

D&C#28 "O God, Where Art Thou?"

Outline:

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I. Introduction

Before we address the revelations that Joseph Smith received during his confinement in the Liberty Jail, it is important that we review the events that preceded his incarceration. We will address the history of the Saints in Missouri, including Clay County; the creation of two counties, Caldwell and Daviess; the cities of Far West and Adam-ondi-Ahman, and the confrontation at Gallatin. We will then address three major events that preceded the incarceration of the leaders of the Church, including Joseph Smith. These are: (1) The Battle at Crooked River; (2) Governor Boggs Extermination Order; and, (3) Haun's Mill Massacre.

The following Time line may be helpful in understanding the sequence of events.

Chart 1: Time line in Missouri [1836-1839]

June 1836	Citizens of Clay County asked the Saints to leave the county.
September 1836	The Saints began moving to Far West and other locations that became Caldwell and Daviess Counties, Missouri.
March 1838	Joseph Smith and his family arrived in Far West, Missouri, after fleeing from the mobs in Kirtland, Ohio.
October 1838	The Battle of Crooked River occurred. Governor Boggs of Missouri issued his extermination order.

October 1838- April 1839	Joseph Smith and other Church leaders were kept as prisoners in Missouri.
April 1839	The Saints fled from Missouri to Illinois.
?	Temple to be built in Independence, Missouri.

Reference: *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 155.

Clay County; the creation of two counties, Caldwell and Daviess; the cities of Far West and Adam-ondi-Ahman, and the confrontation at Gallin:

It was believed that the Saints stay in Clay County, Missouri, just across the Missouri River from Jackson County, was going to be temporary.

Max H. Parkin states,

"The residents of Clay County generally received the Mormons with friendship while the Saints lived there, largely in an impoverished condition...Before returning to Ohio, [Joseph Smith] formed a stake organization among the exiles, appointing David Whitmer as president, with William W. Phelps and John Whitmer as counselors.

"By June 1836, the gathering of the Saints to Clay County and some Latter-day Saint religious beliefs alarmed the residents, who feared the growing Mormon dominance...reminded the Saints of their original intention of living in the county only temporarily...Mobs forcefully stopped Mormon immigration at the county's eastern border and brutally attacked one of their settlements near the residence of Isaac Morley, southwest of Fishing River. Foreseeing further bloodshed and desiring to live 'in a covenant of peace' with the citizens, the Mormons were willing to move from the county (*History of the Saints*, Vol. 2:243)." (*Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saints History*. Edited by Arnold K. Garr, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard O. Cowen. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2000, 217-218).

Our Heritage states,

"Through the efforts of their friend in the state legislature, Alexander W. Doniphan, two new counties,

named Caldwell and Daviess, were created out of Ray County in December 1836. The Saints were allowed to establish their own community of Far West, about 60 miles north of Clay County, as the county seat of Caldwell.

"After a difficult journey from Kirtland, Ohio, the Prophet Joseph Smith arrived in Far West, Missouri, in March, 1838, and established the Church headquarter there. [Many of the faithful Saints from Kirtland, Ohio, followed the Prophet to Missouri, and took residence in Caldwell and Daviess counties.]

In May [1838], Joseph went north into Daviess County and, while visiting the Grand River, prophetically identified the area as the Valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, the 'place where Adam shall come to visit his people' (D&C 116:1). Adam-ondi-Ahman became the primary community of the Saints in Daviess County. The cornerstone for a temple was dedicated at Far West on 4 July 1838, and the Saints began to feel that they had at last found a respite from their enemies. [Unfortunately, peace was short-lived.]

"On 6 August 1838, a mob of 100 people at the election polls in Gallatin, Daviess County, would not let the Saints cast their ballots. This led to a brawl in which several people were injured. The growing disorder fostered by the mob in Caldwell and Daviess Counties caused Governor Lilburn W. Boggs to bring in the state militia to keep the peace." (*Our Heritage*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 45-46).

We will now address the three major events that preceded the incarceration of the leaders of the Church, including Joseph Smith. These were: (1) The Battle of Crooked River; (2) Governor Boggs Extermination Order, and (3) Haun's Mill Massacre.

(1) The Battle of Crooked River

Our Heritage states,

"Captain Samuel W. Bogart, one of the militia officers, was in reality closely allied with the mob. He decided to begin a conflict by kidnapping three Latter-day Saints and holding them in his camp on the Crooked River in northwestern Ray County. A company of Latter-day Saint

militia was dispatched to rescue these men, and a fierce battle was waged on 25 October 1838. [Gideon Carter was killed and eleven others were wounded, including Apostle David W. Patton, who died soon afterward--see Andrew Jenson. *Church Chronology*, [1914], 15]." (*Our Heritage. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 1996, 46).

