

NT#25 Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; LUKE 22:39-46

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I. Wednesday Evening, April 5 A.D. 30, Continued

While there are many who support the position that the events we shall address in this lesson occurred on Thursday evening rather than on Wednesday evening, we will follow the position taken by Monte S. Nyman which is again repeated.

Monte S. Nyman states,

"Most harmonies and commentaries list Wednesday as a day of 'no record.' This listing probably comes because of the traditional 'Good Friday' as the day of Christ's crucifixion. However, in this harmony, the traditional events of Thursday of the last week of the Savior's life are listed under Wednesday, and the traditional events of Friday are listed on Thursday. Some Bible scholars consider this listing because of there being a double Sabbath in certain years of the Jewish calendar. They consider John 19:31 as a reference to such a day, 'for that Sabbath day was a high day.' James E. Talmage suggests this as a possibility in his great work, *Jesus the Christ*, 618-619).

"Another consideration was the prophecy of Christ concerning the prophet Jonah being 'three days and three nights in the whale' as a sign of Christ being 'three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.' (Matt. 12:39-40, see also JST, Mark 8:12, the Prophet Joseph's addition to the text). The Book of Mormon also strongly implies three full days of his being in the spirit world (see 1 Nephi 19:10; 2 Nephi 25:13; 3 Nephi 8:19-23; 10:9). The crucifixion on Friday evening and the resurrection on Sunday does not fulfill the prophecies of the Savior or of the Book of Mormon. While the time period is not as significant as the events themselves, an explanation for

the departure from the usual time table is given." (*New Testament Restoration Harmony: The Complete Guide to the Four Gospels*. Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, Inc., 2006, 327).

This dating will continue throughout the remaining two lessons. It is however understood that while this chronology seems to best convey the dating of last events in the Savior's life, it is the events themselves that are of greatest importance.

II. On the Way to the Garden of Gethsemane

Both Matthew and Mark [Matthew 26:33-36; Mark 14:29-32], address a conversation that Jesus had with Peter as they are conversing on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus speaks of the nights events.

Matthew 26:31-36	Mark 14:28-32
<p>31 Then said Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.</p>	<p>27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.</p>
<p>32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.</p>	<p>28 But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.</p>
<p>33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.</p>	<p>29 But Peter said unto him, Though all shall be offended, yet will not I.</p>
<p>34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.</p>	<p>30 And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thus shalt deny me thrice.</p>
<p>35 Peter said unto him, Though</p>	<p>31 But he spake the more</p>

<p>I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee, Likewise also said all the disciples.</p> <p>36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane,...</p>	<p>vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.</p> <p>32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane:...</p>
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Are we not also like Peter? Have we not all made statements or promises only to regret having made them the next day? It is easy when there is no threat to our honor for each of us to make promises that we may not keep or even recall when our circumstances change. The real test each of us face is to be firm to our promises even when our circumstance change for the worse. It is then that our real character is manifest. We may not be confronted by a risk to our lives, but we may fear failure or rejection and ridicule if we speak our true feelings. It is when our true character is on the line that we must be honest, even if it is frightening or inconvenient.

William Shakespeare stated,

"This above all to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."
(Hamlet, Act 1, scene 3, 78-80)

It is noteworthy from these scriptures that not only Peter, but all stated they would not deny him! Fortunate for Peter, although his action was serious, it was not fatal to his standing as one of the Lord's apostles.

III. The Garden of Gethsemane

Robert L. Millet states,

"Gethsemane, the 'garden of the oil press' (or winepress), was indeed one of the three 'gardens of God.' With the Garden of Eden and the Garden of the Empty Tomb, the Garden of Gethsemane would be forever enshrined in the hearts and minds of Christians as one of those profoundly sacred spots on earth where the works of God--Creation, Fall, and

Atonement--took place." ("Treading the Winepress Alone" in *Studies in Scripture 5*. Edited by Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986, 430).

Robert L. Millet continues,

In the Garden of Gethsemane, "In a way perhaps much more profound than on that joyous Christmas eve some thirty-three years earlier, 'The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight. (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 208)."

("Treading the Winepress Alone" in *Studies in Scripture 5*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986, 431).

As the group arrives at their final destination, Jesus gives those with him the following instructions:

Matthew 26:36-39

36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

37 And he took with him, Peter and the two sons of Zebedee [James and John], and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

38 Then said he unto them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch [stay awake] with me.

39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face..

