

## **BM#30 "The Great Plan of Happiness" - Alma 40-42**

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### **I. Introduction**

As noted in BM#29, Alma, Chapters 40-42, are a continuation of the instructions that Alma gave to his son, Corianton. They are based upon the questions Corianton had regarding the principles of the Gospel.

The Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual states,

"Alma saw that Corianton's misconduct was caused in part by his lack of testimony and misunderstanding of some basic gospel doctrines." (*Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 134).

Bruce Satterfield states,

"It is evident from Alma's teachings to his son, that Corianton had bought into...[his] religious thought [the teachings of Nehor]. We find that Corianton struggled with the necessity of Jesus Christ (Alma 39:15-19). We also learn that he believed that good would be restored from evil (Alma 41:1, 10-15; 42:30). Further, from Alma's discussion of justice and mercy, we understand that Corianton did not understand the necessity of repentance (see Alma 42). Because of these doctrinal misunderstandings, Corianton justified committing sin, even of an abominable nature (see Alma 42:29-30." (Bruce Satterfield, BM#30, August, 2004, Internet: [www.meridianmagazine.org/gospeldoctrine/bm-#30](http://www.meridianmagazine.org/gospeldoctrine/bm-#30)).

Alma, in these chapters, informs Corianton about the "Great Plan of Happiness," or the Plan of Salvation. His questions relate to the subject of "life after death, and the mercy that is available to us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ" (*Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 133).

As we "sit-in" on these sessions of instruction, we will also be enlightened regarding our understanding of important matters. The three most important questions, each of us should consider are: Where did I come from?; Why am I here?, and Where am I going? The correct answer to each of these questions will provide us with a better understanding of the purpose of our mortal probation and the reason for the challenges we each experience. If we knew that there was going to be life after death, would that not help us in making important decisions during our lives?

The Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"In teaching Corianton, Alma referred to Heavenly Father's plan [that was presented during our pre-mortal existence] as 'the plan of restoration' (Alma 41:2), 'the great plan of salvation' (Alma 42:5), 'the great plan of happiness' (Alma 42:8), 'the plan of redemption' (Alma 42:11), and 'the great plan of mercy' (Alma 42:31)." (*Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 134).

The important elements of the Father's plan included the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Foremost of importance to the Father's plan, is free agency. This is in contrast to the plan that Satan offered. (see PGP, Moses 4:3-4.)

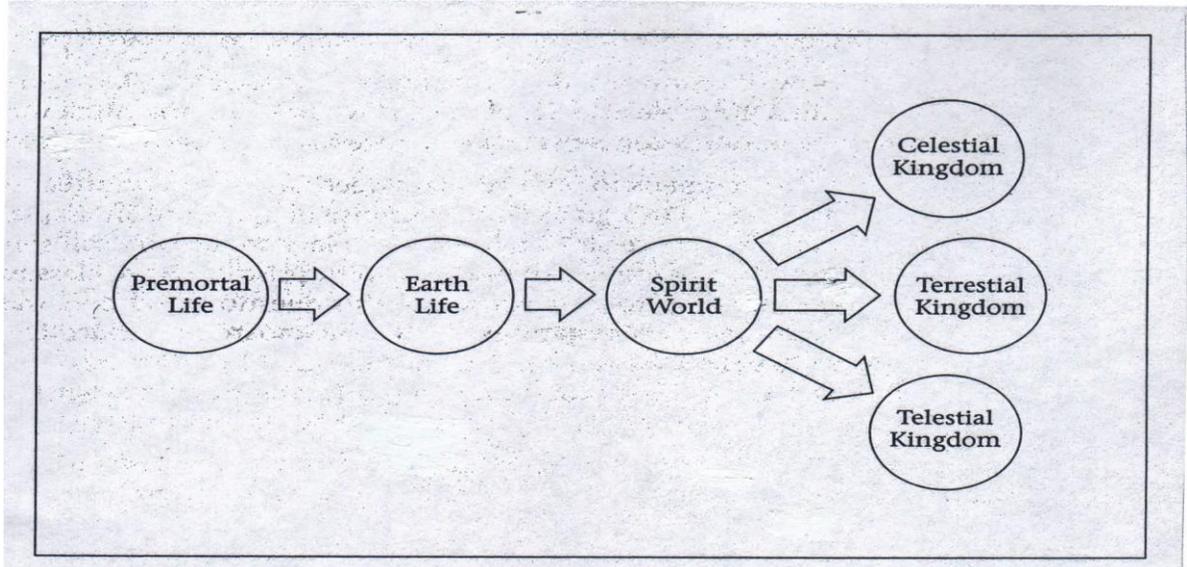
Outline of Alma 40-42:

"Alma 40:1-23                      Alma teaches Corianton about death and resurrection.

