

LESSON 30
“The Great Plan of Happiness”
Alma 40-42

OVERVIEW:

Alma teaches Corianton about death and resurrection. Alma teaches that after we are resurrected, the righteous will be restored to happiness and the wicked will be restored to misery. Alma teaches Corianton about justice and mercy. These three chapters cover the resurrection, the restoration of the body, and justice and mercy.

Corianton believed in the teachings of Nehor. Corianton’s problems stemmed from doctrinal misunderstandings. Alma uses the principles taught in D&C 121 as follows to teach his son: 41 No ^apower or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the ^bpriesthood, only by ^cpersuasion, by ^dlong-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; 42 By ^akindness, and pure ^bknowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the ^csoul without ^dhypocrisy, and without ^eguile— 43 ^aReproving betimes with ^bsharpness, when ^cmoved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of ^dlove toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; 44 That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of ^adeath.

How can justice and mercy work together to save us? At the end of the lesson is a talk by W. Cleon Skousen that gives some insights into the atonement. Although this talk is not part of the lesson, it is interesting in our understanding on how the atonement works in our behalf.

SCRIPTURES:

THE BOOK OF ALMA
THE SON OF ALMA
CHAPTER 40

Christ bringeth to pass the resurrection of all men—The righteous dead go to paradise and the wicked to outer darkness to await the day of their resurrection—All things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame in the resurrection. [About 73 B.C.]

1 NOW my son, here is somewhat more I would say unto thee; for I perceive (Alma was able to perceive his son’s problems through the spiritual gift of discernment. “Oh, that we all had such power of discernment,” stated Elder James E. Talmage. “That is a gift of the Spirit, to which we are entitled and we will have it as we live for it.” Elder Stephen L. Richards, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at the time, taught that this gift “arises largely out of an acute sensitivity to impressions—spiritual impressions, if you will—to read *under the surface* as it were, to detect hidden evil, and more importantly to find the good that may be concealed.” “This gift comes,” said President James E. Faust, “undeviatingly by personal revelation to those who strive to obey the commandments of the Lord and to follow the counsel of the living prophets.” Bruce Satterfield, Meridian Magazine, Lesson 30.) that thy mind is worried concerning the resurrection of the dead.

2 Behold, I say unto you, that there is no resurrection—or, I would say, in other words, that this mortal does not put on ^aimmortality, this corruption does not ^bput on incorruption—^cuntil after the coming of Christ. (Christ will be the first one resurrected.)

3 Behold, he bringeth to pass the ^aresurrection of the dead. But behold, my son, the resurrection is not yet. Now, I unfold unto you a mystery; nevertheless, there are many ^bmysteries which are ^ckept, that no one knoweth them save God himself. But I show unto you one thing which I have inquired diligently of

God that I might know—that is concerning the resurrection. (Jeffrey R. Holland: “Clearly not all of the Nephite prophets knew the details of the Resurrection as we know them in our dispensation, though they knew a great deal for their time. For as much as was revealed about this first resurrection and whatever implications it had for later iterations of that event, at least Alma—for one—was not given to know many of the specifics of the Resurrection even though he had ‘inquired diligently of God’ that he might know them. It was a question about the doctrine of the resurrection that the increasingly humble Zeezrom put to Alma which the prophet could refer to only as one of ‘the mysteries of God.’ Years later in teaching his son Corianton, Alma still called it a ‘mystery,’ the details of which only God himself knows.” (*Christ and the New Covenant*, p. 239-40))

4 Behold, there is a time appointed that all shall ^acome forth from the dead. Now when this time cometh no one knows; but God knoweth the time which is appointed. (The resurrection will be an orderly event. D&C 88.)

5 Now, whether there shall be one time, or a ^asecond time, or a third time, that men shall come forth from the dead, it mattereth not; for God ^bknoweth all these things; and it sufficeth me to know that this is the case—that there is a time appointed that all (even for SOPs) shall rise from the dead. (Knowing that we will be accountable for our actions in the next life should make us do better in this life.)

6 Now there must needs be a space betwixt the time of death and the time of the resurrection. (Spirit world. The only persons who will not have a time between death and resurrection will be those changed in the twinkling of an eye during the Millennium.)

7 And now I would inquire what becometh of the ^asouls of men ^bfrom this time of death to the time appointed for the resurrection?

8 Now whether there is more than one ^atime appointed for men to rise it mattereth not; for all do not die at once, and this mattereth not; all is as one day with God, and time only is measured unto men.

(Abraham was told that one revolution (or day) on Kolob equals a thousand of our years. (Abraham 3:4 And the Lord said unto me, by the Urim and Thummim, that Kolob was after the manner of the Lord, according to its ^atimes and seasons in the revolutions thereof; that one revolution was a ^bday unto the Lord, after his manner of reckoning, it being one thousand ^cyears according to the time appointed unto that whereon thou standest. This is the reckoning of the Lord’s ^dtime, according to the reckoning of Kolob.). If one were to carry the ratio down to smaller units of time we see some interesting implications.

Kolob Time	Earth Time
1 day	1,000 years
1 hour	41.67 years
1 minute	253 days
1 second	4.22 days
.25 second	1.1 day
.01 second	1 hour

Gerald Lund, First Nephi, the Doctrinal Foundation, 158-59. The Great Jehovah contemplated the whole of the events connected with the earth, pertaining to the plan of salvation, before it rolled into existence... “the morning stars sang together” for joy; the past, the present, and the future were and are, with Him, one eternal “now.” TPJS, 220.)

9 Therefore, there is a time appointed unto men that they shall rise from the dead; and there is a space between the time of death and the resurrection. And now, concerning this space of time, what becometh of the souls of men is the thing which I have inquired diligently of the Lord to know; and this is the thing of which I do know. (Even though Alma has sought diligently to know concerning the resurrection, he is not given all the information. Our dispensation seems to be the time when we know much more about the resurrection than any other time.)

10 And when the time cometh when all shall rise, then shall they know that God ^aknoweth all the ^btimes which are appointed unto man.

11 Now, concerning the ^astate of the soul (Meaning spirit in this case. Soul really means the combination of the spirit and body.) between ^bdeath and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are ^ctaken ^dhome (Not directly to God, but into the spirit world.) to that God who gave them life. (Brigham Young: “[Where does the spirit go after death?] I will tell you. Will I locate them? Yes, if you wish me to. They do not pass out of the organization of this earth on which we live. You read in the Bible that when the spirit leaves the body it goes to God who gave it. Now tell me where God is not, if you please; you cannot. How far would you have to go in order to go to God, if your spirits were unclothed? Would you have to go out of this bowery to find God, if you were in the spirit? ... It reads that the spirit goes to God who gave it. Let me render this Scripture a little plainer; when the spirits leave their bodies they are in the presence of our Father and God, they are prepared then to see, hear and understand spiritual things. But where is the spirit world? It is incorporated within this celestial system. Can you see it with your natural eyes? No. Can you see spirits in this room? No. Suppose the Lord should touch your eyes that you might see, could you then see the spirits? Yes, as plainly as you now see bodies, as did the servant of Elijah. [Elisha. See 2 Kings 6:17] If the Lord would permit it, and it was His will that it should be done, you could see the spirits that have departed from this world, as plainly as you now see bodies with your natural eyes.” (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:368) Harold B. Lee: “As I understand what President Young is saying, when we go home to God, it is just like going back to our home country. We may not go into the presence of the governor of the state where we live, but we will go to the home country, and there we shall find our level among the people with whom we are most accustomed to associate.” (*Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 58) To go into the “presence of God” is not necessarily to be “placed within a few yards or rods, or within a short distance of his person.” Orson Pratt, JD 16:365. “Alma, when he says that the ‘spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from the mortal body,...are taken home to that God who gave them life,’ has the idea, doubtless, in his mind that our God is omnipresent – not in his own personality but through his minister, the Holy Spirit. He does not intend to convey the idea that they are immediately ushered into the personal presence of God. He evidently uses that phrase in a qualified sense. George Q. Cannon, Gospel Truth, p. 58. “As for my going into the immediate presence of God when I die, I do not expect it, but I expect to go into the world of spirits and associate with my brethren, and preach the Gospel in the spiritual world, and prepare myself in every necessary way to receive my body again, and then enter through the wall into the celestial world.” Heber C. Kimball, JD 3:112-113.)

12 And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of ^ahappiness, which is called ^bparadise, (I will say something about the spirits in prison. There has been much said by modern divines about the words of Jesus (when on the cross) to the thief, saying, “This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” King James’ translation make it out to say paradise. But what is paradise? It is a modern word: it does not answer at all to the original word that Jesus made use of...There is nothing in the original word in Greek from which this was taken that signifies paradise; but it was – “This day thou shalt be with me in the world of spirits.” Hades, the Greek or Sheol, the Hebrew, these two significations mean a world of spirits. Hades, Sheol, paradise, spirits in prison, are all one: it is a world of spirits. Joseph Smith, TPJS, p. 309-310.) a state of rest, a state of ^cpeace, (this is a partial judgment) where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow. (Joseph Smith: “When men are prepared [for death], they are better off to go hence...The spirits of the just are exalted to a greater and more glorious work; hence they are blessed in their departure to the world of spirits. Enveloped in flaming fire, they are not far from us, and know and understand our thoughts feelings and motions, and are often pained therewith.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 326) Harold B. Lee: “Where is the spirit world? Is it away up in the heavens? That isn't what the scriptures and our brethren explain. They have told us the spirit world is right here round about us, and the only spirits who can live here are those who are assigned to fill their missions here on earth. This is the spirit world. And if our eyes could be opened we could see those who have departed from us a father, mother, brother, a

sister, a child. We could see them, and sometimes when our physical senses are asleep, sometimes our spiritual self and we have ears, spiritual ears, and spiritual eyes sometimes they will be very keen and awake, and a departed one may come while we are lying asleep and come into our consciousness. We'll feel an impression. We'll wake up. Where does it come from? It comes from the spirits of those whom we are sealed to." (*Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 58) Parley P. Pratt: "[the spirit world] is here on the very planet where we were born...The earth and all other planets of a like sphere, have their inward or spiritual spheres, as well as their outward, or temporal. The one is peopled by temporal tabernacles, and the other by spirits. A veil is drawn between the one sphere and the other, whereby all the objects in the spiritual sphere are rendered invisible to those in the temporal." (Millet and McConkie, *The Life Beyond*, p. 16))

13 And then shall it come to pass, that the ^aspirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil—for behold, they have no part nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold, they chose evil works rather than good; therefore the spirit of the ^bdevil did enter into them, and take possession of their house—and these shall be cast out into outer ^cdarkness; there shall be ^dweeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and this because of their own iniquity, being led captive by the will of the devil.

14 Now this is the state of the ^asouls of the ^bwicked, yea, in darkness, and a state of awful, ^cfearful looking for the fiery ^dindignation of the wrath of God upon them; thus they remain in this ^estate, (Orson Pratt: "We might now inquire, what is the cause of this intense suffering and misery? Is it the action of the elements upon the spirit? Is it the materials of nature, operating from without upon it, that causes this distress, this weeping, wailing, mourning, and lamentation? It may be in some measure; it may help to produce the misery and the wretchedness; but there is something connected with the spirit itself that no doubt produces this weeping, wailing, and mourning. What is this something? It is memory, and remorse of conscience; a memory of what they have once done, a memory of their disobedience. Do you not suppose the spirits can have power to remember in that world as well as in this? Yes, they certainly can. Have you never read in the Book of Mormon, where it informs us, that every act of our lives will be fresh upon the memory, and we shall have a clear consciousness of all our doings in this life? ...In this life, things that may have been erased from your memory for years will be presented before you with all the vividness as if they had just taken place. This will be like a worm upon the conscience; it will prey upon the spirit, and produce unhappiness, wretchedness, and misery. This will cause you to lament, and mourn, and weep after you are cast out from the presence of God." (*Journal of Discourses*, 2:239-40) James E. Talmage: "...many other great truths not known before, have been declared to the people, and one of the greatest is that to hell there is an exit as well as an entrance. Hell is no place to which a vindictive judge sends prisoners to suffer and to be punished principally for his glory: But it is a place prepared for the teaching, the disciplining of those who failed to learn here upon the earth what they should have learned...No man will be kept in hell longer than is necessary to bring him to a fitness for something better. When he reaches that stage the prison doors will open and there will be rejoicing among the hosts who welcome him into a better state." (*Conference Report*, Apr. 1930, p. 97 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 342-3)) as well as the righteous in paradise, until the time of their resurrection. (The righteous, those who have received the ordinances of salvation and proven faithful to the attendant covenants, go into paradise at the time of their physical death. It would appear that all others, including the good and noble men and women of the earth who died without a knowledge of the gospel, enter into hell, outer darkness, or what is sometimes called spirit prison. This second division is not simply a place of suffering, but also a place of preparation and learning. Joseph Smith taught concerning the necessity of ordinances for entrance into paradise: "Every man that has been baptized and belongs to the kingdom has a right to be baptized for those who have gone before; and as soon as the law of the Gospel is obeyed here [the gospel ordinance] by their friends who act as proxy for them, the Lord has administrators there to set them free." TPJS, p. 367. Elder Bruce R. McConkie has written: "Before Christ bridged the gulf between paradise and hell – so that the righteous could mingle with the wicked and preach them the gospel – the

wicked in hell were confined to locations which precluded them from contact with the righteous in paradise... Now that the righteous spirits in paradise have been commissioned to carry the message of salvation to the wicked spirits in hell, there is a certain amount of mingling together of the good and bad spirits. Repentance opens the prison doors to the spirits in hell; it enables those bound with the chains of hell to free themselves from darkness, unbelief, ignorance and sin. As rapidly as they can overcome these obstacles and break the chains of hell – they can leave the hell that imprisons them and dwell with the righteous in the peace of paradise. *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 755)

15 Now, there are some that have understood that this state of happiness and this state of misery of the soul, before the resurrection, was a first resurrection. Yea, I admit it may be termed a resurrection, the ^araising of the spirit or the soul and their consignment to happiness or misery, according to the words which have been spoken.

