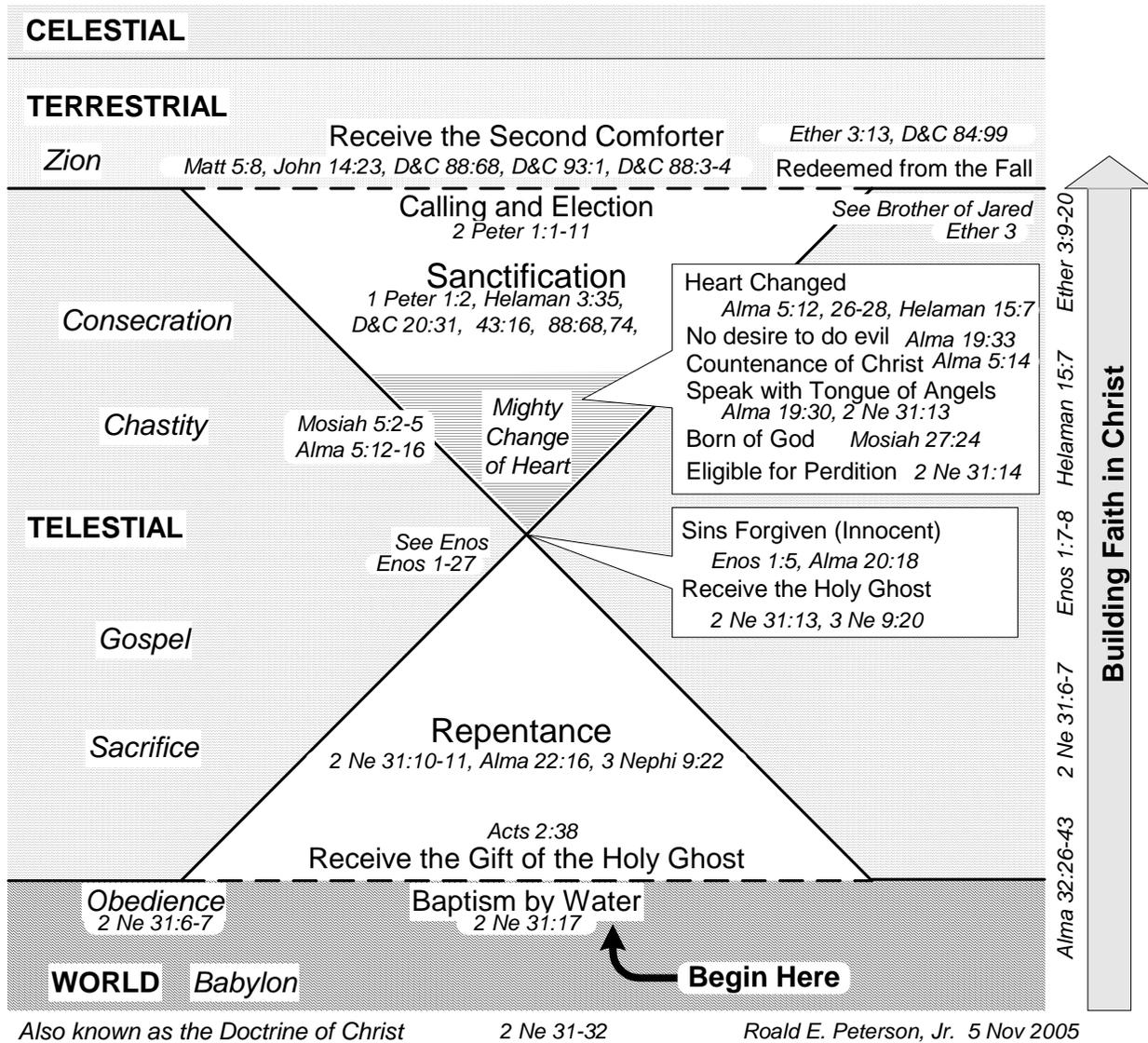


Strait and Narrow Way

Matt 7:14



PART 1 – Introducing the Way

Invitation – If you are seeking greater depth to your understanding of the gospel, and how to fit all the many pieces together into a single coherent plan, this is what you’re looking for. This drawing is a map depicting the spiritual processes, events, and changes one must go through to come unto Christ. He will then prepare you to be received by the Father. This is the fullness of the Gospel. It is taught in the scriptures and in the temple, but it is not well known (“...strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Matt 7:14)

