

Why We Live in an Open Enrollment

- Expanded Version -

Prepared by
Elder Dwight Burford

Original Posting January 2, 2022
Revised & Expanded January 30, 2022

Open enrollment is a term familiar to most people with health insurance policies. During a specified window of time, the insured are given an opportunity to select their coverage plan for the coming term. By analogy, it may be said that we are living in an open enrollment period, one in which we are choosing our care coverage for eternity. Please allow me to explain.

Today if Ye Will Hear His Voice

As with other open enrollment periods, this earthly life affords us the opportunity to choose certain aspects of care that affect the unending part of our lives, that of our eternal existence. Specifically, it determines our on-going relationship with God and the level of *glory* that we may expect to receive from Him on a never-ending basis.¹

Stated another way, this life affords us the opportunity to choose our eternal *reward* and the corresponding bounds and conditions of our habitation in eternity.²

Matthew 16:30 – *For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then **he shall reward every man according to his works.***

Matthew 25:35-37 – *Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, **inherit** the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*

Colossians 3:23-25 – *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the **reward** of the **inheritance**; for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons.*

It is, therefore, very important to recognize just how limited this life is in scope and

¹ e.g. I Thessalonians 4:17 with Hebrews 7:24

² cf. Acts 17:26 with D&C 85:9a,b

duration. God did not intend for it to last forever.³ Rather, He gave it to us so we could make specific choices about our future beyond this life.⁴

*Psalm 95:6-9 – Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. **Today 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.*

*Hebrews 3:7-19 – ... **exhort one another daily, while it is called Today** lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin ... For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end ..."*

*Hebrews 4:7 – Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, **Today**, after so long a time; as it is said, **Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.***

Hebrews 9:27 – ... it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment ...

This limited period of time called *Today* is referred to in the Book of Mormon as a *probationary state* and *the days of your probation*. It is a portion of time that God has set in place for us to prepare to meet Him before He ushers us on into eternity.

*Alma 9:41 – Therefore this life became **a probationary state**; a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state, which has been spoken of by us, which is after the resurrection of the dead.*

*I Nephi 3:33-36 – Therefore remember, O man, for all thy doings thou shalt be brought into judgment. Wherefore, if ye have sought to do wickedly in **the days of your probation**, then ye are found unclean before the judgment seat of God; And no unclean thing can dwell with God; wherefore ye must be cast off for ever. And the Holy Ghost giveth authority that I should speak these things and deny them not.*

The term *probation* makes it clear that our decisions and actions during this special window of time have serious, long-term consequences. Certain conditions, called *the conditions of repentance*, define this preparatory state and its outcome.⁵ Briefly comprehended, those individuals who repent and come to Jesus Christ will obtain mercy and grace,⁶ while those who rebel against Him will be judged without mercy.⁷

Alma 19:94 – Therefore, according to justice, the plan of redemption could not be brought about, only, on conditions of repentance of men in this probationary state; yea, this preparatory state; for except it were for these conditions, mercy could not take effect except it should destroy the work of justice.

³ Revelation 21:1-8 with Luke 17:39, II Peter 3:10-14, Isaiah 65:17-25, Isaiah 66:22 & Ether 6:8-12

⁴ cf. Deuteronomy 30:19 & Joel 3:14 with Joshua 24:15, Jeremiah 21:8, John 1:18 & Romans 6:23

⁵ D&C 16:3c-e & Mosiah 2:9-24 with Alma 3:19-21 Alma 19:94, Helaman 2:70-75 & Helaman 5:64-74

⁶ D&C 3:16a-18, D&C 16:3c-f, Alma 9:55 & Helaman 2:71-75 with II Nephi 7:41-44 & Hebrews 4:15,16

⁷ Mosiah 1:79-85, Mosiah 1:126-130 & Alma 19:107-111 with James 2:13 & Revelation 14:9-11

We would do well, then, to heed the call to be wise in the days of our probation!

Mormon 4:94 – Be wise in the days of your probation; strip yourselves of all uncleanness; ask not, that ye may consume it on your lusts, but ask with a firmness unshaken, that ye will yield to no temptation, but that ye will serve the true and living God.

My Reward Is With Me to Give

What exactly are the options being presented to us in this life, in this time of open enrollment? And what are the possible outcomes of the choices we make, either good or evil? According to the closing chapter of the Bible, our eternal *reward* will be directly connected to one of four final conditions to which we may be *restored*,⁸ that of being: 1) unjust, 2) filthy, 3) righteous, or 4) holy.

