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## Introduction

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The image of a small portion of Michelangelo's fresco, "Creation," found above serves as metaphor for this page's means and ends.

- ? How would you characterize God's arm in the fresco?
- ? How would you characterize Adam's arm?
- ? What is the message in Adam's limp wrist? In the fact that his arm rests on his knee?
- ? How does Adam, as painted in Michelangelo's fresco, represent all of us as we engage in scripture study and seek to understand scripture, scripture's divine author and our relationship to Him?
- ? How does Adam, as painted in Michelangelo's fresco, represent all of us as we seek God's enlivening, strengthening, and saving influence and presence in our daily lives?

Michelangelo reminds us of our desperate need for God's presence in our lives if we are to follow Him and be all that He hopes us to be. In relation to this page and its purposes, we are in need of God's help as we seek to understand and apply scripture.

The questions we posed and our brief commentary concerning the fresco represent an example of our approach to each scripture reading.

Scripture readings are accompanied by general and passage-specific questions to ponder along with brief comments. In addition to the passage-specific questions associated with each reading, the reader can apply the following **general questions** to most readings. These questions come from the purposes of scripture as identified in the introduction to our site, ponderthescriptures.com, found on the site's home page

- What does this reading reveal about the character of God?
- How and what does this reading testify of Christ?
- What wisdom and knowledge does this reading provide?
- How does this reading direct the way you think and act?
- Of what dangers does this reading warn? How does it help you avoid these dangers?
- How does this reading gladden your heart, encourage you, and give you hope?
- How does this reading expand your vision and increase your expectations of the possible?
- What does this reading discern or "read" about you?
- How will you apply this reading to your life, to how you relate with others, and to how you relate to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

It is not intended that the reader ponder every question. We introduce numerous and varied questions in hopes that readers will find a question or two that catches their imagination and interest, seems pertinent to their lives, and provides an opportunity for meaningful pondering and further spiritual insight. In addition, if the reader wishes, the many and varied ponder questions allow the reader to spend additional time to consider passages from various perspectives.

Finally, we suggest that during and after your reading and pondering experience you consider how you

can incorporate your thoughts and feelings from the scripture reading into your personal prayer life. As you pray, share with Heavenly Father what you thought and felt as you studied and pondered. In your prayer, seek further insight from a God who is anxious to reveal himself, his will, and his interest in our lives. Incorporating your reading and pondering into your prayers can, we think, enliven a prayer life that can all too easily become mundane, mechanical, and rote.

## dc 1.1-3

<sup>1</sup>Hearken, O ye people of my church,  
saith the voice of him who dwells on high,  
and whose eyes are upon all men;  
yea, verily I say: Hearken ye people from afar;  
and ye that are upon the islands of the sea, listen together.

<sup>2</sup>For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men,  
and there is none to escape;  
and there is no eye that shall not see,  
neither ear that shall not hear,  
neither heart that shall not be penetrated.

<sup>3</sup>And the rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow;  
for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops,  
and their secret acts shall be revealed.

## Q

uestionary

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Today's reading is the first of ten readings in the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, called by the Lord himself, "my preface."

1. We often ask the reader to be sensitive to the tone and mood of scripture.
  - ? After reading these first three verses of section 1, what tone would you say the Lord takes in this section, and what is the mood of the verses?
  - ? What feelings so you experience when you read a phrase like "there is none to escape"
  - ? Does this feel happy or sad; comforting or disconcerting; positive or negative?
2. The Lord warns that there is no "heart that shall not be penetrated."
  - ? What is the mood of this phrase?
  - ? What is the mood of the following phrases?
    - The rebellious "shall be pierced with much sorrow"
    - The rebellious' "iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops"
    - The rebellious' "secret acts shall be revealed"
  - ? How do you feel about this rather sobering start to the DC?
3. In today's reading, there are two admonitions to "hearken" and one to "listen."
  - ? Who is to listen?
  - ? How does the thrice repeated admonition add to the mood and the seriousness of the Lord's intents as we have identified them so far in section 1.

## dc 1.<sup>4-6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>And the voice of warning shall be unto all people,  
by the mouths of my disciples,  
whom I have chosen in these last days.

<sup>5</sup>And they shall go forth and none shall stay them,  
for I the Lord have commanded them.

<sup>6</sup>Behold, this is mine authority,  
and the authority of my servants,  
and my preface unto the book of my commandments,  
which I have given them to publish unto you,  
O inhabitants of the earth.

## Q

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### uestionary

Today's reading is the second of ten readings in the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, called by the Lord himself, "my preface." In the first reading, we asked the reader to consider the mood of several phrases:

"There is none to escape"

The rebellious "shall be pierced with much sorrow"

The rebellious' "iniquities shall be spoken upon the housetops"

The rebellious' "secret acts shall be revealed"

1. In today's reading we hear, "the voice of warning shall be unto all people."
    - ? Under what circumstances is a "warning" necessary?
    - ? How does this phrase continue and even enhance the somber mood began in the first three verses?
  2. Speaking of his servants who will deliver the Lord's latter-day message, the Lord declares that "none shall stay them."
    - ? What does this assurance imply concerning the world's likely response to the servants' message? Is it likely to resist their message?
    - ? What does its potential resistance to the Lord's message tell you about the "character" of the world, its inhabitants and its nations?
  3. The DC is to be published for the "inhabitants of the earth."
    - ? How effective a publication is the DC for the "inhabitants of the earth"?
- ? Given that Section 1 is the "Preface," or a kind of introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants as a whole, what do the somber "warnings" of the preface prepare you to expect and look for as you read the remainder of the DC?



## dc 1.7-10

- <sup>7</sup>Wherefore, fear and tremble, O ye people,  
for what I the Lord have decreed in them shall be fulfilled.
- <sup>8</sup>And verily I say unto you,  
that they who go forth, bearing these tidings unto the inhabitants of the earth,  
to them is power given to seal both on earth and in heaven,  
the unbelieving and rebellious;
- <sup>9</sup>Yea, verily, to seal them up  
unto the day when the wrath of God shall be poured out upon the wicked without measure—
- <sup>10</sup>Unto the day when the Lord shall come to recompense unto every man according to his work,  
and measure to every man according to the measure which he has measured to his fellow man.

## Q

uestionary

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Today's is the third of ten readings from DC 1. In our first two readings (verses 1-3 and 4-7), we have explored the somber mood of this "preface" to the Doctrine of Covenants, and what that mood conditions us to expect in the rest of the Book.

1. Today's reading begins with this warning:  
"Fear and tremble, O ye people."  
"For what I the Lord have decreed in them shall be fulfilled."  
  - ? Does this warning leave you with a sense that the Lord has decreed anything good?
  - ? Would one "fear and tremble" if what the Lord decreed was positive?
  - ? What does this warning lead you to expect will happen in the latter-days?
  - ? What does the Lord seem to anticipate from those living in the latter-days?
  - ? Again, what is the mood and implication of this warning?
2. We speak often of the sealing power of the priesthood. In today's reading, verse 8 speaks of the sealing power with the next two verses, 9-10, describing what that sealing "effects."  
  - ? What are those effects?
  - ? How do you feel about the sealing power of the priesthood being used with these rather negative consequences?
3. The Lord speaks of a day when "the wrath of God shall be poured out upon the wicked without measure."  
  - ? Does this warning, with those that have proceeded it, lead you to expect the world to repent and respond positively to the Lord's warnings?
  - ? How do you feel about the "wrath of God" being directed against the wicked beyond the capacity to measure?
  - ? Why would the Lord be so extreme in his "wrath"?
  - ? Does the following final phrase help to explain the extremity of the Lord's "wrath"?  

The Lord will "measure to every man according to the measure which he has measured to his fellow man."
  - ? What does this suggest about the way latter-day men judge each other?
  - ? What evidence do you see that latter-day men—individual, institutional, and national—treat each other with a "wrath" that is "beyond measure" as is implied by their commensurate punishment?

## dc 1.<sup>11-14</sup>

- <sup>11</sup> Wherefore the voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth,  
that all that will hear may hear:
- <sup>12</sup> Prepare ye, prepare ye for that which is to come,  
for the Lord is nigh;
- <sup>13</sup> And the anger of the Lord is kindled,  
and his sword is bathed in heaven,  
and it shall fall upon the inhabitants of the earth.
- <sup>14</sup> And the arm of the Lord shall be revealed;  
and the day cometh that they who will not hear the voice of the Lord,  
neither the voice of his servants,  
neither give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles,  
shall be cut off from among the people...

## Q

uestionary

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Today's reading is our fourth of ten from DC 1.

1. In our previous readings from DC 1, we have asked the reader to consider the tone or mood of each of each passage (verses 1-3, verses 4-6, and verses 7-10).  
? What is the tone or mood of today's reading?
2. In the previous reading from DC 1 (verses 7-10), the Lord spoke of his "wrath." In today's reading he speaks of his "anger."  
? What form will his "anger" take?  
? What do you see in your mind when you read that the Lord's "sword is bathed in heaven"?
3. Consider the following passage from Isaiah. This seems to be the inspiration for the imagery found in DC 1.<sup>13</sup>.

For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations,  
and his fury upon all their armies:  
he hath utterly destroyed them,  
he hath delivered them to the slaughter.  
Their slain also shall be cast out,  
and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses,  
and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.  
And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved,  
and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll:  
and all their host shall fall down,  
as the leaf falleth off from the vine,  
and as a falling fig from the fig tree.  
For my sword shall be bathed in heaven:  
behold, it shall come down upon Idumea,  
and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.  
The sword of the LORD is filled with blood,  
it is made fat with fatness,  
and with the blood of lambs and goats,  
with the fat of the kidneys of rams:  
for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah,  
and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea" (34.<sup>2-6</sup>).

- ? Does this change or enhance the imagery you previously had in your mind?

This is really a horrifically violent and disturbing image. In heaven, Yahweh is holding a sword.

The sword is “bathed” or “wet,” read “dripping” with the blood and gore of humans who have been hacked to pieces like animals.

- ? What do you make of this imagery?
- ? How does it square with your image of Jesus—Yahweh.

3. The imagery of verse 13 is so horrific that we often ignore it. But, we must not ignore it. We must face it head on and try to understand it. Consider my, perhaps apologetic, understanding of what we are being told in verse 13.

We have already learned from verses 7-10 that the Lord would “measure to every man according to the measure which he has measured to his fellow man.” As we understand it, this means that the Lord, allows the natural consequences of actions to go unmediated. Individuals, groups, and nations are treated by other individuals, groups, and nations as they treat them. This is a form of the “law of restoration.”

Now, in verse 13, we learn that there is an apocalyptic out-of-control spiral of latter-day violence. Blood and gore are everywhere. This is not the result of God’s active violence against mankind, but of his leaving unmediated mankind’s own violence.

DC 1, then, portrays the latter-days as being a time of extreme, out-of-control violence. This violence is manmade. The sword dripping with human gore is the sword of man, not of God. But, because God does not mediate to stop the violence, the rhetoric is that it is an act of God. And, of course, it was predicted by God.

- ? How do you feel about this explanation?
- ? How does it help you understand the sword dripping with human gore?
- ? Do you see evidence that the violence hinted at in DC 1 is happening today?
- ? Given the active violence of the U.S. in literally hundreds of countries over the globe, what does DC 1 lead us to believe about our nation, and what kind of treatment we can expect from the rest of the globe?
- ? How would you feel—is it going too far?—if we suggested that what happened in America on 9.11. was an unmediated outworking of America’s violent policies and military actions—a direct application of DC 1’s warnings?

## dc 1.<sup>15-16</sup>

- <sup>15</sup>For they have strayed from mine ordinances,  
and have broken mine everlasting covenant;  
<sup>16</sup>They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness,  
but every man walketh in his own way,  
and after the image of his own god,  
whose image is in the likeness of the world,  
and whose substance is that of an idol,  
which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon,  
even Babylon the great, which shall fall.

## Questionary

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Today's reading is our fifth of ten from DC 1.

1. As can be seen from the punctuation, verse 15, with its initial "for" or "because," is a continuation of a sentence begun in verse 14. The "for" seeks to explain the reason why so many are "cut off from among the people."
  - ? What do you think this being "cut off" means?
  - ? What relationship does this being "cut off" have with the previous warning concerning a unmediated and spiraling violence found in the words  
"the anger of the Lord is kindled,  
and his sword is bathed in heaven,  
and it shall fall upon the inhabitants of the earth"?
  - ? What reasons are given in today's readings for the latter-day disasters outlined previously in DC 1?
2. The Lord says that "Babylon" has "strayed from mine ordinances," and "broken mine everlasting covenant."
  - ? What thoughts and feelings does the Lord's reference to "Babylon" create in you?
  - ? What is the relationship between the Lord's "ordinances" and "everlasting covenant"?
  - ? What is the relationship between Babylon's straying and breaking and its out-of-control and unmediated violence?
  - ? How do the "ordinances" and "covenant" teach and aid us in resisting the violence found in Babylon?
3. Verse 16 provides us a contrast.
  - ? What is that contrast?
  - ? How do you feel about these contrasting ways: either establish God's righteousness or become an idolater?
  - ? What does idolatry look like in the modern world?
  - ? How does idolatry, or the priority of those things in which the world takes delight, contribute to the spiraling and unmediated violence previously mentioned in this section?
- ? We ask again, as we have in each of our previous readings from DC 1, what is the tone or mood of today's reading?

**d**c 1.<sup>16</sup> — just scripture

They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness,  
but every man walketh in his own way,  
and after the image of his own god,  
whose image is in the likeness of the world,  
and whose substance is that of an idol,  
which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon,  
even Babylon the great, which shall fall.

### **Q**uestionary

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- ? What are the characteristics of an idolatrous “god, whose image is in the likeness of the world”?
- ? How would you characterize “the likeness of the world”?

## dc 1.<sup>17-23</sup>

- <sup>17</sup>Wherefore, I the Lord,  
knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth,  
called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun.,  
and spake unto him from heaven,  
and gave him commandments;
- <sup>18</sup>And also gave commandments to others,  
that they should proclaim these things unto the world;  
and all this that it might be fulfilled,  
which was written by the prophets—
- <sup>19</sup>The weak things of the world  
shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones,  
that man should not counsel his fellow man,  
neither trust in the arm of flesh—
- <sup>20</sup>But that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord,  
even the Savior of the world;
- <sup>21</sup>That faith also might increase in the earth;  
<sup>22</sup>That mine everlasting covenant might be established;
- <sup>23</sup>That the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed  
by the weak and the simple  
unto the ends of the world,  
and before kings and rulers.

## Questionary

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Today's reading is our sixth of ten from DC 1.

1. So far, DC 1, the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants, has been very somber in its discussion of the latter-days—it's character, it's expectations, etc. Before we go on, take a moment to go back over the first 16 verses.
  - ? Limiting yourself to these 16 verses, what do you find in them that you give you reason to be optimistic, positive, or hopeful about the world in the latter days?
2. With verse 17, the Lord begins to turn his attention from the bleak conditions and expectations of the latter-days to his own response and solution to the bleakness.
  - ? What is the Lord's response, or solution to meeting latter days calamities?
  - ? How do you feel when you read that Joseph Smith's call was the Lord's direct response to the calamities of the latter days?
  - ? How does this shape your understanding of his call, and of the Church established through his instrumentality?
  - ? How does the Church serve to mediate the dire affects of the latter days?
3. The Lord says that his call of Joseph was intended to fulfil his previously revealed intent to strengthen the "weak" against the "mighty and strong." Compare this to what Mary, mother of Jesus, said about her own son and his ministry.

"And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.  
He hath shewed strength with his arm;  
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.  
He hath put down the mighty from their seats,  
and exalted them of low degree.

<sup>53</sup>He hath filled the hungry with good things;  
and the rich he hath sent empty away" (Luke 1.<sup>50-53</sup>).

- ? How does the Lord's determination to call the weak as his servants serve to undermine and even reverse the latter day evils that have previously been outlined in DC 1?
- 4. The call of one as weak as Joseph not only serves to bear witness to the Lord's intent to raise up the "weak" and put down the "mighty and strong." It also informs the "weak" that they need not look to the "mighty and strong" for counsel, or wait for them alone to "speak in the name of God."
  - ? How does this new-found revelation of the "weak"—that they may speak directly with and for God—serve to mediate the latter day evils previously discussed in DC 1?
  - ? What does this new-found power of the weak suggest about their treatment in the world as opposed to in the Church?
  - ? How does this new-found power of the weak "increase faith in the earth"?
- ? What is the tone or mood of today's reading, as compared to the tone and mood of the previous readings from DC 1?

## dc 1.<sup>24-28</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Behold, I am God and have spoken it;  
these commandments are of me,  
and were given unto my servants in their weakness,  
after the manner of their language,  
that they might come to understanding.

<sup>25</sup>And inasmuch as they erred  
it might be made known;

<sup>26</sup>And inasmuch as they sought wisdom  
they might be instructed;

<sup>27</sup>And inasmuch as they sinned  
they might be chastened,  
that they might repent;

<sup>28</sup>And inasmuch as they were humble  
they might be made strong,  
and blessed from on high,  
and receive knowledge from time to time.

## Qquestionary

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Today's reading is our seventh of ten from DC 1.

1. In today's reading the Lord declares that he has provided revelation to his servants in order bring them to understanding, to instruct them, to chasten them, to strengthen them, to bless them on high, and to give them knowledge.
  - ? How has he accomplished these things through the things that he has revealed in Section 1?
  - ? How have the revelations you have received served to bring the same blessings into your life?
2. The blessings that the Lord has given to his servants come in their "weakness," in their "error," in their "sin," and in their "humility."
  - ? How does the Lord's response to human weakness by providing revelatory direction correspond to your own experiences and how the Lord responds to your weakness, error, sin, and humility?



## dc 1.<sup>29-33</sup>

- <sup>29</sup>And after having received the record of the Nephites,  
yea, even my servant Joseph Smith, Jun.,  
might have power to translate through the mercy of God,  
by the power of God,  
the Book of Mormon.
- <sup>30</sup>And also those to whom these commandments were given,  
might have power to lay the foundation of this church,  
and to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness,  
the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth,  
with which I, the Lord, am well pleased,  
speaking unto the church collectively and not individually—
- <sup>31</sup>For I the Lord cannot look upon sin  
with the least degree of allowance;
- <sup>32</sup>Nevertheless, he that repents  
and does the commandments of the Lord  
shall be forgiven;
- <sup>33</sup>And he that repents not,  
from him shall be taken even the light which he has received;  
for my Spirit shall not always strive with man,  
saith the Lord of Hosts.

## Questionary

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Today's reading is our eighth of ten from DC 1.

1. The ancient title page of the Book of Mormon speaks of the book being translated by the “gift and power” of God. DC 135.3 speaks in the same terms: “gift and power.” This is how we most commonly speak of the translation of the Book of Mormon. Section 1 adds to the “power of God” the “mercy of God.”
  - ? In your view, what is the significance of the Book's translation being the consequence of God's mercy?
2. The Lord says that he “cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.”
  - ? What does this mean to you?
  - ? We have spoken several times about “tone” or “mood.” What tone or mood do you hear in this statement?

Consider the following quote.

“Christ said He came to call sinners to repentance, to save them. Christ was condemned by the self-righteous Jews because he took sinners into His society.... Nothing is so much calculated to lead people to forsake sin as to take them by the hand, and watch over them with tenderness. When persons manifest the least kindness and love to me, O what power it has over my mind, while the opposite course has a tendency to harrow up all the harsh feelings and depress the human mind

“It is one evidence that men are unacquainted with the principles of godliness to behold the contraction of affectionate feelings and lack of charity in the world. The power and glory of godliness is spread out on a broad principle to throw out the mantle of charity. God does not look on sin with allowance, but when men have sinned, there must be allowance made for them.

“All the religious world is boasting of righteousness: it is the doctrine of the devil to retard the human mind, and hinder our progress, by filling us with self-righteousness. The nearer we get to our heavenly Father, the more we are disposed to look with compassion on perishing

souls; we feel that we want to take them upon our shoulders, and cast their sins behind our backs. My talk is intended for all this society; if you would have God have mercy on you, have mercy on one another” (Joseph Smith, HC, Vol. 5, p. 23-24).

- ? How does this alter or shape your understanding of the Lord’s statement concerning “allowance”?

## dc 1.<sup>34-36</sup>

- <sup>34</sup>And again, verily I say unto you, O inhabitants of the earth:  
I the Lord am willing to make these things known unto all flesh;
- <sup>35</sup>For I am no respecter of persons,  
and will that all men shall know that the day speedily cometh;  
the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand,  
when peace shall be taken from the earth,  
and the devil shall have power over his own dominion.
- <sup>36</sup>And also the Lord shall have power over his saints,  
and shall reign in their midst,  
and shall come down in judgment upon Idumea,  
or the world.

## Qquestionary

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Today's reading is our ninth of ten from DC 1.

1. We have previously commented on, and encouraged the reader to consider their feelings about the "tone" or "mood" of the first 16 verses—a tone or mood that we have characterized as somber and somewhat negative and pessimistic. We then commented on and encouraged the reader to consider the mood or tone of verse 17 and those immediately following. These, we suggested, provide revelation concerning God's mediating acts in response to the world's violent wickedness, and contain a more optimistic and hopeful tone or mood.  
? What tone or mood do you sense in today's reading?
2. The Lord says that it is "nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth."  
? What does this suggest to you?  
? When in human, certainly modern, history was "the earth" ever at "peace"?  
? When one considers the violent history of the earth, what does this suggest for latter day events?
3. God and the devil, and their respective dominions, are contrasted. God's dominion is Zion. The Devil's dominion is referred to here as "Idumea." Consider the following Old Testament passages that reference Idumea.  
Isaiah 34.<sup>5-6</sup>  
Ezekiel 35.<sup>15</sup>  
Ezekiel 36.<sup>5</sup>  
? To what does "Idumea" seem to refer?  
? What sorts of attitudes and actions constitute the world's enmity with Zion?

**d**c 1.<sup>35</sup>— just scripture

For I am no respecter of persons,  
and will that all men shall know that the day speedily cometh;  
the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand,  
when peace shall be taken from the earth,  
and the devil shall have power over his own dominion.

### **Q**uestionary

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- ? What do you image when you imagine a world from which “peace” is removed?
- ? How closely does what you imagine match the world as it is today?
- ? What does it mean to you that “the devil shall have power over his own dominion”?
- ? Of what and whom does his “dominion” consist?

## dc 1.<sup>37-39</sup>

<sup>37</sup>Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful,  
and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled.

<sup>38</sup>What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken,  
and I excuse not myself;  
and though the heavens and the earth pass away,  
my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled,  
whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants,  
it is the same.

<sup>39</sup>For behold, and lo, the Lord is God,  
and the Spirit beareth record,  
and the record is true,  
and the truth abideth forever and ever. Amen.

## Q

uestionary

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Today's reading is our last of ten from DC 1.

1. There are many "prophecies and promises" found in the Doctrine and Covenants as a whole. There are quite a number found in DC 1 on its own.  
? Take a moment to review DC 1 and make a list of "prophecies and promises" (don't think of "promise" only in terms of something positive) that are found in this first section.
2. It is traditional to say that when "the brethren," particularly "the prophet," speak, it is the same as if God spoke. Whether and when this is true is worth discussing, but today's passage with its "whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same," often used to reflect this assertion, does not say this.

The principle assertion of this passage is that the "prophecies and promises" found in the DC will "all be fulfilled." They may be "fulfilled" by the Lord himself or by the actions of his servants." How ever and who ever "fulfills" them, it is the same—they are fulfilled.

- ? How do you feel about this slightly different understanding of this passage?
  - ? What is a latter-day example of a "prophecy or promise" being fulfilled either by the Lord himself or by a servant.
  - ? Must "servants" be limited to institutional leaders? How is anyone who assists the Lord in fulfilling "prophecies and promises" a servant of the Lord?
- ? We have spoken often of the "mood and tone" of Section 1. When all is said and done, how would you characterize the mood and tone of DC 1?

## dc 2.<sup>1-3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. <sup>2</sup>And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. <sup>3</sup>If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.

### Questionary

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1. Obviously, these verses are a quotation of Malachi 4.<sup>5-6</sup>. albeit an altered one. The DC version is the same as that which the angel Moroni gave to Joseph Smith during his original visit as recorded in the Pearl of Great Price.

“And again, he quoted the fifth verse thus: Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. He also quoted the next verse differently: And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming” (JSH 1.38-39).

Here is the Old Testament passage in the KJV translation.

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

- ? What are the differences between KJV Malachi 4 and DC 2/JSH 1?
- ? In your mind, what is the significance of the differences?

2. DC 2 is not the only time that these verses were quoted in the DC. It is also quoted in DC 128.<sup>17</sup>.

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (128.<sup>17</sup>).

Obviously, this latter quotation of is exactly the same as the original KJV translation.

- ? Why, do you suppose, is the version offered by Moroni not repeated in 128.<sup>17</sup>?
- ? Put differently, why is the KJV version used?

3. Jesus quoted the passage to the Nephites during his visit to them. Here is the quote.

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (3 Ne. 25.<sup>5-6</sup>).

- ? Which version is quoted here?
- ? What do you make of Jesus quoting the KJV version of Malachi 4 rather than Moroni’s version?

4. A portion of Malachi’s statement is quoted by Luke in his Gospel as follows:

“And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, *to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just*; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (1.<sup>17</sup>).

- ? How does this reading differ from the two previous readings—the KJV Malachi version and the Moroni version?