The eight disciples are to sit separate from the three other disciples, [Peter, James and John] who have been given the assignment to "watch with me," or to remain awake with me. It is suggested that then Jesus went "about a stone's throw" [approx. 100 feet] (Luke 22:41) "and fell on his face" (Matthew 26:39). With this action, Jesus' suffering began.

III. The Savior's Suffering for Us

Kenneth S. Bennion states,

"According to the plan that was established before the world was formed, Jesus was to come to the earth, to live as a mortal, to teach the true gospel, and then He was to die and be resurrected, thus making it possible for all

mankind to return to the presence of God. Jesus was literally to suffer and die for the sins of all the world." (*The Life of Christ*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School Union, 1950, [Revised 1957], 144).

Though Jesus is the Son of God, due to his mortal mother, he also experiences pain and sorrow in the same manner as other mortals. This task is however made even greater as he, unlike others before him and after, had lived a perfect life in mortality.

Robert L. Millet states,

"There is no weight heavier than the burden of sin, the Sinless One (and those closest to him) began to sense and feel the bitterness of this singular occasion, a time when the weight of the world was about to be placed upon the shoulder of Him who had made the world...[however] He had never know the feelings of guilt and remorse, the pain of alienation from God that characterizes the whole of mankind." ("Treading the Winepress Alone" in *Studies in Scripture* 5. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986, 431).

Jesus Christ declare himself his experience in revelation.

Doctrine and Covenants 19:18

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.

Luke 22:14-44

**42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.
43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.
44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.**

So excoriating and great was his pain and suffering, the result of the burden of the sins of mankind, that weighed

upon his being that he asked his Father "If thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22:42). An angel was sent, possibly Adam himself, to render support and comfort, but He alone must bear the burden in order for the law of justice to be satisfied.

The total length of time of Jesus' suffering is not known, however according to Matthew, it required three sequential periods (Matthew 26:39, 42, 44). It is after his third departure that he returned a final time and spoke to his Apostles.

Matthew 26:45

45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Some might wonder the reaction of the Father to the suffering of his Only Begotten Son in the Flesh as he carried out his predesigned mission that had begun in a garden and ended on a cross.

Melvin J. Ballard states,

"In the case of our Father, the knife [as it was for Father Abraham regarding his son, Isaac] was not stayed, but it fell, and the life's blood of His Beloved Son went out. His Father look on with great grief and agony over His Beloved Son, until there seems to have come a moment when even our Saviour cried out in despair: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

"In that hour, I think I can see our dear Father behind the veil looking upon these dying struggles until even he could not endure it any longer; and, like the mother who bids farewell to dying child and has to be taken out of the room so as not to look upon the last struggles, so He bowed His head and hid in some part of His universe. His great heart almost breaking for the love He had for His Son. Oh, in that moment when He might have saved His Son, I thank Him and praise Him that He did not fail us, for He had not only the love of His son in mind, but He also had love for us. I

rejoice that He did not interfere, and that His love for us made it possible for Him to endure to look on the sufferings of His Son and give Him finally to us, our Saviour and our Redeemer. Without Him, without His sacrifice, we would have never come glorified into His presence. And so this is what it cost, in part, for our Father in Heaven to give the gift of His Son unto men." ("The Sacramental Covenant" in *Melvin J. Ballard...Crusader for Righteousness*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, 137).

We have seen in this section that the suffering that Jesus Christ, Our Savior experienced was greater than any mortal man could bear.

James E. Talmage states,

"Christ's agony in the garden is unfathomable by the finite mind, both as to intensity and cause. The thought that He suffered through fear of death is untenable. Death to Him a preliminary to resurrection and triumphal return to the Father from whom He had come, and to a state of glory even beyond what He had before possessed; and, moreover, it was within His power to lay down His life voluntarily. He struggled and groaned under the burden such as no other being who has lived on earth might ever conceive as possible. It was not physical pain, nor mental anguish alone, that cause Him to suffer such torture as to produce an extrusion of blood from every pore; but a spiritual agony of soul such a only God was capable of experiencing. No other man, however great his powers of physical or mental endurance, could have suffered so; for his human organism would have succumbed, and syncope would have produced unconsciousness and welcome oblivion. In that hour of anguish Christ met and overcame all the horrors that Satan, 'the prince of the world' could inflict. The frightful struggle incident to the temptations immediately following the Lord's baptism was surpassed and overshadowed by this supreme contest with the powers of evil." (*Jesus The Christ*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1915, [Thirty-Fifth Edition, 1963], 613).

