

Common Consent: *In the Unity of the Faith*

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“And the Lord said unto Enoch, As I live, even so will I come in the last days, in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfill the oath which I made unto you concerning the children of Noah. And the day shall come that the earth shall rest. But before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth. And great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve and righteousness will I send down out of heaven, and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men.

“And righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine own elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare; an holy city, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion; a New Jerusalem. And the Lord said unto Enoch, Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there; and we will receive them into our bosom; and they shall see us, and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other; And there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion, which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made; and for the space of a thousand years shall the earth rest.” Genesis 7:67-72, IV

A Better Country

Our Lord is preparing a place of safety and peace (D&C 45:12c-14) for the preservation of His people during “the days of wickedness and vengeance” in which “great tribulations shall be among the children of men.” Who exactly are the Lord’s people, those whom He promises to preserve? In light of the foretold devastations, we would be wise to not only know the answer to this question but to live the answer.

Can we now answer in the affirmative that we as individuals, families, congregations and as a church are the Lord’s people? Since “the saints” themselves will “hardly escape” the perilous times ahead (D&C 63:9b & I Peter 4:18), treating this question lightly or taking

its answer for granted because of the church we belong to or the things we may or may not have done is to put ourselves in jeopardy of having the summer pass, the harvest end, and yet our souls not be saved (cf. D&C 45:1 & 63:1,2). So again the question needs to be asked, who exactly are the Lord’s people, those He will preserve during the time when “great tribulations shall be among the children of men,” during “the days of wickedness and vengeance?”

A salient characteristic of His people will be that they “hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, *which hope cometh of faith*” (Ether 5:4,32 with Moroni 7:47,48 & 8:29). And because they “desire a better country,” even a city “*whose builder and maker is God,*” He is not ashamed to be

called their God (Hebrews 11:10,13-16).

*“For he [Abraham] looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God...These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a **better country**, that is, a heavenly; **wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.**” Hebrews 11:10,13-16*

*“Wherefore, whoso believeth in God, might with surety **hope for a better world**, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God.” Ether 5:4*

God’s people are not satisfied with their lives in this present world of sin and strife. Rather, having set their affections upon that which is from above, they “seek those things which are above where Christ *sits* on the right hand of God” (Colossians 3:1-4). Why is this so important?

“He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” John 12:25

*“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. **For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.**” Hebrews 13:12-14*

If Ye Seek It With All Your Hearts

The place that is being prepared for the people of the Lord is described as “a land flowing

with milk and honey, upon which there shall be **no curse** when the Lord comes” (D&C 38:4e; contrast with Ether 6:35,36). Who will inherit this precious land of the Lord’s preparing? Those who seek it with all of their hearts:

*“...I hold forth and deign to give unto you greater riches, even a land of promise; a land flowing with milk and honey, upon which there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh; and I will give it unto you for the land of your inheritance, **if ye seek it with all your hearts...**” (D&C 38:4d,e).*

But this special land is not being prepared primarily for their preservation in this life. It is being provided so that they might “gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming,” so that when Jesus comes again they might be like Him *in this world* (cf. Genesis 7:70 with I John 3:1-3, 4:17, & Moroni 7:53). This is vital for their salvation in these latter days because if they are like their Lord **in this world** when He comes in the glory of the Father (Matthew 16:30), then they will have the **boldness** in that day and will not shrink from His presence:

*“Herein is our love made perfect, **that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world.**” I John 4:17 (cf. Matthew 5:50 & Luke 6:36)*

This truth is plainly emphasized by the question put forth by the Holy Spirit through the prophet Malachi, who asked: “who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth” (Malachi 3:2)? Again, the Spirit, through the prophet Joel provided the answer:

*“And it shall come to pass, **that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered;** for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.” Joel 2:32*

Unless we are like Jesus Christ when He comes in glory, we will not be willing nor able to call upon Him in that day. The horror of seeing our Redeemer as He truly is, in holiness and truth, in contrast to our own sinful selves, will be too much for us to bear if we are not like Him (Mormon 4:61-64). Plainly stated, unless we are clothed with His perfect light and love we will not be able to endure His presence (contrast Revelation 6:14-17 with I Corinthians 13:10-13). If we do not want this horrible fate to befall us or those we can affect for good, we must seek the promised inheritance with our whole hearts so that we might be prepared for Jesus Christ's coming in glory (Genesis 7:70). But how are we to do so?

