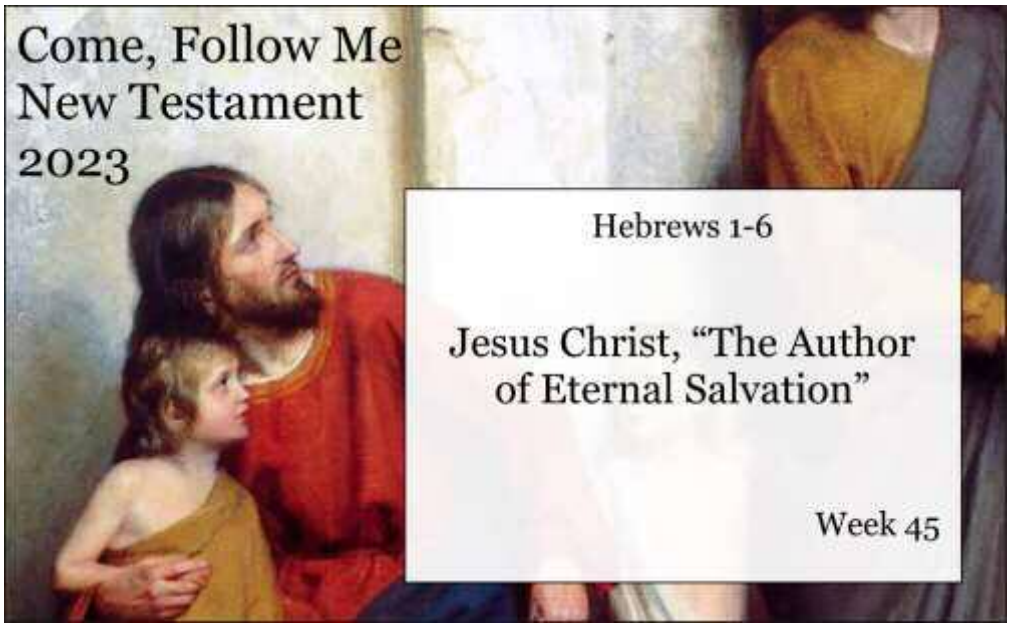

Week 45 is scheduled for study Oct. 30-Nov. 5, 2023. As the author of our eternal salvation, Jesus shows us how important we are as the children of God. Jesus demonstrates his love for us.

Day 1

Recording spiritual impressions helps you recognize what the Holy Ghost wants to teach you. Acting on your impressions demonstrates your faith that those promptings are real.

Hebrews 1-5 - Jesus Christ is "the express image" of Heavenly Father.

There is a lot tied up in the expression and thought that Jesus was in the express image of his Father. We are also created in the image of our Father and of His Son, Jesus Christ. The spirits of the animals look like their bodies, as do ours. Unlike the animals however, because we are created in God's image, we have the inherent potential to become like Him who created us, for we were created as His children.

People have fussed over the nature of God and what He looks like. This has been debated for thousands of years, but the scriptures are clear, especially the latter-day scriptures. In 1909 President Joseph F. Smith and the Council of the First Presidency issued the official doctrine of the church on where man came from. You can read it for

yourself here. It is a masterful and clear explanation as to the origins of man and why we can be confident that we are the children of God.

Jesus openly declared himself to be in "the express image" of God, our Father. This truth is important, because the scriptures state that we are created in Christ's image. So knowing who his Father is becomes important to us, because his Father is also our Father. Only God's children have been openly declared to have the potential to become like God. The animals will be blessed in the eternities, but only the seed or posterity of God, Himself can inherit His kingdom as the ruler of the universe.

I suggest you read both the talk by President Smith and the material suggested in the manual. Both of these sources give dignity to us as humans that the sciences cannot even imagine.

Day 2

Recording spiritual impressions helps you recognize what the Holy Ghost wants to teach you. Acting on your impressions demonstrates your faith that those promptings are real.

Hebrews 2:9-18; 4:12-16; 5:7-8 - Jesus Christ suffered all things so that He can understand and help me when I suffer.

I would like to make a quick side step here. In the sentence before Hebrews 2:9-18, starting in verse 7, the author of Hebrews makes a statement that no one ever talks about.

> 7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

The footnote where it says that God made Christ "a little lower than the angels" says that in Hebrew the statement should read - "a little lower than the gods." It is the Greek that substitutes the word "angels." And yes, that Hebrew word is plural. Okay, that is the end of my side step.

One of the main mistakes made by Christianity, especially by many in the Protestant portion of the religion, is that God is unapproachable. He is a God of vengeance and punishment, and not a God of love and mercy. For your reading enjoyment (tongue in

cheek) here is an article about this subject I wrote earlier - Does Modern-day Israel Need a Little Hellfire and Damnation?

The following has been a tough lesson for me to learn. I have always put myself at the center of God, our Father's love and attention. He created, in my mind, this whole universe to enable my salvation to take place. It was all created to open the way for me to return home someday. But that is not what the scriptures say. Ouch. The scriptures say that all things were made for Christ, for his glory, for his benefit. Here is the first of our scriptures today - Hebrews 2:9-12.

> 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.
>
> 10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
>
> 11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,
>
> 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

Verse 10 comes right out and tells us that God had Jesus make everything in the universe for his (Jesus's) glory, his benefit. How did creating all this benefit Jesus? That is the next part of the sentence. It goes on to say that God had Jesus make all of this for his own benefit, so he could bring God's sons (and of course His daughters) "unto glory." God needed Jesus to make all of this so that Jesus could become the captain of our salvation.