Come Unto Christ – The command to come unto Christ (Matt 11:28) is literal, not figurative. Those who follow the full gospel path will find themselves

walking one day into the presence of the Savior, just as the Brother of Jared did (Ether 3). We do not have to wait, nor should we wait until death to see the face of Christ. Those who are valiant will seek his face always (D&C 101:38).

Spiritual Levels & Cities – Our Father in Heaven lives in the Celestial Kingdom, where we once lived. When we were sent to earth we found ourselves in a world at the telestial spiritual level. This life’s test and purpose are to ascend from the telestial level to the terrestrial, to prepare for our resurrection back into the celestial. The world is characterized by the city of Babylon. The terrestrial order is also characterized by a city, Zion. To reach Zion we must become pure in

heart. If we are pure in heart, we shall also see God, even Jesus Christ, the King of Zion (D&C 97:16-21, D&C 101:18, Matt 5:8). Between the righteous of Zion and the wicked of Babylon, there is a great gulf (1Ne 12:18; 15:30, Alma 26:20, Luke 16:26). Fallen people cannot cross this gulf without help from the Savior.

The Path to Christ – There is a path leading across this gulf. It is made possible only by the atonement of Christ, granting unto us a remission of sins, and can only be accomplished with the guidance, revelation, and regeneration of the Holy Ghost. Now, shed your pride and begin at the bottom.

Baptism – The path to Christ begins by leaving the world and taking upon us his name by repentance and the ordinance of baptism. This ordinance is for the express purpose of obtaining a remission of sins. By it we become candidates for the kingdom of God. As we learn greater obedience to the laws of God and develop greater faith in Christ we draw closer to that time when our sins will be fully removed. But a complete and lasting remission of sins usually comes some time after baptism, as we develop faith through repentance, asking for forgiveness, and preparing to receive it. However, we usually receive temporary remissions before complete remission. Since the Holy Ghost cannot dwell in an unclean temple, whenever we feel the Spirit with us, we can know that the atonement of Christ is operative in our lives, and for that period of time, we are innocent, or free of sin.

Gift of the Holy Ghost – The gift of the Holy Ghost is given to those who are obedient and are baptized. The purpose of the Holy Ghost is to provide guidance, confirm truth, and to bring about change in us. While we are commanded in the ordinance of the laying on of hands to “receive the Holy Ghost,” most do not receive it in its fullness because they have not received a full and lasting remission of sins. But just as the Liahona provided guidance from time to time according to the diligence of Lehi’s family, the Holy Ghost will guide and change us as we are worthy and seek his guidance. Whenever he is with us, our sins are in remission. Later in their journey on the ocean, Lehi’s people used the Liahona full time to steer their ship. Likewise, when we reach a point in our journey to the promise land (Christ), we will receive the Holy Ghost full time. By the way, Lehi’s journey to the promise land is symbolic of the path to Christ.

Repentance, Sacrifice, & Law of the Gospel – Our journey through the lower triangle is characterized by repenting (turning from disobedience to greater obedience), and by sacrificing things (good and bad) and habits which hold us back in our progress. This constant refinement includes stricter and stricter obedience to the laws of the gospel. It also includes sharing and proclaiming the gospel. Greater obedience often means that our path seems to be

narrowing as we move toward the strait gate and we may feel confined or restricted.

