

**LESSON 25**  
**“Not My Will, But Thine, Be Done”**  
**Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46**

**OVERVIEW:**

The Atonement of Jesus Christ

**SCRIPTURES:**

**Gethsemane:**

Matthew 26	Mark 14	Luke 22	John 18
		39 ¶ And he came out, and went, as he was <sup>a</sup> went (accustomed), to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.	1 WHEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.
			Commentary:
36 ¶ Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called <sup>a</sup> Gethsemane,	32 <sup>a</sup> And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: <del>and he saith</del> (which was a garden; and the disciples began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy, and to complain in their hearts, wondering if this be the Messiah.		
and sai(d)th unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go (yonder) and <sup>b</sup> pray yonder.	And Jesus knowing their hearts, said) to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.	40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into <sup>a</sup> temptation.	(He did not fit the popular pattern for the Jewish Messiah, and the disciples had not yet received the gift of the Holy Ghost. MM, 4:123) Their temptation would be that they would not believe that Jesus was the Christ.
37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and <sup>a</sup> began to be sorrowful and very heavy. (began to be distressed and troubled.)	33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and <del>began to be</del> <sup>a</sup> sore amazed, and to be <sup>b</sup> very <sup>c</sup> heavy; (rebuked them,)		

<p>38 Then said he unto them, My soul is <sup>a</sup>exceeding sorrowful, (deeply grieved) even unto death: tarry ye here, and <sup>b</sup>watch with me. (Gr. Stay awake with me.)</p>	<p>34 And said unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.</p>		
<p>39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and <sup>a</sup>prayed,</p>	<p>35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed</p>	<p>41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,</p>	<p>(The statement that he kneeled is Luke's; Mark says he 'fell on the ground, [that is prostrated himself], and Matthew says he 'fell on his face. No doubt he did all of these things, over a long period and in the course of repeated prayers. MM, 4:123-4)</p>
<p>saying, O my <sup>b</sup>Father, if it be possible, let this <sup>c</sup>cup pass from me:</p>	<p>that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; <sup>a</sup>take away this <sup>b</sup>cup from me:</p>	<p>42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, <sup>a</sup>remove this cup from me:</p>	<p>(The word "Abba" is an Aramaic word meaning "Papa" or "Daddy." Gethsemane, Skinner, p. 60) (The translated word for cup means "a person's lot.")</p>
<p>nevertheless not as I <sup>d</sup>will, but as <sup>e</sup>thou <sup>f</sup>wilt.</p>	<p>nevertheless not <del>what I will, but what thou wilt.</del> (my will, but thine be done.)</p>	<p>nevertheless not my <sup>b</sup>will, but thine, be done.</p>	
		<p>43 And there appeared an <sup>a</sup>angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.</p>	<p>Elder McConkie said: "If we might indulge in speculation, we would suggest that the angel who came into this second Eden was the same person who dwelt in the first Eden. At least Adam, who is Michael, the archangel – the head of the whole heavenly hierarchy of angelic ministrants – seems the logical one to give aid and comfort to his Lord on such a solemn occasion. Adam</p>

			<p>fell and Christ redeemed men from the fall; theirs was a joint enterprise, both parts of which were essential for the salvation of the Father's children." MM 4:125)</p>
		<p>44 And being in an <sup>a</sup>agony he prayed more earnestly: <sup>b</sup>and his (he) sweat <del>was</del> as it were great drops of <sup>c</sup>blood falling down to the ground.</p>	<p>D&amp;C 19:18 Which <sup>a</sup>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 <sup>b</sup>not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—</p>
<p>40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them <sup>a</sup>asleep,</p>	<p>37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping,</p>	<p>45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping <del>for sorrow,</del> (for they were filled with sorrow;)</p>	
<p>and saith unto Peter, What, <sup>b</sup>could ye not watch with me one hour? (Are you so powerless that you could not stay awake with me...)</p>	<p>and sai(d)th unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one <sup>a</sup>hour?  (Jesus was asking them to pray for him.)</p>	<p>46 And (he) said unto them, Why sleep ye?</p>	<p>(Perhaps the very reason Peter, James and John slept was to enable a divine providence to withhold from their ears, and seal up from their eyes, those things which only Gods can comprehend. MM, 4:124)</p>
<p>41 <sup>a</sup>Watch and <sup>b</sup>pray, that ye enter not into <sup>c</sup>temptation: the spirit indeed <i>is</i> willing, but the flesh <i>is</i> weak.</p>	<p>38 <sup>a</sup>Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into <sup>b</sup>temptation. (And they said unto him,) The spirit truly <i>is</i> ready, but the flesh <i>is</i> weak.</p>	<p>rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.</p>	<p>(Could you not resist temptation one hour?)  (Temptation to disbelieve in Jesus.)</p>
<p>42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy <sup>a</sup>will be done.</p>	<p>39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. (Being perfect, Jesus did not and could not know what sin felt like. He did not have the experience of feeling</p>	<p>(The shock to the Savior at this moment must have been overwhelming. Because he was perfect, he was also perfectly sensitive to all the effects and ramifications of sin on</p>	<p>(That prayer in all its infinite reverence and awe was heard; that strong crying and those tears were not rejected. We may not intrude too closely into this scene. It is shrouded in a halo</p>

the effects of sin – neither physically, spiritually, mentally, nor emotionally. Not until Gethsemane, that is. Now, in an instant, he began to feel all the sensations and effects of sin, all the guilt, anguish, darkness, turmoil, depression, anger, and physical sickness that sin brings. All of this the Savior felt and much, much more. Verse by Verse, the Four Gospels, p. 598)

