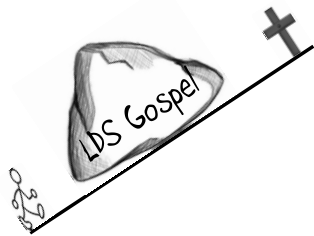


Sharing with Latter-day Saints— Rock 4



Contrast becomes an obstacle when we don't understand the role of faith and works for LDS salvation.

Clearing Rocks from the Road to Redemption

The above diagram depicts one of the common obstacles or “Rocks” that Latter-day Saints (LDS) frequently encounter when discussing matters of faith with biblical Christians.

The below diagram represents the ideal sharing scenario—the Rock has been cleared from the road to redemption. In other words, the only thing standing between LDS and being forgiven of ALL their sins is faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ ALONE to freely secure their salvation.

Note that the road to redemption is NOT on level ground, but is an uphill climb. This is because many LDS risk incredible loss (e.g. family, friends, social status, financial security, etc.) when contemplating leaving the LDS Church for a saving relationship with the Jesus Christ of the Bible.



I. Rock 4 at a Glance

A. The Purposes of Rock 4

1. One aim of this lesson is to clarify the indispensable role that faith (as opposed to works) and God's mercy and grace through Christ's Atonement play in the forgiveness of sin and salvation according to the LDS gospel.
2. Another aim of this lesson is clarify what the "work" of repentance unto the forgiveness of sin and salvation actually requires of Mormons *in this life* according to the LDS gospel.

II. What Is the Atonement (or "Work") of Christ in Which Mormons Must Have Faith?

A. **Gospel Principles** (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2009).

[p. 59] The Fall of Adam brought two kinds of death into the world: physical death and spiritual death. Physical death is separation of the body and spirit. **Spiritual death is separation from God.** If these two kinds of death had not been overcome by Jesus Christ's Atonement, two consequences would have resulted: our bodies and our spirits would have been separated forever, and we could not have **lived again with our Heavenly Father** (see **2 Nephi 9:7–9**).

[p. 61] The Savior atoned for our sins by suffering in Gethsemane and by **giving His life on the cross.** It is impossible for us to fully understand how He suffered for all of our sins. In the Garden of Gethsemane, the weight of our sins caused Him to feel such agony that He bled from every pore (see **D&C 19:18–19**). Later, as He hung upon the cross, Jesus suffered painful death by one of the most cruel methods known to man.

[pp. 61-62] On the third day after His Crucifixion, Christ took up His body

Comment [MG1]: Note how "spiritual death" applies to everyone who is NOT worthy to be reconciled to God in His kingdom. What might this term imply for those consigned to the lower two LDS kingdoms?

Comment [MG2]: Note that "lived again" is in reference to the LDS doctrine of the preexistence (see Comment 23).

Comment [MG3]: Also noted on page 61: "Jesus is the only person who has ever lived on the earth who did not sin. This made Him a worthy sacrifice to pay for the sins of others." Mormons must believe in this unmerited grace of God and work of Christ!

Comment [MG4]: Note how the Savior's atonement on the cross is given explicit credit. Mormons must believe in this unmerited grace of God and work of Christ!

again and became the first person to be resurrected. When His friends went to seek Him, the angels who guarded His tomb told them, “He is not here: for he is risen, as he said” (**Matthew 28:6**). His spirit had reentered His body, never to be separated again. Christ thus overcame physical death. Because of His Atonement, everyone born on this earth will be resurrected (see **1 Corinthians 15:21–22**). Just as Jesus was resurrected, our spirits will be reunited with our bodies, “that they can die no more . . . , never to be divided” (**Alma 11:45**). This condition is called immortality. All people who have ever lived will be resurrected, “both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, both the wicked and the righteous” (**Alma 11:44**).

[p. 62] The Savior’s Atonement makes it possible for us to overcome spiritual death. Although all people will be resurrected, only those who accept the Atonement will be saved from spiritual death (see **Articles of Faith 1:3**). We accept Christ’s Atonement by placing our faith in Him. Through this faith, we repent of our sins, are baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, and obey His commandments. We become faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. We are forgiven and cleansed from sin and prepared to return and live forever with our Heavenly Father. The Savior tells us, “For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer . . . even as I” (**D&C 19:16–17**). Christ did His part to atone for our sins. To make His Atonement fully effective in our lives, we must strive to obey Him and repent of our sins.

[p. 65] Our sins are our spiritual debts. Without Jesus Christ, who is our Savior and Mediator, we would all pay for our sins by suffering spiritual death. But because of Him, if we will keep His terms, which are to repent and keep His commandments, we may return to live with our Heavenly Father.

Comment [MG5]: Note how Christ’s resurrection is given explicit credit. Mormons must believe in this unmerited grace of God and work of Christ!

Comment [MG6]: Note how this biblical text is used to support universal resurrection when the context refers only to “those who belong to [Christ]” (see v. 23).

Comment [MG7]: Remember this: LDS “immortality” is merely universal resurrection (a.k.a. general salvation) and NOT resurrection unto salvation in Christ’s kingdom.

Comment [MG8]: Note the similar language used in Joseph Fielding Smith’s Ladder Illustration in R3.4.

