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No More Doubt

a testimony by Mary Lee Treat

You have heard it said, "The longest distance is that which is between your head and your heart," meaning sometimes it takes a long time to really comprehend things we acknowledge quickly through the intellect.

Such was my case in understanding what it means to have a covenant with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

It is true that repetition is the best teacher. One day, after hearing Ray teach many classes on covenant, I finally grasped the awesomeness of the covenant concept through the gracious intervention of the Holy Spirit. I had a revelation of what the covenant meant to me personally.

Sometime later while Ray was teaching a class on covenant, the Holy Spirit quickened to my memory an important experience I had had several years earlier and my unresolved questions from that experience. I had never connected this experience with the covenant concept until that very moment. It was as though the Lord whispered to my mind, "This is the answer to your question." As I pondered the connection, I slowly began to understand. Let me explain.

We had spent the summer in a remote Mexican town near the Guatemalan border, studying the ceramics Ray had excavated from a site in that area. As I was preparing for our return to our home in

Independence, I suddenly felt extremely ill. I thought I would feel better if I rested for a few minutes, but an intense pain in my abdomen quickly incapacitated me.

I called the girls who were packing their things in another room. Not wanting to alarm them I said, "I'm not feeling well. Go quickly to the *bodega* and tell dad to drive back at once so he can administer to me." The *bodega* was a large Spanish Colonial house that had been converted into a work area for the archaeologists. It was about a 10 minute walk from our house.

Ray and I had been traveling in Mexico for about 20 years. We had lived in remote places for short periods of time before, and although we knew that there were no hospitals or doctors such as those in Mexico City or the United States, we also felt that the Lord would take care of us when we were seeking to follow his direction.

As I waited for Ray's arrival, the pain grew so intense that I was afraid of losing consciousness. I knew that something life threatening was going on in my body. I also knew that I could not reach a hospital in time for help. I quickly came to the conclusion that if God did not intervene I would die.

When Ray walked into the room I asked him to administer to me and told him that I knew if God did not heal me I would die. He anointed

my head and prayed for my healing.

When I realized I was dying, the burning question in my spirit was, "Does God know me?" The question surprised me since I was baptized as a child and had spent all my life seeking to serve the Lord. Even though I had felt his abiding Spirit throughout my life, the question was deeply rooted in me, "Does He know me?"

After Ray finished praying I asked him to read to me from the scripture. He reached up to the shelf where we kept the scriptures and opened the Bible at random. He read out loud the first words his eyes fell upon: "I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26).

In that small bedroom, in that remote town in Mexico, the Word of God brought healing to me. The intense pain began to subside. By the end of the day I was able to get up and finish our packing.

On the trip home and many times since then I pondered my response to imminent death. While I had no fear, I did not have confidence that the Lord knew me. I did not plead with the Lord to save my life for the sake of my children and husband. I had no concern for temporal things. My only concern was if He knew me.

Frankly, I was astounded at this reaction. How could it be that one who had spent her life seeking to serve the Lord could wonder if the

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More on Righteousness

by Raymond C. Treat

When we exercise faith, repent and make a covenant with God by coming unto Jesus Christ, God calls us righteous (see *Zarahemla Record* #67). As part of the covenant-making process, we give God our outer garment, which is called filthy rags, and God puts his robe on us, which is called the robe of righteousness. This means our righteousness is by faith and is not something we have to earn (1 Nephi 3:117-118 [12:10-11]; Alma 16:236 [34:36]; Romans 3:22). It is truly a blessing to finally realize the real definition of righteousness—God’s definition.

Assuming that we have made a covenant by coming unto Christ and that we have continued in the covenant relationship through obedience and keeping the commandments, we have retained our righteous state in God’s eyes. We are now in a position to look at the attributes of the righteous and realize that these attributes apply to us also. No longer can Satan continue to rob us of our inheritance by hiding the covenant relationship and God’s definition of righteousness from us.