our mental, emotional, and physical makeup. His makeup was such that it could not tolerate poison, disease, extreme heat, cold, dehydration, or a hundred other harmful substances and conditions. More significantly, as Mark describes for us, the experience Jesus had of finally comprehending sin as well as the feelings that issue from sin were absolutely surprising to him. He had never before experienced these sensations. Not only did it surprise him but it terrified him. For the first time in his eternal existence, the God of heaven and earth was experiencing the terrifying feelings associated with sin. Jesus felt something in Gethsemane he had never known before. Perhaps that is the full meaning of Alma's words that the Son of God, the Messiah, would be born as a mortal so that "he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people." (Alma 7:12) Elder Neal A. Maxwell wrote: "Imagine, Jehovah, the Creator of this and other worlds, astonished! Jesus knew cognitively what He must do, but not experientially. He had never personally known

and a mystery into which no footstep may penetrate. We, as we contemplate it, are like those disciples – our senses are confused, our perceptions are not clear. We can but enter into their amazement and sore distress. Half waking, half oppressed with an irresistible weight of troubled slumber, they only felt that deeper than anything which they could fathom, as it far transcended all that, even in our purest moments, we can pretend to understand. The place seems haunted by presences of good and evil, struggling in mighty but silent contest for the eternal victory. They see Him, before whom the demons had fled in howling terror, lying on His face upon the ground. They hear that voice wailing in murmurs of broken agony, which had commanded the wind and the sea, and they obeyed Him. The great drops of anguish which fall from Him in the dreadful struggle, look to them like heavy gouts of blood. Farrar, p. 624. And so they were. MM, 4:127)

		the exquisite and exacting process an atonement before. Thus, when the agony came in its fulness, it was so much, much worse than even He with his unique intellect had ever imagined.” Ensign, May 1985, p. 72-3. Verse be Verse, the Four Gospels, p. 598-99)	
43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.	40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither <del>wist</del> -(knew) they what to answer him.		
44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.			
45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take <del>your</del> rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is <sup>a</sup> betrayed into the hands of sinners.	41 And he cometh (to them) the third time, and sai(d)th unto them, Sleep on now, and take <del>your</del> rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.		
46 (And after they had slept, he said unto them, A)Rise, (and) let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.	42 (And after they had finished their sleep, he said,) Rise up, let us go; lo, he <del>that</del> -(who) betrayeth me is at hand.	(Jesus has done all he can for now. He will suffer again on the cross, where He again will experience all of the horrors of Gethsemane, until the Spirit tells Him, It is finished, You’ve done all that is necessary for the Atonement to be infinite.)	(It looks like they patiently waited for Judas.)

Gethsemane means oil press: The garden of the oil press.

The Sanhedrin and the temple guards brought him to the cross. But I brought him to Gethsemane, my life, my choices, my sins. (Ted L. Gibbons, Misery and Joy, p. 8)

Elder Talmage said: “He struggled under a burden such as no other being who has lived on earth might even conceive as possible. It was not physical pain, nor mental anguish alone, that caused him to suffer such torture as to produce an extrusion of blood from every pore; but a spiritual agony of soul such as only God was capable of experiencing. No other man, however great his powers of physical or mental endurance, could have suffered so; for his human organism would have succumbed, and syncope would have produced unconsciousness and welcome oblivion.” Jesus the Christ.

The following are extracts from the book “Gethsemane,” by Andrew Skinner:

**The Atonement goes beyond personal sin to include disappointment, sorrow, and suffering caused by the sins of others. It even extends to the sicknesses and infirmities we must bear just because we are mortal** (Alma 7:11-12). The Savior’s heaviness in Gethsemane, then, was caused not just by our sins but the weight of all the sickness, sorrow, suffering, injustice, and unfairness that everyone on this earth has ever experienced. He suffered for all the heartaches and sorrows caused by broken homes, marital infidelity, abuse of every kind, children gone astray, disloyalty on the part of trusted friends, crises of health, depression, sickness, pain, lost opportunities, loneliness resulting from the death of a loved one, and psychological scars left by horrible events of which some of us cannot even conceive.

**He who was sinless was weighed down by the crushing sins of everyone else. The Lamb of God, experienced during his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross at the moment he died: Jesus experienced a contrite (crushed) spirit in the garden and broken heart on the cross. For each of us, the broken heart and contrite spirit lead to newness of life through repentance.**

**In Gethsemane Jesus became us, each one of us, and we became him. Our sins were transferred to Jesus. His perfection was transferred to us. The scriptures of the Restoration teach that the Savior took to himself the full force of the punishment deserved by each of us.**

According to the rules framing the universe, the full consequences of transgressed laws cannot be overlooked. They must be borne by someone.

The Gospel of Mark is clear that Jesus felt something else in Gethsemane besides heaviness and sorrow. The KJV translates the Greek *ekthambeisthai* as “sore amazed.” It is often rendered as “awestruck” or “astonished.” One respected New Testament scholar says that this word is best rendered as “**terrified surprise.**” (Murphy O’Connor, “What Really Happened at Gethsemane,” p. 36)

**Being perfect Jesus did not and could not know what sin felt like. He did not have the experience of feeling the effects of sin – neither physically, spiritually, mentally, nor emotionally. Not until Gethsemane, that is. Now, in an instant, he began to feel all the sensations and effects of sin, all the guilt, anguish, darkness, turmoil, depression, anger and physical sickness that sin brings. All of this the Savior felt and much, much more.**

The shock to the Savior at this moment in his existence must have been overwhelming. Because he was perfect, he was also perfectly sensitive to all the effects and ramifications of sin on our mental, emotional, and physical makeup. His makeup was such that it could not tolerate sin or its effects...