Comment [MG9]: Remember this: Mormons must “accept the Atonement” in order to be reconciled to God in His kingdom.

Comment [MG10]: AoF 1:3 reads, “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.”

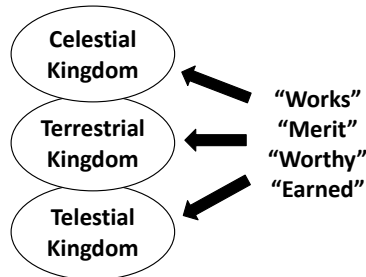
Comment [MG11]: Primarily entails the aforementioned work of Christ.

Comment [MG12]: Remember this: The sin-cleansing benefits of the Atonement are accessed only through LDS repentance. “Accessing,” “receiving,” and “accepting” the Atonement is common LDS terminology.

Comment [MG13]: Also on page 65 LDS apostle Boyd K. Packer confirms that because Jesus paid our sin debt He is now our “creditor,” we “pay the debt” to Him, and He “will set the terms.”

Comment [MG14]: Note the conditional “if” of “His terms,” thus entailing the necessary work for LDS to be reconciled to God.

III. Why Are There 3 LDS Kingdoms of Glory or Heavens?



A. **Joseph Fielding Smith**, 10th LDS Prophet and President (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1955, Vol. 2).

[pp. 12-13] Salvation will come to all who enter the terrestrial kingdom. They will receive a higher grade of salvation than will those in the telestial kingdom. Salvation will come also to those who enter the celestial kingdom. That will be a still higher grade of salvation.

Salvation is of varying stages or degrees. Every man is to be judged according to his **works**, and for this reason various degrees or kingdoms have been established.

[p. 5] Very gladly would the Lord give to everyone eternal life [in the celestial kingdom], but since that blessing can come only on **merit**—through the faithful performance of duty—only those who are **worthy** shall receive it.

B. **Bruce R. McConkie**, LDS Apostle (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, p. 641).

Except for the free gift of immortality (which comes by grace alone and includes bodily or physical perfection), all rewards gained in the eternal worlds must be **earned**. That perfection sought by the saints is both temporal and spiritual and comes only as a result of full obedience.

IV. Why Is the Celestial Kingdom the Ultimate Reward?

Comment [MG15]: Salvation in the sense of consignment to a kingdom of glory is referred to as “individual salvation,” because it is conditioned in part upon one’s works.

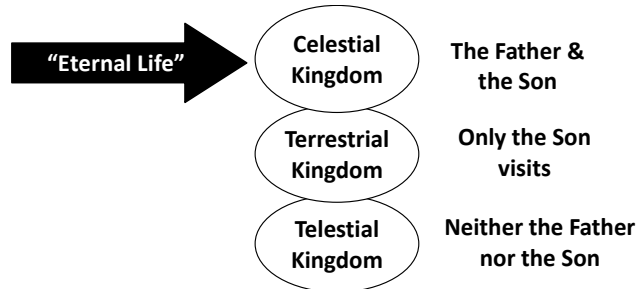
“General salvation,” however, is merely resurrection, that is, the reuniting of the body and spirit after death. It comes to ALL mankind as an absolutely free gift to the exclusion of faith and works.

Comment [MG16]: Remember this: “Works” are co-instrumental in LDS salvation, that is, Christ did His part and we must do ours to close the God-gap.

Salvation is for LDS a cooperative, synergistic system—it is neither solely of LDS works nor solely of Christ’s work (although without Christ’s work, salvation would NOT be possible).

Comment [MG17]: Remember this: Because salvation is “earned,” it is we who obligate Christ our Creditor to pay us our due. Salvation, then, is more of a wage paid than a gift freely given.

The difference between a child’s Christmas gift from their parents and a paycheck from a gracious employer helps to clarify this concept.



A. **Doctrines of the Gospel—Student Manual** (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010, pp. 90-91).

C3. Those who inherit the celestial kingdom will dwell in the presence of God and Christ forever (see **D&C 76:62**).

C6. Through the Atonement and their own faithfulness, those who obtain exaltation become gods (see **D&C 76:58; 132:19–20**).

D1. Those who inherit the terrestrial kingdom are described as honorable people who, either in this world or in the spirit world, receive the testimony of Jesus but are not valiant in that testimony (see **D&C 76:71–79**).

E1. The inhabitants of the terrestrial kingdom will enjoy the presence of the Son but not the fulness [sic] of the Father (see **D&C 76:77**).

F1. Those who profess to follow Christ or the prophets but willfully reject the gospel, the testimony of Jesus, the prophets, and the everlasting covenant will inherit the telestial kingdom (see **D&C 76:99–101**).

G5. Those in the telestial kingdom will be servants of God, “but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end” (**D&C 76:112**).

Comment [MG18]: The goal of every faithful Mormon is to be worthy to dwell in the celestial kingdom with their Heavenly Father.

Comment [MG19]: Note again that “individual salvation” (particularly in the celestial kingdom) is a co-instrumental, cooperative, synergistic system.

Comment [MG20]: Page 90 confirms that celestial inhabitants “will minister” to terrestrial inhabitants only. Nevertheless, the LDS doctrine of “forever families” in reality is restricted to celestial inhabitants.