Clearly, inspired individuals have felt free to translate and understand the passage differently.

- ? How do you feel about this? How do you explain it?

5. This statement found at the end of Malachi, then, is quoted in every one of the LDS standard works. As far as I know, these verses are the only scripture verses found and quoted in every LDS standard work.

? What, do you think, is so important about this passage that it along would be found in every standard work?

6. Following are other translations of Malachi's statement.

"See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction" (NIV).

"Lo, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the coming of the awesome, fearful day of the LORD. He shall reconcile parents with children and children with their parents, so that, when I come, I do not strike the whole land with utter destruction" (Jewish Tanakh Translation).

"Understand. I am going to send 'ēliyâ, the prophet, to you before the coming, totally awe-inspiring day of YHWH. He is to restore the love of parents for children and the love of children for parents so that when I arrive I need not strike the earth with annihilation" (author's translation).

? What comes to your mind when you read the Jewish Tanakh version with its emphasis on "reconciliation"?

Consider the following passage with its brief quotation of a portion of Malachi's passage.

"Therefore, be not afraid of your enemies, for I have decreed in my heart, saith 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. For if ye will not abide in my covenant ye are not worthy of me.

Therefore, renounce war and proclaim peace, and seek diligently to *turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children*; and again, the hearts of the Jews unto the prophets, and the prophets unto the Jews; *lest I come and smite the whole earth with a curse, and all flesh be consumed before me*" (DC 98.<sup>14-17</sup>).

? What does the renouncing of war and the proclaiming of peace have to do with "the spirit of Elijah"?

? How would you feel about "the spirit of Elijah" being as much about the reconciliation of people to each other in real life as about the performance ordinances in temples?

7. The passage ends with a warning about the earth being "wasted" or "cursed." The Hebrew word is *hērem*. It means, "extermination."

? What are your thoughts and feelings when you contemplate that the Old Testament ended with this word and the idea of the earth's population being exterminated.

? How is extermination the logical consequence of a people who refuse to be reconciled, or accept the "linkage" that must exist between them if they are to endure?

Here are a few additional and more difficult questions.

It is possible that Joseph Smith read Malachi 4.<sup>5-6</sup> before his encounter with Moroni, but he gives us no reason to think that it made any greater impression on him than any other Biblical passage—and certainly not the impression that James 1.<sup>5</sup> made. Thus, his encounter with the passage during Moroni's visit is likely the first time that the passage was made to stand out in his mind.

It is unclear when Joseph first recorded his visit with Moroni or the words that passed between them. Section 2, containing Moroni's quotation of Malachi 4.<sup>5-6</sup>, was not included in the Book of Commandments, published in 1833, or in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. It was first included in the Doctrine and Covenants with the 1844 edition. It seems, then, that the first

record of Moroni's quotation of Malachi is to be found in the Joseph Smith History found in today's Pearl of Great and written in 1838.

- ? This is some 15 years after the visit. I will let the reader decide how likely it is that Joseph Smith remembered the exact manner in which Moroni quoted Malachi 4.<sup>5-6</sup> all those years later. Imagine having the passage quoted to you in 2004. How likely are you to quote it today exactly as you heard it in 2004? It seems more likely to this writer, that this reading is Joseph Smith's own.
- ? The Book of Mormon quotation of Malachi 4.<sup>5-6</sup> is exactly the same as the KJV. Why? The KJV did not exist when Jesus visited the Nephites. Does Jesus' quotation of the passage as it is in the KJV imply that the KJV translation is the most accurate? If the KJV is most accurate, why did Moroni quote it differently? If Joseph had heard Moroni quote Malachi 4.<sup>5-6</sup> differently—more accurately and “originally?”—why did this reading not find its way into the Book of Mormon, published a little more than a half-dozen years after Moroni's visit?
- ? In the summer, fall, and winter of 1830 and progressing through the winter and spring of 1831, Joseph Smith worked on what has come to be known as the Joseph Smith Translation. In that translation, Malachi 4.<sup>5-6</sup> remained unchanged from that of the KJV translation. This work was conducted after Joseph had allegedly heard Moroni's alternate reading of this text. If Moroni's reading is somehow superior to that of the KJV, why did he leave the KJV untouched and uncorrected?



## dc 3.<sup>1-4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught. <sup>2</sup>For God doth not walk in crooked paths, neither doth he turn to the right hand nor to the left, neither doth he vary from that which he hath said, therefore his paths are straight, and his course is one eternal round. <sup>3</sup>Remember, remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men; <sup>4</sup>for although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him.

## Questionary

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This section was given in response to the loss of 116 manuscript pages containing a portion of the translation of the Book of Mormon.

1. Verse 1 speaks of God's "works," "designs," and "purposes."
    - ? How would you characterize God's "works," "designs," and "purposes"? Of what do they consist?
  2. The Lord speaks individuals who
    - "may have many revelations"
    - "have power to do many mighty works"
    - ? How does this apply to Joseph's experiences leading up to the loss of the 116 manuscript pages?
    - ? What revelations had he had and what mighty works had he accomplished?
  3. The Lord also speaks of the individual who
    - "boasts in his own strength"
    - "sets at naught the counsels of God"
    - "follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires"
    - ? How does this apply to Joseph in relation to the loss of the manuscript?
    - ? What element of boastfulness was in him that led to the loss of the manuscript?
    - ? To what carnal desires did Joseph yield himself that led to the loss of the manuscript?
    - ? How does this apply to you? To what "boastings" and "carnal desires" are you subject?
    - ? What do you do to control such common weaknesses?
  4. Those who engage in the attitudes and behaviors described in verse 4 can expect to "fall and incur the vengeance of a just God" if they do not repent.
    - ? Of what, do you suppose, would a "fall" consist in Joseph's case?
    - ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate "the vengeance of a just God" exercised upon Joseph? Upon yourself?
    - ? What do you think and feel about the "vengeance" of God in general?
- ? What do you think and feel when you make direct application of these criticisms and warnings to Joseph Smith?

## dc 3.<sup>5-11</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Behold, you have been entrusted with these things, but how strict were your commandments; and remember also the promises which were made to you, if you did not transgress them. <sup>6</sup>And behold, how oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men. <sup>7</sup>For, behold, you should not have feared man more than God. Although men set at naught the counsels of God, and despise his words—<sup>8</sup>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.

<sup>9</sup>Behold, thou art Joseph, and thou wast chosen to do the work of the Lord, but because of transgression, if thou art not aware thou wilt fall. <sup>10</sup>But remember, God is merciful; therefore, repent of that which thou hast done which is contrary to the commandment which I gave you, and thou art still chosen, and art again called to the work; <sup>11</sup>except thou do this, thou shalt be delivered up and become as other men, and have no more gift.

## Q

uestionary

1. These verses continue the Lord's response to Joseph's loss of the 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon. In verses 1-4, the Lord spoke of Joseph's boasting "in his own strength," setting "at naught the counsels of God," and following "after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires."
  - ? How does today's reading continue and expand upon this theme?
  - ? How do you feel when you read God charge, "how oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men"?
  - ? What do you feel when you read that "how oft"?
  - ? How do you suppose Joseph felt?
  - ? How do you feel about God as you consider the directness with which he spoke to Joseph?
2. The Lord tells Joseph, "You should not have feared man more than God?"
  - ? What do you think and feel when you read the implication that Joseph has shown more "fear" or respect to people than to God?
  - ? How had Joseph demonstrated this?
  - ? How do we demonstrate this in our lives?
3. The Lord goes on to say, "Although men set at naught the counsels of God, and despise his words—yet you should have been faithful..."
  - ? Why is Joseph held to a higher standard than others?
  - ? How do we sometimes excuse our actions by reminding ourselves and others that "others do it"?
4. After the severe reproaches, the Lord begins to build Joseph up again with His, "Thou art Joseph... But remember, God is merciful."
  - ? What do you think Joseph felt and how do you feel when you hear these words?

Later in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord will give this direction: "Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; that he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death" (121.<sup>43-44</sup>).

- ? How do the Lord's words of comfort to Joseph after the severe rebuke he offered demonstrate that we are not asked to do anything that God Himself does not do?
- ? Make a list of other commandments/ directions that God has given to us that reflect the very nature of God and the ways He Himself acts?

## dc 3.<sup>12-15</sup>

<sup>12</sup>And when thou deliveredst up that which God had given thee sight and power to translate, thou deliveredst up that which was sacred into the hands of a wicked man, <sup>13</sup>who has set at naught the counsels of God, and has broken the most sacred promises which were made before God, and has depended upon his own judgment and boasted in his own wisdom. <sup>14</sup>And this is the reason that thou hast lost thy privileges for a season—<sup>15</sup>for thou hast suffered the counsel of thy director to be trampled upon from the beginning.

## Q

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### uestionary

1. Through Joseph Smith, the Lord calls Martin Harris a “wicked man” because he “sat at naught the counsels of God” and “boasted in his own wisdom,” and depended upon his own judgment.”  
? How does this compare with Joseph whom the Lord has accused of “boast[ing] in his own strength,” and “set[ting] at naught the counsels of God,” and “follow[ing] after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires”? (Verse 4)
2. In verse 6, the Lord speaking of Joseph Smirh had lamented “how oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God...” Now, in verse 15, the Lord laments further, “thou hast suffered the counsel of thy director to be trampled upon from the beginning.”  
? What do you think and feel when you think of Joseph in these terms?

Consider the following words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel through the prophet, Jeremiah.

“Yet my people have forgotten me  
days without number” (Jer. 2.<sup>32</sup>).

“This hath been thy manner from thy youth,  
that thou obeyedst not my voice” (Jer. 22.<sup>21</sup>).

“We have sinned against the LORD our God,  
we and our fathers,  
from our youth even unto this day,  
and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God” (Jer. 3.<sup>25</sup>).

“Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day... they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck...” (Jer. 7.<sup>25-26</sup>).

- ? How do these sayings compare with what the Lord said of Joseph?
- ? How true would such words be of you and your life?
- ? What is the take home message of these laments concerning both Joseph and the people of Israel?

**d**c 6.<sup>34-37</sup>— atonement

<sup>34</sup>Therefore, fear not, little flock;  
do good; let earth and hell combine against you,  
for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail.

<sup>35</sup>Behold, I do not condemn you;  
go your ways and sin no more;  
perform with soberness the work which I have commanded you. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Look unto me in every thought;  
doubt not, fear not.

<sup>37</sup>Behold the wounds which pierced my side,  
and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet;  
be faithful, keep my commandments,  
and ye shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

## Questionary

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1. Today's reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, "The savior's generous and earnest invitation."  
? What message or messages of invitation and comfort do you hear in today's reading?
2. The Savior speaks these comforting words: "Behold, I do not condemn you." Turn to D&C 23 and look for this same comforting statement. Look around in scripture for other passages that hint at the same promise. For example, read and consider John 3.<sup>16-18</sup>.  
"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned..."  
? How do you feel about this promise of the absence of "condemnation" in your life?  
? Do you feel an absence of "condemnation" in your life? If not, why not? What do you need to think and do to realize this divine promise?  
? In your mind, what is the key to feeling that we are not "under condemnation"?  
? How likely are you to arrive at such feelings based solely on your "performance"?
3. The Savior's invitation to "behold the wounds which pierced my side, and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet" might have been literal or figurative. The Savior may have been in view at the time of the statement, or it may be an invitation to keep him ever in mind.  
? How can you read the invitation to "behold the wounds which pierced my side, and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet" in such a way that it is extended to you personally?  
? What can you do to accept the invitation?  
? What can you do to extend the invitation to another to "behold the wounds which pierced my side, and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet"?  
? Take some time today or in the near future to close your eyes and "behold" the Savior's wounds. What do you see and feel as you do so?
4. Read John 5.<sup>11-13</sup> and John 10.<sup>27-29</sup>.  
"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."  
"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My

Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.”

- ? How do these two passages relate to today's reading?
- ? How do they all fit together in your mind?
- ? Can you and do you hear in Jesus' promise “ye shall inherit the kingdom of heaven,” words that you feel you can apply to yourself?

\* The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:

“Fall: Our Need of Atonement”

“Grace: The Savior's Generous and Earnest Invitation”

“At-one-ment: The Savior's unity and connectedness with us”

“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”

“Glorification: The Savior's Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

“Justification: How We Repent and Change”

“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”

“Sanctification: Imitating and living a life of Atonement”

“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”

“Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

## dc 10.<sup>1-4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Now, behold, I say unto you, that because you delivered up those writings which you had power given unto you to translate by the means of the Urim and Thummim, into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them. <sup>2</sup>And you also lost your gift at the same time, and your mind became darkened. <sup>3</sup>Nevertheless, it is now restored unto you again; therefore see that you are faithful and continue on unto the finishing of the remainder of the work of translation as you have begun. <sup>4</sup>Do not run faster or labor more than you have strength and means provided to enable you to translate; but be diligent unto the end.

## Questionary

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Like section 3, this section addresses the loss of the 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages. This is the first of 12 readings in DC 10.

1. After losing the manuscript, the Lord says, Joseph “lost your gift at the same time, and your mind became darkened.”  
? What does this mean to you?

After losing the manuscript, Joseph had the Urim and Thummim taken from him. They were returned to him so he could receive section 3 and then taken once more. Then again, they were returned so he could receive section 10 and then taken away once more. They were only returned to him in mid-September for resumption of the translation.

- ? What do you think and feel when you consider these measures and the two to three months of uncertainty that Joseph experienced?
2. Joseph is admonished: “Do not run faster or labor more than you have strength and means provided to enable you to translate.”  
? Against what attitudes and actions, do you suppose, is Joseph being warned?  
? In having the Urim and Thummim returned to him for translation, what might he want to do to “make up for the lost time”? Why would this be detrimental?

King Benjamin gave similar advice to his people.

- “And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength. And again, it is expedient that he should be diligent, that thereby he might win the prize; therefore, all things must be done in order” (Mosiah 4.<sup>27</sup>).
- ? What is the danger of having wild swings in one’s feelings and actions in regard to spiritual things?
  - ? It is especially tempting for those in the process of repentance to feel extreme desires for rapid and profound improvement. Why is this undesirable?
  - ? Why is it preferable to remain calm and steady in one’s spiritual endeavors?
  - ? How and why does the calm and steady approach show greater faith in God than wild swings to hyper spiritual feelings and endeavors?

## dc 10.<sup>5-9</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work. <sup>6</sup>Behold, they have sought to destroy you; yea, even the man in whom you have trusted has sought to destroy you. <sup>7</sup>And for this cause I said that he is a wicked man, for he has sought to take away the things wherewith you have been entrusted; and he has also sought to destroy your gift. <sup>8</sup>And because you have delivered the writings into his hands, behold, wicked men have taken them from you. <sup>9</sup>Therefore, you have delivered them up, yea, that which was sacred, unto wickedness.

## Questionary

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Like section 3, this section addresses the loss of the 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages. This is the second of 12 readings in DC 10.

1. The word, “destroy,” is repeated three times in this reading.
  - ? Who is trying to destroy and whom/what are they trying to destroy?Scan through verse 27, looking for additional occurrences of “destroy/ destruction.”
  - ? Who is trying to destroy and whom/ what are they trying to destroy?
  - ? What do you think and feel when you consider that destruction is the goal of Satan and those who uphold his work?
  - ? What works of destruction have you witnessed in your life, works that reflect the Satanic goal?
2. In response to the Satanic work of destruction, the Lord provides the weapon to be used to “conquer” and “escape.”
  - ? What is that weapon?
  - ? What do you learn from the militant language that is reflected in the vocabular of destroy/ destruction/ conquer/ escape?
  - ? How have you seen prayer used, either in your own life or in the life of others, to conquer and escape the Satanic work of destruction?

## dc 10.<sup>10-13</sup>

<sup>10</sup>And, behold, Satan hath put it into their hearts to alter the words which you have caused to be written, or which you have translated, which have gone out of your hands. <sup>11</sup>And behold, I say unto you, that because they have altered the words, they read contrary from that which you translated and caused to be written; <sup>12</sup>and, on this wise, the devil has sought to lay a cunning plan, that he may destroy this work; <sup>13</sup>for he hath put into their hearts to do this, that by lying they may say they have caught you in the words which you have pretended to translate.

## Questionary

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Like section 3, this section addresses the loss of the 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages. This is the first of third readings in DC 10.

1. In our previous reading from this section, we suggested that one of the revelations presented in this section was the destructive goals and work of Satan and those who follow him.
  - ? How does today's reading contribute to that revelation of Satanic destructiveness?
2. We are informed that Satan "hath put into their hearts... that by lying they may say they have caught you in the words which you have pretended to translate. We often think of lying in terms of presenting false facts. But lying is as much about abusing and intending harm—harm to individuals and movements.
  - ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate not just the falsity of lying but its intent to do harm?
  - ? In discussing lying, what is the relationship between believing a lie and retelling a lie, and using facts that one knows to be false to accomplish some desired end?
  - ? How have you witnessed lies being used to misinform, to harm, and to destroy?
  - ? What do you do to combat such lying?



## dc 10.<sup>14-19</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Verily, I say unto you, that I will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing.

<sup>15</sup>For behold, he has put it into their hearts to get thee to tempt the Lord thy God, in asking to translate it over again. <sup>16</sup>And then, behold, they say and think in their hearts—“We will see if God has given him power to translate; if so, he will also give him power again; <sup>17</sup>and if God giveth him power again, or if he translates again, or, in other words, if he bringeth forth the same words, behold, we have the same with us, and we have altered them; <sup>18</sup>therefore they will not agree, and we will say that he has lied in his words, and that he has no gift, and that he has no power; <sup>19</sup>therefore we will destroy him, and also the work; and we will do this that we may not be ashamed in the end, and that we may get glory of the world.”

## Questionary

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Like section 3, this section addresses the loss of the 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages. This is the fourth of 12 readings in DC 10.

1. In our previous readings from this section, we suggested that one of the revelations presented in this section was the destructive goals and work of Satan and those who follow him.
  - ? How does today’s reading contribute to that revelation of Satanic destructiveness?
  - ? According to today’s reading, what specific plans have been put in place to destroy Joseph, the Book of Mormon, the work of God, and the souls of men?
  - ? What do you learn about those who sought to destroy Joseph and the Book of Mormon that they intended to pursue their work of destruction even if Joseph translated the work again exactly as it was before they had altered it?
  - ? How do you feel about the fact that those who seek destruction care little for truth, or what actually is, but rather will resort to distorting things to achieve their own ends?
  - ? Do you see this same spirit at play today? Why do you answer as you do? To what examples would you point in which individuals are more concerned about “winning” than it what is real and true?
2. At the end of the passage, the Lord reveals the real motivations of those who distort what really is for lies and delusion.
  - ? What are those motivations?
  - ? How does “truth” serve to cause shame?
  - ? How do lies serve to help individuals avoid shame?
  - ? How do you feel about lies serving to help individuals achieve the “glory of the world”?
  - ? What examples of individuals achieving the “glory of the world” through lies have you witnessed?
  - ? How does one combat such lying efforts?
- ? How satisfied are you with Joseph’s, or the Lord’s explanation of what has happened and the solution to the problem? Why do you answer as you do?
- ? Whether one is satisfied or not, can one still rely on the observations concerning the attitudes and motivations of those who resort to lying? Why do you answer as you do?

## dc 10.<sup>20-28</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Verily, verily, I say unto you, that Satan has great hold upon their hearts; he stirreth them up to iniquity against that which is good; <sup>21</sup>and their hearts are corrupt, and full of wickedness and abominations; and they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; therefore they will not ask of me. <sup>22</sup>Satan stirreth them up, that he may lead their souls to destruction. <sup>23</sup>And thus he has laid a cunning plan, thinking to destroy the work of God; but I will require this at their hands, and it shall turn to their shame and condemnation in the day of judgment. <sup>24</sup>Yea, he stirreth up their hearts to anger against this work. <sup>25</sup>Yea, he saith unto them: “Deceive and lie in wait to catch, that ye may destroy; behold, this is no harm.” And thus he flattereth them, and telleth them that it is no sin to lie that they may catch a man in a lie, that they may destroy him.

<sup>26</sup>And thus he flattereth them, and leadeth them along until he draggeth their souls down to hell; and thus he causeth them to catch themselves in their own snare. <sup>27</sup>And thus he goeth up and down, to and fro in the earth, seeking to destroy the souls of men. <sup>28</sup>Verily, verily, I say unto you, wo be unto him that lieth to deceive because he supposeth that another lieth to deceive, for such are not exempt from the justice of God.

## Questionary

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Like section 3, this section addresses the loss of the 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages. This is the fifth of 12 readings in DC 10.

1. In verses 20-21, the Lord describes the nature and character of the wicked who oppose Joseph, the work of translation, and the Lord himself. In making a scripture list of these characteristics, we might number seven of them.  
? What characteristics do you find?
2. Three times in this brief passage, the Lord speaks of Satan “stirring” individuals.  
? What happens to something that is stirred?  
? What comes to mind when you think of people being “stirring”?
3. Three times in this brief passage, the Lord speaks of the “hearts” of those who oppose Joseph, the work of translation, and the Lord himself.  
? What is the significance of this repeated reference to the “heart”?  
? What is the difference between error committed out of the heart, and error not committed out of the heart?
4. Verses 25-28 constitute one of our Just Scripture passages. In it we are informed that contrary to common opinion it is wrong to lie to catch and expose another person in a lie.  
? Could we extrapolate and say that it is wrong to do wrong to expose the wrong of another? Why do you answer as you do.  
? Why, do you think, is such strategy to expose a real evil, evil in itself?  
? Could we apply this criticism concerning lying to catch another in their lies to any unethical and unjust behavior used to catch another in their unethical and unjust behavior? Why do you answer as you do?

It seems that utilizing and justifying lies and bad behavior to expose the lies and bad behavior of one’s adversary is a standard and much used practice in current American politics.

- ? How do you feel about this assertion? Why do you feel as you do?  
? If you agree with the assertion, to what examples can you point in which an individual or group/ institution/ etc. use unethical means to catch opponents in unethical behavior?  
? How do you feel about this being seen as inspired by Satan, or “Satanic”?  
? How do you go about combating such Satanic inspired strategies for undermining perceived adversaries?
5. The Lord states that Satan “causeth them to catch themselves in their own snare.”

- ? What role does Satan really play if we are caught in a snare of our own making?
  - ? What does it mean that we make our own snares?
6. The Lord pronounces a “wo” upon those who “lieth to deceive.”
- ? What does this teach you about the nature of lies?
  - ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate that lying is less about being factually inaccurate and more about our intent in lying?
  - ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate that lying is about the intent to do harm to another rather than simply stating an inaccuracy?

**d**c 10.<sup>28</sup>— just scripture

Verily, verily, I say unto you, wo be unto him that lieth to deceive because he supposeth that another lieth to deceive, for such are not exempt from the justice of God.

### **Q**uestionary

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We see much of this in the political arena. Opponents adopt dishonest arguments and attacks in response to real or imagined dishonest arguments and attacks upon them. Little attention is given to what is “factual,” only what is “transactional.”

? What are the dangers to society of this sort of attitude and the behaviors it engenders?

## dc 10.<sup>29-33</sup>

<sup>29</sup>Now, behold, they have altered these words, because Satan saith unto them: “He hath deceived you”—and thus he flattereth them away to do iniquity, to get thee to tempt the Lord thy God.

<sup>30</sup>Behold, I say unto you, that you shall not translate again those words which have gone forth out of your hands; <sup>31</sup>for, behold, they shall not accomplish their evil designs in lying against those words. For, behold, if you should bring forth the same words they will say that you have lied and that you have pretended to translate, but that you have contradicted yourself. <sup>32</sup>And, behold, they will publish this, and Satan will harden the hearts of the people to stir them up to anger against you, that they will not believe my words. <sup>33</sup>Thus Satan thinketh to overpower your testimony in this generation, that the work may not come forth in this generation.

## Questionary

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Like section 3, this section addresses the loss of the 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages. This is the sixth of 12 readings in DC 10.

1. In proposing the translation strategy found in these verses, the Lord shares several over-riding concerns he has for the translation of the Book of Mormon.
  - ? What are those concerns?
2. The Lord shared his concerns about those “lying against *those words*”—i.e., the words found in the translation. He was concerned that upon hearing the lies, many “will not believe *my words*—i.e., the words found in the translation. He understood that Satan’s intention was “that *the work* may not come forth—the “work” being the translation of the Book of Mormon.
  - ? What does all of this tell you the Lord’s view concerning the Book of Mormon and its importance?
  - ? How important has the Book of Mormon been to you?
  - ? What has been its most significant contributions to your life?
3. Obviously, the Lord is presented as having been very involved in the preservation of the Book of Mormon.
  - ? How involved would you say he has been in the preservation of the Bible over many thousands of years? Why do you answer as you do?
  - ? Does your interest in and commitment to the study of scripture reflect the importance that the Lord seems to subscribe to them? Why do you answer as you do?
  - ? If not, what could you do to more fully value scripture?

## dc 10.<sup>34-37</sup>

<sup>34</sup>But behold, here is wisdom, and because I show unto you wisdom, and give you commandments concerning these things, what you shall do, show it not unto the world until you have accomplished the work of translation. <sup>35</sup>Marvel not that I said unto you: “Here is wisdom, show it not unto the world”—for I said, show it not unto the world, that you may be preserved.

<sup>36</sup>Behold, I do not say that you shall not show it unto the righteous; <sup>37</sup>but as you cannot always judge the righteous, or as you cannot always tell the wicked from the righteous, therefore I say unto you, hold your peace until I shall see fit to make all things known unto the world concerning the matter.

