

## **D&C#19 The Plan of Salvation**

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### **I. Introduction**

Some years ago, I met a young lady who had joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. I asked her to share her conversion experience with me. As it was not written down, to the best of my knowledge, this is her experience:

She had been raised in a religious home and her parents were members of the Presbyterian Church. As she grew in years, she began to question some of the core beliefs of the Church. She had difficulty with the Church's teaching regarding God as a Spirit. She was also unsettled regarding the purpose and meaning of this life. She wondered what happened after we died. Was that the end, she questioned, or was there more?

She graduated from high school, attended college, but could not find her vocation. She decided to apply to be an Airline hostess and was hired by one of the major carriers. She was stationed out of New York. She obtained an apartment, with some roommates to share the rent, and began to enjoy the experience of living in a large city. While in New York, she began attending the Four Square Church. Norman Vincent Peale was the pastor. She enjoyed his teachings from the Bible and their application to everyday life.

One evening, upon returning from a flight, she was asked by her employer to look after two young girls for the evening until they could get a flight the next day. It was an unusual request. The girls were from South America, spoke excellent English, but were clearly in need of assistance, so she agreed. As she spoke with them, the subject of

religion came up. They talked, well into the night as their beliefs were so interesting to her. She asked them about their belief in God and then posed to them her three questions. Their answers to her questions, for the first time, made a lot of sense, and she felt something special about their beliefs. She inquired as to their church and was told they were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The headquarters of the Church was in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Later, while the union was on strike against the Airline, her parents purposed they take a trip across the United States. During this trip, they visited Salt Lake City. They visited Temple Square and saw the Salt Lake Temple. They took the tour and she learned more about the Church and its history. How it had begun in the state of New York, but as a result of religious persecution, the members had come west to the valley of the Salt Lake. At end of the tour, you could sign up if you were interested in learning more. Her parents were not interested, but she was. She wrote her name and address in New York. She returned to her apartment in New York, and waited for the reply.

Two LDS missionaries did contact her in New York. She took the missionary lessons and joined the Church. In 2002, she wrote the following to her sorority sisters as part of their newsletter published in January, 2003:

"Have you ever tried to answer these three questions:

1. Where did I come from?
2. What am I doing here?
3. Where am I going?

"I feel sure that before earth life we lived as spirit children with our Heavenly Father and Mother. We then were given the opportunity to come to earth to live and to gain a body of flesh and bones. Just as we send our children to school to gain knowledge and learn from their experiences, so does our Heavenly Father send his children to the school of life in order that through faith and hard work we can become more like Him. During our time in mortality we will ...[have] exhilarating experiences, tremendous challenges from which we can learn and grow, and we will gain knowledge. We can enjoy the material possessions that we accumulate during our stay here on earth, but when it is

time for graduation from this life, we will only take with us how we have lived (how we have treated our family, our loved ones, and those around us, and how we have perfected our talents to bless others, our experiences and our knowledge). Hopefully on the day of graduation (departure from this life) we are enough like our Heavenly Father that we can live with Him eternally.

"I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in January, 2001. I've undergone three major surgeries in the past two years, and am on my fourth chemo. I feel confident that I will be cancer free one of these days. I must tell you I'm ready to move on to another challenge.

"I look forward to hearing your news and am open to any comments you might have on my three questions." (**Lynn Pfersick Van Sweden (Mrs. Robert)**). *DePauw '64 Kappa Newsletter* Edited by Diane (Engel Johnson), Johnnie (Johnson Lewis), and Carolyn (Hartzler Stewart). Issued January, 2003).

She lost her battle against cancer, May 8, 2003. She was my wife for thirty-two and one-half years.

The three questions for which she sought an answer are the three questions we will consider as we proceed with our inquiry regarding the Plan of Salvation.

## **II. The Plan of Salvation is "One of Heaven's Best Gifts to Mankind"**

The Plan of Salvation has been referred to by a variety of names. These include: Plan of Salvation (B/M, Alma 24:124; 42:5; PGP, Moses 6:62); Plan of Happiness (B/M, Alma 42:8, 16); Plan of Redemption (B/M, Jacob 6:8; Alma 12:25-33); Plan of Restoration (B/M, Alma 41:2); and, Plan of Mercy (B/M, Alma 42:15, 31).

