

## August 5–11: Alma 39–42, “The Great Plan of Happiness”

### The Great Plan of Happiness

Alma teaches our Heavenly Father's plan of salvation to his son, Corianton.

Alma refers to the plan by several names:

- The plan of restoration (41:2)
- The great plan of salvation (42:5)
- The great plan of happiness (42:8)
- The plan of redemption (42:11)
- The great plan of mercy (42:31)

Alma starts with the resurrection

Alma 40:1,23-25

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

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

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

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

Joseph Smith

“The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pg. 121)

Why do you think that Joseph Smith referred to events pertaining to Christ’s resurrection “the fundamental principles of our religion”?

Dallin H. Oaks

“The possibility that a mortal who has died will be brought forth and live again in a resurrected body has awakened hope and stirred controversy through much of recorded history. Relying on clear scriptural teachings, Latter-day Saints join in affirming that Christ has ‘broken the bands of death’ and that ‘death is swallowed up in victory.’ Because we believe the Bible and Book of Mormon descriptions of the literal Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we also readily accept the numerous scriptural teachings that a similar resurrection will come to all mortals who have ever lived upon this earth. As Jesus taught, ‘Because I live, ye shall live also’ (John 14:19).” (CR, April 2000)

Alma teaches Corianton about the state of our spirits between death and resurrection

Note that what Alma calls “outer darkness” is what we usually refer to as “spirit prison” as described in 1 Peter 3:19. This use of “outer darkness” is consistent with references in the D&C (D&C 101:91, D&C 133:73).

We often refer to to the eternal state of the sons of perdition as “outer darkness” but the actual description is found in D&C 76:36, “[they] shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels.”

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 the 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.

What happens to our spirits between death and resurrection?

(taken home to that God who gave them life)

How does Alma describe paradise?

(a state of happiness, a state of rest, a state of peace)

How does Alma say about those who will go to spirit prison?

(they chose evil works rather than good)

How does Alma describe what it is like in the spirit prison?

(weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth  
a state of awful, fearful looking for the fiery indignation of the wrath of God)

But keep in mind that Alma's teachings are before the resurrection of Christ. After Christ's resurrection there began to be preaching to those in this state of darkness. We learn this from a revelation received by Joseph F. Smith

D&C 138

29)... I perceived that the Lord went not in person among the wicked and the disobedient who had rejected the truth, to teach them;

30) But behold, from among the righteous, he organized his 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.

He teaches about the judgement

Alma 41:3-7

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

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

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

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

7 These are they that are redeemed of the Lord; yea, these are they that are taken out, that are delivered from that endless night of darkness; and thus they stand or fall; for behold, they are their own judges, whether to do good or do evil.

What does Alma tell us will be the basis of how we are judged?

(according to their works... and the desires of their hearts)

D&C 137:7-9

7) Thus 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 that 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.

There are a number of verses that state Christ will be our judge. So -  
What do you think Alma means then says of mankind that “they are their own judges”?

(one raised to happiness according to his desires of happiness, or good according to his desires of good; and the other to evil according to his desires of evil)

Joseph Smith

“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, pg. 311)

Corianton is confused about the correlation between resurrection and restoration so Alma goes into detail

Alma 41:10-11

10 Do not suppose, because it has been spoken concerning restoration, that ye shall be restored from sin to happiness. Behold, I say unto you, wickedness never was happiness.

11 And now, my son, all men that are in a state of nature, or I would say, in a carnal state, are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; they are without God in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God; therefore, they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness.

What do we know about the spiritual state that will go with us into the next life?

Alma 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.

Then what spiritual state will we be in if we pass from this life while still embracing worldliness?

(in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity)

Gordon B. Hinckley

“The way of the Lord is the way of happiness. Wickedness never was happiness. Transgression never was happiness. Sin never was happiness. Disobedience never was happiness. The way of happiness is following the way of the Lord. I believe this with all my heart. If there is any message that runs through all of the Book of Mormon, it is this great transcendent message, that when the people lived in righteousness they were happy and they were prospered. And when they fell into wickedness they were miserable, they were at war, they were in poverty, they were in trouble. That theme goes all the way through the Book of Mormon. As it was true then, so it is true now. The way of happiness for the people of this Church lies in following the ways of the Lord.” (Church News, June 1, 1996)

Alma 41:13-15

13 O, my son, this is not the case; but the meaning of the word restoration is to bring back again evil for evil, or carnal for carnal, or devilish for devilish—good for that which is good; righteous for that which is righteous; just for that which is just; merciful for that which is merciful.