## Questionary

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Like section 3, this section addresses the loss of the 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages. This is the seventh of 12 readings in DC 10.

Today’s reading is follow up to the Lord’s strategy in proceeding with the translation of the Book of Mormon after the first translation manuscript was lost and altered by those who wished to undermine Joseph, the Book of Mormon, and God’s efforts to save His children.

1. In this reading, the Lord counsels Joseph to keep the strategy secret.
  - ? Why keep it secret?
  - ? How do you feel about the secrecy itself, and the need for secrecy?
2. The secrecy extends even to believers. The reason given for this is that “you cannot always tell the wicked from the righteous.”
  - ? What do you think and feel when you consider the difficulty of identifying who is “wicked” and who is “righteous”?
  - ? What do you think and feel when this difficulty is even present among the prophets—if it is true for Joseph, considered one of the greatest of prophets, is much certainly true of all prophets?
  - ? To what examples of prophets being fooled by individuals can you point?
  - ? How does the reality of the difficulty in discerning the “wicked” and the “righteous,” influence the way you approach, judge, and relate to others?

## dc 10.<sup>38-45</sup>

<sup>38</sup>And now, verily I say unto you, that an account of those things that you have written, which have gone out of your hands, is engraven upon the plates of Nephi; <sup>39</sup>yea, and you remember it was said in those writings that a more particular account was given of these things upon the plates of Nephi.

<sup>40</sup>And now, because the account which is engraven upon the plates of Nephi is more particular concerning the things which, in my wisdom, I would bring to the knowledge of the people in this account—<sup>41</sup>therefore, you shall translate the engravings which are on the plates of Nephi, down even till you come to the reign of king Benjamin, or until you come to that which you have translated, which you have retained; <sup>42</sup>and behold, you shall publish it as the record of Nephi; and thus I will confound those who have altered my words.

<sup>43</sup>I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil. <sup>44</sup>Behold, they have only got a part, or an abridgment of the account of Nephi. <sup>45</sup>Behold, there are many things engraven upon the plates of Nephi which do throw greater views upon my gospel; therefore, it is wisdom in me that you should translate this first part of the engravings of Nephi, and send forth in this work.

## Questionary

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Like section 3, this section addresses the loss of the 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages. This is the eighth of 12 readings in DC 10.

Today's reading contains additional information concerning the Lord's strategy in proceeding with the translation of the Book of Mormon after the first translation manuscript was lost and altered by those who wished to undermine Joseph, the Book of Mormon, and God's efforts to save His children.

1. In the Book of Mormon, the Words of Mormon 1.<sup>1-11</sup> contain much the same information that is found in today's reading.
  - ? What do you learn from these two sources about the textual history of the Book of Mormon as we have it today?
2. The Lord says that by the strategy he has proposed to Joseph, "I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil." In the Words of Mormon, Mormon tells us the following about his editorial selections involving the large and small plates of Nephi and their relation to his abridgment. "And I do this for a wise purpose; for thus it whispereth me, according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord which is in me. And now, I do not know all things; but the Lord knoweth all things which are to come; wherefore, he worketh in me to do according to his will" (1.7).
  - ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate the intricacies behind the preservation of the Book of Mormon and, more generally, of all scripture?
  - ? What does it tell you about the importance of scripture, including the Book of Mormon?
  - ? How does your study of them and your striving to live the principles you find in them evidence your appreciation for scripture and the efforts that have gone into preserving them for our benefit today?
  - ? What could you do to take greater advantage of the treasures that are the scriptures?

Mormon speaks of his doing things that he did not understand and came to him in nothing more than a whisper?

  - ? Has this been true in your life? If so, how?
  - ? How do you distinguish between inspired whisperings and those that simply originate from your own mind and thoughts?
3. Of his decision to attach the smaller, unabridged plates of Nephi to his record, Mormon says, "The things which are upon these plates pleas[ed] me, because of the prophecies of the coming of Christ" (W of M 1.4).

? What have you appreciated and learned about Christ from 1 Nephi-Omni?



## dc 10.<sup>46-52</sup>

<sup>46</sup>And, behold, all the remainder of this work does contain all those parts of my gospel which my holy prophets, yea, and also my disciples, desired in their prayers should come forth unto this people.

<sup>47</sup>And I said unto them, that it should be granted unto them according to their faith in their prayers;

<sup>48</sup>yea, and this was their faith—that my gospel, which I gave unto them that they might preach in their days, might come unto their brethren the Lamanites, and also all that had become Lamanites because of their dissensions. <sup>49</sup>Now, this is not all—their faith in their prayers was that this gospel should be made known also, if it were possible that other nations should possess this land; <sup>50</sup>and thus they did leave a blessing upon this land in their prayers, that whosoever should believe in this gospel in this land might have eternal life; <sup>51</sup>yea, that it might be free unto all of whatsoever nation, kindred, tongue, or people they may be. <sup>52</sup>And now, behold, according to their faith in their prayers will I bring this part of my gospel to the knowledge of my people. Behold, I do not bring it to destroy that which they have received, but to build it up.

## Questinary

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Like section 3, this section addresses the loss of the 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages. This is the ninth of 12 readings in DC 10.

1. In this reading, the Lord speaks 5 times of “gospel” (three times, as “my gospel,” and two times as “this gospel”).
  - ? What does “gospel” mean to you?
  - ? Among the five uses of the word in this reading, are there slightly different nuances to the word? If so, what are those different nuances?
2. The Lord says that “this part of my gospel” will not serve “to destroy that which they have received, but to build it up.”
  - ? To what do “this part of my gospel” and “that which they have received” refer?
  - ? To what specific Book of Mormon passages would you point as serving to “build up” the Bible.
  - ? How has the Book of Mormon “built up” the Bible in your estimation?
  - ? How is the Book of Mormon’s building up of the Bible reflected in your study of the Bible?
3. Speaking of the authors found in the Book of Mormon, The Lord says that it is “according to their faith in their prayers” that He would “bring this part of my gospel [the Book of Mormon] to the knowledge of my people.”
  - ? What comes to your mind when you consider how the Lord honors today hopes and prayers that were offered thousands of years ago?
  - ? What does this tell you about the character of God?
  - ? What does this teach you about the nature of prayer?
  - ? Can you, through your prayers, be a blessing to individuals who may live far away in time and space? If so, how?

## dc 10.<sup>53-56</sup>

<sup>53</sup>And for this cause have I said: “If this generation harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them.”

<sup>54</sup>Now I do not say this to destroy my church, but I say this to build up my church; <sup>55</sup>therefore, whosoever belongeth to my church need not fear, for such shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. <sup>56</sup>But it is they who do not fear me, neither keep my commandments but build up churches unto themselves to get gain, yea, and all those that do wickedly and build up the kingdom of the devil—yea, verily, verily, I say unto you, that it is they that I will disturb, and cause to tremble and shake to the center.

## Questionary

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Like section 3, this section addresses the loss of the 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages. This is the tenth of 12 readings in DC 10.

1. We often read quickly, without much thought but with full confidence that we understand. Consider this reading’s first sentence and the following.
  - It speaks of “this generation.”
    - ? What does “this generation” mean and how far in time does a generation extend? Why do you answer as you do?
  - It speaks of “hardened hearts.”
    - ? What does it mean to harden one’s heart?
    - ? What sort of attitudes and behaviors does it include? What makes you answer as you do?
  - It speaks of “my church.”
    - ? What is meant by “my church”?
    - ? In your mind, is there any possibility that the Lord would include within his “church” more than one institution? Why do you answer as you do?
2. The Lord warns about
  - Those “who do not fear me.”
    - ? What does it mean to you to fear God?
  - Those who don’t “keep my commandments but build up churches unto themselves to get gain.”
    - ? Joined, as they are, by “but” the Lord associates not keeping the commandments with building up churches unto themselves to get gain. What is the relationship between disobedience and seeking gain?
    - ? How does getting gain become, essentially, religion?
    - ? What is meant by getting gain? Why do you answer as you do?
    - ? How is the getting of gain a form of not keeping the commandments?
    - ? How is not getting gain central to keeping the commandments?
    - ? How is the church of getting gain the opposite of what the Lord calls “my church”?
  - “Those that do wickedly and build up the kingdom of the devil.”
    - ? How does wickedness “build up the kingdom of the devil”?
    - ? How do you feel about this rather uncompromising statement?
3. The Lord says that he will “disturb, and cause to tremble and shake to the center, those who do not fear God, don’t keep commandments, but seek financial gain, and thus help build the devil’s domain.”
  - ? What does this mean to you?
  - ? How do you feel about it?
  - ? What evidence of disturbance, trembling, and shaking to the core do you see in the world since this warning? In the world today?

## dc 10.<sup>57-63</sup>

<sup>57</sup>Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I came unto mine own, and mine own received me not. <sup>58</sup>I am the light which shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. <sup>59</sup>I am he who said—“Other sheep have I which are not of this fold”—unto my disciples, and many there were that understood me not.

<sup>60</sup>And I will show unto this people that I had other sheep, and that they were a branch of the house of Jacob; <sup>61</sup>and I will bring to light their marvelous works, which they did in my name; <sup>62</sup>yea, and I will also bring to light my gospel which was ministered unto them, and, behold, they shall not deny that which you have received, but they shall build it up, and shall bring to light the true points of my doctrine, yea, and the only doctrine which is in me. <sup>63</sup>And this I do that I may establish my gospel, that there may not be so much contention; yea, Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the scriptures and do not understand them.

## Questionary

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Like section 3, this section addresses the loss of the 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages. This is the eleventh of 12 readings in DC 10.

1. Verses 57 and 58, of course, come from John 1. All, or portions of these two Gospel verses are quoted some half dozen times in the DC.
  - ? Why, do you think, does the Lord repeat so often the unpleasant reality of his rejection and the incomprehension of him?
  - ? How do we fail to fully comprehend him today?
2. One minor incomprehension of him came with his announcement: “Other sheep have I...”
  - ? What is the nature of this incomprehension?
  - ? Is it something more than an incomprehension about the existence of people in the New World?
  - ? Might he think of some as his sheep about whom we give little thought as being thought of by him as his? Why do you answer as you do?
  - ? Who would you include among his sheep that might not be thought of in such terms?
3. Once more he speaks of the Book of Mormon as building up the Bible.
  - ? How has the Book of Mormon built up the Bible in your life, in your study, and in your use?
  - ? What evidence would others see in your life that the Book of Mormon has increased your appreciation for and your study of the Bible?
4. One of the purposes of the Book of Mormon is to reduce misunderstanding and contention about doctrine.
  - ? What doctrines has it clarified for you?
  - ? How has it reduced contention concerning doctrine in your life?

## dc 10.<sup>64-70</sup>

<sup>64</sup>Therefore, I will unfold unto them this great mystery; <sup>65</sup>for, behold, I will gather them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if they will not harden their hearts; <sup>66</sup>yea, if they will come, they may, and partake of the waters of life freely.

<sup>67</sup>Behold, this is my doctrine—whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church.

<sup>68</sup>Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore he is not of my church. <sup>69</sup>And now, behold, whosoever is of my church, and endureth of my church to the end, him will I establish upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. <sup>70</sup>And now, remember the words of him who is the life and light of the world, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Amen.

## Questionary

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Like section 3, this section addresses the loss of the 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages. This is the twelfth and final reading in DC 10.

1. The Lord promises, “I will unfold unto them this great mystery.”
  - ? What is the nature of this “mystery”?
2. The Lord speaks of “the waters of life”?
  - ? What do you think of when you consider these waters?
3. The Lord defines “my doctrine” as “whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church.”
  - ? What does it mean to you to repent?
  - ? What is the relationship between repenting and coming to Jesus Christ?
  - ? What role does Jesus play in our ability to and success in repenting?
4. The Lord warns that “Whosoever declareth more or less than this [repentance and reliance on the Savior], the same is not of me.”
  - ? What would “more” include?
  - ? What would “less” include?
5. In the final verse, the Lord identifies himself by several titles.
  - ? What are those titles?
  - ? What is the significance of each title in your daily life?
    - Life of the world
    - Light of the world
    - Redeemer
    - Lord
    - God

## dc 19.<sup>18-19</sup>— atonement

<sup>18</sup>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—<sup>19</sup>nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.

### Q

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This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us.” \*

1. We have many accounts and summaries of Jesus’ suffering in Gethsemane and at Calvary. Some come from eyewitnesses, such as those found in John and Matthew. Some, such as Luke’s and Mark’s seem to come from investigation of sources near to the events in time and space. Others come from vision, such as Enoch’s, or Nephi’s, or, King Benjamin’s, or perhaps, Isaiah’s. But today’s witness concerning Jesus’ suffering is unique. It is intimate and personal and private. It comes from Jesus’ own mouth.
  - ? What do you learn and feel from Jesus’ witness concerning his own suffering that you might not learn or feel from secondhand accounts?
  - ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate that Jesus’ lives eternally with the remembrance of the event in ways that no one else can?
2. Jesus openly admits that he wanted to “shrink” from drinking the “bitter cup.”
  - ? How do you feel about this candid admission?
  - ? What does it tell you about the nature of the “bitter cup”?

We have explored the imagery of a “bitter cup” and what it tells us about Jesus ordeal elsewhere (See Luke 22.<sup>39-44</sup> and 3 Nephi 11.<sup>9-11</sup>).

3. Jesus refers to himself as “God, the greatest of all.”
  - ? How do you feel about his calling himself “God” without any caveats?
  - ? Is he “God” to you? If so, why? If not, why not?

\* The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:

“Fall: Our Need of Atonement”

“Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”

“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”

“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”

“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

“Justification: How We Repent and Change”

“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”

“Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement”

“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”

“The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

## dc 20.<sup>1-4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The rise of the Church of Christ in these last days, being one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh, it being regularly organized and established agreeable to the laws of our country, by the will and commandments of God, in the fourth month, and on the sixth day of the month which is called April—<sup>2</sup>which commandments were given to Joseph Smith, Jun., who was called of God, and ordained an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the first elder of this church; <sup>3</sup>and to Oliver Cowdery, who was also called of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the second elder of this church, and ordained under his hand; <sup>4</sup>and this according to the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be all glory, both now and forever. Amen.

## Questionary

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The first 36 verses of Section 20 are structured in five divisions, each ending with a concluding, “Amen” (1-4, 5-12, 13-16, 17-28, 29-36). We are examining these 36 verses in 10 readings. This is the first.

1. Joseph and Oliver were called as “apostles,” and were respectively “the first elder” and “the second elder.”
  - ? What, do you think, did these titles of “apostle” and “elder” mean at this early stage of Church history?
  - ? How has the understanding of “apostle” evolved over the history of the latter-day Church?

In Greek, an apóstolos, is a “commissioned envoy.”

- ? What comes to your mind when you think of an envoy?
  - ? What is their principle role?
2. Joseph speaks of his and Oliver’s callings as being “according to the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”
    - ? What does this mean to you?
    - ? How, if at all, does it alter your understanding if we read, “consistent with the generosity (or accepting nature) of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?”
    - ? How is Joseph’s and Oliver’s calling an act of generosity toward the two of them and toward the world at large?
    - ? How has Jesus shown generosity to you?
  3. Joseph ends the introductory statement with, “to whom [Jesus] be all glory, both now and forever. Amen.”
    - ? What do you think and feel when you hear this hope and declaration?
    - ? How does this relate to the role of apostles?
    - ? What have apostles said and done during your lifetime to bring a greater appreciation for Jesus into your life?

## dc 20.<sup>5-7</sup>

<sup>5</sup>After it was truly manifested unto this first elder that he had received a remission of his sins, he was entangled again in the vanities of the world; <sup>6</sup>but after repenting, and humbling himself sincerely, through faith, God ministered unto him by an holy angel, whose countenance was as lightning, and whose garments were pure and white above all other whiteness; <sup>7</sup>and gave unto him commandments which inspired him...

### Questionary

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The first 36 verses of Section 20 are structured in five divisions, each ending with a concluding, “Amen” (1-4, 5-12, 13-16, 17-28, 29-36). We are examining these 36 verses in 10 readings. This is the second reading and represents the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> division.

1. While Joseph had referred to his call as “apostle” and “first elder” in the opening lines of this section, here he only speaks of himself as “first elder.”
  - ? Why, do you think, did he confine his self referral to this title?
  - ? What do you think and feel when you think of Joseph as “first elder” rather than as “apostle,” or “president,” or “prophet”?
2. Joseph refers to his having “received a remission of his sins.”
  - ? To what, do you think, is he referring?

In his 1832 account of the first vision, Joseph reports,

“I cried unto the Lord for mercy for there was none else to whom I could go and to obtain mercy and the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness and while in <sup>the</sup> attitude of calling upon the Lord <sup>in the 16th year of my age</sup> a pillar of ~~fire~~ light above the brightness of the Sun at noon day come down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the spirit of god and the <sup>Lord</sup> opened the heavens upon me and I Saw the Lord and he Spake unto me Saying Joseph <sup>my Son</sup> thy Sins are forgiven thee. go thy <sup>way</sup> walk in my Statutes and keep my commandments behold I am the Lord of glory I was crucified (sic) for the world that all those who believe on my name may have Eternal life” (Dean C. Jessee, *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, pp. 5-7).

- ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate Joseph’s “entanglement” in “the vanities of the world” after such an experience?
  - ? Can you relate to Joseph’s spiritual ups and downs? Why do you answer as you do?
  - ? What do you think and feel when you consider that Joseph’s “First Vision” was as much about his own personal redemption as it was about an institutional restoration?
3. Joseph speaks too of his repeated “entanglement” in “the vanities of the world.”
    - ? To what, do you think, is he referring here?

Consider the following thoughts and feeling that Joseph reported feeling on the night that the angel Moroni visited him.

“... I frequently fell into many foolish errors, and displayed the weakness of youth, and the foibles of human nature; which, I am sorry to say, led me into divers temptations, offensive in the sight of God. In making this confession, no one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins. A disposition to commit such was never in my nature. But I was guilty of levity, and sometimes associated with jovial company, etc. , not consistent with that character which ought to be maintained by one who was called of God as I had been. But this will not seem very strange to any one who recollects my youth, and is acquainted with my native cheery temperament. In consequence of these things, I often felt condemned for my weakness and imperfections...” (JSH 1.<sup>28-29</sup>).

- ? What role might Joseph's experience in receiving a remission of sins during his "First Vision" have played in his confidence in approaching God on a night when he was having such thoughts of unworthiness as are expressed in this passage?



## dc 20.<sup>8-12</sup>

<sup>8</sup>And gave him power from on high, by the means which were before prepared, to translate the Book of Mormon; <sup>9</sup>which contains a record of a fallen people, and the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also; <sup>10</sup>which was given by inspiration, and is confirmed to others by the ministering of angels, and is declared unto the world by them—<sup>11</sup>proving to the world that the holy scriptures are true, and that God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old; <sup>12</sup>thereby showing that he is the same God yesterday, today, and forever. Amen.

## Questionary

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The first 36 verses of Section 20 are structured in five divisions, each ending with a concluding, “Amen” (1-4, 5-12, 13-16, 17-28, 29-36). We are examining these 36 verses in 10 readings. This is the third reading and represents the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> division.

1. This reading is focused on the Book of Mormon: what messages it contains within itself and what messages its presence in the world today sends out into the world.
  - ? What messages does the Book of Mormon contain within its own pages?
  - ? What messages does its present in the world today send out into the world?
2. The Book of Mormon “contains a record of a fallen people.”
  - ? What do you hear when you read this? What is meant by “fallen”?
  - ? If we think of “fallen” in terms of a once great society that collapsed and disappeared, what would be the significance of our knowing of it and its history?
  - ? If we think of “fallen” in terms of “spiritual death” as in the classic sense of “the fall,” what would be the significance of our seeing the nature of “fallenness”?
3. The Book of Mormon contains “the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” But one can think of any number of “gospel principles” as they are called today that are not found in the Book of Mormon.
  - ? So, what is meant by “the *fulness* of the gospel...”?
  - ? What principles would you include in the “*fulness* of the gospel”?
  - ? If you have included things that are not found in the Book of Mormon why?
  - ? How do you reconcile the Book of Mormon containing the “*fulness* of the gospel” with your inclusion of principles that are not found in the Book of Mormon?
  - ? After considering these questions, do you wish to change what you think is meant by “the *fulness* of the Gospel”? How?
4. In being in the world today, the Book of Mormon serves in
  - “proving to the world that the holy scriptures are true”
  - “proving... that God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old
  - “showing that he is the same God yesterday, today, and forever”
  - ? How, in your view and in your experiences of possessing and reading it, does the Book of Mormon do these three things?
5. There is much interest in how, exactly, the Book of Mormon was translated. While several of those who witnessed its translation process have commented on and described it, scripture seems cautious about its statements concerning the means of translation, saying only that it was translated
  - “through the mercy of God, by the power of God” (DC 1.<sup>29</sup>)
  - “by the means of the Urim and Thummim” (10.<sup>1</sup>)
  - “by the means which were before prepared” (20.<sup>8</sup>)

“by inspiration” (20.<sup>8</sup>)

“by the gift and power of God” (135.<sup>3</sup>).

- ? Why, do you think, did Joseph and scripture say so little about the process of translating the Book of Mormon?

## **d**c 20.<sup>13-16</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Therefore, having so great witnesses, by them shall the world be judged, even as many as shall hereafter come to a knowledge of this work. <sup>14</sup>And those who receive it in faith, and work righteousness, shall receive a crown of eternal life; <sup>15</sup>but those who harden their hearts in unbelief, and reject it, it shall turn to their own condemnation—<sup>16</sup>for the Lord God has spoken it; and we, the elders of the church, have heard and bear witness to the words of the glorious Majesty on high, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

## **Q**uestionary

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The first 36 verses of Section 20 are structured in five divisions, each ending with a concluding, “Amen” (1-4, 5-12, 13-16, 17-28, 29-36). We are examining these 36 verses in 10 readings. This is the fourth reading and represents the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> division.

1. Individuals, we are informed, will be judged by the “witnesses” that come to them.
  - ? What is meant by “witnesses”?
  - ? Are these “witnesses,” individuals who speak and act, the witness represented in God’s words and actions, both, something else? Why do you answer as you do?
  - ? By what “witnesses” are those judged who do not “come to a knowledge of this work”?
2. Of those who see and hear the witness found in “this work” and reject it, we are told that “it shall turn to their own condemnation.”
  - ? What is the nature of that “condemnation”?
  - ? How and by whom is the “condemnation” applied?
  - ? Does the mood seem different between “it shall turn to their own condemnation” and “they shall be condemned” another potential way to say it? Why do you answer as you do?

## dc 20.<sup>17-19</sup>

<sup>17</sup>By these things we know that there is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God, the framer of heaven and earth, and all things which are in them; <sup>18</sup>and that he created man, male and female, after his own image and in his own likeness, created he them; <sup>19</sup>and gave unto them commandments that they should love and serve him, the only living and true God, and that he should be the only being whom they should worship.

## Questionary

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The first 36 verses of Section 20 are structured in five divisions, each ending with a concluding, “Amen” (1-4, 5-12, 13-16, 17-28, 29-36). We are examining these 36 verses in 10 readings. This is the fifth reading and represents the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> division. We should also note that this reading begins the first of five “credal” statements— “We know...” (17-28, 29, 30, 31-34, and 35-36).

1. The first part of this credal statement addresses the nature of God in the cosmos.
  - He is “God in heaven”
  - He is “infinite and eternal”
  - He is “from everlasting to everlasting”
  - He is “unchangeable”

? As you contemplate these aspects of God, what do each mean to you?  
? How do each impact your daily life?
2. The second part of the credal statement found in today’s reading addresses the nature of God’s relationship with this earth.
  - He is “the framer of heaven and earth”
  - He is the “framer” of “all things which are in” heaven and earth.
  - He “created man, male and female, after his own image and in his own likeness”
  - He “gave unto them commandments that they should love and serve him, the only living and true God, and that he should be the only being whom they should worship.”

? What do each of these statements teach you about the nature and interests of God?  
? When you read that both male and female are created “after [God’s] own image and... likeness,” how do you understand the meaning of “image” and “likeness”?  
? What does this suggest to you about the nature of similarities between men and women as opposed to the nature of the differences?
3. In establishing the nature of his relationship with the earth’s inhabitants, God “gave unto them commandments that they should love and serve him, the only living and true God, and that he should be the only being whom they should worship.” In issuing this command, God apparently anticipated there would be competitors for his love and respect.
  - ? Who and what are some of the people and things that sometimes take the place of God in the thoughts and affections of the human mind and heart?
  - ? What thoughts and behavior’s indicate the presence of idols in the life of individuals and societies?
  - ? How do you keep such people and things in their proper, subordinate place?

## dc 20.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup>But by the transgression of these holy laws man became sensual and devilish, and became fallen man.

### Questionary

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The first 36 verses of Section 20 are structured in five divisions, each ending with a concluding, “Amen” (1-4, 5-12, 13-16, 17-28, 29-36). We are examining these 36 verses in 10 readings. This is the sixth reading and represents part of the 4<sup>th</sup> division. We should also note that this reading is a portion of the first of five “credal” statements— “We know...” (17-28, 29, 30, 31-34, and 35-36).