"Alma 40:24-26;41                Alma teaches Corianton that after we are resurrected, the righteous will be restored to happiness and the wicked will be restored to misery.

"Alma 42                              Alma teaches Corianton about justice and mercy in the great plan of happiness." (*Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 133).

Chart 1: Outline "Great Plan of Happiness" - Alma 41:8



Reference: (*Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 133).

Neal A. Maxwell states,

"The Lord has described his plan of redemption as the Plan of Happiness. Conversationally, we reference this great design almost too casually at times; we even sketch its rude outlines on chalkboards and paper as if it were the floor plan for an addition to one's house. However, when we really take time to ponder the Plan, it is breathtaking and overpowering!" ("Thanks Be to God," in *Ensign*, July 1982, 51).

We sketch its outlines on chalkboards and paper, as we need to have some basis of understanding for our discussion. Our outline, simple as it is, provides a point where we can begin to build upon our understanding.

## II. Alma 40

Alma 40:1-3, 5

**1 Now my son, here is somewhat more I would say unto thee; for I perceive that thy mind is worried concerning the resurrection of the dead.**

**2 Behold, I say unto you, that there is no resurrection...until after the coming of Christ.**

**3 Behold, he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead..**

**5 ...men shall come forth from the dead...there is a time appointed that all shall rise from the dead.**

The primary doctrine of Nehor says there is no need for a Redeemer, "as all mankind should be saved at the last day...he had also redeemed all men; and, in the end, all men should have eternal life" (Alma 1:4). Also there is no need for repentance, for "God will save all men" (Alma 21:6). We also "do not believe that [anyone]...knowest of things to come" (Alma 21:8), which denies there is a God who knows all thoughts and feelings, also no one can know the coming of Christ as a future event. If all mankind is to be saved, the individual may then feel he/she is free to live their lives as they please without any consequences for their sins.

Alma teaches his son, Corianton, that Christ is coming. He will bring "to pass the resurrection of the dead" (Alma 40:3), and "that all men shall rise from the dead" (Alma 40:5).

Alma 40:6-7, 11

**6 Now there must be a space betwixt the time of death and the time of resurrection.**

**7 And now I would inquire what becometh of the souls of men from this time of death to the time appointed for the resurrection?**

**11 Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection--Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they are good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life.**

The Book of Mormon Student Manual [2009] states,

"If at death we enter the spirit world, not God's actual presence, how are we to understand Alma's words? President Joseph Fielding Smith...explained that Alma did not necessarily mean that we are brought back into God's

presence... 'Taken home to God' [compare Ecclesiastes 12:7] simply means that their mortal existence has come to an end, and they have returned to the world of spirits" (*Book of Mormon Student Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2009, 242).

Alma taught his son, Corianton, that there is a place when the spirit of the dead go to await their resurrection. This is referred to as "the Spirit World or Paradise." It is divided into at least two sections. One is for those who were righteous, found the true church, and made and kept sacred covenants throughout their lives. The other section, often referred to as Spirit Prison, is reserved for those who either did not have the opportunity to receive the gospel during their mortal life or those who rejected the message of the gospel. In Spirit Prison, they will have an opportunity to hear the teachings of the gospel and dependent upon their decision, will either remain in Spirit Prison until the judgment or have the opportunity to enter the Spirit World with those who are righteous.

Alma 40:12-14

**12 And then shall it come to pass that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow.**

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

**14 ...thus they remain in this state, as well as the righteous in paradise, until the time of their resurrection.**

The state of having "the spirit of the devil...enter into them, and take possession of their [spirit]" is a condition reserved only for those who remain unrepentant and unwilling to accept the atonement of Jesus Christ.

True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference states,

"When the physical body dies, the spirit continues to live. In the spirit world, the spirits of the righteous 'are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow' (Alma 40:12). A place called spirit prison is reserved for 'those who [have] died in their sins, without a knowledge of the truth, or in transgression, having rejected the prophets' (D&C 138:32). The spirits in prison are [taught the gospel]...If they accept the principles of the gospel, repent of their sins, and accept ordinances performed in their behalf in temples, they will be welcomed into paradise." (*True to the Faith*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004, 46-47).

Alma taught Corianton that it does make a difference how you live your life and the choice you make for either righteousness or wickedness. These choices determine your location in the Spirit World or Paradise. Acceptance of the true gospel and repentance from former sins are essential steps regarding individual salvation.