16 And behold, again it hath been spoken, that there is a ^afirst ^bresurrection, a resurrection of all those who have been, or who are, or who shall be, down to the resurrection of Christ from the dead. (This verse has proven problematic in the past. On the surface, it would appear that Alma is suggesting that the first resurrection consists of the rising of all people who lived and died from the days of Adam to the meridian of time – righteous and wicked alike – at the time of Christ’s resurrection. We know from Abinadi (Mosiah 15:21-22) and from modern revelation (D&C 76:50-80) that only the celestial and the terrestrial bodies come forth in the first resurrection. Alma finally clarifies his meaning in verse 20 when he states that “the souls and the bodies are reunited, of the righteous, at the resurrection of Christ.”

Bruce R. McConkie: “To those who lived before the resurrection of Christ, the day of his coming forth from the dead was known as the first resurrection. Abinadi and Alma, for instance, so considered it. (Mosiah 15:21-25; Alma 40.) To those who have lived since that day, the first resurrection is yet future and will take place at the time of the Second Coming. (D. & C. 88:96-102.) We have no knowledge that the resurrection is going on now or that any persons have been resurrected since the day in which Christ came forth excepting Peter, James, and Moroni, all of whom had special labors to perform in this day which necessitated tangible resurrected bodies. Though all men are assured of a resurrection, all will not be resurrected at the same time, and there will be varying degrees of glory for immortal persons. All will come forth from the grave, ‘But every man in his own order’ (1 Cor. 15:23), as Paul expresses it.”

(*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 639-40) Joseph Fielding Smith: “While there was a general resurrection of the righteous at the time Christ arose from the dead, it is customary for us to speak of the resurrection of the righteous at the Second Coming of Christ as the *first resurrection*. It is the first *to us*, for we have little thought or concern over that which is past. The Lord has promised that at the time of his Second Advent the graves will be opened, and the just shall come forth to reign with him on the earth for a thousand years... In modern revelation given to the Church, the Lord has made known more in relation to this glorious event. There shall be at least two classes which shall have the privilege of the resurrection at this time: First, those who ‘shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever’; and second, honorable men, those who belong to the terrestrial kingdom as well as those of the celestial kingdom (D&C 76:62,75). At the time of the coming of Christ, ‘They who have slept in their graves shall come forth, for their graves shall be opened; and they also shall be caught up to meet him in the midst of the pillar of heaven-They are Christ's, the first fruits, they who shall descend with him first, and they who are on the earth and in their graves, who are first caught up to meet him; and all this by the voice of the sounding of the trump of the angel of God.’ (D&C 88:97-8)... Following this great event, and after the Lord and the righteous who are caught up to meet him have descended upon the earth, there will come to pass another resurrection. This may be considered as a part of the first, although it comes later. In this resurrection will come forth those of the terrestrial order, who were not worthy to be caught up to meet him, but who are worthy to come forth to enjoy the millennial reign...(D&C 88:99) All liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers and all who love and make a lie, shall not receive the resurrection at this time, but for a thousand years shall be thrust down into hell where they shall suffer the wrath of God until they pay the price of their sinning, if it is possible, by the things which they shall suffer. These are

the 'spirits of men who are to be judged, and are found under condemnation; And these are the rest of the dead; and they live not again until the thousand years are ended, neither again, until the end of the earth.' (D&C 88:100-1) These are the hosts of the telestial world who are condemned to 'suffer the wrath of God on earth'; and who are 'cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God, until the fulness of times, when Christ shall have subdued all enemies under his feet, and shall have perfected his work.' (D&C 76:104-6)" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, pp. 295-7))

17 Now, we do not suppose that this first resurrection, which is spoken of in this manner, can be the resurrection of the souls and their ^aconsignation to happiness or misery. Ye cannot suppose that this is what it meaneth.

18 Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but it meaneth the ^areuniting of the soul with the body, of those from the days of Adam down to the resurrection of Christ. (But only the righteous were resurrected at the time of Christ's resurrection. There were none of the wicked, or those to inherit the terrestrial, telestial, or sons of perdition that were resurrected when Christ was.)

19 Now, whether the souls and the bodies of those of whom has been spoken shall all be reunited at once, the wicked as well as the righteous, I do not say; let it suffice, that I say that they all come forth; or in other words, their resurrection cometh to pass ^abefore the resurrection of those who die after the resurrection of Christ.

20 Now, my son, I do not say that their resurrection cometh at the resurrection of Christ; but behold, I give it as my opinion, that the souls and the bodies are reunited, of the righteous, (Here Alma clarifies that it is to be the righteous dead that will be resurrected when Christ is resurrected.) at the resurrection of Christ, and his ^aascension into heaven.

21 But whether it be at his resurrection or after, I do not say; but this much I say, that there is a ^aspace between death and the resurrection of the body, and a state of the soul in ^bhappiness or in ^cmisery until the time which is appointed of God that the dead shall come forth, and be reunited, both soul and body, and be ^dbrought to stand before God, and be judged according to their works. (There are those who suppose that death brings with it a restoration of pre-earth knowledge. The scriptures do not sustain such an idea. Were this the case, those in the spirit world who had not heard the gospel could hardly be judged according to men in the flesh as revelation ancient and modern assets. Millet/McConkie, *The Life Beyond*, 62)

22 Yea, this bringeth about the restoration of those things of which has been spoken by the mouths of the prophets.

23 The ^asoul (spirit) shall be ^brestored to the ^cbody, and the body to the soul (spirit); yea, and every limb and joint shall be restored to its body; yea, even a ^dhair of the head shall not be lost (we don't get every hair back or every fingernail); but all things shall be restored to their proper and ^cperfect frame. (Joseph F. Smith: "(speaking of the resurrection) Deformity will be removed; defects will be eliminated, and men and women shall [return] again to the perfection of their spirits, to the perfection that God designed in the beginning. It is his purpose that men and women, his children, born to become heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ shall be made perfect, physically as well as spiritually through obedience to the law by which he has provided the means that perfection shall come to all his children." (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 4, p. 187) Joseph Fielding Smith: "A little sound thinking will reveal to us that it would be inconsistent for our bodies to be raised with all kinds of imperfections. Some men have been burned at the stake for the sake of truth. Some have been beheaded, and others have had their bodies torn asunder; for example, John the Baptist was beheaded and received his resurrection at the time of the resurrection of our Redeemer. It is impossible for us to think of him coming forth from the dead holding his head in his hands; our reason says he was physically complete in the resurrection, He appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery with a perfect resurrected body." (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, p. 289) Dallin H. Oaks: "Many living witnesses can testify to the literal fulfillment of these scriptural assurances of the resurrection. Many, including some in my own extended family, have seen a departed loved one in vision or personal appearance and have

witnessed their restoration in ‘proper and perfect frame’ in the prime of life. Whether these were manifestations of persons already resurrected or of righteous spirits awaiting an assured resurrection, the reality and nature of the resurrection of mortals is evident. What a comfort to know that all who have been disadvantaged in life from birth defects, from mortal injuries, from disease, or from the natural deterioration of old age will be resurrected in ‘proper and perfect frame.’” (*Conference Report*, Apr. 2000, May *Ensign*, p. 15) David O. McKay: “The question frequently arises as to whether a child that died in infancy will remain a child in the hereafter, and whether in the resurrection the spirit will take up the same body that it tabernacled in the flesh. The doctrine of the Church in this respect was very clearly set forth by the late President Joseph F. Smith in an editorial in *The Improvement Era*, June 1904, wherein he stated, ‘The body will come forth as it is laid to rest, for there is no growth or development in the grave. As it is laid down, so will it arise, and changes to perfection will come by the law of restitution. But the spirit will continue to expand and develop, to the full stature of man.’ Parents, therefore, who have been parted from their children by death may rest assured that, if worthy through obedience to the principles of the gospel, they will not only meet their children in the spirit world, but will also recognize them and know them as they knew them in this life. Parents, too, have even a greater comfort in the fact that their little ones whose lives on earth were cut short will continue to grow and develop, and receive every blessing to which their inheritance and faithfulness will entitle them. (*Gospel Ideals*, p. 75 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 340))

24 And now, my son, this is the restoration of which has been ^aspoken by the mouths of the prophets—
25 And then shall the ^arighteous shine forth in the kingdom of God. (Here then is eternal life, to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power. Joseph Smith, TPJS, p. 346-47.)

26 But behold, an awful ^adeath cometh upon the wicked; for they die as to things pertaining to things of righteousness; for they are unclean (sons of perdition.), and ^bno unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of God; but they are cast out, and consigned to partake of the fruits of their labors or their works, which have been evil; and they drink the dregs of a bitter ^ccup. (Sons of perdition shall suffer the full wrath and justice of God. Since they will not repent, they will suffer the effects of their sins for eternity. Thus, eventually, all are redeemed from spiritual death except those who have “sinned unto death,” that is those who are destined to be sons of perdition. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine.)

CHAPTER 41

In the resurrection men come forth to a state of endless happiness or endless misery—Wickedness never was happiness—Carnal men are without God in the world—Every person receives again in the restoration the characteristics and attributes acquired in mortality. [About 73 B.C.]

1 AND now, my son, I have somewhat to say concerning the restoration (the law of the harvest) of which has been spoken; for behold, some have ^awrested (to twist or distort) the scriptures, and have gone far ^bastray because of this thing (If we rationalize the scriptures to support our sins, we will be led astray.). And I perceive that thy mind has been ^cworried also concerning this thing. But behold, I will explain it unto thee.

2 I say unto thee, my son, that the plan of restoration is requisite with the justice of God; for it is requisite that all things should be restored to their proper order. (The resurrection is a perfect manifestation of a larger law – the law of restoration. It illustrates beautifully the justice and order upon which the kingdom of heaven is founded. In the resurrection each person is called forth by that law to

which he has chosen to give allegiance. Thus, those choosing to live a celestial law will be called forth in a celestial resurrection; those who choose to live a terrestrial standard will come forth in a terrestrial resurrection; the adherents of a telestial standard will come forth in a telestial resurrection; and the sons of perdition will come forth in a resurrection of their own. The order of resurrection is from most righteous to most wicked – Christ is the first fruits of them that slept and the sons of perdition will be the last. In the morning of the first resurrection, celestial spirits will be inseparably united with celestial bodies; in the afternoon of the first resurrection, terrestrial spirits will be eternally united with terrestrial bodies; in the morning of the second resurrection, or the resurrection of the unjust, telestial spirits will be endlessly bound with telestial bodies; and finally, those who even in the resurrection are filthy still, the sons of perdition, will be called forth. D&C 88: 29 Ye who are ^aquickened by a portion of the celestial ^bglory shall then receive of the same, even a fulness. 30 And they who are quickened by a portion of the ^aterrestrial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fulness. 31 And also they who are quickened by a portion of the ^atelestial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fulness. 32 And they who remain shall also be ^aquickened; nevertheless, they shall return again to their own place, to enjoy that which they are ^bwilling to receive, because they were not willing to enjoy that which they might have received. DCBM, 3:303-04.) Behold, it is requisite and just, according to the power and resurrection of Christ, that the soul of man should be restored to its body, and that every ^apart of the body should be restored to itself.

3 And it is requisite with the ^ajustice of God that men should be ^bjudged according to their ^cworks; and if their works were good in this life, and the desires of their hearts were good, that they should also, at the last day, be ^drestored unto that which is good. (How perfect the wisdom of God! Both heart and soul will be weighed in the balance on Judgment Day. It is the combination of (1) works accomplished in the stewardships given and (2) the desires of the heart that give the true weight of the soul. We will each be judged according to what we did in the circumstances that were ours, and to what we would have done if we had been allowed control over those circumstances. Such are the seeds we planted, and such will be the harvest we will reap. DCBM, 3:305.)