(2) Governor Boggs Extermination Order:

Our Heritage states,

"[At the Battle of Crooked River], Captain Samuel Bogart's company had acted more like a mob than a like state militia. Nevertheless, the death of a militiaman in the Battle of Crooked River, along with other reports, were employed by Governor Lilburn W. Boggs in formulating his infamous 'extermination order.' That decree, dated 27 October 1838, stated in part, 'The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary, for the public peace--their outrages are beyond all description. A militia officer was appointed to carry out the governor's order." (*Our Heritage. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 1996, 47).

(3) Haun's Mill Massacre

Alma R. Blair states,

"Jacob Haun's mill was one of several scattered along Shoal Creek. For about a year it had been the home of fifteen to twenty families of the Saints, and other Church members in the area used it for grinding their grain. It had also become a shipping place for those migrating to Caldwell County from Kirtland. Although the Saints had settled in Livingstone County or Carroll County to the east, and although the mill was inside Caldwell County, it was close to the borders and threatened to become a center for the Mormon population that might spill over into gentile territory." ("The Haun's Mill Massacre," in *BYU Studies* 13, no. 1 (1972)).

Leland Homer Gentry states,

"...prior to the Battle of Crooked River, Joseph Smith had advised all the Saints in smaller communities to gather to the larger population center. Apparently Jacob Haun was unwilling to abandon his property as advised... Haun went to Far West to consult with the Mormon Prophet about the matter.

"...the Prophet said to him: 'Move in, by all means, if you wish to save your lives. Haun [sis] replied that if the settlers left their homes, all of their property would be lost and the Gentiles would burn their houses and other buildings. The Prophet said: 'You had better lose your property than your lives; one can be replaced, the other cannot be restored; but there is no need of you losing either if you will only do as you are commanded.'

"Jacob Haun returned to the mill and reported his conversation with the Mormon Prophet. He said that Joseph's counsel was for the residents at the mill to remain where they were and to defend their homes if they thought they could; if they thought they could not, they were to come to Far West." ("The Haun's Mill Massacre," in *A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri from 1836 to 1839. A Dissertation Presented to the Department of Graduate Studies in Religious Instruction at Brigham Young University*, 2000, 165-166).

Our Heritage states,

"On 30 October 1838, three days after the extermination had been issued, some 200 men [under the direction of Colonel Thomas Jennings] mounted a surprise attack against the small community of Saints at Haun's Mill on Shoal Creek, Caldwell County. The assailants, in an act of treachery, called for those men who wished to save themselves to run into the blacksmith shop. They then took up positions around the building and fired into it until they thought all inside were dead. Others were shot as they tried to make their escape. In all, 17 men and boys were killed and 15 wounded, [including children]." (*Our Heritage*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996, 47).

Joseph Young recording of Amanda Smith's experience,

"[Amanda Smith], As I returned [to the dreadful scene], I found the sister in a pool of blood where she had fainted, but she was only shot through the hand. Farther on was lying dead Brother McBride, and aged white-haired revolutionary soldier. His murderer had literally cut him to pieces with an old corn cutter. His hands had been split down when he raised them in supplication for mercy. Then the monster cleft open his head with the same weapon,... [122]

"The crawling of my boys under the bellows of the blacksmith's shop where the tragedy occurred is an incident familiar to all our people. [One son], Alma's hip was shot away while thus hiding. [Her other son], Sardius was discovered after the massacre by the monsters who came in to despoil the bodies. The eldest, Willard, was not discovered. In cold blood, one Glaze, of Carroll county, presented a rifle near the head of Sardius and literally blew off the upper part of it, leaving the skull empty and dry while the brains and the hair of the murdered boy were scattered around and on the walls."

"At this one of the men, more merciful than the rest, observed: 'It was a d__d shame to kill those little boys.' 'D__d the difference!' retorted the other, 'nits make lice!'

"My son who escaped, also says the mobocrat William Mann took from my husband's feet, before he was dead, a pair of new boots. From his hiding place, the boy saw the ruffian drag his father across the shop in the act of pulling off his boot. 'Oh! you hurt me!' groaned my husband. But the murderer dragged him back again, pulling off the other boot, 'and there,' says the boy, 'my father fell over dead'" [127]. (Edward W. Tullidge. *Women of Mormondom*. New York, 1877, [Lithographic Reprint, 1957], 122, 127).

Leland Homer Gentry concludes,

"On the morning of October 31, the Saints at Haun's Mill were confronted with the problem with what to do with the dead. The summer sun was rapidly decaying the corpses...Moreover, the imminent return of their assailants was expected by the Saints.

"A little northeast of the mill was an old well, about twelve feet deep, which was no longer in use. A rapid

consultation brought agreement that this site offered the most suitable burial plot available. With the women doing most of the work, the bodies of the slain were dragged to the side of the open pit and dropped one by one over the edge. The bodies, seventeen in all, were buried in the clothes they were wearing at the time they were killed."

"In spite of various appeals, none of the non-Mormons was ever brought to trial for their participation in this infamous affair. It was even rumored that the Governor completely sanctioned and expressed satisfaction for what had been done. The fruits of his Order, it seems, were apparent almost from the time it was issued. Many appear to have felt that the Mormons simply got what they had coming to them.