Alma 40:16, 18, 20

**16 And behold, again it hath been spoken, that there is a first resurrection, a resurrection of all those who have been, or who are, or who shall be, down to the resurrection of Christ from the dead.**

**18 ...but it meaneth the reuniting of the soul with the body, of those from the days of Adam down to the resurrection of Christ.**

**20 Now, my son, I do not say that their resurrection cometh at the resurrection of Christ; bur behold, I give it as my opinion, that the souls and the bodies are reunited, of the righteous, at the resurrection of Christ, and his ascension into heaven.**

It is essential to understand that prior to the resurrection of Christ, no one had been resurrected. As Paul taught the Corinthians, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Corinthians 15:22-23).

The Book of Mormon Study Guide states,

"The first resurrection, which is also referred to as the Resurrection of the Just, began with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and continues through the Second Coming." (*The Book of Mormon Study Guide: Start to Finish*. Thomas R. Valletta, General Editor. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2015, 499).

Some churches have taught that there are only two options where man will go following their death. They are titled as "Heaven or Hell." Through the Bible and modern revelation, we know the names of each of the kingdoms to which the human race will be assigned. They are the Celestial, Terrestrial, and Telestial. Our assignment to which of the various kingdom is now being determined as we live each day and make our choices accordingly. The glory of each kingdom differs as the glory of the sun, moon and stars differ from each other.

Alma 40:21

**21 ...there is a space between death and the resurrection of the body, and a state of the soul in happiness or in misery until the time which is appointed of God that the dead shall come forth, and be reunited, both soul and body, and be brought to stand before God, and be judged according to their works.**

Following the requisite time necessary for the individual to be in the Spirit World, they await judgment. As Amuluk taught (Alma 34:32), it is during our mortal journey when we have the greatest opportunity to prepare to meet our God. Finally the day the righteous have been waiting for, and the wicked have dreaded, will arrive. Individually, each will come before God at the judgment bar to give an accounting of their life and receive assignment to their eternal kingdom.

It was the Apostle Paul who had a vision regarding the various kingdoms. He taught,

1 Corinthians 15:40-42

**40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.**

**41 There is one glory of the sun [Celestial], and another glory of the moon [Terrestrial], and another glory for the stars [Telestial]: for one star differeth from another star in glory.**

**42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.**

For a listing of the names noted in brackets [], see Joseph Smith Translation, 1 Corinthians 15:40.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"Those coming forth in the morning of this [first] resurrection do so with celestial bodies and shall inherit a celestial glory; these are they who are Christ's the firstfruits. Those coming forth in the afternoon of this [first] resurrection do so with terrestrial bodies and consequently shall inherit that kingdom; they are described as being Christ's at his coming. All who have been resurrection so far [to date] have received celestial bodies; the coming forth of terrestrial beings does not commence until after the Second Coming (D&C 76:50-80; 88:95-99).

"Then comes the "second resurrection. At the end of the millennium, and in the morning of this second resurrection, shall come forth those who merit telestial bodies, and they shall be rewarded accordingly. Finally, in the afternoon of the second resurrection, those who 'remain filthy still,' those who having been raised in immortality are judges and found wholly wanting, those whom we call sons of perdition, shall be cast out with Lucifer and his angels to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire forever. (D&C 76; 25-49; 81-113; 88:101-102; 2 Nephi 9:14-16)." (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Vol.1.* Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965, [11<sup>th</sup> Printing, 1976], 196-197).

According to Bruce R. McConkie, the first resurrection began with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and will continue until after the Second Coming. After Christ, came those who arose forth from their graves at the time of his resurrection (Matthew 27:52-53). During the afternoon of

the first resurrection, which will not commence until after the second coming, the candidates of the Terrestrial kingdom will be determined. The morning of the second resurrection, will commence at the end of the Millennium, and will involve those who will be members of the Telestial kingdom. The afternoon of the second resurrection will concern those who have rejected the atonement of Jesus Christ and his saving ordinances despite having been given a full opportunity to receive them. They have in word and deed chosen to become servants of the devil and will, at this time, join him in his eternal abode.

Alma 40:22-24

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

**23 The soul shall be restored to the body, and the body to the soul; yea, and every limb and joint shall be restored to its body; yea, even a hair of the head shall not be lost; but all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame.**

**24 And now, my son, this is the restoration of which has been spoken by the mouths of the prophets--**

At the time of death, the physical body is laid in mother earth, separated from its spirit. The restoration or resurrection of the soul and body will occur for every individual as a result of the atonement of Jesus Christ. The physical body "will be restored to [its]...proper and perfect frame" (Alma 40:23). This resurrection is final and the spirit and the body will never again be separated.