Full Remission of Sins (Justification) – Eventually our faith grows to a point where, like Enos, we understand that we are unclean and that only Christ can cleanse us. Our desire to be clean brings us to ask God for forgiveness through the atonement of his Son. When our faith (reliance and belief) in Christ is sufficient, a full and complete remission of sins will be granted. At that point we become innocent before God. Notice in Enos’ story (v7,8) that it is faith and not repentance that allows us to receive forgiveness. Do NOT misunderstand this. It doesn’t mean repentance is optional. It is essential and enables us to develop the necessary faith. But too often we think forgiveness depends on us. It comes through Christ. Focus on Christ, who is mighty to save, not your weaknesses.

Receive the Holy Ghost – Because of our innocence, we receive the Holy Ghost and he dwells with us all the time, in a greater fullness than we have known. But even though we are innocent, we are not pure and holy. Innocence is only the lack of guilt. We must still be changed from our fallen telestial state to a pure terrestrial state. The Holy Ghost will provide constant guidance through the upper triangle. But even more importantly He will become the agent of great spiritual change.

Mighty Change of Heart – The first thing that changes is our heart, that part of our spirit containing our deepest desires. This process can take place in a few minutes or over a period of months. Alma the younger went through this process quickly. Others have taken a few hours or days. For most it will be a longer process of weeks or months. Careful reading of Enos will show evidence of his change taking place over a period of time. A major sign of this change is his concern shifting from himself to those around him and even including his enemies, whom he now sees and “brethren.” You may or may not know that the mighty change has taken place, but there will be signs of it in your life. If you ask whether you have been forgiven, the Holy Ghost will answer.

Sanctification – After the heart is changed, the rest of the spirit and physical body must be changed. The process of “burning” to change from a telestial to a terrestrial state is known as sanctification. This regeneration is made possible by the atonement of Christ and is performed by the Holy Ghost. While the first principles and ordinances of the gospel can bring a person to the mighty change of heart, the ordinance of the temple endowment is necessary for sanctification. Sanctification happens as we become a conduit for the Spirit while living the laws of chastity and consecration.

Laws of Chastity & Consecration – The law of chastity is twofold. It is a literal requirement for moral cleanliness, restricting sexual relations to marriage. Its greater meaning is to be symbolic of the absolute fidelity that must exist between Christ and us – between the Bridegroom and the bride. It is a deeper reiteration of the command to “have no other gods before me.” If we make God the first priority in our lives then all our resources, be they time, talents, or material, are consecrated to God’s purposes. Whereas sacrifice is characterized by giving up things to progress along the path, consecration is using things which are part of our stewardship for a greater purpose. It includes a change of attitude: “All that I have belongs to God. I should use it for his purposes because I’m only a steward.” Sacrifice deals more with the sins of commission, while consecration covers the sins of omission. Those who live the law of consecration find that God rewards them with greater stewardships until they finally receive all things. Because we receive greater opportunities, the path seems to widen in the upper triangle.

Calling and Election & Second Comforter – When we have proven ourselves capable of living the laws of the Celestial Kingdom, and when we are fully sanctified (have become pure in heart and holy), God, in his time, will seal us up unto salvation and eternal life. At this time we will also be eligible to receive the Second Comforter, who is Jesus Christ. We will also have the Holy Ghost bear witness to us that we have been sealed up. In this action he is acting as the Holy Spirit of Promise. The Brother of Jared story (Ether 3) provides us with a detailed account of receiving the Second Comforter. In his case, he was allowed to enter the presence of Christ, who then told him he was redeemed. Again, it was his faith that allowed him to knock and enter. Many others have also done this. It is sometimes referred to as entering into the Lord’s rest and can happen on either side of the veil.

Zion – When our calling and election are made sure we have become pure in heart and are therefore known as Zion (D&C 97:21). Zion is a terrestrial state of being. It is also the name of the holy city populated by Zion people, including Enoch and his people. These people are also members of the Church of the Firstborn (Hebrews 12:23, D&C 76:50-70). Because Zion people are terrestrial, God has often translated them – removed them from the terrestrial earth until the Millennium comes.

