

**3 Nephi 9:2**

“the devil laugheth and his angels rejoice”

1 I once had an opportunity to accompany President Spencer W. Kimball to a distant land. We were given a tour of the various sites in the area, including underground catacombs—burial grounds for people who had been persecuted by Christian zealots. As we came up the dark, narrow stairs of that place, President Kimball taught me an unforgettable lesson. He pulled my coattail and said, “It has always troubled me what the adversary does using the name of our Savior.” He then said, “. . . the adversary can never have joy unless you and I sin,”

As I contemplated this comment and studied the scriptures, I began to understand what President Kimball may have meant. I recalled the word of the Lord to all the inhabitants of the earth as recorded in the Book of Mormon: “Wo, wo, wo, unto this people; wo unto the inhabitants of the whole earth except they shall repent; for the devil laugheth, and his angels rejoice, because of the slain of the fair sons and daughters of my people.” It is our sins that make the devil laugh, our sorrow that bring his counterfeit joy.

Although the devil laughs, his power is limited. Some may remember the old adage: The devil made me do it.” Today I want to convey, in absolutely certain terms, that the adversary cannot make us do anything. He does lie at our door, as the scriptures say, and he follows us each day (D&C 95:6). Every time we go out, every decision we make, we are either choosing to move in his direction or in the direction of our Savior. But the adversary must depart if we tell him to depart. He cannot influence us unless we allow him to do so, and he knows that! The only time he can affect our minds and bodies—our very spirits—is when we *allow* him to do so. Robert D. Hales, *Ensign*, May 2006 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006], 6.

2 Never should a bearer of the Aaronic Priesthood be guilty of saying anything discourteous or disrespectful to his mother. The scriptures teach us that whenever we are abusive, thoughtless, or unkind to others, “the devil laugheth, and his angels rejoice” (3 Ne. 9:2); also, that “the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen [or the end] to the priesthood or the authority of that man” (D&C 121:37).

Joe J. Christensen, *Ensign*, Nov. 1996 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996], 39-40.

**3 Nephi 9:13**

“Spared more Righteous”

3 Too many of our wives and mothers prefer the added luxuries of two incomes to the satisfactions of seeing children grow up in the fear and love of God. We golf and boat and hunt and fish and watch sports rather than solemnize the Sabbath. Total morality is found neither among the people nor among the leaders of the state and nation. Personal interests and ulterior motives block the way. Old Man “Rationalization” with his long beard is ever present to tell us that we are justified in these deviations, and because we are not vicious enough to be confined in penitentiaries we rationalize that we are not failing to measure up. The masses of the people are perhaps much like those who escaped destruction in the ancient days of this continent. The Lord

said to them: “O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they [the slain ones], will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you? (3 Nephi 9:13).

Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 317

- 4 When we say that only the righteous shall abide the day... we must take into account the fact that there are no perfect men... Even the most faithful saints commit sin and live in some degree after the manner of the world. But such worldly works as remain with the righteous shall be burned so that the saints themselves may be saved... The burning that destroys every corruptible thing is the same burning that cleanses the righteous... If only perfect people were saved, there would be only one saved soul—the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bruce R. McConkie, *The millennial Messiah*, pp. 543-544.

### **3 Nephi 9:13**

- 5 “*be converted and healed*”

Conversion means “to turn with.” Conversion is a turning *from* the ways of the world *to*, and staying *with*, the ways of the Lord. Conversion includes repentance and obedience. Conversion brings a mighty change of heart (see Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:12-14). Thus, a true convert is “born again” (see John 3:3-7; 1 Peter 1:23; Mosiah 27:24-26; Alma 5:49; 7:14; Moses 6:59; Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 6:62), walking with a newness of life (see Romans 6:3-4).

As true converts, we are motivated to do what the Lord wants us to do (see Mosiah 5:2-50 and to be who He wants us to be (see 3 Nephi 27:21, 27).

Russell M. Nelson, *Ensign*, Nov. 2005 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005], 86, 88.