\*What do these words teach about Heavenly Father's plan?

The words used to describe the Father's plan designate the purpose of the plan as it applies to the salvation of His children.

\*How can the plan of salvation bring us happiness?

Alma described the Fathers Plan of salvation as "the great plan of happiness" (B/M, Alma 42:8). As we follow the direction of the plan, it will enable us to navigate the pitfalls and sidetracks that Satan and his servants place in our path in a way that will allow us to successfully avoid them. In this manner we will fulfill the purpose of our birth and one day, through the grace of His Son, Jesus Christ, be able return and live with Our Father in Heaven again. Our return will truly be a day of great joy and happiness to us.

Joseph Smith taught,

"The great plan of salvation is a theme which ought to occupy our strict attention, and be regarded as one of heaven's best gifts to mankind. No consideration whatsoever ought to deter us from showing ourselves approved in the sight of God according to His divine requirement."  
(*Teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976 [1977], 68).

The purpose of this lesson is to show how the principles of the gospel relate to each other as part of one great plan.

### **III. Premortal Life**

The plan of salvation can be divided into three parts: premortal life, mortal life, and life after death. For the sincere seeker of truth, each part serves to answer the following questions: (1) Where did I come from?; (2) Why am I here?; and, (3) Where am I going?

One of the significant blessings of the Restoration is the provision of increased knowledge regarding the answer to these three questions. The concept of current and on-going revelation is primary in our being able to access this information through the provision of increased scriptures and the enlightenment provided to modern-day prophets. This information is not available without these additional sources.

**Premortal Life:**

Through continued revelation and modern-day prophets, our knowledge regarding our life before we came to earth has been expanded. This knowledge helps us to better understand where we came from and our part in God's plan of salvation.

- a. We are sons and daughters of God, and lived in a premortal existence as His spirit children.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:24

**24 That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.**

Doctrine and Covenants 93:29

**29 Man was also in the beginning [as spirits] with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.**

\*How does the knowledge that you are a child of God influence you?

This knowledge blesses my life in that I know that I have the divine potential, as a result of heavenly parents, to become as they are. I did not just evolve from primal ancestors, as some believe, but came about as the result of divine purpose and planning.

- b. The plan presented was the Father's plan.

Joseph Smith states,

"God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest [of the spirits] could have a privilege to advance like himself...God [the Father] has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with himself, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits."  
(*Teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph

Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976 [1977], 354).

PGP, Abraham 3:21-22

**21 I dwell in the midst of them all;...I came down in the beginning in the midst of all the intelligences thou hast seen.**

**22 Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;**

- c. Before the earth was created, Heavenly Father called a council in heaven and presented the plan of salvation to all His spirit children.

PGP, Abraham 3:23

**23 And God saw those souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.**

\*What were some of the elements of the plan that Heavenly Father presented in the premortal world?

B/M, 2 Nephi 2:24-26 [Man is free to choose; Redeemer provided]

**24 But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things.**

**25 Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.**

**26 And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given.**

B/M, Alma 34:8-9 [As result of sin, Necessity of Atonement]

**8 And now, behold, I will 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 transgressions of his people, and that he shall atone for the sins of the world; for the Lord God hath spoken it.**

**9 For it is expedient that an atonement should be made; for according to the great 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 fallen and are lost, and must perish except it be through the atonement which it is expedient should be made.**

PGP, Abraham 3:24-25 [Earth to be created so man prove self]

**24 And there stood one among them that was like God, and he said unto those that were with him: We will go done, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;**

**25 And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;**

It is Latter-day Saint theology that Jesus Christ, acting under the direction of His Father, created "worlds without number" so that the spirit children of the Father would have the opportunity where they might experience earth life.

d. The earth was created for a divine purpose. It did not just suddenly exist through the action of chemical forces.

Doctrine and Covenants 104:14

**14 I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.**

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig J. Ostler state,

"The notion common to the theology of the historical Christian world is that the universe was brought into being out of nothing by the free act of God. The Lord testifies that he 'built the earth,' that is, it was organized of 'chaotic matter,' or element that is eternal." (*Revelations of the Restoration*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 760).