Comment [MG21]: One wonders what ontological distinction may be entailed by “the presence of the Son but not the fulness [sic] of the Father” in the terrestrial kingdom.

Comment [MG22]: Page 90 confirms that terrestrial inhabitants “will minister” to telestial inhabitants (i.e. murders, liars, and adulterers)—“the wicked people of the earth.”

B. **Joseph Fielding Smith**, 10th LDS Prophet and President (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1957, 1:29).

The plan of salvation was prepared before the foundation of our earth was laid. We were then the spirit children of our Eternal Father. In the course of our progression it was necessary that we have the privilege of coming to this earth and here receive our bodies of flesh and bones and pass through this period of mortality where we are subject to all the conditions we find in this life: pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow, and be tried and tempted to see if we would be true to our Eternal Father and keep his commandments when we were not in his presence as we kept them when we were spirits living in his presence. This earth is a probationary state, or a place prepared where we are tested and given the privilege of walking by faith, that we may become worthy to return to our Father to dwell in his presence, and become his eternal sons and daughters.

C. **Joseph Fielding Smith**, 10th LDS Prophet and President (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1955, 2:23).

THE CELESTIAL IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD. The celestial kingdom is the kingdom spoken of in the scriptures as the kingdom of God, which men are commanded to seek first in preference to all else. It is the place where those who enter receive eternal life, in addition to immortality. Immortality is the gift to live forever given to all men. Eternal life is life in the presence of the Father and the Son and is the kind of life which they possess. It is of the celestial kingdom the Lord was speaking when he said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." [Matthew 7:13-14]

Comment [MG23]: Note that this is in reference to the LDS doctrine of the preexistence where all created beings were the literal, spiritual offspring of our Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother. (This includes Jesus and Lucifer/Satan.)

While biblical Christianity teaches the preexistence of angels (e.g. Satan, Michael, Gabriel, etc.), ALL of whom the Son of God created, humans come into personal being (materially and spiritually) at the moment of conception.

Comment [MG24]: Remember this: The LDS doctrine of the preexistence entails a "return to our Father." Biblical Christianity teaches NOT returning to, but being reconciled to God.

Both Mormonism and biblical Christianity teach we must "become worthy" to dwell forever with the Father and the Son—HOW this takes place is where these two gospels of salvation are diametrically opposed. (See the Ladder, Light Bulb, and Kingdoms Illustrations in R3.)

Comment [MG25]: Remember this: "Eternal life" is equated with the celestial kingdom only.

Comment [MG26]: Understand that there are three levels within the celestial kingdom of which only the highest is equated to exaltation or godhood for Mormons.

V. How Many Commandments Must Be Obeyed to Return to Heavenly Father in the Celestial Kingdom?

A. **Joseph Fielding Smith**, 10th LDS Prophet and President (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1979, pp. 26-27).

After giving this counsel and teaching the members to be faithful in all things, he said, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (**James 2:10**.) James did not mean that a man who stole was guilty of murder, or that one who lied was guilty of unchastity. He was endeavoring to impress upon the minds of the members that the kingdom of God is one. Its laws are perfect. No unclean person can enter there. Since it is a perfect kingdom, its laws must be obeyed. ... Therefore the words of James are true. Unless a man can abide strictly in complete accord, he cannot enter there, and in the words of James, he is guilty of all. In other words if there is one divine law that he does not keep he is barred from participating in the kingdom, and figuratively guilty of all, since he is denied all.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. [**Matthew 5:48**].

B. **Joseph Fielding Smith**, 10th LDS Prophet and President (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1955, 2:345).

We covenant [when partaking of the Sacrament] that we will keep his commandments which he has given us, not one commandment, but that we will be willing to "live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God." [**D&C 84:44**]

VI. Will Even One Small Sin Prevent Us from Returning to Heavenly Father?

Comment [MG27]: Refer also to the continuation of this quote and the Light Bulb Illustration in R3.6.

Comment [MG28]: Note the "all-or-nothing" implications here with which biblical Christians wholeheartedly agree. Note also the citation of biblical Scripture which is commendable.

Comment [MG29]: Note that James 2:10 is interpreted in the context of the celestial kingdom.

Comment [MG30]: "Unclean" terminology clearly refers to broken commandments that have resulted in unforgiven sin.

Comment [MG31]: Remember this: All of God's laws and commandments under the New Covenant "must be obeyed."

Comment [MG32]: Note the absolute terminology in the entire quote: "all" (5x); "whole law"; "perfect" (3x); "no"; "must"; "cannot"; "barred."

Comment [MG33]: Remember this: D&C 84:44 is interpreted to be equated with ALL of God's commandments (i.e. under the New Covenant and including latter-day revelation).

Comment [MG34]: Remember this: The ultimate goal established by the LDS Church for every Mormon is to live a life that renders one worthy to return to Heavenly Father.

Here is a key question for LDS and biblical Christians: "What must we do to live forever with our Heavenly Father (i.e. be reconciled to Him)?"

The "Unclean" May Not Dwell with God



- A. **Spencer W. Kimball**, 12th LDS Prophet and President (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 1969, p. 19).

At that destination [the celestial kingdom] our Father waits hopefully, anxious to greet his returning children. Unfortunately many will not arrive.