*Revelation 22:11,12 – He that is unjust, let him be **unjust still**; and he which is filthy, let him be **filthy still**; and he that is righteous, let him be **righteous still**; and he that is holy, let him be **holy still**. And, behold, I come quickly; and **my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be**.*

The redeeming work of Christ has made these four final estates possible and available to all mankind on an individual basis. Without His atonement and intercession for us, one judgment – the original judgment – would have remained in place on humanity forever, which was death and eternal separation from God.⁹

Romans 5:12-14 – Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ... For I say, that through the offense, death reigned over all.

*II Nephi 6:11-18 – For as death has passed upon all men, to fulfill the merciful plan of the great Creator, there must needs be a power of resurrection, and the resurrection must needs come unto man by reason of the fall; And the fall came by reason of transgression; And because man became fallen, they were **cut off** from the presence of the Lord; Wherefore, it must needs be an infinite atonement; Save it should be an infinite atonement, this corruption could not put on incorruption. **Wherefore, the first judgment which came upon man, must needs have remained to an endless duration**. And if so, this flesh must have lain down to rot and to crumble to its mother earth, to rise no more.*

In the Nephite record, these four eternal conditions made available to us in Christ are listed as: 1) unhappy, 2) filthy, 3) righteous, and 4) happy.¹⁰

Mormon 4:74 – And then cometh the judgment of the Holy One upon them; and then cometh

⁸ Alma 19:55-80 with Alma 8:99-107 & Helaman 5:85,86

⁹ cf. I Corinthians 15:55-57 with Colossians 2:13-15

¹⁰ cf. I Nephi 3:238-256 & Mosiah 1:88 with I Nephi 2:49 & Alma 21:77; cf. Matthew 5:1-18 with James 5:11, I Peter 3:14 & I Peter 4:14

*the time that he that is filthy, shall be **filthy still**, and he that is righteous, shall be **righteous still**; he that is happy, shall be **happy still**; and he that is unhappy, shall be **unhappy still**.*

Paul likened three of these final conditions or estates to three *glories* that differ in their measure of light. In this comparison,¹¹ those who are *holy* shine like the *sun*, those who are *righteous* shine like the *moon*, and those who are *unjust* shine like *stars*.

I Corinthians 15:41-44 – *There is **one glory of the sun**, and **another glory of the moon**, and **another glory of the stars**; for one star differeth from another star in glory. **So also is the resurrection of the dead**. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

What about those who inherit the fourth estate, that of the *filthy*? The Lord saves everyone except for these.¹² They are they who suffer *the second death* with the devil and his angels in an eternal estate that is without glory, one that is devoid of light and truth.¹³

Isaiah 5:14 – *Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.*

I Corinthians 6:17 – *If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.*

II Nephi 6:36-40 – *And it shall come to pass, that when all men shall have passed from this first death unto life, insomuch as they have become immortal, they must appear before the judgment seat of the Holy One of Israel; and then cometh the judgment; and then must they be judged according to the holy judgment of God ... they who are righteous shall be righteous still, and they who are filthy shall be filthy still; wherefore, they who are filthy are the devil and his angels; and they shall go away into everlasting fire, prepared for them; and their torment is as a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flames ascendeth up for ever and ever; and has no end.*

Jesus testified that He is coming again for the very purpose of granting these four rewards of glory to their respective recipients.¹⁴ What exactly is the reward He is bringing with Him? It is the glory of His Father.¹⁵

Sadly, not everyone will receive the fullness of His Father's glory. Some individuals will receive just a portion of His glory while others will receive none of His glory, i.e.

¹¹ Romans 1:20 with Genesis 6:66 IV

¹² D&C 76:4a-4k with Hebrews 6:4-9 & Hebrews 10:26-31

¹³ Revelation 20:14, Revelation 21:7,8, John 8:44, II Peter 2:4-10, & Jude 1:5-8 with I Corinthians 6:9,10, Galatians 5:19-21 & Ephesians 5:3-5

¹⁴ e.g. Revelation 22:12-14 with Isaiah 40:9-31 & Isaiah 62:6-12

¹⁵ Matthew 16:30, Mark 8:41, Luke 9:26, Luke 21:36, Revelation 1:7 with III Nephi 13:17-19

they will receive none of His light and truth.¹⁶

Although all people were created in God's image and likeness, not everyone is willing to abide in the glory of God.¹⁷ Therefore, Jesus is prepared to give two lesser measures of glory (*intelligence*¹⁸) to certain individuals, while He will give no glory to those who defile and dishonor and altogether reject the gift of His Father's glory.¹⁹