"What can be said is that the tragedy was to have reverberations in Mormondom for years to come." ("The Haun's Mill Massacre," in *A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri from 1836 to 1839. A Dissertation Presented to the Department of Graduate Studies in Religious Instruction at Brigham Young University*, 2000, 175-176).

Having addressed three incidents that preceded the incarceration of the leaders of the Church, including Joseph Smith, we now record the events that led to their arrest.

Andrew Jenson records,

"[October] 30. 1838]--[the same day Haun's Mill was attacked], a mob-militia, about two thousand strong, under the command of Samuel D. Lucas, arrived near Far West, and the citizens prepared for their own defense.

"[October] Wed. 31--Joseph Smith, jun., Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, Lyman Wight and Geo. W. Robinson was betrayed by Col. George M. Hinkle and made prisoners in the camp of the mob-militia.

"November. Thurs 1--Hyrum Smith and Amasa M. Lyman were brought as prisoners into camp. A court martial was held, and the prisoners were sentenced to be shot the following morning; they were, however, saved through the interference of General [Alexander W.] Doniphan.

"On the demand of General Samuel D. Lucas the citizens of Far West were forced to give up their arms, after which the mob-militia pillaged the town, ravished the women, and committed other acts of barbarity.

"[November]. Fri. 2—Joseph Smith, jun., and fellow prisoners were taken to Far West under a strong guard and permitted to see their families, [and then] they...were rudely torn [from them] and started [for Independence, Jackson County] under a strong guard, commanded by General Samuel D. Lucas and Robert Wilson,...where they arrived on the 4th.

"[November] Fri. 9—[From Independence they were transferred to] Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, where they were put in chains and much abused by their guards. On one occasion the Prophet Joseph Smith rebuked the wicked guard with the power of the God, and stopped the foul conversation with which the prisoners were being tantalized.

"[November] Tues. 13—A mock trial which lasted sixteen days, was commenced at Richmond, and nearly sixty of the brethren were brought before Judge Austin A. King, charged with treason, murder, burglary, arson, robbery and larceny.

"[November] Sat. 24—Twenty-three of the Far West prisoners were discharged at Richmond, Missouri, as nothing could be found against them.

"[November] Wed. 28—The remaining prisoners in Richmond were released, or admitted to bail, except Joseph Smith, jun., Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin, Hyrum Smith, Alex McRae, and Sidney Rigdon, who were sent to jail in Liberty, Clay Co., to stand their trial for treason and murder, of which they were falsely accused; and Parley P. Pratt, Morris Phelps, Luman Gibbs, Darwin Chase and Norman Shearer were confined in the Richmond jail to stand trial on a similar charge." (*Church Chronology*. Compiled by Andrew Jenson. Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1898, [Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged, with Two Supplements and an Elaborate Index, 1914], 15-16).

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

"Conditions in Liberty Jail were harsh. The prisoners were kept in the lower level, which was like a dungeon--dark, cold, and unsanitary...[where they were kept from November 1838-April 1839]. The Prophet and his companions had only a little straw on the stone floor for their beds, with meager blankets for cover. The ceiling was so low that some of the brethren, including Joseph and Hyrum, could not stand upright. They were also under constant threat of death.

"While the Prophet was imprisoned, about 8,000 Saints in Missouri were forced out of their homes as a result of the governor's extermination order. Many of them were robbed, beaten, and killed by the mobs as they fled to the state of Illinois. The Prophet heard reports of the Saint's suffering and pleaded with the Lord for help. In response, the Lord gave some powerful revelations. The Prophet included them in a letter to Church leaders in Quincy, Illinois, who were directing the Saints' exodus from Missouri. Portions of these revelations are now sections 121, 122, and 123 of the Doctrine and Covenants." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 158).

II. Joseph Smith's Prayer in the Liberty Jail and the Lord's Response

Doctrine and Covenants 121:1-6

- 1 O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?
- 2 How long shall thy hand be stayed and thine eye, yea thy pure eye, behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants, and thine ear be penetrated with their cries?
- 3 Yea, O Lord, how long shall they suffer these wrongs and unlawful oppressions, before thine heart shall be softened toward them, and thy bowels be moved with compassion toward them?
- 4 O Lord God Almighty, maker of heaven, earth, and seas, and of all things that in them are, and who controllest and subjectest the devil, and the dark and benighted dominion of Sheol--stretch forth thy hand; let thine eye pierce; let thy pavillion be taken up; let thy hiding place no longer be covered; let thine

ear be inclined; let thine heart be softened, and thy bowels moved with compassion toward us.

5 Let thine anger be kindled against our enemies; and, in the fury of thine heart, with thy sword avenge us of our wrongs.