4 And if their works are evil they shall be ^arestored unto them for evil. Therefore, all things shall be ^brestored to their proper order, every thing to its natural frame—^cmortality raised to ^dimmortality, ^ecorruption to incorruption—raised to ^fendless happiness to ^ginherit the kingdom of God, or to endless misery to inherit the kingdom of the devil, the one on one hand, the other on the other—

5 The one raised to ^ahappiness according to his desires of happiness, or good according to his desires of good; and the other to evil according to his desires of evil; for as he has desired to do evil all the day long even so shall he have his reward of evil when the night cometh. (Dallin H. Oaks: “Just as we will be accountable for our evil desires, we will also be rewarded for our righteous ones. Our Father in Heaven will receive a truly righteous desire as a substitute for actions that are genuinely impossible. My father-in-law was fond of expressing his version of this principle. When someone wanted to do something for him but was prevented by circumstances, he would say: ‘Thank you. I will take the good will for the deed.’ This is the principle that blessed Abraham for his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac. The Lord stopped him at the last instant (see Genesis 22:11-12), but his willingness to follow the Lord's command ‘was accounted unto him for righteousness’ (D&C 132:36). This principle means that when we have done all that we can, our desires will carry us the rest of the way. It also means that if our desires are right, we can be forgiven for the unintended errors or mistakes we will inevitably make as we try to carry those desires into effect. What a comfort for our feelings of inadequacy!” (*Pure in Heart*, p. 59) Brigham Young: “No matter what the outward appearance is--if I can know of a truth that the hearts of the people are fully set to do the will of their Father in heaven, though they may falter and do a great many things through the weaknesses of human nature, yet, they will be saved. . . .If their motives are pure--no matter whether their outward appearance is particularly precise, their acts will be discerned by the Spirit of the Lord, and will be appreciated for what they were intended. If people act from pure motives, though their outward movements may not always be so pleasant as our traditions would prefer,

yet God will make those acts result in the best good to the people. (*Journal of Discourses* 5:256.)” (Dallin H. Oaks, *Pure in Heart*, pp. 59-60) M. Russell Ballard: “If you have a bad habit, do you think death is going to change it? Do you think that habit will simply dissolve in some miraculous way and will no longer be with you? I believe that the Lord impresses upon you and me the need to repent and live the law, keep the commandments, and keep our lives aligned to the celestial goal; because it is when we are here in mortality that the body and the spirit can learn together. “For example, when a man who smokes dies and his body is placed six feet into the ground, is there any reason for us to believe that when his body comes back up out of the ground it will no longer have the desires that it had when it was laid down? I do not think so. I think that the body will rise in the resurrection with the same desires and that the body and the spirit together must work out this matter of eternal salvation. (*B.Y.U. Speeches of the Year*, 1979, pp. 157-8.)” (Dallin H. Oaks, *Pure in Heart*, pp. 54-5))

6 And so it is on the other hand. If he hath repented of his sins, and desired righteousness until the end of his days, even so he shall be rewarded unto righteousness. (Even if our actions don't totally conform to our righteous desires.)

7 ^aThese are they that are redeemed of the Lord; yea, these are they that are taken out, that are delivered from that endless night of darkness; and thus they stand or fall; for behold, they are their own ^bjudges, (In the ultimate sense, Christ-Jehovah is the keeper of the gate and the judge of all men and women. In addition, priesthood leaders – as exemplified by the Twelve who will judge the whole house of Israel – stand as judges of those persons who lived and labored during their ministry and under their direction. In one sense, however, each of us becomes his or her own judge, since we make those decisions which determine the kind of life we will live here and thus where and with whom we will dwell hereafter. Truly, as Samuel warned, “whosoever perisheth, perisheth unto himself and whosoever doeth iniquity, doeth in unto himself; for behold ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves.” Helaman 14:30. Because in that day of judgment the works of man will be evident, because there will be nothing hidden, and because we will have a perfect knowledge of our uncleanness as well as of our happiness, it will not be necessary for a designated person to consider our case and adjudicate our life. We will be what we have become. Our natures will have been prepared for that kingdom of glory which is most appropriate to the decisions we have made in mortality. DCBM, 3:306. Bruce R. McConkie: The reality is that there will be a whole hierarchy of judges who, under Christ, shall judge the righteous. He alone shall issue the decrees of damnation for the wicked. Millennial Messiah, 520.) whether to do good or do evil. (Joseph Smith: “The great misery of departed spirits in the world of spirits, where they go after death, is to know that they come short of the glory that others enjoy and that they might have enjoyed themselves, and they are their own accusers.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 311))

8 Now, the decrees of God are ^aunalterable; therefore, the way is prepared that ^bwhosoever will may ^cwalk therein and be saved. (Salvation is available to all who choose the path of faith and obedience. It is occasionally taught that some were born into this life without the capacity to obtain the fullness of the Father. The idea suggests that God is without the capacity to save all of his creations, and that he has given commandments to some which they cannot keep. Such suggestions are neither flattering to God nor in accord with scriptural writ. Indeed, the third Article of Faith states: We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved [meaning exalted], by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel. 2 Nephi 26 states: 27 Hath he commanded any that they should not partake of his ^asalvation? Behold I say unto you, Nay; but he hath ^bgiven it free for all men; and he hath commanded his people that they should persuade all men to ^crepentance. 28 Behold, hath the Lord commanded any that they should not partake of his goodness? Behold I say unto you, Nay; but ^aall men are privileged the one ^blike unto the other, and none are forbidden. If the command to accept the gospel is to all, the promise of its blessings must likewise be to all. DCBM, 3:307.)

9 And now behold, my son, do not risk ^aone more offense against your God upon those points of doctrine, which ye have hitherto risked to commit sin.

10 Do not suppose, because it has been spoken concerning restoration, that ye shall be restored from sin

to happiness. Behold, I say unto you, ^awickedness never was ^bhappiness. (Justice will not permit happiness in sin. Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 5:134.35. I once heard a man say that there are two doors to sin – the front door is pride and the back door is low self-esteem. Many times people sin not because they really want to or because they are rebellious, but because they are so discouraged, so filled with hopelessness, or so desirous of meeting their basic needs that they go after them in unwise ways. Someone once noted that the majority of sins committed by people are an inadequate or misguided attempt to meet our basic needs. Most sins are not committed by evil people, just misguided people. Selected Writings of Gerald N. Lund, 378. The gravitation of sin to sorrow is as certain as that of the earth to the sun. Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay, 492.)

11 And now, my son, all men that are in a state of ^anature, or I would say, in a ^bcarnal state, are in the ^cgall of bitterness and in the ^dbonds of iniquity; they are ^ewithout God in the world, and they have gone ^fcontrary to the nature of God; therefore, they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness. (The natural man is working against God and against himself.)

12 And now behold, is the meaning of the word restoration to take a thing of a natural state and place it in an unnatural state, or to place it in a state opposite to its nature?

13 O, my son, this is not the case; but the meaning of the word restoration is to bring back again ^aevil for evil, or carnal for carnal, or devilish for devilish—good for that which is good; righteous for that which is righteous; just for that which is just; merciful for that which is merciful. (Hugh Nibley: “In the next world we guarantee maximum satisfaction; you will get exactly what you want. What you want and what pleases you may be horrendously shocking to somebody else, but if that’s what you want you’ll have it.” (*Teachings From the Book of Mormon*, Lecture 56, p. 472) Jeffrey R. Holland: “The spiritual impact of that doctrine of restoration is sobering for those who may have believed that Christ’s atonement and their resurrection would somehow bring something more than was deserved. Alma made it very clear that if our works are good in this life, and the desires of our hearts are good, then in the Resurrection we will be restored to that which is good. But, by the same token, if our works are evil, then our reward will be the restoration of evil in the Resurrection.” (*Christ and the New Covenant*, p. 242))

14 Therefore, my son, see that you are merciful unto your brethren (We don’t know the desires in the hearts of others, so we can’t know the motives for their actions. It is better not to judge them by what appears to be true on the surface.); deal ^ajustly, ^bjudge righteously, and do ^cgood continually; and if ye do all these things then shall ye receive your ^dreward; yea, ye shall have ^emercy restored unto you again; ye shall have justice restored unto you again (If we don’t extend mercy to others, we will have the full effects of justice upon us.); ye shall have a righteous judgment restored unto you again; and ye shall have good rewarded unto you again.

15 For that which ye do ^asend out shall return unto you again, (What goes around comes around. Luke 6:38: ^aGive, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same ^bmeasure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.) and be restored; therefore, the word restoration more fully condemneth the sinner, and justifieth him not at all.

CHAPTER 42

Mortality is a probationary time to enable man to repent and serve God—The fall brought temporal and spiritual death upon all mankind—Redemption comes through repentance—God himself atoneth for the sins of the world—Mercy is for those who repent—All others are subject to God’s justice—Mercy cometh because of the atonement—Only the truly penitent are saved. [About 73 B.C.]

1 AND now, my son, I perceive (The spirit of discernment) there is somewhat more which doth worry your mind, which ye cannot understand—which is concerning the ^ajustice of God in the ^bpunishment of the sinner; for ye do try to suppose that it is ^cinjustice that the sinner should be consigned to a state of misery. (God does not hate us when we sin. He wants us to return to him, but in his way, through repentance and the atonement.)

2 Now behold, my son, I will explain this thing unto thee. For behold, after the Lord God sent our first parents forth from the garden of ^aEden, to till the ^bground, from whence they were taken—yea, he drew out the man (Adam and Eve did not want to leave Eden, but were forced to do so.), and he placed at the east end of the garden of Eden, ^ccherubim, (Cherubim is the Hebrew plural of cherub, though it is used in the scriptures as a singular noun. In the celestial hierarchy, cherubs are represented as spirits next in order to seraphs. Regarded as chief among their duties is that of guarding the holy place, or the place where God dwells. DCBM, 3:310-11.) and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the tree of life— (Our goal is to get back to the tree of life, through repentance and the Atonement of Christ. The temple is a metaphor for that journey.)

3 Now, we see that the man had become as God, (As to the fall the scriptures set forth that there were in the Garden of Eden two trees. One was the tree of life, which figuratively refers to eternal life; the other was the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which figuratively refers to how and why and in what manner mortality and all that appertains to it came into being... Eve partook without full understanding; Adam partook knowing that unless he did so, he and Eve could not have children and fulfill the commandment they had received to multiply and replenish the earth. Bruce R. McConkie, *New Witness*, p. 86. The account is speaking figuratively. What is meant by partaking of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is that our first parents complied with whatever laws were involved so that their bodies would change from their state of paradisiacal immortality to a state of natural mortality. Bruce R. McConkie, *Christ and the Creation*, *Ensign*, June 1982, p. 15.) knowing good and evil; and lest he should put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever (The thought would be more complete were it to read “and live forever in his sins.” It is not endless life that the Lord sought to prevent by placing the cherubim and a flaming sword to guard the tree of life, rather it was endless life in an unrepentant state. Thus God in his mercy granted Adam a probationary time, a time to repent and serve God. DCBM, 3:311.), the Lord God placed ^acherubim and the flaming sword, that he should not partake of the fruit—

4 And thus we see, that there was a ^atime granted unto man to repent, yea, a ^bprobationary time, a time to repent and serve God. (It's not just repentance that is necessary, but also serving God. Hugh Nibley: “We are being tested every minute of the day by the choices we make, by the reactions we have, by the things we say, by the things we think about. It's like the ancient Christian doctrine of the two ways, the way to the right and the way to left, whichever they are. You must make the choice, and you may have made the wrong choice every day of your life up until now, but as long as you are here it is still not too late. You can still make the right choice—every minute you can make the right choice. It's never too late to make the right one... We have a time to repent; ‘therefore this life became a probationary state.’ Well, it can't be anything else; it's a time to prepare to meet God. That's why we need the gospel here.” (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Lecture 48, p. 327))

5 For behold, if Adam had put forth his hand immediately, and ^apartaken of the ^btree of life, he would have lived forever (in his sins), according to the word of God, having no space (time) for repentance; yea, and also the word of God would have been void, and the great plan of salvation would have been frustrated.

6 But behold, it was appointed unto man to ^adie—therefore, as they were cut off from the tree of life they should be cut off from the face of the earth—and man became ^blost forever, yea, they became ^cfallen man. (“Adam brought the fallen condition, mortality, through partaking of the forbidden fruit. All men and women are subject to this condition. All. Jehovah spoke to Adam: ‘Inasmuch as thy children are conceived in sin, even so when they begin to grow up, sin conceiveth in their hearts, and

they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good' (Moses 6:55). Robert L. Millet has written: 'No, of course we do not believe, with Calvin, in the moral depravity of men and women. No, we do not believe, with Luther, that man, because of his carnality and depravity, does not, even have the power to choose good over evil. And we do not believe that children are born in sin, that they inherit the so-called sin of Adam either through sexual union or by birth. Rather, children are conceived in sin: meaning first, that they are conceived into a world of sin, and second, that conception is the vehicle by which the effects of the Fall (not the original transgression, which God has forgiven) are transmitted to Adam's posterity. To say that we are not punished for the transgression is not to say that we are not subject to and affected by it. . . . Adam's fallen nature is passed on to his children and thereby from generation to generation. Thus sin is implanted in man's nature at conception, just as death is implanted at the same time. Both of these- death and sin- are present only in seed form at conception, and therefore a child is neither dead nor sinful when born. Death and sin do, however, come to pass as a result of man's nature as he grows up. Sin comes naturally, just as does death.' (*Life in Christ*, pp. 24-25.) "This is what we call the fall of man. Adam, and thus all of us as his children, were freed from whatever 'original guilt' might once have been as a result of Adam's transgression (see Moses 6:53-54). But what of our own fall? Gerald N. Lund has written: 'If we know good from evil and then sin (which, according to Paul, all men do), then we must talk about a second fall. This is not the fall of Adam. This is *one's own personal fall*. This fall, which our own, not Adam's, transgression brings about, requires redemption as surely as mankind needed redemption from the consequences of Adam's fall. We'll term this the 'fall of me.' . . . Now, since we have no one to blame for this except ourselves, our redemption becomes conditional upon our actions. This is what Lehi meant [2 Nephi 2:7] when he said that the sacrifice that the Messiah offered to satisfy the ends of the law is viable only for those with a broken heart and a contrite spirit.' (*Jesus Christ, Key to the Plan of Salvation*, p. 95.)" (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 314))

7 And now, ye see by this that our first parents were ^acut off both temporally and spiritually from the ^bpresence of the Lord; and thus we see they became subjects to follow after their own ^cwill.

8 Now behold, it was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this ^atemporal death, for that would destroy the great ^bplan of happiness.

9 Therefore, as the soul could never die, and the ^afall had brought upon all mankind a spiritual ^bdeath as well as a temporal, that is, they were cut off from the presence of the Lord, it was expedient that mankind should be reclaimed from this spiritual death.

10 Therefore, as they had become ^acarnal, sensual, and devilish, by ^bnature, this ^cprobationary state became a state for them to prepare; it became a preparatory state.