\*How did Jehovah, the Son of God, respond to the Plan of Salvation as presented by His Father?

PGP, Moses 4:2

**2 But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me--Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.**

Jehovah or the Premortal Jesus Christ, understood the need for a Savior in order to enact the plan of His Father. When the plan was presented, He volunteered himself to make the sacrifice and serve as the Redeemer of mankind. The Father was to receive the glory for His sacrifice.

Doctrine and Covenants 19:16-19

**16 For behold, I, God, [Jesus Christ] have suffered these things for all [mankind], that they might not suffer if they would repent;  
17 But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;  
18 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--  
19 Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparation unto the children of men.**

In these words, as revealed to Joseph Smith, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, shared the pain and suffering He experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross at Golgotha. He had come to earth specifically to die for the sins of mankind, thereby offering them the opportunity for repentance and forgiveness.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:40-42

40 And this is the gospel, the glad tidings, which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us—  
41 That he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness;  
42 That through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him;

Without the atoning sacrifice of the Savior, the plan of the Father would have been null and void. (see B/M, Alma 34:9.) The Savior thereby became the central figure in God's plan for our salvation. We come to the Father, through the atonement of the Son.

e. In the premortal council in heaven, Lucifer rebelled against the plan of salvation, seeking to destroy our agency and gain Heavenly Father's power.

PGP, Moses 4:1, 3

1 And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying: That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which from the beginning, and he came before me, saying--Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.

3 Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down;

Doctrine and Covenants 29:36

36 And it came to pass that Adam, being tempted of the devil--for behold, the devil was before Adam, for he rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine honor, which is my power; and also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their agency;

By Lucifer's rebellion against the Plan of His Father by seeking to destroy the agency of man, he introduced obedience by force and coercion, rather than by choice. In his rejection of the Father's Plan, he was also seeking his own aggrandizement among the spirit children of the Father. We must assume, those who rebelled and thus joined forces with him, were those who were afraid they could not meet the test of obedience and righteousness and were, therefore, looking for a easy way to progress without the necessary trials and adversity of mortality.

Doctrine and Covenants 29:37-38

**37 And they were thrust down, and thus came the devil and his angels;  
38 And, behold, there is a place prepared for them from the beginning, which place is hell.**

As a result of their rebellion, Satan and his followers were cast out of Father's presence. They lost the opportunity to gain a physical body and to benefit from the experiences of mortality.

Doctrine and Covenants 76:25-27

**25 And this we saw also, and bear record, that an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God, who rebelled against the Only Begotten Son whom the Father loved and who was in the bosom of the Father, was thrust down from the presence of God and the Son,  
26 And was called Perdition, for the heavens wept over him--he was Lucifer, a son of the morning.  
27 And we beheld, and lo, he is fallen! is fallen, even a son of the morning!**

Here we learn that Lucifer held a position of authority in the heavenly kingdom of God. He chose to exercise his free agency and rebelled against both the Father and the Son. God the Father was the author of the Plan and his Son had been chosen to be its Redeemer. Lucifer was known by the other spirits and many mourned his rebellion.

PGP, Moses 4:4

**4 And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice.**

Satan's rebellion, which began in the premortal world, continues on earth. He and his followers seek to thwart the implementation of the Father's Plan. His tools are lies and deception. He especially attacks those on earth who are wavering in their determination to follow the council of the Father.

PGP, Abraham 3:26

**26 And those who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.**

The first estate refers to our premortal existence. The second estate refers to our probationary life in mortality. Those who accept the Father's Plan in the pre-existence received additional glory which includes receiving a physical body. Satan, and those who rebelled with him, were denied the opportunity to receive a physical body and remain as spirits. Those who are obedient to God's commandments and seek to do His will, receive even greater glory which includes becoming a God themselves.

\*Why is it important to know about the existence of Satan and his followers?

It helps us to understand that evil came about through the choice of one in authority who exercised his free agency to rebel against the Father and His Plan for his spirit children. It is important to know the battle between righteousness and wickedness, begun in the pre-existence, is still going on today. As we understand the source of opposition on earth, we are reminded to be more diligent in following the direction of the Lord's prophets and servants on the earth so we are not deceived.

