, nevertheless, we know them, and cannot deny, and even the first of all we know, even Adam, for a book of remembrance we have written among us, according to the pattern given by the finger of God, and it is given in our own language.

And as Enoch spake forth the words of God, the people trembled and could not stand in his presence.”

His pedigree – he was taught in the ways of God by his father and the God of Heaven and Earth gave him a commandment to speak.

We are just beginning to find out what is valued in God’s kingdom and it isn’t the hierarchies of man.

We must get over our idolatry of those who are held up by Babylon’s values; values that have been present since the beginning of this world, as a counterfeit to God’s society or we will forever be blinded. We must grow to see the real value of people and of God’s words to us.

From Hugh Nibley’s Approaching Zion –

“Just like Zion, Babylon is a city. “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. The great world center of commerce and business, “the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. Indeed, thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.” Babylon is built upon deceptions. Babylon is described fully in Revelation 18 : She is rich, luxurious, immoral, full of fornications, merchants, riches, delicacies, sins, merchandise, gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linens, purples, silks, scarlets, tyine wood, all manner of vessels, ivory, precious wood, brass, iron, marble, and so on. She is a giant delicatessen, full of wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, a perfume counter with cinnamon, odors, ointments, and frankincense; a market with beasts and sheep. It reads like a guide to a modern supermarket or department store. Horses and chariots and all manner of services are available; slaves in the souls of men. These are the fruits thy soul lusted after and all things which were dainty and goodly”. And it all is for sale. Her king is equated to Lucifer, who says, “ I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:14) And all the nations are weakened at her expense.”

A bit after this he explains Zion and Babylon further –

“Throughout the scriptures, Zion is brought into the clearest focus by placing it against a dark background; and like Zion, that background world is given a code name: Babylon. Babylon, like Zion, is a real society – a type, place, and environment of human existence, described in the scriptures with great clarity and precision. (The word Babylon is not just a general term to indicate anything that is not Zion; it is the designation of a very particular and specific type of society.) Though Babylon is vividly described by the prophets, the best way to define her is as the exact opposite of Zion in all things. Babylon is just as pure in its way as is Zion; it is pure evil – for even good, when it becomes contaminated and perverted, becomes an evil. The main thing is that Babylon and Zion cannot mix in any degree; a Zion that makes concessions is no longer Zion.

One may well ask if it is necessary to choose between such absolute extremes, and wonder if there is not some more moderate approach to the problems. By the very nature of things, there is no third way – as the early Jewish and Christian writers remind us repeatedly in their doctrine of the Two Ways. According to this oldest and best established of teachings (though quite unpopular with conventional Christianity and Judaism of our time), there are Two Ways lying before every person in this life, the Way of Light and the Way of Darkness, the Way of Life and the Way of Death; and every mortal every day of his life is required to make a choice between them.

Unfortunately for our peace of mind, any compromise between the Two Ways is out of the question, since they lead in opposite directions. As the wise Heraclitus pointed out long ago, 'The up-road and the down road are one and the same.' Which one you are on depends entirely on the way you are facing. To go off at an angle is to get nowhere; if you find the road to Zion, the Heavenly City, too steep, you may mitigate the climb by striking off on a more level course – but in that case you will never, never reach Zion.”

Here are a few more scriptures that speak to us of what God values and what choices we need to make in order to find Zion.

From Matthew Chapter 9 –

“Then came Peter to him and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but, until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him who owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. And the servant besought him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. The servant, therefore, fell down and worshipped him. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants which owed him a hundred pence, and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me what thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord said unto him, O thou wicked servant! I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses.”

King Benjamin reminds us that we can serve, but we are unprofitable, and must keep the commandments of God. From Mosiah, Chapter 1 –

“And behold I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom, that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God. Behold ye have called me your king. And if I, whom ye call your king, do labor to serve you, then had not ye ought to labor to serve one another? And behold also if I, whom ye call your king, who has spent his days in your service and yet has been in the service of God, doth merit any thanks from you, O how had you ought to thank your heavenly King. I say unto you my brethren that if you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole souls have power to possess to that God who has created you and has kept and preserved you and has caused that ye should rejoice and has granted that ye should live in peace one with another, -I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning and art preserving you from day to day by lending you breath that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another- I say, If ye should serve him with all your whole soul, yet ye would be unprofitable servants. And behold all that he requires of you is to keep his commandments. And he has promised you that if ye would keep his commandments, ye should prosper in the land. And he never doth vary from that which he hath said. Therefore if ye do keep his commandments he doth bless you and prosper you.