- 6 Over a century ago when Elder J. Golden Kimball presided over the Southern States Mission, he called for a meeting of the elders. They were to meet in a secluded spot in the woods so they would have privacy. One of the elders had a problem with one of his legs. It was raw and swollen to at least twice the size of his other leg. But the elder insisted on attending this special priesthood meeting in the woods. So two of the elders carried him to this meeting place.

Elder Kimball asked the missionaries, “Brethren, what are you preaching?”

They said, “We are preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

“Are you telling these people that you have the power and authority, through faith, to heal the sick?” he asked.

They said, “yes.”

“Well then,” he continued, “why don’t you believe it?”

The young man with the swollen leg spoke up and said, “I believe it.” Here is the rest of the story told in Elder Kimball’s words: “[The elder] sat down on a stump and the elders gathered around him. He was anointed and I administered to him, and he was healed right in their presence. It was quite a shock; and every other elder that was sick was administered to, and they were all healed. We went out of that priesthood meeting and the elders received their

appointments, and there was a joy and happiness that cannot be described” (*New Era*, July 1985, 10).

James E. Faust, *Ensign*, Nov. 2006 [Salt Lake City” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006], 55-56.

### **3 Nephi 9:14**

#### 7 *Come Unto Me*

“Come,” [Christ] says lovingly, “Come, follow me.” Wherever you are going, first come and see what I do, see where and how I spend my time. Learn of me, walk with me, talk with me, believe. Listen to me pray. In turn you will find answers to your own prayers. God will bring rest to your souls. Come, follow me.”

Jeffrey R. Holland, Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 88; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 65.

8 The book of 3 Nephi is essentially a story of repentance. The first seven chapters show the need for it, the eighth tells of the destruction which comes when the people refuse to repent, the remaining chapters recount the Savior’s call for repentance and the response of the remnant who were “more righteous” than those who were destroyed.

The Lord emphasizes the importance of repentance in the first words he utters when he appears to the survivors of the Nephite people. He proclaims woe to all the people of the earth unless they repent and then relates the fate of all those Nephite cities whose inhabitants had refused his warning. His plea shows his love for his children. In fact, his call to repentance indicates the true nature of repentance: a gift of love from God to his people.

Clearly, love and the longing to rescue his children from destruction are the essence of Christ’s plea for repentance.

Mae Blanch, *Repentance: The Gift of Love*.

9 Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation.... Salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things.

Joseph Smith, *Lectures on Faith*, 6:58

10 I went before [the Lord] and in essence said, “I’m not neutral, and You can do with me what You want. If You need my vote, it’s there. I don’t care what You do with me, and You don’t have to take anything from me because I give it to You—everything, all I own, all I am.”

Boyd K. Packer, *That All May Be Edified*, 272

**3 Nephi 9:15**11 *Christ identifies Himself*

9:15	Behold I am Jesus Christ the Son of God	9:18	Alpha and Omega
9:15	I created the heavens and earth	11:10	I am he who the prophets testified shall come into the world
9:15	I was with the Father from the beginning	11:14	God of Israel
9:15	I am in the Father and the Father in me	11:14	I am the God of the whole earth
9:15	In me hath the Father glorified his name	15:17	I am the good Shepherd
9:17	I am the Redeemer		
9:18	I am the life and light (“life”) –unique to Nephites)		

**3 Nephi 9:15***Father & Son “one God”*12 **In many ways, the Son is like the Father**

In the exalted family of the Gods, the Father and the Son are one. They have the same character, perfections, and attributes. They think the same thoughts, speak the same words, perform the same acts, have the same desires, and do the same words. They possess the same power, have the same mind, know the same truths, live in the same light and glory. To know one is to know the other; to see one is to see the other; to hear the voice of one is to hear the voice of the other. Their unity is perfect. The Son is in the express image of his father’s person; each has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s.

Bruce R. McConkie, *promised Messiah*, 9.

**In other ways, the Son literally is the Father.**

13 [First] The Savior becomes our Father, in the sense in which... he offers us life, eternal life, through the atonement....

[Second] We become the children, sons and daughters of Jesus Christ, through our covenants of obedience to him [see Mosiah 5:7]....

[Third] Christ is also our Father because his Father has given him of his fullness; that is, he has received a fullness of the glory of the Father [see D&C 93:1-5, 16-17]....