The reason is forthrightly stated by Nephi—"... There cannot any unclean thing enter into the Kingdom of God ..." (1 Ne. 15:34.) And again, "... no unclean thing can dwell with God..." (1 Ne. 10:21.) To the prophets the term unclean in this context means what it means to God. To man the word may be relative in meaning—one minute speck of dirt does not make a white shirt or dress unclean, for example. But to God who is perfection, cleanliness means moral and personal cleanliness. Less than that is, in one degree or another, uncleanliness and hence cannot dwell with God.

- B. **Joseph Fielding Smith**, 10th LDS Prophet and President (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1955, 2:17).

LITTLE SINS WILL KEEP US FROM SALVATION

God is not going to save every man and woman in the celestial kingdom. If you want to get there, and you have failings; if you are committing sins; if you are breaking the commandments of the Lord, and you know it; it is a good time right now to repent and reform, and not get the idea that it is such a little thing [“Oh, a cup of tea is such a little thing.” p. 16] that the

Comment [MG35]: We might refer to this as “The White Shirt Illustration.”

Comment [MG36]: Biblical Christians wholeheartedly agree with this core LDS gospel doctrine.

Comment [MG37]: Note that the prophets (as recorded in LDS Scripture) and God are in complete agreement—sin CANNOT be relativized.

Comment [MG38]: Note that it is man who relativizes sin.

Comment [MG39]: Taken together with “one minute speck,” the phrase “one degree or another” entails the full spectrum of sins, ALL of which result in the same consequence.

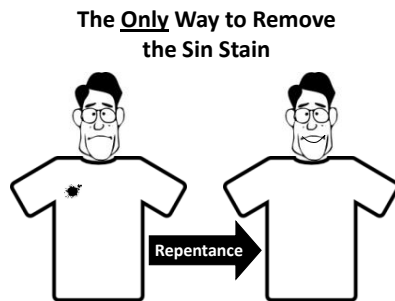
Comment [MG40]: Remember this: Adequate knowledge and understanding of divine law is the sufficient condition for moral culpability and sin in LDS teachings (see Jas. 4:17).

Question: Where does this leave the Latter-day Saint who is self-deceived and in denial of their sin? (Refer below to section IX.A.)

Comment [MG41]: This is in reference to the “Word of Wisdom” in D&C 89 and again condemns the relativizing of sin.

Lord will forgive you; just a few stripes, just a little punishment and we will be forgiven; for you may find yourselves cast out, if you insist and persist in such a course.

VII. How Is Our Sin Stain Removed?



- A. **Spencer W. Kimball**, 12th LDS Prophet and President (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 1969, p. 20).

Were it not for the blessed gifts of repentance and forgiveness this ["moral and personal cleanliness" p. 19] would be a hopeless situation for man, since no one except the Master has ever lived sinless on the earth.

Comment [MG42]: This is a continuation of Spencer Kimball's quote in section VI.A. above in reference to "one minute speck of dirt" rendering us unclean and unworthy to "dwell with God."

- B. **Gospel Principles** (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2009, p. 109).

Repentance is the way provided for us to become free from our sins and receive forgiveness for them. Sins slow our spiritual progression and can even stop it. Repentance makes it possible for us to grow and develop spiritually again. The privilege of repenting is made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

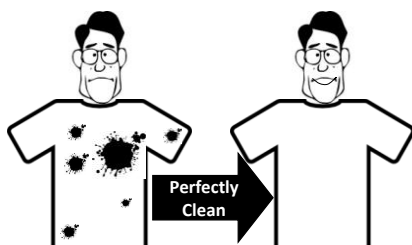
Comment [MG43]: Spencer Kimball here gives us a very subtle (yet critical) clue as it concerns the requirement for returning to Heavenly Father—namely, that Mormons must attain sinless perfection on par with that of Jesus, albeit through perfect repentance.

Comment [MG44]: This is in reference to the LDS doctrine of eternal progression (i.e. perfection, exaltation, godhood).

Comment [MG45]: Note that repentance is how Mormons gain access to the sin-cleansing benefits of Christ's Atonement. (Refer above to section II.A.)

VIII. How Many Sins Must We Repent of to Return to Heavenly Father?

Obedience & the Repentance of All Our Sins!



A. **3 Nephi 27:19** (Book of Mormon - BoM)

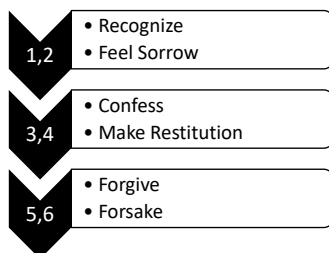
19 And no unclean thing can enter into his [the Father's] kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my [Christ's] blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

Comment [MG46]: Remember this: Many Mormons are under the false impression that the Atonement of Christ will help close the God-gap by covering sins that were not completely repented of.

Clearly "all" means all! Once the necessary and sufficient conditions for LDS repentance are established, anything short of this renders one "unclean" and unworthy to return to Heavenly Father. (Refer below to Alma 11:37 in section IX.C.)