\*How did we respond to the plan of salvation?

Job 38:4-7

**4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.**

**5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?**

**6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;**

**7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?**

As spirits in the pre-existence, we walked by knowledge and also associated with God the Father, His Son, and the Holy Ghost. As we came to earth, as part of our mortal probation, a veil of forgetfulness was placed upon our minds, just as Job experienced. We, therefore, do not remember the events of the pre-existence. Therefore, we are required to walk by faith and also trust those who have been called of God to lead and guide us. To assist us, we have been given the blessing of personal prayer. We can ask God regarding the truthfulness of their teachings. Though the Holy Ghost, we will be given heavenly guidance and direction. If we follow the promptings of the Spirit, we will not be deceived.

f. Noble spirits were called and foreordained in the pre-existence to carry forth God's work on earth.

Doctrine and Covenants 138:55-56

**55 I observed that they were also among the noble and great ones who were chosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church of God.**

**56 Even before they were born, they, with many others, received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men.**

These words were written by Joseph F. Smith following a vision he received, among other things, of the operation of the Father's kingdom on earth. The "noble and great ones" refers to those in the pre-existence who, because of their increased obedience to the laws of eternal progression,

were able to increase in glory and understanding beyond others.

PGP, Abraham 3:22-23

**22 Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;**

**23 And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou was chosen before thou wast born.**

By vision, Father Abraham learned those who had exercised great obedience and faithfulness to the laws of eternal progression had been selected to be God's leaders and teachers upon the earth. Abraham learned that he had been one of the noble and great.

Joseph Smith taught,

"Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that Great Council."

*(Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, [1977], 365).*

\*In what ways might our knowledge of premortal life influence our daily decisions?

We know that we also were among those who had faith and chose the Father's Plan. If we had not kept our first estate, we would not be on earth with our physical body. This infers also that we were faithful and stood against Lucifer's deceptive techniques once before. With the Lord's help, we can do so again.

\*How can our knowledge of our premortal life help us when we face trials?

Joseph Smith taught,

"All beings who have bodies have power over those who have not. The devil had no power over us only as we permit him. The moment we revolt at anything which comes from God, the devil takes power." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, [1977], 181).

If we make sure that we follow the direction of our inspired leaders, we will be protected against the deceptions of Satan and his servants.

#### **IV. Mortal Life**

##### **Mortality:**

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"Because of the Fall of Adam and Eve, we are in a fallen state in mortality.

Doctrine and Covenants 29:40

**40 Wherefore, it came to pass that the devil tempted Adam, and he partook of the forbidden fruit and transgressed the commandment, wherein he became subject to the will of the devil, because he yielded unto temptation.**

"We are subject to physical death [meaning all will die] and also to spiritual death, or separation from the presence of God.

Doctrine and Covenants 29:41-42

**41 Wherefore, I, the Lord God, caused that he [Adam] should be cast out from the Garden of Eden, from my presence, because of his transgression, wherein he became spiritually dead, which is the first death, even that same death which is the last death, which is spiritual, which shall be pronounced upon the wicked when I shall say: Depart, ye cursed.**

**42 But, behold, I say unto you that I, the Lord God, gave unto Adam and unto his seed, that they should not**

[permanently] die as to the temporal death, until I, the Lord God, should send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption, through faith on the name of mine Only Begotten Son.

B/M, Alma 42:9, 14

9 Therefore, as the soul could never die, and the fall had brought upon all mankind a spiritual 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.

14 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.

"From latter-day revelation we learn that the Fall was a necessary step in our eternal progression." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 107).

Eve spoke of the blessings of the Fall:

PGP, Moses 5:11

11 And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed [children], and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life with God giveth unto all the obedient.

In summary: If Adam and Eve had NOT PARTAKEN of the forbidden fruit: (1) They would Not have had children; (2) Would not have been able to choose as they did not have a knowledge of good and evil; (3) They would not have known the joy of the Savior; and, (4) They would not have been able to gain eternal life through obedience to the ordinances of God.

The Purposes of Mortal Life include:

"a. To receive a physical body.

Joseph Smith taught,

"We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom."  
(*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, [1977], 181).

As we are subjected to the desires and urges of our physical body, we can demonstrate to God that we are in control of our body; it does not control us.

