

1r-D&C-19
The Plan of Salvation
(D&C 29, 76, 93, 109-110, 137, 138)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Restoration)

I. **The Saints received an endowment at the Kirtland Temple --- given by Jesus Christ Himself.**

A. Jesus Christ appeared and “endowed” them with great light and knowledge.

1. “ **It was ... an endowment indeed**, long to be remembered, for the **sound shall go forth** from this place into all the world, and the occurrences of this day shall be handed down upon the pages of sacred history, to all generations; ... so shall this day be numbered and celebrated **as a year of jubilee**” (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, ed. B.H.Roberts) 2:432-33. (Emphasis added).

2. According to our Church of Christ tour guide at the Kirtland Temple, Joseph instructed the bell on the Kirtland Temple be rung 50 times. The guide did not know why. But the year of Jubilee was always the 50th year, and signified the time when Israel would be **returned to its original roots and identity**.

3. As shown above, Joseph recognized this time of revelatory endowment was a momentous step. It was a momentous step for Latter-day Israel to be returned to the covenants the Lord had made to Israel: The Plan of Salvation meant the Promise of Eternal Life and Eternal Seed. And it was thus a **true Time of Jubilee**. He also said the sound of these events would issue forth to the world. **And they did through the ringing of its bell 50 times.**

II. The blessings of light and knowledge continued.

A. Many individuals at the Dedication had either beheld the Savior or heard His voice or felt His presence, and records were made of the precious teachings they received at that time.

B. The greatest visitation was when Jesus appeared at the breastwork of the pulpit (D&C 110), personally bearing witness of His great work of salvation and **accepting the Temple as His House**.

C. From then on, as has been pointed out: “Christ dictated more revelations and caused the initial printing of more of His words during the Kirtland period than at any other time in Church history” (Karl Ricks Anderson, *The Savior in Kirtland*, Deseret Book, p. 95).

1. This statement pertains *to all that was received or published during the Kirtland period*.

D. Furthermore, as ancient prophets restored precious keys and authority to carry on the great Latter-day work, **they also gave understanding of those respective keys and work**.

1. They **endowed the Church members with light and knowledge concerning those keys**.

III. Some of the most important knowledge, in preparation for that to be given in the Temple, was given Joseph and Sidney Rigdon four years earlier. It was in a marvelous vision recorded in D&C 76 --- the Plan of Salvation.

A. Joseph Smith himself explained why this knowledge is so essential.

B. “All men know that they must die. And it is important that we should understand the reasons and causes of our exposure to the vicissitudes of life and of death, and the designs and purposes of God in our coming into the world, our sufferings here, and our departure hence. What is the object of our coming into existence, then dying and falling away, to be here no more? *It is but reasonable to suppose that God would reveal something in reference*

to the matter, and **it is a subject we ought to study more than any other**. We ought to study it day and night, for the world is ignorant in reference to their true condition and relation. *If we have any claim on our Heavenly Father for anything, it is for knowledge on this important subject*" (*History of the Church* 6:50). (Emphasis added).

- C. This highlighted the great difference between Joseph Smith and other religious teachers of men. He had complete faith that the Lord would bestow significant knowledge to men about Himself and His purposes --- if men asked in faith. While others for centuries had sought understandings out of their own mortal minds. And thus they created Him in their image! Because Joseph had faith to seek such knowledge, it was bestowed!

IV. Understanding the Plan of Salvation sheds great light upon the very nature of God.

- A. It was made clear to the young Joseph in His First Vision, that the doctrines of men, which actually portrayed God as cruel and unjust, were an abomination to Him (Joseph Smith---History 1:19).
- B. In revealing the Plan of Salvation, **the great wisdom and love of God the Father and His Son were manifest**.
 - 1. Wilford Woodruff shared what knowing the Plan of Salvation meant to him. "When I first read that vision it swept away a veil that had been around me all my life; it opened my understanding and shook off my shackles. There was something in it so different from the old sectarian notion ---- something that swept away the idea of one heaven, one hell, and that those who do not go to one place must go to the other, and that all in heaven have an equal glory, and all in hell an equal misery. There always appeared something very inconsistent connected with the doctrine of future rewards and punishment as taught by modern divines; but **when I got hold of the vision, I saw more light, more consistency, and Godlike mercy and justice than I have ever seen in my life...**" (Wilford Woodruff, *Journal of Discourses*, 8:265-66). (Emphasis added).

V. It was made clear that the Savior's Atonement was the **central part of the whole plan of salvation**.

- A. Among the things the Savior re-emphasized, expanded upon, or revealed anew were:
 - 1. Before the earth was created, He freely volunteered to redeem all mankind (Moses 4:1).
 - 2. Among reasons He was chosen as Redeemer was because He would not deny men their moral agency in the process (Moses 5:9; 7:32).
 - 3. Because Jesus Christ came to the earth as the only begotten Son of God in the flesh, He and He alone had the power through His divine nature to bring about the redemption of man (D&C 76:1; 109:4; 29:42).
 - 4. Christ atoned for the sins of all mankind, out of His great love for His brothers and sisters (D&C 76:41; 19:16).
 - 5. The Plan of Salvation had been taught unto man at the beginning (Moses 6:59, 62).