IX. Exactly What "Work" Is Required of Us to Repent?

The 6-Step Program



A. **Gospel Principles** (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2009, pp. 110-11).

We Must Recognize Our Sins

Comment [MG47]: Note the absolute phrase "we must" that is repeated in all 6 necessary conditions for repentance.

To repent, we must admit to ourselves that we have sinned. If we do not admit this, we cannot repent.

Comment [MG48]: Where does this leave the Latter-day Saint who is self-deceived and in denial of even one sin?

We Must Feel Sorrow for Our Sins

In addition to recognizing our sins, we must feel sincere sorrow for what we have done. We must feel that our sins are terrible. We must want to unload and abandon them.

Comment [MG49]: How exactly are Mormons to gauge adequate sincerity and sorrow to be truly repentant and to secure forgiveness for even one sin?

We Must Confess Our Sins

Confessing our sins is very important. The Lord has commanded us to confess our sins. Confession relieves a heavy burden from the sinner.

Comment [MG50]: Where does this leave the Latter-day Saint who will not or cannot recognize even one sin in order to confess it (see Comment 48)?

We Must Make Restitution

Part of repentance is to make restitution. This means that as much as possible we must make right any wrong that we have done.

Comment [MG51]: How easy would it be to convince ourselves that we have done "as much as possible" when, in fact, we have not?

We Must Forgive Others

A vital part of repentance is to forgive those who have sinned against us. The Lord will not forgive us unless our hearts are fully cleansed of all hate, bitterness, and bad feelings against other people (see 3 Nephi 13:14–15).

Comment [MG52]: Note the absolute terms "fully" and "all." Keeping in mind that God CANNOT relativize sin (see section VI.A. above), where does this leave the Latter-day Saint who has had the most horrific, heinous, and torturous sins committed against them or their loved ones, and this, repeatedly or unceasingly?

We Must Forsake Our Sins

Our sincere sorrow should lead us to forsake (stop) our sins. If we have stolen something, we will steal no more. If we have lied, we will lie no more. If we have committed adultery, we will stop. The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, "By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:43).

Comment [MG53]: Note the repeated absolute phrase "no more."

Remember this: NOT REPEATING the sin is the clearest most objective evidence of true, sincere, and complete repentance without which there can be NO forgiveness.

B. Doctrine and Covenants 1:31-33

31 For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance;

Comment [MG54]: Remember this: D&C 58:43 is the key verse in LDS Scripture that defines the necessary condition for repentance.

Comment [MG55]: Note the all-encompassing nature of sin that God CANNOT allow.

32 Nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven;

33 And he that repents not, from him shall be taken even the light which he has received; for my Spirit shall not always strive with man, saith the Lord of Hosts.

Comment [MG56]: Note that true, sincere, and complete repentance requires "doing the commandments" (i.e. NOT repeating the sin) to secure forgiveness.

C. Alma 11:37 (BoM)

37 And I [Amulek] say unto you [Zeezrom] again that he [God] cannot save them [his people] in their sins; for I cannot deny his word, and he hath said that no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore, how can ye be saved, except ye inherit the kingdom of heaven? Therefore, ye cannot be saved in your sins.

Comment [MG57]: Clearly Latter-day Saints who have not met the 6 requirements of repentance for every sin are still "in their sins," "unclean" unsaved, and unworthy to return to Heavenly Father in the celestial kingdom.

D. Moroni 10:32-33 (BoM)

32 Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

Comment [MG58]: Note the absolute terminology "all ungodliness" and "all your might, mind and strength." These are the necessary and sufficient conditions for Christ's grace "unto the remission of your sins" (see v. 33 below).

33 And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.

Comment [MG59]: Clearly the "work" of Latter-day Saints is as indispensable as the Atonement of Christ to secure forgiveness.

X. Does Repentance Allow for the Repetition of Sin?

- A. **Spencer W. Kimball**, 12th LDS Prophet and President (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 1969, p. 163).

There is one crucial test of repentance. This is abandonment of the sin. Providing that a person discontinues his sin with the right motives — because of a growing consciousness of the gravity of the sin and a willingness to comply with the laws of the Lord — he is genuinely repenting. This criterion has been set by the Lord: "By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins — behold, he will confess them and forsake them." (**D&C 58:43**. Italics added.)

Desire Is Not Sufficient

In other words, it is not real repentance until one has abandoned the error of his way and started on a new path.

- B. **Doctrines of the Gospel—Student Manual** (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010, p. 39-40).

"When we speak of the continual need of repentance, let it not be understood that we refer to a cycle of sinning and repenting and sinning again. That is not complete repentance. We must see the right and follow it, recognize the wrong and forsake it with a 'Godly sorrow' if we would obtain the blessing of complete repentance. A growing conception of the good life must be accompanied by constant adjustment thereto if one would achieve harmony with the will of God" (Hugh B. Brown [LDS Apostle], *Eternal Quest*, 99, 102).

Comment [MG60]: The "work" of repentance hangs almost entirely on this "one crucial test"—the commandment that was first broken MUST NOT be broken again!

Comment [MG61]: Note that repentance "with the right motives" is where feeling sincere sorrow comes into play (see Comment 49).

Comment [MG62]: Note that "abandonment of the sin" is equated with keeping the "the laws of the Lord."

