

Mormon 2:1-2

1 President Joseph Fielding Smith Observed: “We may... conclude that Mormon received the priesthood at a very tender age. He was only ten years old when Ammaron counseled him and placed in him the wonderful trust as guardian of the sacred plates. Moreover, when he was fifteen years of age he had a visitation by the Lord and ‘...tasted and knew of the goodness of Jesus.’”

Answers to Gospel Questions 2:9-10

2 If you think it an inspiration that a 16 year old boy could win the leadership of a national army what would you think of a man between the ages of 65 and 74 who was still the best man among his entire people for this top position of leadership, and in those days the general marched at the head and not in the rear of his troops. (Mormon 6:11). It is one thing to shoot a guided missile at an enemy a thousand miles away, but it is quite another thing to meet the enemy face to face, and with a sword or a battle axe, take on all comers, old and young, on any basis they might choose to elect; and still be in there fighting at age 74. No weakling or coward survives a test like that.

Sterling W. Sill, in Daniel H. Ludlow, *Companion*, 299.

Mormon 2:13

Worldly sorrow vs. Godly sorrow.

3 Repentance means more than simply a reformation of behavior. Many men and women in the world demonstrate great willpower and self-discipline in overcoming bad habits and the weaknesses of the flesh. Yet at the same time they give no thought to the Master, sometimes even openly rejecting Him. Such changes of behavior, even if in a positive direction, do not constitute true repentance... It is not uncommon to find men and women in the world who feel remorse or the things they do wrong. Sometimes their sorrow is caused because they are caught and punished for their actions. Such worldly feelings do not constitute “godly sorrow”... Godly sorrow is a gift of the Spirit. It is a deep realization that our actions have offended our Father and our God. It is the sharp and keen awareness that our behavior caused the Savior, He who knew no sin, even the greatest of all, to endure agony and suffering. Our sins caused Him to bleed at every pore. This very real mental and spiritual anguish is what the scriptures refer to as having a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Such a spirit is the absolute prerequisite for true repentance.

Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, Oct. 1987, pp. 2,4

4 Repentance, which is an assured passage to an eternal destination, is nonetheless not a free ride... Why is it necessary for us to suffer on the way to repentance for serious transgressions? We often think of the results of repentance as simply cleansing us from sin. But that is an incomplete view of the matter. A person who sins is like a tree that bends easily in the wind. On a windy and rainy day the tree bent so deeply against the ground that the leaves became soiled with mud, like sin. If we only focus on cleaning the leaves, the weakness in the tree that allowed

it to bend and soil its leaves may remain. Merely cleaning the leaves does not strengthen the tree in the next high wind. The susceptibility to repetition.

Dallin H. Oaks, BYU Fireside, Aug. 5, 1990.

5 Alma the Younger certainly understood that easy and painless sorrow was not a sufficient basis for repentance. His experience, related in the Book of Mormon, is our best scriptural illustration of the fact that the process of repentance is filled with personal suffering for sin.

Alma said that after he was stopped in his wicked course, he was “in the darkest abyss” (Mosiah 27:29), “racked with eternal torment, for my soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins” (Alma 36:12).

All of our personal experiences confirms the fact that we must endure personal suffering in the process of repentance—and for serious transgressions, that suffering can be severe and prolonged.

Dallin H. Oaks, “Sin and Suffering,” *Ensign*, July 1992, p. 73.

6 Often people indicate that they have repented when all they have done is to express regret for a wrong act. But true repentance is marked by that godly sorrow that changes, transforms, and saves. To be sorry is not enough. Perhaps the felon in the penitentiary, coming to realize the high price he must pay for his folly, may wish he had not committed the crime. That is not repentance. The vicious man who is serving a stiff sentence for rape may be very sorry he did the deed, but he is not repentant if his heavy sentence is the only reason for his sorrow. That is the sorrow of the world. The truly repentant man is sorry before he is apprehended. He is sorry even if his secret is never known. He desires to make voluntary amends... Repentance of the godly type means that one comes to recognize the sin and voluntarily and without pressure from outside sources begins his transformation.

Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], 153.

7 The prophet Mormon at first thought his people were sorrowing unto repentance (see Mormon 2:12-13). Yet he soon discerned that theirs was not actually the sorrowing unto repentance but the “sorrowing of the damned,” stranding them in a “no-man’s land.” Compare that episode to the prodigal son’s solitary working through of his own repentance; since his sorrow was real, he truly “came to himself” (Luke 15:17). Sometimes we learn “by sad experience,” but sometimes not! (D&C 121:39).