Preparing to see the Father – While returning to Christ ensures us eternal life, our journey is not complete until we return to our Father. Christ will teach us and prepare us for this great event. (John 14:23) While there are relatively few written things available at this time concerning this, and most are hidden behind symbolism, we know that the Brother of Jared saw and recorded all things, and much of this

is recorded in the gold plates. We also have an assurance that Christ will teach us when we come unto him (2 Nephi 32:6).

Why follow the Path – If we wish to receive all that our Father has, we must follow the path that leads us there, either now or later. The longer we wait, the more we show our slothfulness and the less our faith grows. Those who delay are not being valiant. Also, we are moving into a time of great tribulation and chaos, eventually, the only safety there will be is in Zion, the real Zion where the pure in heart are. Those who follow the path are far better able to teach others how to come unto Christ. It took me until the age of 49 to go through the mighty change of heart. Several of those I have taught have made the change before they were 25. Is this not worth it?

How to follow the Path – The path is not easy to find – few there be that find it – but those who diligently seek, ask, and knock will find it. Listen to and obey the words of the living prophets. Read and apply the Book of Mormon to your life. It is the handbook for coming unto Christ. That is its purpose. Seek and talk with others who are following the path. Pray much – counsel with the Lord in all your doings – learn to receive and understand revelation. Where possible, make the temple a regular part of your worship. All these things will bring the Spirit and allow it to work with you, increasing your faith.

“And Should We Die Before Our Journey’s Through – All is well.” Some worry that they might not complete the path and have their calling and election before they leave mortality. This life is a time of choosing paths to follow. Rarely, if ever, do people reach the end of their path in this life. Even Christ did not claim perfection until after his resurrection (Matt 5:48; 3 Ne 12:48). What is important is that we are facing the right direction and moving in that direction. While the speed with which we move may be an indication of how valiant we are, we are not judged by others’ capabilities, but by our own talents and abilities. If we are pressing forward along the gospel path when we die, we can expect to continue that path beyond the veil until we reach its end. “That same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.” (Alma 34:34) In other words, being valiant when we leave mortality, regardless of where we are on the path, gives us the promise that our calling and election will become sure. When we see the Lord face to face, he will not ask what took us so long, he will simply say, “welcome home.”

Conclusion

4 Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.

5 For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.

6 Behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and there will be no more doctrine given until after he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh. And when he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh, the things which he shall say unto you shall ye observe to do. (2 Nephi 32)

12 Now they, after being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, having their garments made white, being pure and spotless before God, could not look upon sin save it were with abhorrence; and there were many, exceedingly great many, who were made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God.

13 And now, my brethren, I would that ye should humble yourselves before God, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, that ye may also enter into that rest.

14 Yea, humble yourselves even as the people in the days of Melchizedek, who was also a high priest

after this same order which I have spoken, who also took upon him the high priesthood forever.

16 Now these ordinances were given after this manner, that thereby the people might look forward on the Son of God, it being a type of his order, or it being his order, and this that they might look forward to him for a remission of their sins, that they might enter into the rest of the Lord. (Alma 13)