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"The Atonement is now over and he has won the victory; the atonement, in large measure, has been worked out, and he is

now ready for the shame and humiliation and pain of the cross. Then will come the resurrection and the crown." (*The Mortal Messiah: Book 4*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981, 126).

The portion of Jesus' suffering in the garden of Gethsemane was now over. The cross lay yet ahead.

IV. *Why Do We Need a Savior?, and Why Only Jesus Christ Could Qualify?

[*Title for section taken from similar title of Devotional Address given at Brigham Young University on December 4, 1984 by Robert J. Matthews]

Ezra Taft Benson states,

"Just as a man does not really desire food until he is hungry, so he does not desire the salvation of Christ until he knows why he needs Christ.

"No one adequately and properly knows why he needs Christ until he understands and accepts the doctrine of the Fall and its effect upon all mankind." (*A Witness and A Warning*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988, 33).

The following is a brief and simple summary of the doctrines of the Creation and the Fall, in order to provide a foundation upon which we can build an understanding of why we need a Savior.

In order to more fully understand our need for a Savior, we must return to another garden, even the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve, the first man and woman to ever live upon mortal earth, had been placed here by Our Father in Heaven.

Genesis 1:27

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

They were to be the first of innumerable spirits who would come to earth in order to work out their mortal probation.

Genesis 1:28

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,...

They had been placed in the Garden of Eden so that they might have the opportunity to choose for themselves between good and evil or following the direction of their Heavenly Father while also being enticed by the temptations of Lucifer.

Genesis 1:16-17

**16 And the LORD God, commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:
17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.**

You will recall that this was one of the elements of conflict during pre-mortal life. The plan of the Father was based upon free agency and individual choice; Lucifer's alternate plan was to negate free agency so that no spirit who came to earth would risk the possibility of not returning to the Father. One-third of all the hosts in heaven rejected the Father's plan including free agency to become followers of Lucifer. These spirits came to earth, but were denied the opportunity of having a physical body. Their role in the Father's plan is providing the basis of opposition in all things so that those who came to earth would have the full opportunity of choice. The risk is that given a choice, some individuals who come to earth and received a physical body, may decide, acting under the temptations of Lucifer, to reject the Father's plan, known as the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and become his followers.

Adam and Eve, while in the Garden of Eden, were given two commandments as noted above. First, do not partake of the fruit of the knowledge of Good and evil or you would die. The second is to multiply and have children. The second commandment could not be kept however while Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden.

When Lucifer came and tempted Adam regarding his partaking of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, he refused.

Lucifer than turned his attention to Eve, and when she learned that she would have the opportunity to become like the Gods, knowing good and evil, she partook of the forbidden fruit (see Genesis 2:1-6). Her penalty for doing so was that she was now subject to death and she could no longer remain in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 2:22-23).

Eve, now upon Lucifer's bidding, took some of the fruit of the tree and approached Adam. Initially, he rejected her offer, but when told that because she had partaken of the fruit that she would be cast out of the garden and he would remain alone, he also partook of the fruit thereby occurring the same penalty as Eve. As this point, Satan was overjoyed. He believed that he had thwarted the Father's plan and therefore he would now receive the power and glory he sought.

The Father, knowing his children, knew that Adam and Eve would partake of the fruit and therefore would be expelled from the garden into the lone and dreary world according to the laws of justice. They would also experience mortal death. They could now have children and thereby spirits could come from the Spirit world to earth and have a mortal experience.

PGP, Moses 5:10-11

10 And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.

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, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.

The opportunity of choice continued intact as part of their mortal experience through the temptations of Lucifer and his servants.

The Father, as part of His plan, in the beginning had provided the means for a Savior. It was necessary that the Savior be one who was sinless himself, so that He was not subject to his own personal sins, and who was willing to come to earth and experience mortality in complete obedience though tempted by Satan. As a result of his parents, from His Immortal Father, he inherited the power of life over death; from His mortal Mother, Mary, he was therefore subject to death. This inheritance gave him the power over death which meant that he would only die if he voluntarily gave up his life.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary states,

"savior also **savour** is one that saves from danger or destruction or one who brings salvation." (**savior** also **savour**. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. Springfield, Mass: Merriam-Webster Inc., 1991, 1045).

Each of Adam and Eve's children due to their transgression were subject to two deaths. The first was a physical death or the separation of their body from their spirit. The second was a spiritual death or separation from God's presence.