The following attributes of the righteous are taken from the Book of Mormon. Ponder them carefully. It is a great blessing to consider such a list. This list is made up of quotes and summaries. Turn to the references for exact wording and context.

The Righteous

are the saints 1N 3:230-231 [14:14]
 are the saints of the Holy One of Israel 2N 6:42 [9:18]
 are the covenant people of the Lord
 1N 3:230-231 [14:14]; Mos 3:7 [5:6]
 are those whose garments are made white in the blood of
 the Lamb of God because of their faith
 1N 3:117-118 [12:10-11]; Alma 16:236 [34:36]
 humble themselves before the Lord 1N 5:5 [16:5]
 fear the name of the Lord 3N 11:19-23 [24:16-25:2]
 have the power of God 1N 3:230-231 [14:14]
 have believed in the Holy One of Israel 2N 6:42 [9:18]
 are willing to hearken to the truth 1N 5:3 [16:3]
 are willing to give heed to the truth 1N 5:3 [16:3]
 fear not the words of truth 2N 6:78 [9:40]
 love the truth 2N 6:78 [9:40]
 hearken unto the words of the prophets and
 destroy them not 2N 11:72 [26:8]
 look forward unto Christ with steadfastness 2N 11:72 [26:8]
 are baptized by water 2N 13:7 [31:5]
 walk uprightly before God 1N 5:3 [16:3]
 walk in the paths of righteousness 1N 5:5 [16:5]
 Alma 5:33 [7:19]
 walk in the ways of the Lord Alma 14:74 [25:14]
 serve God 3N 11:21 [24:18]

remember that the paths of the Lord
 are righteousness 2N 6:79-80 [9:41]
 follow after righteousness 2N 5:70 [8:1]
 keep the commandments of the Lord 2N 1:34 [1:19-20]
 Alma 14:74 [25:14]
 have faith, hope and charity Eth 5:29 [12:28]
 abhor sin 2N 6:98 [9:49]
 delight in righteousness 2N 6:98 [9:49]
 are they who have endured the crosses of the world
 and despised the shame of it 2N 6:42 [9:18]
 are they whose joy shall be full forever 2N 6:42 [9:18]
 are born again Mos 11:187-188 [27:25-26]
 are born of God Mos 11:188 [27:25-26]
 are changed from their carnal and fallen state
 to a state of righteousness Mos 11:188 [27:25]
 are redeemed Mos 11:188 [27:25]
 are justified 1N 5:2 [16:2]
 are sons and daughters of God Mos 11:188 [27:25]
 are new creatures Mos 11:188 [27:26]
 bring forth good fruit Alma 3:60 [5:36]
 are blessed Alma 3:32 [5:16]; Mn 3:22 [6:21]
 bring forth works of righteousness Alma 3:32, 59 [5:16, 35]
 shall reap the salvation of their souls Alma 7:43 [9:28]
 receive healing 3N 11:23 [25:2]
 will have their prayers remembered by the Lord
 Mn 2:50 [5:21]
 do not murmur 1N 5:3 [16:3]
 are not shaken 2N 6:78 [9:40]
 do not take bribes Alma 8:70-72 [11:22]
 are spared Omni 1:9 [1:7]; Alma 10:2 [13:10]
 3N 4:66 [10:12]
 need not fear 1N 7:37, 48 [22:18, 22]; 3N 10:22 [22:14]
 are far from oppression 3N 10:22 [22:14]
 are far from terror 3N 10:22 [22:14]
 put on the armor of righteousness 2N 1:38 [1:23]
 have more power than Satan 1N 7:60, 62 [22:26]
 no weapon formed against them shall prosper
 3N 10:25 [22:17]
 are not under the power of Satan Eth 3:102 [8:26]
 shall not be destroyed 1N 7:35 [22:16]
 shall not perish 2N 11:72 [26:8]
 are divided from the wicked 1N 4:48, 62 [15:30, 36]
 are suffered by the Lord to be slain that judgment
 may come upon the wicked Alma 27:29 [60:13]
 are not lost because they are slain but they enter
 into the rest of the Lord their God Alma 27:29 [60:13]
 are favored of God 1N 5:122 [17:35]
 it is well with them 2N 8:48 [13:10]
 shall eat the fruit of their doings 2N 8:48 [13:10]
 are happy 2N 1:90 [2:13]
 know righteousness 2N 5:82 [8:7]