In terms of the present analogy of comparing our probationary state to an open enrollment period (think insurance plan options), the four eternal estates of light – or lack thereof in the case of the fourth estate – described by Paul may be represented as four basic plan options:

Plan A: Glory like that of the sun (the glory of the day)

Plan B: Glory like that of the moon (the greater of the two night glories)

Plan C: Glory like that of the stars (the lesser of the two night glories)

Plan D: No glory

Described in terms provided in latter day revelation,²⁰ the benefits of each plan may be briefly summarized as:

Plan A: Receives the fullness of the Father

Plan B: Receives the presence of the Son, but not the fullness of the Father

Plan C: Remains eternally separated from the Father and Son as servants

Plan D: Receives judgment without any measure of grace or mercy

You Were Bought with a Price

Amazingly and to the glory of Jesus Christ, He has paid the premiums for each plan of glory completely and endlessly!²¹

I Corinthians 6:19,20 – What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

As our Redeemer Lord, Jesus did not pay this price just for some people, but for everyone. He has covered the cost of salvation for the whole world, for each person

¹⁶ cf. D&C 90:6a with I John 1:5-10

¹⁷ Genesis 1:27-29

¹⁸ D&C 90:6a with D&C 83:7a-7d, D&C 85:2a-3b & D&C 85:10a

¹⁹ Matthew 25:42 with Revelation 14:9-12

²⁰ D&C 76:3a-7w with D&C 85:5a-8b

²¹ Acts 20:28 & Helaman 2:71 with I Peter 1:18,19 & Revelation 5:9

who has lived, who is living, or who will yet live on this earth.²²

*I Timothy 4:9,10 – This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in **the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe.***

*I John 2:1-3 – My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. But if any man sin and repent, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; **And he is the propitiation [atoning sacrifice] for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.** And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*

Tragically, not everyone will accept our Lord's *free gift* of salvation²³ and will, therefore, remain as if there had been no redemption made for them²⁴ – except, that is, to be raised from the dead to be judged according to their works.²⁵ (This is Plan D in the present analogy of comparing this life to an open enrollment period.)

Alma 8:97,98 – Therefore the wicked remain as though there had been no redemption made, except it be the loosing of the bands of death; for behold, the day cometh that all shall rise from the dead and stand before God, and be judged according to their works.

Several questions yet remain: who exactly will inherit each of the three glories and who will receive no glory, i.e. no light and truth? Our heavenly Father has assigned making these judgments, these determinations, to His Son, Jesus Christ.²⁶

*John 5:20-23 – For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth; and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. **For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;** that all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father who hath sent him.*

Colossians 1:16-18 – For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Psalms 2:10-12 – Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish

²² John 3:14-22, Romans 5:15-18 & Titus 2:11-15 with Alma 16:190-197 & Numbers 21:6-9

²³ Hebrews 3:7-19 & D&C 85:7 with Romans 5:6-21

²⁴ Mosiah 8:77,78, Alma 8:95-98 & Alma 9:21-32 with Revelation 9:19-21, Revelation 16:8-11, etc.

²⁵ Jacob 4:8-17 with Revelation 3:17-22

²⁶ Hebrews 1:1-14 & Hebrews 2:1-18

from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Remember, Jesus Christ's work of atonement was completed on the cross of His sufferings for the whole world.²⁷

Matthew 27:54-57 – *Jesus when he had cried again with a loud voice, saying, **Father, it is finished, thy will is done**, yielded up the ghost. And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and the bodies of the saints which slept, arose, who were many. And came out of the graves after his resurrection, went unto the holy city, and appeared unto many.*

Hebrews 1:1-3 – *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, **when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.***

Now, Jesus' work of judgment and bestowing rewards of glory is yet before Him.²⁸

Isaiah 62:11 – *Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, **his reward is with him, and his work before him.***

Revelation 22:11,12 – *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; **and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be.***

Alma 7:42-44 – *Therefore prepare ye the way of the Lord, for the time is at hand that all men shall reap a reward of their works, according to that which they have been: If they have been righteous, they shall reap the salvation of their souls, according to the power and deliverance of Jesus Christ; and if they have been evil, they shall reap the damnation of their souls, according to the power and captivity of the devil.*