"b. To prove our faithfulness through obedience to God's commandments. This includes repenting of our sins and receiving the ordinances of salvation.

PGP, Abraham 3:25-26

**25 And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;**

**26 And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.**

As we demonstrate our obedience to God's commandments, we qualify for increased glory.

B/M, Alma 12:24

**24 And we see that death comes upon mankind, yea, the death which has been spoken of by Amulek, which is the temporal death; nevertheless there was a space granted unto man in which he might repent; therefore this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state which has been spoken of by us, which is after the resurrection of the dead.**

Our time in mortality between our birth and death is considered a probationary state. During this time, we have the opportunity, through our choices, to demonstrate our

desire to be obedient. As we face and overcome the challenges and adversity to which we are subjected, we demonstrate our faithfulness to God to be obedient

Doctrine and Covenants 29:42-43

**42 But, behold, I say unto you that I, the Lord God, gave unto Adam and unto his seed, that they should not die as to the temporal death, until I, the Lord God, should send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption, through faith on the name of mine Only Begotten Son.**

**43 And thus did I, the Lord God, appoint unto man the days of his probation--that by his natural death he might be raised in immortality unto eternal life, even as many as would believe;**

As we sin during our mortal life, we have been granted the opportunity to repent. Through our personal repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, continued obedience, and the gift of grace through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can receive forgiveness. This process enables us to once again qualify for life eternal.

Articles of Faith 1:3

**3 We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.**

Being saved is more than a simple declaration, it requires a lifetime of obedience and faithfulness to the commandments of God. Personal salvation comes through the grace of Jesus Christ, only when we have done all that we can do. It does not come through just faith or just works, but only through the application of both principles in our daily lives.

"c. To live in families and to seal children to their parents through temple ordinances.

PGP, Moses 2:28

**28 And I, God, blessed them, and said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea,**

**and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.**

Doctrine and Covenants 93:40

**40 But I have command you to bring up your children in light and truth.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 93 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, May 6, 1833." (Heading: Section 93. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 180).

Doctrine and Covenants 131:1-4

**1 In the celestial glory, there are three heavens or degrees;**  
**2 And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];**  
**3 And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.**  
**4 He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom, he cannot have an increase.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 131 states, "Instructions by Joseph Smith the Prophet, given at Ramus, Illinois, May 16 and 17, 1843. (Heading: Section 131. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 265).

There are three kingdoms of Glory: Celestial, Terrestrial, and Telestial. In the Celestial kingdom, there are three divisions. In order to be able to have eternal increase, it is necessary that a man be married to a woman in the Holy Temple. If he chooses not to be married in the Holy Temple, in person or later, by proxy, he cannot obtain the highest division in the Celestial kingdom. Thereby, his eternal glory is limited and he cannot have increase.

**48 Foreshadowing the great work to be done in the temples of the Lord in the dispensation of the fulness of times, for the redemption of the dead, and the sealing of the children to their parents, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse and utterly wasted at his coming.**

It is for this purpose that the Prophet Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple, on April 3, 1836. (see D&C#110.)

Without the restoration of the keys of sealing power, held by Elijah, the ordinances regarding the sealing of the dead would not have been authorized by God.

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issued "The Family: A Proclamation to the World." It was originally read by President Gordon B. Hinckley at the General Women's Conference, September 23, 1995. Herein they proclaimed:

"...marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children...The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally." ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," in *Ensign*, November 1995, 102).

\*How does your understanding of the purposes of mortality make a difference in your life?

The importance of marriage and family are an essential priority in my life. They provide an opportunity to further develop the qualities that will allow me to have a special relationship with my wife and children here on earth and with my Father in Heaven.

\*How does your understanding of these purposes influence the decisions you make?

The importance of marriage and family are top priorities in my life. I realize that work and effort are required in order to be successful, but I accept that responsibility. Knowing they are important to my Heavenly Father makes me even more desirous to do my very best.

"d. As part of mortal life, Satan is allowed to tempt us. Why?"