1. The first part of this credal statement addresses
1. The doctrine of the fall can be a bit difficult for many.
  - ? How do you feel about the doctrine?
  - ? When you think of “the fall” do you imagine it being a fall from a great height and for some distance, or do you see it as a stumble, more akin to a fall from a standing position to a kneeling one or prone position? Why do you answer as you do?
  - ? What is the difference spiritually between these two different images?
2. This passage speaks of “fallen man” in association with man become “sensual and devilish.”
  - ? What does it mean to you to be “sensual”—do not limit yourselves to matters of sexuality?
  - ? What does it mean to you to be “devilish”?
  - ? How pervasive are these states of sensuality and devilishness?
3. This passage says that the state of fallenness, sensuality, and devilishness came as the result of the transgression of “these holy laws.”
  - ? To what commandments do “*these*” holy laws refer?
  - ? Whose transgression brought or brings about this state—Adam and Eve, each individual, other? Why do you answer as you do?

Below are several passages from the Book of Mormon that address the fall, its consequences, and the nature of those fallen.

- ? After considering these passages, what additional insights do you have concerning the fall?

“Wherefore, all mankind were in a lost and in a fallen state, and ever would be save they should rely on this Redeemer” (1 Ne.10.<sup>6</sup>).

“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” (Al. 42.14).

“Now Alma said unto him: This is the thing which I was about to explain. Now we see that Adam did fall by the partaking of the forbidden fruit, according to the word of God; and thus we see, that by his fall, all mankind became a lost and fallen people” (Al. 12.<sup>22</sup>).

“...all mankind, by the fall of Adam being cut off from the presence of the Lord, are considered as dead, both as to things temporal and to things spiritual” (Hel. 14.<sup>16</sup>).

“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. 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.

Now behold, it was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this temporal death, for that would destroy the great plan of happiness. 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. 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.

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. And now, there was no means to reclaim men from this fallen state, which man had brought upon himself because of his own disobedience..." Al. 42.<sup>6-12</sup>).

"For it is expedient that an atonement should be made; for according to the great plan of the Eternal God there must be an atonement made, or else all mankind must unavoidably perish; yea, all are hardened; yea, all are fallen and are lost, and must perish except it be through the atonement which it is expedient should be made" (Al. 34.<sup>9</sup>)

"For they are carnal and devilish, and the devil has power over them; yea, even that old serpent that did beguile our first parents, which was the cause of their fall; which was the cause of all mankind becoming carnal, sensual, devilish, knowing evil from good, subjecting themselves to the devil. Thus all mankind were lost; and behold, they would have been endlessly lost were it not that God redeemed his people from their lost and fallen state" (Mos. 16.<sup>3-4</sup>).

"...because of transgression, man had fallen. And Aaron did expound unto him the scriptures from the creation of Adam, laying the fall of man before him, and their carnal state... And since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atone for their sins..." (Al. 22.<sup>12-14</sup>).

"... and all things which are good cometh of Christ; otherwise men were fallen, and there could no good thing come unto them" (Moro. 7.<sup>24</sup> ).

"O Lord, thou hast said that we must be encompassed about by the floods. Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry with thy servant because of his weakness before thee; for we know that thou art holy and dwellest in the heavens, and that we are unworthy before thee; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires" (Eth. 3.<sup>2</sup>).

## dc 20.<sup>21-24</sup>— atonement

<sup>21</sup>Wherefore, the Almighty God gave his Only Begotten Son, as it is written in those scriptures which have been given of him.

<sup>22</sup>He suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them.

<sup>23</sup>He was crucified, died, and rose again the third day;

<sup>24</sup>And ascended into heaven, to sit down on the right hand of the Father,  
To reign with almighty power according to the will of the Father...

## Questionary

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This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

This reading is also the seventh in a series of ten readings from DC 20.<sup>1-36</sup>. These first 36 verses of Section 20 are structured in five divisions, each ending with a concluding, “Amen” (1-4, 5-12, 13-16, 17-28, 29-36). This is the seventh reading in that series and represents part of the 4<sup>th</sup> division. We should also note that this reading is a portion of the first of five “creedal” statements— “We know...” (17-28, 29, 30, 31-34, and 35-36).

1. The fourth part of Section 20 takes a “creedal” form, its content not unlike that found in one of Christianity’s earliest documents, “The Apostles’ Creed.”

“I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.”

- ? What elements of “atonement” do you find in today’s four verses and in the Apostles’ Creed?
2. In thinking about and speaking of Jesus’ atonement, we are quite accustomed to considering Jesus’ suffering, crucifixion, death, and resurrection. But today’s text does not end there. It includes his ascension into heaven and his enthronement at the right hand of God.
  - ? What is the significance of these two additional elements?
  - ? How do these two additional elements to Jesus’ atonement impact your daily life? (You might want to review our previous readings under this topic)
  - ? What does Jesus do from his throne at God’s right hand?
3. From God’s right hand, Jesus “reign[s] with almighty power according to the will of the Father.” We can think of this from a cosmic “administrative” perspective.
  - ? But how does his “reign with almighty power” impact you personally in your daily life?
  - ? As you consider this question, consider the following passage. How does it amplify your appreciation of Jesus enthronement at the right hand of God?

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the

exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Ephesians 1.<sup>18-23</sup>).

- ? What hostile “principalities,” “powers,” “might,” “dominions,” and “names” do you need help putting under your feet, or subduing?
- ? How does Jesus’ enthronement and his power over all these things impact your ability to subdue and conquer all hostile influences in your life—whether internal or external?
- ? How might the knowledge of Jesus’ enthronement at the right hand of God impact the way you pray when you seek divine assistance?

\* The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:

“Fall: Our Need of Atonement”

“Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”

“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”

“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”

“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

“Justification: How We Repent and Change”

“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”

“Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement”

“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”

“The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”



## dc 20.<sup>25-28</sup>

<sup>25</sup>That as many as would believe and be baptized in his holy name, and endure in faith to the end, should be saved—<sup>26</sup>not only those who believed after he came in the meridian of time, in the flesh, but all those from the beginning, even as many as were before he came, who believed in the words of the holy prophets, who spake as they were inspired by the gift of the Holy Ghost, who truly testified of him in all things, should have eternal life, <sup>27</sup>as well as those who should come after, who should believe in the gifts and callings of God by the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of the Father and of the Son; <sup>28</sup>which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God, infinite and eternal, without end. Amen.

## Questionary

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The first 36 verses of Section 20 are structured in five divisions, each ending with a concluding, “Amen” (1-4, 5-12, 13-16, 17-28, 29-36). We are examining these 36 verses in 10 readings. This is the eighth reading and represents the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> division. We should also note that this reading concludes the first of five “credal” statements— “We know...” (17-28, 29, 30, 31-34, and 35-36).

1. This reading contains the extraordinary and hopeful assurance that “not only those who believed after he [Jesus] came... in the flesh,” but even those who believed in him “from the beginning, even as many as were before he came” would be “saved” and “have eternal life.” Today, we take this for granted. But there was a time when such expansive, near universal salvation was uncertain and questioned.

? What do you think and feel when you consider this expansive view of God’s willingness and ability to save, especially in light of the uncertainty of this among so many others?

? How do your feelings compare with those of Joseph Smith as he reflected later in life on the expansiveness of God’s salvation?

“Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free. Let the mountains shout for joy, and all ye valleys cry aloud; and all ye seas and dry lands tell the wonders of your Eternal King! And ye rivers, and brooks, and rills, flow down with gladness. Let the woods and all the trees of the field praise the Lord; and ye solid rocks weep for joy! And let the sun, moon, and the morning stars sing together, and let all the sons of God shout for joy! And let the eternal creations declare his name forever and ever!” (DC 128.<sup>22-23</sup>).

2. This reading also speaks of the salvation that is granted to those “who believed in the words of the holy prophets, who spake as they were inspired by the gift of the Holy Ghost, who truly testified of him in all things.”

? At its most basic, what does it mean to “believe in the words of the holy prophets”?

? At its most basic of what does the prophetic message consist?

? How does the following quotation shape, reshape, or refine your answers to the previous two questions?

“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” (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 121).

? What messages have you heard from today’s prophets that reaffirm God’s expansive ability to save through Jesus Christ?

? Has our understanding of God’s expansive ability to save been further expanded since the time of Joseph Smith? Why do you answer as you do?

- ? If you answered, “yes,” in what ways and what group or groups have been brought under the umbrella of God’s expansive capacity to save?
- ? If you answer, “no,” did the DC reach the furthest limits of God’s expansive ability to save? Why do you answer as you do?

## dc 20.<sup>29-34</sup>— atonement

<sup>29</sup>And we know that all men must repent and believe on the name of Jesus Christ,  
and worship the Father in his name,  
and endure in faith on his name to the end,  
or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God.

<sup>30</sup>And we know that justification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ  
is just and true;

<sup>31</sup>And we know also, that sanctification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ  
is just and true, to all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds, and strength.

<sup>32</sup>But there is a possibility that man may fall from grace  
and depart from the living God;

<sup>33</sup>Therefore let the church take heed and pray always,  
lest they fall into temptation;

<sup>34</sup>Yea, and even let those who are sanctified take heed also.

## Qquestionary

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This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement.” \*

This reading is also the ninth in a series of ten readings from DC 20.<sup>1-36</sup>. These first 36 verses of Section 20 are structured in five divisions, each ending with a concluding, “Amen” (1-4, 5-12, 13-16, 17-28, 29-36). This represents a portion of the 5<sup>th</sup> division. We should also note that this reading represents the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> “credal” statements— “We know...” (17-28, 29, 30, 31-34, and 35-36).

1. Today’s reading contains three of the five credal statements found in DC 20.
  - ? Of what truths do these three credal statements bear witness?
2. In verse 30, we hear “we know that justification... is just and true.” In verse 31, we hear, “we know also that sanctification... is just and true.”
  - ? What does it mean to you to be “justified,” and “sanctified”?
  - ? What is the difference?
  - ? How would you feel and what would you think if we suggested that “justification” is the remission of sins—sins that we have, do, and will commit—that we can experience in every moment of our lives, while “sanctification” is the perfection of Christ-like character, especially that of at-one-ment or connectedness/unity, that comes after a life-long effort of improvement?
3. In describing “justification,” the text sees it as coming “through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Period. In describing “sanctification,” the text also sees it as coming “through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” However, in the case of “sanctification,” the text adds, “to all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds, and strength.”
  - ? What is the significance of the fact that “to all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds, and strength” is absent in the matter of “justification”?
  - ? How do you feel about the fact that personal works of righteousness are not a prerequisite to “justification” but are to “sanctification”?
  - ? Why is it that “good works” cannot achieve “justification” or the forgiveness of sins?
4. Both “justification” and “sanctification” are dependent upon “the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”?
  - ? What do you understand “grace” to be?
  - ? If you were to consider that “grace” is something other than or in addition to “enabling power” what would that something be?

- ? How would you feel and what would you think if we suggested that “grace” is Jesus’ dispositional and willing acceptance of us?
  - ? How would an actual knowledge that Jesus finds you acceptable make your belief in and acceptance of the forgiveness of sins more likely?
5. We have suggested that “sanctification” is the perfection of Christ-like character, especially that of at-one-ment or connectedness/unity, that comes after a life-long effort of improvement.
    - ? What are you doing today to grow in Christ-like character, especially that of at-one-ment or connectedness and unity with Christ and with others?
  6. The text bears witness that “there is a possibility that man [or woman] may fall from grace.”
    - ? What does it mean to you to “fall from grace”?
    - ? How does it happen?
  7. In today’s reading, “the church” is warned to “take heed and pray always lest they fall into temptation.” Then, “those who are sanctified” are warned to “take heed also.” It seems that the two groups, “the church” and the “sanctified” are not synonymous.
    - ? What is the difference between “the church” and the “sanctified”?
    - ? How do you feel and what do you think about the two groups not being synonymous?
    - ? Are you in one group or the other? Or both? Why do you answer as you do?
- \* The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:
- “Fall: Our Need of Atonement”
  - “Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”
  - “At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”
  - “Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”
  - “Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”
  - “Justification: How We Repent and Change”
  - “Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”
  - “Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement”
  - “Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”
  - “The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

## dc 20.<sup>35-36</sup>

<sup>35</sup>And we know that these things are true and according to the revelations of John, neither adding to, nor diminishing from the prophecy of his book, the holy scriptures, or the revelations of God which shall come hereafter by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, the voice of God, or the ministering of angels.

<sup>36</sup>And the Lord God has spoken it; and honor, power and glory be rendered to his holy name, both now and ever. Amen.

## Questionary

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The first 36 verses of Section 20 are structured in five divisions, each ending with a concluding, “Amen” (1-4, 5-12, 13-16, 17-28, 29-36). We are examining these 36 verses in 10 readings. This is the tenth reading and represents part of the 5<sup>th</sup> division. We should also note that this reading is the last of five “credal” statements— “We know...” (17-28, 29, 30, 31-34, and 35-36).

? What truth or truths are testified to in this last of five credal statements as found in DC 20?

1. The prophet bears witness to three means by which “the revelations of God” are disseminated.

? What are those three means?

? To what extent have you experienced these means in your own life?

? How strong is your belief that you can receive “the revelations of God” by means of each of these three?

The Holy Spirit

The voice of God

The ministering of angels

2. The five “credal” statements, all of which had been introduced with “We know,” end with “the Lord God has spoken it.”

? Whose statements were these, the writers or God’s? Why do you answer as you do?

? What is the impact of this final “the Lord God has spoken it”?

3. Finally, we hear the hope that “honor, power and glory be rendered to his holy name, both now and ever.”

? What does it mean for “honor, power and glory” to be “rendered” to God?

? Who does the “rendering”? What part do humans play in “rendering” to God “honor, power and glory”?

? One of the meanings of “render” is “to give up, or yield”?

? What does it mean to yield “honor, power and glory” to God?

? How do we often seek to maintain “honor, power and glory” in and to ourselves?

? How is this an affront to God and a rejection of His rule in our lives?

? How do individuals and nations do that demonstrates their unwillingness to “render” “honor, power and glory” to God?

## dc 20.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup>*And again, by way of commandment to the church concerning the manner of baptism—*

All those who

humble themselves before God,

and desire to be baptized,

and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits,

and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins,

and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ,

having a determination to serve him to the end,

and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins,

shall be received by baptism into his church.

## Questionary

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We examined the first 36 verses of Section 20 in ten readings. We found that those first 36 verses had been organized and structured into five divisions, each ending with a concluding, “Amen (1-4, 5-12, 13-16, 17-28, 29-36).

The final 48 verses are organized into three divisions, each introduced in today’s versions of the DC by italicized headings (37, 38-67, 68-84). While the first 36 verses were heavily doctrinal and theological the final 48 verses are highly administrative. Today’s reading is the first, single-versed division of the final 48 verses.

1. This verse, entitled, “By way of commandment to the church concerning the manner of baptism,” gives seven prerequisites for adults who receive the ordinance of baptism  
? What are those seven prerequisites?
2. Two of the prerequisites are to “humble themselves before God” and to “come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits.”  
? What is the difference between these two things?
3. The final prerequisite reads, “and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins.”  
? What do you think and feel about this prerequisite?

Joseph Smith reports the following in relation to this line.

“[Oliver Cowdery] wrote to inform me that he had discovered an error in one of the commandments—Book of Doctrine and Covenants: ‘And truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto a remission of their sins.’

The above quotation, he said, was erroneous, and added: ‘I command you in the name of God to erase those words, that no priestcraft be amongst us!’ ....

“A few days afterwards I visited him and Mr. Whitmer’s family, when I found the family in general of his opinion concerning the words above quoted” (*HC*, Vol. 1, p. 105).

- ? What, do you suppose, might Oliver Cowdery had found to be erroneous?

Oliver felt that baptism was the ordinance that brought a remission of sins while this passage suggests that those who are baptized were doing so as a sign that they *had* already received a remission of sins.

- ? When and how do you consider an initial remission of sins to come into one’s life?  
? How does the following Book of Mormon passage relate to this question?

“Now I would have you to remember also, that there were none who were brought unto repentance who were not baptized with water. Therefore, there were ordained of Nephi,

men unto this ministry, that all such as should come unto them should be baptized with water, and this as a witness and a testimony before God, and unto the people, that they had repented and received a remission of their sins” (3 Ne. 7.<sup>24-25</sup>).

- ? How do you feel about adult baptism being a sign that forgiveness of sins has already been granted rather than a promise of a future remission of sins?  
How would you feel about this “manifestation” that one had already received a remission of sins being a prerequisite for adult baptism today?
- ? Why, do you suppose, is this very specific “manifestation” that one has already received a remission of sins not required today—certainly not in any such language?
- ? What do these two different views about baptism, forgiveness, and their relation to Church membership say about the meaning and nature of “church” and the sort of people who can be given entrance?

**dc 29.**<sup>5</sup>

Lift up your hearts and be glad, for I am in your midst, and am your advocate with the Father; and it is his good will to give you the kingdom.

**Q**uestionary

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- ? What does it mean to you that “it is [God’s] good will to give you the kingdom”?
  - ? What is the relationship between “his good will” and your own “personal goodness”?
  - ? Can you confidently apply this encouraging declaration to yourself: “it is his good will to give you the kingdom”?



**d**c 33.<sup>4</sup>

And my vineyard has become corrupted every whit; and there is none which doeth good save it be a few; and they err in many instances because of priestcrafts, all having corrupt minds.

**Q**uestionary

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This language is not unlike that found in Genesis as it describes society immediately before its destruction by flood:

“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.... The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth” (Genesis 6.<sup>5, 11-12</sup>).

? What do you think and feel about our society when you consider the similarity between the ancient and the modern authors?

## **d**c 35.<sup>10-12</sup>

<sup>10</sup>And the time speedily cometh that great things are to be shown forth unto the children of men; <sup>11</sup>but without faith shall not anything be shown forth except desolations upon Babylon, the same which has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. <sup>12</sup>And there are none that doeth good except those who are ready to receive the fulness of my gospel, which I have sent forth unto this generation.

### **Q**uestionary

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- ? What types of things might be the “great things” that God is anxious to show those who live with faith?
- ? What does “Babylon” represent?
- ? What historical and societal happenings, do you think, come under the rubric of “drink[ing] of the wine of the wrath of [Babylon’s] fornication?”
- ? What constitutes receiving “the FULNESS of my gospel?”

## dc 38.<sup>1-4</sup>— atonement

<sup>1</sup>Thus saith the Lord your God, even Jesus Christ, the Great I Am, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the same which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of heaven, before the world was made; <sup>2</sup>the same which knoweth all things, for all things are present before mine eyes; <sup>3</sup>I am the same which spake, and the world was made, and all things came by me. <sup>4</sup>I am the same which have taken the Zion of Enoch into mine own bosom; and verily, I say, even as many as have believed in my name, for I am Christ, and in mine own name, by the virtue of the blood which I have spilt, have I pleaded before the Father for them.

## Q

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1. In introducing himself as the source of the revelation found in this 38<sup>th</sup> section of the Doctrine and Covenants, Jesus adds a number of titles and descriptors of his own Being.
  - ? What titles and descriptors do you identify?
  - ? What do each of the following titles and descriptors teach you about Jesus?
    - “The Lord your God”
    - “The Great I Am”
    - “Alpha and Omega”
    - “Beginning and End”
    - The One “which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of heaven”
    - The One “which knoweth all things”
    - The One before whom “all things are present”
    - The Creator
    - The One “which have taken the Zion of Enoch into mine own bosom”
2. This same magnificent Being “spilt” his blood.
  - ? What do you think and feel when you consider the “contradiction”—in the sense that “Jesus suffered greater contradiction than any other man,” Joseph Smith—between who Jesus was and is in eternity and what he experienced in mortality?
3. Jesus says that he has “pleaded before the Father” for all of us “by the virtue of the blood which I have spilt.”
  - ? How and why does Jesus’ experience of spilling his blood allow him to “plead” for us?
  - ? What does this tell you about the Father’s feelings toward Jesus?
  - ? Have you sensed Jesus pleading for you? What were the circumstances? How did it make you feel?

## **d**c 38.<sup>11-12</sup>

For all flesh is corrupted before me; and the powers of darkness prevail upon the earth, among the children of men, in the presence of all the hosts of heaven—which causeth silence to reign, and all eternity is pained, and the angels are waiting the great command to reap down the earth, to gather the tares that they may be burned; and, behold, the enemy is combined.

### **Q**uestionary

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- ? How do you feel about the Lord's characterization that "all flesh is corrupted before me" and that "the powers of darkness prevail upon the earth"?
- ? Based upon your own observations, what evidence would you present to support the Lord's characterization?
- ? It seems unlikely that by "all flesh" the Lord feels that every single human being "is corrupted." So what do you understand the Lord to mean by "all flesh"?

**d**c 38.<sup>16</sup> — just scripture

And for your salvation I give unto you a commandment, for I have heard your prayers, and the poor have complained before me, and the rich have I made, and all flesh is mine, and I am no respecter of persons.

**Q**uestionary

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- ? What is the Lord implying when he states, “the poor have complained before me”? Will their complaints go unheeded, or will God act in their behalf?
- ? What is the focus of God ‘suggestion that “the rich have I made”?
- ? Is it: “I am the one responsible for people being rich”?
- ? How would you feel about understanding it as: “Since the rich are dependent upon me for their riches, they are to spend their riches as I command”?

**dc 38.**<sup>23-27</sup>— atonement

<sup>23</sup>But, verily I say unto you, teach one another according to the office wherewith I have appointed you; <sup>24</sup>and let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practise virtue and holiness before me.

<sup>25</sup>And again I say unto you, let every man esteem his brother as himself. <sup>26</sup>For what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one: ‘Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here;’ and to the other: ‘Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there’—and looketh upon his sons and saith I am just? <sup>27</sup>Behold, this I have given unto you as a parable, and it is even as I am. I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine.

**Q**uestionary

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This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Sanctification: Imitating and living Atonement.” \*

Throughout his life Jesus sought to reveal his and his Father’s unity, connectedness, attachment, or at-one-ment with humankind. Today’s reading focuses on the desire and need for each disciple to follow Jesus’ example and live a life of connectedness with others, near and far.

1. Today’s reading speaks of others as “brothers,” and by implication “sisters.” It uses a “parable in which others are likened to “sons,” and by implication “daughters.”
  - ? How would your attitude toward and treatment of others change if you truly thought of them as “brothers,” “sisters,” “sons,” and “daughters.”
  - ? How is inequality in our treatment of others—economic, emotional, etc.—a reflection of our thinking of others as something less than family?
2. The Lord admonishes us to “esteem his brother as himself, and practice virtue and holiness before me.”
  - ? What does it look like to “esteem” another as oneself?
  - ? What is the relationship between “esteeming” others as oneself and possessing “virtue” and “holiness”?
3. God really says that the admonitions he is delivering in today’s reading is a reflection of his own character—“it is even as I am.”
  - ? What comes to mind and how does it impact your view of God when you consider him “esteeming” others as Himself?
  - ? What does it mean that God is no “respecter” of persons?
  - ? What does this look like in your life?

It is one thing to live today’s admonitions at the private and individual level. It is another to live the admonitions in a public manner so as to impact the way society views and treats its various members.

? What do you do to encourage society at large to follow the admonitions found in today’s reading?

\* The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:

“Fall: Our Need of Atonement”

“Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”

“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”

“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”

“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

“Justification: How We Repent and Change”

“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”

“Sanctification: Imitating and living a life of Atonement”

“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”

“Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

**dc 38.**<sup>35</sup>— just scripture

And they shall look to the poor and the needy, and administer to their relief that they shall not suffer....

### **Q**uestionary

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- ? This admonition can be applied to both the individual and to society. What do you do as an individual to “look to” and “administer to the relief of the poor”?
- ? What do you do as a citizen to encourage governmental institutions to “look to” and “administer to the relief of the poor”?



**d**c 42.<sup>29-31</sup>— just scripture

If thou lovest me thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments. And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken. And inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me....

**Q**uestionary

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- ? In your mind, what is the significance of the Lord moving directly from his admonition to “keep all my commandments” to “remember the poor”?
- ? What does the direction to “consecrate of thy properties” for the “support” of the poor mean to you?
- ? What do you do to fulfill this directive?

**d**c 42.<sup>55</sup>— just scripture

And if thou obtainest more than that which would be for thy support, thou shalt give it into my storehouse, that all things may be done according to that which I have said.

### **Q**uestionary

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- ? There seems always something newer and sleeker and faster and smarter and better to be purchased. At what point has one obtained “more than that which would be for thy support”?
- ? Honestly, it seems that in our culture it is impossible to arrive at the point of having “more than that which would be for they support.” What does this suggest about our culture?
- ? Where are you in relation to the Lord’s standard, “if thou obtainest more than that which would be for thy support”?

## dc 45.<sup>1-2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hearken, O ye people of my church,  
to whom the kingdom has been given;  
hearken ye and give ear to him who laid the foundation of the earth,  
who made the heavens and all the hosts thereof,  
and by whom all things were made which live,  
and move, and have a being.

<sup>2</sup>And again I say, hearken unto my voice,  
lest death shall overtake you;  
in an hour when ye think not the summer shall be past,  
and the harvest ended,  
and your souls not saved.

## Questionary

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Today's reading is the 1<sup>st</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

1. In these two verses, the Lord extends the same request three times.

? What is that request?

? What does it mean to you to "hearken"?

I used the word, "request" above in referring to the Lord's admonition to "hearken." Reread these verses two times—each time in a "dramatic" or "inflective" way. In the first reading, read and inflect your voice in a way that reflects "hearken" as a command. Then read and inflect your voice in a way that reflects "hearken" as an invitation."

? What is the difference in feeling between the two readings?

? Do you think of this call to "hearken" as a "command" or an "invitation"?

? Why do you answer as you do?