**Not only did it surprise him, it terrified him. For the first time in his eternal existence, the God of heaven and earth was experiencing the terrifying feelings associated with sin.**

**Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: “Jesus knew cognitively what he must do, but not experientially. He had never personally known the exquisite and exacting process of an atonement before. Thus, when the agony came in its fullness, it was so much, much worse than even He with his unique intellect had ever imagined.” (Ensign, May 1985, 72-3)**

**In Gethsemane, on that terrible but glorious night, in a scene so personal as almost to dissuade us from listening in, Jesus cried out in shockingly familiar tones, “Daddy (Papa), all things are possible for you. Please take this experience away – it is worse than even I thought it would be. Nevertheless, I will do what you desire and not what I desire.**

**Don’t we all have to go through times in our lives when we will wrestle with conflicting impulses? Will there not come a time when each one of us will consciously have to choose to be obedient, to subjugate our desires and preferences to the will of God, to yield our agency to Deity? Our agency, our personal decision-making power, is really the only thing that is truly our private possession and domain – the only thing we “own” in mortality.**

**Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: “The submission of one’s will is really the only uniquely personal thing we have to place on God’s altar. The many other things we “give,” brothers and sisters, are actually the things He has already given or loaned to us. However, when you and I finally submit ourselves, by letting our individual wills be swallowed up in God’s will, then we are really giving something to Him! It is the only possession which is truly ours to give! Consecration thus constitutes the only unconditional surrender which is also a total victory! Ensign, November 1995, p. 24.**

**Who better than Adam to aid and assist the Savior during his time of extreme distress than he whose actions had brought about mortality? Who better to thank the Savior for paying the debt that his actions had introduced (sin, suffering, and the other myriad effects of the Fall) than Adam himself? Who better to strengthen the Great Creator than he who, as one of the gods, assisted the Savior in laying the foundations of the very planet where the Savior himself, as well as all the children of Adam, would someday reside?**

**President Brigham Young said: “If he [Jesus] had had the power of God upon him, he would not have sweat blood; but all was withdrawn from him, and a veil was cast over him.” JD, 3:205-6.**

**All the negative aspects of the human existence brought about by the Fall, Jesus Christ absorbed into himself. He experienced vicariously in Gethsemane all the private griefs and heartaches, all the physical pains and handicaps, all the emotional burdens and depressions of the human family. He knows the loneliness of those who don’t fit in, or who aren’t handsome or pretty. He knows what it’s like to choose up teams and be the last one chosen. He knows the anguish of parents whose children go wrong. He knows these things personally and intimately because he lived them in the Gethsemane experience. Having personally lived a perfect life, he then chose to experience our imperfect lives. In that infinite Gethsemane experience, in the meridian of time, the center of eternity, he lived a billion billion lifetimes of sin, pain, disease, and sorrow. Stephen E. Robinson, Believing Christ, p. 122.**

**All that the Fall put wrong, the Savior in his atonement puts right.**

**Orson F. Whitney’s dream:**

I seemed to be in the Garden of Gethsemane, a witness of the Savior's agony. I saw Him as plainly as I have seen anyone. Standing behind a tree in the foreground, I beheld Jesus, with Peter, James and John as they came through a little wicket gate at my right, leaving the three Apostles there, after telling them to kneel and pray, the Son of God passed over to the other side, where He also knelt and prayed. It was the same prayer with which all Bible readers are familiar: "Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." As he prayed the tears streamed down his face, which was toward me. I was so moved at the sight that I also wept, out of pure sympathy. My whole heart went out to him; I loved him with all my soul, and longed to be with him as I longed for nothing else. Presently He arose and walked to where those Apostles were kneeling-- fast asleep! He shook them gently, awoke them, and in a tone of tender reproach, untinged by the least show of anger or impatience, asked them plaintively if they could not watch with Him one hour. There He was, with the awful weight of the world's sins upon His shoulders, with the pangs of every man, woman and child shooting through His sensitive soul-- and they could not watch with Him one poor hour! Returning to His place, He offered up the same prayer as before; then went back and again found them sleeping. Again He awoke them, readmonished them, and once more returned and prayed. Three times this occurred, until I was perfectly familiar with His appearance-- face, form and movements. He was of noble stature and majestic mien-- not at all the weak, effeminate being that some painters have portrayed; but the very God that He was and is, as meek and humble as a little child. (Through Memory's Halls, Life Story of Orson F. Whitney, p. 81-83.)

## THE SECOND BOOK OF NEPHI CHAPTER 2

5 And men are instructed sufficiently that they <sup>a</sup>know good from evil. And the <sup>b</sup>law is given unto men. And by the law no flesh is <sup>c</sup>justified; or, by the law men are <sup>d</sup>cut off. Yea, by the temporal law they were cut off; (We can't keep all of the laws all of the time. The law is merciless. Justice.) and also, by the spiritual law they perish from that which is good, and become miserable forever.

6 Wherefore, <sup>a</sup>redemption cometh in and through the <sup>b</sup>Holy <sup>c</sup>Messiah; for he is full of <sup>d</sup>grace and truth.

7 Behold, he offereth himself a <sup>a</sup>sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law (Christ met the demands of the law because he lived a perfect life.), unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto <sup>b</sup>none else can the <sup>c</sup>ends of the law be answered.

8 Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, <sup>a</sup>save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who <sup>b</sup>layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the <sup>c</sup>resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise.

## THE BOOK OF ALMA CHAPTER 7

11 And he shall go forth, **suffering pains and <sup>a</sup>afflictions and <sup>b</sup>temptations of every kind**; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith **he will <sup>c</sup>take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people**. ("Think of it! When his body was taken from the cross and hastily placed in a borrowed tomb, he, the sinless Son of God, had already taken upon him not only the sins and temptations of every human soul who will repent, but all of our sickness and grief and pain of every kind. He suffered these afflictions as we suffer them, according to the flesh. He suffered them all. He did this to perfect his mercy and his ability to lift us above every earthly trial." (*Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, pp. 6-7) John Taylor said: "There came upon Him the weight and agony of ages....Hence His profound grief, His indescribable anguish, His overpowering torture, all experienced in the submission to the eternal fiat



of Jehovah and the requirements of an inexorable law....Groaning beneath this concentrated load, this intense, incomprehensible pressure, this terrible exaction of Divine justice, from which feeble humanity shrank, and through the agony thus experienced sweating great drops of blood, He was led to exclaim, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' (Matt 26:39)" (Tad Callister, *Infinite Atonement*, p. 124))