Doctrine and Covenants 29:39

**39 And it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet--**

There is no good choice if we are not influenced by the opposite. We need to have temptation so that we can learn to choose the good from the evil through our own experiences. When one sins and tastes the bitter fruits of disobedience, they are so grateful for the sweet fruits that follow personal repentance. The loss of the Spirit of the Holy Ghost brings with it great emotional pain and feelings of guilt to the individual that are heart-wrenching. Full and complete repentance restores once again the sweet spirit of the Holy Ghost and the peace that surpasses all understanding.

B/M, 2 Nephi 2:11-13

**11 For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, my firstborn in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility.**  
**12 Wherefore, it must needs have been created for a thing of naught; wherefore there would have been no purpose in the end of its creation. Wherefore, this thing must needs destroy the wisdom of God and his eternal purposes, and also the power, and the mercy, and the justice of God.**

13 And if ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say there is no sin. If ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness. And if there be no righteousness, there be no happiness. And if there be no righteousness nor happiness, there be no punishment nor misery. And if these things are not there is no God. And if there is no God we are not, neither the earth; for there could have been no creation of things, neither to act nor to be acted upon; wherefore, all things must have vanished away.

For example, only when there is choice, for example, between good and evil, or righteousness and punishment, can free agency exist. Without choice and free agency, you might as well say God does not exist.

(Items a-c, and d which was added. *Doctrine and Covenant and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 107).

\*Why is free agency an important part of the plan of salvation?

Doctrine and Covenants 58:27-28

27 Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;  
28 For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:78

78 That every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment.

B/M, 2 Nephi 2:25-27

25 Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.  
26 And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And

because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given. 27 Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.

We learn in these three scriptures that free agency is an eternal principle. It was instituted by God to allow His children to become agents to themselves. According to the law of agency, we are free to choose either good or evil. By the choices we make, we exemplify either our obedience to the will of God or the devil.

## **V. Life After Death**

There have been numerous books written seeking to answer the important question of life after death. Some have concluded that life is over once we are dead; there is nothing after this life. Others state that life does not end with mortality, but continues. For many, the question remains unknown, even unknowable.

Without additional revelation, the question, "Is there life after death?" would remain unknown. Fortunately, God has not left us without understanding regarding this area of our concern. These important truths have been revealed:

### Life After Death:

"a. When we die, our spirits enter the spirit world.

Joseph Smith taught,

"The righteous and the wicked all go to the same world of spirits until the resurrection. [This world is divided into two parts: Paradise and Spirit Prison]. The great misery of departed spirits in the world of spirits, where they go after death, is to know that they come short of the glory that others enjoy and that they might have enjoyed

themselves, and they are their own accusers." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, [1977], 310-311).

\*How will our works during mortality influence our life in the postmortal spirit world?

B/M, Alma 34:34

**34 Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.**

There is no "death bed repentance." Our disobedience to God's commandments, cannot suddenly be wiped away moments before our death. Real and lasting change can only be meaningful when it is begun prior to our departure from mortal life.

B/M, Alma 40:11-14

**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 be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life.**

**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 Now this is the state of the souls of the wicked, yea, in darkness, and a state of awful, fearful looking for fiery indignation of the wrath of God upon them; thus they remain in this state, as well as the righteous in paradise, until the time of their resurrection.**

Through further revelation, we have come to understand the judgment either for the righteous or the wicked does not come upon death, but at a later time. There is also a separation or gulf between those assigned to Paradise and those assigned to Spirit Prison.

"b. People who do not receive the gospel on earth will have the opportunity in the Spirit World.

Doctrine and Covenants 137:7-9

**7 Then came the voice of the Lord unto me, saying: All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; 8 Also all who shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom; 9 For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts.**

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 137 states, "A vision given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, in the temple at Kirtland, Ohio, January 21, 1836. The occasion was the administration of ordinances in preparation for the dedication of the temple." (Heading: Section 137. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 285).

Here we learn that had they not died, all those who would have accepted the gospel during mortality, would become heirs to the Celestial kingdom. We also learn that we will be judged according to our works as well as the desires of our heart. In this manner the mercy of the Lord is manifest.

