

10 September 2023

## Renewed in Knowledge

Dear Sisters and Elders,

Some 27 years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ and 25 years into Paul's ministry, Paul wrote a letter to the Saints in Colosse. Paul had been visited by one of the Church leaders who lived there who *"reported that the Colossians were falling into serious error, the result of a deep consciousness of sin leading to a desire to attain moral perfection by the careful observance of external ordinances and ascetic (severe self-discipline and abstention from all forms of indulgence) restrictions."* (see Bible Dictionary, Pauline Epistles). In other words, while they were horrified by sin, they thought they could be sanctified by the external ordinances associated with the law of Moses. Paul was writing to show them that sanctification was only possible through Jesus Christ.

It is Colossians 3:10 where the phrase "renewed in knowledge" appears. *"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:"* Paul is telling them to put off the natural man, refresh what you know about Jesus Christ (and learn more) and become like Him. Paul tells them this is the only way to become sanctified.

This past week, a friend of mine sent me a story posted on Twitter by a member of the security team working during the remodeling and stabilization of the Salt Lake Temple.

*"I've been in the Temple twice since construction began... Once in Feb of 2021, and again just recently. When I went through in 2021, I was amazed... It was completely gutted. I walked at what was then ground-level, and it was beneath where the baptismal font used to be. I could see all the way up through the rafters above the 5th floor where the Assembly Hall used to be. There was NOTHING in between the basement and the roof. It looked like the bombed-out shell of buildings that you see in WWII movies. The interior of the Temple will look NOTHING like it used to. It was full of narrow hallways, blind turns, and other poorly-designed elements, especially in the basement area... that was so hard to find your way around in. It will have a much more open feel, and a much better flow. But like I said... everything was gutted. There was no baptistry left... though they are replacing the old one with two baptistries. There was no entrance-level, no grand staircase, no world room, no telestial room, no terrestrial room, no celestial room, no holy of holies, no assembly hall on the 5th floor, no Q12 (Quorum of the Twelve) conference room on the 4th floor... there were no 4th and 5th floors."*

My friend then went on to compare this extensive renovation as an analogy to our lives. He concluded that *"no matter what our spiritual experiences of the past have been, they need to be increased, restructured, and strengthened.* He went on to explain that *"we need to get rid of every possible weakness, sin, and deteriorating influence in our lives, so that we may be prepared for that which is to come."* [Thom Harrison]. The Salt Lake Temple was dedicated on April 6, 1893 and stood for 126 years having never previously been decommissioned for

renovation. And yet, the time came when the temple had to be shut down and extensive upgrades and seismic retrofitting completed to protect it from sizeable future earthquakes.

When the temple was built during the 1800's, none of today's earthquake protection technologies existed. In fact, few if any of the engineering standards, methods, and processes being employed in the renovation had been developed. This possibilities for this renovation came to fruition because these men responsible for the construction were educated and renewed in their knowledge of these new engineering techniques.

And so, it is with us. We cannot expect that who we were yesterday is going to be good enough for tomorrow. We will surely experience earthquakes in our own lives. As my friend said, we need to *"get rid of every sin, weakness, and deteriorating influence in our lives"*. How do we do this? We renew our knowledge of Jesus Christ. We make learning of Him a lifelong effort. As we come to know Him, we will be prepared with the knowledge, strength, and power to overcome whatever tribulations come our way. Powerful personal study every single day is the key.

May we constantly be "renewed in knowledge" of our Savior Jesus Christ.

All my love,

President Kunz