Comment [MG63]: Sinning again is equated with not "genuinely" repenting.

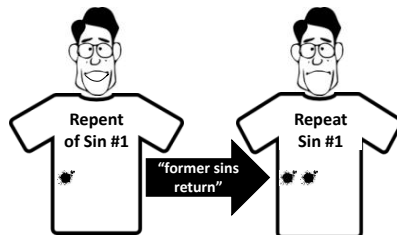
Comment [MG64]: Sinning again is equated with "not real repentance."

Comment [MG65]: Sinning again is equated with "not complete repentance."

Comment [MG66]: This conditional "if" clearly means that repeating the sin betrays incomplete repentance and therefore unforgiveness.

XI. How Does False Repentance Compound Our Sins?

False Repentance Compounds Our Sins



A. Doctrine and Covenants 82:7

7 And now, verily I say unto you, I, the Lord, will not lay any sin to your charge; go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God.

B. Spencer W. Kimball, 12th LDS Prophet and President (*Faith Precedes the Miracle*, 1972, p. 181.)

And the Lord in our dispensation said: By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins — behold, he will . . . forsake them. (D&C 58:43.)

The discontinuance must be a permanent one. True repentance does not permit repetition. Peter said: For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world . . . they are again entangled therein. . . . it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment. . . . [as the] dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. (2 Peter 2:20-22.)

Forgiveness is not assured if one reverts to early sins. The Lord said: . . . go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return. . . . (D&C 82:7.)

Comment [MG67]: Remember this: Repeating a sin that was formerly repented of proves false that repentance, which is exactly why "the former sins return." Otherwise, ONLY the current sin would be on our soul.

Comment [MG68]: False repentance is the opposite of "true repentance."

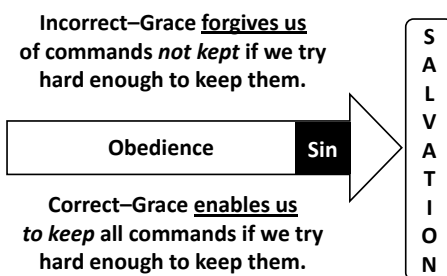
Comment [MG69]: Remember this: D&C 82:7 is the key verse in LDS Scripture that defines the necessary consequence of repeating a sin formerly repented of and which exposes it as a false, insincere, disingenuous, incomplete repentance.

XII. What Is the Correct Interpretation of 2 Nephi 25:23?

A. **2 Nephi 25:23** (BoM)

23 For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; **for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.**

“After All We Can Do”



Comment [MG70]: Remember this: 2 Nephi 25:23 is the key verse cited by Mormons who incorrectly believe that Christ’s Atonement will cover the sins they have yet to overcome, that is, no longer repeat.

Question1: What is the difference between those who have overcome their sins and those who have NOT?

Answer: The former do NOT continue to repeat their sins as do the latter.

Question 2: Is God’s mercy robbing His justice by cleansing sins that have NOT been overcome, that is, truly repented of?

Answer: Yes. “If so, God would cease to be God” (see Alma 42:24-25).

B. **Ezra Taft Benson**, 13th LDS Prophet and President (*Come Unto Christ*, 1983, pp. 7-8).

As a church, we are in accord with an ancient prophet who said, "It is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." (Book of Mormon, **2 Nephi 25:23**.) Grace consists of God's gift to His children wherein He gave His Only Begotten Son in order that whosoever would believe in Him **and comply with His laws and ordinances would have everlasting life.**

Comment [MG71]: Note this is Ezra Taft Benson’s comment on 2 Nephi 25:23.

Comment [MG72]: Note that those who “comply” with God’s commandments are forgiven, NOT those who repeat their sins.

By grace, the Savior accomplished His atoning sacrifice so that all mankind will attain immortality. By His grace and by our faith in His atonement and our repentance of our sins, **we receive the strength to do the necessary works that we otherwise could not do by our own power.**

Comment [MG73]: Note that those who “do the necessary works” are saved, NOT those who repeat their sins.

Clearly, we who have not overcome our sins have NOT done “all we can do.”

C. **Spencer W. Kimball**, 12th LDS Prophet and President (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 1969, pp. 164-165).

Trying Is Not Sufficient

Nor is repentance complete when one merely tries to abandon sin. To try with a weakness of attitude and effort is to assure failure in the face of Satan's strong counteracting efforts. What is needed is resolute action. A story will perhaps illustrate this.

An army officer called a soldier to him and ordered him to take a message to another officer. The soldier saluted and said, "I'll try, sir! I'll try!" To this the officer responded: "I don't want you to try, I want you to deliver this message." The soldier, somewhat embarrassed, now replied: "I'll do the best I can, sir." At this the officer, now disgusted, rejoined with some vigor: "I don't want you to try and I don't want you to 'do the best you can.' I want you to deliver this message." Now the young soldier, straightening to his full height, approached the matter magnificently, as he thought, when he saluted again and said: "I'll do it or die, sir." To this the now irate officer responded: "I don't want you to die, and I don't want you merely to do the best you can, and I don't want you to try. Now, the request is a reasonable one; the message is important; the distance is not far; you are able-bodied; you can do what I have ordered. Now get out of here and accomplish your mission."