After His work of judgment and assignment of glory, then comes Jesus Christ's work of sustaining us and maturing us in His ways of everlasting righteousness²⁹ according to the measure of glory each person is to receive.³⁰

Luke 12:40-43 – *Verily I say unto you, Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching; **for he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat,***

²⁷ John 19:28-30 with John 3:16&17 & John 17:4,5

²⁸ See also Isaiah 40:10 with Luke 12:40-43; cf. Hebrews 1:1-3 & Hebrews 4:3-12

²⁹ Matthew 11:29,30 with Isaiah 2:2-4 & Micah 4:1-3

³⁰ Matthew 16:30, Mark 8:41, Luke 9:26, etc. with I Corinthians 15:41-44, Revelation 22:11 & Psalm 73:25

and will come forth and serve them. For, behold, he cometh in the first watch of the night, and he shall also come in the second watch, and again he shall come in the third watch. And verily I say unto you, He hath already come, as it is written of him; and again when he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, blessed are those servants when he cometh, that he shall find so doing; **for the Lord of those servants shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.**

Revelation 22:1-5 – And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him; And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign forever and ever.

Their Works Do Follow Them

While this life does not last forever, the consequences of our choices and actions in it do last forever. For it is written that our works follow us.³¹

Revelation 14:13 – And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.

III Nephi 12:22-24 – And if it so be that the church is built upon my gospel, then will the Father shew forth his own works in it; but if it be not built upon my gospel, and is built upon the works of men, or upon the works of the devil, verily I say unto you, They have joy in their works for a season, and by and by the end cometh, and they are hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence there is no return; for their works do follow them, for it is because of their works that they are hewn down; therefore remember the things that I have told you.

D&C 59:1a – Behold, blessed, saith the Lord, are they who have come up unto this land with an eye single to my glory, according to my commandments; for they that live shall inherit the earth, and they that die shall rest from all their labors, and their works shall follow them, and they shall receive a crown in the mansions of my Father, which I have prepared for them...

God's justice is the reason our works follow us. According to His justice we all must be judged according to our works or deeds that we have done in the flesh.

Matthew 7:31 – For the day soon cometh, that men shall come before me to judgment, to be judged according to their works.

II Corinthians 5:10 – For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive a reward of the deeds done in the body; things according to what he hath done,

³¹ cf. III Nephi 12:24 with Alma 15:56, Alma 19:65-71 & D&C 63:4b,c

whether good or bad.

Revelation 20:13 – *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works.*

Alma 19:66-69 – *And it is requisite with the justice of God, that men should be judged according to their works ... If he hath repented of his sins, and desired righteousness until the end of his days, even so shall he be rewarded unto righteousness.*³²

In effect, our works reflect our plan selection in this open enrollment period.

Because we are born of the flesh, we naturally do the works of our corruptible flesh.³³ That is, by nature we bear the *fruit* of our flesh.³⁴ If, however, we are born again of the Spirit of God, we receive sufficient grace from Jesus Christ to do *good works*, i.e. those works or deeds that come of faith on His name and in His redemption.³⁵

Ephesians 2:10 – *For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

John 1:11-16 – *He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he **power to become** the sons of God; only to them who believe on his name. He was born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the same word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. ... For in the beginning was the Word, even the Son, who is made flesh, and sent unto us by the will of the Father. And as many as believe on his name shall receive of his fullness. And of his fullness have all we received, even immortality and eternal life, through his grace.*

Once we are born of God, Jesus, as the Good Shepherd,³⁶ guides us into *all truth* by His Spirit of truth.

John 14:15-17,21,26 – *If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another **Comforter**, that he may abide with you forever; **even the Spirit of truth** ... He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him ... **the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost**, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

John 16:13-15 – *... when he, **the Spirit of truth**, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it*

³² See also I Nephi 3:187,188 with Matthew 10:19 & Mark 13:13

³³ Colossians 3:5-9 with Genesis 6:57

³⁴ Galatians 5:19-21

³⁵ John 3:3-17, John 15:1-8, Alma 3:27-32 & Titus 2:14 with Matthew 5:15-18

³⁶ John 10:11-13 with Hebrews 13:20,21

unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.

The scriptures, having been inspired by the Holy Ghost (i.e. the Spirit of truth, who is the Comforter), are therefore invaluable to us with respect to becoming *thoroughly furnished unto all good works*.