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

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

What do you think Alma means when he says “that which ye do send out shall return unto you again”?

(the meaning of the word restoration is to bring back again evil for evil... righteous for that which is righteous)

Jeffrey R. Holland

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

The ability to chose to be evil or righteous came about because of the fall

Alma 42:4,7,10

4 And thus we see, that there was a time granted unto man to repent, yea, a probationary time, a time to repent and serve God.

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

10 Therefore, as they had become carnal, sensual, and devilish, by nature, this probationary state became a state for them to prepare; it became a preparatory state.

What do you think Alma means when he says that we have “became subjects to follow after [our] own will”?

(they had become carnal, sensual, and devilish, by nature)

As a result, what must we do during the “probationary time” we have here on earth if we want to be “received into a state of happiness”?

(a time to repent and serve God)

Joseph Smith

“All persons are entitled to their agency, for God has so ordained it. He has constituted mankind moral agents, and given them power to choose good or evil; to seek after that which is good, by pursuing the pathway of holiness in this life, which brings peace of mind, and joy in the Holy Ghost here, and a fulness of joy and happiness at His right hand hereafter; or to pursue an evil course, going on in sin and rebellion against God, thereby bringing condemnation to their souls in this world, and an eternal loss in the world to come.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pg. 213)

Alma explains that death is essential because it allows us to move on from our probationary state

Alma 42:5-6

5 For behold, if Adam had put forth his hand immediately, and partaken of the tree of life, he would have lived forever, according to the word of God, having no space for repentance; yea, and also the word of God would have been void, and the great plan of salvation would have been frustrated.

6 But behold, it was appointed unto man to die—therefore, as they were cut off from the tree of life they should be cut off from the face of the earth—and man became lost forever, yea, they became fallen man.

Why would the “great plan of salvation” be frustrated if we were to live forever on this earth?

(having no space for repentance  
man became lost forever, yea, they became fallen man)

Russell M. Nelson

“The eventual death of your mortal body is essential to God’s great plan of

happiness. Why? Because death will allow your spirit to return home to Him. The Psalmist wrote, ‘Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints’ (Psalm 116:15). Death is precious because it is a ‘homecoming’ for the Saint with the Lord. From an eternal perspective, death is only premature for those who are not prepared to meet God.” (CR, Oct. 2013)

Because of the fall we became subject to spiritual death as well

Alma 42:9,11

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.

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.

How does Alma define “spiritual death”?

(being cut off from the presence of the Lord  
brought upon himself because of his own disobedience)

Joseph Fielding Smith

“After he was driven out of the Garden of Eden the scene changed. Adam was banished because of his transgression from the presence of the Father. The scriptures say he became spiritually dead—that is, he was shut out from the presence of God.

“From that time on Jesus Christ comes on the scene as our advocate, pleading for us as our mediator through his ministry and labors to reconcile us, to bring us into agreement with God, his Father.” (CR, Oct. 1953)

We need an advocate because now we are all subjected to the law of justice

Alma 42:12,14

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;

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.

What do you think Alma means when he says that we are all “in the grasp of justice”?

(which consigned them forever to be cut off from his presence)

Jeffrey R. Holland

“Obviously the demands of justice require that penalties must be paid for violation of the law. Adam transgressed and so have all of us; thus the judgment of death (physically) and the consequences of hell (spiritually) is pronounced as a just reward. Furthermore, once guilty, none of us could personally do anything to overcome that fate.... Furthermore, God cannot simply turn a blind eye to the breaking of divine law, because in so doing he would dishonor justice and would 'cease to be God,' which thing he would never do. The sorry truth for mortal men and women was, then, that 'there was no means to reclaim [them] from this fallen state which man had brought upon himself because of his own disobedience' (Alma 42:12).”  
(Christ And The New Covenant, pg. 226)

But we can be reclaimed because of the law of mercy

Alma 42:15,23

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.

23 But God ceaseth not to be God, and mercy claimeth the penitent, and mercy cometh because of the atonement; and the atonement bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead; and the resurrection of the dead bringeth back men into the presence of God; and thus they are restored into his presence, to be judged according to their works, according to the law and justice.

What is required to satisfy the demands of justice so we can return to dwell in Heavenly Father's presence?

(God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice)

How did the Atonement of Jesus Christ appease the demands of justice?