[Therefore] the Father has honored Christ by placing his name upon him, so that he can minister in and through that name as though he were the Father....

[Fourth] Our Lord is also called the father in the sense that he is the Father or Creator of the heavens and the earth and all things.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:29-30

**3 Nephi 9:18***Alpha and Omega*

14 Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The use of these terms as titles of the Lord Jesus Christ has a dual application. First, they are used to imply the eternal nature of Jesus as a member of the Godhead, or as the scriptures refer to him, “the Eternal One.” This indicates that “he is an everlasting and eternal being in whom all fulness and perfection

dwelling” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Promised Messiah*, p. 167). Second, the phrase “the beginning and the end” have reference to the Atonement and that Jesus is both the beginning, or author, and the end, or finisher, of the salvation of men (see Hebrews 5:9; 12:2; Moroni 6:4). Elder Bruce R. McConkie observed that Christ is not the “author” of salvation if that means the innovator of the plan of redemption, but rather he is the “cause thereof; that is, salvation is possible because of his atoning sacrifice” and that “he is the ‘leader’ in the cause of salvation.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 66.)

Millet & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary of BOM*, p. 44

- 15 Jesus’ concluding point of identification was that he was “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end”(v.18). Alpha and Omega represent the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. The words refer to Christ as the creator of the earth in the beginning, and also the finisher or holder of its final destiny, and of the inhabitants who reside upon it. Paul and Moroni both call him “the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2; Moroni 6:4).

Monte S. Nyman, *Divine Ministry—The First Gospel*, p. 109.

### **3 Nephi 9:19-20**

*No more blood sacrifice – New sacrifice*

- 16 *When did Jesus Christ fulfill the Law of Moses?*

The Law of Moses... continued until the resurrection of Jesus Christ, when this carnal law was fulfilled and was replaced by the fullness of the gospel.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:84.

- 17 In declaring that the law of Moses is fulfilled (see verse 17), the Savior was not rescinding the eternal law of sacrifice but rather was declaring that the specific practice or instructional methodology employed earlier was no longer in effect. From the days of Adam to Moses and from Moses to Jesus Christ, animal sacrifices were used to symbolically point toward the future atoning sacrificial rites and the accompanying carnal codes as “types of things to come” (Mosiah 13:31). Inasmuch as the savior had already shed his blood and drunk of the “bitter cup” in Gethsemane and on Golgotha and had broken the bands of death in coming forth from the garden tomb, a new day had now dawned that required new symbolism, a new type of sacrifice, and new instruction in the eternal meaning of the covenant of sacrifice.

Although the objective or instructional purpose of animal sacrifices and burnt offerings was now fulfilled in Christ, the Saints understand that as part of the “restitution of all things” such sacrifices will be reinstated at least for a season.

Millet & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary of the Book of Mormon, Vol 4, p. 44.*

- 18 It is difficult for us today to realize the tremendous revolution involved in altering the ritualism of the Law of Moses into the humble and lowly concept of worship, not with the sacrificial blood of animals, but with this broken heart and contrite spirit of the worshiper ...[Animal sacrifice] was always a vicarious sacrifice, apparently with little actual sacrifice except for the value of the animal sacrificed, by the individuals themselves, to cancel the debit,

so to speak, against their lives and living in the eyes of the Almighty One. The sinner seemingly, in general, took on no obligation and considered himself under no obligation to abandon his sins, but took on only the obligation to offer sacrifice therefore. But under the new covenant that came in with Christ, the sinner must offer the sacrifice out of his own life, not by offering the blood of some other creature; he must give up his sins, he must repent, he himself must make the sacrifice....