And now in the first place, he hath created you and granted unto you your lives, for which ye are indebted unto him. And secondly, he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you, for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you, and therefore he hath paid you. And ye are still indebted unto him and are and will be forever and ever. Therefore of what have ye to boast? And now I ask, Can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth, yet ye were created of the dust of the earth but behold it belongeth to him who created you. And I, even I, whom ye call your king, am no better than ye yourselves are, for I am also of the dust...”

Let me repeat some of his words “And behold all that he requires of you is to keep his commandments.” Keeping His commandments leads to doing and serving, but it is true service. True, Christlike service - teaching His words, bending to His will, kneeling and serving.

It is our responsibility to learn the commandments, keep the commandments, and apply the commandments.

Enoch and King Benjamin knew what was of true value. Enoch had faith in God, he was loyal to God's ways and His commands. He sacrificed to teach all who would listen. King Benjamin taught and served all his days and sacrificed to do so. The key is that they did not value themselves and the attention they received, they valued God, His ways, His commands, His children. They raised any who would listen to greater enlightenment only by teaching and serving; not by leading (in humanity's sense of the word), not by taking control, not by trying to exalt themselves.

Mother Theresa was one who exemplified true Christlike service. She lived her whole life committed to relieving the suffering of others. Here is some of the wisdom she imparted from living such a life. She said -

"Let us touch the dying, the poor, the lonely and the unwanted according to the graces we have received and let us not be ashamed or slow to do the humble work."

"A sacrifice to be real must cost, must hurt, and must empty ourselves. Give yourself fully to God. He will use you to accomplish great things on the condition that you believe much more in his love than in your weakness."

Imagine a flat line instead of a pyramid. Those who are exalted are ones who go below this line and support it. Those who kneel and bow down to serve and teach their peers on the line; not those who climb on top of others and push others out of the way in order to be at the top of the pyramid, or mountain, as in the child's game, king of the mountain. This is a game taught to children that teaches the ongoing values of Babylon, not Zion.

Compare this passage of scripture in Alma chapter 1 –

"Now this was a great trial to those that did stand fast in the faith; nevertheless they were steadfast and immovable in keeping the commandments of God, and they bore with patience the persecution which was heaped upon them. And when the priests left their labor to impart the word of God unto the people, the people also left their labors to hear the word of God. And when the priest had imparted unto them the word of God, they all returned again diligently unto their labors,

and the priest, not esteeming himself above his hearers, for the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner.

And thus they were all equal; and they did all labor, every man according to his strength. And they did impart of their substance, every man according to that which he had, to the poor and the needy and the sick and the afflicted. And they did not wear costly apparel, yet they were neat and comely. And thus they did establish the affairs of the church, and thus they began to have continual peace again, notwithstanding all their persecutions.

We need to be humble, serve, and reach beneath everyone in order to lift all. That is what God values, not hierarchies of idols.

This is exceedingly difficult to accomplish in this toxic society that we live in. A society that barrages all, especially children, with false messages at every turn. We have to repent constantly, and, consistently, reorient ourselves toward Christ by following His commandments. All prophets are told to preach repentance. Why? Because we humans are a stubborn lot and we like our own ideas and our own works too much.

Here are the words of the prophets from the Lord to us in this day-

From 3rd Nephi - Chapter 14

Hearken, O ye Gentiles, and hear the words of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, which he hath commanded me that I should speak concerning you, for behold he commandeth me that I should write saying, Turn, all ye Gentiles, from your wicked ways and repent of your evil doings: of your lyings and deceivings, and of your whoredoms, and of your secret abominations, and your idolatries, and of your murders, and of your priestcrafts, and your envyings, and your strifes, and from all your wickedness and abominations. And come unto me and be baptized in my name that ye may receive a remission of your sins and be filled with the Holy Ghost, that ye may be numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel.