B/M, 2 Nephi 9:10, 8-9

10 O how great the goodness of our God, who prepared a way for our escape from the grasp of his awful monster; yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit.

8 O the wisdom of God, his mercy and grace! For behold, if the flesh should rise no more [that is if there was no resurrection of the body] our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more.

9 And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself...

Why do we need a Savior? Because all of God's children would have become "angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of God, and to remain with the father of lies [Lucifer], in misery, regardless of how they lived their lives while on earth! The penalty of the physical death would have remained in force and there would have been no life after death.

The second death or spiritual death involving our separation from the presence of God came about as the result of disobedience to God's commandments. It was disobedience to the Father's commandments that resulted in Adam and Eve being exiled from the Garden of Eden where they had enjoyed the presence of both the Father and the Son who had taught them the gospel. Living now in the lone and dreary world, they were outside of God's presence.

In order to return to God's presence meant that they would have to be taught by messengers sent from God and then demonstrate their obedience to the direction or commandments they received. Their obedience brought further instruction and blessings from God as they continued to draw ever closer to Him. It is important to understand that in spite of our desire to keep all the commandments and fulfill all the ordinances, fallen man cannot save themselves. Left to our own efforts, our separation from God's presence would continue forever. The gap between our best efforts and return to God's presence is greater than we alone can surmount.

In summation, we need a Savior because the two deaths, physical and spiritual, that occurred as a result of Adam and Eve's transgression were inherited by us as their children. In the words of Jacob, a prophet in Ancient America,

B/M, Jacob 7:12

12 ...and it also has been manifest to me by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, I know if there should be no atonement made all mankind must be lost.

Given the state of all mankind the need for a Savior is apparent, but now, why only Jesus Christ?

It was Alma, a prophet living in Ancient America, who taught the people regarding the requirements that must be met in order for an atonement to occur.

B/M, Alma 34: 9-12, 14-16

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 lost, and must perish except it be through the atonement which it is expedient should be made.

10 For it is expedient that there should be a great and last sacrifice; yea, not a sacrifice of man, neither of beast, neither of any manner of fowl; for it shall not be a human sacrifice; but it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice.

11 Now, there is not any man that can sacrifice his own blood which will atone for the sins of another...

12 ...therefore there can be nothing which is short of an infinite atonement which will suffice for the sins of the world.

14 ...that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal.

15 And thus he shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance.

16 And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircle them in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption.

The requirements for fulfilling the atonement are so demanding that no one, other than the Son of God was willing to meet the necessary requirement. Simply speaking the requirements are: 1) The individual who volunteered to perform "the great and lasting sacrifice" must possess the power of life over death and also be subjected to death

themselves. If they did not, like all of Adam and Eve's children, they would die and be helpless to bring about their own resurrection; 2) The individual must be perfect or without sin or the same penalty of being outside of God's presence would also apply to them and their own sins would prevent them from being able to save themselves; 3) They must be willing to experience intense and exquisite suffering brought about by experiencing the sins of all mankind who had ever lived and would live as well as all the pain that Lucifer could bring to bear. Though they had the power to personally save themselves and not have to suffer, they would choose not to exercise this power so that they might save those whose sins they were bearing. This would also include the sins of those who would choose to reject their offer to them; 4) They must be willing to exercise complete obedience to the Plan of the Father without any desire for glory or reward for themselves. The motivating force of their actions must be based on the love they have for the Father's children, their brothers and sisters.

Why only Jesus Christ? Because he is the only one who meets all the qualifications necessary to bring about the Atonement. When the Plan was presented to the hosts of heaven by the Father, only two individuals stepped forward to offer themselves as the Savior. One, motivated by his desire for glory and honor, quickly disqualified himself and then in rebellion he rose against the Plan the Father had presented. Only one was accepted by the Father. He is known in the Old Testament as Jehovah and in the New Testament as Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

V. Gifts given to Us Because of the Atonement

Monte S. Nyman states,

"The Atonement is the most important doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ and yet the least understood. The Bible tells us that it happened, but the Book of Mormon tells us why and how it happened, and what must be done as an individual to get full benefits of it." (*Book of Mormon Commentary 1: I Nephi Wrote This Record*. Orem, Utah: Granite Publishing and Distribution, LLC, 2003, 491-492).

As we come to understand the gifts that come to us as a result of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we will then appreciate more fully his sacrifice and its importance for us.