It is normal for children to try. They fall and get up numerous times before they can be certain of their footing. But adults, who have gone through these learning periods, must determine what they will do, then proceed to do it. To "try" is weak. To "do the best I can" is not strong. We must always do better than we can. . . . With the inspiration from the Lord we can rise higher than our individual powers, extend far beyond our own personal potential.

Comment [MG74]: Many Mormons incorrectly believe that trying as hard as they can to overcome sin is the sufficient condition for cleansing through Christ's Atonement.

Comment [MG75]: Spencer Kimball's point here is that trying is sufficient so long as the effort actually results in the sin being abandoned or overcome.

Comment [MG76]: Note the obvious parallel here between trying and actually overcoming the sin.

Comment [MG77]: Note the obvious parallel here between doing "the best you can" and actually overcoming the sin.

Comment [MG78]: Note the obvious parallel here between dying while trying and actually overcoming the sin.

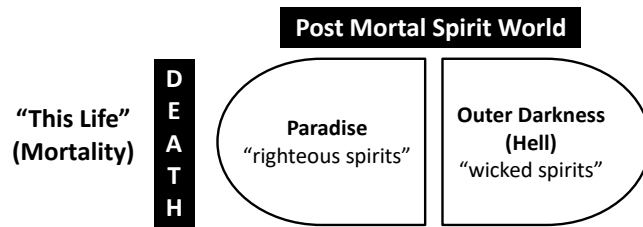
Comment [MG79]: Note how Spencer Kimball here echoes the words of Ezra Taft Benson above in association with Comment 73.

XIII. Must All Known Sins Be Repented of in This Life to Return to Heavenly Father?

1. Outer darkness is referred to as "spirit prison" because the wicked spirits are the last to be reunited with their resurrected bodies.

2. The post mortal spirit world is also referred to as "spirit prison" in the sense that all spirits must wait to be reunited with their resurrected bodies.

Incorrect—we may continue our repentance unto celestial glory.



Correct—we may NOT continue our repentance unto celestial glory.

A. **Alma 34:32-34** (BoM)

32 For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors.

33 And now, as I said unto you before, as ye have had so many witnesses, therefore, I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed.

34 Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for 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.

B. **Spencer W. Kimball**, 12th LDS Prophet and President (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 1969, pp. 12-14).

Comment [MG80]: Note the emphasis on "this life" to "prepare" and "perform" as opposed to the afterlife—a consequential boundary is indeed being stressed.

Comment [MG81]: As shall be demonstrated, "no labor [can be] performed" with the hope of returning to Heavenly Father by trying to repent of sins in the afterlife that were known sins "in this life."

Comment [MG82]: Clearly this is in reference to the celestial kingdom. (Refer above to section IV.A.)

Comment [MG83]: Remember this: The reason we are unable to "return to [our] God," is because any sin-stain on our spirit at the time of death in "this life" is indelibly transferred to our spirit in the afterlife.

Comment [MG84]: It is important to note that Spencer Kimball's quote here appears in chapter one titled "This Life Is the Time" under which he cites Alma 34:32.

Judgment According to Knowledge

Knowledge of the gospel has come to many men and women in this life together with adequate opportunity to live it. Such will be judged by the gospel law. Should one not have had opportunities to hear and understand the gospel in this mortal life, that privilege will be given him hereafter. Judgment is according to knowledge and compliance.

Comment [MG85]: Remember this: "Knowledge" and "adequate opportunity" are the necessary and sufficient conditions for culpability "in this life."

Latter-day Saints are in the first category. Having been blessed with the gospel privileges they are and will be judged on gospel criteria. Where the law is, it is a serious error not to comply with it, as the following scriptures emphasize:

Comment [MG86]: Many Mormons mistakenly hope for forgiveness in the afterlife—a hope that is reserved ONLY for those who did NOT have "opportunities to hear and understand the gospel in this mortal life."

Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth. (John 9:41.)

Comment [MG87]: Note the conditions for spiritual culpability here and in each of the below LDS Scripture citations.

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. (John 15:22.)

And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required. (Luke 12:47-48.)

Jacob's words to his people might have been spoken directly to us:

But wo [sic] unto him that has the law given, yea, that has all the commandments of God, like unto us, and that transgresseth them, and that wasteth the days of his probation, for awful is his state! (2 Ne. 9:27.)

Some Opportunities End at Death

Thus for us who know but do not comply, the opportunities for certain limitless blessings have an end when death closes our eyes.

Comment [MG88]: Question: What are the specific opportunities that "end when death closes our eyes" if we "do not comply" with God's commandments?

And after that you have received this, if you keep not my commandments you cannot be saved in the kingdom of my Father. (D&C 18:46.)

Comment [MG89]: Answer: The opportunity to return to Heavenly Father is lost given our knowledge of ANY of God's commandments and adequate opportunity to understand them.

King Benjamin's graphic statement is indeed a sobering thought:

Therefore if that man repenteth not, and remaineth and dieth an enemy to God, the demands of divine justice do awaken his immortal soul to a lively sense of his own guilt, which doth cause him to shrink from the presence of the Lord, and doth fill his breast with guilt, and pain, and anguish, which is like an unquenchable fire, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever. **Mos. 2:38.**)

This is the state of those who knowingly fail to live the commandments in this life. They will bring upon themselves their own hell.