29 And as I wondered, my eyes were opened, and my understanding quickened, and I perceived that the Lord went not in person among the wicked and the disobedient who has rejected the truth, to teach them;  
30 But behold, from among the righteous, he organized his [missionary] forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men; and thus was the gospel preached to the dead.  
31 And the chosen messengers went forth to declare the acceptable day of the Lord and proclaim liberty to the captives who were bound, even unto all who would repent of their sins and receive the gospel.  
32 Thus was the gospel preached to those who had died in their sins, without a knowledge of the truth, or in transgression, having rejected the prophets.  
33 These were taught faith in God, repentance from sin, vicarious baptism for the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.  
34 And all other principles of the gospel that were necessary for them to know in order to qualify themselves that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

We learn that Jesus Christ went to the Spirit World and organized the missionary work in the Spirit Prison. He did not go himself among those who had been disobedient in the flesh. They were taught by the missionaries the same first principles of the Gospel as are taught to those on earth. Baptism, being an earthly ordinance, is available vicariously by those who are living on the earth within Holy Temples.

\*What can we do to help them receive all the blessings of the plan of salvation?

We can do the genealogical work for our kindred dead thereby creating spiritual links with our ancestors who did not have the opportunity to do the work from themselves. We can also attend the temple and there vicariously do the necessary ordinances for them.

“c. Through the Fall of Adam and Eve, physical death

[separation of our body from its spirit] and spiritual death [separation from God] came into the world. As Adam and Eve's children, we too are subject to these two deaths.

\*How are we delivered from the physical death?

1 Corinthians 15:22

**22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.**

B/M, Alma 11:42

**42 Now, there is a death which is called a temporal death; and the death of Christ shall loose the bands of this temporal death, that all shall be raised from this temporal death.**

Doctrine and Covenants 88:14-16

**14 Now, verily I say unto you, that through the redemption which is made for you is brought to pass the resurrection from the dead.**

**15 And the spirit and the body are the soul of man.**

**16 And the resurrection from the dead is the redemption of the soul.**

Doctrine and Covenants 93:33

**33 For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy;**

The overcoming of the temporal death is a gift from God. It is brought to pass by the atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ. As a result of His suffering, death, and resurrection, Jesus Christ, upon being resurrected by the Father, also received the power to be able to resurrect all mankind. Our spirit will again be united with our physical bodies, never again to be separated. All mankind, after their mortal death, will live again initially as spirits and later as resurrected beings.

\*How can we be delivered from spiritual death?

B/M, Alma 42:11-13, 15

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 miserable, being cut off from the presence of the Lord.

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;

13 Therefore, according to justice, the plan of 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 cease to be God.

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.

Articles of Faith, 1:3

3 We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

As Adam and Eve partook of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil, their bodies underwent a physical change and they became mortal. They were also subject to physical death. In this manner, physical death became the inheritance of all their children.

They had also been commanded by God the Father not to partake of the forbidden fruit. By doing so, they broke a commandment of God. This action led them to be cast out of the Garden of Eden into the mortal world. As a result of their transgression, they were also subjected to the conditions of a fallen world, including being vulnerable to Satan's temptations, including evil thought and actions. No

longer did they walk and talk with God, but were separated from His presence as the result of their disobedience.

As each of us are born into a mortal world, we become subject to sin and temptation. As we reach the age of accountability, as a consequence of our own sins, we became separated from God. We then suffer spiritual death.

Unable to atone for our own sins, which separated us from God, we are in need of a Mediator. One who had no sin Himself, but is willing to suffer the consequences of our sins. Only in this manner can the gap separating us from Our Father be bridged. Jesus Christ qualified to reconcile us with God, but His willingness to bridge the gap was conditional upon our accepting Him as our Mediator. He was willing to suffer for our sins in order to satisfy the requirement of the law of justice that demanded payment in full for our sins. He was also willing to extend mercy to us, based upon our willingness to accept His conditions of repentance from our sins.

Boyd K. Packer taught,

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

"There is a Redeemer, a Mediator, who stands both willing and able to appease the demands of justice and extend mercy to those who are penitent, for 'He offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered' (B/M, 2 Nephi 2:7.)

"Already He has accomplished the redemption of all mankind from mortal death [or physical death]; resurrection is extended to all without condition.

"He also makes possible redemption from the second death, which is the spiritual death, which is separation from the presence of our Heavenly Father. This redemption can come only to those who are clean, for no unclean thing can dwell in the presence of God.