2. Each of the three repeated invitations to hearken focus on a different aspect of the verb.

The first focuses on the listener

The second focuses on the speaker

The third focuses on the reason for hearkening

? Identify the listener, the speaker, and the reason for the invitation.

In speaking of himself, the Savior identifies himself as

"Him who laid the foundation of the earth,  
who made the heavens and all the hosts thereof,  
and by whom all things were made which live,  
and move, and have a being."

? Are such truths about the Lord's character simply "esoteric," or do they have a bearing on the way you live your daily life?

? If they do influence daily life, what is that influence and how does it impact daily life?

3. In offering a reason for the importance of "hearkening" the Lord offers, "lest death shall overtake you."

? How do you feel about the reason?

? We might have anticipated a more positive reason for hearkening such as "you will be blessed." Why do you think he chose to "go negative"?

? Of what kind or kinds of death are those who refuse to "hearken" in danger?

? When is it necessary to remind someone of the negative consequences of disobedience as opposed to the positive consequences of obedience?

? Is one more or less effective than the other in your mind? Why to you answer as you do?

4. The Lord has extended an earnest invitation—“hearken.” He has identified his audience—“the people of my church”— and why he wished them to listen—“lest death come upon you.” He has introduced himself as the creator and the power by which all things “live and move, and have a being.”

He has yet to stipulate what it is to which we are being invited to hearken.

? Without the benefit of further reading in section 45, to what, do you think, would the Lord have us “hearken”?

Section 45 will very soon give us something very specific to which the Lord wishes us to “hearken.”

## dc 45.<sup>3-5</sup>— atonement

<sup>3</sup>Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father,  
who is pleading your cause before him—

<sup>4</sup>Saying: “Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin,  
in whom thou wast well pleased;

behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might  
be glorified;

<sup>5</sup>Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name,  
that they may come unto me and have everlasting life.

## Q

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### uestionary

In addition to being one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Glorification: The Savior’s resurrection, ascension, and enthronement,” today’s reading is also the second of 21 readings taken from DC 45.

In our first reading from DC 45 (verses 1-2), we heard the Lord’s thrice repeated invitation to members of the church that they “hearken” to him “lest death shall overtake you.”

1. If we were to consider things outside the context of section 45, we could identify any number of things to which we should hearken. However, if we restrict our considerations only to the context of section 45, today’s reading contains one specific thing to which the church is to hearken in order to avoid “death.”

? What is said in today’s reading that is to be hearkened to, and will rescue the hearer from death?

? Why is it so important that we “hearken” to the Lord’s advocacy for us?

? How does hearing his advocacy for us deliver us from “death”?

2. In our previous reading on “Glorification: The Savior’s resurrection, ascension, and enthronement” (3 Nephi 17.<sup>16-18</sup>), we considered an instance when individuals heard Jesus praying for them, and how they felt and what they said about it.

“And behold he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written, and the multitude did bear record who heard him. And after this manner do they bear record: The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father; and no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father” (3 Nephi 17.<sup>16-17</sup>).

? Have you heard/sensed Jesus praying for you?

? If so, how did it make you feel? If not, why not? What might you do to hear him?

3. We are admonished to “praying in the name of Jesus Christ.” This is much more than instruction concerning the “formula of prayer.”

? What does praying in his name mean to you?

When we invoke his name in prayer, we are actually inviting him to join in our prayer as a partner.

? Have you experienced prayer in which you felt Jesus participating with you in the prayer?

- \* The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:

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“Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”

“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”  
“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”  
“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”  
“Justification: How We Repent and Change”  
“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”  
“Sanctification: Imitating and living a life of Atonement”  
“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”  
“Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

## dc 45.<sup>6-8</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Hearken, O ye people of my church,  
and ye elders listen together,  
and hear my voice while it is called today,  
and harden not your hearts;  
<sup>7</sup>for verily I say unto you that I am Alpha and Omega,  
the beginning and the end,  
the light and the life of the world—  
a light that shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not.  
<sup>8</sup>I came unto mine own, and mine own received me not;  
but unto as many as received me gave I power to do many miracles,  
and to become the sons of God;  
and even unto them that believed on my name gave I power to obtain eternal life.

## Questionary

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Today's reading is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first reading from DC 45 (verses 1-2), we heard the Lord's thrice repeated invitation to members of the church that they "hearken" to him "lest death shall overtake you."

In our second reading (verses 3-5) we heard the specific words to which we are to hearken. We are to hearken to his words of advocacy for us. The Savior's advocacy for us, and our awareness of it, is central to our ability to escape death.

1. After permitting us to hear his words of advocacy for us, the Savior gives the following admonition:

"hear my voice while it is called today  
and harden not your hearts"

- ? Why do you think he issues this admonition?

? Is there a danger that some will harden their hearts against his advocacy? Why would anyone be so hardened?

? What attitudes and actions are indicative of a hardening against his advocacy?
2. The admonition to not harden our hearts that is found here comes from the New Testament Book of Hebrews (3.<sup>7-8</sup>), and is, itself, a quotation from Psalm 95.

"To day if ye will hear his voice,  
Harden not your heart, as in the provocation,  
and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:  
When your fathers tempted me, proved me,  
and saw my work.  
Forty years long was I grieved with this generation,  
and said, "It is a people that do err in their heart,  
and they have not known my ways:"  
Unto whom I swear in my wrath  
that they should not enter into my rest" (Psalm 95.<sup>7-11</sup>).

- ? What additional insights into the attitudes and actions of "hardening" do you glean from this passage?

? How is our hardening of the heart against Jesus' advocacy for us like Israel's ancient resistance to entering the promised land and thus the "rest of the Lord"?

3. In verse two the Lord described himself as he

“who laid the foundation of the earth,”

“who made the heavens and all the hosts thereof,”

“by whom all things were made which live, and move, and have a being.”

In verse 7 of today’s reading, the Lord provides further descriptions of himself.

? Identify those things that you learn about him from verse 7.

? We ask here, as we asked in verse 2, “Does such knowledge about the Savior impact your daily life? If so, how?” Jesus is:

“Alpha and Omega”

“The beginning and the end”

“The light and the life of the world”

“A light that shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not”

This lament that Jesus is a light shining in the darkness that is not “comprehended”—a lament first found in John 1—is repeated some dozen times or so in the Doctrine and Covenants.

? How do you feel about it’s being repeated so often?

? Why, do you think, is it repeated so often?

? What does “Alpha and Omega” signify?

4. In verse 8, Jesus says that he has given those who believe in him “power...to become the sons of God.”

? In what sense are we not “sons of God” until we have demonstrated that we believe in Christ?

? What do you think and how do you feel when you learn that there is a sense in which being a “son of God” is based upon a “choice” rather than some type of cosmic parentage?



## dc 45.<sup>9-10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>And even so I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world,  
to be a light to the world,  
and to be a standard for my people,  
and for the Gentiles to seek to it,  
and to be a messenger before my face  
to prepare the way before me.  
<sup>10</sup>Wherefore, come ye unto it,  
and with him that cometh  
I will reason as with men in days of old,  
and I will show unto you my strong reasoning.

## Q

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### uestionary

Today's reading is the 4<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first reading from DC 45 (verses 1-2), we heard the Lord's thrice repeated invitation to members of the church that they "hearken" to him "lest death shall overtake you."

In our second reading (verses 3-5) we heard the specific words to which we are to hearken. We are to hearken to his words of advocacy for us. The Savior's advocacy for us, and our awareness of it, is central to our ability to escape death.

In the third reading (verses 6-8), the Lord repeated his admonition to hearken along with additional reasons that he is worthy of our attention.

1. In today's reading, the Lord speaks of having "sent mine everlasting covenant into the world. The term, "everlasting covenant" refers to different aspects of the gospel, depending on the local context.
  - ? To what, do you think, "everlasting covenant" refers in today's reading?
  - ? In verses 3-5, the Lord spoke of his "commitment" to advocating our cause. What would you think, and how would you feel about understanding the Lord's "everlasting covenant" in this context as his undying commitment to play the part of advocate for others?
2. Those who choose to accept the truth of the Lord's commitment to advocate for them, even if that "acceptance" is only "provisional" or "experimental"—think Alma's invitation to "experiment on the word"—are promised that the Lord will "reason" with them, even with his "strong reasoning."
  - ? Why, do you suppose, is there a need for the Lord to "reason strongly" in regard to his commitment to advocate?
  - ? Take a little time to consider, compose, and even write down the Lord's "arguments" for accepting his commitment to advocate.
3. This "everlasting covenant," this enduring commitment to advocate for others is to be a "light to the world," a "standard for his people" and a "messenger before his face."
  - ? How is it a "light to the world"?
  - ? What does it mean that the Lord's commitment to advocate is a "standard for his people"?
  - ? How does it serve as a "messenger" or "herald" of his coming?
  - ? How does the Lord's light get communicated to the world?
4. Consider how the Lord's commitment to advocacy for others is a "standard for his people." One way for the world to learn of his commitment is through the Lord's people's "preaching" and "teaching" concerning it. However, there may be an even more effective way of making the Lord's commitment to advocate for others known. Consider the following well-known scriptures.

"Be ye therefore perfect [or, as Luke has it, "Be ye merciful"], even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect [or "merciful"] (Matthew 5.<sup>48</sup> and Luke 6.<sup>36</sup>).

“Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:<sup>27</sup>).

- ? What responsibility do you have as one of the Lord’s people to not only accept his advocacy for you, but to become, like him, and advocate for others?
- ? Who needs the Lord’s advocacy? Who needs your advocacy?
- ? How might our failure to advocate for those who need advocacy indicate that we do not understand the meaning of his advocacy for us?

**dc 45.**<sup>11-14</sup>— just scripture

<sup>11</sup>Wherefore, hearken ye together and let me show unto you even my wisdom—  
the wisdom of him whom ye say is the God of Enoch, and his brethren,

<sup>12</sup>Who were separated from the earth, and were received unto myself—  
a city reserved until a day of righteousness shall come—  
a day which was sought for by all holy men,

and they found it not because of wickedness and abominations;

<sup>13</sup>And confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;

<sup>14</sup>But obtained a promise that they should find it and see it in their flesh.

## Questionary

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In addition to being a *Just Scripture* reading, today's reading is also the 5<sup>th</sup> of 21 taken from DC 45.

In our first reading from DC 45 (verses 1-2), we heard the Lord's thrice repeated invitation to members of the church that they "hearken" to him "lest death shall overtake you."

In our second reading (verses 3-5) we heard the specific words to which we are to hearken. We are to hearken to his words of advocacy for us. The Savior's advocacy for us, and our awareness of it, is central to our ability to escape death.

In our third reading (verses 6-8), the Lord identifies negative consequences that are avoided and positive consequences that are enjoyed by harkening to the Lord's advocacy for us.

In our fourth reading (verses 9-10), the Lord speaks of his "everlasting covenant," which we associated with his enduring commitment to advocate for others. This commitment to advocate for others is the standard by which we are to live and establishes how we relate to others.

1. After speaking of his commitment to advocate, and establishing our advocacy for others as a standard of behavior, the Lord continues with "wherefore..."
  - ? What does this "wherefore" signal to you?
2. The Lord transitions easily from the discussion concerning his "everlasting covenant" to advocate to a discussion concerning the city of Zion.
  - ? What does this suggest to you?
  - ? What is the relationship between Zion and the advocacy for others?
3. The Lord suggests that throughout history every individual who could be thought of as "holy" has possessed the desire for a "day of righteousness" and worked for the establishment of Zion.
  - ? What thought do you give to the establishment of Zion?
  - ? How often do such thoughts occupy your mind?
  - ? What efforts do you make toward the establishment of Zion?
  - ? Given your answer to the former three questions, can you be thought of as "holy"?
  - ? What role might your advocacy for others play in the establishment of Zion.
  - ? How would you feel and what would you think if we identified Zion as a community that advocates for others?
4. The Book of Moses describes Zion as that society that
  - is "of one heart and one mind"
  - dwells "in righteousness"
  - has "no poor among them" (Moses 7.<sup>18</sup>).
  - ? How is advocacy for others indicative of being "of one heart and one mind"?
  - ? What role does the advocacy for others play in doing away with poverty?
  - ? What attitudes and actions would accompany advocacy for the poor such that it would do away with poverty?

5. According to today's reading, those who seek to establish Zion do so, partially out of a sense that they are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth."
  - ? What does this mean to you?
  - ? Why do they feel like "strangers"?
  - ? What is it about the world that makes them feel like they do not belong?
  - ? What does the world do to make advocacy and belonging and unity so difficult?
  - ? How comfortable are you in this world?
  - ? How consistently and diligently do you act to put the world behind you and enjoy a Zion type society in which advocacy and belonging and unity play such a large role and are principle ideals?

## dc 45.<sup>15-17</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Wherefore, hearken and I will reason with you,  
and I will speak unto you and prophesy, as unto men in days of old.

<sup>16</sup>And I will show it plainly as I showed it unto my disciples as I stood before them in the flesh,  
and spake unto them, saying:

As ye have asked of me concerning the signs of my coming,  
in the day when I shall come in my glory in the clouds of heaven,  
to fulfil the promises that I have made unto your fathers,

<sup>17</sup>for as ye have looked upon the long absence of your spirits from your bodies to be a bondage,  
I will show unto you how the day of redemption shall come,  
and also the restoration of the scattered Israel.

## Questionary

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Today's reading the 6<sup>th</sup> of 21 taken from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior’s advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others’ lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

With verse 15, there is a dramatic shift. However, as before, the Lord continues to reason with us, and we are under the continued necessity of hearkening. In verses 15-63, we enter a quasi-apocalyptic world. But the description of a dystopian world is not to be thought of only in terms of apocalyptic, or a catalogue of the “signs of the times.” It must not be divorced from what has preceded it. It is, we suggest, a world made dystopian through the absence of advocacy, belonging, inclusion, and unity. This will become clear in verses 64-71, which represent the alternative to the dystopia. The section will end with a brief conclusion (verses 72-75).

1. The Lord promises, “I will reason with you, and I will speak unto you and prophesy, us unto men in days of old.”
  - ? What do you think and feel when you hear such a promise?
  - ? To what extent do you apply this promise to yourself, personally, as opposed to simply institutionally—the promise being granted to institutional prophets without reference to individual members?
2. Jesus speaks of his disciples looking “upon the long absence of [their] spirits from [their] bodies” as “a bondage.”
  - ? How do you feel about your body?
  - ? Is your body something that you feel you couldn’t live without as your spirit continues to live in eternity?
  - ? What, to your way of thinking, would be the advantage of having a body in eternity if one’s “ego” could exist without one?
3. The Lord prepares us for what is to follow by informing us, “I will show unto you how the day of redemption shall come, and also the restoration of the scattered Israel.”
  - ? How will this notice shape how you read the following verses?
  - ? What do you think, feel, and imagine when you read of “the day of redemption”?
  - ? What do you think, feel, and imagine when you read of “the restoration of the scattered Israel”?

- ? How might a day of “redemption” and “restoration” relate to the idea of advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, unity that was found in the first 14 verses of this section of the DC?

## dc 45.<sup>18-21</sup>

<sup>18</sup>And now ye behold this temple which is in Jerusalem,  
which ye call the house of God,  
and your enemies say that this house shall never fall.

<sup>19</sup>But, verily I say unto you, that desolation shall come upon this generation as a thief in the night,  
and this people shall be destroyed and scattered among all nations.

<sup>20</sup>And this temple which ye now see shall be thrown down  
that there shall not be left one stone upon another.

<sup>21</sup>And it shall come to pass, that this generation of Jews shall not pass away  
until every desolation which I have told you concerning them shall come to pass.

## Questionary

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Today's reading is the 7<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior’s advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others’ lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

With verse 15, there is a dramatic shift. However, as before, the Lord continues to reason with us, and we are under the continued necessity of hearkening. In verses 15-63, we enter a quasi-apocalyptic world. But the description of a dystopian world is not to be thought of only in terms of apocalyptic, or a catalogue of the “signs of the times.” It must not be divorced from what has preceded it. It is, we suggest, a world made dystopian through the absence of advocacy, belonging, inclusion, and unity. This will become clear in verses 64-71, which represent the alternative to the dystopia. The section will end with a brief conclusion (verses 72-75).

Today's reading then, continues the quasi-apocalyptic theme.

1. In the lead up to Jesus’ utterance found in today’s reading, Matthew informs us that “his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple” (Mt. 25.<sup>1</sup>). Luke tells us that “some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts...” (Lk. 21.<sup>5</sup>). Mark notes that it was “one of his disciples” that commended the temple for his consideration: “see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! (Mk. 13.<sup>1</sup>). It seems obvious that the disciples were very enthralled by the beauty of the temple and all that it stood for.
  - ? So, what do you suppose the disciples thought and felt when Jesus told them that “this temple which ye now see shall be thrown down that there shall not be left one stone upon another”?
  - ? How do you suppose other lay Jews and their priesthood leaders felt about such an assertion?
  - ? How did the Jews of Jeremiah’s day respond to a similar message?
  - ? Why is it so difficult for people to believe that the institutions that they put stock in can collapse and disappear into nothingness— especially in light of how many times it has happened in human history?
2. In speaking to his disciples Jesus speaks of the temple “which ye call the house of God. He also says that “*your* enemies say that this house shall never fall.”
  - ? What is the significance of that “ye” in “ye call the house of God” rather than “I call the house of God”?

Jesus certainly disavows “your enemies” avowal that “this house shall never fall” with his warning that “this temple which ye now see shall be thrown down.”

? What would you think and feel when we suggest that in speaking as he does, Jesus disavowed that the Jewish temple was “the house of God” and that it was invincible?

3. Jesus associates the temple and its adherents with a series of negative words: “desolation” (twice), “destroyed,” “scattered,” “not be left,” “throw down.”

Consider how this 45<sup>th</sup> section began: with a discussion of Jesus’ advocacy, the importance of that advocacy, and the need for his disciples to imitate and expand his idea of advocacy.

? What do you think and feel when we suggest that the desolation of the temple and its adherents is a consequence of their having rejected the idea, doctrine, and practice of advocacy, with its implied ideas of inclusion, acceptance, unity, etc.?



## dc 45.<sup>22-25</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Ye say that ye know that the end of the world cometh;  
ye say also that ye know that the heavens and the earth shall pass away;  
<sup>23</sup>And in this ye say truly, for so it is;  
but these things which I have told you shall not pass away until all shall be fulfilled.  
<sup>24</sup>And this I have told you concerning Jerusalem;  
and when that day shall come, shall a remnant be scattered among all nations;  
<sup>25</sup>But they shall be gathered again;  
but they shall remain until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

## Q

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### uestionary

Today's reading is the 8<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior’s advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others’ lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

With verse 15, there is a dramatic shift. However, as before, the Lord continues to reason with us, and we are under the continued necessity of hearkening. In verses 15-63, we enter a quasi-apocalyptic world. But the description of a dystopian world is not to be thought of only in terms of apocalyptic, or a catalogue of the “signs of the times.” It must not be divorced from what has preceded it. It is, we suggest, a world made dystopian through the absence of advocacy, belonging, inclusion, and unity. This will become clear in verses 64-71, which represent the alternative to the dystopia. The section will end with a brief conclusion (verses 72-75).

Today's reading then, continues the quasi-apocalyptic theme.

1. Jesus speaks of “the end of the world” and of “the heavens and the earth” passing away as realities.
  - ? What is the difference between “the end of the world” and “the earth” passing away?
  - ? What, do you suppose, did Jesus’ disciples anticipate would replace the world, the heavens, and the earth?
  - ? What do you see existing in their place?
2. Before the end of “the world,” “the heavens,” and “the earth, there are things that must “be fulfilled.”
  - ? What sorts of things must be fulfilled?
  - ? How do you really feel about the life as you know it, the daily routines, the little pleasures, the predictabilities, etc. coming to and end?
  - ? How do you really feel knowing that before the end comes, there will be some very, very dark, dangerous, and destructive events; that your life as it is know with all its comforts is likely to be deeply disrupted?
3. Jesus speaks of the scattering and subsequent gathering of Israel. But the gathering will not take place “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”
  - ? What does he mean by “gentiles”?
  - ? Are you a “gentile” as he defines the term?
  - ? What do you learn about the identity of “the gentiles” from the following passage taken from the Kirtland temple dedicatory prayer?

“Now these words, O Lord, we have spoken before thee, concerning the revelations and commandments which thou hast given unto us, who are identified with the Gentiles” (DC 109.<sup>60</sup>).

- ? What is meant by the “times of the Gentiles” being “fulfilled”?

## dc 45.<sup>26-30</sup>

<sup>26</sup>And in that day shall be heard of wars and rumors of wars,  
and the whole earth shall be in commotion,  
and men's hearts shall fail them,  
and they shall say that Christ delayeth his coming until the end of the earth.

<sup>27</sup>And the love of men shall wax cold,  
and iniquity shall abound.

<sup>28</sup>And when the times of the Gentiles is come in,  
a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness,  
and it shall be the fulness of my gospel;

<sup>29</sup>But they receive it not; for they perceive not the light,  
and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men.

<sup>30</sup>And in that generation shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

## Questionary

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Today's reading is the 9<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior's advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others' lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

With verse 15, there is a dramatic shift. However, as before, the Lord continues to reason with us, and we are under the continued necessity of hearkening. In verses 15-63, we enter a quasi-apocalyptic world. But the description of a dystopian world is not to be thought of only in terms of apocalyptic, or a catalogue of the “signs of the times.” It must not be divorced from what has preceded it. It is, we suggest, a world made dystopian through the absence of advocacy, belonging, inclusion, and unity. This will become clear in verses 64-71, which represent the alternative to the dystopia. The section will end with a brief conclusion (verses 72-75).

Today's reading then, continues the quasi-apocalyptic theme.

1. Today's reading continues its description of this world, a dystopian world.
  - ? What are the characteristics of a dystopian world as it is described in today's reading?
  - ? How would this sort of dystopia be alleviated through the sort of advocacy found in the verses 3-15 of this section?
2. Jesus describes the world as a place of “wars and rumors of wars.” In Nephi's visions, he repeatedly refers to this world as one filled with “wars and rumors of wars” (1 Ne. 12.<sup>2, 21</sup>; 14.<sup>15</sup>), while speaking of wars' “great slaughters” (1 Ne. 12.<sup>2</sup>), and “many generations” passing away “after the manner of wars and contentions (1 Ne. 12.<sup>3</sup>). In a book that wishes, above all, to be “another testament of Christ,” the Book of Mormon devotes a good chunk of space to wars and rumors of wars.”
  - ? How do you feel about this world being depicted as a place of wars and rumors of wars?
  - ? How is this reflected in Satan's threat to “buy up armies and navies and reign with blood and horror on the earth”?
  - ? How is your nation contributing to the fulfilment of this satanic and dystopian threat?
  - ? What do you do to follow the Lord's command that we “renounce war and proclaim peace” (DC 98.<sup>16</sup>)?
3. Jesus describes a dystopian world in which “men's hearts shall fail them.”

- ? What is meant by this failing of the heart?
  - ? What evidence do you see in the world around you that individuals and even institutions are losing hope, giving up on goodness, and yielding to the demands of evil?
  - ? How do you keep from having your heart fail you?
4. Jesus describes a dystopian world in which “the love of men shall wax cold”
    - ? What evidence do you see in the world around you of this feature of a dystopian world?
    - ? How has the COVID-19 pandemic revealed this waxing cold” of individuals’ and institutions’ love, concern, and care for those around them?
  5. Jesus speaks of “the times of the Gentiles” coming in and then, as in verse 25, of “the times of the Gentiles” being “fulfilled.”
    - ? What is meant by these two things?
    - ? What are the evidences of “the times of the Gentiles” coming in?
    - ? What are the evidences of “the times of the Gentiles” being “fulfilled”?
    - ? How do you feel about our equating “the times of the gentiles” being “fulfilled” with “the times of the gentiles” ending?
    - ? Whose time might follow “the times of the Gentiles”?
    - ? How might the Gentiles feel about and respond to their time coming to an end?
    - ? How would you feel and what would you think if we suggested that we are seeing this fulfillment or ending today and seeing the Gentile reaction?
  6. Notwithstanding the fact that “a light” which is “the fulness of my gospel” breaks forth “among them that sit in darkness,” Jesus warns that the Gentiles will not “receive it,” but “turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men.”
    - ? How do you feel about this observation?
    - ? Is it a fair description of the world’s response to the gospel?
    - ? What is meant by “the precepts of men”?
    - ? What precepts or ideologies stand in opposition to the precepts of the gospel?
    - ? How does the “pride of the world,” or “those things in which the world takes pride”—i.e., the desire and drive for and the near worship of wealth, power, and prestige stand as a “precept of men” and in opposition to the precepts of the gospel?

## dc 45.<sup>31-33</sup>

<sup>31</sup>And there shall be men standing in that generation,  
that shall not pass until they shall see an overflowing scourge;  
for a desolating sickness shall cover the land.

<sup>32</sup>But my disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved;  
but among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices and curse God and die.

<sup>33</sup>And there shall be earthquakes also in divers places,  
and many desolations;  
yet men will harden their hearts against me,  
and they will take up the sword, one against another,  
and they will kill one another.

## Q

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### uestionary

Today's reading is the 10<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior’s advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others’ lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

With verse 15, there is a dramatic shift. However, as before, the Lord continues to reason with us, and we are under the continued necessity of hearkening. In verses 15-63, we enter a quasi-apocalyptic world. But the description of a dystopian world is not to be thought of only in terms of apocalyptic, or a catalogue of the “signs of the times.” It must not be divorced from what has preceded it. It is, we suggest, a world made dystopian through the absence of advocacy, belonging, inclusion, and unity. This will become clear in verses 64-71, which represent the alternative to the dystopia. The section will end with a brief conclusion (verses 72-75).