Some of these gifts include:

1. Because of Christ's Atonement, all will be eventually be resurrected following their death, and will have their spirits again united with their bodies. If Christ had not overcome the bands of death that bind all mortals, there would have been no resurrection. When we died we would have become servants to Lucifer to serve him forever.

B/M, 2 Nephi 9:8-9

8 O the wisdom of God, his mercy and grace! For behold, if the flesh should rise no more [no resurrection] our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more. 9 And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself;...

2. The Atonement offers all who are willing to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Redeemer and to then make and keep sacred covenants, beginning with baptism, the opportunity of living again with Our Father in Heaven. Freedom from eternal death is a gift given to all by Jesus Christ; returning to live forever with Our Heavenly Father requires our obedience to the commandments and our sincere effort to become his disciples and to be changed by Him. The most important decision we can make in our lives is to choose to come unto Christ.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"In the strictest sense, no one can work out his own salvation. No person can create himself, resurrect himself, ransom himself from sin, or cleanse his own

heart from taints of the world. These are the actions of a God, of an infinite being. We can seek and ask and petition and supplicate. We can apply his blood, take his name, accept his enabling power, and acquire his nature, but we cannot save ourselves. The Saints [members] of God seek above all things for the sanctifying powers of the Spirit in their lives. Through this process they have their hearts changed, and by means of that Spirit they are motivated to righteous works, the works of God. In that sense, Christ has begun to live in them (see Galatians 2:20). Thus Paul implored: 'Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.' And now note the Apostle's words: '*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*' (Philippians 2:12-13, italics added.)" (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon 3*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991, [3rd Printing, 1993], 258).

4. Because of Christ's atonement, the penalties imposed upon Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden have been paid in full. We are however responsible for our sins, but not for Adam's transgressions.

The Second Articles of Faith of the Church of Jesus Christ states,

"2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression." (**The Articles of Faith**. *Triple Combination of Latter-day Saint Scriptures*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1981, 60); see also *History of the Church 4*. 535-541).

5. Because of Christ' atonement, followed by our own suffering for our sins, we may then enter into the waters of baptism. It is because of the shedding of the blood of Christ combined with our personal suffering, that we are then cleansed from our own sins as well as well as receiving further spiritual fortification.

Richard G. Scott states,

"Each of us has had times in our lives when we have made

poor choices. We are all in desperate need of the redemptive power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Each of us must repent of any rebellion. 'For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance' (Doctrine and Covenants 1:31)...Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we,...can build spiritual fortifications between ourselves and any past mistakes that Satan attempts to exploit." ("Personal Strength through the Atonement of Jesus Christ" in *Ensign*, November, 2013, 84).

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet add,

"What, then, of those who accept Jesus as the Christ and allow his infinite and eternal sacrifice to stand in the stead of [their own] suffering?...True repentance, which centers in faith in Christ and his atoning sacrifice, still requires sufficient suffering on the part of those desiring to repent to make them one in mind and soul with the Savior. The blessings of salvation, though freely given, cannot be wholly undeserved. In all things we must unite our best effort with him who sacrificed all. The testimony of the holy writ is that without suffering there is no repentance...Many in the Christian world who claim a spiritual rebirth...yet have made no other changes in their lives [including repentance and baptism, do not seem to understand that the evidence of a new birth is] a life of devotion and service to God [and their fellowman]." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon 3*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991, [3rd Printing, 1993], 267, 269).

6. Because of the Atonement, Jesus not only took upon himself all our sins, he also experienced all our sorrows, disappointments, regrets, heartaches. In fact, there is nothing that any of us will ever experience during our mortal life that he didn't also experienced on our behalf during his suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross. Because of his own experience, he know exactly how we feel.

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 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 [aid, comfort] his people according to their infirmities.

Chieko N. Okazaki states,

"We know that on some level Jesus experienced the totality of mortal existence in Gethsemane. It is our faith that he experienced everything—absolutely everything...This means Jesus know what it felt like when your mother died of cancer—how it was for your mother, how it still is for you. He knows what it felt like to lose the student-body election. He know that moment when the brakes locked, and the car started to skid. He experienced the slave ship sailing from Ghana toward Virginia He experienced the gas chambers at Dachau. He experience napalm in Vietnam. He knows about drug addiction and alcoholism.

"There is nothing you have experienced as a *woman* that he does not also know and recognize. On a profound level, he understands about pregnancy and giving birth. He know about PMS and cramps and menopause. He understands about rape and infertility and abortion.