"If justice decrees that we are not eligible because of our transgression, mercy provides a probation, a penitence, a preparation to enter in." ("The Mediator," in *Ensign*, May 1977, 56).

(a-c added for clarity. *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 108).

In conclusion, we accept His gospel, and enter into a covenant with Him to obey his commandments, and repent from our sins. In this manner, His atonement allowed us, based upon our obedience, to one day come back into the presence of the Father and His Son. Through the atonement of Jesus Christ, the physical death was overcome unconditionally. Through our acceptance of Him as Our Mediator and our willingness to repent and keep his commandments, the spiritual death is also overcome.

Doctrine and Covenant and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"...after we are resurrected, we will return to the presence of God to be judged according to our works...We will [then] inherit a place in the celestial kingdom, the terrestrial kingdom, or the telestial kingdom, based on the manner in which we have 'received the testimony of Jesus' (D&C 76:51." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 108).

Doctrine and Covenants 76:50-51, 79-82

**50 And again we bear record--for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ concerning them who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just--**

**51 They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given--**

79 There are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.

80 And now this is the end of the vision which we saw of the terrestrial, that the Lord commanded us to white while we were yet in the Spirit.

81 And again, we saw the glory of the telestial, which glory is that of the lesser, even as the glory of the stars differs from that of the glory of the moon in the firmament.

82 These are they who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus.

## VI. Conclusions

In this lesson, we have addressed three important questions that many have considered: (1) Where did I come from?; (2) What am I doing here? and, (3) Where am I going? The answer to each of these questions is found with God's Plan of Salvation or Plan of Happiness.

**Premortal Life:** We learn through revealed scripture and modern-day revelation that we lived as Spirit children of Heavenly parents in the pre-existence. While there, we had the opportunity to grow and progress. We knew and were taught by God and His servants. The time came, as the result of our individual progression, to come to earth. Our Heavenly Father presented His Plan to us. An important part of the plan was the need for a Savior and Redeemer. Two offered to fulfill this role. The first was Jesus Christ, our older brother, and the other was Lucifer. Lucifer rose in rebellion against God the Father and sought to bring about our redemption through force, rather than choice. He also wanted all the glory, even the glory of the Father. Lucifer's proposal was rejected while Christ's was accepted. It differed from Lucifer's in that it honored our agency, and gave the glory to the Father.

One-third of all the Father's children joined Lucifer's rebellion and were cast out from heaven. They forfeited any opportunity for further glory, and lost the opportunity to receive a physical body.

**Mortality:** Adam and Eve were the first to come to earth and took residence in the Garden of Eden. There was a tree with fruit known as the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam

and Eve had been commanded not to partake of this fruit, for if they did they would then die. Lucifer enticed Eve by telling her that she would not die, but would become like the Gods. She submitted to Satan's temptations and then she got Adam to also partake of the fruit. As a result of their actions, they were ejected from the garden paradise, and became mortal. The blessing was that they could now have children. Through their acceptance of the Savior and his redemption, they were given the opportunity to repent and again come back into the Father's presence.

**Life After Death:** This life does not end with our mortal death. As a result of our Father's Plan, and our obedience to His Gospel as administered by His Son, Jesus Christ, we may continue our progression after this life. Those who have not had the opportunity to hear the gospel on earth, may do so after this life. The sacred ordinances, including baptism, confirmation, and sealing, can be done vicariously by those on earth in the Holy Temple.

Our choices and actions upon this earth are essential in determining both our further progression and glory. The two deaths which Adam and Eve experienced, namely the physical and spiritual, can be overcome. The physical death is a free gift to all as a result of the Savior's atonement. However, spiritual death requires our acceptance of Jesus Christ, His Gospel and our repentance, in order to overcome.

We are fortunate to have been given the knowledge of the Plan of Salvation so that we may gain the blessings, while also avoiding the pitfalls and temptations, of this life. What joy it is that our Father has provided a plan whereby we may be able to return to live with Him and our loved ones forever.

Our next lesson [D&C#20] focuses upon the three kingdoms of glory. We will be better able to understand the requirements for each kingdom and how we may qualify to inherit the highest glory in the celestial kingdom.