6 Remember thy suffering saints, O our God; and thy servants will rejoice in thy name forever.

Joseph Smith, with other Church leaders, was incarcerated in the jail in Liberty, Missouri. While he was being held there, he received reports regarding the plight of the saints in Missouri and the persecutions they were experiencing. In these verses, he appealed to the Lord for intervention on their behalf. Note that his concern was not for himself and his confinement. His overriding concern was for the Saints in Missouri.

The Lord did respond to Joseph's plea on behalf of the Saints. His reply is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 121:7-33, and Section 122. We will now address several of these verses and their application to our lives today.

Doctrine and Covenants 121:7-10

7 My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but for a small moment;

8 And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes.

9 Thy friends do stand by thee, and they shall hail thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands.

10 Thou art not yet as Job; thy friends do not contend against thee, neither charge thee with transgression, as they did Job.

*What did the Lord teach Joseph in these verses?

A common lot for many of us is when adversity and affliction come in our lives, we immediately become discouraged. We, at times, even feel our adverse circumstances will last for an extended period of time. The first clarification, after God confirms He has heard Joseph's prayer and has come to bring him peace, is the Lord's confirmation to Joseph that his adversity will only last for only "a short moment" (D&C 121:7). The second insight we gain is adversity and affliction have an important

purpose in our lives. If we allow them, they may serve to strengthen us and make us stronger. Only as we are tried and tested, will be able to gain the mental strength which will then enable us to rise above our afflictions and become stronger.

Henry B. Eyring states regarding his father who was battling cancer,

"When the pain became intense, we found him in the morning on his knees by the bed. He had been too weak to get back into bed. He told us he had been praying to ask his Heavenly Father why he had to suffer so much when he had always tried to be good. He said a kindly answer came: 'God needs brave sons.'

"And so he soldiered on to the end, trusting that God loved him, listened to him, and would lift him up. He was blessed to have known early [in his life] and to never forget that a loving God is as close as a prayer." ("Families and Prayer," in *Ensign* or *Liahona*, September 2015, 4).

The Lord then reminded Joseph that Job was also called upon to experience trials and adversity during his life. While in the depths of sorrow and pain, his friends turned against him and stated that the cause of Job's affliction and suffering was the result of his transgressions. Joseph, in contrast, had the support of members of the Church who never suggested his imprisonment was the result of his unrighteousness.

*What can we learn about the Lord from his reply?

The primary focus of the Lord is to strengthen us and to help us grow from our experiences in mortal life. He is always here to help and strengthen us during our journey. As we seek his counsel and direction, He will bless us with additional insight and understanding. If we are wise, we will immediately give it application in our lives.

B.H. Roberts states,

"[These revelations] made Liberty jail, for a time, a center of instruction. The eyes of the saints were turned to it as the place whence would come encouragement, counsel--the word of the Lord. It was more temple than

prison, so long as the Prophet was there. It was a place of meditation and prayer...Joseph Smith sought God in this rude prison, and found him." (B.H. Roberts. *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, Vol. 1. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1957, [Reprinted 1977], 526).

III. The Savior's Perfect Understanding of Our Sufferings and Adversity

Doctrine and Covenants 122:5-8

5 If thou art called to pass through tribulation; if thou art in perils among false brethren; if thou art in perils among robbers; if thou art in perils by land or by sea;

6 If thou art accused with all manner of false accusations; if thine enemies fall upon thee; if they tear thee from the society of thy father and mother and brethren and sisters; and if with a drawn sword thine enemies tear thee from the bosom of thy wife, and of thine offspring, and thine elder son, although but six years of age, shall cling to thy garments, and shall say, My father, my father, why can't you stay with us? O, my father, what are the men going to do with you? and if then he shall be thrust from thee by the sword, and thou be dragged to prison, and thine enemies prowl around thee like wolves for the blood of the lamb;

7 And if thou shouldest be cast in the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if, the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

8 The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?

The majority of events which the Savior references had already occurred in the short life of Joseph Smith. He had been accused of being "a fallen prophet" by those who been his closest followers. While in Richmond, his wife and family had come to see him, while he was confined in a

wagon, prior to his departure to Liberty, and they had been torn from his side. He had even now been cast into a pit which had to be descended by latter, had little straw for their bed on a stone floor, with meager bedding. There is ample evidence to conclude that during their imprisonment, the jailers threats were clearly designed to make him fear for his life. He, and others, were even now, being held in the Liberty jail under the unproven accusations of treason and murder. He had also, as early as when he had gone to initially view the plates, been exposed to the threats of Satan and his servants. It was, however, important for Joseph to understand all he had experienced, was now experiencing, and would yet experience, would bless his life for good. This is not, however, to suggest that Joseph, or any mortal, would ever experience the pain and torture and rejection the Savior had experienced during his mortal life. For we know that He descended below "all things" that He may have a perfect understanding of all our trials. No one could justly say to Him, "You don't know what I am experiencing," for in a way not understood, He did experience all any of us would ever experience.