12 **And he will take upon him<sup>a</sup> death, that he may<sup>b</sup> loose the bands of death** which bind his people; **and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy**, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to<sup>c</sup> succor his people according to their infirmities. ("Elder Neal A. Maxwell gave this insight into the relationship between the Atonement and the Savior's succoring powers: 'His empathy and capacity to succor us—in our own sickness, temptations, or sins—were demonstrated and perfected in the process of the great atonement.' He also said, 'The marvelous atonement brought about not only immortality but also the final perfection of Jesus' empathetic and helping capacity.'...No mortal can cry out, 'he does not understand my plight for my trials are unique.' There is nothing outside the scope of the Savior's experience. As Elder Maxwell observed, 'None of us can tell Christ anything about depression.' As a result of his mortal experience, culminating in the Atonement, the Savior knows understands, and feels every human condition, every human woe, and every human loss. He can comfort as no other. He can lift burdens as no other. He can listen as no other." (Tad Callister, *Infinite Atonement*, pp. 207-9))

13 Now the Spirit<sup>a</sup> knoweth all things (Since the Spirit knows all things, Christ could have "known" what it was like to suffer or to feel the guilt of sin. But he had to actually experience it in order to take our suffering upon him.); nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the<sup>b</sup> flesh that **he might<sup>c</sup> take upon him the sins of his people, that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance**; and now behold, this is the testimony which is in me. (Alma has broached a topic which some of his listener's might question. He has stated that this coming Atoning Messiah will actually *learn* something. Alma understands that there will be those who might not understand what he means, so he clarifies. Alma confirms that "the Spirit knoweth all things." In other words, this experience of pain, afflictions, and death, is not teaching the Messiah anything that he would not have understood on some level. Nevertheless, the entire experience is what allows the Messiah to be merciful and "blot out their transgressions." Alma testifies that this process is essential to the mission of the Atoning Messiah. Brant Gardner. Jesus Christ, in taking upon him the effects of the sins of all mankind, was thus exposed to the awful (and to Jesus, unusual) withdrawal of that Spirit which had been his constant companion from the beginning. President Brigham Young explained: "The Father withdrew His Spirit from His Son, at the time he was to be crucified...At the very moment, at the hour when the crisis came for him to offer up his life, the Father withdrew Himself, withdrew His Spirit...That is what made him sweat blood. If he had had the power of God upon him, he would not have sweat blood. JD, 3:206, DCBM, 3:53.)

14 Now I say unto you that ye must<sup>a</sup> repent, and be born again; for the Spirit saith if ye are not born again ye cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore come and be baptized unto repentance, that ye may be washed from your sins (Sins are remitted, not in the waters of baptism, as we say casually, but rather as we receive the cleansing and sanctifying influence of the Spirit in our lives. DCBM, 3:53.), that ye may have faith on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, who is mighty to save and to cleanse from all unrighteousness. (Bruce R. McConkie said: "Sometimes someone will say: 'Well, I have been baptized into the Church; I am a member of the Church; I am a member of the Church; I'll just go along and live an ordinary sort of life; I won't commit any great crimes; I'll live a reasonably good Christian life; and eventually I will gain the kingdom of God.' I don't understand it that way. I think that baptism is a gate. It is a gate which puts us on a path; and the name of the path is the straight and narrow path. The straight and narrow path leads upward from the gate of baptism to the celestial kingdom of heaven. After a person has entered the gate of baptism, he has to press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, as Nephi expresses it, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God

and of all men; and if he endures to the end, then he gains the promised reward.” (*Conference Report*, Oct. 1950, p. 16 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p.34))

## THE BOOK OF ALMA CHAPTER 34

8 And now, behold, I will <sup>a</sup>testify unto you of myself that these things are true. Behold, I say unto you, that I do know that Christ shall come among the children of men, to take upon him the <sup>b</sup>transgressions of his people, and that he shall <sup>c</sup>atone for the sins of the world; for the Lord God hath spoken it.

9 For it is expedient that an <sup>a</sup>atonement should be made (Had there been no atonement, no amount of goodness, no amount of caring and concern, no amount of human strength could have made up the difference. We are forever indebted to him who bought us with his blood. DCBM, 3:246); for according to the great <sup>b</sup>plan of the Eternal God there must be an atonement made, or else all mankind must unavoidably perish; yea, all are hardened; yea, all are <sup>c</sup>fallen and are lost, and must perish except it be through the atonement which it is expedient should be made. (It is not the whole soul – spirit and flesh – that is corrupt and “an enemy to God,” but only the person’s fallen mortal nature – a nature inherited through Adam’s necessary transgression. Through the atonement of Christ, this initially corrupt nature may be overcome, sanctified, and glorified. Therefore, humanity’s condemnation is not that as mortals they were born carnal, sensual and devilish, but that they choose to remain so when given the opportunity to repent and overcome that condition. Rodney Turner, *Studies in the Scriptures*, 8:31)