***Be One; and if Ye are not One,
Ye are not Mine***

To seek this choice land with all one's heart means to seek to be of one heart and of one mind and to dwell together in righteousness as one people; for, to none other is it promised (cf. Genesis 7:23 with John 13:34,35 & 15:5-14). We should only expect to dwell in the precious land of the Lord's preparing according to the terms of the New and Everlasting Covenant (Genesis 9:21-24 with Hebrews 8:8-12 & 13:20,21). Otherwise, if we are not one people in the Lord, we do not have the promise that He will preserve us (D&C 81:3b with D&C 58:6i).

This is easily shown by comparing an admonition given to those in the early restored church with the record found in Genesis 7:69. The admonition is rather plain and unambiguous: "Be one; and if ye are not one, ye are not mine" (D&C 38:6a). Is it not rather clear then that if we are not one, we are not the people the Lord promises to preserve in the days of great tribulations (cf. D&C 38:6b-d)?

The ease with which we have been and continue to be fragmented as a people shows just

how very little hope there is of our preservation in our present condition. And if we are not unified in one body when the judgments of the Lord descend upon the wicked, i.e. upon those who will not heed the word and commandment of the Lord, we will be subject to the same judgments that are to fall upon them (cf. D&C 43:5c, 45:1,2, 63:9, 64:5b, 100:3c, etc.).

Unity for unity's sake can neither be our motivation nor our goal, though. We are to be the Lord's people, His body through whom He reveals His good works in this world (I Corinthians 12:7-31 & Philippians 1:11 with Mark 16:21, Matthew 5:16-18 & John 14:12). And so by way of warning, our Savior admonished all His disciples "pray always and keep my commandments," including the commandment to be one, so we might be counted worthy to escape the judgments that are to come upon the wicked (Luke 21:36 with Mark 13:52).

***The First of All the
Commandments is...***

The call to seek the land of promise with all our hearts is founded upon the two great commandments (Matthew 22:39): first, to love God with all the energies and resources of our whole being, and next, to love each other as ourselves according to the gift and power of His love and example (I John 4:7-5:4 & John 13:4-34):

"And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he [Jesus] had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is: Hearken, and hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord; And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like

*this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one God, and there is none other but him. And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength; and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, **Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.**” Mark 12:33-39*

Likewise, everyone in our day who upholds the two great commandments is not far from the kingdom of God. They earnestly seek the fulfillment of the prayer Jesus taught His disciples: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven” (Matthew 6:11). To them, just as it was to Jesus, the commandment of God is “life everlasting” (John 12:50; cf. D&C 59:1c):

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments...” I John 5:2,3

There Shall be Mine Abode

Jesus told His disciples:

*“If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our **abode** with him.”*
John 14:23

This principle is consistent with the New and Everlasting covenant the Lord made with Enoch:

*“And the Lord said unto Enoch, Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there; and we will receive them into our bosom; and they shall see us, and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other; **and there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion**, which shall come*

forth out of all the creations which I have made; and for the space of a thousand years shall the earth rest.” Genesis 7:71,72

*“And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant, which I made unto thy father Enoch; that, when men **should keep all my commandments**, Zion should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I caught up unto myself. And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth [Jesus is the Truth; John 14:6], and look upward [e.g. for wisdom; James 1:5 & 3:17,18], then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy; and the general assembly of the church of firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine everlasting covenant, which I made with thy father Enoch.”* Genesis 9:21-23

Upon the land our Lord’s preparing – for those He calls “my people” – shall be His abode, His tabernacle, His dwelling place (Genesis 7:70-72). What is His tabernacle? He does not dwell in “temples made with hands” (Acts 7:48 & 17:24). Rather, His people themselves, they who are of one heart and mind and who dwell in the glory of His righteousness, are His temple (John 14:15-26, Alma 16:235 & I Corinthians 6:19,20 with Genesis 7:21-23 & Jeremiah 23:6). For as God has said “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (cf. I Corinthians 6:19,20 & II Corinthians 6:16 with Hebrews 8:8-12):

*“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; **in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the***

Spirit.” Ephesians 2:19-22

A key factor in our being “built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit,” and thus becoming the people whom the Lord will preserve from the great tribulations to come, is **common consent**. This is a crucial element in the health and success of the body of Christ in being a light to the world (Matthew 5:16-18 with John 17:17-23). Therefore, it is imperative that God’s people attain a working knowledge of common consent based upon a scriptural understanding of what it is and how it is to be established and maintained.