B/M, Alma 7:11-12

11 And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

12 And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.

Neil A. Maxwell states,

"As part of His infinite atonement, Jesus...has borne the sins, griefs, sorrows, and, declared Jacob, the pain of every man, woman, and child (see B/M, 2 Nephi 9:21). Having been perfected in His empathy, Jesus thus knows how to succor us...Nothing is beyond His redeeming reach or His encircling empathy. Therefore, we should not complain about our own life's not been a rose garden when we remember who

wore the crown of thorns!" ("Overcome...Even As I Overcame," in *Ensign*, 1987, 72).

*Do we experience any trials in which we cannot be comforted by the Savior?

New Testament, Hebrews 4:15

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Despite the extent of the trials and adversity that Jesus Christ experienced, He, unlike each of us, did not falter or commit sin. He, therefore, can strengthen and support us, because He overcame all temptations which any will ever experience. .

*What can we do to more fully partake of the comfort and strength that Jesus offers through His Atonement?

New Testament, Hebrews 4:16

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

For many, the difference between mercy and grace is difficult to distinguish. A Stake President once offered this clarification:

He quoted 2 Nephi 2:8.

B/M, 2 Nephi 2:8

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

He then stated, "Mercy is withholding that which we deserve because of our sins (including punishment, banishment from God, temporal and eternal consequences).

"Grace is when the Lord extends to us that which we don't deserve (including forgiveness, the gifts of the Spirit, revelation, salvation, and eternal life).

"It is through the merits of Christ and His atonement that mercy and grace can be extended to us." (Personal communication on file).

Mercy and grace are extended to us as a result of the Savior's atonement as we strive to repent from our sins and do our best, that someday we may come unto Christ and be perfected in Him.

IV. Purpose of Adversity

As we increase our understanding of the purpose which adversity serves in our lives, we will be better able to be refined by it, rather than to view it as a negative circumstance in our lives.

Joseph Smith states,

"[Afflictions] have been my common lot all the days of my life...and I feel, like Paul, to glory in tribulation" (D&C 127:2).

Purposes of Adversity:

"a. To try and prove us to see whether we will abide in His covenant.

Doctrine and Covenants 98:12, 14-15

12 For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith.

14 Therefore, be not afraid of your enemies, for I have decreed in my heart, said the Lord, that I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant, even unto death, that you may be found worthy.

15 For if ye will not abide in my covenant ye are not worthy of me.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:4

4 Therefore, they must needs be chastened and tried, even as Abraham, who was commanded to offer up his only son.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:31

31 My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them, even the glory of Zion; and he that will not bear chastisement is not worthy of my kingdom.

*Why does the Lord want His people to be "tried in all things?

Through challenges and adversity we experience faith and trust in the Lord, and we then become more steadfast and immovable in our testimonies. We come to know the Lord through our extremities. Our determination to serve Him, despite the obstacles we experience, serves to strengthen our discipleship.

"b. Some adversity is a result of our transgressions.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:1-2

1 Verily I say unto you, concerning your brethren who have been afflicted, and persecuted, and cast out from the land of their inheritance--

2 I, the Lord, have suffered the affliction to come upon them, wherewith they have been afflicted, in consequence of their transgressions;

When we are disobedient to the commandments of the Lord, we in turn, experience the direct consequences of our choices. These may be minor or serious. While we are free to choose to obey or not to obey the Lord, we are not free from the consequences of our choices. They will follow as surely as night follows day.

"c. The Lord allows adversity to give us experience and help us grow.

7 And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

(a-c *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 160).

In order for us to become the valiant and obedient servants God needs in His kingdom, He individually designs lives' challenges and adversity to provide training and discipline. This gives us the customized experiences we need in order to reach our true potential. Only in this manner, are we able to develop and thereby become more like Him.

Some may have concluded that all adversity is the result of transgression. While it is true that some adversity does have its source in transgression, this is not the only source of adversity.

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

"[The sources of adversity are multiple.] Some adversity comes because even for the righteous 'there is an opposition in all things' (B/M, 2 Nephi 2:11). Some adversity comes as a natural consequence of the frailty and corruptibility of the mortal body. Some comes because of accidents, because of our own choices that aren't necessarily transgressions, and because of other people's choices--things that God can protect us from but sometimes does not because 'the basic gospel law is free agency and eternal development' (Spencer W. Kimball. *Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1973], 96). Adversity can also come 'to accomplish the Lord's own purposes in our life that we may receive the refinement that comes from testing' ("Trust in

the Lord," in *Ensign*, November 1995, 16)." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 160).

B/M, Alma 32:6

6 And now when Alma heard this, he turned him about, is face immediately towards him, and he beheld with great joy; for he beheld that their afflictions had truly humbled them, and that they were in a preparation to hear the word.

Alma learned the poverty [afflictions] of the people had the positive effect upon them as it caused them to soften their hearts. As a result of their humility, he was then able to teach them the word of God when others had rejected his message.