Mosiah 15:7-9

7 Yea, even so he shall be led, crucified, and slain, the flesh becoming subject even unto death, the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father.

8 And thus God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men—

9 Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice.



Note in verse 23 that everyone will be judged according to the law of justice. So we must live in such a way that Jesus will satisfy the law for us

Alma 42:22,29-30

22 But there is a law given, and a punishment affixed, and a repentance granted; which repentance, mercy claimeth; otherwise, justice claimeth the creature and executeth the law, and the law inflicteth the punishment; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed, and God would cease to be God.

29 And now, my son, I desire that ye should let these things trouble you no more, and only let your sins trouble you, with that trouble which shall bring you down unto repentance.

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

What must we do to take advantage of the Law of Mercy provided by Jesus?

(which repentance, mercy claimeth  
let the justice of God, and his mercy, and his long-suffering have full sway  
in your heart; and let it bring you down to the dust in humility)

## The Law of Chastity

Alma calls Corianton to repentance for his immoral actions

Alma 39:1-5

1 And now, my son, I have somewhat more to say unto thee than what I said unto thy brother; for behold, have ye not observed the steadiness of thy brother, his faithfulness, and his diligence in keeping the commandments of God? Behold, has he not set a good example for thee?

2 For thou didst not give so much heed unto my words as did thy brother, among the people of the Zoramites. Now this is what I have against thee; thou didst go on unto boasting in thy strength and thy wisdom.

3 And this is not all, my son. Thou didst do that which was grievous unto me; for thou didst forsake the ministry, and did go over into the land of Siron among the borders of the Lamanites, after the harlot Isabel.

4 Yea, she did steal away the hearts of many; but this was no excuse for thee, my son. Thou shouldst have tended to the ministry wherewith thou wast entrusted.

5 Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost?

According to Alma, how serious is the sin of sexual immorality in the eyes of

the Lord?

(most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost)

Dallin H. Oaks

"Outside the bonds of marriage, all uses of the procreative power are to one degree or another a sinful degrading and perversion of the most divine attribute of men and women. The Book of Mormon teaches that unchastity is 'most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost'.... Some who do not know the plan of salvation behave like promiscuous animals, but Latter-day Saints—especially those who are under sacred covenants—have no such latitude. We are solemnly responsible to God for the destruction or misuse of the creative powers he has placed within us." (CR, Oct. 1993)

Alma 39:9-11

9 Now my son, I would that ye should repent and forsake your sins, and go no more after the lusts of your eyes, but cross yourself in all these things; for except ye do this ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God. Oh, remember, and take it upon you, and cross yourself in these things.

10 And I command you to take it upon you to counsel with your elder brothers in your undertakings; for behold, thou art in thy youth, and ye stand in need to be nourished by your brothers. And give heed to their counsel.

11 Suffer not yourself to be led away by any vain or foolish thing; suffer not the devil to lead away your heart again after those wicked harlots. Behold, O my son, how great iniquity ye brought upon the Zoramites; for when they saw your conduct they would not believe in my words.

What do you think Alma means when he says that we should “cross [ourselves] in all these things”?

Footnote b: self-mastery

JST Matthew 16:25-26

25) Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

26) And now for a man to take up his cross is to deny himself all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and keep my commandments.

James E. Faust

"The disciples of Christ receive a call to not only forsake the pursuit of worldly things but to carry the cross daily. To carry the cross means to follow His commandments and to build up His Church on the earth. It also means self-mastery. As Jesus of Nazareth instructed us, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me' (Luke 9:23). 'And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after

me, cannot be my disciple' (Luke 14:27)." (CR, Oct. 2006)

In addition to the personal destruction caused by the sin itself, what other problems did Corianton's immoral conduct cause?

(for when they saw your conduct they would not believe in my words)

Joseph Fielding Smith

"I think the greatest crime in all this world is to lead men and women, the children of God, away from the true principles. We see in the world today philosophies of various kinds, tending to destroy faith, faith in God, faith in the principles of the gospel. What a dreadful thing that is.

"The Lord says if we labor all our days and save but one soul, how great will be our joy with him; on the other hand how great will be our sorrow and our condemnation if through our acts we have led one soul away from this truth.

"He who blinds one soul, he who spreads error, he who destroys, through his teachings, divine truth, truth that would lead a man to the kingdom of God and to its fullness, how great shall be his condemnation and his punishment in eternity. For the destruction of a soul is the destruction of the greatest thing that has ever been created." (Doctrines of Salvation, 1:314)