By Much Prayer and Faith

In the Doctrine & Covenants, the first use of the term *common consent* appears to have been in Section 25:1b, which reads as follows:

*“And all things shall be done **by** common consent in the church, **by** much prayer and faith: for all things you shall receive by faith. Amen.” D&C 25:1b*

In this scripture we can see that “common consent” is coincident with “much prayer and faith.” This is shown by the parallel use of the word “**by**” which indicates that the phrase “**by** common consent in the church” is equivalent to the phrase “**by** much prayer and faith.” In other words, in each of these phrases our Lord is stating the same thing: common consent prevails in the body when the members of the body are given to “much prayer and faith.” Why by faith? “All things you shall receive by faith.” This same principle was again emphasized by our Lord in the following scripture:

*“Neither shall anything be appointed unto any of this church contrary to the church covenants, for all things must be done in order and **by** common consent in the church, **by** the prayer of faith.” D&C 27:4c [See also D&C 28:2c & 17:18b]*

This is what the apostle Paul called “the unity of the faith”(Ephesians 4:13).

*“And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; Till we, **in the unity of faith**, all come to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-13*

The phrase in D&C 27:4c, “Neither shall anything be appointed,” expresses the same principle found in the statement that “all things you shall receive by faith” as recorded in D&C 25:1b. The importance of these statements is grounded in the fact that God always works among the children of men according to their faith in Jesus Christ. In the words of Mormon, it is only through faith that we can lay hold upon every good gift (Moroni 7:19-44). Moroni put it this way, “wherefore thou workest **after** men have faith” (Ether 5:31). Please note the word “after.” We must first demonstrate our faith before we receive the promised blessing (cf. Hebrews 6:11,12 & 10:36 with Acts 10:4):

“Ye can not behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow, after much tribulations [cf. Romans 5:1-5]. For after much tribulations come the blessings. Wherefore the day cometh that ye shall be crowned with much glory; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand.” D&C 58:2

To receive the promised reward we must act in faith according to the word of the Lord, otherwise our reward comes from beneath:

“I command and a man obeys not, I revoke and they receive not the blessing; then they say in their hearts, This is not the work of the Lord, for his promises are not fulfilled. But

woe unto such, for their reward lurketh beneath, and not from above.” D&C 58:6i

No one can please God except they first have faith (Hebrews 11:6 & D&C 63:3 with D&C 32:3c). So nothing can be appointed contrary to faith nor will anything ever be given until after we exercise faith in the Lord (e.g. D&C 28:2c with 44:2a). Therefore, we are commanded in the first place to believe in God and follow His instruction and direction (Mosiah 2:13-17 with Alma 16:138-174).

The unity which comes of faith, or common consent, can prevail in the body of Christ only when the members of the church are in agreement with the One who brings unity to the body, i.e. by being in agreement with the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:1-4). For such agreement or consent to exist, each member of the body must exercise faithful devotion to the will of the Lord. They can only do this by seeking to come to know His will through faithful study of His word and the prayer of faith, and then by doing His will according to His meek and lowly ways (Matthew 11:29,30 with Mosiah 2:13-17):

“...and as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning even by study, and also by faith.” D&C 85:36a

Please note the phrase “and also by faith.” Since not all have faith at first, they must hear the word of God preached, whether by mouth or by reading it as recorded in scripture through the enlightenment of the Spirit of truth (cf. Romans 10:16 with II Timothy 3:15-17 & D&C 42:5, 50:4-6b & 88:1d). Common consent does not come by book learning, however. It will come only by faith. Consequently, each member of the body of Christ must seek faith, with perhaps the most important way being through studying the word of God. But please remember that no matter

what we hear or study, if it is not “mixed with faith” it will be unprofitable to us (Hebrews 4:1,2).