10 For it is expedient that there should be a great and last <sup>a</sup>sacrifice; (J. Rueben Clark, Jr.: Under the new covenant that came in with Christ, the sinner must offer the sacrifice out of his own life, not by offering the blood of some other creature; he must give up his sins, he must repent, he himself must make the sacrifice and that sacrifice was calculated to reach out into the life of the sinner in the future so that he would become a better and changed man...Every sinner so repenting, every sinner so sorrowing for the past by an abandonment of the practices of the past, moves into a new world where, with proper covenants, he thrusts away out of his life the wrongs of his past. *Meaning of the Peace of Which the Angels Speak*, p. 15.) yea, not a <sup>b</sup>sacrifice of man, neither of beast, neither of any manner of fowl; for it shall not be a human sacrifice; but it must be an <sup>c</sup>infinite and <sup>d</sup>eternal <sup>e</sup>sacrifice. (Bruce R. McConkie: “When the prophets speak of an infinite atonement, they mean just that. Its effects cover all men, the earth itself and all forms of life thereon, and reach out into the endless expanses of eternity....Now our Lord’s jurisdiction and power extend far beyond the limits of this one small earth on which we dwell. He is under the Father, the creator of worlds without number (Moses 1:33). And through the power of his atonement the inhabitants of these worlds, the revelation says, ‘are begotten sons and daughters unto God’ (DC 76:24), which means that the atonement of Christ, being literally and truly infinite, applies to an infinite number of earths.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 64-5) Russell M. Nelson: “His Atonement is infinite—without an end. It was also infinite in that all humankind would be saved from never-ending death (see 2 Ne 9:7; 25:16; Alma 34:10,12,14). It was infinite in terms of His immense suffering. It was infinite in time, putting an end to the preceding prototype of animal sacrifice. It was infinite in scope—it was to be done once for all (see Heb 10:10). And the mercy of the Atonement extends not only to an infinite number of people, but also to an infinite number of worlds created by Him (see DC 76:24; Moses 1:33). It was infinite beyond any human scale of measurement or mortal comprehension. Jesus was the only one who could offer such an infinite atonement, since He was born of a mortal mother and an immortal Father. Because of that unique birthright, Jesus was an infinite Being.” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1996, p. 35 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 114) Christ’s atonement was great and last in terms of its spiritual significance, its impact, its timelessness and eternal and everlasting relevance, not necessarily in terms of its chronology, John the Baptist, as a part of his prayer of ordination upon the heads of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery,

explained that the Aaronic Priesthood “shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.” According to Oliver Cowdery, the Baptist said: “Upon you my fellow-servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer this Priesthood and this authority, which shall remain upon earth, **that** the sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness. Likewise, a modern revelation speaks of the sons of Moses and the sons of Aaron offering an acceptable sacrifice in the temple to be erected in Independence, Jackson County, Missouri. Joseph Smith taught: The offering of sacrifice has ever been connected and forms a part of the duties of the Priesthood. It began with the Priesthood, and will be continued until after the coming of Christ... These sacrifices, as well as every ordinance belonging to the Priesthood, will, when the Temple of the Lord shall be built, and the sons of Levi be purified, be fully restored and attended to in all their powers, ramifications, and blessings. This ever did and ever will exist when the powers of the Melchizedek Priesthood are sufficiently manifest; else how can the restitution of all things spoken of by the Holy Prophets be brought to pass? It is not to be understood that the law of Moses will be established again with all its rites and variety of ceremonies; this has never been spoken of by the prophets; but those things which existed prior to Moses’ day, namely, sacrifice, will be continued. It may be asked by some, what necessity for sacrifice, since the Great Sacrifice was offered? In answer to which, if repentance, baptism, and faith existed prior to the days of Christ, what necessity for them since that time? It may be that such a sacrifice, as a part of the restitution of all things, will be instituted one final time to point toward the great and last sacrifice of Jesus the Lamb. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 1:128. DCBM, 3:249-250.)

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 <sup>a</sup>just, take the life of his brother? I say unto you, Nay.

12 But the law requireth the <sup>a</sup>life of him who hath <sup>b</sup>murdered; therefore there can be nothing which is short of an infinite atonement which will suffice for the sins of the world.

13 Therefore, it is expedient that there should be a great and last sacrifice, and then shall there be, or it is expedient there should be, a <sup>a</sup>stop to the shedding of <sup>b</sup>blood; (Bruce R. McConkie: “When the Lamb of God, in Gethsemane and at Golgotha, worked out the infinite and eternal atonement and permitted himself to be slain for the sins of the world, it was intended that the sacrificial ordinances prefiguring that most transcendent of all events should cease. No one has set forth why this was destined to be with the clarity and plainness found in the words of the prophet Amulek... “Appearing in resurrected glory to his Nephite kinsmen, our Lord affirmed the end of the old order and announced the beginning of the new one. ‘By me redemption cometh,’ he said, ‘and in me is the law of Moses fulfilled. . . . And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood.’ It is the Lord Jesus who is the Lord Jehovah who is speaking, which means that the sacrifices of old were offered to Christ. ‘Yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings. And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit.’ (3 Ne. 9:17-20.)” (*The Mortal Messiah*, p. 127) J. Reuben Clark, Jr.: “Under the new covenant that came in with Christ, the sinner must offer the sacrifice out of his own life, not by offering the blood of some other creature; he must give up his sins, he must repent, he himself must... become a better and changed man.” (*Church News*, 12/24/60, p. 15)) then shall the <sup>c</sup>law of Moses be fulfilled; yea, it shall be all fulfilled, every jot and tittle, and none shall have passed away.

14 And behold, this is the whole <sup>a</sup>meaning of the <sup>b</sup>law, (Jeffrey R. Holland: “Unlike the Israelites in the Old World, the faithful Nephites of the New World found it easier to recognize the return of the higher gospel and thereby let go of the ancient law of Moses. For one thing, they seemed to grasp more readily that Christ had not destroyed the law but fulfilled it—given it breadth, dimension, meaning, and reality, just as a prophecy is spoken of as being ‘fulfilled.’” (*Christ and the New Covenant*, p. 155)) every whit <sup>c</sup>pointing to that great and last <sup>d</sup>sacrifice; and that great and last <sup>e</sup>sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, <sup>f</sup>infinite and eternal.