From Helaman –

“And it came to pass that there arose a division among the people insomuch that they divided hither and thither and went their ways, leaving Nephi alone as he was standing in the midst of them. And it came to pass that Nephi went his way towards his own house pondering upon the things which the Lord had shewn unto him. And it came to pass as he was thus pondering, being much cast down because of the wickedness of the people of the Nephites, their secret works of darkness, and their murderings, and their plunderings, and all manner of iniquities, and it came to pass as he was thus pondering in his heart, behold, a voice came unto him, saying, Blessed art thou Nephi for those things which thou hast done. For I have beheld how thou hast with unwearyingness declared the word which I have given unto thee, unto this people. And thou hast not feared them, and hast not sought thine own life, but have sought my will and to keep my commandments. And now because thou hast done this with such unwearyingness, behold, I will bless thee forever. And I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works, yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will. Behold, thou art Nephi, and I am God. Behold, I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels that ye shall have power over this people and shall smite the earth with famine, and with pestilence, and destruction, according to the wickedness of this people. Behold, I give unto you power that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven, and thus shall ye have power among this people. And thus, if ye shall say unto this temple, It shall be rent in twain, it shall be done. And if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou cast down and become smooth, it shall be done. And behold, if ye shall say that God shall smite this people, it shall come to pass. And now behold, I command you that ye shall go and declare unto this people that thus saith the Lord God, who is the Almighty, Except ye repent, ye shall be smitten even unto destruction.”

Also from Helaman we read–

“O repent ye, repent ye. Why will ye die? Turn ye, turn ye unto the Lord your God. Why has he forsaken you? It is because you have hardened your hearts, yea, ye

will not hearken unto the voice of the good shepherd; yea, ye have provoked him to anger against you. And behold, instead of gathering you, except ye will repent, behold he shall scatter you forth that ye shall become meat for dogs and wild beasts. O how could you have forgotten your God in the very day that he has delivered you?

But behold, it is to get gain, to be praised of men, yea, and that ye might get gold and silver. And ye have set your hearts upon the riches and the vain things of this world, for the which ye do murder, and plunder, and steal, and bear false witness against your neighbor, and do all manner of iniquity, and for this cause wo shall come unto you except ye shall repent.

From Alma, chapter 3 - Could ye say, if ye were called to die at this time, within yourselves that ye have been sufficiently humble, that your garments have been cleansed and made white through the blood of Christ, who will come to redeem his people from their sins? Behold are ye stripped of pride? I say unto you, If ye are not, ye are not prepared to meet God. Behold ye must prepare quickly; for the kingdom of heaven is soon at hand, and such an one hath not eternal life. Behold I say, Is there one among you who is not stripped of envy? I say unto you that such an one is not prepared. And I would that he should prepare quickly, for the hour is close at hand; and he knoweth not when the time shall come, for such an one is not found guiltless.

And again I say unto you, Is there one among you that doth make a mock of his brother or that heapeth upon him persecutions? Wo unto such an one, for he is not prepared; and the time is at hand that he must repent, or he cannot be saved. Yea, even wo unto all ye workers of iniquity; repent, repent, for the Lord God hath spoken it. Behold he sendeth an invitation unto all men; for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith, Repent and I will receive you. Yea, he saith, Come unto me and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life; yea, ye shall eat and drink of the bread and the waters of life freely. Yea, come unto me and bring forth works of righteousness, and ye shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire. For behold the time is at hand that whosoever bringeth forth not good fruit, or whosoever doeth not the works of righteousness, the same have cause to wail and mourn.

O ye workers of iniquity, ye that are puffed up in the vain things of the world, ye that have professed to have known the ways of righteousness, nevertheless have gone astray as sheep having no shepherd. Notwithstanding a shepherd hath called after you and art still calling after you, but ye will not hearken unto his voice. Behold I say unto you that the good shepherd doth call you; yea, and in his own name he doth call you, which is the name of Christ.

And if ye will not hearken unto the voice of the good shepherd, to the name by which ye are called, behold ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd. And now if ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd, of what fold are ye? . . .

For I say unto you that whatsoever is good cometh from God and whatsoever is evil cometh from the devil. Therefore if a man bringeth forth good works, he hearkeneth unto the voice of the good shepherd, and he doth follow him. But whosoever bringeth forth evil works, the same becometh a child of the devil, for he hearkeneth unto his voice and doth follow him. And whosoever doeth this must receive his wages of him. Therefore for his wages, he receiveth death as to things pertaining unto righteousness, being dead unto all good works. And now my brethren, I would that ye should hear me, for I speak in the energy of my soul. For behold I have spoken unto you plain, that ye cannot err, or have spoken according to the commandments of God. For I am called to speak after this manner according to the holy order of God, which is in Christ Jesus. Yea, I am commanded to stand and testify unto this people the things which have been spoken by our fathers concerning the things which are to come. And this is not all; do ye not suppose that I know of these things myself? Behold I testify unto you that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true. And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety? Behold I say unto you, They are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God.

I am thankful for the Lord's guiding words in scripture. May we all repent, for we all have much to repent of, so that after much fasting and prayer and diligence, we too may bare testimony of Him and be called His. Amen.