Alma 40:25-26

**25 And then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of God.**

**26 But behold, an awful death cometh upon the wicked; for they die as to things pertaining to things of righteousness; for they are unclean, and no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of God; but they are cast out, and consigned to partake of the fruits of their labors or their works, which have been evil; and they drink the dregs of a bitter cup.**

What a difference for those who have lived righteous lives and kept their covenants than those who have rejected the

words of the prophets and chosen to follow the counsel of the devil.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

**"They drink the dregs of a bitter cup.** That is, they face the full effects of the justice of the Almighty God (Mosiah 3:26), a justice which could have been mitigated by their own repentance through the divine grace of the Holy One of Israel." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.3.* Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991, [3<sup>rd</sup> Printing, 1993], 303).

### **III. Alma 41**

Alma 41:1

**1 And now, my son, I have somewhat to say concerning the restoration of which has been spoken; for behold, some have wrested the scriptures, and have gone astray because of this thing. And I perceive that thy mind has been worried also concerning this thing. But behold, I will explain it unto thee.**

Richard O. Cowan states,

"When [LDS] hear the term *restoration*, [LDS] they typically think of the latter-day return of the Church and the revelation of the gospel in its fullness. Book of Mormon prophets, however, use this term in a rather different sense. They teach that every individual will receive a temporal as well as a spiritual restoration, good for good, evil for evil (Alma 41:13)." ("A New Meaning of 'Restoration': The Book of Mormon on Life After Death," in *The Book of Mormon: Alma, The Testimony Of The Word, Vol.6.* Edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992, 198).

As Alma uses the term: "Restoration," he is referring not only to a physical restoration, [Alma 41:2], but also to a restoration based upon the individual's works [Alma 41:3-4].

Alma 41:2-4

2 I say unto thee, my son, that the plan of restoration is requisite with the justice of God; for it is requisite that all things should be restored to their proper order. Behold, it is requisite and just, according to the power and resurrection of Christ, that the soul of man should be restored to its body, and that every part of the body should be restored to itself.

3 And it is requisite with the justice of God that men should be judged according to their works; and if their works were good in this life, and the desires of their hearts were good, that they should also, at the last day, be restored unto that which is good.

4 And if their works are evil they shall be restored unto them for evil. Therefore, all things shall be restored to their proper order, every thing to its natural frame--mortality raised to immortality, corruption to incorruption--raised to endless happiness to inherit the kingdom of God, or to endless misery to inherit the kingdom of the devil, the one on one hand, the other on the other.

Nehorism states that "all mankind should be saved at the last day...and in the end, all men should have eternal life" (Alma 1:4). Under this teaching, all mankind will be saved, regardless of their works in the flesh, and all will be receive eternal life, or endless happiness in the kingdom of God as a gift from God. The doctrine that Alma is teaching his son, Corianton is in opposition to Nehorism. He teaches his son that our works in the flesh are an essential ingredient in determining whether we receive endless happiness or endless misery following our death. All are not promised eternal life.

Alma 41:5-6

5 The one raised to happiness according to his desires of happiness...the other to evil according to his desires of evil; for he has desired to do evil all the day long even so shall he have his reward of evil when the night cometh.

6 And so it is on the other hand. If he hath repented of his sins, and desired righteousness until the end of his days, even so he shall be rewarded unto righteousness.

In these verses, the word "desire" must be understood to mean, not only the inclination to good works, but the doing of good works. In a similar light, punishment for evil desires refers to the individuals actions of evil, not their thoughts only. As Alma notes, the opportunity for repentance from evil extends through our time in the Spirit World. In addition, modern revelation states, "For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desires of their hearts" (Doctrine and Covenants 137:9). This is consistent with the fact that our actions are often preceded by our thoughts. (see Matthew 5:27-28.)

Alma 41:9-10

**9 And now behold, my son, do not risk one more offense against your God upon those points of doctrine, which ye have hitherto risked to commit sin.**  
**10 Do not suppose, because it has been spoken concerning restoration, that ye shall be restored from sin to happiness. Behold, I say unto you, wickedness never was happiness.**

Alma is most desirous that his son, Corianton, understand that without the repentance of his sins, he will not be restored to happiness. His wickedness, without the necessary repentance, will directly result in his endless misery. For him to believe otherwise, is to not understand the words of the Lord as spoken through his prophets.