15 And thus he shall bring <sup>a</sup>salvation 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.

16 And thus <sup>a</sup>mercy can satisfy the demands of <sup>b</sup>justice, (“Life, like a computer, has default settings, conditions that will automatically apply unless we take positive action to avoid them. Thus, if we refuse to make Christ our Lord by taking positive steps to enter into his covenant, then Satan becomes our lord by default. Christ by choice or Satan by default—there are no other options. “Christ ‘shall bring salvation 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. And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety.’ (Alma 34:15-16.) The choice before us is mercy or justice. Either choice can be accommodated, and either choice is compatible with the nature and plan of God, but, as in the choice between the Lord and Satan, there are no third alternatives. Again, life has default settings, and they are set for justice. We can choose the mercy that is offered through the gospel covenant, but if we refuse that mercy, we will receive justice. Now here is an odd thing about the nature of mercy: by definition, mercy can only be mercy if we don't deserve it. For if we deserve something, then it becomes a matter of justice that we receive it. So it ceases to be a matter of mercy. Thus, in this sense at least, to give or to receive mercy is always somewhat unfair. But one of the great beauties of the gospel, some of the best news of all, is that Jesus Christ does not mind this unfairness. He is willing to suffer unfairly and compensate justice himself out of his own person in order to extend mercy to weaker beings like us. This willingness on his part to pay more than his fair share and to carry more than his fair load in order to grant mercy to others constitutes the grace of Christ.” (Stephen R. Robinson, *Believing Christ*, p. 60)) and encircles them in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of <sup>c</sup>justice; (Justice may be satisfied in two ways. 1) keeping the law perfectly, or 2) suffering the effects of the broken law. Christ satisfied the demands of justice in both of these ways; he kept the law perfectly for himself and suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross for and in behalf of those of us who repent. Those who refuse to repent are exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice, that is they must face without divine aid the consequences of wilfull sin. They therefore lost the opportunity for that rehabilitative redemption which can only come through Christ's enabling power. Bruce Hafen said: I once wondered if those who refuse to repent but who then satisfy the law of justice by paying for their own sins are then worthy to enter the celestial kingdom. The answer is no. The entrance requirements for celestial life are simply higher than merely satisfying the law of justice. For that reason, paying for our sins will not bear the same fruit as repenting of our sins. Justice is a law of balance and order and it must be satisfied, either through our payment or his. But if we decline the Savior's invitation to let him carry our sins, and then satisfy justice by ourselves, we will not yet have experienced the complete rehabilitation that can occur through a combination of divine assistance and genuine repentance. Working together, those forces have the power permanently to change our hearts and our lives, preparing us for celestial life. *The Broken Heart*, p. 7-8. DCBM, 3:251-252.) therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal <sup>d</sup>plan of <sup>e</sup>redemption.

## 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 <sup>a</sup>justice of God in the <sup>b</sup>punishment of the sinner; for ye do try to suppose that it is <sup>c</sup>injustice 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 <sup>a</sup>Eden, to till the <sup>b</sup>ground, 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, <sup>c</sup>cherubim, (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 <sup>a</sup>cherubim and the flaming sword, that he should not partake of the fruit—

4 And thus we see, that there was a <sup>a</sup>time granted unto man to repent, yea, a <sup>b</sup>probationary 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 <sup>a</sup>partaken of the <sup>b</sup>tree 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 <sup>a</sup>die—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 <sup>b</sup>lost forever, yea, they became <sup>c</sup>fallen 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 <sup>a</sup>cut off both temporally and spiritually from the <sup>b</sup>presence of the Lord; and thus we see they became subjects to follow after their own <sup>c</sup>will.

8 Now behold, it was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this <sup>a</sup>temporal death, for that would destroy the great <sup>b</sup>plan of happiness.

9 Therefore, as the soul could never die, and the <sup>a</sup>fall had brought upon all mankind a spiritual <sup>b</sup>death 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 <sup>a</sup>carnal, sensual, and devilish, by <sup>b</sup>nature, this <sup>c</sup>probationary 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 <sup>a</sup>miserable, 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 <sup>a</sup>man had brought upon himself because of his own <sup>b</sup>disobedience; (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. Robert Millet,

Life in Christ, p. 24-25 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. Gerald N. Lund, *Jesus Christ, Key to the Plan of Salvation*, p. 95.)

13 Therefore, according to justice, the <sup>a</sup>plan of <sup>b</sup>redemption 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 <sup>c</sup>cease 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 <sup>a</sup>fallen, and they were in the grasp of <sup>b</sup>justice; 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 <sup>a</sup>atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of <sup>b</sup>mercy, to appease the demands of <sup>c</sup>justice, that God might be a <sup>d</sup>perfect, just God, and a <sup>e</sup>merciful God also. (Bruce R. McConkie: "Mercy is thus for the repentant, the faithful, the obedient, those who love and serve God. All other 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<sup>a</sup> punishment, which also was b<sup>b</sup> eternal as the life of the soul should be, affixed c<sup>c</sup> opposite to the plan of happiness, which was as d<sup>d</sup> eternal also as the life of the soul.

17 Now, how could a man repent except he should a<sup>a</sup> sin? How could he sin if there was no b<sup>b</sup> law? How could there be a law save there was a punishment?

18 Now, there was a punishment affixed, and a just law given, which brought remorse of a<sup>a</sup> conscience 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 a<sup>a</sup> murdered he should b<sup>b</sup> die—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 a<sup>a</sup> no 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 a<sup>a</sup> punishment affixed, and a b<sup>b</sup> repentance granted; which repentance, mercy claimeth; otherwise, justice claimeth the creature and executeth the c<sup>c</sup> law, and the law inflicteth the punishment; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed, and God would cease to be God.

23 But God ceaseth not to be God, and a<sup>a</sup> mercy 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 <sup>b</sup>atonement; and the atonement bringeth to pass the <sup>c</sup>resurrection of the dead; and the <sup>d</sup>resurrection of the dead bringeth <sup>e</sup>back men into the presence of God; and thus they are restored into his presence, to be <sup>f</sup>judged according to their works, according to the law and justice.

24 For behold, justice exerciseth all his demands, and also <sup>a</sup>mercy 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 <sup>a</sup>mercy can rob <sup>b</sup>justice? I say unto you, Nay; not one whit. If so, God would cease to be God.

26 And thus God bringeth about his great and eternal <sup>a</sup>purposes, which were prepared <sup>b</sup>from 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, <sup>a</sup>whosoever 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 <sup>b</sup>restored unto him according to his <sup>c</sup>deeds.

28 If he has desired to do <sup>a</sup>evil, 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 <sup>a</sup>trouble 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 <sup>a</sup>justice 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 <sup>b</sup>mercy, and his long-suffering have full sway in your heart; and let it bring you down to the dust in <sup>c</sup>humility.