11 And now remember, my son, if it were not for the plan of redemption, (laying it aside) as soon as they were dead their souls were ^amiserable, being cut off from the presence of the Lord. (2 Nephi 9 says that without the atonement, we would have been angels to the devil.)

12 And now, there was no means to reclaim men from this fallen state, which ^aman had brought upon himself because of his own ^bdisobedience;

13 Therefore, according to justice, the ^aplan of ^bredemption could not be brought about, only on conditions of repentance of men in this probationary state, yea, this preparatory state; for except it were for these conditions, mercy could not take effect except it should destroy the work of justice. Now the work of justice could not be destroyed; if so, God would ^ccease to be God. (God cannot cease to be God. This is just a teaching method. This is an argument to the impossible. He will never do anything that would cause himself to cease to be God.)

14 And thus we see that all mankind were ^afallen, and they were in the grasp of ^bjustice; yea, the justice of God, which consigned them forever to be cut off from his presence. (Jeffrey R. Holland: "This loving, charitable, and merciful generosity of the Savior raises the inevitable question of the place of justice in his working out of the Atonement. The balance between seemingly contradictory principles is examined in the Book of Mormon most skillfully and—because it is a father speaking to his own transgressing

son—most sensitively by Alma the Younger when instructing his son Corianton. Obviously the demands of justice require that penalties must be paid for violation of the law. Adam transgressed and so have all of us; thus the judgment of death (physically) and the consequences of hell (spiritually) is pronounced as a just reward. Furthermore, once guilty, none of us could personally do anything to overcome that fate. We do not have in us the seeds of immortality allowing us to conquer death physically, and we have not been perfect in our behavior, thus forfeiting the purity that would let us return to the presence of God spiritually. Furthermore, God cannot simply turn a blind eye to the breaking of divine law, because in so doing he would dishonor justice and would ‘cease to be God,’ which thing he would never do. The sorry truth for mortal men and women was, then, that ‘there was no means to reclaim [them] from this fallen state which man had brought upon himself because of his own disobedience.’ (Alma 42:12) “‘Thus we see that all mankind were fallen, and they were in the grasp of justice; yea, the justice of God, which consigned them forever to be cut off from his presence.’ (Alma 42:14)” (*Christ And The New Covenant*, p. 226))

15 And now, the plan of mercy could not be brought about except an atonement should be made; therefore God himself ^aatoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of ^bmercy, to appease the demands of ^cjustice, that God might be a ^dperfect, just God, and a ^emerciful God also. (Bruce R. McConkie: “Mercy is thus for the repentant, the faithful, the obedient, those who love and serve God. All others fail to escape the clutches of justice. ‘Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.’ (Matt. 5:7.) ‘Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.’ (Luke 6:36.) Salvation is the reward of those who conform to the plan of mercy. ‘Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.’ (Ps. 23:6.) So infinite in scope is the plan of mercy that it applies to the living and the dead. Those who did not have the opportunity to subject themselves by repentance to the plan of mercy while in this life, but who would have done so had the opportunity been afforded them, will have their chance in the spirit world; they shall then be saved from the grasp of justice and, reaping the full blessings of mercy, shall go on to celestial reward. ‘There is never a time when the spirit is too old to approach God,’ the Prophet said. ‘All are within the reach of pardoning mercy, who have not committed the unpardonable sin, which hath no forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. There is a way to release the spirits of the dead; that is by the power and authority of the priesthood -- by binding and loosing on earth. This doctrine appears glorious, inasmuch as it exhibits the greatness of divine compassion and benevolence in the extent of the plan of human salvation.’ (*Teachings*, pp. 191-192.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 486))

16 Now, repentance could not come unto men except there were a ^apunishment, which also was ^beternal as the life of the soul should be, affixed ^copposite to the plan of happiness, which was as ^deternal also as the life of the soul.

17 Now, how could a man repent except he should ^asin? How could he sin if there was no ^blaw? How could there be a law save there was a punishment? (Daniel H. Ludlow: Justice requires that God must be a God of order and that he must be just and impartial. Mercy agrees with justice; however, mercy introduces the possibility of vicarious payment of the laws that have been transgressed. The law of mercy paraphrased as follows: Whenever a law is broken, a payment (or atonement) must be made; however the person does not need to make payment if he will repent and if he can find someone who is both able and willing to make payment. Note the law of mercy insists the demands of justice be met fully. *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, 176-77)

18 Now, there was a punishment affixed, and a just law given, which brought remorse of ^aconscience unto man. (Harold B. Lee: “Remorse of conscience is the greatest hell. The greatest hell that one can suffer is the burning of one's conscience. The scriptures say his thoughts will condemn him, he'll have a bright recollection of all his life (see Alma 12:14; 11:43). You'll remember that in the scriptures they speak of the Lamb's book of life, which is a record kept of man's life which is kept in heaven. Well, who keeps that record? Not only the records on earth, but there's a record of our lives in heaven. Men will be judged according to the records that have been kept of our lives. (See D&C 128:6-7.) Now, when we fail

of that highest degree of glory and realize what we've lost, there will be a burning of the conscience that will be worse than any physical kind of fire that I assume one could suffer.” (*Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 67))

19 Now, if there was no law given—if a man ^amurdered he should ^bdie—would he be afraid he would die if he should murder?

20 And also, if there was no law given against sin men would not be afraid to sin.

21 And if there was ^ano law given, if men sinned what could justice do, or mercy either, for they would have no claim upon the creature? (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, explained Alma’s teachings in these words:

“Unlike the changeable laws of man, the laws of God are fixed and permanent, ‘irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world’ (D&C 130:20). These laws of God are likewise concerned with justice. The idea of justice as what one deserves is the fundamental premise of all scriptures that speak of men’s being judged according to their works....According to eternal law, the consequences that follow from the justice of God are severe and permanent. When a commandment is broken, a commensurate penalty is imposed. This happens automatically. Punishments prescribed by the laws of man only follow the judge’s action, but under the laws of God the consequences and penalties of sin are inherent in the act. ‘There is a law given, and a punishment affixed,’ the prophet Alma taught, and ‘justice claimeth the creature and executeth the law, and the law inflicteth the punishment.’ Alma explained, ‘And thus we see that all mankind were fallen, and they were in the grasp of justice; yea, the justice of God, which consigned them forever to be cut off from his presence’ (Alma 42:22, 14).

Abinadi added that the Lord ‘cannot deny justice when it has its claim’ (Mosiah 15:27). By itself, justice is uncompromising. The justice of God holds each of us responsible for our own transgressions and automatically imposes the penalty. This reality should permeate our understanding, and it should influence all our teachings about the commandments of God and the effect of individual transgressions. Can man in and of himself overcome the spiritual death all mankind suffers from the Fall, which we bring upon ourselves anew by our own sinful acts? No! Can we ‘work out our own salvation’? Never! ‘By the law no flesh is justified,’ Lehi explained (2 Nephi 2:5). ‘Salvation doth not come by the law alone,’ Abinadi warned (Mosiah 13:28). Shakespeare had one of his characters declare this truth: ‘In the course of justice, none of us should see salvation: we do pray for mercy’ (*The Merchant of Venice*, act 4, scene 1, lines 196-197).” Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Sins, Crimes, and Atonement,” in *With Full Purpose of Heart* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), pp. 114-116.)

22 But there is a law given, and a ^apunishment affixed, and a ^brepentance granted; which repentance, mercy claimeth; otherwise, justice claimeth the creature and executeth the ^claw, and the law inflicteth the punishment; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed, and God would cease to be God. (I believe that our Heavenly Father wants to save every one of his children. I do not think he intends to shut any of us off because of some slight transgression, some slight failure to observe some rule or regulation... I believe that in his justice and mercy, he will give us the maximum reward for our acts, give us all that he can give, and in the reverse, I believe that he will impose upon us the minimum penalty which it is possible for him to impose. J. Reuben Clark, Jr., CR 30 Sep 1955, 24)

23 But God ceaseth not to be God, and ^amercy claimeth the penitent (Bruce C. Hafen: “Mercy is thus rehabilitative, not retributive or arbitrary. The Lord asks repentance from a transgressor, not to compensate the Savior for paying the debt of justice, but to induce the transgressor to undertake a meaningful process of personal development toward a Christlike nature. At the same time, mercy depends ultimately on the Lord's extension of unmerited grace. Even though conditioned on repentance for personal sins, mercy is never fully ‘earned’ by its recipients. Repentance is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition of salvation and exaltation. ‘For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do’ (2 Ne. 25:23). The unearned nature of mercy is demonstrated by the Atonement's having unconditionally compensated for the disabilities imposed on mankind by the Fall of Adam. Adam and Eve and their posterity were utterly powerless to overcome the physical and spiritual deaths that were introduced by the Fall. Moreover, transgressors do not ‘pay’ fully for their sins through the process of

repentance. Even though repentance requires restitution to the extent of one's ability, most forms of restitution are beyond any person's ability to achieve. No matter how complete our repentance, it would all be to no avail without a mediator willing and able to pay our debt to justice, on condition of our repentance. Thus, even with sincere and complete repentance, all are utterly dependent on Jesus Christ.” (*Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, p. 776)), and mercy cometh because of the ^batonement; and the atonement bringeth to pass the ^cresurrection of the dead; and the ^dresurrection of the dead bringeth ^eback men into the presence of God; and thus they are restored into his presence, to be ^fjudged according to their works, according to the law and justice.

24 For behold, justice exerciseth all his demands, and also ^amercy claimeth all which is her own (“The good news of the gospel is that because of the atonement of Jesus Christ there is something called *mercy*. *Mercy* signifies an advantage greater than what we deserve. This could come by the withholding of a deserved punishment or by the granting of an undeserved benefit. If justice is balance, then mercy is counterbalance. If justice is exactly what we deserve, then mercy is *more* benefit than we deserve. In its relationship to justice and mercy, the Atonement is the means by which justice is served and mercy is extended. In combination, justice and mercy and the Atonement constitute the glorious eternal wholeness of the justice and mercy of God. Mercy has several different manifestations in connection with our redemption. The universal resurrection from physical death is an unconditional act of mercy made possible by the Atonement. Alma taught Corianton that ‘mercy cometh because of the atonement; and the atonement bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead’ (Alma 42:23). A second effect of the Atonement concerns our redemption from spiritual death. We are redeemed from the fall of Adam without condition. We are redeemed from the effects of our personal sins on condition of our obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. Justice is served and mercy is extended by the suffering and shed blood of Jesus Christ. The Messiah ‘offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law’ (2 Nephi 2:7; Romans 5:18-19). In this way, ‘God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also’ (Alma 42:15).” Dallin Oaks. Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Sins, Crimes, and Atonement,” in *With Full Purpose of Heart* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), pp. 114-116.); and thus, none but the truly penitent are saved.

25 What, do ye suppose that ^amercy can rob ^bjustice? I say unto you, Nay; not one whit. If so, God would cease to be God. (Mercy, detached from Justice, grows unmerciful. That is the important paradox. As there are plants which flourish only in mountain soil, so it appears that Mercy will flower only when it grows in the crannies of the rock of Justice. C.S. Lewis, “The Humanitarian Theory of Punishment, 294)

26 And thus God bringeth about his great and eternal ^apurposes, which were prepared ^bfrom the foundation of the world. And thus cometh about the salvation and the redemption of men, and also their destruction and misery.

27 Therefore, O my son, ^awhosoever will come may come and partake of the waters of life freely; and whosoever will not come the same is not compelled to come; but in the last day it shall be ^brestored unto him according to his ^cdeeds.

28 If he has desired (We will be judged for the desires of our heart.) to do ^aevil, and has not repented in his days, behold, evil shall be done unto him, according to the restoration of God.

29 And now, my son, I desire that ye should let these things ^atrouble you no more, and only let your sins trouble you, with that trouble which shall bring you down unto repentance.

30 O my son, I desire that ye should deny the ^ajustice of God no more (“Elder Orson F. Whitney held out this hope for the parents of wandering or wayward children: ‘You parents of the wilful and the wayward: Don't give them up. Don't cast them off. They are not utterly lost. The shepherd will find his sheep. They were his before they were yours- long before he entrusted them to your care; and you cannot begin to love them as he loves them. They have but strayed in ignorance from the Path of Right, and God is merciful to ignorance. Only the fulness of knowledge brings the fulness of accountability.

Our Heavenly Father is far more merciful, infinitely more charitable, than even the best of his servants, and the Everlasting Gospel is mightier in power to save than our narrow finite minds can comprehend.' (CR, April 1929, p. 110.)" (McConkie & Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 320). Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point because of your sins, by denying the justice of God; but do you let the justice of God, and his ^bmercy, and his long-suffering have full sway in your heart; and let it bring you down to the dust in ^chumility.

31 And now, O my son, ye are called of God to ^apreach the word unto this people. And now, my son, go thy way, declare the word with truth and soberness, that thou mayest ^bbring souls unto repentance, that the great plan of mercy may have claim upon them. And may God grant unto you even according to my words. Amen.