Ezra Taft Benson states,

"Do not be misled by Satan's lies. There is no lasting happiness in immorality. There is no joy to be found in breaking the law of chastity. Just the opposite is true. There may be momentary pleasure. For a time it may seem like everything is wonderful. But quickly the relationship will sour. Guilt and shame set in. We become fearful that our sins will be discovered. We must sneak and hide, lie and cheat. Love begins to die. Bitterness, jealousy, anger, and even hate begin to grow. All of these are the natural results of sin and transgression." ("The Law of Chastity," in *Morality*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, 86).

M. Russell Ballard states,

"If you have a bad habit, do you think death is going to change it? Do you think that habit will simply dissolve in some miraculous way and will no longer be with you? I believe that the Lord impresses upon you and me the need to repent and live the law, keep the commandments, and keep our lives aligned to the celestial goal; because it is when we are here in mortality that the body and the spirit can learn together." ("Is It Worth It?" in *BYU Speeches of the Year*, 1979, 157-158).

Alma 41:13

**13 ...the meaning of the word restoration is to bring back again evil for evil, or carnal for carnal, or devilish for devilish--good for that which good; righteousness for that which is righteousness; just for that which is just; merciful for that which is merciful.**

Jeffrey R. Holland states,

"The spiritual impact of that doctrine of restoration is sobering for those who may have believed that Christ's atonement and their resurrection would somehow bring something more than was deserved. Alma makes it very clear that if our works are good in this life, and the desires of our hearts are good, then in the Resurrection we will be restored to that which is good. But, by the same token, if our works are evil, then our reward will be the restoration of the evil in the Resurrection." (*Christ and the New Covenant*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997, 242).

To one who had believed that one would not be held accountable for their sinful choices, and that following their death, they would receive the crown of salvation from a merciful God and live in eternal happiness forever, the words of Alma must be a rude awakening. How subtle the devil is as he makes statements he knows are a lie. It began in the Garden of Eden when he told Eve that if she partook of the fruit of the Tree of Good and Evil, she would not die. His statement was in opposition to the word of God who had previously told Adam and Eve that if they partook of the fruit, they would die. (see Genesis 2:17 and Genesis 3:3-4.)

Each of us, including Corianton, must determine to whom we will listen. Will we follow our carnal desires and believe the false teachings of the devil and his servants? Or will we heed the truths as taught by God's Holy servants? It is our choice, and in turn, we will surely reap the consequences of our choices.

Alma 41:14-15

**14 Therefore, my son, see that you are merciful unto your brethren; deal justly, judge righteously, and do good continually; and if ye do all these things, then shall ye receive your reward; yea, ye shall have mercy restored unto you again; ye shall have justice restored unto you again; ye shall have a righteous judgment restored unto you again; and ye shall have good rewarded unto you again.**

**15 For that which ye do send out shall return unto you again, and be restored; therefore, the word restoration more fully condemneth the sinner, and justifieth him not at all.**

Like the gardner who plants good seeds in his garden and then gives them tender care and attention will, after time, harvest a bountiful crop. If instead, he gives no care to his ground, he can expect, as a result of his neglect, only weeds and thorns. When we choose to do that which is good, making and keeping sacred covenants, in time, we will reap joy here and eternal happiness hereafter.

#### **IV. Alma 42**

Alma 42:1

**1 And now, my son, I perceive there is somewhat more which doth worry your mind, which ye cannot understand--which is concerning the justice of God in the punishment of the sinner; for ye do try to suppose that it is injustice that the sinner should be consigned to a state of misery.**

How entrenched Corianton is in Neorism, we do not know, however, he is confused. Nehorism teaches that regardless of how an individual lives his life, "in the end, all men should have eternal life" (Alma 1:4). "Eternal life" does not sound like "a state of misery."

Alma 42:2-3

**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 Eden, to till the ground, from whence they were taken--yea, he drew out the man, and he placed at the east end of the garden of Eden, cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the tree of life--**

**3 Now, we see that the man had become as God, 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 Lord God placed cherubim and the flaming sword, that he should not partake of the fruit--**

Among the many plants and trees in the Garden of Eden, there were two trees whose fruit would have a lasting effect upon their bodies. One was the Tree of Good and Evil and the other was the Tree of Life. If they were to partake of the fruit of the Tree of Good and Evil and then partake of the fruit of the Tree of Life, Adam and Eve would not have died, but instead would have lived forever in their fallen state.