31 And now, O my son, ye are called of God to <sup>a</sup>preach the word unto this people. And now, my son, go thy way, declare the word with truth and soberness, that thou mayest <sup>b</sup>bring 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.

## THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS SECTION 19

*Revelation given through Joseph Smith, at Manchester, New York, March 1830. HC 1: 72—74. In his history the Prophet introduced it as “a commandment of God and not of man, to Martin Harris, given by him who is Eternal.”*

15 Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I <sup>a</sup>smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your <sup>b</sup>sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

16 For behold, I, God, (Only a God could suffer for the benefit of others.) have <sup>a</sup>suffered these things for all, that they might not <sup>b</sup>suffer if they would <sup>c</sup>repent;

17 But if they would not repent they must <sup>a</sup>suffer even as I; (The suffering referred to by the Savior is not a quantity of punishment meted out and experienced for a predetermined length of time. Individuals suffer as long as they remain in sin. When they repent, the atonement of Christ has claim upon them. "Hence the salvation of Jesus Christ was wrought out for all men," taught the Prophet Joseph Smith, "in order to triumph over the devil; for if it did not catch him in one place, it would in another; for he stood up as a Savior. All will suffer until they obey Christ himself" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 357). Therefore, the suffering continues until individuals repent and forsake their sins. There are those who have falsely supposed that Christ's suffering supplants suffering on the part of those who repent. This simply is not the case. There is no repentance without suffering. What the present text means is that the repentant soul will not have to suffer "even as" the Savior suffered. But it does not mean that they will not have to suffer. Nor should it be supposed that their suffering is confined to the natural consequences of their actions. In addition to those consequences, he or she must experience the anguish associated with true repentance. President Spencer W. Kimball said of personal suffering that it "is a very important part of repentance. One has not begun to repent until he has suffered intensely for his sins. . . . If a person hasn't suffered, he hasn't repented. . . . He has got to go through a change in his system whereby he suffers and then forgiveness is a possibility" (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 88, 99). Responding to the issue as to why it is necessary for one to suffer when serious transgression is involved, Elder Oaks said, "We often think of the results of repentance as simply cleansing us from sin. But that is an incomplete view of the matter. A person who sins is like a tree that bends easily in the

wind. On a windy and rainy day the tree bends so deeply against the ground that the leaves become soiled with mud, like sin. If we only focus on cleaning the leaves, the weakness in the tree that allowed it to bend and soil its leaves may remain. Merely cleaning the leaves does not strengthen the tree. Similarly, a person who is merely sorry to be soiled by sin will sin again in the next high wind. The susceptibility to repetition continues until the tree has been strengthened" ("Sin and Suffering," 150). Revelations of the Restoration, Joseph Fielding McConkie, p. 147-48)

18 Which <sup>a</sup>suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, (Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: "We do not know, we cannot tell, no mortal mind can conceive the full import of what Christ did in Gethsemane. We know he sweat great goutts of blood from every pore as he drained the dregs of that bitter cup his Father had given him. We know he suffered, both body and spirit, more than it is possible for man to suffer, except it be unto death. We know that in some way, incomprehensible to us, his suffering satisfied the demands of justice, ransomed penitent souls from the pains and penalties of sin, and made mercy available to those who believe in his holy name. We know that he lay prostrate upon the ground as the pains and agonies of an infinite burden caused him to tremble and would that he might not drink the bitter cup. We know that an angel came from the courts of glory to strengthen him in his ordeal, and we suppose it was mighty Michael, who foremost fell that mortal man might be. As near as we can judge, these infinite agonies—this suffering beyond compare—continued for some three or four hours" (Conference Report, April 1985, 9-10).) and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might <sup>b</sup>not drink the bitter cup, and shrink— ("Later, in Gethsemane," observed Elder Neal A. Maxwell, "the suffering Jesus began to be 'sore amazed' (Mark 14:33), or, in the Greek, 'awestruck' and 'astonished.' Imagine, Jehovah, the Creator of this and other worlds, 'astonished'! Jesus knew cognitively what He must do, but not experientially. He had never personally known the exquisite and exacting process of an atonement before. Thus, when the agony came in its fulness, it was so much, much worse than even He with his unique intellect had ever imagined! No wonder an angel appeared to strengthen him! (See Luke 22:43.) The cumulative weight of all mortal sins—past, present, and future— pressed upon that perfect, sinless, and sensitive Soul! All our infirmities and sicknesses were somehow, too, a part of the awful arithmetic of the Atonement. (See Alma 7:11-12, Isaiah 53:3-5, Matthew 8:17.) The anguished Jesus not only pled with the Father that the hour and cup might pass from Him, but with this relevant citation. 'And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me' (Mark 14:35-36)" (Conference Report, April 1985, 92).)

19 Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and <sup>a</sup>finished my preparations (The way is prepared for all to come back into the presence of the Father, if they will.) unto the children of men.  
20 Wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I <sup>a</sup>humble you with my almighty power; and that you <sup>b</sup>confess your sins, lest you suffer these <sup>c</sup>punishments of which I have spoken, of which in the smallest, yea, even in the least degree you have <sup>d</sup>tasted at the time I withdrew my Spirit.  
21 And I command you that you <sup>a</sup>preach naught but repentance, and show <sup>b</sup>not these things unto the world until it is wisdom in me.  
22 For they cannot <sup>a</sup>bear meat now, but <sup>b</sup>milk they must receive; wherefore, they must not know these things, lest they perish.  
23 <sup>a</sup>Learn of me, and listen to my words; <sup>b</sup>walk in the <sup>c</sup>meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have <sup>d</sup>peace in me.  
24 I am Jesus Christ; I <sup>a</sup>came by the <sup>b</sup>will of the Father, and I do his will.

## BIBLE DICTIONARY ATONEMENT

The word describes the setting “at one” of those who have been estranged, and denotes the reconciliation of man to God. Sin is the cause of the estrangement, and therefore the purpose of atonement is to correct or overcome the consequences of sin. From the time of Adam to the death of Jesus Christ, true believers were instructed to offer animal sacrifices to the Lord. These sacrifices were symbolic of the forthcoming death of Jesus Christ, and were done by faith in him (Moses 5: 5-8).