Because not all in the body have faith, as the above scripture shows, the extent to which common consent prevails among all of God’s people is not as far reaching as it could or should be. Does this halt God’s work? Not if we are to believe that “The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God, can not be frustrated, neither can they come to naught...” (D&C 2:1a). We may disqualify ourselves from taking part in His work by not being unified in faith (cf. D&C 4:1e & 11:4b), but His work will most assuredly go forward through those who are faithful.

The Prayer of Faith

This leads to the following question: When a group of people, like a branch, agree on something or when there is a unanimous vote cast, is this a sign of common consent? It may or may not be. This is because just being unified in our purpose is not an accurate indicator of the common consent which comes by faith as is described in scripture (D&C 25:1b & 27:4c). Take, for instance, the building of the tower of Babel. There was unity among the people in that day, but they were unified directly in opposition to the Lord’s will; they were not one *with their Lord* (e.g. Genesis 11:2-5). So unity, as manifest by a unanimous vote for example, does not necessarily mean that common consent (again, that which comes through faith in Jesus Christ) is present in the body.

There are various meetings held for the members of the body of Christ to cast their vote. But I believe that the most effectual time for common consent to be expressed is in the season of prayer. The prayer of faith is our vote, if you will, before God, the One who really counts when it comes to what the body of

Christ should “be about.” And what business should the body of Christ be about? Like Jesus, it should be occupied with our Father’s business, not our own (cf. Luke 2:49 with John 20:17).

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as the Head of His church, is very able to lead and direct the affairs of the same, and He will do so if we will but follow after Him through faithful devotion to His direction. Accordingly, the prayer of faith of His meek and humble followers is much more powerful and effectual than any other power on the earth or in the heavens that can be evoked by mankind (e.g. James 5:16 with Matthew 21:20 & D&C 25:1b). The prayer of faith, however, can be a frightening thing (Hebrews 10:31) at times because it is a two-way street. When we bring our requests to our Lord, He labors to perfect or redirect our requests to a far better purpose other than our own (Philippians 2:12,13). Why? If we “ask anything that is not expedient for [us], it shall turn unto [our] condemnation” (D&C 85:16f).

Because we do not know how to pray “as we ought,” the Spirit of our Lord makes intercessions for us so that we do not pray amiss (Romans 8:26). And so, this is the prayer of faith, to pray in accordance with the direction and will of the Spirit of truth, for “he that asketh in the spirit, asketh according to the will of God, wherefore it is done even as he asketh” that all might be benefited (cf. D&C 46:8; cf. D&C 50:6f).

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” Jude 20,21

As outlined in this scripture verse, praying in the Spirit involves action: *building up, praying, keeping* and *looking*. That is, it involves faithful devotion to being a doer of the Word

(James 1:22). Thus, it involves praying according to the will of the Lord to know the will of the Lord with the intent of obeying the will of the Lord (cf. Romans 8:26-28).

“He that asked in the Spirit, asketh according to the will of God, wherefore it is done even as he asketh.” D&C 46:8

“But know this, it shall be given you what you shall ask...” D&C 50:6f

*“Yea, **signs come by faith**, not by the will of men, nor as they please, but **by the will of God.**” D&C 50:6f*

Why is it important to know that the Spirit of the Lord will give to us what we should ask?

*“Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, that is expedient for you; **and if ye ask anything that is not expedient for you, it shall turn unto your condemnation.**” D&C 85:16f (cf. Alma 15:55,56)*

Hence the counsel to, in the first place, ask of God (e.g. Matthew 7:12,13):

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” James 1:5 (cf. D&C 46:3b-4b)

“...ye are commanded in all things to ask of God, who giveth liberally, and that which the Spirit testifies unto you, even so I would that you should do in all holiness of heart, walking uprightly before me, considering the end of your salvation, doing all things with prayer and thanksgiving, that ye may not be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrines of devils, or the commandments of men, for some are of men, and others of devils.” D&C 46:3b,c

“For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray, ye would know that ye must pray: for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray. But behold I say unto you, that ye must

pray always, and not faint: that ye must not perform anything unto the Lord, save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul.” II Nephi 14:11,12 (Colossians 3:23 & 4:2)

This, asking God for wisdom and following the direction of His Spirit of truth (cf. John 14:26 & 16:13 with II Nephi 14:4), is the foundational principle upon which common consent is and must be established. Recall that through the instruction recorded in James 1:5 that the Lord inspired the youthful Joseph Smith, Jr., to inquire of Him and then, from there, go on to lay the foundation of the restored church “*and to build it up unto the most holy faith*” (cf. D&C 19:1).