Harold B. Lee, quoted by A. Theodore Tuttle, states,

"Living the gospel of Jesus Christ is no guarantee that adversity will not come into our lives; but living the gospel does give us the strength and faith and power to rise above that adversity and look beyond the present trouble to the brighter day." ("Sweet Are the Uses of Adversity," in *Improvement Era*, December 1967, 47).

V. The Lord's Counsel To Those Who Experience Adversity

The Lord, in the following scriptures, provides counsel to those who experience adversity:

"a. Be patient in afflictions; they will 'be but a small moment.'

Doctrine and Covenants 24:8

8 Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for, lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days.

*How can we increase our patience to endure trials?

We need to remember that, in contrast to eternity, they will "be but for a small moment" (D&C 121:7). The Savior

met his afflictions with a firm commitment and with his help, we can also.

"b. Rejoice and give thanks.

Doctrine and Covenants 98:1

1 Verily I say unto you my friends, fear not, let your hearts be comforted; yea, rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks;

*Why should we give thanks to God even when we are experiencing trials?

If we could see our trials and adversity as blessings in disguise, we may be able to be more grateful for them. If we trust the Lord will strengthen us and stand by us, we may be better able to see the blessings they will bring to us.

*What are some blessings we continue to have even during the most severe adversity?

Even during our most difficult experiences, we still have our testimony that the gospel is true; we still know that Jesus is the Christ; and that God is our loving Father. We also know that someday we will be free from the pain and sorrow of this world.

"c. We should remain obedient and 'cleave unto all good.'

Doctrine and Covenants 98:11

11 And I give unto a commandment, that ye shall forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, that ye shall live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God.

*Why is it sometimes difficult to remain obedient when we experience adversity?

When we forget that the purpose of adversity is to strengthen us and refine us, in our pain, we are more susceptible to the temptations of Satan. We may even doubt the love God has for us and through the blessings of His Son and the Holy Ghost, all things will work for our good.

"d. Care for the soul, not for the body, and seek the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:36-38

36 Wherefore, fear not even unto death; for in this world your joy is not full, but in me your joy is full.

37 Therefore, care not for the body, neither the life of the body; but care for the soul, and for the life of the soul.

38 And seek the face of the Lord always, that in patience ye may possess your souls, and ye shall have eternal life.

Joseph Smith taught at King Follett's funeral,

"Your friends who have been murdered for the truth's sake in the persecutions shall triumph gloriously in the celestial world, while their murderers shall welter for ages in torment, even until they shall have paid the uttermost farthing." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, [1977], 359).

We are reminded that while Satan may destroy our body, he cannot destroy our soul. Even if we may be called upon to give our life for the truth, one day, our bodies will again be united with our spirits, and we will yet live again.

"e. We should not fear what man may do, for God will be with us forever.

Doctrine and Covenants 122:9

9 Therefore, hold on thy way, and the priesthood shall remain with thee; for their bounds are set, they cannot pass. Thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; therefore, fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and even.

Doctrine and Covenants 98:13

13 And whoso layeth down his life in my cause, for my name's sake, shall find it again, even life eternal.

If we continue to be valiant to the covenants we have made with God in His Holy Temple, someday we will receive the blessings the Father has promised us. Regardless of the pain man may inflict upon us, angels will watch over us to strengthen and bear us up. When we have God's support, we need not fear.

(*a-e Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 161).

*Why are some people embittered by trials while others grow and are strengthened?

The affect that trials and adversity have upon our lives seems to be in proportion to the depth of our testimonies. If they are based solely upon our reception of blessings, when trials come, and they do, if our testimonies are strong and our faith and trust of the Lord secure, we will be able to not only weather the storm, but to see the blessings the rain brought to the world in which we live.

B/M, Alma 62:49-51

49 But notwithstanding their riches, or their strength, or their prosperity, they were not lifted up in the pride of their eyes; neither were they slow to remember the Lord their God; but they did humble themselves exceedingly before him.

50 Yea, they did remember how great things the Lord had done for them, that he had delivered them from death, and from bonds, and from prisons, and from all manner of afflictions, and he had delivered them out of the hands of their enemies.

51 And they did pray unto the Lord their God continually, insomuch that the Lord did bless them, according to his word, so that they did wax strong and prosper in the land.

*What can we do to face our trials and adversity better?

If we are humble and trust in the Lord, we will be able to see the lessons learned from our trials and adversity, rather than viewing them as punishment we are receiving. As we focus upon the potential blessings to be gained, we will

be able to bear them despite the means by which they are presented.

*What have others done to help you through adversity?

They reminded me that it will not last forever. Despite the clouds and rain, the sun will shine again. Even April showers bring May flowers. Every storm had a silver lining.

*What benefits can come from serving others when we are in the midst of our own trials?

New Testament, Luke 9:24

24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

New Testament, Galatians 6:2

2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

As we lose ourselves in giving service to others, we begin to forget our own trials. We realize that we are not the only ones who are experiencing challenges in our life. Blessing the life of another person, also serves to lift our own. Our challenges may yet remain when we return from giving service, but somehow they seem more manageable.

