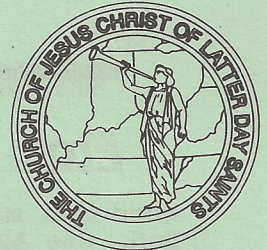


# The IRON ROD

OUR CHARGE AS MISSIONARIES IS TO -- TEACH AND TESTIFY OF CHRIST AND THE RESTORATION AND, INVITE ALL TO COME AND BE BAPTIZED UNTO REPENTANCE THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE PARTAKERS OF THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF LIFE.

July 1991



## President's Message

This month as we celebrate Independence Day and Pioneer Day we should:

1. Understand the fundamental truth that where there is righteousness there is freedom and where there is wickedness there is captivity. This is because the Spirit of the Lord brings freedom and Satan brings captivity. See 2 Cor. 3:17 and 1 Nephi 16:7.

2. Remember that our pilgrim fathers who settled this country were wrought upon by the Spirit of God and they went forth out of captivity and were delivered by the power of God. See 1 Nephi 13:12-17. Our pioneer fathers as they crossed the plains and settled in the Great Salt Lake Valley were lead by a prophet of God like unto Moses and Nephi.

Just as the Nephites were admonished to remember the deliverance of their fathers out of Egypt and Jerusalem by the hand of the Lord (see Mosiah 7:19-20 and Alma 36:28-29), we should also remember that the Lord delivered our pilgrim and pioneer fathers to their promised lands.

Like the righteous Nephites our fathers also believed the words of the prophets "and a mighty change was wrought in their hearts, and they humbled themselves and put their trust in the true and living God. And behold, they were faithful until the end; therefore they were saved." Alma 5:13.

We should ask ourselves the questions asked by Alma, "And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?" Alma 5:14.

To answer these questions we need an understanding of the doctrine involved. Many people read John 3:3-5 and talk a lot about being born again but have no understanding of what it really means. Joseph Smith taught the birth being spoken of in John 3:3 to see the kingdom of God "was not the gift of the Holy Ghost, which was promised after baptism, but was a portion of the Spirit which attended the preaching of the gospel by the Elders of the Church. They were born to see the kingdom of God. They were not in it, but could see it from the outside, which they could not do until the Spirit of the Lord took the veil from

before their eyes. It was a change of heart but not of state; they were converted but were yet in their sins."

Having been born to see the kingdom of God, by a manifestation of the Spirit, one must then be born of water and of the Spirit to enter the kingdom. See John 3:5. Joseph Smith explained: "It is one thing to see the kingdom of God, and another thing to enter into it. We must have a change of heart to see the kingdom of God, and subscribe to the articles of adoption [by which we are born again as sons and daughters of Jesus Christ] to enter therein." As we were born into this world by water, blood, and spirit we must be born again into the kingdom of Heaven by water, and receive the Holy Spirit, and be cleansed by the blood of Christ.

What it means to have a change of heart and be born again and how they relate to freedom is best taught in the Book of Mormon. There we learn that:

1. The atonement makes us "free forever, knowing good from evil, to act for [ourselves] ... and [we] are free to choose liberty and eternal life through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil." 2 Nephi 2:26-27.

2. As a person chooses to harden his heart he is taken captive by the devil and is bound by the chains of hell. See Alma 12:11.

3. As we choose righteousness we experience a change of heart and "we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually." Mosiah 5:2.

4. This change of heart opens the way to be born again as sons and daughters of Jesus Christ. See Mosiah 5:7; 27:25-26. There is a new family relationship created as we take upon us his name and become members of his family. He then becomes the Father of our salvation.

5. Only those who are born again and become his sons and daughters are made truly free because they are delivered from the captivity caused by death, hell, and the devil. See Mosiah 5:7-8 and 2 Nephi 9:19.

Our message is that freedom is centered in Christ and his atonement. Our desire as missionaries is to be born of God so that we may have the bounteous harvest of souls that the Lord has promised. As President Benson points out, "It was the 'born of God' Alma who as a missionary was so able to impart of the