Where the counsel to call upon the Lord for the wisdom (that which comes from above, which is first of all *pure* then *peaceful*; James 3:17,18) goes unheeded by the members of the church, the members of the church expose themselves and those around them to the seducing power of evil spirits, doctrines of devils, and the commandments of men (D&C 46:3c). Therefore, the Lord has warned us to take care to seek Him and His counsel.

“And now, verily, verily I say unto thee, Put thy trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good; year, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously; and this is my Spirit.” D&C 10:6

“Wherefore, beware, lest ye are deceived, and that ye may not be deceived, seek ye earnestly the best gives, always remembering for what they are given; for verily I say unto you, They are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do, that all may be benefited, that seeketh or that asketh of me, that asketh and not for a sign that he may consume it upon his lusts.” D&C 46:4a,b

The Bond of Perfectness and Peace

If a unanimous vote is not always a clear indicator of common consent, what then signifies that it is present and prevails? The answer is charity or brotherly love, which is the bond of perfectness:

*“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. **By this** shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”* John 14:34,35

“And above all things, clothe yourselves with the bonds of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace; pray always, that you may not faint until I come; behold, and lo, I will come quickly, and receive unto myself. Amen.” D&C 85:38c

True and lasting common consent is founded in charity. Charity is the bond of perfectness and peace (cf. Colossians 3:14 with Ephesians 4:3). It both holds the body of Christ together and also builds it up (Ephesians 4:11-16). Therefore, where the characteristics of charity abound there too will common consent be found:

“And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity ye are nothing, for charity never faileth.

*Wherefore, **cleave unto charity**, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail; but charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth for ever; **and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with them.***

*Wherefore, my beloved brethren, **pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son Jesus Christ, that ye may become the***

sons of God, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is, that we may have this hope, that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen.” Moroni 7:51-53

Since charity is the pure love of Christ, common consent can prevail only where Jesus Christ is truly Lord. That is, it will prevail only where there are those who love Him and keep His commandments, among those who are “possessed of” charity (e.g. Helaman 2:31 with John 14:15-18 & Matthew 22:35-39):

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and everyone that loveth him that begat [God] loveth him also that is begotten of him [each other]. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith [the same faith by which common consent comes].” I John 5:1-4

Does charity *possess* us? If it does, we will be in the midst of common consent. But if not, we will remain outside the bonds of unity which the Lord’s Spirit establishes, never being able to attain to common consent, even though a unanimous vote may be cast.

Wherefore, Pray With All the Energy of Heart

To conclude, common consent comes by being in agreement with the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ (cf. Moroni 10:13,14). It is *the unity of faith* which the apostle Paul wrote of in Ephesians 4:13. But because not all have faith (D&C 38:36a & II Thessalonians 3:2), it may or may not be manifest by a unanimous vote, but it will always be manifest by charity, the pure love of Christ.

Where common consent is absent, there also will the fruit of the Spirit, i.e. love, joy, peace, patience, **faith**, etc., be absent. And because there is no space in which there is not a kingdom (D&C 85:9), those who are outside the bonds of common consent will be filled instead with the fruit of the flesh: bitterness, resentment, fear, anxiety, suspicion, rumoring, strife, contentions, hatred, clamoring and the like (cf. Galatians 5:19-21):

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” Galatians 5:17

The only way one can be repaired to common consent, and thus to the Lord’s peace, is through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. That is, by being reconciled to the will of God as opposed to conforming to the will of the devil and the flesh (II Nephi 7:41,42 with Romans 13:14 & Alma 18:15). For we can only come into the unity of faith by becoming doers of His word; and this we must do with the intent of being perfected in Christ so that, in turn, we might become perfect (i.e. merciful) as our Father in heaven is perfect (Moroni 10:29,30 & John 14:22-27 with James 1:22, Matthew 5:40-50, Luke 6:35,36, Matthew 7:34,35 & Genesis 1:29).