Bryan Richards states,

"Had Adam partaken of the tree of life after the fall, he would have had instant immortality. On the surface, this sounds great! But he would have been immortal in a fallen state [with no opportunity for repentance]. He would have condemned himself to eternity in a telestial existence with its spontaneous thorns and thistles and food supply contingent upon the sweat of the brow (PGP, Moses 4:23-25). This is not according to the Lord's plan, and could not be allowed." ([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-42](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-42)).

Alma 42:5-6

**5 For behold, if Adam had put forth his hand immediately, and partaken of the tree of life, he would have lived forever, according to the word of God, having no space 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 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 lost forever, yea, they became fallen man.**

Adam and Eve, having partaken of the forbidden fruit, brought about their fallen condition. All men and woman as the progenitors of Adam and Eve, became subject to this condition.

Robert L. Millet states,

"Jehovah explained 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" (PGP, Moses 6:55, *Italics added*). 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 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 effect of the Fall; (not the original transgression, which God has forgiven) are transmitted by 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 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 come naturally, just as does death. (*Life in Christ*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990, [2<sup>nd</sup> Printing, 1990], 24-25).

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"Fall thou must, O mighty [Adam]...Fall? Yes, plunge down from thy immortal state of peace, perfection, and glory to a lower existence; leave the presence of thy God in the garden and enter the lone and dreary world; step forth from the garden to the wilderness...but with it all bear children..Yes, Adam, fall; fall for thine own good; fall for the good of all mankind [Without the fall, Adam and Eve could not have had children--Us]; fall that man may be; bring death into the world; do that which will cause an

atonement to be made, with all the infinite and eternal blessings which flow therefrom.

"And so Adam fell as fall he must. But he fell by breaking a lesser law--so that he too, having thereby transgressed, would become subject to sin and need a Redeemer and be privileged to work out his own salvation, even as would be the case with all those upon whom the effects of his fall would come." (*The Promised Messiah*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978, 221).

The transgressions of Adam and Eve which brought about the temporal or physical death and the spiritual death, can only be overcome by one who is willing to serve as the Savior and Redeemer of mankind. Man cannot save themselves.

Alma 42:7

**7 And now, ye see by this that our first parents were cut off both temporally [physically] and spiritually from the presence of the Lord; and thus we see that they became subjects to follow after their own will.**

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

Being cut off from the presence of the Lord is a "death...that had passed upon all men who have remained unrepentant and who have not received the gospel. Those who have suffered the *first spiritual death or departure, which is the shutting out from the presence of God*, have the privilege of being redeemed from this death through obedience to the principles of the gospel. Through baptism and confirmation they are *born again* [cleansed from sin] and thus come *back into spiritual life*, and through their continued obedience to the end, they shall be made partakers of the blessings of eternal life in the celestial kingdom of God." (*Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. 2*. Compiled by Bruce R. McConkie. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955, [20<sup>th</sup> Printing, 222-223).

Man is now subject to physical death and is outside the presence of God.

Alma 42:10, 12

**10 Therefore, as they [mankind] had become carnal, sensual and devilish, by nature, this probationary**

**state became a state for them to prepare; it became a preparatory state.**

**12 And now, there was no means to reclaim men from this fallen state, which man had brought upon himself because of his own disobedience.**

Jeffrey R. Holland states,

"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 (physical) and the consequences of hell (spiritually) is pronounced as a just reward. Furthermore, once guilty, none of us could personally do anything to overcome our 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 not 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 42:12)." (*Christ and the New Covenant*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997,

Fortunately, for mankind, God had foreseen as he formulated his plan the choices that Adam and Eve would make while in the garden and the consequences of their choice which also came upon their children. In order for mankind to be able to progress from their fallen state, it would require that a Savior and Redeemer be provided. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, during our pre-mortal existence, volunteered to be the Savior and Redeemer of mankind.

Alma 42:15

**15 And now, the plan of mercy could not be brought about except an atonement should be made: therefore**

**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.**

It was necessary that atonement be made. The atonement of mankind could only be accomplished by an individual who, while being subject to temptation, did not sin, but lived a perfect life. He had to be subject to death, but to hold the power over death. He had to be willing, without sin himself, to suffer the sins of all mankind so that by his suffering the demands of justice would be met. It was also necessary that he possess the power to resurrect not only himself, but all mankind. No one, other than the Son of God himself, met all the qualifications. It was only when the demands of justice were satisfied that mercy could be extended to mankind.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"Mercy is thus for the repentant, the faithful, the obedient, those who love and serve God. All others fail to escape the clutches of justice. 'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.' (Matt.5:7.) 'Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.' (Luke 6:36.) Salvation is the reward of those who conform to the plan of mercy. 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.' (Ps.23:6.)