Today's reading then, continues the quasi-apocalyptic theme.

1. Today's reading continues its description of this world, a dystopian world.
  - ? What characteristics does today's reading describe as part of this world?
  - ? What consequences flow from these characteristics?
2. Consider the following strong language from today's reading:
  - “Overflowing scourge”
  - “Desolating sickness”
  - “Desolations”
  - ? What feelings and images does such language bring to your heart and mind?
3. In the previous reading, Jesus portrays the world history as a continual cycle of “wars and rumors of war.”
  - ? How does today's reading reaffirm this characteristic of human history?
  - ? What do you think and feel when you see the Lord come back to this characteristic of human behavior over and over again?
  - ? Again, we ask, what are you doing to reveal and resist the human behavior in your day and in your society?
4. The Lord asserts that his disciples will not partake in the dystopia: “disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved.”
  - ? What and where are such “holy places”?

- ? While the individual may carve out little oases of peace, how are groups of individuals necessary to a more enduring peace?
- ? What groups do you know of that resist “war and rumors of wars”?
- ? How do they do so?

## dc 45.<sup>34-38</sup>

<sup>34</sup>And now, when I the Lord had spoken these words unto my disciples, they were troubled.

<sup>35</sup>And I said unto them: Be not troubled, for, when all these things shall come to pass, ye may know that the promises which have been made unto you shall be fulfilled.

<sup>36</sup>And when the light shall begin to break forth, it shall be with them like unto a parable which I will show you—

<sup>37</sup>Ye look and behold the fig-trees, and ye see them with your eyes, and ye say when they begin to shoot forth, and their leaves are yet tender, that summer is now nigh at hand;

<sup>38</sup>Even so it shall be in that day when they shall see all these things, then shall they know that the hour is nigh.

## Questionary

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Today's reading is the 11<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior’s advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others’ lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

With verse 15, there is a dramatic shift. However, as before, the Lord continues to reason with us, and we are under the continued necessity of hearkening. In verses 15-63, we enter a quasi-apocalyptic world. But the description of a dystopian world is not to be thought of only in terms of apocalyptic, or a catalogue of the “signs of the times.” It must not be divorced from what has preceded it. It is, we suggest, a world made dystopian through the absence of advocacy, belonging, inclusion, and unity. This will become clear in verses 64-71, which represent the alternative to the dystopia. The section will end with a brief conclusion (verses 72-75).

Today's reading then, continues the quasi-apocalyptic theme.

1. The Lord informs us that “when I the Lord had spoken these words unto my disciples, they were troubled.”
  - ? To what degree do the things from the previous three readings trouble you?
  - ? What serves as a source of comfort to you when you contemplate the dystopia of our world, the consequences that it brings, and the disruption and uncertainty that it likely brings into our lives?
  - ? What role, if any, does the knowledge that the end “is nigh”?

## dc 45.<sup>39-44</sup>

<sup>39</sup>And it shall come to pass that he that feareth me shall be looking forth for the great day of the Lord to come,

even for the signs of the coming of the Son of Man.

<sup>40</sup>And they shall see signs and wonders,

for they shall be shown forth in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath.

<sup>41</sup>And they shall behold blood, and fire, and vapors of smoke.

<sup>42</sup>And before the day of the Lord shall come, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon be turned into blood, and the stars fall from heaven.

<sup>43</sup>And the remnant shall be gathered unto this place;

<sup>44</sup>And then they shall look for me, and, behold, I will come;

and they shall see me in the clouds of heaven,

clothed with power and great glory;

with all the holy angels;

and he that watches not for me shall be cut off.

## Q

uestionary

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Today's reading is the 12<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior’s advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others’ lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

With verse 15, there is a dramatic shift. However, as before, the Lord continues to reason with us, and we are under the continued necessity of hearkening. In verses 15-63, we enter a quasi-apocalyptic world. But the description of a dystopian world is not to be thought of only in terms of apocalyptic, or a catalogue of the “signs of the times.” It must not be divorced from what has preceded it. It is, we suggest, a world made dystopian through the absence of advocacy, belonging, inclusion, and unity. This will become clear in verses 64-71, which represent the alternative to the dystopia. The section will end with a brief conclusion (verses 72-75).

Today's reading then, continues the quasi-apocalyptic theme.

1. The Lord says that “he that feareth me shall be looking forth for the great day of the Lord to come.” Also, “they shall look for me, and, behold, I will come.” Finally, “he that watches not for me shall be cut off.” Looking and watching for the Lord seem to be vital in enduring the dystopia of this world.
  - ? How do you look to and watch for the Lord in the normal difficulties and perplexities of life, whether you live in or see the “end days” or not?
  - ? What is it about keeping our eyes on the Savior that is so reassuring and such a help in avoiding the evils of the dystopian world in which we live?
  - ? What sorts of things help you stay focused on the Savior?
2. The Lord mentions several signs that are associated with the “end times.”
  - ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate the entire idea of “the signs of the times”? Are thoughts and discussions about “the signs of the times significant to the way you live your life, do they seem abstract and far away, do they seem strange and unrealistic?



## dc 45.<sup>45-46</sup>

<sup>45</sup>But before the arm of the Lord shall fall, an angel shall sound his trump,  
and the saints that have slept shall come forth to meet me in the cloud.

<sup>46</sup>Wherefore, if ye have slept in peace blessed are you;  
for as you now behold me and know that I am,  
even so shall ye come unto me and your souls shall live,  
and your redemption shall be perfected;  
and the saints shall come forth from the four quarters of the earth.

## Q

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### uestionary

Today's reading is the 13<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior’s advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others’ lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

With verse 15, there is a dramatic shift. However, as before, the Lord continues to reason with us, and we are under the continued necessity of hearkening. In verses 15-63, we enter a quasi-apocalyptic world. But the description of a dystopian world is not to be thought of only in terms of apocalyptic, or a catalogue of the “signs of the times.” It must not be divorced from what has preceded it. It is, we suggest, a world made dystopian through the absence of advocacy, belonging, inclusion, and unity. This will become clear in verses 64-71, which represent the alternative to the dystopia. The section will end with a brief conclusion (verses 72-75).

Today's reading then, continues the quasi-apocalyptic theme.

1. With today's, “the saints that have slept shall come forth to meet me in the cloud” and its “the saints shall come forth from the four quarters of the earth,” we seem to have a variation on the traditional Christian “rapture.”
  - ? How do you feel about this?
  - ? How do you understand what will happen to dead and living followers of Christ before he final conflagration of the earth?
2. The Lord speaks of “your redemption” and of it being “perfected.”
  - ? What does this mean to you?
  - ? Is there a “redemption” that is “not perfected”? If so, what is it and what does it look like?
  - ? What is the nature of your own current “redemption”?

## dc 45.<sup>47-50</sup>

<sup>47</sup>Then shall the arm of the Lord fall upon the nations.

<sup>48</sup>And then shall the Lord set his foot upon this mount,  
and it shall cleave in twain, and the earth shall tremble, and reel to and fro,  
and the heavens also shall shake.

<sup>49</sup>And the Lord shall utter his voice,  
and all the ends of the earth shall hear it;  
and the nations of the earth shall mourn,  
and they that have laughed shall see their folly.

<sup>50</sup>And calamity shall cover the mocker,  
and the scorner shall be consumed;  
and they that have watched for iniquity shall be hewn down and cast into the fire.

## Questionary

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Today's reading is the 14<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior’s advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others’ lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

With verse 15, there is a dramatic shift. However, as before, the Lord continues to reason with us, and we are under the continued necessity of hearkening. In verses 15-63, we enter a quasi-apocalyptic world. But the description of a dystopian world is not to be thought of only in terms of apocalyptic, or a catalogue of the “signs of the times.” It must not be divorced from what has preceded it. It is, we suggest, a world made dystopian through the absence of advocacy, belonging, inclusion, and unity. This will become clear in verses 64-71, which represent the alternative to the dystopia. The section will end with a brief conclusion (verses 72-75).

Today's reading then, continues the quasi-apocalyptic theme.

1. In today's reading, the Lord foretells setbacks that “the nations of the earth” will suffer
  - ? What are these setbacks?
  - ? How do you feel when you read that “the arm of the Lord fall[s] upon the nations” and that “the nations of the earth shall mourn”?

Consider the following passages, all take from the Doctrine and Covenants

“For a desolating scourge shall go forth among the inhabitants of the earth, and shall continue to be poured out from time to time, if they repent not, until the earth is empty, and the inhabitants thereof are consumed away and utterly destroyed by the brightness of my coming” (5.<sup>19</sup>)

“But without faith shall not anything be shown forth except desolations upon Babylon, the same which has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (35.<sup>11</sup>).

“For I, the Almighty, have laid my hands upon the nations, to scourge them for their wickedness. And plagues shall go forth, and they shall not be taken from the earth until I have completed my work, which shall be cut short in righteousness— (84.<sup>96-97</sup>).

“And verily I say unto you, the rest of my servants, go ye forth as your circumstances shall permit, in your several callings, unto the great and notable cities and villages,

reproving the world in righteousness of all their unrighteous and ungodly deeds, setting forth clearly and understandingly the desolation of abomination in the last days. For, with you saith the Lord Almighty, I will rend their kingdoms; I will not only shake the earth, but the starry heavens shall tremble” (84.<sup>117-118</sup>).

“And thus, with the sword and by bloodshed the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn; and with famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God, until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all nations...” (87.<sup>6</sup>).

“For behold, and lo, vengeance cometh speedily upon the ungodly as the whirlwind; and who shall escape it? The Lord’s scourge shall pass over by night and by day, and the report thereof shall vex all people; yea, it shall not be stayed until the Lord come; for the indignation of the Lord is kindled against their abominations and all their wicked works” (97.<sup>22-24</sup>).

“Mine indignation is soon to be poured out without measure upon all nations; and this will I do when the cup of their iniquity is full” (101.<sup>11</sup>).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face. Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation; and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord” (112.<sup>23-24</sup>).

- ? How do you feel as you read the Lord’s plans and intentions for the kingdoms of this world?
  - ? What, do you think, would be the impact of such circumstances upon yourself and your family?
  - ? What would your community look like in such circumstances?
  - ? How would you feel about being alive in such times?
2. The Lord warns that “they that have laughed shall see their folly;” that “calamity shall cover the mocker;” and that “the scorner shall be consumed.”
    - ? What types of people and what types of attitudes and behaviors are reflected in these three groups of people—laughers, mockers, and scorners?
    - ? What do they laugh about and what do they mock and scorn?
  3. Finally, the Lord warns that “they that have watched for iniquity shall be hewn down and cast into the fire.”
    - ? What does it mean to “watch for iniquity”?
    - ? Is there a difference between observing the reality of iniquity in others and “watching for iniquity”? If so, what is the difference?
    - ? How do individuals seek to take advantage and excel through others’ weaknesses and vulnerabilities?

## dc 45.<sup>51-53</sup>

<sup>51</sup>And then shall the Jews look upon me and say:  
What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet?

<sup>52</sup>Then shall they know that I am the Lord;  
for I will say unto them:

These wounds are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.  
I am he who was lifted up.

I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God.

<sup>53</sup>And then shall they weep because of their iniquities;  
then shall they lament because they persecuted their king.

## Q

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### uestionary

Today's reading is the 15<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior’s advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others’ lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

With verse 15, there is a dramatic shift. However, as before, the Lord continues to reason with us, and we are under the continued necessity of hearkening. In verses 15-63, we enter a quasi-apocalyptic world. But the description of a dystopian world is not to be thought of only in terms of apocalyptic, or a catalogue of the “signs of the times.” It must not be divorced from what has preceded it. It is, we suggest, a world made dystopian through the absence of advocacy, belonging, inclusion, and unity. This will become clear in verses 64-71, which represent the alternative to the dystopia. The section will end with a brief conclusion (verses 72-75).

Today's reading then, continues the quasi-apocalyptic theme.

1. In readings immediately proceeding today's reading, we have heard of a dystopian future in which the nations of the earth would face calamities, tribulations, and desolations of all types, including, for example, overflowing scourges, desolating sickness, earthquakes, blood, and fire, and vapors of smoke, a darkened sun, a moon turned into blood, stars falling from heaven, the earth trembling, reeling to and fro, etc.
  - ? How would you compare all these disasters with the trial of the Jewish people that is described in today's reading?
  - ? How would you compare the pains of all these disasters with the pain of knowing that you killed your God who had so lovingly desired to care for you?
  - ? Why is it unfair to single out the Jews as murderers of God?
  - ? How do all nations and peoples of the earth demonstrate their hostility toward God?
  - ? Looking at the world around you as it is today, how accurate do you feel Nephi was when he spoke of the Jews as “the more wicked part of the world” and that “none other nation... would crucify [murder] their God”? (2 Ne. 10.<sup>3</sup>).
  - ? How are the peoples of the world today doing violence against God in ways that would very likely turn to murderous intent if he were to appear as a mortal and criticize their behavior?
  - ? What marks and wounds do our present sins leave upon him?

## dc 45.<sup>54-59</sup>

<sup>54</sup>And then shall the heathen nations be redeemed,  
and they that knew no law shall have part in the first resurrection;  
and it shall be tolerable for them.

<sup>55</sup>And Satan shall be bound,  
that he shall have no place in the hearts of the children of men.

<sup>56</sup>And at that day, when I shall come in my glory,  
shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins.

<sup>57</sup>For they that are wise and have received the truth,  
and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide,  
and have not been deceived—

verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire,  
but shall abide the day.

<sup>58</sup>And the earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance;  
and they shall multiply and wax strong,  
and their children shall grow up without sin unto salvation.

<sup>59</sup>For the Lord shall be in their midst,  
and his glory shall be upon them,  
and he will be their king and their lawgiver.

## Q

uestionary

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Today's reading is the 16<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior's advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others' lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

With verse 15, there is a dramatic shift. However, as before, the Lord continues to reason with us, and we are under the continued necessity of hearkening. In verses 15-63, we enter a quasi-apocalyptic world. But the description of a dystopian world is not to be thought of only in terms of apocalyptic, or a catalogue of the “signs of the times.” It must not be divorced from what has preceded it. It is, we suggest, a world made dystopian through the absence of advocacy, belonging, inclusion, and unity. This will become clear in verses 64-71, which represent the alternative to the dystopia. The section will end with a brief conclusion (verses 72-75).

Today's reading then, continues the quasi-apocalyptic theme.

1. Today's reading promises that “Satan shall be bound, that he shall have no place in the hearts of the children of men.”
  - ? After having been a power and dominant force for evil for thousands of years in human history, how do you explain how Satan is finally bound, causing him to lose his ability to influence the hearts of human beings?
2. The Lord predicts that in the millennium there will be those who “are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived.”
  - ? What is the relationship between taking the Holy Spirit as a guide and binding Satan and ending his influence?
  - ? Given Satan's current influence, what does this say about the level to which individuals are currently taking the Holy Spirit for their guide?

- ? How effectively do you take the Holy Spirit for your guide? On what basis and by what standards do you base your answer?
3. Previous to Jesus' appearance in Nephite America, prophets labored diligently to reclaim the people without much success. I suppose that prophets today labor as diligently, apparently, with little success. Yet, in his short ministry among the Nephites, Jesus created a just and righteous society that lasted for hundreds of years. The DC prophecies that he will minister again upon the earth and that his ministry will produce a just and righteous society that will endure for a thousand years.
- ? What is it about Jesus' personal ministration that is so much more effective and transformative than that of even the most dedicated of prophets?
  - ? What does this suggest about you and your own life?
  - ? Is there anything you could do—and if so, what—to experience the more personal and transformative ministry of Jesus himself in life today?

## dc 45.<sup>60-61</sup>

<sup>60</sup>And now, behold, I say unto you,  
it shall not be given unto you to know any further concerning this chapter,  
until the New Testament be translated,  
and in it all these things shall be made known;  
<sup>61</sup>Wherefore I give unto you that ye may now translate it,  
that ye may be prepared for the things to come.

## Q

uestionary

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Today's reading is the 17<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior’s advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others’ lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

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Today's reading then, continues the quasi-apocalyptic theme.

1. In today's reading, the Lord mentions the “translation” of the New Testament and “this chapter”
  - ? To what is the Lord referring when he mentions “this chapter”?
  - ? To what is the Lord referring when he mentions a New Testament “translation”?
  - ? What use have you made of the Joseph Smith Translation in general?
  - ? What use have you made of other translations of the Bible? What advantages or disadvantages have you found in such translations?
2. The Lord seems to suggest that an understanding of scriptures that speak of “the Latter-days,” are necessary to being “prepared for the things to come”?
  - ? How prepared “for the things to come” do you feel?

This section of the Doctrine and Covenants has a heavy apocalyptic spirit.

- ? How useful, informative, inspiring, and helpful do you find such literature?

## dc 45.<sup>62-63</sup>

<sup>62</sup>For verily I say unto you, that great things await you;

<sup>63</sup>Ye hear of wars in foreign lands;

but, behold, I say unto you, they are nigh,  
even at your doors,

and not many years hence ye shall hear of wars in your own lands.

## Questionary

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Today's reading is the 18<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior’s advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others’ lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

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Today's reading then, continues the quasi-apocalyptic theme.

1. As we near the end of this quasi-apocalyptic portion of Section 45, we are reminded that the reasons for the bestowal of such information go well beyond “knowing.” It is bestowed “that ye may be prepared for the things to come” (verse 61).
  - ? What “things to come” are discussed in today’s reading?
  - ? How do you feel about the Lord’s emphasis of war, foreign and domestic?

In his desire to understand his father’s dream, Nephi sees a series of visions. Some of these visions look into the future of world history. In characterizing this human history, the angel who leads him through them characterizes human history, in general, as one of “wars and rumors of wars.”

“I beheld multitudes gathered together to battle, one against the other; and I beheld wars, and rumors of wars, and great slaughters with the sword among my people. And\* I beheld many generations pass away, after the manner of wars and contentions in the land...” (1 Nephi 12.<sup>2-3</sup>).

“And I saw them gathered together in multitudes; and I saw wars and rumors of wars among them; and in wars and rumors of wars I <sup>saw</sup> many generations pass away” (1 Nephi 12.<sup>21</sup>).

“I beheld that the wrath of God was poured out upon that great and abominable church, insomuch that there were wars and rumors of wars among all the nations and kindreds of the earth. And as there began to be wars and rumors of wars among all the nations which belonged to the mother of abominations, the angel spake unto me, saying: ‘Behold, the wrath of God is upon the mother of harlots; and behold, thou seest all these things’— (1 Nephi 14.<sup>15-16</sup>).

A half-year after Joseph received Section 45, he received the following:



“I have sworn in my wrath, and decreed wars upon the face of the earth, and the wicked shall slay the wicked, and fear shall come upon every man; and the saints also shall hardly escape...” (DC 63.<sup>33-34</sup>).

On Christmas day of the same year (1831), Joseph was informed through revelation:

“And the time will come that war will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at this place.... (DC 87.<sup>2</sup>).

- ? How do you feel and what do you think about foreign and domestic wars being so central a feature of human history and, more specifically of the latter days?
- ? How do you feel and what do you think when you consider that wars—domestic and foreign—are part of the “great things [that] await you” as stated in verse 62 of today’s reading?
- ? How accurate do you find the characterization of the latter days as a time of wars and rumors of wars to be?
- ? How do you feel and what do you understand when the Lord says that “the saints also shall hardly escape” the wars decreed for the latter days?

## dc 45.<sup>64-65</sup>

<sup>64</sup>Wherefore I, the Lord, have said,  
gather ye out from the eastern lands,  
assemble ye yourselves together ye elders of my church;  
go ye forth into the western countries,  
call upon the inhabitants to repent,  
and inasmuch as they do repent, build up churches unto me.  
<sup>65</sup>And with one heart and with one mind,  
gather up your riches that ye may purchase an inheritance  
which shall hereafter be appointed unto you.

## Q

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### uestionary

Today's reading is the 19<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior’s advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others’ lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

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1. Today's reading begins to present the alternative to the dystopia of the latter days. That alternative is based upon advocacy, belonging, inclusion, and unity
  - ? What evidences of unity and cooperation do you find in today's reading?
  - ? What does it mean and what does it look like to “gather up... riches” “*with one heart and with one mind*”?
  - ? How does this unity relate to the law of consecration?
2. Today's reading begins with the conjunction, or connecting word, “Wherefore.”
  - ? What does “wherefore” mean? With what other words might you replace it?
  - ? After reading the two verses prior to this “wherefore,” identify the reasons for the need to gather in a community called “Zion”?
  - ? How does gathering to Zion protect against the near constant war and rumor of war that is part of human history and of the latter days in particular?

Even with the gathering, circumstances will be difficult. Elsewhere, the Lord warns, “I have sworn in my wrath, and decreed wars upon the face of the earth, and the wicked shall slay the wicked, and fear shall come upon every man; and the saints also shall hardly escape...” (DC 63.<sup>33-34</sup>).

- ? How do you feel when you read that even with their unity the saints will “hardly escape”?

## dc 45.<sup>66-71</sup>

<sup>66</sup>And it shall be called the New Jerusalem,  
a land of peace, a city of refuge,  
a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God;

<sup>67</sup>And the glory of the Lord shall be there,  
and the terror of the Lord also shall be there,  
insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it,  
and it shall be called Zion.

<sup>68</sup>And it shall come to pass among the wicked,  
that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor  
must needs flee unto Zion for safety.

<sup>69</sup>And there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven;  
and it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another.

<sup>70</sup>And it shall be said among the wicked:  
Let us not go up to battle against Zion,  
for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible;  
wherefore we cannot stand.

<sup>71</sup>And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations,  
and shall come to Zion, singing with songs of everlasting joy.

## Q

uestionary

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Today's reading is the 20<sup>th</sup> of 21 from DC 45.

In our first five readings from DC 45 (verses 1-14), we were repeatedly invited to “hearken, “hear,” and “listen.” The invitation came with a warning, “lest death shall overtake you.” With his strong reasoning, the Lord revealed that advocacy, acceptance, belonging, inclusion, and unity were the means by which death was avoided. We first heard the words of the Savior’s advocacy for us (3-5). This was followed by the positive and negative consequences of “hearing” his voice of advocacy (6-8). Finally, we heard the necessity of our becoming the kind of advocates in others’ lives that Jesus is in ours (9-10), and that this advocacy took not only private forms, but public as well (11-14).

With verse 15, there is a dramatic shift. However, as before, the Lord continues to reason with us, and we are under the continued necessity of hearkening. In verses 15-63, we enter a quasi-apocalyptic world. But the description of a dystopian world is not to be thought of only in terms of apocalyptic, or a catalogue of the “signs of the times.” It must not be divorced from what has preceded it. It is, we suggest, a world made dystopian through the absence of advocacy, belonging, inclusion, and unity. This will become clear in verses 64-71, which represent the alternative to the dystopia. The section will end with a brief conclusion (verses 72-75).

1. Today's reading continues the discussion concerning the gathering and the response it represents to the latter days' incessant wars and rumors of war.
  - ? What do you think and feel when you read 1) “that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor must needs flee unto Zion; and 2) that the people of Zion “shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another”?
  - ? How close to this sort of unity do you sense that the current Church is? Why do you answer as you do?
  - ? How unified, for example, is the current Church in regard to issues surrounding 1) war, 2) immigration, 3) COVID-19 and appropriate responses?
2. The nations and peoples of the earth say, “Let us not go up to battle against Zion, for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible; wherefore we cannot stand.” They say this even though the people of Zion refuse to engage in war and, presumably, all of war's preparations.
  - ? What is the nature of Zion's defenses?

? What, if any, does the experience of Enoch's Zion have to do with this latter-day experience?

“And so great was the faith of Enoch that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them; and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him. There also came up a land out of the depth of the sea, and so great was the fear of the enemies of the people of God, that they fled and stood afar off and went upon the land which came up out of the depth of the sea” (Moses 7.<sup>13-14</sup>).

## dc 45.<sup>72-75</sup>

<sup>72</sup>And now I say unto you,  
keep these things from going abroad unto the world until it is expedient in me, that ye may  
accomplish this work in the eyes of the people,  
and in the eyes of your enemies,  
that they may not know your works until ye have accomplished the thing which I have commanded  
you;

<sup>73</sup>That when they shall know it,  
that they may consider these things.

<sup>74</sup>For when the Lord shall appear he shall be terrible unto them,  
that fear may seize upon them,  
and they shall stand afar off and tremble.

<sup>75</sup>And all nations shall be afraid because of the terror of the Lord,  
and the power of his might. Even so. Amen.

## Qquestionary

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Today's is the final of 21 readings from DC 45.

1. The Lord admonishes that the Church “keep these things from going abroad unto the world until it is expedient in me, that ye may accomplish this work...”
  - ? What are “these things” that are not to be revealed to the world?
  - ? What is “this work” that the Church was to work to “accomplish”?
  - ? Why would the Lord suggest that the Saints’ intention to establish a Zion community be kept secret so that their “enemies “not know your works”?
  - ? How do you feel about this secrecy?
2. The Lord anticipates that when he “appears” “he shall be terrible unto” the world such that “fear” will “seize them. He also speaks of “the terror of the Lord.”
  - ? How do you feel when you consider this intimidating and severe language?
  - ? How does this language comport with the “gentle Jesus” on which we so often focus?
  - ? What is the danger in ignoring the Jesus that speaks in today’s reading?
  - ? How can you maintain the balance in your own life and in your witnessing between this Jesus and the “gentle Jesus”?
  - ? How does this the following passage relate to today’s reading?