prosper 2N 1:34 [1:20]
 shall have all these things added unto them 3N 6:11 [13:33]
 will be preserved 1N 7:36 [22:17]
 are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God which was
 prepared for them from the foundation of the world
 2N 6:42 [9:18]; Mos 11:188 [27:25-26]; Alma 5:33 [7:19]
 shall sit down in his kingdom to go no more out
 Alma 16:236 [34:36]
 shall shine forth in the kingdom of God Alma 19:59 [40:25]
 are led away into precious lands 1N 5:129 [17:38]
 will be blessed in the land of promise forever
 2N 1:6, 15 [1:5, 7]
 shall have an inheritance at the right hand
 of the Lord Alma 3:100 [5:58]
 shall have their names written in the book of life
 Alma 3:100 [5:58]
 are received into a state of happiness
 which is called paradise 2N 6:31 [9:13]
 Alma 19:44, 47 [40:12, 14]
 wear the robe of righteousness 2N 3:56 [4:33]; 6:35 [9:14]
 receive their righteousness from the Lord 3N 10:25 [22:17]
 are clothed with purity 2N 6:35 [9:14]
 are the people in whose heart I have written
 my law 2N 5:82 [8:7]
 have the Lord dwelling in their heart Alma 16:235 [34:36]
 shall be filled with the Holy Ghost 3N 5:53 [12:6]

Go over this list slowly, several times, keeping in mind that these attributes apply to you. This is not a complete list, so you may want to review all the references in your concordance referring to righteousness.

Saints

We see in the first attribute that the righteous are the saints. It is interesting that we all call ourselves saints but don't consider ourselves righteous. This is, of course, because our definition of righteousness has been wrong. Understanding our covenant gives us the correct definition of righteousness.

Our increasing clarity of understanding about the covenant relationship goes hand-in-hand with the growing revelation of the Hebrew nature of the Book of Mormon. When we realize that an estimated 90 percent of all we know about the Hebrew nature of the Book of Mormon is about 10 years old or less, and that our awareness of the importance of the covenant relationship is about five years old or less, then it is easy to see that the Lord is indeed saving the best until last. The next time you talk to friends who are Book of Mormon believers, ask them if they are saints. If they say yes, ask them if they are righteous. If they say no, you can quote First Nephi 3:230-231 [14:14] and Second Nephi 6:42 [9:18] and tell them that if they are saints, they are righteous. If they do not believe or understand what you are saying, you can suggest a study of what the word of God says about these subjects. We now know that the covenant relationship is the most important subject of all scripture and we see from First Nephi 3:230 [14:14] that

saints are the covenant people of the Lord. Conversely, if we do not have a covenant, we must not be saints.

Fear

We all have to deal with fear. We are told in Third Nephi 11:22-23 [25:1-2] that if we are righteous, we will fear the name of the Lord. If you will study the topic of the fear of the Lord, which refers to awe and reverence, you will find that it is a synonym for those who have a covenant (Psalm 25:14). We are also told in First Nephi 7:37, 48 [22:17, 22] and Third Nephi 10:22 [22:14] that we need not fear. Therefore, if we are righteous, that is, if we have a covenant and have the fear (reverence) of the Lord, we will be able to overcome all of the fear to which the world (those without a covenant) is subject. Fear is Satan's perversion of the faith of Christ. If we are exercising faith in every area of our lives, which is part of the covenant lifestyle, fear cannot enter. If the words that come out of our mouth are in harmony with the word of God, Satan cannot have entrance. The word of God tells us that the darts that Satan hurls at us are aimed at our tongue (James, chapter 3). Notice that no weapon formed against us shall prosper if we are living the righteous covenant lifestyle (3 Nephi 10:25 [22:17]). Fear is indeed a weapon of Satan in an attempt to keep us from acting in faith.