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son Jesus Christ, that ye may become the sons of God, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is, that we may have this hope, that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen.” Moroni 7:53

What a marvelous invitation and admonition this scripture is! In these few but precious words we are directed to the only true and sure way that we can effectually seek with our whole hearts the land promised of the Lord, the land of Zion, a land flowing with milk and

honey; a land upon which there will no curse when He comes in glory (D&C 38:4e with I Nephi 3:187-189)! And what is that way? It is to seek to be pure as our Lord and Redeemer is pure so that when He comes we might be like Him according to His pure and perfect love, charity (cf. I John 3:1-3 & 4:17 with Moroni 7:52 & 8:18).

***This Hope:* THE PURE IN HEART**

Remember, this is Zion: THE PURE IN HEART (D&C 94:5c), and that there is no other means whereby our garments can be cleansed and our hearts made pure than through faith in the atoning merits of the shed blood of Jesus Christ (I Nephi 3:117-119 & Ether 6:10,11).

*“O remember, remember, my sons, the words which King Benjamin spake unto his people; yea, remember that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, **only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, who shall come; yea, remember that he cometh to redeem the world...not to redeem them in their sins, but to redeem them from their sins.**” Helaman 2:71,72*

Remember that our Redeemer was given the name of *Jesus* because, as it was prophesied, He came to save His people **from** their sins (Matthew 2:4). And so, all who believe **on His name** believe that He will save and redeem them **from** their sins, not **in** their sins (Matthew 26:24, II Nephi 11:22 & D&C 45:1e). This is simply what His name means. Those who pursue being redeemed **in** their sins will not find a savior in Jesus Christ. They will have to look elsewhere to their own futility and eventual condemnation. For there is no other **name** given whereby mankind can be saved **from** their sins (Acts 4:12, Mosiah 3:11 & D&C 16:4e-g). It is only in and through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ that salvation can come.

Oh, then, what a glorious day it shall be when there is a people who, like King Benjamin’s people of old, exclaim with one voice:

*“O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ, **that we may receive forgiveness of sins, and our hearts may be purified:** For we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things, who shall come down among the children of men.”* Mosiah 2:3,4

At that day we shall all see *eye to eye*, and the Lord shall bring again His Zion (Isaiah 52:8). For His people shall have *all things common* (Acts 2:41-47 & 4:32,33) because *common consent* will hold sway in their hearts through faith in the purifying power of the atoning blood of the Lamb of God, the Holy One of Israel.

Only by faith will Zion be ushered in. Remember, to have faith is to hope for things that are true (Alma 16:143). And according to the New and Everlasting covenant, when Noah’s posterity shall *embrace* the truth (through faith) and look up, then will the Lord bring again Zion upon the earth and the earth shall rest for a thousand years (Genesis 9:22); for, as it is written, we *lay hold* on every good gift by faith (see Moroni 7:20-44).

May we, then, so embrace the Truth, who is Jesus Christ (John 14:6), and look up to heaven for the wisdom which “is *first pure*, then *peaceable*, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17 with James 1:5; cf. Proverbs 4:7 with I Corinthians 13:13 & I Corinthians 1:24).

And above all, let us pray with all the energy of our souls that we might be filled with charity that we might have *this hope* of being like Jesus when He comes in the glory of the Father that we may be pure even as He is pure (cf. Moroni 10:15 & I John 3:1-3). And pray

we must so that our love might be perfected in Him, that we might be like him in this world (I John 4:17 with Matthew 4:40-50 & Luke 6:36).

Those called of the Lord are to be a city set upon a hill, shining forth in unison the good works of our glorious Savior for all the world to see, so that they might give honor and glory to our heavenly Father (I John 4:17 with Matthew 5:16-18). Herein is true common consent manifest. Herein are we bound together in *the bond of perfectness and peace*, even in the blessed unity of the faith of the Son of God to the glory of the Father (Galatians 2:20 with Colossians 3:14,15 & D&C 85:38c).

To Him who is the only true and wise God be all the honor and glory and praise forevermore. Amen.