*What can we do if we feel ourselves becoming desperate and hopeless because of adversity?

B/M, Alma 36:3

3 And now, O my son Helaman, behold, thou art in thy youth, and therefore, I beseech of thee that thou wilt hear my words and learn of me; for I do know that whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day.

As we turn to the Lord for guidance and comfort, He will bless us. He may not take our burdens from us, knowing that they will yet become a source of strength to us, but He

will strengthen our backs so that we may be better able to bear them.

VI. The Lord's Promise To Those Who Are Faithful in Adversity

Promises of the Lord to Those Who Are Faithful in Adversity include:

"a. The Lord will be with us, stand by us, and heal us in our afflictions.

Doctrine and Covenants 3:8

8 Yet you should have been faithful; and he would have extended his arm and supported you against all the fiery darts of the adversary; and he would have been with you in every time of trouble.

Doctrine and Covenants 112:13

13 And after their temptations, and much tribulation, behold, I, the Lord, will feel after them, and if they harden not their hearts, and stiffen not their necks against me, they shall be converted, and I will heal them.

Doctrine and Covenants 122:4

4 And although their influence shall cast thee into trouble, and into bars and walls, thou shalt be had in honor; and but for a small moment and thy voice shall be more terrible in the midst of thine enemies than the fierce lion, because of thy righteousness; and thy God shall stand by thee forever and ever.

*Why is it important to know that the Lord will be with us in affliction?

To be able to draw upon the Lord's guidance and comfort means everything when we are confronted with trials and adversity. We are not left alone to face our challenges. If we will humble ourselves and seek His guidance and direction, He will stand by us in our afflictions.

"b. Those who are faithful in tribulation will receive

glory, joy, and others blessings.

Doctrine and Covenants 58:2-4

2 For verily I say unto you, blessed is he that keepeth my commandments, whether in life or in death; and he that is faithful in tribulation, the reward of the same is greater in the kingdom of heaven.

3 Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation.

4 For after much tribulation come the blessings. Wherefore the day cometh that ye shall be crowned with much glory; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:35-36

35 And all they who suffer persecution for my name, and endure in faith, though they are called to lay down their lives for my sake yet shall they partake of all this glory.

36 Wherefore, fear not even unto death; for in this world your joy is not full, but in me your joy is full.

Doctrine and Covenants 136:31

31 My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them, even the glory of Zion; and he that will not bear chastisement is not worthy of my kingdom.

The Lord has great blessings in store for those who are faithful despite the persecutions and adversity they may be called upon to bear. As the Lord tries and tests us and our commitment to serve Him at all costs, those who meet the challenges with faithfulness and obedience to His command will receive his blessings.

"c. All things will work together for our good and to the Lord's glory.

Doctrine and Covenants 98:3

3 Therefore, he giveth this promise unto you, with an immutable covenant that they shall be fulfilled; and all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good, and to my name's glory, saith the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 122:7

7 ...know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

Whatever adversity or tribulation we are called upon to experience, if we will do so with faith and trust in the Lord, will work for our good and be a blessing to us.

James E. Faust states,

"In the pain, the agony, and the heroic endeavors of life, we pass through a refiner's fire, and the insignificant and the unimportant in our lives can melt away like dross and make our faith bright, intact, and strong...It is part of the purging toll exacted of some to become acquainted with God. In the agonies of life, we seem to listen better to the faint, godly whisperings of the Divine Shepherd." ("The Refiner's Fire," in *Ensign*, May 1979, 53).

Marion G. Romney added,

"I have seen the remorse and despair in the lives of men who, in the hour of their trial, have cursed God and died spiritually. And I have seen people rise to great heights from what seemed to be unbearable burdens.

"Finally, I have sought the Lord in my own extremities and learned for myself that my soul has made its greatest growth as I have been driven to my knees by adversity and affliction." ("The Crucible of Adversity and Affliction," in *Improvement Era*, December 1969, 69).

"d. Those who are faithful in affliction will be exalted.

Doctrine and Covenants 121:8

8 And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes.

Doctrine and Covenants 127:2

2 And as for the perils which I am called to pass through, they seem but a small thing to me, as the envy and wrath of man have been my common lot all the days of my life; and for what cause it seems mysterious, unless I was ordained from before the foundation of the world for some good end, or bad, as you may choose to call it. Judge ye for yourselves. God knoweth all these things, whether it be good or bad. But nevertheless, deep water is what I am wont to swim in. It all has become a second nature to me; and I feel, like Paul, to glory in tribulation; for to this day has the God of my fathers delivered me out of them all, and will deliver me from henceforth; for behold, and lo, I shall triumph over all my enemies, for the Lord God hath spoken it.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 127 states, "An epistle from Joseph Smith the Prophet to the Latter-day Saints at Nauvoo, September 1, 1842." (Heading: Section 127. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 257).