"His last recorded words to his disciple were, 'And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' (Matthew 28:30). What does that mean? It means he understands your mother-pain when your five-year-old leaves for kindergarten, when a bully picks on your fifth-grader, when your daughter calls to say that the new baby has Down's syndrome. He knows your mother-*rage* when a trusted babysitter sexually abuses your two-year-old, when someone gives your thirteen-year-old drugs, when someone seduces your seventeen-year-old. He know the pain you live with when you come home to a quiet apartment where the only children who ever come are visitors, when you hear that your former husband

and his new wife were sealed in the temple last week, when your fiftieth wedding anniversary rolls around and your husband has been dead for two years. He knows all that. He's been there. He's been lower than all that." (*Lighten Up!* Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993, 174-175).

The next step is ours. He has taken upon himself the transgressions of Adam as well as our own. He is willing to be Our Savior and Redeemer, but we must accept his offering by repenting, entering into the waters of baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost and be willing to follow Him as we endure to the end in obedience. If we choose not to accept Him as Our Savior and Redeemer, then we will be required to bear the full effects of the law of justice ourselves.

Doctrine and Covenants 19:16-17

**16 For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;
17 But if they would not repent, they must suffer even as I;**

VI. Conclusions

James E. Talmage states,

"Christ's agony in the garden is unfathomable by the finite mind, both as to intensity and cause...He struggled and groaned under a burden such as no other being who has lived on earth might even conceive possible. It was not physical pain, nor mental anguish alone, that caused him to suffer such torture as to produce an extrusion of blood from every pore; but a spiritual agony of soul such as only God was capable of experiencing..In that hour of anguish Christ met and overcame all the horrors that Satan, 'the prince of this world,' could inflict...In some manner, actual and terribly real though to man incomprehensible, the Savior took upon Himself the burden of the sins of mankind from Adam to the end of the world." (*Jesus The Christ*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1915, [Thirty-Fifth Edition, 1963], 613).

What did it cost in order to redeem our souls from sin? It required the blood of a God. Words are inadequate to fully express the suffering Jesus was willing to undergo on our behalf so that the Plan of his Father may become operative for all his children based upon their willingness to accept His Son as their Savior and Redeemer. Unfortunately, due to the eternal law of free agency, the Father knew that not all would accept the offering of His Son. There would be those who would reject Him. There would also be those who would crucify Him though he was without sin.

This life is not easy and at times the burdens we carry are almost beyond our ability to bear. There is one who calls to each of us.

Matthew 11:28-30

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

May each of us answer, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Son of God, My Savior and Redeemer. Help me. Bear me up. With your help, I will receive strength to overcome. Without your help, I will fail."

There are in mortality, two eternal laws that impact our lives. One is the law of Justice; the other, the law of mercy. We want justice when it serves our cause for payment. We want mercy when we are in need and helpless to meet our obligations.

Boyd K. Packer states,

It seems that these "two eternal ideals [justice and mercy] ...appear to contradict one another. Is there no way for justice to be fully served, and mercy also? There is a way. The law of justice can be fully satisfied and mercy can be fully extended—but it takes someone else. [The mediator then stepped forward and paid the debt of the creditor]...the creditor was paid in full. He had been justly dealt with. No contract had been broken. [The law of justice had been

met]. The debtor, in turn, had been extended mercy [for he had agreed to accept the terms the Mediator had set]...[It is true that] by eternal law, mercy cannot be extended save there is one who is both willing and able to assume our debt and pay the price and arrange the terms for our redemption...Both laws [now] stood fulfilled. Because there was a mediator, justice had claimed its full share, and mercy was fully satisfied...[It is imperative to remember that] unless there is a mediator, unless we have a friend, the full weight of justice untempered, unsympathetic, must, positively must fall on us." ("The Mediator" in *Ensign*, May, 1977, 55-56).

Our focus has been upon Jesus suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane in order to fulfill the purpose of his mortal birth. He had come to earth in order to meet the requirements necessary to serve as the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind. He had voluntarily offered to fulfill this role when the Father had presented his plan before the pre-mortal council. Only He met all the conditions necessary to qualify for this sacred responsibility. The eternal lives of innumerable spirits depended on his meeting this requirement. How grateful I am that in spite of the intense pain and sacrifice required, he voluntarily surrendered his life on our behalf. He alone marked the path that will lead each of us to return to the presence of Our Heavenly Father. He has finished his part in the garden. May each of us do our part and accept the terms He has set so that the laws of justice and mercy may both be fulfilled to our eternal benefit.