Comment [MG90]: Remember this: Returning to Heavenly Father in the celestial kingdom requires that Mormons learn more and more commandments and which MUST be obeyed (a.k.a. "celestial law") in this life.

- C. **Spencer W. Kimball**, 12th LDS Prophet and President (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 1969, pp. 167-168).

Repentance Takes Time

Repentance is inseparable from time. No one can repent on the cross, nor in prison, nor in custody. One must have the opportunity of committing wrong in order to be really repentant. The man in handcuffs, the prisoner in the penitentiary, the man as he drowns, or as he dies such a man certainly cannot repent totally. He can wish to do it, he may intend to change his life, he may determine that he will, but that is only the beginning.

Clearly for every commandment learned the potential for sinning increases exponentially over the course of one's life. Perhaps this is why so many Mormons are falsely hoping to continue their repentance in the spirit world.

That is why we should not wait for the life beyond but should abandon evil habits and weaknesses while in the flesh on the earth. **Elder Melvin J.**

Ballard [Quorum of the Twelve Apostles] pinpointed this problem:

Comment [MG91]: Note this important additional teaching on LDS repentance that bears directly on forgiveness (or lack thereof) in the spirit world.

A man may receive the priesthood and all its privileges and blessings, but until he learns to overcome the flesh, his temper, his tongue, his disposition to indulge in the things God has forbidden, he cannot come

Comment [MG92]: The key to understanding repentance in this context is realizing that sins of a physical nature MAY NOT be repented of in the spirit world (see Comment 95).

into the celestial kingdom of God — he must overcome either in this life or in the life to come. But this life is the time in which men are to repent. Do not let any of us imagine that we can go down to the grave not having overcome the corruptions of the flesh and then lose in the grave all our sins and evil tendencies. They will be with us. They will be with the spirit when separated from the body.

Clearly it is difficult to repent in the spirit world of sins involving physical habits and actions. There one has spirit and mind but not the physical power to overcome a physical habit. He can desire to change his life, but how can he overcome the lusts of the flesh unless he has flesh to control and transform? How can he overcome the tobacco or the drink habit in the spirit world where there is no liquor nor tobacco and no flesh to crave it? Similarly with other sins involving lack of control over the body.

Comment [MG93]: Once again it is emphatically declared that where knowledge and adequate opportunity exist to repent "in this life" (and we are unsuccessful), there is NO hope of working out our celestial salvation in the afterlife (see Comments 82, 88 and 89).

Comment [MG94]: At first blush this appears to be a contradiction but it is not. Sins not overcome in mortality may be overcome in the afterlife, but only to improve one's blessings in a kingdom of glory other than the celestial.

Comment [MG95]: Remember this: This is exactly why Mormons baptize by proxy for the dead in temples—baptism is a physical ordinance that CANNOT be performed in the spirit world.

XIV. Must Even Small Sins Be Repented of in This Life to Return to Heavenly Father?

- A. **Joseph Fielding Smith**, 10th LDS Prophet and President (*The Way to Perfection*, 1949, pp. 202-204).

Procrastination, as it may be applied to Gospel principles, is the thief of eternal life — which is life in the presence of the Father and the Son. There are many among us, even members of the Church, who feel that there is no need for haste in the observance of Gospel principles and the keeping of the commandments.

Comment [MG96]: Note that "procrastination" in the context of repentance in this life bears directly on our inability to return to Heavenly Father in the celestial kingdom.

Comment [MG97]: Note that "members of the [LDS] Church" are singled out, NOT the unconverted.

The Delusion That "All Is Well in Zion"

Nephi wrote of the people of the last days: "Yea, and there shall be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us. And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God — he will justify in committing a little

sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God." —

2 Nephi 28:7-8.

Do not think that this was said of the world, or even the "stranger within our gates." It is said of members of the Church.

Lulled Into Carnal Security

We are living in the last days. Have we not heard individuals talk as Nephi said they would? Are there not many who excuse themselves and lull themselves to sleep in "carnal security," thinking that the Lord will overlook their little sins? Are there not those among us who are denying the power of the devil, and who deny that there is a devil? Do they not "spiritualize" the torments of hell, and say there is no hell? Have you not heard these things taught? In this manner Satan is raging in the hearts of the people, and members of the Church do not entirely escape his cunning sophistries!

Bad habits are easily formed, but not so easily broken. Are we yielding to our evil habits, thinking they are only trifles after all, and we will get rid of them in the grave? Do we expect that our bodies will be cleansed in the grave and we shall come forth with perfect and sanctified bodies in the resurrection? There are some among us who teach this thing, and excuse themselves for their practices, saying that they will be cleansed in the grave.

Comment [MG98]: Note the context of "a little sin." (Refer above also to section IV.)

Comment [MG99]: Once again the contextual implication here is returning to Heavenly Father in the celestial kingdom (see also Comments 82, 88-89, and 93).

Comment [MG100]: Refer above to Comment 97.)

Comment [MG101]: Note again the context of our "little sins."

Comment [MG102]: Note the false hope of Mormons who believe their "little sins" may be repented of in the afterlife (i.e. "in the grave").