Additional Reading:

THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS SECTION 138

A vision, given to President Joseph F. Smith in Salt Lake City, Utah, on October 3, 1918. In his opening address at the eighty-ninth Semiannual General Conference of the Church, on October 4, 1918, President Smith declared that he had received several divine communications during the previous months. One of these, concerning the Savior's visit to the spirits of the dead while his body was in the tomb, he had received the previous day. It was written immediately following the close of the conference; on October 31, 1918, it was submitted to the counselors in the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Patriarch, and it was unanimously accepted by them. (Two weeks after the general conference Elder Joseph Fielding Smith wrote down the vision as his father dictated it to him. After it was endorsed by the counselors in the First Presidency and by the Quorum of the Twelve, it was published in the Improvement Era (Dec 1918, p. 166-170). During April conference of 1976, it was accepted as scripture and approved for publication in the Pearl of Great Price. In June 1979 the First Presidency announced that it would become section 138 of the Doctrine and Covenants. D&C Student Manual, p. 356-57. Elder Packer spoke of it [the adding of the two new sections to the Doctrine and Covenants] at a Church Education seminar in the Assembly Hall on Temple Square on 14 October 1977: "I was surprised, and I think all of the Brethren were surprised, at how casually that announcement of two additions to the standard works was received by the Church. But we will live to sense the significance of it; we will tell our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren, that we were on the earth and remember when that took place." Talk, Church Education Seminar, 14 October 1977. Unpublished)

1—10, President Joseph F. Smith ponders upon the writings of Peter and our Lord's visit to the spirit world; 11—24, He sees the righteous dead assembled in paradise and Christ's ministry among them; 25—37, How the preaching of the gospel was organized among the spirits; 38—52, President Smith sees Adam, Eve, and many of the holy prophets in the spirit world who considered their spirit state before their resurrection as a bondage; 53—60, The righteous dead of this day continue their labors in the world of spirits.

1 ON the third of October, in the year nineteen hundred and eighteen, I sat in my room ^apondering (Pondering is often a prerequisite to receiving revelation.) over the scriptures; (Elder Boyd K. Packer: On one occasion when Elder Harold B. Lee spoke to the seminary and institute teachers, he was stressing to us the reality of spiritual communication and of the help and guidance we may receive from beyond the veil. But, he warned, we must be attuned in order to receive it. Here is an excerpt from his address: A few weeks ago, President McKay related to the Twelve an interesting experience, and I asked him yesterday if I might repeat it to you this morning. He said it is a great thing to be responsive to the

whisperings of the Spirit, and we know that when these whisperings come it is a gift and our privilege to have them. They come when we are relaxed and not under pressure of appointments. The President then took occasion to relate an experience in the life of Bishop John Wells, former member of the Presiding Bishopric. A son of Bishop Wells was killed in Emigration Canyon on a railroad track. Brother John Wells was a great detail man and prepared many of the reports we are following up now. His boy was run over by a freight train. Sister Wells was inconsolable. She mourned during the three days prior to the funeral, received no comfort at the funeral, and was in a rather serious state of mind. One day soon after the funeral services while she was lying on her bed relaxed, still mourning, she says that her son appeared to her and said, "Mother do not mourn, do not cry. I am all right." He told her that she did not understand how the accident happened and explained that he had given the signal to the engineer to move on, and then made the usual effort to catch the railing on the freight train; but as he attempted to do so his foot caught on a root and he failed to catch the hand rail, and his body fell under the train. It was clearly an accident. Now, listen. He said that as soon as he realized that he was in another environment he tried to see his father, but he couldn't reach him. His father was so busy with the duties in his office he could not respond to his call. Therefore he had come to his mother. He said to her, "You tell father that all is well with me, and I want you not to mourn any more." Then the President made the statement that the point he had in mind was that when we are relaxed in a private room we are more susceptible to those things; and that so far as he was concerned, his best thoughts come after he gets up in the morning and is relaxed and thinking about the duties of the day; that impressions come more dearly, as if it were to hear a voice. Those impressions are right. If we are worried about something and upset in our feelings, the inspiration does not come. If we so live that our minds are free from worry and our conscience is clear and our feelings are right toward one another, the operation of the Spirit of the Lord upon our spirit is as real as when we pick up the telephone; but when they come, we must be brave enough to take the suggested actions. The Lord will approve it and the Brethren will approve it, and we know it is right. He said, it is a great consolation in this upset world today to know that our Savior is directing this work. Then the President concluded: "I value that testimony." If you forget all else I have said, you remember that lesson and that admonition. (Address to seminary and institute faculty, Brigham Young University, 6 July 1956. Additional revelation comes as a result of the study of the scriptures.)

2 And ^areflecting upon the great ^batonement ^csacrifice that was made by the Son of God, for the ^dredemption of the world;

3 And the great and wonderful ^alove made manifest by the Father and the Son in the coming of the ^bRedeemer into the world;

4 That through his ^aatonement, and by ^bobedience to the principles of the gospel, mankind might be saved.

5 While I was thus engaged, my mind reverted to the writings of the apostle Peter, (One chief Apostle is pondering the words of another chief Apostle.) to the ^aprimitive saints scattered abroad throughout ^bPontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and other parts of Asia, where the gospel had been ^cpreached after the crucifixion of the Lord.

6 I opened the Bible and read the third and fourth chapters of the first epistle of ^aPeter, and as I read I was greatly ^bimpressed, more than I had ever been before, with the following passages:

7 "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

8 "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in ^aprison;

9 "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." (1 Peter 3:18—20.)

10 "For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." (1 Peter 4:6.)

11 As I ^apondered over these things which are ^bwritten, the ^ceyes of my ^dunderstanding were opened, and

the Spirit of the Lord ^crested upon me, and I saw the hosts of the ^fdead, both small and great.

12 (Will many be saved in the Celestial Kingdom?) And there were gathered together in one place ^aan innumerable company of the spirits of the ^ajust, who had been ^bfaithful in the ^ctestimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality;

13 And who had offered ^asacrifice in the ^bsimilitude of the great sacrifice of the Son of God, and had suffered ^ctribulation in their Redeemer's ^dname. (From this scripture we learn that those who inherit the Celestial Kingdom will offer a sacrifice similar to the sacrifice made by Jesus Christ. We will be called to offer a sacrifice like that of Abraham. We will be tried and chastened to see if we will be willing to offer the sacrifice that will be required of us. Gordon B. Hinckley: Sacrifice is the very essence of religion; it is the keystone of happy home life, the basis of true friendship, the foundation of peaceful community living, of sound relations among people and nations. Without sacrifice there is no true worship of God. I become increasingly convinced of that every day. "The Father gave his Son, and the Son gave his life," and we do not worship unless we give-give of our substance, give of our time, give of our strength, give of our talent, give of our faith, give of our testimonies. BYU Speeches of the Year, 1962.)

14 All these had departed the mortal life, firm in the ^ahope (Bruce R. McConkie: all the faithful Saints, all of those who have endured to the end, depart this life with the absolute guarantee of eternal life. There is no equivocation, no doubt, no uncertainty in our minds. Those who have been true and faithful in this life will not fall by the wayside in the life to come. If they keep their covenants here and now and depart this life firm and true in the testimony of our blessed Lord, they shall come forth with an inheritance of eternal life. We do not mean to say that those who die in the Lord, and who are true and faithful in this life, must be perfect in all things when they go into the next sphere of existence. There was only one perfect man—the Lord Jesus whose Father was God. There have been many righteous souls who have attained relative degrees of perfection, and there have been great hosts of faithful people who have kept the faith, and lived the law, and departed this life with the full assurance of an eventual inheritance of eternal life. There are many things they will do and must do, even beyond the grave, to merit the fulness of the Father's kingdom in that final glorious day when the great King shall say unto them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 25:34.) But what we are saying is that when the saints of God chart a course of righteousness, when they gain sure testimonies of the truth and divinity of the Lord's work, when they keep the commandments, when they overcome the world, when they put first in their lives the things of God's kingdom: when they do all these things, and then depart this life—though they have not yet become perfect—they shall nonetheless gain eternal life in our Father's kingdom; and eventually they shall be perfect as God their Father and Christ His Son are perfect. CR, Oct 1976, p. 107) of a glorious ^bresurrection, through the ^cgrace of God the ^dFather and his ^eOnly Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

15 I beheld that they were filled with ^ajoy and gladness, and were rejoicing together because the day of their ^bdeliverance was at hand. (Joseph Smith: "We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom. The great principle of happiness consists in having a body. The devil has no body, and herein is his punishment. He is pleased when he can obtain the tabernacle of man, and when cast out by the Savior he asked to go into the herd of swine, showing that he would prefer a swine's body to having none. [Luke 8:26-33.] All beings who have bodies have power over those who have not." (Joseph Smith, TPJS, p. 181.))

16 They were assembled awaiting the advent of the Son of God into the ^aspirit world, to declare their ^bredemption from the ^cbands of death.

17 Their sleeping ^adust was to be ^brestored unto its ^cperfect frame, ^dbone to his bone, and the sinews and the flesh upon them, the ^espirit and the body to be united never again to be divided, that they might receive a fulness of ^fjoy.

18 While this vast multitude waited and conversed, rejoicing in the hour of their ^adeliverance from the chains of death, the Son of God appeared, declaring ^bliberty to the ^ccaptives who had been faithful;

19 And there he ^apreached to them the everlasting ^bgospel, the doctrine of the ^cresurrection and the redemption of mankind from the ^dfall, and from individual sins on conditions of ^erepentance.

20 But unto the ^awicked he did not go, and among the ungodly and the unrepentant who had ^bdefiled themselves while in the flesh, his voice was not raised;

21 Neither did the ^arebellious who rejected the ^btestimonies and the warnings of the ancient ^cprophets behold his ^dpresence, nor look upon his face.

22 Where these were, ^adarkness reigned, but among the righteous there was ^bpeace;

23 And the saints rejoiced in their ^aredemption, and bowed the ^bknee and acknowledged the Son of God as their Redeemer and Deliverer from death and the ^cchains of ^dhell.

24 Their countenances ^ashone, and the ^bradiance from the presence of the Lord rested upon them, and they ^csang praises unto his holy name.

25 I marveled, for I understood that the Savior spent about three years in his ^aministry among the Jews and those of the house of Israel, endeavoring to ^bteach them the everlasting gospel and call them unto repentance;

26 And yet, notwithstanding his mighty works, and miracles, and proclamation of the truth, in great ^apower and authority, there were but ^bfew who hearkened to his voice, and rejoiced in his presence, and received salvation at his hands.

27 But his ministry among those who were dead was limited to the ^abrief time (Somewhere between 38 and 40 hours) intervening between the crucifixion and his resurrection;

28 And I wondered at the words of Peter—wherein he said that the Son of God preached unto the ^aspirits in prison, who sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah—and how it was possible for him to preach to those spirits and perform the necessary labor among them in so short a time.

29 And as I wondered, my eyes were opened, and my understanding ^aquickened, and I perceived that the Lord went not in person among the ^bwicked and the disobedient who had rejected the truth, to teach them;

30 But behold, from among the righteous, he ^aorganized his forces and appointed ^bmessengers, ^cclothed with power and authority, and ^dcommissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in ^edarkness, even to ^fall the spirits of men; and thus was the gospel preached to the dead.

(President Wilford Woodruff explained that in the spirit world "every Apostle, every Seventy, every Elder, etc., who has died in the faith as soon as he passes to the other side of the veil, enters into the work of the ministry, and there is a thousand times more to preach [to] there than there is here. They have word on the other side of the veil; and they want men, and they call them" (Journal of Discourses, 22:334). Joseph F. Smith: I believe that the disciples who have passed away in this dispensation—Joseph, the Prophet, and his brother Hyrum, and Brigham, and Heber, and Willard, and Daniel and John, and Wilford and all the rest of the prophets who have lived in this dispensation, and who have been intimately associated with the work of redemption and the other ordinances of the gospel of the Son of God in this world, are preaching that same gospel that they lived and preached here, to those who are in darkness in the spirit world and who had not the knowledge before they went. The gospel Now, among all these millions of spirits that have lived on the earth and have passed away, from generation to generation, since the beginning of the world, without the knowledge of the gospel—among them you may count that at least one-half are women. Who is going to preach the gospel to the women? Who is going to carry the testimony of Jesus Christ to the hearts of the women who have passed away without a knowledge of the gospel? Well, to my mind, it is a simple thing. These good sisters who have been set apart, ordained to the work, called to it, authorized by the authority of the holy Priesthood to minister for their sex, in the House of God for the living and for the dead, will be fully authorized and empowered to preach the gospel and minister to the women while the elders and prophets are preaching it to the men. The things we experience here are typical of the things of God and the life beyond us. There is a great similarity between God's purposes as manifested here and his purposes as carried out in his presence and

kingdom. Those who are authorized to preach the gospel here and are appointed here to do that work will not be idle after they have passed away, but will continue to exercise the rights that they obtained here under the Priesthood of the Son of God to minister for the salvation of those who have died without a knowledge of the truth. Gospel Doctrine, 460-61)

31 And the chosen messengers went forth to declare the ^aacceptable day of the Lord and proclaim ^bliberty to the captives who were bound, even unto all who would ^crepent of their sins (Those in the spirit world are still able to repent.) and receive the gospel. (Both those who died without hearing the gospel in mortality and those who rejected the words of the prophets while in the flesh are to hear the gospel in the spirit world. That is to say the gospel will be taught to all who will listen. Those who had the opportunity to receive the gospel in this life (God being their judge) and who rejected it, may accept it in the spirit world to their blessing but not to their exaltation. This is not to suggest that there is no repentance in the spirit world. This revelation states that "the dead who repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God. And after they have paid the penalty of their transgressions, and are washed clean, shall receive a reward according to their works, for they are heirs of salvation" (D&C138:58-59). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1148)

32 Thus was the gospel preached to those who had ^adied in their sins, without a ^bknowledge of the truth, or in ^ctransgression, having ^drejected the prophets.