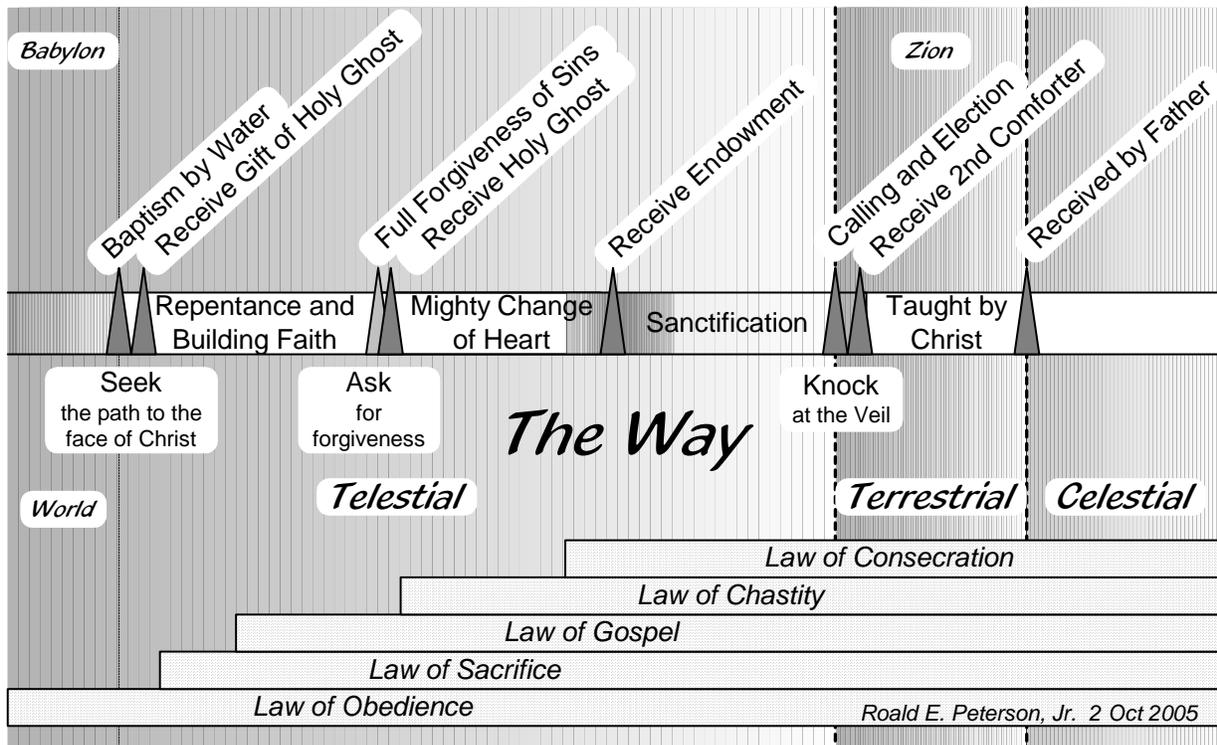
Seek the face of the Lord always, that in patience ye may possess your souls, and ye shall have eternal life. (D&C 101:38)

68 Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will. (D&C 88)

Seek the Spirit; the Holy Ghost will lead us to Christ, and Christ will lead us to the Father.

PART 2 – Events, Processes, and Laws of *The Way*

Introduction – It is helpful to understand which steps in the gospel path are events, taking place in an instant or over a few seconds, and which are processes, taking place over a period of time. In this diagram the levels of kingdoms are shown, as well as the various laws of the gospel. These steps are shown in proper sequence, and the scriptural examples which follow tell of people going through the different steps. Careful, prayerful study of the suggested scriptures will bring greater understanding. Regular temple worship will add even more. Remember, these are steps of personal, spiritual change, not simple acts to complete.



Events – The following are events along the path of spiritual progress. Although they happen in an instant or a very short time, they may be the result of a long period of growth or change.

- Baptism by water
- Confirmation and receipt of gift of the Holy Ghost
- Full forgiveness of sins
- Receiving the Holy Ghost
- Receiving the temple Endowment (anytime after baptism, but before sanctification)
- Calling and Election
- Receiving the Second Comforter
- Being received by the Father

Processes – These are those changes in our spiritual progress that take place over a period of time, often years. They usually lead to an event.

- Repentance (years)
- Building Faith (years)
- Mighty Change of Heart – Baptism of Fire & Holy Ghost (minutes - years)
- Sanctification (months - years)
- Teaching by Christ (unknown)

Scriptural Examples

The following are examples of people who went through the spiritual changes or processes indicated.