VI. The Lord has revealed many additional details of the full Plan of Salvation at various times.

- A. Knowledge of the pre-mortal existence, a marvelous revelation, was bestowed.
- B. "Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence... was not created or made, neither indeed can be" (D&C 93:29).

1. Accepting the paradigm that life did not happen by accident but by great purpose and design creates astonishing new views for one's life.
2. In particular, we learn **some essence about us is Eternal, and that is very important.**
 - a. Scholar Truman Madsen once pointed out that knowing something about us is Eternal confounds the thinking of men, who believe we can be totally destroyed. What Joseph Smith revealed was that **we can never be totally destroyed** (See *Eternal Man*, pp. 15-16).
 - b. Knowing that we lived before this life helps us comprehend many things which otherwise would seem terribly unjust.
 - c. Knowing that there was a Council in Heaven, where a great plan for the existence, salvation, and exaltation of man was formulated shows all things were created out of wisdom, which is enormously faith building and comforting.
 - d. Knowing that Satan is real, but **can and will be overcome by the power of Christ**, helps one understand the sources of evil and gives one power and willingness to combat its influence. It definitely drives away any feeling of helplessness.
 - e. It is marvelous to know that God is not a Being who will ever force man, but from the beginning valued moral agency. Thus we will come into righteousness out of desire and free will. And if worthy to receive His powers, will use those powers for righteousness.
3. Greater understanding was given concerning the Fall of man.
 - a. It is marvelous to know that the Fall was not a great tragedy, but the first essential step in God's overall plan to bring man into His realm as co-equal beings with Him.
 - b. It is marvelous to know that our first ancestors were not terrible sinners, but worthy individuals whom we will eventually have opportunity to honor.
4. Greater understanding was given concerning mortal life.
 - a. It is marvelous to understand that mortal life is a "time of our probation," and the **many trials we face here are not always due to punishment, but are often the means of fully testing us and preparing us for greater blessings.**
 - b. It is marvelous to know the supposed curses given to Adam were not actually curses, but learning experiences given ultimately for our benefit.
5. Greater understanding was given concerning our post-mortal life.
 - a. It is marvelous to know of the surety of the resurrection, even for those who have not been as faithful and for whom repentance will still have some impact.
 - b. It is marvelous to know that while some cannot progress further [kept in Spirit Prison] until additional teaching and work is done, there will be further opportunities for salvation or exaltation beyond this life.
 - c. It is marvelous to know that eventually everyone who has lived upon this earth will have a fair and just chance to hear the gospel and to prove themselves worthy or unworthy of the greatest of blessings.
 - d. It is **particularly marvelous to know the enormous blessings the Lord has prepared for those who are truly righteous.**

VII. In spite of its beauties, the Plan of Salvation was difficult for some to receive.

- A. Sometimes it is difficult for people to give up past views which they are invested too heavily in.
- B. Some members were still too bonded to traditional Christian creeds. Brigham Young said:

“When God revealed to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon that there was a place prepared for all, according to the light they had received and their rejection of evil and practice of good, it was a great trial to many, and some apostatized because God was not going to send to everlasting punishment heathens and infants, but had a place of salvation, in due time, for all, and would bless the honest and virtuous and truthful, whether they ever belonged to any church or not. It was a new doctrine to this generation, and many stumbled at it” (Discourses of Brigham Young, ed., John A. Widstoe (Bookcraft, 1998) 390-91.

- C. This should be a great lesson in reminding us to keep ourselves open to new revelation given by the Lord. For He does reveal things line upon line. We must always be ready to receive from His mouth. To be willing to receive His new revealed truths (or those which come from sources where truth is “proved.”) must be put above the preservation of our own personal egos.
- D. Sydney Rigdon attributed the news of this vision reaching those outside the church as causing the terrible persecution of Joseph when he was dragged from his bed and tarred and feathered, along with other persecutions.
- E. Those who did receive the revelation on the Plan of Salvation were prepared for its next great step: To receive the ordinances given in a future Temple. This would lead to the realization of the Plan of Salvation’s ultimate promises: Eternal Live and Eternal Seed.

VIII. Through these experiences the Lord has shown the importance of being humble enough to learn of Him and His ways when He opens His mouth.

- A. The Kirtland Temple taught its pattern should also be the pattern for our homes.
 - B. Through it He gave His pattern for learning; establishing our homes as “a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (D&C 109:8).
 - C. Thus, if we really want to find His Truths, we will begin with prayer and fasting and faith. Then we will be led to correct learning, and eventually to glory, to His order and to Him.
 - D. Much emphasis was put into learning, of many kinds, in Kirtland.
 - 1. “...seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom, seek learning even by study and by faith” (D&C 109:7).
 - 2. I rejoice in this counsel, for I find my outside learning correlates, supplements, and makes more glorious my learning in the Temple.
 - a. For example, when the creation is reviewed, it brings to memory many of the awesome details I have learned about the miraculous and marvelous creations of God. As I have studied the things revealed through scientific studies, I marvel continually at the meticulous planning and preparation the Lord used in making the Universe and the Earth. It is marvelous what He did to make the earth not only habitable and full of the things we humans need to sustain life, but also beautiful.
And perhaps most importantly, He created it so that “All things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of[Him].” (Moses 6:63). Thus the earth was created full of symbols, which help us to understand His Ways and His truths.
Chief among those truths is His Plan of Salvation, with its central factor the Atonement of Jesus Christ.
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