Prosper

Notice the prosperous nature of the righteous (2 Nephi 1:34 [1:19]). This attribute is in stark contrast to the common belief that the more poor we are the more holy we are. Satan wants us poor to hinder us from spreading the word of God. The word of God says the Lord gives us power to get wealth to establish the covenant (Deuteronomy 8:18) and that if we have a hope in Christ, which is obviously a characteristic of the righteous, we will prosper in order to do good (Jacob 2:23-24 [2:18-19]).

Land

Finally, a comment should be made about land. We are told in Second Nephi 1:6, 15 [1:5, 7] that the righteous will be blessed in the land of promise forever. One of the chief characteristics of the righteous (those with a covenant) is that they always receive an inheritance. We are looking forward to Zion. Zion is our inheritance, our land of promise. Therefore, if you are interested in an inheritance in Zion, you must be interested in the concept of righteousness according to God's definition.

We all need to go over this and other similar lists, spending enough time with them to allow the Holy Spirit to enlighten our spirits and correct any incorrect tradition we may have had about righteousness and related concepts. In the end it is the word of God which will stand—not our misconceptions. Go over this list until your definition of righteousness matches God's definition. Then you will be clothed with purity (2 Nephi 6:35 [9:14]) which we all recognize as a major prerequisite of Zion. ZRF

Lord knew her? I had been healed many times and spoken to directly by the voice of his Spirit. How could I have any doubt that He knew me? Now, several years later, I believe I understand.

At that time I did not have a full comprehension of what it means to have a covenant with the Lord. I did not know that God only works through covenants and that his word is his covenant to us. Because God cannot lie, whatever his word declares will come to pass.

When I was baptized I did not have full comprehension of his covenant with me. Slowly through the years I have gained this understanding.

How does understanding God's covenantal nature make a difference? The covenant removes all doubt. The terms of my covenant, and yours, is the word of God contained in the scriptures.

If the word of God indicates that covenant people are prosperous in health, relationships, material needs, etc., then these are all my inheritance as a covenant partner with the Lord. He in turn requires me to be fully committed to do whatever he asks.

As an adult I had a "reconversion" when I committed my life to the Lord again. Of course this is what Jesus is referring to in Third Nephi 5:39- 40 [11:37-38]. However, because I had not understood that God always works with us through covenants, I did not have the foundation of assurance that comes with that understanding.

In the verses above, the covenant or total commitment of one's life is found in the phrase "become as a little child." It can be made at any point, but the preferred sequence is before baptism. Mosiah 9:41, 44, 174-180 [18:10, 13; 21:31-35] all indicate that covenants are made and then baptism follows as a witness of a covenant already made.

Jesus' own words in Third Nephi 5:40 [11:38], however, offer the solution to those of us who did not fully understand the covenant concept before we were baptized: we can make our total commitment now, as soon as we comprehend the nature of covenant.

Understanding the magnitude of a covenant relationship with the Lord of the universe is a thrilling and humbling experience. I have a small glimpse and it has revolution-

ized my relationship with my Heavenly Father and his word.

If I had passed over to meet him that day would he have known me? Yes, of course, because he created me. But I did not "know" him as I do now. In Biblical terms, to "know" someone is to have a covenanted, intimate relationship such as husband and wife. The well-known scripture in Matthew 7:32-33 [22-23] is brought into focus with this understanding:

And many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and in thy name cast out devils; and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I say, Ye never knew me (I never knew you, KJV).

The point of the above reference is that even though we invoke the name of Jesus, if we do not have a covenant with him, to serve him to the end, he will not recognize us at the last day.

I am so thankful to my Heavenly Father that he has brought the greater understanding of what it means to have a covenant with him!

ZRF

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