"So infinite in scope is the plan of mercy that it applies to the living and the dead. Those who did not have the opportunity to subject themselves by repentance to the plan of mercy while in this life, but who would have done so had the opportunity been afforded them, will have their chance in the spirit world; they shall then be saved from the grasp of justice and, reaping the full blessings of mercy, shall go on to a celestial reward." (*Mormon Doctrine*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, [Second Edition], 486).

Alma 42:16-18

**16 Now, repentance could not come unto men except there was a punishment, which also was eternal as the life of the soul should be, affixed opposite to the plan of happiness, which was as eternal also as the life of the soul.**

**17 Now, how could a man repent except he should sin? How could he sin if there was no 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 conscience unto man.**

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"With a plainness unmatched elsewhere in scripture, Alma explains why there is no true repentance without punishment. His instruction is most relevant for our day, in which inconstant theology and cheap grace abound in the media ministries. It is generally forgotten that discipline and discipleship are branches of the same tree, and that both involve bringing a person to a condition of order and obedience. Wise parents quickly learn that discipline is a manifestation of love, and yet many of the same parents would suppose that heavenly parents would not do likewise. Alma's chain of thought is quite simple: if there are laws, there must be punishments for the violation of the laws; and thus, if God has given laws, there must in like manner be punishments affixed. Repentance is the process by which we make retribution for the violation of God's laws.

"By its very nature, the gospel blesses or curses. If there is a plan or path of happiness, of necessity there must be a path of unhappiness; if there is a course that brings joy and rejoicing, of necessity there must be a course that brings bitterness and sorrow. If there are commandments, the obedience of which brings blessings, it follows that to violate those commandments must bring punishments."

*(Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.3. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991, [3<sup>rd</sup> Printing, 1993],*

Alma 42:22-23

**22 But there is a law given, and a punishment affixed, and a repentance granted; which repentance, mercy claimeth; otherwise, justice claimeth the creature [individual] and executeth the 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 mercy claimeth the penitent, and mercy cometh because of the atonement; and the atonement bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead; and the resurrection of the**

**dead bringeth back men into the presence of God; and thus they are restored into his presence, to be judged according to their works, according to the law and justice.**

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"Justice has many meanings. One is balance. A popular symbol of justice is scales in balance. Thus, when the laws of man have been violated, justice usually requires that a punishment be imposed, a penalty that will restore the balance...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...by itself, justice is uncompromising. The justice of God holds each of us responsible for our own transgressions and automatically imposes the penalty." ("Sins, Crimes, and the Atonement." Talk to CES Religious Educators, February 7, 1992).

Gerald R. Lund states,

"Not only does Christ's redemption bring about resurrection for all without condition, it also brings all men to the judgment bar where they are brought back into the presence of God, then spiritual death, or the separation from God that came because of Adam's fall, is at that point overcome. What does a person have to do to have this happen? Absolutely nothing. It is unconditional. Thus the Savior automatically redeems us from both effects of the fall of Adam.

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 [is] our own, not Adam's transgression...requires redemption as surely as mankind need redemption from the consequences of Adam's fall. We'll term this the 'fall of men.

"Once a person reaches the age of accountability and sins through the use of his own agency, he becomes unclean. Unless something happens, when he is brought back into God's presence at the judgment, he will not be allowed to stay. Now, since we have no one else to blame for this except ourselves, our redemption becomes conditional upon our actions." (*Jesus Christ, Key To The Plan Of Salvation*.)

Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1991, 95).

Bruce C. Hafen states

"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 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." (**Justice and Mercy. Bruce C. Hafen.** in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Vol.2. Edited by Daniel H. Ludlow. New York: Macmillian Publishing Company, 1992, 776).

Alma 42:26-27

**26 And thus God bringeth about his great and eternal purposes, which were prepared 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, 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 restored unto him according to his deeds.**

Boyd K. Packer states,

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

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

"So he signed a contract. He would pay it off sometime along the way. He didn't worry too much about it, for the date seemed such a long time away. He had what he wanted now, and that was what seemed important. The creditor was always somewhere in the back of his mind, and he made token payments now and again, thinking somehow that the day of reckoning really would never come.

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

"Each of us lives on a kind of spiritual credit. One day the account will be closed, a settlement demanded. However casually we may view it now, when that day comes and the foreclosure is imminent, we will look around in restless agony for someone, anyone to help us." ("The Mediator," in *Ensign*, May 1977, 54-55).