Verse 10 ends with the aside that Jesus becomes our captain, that it is he who will lead us home safely, through sufferings. I don't know if it is referring to his sufferings, our sufferings, or all of our sufferings. But in verse 11 the author of Hebrews tells us that "both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." For this reason - I guess because we are all in the same boat in mortality, we all must suffer to become sanctified - he (Jesus) "is not ashamed to call [us] brethren."

When you call, and consider, someone to be your brother, you don't push them away like a stranger. Instead, a brother is pulled close, and invited to approach freely. That is

the nature of that relationship. Jesus, in essence, is telling us that he considers himself to be one of us. He not only chose to suffer for our sins, but he also was tested, tried, and tempted in all things. He understands us. His trials in life were such that there is nothing we come across in mortality that he hasn't, in one way or another, already tasted of. Jesus knows shame, humiliation, being excluded. He understands unjust punishment, and because of his atoning sacrifice, he has had to taste of every sin ever committed by mankind, and then suffered the eternal penalty for that sin. If ever there was a "man of the people" it is Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus suffered all of this specifically so that when we want someone who understands and can offer consolation, he is there and able to help us. He suffered for us so that when we seek healing there is a healer there to sooth our pain and heal our wounds. Yes, this glorifies Jesus. This is why God had Jesus make the universe. It was to glorify his son. Why? Because it is the calling and purpose of being a Messiah, the anointed one, to offer redemption to all of God's children. This is the only way for God to bring all of His children home again, or at least offer them a degree of glory they are willing to receive. But it all has to happen because of a Messiah, a Savior, and that man is Jesus.

So yes, there is no matter too small or too great for us to bring to the throne of Christ. He pleads with us to bring it all and place it in his lap so he can help us, heal us, and lift us up and make us more like him. There is no arrogance involved here. We all understand that his capacity and abilities surpass our understanding. All we can ever hope for is to become a little bit more like him. We can never be as good as him. But it is in the trying that we are enabled through his grace to have our heart changed and have his enabling grace teach us how to be better people. He understands how much greater than us he is, yet instead of lording his superiority over us, his love for us beckons us to come to him and use his abilities to help us become more like him. The goal is to help all of us return home in triumph to our Father in Heaven.

There should never be any hesitation on our part about approaching Christ for help with a weakness or a sin. He has suffered all there is to suffer just so he can be available to help us return home to our Father in Heaven. Jesus is pleased beyond our ability to understand when we turn to him and accept his power and grace to better ourselves and learn of God's ways. This is why we are told to be bold about approaching God for forgiveness and help. For there is no reservation, resentment, or hesitation in the

Godhead when it comes to us seeking to be better people. That is what brings them the most joy.

Day 3

Recording spiritual impressions helps you recognize what the Holy Ghost wants to teach you. Acting on your impressions demonstrates your faith that those promptings are real.

Hebrews 3:7-4:11 - God's blessings are available to those who "harden not [their] hearts."

If you talk to someone like Laman or Lemuel from the Book of Mormon, the state of their heart is something over which they believe they have no control. When Nephi asked them in 1 Nephi if they had gone to the Lord to ask Him about their father's dream, their response was that God didn't make such things known unto them. They said it like they weren't involved in that decision. But when it comes to God teaching us and revealing things to us, we have everything to do with that decision on His part.

A soft heart is one where we are open to God's influence and are willing to obey Him. When we resist God's direction, fight His servants, choose to follow others around us, that is when we are said to have hardened our heart. Both a soft heart and a hard heart is a choice. If our heart today is a little hard, for whatever reason, we can choose to obey a commandment, read the scriptures, follow the prophet, or anything else that will bring us closer to the Holy Spirit, and our heart will soften. We become more pliable in the hands of the Spirit to learn to do and be more good than we are today when we are resisting His influence in our life.

We can both choose to soften our own heart and harden our own heart. If we abdicate our free will and follow the direction of anyone other than one of God's servants, we are, in essence, choosing to harden our heart, for only God's servants preach and teach obedience and subjection to the Spirit. In the Old Testament it says over and over again that God hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he wouldn't let Israel go. When Joseph Smith translated that part of the Bible he corrected those verses to read that Pharaoh hardened his heart. God had nothing to do with Pharaoh's decision, except to administer the punishment through His servant.

The "provocation" referred to in Hebrews 3:15 is a reference to the children of Israel when Moses was trying to lead them out of Egypt then the 40 years of disobedience to God that followed, as God killed off the original generation of Israelites still steeped in Egyptian ways, and raised up a generation more faithful to the law Moses gave them. The original Israelites didn't have to die. Those who chose to be obedient to Moses as God's prophet lived to enter the Promised land. The others died because they chose to be disobedient no matter how much evidence God gave them that He was really God. Choosing to believe or choosing to not believe God makes all the difference in the world. Again, that is not God's choice, but ours, for what we believe is always our choice.

FHE/Personal Study

Hebrews 1:8-9 - He loves righteousness

Here are the verses.

> 8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.
>
> 9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Something I just learned is that the scepter, the symbol of kingly authority is older than the crown. One of the ancient Egyptian scepters was the Papyrus reed. The plant was used to make paper and represented education and wisdom. In many of the drawings of Egyptian royalty you will see the Pharaoh holding a papyrus reed as one of the scepters.

As an illustration of God's devotion to righteousness these verses tell us that Christ holds a scepter of righteousness as his symbol of authority and power. It is because of his love of righteousness that "God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Anyone who has sought righteousness can attest that the righteous life brings with it gladness and joy. The scriptures are clear that "wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10). Only the righteous life can bring us joy and happiness.

It is this love for all things righteous, merciful, kind, gentle, and loving that gives us the assurance that we can approach the throne of God with confidence and He will receive us with love and forgiveness, followed by an infusion of His grace and power.

Click the link below to

print a PDF copy of the file.

NT45-2023 - Jesus Christ, "The Author of Eternal Salvation"