Neal A. Maxwell, in Conference Report, Apr. 2000 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000], 91.

8 After recognition, real *remorse* floods the soul. This is a “godly sorrow,” not merely the “sorrow of the world” nor the “sorrowing of the damned” when we can no longer “take happiness in sin” (2 Corinthians 7:10; Mormon 2:13). False remorse instead is like fondling our failings. In ritual regret, we mourn our mistakes but without mending them.

Neal A. Maxwell, in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 40; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 31.

9 Elder Orson Pratt eloquently differentiated between the “sorrowing of the damned” and the godly sorrow which worketh repentance”: “There are different kinds of sorrow. Thieves, robbers, murderers, adulterers, etc., are frequently sorrowful because they have been detected in the crimes they have committed. They are not sorrowful because they have sinned against God, or because they have injured other; but they are sorry because their crimes have been exposed, or that they have been prevented from a realization of the happiness which they anticipated. This is the sorrow of the world; and it is of the same nature as the sorrowing of the evil spirits in hell: they are sorry when they fail to accomplish their malicious designs against God and His people. This kind of sorrow worketh death.

“Others have a species of sorrow arising through fear. They are convinced that they have, in numerous instances, violated the law of God, and they greatly fear the consequences in the great judgment day; but yet they feel no disposition to reform...

“But the sorrow that is acceptable in the sight of God is that which leads to true repentance, or reformation of conduct; it is that sorrow which arises not only through fear of punishment, but through a proper sense of the evil consequences of sin; it is that sorrow which arises from a knowledge of our own unworthiness, and from a contrast of our own degraded and fallen condition with the mercy, goodness, and holiness of God. We are sorry that we should ever have condescended to do evil. We are sorry that we should every have rendered ourselves so unworthy before God; we are sorry at the weakness of our own fallen nature. This kind of sorrow will lead us to obey every commandment of God; it will make us humble and childlike in our dispositions; it will impart unto us meekness and lowliness of mind; it will cause our hearts to be broken and our spirits to be contrite; it will cause us to watch, with great carefulness, every work, thought, and deed; it will call up our past dealings with mankind, and we will feel most anxious to make restitution to all whom we may have in any way injured... These, and many other good things, are the results of Godly sorrow for sin. This is repentance not in word, but in deed: this is the sorrow with which the heavens are pleased.”(True Repentance, in Orson Pratt: *Writings of an Apostle*, pp. 30-31; for a more extensive discussion of the sorrow for sins that yields true repentance see Brent L. Top, *Though Your Sins Be As Scarlet*, pp. 43-65.)

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 4 vols. 4, p. 216

Mormon 2: 15

Day of Grace is passed

10 There are many causes for human suffering—including war, disease, and poverty—and the suffering that proceeds from each of these is very real, but I would not be true to my trust if I did not say that the most persistent cause of human suffering, that suffering which causes the deepest pain, is sin—the violation of the commandments given to us by God. There cannot be, for instance, a rich and full life unless we practice total chastity before marriage and total fidelity after. There cannot be a sense of wholeness and integrity if we lie, steal, or cheat. There cannot be sweetness in our lives if we are filled with envy or covetousness. Our lives cannot really be abundant if we do not honor our parents. If any of us wish to have more precise prescriptions for

ourselves in terms of what we can do to have more abundant lives, all we usually need to do is to consult our conscience...

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ed. Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], 155-56.

11 Truly, wrath and vengeance are bedfellows. When the Lord pours out his wrath without measure, the wicked suffer the vengeance of a just God in exactly the same proportion. It is their day of reckoning; they are given measure for measure as their deeds warrant; it is a day of retribution and avengement. It is “the day when the Lord shall come to recompense unto every man according to his work, and measure to every man according to the measure which he has measured to his fellow man.” (D&C 1:10).

Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982], 500.

12 It is true that the great principle of repentance is always available, but for the wicked and rebellious there are serious reservations to this statement. For instance, sin is intensely habit-forming and sometimes moves men to the tragic point of no return. Without repentance there can be no forgiveness, and without forgiveness all the blessings of eternity hang in jeopardy. As the transgressor moves deeper and deeper in his sin, and the error is entrenched more deeply and the will to change is weakened, it becomes increasingly nearer hopeless and he skids down and down until either he does not want to climb back up or he has lost the power to do so.

Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 117.