“And so great was the faith of Enoch that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them; and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him. There also came up a land out of the depth of the sea, and so great was the fear of the enemies of the people of God, that they fled and stood afar off and went upon the land which came up out of the depth of the sea” (Moses 7.<sup>13-14</sup>).
3. With today’s reading, we come to the end of our readings in DC 45.
  - ? What new insights have you had as you worked your way thought Section 45?

## dc 49.<sup>5-7</sup>—atonement

<sup>5</sup>Thus saith the Lord; for I am God, and have sent mine Only Begotten Son into the world for the redemption of the world, and have decreed that he that receiveth him shall be saved, and he that receiveth him not shall be damned—<sup>6</sup>and they have done unto the Son of Man even as they listed; and he has taken his power on the right hand of his glory, and now reigneth in the heavens, and will reign till he descends on the earth to put all enemies under his feet, which time is nigh at hand—<sup>7</sup>I, the Lord God, have spoken it; but the hour and the day no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor shall they know until he comes.

### Questionary

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1. Those who “receiveth” Jesus “shall be saved.” Those who “receiveth him not shall be damned.”
  - ? What does it mean and what is entailed in receiving Jesus?
  - ? What scriptures would you use to justify your answer?
  - ? “Saved” and “damned” seem to be opposite conditions. What does it mean to be “saved” and “damned”?
  - ? What scriptures would you reference to justify your answer?
2. The Father says that “they have done unto the Son of Man even as they listed (wanted, were inclined).
  - ? Who is the “they”?
  - ? How accurate is it to lay the responsibility of Jesus’ death only upon Romans and Jews who actively participated in Jesus’ death?
  - ? How would you feel about the suggestion that while those who were present during Jesus’ life were the only ones who *could* kill Jesus, they are not the only ones who *would* kill Jesus if they could?
  - ? What responsibility do peoples all over the earth and during all periods of earth history have for Jesus’ death if they would kill him if they could?
3. After his resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven and was enthroned on the right hand of God and now “reigneth in the heavens.”
  - ? How does his reign in heaven impact you personally? Daily?
  - ? How does it impact the inhabitants of the planet?
4. Jesus “will reign,” we are informed, “till he descends on the earth to put all enemies under his feet.”
  - ? What does this mean to you?
  - ? What do you think, feel, imagine, when you contemplate “enemies” being “put under his feet”?
  - ? Is this a happy thought or a disturbing one? Why do you answer as you do?
  - ? Do passages such as the following relate to this putting of enemies under his feet? If so, how?

“And verily I say unto you, the rest of my servants, go ye forth as your circumstances shall permit, in your several callings, unto the great and notable cities and villages, reproving the world in righteousness of all their unrighteous and ungodly deeds, setting forth clearly and understandingly the desolation of abomination in the last days. For, with you saith the Lord Almighty, I will rend their kingdoms; I will not only shake the earth, but the starry heavens shall tremble” (84.<sup>117-118</sup>).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face. Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation; and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord” (112.<sup>23-24</sup>).

\* The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:

“Fall: Our Need of Atonement”

“Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”

“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”

“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”

“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

“Justification: How We Repent and Change”

“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”

“Sanctification: Imitating and living a life of Atonement”

“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”

“Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

**dc 49.**<sup>20</sup>— just scripture

It is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin.

### **Q**uestionary

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- ? How do you feel about the Lord's standard of righteousness being associated with economic equality?
- ? How do you feel and what do you think about the assertion that the world is guilty of sin because of economic inequality?
- ? Given the Lord's standard, what would he say about and how would he judge America?



## **d**c 50.<sup>40-46</sup>

Behold, ye are little children and ye cannot bear all things now;  
ye must grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.  
Fear not, little children, for you are mine,  
and I have overcome the world,  
and you are of them that my Father hath given me;  
And none of them that my Father hath given me shall be lost.  
And the Father and I are one.  
I am in the Father and the Father in me;  
and inasmuch as ye have received me, ye are in me and I in you.  
Wherefore, I am in your midst,  
and I am the good shepherd, and the stone of Israel.  
He that buildeth upon this rock shall never fall.  
And the day cometh that you shall hear my voice and see me, and know that I am.  
Watch, therefore, that ye may be ready.  
Even so. Amen.

## **Q**uestionary

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- ? What does it mean that Jesus has “overcome the world” and how does this reality impact your daily life?
- ? What does it mean to you and for you that Jesus will not lose anyone whom the Father has “given” him?
- ? What does it mean to “build” upon Christ?
- ? What does it mean to be watching and be ready for Jesus’ return?

**d**c 51.<sup>9</sup>— just scripture

And let every man deal honestly, and be alike among this people, and receive alike, that ye may be one, even as I have commanded you.

**Q**uestionary

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- ? What does it mean to “receive alike”?
- ? Can it and should it be applied to economic matters?

**d**c 52.<sup>40</sup>— just scripture

And remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple.

### **Q**uestionary

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1. The Lord admonishes that the saints “remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.”
  - ? What is meant by “in all things”?
  - ? Who and what type of situations would fall under the designation, “afflicted”?
  - ? What is involved in “remembering” the poor, needy, sick, and afflicted?
  
2. Those who do not live according to this admonition, are said to be “not my disciple.”
  - ? If one is not a disciple of Jesus, what can they say of themselves?
  - ? Whose disciples are they?
  - ? How well is American society abiding by this admonition?
  - ? If it is not as a society abiding by this admonition, how legitimately can its citizenry call themselves “disciples of Christ, or their nation a “Christian nation”?

**d**c 56.<sup>16</sup>— just scripture

Wo unto you rich men, that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls; and this shall be your lamentation in the day of visitation, and of judgment, and of indignation: The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved!

**Q**uestionary

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- ? What does it mean to have one's soul "cankered"?
- ? How are American political institutions and the nation's wealthy doing at "giving their substance to the poor"?
- ? How does one judge such things?

## dc 58.<sup>6-11</sup>— just scripture

<sup>6</sup>Behold, verily I say unto you, for this cause I have sent you—that you might be obedient, and that your hearts might be prepared to bear testimony of the things which are to come; <sup>7</sup>and also that you might be honored in laying the foundation, and in bearing record of the land upon which the Zion of God shall stand; <sup>8</sup>and also that a feast of fat things might be prepared for the poor; <sup>9</sup>yea, a feast of fat things, of wine on the lees well refined, that the earth may know that the mouths of the prophets shall not fail; yea, a supper of the house of the Lord, well prepared, unto which all nations shall be invited. <sup>10</sup>First, the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble; <sup>11</sup>and after that cometh the day of my power; then shall the poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf, come in unto the marriage of the Lamb, and partake of the supper of the Lord, prepared for the great day to come.

## Questionary

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There is much in today's reading that challenges our complacency and parochialism. There is an expansiveness in the Lord's vision found here that, by his own testimony, goes right over the head of every saint, big and small alike: "Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter..." (58.<sup>3</sup>). There is much that is, frankly, shocking. Understood, it is likely to be rejected as too expansive. But, this is, it seems to me, one of the fundamental messages of the gospel: God is expansive—expansive far beyond our comprehension, appreciation, and even, sometimes, our acceptance.

Today's reading is sufficiently expansive that it is worth several day's-worth of pondering and praying.

1. Joseph Smith, along with many other Church leaders have been "sent" to Missouri (see DC 58.<sup>1</sup>). There are divine purposes in God's having sent them: "for this cause I have sent you."  
? Using just today's reading, what are the purposes for which God sent Joseph and other Church leaders to Missouri?
2. It will not be enough to answer this question with the generalized answer: "that you might be obedient."  
? Obedient in what, exactly—again, limit your consideration of this question to today's reading?
3. We are to have hearts "prepared to bear testimony of the things which are to come."  
? What, exactly is "to come"—again, limit your consideration of this question to today's reading?
4. The saints are to "be honored in laying the foundation" of Zion, and in "bearing record of the land upon which the Zion of God shall stand." Zion is being founded with a purpose.  
? According to today's reading, what is the purpose of Zion?
5. It is fine, I suppose, to spiritualize the promises of "a feast of fat things... prepared for the poor" and "a supper of the house of the Lord, well prepared." But such sayings must not be spiritualized to the exclusion of a literal economic understanding: God establishes Zion in order to meet the physical and emotional needs of the poor.  
? How do you feel about this literal economic understanding?  
? How is the Church doing in this respect?  
? Do you worry over the "worthiness" of the poor to receive such divine largesse?  
? Does God's vision seem too expansive?
6. The Church has experienced unprecedented growth over the past two or three generations. It has astonished even many leaders of the Church. It might be argued that, in the U.S. anyway, that growth has been among "the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble." But today's passage suggests that something even more remarkable is to follow that growth—"after that cometh the

day of my power.”

- ? What is that remarkable follow up to our past and current growth?
  - ? How is God’s inclusion of the earth’s vulnerable, hitherto left out of the “feast of fat things,” a greater manifestation of his power than was his appeal to “the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble”?
  - ? How do you feel about it being economic as well as spiritual?
  - ? Why is God so anxious about the economic well-fare of the earth’s disadvantaged?
  - ? How do you feel about this “divine expansiveness”?
- 
- ? How does it make you feel knowing that God established his Church and called Saints especially to serve and provide an abundance of recompense for the disadvantaged?
  - ? What do you think and feel when you consider that God intends to exert his ultimate power for the benefit of vulnerable people?

**d**c 59.<sup>12</sup>

But remember that on this, the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord.

**Q**uestionary

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- ? The entire Christian world has entered the period of Lent. What does mean to you? What role could it play in your repentance?
- ? Sometimes we talk and write as much about what passages do not mean as we do about what they do mean. What does it mean, and what does it look like for saints to “confess [their] sins unto [their] brethren?
- ? How can you apply this passage appropriately?

**d**c 70.<sup>14</sup>— just scripture

Nevertheless, in your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld.

### **Q**uestionary

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- ? What are “the manifestations of the Spirit”?
- ? How and why are these manifestations impacted by individual and societal economic inequality?
- ? Given the extreme inequality in America, what does this suggest about the “manifestations” of the Spirit among its people?



## dc 76.<sup>1-4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth,  
and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof,  
for the Lord is God,  
and beside him there is no Savior.

<sup>2</sup>Great is his wisdom,  
marvelous are his ways,  
and the extent of his doings none can find out.

<sup>3</sup>his purposes fail not,  
neither are there any who can stay his hand.

<sup>4</sup>From eternity to eternity he is the same,  
and his years never fail.

## Questionary

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This reading is the 8th in a series of Advent readings and post-Advent readings that will continue through the end of December.

1. During the Christmas season our minds naturally turn foremost to the events surrounding the Savior's birth. We think, therefore, of a babe developing in his mother's womb, lying in a manger and being admired by humble shepherds and prestigious wise men. This reading reminds us that this babe is "the Lord *GOD*."

? What does it mean to you that the birth of Jesus is the "incarnation" of GOD—God living in a mortal body here on earth among men?

2. Consider these seven things that today's reading says about God, the Savior.

His wisdom is great  
His ways are marvelous  
His actions are beyond comprehending  
His purposes are inevitably accomplished  
His power is irresistible  
He is unchanging  
His existence is unending

? Choose one or two of these and consider what they mean to you—not so much from a "theological" point of view, but how they impact your everyday life.

3. Though Section 76 has the glorification and progression of humankind, it begins with this extended statement about the character and capacities of God.

? Why, do you think, does this section begin by focusing on God?

? What role will God and his capacities play in your glorification and progression?

## dc 76.<sup>5-10</sup>

<sup>5</sup>For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

<sup>6</sup>Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory.

<sup>7</sup>And to them will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom.

<sup>8</sup>Yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I show them, even the things of many generations.

<sup>9</sup>And their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven; and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught.

<sup>10</sup>For by my Spirit will I enlighten them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will— yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man.

## Q

uestionary

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Today's reading is the 15<sup>th</sup> in a series of Advent readings that will continue throughout the month of December.

1. The Lord issues some pretty amazing promises “unto those who fear” him and “serve [him] in righteousness and in truth unto the end.”
  - ? What is involved in serving God “in righteousness and in truth”?
  - ? How would you feel and respond if we asked the same question, but added a warning about being “legalistic” about your answer?
  - ? How is your service of him manifested in both your private life and in your public life?
  - ? What promises in today's reading jump out at you?
  - ? How desirable and motivating are such promises to you?
  - ? Are all of the promises issued in today's reading reserved only for the next life, or might some be granted in this life? Why do you answer as you do?
  - ? Which promises might be experienced in this life? How would you experience them?
  - ? How would you feel about focusing on one of the promises and making it a matter of prayer, asking that you might experience the blessing?

**dc 76.**<sup>40-43</sup>

And this is the gospel, the glad tidings, which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us—that he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness; that through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him; who glorifies the Father, and saves all the works of his hands, except those sons of perdition who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him.

**Q**uestionary

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- ? How do you feel about the near universal salvation to which today's reading testifies?
- ? Does this cause you to rejoice or does it produce feelings of uneasiness?
- ? Why would you feel uneasy?
- ? Why should you be rejoiced?

**dc 78.**<sup>3-7</sup>— just scripture

<sup>3</sup>For verily I say unto you, the time has come, and is now at hand; and behold, and lo, it must needs be that there be an organization of my people, in regulating and establishing the affairs of the storehouse for the poor of my people, both in this place and in the land of Zion—<sup>4</sup>for a permanent and everlasting establishment and order unto my church, to advance the cause, which ye have espoused, to the salvation of man, and to the glory of your Father who is in heaven; <sup>5</sup>that you may be equal in the bonds of heavenly things, yea, and earthly things also, for the obtaining of heavenly things. <sup>6</sup>For if ye are not equal in earthly things ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things; <sup>7</sup>for if you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you.

**Q**uestionary

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Today, we take another break from our long series of readings focused on Yom Kippur, or Day of Atonement, to examine a passage with implications concerning economic principles and attitudes related to the just society.

- 1, In establishing a storehouse for the poor, the Lord calls it “a permanent and everlasting establishment and order” which is meant to “advance the cause.”
  - ? What is the “cause that the storehouse seeks to “advance”?”
  - ? How does caring for the poor accomplish the following listed purposes or “advance” these causes?
    - Brings about the “salvation of man”
    - Brings about “the glory of [our] Father”
    - Brings about both economic and spiritual “equality”
    - Makes “a place in the celestial world” possible
  - ? How do you feel about these things being so intimately tied to caring for the poor?
2. The Lord warns that “if ye are not equal in earthly things ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things.”
  - ? How would you explain the connection between temporal or economic equality and spiritual equality?
  - ? How do you feel about an individual’s and a society’s spiritual progress being retarded because of temporal or economic inequality?
  - ? What is the spiritual state of our society based upon this criterion?
  - ? What is the spiritual state of the Church based upon this criterion?
  - ? What is your spiritual state based upon this criterion?
  - ? What might be needed to make improvement?
- ? How would you explain the correlation between economic inequality and spiritual inequality?
- ? How does economic inequality weaken the spiritual capacity of the Body of Christ, the Church?

## **d**c 82.<sup>5-6</sup>

Therefore, what I say unto one I say unto all: Watch, for the adversary spreadeth his dominions, and darkness reigneth; and the anger of God kindleth against the inhabitants of the earth; and none doeth good, for all have gone out of the way.

## **Q**uestionary

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- ? What are your thoughts and feelings when you consider today's passage juxtaposed next to the following verse that describes the state of the world's population immediately before the utter destruction of the flood.?

“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6.<sup>5</sup>).

**d**c 82.<sup>19</sup>— just scripture

Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God.

### **Q**uestionary

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- ? What does it mean to “seek the interest of” one’s neighbor?
- ? How does one establish what the interest of their neighbor are?
- ? How did Jesus “seek the interest” of others above that of himself?
- ? What can you personally do to follow the Savior’s example in “seeking the interest of” those around you above that of your own?
- ? What can you do as a public citizen to encourage others in your society to follow the Savior’s example in “seeking the interest of” others above themselves.
- ? How does “seeking the interest of” another reflect that the glory of God is paramount in an individual’s life?

**d**c 84.<sup>112</sup>—just scripture

And the bishop, Newel K. Whitney, also should travel round about and among all the churches, searching after the poor to administer to their wants by humbling the rich and the proud.

### Q

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1. Bishop Whitney is to “*search* after the poor”?
  - ? How do you feel about the responsibility Church leaders have to “search after the poor” rather than simply waiting for them to approach them for assistance?
  - ? How might such an attitude on the part of a leader impact the way the poor feels and thinks of him or herself in the midst of their need?
  - ? How does this counsel to “search after the poor” relate to members who may not be a “leader”?
  
2. Bishop Whitney is also instructed to “administer to their *wants*.”
  - ? How does this relate to their “needs”?
  - ? How do you feel about the Lord’s interest in meeting not only the poor’s basic needs but their wants as well?
  - ? What message about God does this send to the poor?
  - ? How would you feel about God if he took notice only of your most basic spiritual “needs” and ignored your spiritual “wants”?
  
3. The poor are to be assisted “by humbling the rich and the proud.”
  - ? What does this mean to you?
  - ? What is its significance?
  - ? What does “humbling the rich” in order to “administer” to the “wants” of the poor look like?
  - ? Why is there so often a connection made between wealth and pride?
  - ? What does this say about the “needs” of the wealthy?

**dc 84.**<sup>117-119</sup>—just scripture

<sup>117</sup>And verily I say unto you, the rest of my servants, go ye forth as your circumstances shall permit, in your several callings, unto the great and notable cities and villages, reprovng the world in righteousness of all their unrighteous and ungodly deeds, setting forth clearly and understandingly the desolation of abomination in the last days. <sup>118</sup>For, with you saith the Lord Almighty, I will rend their kingdoms; I will not only shake the earth, but the starry heavens shall tremble. <sup>119</sup>For I, the Lord, have put forth my hand to exert the powers of heaven; ye cannot see it now, yet a little while and ye shall see it, and know that I am, and that I will come and reign with my people.

## Questionary

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1. In today's reading, "servants" are called to go out and preach.
  - ? Where are they to preach?
  - ? What are they to preach?
  - ? In your mind, what does "reprovng the world" look like?
2. Latter-day servants of God are to go out "setting forth clearly and understandingly the desolation of abomination in the last days."
  - ? How "clearly and understandingly" do you understand "the desolation of abomination"?
  - ? How "clearly and understandingly" could you "set it forth" to another?
  - ? Take a moment to consider and perhaps record what you understand the "desolation of abomination" to be?
  - ? How important is it that "the world" hear of and understand that a "desolation of abomination" looms in its future?
  - ? How do you feel about latter-day servants having such an assignment?
  - ? How well are we/they magnifying this calling?
  - ? What can you do and say to faithfully aid in educating "the world" about this looming threat?
3. We hear this phrase—"abomination that maketh desolate"—for the first time in Daniel (11.<sup>31</sup>). He uses it to describe idolatry that takes place in the house of God, and its devastating impact. Jesus quotes Daniel's statement in saying: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place..." (Matthew 24.<sup>15</sup>)
  - ? What is it about the abomination of idolatry that causes such complete desolation?
  - ? What are the indicators of idolatry in our modern society?
4. The Lord warns/threatens, "I will rend their kingdoms."
  - ? What does this mean to you?
  - ? How do you feel about the Lord's intention of "rending" the kingdoms of this world?
  - ? What would be the likely impact of such kingdom rending events on you? On your family?
  - ? If there is anything you can do to lessen the impact of such events, what would it be?
  - ? What is "the desolation of abomination" that is to come "in the last days"?
  - ? How "clearly and understandingly" is this warning being "set forth" by the Church, its leaders, and its missionaries?
  - ? How do you feel about the warning itself and the manner in which it is being "set forth"?



**dc 87.<sup>6-8</sup>**

And thus, with the sword and by bloodshed the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn; and with famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God, until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all nations; that the cry of the saints, and of the blood of the saints, shall cease to come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, from the earth, to be avenged of their enemies. Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly, saith the Lord. Amen.

**Q**uestionary

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- ? How do you feel about a “consumption decreed” that will make “a full end of all nations”?
  - ? What does this look like to you?
  - ? How might this impact you and your family personally?

## dc 88.<sup>123</sup>—atonement

See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires.

### Questionary

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1. This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement.”\* It is also one of our *just scripture* passages. The fact is, almost any of our *just scripture* passages could also serve under this Atonement title. To begin, let us ask this question:

? How did and does Jesus himself observe the admonition found in today’s reading?

It will be easy to answer, “He loves,” and stop there. But try to go beyond this. Ask yourself

? How did/does exhibit an absence of covetousness?

? How did Jesus “impart” to others?

2. Covetousness is mentioned in the same breath as “love one another.”

? How does covetousness reveal a lack of love for others?

While we can covet non-materialistic aspects of others lives, covetousness principally lives in the materialistic realm.

? In this context, then, how is the imparting of material assets a sign of love?

3. This reading admonishes us to “impart one to another *as the gospel requires.*”

? How does “the gospel” require one to impart their material assets?

? What scriptures would you bring to bear to justify your answer?

? How does the following passage shed light on what the “gospel requires” in one’s imparting of material assets?

“And also, ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; and ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish. Perhaps thou shalt say: ‘The man has brought upon himself his misery; therefore I will stay my hand, and will not give unto him of my food, nor impart unto him of my substance that he may not suffer, for his punishments are just’— But I say unto you, O man, whosoever doeth this the same hath great cause to repent; and except he repenteth of that which he hath done he perisheth forever, and hath no interest in the kingdom of God... And if ye judge the man who putteth up his petition to you for your substance that he perish not, and condemn him, how much more just will be your condemnation for withholding your substance, which doth not belong to you but to God, to whom also your life belongeth; and yet ye put up no petition, nor repent of the thing which thou hast done” (Mos. 4.<sup>16-18, 22</sup>).

? How is Jesus consistent with the principles found in this passage as he relates to us and gives us what we ask?

? Could Jesus have felt that he would not impart his benefits to us because he had managed his life well, while we had not?

? How “deserving” are you of Jesus’ benefits?

- ? What is the central feature of the Doctrine and Covenants when it comes to how one manages their material resources and how they “impart” them?

- ? What do you think and feel when you realize that your attitude towards your material assets and how you impart them is a central aspect of sanctification, your becoming and acting like Jesus, and your ability to dwell with him comfortably?

\* The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:

“Fall: Our Need of Atonement”

“Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”

“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”

“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”

“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

“Justification: How We Repent and Change”

“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”

“Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement”

“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”

“The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

**d**c 98.<sup>9-10</sup>— just scripture

Nevertheless, when the wicked rule the people mourn. Wherefore, honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil.

### **Q**uestionary

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- ? How, in God's name, can anyone with half a mind or a modicum of morality and ethical integrity believe that the current occupant of the U.S. White House, a.k.a., Caligula, tRUMP, is an "honest" or "wise" man"?
- ? How could anyone with a moral compass and respect for God believe that Caligula's influence in America does anything but "cometh of evil"?

**dc 98.**<sup>14-17</sup>— just scripture

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, be not afraid of your enemies, for I have decreed in my heart, saith 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. <sup>15</sup>For if ye will not abide in my covenant ye are not worthy of me.

<sup>16</sup>Therefore, renounce war and proclaim peace, and seek diligently to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children; <sup>17</sup>and again, the hearts of the Jews unto the prophets, and the prophets unto the Jews; lest I come and smite the whole earth with a curse, and all flesh be consumed before me.

## Questionary

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1. In today's reading, the Lord warns, "I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant, even unto death."
  - ? What does this mean to you?
  - ? How do you feel about the Lord's expectation that you will be faithful to his requests "even unto death"?
2. Verse 16 contains one of the Lord's expectations.
  - ? What is that expectation?
  - ? How do you feel about the Lord's expectation that you will "renounce war and proclaim peace"?
  - If we combine the expectations of verse 14 and 17, then we are to "renounce war and proclaim peace," "even unto death."
  - ? How do you feel about this?
  - ? How far have you gone to be true to the charge to "renounce war and proclaim peace"?
3. The renunciation of war and the proclamation of peace is presented in the context of the "spirit of Elijah," "to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children."
  - ? How is the renunciation of war and the proclamation of peace part of the "spirit of Elijah" and the covenants that are made in the temple?
  - ? Given this relationship, how involved have you been in the "spirit of Elijah"?
4. Consider the Jewish Publication Society's translation of Malachi 3.<sup>23-24</sup> (KJV 4.<sup>5-6</sup>).

"Lo, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the coming of the awesome fearful day of the LORD. He shall reconcile parents with children and children with their parents, so that, when I come, I do not strike the whole land with utter destruction."

  - ? How does "reconciliation" spoken of here relate to today's divine expectation that we "renounce war and proclaim peace"?
  - ? How does today's reading relate to Isaiah 2.<sup>2-4</sup>?

"In days to come  
the Mountain on which stands Yahweh's temple  
will be fixed above any other Mountain;  
lifted above any other height.  
All nations will come streaming to it;  
many peoples will come, saying:  
Come! Let's go up to Yahweh's mountain;  
to the temple of the God of Ya'qōḇ.  
He will teach us his ways,  
and we shall walk in his paths.  
For Torah will come out of Ṣīyôn,  
and the word of Yahweh from Y'rûšālāyim.

