

August 5–11

Alma 39–42

“The Great Plan of Happiness”



The Great Plan of Happiness

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)

The Great Plan of Happiness

Alma 40:1,23-25

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

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)

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)

The Great Plan of Happiness

Alma 40:11-14

What happens to our spirits between death and resurrection?

How does Alma describe paradise?

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

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

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.

The Great Plan of Happiness

Alma 41:3-7

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

What do you think Alma means then says of mankind that “they are their own judges”?

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.

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)

The Great Plan of Happiness

Alma 41:10-11

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

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

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.

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 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)

The Great Plan of Happiness

Alma 41:13-15

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

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 Great Plan of Happiness

Alma 42:4,7,10

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

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”?

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)

The Great Plan of Happiness

Alma 42:5-6

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

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)

The Great Plan of Happiness

Alma 42:9,11

How does Alma define “spiritual death”?

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)

The Great Plan of Happiness

Alma 42:12,14

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

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)

The Great Plan of Happiness

Alma 42:15,23

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

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.

The Great Plan of Happiness

Alma 42:22,29-30

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

The Law of Chastity

Alma 39:1-5

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

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)

The Law of Chastity

Alma 39:9-11

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

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

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)

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)

Next Week:

August 12–18

Alma 43–52

"Stand Fast in the Faith of Christ"