33 These were taught ^afaith in God, repentance from sin, ^bvicarious baptism for the ^cremission of sins, the ^dgift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands,

34 And all other principles of the gospel that were necessary for them to know in order to qualify themselves that they might be ^ajudged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. (Joseph Fielding Smith: If a person is in every way worthy of the blessings and was denied them while living, then any time after death the ordinances may be performed. If the person had every opportunity to receive these blessings in person and refused, or through procrastination and lack of faith did not receive them, then he is not entitled to them, and it is doubtful if the work for him will be valid if done within one week or 1,000 years. The Lord has declared that it is he who endures to the end that shall be saved, and he who rejects or neglects these blessings until death, when he has had the opportunity, is not worthy of them. Doctrines of Salvation, 2:179. The question is often asked as to whether it is harder or easier to accept the gospel in the spirit world. If those in that sphere are to be "judged according to men in the flesh," it must of necessity require the same degree of faith and courage to accept and live the gospel there as here. For those who have accorded their lives with gospel principles, accepting the gospel will be a natural step in their progression. Those whose lives were devoted to debauchery, wickedness, and warring against light and truth will have the greatest of difficulty in changing their course. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1148)

35 And so it was made known among the dead, both small and great, the unrighteous as well as the faithful, that redemption had been wrought through the ^asacrifice of the Son of God upon the ^bcross.

36 Thus was it made known that our Redeemer spent his time during his sojourn in the world of ^aspirits, instructing and preparing the faithful spirits of the ^bprophets who had testified of him in the flesh;

37 That they might carry the message of redemption unto all the dead, unto whom he could not go personally, because of their ^arebellion and transgression, that they through the ministration of his servants might also hear his words.

38 Among the great and ^amighty ones who were assembled in this vast congregation of the righteous were Father ^bAdam, the ^cAncient of Days and father of all,

39 And our glorious ^aMother ^bEve, with many of her faithful ^cdaughters who had lived through the ages and worshiped the true and living God.

40 ^aAbel, the first ^bmartyr, was there, and his brother ^cSeth, one of the mighty ones, who was in the express ^dimage of his father, Adam.

41 ^aNoah, who gave warning of the flood; ^bShem, the great ^chigh priest; ^dAbraham, the father of the faithful; ^eIsaac, ^fJacob, and Moses, the great ^glaw-giver of Israel;

42 And ^aIsaiah, who declared by prophecy that the Redeemer was anointed to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the ^bcaptives, and the opening of the ^cprison to them that were bound, were also there.

43 Moreover, Ezekiel, who was shown in vision the great valley of ^adry bones, which were to be ^bclothed upon with flesh, to come forth again in the resurrection of the dead, living souls;

44 Daniel, who foresaw and foretold the establishment of the ^akingdom of God in the latter days, never again to be destroyed nor given to other people;

45 ^aElias, who was with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration;

46 And ^aMalachi, the prophet who testified of the coming of ^bElijah—of whom also Moroni spake to the Prophet Joseph Smith, declaring that he should come before the ushering in of the great and dreadful ^cday of the Lord—were also there.

47 The Prophet Elijah was to plant in the ^ahearts of the children the promises made to their fathers, 48 Foreshadowing the great work to be done in the ^atemples of the Lord in the ^bdispensation of the fulness of times, for the redemption of the dead, and the ^csealing of the children to their parents, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse and utterly wasted at his coming.

49 All these and many more, even the ^aprophets who dwelt among the Nephites and ^btestified of the coming of the Son of God, mingled in the vast assembly and waited for their deliverance,

50 For the ^adead had looked upon the long absence of their ^bspirits from their bodies as a ^cbondage.

("The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy; and when separated, man cannot receive a fulness of joy" (D&C 93:33-34). All of the spirit world is considered a prison because we do not have our bodies.)

51 These the Lord taught, and gave them ^apower to come forth, after his resurrection from the dead, to enter into his Father's kingdom, there to be crowned with ^bimmortality and eternal life, (How do we get the power to become resurrected? President Spencer W. Kimball: President Brigham Young, the second president of this dispensation, said: "It is supposed by this people that we have all the ordinances in our possession for life and salvation, and exaltation, and that we are administering in those ordinances. This is not the case. We are in possession of all the ordinances that can be administered in the flesh; but there are other ordinances and administrations that must be administered beyond this world. I know you would like to ask what they are. I will mention one. We have not, neither can we receive here, the ordinance and the keys of resurrection." (Journal of Discourses, 15:137.) Do we have the keys of resurrection? Could you return to the earth as ones who would never again die—your own parents, your grandparents, your ancestors? I buried my mother when I was eleven, my father when I was in my early twenties. I have missed my parents much. If I had the power of resurrection as did the Savior of the world, I would have been tempted to try to have kept them longer. I have been called to speak in numerous funerals for people whom I have known, people whom I have loved, and people whom I have saved and held on to in a limited way. We do not know of anyone who can resurrect the dead as did Jesus the Christ when he came back to mortality. "[The keys] will be given to those who have passed off this stage of action and have received their bodies again. ... They will be ordained, by those who hold the keys of the resurrection, to go forth and resurrect the Saints, just as we receive the ordinance of baptism then receive the keys of authority to baptize others for the remission of their sins. This is one of the ordinances we can not receive here [on the earth], and there are many more." (JD, 15:137.) CR, Apr 1977, p. 69. Brigham Young: Some person holding the keys of the resurrection, having previously passed through that ordeal, will be delegated to resurrect our bodies. JD, 9:139)

52 And continue thenceforth their labor (What labor? To be as God is.) as had been promised by the Lord, and be partakers of all ^a blessings which were held in reserve for them that love him.

(Having witnessed the visit of the Savior to the world of spirits while his body lay in the borrowed tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, the scene now changes so that President Joseph F. Smith is invited to view things in the spirit world as they were at the time he received this vision in October of 1918. There is no

justification in the supposition that premortal spirits (Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, and Wilford Woodruff) mingled with the disembodied spirits during the visit of Christ to them in the meridian of time. Those described as being present included the faithful from Adam to Malachi (vv. 38-46) and the Book of Mormon prophets (v. 49), all of whom had complied with the law of sacrifice as practiced in the Old Testament (vv. 12-14) and had received the power of resurrection (v. 51). It is common for a vision of this sort to change scenes, including time and place. The vision of John the Revelator in the book of Revelation, that of Nephi in 1 Nephi 11-14, and that of the Prophet Joseph Smith in Doctrine and Covenants 76 are classic examples. What President Smith now sees is a vision of those who had been "reserved to come forth in the fulness of times" to lay the foundation of the "great latter-day work." Having completed their labors in the flesh, they now continued them in the spirit world. Verses 55 and 56 may well be a flashback to our first estate. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1149-50)

(President Smith is now going to see the pre-mortal existence.) 53 The Prophet Joseph Smith, and my father, Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and other choice ^aspirits who were ^breserved to come forth in the ^cfulness of times to take part in laying the ^dfoundations of the great latter-day work, (There is no scriptural evidence to suggest that those in premortality mingled with those who had died and were in the spirit world.)

54 Including the building of the ^atemples and the performance of ordinances therein for the redemption of the ^bdead, were also in the spirit world.

55 I observed that they were also among the ^anoble and great ones who were ^bchosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church of God.

56 Even before they were born, they, with many others, received their first ^alessons in the world of spirits and were ^bprepared to come forth in the due ^ctime of the Lord to labor in his ^dvineyard for the salvation of the souls of men.

(Now he goes back to the spirit world.) 57 I beheld that the faithful ^aelders of this dispensation, when they depart from mortal life, continue their labors in the ^bpreaching of the ^cgospel of repentance and redemption, through the sacrifice of the Only Begotten Son of God, among those who are in darkness and under the bondage of sin in the great world of the ^dspirits of the dead.

58 The dead who ^arepent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ^bordinances of the house of God, 59 And after they have paid the ^apenalty of their transgressions, and are ^bwashed clean, shall receive a ^creward according to their ^dworks, for they are heirs of salvation. (In the previous verse we are assured that the dead can repent. We know that there is no true repentance without suffering (Alma 42:16-18). It naturally follows that those in the spirit world who repent will be involved in the same process that they would have been involved in had they lived to do their repenting in this life. If they are to be judged according to men in the flesh, they too must pay "the penalty of their transgressions." One illustration of this principle could include those who, in a state of despondency, commit suicide. While not negating the seriousness of this transgression, it would be our hope that there will be those who, in the course of time, having "paid the penalty" will be able to right their lives (Ballard, Suicide, 52-54). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1150)

60 Thus was the ^avision of the redemption of the dead revealed to me, and I bear record, and I know that this ^brecord is ^ctrue, through the blessing of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, even so. Amen.

The following is a talk given by Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles entitled The Mediator.

“There once was a man who wanted something very much. It seemed more important than anything else in his life. In order for him to have his desire, he incurred a great debt.

“He had been warned about going into that much debt, and particularly about his creditor. But it seemed so important for him to do what he wanted to do and to have what he wanted right now. He was sure he could pay for it later.

“So he signed a contract. He would pay it off sometime along the way. He didn't worry too much about it, for the due date seemed such a long time away. He had what he wanted now, and that was what seemed important.

The creditor was always somewhere in the back of his mind, and he made token payments now and again, thinking somehow that the day of reckoning really would never come.

“But as it always does, the day came, and the contract fell due. The debt had not been fully paid. His creditor appeared and demanded payment in full.

“Only then did he realize that his creditor not only had the power to repossess all that he owned, but the power to cast him into prison as well.

‘I cannot pay you, for I have not the power to do so,’ he confessed. ‘Then,’ said the creditor, ‘we will exercise the contract, take your possessions, and you shall go to prison. You agreed to that. It was your choice. You signed the contract, and now it must be enforced.’

“Can you not extend the time or forgive the debt?’ the debtor begged. ‘Arrange some way for me to keep what I have and not go to prison. Surely you believe in mercy? Will you not show mercy?’

“The creditor replied, ‘Mercy is always so one sided. It would serve only you. If I show mercy to you, it will leave me unpaid. It is justice I demand. Do you believe in justice?’

“I believed in justice when I signed the contract,’ the debtor said. ‘It was on my side then, for I thought it would protect me. I did not need mercy then, nor think I should need it ever. Justice, I thought, would serve both of us equally as well.’

“It is justice that demands that you pay the contract or suffer the penalty,’ the creditor replied. ‘That is the law. You have agreed to it and that is the way it must be. Mercy cannot rob justice.’

“There they were: One meting out justice, the other pleading for mercy. Neither could prevail except at the expense of the other.

“If you do not forgive the debt there will be no mercy,’ the debtor pleaded.

‘If I do, there will be no justice,’ was the reply.

“Both laws, it seemed, could not be served. They are two eternal ideals that appear to contradict one another. Is there no way for justice to be fully served, and mercy also?

“There is a way! The law of justice can be fully satisfied and mercy can be fully extended-but it takes someone else. And so it happened this time.

The debtor had a friend. He came to help. He knew the debtor well. He knew him to be shortsighted. He thought him foolish to have gotten himself into such a predicament. Nevertheless, he wanted to help because he loved him. He stepped between them, faced the creditor, and made this offer.

“I will pay the debt if you will free the debtor from his contract so that he may keep his possessions and not go to prison.’

“As the creditor was pondering the offer, the mediator added, ‘You demanded justice. Though he cannot pay you, I will do so. You will have been justly dealt with and can ask no more. It would not be just.’

“And so the creditor agreed.

“The mediator turned then to the debtor. ‘If I pay your debt, will you accept me as your creditor?’

“‘Oh yes, yes,’ cried the debtor. ‘You save me from prison and show mercy to me.’

“‘Then,’ said the benefactor, ‘you will pay the debt to me and I will set the terms. It will not be easy, but it will be possible. I will provide a way. You need not go to prison.’

“And so it was that the creditor was paid in full. He had been justly dealt with. No contract had been broken.

“The debtor, in turn, had been extended mercy. Both laws stood fulfilled. Because there was a mediator, justice had claimed its full share, and mercy was fully satisfied.

Each Lives on Spiritual Credit

“Each of us lives on a kind of spiritual credit. One day the account will be closed, a settlement demanded. However casually we may view it now, when that day comes and the foreclosure is imminent, we will look around in restless agony for someone, anyone, to help us.

“And, by eternal law, mercy cannot be extended save there be one who is both willing and able to assume our debt and pay the price and arrange the terms for our redemption.

“Unless there is a mediator, unless we have a friend, the full weight of justice untempered, unsympathetic, must, positively must, fall on us. The full recompense for every transgression, however minor or however deep, will be exacted from us to the uttermost farthing.

“But know this: Truth, glorious truth, proclaims there is such a mediator.

‘For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.’ (1 Timothy 2:5.)

“Through Him mercy can be fully extended to each of us without offending the eternal law of justice.

“This truth is the very root of Christian doctrine. You may know much about the gospel as it branches out from there, but if you only know the branches and those branches do not touch that root, if they have been cut free from that truth, there will be no life nor substance nor redemption in them.

Mercy Is Not Automatic

“The extension of mercy will not be automatic. It will be through covenants with Him. It will be on His terms, His generous terms, which include, as an absolute essential, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.

“All mankind can be protected by the law of justice, and at once each of us individually may be extended the redeeming and healing blessing of mercy.

“A knowledge of what I am talking about is of a very practical value. It is very useful and very helpful personally; it opens the way for each of us to keep his spiritual accounts paid up.

“You, perhaps, are among those troubled people. When you come face to face with yourself in those moments of quiet contemplation-that many of us try to avoid-are there some unsettled things that bother you?

“Do you have something on your conscience? Are you still, to one degree or another, guilty of anything small or large?

“We often try to solve guilt problems by telling one another that they don't matter. But somehow, deep inside, we don't believe one another. Nor do we believe ourselves if we say it. We know better. They do matter!

Our transgressions are all added to our account, and one day if it is not properly settled, each of us, like Belshazzar of Babylon, will be weighed in the balance and found wanting.” (*That All May Be Edified*, p. 318-21. CR Apr 1977.)