13 It is possible for people to get so far in the dark through rebellion and wickedness that the spirit of repentance leaves them. It is a gift of God, and they get beyond the power of repentance.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:194

14 It is at this moment in Nephite history—just under 950 years since it had begun and just over 300 years since they had been visited by the Son of God himself—that Mormon realized the story was finished. In perhaps the most chilling line he ever wrote, Mormon asserted simply, “I saw that the day of grace was passed with them, both temporally and spiritually.” His people had learned that most fateful of all lessons—that the Spirit of God will not always strive with man; that it is possible, collectively as well as individually, to have time run out. The day of repentance can pass, and it had passed for the Nephites. Their numbers were being “hewn down in open rebellion against their God,” and in a metaphor almost too vivid in its moral commentary, they were being “heaped up as dung upon the face of the land.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, 319.

15 For Behold they had Wilfully Rebelled Against Their God: It is possible for people to get so far in the dark through rebellion and wickedness that the spirit of repentance leaves them. It is a gift of God, and they get beyond the power of repentance. How well Mormon speaks of that, in reference to the people who turned away with their eyes open, who turned against the truth some

200 years following the coming of Christ. The people rebelled; Mormon speaks about them and their condition beyond the power of redemption because of their wickedness and the hardness of their hearts, which the Spirit of the Lord could not penetrate.

They sinned willfully, and therefore salvation cannot come to them. It was offered to them, and they would not have it. They rejected it. They fought it and preferred to take the course of rebellion; and the Lord on one occasion said to Mormon, “You shall not preach to these people; they have turned against me and you shall not preach to them.” He had a right to say that. Now why did he say that? Because they had every opportunity and would not receive the truth. They mocked at it, and so the Lord said, “You don’t have to talk to them; there is no need to cry repentance to them any longer.” And after a while Mormon still pleaded with the Lord to let him try again. It was useless.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vol. (1954,56), 2:194-195.

Mormon 2:17-18

Abridgement of Mormon’s Record

16 When Ammaron turned the responsibility of the records over to Mormon, he indicated that Mormon should “engrave on the plates of Nephi all the things that [he] had observed concerning the people.” (Mormon 1:4.) Thus Mormon’s major record of the events of his day was written on the large plates of Nephi. However, later in his life he was commanded by the Lord to make a separate set of plates, the plates of Mormon. He then abridged onto his own plates all of the writings from the large plates of Nephi, including his own writings. Concerning his writings on these two sets of plates, Mormon said: “And upon the plates of Nephi I did make a full account of all the wickedness and abominations; but upon these plates [the plates of Mormon] I did forbear to make a full account of their wickedness and abominations...” {Mormon 2:18}.

Earlier in his writings, Mormon indicated he did not write on the plates of Mormon even one hundredth part of the things that were written on the large plates of Nephi. (3 Nephi 26:6-8.)
Ludlow, *Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, pp. 299-300.

Mormon 2:19

I shall be lifted up

17 Those members of the Church who devote themselves wholly to righteousness, living by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, make their calling and election sure. That is, they receive the more sure word of prophecy, which means that the Lord seals their exaltation upon them while they are yet in this life...

...The more sure word of prophecy means a man’s knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the Holy Priesthood. (D&C 131:5.)...

...The Prophet, for one, had this seal placed upon him... To him Deity said: “I am the Lord thy God, and will be with these even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily *I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father.*” (D&C 132:49.)

Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 109-10.

18 Joseph Smith often urged the Saints “to go on and continue to call upon God until you make your calling and election sure for yourselves, by obtaining this more sure word of prophecy, and wait patiently for the promise until you obtain it” (Teachings, p. 299). One receives these blessings only after, as Joseph taught, “the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards.”

Teachings, p. 150

Mormon 2: 23-25

Vigor, Firmness

19 There is a real power, both physical and spiritual, that can come into the life of every man or woman who is filled with the Holy Ghost. That power constitutes the “strength of the Lord”—a divine, unlimited power. Without that strength and power we are left only with the limited mortal abilities of man.

Millet & Top, *BOM Commentary*, Vol. 4, p. 220.

Mormon 2: 26

We were left to ourselves

20 When a person violates any of God’s commandments, if there is no repentance the Lord withdraws His protective and sustaining influence. When we lose power with God, we know of a certainty that the problem lies within us and not within God. “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10). Our misdeeds bring despair. They sadden and extinguish the “perfect brightness of Hope” offered by Christ (2 Nephi 31:20). Without God’s help, we are left to ourselves.

Roy H. Wood, Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 54: or *Ensign*, May 1999, 40-41.