J. Reuben Clark Jr., *Behold the Lamb of God* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991], 107-109

19 The practice of sacrifice that was fulfilled in Christ was one of rites and rituals, whereas the new practice commanded of the Lord involved inner attitudes that would bring about outward obedience to commandments and ordinances. Just as the sacrifices of animals were to symbolize the shedding of the blood of Christ and to focus the faith of the people on the Messiah, so must our obedience stemming from a sacrifice of a broken heart and contrite spirit be centered solely on Christ. What then is a “broken heart and a contrite spirit” that is to be our “living sacrifice” to the Lord? It is, as Paul taught, a “godly sorrow” which “worketh repentance to salvation” (2 Corinthians 7:10). It is much more than just a repentant attitude; it includes a recognition of total dependence upon the Lord for salvation and a willing submission to him and his laws (see Mosiah 3:19). Lamoni’s father characterized this sacrifice with his desire to come to know God when he declared, “I will give away all my sins to know thee” (Alma 22:18). Offering a sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit requires “giving away our sins” through faith in Christ, sincere and complete repentance, obedience to the Lord’s commands and pressing forward with a “steadfastness in Christ”.

Millet & McConkie, *Doctrinal commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4, pp. 44-45.

20 A sacrifice, as before stated, means that one thing is given up willingly for something else. To offer a broken heart is to give up the pride of your heart, and to recognize that your sins contributed to the suffering of Jesus Christ in the garden of Gethsemane. This knowledge should break your heart.

To offer a contrite spirit is to give up the arrogance of self-conceit, and to acknowledge that the source of all intelligence is the light of Christ

11 And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings;

12 Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the emensity of space—

13 The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things [D&C 88:11-13]

The converted person is thereby teachable through the Spirit. As a horse is broken to be ridden, or to work, he submits himself (heart) to his master. The converted human being submits himself or herself (heart) to the will of the Savior in recognition of his or her dependence upon Christ.

Monte S. Nyman, *Divine Ministry—The First Gospel, Jesus Among the Nephites*, p. 110-111.

21 The Savior said He would no longer accept burnt offerings of animals. The gift or sacrifice He will accept now is “a broken heart and a contrite spirit” [3 Nephi 9:20].... You can offer the Lord the gift of your broken heart, or repentant heart, and your contrite, or obedient spirit. In reality, it is the gift of yourself—what you are and what you are becoming.

Is there something in you or in your life that is impure or unworthy? When you get rid of it, that is a gift to the Savior. Is there a good habit or quality that is lacking in your life? When you adopt it and make it part of your character, you are giving a gift to the Lord.

D. Todd Christopherson, Conference Report, Apr. 2004, 10; or *Ensign*, May 2004, 12.

### **3 Nephi 9:20-22**

#### *Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit*

22 A soft heart has nothing to do with being a coward. In fact, the bravest people I’ve ever known have had the softest hearts... When people love enough, and their hearts are softened enough, there’s nothing they wouldn’t do in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. A Latter-day Saint with a soft heart is courageous, strong, and able to do far more than those who think of themselves as tough. This is what the Savior said about a soft heart; [3 Nephi 9:20-22].

What are some things you could do to have a soft heart? First of all, don’t think of repentance as something you do after you’ve made a very serious mistake. Think of repentance as what you do every day. Find a moment each day to review in your mind those things that might have disappointed your Heavenly Father and your Savior, and then go and humbly plead for forgiveness. I would suggest that you do that especially on Sundays when you take the sacrament...

Another way to obtain a soft heart is to make sure you don’t focus too much on yourself or your personal problems and struggles. Instead of thinking of yourself primarily as someone who is seeking purification, think of yourself as someone who is trying to find out who around you needs your help. Pray that way and then reach out.

Henry B. Eyring, *To Draw Closer to God* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 109-110

23 In the reorganization of a rather far-flung stake recently [in Latin America], I felt the Lord’s prompting to call a man to the stake presidency who I had been told, owned a bicycle but no automobile. Many leaders across the Church don’t have cars, but I was nevertheless worried about what that might mean for this man in this particular stake. In my terminally-ill Spanish I pursued the interview, then said, “*Hermano, no tiene us auto?*” With a smile and not a second’s hesitation he replied, “*No tengo un auto; pero yo tengo pies, yo tengo fe.*” (I do not have a car, but I do have feet and I do have faith.) He then said he could ride the bus, ride his bicycle, or walk, “*come los misioneros,*” he smiled—“like the missionaries.” And he does.