(*a-d Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 161-162).

In these verses, Joseph Smith confirms that the Lord is knowledgeable of the trials and adversity we will experience and, in His wisdom, will bless us when we have received the maximum amount of the benefit. None are exempt from adversity, however, their effect upon our eternal lives depends upon our response to them.

It is during times of adversity and sorrow that I have learned much. I have also learned that during these experiences, if I am going to receive their maximum benefit, I must hold on tight to my faith with both hands, and trust in God to help me get through them.

In order to avoid extradition to Missouri, to answer for false charges, Joseph had gone into hiding. It did not prevent him, however, from communicating with the Saints, which he did through letters.

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

"In April 1839, after the Prophet and his companions had been held in Liberty Jail for nearly five months, they were sent to Daviess County and then to Boone County, [Missouri] for trial. While being moved to Boone County, the guards let them escape because some officials concluded that they could not be successfully prosecuted. Joseph Smith and the other prisoners then made their way to Illinois, where they joined their families and the rest of the Saints."

(*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 162).

VII. Conclusions

Before addressing the confinement of Joseph, and others, in the Liberty Jail in Missouri, it was deemed necessary to highlight the events in Missouri that led to their incarceration. These included the Saints move from Clay County to the counties that had been created for their settlement, Caldwell and Daviess. When Joseph and others arrived in Missouri, in March, 1839, they settled in Far West. For a brief period of time, the Saints experienced peace. This was short-lived when the settlers refused to allow the Saints from voting in Gallatin, Daviess County. In order to restore peace, Governor Lilborn W. Boggs ordered out the state militia. Under Captain Samuel W. Bogart, three latter-day saints were kidnapped and held in their camp at Crooked River. When the Saints attempted to rescue them a battle broke out. When a militia man was killed, charges against the Mormons were exaggerated, and, without further investigation of the facts, Governor Boggs issued his extermination order against the Mormons. As a direct result of his action, several attacked the settlement at Haun's Mill. Many of the Saints were killed.

The very day the massacre occurred at Haun's Mill, General Samuel Lucas, with 2000 militia men sought to attack Far

West. Joseph, and four others, were betrayed into the hands of General Lucas, by Colonel George M. Hinkle.

After a mock trial, Joseph, and others, were to be shot. Had it not been for the intervention of General Alexander W. Doniphan, they would have each been killed.

Joseph along with others, including his brother Hyrum, were then taken to Independence, and then Richmond. Here they were charged with treason and murder. Five were held in the Richmond Jail, and Joseph, Hyrum and four others were transferred to the jail at Liberty, Missouri. It is during the time that Joseph was being held in the Liberty Jail, that he sought the Lord's counsel and direction regarding the adversity and persecution to which the Saints in Missouri had been subjected.

Joseph Smith's Prayer in the Liberty Jail, and the Lord's Response: The Lord heard Joseph's pleading and confirmed that his adversity would only last for "a short moment" (D&C 121:7). Joseph also learned that adversity and affliction have an important purpose to serve in our lives. They can serve to strengthen us and make us strong.

The Savior's Perfect Understanding of Our Sufferings and Adversity: Jesus reminded Joseph Smith that despite the suffering and adversity he had experienced, the Lord had suffered even more. As a result of His suffering, He understands the pain and the sorrow we are experiencing. It is because of His understanding that He is able, as we come unto Him, provide His mercy and grace on our behalf. Thereby, our suffering and adversity can assist us in our desire to become perfected in Him.

Purpose of Adversity: We learned three purposes that adversity serves in our mortal development: (a) To try and prove us to see whether we will abide in His covenant; (b) Some adversity is a result of our transgressions; and, (c) The Lord allows adversity to give us experience and to help us grow.

The Lord's Counsel To Those Who Experience Adversity: He admonishes us (a) Be patient in afflictions; they will "be but a small moment" (D&C 121:7); (b) Rejoice and give thanks; (c) We should remain obedient and "cleave unto all good" (D&C 98:11); (d) Care for the soul, not for the body,

and serve the Lord; and, (e) We should not fear what man may do, for God will be with us forever.

The Lord's Promise to Those Who Are Faithful in Adversity:

(a) The Lord will be with us, stand by us, and heal us in our afflictions; (b) Those who are faithful in tribulation will receive glory, joy, and other blessings; (c) All things will work together for our good and to the Lord's glory; and, (d) Those who are faithful in affliction will be exalted.

We are especially blessed to be able to understand more fully the purpose that adversity serves in our lives. If we are faithful to the counsel we have received from the Lord when we experience adversity, it will yet become a blessing in our lives.

Our next lesson [D&C#29], addresses the building up of the kingdom of God in Nauvoo. We will learn about the kindness extended by the citizens in Quincy, Illinois, the establishment of the city of Nauvoo, and the blessings that came to those who were faithful. We will also learn about the success of the missionaries in preaching the gospel and the organization of the Relief Society for the women of the Church.