Someday each of us will depart from this mortal life. We will also be required to give an accounting to Our Heavenly Father regarding the life we have lived and the choices we have made. If we had made the necessary preparation during our mortal lives to know Jesus Christ and learn which Church is true, and have then lived these principles to the best of our ability, our meeting will be a time of happiness and rejoicing. If, however, we took no time to know Jesus Christ or to learn of his gospel, and in fact, rejected the opportunity when it was presented to us, we will face our judgment with sadness and regret. The day will come for all of us when we will die. Jesus Christ is the someone who is prepared to help us. It is important that we come to know Him and accept his conditions. Now is

the time for us to prepare for our meeting with God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Alma 42:29-30

**29 And now, my son, I desire that ye should let these things 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 justice of God no more. Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point because of your sins, by denying the justice of God; but do let the justice of God, and his mercy, and his long-suffering have full sway in your heart; and let it bring you down to the dust of humility.**

There may have been multiple reasons for Corianton's breaking the law of chastity. These may include his being influenced by the doctrine of Nehorism that justified sin as "all men should have eternal life" (Alma 1:4). It may have been a lack of understanding of the essential principles of the gospel despite his having been taught these concepts in the home and exemplified by his father and brothers. It may have been as simple as yielding to the impulses of the natural man and then seeking to rationalize his actions.

Bryan Richards states,

"Alma wants Corianton to stop questioning the justice of God and start worrying about what he should be concerning with--his own sins. Here Alma demonstrates great insight into the mind of the sinner. With this gentle, understated rebuke, Alma recognizes that the mind of the sinner rarely focuses on sin. Rather, as with Corianton, the mind will search for conflict within his belief system. He will become critical of Church leaders, wrest [twist or distort] the scriptures, or as with Corianton, question the justice of God himself. The mind...at fault is quick to find fault. In this way, the mind protects itself from the remorse of conscience which inevitably follows from knowingly violating the laws of God."

[www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-42](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-42)).

Let us not procrastinate the day of our repentance. Let us take an accounting of our lives and correct those areas

where change is needed today. As we confess these sins to Our God, and if necessary to his servants, we will feel as if a burden has been lifted from our shoulders. A burden we had been carrying for so long, is now gone.

Alma 42:31

**31 And now, O my son, ye are called of God to preach the word unto this people. And now, my son, go thy way, declare the word with truth and soberness, that thou mayest 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.**

What was the cumulative effect upon Corianton of his father's instructions? We will learn later in the writings of Alma that his son will serve another mission. At this time, he will be included with his brothers, along with Ammon and his brothers, for having declared the word of God with diligence. (see Alma 49:50.) Sometimes sons and daughters, even those who commit sin, do listen to the words and example of their parents and follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

## **V. Conclusions**

We have concluded our two part discussion of Alma's interview and teachings to his son, Corianton. We have greatly benefited from their meeting as we have increased our understanding of the resurrection, the fall of Adam and Eve, the concepts of justice and mercy and our need for a Savior.

In Alma, Chapter 40, we learned that there will be no resurrection of the dead until after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. After we depart from this life, our spirits will enter the Spirit World or Paradise to await our resurrection. There those who did not have an opportunity to hear the gospel or even those who rejected its teachings, will have a opportunity to receive the teachings of salvation. Contrary to the belief of some, it does make a difference regarding how you live your life while on this earth. Following our judgment, we will be assigned to one of the three kingdoms of glory.

Alma, Chapter 41, taught us that our works or actions will be restored to us, good for good, evil for evil. If we have

lived lives of righteousness, we will be restored to happiness; if not, we will learn to our regret that "wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10). Our final judgment will be directly affected by our choices in mortality.

In Alma, Chapter 42, we learn that God is just. He foresaw the effects of the fall of Adam and Eve upon their children and provided a Savior and Redeemer to meet the demands of justice and to extend the blessing of mercy. Mercy for our own sins can only be extended when we accept Jesus Christ as Our Savior and Redeemer and follow the steps of repentance, baptism, and the receipt of the Holy Ghost. We must continue to keep our covenants and strive to become "born again" as we become like Jesus Christ. As we do so, we will find great happiness in our lives and eternal joy hereafter.

These principles will have a great effect upon our lives as we strive to live them daily.

Our next lesson [BM#31] addresses the conflicts that occurred when the Nephites became unrighteous. Only when they repented, were they able to achieve success in their battle against the forces of evil.