Just eight weeks ago I was holding a mission district conference on the island of Chiloe, an interior location in the south of Chile that gets few visitors.... It was pointed out to me that a very elderly man seated near the front of the chapel had set out on foot at five o’clock that morning, walking for four hours to be in his seat by nine o’clock, for a meeting that was not scheduled to begin until eleven o’clock. He said he wanted to get a good seat. I looked into his

eyes, thought of times in my life when I had been either too casual or too late, and thought of Jesus' phrase, "I have not found so great fait, no not in Israel."

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, May 2004 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 30-31.

### **3 Nephi 9:20**

#### *Baptised with Fire*

24 Baptism by fire is the baptism of the Spirit—the reception of the Holy Ghost that cleanses one from sin and makes one a “new creature.” Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: “The Holy Ghost is a sanctifier whose divine commission is to burn dross and evil out of a human soul as though by fire, thus giving rise to the expression *baptism of fire*, which is the baptism of the Spirit. Forgiveness is assured when the contrite soul receives the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit will not dwell in an unclean tabernacle.... It is the Holy Spirit of God that erases carnality and brings us to a state of righteousness. We become clean when we actually receive the fellowship and companionship of the Holy Ghost. It is then that sin and dross and evil are burned oput of our souls as though by fire. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is the baptism of fire. There have been miraculous occasions when visable flames enveloped penitent persons, but ordinarily the cleansing power of the Spirit simply dwells, unseen and unheralded, in the hearts of those who have made the Lord their friend.” (*New Witness*, pp. 239, 290.)...In discussing the powerful spiritual side-effects of the baptism of fire, the Savior used the faithful Lamanites as a prime example. Two important doctrinal points are seen in his brief statement about the conversion of the Lamanites. First, their spiritual rebirth came because of their faith in Christ. “True repentance is based on and flows from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.” President Ezra Taft Benson testified: “There is no other way.” Numerous scriptural passages likewise declare that the conversion, the baptism of fire, the mighty change of heart, come as a result of unwavering faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (see 1 Nephi 12:8-11; 2 Nephi 2:3; Enos 1:3-8; Alma 34:14-18;36:17-20).

The second doctrinal point is found in the phrase, “and they knew it not.’ For most, this baptism of fire experience is a continual process rather than a singular, dramatic event. “Most repentance does not involve sensational or dramatic changes.” President Ezra Taft Benson explained, “but rather is a step by step, steady and consistent movement toward godliness.” He further counseled to not to become discouraged by expecting sensational spiritual experiences or by comparing our baptism by fire experience with those of others. “We must be careful, as we seek to become more and more godlike, that we do not become discouraged and lose hope. Becoming Christlike is a lifetime pursuit and very often involves growth and change that is slow, almost imperceptible.” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, pp. 71-72). Millet & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the BOM*, Vol 4, pp. 44-45.

**3 Nephi 9:20***“They knew it not”*

25 Too many of us are like those whom the Lord said “[came] with a broken heart and a contrite spirit.... [and] at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, *and they knew it not*” (3 Nephi 9:20; emphasis added).

Imagine that: “And they knew it not.” It is not unusual for one to have received the gift and really know it.

I fear this supernal gift is being obscured by programs and activities and schedules and so many meetings. There are so many places to go, so many things to do in this noisy world. We can be too busy to pay attention to the promptings of the Spirit.

The voice of the Spirit is a still, small voice—a voice that is *felt* rather than heard. It is a spiritual voice that comes into the mind as a thought put into your heart.

Boyd K. Packer, Conference Report, Apr. 2000 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000], 8.

26 Day by day [Latter-day Saints] move closer to the Lord, little realizing they are building a godlike life. They live quiet lives of goodness, service, and commitment. They are like the Lamanites, who the Lord said “were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, *and they knew it not.*” (3 Ne. 9:20; italics added)

“A Mighty Change of Heart,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1989, 5.

27 Whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with a fire and with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites, because of their faith in me at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and then comes this little phrase, “and they knew it not.” They were born again and didn’t know it.

We need to remind our young people of that. We need to remind ourselves of that. We can be born again without having to go through an all night and all day experience like Alma the Younger or Lamoni. That blessing can simply grow out of the way we live.

*Selected Writings of Gerald N. Lund* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999], 384.