When discussing the principles of justice and mercy, how do they really work? In a talk by Cleon Skousen, he discusses how the atonement actually works and brings together the opposite principles of justice and mercy.

The Meaning of the Atonement

From a talk by W. Cleon Skousen

Right now I would like to share with you some things that are beautiful and powerful and almost lost from the Church and were introduced by President Kimball at the Priesthood meeting on Saturday night, April 2nd (1977).

There are many profound and beautiful things that have been restored with the Gospel that are not often discussed. Sometimes when they are discussed, you will hear people say, "Why don't the Brethren talk about that more?" Well, when the Brethren are heard in conference, they are talking to the world. If you get the Brethren together in a cloistered setting, you'll hear it. If you are a group of missionaries with one of the General Authorities, they'll open up on the profound truths of the Gospel that are not generally discussed when the Brethren are talking to the world.

These truths are very sacred, and President Kimball introduced on Saturday night what I want to comment on briefly because it is the whole foundation of Easter, but it is hardly ever discussed. We just don't talk about it, and we are the only people who know about it. And we have almost lost it as a doctrine of the Church, and I was thrilled when I heard President Kimball introduce it. He said, "I want everyone to understand that in this life we only have a very limited amount of Priesthood authority with which to function. There are many ordinances that must as yet be given in the next world, and one of them will be the ordinance of resurrection. We are not allowed to perform that ordinance here. It is an ordinance of the Priesthood. You'll get it over there. Over in the next life you will also have the ordinance of begetting spirit children with your then resurrected bodies. That is something that we have no power to do here. Physical bodies, yes, but not spiritual."

Then he got on a theme that I am sure seemed strange to some ears. He said, "You will be able to have access to the intelligences in the universe and organize them and make planets and organize kingdoms." Now this is a beautiful doctrine, and it is time that we discuss it a bit more because if we understand that principle, it will help us understand why there had to be an atonement.

I don't know if this bothers you or not, but when I was a little boy in Alberta, Canada, and in Sunday School they talked about the terrible suffering of Jesus on the cross, I would say to my teacher, "Who wanted that anyway? Who was all that suffering for? Who is it to satisfy?" And my teacher would reply, "Well, it was to satisfy Heavenly Father." That didn't answer my question. It seemed that if Heavenly Father wanted us to come to the earth, after we repented, all he would have to say was, "Come on back. You did the best you could." Why do we need all this suffering? And all my life, at least until I went on my mission, I asked those questions.

So one day I was riding along with President Widstoe, who was in charge of all the European Mission. I was only 17 when I was called on my mission, and I thought that this was my chance to ask Brother Widstoe all these questions that had been on my mind since I was a little boy and so I asked him. ["Why did Jesus have to suffer on the cross?"] "Who told you to ask me that question?" And I said, "It's my question. Nobody told me to ask it."

So he said, "This is the most profound question of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and it shouldn't be answered until people are at first capable of wondering about it so they can understand the answer. So I'll share the answer with you over a period of time." (And if you've never wondered, you can stop reading right here.)

"That's great!" I said and started getting out a pen and paper. "If you'll just give me the scriptures, I'll write them down." He started to tell me, "One scripture is in the D&C, another is in the Book of Mormon." "Aren't you going to give me the chapter and verse?" "I wouldn't deprive you of the pleasure of finding them yourself."

As my mission continued, and after it as well, I would report in on my progress. He would say, "You're doing quite well. Try the 38th section of the Doctrine and Covenants," and so on. It took me another seven years until I finally put it all together, but I was so thrilled when I finally did it and he said, "Yes, that's the picture now." I'll give you all the references so it won't take you seven years.

Actually read the passages and you will begin to see what a marvelous ocean, an avalanche, a veritable waterfall has been poured out upon the Saints in the latter days, and some of it we have allowed to run off without really appreciating what it meant.

Now the first is in 2nd Nephi 2:14. (And now, my sons, I speak unto you these things for your profit and^a learning; for there is a God, and he hath^b created all things, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are, both things to act and things to be^c acted upon.) Here is what you shall read. Father Lehi says that everything in the universe is made of two things. This is where we get our building block concept. Something to act and something to be acted upon.

Your next reference is D&C 93:29. (Man was also in the^a beginning with God. ^bIntelligence, or the^c light of^d truth, was not^e created or made, neither indeed can be.) A thing that acts is called Eternal Intelligences, plural.

The next one is D&C 93:30. (All truth is independent in that ^asphere in which God has placed it, to ^bact for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence.) These intelligences are independent and act voluntarily. They are not compelled, and the Heavens wait on them until they obey. They don't do anything until they are ready—just like us. And our Heavenly Father built the whole universe with this element of action. This energy factor in the universe is intelligence, and it only operates as fast as it wants and in a direction it is willing to follow.

Now Abraham 3:19. (And the Lord said unto me: These two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intelligent than they; I am the Lord thy God, I am ^amore intelligent than they all.) These intelligences are graded from the lowest to the highest, and the highest of all is God's intelligence himself, and we are in between. Some intelligences were assigned to the elements, some were assigned to plant life, and some were assigned to animals. Those that were His very special, superior, super deluxe intelligences were given bodies in His image, and you are they. You are very, very special people.

Now, Joseph Smith describes this in D.H.C. 8:519. He says, "...And I explained to the quorum of the Twelve and their wives about the doctrine of Eternal progression of intelligences." Then he doesn't tell us what the explanation is. So you have to go to Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, and Heber C. Kimball, and they explain what he explained to them, but they got the doctrine from him.

All right, your next one is D&C 93:33. (For man is ^aspirit. The elements are ^beternal, and ^cspirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy;) Those which are acted upon, see there is a thing to act and a thing to be acted upon, are called Eternal elements. It is element. It is matter. Joseph Smith said that matter existed in two dimensions. The very refined element is called Spirit, and the more coarse element is called this temporal matter that we have here (referring to the body). So it is that all matter exists on two planes. It is like ice and water. They are really the same thing, but they are on different dimensions. Now, everything is made up of a combination of intelligence and matter. These are the building blocks of the universe (Abraham 4:10, (And the Gods pronounced the dry land, Earth; and the gathering together of the waters, pronounced they, ^aGreat Waters; and the Gods saw that they were obeyed.) 12, (And the Gods organized the ^aearth to bring forth grass from its own seed, and the herb to bring forth herb from its own seed, yielding seed after his kind; and the earth to bring forth the tree from its own seed, yielding fruit, whose seed could only bring forth the same in itself, after his kind; and the Gods saw that they were obeyed.) 18 (And the Gods watched those things which they had ^aordered until they obeyed.) and Helaman 12:8-9 (For behold, the dust of the earth moveth hither and thither, to the dividing asunder, at the command of our great and everlasting God. Yea, behold at his ^avoice do the hills and the mountains tremble and ^bquake.).

If you're a scientist, this will be very exciting information because our most advanced research scientists in the pure research area have just proven that this is true. Matter does not function mechanically. It has an element of finite intelligence they say. That's what Burgeson, the French philosopher, called it. It can distinguish. It can choose. It doesn't always do what the rules say. Some of those little elements are just as ornery as you and me. They go wandering around, and it is the aggregate, we say, that is the law of chemistry. In the aggregate, yes, but you look at them individually, and they are fooling around. As a matter of fact, Robert Milliken said that if all the elements were obeying all the rules of chemistry, you would never die. There is rebellion in the flesh, and it is called the "Seeds of Death."

At God's command, the elements that have received intelligence attached to them will obey. You want a mountain to move, talk to it. God commands it, or His Priesthood does it by His authority. When God commands, those intelligences obey in the elements. That's Jacob 4:6 (Wherefore, we search the

prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of ^aprophecy; and having all these ^bwitnesses we obtain a hope, and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we truly can ^ccommand in the ^dname of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea.) and 1st Nephi 20:13 (Mine hand hath also ^alaid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens. I ^bcall unto them and they stand up together.).

You listen to Brigham Young discussing this principle. "There is light or intelligence in all matter throughout the vast extent of all the eternities. It is in the rock. It is in the sand, in water, air. It is in the gases and, in short, in every description or organization of matter, whether it be solid, liquid, or gas. Particle operation with particle." Now all of a sudden, we begin to catch the vision of this miracle of God's creation. He goes into the outer darkness of unorganized intelligences and unorganized bits of elements and combines them together so that a little tiny bit of element has an intelligence attached to it, and now He can command it. The Lord has said, "I have given all of them a pattern which becomes the law by which they operate."

God speaks, and they obey. Things are made up of things that act and things that are acted upon. They have been identified for us by name, and President Kimball said that in the next world we will have access to these intelligences to organize our own great systems. Now, our Heavenly Father says, "You know what makes me God?" The source of God's power is described in D&C 29:36. (And it came to pass that Adam, being tempted of the ^adevil—for, behold, the ^bdevil was before Adam, for he ^crebelled against me, saying, Give me thine ^dhonor, which is my ^epower; and also a ^fthird part of the ^ghosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their ^hagency;.) It is in some other places, too—Moses 4:1,4 (1 AND I, the ^aLord God, spake unto Moses, saying: That ^bSatan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the ^cbeginning, and he came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will ^dredeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely ^eI will do it; wherefore ^fgive me thine honor. 4 And he became ^aSatan, yea, even the ^bdevil, the father of all ^clies, to ^ddeceive and to blind men, and to lead them ^ecaptive at his will, even as many as would not ^fhearken unto my voice.).

What makes him God? What makes, over a process of time, a God? "My honor is my power." My honor is my power so that when He speaks and says, "Water reorganize into wine," a very high grade of wine, there is no problem. It reorganizes. We call it a miracle, but it is nothing in the world but obedient intelligences. That is the doctrine!

Now, keeping in mind D&C 29:36 (And it came to pass that Adam, being tempted of the ^adevil—for, behold, the ^bdevil was before Adam, for he ^crebelled against me, saying, Give me thine ^dhonor, which is my ^epower; and also a ^fthird part of the ^ghosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their ^hagency;), what would happen if the Father violated the confidence of these intelligences? What do you think would happen? No one on the face of the earth has dared to announce the doctrine contained in the back of Alma 42. No church has dared to suggest that God could fall. Our Heavenly Father has said, "I want you to know I walk the razor's edge of celestial law continually in order to maintain the confidence and honor of all these who trust me, because that is the source of my power."

This gives us a while now understanding of our Heavenly Father. In Alma 42:13 (Therefore, according to justice, the ^aplan of ^bredemption could not be brought about, only on conditions of repentance of men in this probationary state, yea, this preparatory state; for except it were for these conditions, mercy could not take effect except it should destroy the work of justice. Now the work of justice could not be destroyed; if so, God would ^ccease to be God.), 22 (But there is a law given, and a ^apunishment affixed, and a ^brepentance granted; which repentance, mercy claimeth; otherwise, justice claimeth the creature

and executeth the ^claw, and the law inflicteth the punishment; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed, and God would cease to be God.), and 25 (What, do ye suppose that ^amercy can rob ^bjustice? I say unto you, Nay; not one whit. If so, God would cease to be God.), it is repeated over and over again. In Mormon 9:19 (And if there were ^amiracles wrought then, why has God ceased to be a God of miracles and yet be an unchangeable Being? And behold, I say unto you he ^bchangeth not; if so he would cease to be God; and he ceaseth not to be God, and is a God of miracles.), it is repeated. If He were unjust, if He were arbitrary, if He were false in any sense, He would what? He would cease to be God. Who dares to suggest anything to challenge the power of the Almighty Elohim, Chief of the Gods?! Our Heavenly Father says, "I want you to know and understand me. I work within very strict rules. I have to function so that I enjoy their confidence and so not to violate it." In Alma 34:9 (For it is expedient that an ^aatonement should be made; for according to the great ^bplan of the Eternal God there must be an atonement made, or else all mankind must unavoidably perish; yea, all are hardened; yea, all are ^cfallen and are lost, and must perish except it be through the atonement which it is expedient should be made.), the Father says, "Once I put you down into the second estate, I lose all capacity to bring you back. If I brought you back myself, it would be arbitrary, capricious, and unjust and violate the rules by which the whole kingdom was established. I lose complete control over the possibility of bringing you back myself."

God the Father cannot save us. See, these are the doctrines of the Church that we seldom see in these dimensions, but this is the Easter story. This is the real Easter story. Had it been left to the Father, He would have been helpless to get us back! If there had not been some other way for us to get back to the presence of the Father, we would have ended in outer darkness with Satan and his hosts. And everything that had been organized by the Father in connection with us, our Earth, the other earths on which part of this family is located, and all of the creations connected with it, would have disintegrated and would have gone to outer darkness.

Now this takes all the magic out of the creation. All of a sudden, the Father becomes much more rational, comprehensible, and our appreciation accelerates as we begin to realize what a remarkable, beautiful personality He is.

2 Nephi 9:9 (And our spirits must have become ^alike unto him, and we become devils, ^bangels to a ^cdevil, to be ^dshut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of ^elies, in misery, like unto himself; yea, to that being who ^fbeguiled our first parents, who ^gtransformeth himself nigh unto an ^hangel of light, and ⁱstirreth up the children of men unto ^jsecret combinations of murder and all manner of secret works of darkness.) says that we would end up with Satan and his angels were there no atonement, that it is absolutely beyond the capacity of our Heavenly Father to lift children who have stumbled while learning the difference between good and evil back into his presence because He has to operate according to law. All the other intelligences would say, "Father, they have sinned and come short of their glory. They cannot come back. Remember all the laws that held us back. We didn't get to be these top people. We were graded down. You kept talking about laws. We are they who demand justice, and will not let them return." And should God try it, as it says in Alma, they would cease to honor Him, and He would cease to be God. That is the doctrine. Then how do we do it? Alma 34:11 (Now there is not any man that can sacrifice his own blood which will atone for the sins of another. Now, if a man murdereth, behold will our law, which is ^ajust, take the life of his brother? I say unto you, Nay.) says no person can suffer for the sins of another person. That's the law. That is what all these little intelligences are saying. You just stop and think why that is so.