Then will He mediate between nations;  
He will reconcile many peoples,  
so that they will retool their swords into plow blades  
and their spears into pruning instruments.  
One nation will no longer lift the sword against another,  
nor will they any longer train for warfare.”

- ? How, then, does the temple contribute to the renunciation of war and the proclamation of peace?
- ? What lessons do you take from the temple into society to “renounce war and proclaim peace”?
- ? What will you say and do to be faithful to this divine expectation?

## dc 101.<sup>37-38</sup>

<sup>37</sup>Therefore, care not for the body, neither the life of the body; but care for the soul, and for the life of the soul. <sup>38</sup>And seek the face of the Lord always, that in patience ye may possess your souls, and ye shall have eternal life.

### Questionary

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Today's reading is the 31<sup>st</sup> in a series of Advent readings (this one "post-Advent") that will continue throughout the month of December.

1. In today's reading, the Lord speaks of the "care" for the body and the "care" for the soul. We know how to "care" for the body, and act seriously upon this knowledge on a daily, even minute by minute basis.
  - ? What do you do to "care" for your body?
  - ? What do you do seriously, daily, even minute by minute to "care" for your soul?
  - ? If another were to observe you all day every day, how well would they say you are caring for your soul?
  - ? What can you do in the upcoming year to "care" more fully for you soul?
2. The Lord invites all to "seek the face of the Lord always." The Lord extended the same invitation in the Psalms.

"When thou saidst, 'Seek ye my face;  
my heart said unto thee, 'Thy face, LORD, will I seek.'"

  - ? What does it look like to "seek the face of the Lord"?
  - ? How much thought do you give to this pursuit each day?
  - ? What would it look like to achieve this pursuit?
3. The Lord admonishes, "in patience... possess your souls."
  - ? What does this mean to you?
  - ? What does it mean to "possess your soul"?
  - ? How did Jesus live and exemplify the counsel found in today's reading?
  - ? How serious is he about you following his example?
  - ? How serious are you about following his example? What evidence would others find in your life to confirm your answer?

## dc 101.<sup>46-51</sup>— just scripture

<sup>46</sup>Now, the servants of the nobleman went and did as their lord commanded them, and planted the olive-trees, and built a hedge round about, and set watchmen, and began to build a tower. <sup>47</sup>And while they were yet laying the foundation thereof, they began to say among themselves:

‘And what need hath my lord of this tower?’

<sup>48</sup>And consulted for a long time, saying among themselves:

“What need hath my lord of this tower, seeing this is a time of peace?”

<sup>49</sup>Might not this money be given to the exchangers?

For there is no need of these things.’

<sup>50</sup>And while they were at variance one with another they became very slothful, and they hearkened not unto the commandments of their lord. <sup>51</sup>And the enemy came by night, and broke down the hedge; and the servants of the nobleman arose and were affrighted, and fled; and the enemy destroyed their works, and broke down the olive-trees.

## Questionary

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In 1833, Mormons were expelled from their homes in Jackson County Missouri, a location that doctrine had taught them was to be Zion. In response to this tragic expulsion, Joseph Smith received the revelation found today in Doctrine and Covenants, section 101. A portion of that revelation, found in verses 44-62, consisted of a parable “concerning the redemption of Zion.”

In our previous Read, Ponder, Pray, we examined the introduction to the parable—in which we were informed that the subject matter of the parable would be “the redemption of Zion”—and the first two verses of the parable itself. In these, a nobleman provides directions to his “servants concerning the planting and protection of a “vineyard” in which are planted 12 olive trees. Principle in his directions was the building of a watchtower so that watchmen could see any looming danger long before it became an immediate threat.

We found that the nobleman was God, the vineyard, Zion, and the 12 olive trees Zion’s role as ambassador of world peace. Zion was, in the language of DC 98.<sup>16</sup>, to “renounce war and proclaim peace.” The watchtower represented Zion’s watchmen’s added insights into the dangers that outside influences posed to Zion’s safety and its ability to fulfil its role.

1. In today’s Read, Ponder, Pray we continue our examination of the parable. In today’s portion of the parable, we are informed of the servant’s efforts to follow the directions given to them by the nobleman—or, in the interpretation, Zion’s efforts to follow the directions of the Lord—and the results of their efforts.
  - ? How well did the servants follow the directions?
2. While they started out well enough, reasoning and disagreements began to arise concerning the “need” of a tower.
  - ? Why did they question the need for the tower’s construction?
  - ? What alternative use did they suggest for the money that had been dedicated to the tower’s construction?
  - ? What is the significance, and what does it tell you about the priorities of the servants that “investment” of the money that was to be dedicated to the tower’s construction was deemed better and wiser than the original intent of the money?
  - ? How do you feel about this alternative use of the money?
  - ? Where were the consequences of this decision?
3. Verses 46-54 (we will look at 52-54 in our next passage) has a kind of chiastic structure, with the decision to forgo building the tower in order to invest the money at the very center. This seems to be the point of the first half of the parable, and the principle explanation for Zion’s loss. It wasn’t simply a matter of Zion’s citizenry not following the nobleman’s directions. Nor was it simply a



matter of their being “wise in their own eyes” and thinking that they knew better than God. It was the manner in which they deviated from the directions. The error was economic. The error was caused by greed.

Consider the Lord explanation for the loss of Zion found elsewhere.

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

“Behold, I say unto you, there were jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them; therefore by these things they polluted their inheritances” (DC 101.<sup>2,6</sup>)

“Behold, I say unto you, were it not for the transgressions of my people, speaking concerning the church and not individuals, they might have been redeemed even now. But behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them....” (DC 105.<sup>2-3</sup>)

- ? How do these passages confirm the “economic” nature of Zion’s rebellion?
- ? Given what you have read, which would be more accurate

Zion was lost because its citizenry “sold it out.”

Zion was lost because its enemies stole it.

- ? Why do you answer as you do?
  - ? How does a focus on personal wealth, sell-out Zion and its objectives?
  - ? How is today’s church doing in comparison with its founding members?
  - ? What are our attitudes toward personal “profit” as opposed to “Every man [and woman] seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God” (DC 82.<sup>19</sup>).
4. In our interpretation, the enemy’s breaking down of the 12 olive trees, signifies Zion’s diminished ability to be effective ambassadors of peace to the world?
- ? How might a focus on Mammon, money, and profit—both individual and institutional—diminish Zion’s effectiveness as ambassadors of peace?
  - ? How might a focus on Mammon, money, and profit—both individual and institutional—diminish an individual’s effectiveness as an ambassador of peace?
  - ? How does a focus on Mammon, money, and profit itself make peace and friendship less achievable and less likely?
- ? 19<sup>th</sup> century Latter-day Saints failed in establishing Zion, principally, because they were more interested in personal financial matters—“might not this money be given to the exchangers”—than in following the Lord’s economic principles.
  - ? Based upon this insight, how well do you think current Latter-day Saints are doing at establishing Zion?

**dc 101.**<sup>52-54</sup>— just scripture

<sup>52</sup>Now, behold, the nobleman, the lord of the vineyard, called upon his servants, and said unto them,

‘Why! what is the cause of this great evil? <sup>53</sup>Ought ye not to have done even as I commanded you, and—after ye had planted the vineyard, and built the hedge round about, and set watchmen upon the walls thereof—built the tower also, and set a watchman upon the tower, and watched for my vineyard, and not have fallen asleep, lest the enemy should come upon you? <sup>54</sup>And behold, the watchman upon the tower would have seen the enemy while he was yet afar off; and then ye could have made ready and kept the enemy from breaking down the hedge thereof, and saved my vineyard from the hands of the destroyer.’

## Questionary

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In our first Read, Ponder, Pray based on this parable, we examined the introduction to the parable—in which we were informed that the subject matter of the parable would be “the redemption of Zion”—and the first two verses of the parable itself. In these, a nobleman provides directions to his “servants concerning the planting and protection of a “vineyard” in which are planted 12 olive trees. Principle in his directions was the building of a watchtower so that watchmen could see any looming danger long before it became an immediate threat.

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In our second reading from this parable, we found that Zion’s citizenry were unfaithful to the Lord’s directions. Specifically, rather than living by the law of consecration—an economic law of equality that allowed them to see and avoid the many dangers of this world from a higher and safer vantage point—the citizenry reverted to the worlds lust for profit and economic gain. Because of this faithlessness, Zion was lost along with its capacity to act as an effective and trusted ambassador of peace to the world.

1. In today’s reading (verse 52-54), the nobleman, in his own words, addresses his feelings and insights into the reasons for and the nature of Zion loss.
  - ? What new or additional insights into the reasons for and the nature of Zion’s loss do you glean from the nobleman’s observation in contrast to those found in the previous verses.
2. The servants were faithful in that they “had planted the vineyard, and built the hedge round about, and set watchmen upon the walls thereof.” Their downfall came in not building the tower, upon which watchmen could be set.
  - ? What does this suggest about the effectiveness of any “watchmen,” however well-intentioned and authorized they may be, that might come after the decision to not build the tower?
3. The Lord reminds the servants that had the tower been built, “the watchman upon the tower would have seen the enemy while he was yet afar off.”
  - ? What enemies, or spiritual and temporal dangers might be missed because the tower was not built, i.e., consecration was not adopted as the economic principle in Zion?
  - ? How might economic consecration rescue us today from the prevalent dangers of today’s world?

**dc 104.**<sup>15-18</sup>— just scripture

<sup>15</sup>And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine. <sup>16</sup>But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low. <sup>17</sup>For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves. <sup>18</sup>Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment.

**Q**uestionary

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1. In today's reading, the Lord says that he intends to "provide for my saints."
  - ? What does this mean to you?
  - ? In what way does the Lord intend to "provide"?
  - ? Why do the "saints" need to be "provided for"? Why do they not "provide for" themselves?
  - ? How are we to understand "saint"?
  - ? Is this limited to "members of the Church" or is it broader than that?
2. The Lord intends to "provide" for his saints by exalting the poor and making the rich low.
  - ? What does this look like?
  - ? How are the rich brought low?
  - ? How do you feel about this?
  - ? Have you seen this in action? If so, in what way?
3. The Lord threatens those who "take of the abundance... and impart not his portion... unto the poor and the needy with hell."
  - ? How would one know when they were denying the poor and needy by holding on to their "abundance"?
  - ? Does such a warning apply only to "members of the Church," or can it be applied to individuals and societies in general?
  - ? How is the Church and the society at large doing in regard to the Lord's intentions and his interests in caring for the poor and needy?
- ? We sometimes think of economics only in terms of a zero sum game in which, we think, economic inequality is inevitable and appropriate. How does the Lord's contention that there is "enough and to spare" put the lie to such ideology?
- ? How does selfishness contribute to and get use as justification for economic inequality?

**dc 105.**<sup>3-5</sup>— just scripture

But behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them; and are not united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom; and Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself.

**Q**uestionary

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- ? How do you feel about God identifying those who are unwilling to impart of their substance to the poor and afflicted as being “full of all manner of evil”—note, “FULL OF ALL MANNER”?

**dc 112.**<sup>23-26</sup>— just scripture

Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth,  
and gross darkness the minds of the people,  
and all flesh has become corrupt before my face.  
Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth,  
a day of wrath, a day of burning,  
a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation;  
and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth,  
saith the Lord.  
And upon my house shall it begin,  
and from my house shall it go forth,  
saith the Lord;  
First among those among you,  
saith the Lord,  
who have professed to know my name and have not known me,  
and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house,  
saith the Lord.

**Q**uestionary

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1. In July of 1837, the Lord announced that “all flesh has become corrupt before my face.”
  - ? How do you feel about this announcement?
  - ? Is this still true?

What do you think and feel when you compare this announcement with the following passage reporting the state of society before the flood?

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually... And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth” (Gen. 6.<sup>5, 12</sup>).

- ? How legitimate is it, do you feel, to see the two generations—ours and that of the flood—as essentially the same in terms of wickedness?
  - ? Why do you answer as you do?
2. After describing the level of sin, the Lord warns of approaching punishment and that “upon my house” or “those who have professed to know my name and have not known me “shall it begin.”
    - ? What is meant by “my house” and who is meant by those who “have professed to know my name”?
  3. God speaks of those who have “blasphemed against me in the midst of my house.”
    - ? What does it mean to “blaspheme” against God?
    - ? What do you think and feel when you think of it being done “in the midst of my house”?

**d**c 117.4— just scripture

Let them repent of all their sins, and of all their covetous desires, before me,  
saith the Lord;  
for what is property unto me?  
saith the Lord.

## Q

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Today's reading is one of our shorter readings—just one verse. Yet, these few words leave us with an awfully lot to consider.

- ? How do we understand the Lord's query, "What is property unto me?"
  - ? How would you respond to the assertion that the Lord, through the question, is reminding the saints that he "owns" the universe and is not in need of the pittance we own and may be willing to dedicate to him?
  - ? Does such a reading seem consistent with the context in which we find this verse?
  - ? How would such a reading relate to the previous criticism concerning the saints' covetousness?
1. It seems best to read the Lord's question—"What is property unto me?"—as his way of inciting us to evaluate our own feelings about possessions and our materialistic habits; as if he really asked, "What is property unto you?"
    - ? How do you feel about this reading of the question?
    - ? Take some time to engage in such evaluation. How important is "property" to you?
    - ? Do you see indications of "covetousness"—large or small?
    - ? What sort of actions on your part would be indicative that you are not covetous toward your own property, but keep it in proper perspective?
    - ? Is there more you could do to evince a correct attitude toward possessions? What is it?
    - ? What sort of actions on the part of society would be indicative that we are not, as a society, covetous toward what we view as "ours," but keep it in proper perspective?
    - ? What might you do to encourage less covetousness on the part of society?
- ? What is the Lord's emphasis in asking "what is property unto me"?
  - ? Is it "I don't need property," or "your desire for property and acquisitions is out of balance?"
  - ? How do you remain balanced when it comes to materialism?

**dc 121.**<sup>39-44</sup>— just scripture

<sup>39</sup>We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. <sup>40</sup>Hence many are called, but few are chosen.

<sup>41</sup>No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; <sup>42</sup>by kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—

<sup>43</sup>reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; <sup>44</sup>that he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.

## Questionary

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1. In verses 41-44, the Lord affirms the conditions under which priesthood “power or influence can or ought to be maintained.”
  - ? What are those conditions?
  - ? How well have you maintained those conditions in your own life and in your own “power or influence,” such as it is?
  - ? How well have those with “power or influence” in your life maintained those conditions?
  - ? How, if at all, are these conditions applicable to “power or influence” that is maintained outside of priesthood, i.e., among those who have “power or influence” in the world at large?
  - ? Why do you answer the previous question as you do?
  - ? If you feel they are not applicable, why would being “long-suffering” or being “gentle” or “kind,” or seeking to act and influence based on “pure knowledge” be inappropriate to worldly governance, power, or influence? How would they make the world and its governance a worse place?
  - ? If you feel they are not applicable, how are people who are governed and influenced in the world and what they hope for themselves and their families different than those who are governed and influenced by priesthood power and influence?
2. In verse 39, the Lord asserts that “it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion.” This assertion is applicable to everyone, male and female, regardless of priesthood status.
  - ? How do you feel about the Lord’s assertion? Has it seemed verified in your own experience with others? With yourself? Why do you answer as you do?
  - ? How do you feel about the “almost” all men—or “almost” everyone?
  - ? If you have seen those whom you think did not fall prey to this error, who were they and what was it about their power or influence that made you feel this way about them?
  - ? How is this disposition to “exercise unrighteous dominion” manifest in the world’s power centers, in nations, industries, corporations, institutions, etc.?
  - ? What do you hear when the text speaks of those with “a little authority, as they suppose?” What is the impact of this “as they suppose”?
  - ? Why does power and authority so frequently, almost universally corrupt behavior toward others?
3. The Lord speaks of “unrighteous dominion.”
  - ? Is there a “righteous” dominion?
  - ? How would you feel if we suggested that the “unrighteous” in “unrighteous dominion” is redundant, a rhetorical element intended to intensify the seriousness of the error—that “dominion” would have sufficed, for all “dominion” is “unrighteous”?

**dc 128.**<sup>22-23</sup> — atonement

<sup>22</sup>Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause?  
Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren;  
and on, on to the victory!

Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad.  
Let the earth break forth into singing.

Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel,  
who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their  
prison;  
for the prisoners shall go free.

<sup>23</sup>Let the mountains shout for joy, and all ye valleys cry aloud;  
and all ye seas and dry lands tell the wonders of your Eternal King!  
And ye rivers, and brooks, and rills, flow down with gladness.  
Let the woods and all the trees of the field praise the Lord;  
and ye solid rocks weep for joy!

And let the sun, moon, and the morning stars sing together,  
and let all the sons of God shout for joy!

And let the eternal creations declare his name forever and ever!

And again I say, how glorious is the voice we hear from heaven,  
proclaiming in our ears, glory, and salvation, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life; kingdoms,  
principalities, and powers!

**Q**uestionary

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This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement.” \*

1. In this hymn-like passage in which the prophet calls for the praise of God, the call to praise contains a progression.
    - ? What is the nature of that progression?
    - ? What do you feel as you see the call to praise progress to larger and more expansive limits.  
  
Brethren... earth... the dead... mountains...valleys...seas...dry lands... rivers... brooks... rills...woods...trees... rocks... sun...moon...stars... sons of God... eternal creations...heaven.
  2. The prophet’s jubilant feelings toward God stem, here, from the discovery of God’s willingness and ability to save even the dead.
    - ? How do you feel when you contemplate this truth?
    - ? What is the larger message this truth contains about God’s committed willingness and ability to reach out to all?
    - ? What is the message this truth contains about God’s committed willingness and ability to reach out to you?
    - ? To what extent do you join in the sort of praise that is found in this reading?
    - ? How do you manifest your praise for God?
- \* The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:  
“Fall: Our Need of Atonement”  
“Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”  
“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”  
“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”  
“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”  
“Justification: How We Repent and Change”



“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”  
“Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement”  
“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”  
“The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

**d**c 133.<sup>53</sup>

And now the year of my redeemed is come; and they shall mention the loving kindness of their Lord, and all that he has bestowed upon them according to his goodness, and according to his loving kindness, forever and ever.

**Q**uestionary

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- ? What are the manifestations of God's goodness and loving kindness in your life?
- ? What can you do to help others experience more fully God's goodness and loving kindness in their lives?

**dc 138.**<sup>11-12, 15-16, 18-19</sup>

<sup>11</sup>I saw the hosts of the dead, both small and great. <sup>12</sup>And there were gathered together in one place an innumerable company of the spirits of the just... <sup>15</sup>I beheld that they were filled with joy and gladness, and were rejoicing together because the day of their deliverance was at hand. <sup>16</sup>They were assembled awaiting the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world, to declare their redemption from the bands of death... <sup>18</sup>While this vast multitude waited and conversed, rejoicing in the hour of their deliverance from the chains of death, the Son of God appeared, declaring liberty to the captives who had been faithful; <sup>19</sup>and there he preached to them the everlasting gospel, the doctrine of the resurrection and the redemption of mankind from the fall, and from individual sins on conditions of repentance.

**Q**uestionary

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Today's is our 44<sup>th</sup> reading for Lent/Easter.

1. We have suggested on several occasions that you spend time during the Lent and Easter Season to follow Jacob's admonition and "view his [Jesus'] death." Today, we suggest that you spend some time using your imagination to view "the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world."
  - ? What does Jesus look like?
  - ? How does his appearance differ from the last time you viewed him on the cross? How is it the same?
2. We also suggest that you imagine the "innumerable company" or "vast multitude" that was "filled with joy and gladness" at Jesus' advent.
  - ? What does this "company" look like?
  - ? What do their conversations and rejoicings look and sound like?
  - ? How do you feel when you view their joy at redemption?
  - ? What can you do to invite a deeper and more intimate appearance, or advent in your life on the part of the Savior?
  - ? What can you do to invite others to experience a deeper and more intimate advent of Jesus into their lives?
3. The revelation speaks of "the hour of their deliverance from the chains of death."
  - ? Why, do you think, is death thought of as having "chains" when one has full self-consciousness?
  - ? What does a "*physical* resurrection" mean to you as opposed to a simple continuation of personality, consciousness, and relationships?
  - ? How disappointed would you be if the resurrection were "only" the continuation of personality, consciousness, and relationships? Why do you answer as you do?

## Pearl of great price

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**Moses 5.**<sup>31</sup>— just scripture

And Cain said: Truly I am Mahan, the master of this great secret, that I may murder and get gain.  
Wherefore Cain was called Master Mahan, and he gloried in his wickedness.

## Q

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- ? How often have the wealthy utilized violent means to get gain.
- ? To what examples can you point?
- ? What examples can you point to in today's economic system in which violent means are used to get gain?

## Moses 6.<sup>48-49</sup>— Atonement

<sup>48</sup>“And he said unto them: ‘Because that Adam fell, we are; and by his fall came death; and we are made partakers of misery and woe. <sup>49</sup>Behold Satan hath come among the children of men, and tempteth them to worship him; and men have become carnal, sensual, and devilish, and are shut out from the presence of God.

### Questionary

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This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Fall: Our Need of Atonement.” \*

1. It this passage, Enoch identifies several consequences that we all experience as a result of the fall.
  - ? What consequences do you find in the passage?
  - ? How do you feel when you read that “we are made partakers of misery and woe”? Do you agree?
  - ? What is Enoch talking about when he speaks of “misery and woe”?
  - ? How truly is this reflected in our own life? Why do you answer as you do?
  - ? How do you feel and what do you think when you read that we “have become carnal, sensual, and devilish” through the fall and Satan’s subsequent entrance into the life of mortal beings?
  - ? What does it mean to be “carnal”? “Sensual”? “Devilish”?
  - ? Is this fair assessment of humankind? Of you? Why do you answer as you do?

\* The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:

“Fall: Our Need of Atonement”

“Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”

“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”

“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”

“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

“Justification: How We Repent and Change”

“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”

“Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement”

“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”

“The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

## Moses 6.<sup>59-62</sup>—Atonement

<sup>59</sup>That by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory; <sup>60</sup>for by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified; <sup>61</sup>therefore it is given to abide in you; the record of heaven; the Comforter; the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment. <sup>62</sup>And now, behold, I say unto you: This is the plan of salvation unto all men, through the blood of mine Only Begotten, who shall come in the meridian of time.

## Questionary

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This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Justification: How We Repent and Change.” \*

1. We have often spoken of the frequent need for a crisis before we truly seek to be born again/justified/be forgiven/receive a remission of sins.
  - ? What language in today’s language is likely to create a spiritual crisis in one’s life if the language is taken seriously and personally?
2. As we have seen in previous readings, the spiritual rebirth is patterned after the physical birth with water, blood, and spirit being present in both
  - ? What thoughts and feelings do you have when you contemplate that just as your immortal spirit must enter the physical body to bring and sustain temporal life, so must the Holy Spirit of God enter into your life to bring and sustain spiritual life in this world and the world to come?
  - ? How does the Holy Spirit act to sustain spiritual life?
3. Enoch speaks of “enjoy[ing] the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.”
  - ? What does it mean to “enjoy the words of eternal life in this world?”
  - ? How is your enjoyment of “the words of eternal life” manifest in your daily life?
4. Enoch teaches that
  - “by the water ye keep the commandment...”
  - “by the Spirit ye are justified...”
  - “and by the blood ye are sanctified.”
  - ? What do each of these mean to you?
  - ? How does Enoch’s “by the water ye keep the commandment,” clarify the following statement concerning “keeping the commandments” and the “commandments” that are to be kept in order to “be washed and cleansed from all... sins” (be born again) and so receive a celestial glory?
    - “They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given—that by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power; and who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true” (DC 76.<sup>51-53</sup>).

- ? How do you feel about the contention that the commandments that must be kept to be forgiven are faith and baptism?
  - ? How about the contention that keeping all and every commandment is not a prerequisite for forgiveness/being born again/entering the celestial glory?
5. Enoch describes the Holy Spirit, principle agent in our justification/being born again/forgiveness, with the following words and phrases.
- “The record of heaven”
  - “The Comforter”
  - “The peaceable things of immortal glory”
  - “The truth of all things”
  - “That which quickeneth all things”
  - “That which maketh alive all things”
  - “That which knoweth all things”
  - “That which hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment”
- ? What do each of these attributes of the Holy Spirit mean to you?
  - ? To what degree have you and do you experience these spiritual manifestations in your life?
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**Moses 7.18**— just scripture

And the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.

**Q**uestionary

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1. Today's passage indicates three characteristics that a Zion community possesses.
  - ? What are those three characteristics?
  - ? What is the relationship between being "of one heart and one mind," dwelling "in righteousness," and eliminating poverty so that there are "no poor"?
  - ? Can any one of these community attributes and characteristics exist without the other two? Why do you answer as you do?
  - ? To what degree does your community/ society/ nation conform to these characteristics?
  - ? Does the Lord exonerate a society for not conforming to these characteristics if and because it is not "religious"? Why do you feel as you do?
  - ? To what degree should we demand that our secular society strive to live up to the high character represented by "Zion"? Why do you answer as you do?



**jsh** 1.<sup>19-20</sup>

“I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: ‘they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof. ‘ He again forbade me to join with any of them...”

### **Q**uestionary

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- ? How do you feel about God referring to American “Christianity,” its teachings, leaders, and ethics as being “an abomination” “corrupt,” and “deniers of the power of godliness” (i.e. supporters of the power of ungodliness)?
- ? How does its overwhelming support for the current corrupt occupant of the White House reinforce the Lord’s brutal verdict of its profound guilt before God?