Jesus Christ, as the Only Begotten Son of God and the only sinless person to live on this earth, was the only one capable of making an atonement for mankind. By his selection and foreordination in the Grand Council before the world was formed, his divine Sonship, his sinless life, the shedding of his blood in the garden of Gethsemane, his death on the cross and subsequent bodily resurrection from the grave, he made a perfect atonement for all mankind. All are covered *unconditionally* as pertaining to the fall of Adam. Hence, all shall rise from the dead with immortal bodies, because of Jesus’ atonement. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15: 22), and all little children are innocent at birth. The atonement is *conditional*, however, so far as each person’s individual sins are concerned, and touches every one to the degree that he has faith in Jesus Christ, repents of his sins, and obeys the gospel. The services of the Day of Atonement foreshadowed the atoning work of Christ (Lev. 4; Lev. 23: 26-32; Heb. 9). The scriptures point out that no law, ordinance, or sacrifice would be satisfactory if it were not for the atonement of Jesus Christ (Heb. 10: 1-9; 2 Ne. 9: 5-24; Mosiah 13: 27-32).

Sin is lawlessness (1 Jn. 3: 4); it is a refusal on men’s part to submit to the law of God (Rom. 8: 7). By transgression man loses control over his own will and becomes the slave of sin (Rom. 7: 14), and so incurs the penalty of spiritual death, which is alienation from God (Rom. 6: 23). The atonement of Jesus Christ redeems all mankind from the fall of Adam and causes all to be answerable for their own manner of life. This means of atonement is provided by the Father (John 3: 16-17), and is offered in the life and person of his Son, Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5: 19).

*See also Fasts; Sacrifices.*

## BIBLE DICTIONARY GETHSEMANE

The garden, across the brook Kedron, and somewhere near the Mount of Olives, to which our Lord went on leaving the upper room on the night of his betrayal (Matt. 26: 36; Mark 14: 32; cf. Luke 22: 39; John 18: 1). An old tradition identifies it with a garden still existing some 250 yards from the east wall of the city.

### 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<sup>a</sup> learning; for there is a God, and he hath<sup>b</sup> created all things, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are, both things to act and things to be<sup>c</sup> 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<sup>a</sup> beginning with God. <sup>b</sup>Intelligence, or the<sup>c</sup> light of<sup>d</sup> truth, was not<sup>e</sup> 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<sup>a</sup> sphere in which God has placed it, to<sup>b</sup> act 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<sup>a</sup> more 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<sup>a</sup> spirit. The elements are<sup>b</sup> eternal, and<sup>c</sup> spirit 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, <sup>a</sup>Great Waters; and the Gods saw that they were obeyed.) 12, (And the Gods organized the<sup>a</sup> earth 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<sup>a</sup> ordered 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 <sup>a</sup>voice do the hills and the mountains tremble and <sup>b</sup>quake.).

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 <sup>a</sup>prophecy; and having all these <sup>b</sup>witnesses we obtain a hope, and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we truly can <sup>c</sup>command in the <sup>d</sup>name 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 <sup>a</sup>laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens. I <sup>b</sup>call 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 <sup>a</sup>devil—for, behold, the <sup>b</sup>devil was before Adam, for he <sup>c</sup>rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine <sup>d</sup>honor, which is my <sup>e</sup>power; and also a <sup>f</sup>third part of the <sup>g</sup>hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their <sup>h</sup>agency;) It is in some other places, too—Moses 4:1,4 (1 AND I, the <sup>a</sup>Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying: That <sup>b</sup>Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the <sup>c</sup>beginning, and he came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will <sup>d</sup>redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely <sup>e</sup>I will do it; wherefore <sup>f</sup>give me thine honor. 4 And he became <sup>a</sup>Satan, yea, even the <sup>b</sup>devil, the father of all <sup>c</sup>lies, to <sup>d</sup>deceive and to blind men, and to lead them <sup>e</sup>captive at his will, even as many as would not <sup>f</sup>hearken 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 <sup>a</sup>devil—for, behold, the <sup>b</sup>devil was before Adam, for he <sup>c</sup>rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine <sup>d</sup>honor, which is my <sup>e</sup>power; and also a <sup>f</sup>third part of the <sup>g</sup>hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their <sup>h</sup>agency;), 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 <sup>a</sup>plan of <sup>b</sup>redemption 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 <sup>c</sup>cease to be God.), 22 (But there is a law given, and a <sup>a</sup>punishment affixed, and a <sup>b</sup>repentance granted; which repentance, mercy claimeth; otherwise, justice claimeth the creature and executeth the <sup>c</sup>law, 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 <sup>a</sup>mercy can rob <sup>b</sup>justice? 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 <sup>a</sup>miracles 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 <sup>b</sup>changeth 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 <sup>a</sup>atonement should be made; for according to the great <sup>b</sup>plan of the Eternal God there must be an atonement made, or else all mankind must unavoidably perish; yea, all are hardened; yea, all are <sup>c</sup>fallen 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 <sup>a</sup>like unto him, and we become devils, <sup>b</sup>angels to a <sup>c</sup>devil, to be <sup>d</sup>shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of <sup>e</sup>lies, in misery, like unto himself; yea, to that being who <sup>f</sup>beguiled our first parents, who <sup>g</sup>transformeth himself nigh unto an <sup>h</sup>angel of light, and <sup>i</sup>stirreth up the children of men unto <sup>j</sup>secret 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 <sup>a</sup>just, 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 <sup>a</sup>salvation 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 this 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 <sup>a</sup>worshiped the Father in his name, and also we worship the Father in his <sup>b</sup>name. And for this intent we <sup>c</sup>keep the <sup>d</sup>law of Moses, it <sup>e</sup>pointing 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 <sup>f</sup>similitude of God and his <sup>g</sup>Only 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.