If I commit an offense, a very serious offense, can you die for it and satisfy this audience? Do you think you could, even though we love each other, and you say to everybody, "No, don't let Brother Skousen

be killed. I'll die for Brother Skousen." Do you think they are going to be happy about that? No. It would violate your sense of justice and it does all those little intelligences and Alma 34:11 says that no person can die or be punished for the sins of another and have it be accepted as justice. The demands of justice, that is what these little intelligences defend. "They cannot come back, Father." Everybody see the problem?

Now, the genius of the solution: The gods know that these little intelligences have a capacity for compassion. Therefore, the atonement is based not on law, but on mercy. That's in Alma 34:15 (And thus he shall bring ^asalvation to all those who shall believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance.). In other words, we are going to try to get to these little intelligences in some way so that we can overcome the demands of Justice. The families of God must have worked this out eons and eons ago with other families. So this is the pattern.

Remember when they were selecting a Savior? Jesus volunteered. Then Satan said, "You know, Father, this is a very old-fashioned plan. I mean, this isn't necessary. You can satisfy the intelligences of the universe. Just put your children in strait jackets and get them through the second estate, and it is a great idea I thought of. I really would like credit for it. I am offering the whole human family no-risk insurance. All I am asking is for you to give up on this hang-up that this family has always had on this free-agency thing. It's only for a little bit of time. We take them down, they get bodies, we prevent them from violating any laws, and we bring them back. It is that simple."

"No," said the Father, "it is not that simple," apparently implying that if you introduce compulsion into our eternal plan of salvation or into the cosmic universe you also plant the seeds of what? Revolution. Disintegration. Everything we have out there is moving as it is willing to move. You don't get any revolution that way. But Satan said he would start a revolution, and he got it. I wouldn't be surprised if the real followers of the Father were a minority for a while. We had a big, uncommitted, in-the-middle majority.

Jesus said, "Father, I will do it your way. I will do it the way they have always done it before. We do have casualties, true, but we are able to maintain voluntary participation. I know that someone has to suffer in order to have an atonement and create that felling of compassion, but I'll do it."

And so we had a big argument, and revelation says that the war in heaven was a kind of big testimony meeting. We said to one another, "Look, Father's way is the right way. We don't want to introduce compulsion. If we start compulsion, who is to say where it will end? Lucifer is trying to steal the throne of our Heavenly Father and he wants glory for it and there is nothing in that direction but rebellion and destruction."

We finally got two-thirds on our side. I won't be surprised, when we see this vision, to learn that we only had a minority to begin with, but we finally got our majority while the other third went for no-risk insurance. They wouldn't take a chance with us.

All right, now how does this atonement work? Watch how the principles function. You are an intelligence. You are capable of being subjected to so much sympathy and compassion that you stop asking for every "pound of flesh" that the law permits. To overcome the demands of justice on all mankind, you must have a person who is infinitely loved as it says in Alma 34. You know that infinitely means universally. Everyone recognizes that. So we take a spirit who is so superior that he is the first counselor in the First Presidency of Heaven. He is so honored that when the Father wants something

done He speaks to this person, and then he in turn speaks to these intelligences. He is identified as the Word, the one through whom the word passes. He is loved and respected by all, just like the Father is. So we use him. He is infinitely loved, and we have him come down to the second estate and live a perfect life without offense so that he can return to the Father. While laboring among the human family, we have him suffer so terribly that the little intelligences of the entire universe are affected. They abhorred the suffering that he went through. They loved him, as it says in the Book of Mormon, and the very elements cried out against this torture of someone they loved. All this was done by design.

That was the mission of Jesus Christ. He had to suffer so much that when He goes to those little intelligences and pleads on the behalf of someone who did the best he could, which is called repentance, they'll say, "Well, he shouldn't go back, but if you want him to, after all you've gone through, then, yes, he can go up." That's the atonement. Listen to Alma 34 as we hear the prophets who used to understand and preach this doctrine extensively, which we kind of stopped preaching among ourselves. Alma 34:15, "And thus he shall bring salvation to all those who believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy..." Whose mercy? Our Father already has mercy for us. This is His plan. We don't have to create that in Him. We have to create that in those who are demanding justice. "Father, they have sinned and come short of the glory of God." That is where you must arouse the bowels of mercy which overpowereth justice. And thus, mercy can satisfy the demands of justice and encircle them in the arms of mercy, while he who does not exercise faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of justice. Therefore, only unto him who has exercised this faith is brought about the great and eternal plan of salvation.

Now let me turn to Doctrine and Covenants 45, and you listen to the Savior telling you about it. Verse 3, "Listen to him who is the advocate of the Father, who is pleading your cause before Him saying, Father, behold the suffering and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified. Wherefore, Father spare these my brethren that believe on my name." You see how he did that? He doesn't plead for those who do not believe in him. He can't. That would rob justice. "Spare these my brethren who believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life." And the Father can do that without ceasing to be God. Because of what? Mercy. Let me give you an example of how that works.

During the Civil War, there was a 19-year-old soldier who went to sleep on guard duty. A whole section of the Union army was wiped out in that particular sector. He lost many of his very best friends, all because he fell asleep and the opposing forces were able to make a surprise attack on one flank of that particular defense effort. He survived the battle, was court-martialled, and was sentenced to be hanged for neglect of duty and going to sleep, which is routine military law.

The death sentence and order of execution were placed on the desk of President Lincoln, and he was prepared to sign it. President Lincoln was contacted by a little old woman. I think she came in person, but I'm not sure. Anyway, this little mother said to President Lincoln, "When this war started, I had a husband and five sons. First I lost my husband and then, one by one, four of my sons. I have just one son left, and he's sentenced to die for neglect of duty. He feels just terrible about what happened. He expects to die. He thinks it is only just that he should die. President Lincoln, I was wondering if you could pardon him, not for his sake, but for my sake."

And President Lincoln said, "Little mother, for your sake, I pardon your son. Pray God that he will survive the war and be a blessing to you all the days of your life." See how compassion works. It completely overcame the demands of justice, and nobody criticized President Lincoln for that decision.

I would like to just pause at this moment and ask, "What is an Intelligence?" It is a wonderful, self-knowing, eternal, little entity that says, "I am." "I am" is right inside. That is the seed of power. You want to know what an intelligence is? It's you. And you are one of the very advanced intelligences. You are so smart that one of your brothers, at your level, thought that he was as smart as the Father and tried to take over the Father's kingdom. That is something the other intelligences wouldn't even have thought of.

I tell you this is an exciting place to be. And it took eons to bring us here, and everyone is so precious that Heavenly Father says that if you see one of them trying and backsliding, we must work with him and forgive him seventy times seven as long as he is trying. Keep pushing, and we might make it eventually. Maybe you have an Alma the Younger in there, who knows?

Towards the evening, they went to the Last Supper. They partook of the Passover lamb, and he looked out at his twelve apostles and said, "One of you will betray me." Peter said, "Which one? John, you're the closest, ask him which one." And so John asked, "Master, which one?" The Savior whispered, "Him to whom I give the sop." He then picked up a piece of bread and dipped it in the gravy and handed it to Judas Iscariot and said, "Judas, what thou doest, do quickly." Judas got up and just went out.

Now Jesus became very depressed and rose up and gave that beautiful high priest's prayer found in John, Chapter 17, where he pleads to the Father, "to bless these that they might be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they all may be one in us." And he said, "Bless these who shall believe in these words who have not seen me, that they also may be one."

Then he said, "Let us be gone. I need to pray." So they went from the part of the city where the poor people lived. It is dark now, and he tells eight disciples to stay by the gate. He took Peter, James, and John and went back into the grove and he had them watch while he went further up the hillside in the grove. Apparently, only John stayed awake, and he heard Jesus fall on the ground. He didn't kneel on a rock, he fell full length on the ground, and he said, "Oh, Father, all things are possible unto thee, take this cup from me. Nevertheless not my will but thy will be done."

What he is saying is, "Father, you are God! You can do anything. Don't make me go through this. Please work it out some other way." And that is when an angel came to administer unto Jesus. What the angel must have said, though we don't have the message, was something like this. "Oh, Jehovah, thou son of God, you do not have to do this if you don't want to, but you should know that unless you fulfill this assignment, Heavenly Father will not only lose his family but the entire creation associated with them—the planets, the plants, the animals. Everything that you helped create will be lost and go back to outer darkness from whence it came."

He must have said something like that because when the angel had finished ministering unto him he said, "Thy will be done." He sweat great drops of blood. We can't understand how terrible it was, but Jesus himself has given us an idea of what he went through in the 19th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, in which he said at the beginning of the 15th verse, "Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, how hard to bear, you know not. For behold, I God, have suffered these things for all that they might not suffer even as I; Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup and shrink— Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of

men." In other words, "If you will be obedient and repent, the spirit will justify you, and I will sanctify you. I've done it. I've paid the price... don't waste it! Come unto me. Remember. Come unto me."

Now Judas came with the soldiers, and Jesus heard them coming. He came back and found the apostles sleeping again. Judas came up to him. It is nighttime, and they want to be sure to get the right one, so Judas came up to him and, embracing him, says, "Master!" The Savior looked down at him and said, "Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?" Then the soldiers cried, "Seize him!" Everybody fled. The Savior was taken to the house of Ananias, and all of you remember the terrible night he spent. You will remember the three denials by Peter. He is terrified. He will find it hard to forgive himself for these three denials.

The next morning there is an illegal trial before the Sanhedrin. They can't kill Jesus without the consent of Pilate, and so they take him into the fortress, right next to the temple square. And right in the middle of that open square, they brought Jesus and turned him over to Pilate. Even Pilate, a gentile, tried to create sympathy in their hearts by flogging him and putting a crown of thorns on his head and letting the blood run down his face. Jesus' robe is saturated with blood, and Pilate brings him and says, "Behold the man." And they scream, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said, "See to it. I wash my hands of this judgment."

So they took him with his cross and made him carry it as long as his broken body could support it. Finally they led him to the place of the skull, and there they nailed the nails first into his hands, then into his wrists, then his feet, and they lifted the cross into position, two thieves crucified either side of him. Towards the end he cried, "I thirst." They put a sponge with vinegar to his lips because it was supposed to dull some of the pain. He looked down in his agony and said, "John, behold your mother. Mother, behold your son." Apparently, Joseph had passed away. He was saying that John should take care of his mother. All this was foreseen by David.

Then, when the agony was almost past bearing and it was getting towards dusk, Jesus looked up and said, "It is finished. Unto thee, Father, I commend my spirit." Then he departed. At that moment Jesus became the Christ. He has done what was necessary to overcome the demands of justice so we could go back. He did it by the great power that was in him. He was gone for three days and three nights during which time he received a resurrected, purified, and glorified body.

That is the Easter message, and our God suffered so much that night in Gethsemane. And our Heavenly Father was suffering so much that night that he wanted at least one of his children here on earth to know what it was like, so he said to our great ancestor, Abraham, "I want you to take your best beloved son to the top of Mount Moriah, and I want you to offer him to me as a sacrifice." In Jacob 4:5 (Behold, they believed in Christ and ^aworshiped the Father in his name, and also we worship the Father in his ^bname. And for this intent we ^ckeep the ^dlaw of Moses, it ^epointing our souls to him; and for this cause it is sanctified unto us for righteousness, even as it was accounted unto Abraham in the wilderness to be obedient unto the commands of God in offering up his son Isaac, which is a ^fsimilitude of God and his ^gOnly Begotten Son.) it says that this was done specifically so that one human father would know what the pain and agony was like when our Heavenly Father was asked by his son to "take this cup from me."

You know, as you begin to understand this beautiful doctrine, the foundation of which President Kimball was speaking about in Priesthood Meeting, the intelligences in the universe—the fact that they are here on earth—God and what makes him God—the fact that if he lost their confidence, he would cease to be God.

These are basic doctrines of the Gospel as it says in Jacob, Chapter 2. I don't know what this knowledge does for you, but it has made me love my Heavenly Father like I never loved Him before. He loves me as much as He loves the Son. He had to go through all that to give me the chance to live with Him again. And I have learned to love my Savior like I have never loved Him before. Now I know what these two wonderful people did for me and you, for my children, and for all the people in the world—for the planet we live on, and for the beautiful things He has blessed us with. They would all be lost if those two beautiful people hadn't done what they did. I love them for that.

I bear witness to you, my brothers and sisters, from the depths of my heart, Jesus is the Christ. We have a Father in Heaven who loves us. The atonement is real. The atonement works. There is a resurrection. There is forgiveness of sin. And although our sins are as scarlet, if we will truly repent, all can be restored and taken back to our Heavenly Father, cleaned white as snow.

I pray that our Heavenly Father will help us so that we will not let him down, so we won't betray the Christ. Be good missionaries, and we will spread the message to our neighbors and take it to every valuable child of God, wherever we may find him. Our Heavenly Father's children deserve every blessing and advantage that we can give them. We can't take them faster than they are willing to go, but every soul that is saved will bless us beyond any measure that we can dream of.

May I leave my blessing with you and a prayer that we may be worthy of both the atonement of Jesus Christ and the Gospel which he has restored for our salvation. This is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.