Forgiveness, Mighty Change

- General instructions (2 Nephi 31:13-14)
- Apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-20)
- Enos (Enos 5-19)
- King Benjamin's people (Mosiah 4:1-16)
- Younger Alma (Mosiah 27:8-37; Alma 36:5-29)
- Persecutors of Nephi & Lehi (Helaman 5:22-50)
- Lamanites who knew not (3 Nephi 9:20)
- Lamoni and his household (Alma 18:12-19:36)
- Lamoni innocent afterwards (Alma 20:17-19)
- Lamoni's father (Alma 22:1-23)
- Isaiah (Isaiah 6:5-7)
- Others – note conditions and circumstances (Matthew 9:2-7, Luke 7:36-50, D&C 25:1-3, D&C 29:1-3, D&C 31:5, D&C 36:1, D&C 60:7, D&C 61:2, D&C 62:3, D&C 90:1, D&C 95:1, D&C 108:1, D&C 112:3)

Calling and Election, Second Comforter

- 2nd Comforter = Holy Spirit of Promise = see face of Christ = entering into his rest (D&C 84:21-24; Alma 13:12)
- Brother of Jared (Ether 3)
- Enoch and his people (Gen 5:24; Heb 11:5; D&C 38:4; D&C 107:49)
- Many of the High Priesthood (Melchizedek) (Alma 13:1-19; especially v12)
- Nephi and Isaiah (2Nephi 11:2-3)
- Jacob brother of Nephi (2Nephi 2:2-4; 11:2-3)
- Saints before Moroni (Mormon 8:23-24)

- 3rd Nephi (Helaman 10:2-7)
- Mormon (Mormon 8:35)
- Ether (Ether 15:34)
- People who rejected it (D&C 84:19-25)

Laws of the Kingdom

Conformance with these laws prepares us to live in the Celestial Kingdom. Learning to live the laws leading to the mighty change of heart or calling and election will actually bring those changes about. Notice that the laws do not supersede one another but actually build upon each other.

Law of Obedience

3 Nephi 12:20; D&C 130:20-21, 1 Samuel 15:22, Mosiah 5:5

Law of Sacrifice

3 Nephi 9:20; 3 Nephi 12:19; D&C 59:8; D&C 97:7-9

Law of the Gospel

The law of the gospel is essentially those teachings which supersede the Law of Moses and embody the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It replaces much of the observance of outward ordinances of the law with personal emulation of the Savior. Instead of looking forward to the Great Sacrifice of the Atonement, we are invited to "Come follow me." It does not do away with the Ten Commandments or the law of sacrifice. To understand the law of the gospel, we need to follow the life, teachings, and commandments of Christ and his authorized prophets and apostles. The law of the gospel includes all ordinances, commandments, and doctrine which help us become perfect as he and Father are. (Matthew 5:48, 3 Nephi 12:48)

Law of Chastity

The law of chastity includes a strict requirement to true, complete, and literal moral cleanliness. It goes beyond the prohibition against adultery to include "anything like unto it," and even includes our thoughts. Sexual relations are reserved exclusively for husband and wife. Chastity is defined as "that which is most dear and precious above all things." Jacob 2:28, Moroni 9:9, D&C 59:6, D&C 63:16.

While the literal meaning of the law of chastity is valid and binding, the symbolic meaning is also as important with respect to eternal consequences. Christ is often referred to as the Bridegroom, and the church as the bride. To be true followers of Christ, we as the bride must demonstrate total fidelity to the Bridegroom, having no other gods before us. Putting any thing, person, or idea before Christ is violating the covenant of chastity.

Law of Consecration

Consecration means to dedicate something to the Lord's purposes. While it may involve sacrifice, it is

not the same thing. Sacrifice usually means to give something up. As an example, I may sacrifice a certain type of music because it will not allow me to grow spiritually. If I use good music to teach the gospel or bring people to Christ, I have consecrated that talent or music to the Lord. The more difficult thing to understand would be the time I use for the Lord's purposes. As a missionary I consecrate my time to the Lord's service. Because I give up the opportunity to go to school or earn money through employment during the time I am a missionary, those could be considered sacrifices. We consecrate our tithing money. We sacrifice our desires for things we could have bought with that money.

The law of consecration is not the United Order; that was an attempt to implement the law on a larger scale. The law can be practiced here and now. Listen carefully to the words spoken concerning this in the temple.