II Timothy 3:16,17 – *And all scripture given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be **perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works**.*

II Peter 1:20,21 – *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scriptures is given of any private will of man. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

Titus 2:11-15 – *For the grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared; teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, **zealous of good works**. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*

This is why Paul has shown us that we “*should repent and turn to God and do works meet for repentance.*”³⁷ Good works (i.e. fruit of the Spirit) are the only works that are *meet for* or agreeable with repentance.³⁸ For they reveal in us the Father’s work of reconciling us to Himself through Jesus Christ.³⁹

Philippians 2:12,13 – *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.***

II Corinthians 5:17-19 – *Therefore if any man live in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and receiveth all the things of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

Thy Reward Shall Return Upon Thine Own Head

When we are brought before the Lord at the appointed time of judgment, all of our works will be tried by fire.⁴⁰ Those works that are not works or fruit of the Spirit of God (i.e. those works that are of the flesh) will be burned with fire and will therefore

³⁷ Acts 26:19,20

³⁸ Matthew 7:22-29 with Galatians 5:18,22-23 & Philippians 2:12,13

³⁹ Matthew 5:15-18 & Philippians 2:12,13 with John 1:11-18, John 14:12 & I Nephi 1:65

⁴⁰ cf. Matthew 16:30 with Jude 1:14-25

be lost to us forever. On the other hand, those works that are born of the Spirit will remain for eternity.

I Corinthians 3:13-15 – *Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself may be saved; yet so as by fire.*

In this way, we will receive a reward in an eternal estate that is fitting with how we have lived our lives in this world.⁴¹ For no works will go without testing. All will be tried by fire. All secret works especially will be exposed by fire in the day of the Lord's judgment.⁴² Hence, the Lord has sent forth the following word of warning in these last days:

D&C 1:1a-d – *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; 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; **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;** and the voice of warning shall be unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days, and they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them.*

D&C 85:34-35b – *And then shall the first angel again sound his trump in the ears of all living, and reveal the secret acts of men, and the mighty works of God in the first thousandth year. And then shall the second angel sound his trump, and reveal the secret acts of men, and the thoughts and intents of their hearts, and the mighty works of God in the second thousandth year: and so on, until the seventh angel shall sound his trump...*

This is not all. For our reward, the Lord will *measure* out to each of us the same *measure* we have measured to each other, whether good or evil.⁴³ That is, our reward to others will return upon our own heads – even those same rewards with which we have rewarded each other.

Obadiah 1:15 – *For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen; as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; **thy reward shall return upon thine own head.***

Luke 6:38 – *Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. **For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.***

⁴¹ cf. I Nephi 4:35-64 with II Nephi 11:76-160

⁴² Joel 2:31, Amos 5:18-20, Obadiah 1:15, Zephaniah 1:14,18, etc. with Hebrews 12:28,29

⁴³ Luke 8:17 with Romans 2:16; cf. Luke 6:36-38 & Matthew 6:6,18 with Romans 12:19 & Eph. 5:11-14

D&C 1:2c-e – *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; yea, verily, to seal them up unto the day when the wrath of God shall be poured out upon the wicked without measure; 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.***

We Have an Advocate With the Father

As both our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ not only stands ready to judge us righteously according to the justice and mercy of the Father, but He also stands ready to intercede as our Advocate with the Father!⁴⁴

I John 2:1,2 – *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. But **if any man sin and repent, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;** and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

He is prepared to support and sustain each of us forever, not just part of the time, but continuously, throughout all eternity by way of His never-ending intercession of grace on our behalf.⁴⁵

Hebrews 7:23,24 – *... this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, **seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.***

In keeping with this message, Jesus Christ tells us in latter day revelation that He **is** pleading our cause before our heavenly Father. He does not say that He *was* pleading or *has* pled our cause. Rather, as *the great I Am*,⁴⁶ He **is** pleading our cause here and now.

D&C 45:1c-e – ***Listen to him who is the Advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him,*** 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; wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life.

Those who listen to Jesus' voice and follow Him by faith on His words will be led to make a covenant with Him through repentance and baptism⁴⁷ – with baptism being the first-fruits of repentance.⁴⁸ Why baptism? In baptism, we enter into Jesus' death to sin so we may come forth in the *newness* of His life according to the new

⁴⁴ John 5:27-31 & Hebrews 1:1-3 with I John 2:1,2

⁴⁵ I Peter 1:3-25 with I Corinthians 15:12-58 & Colossians 1:13-18

⁴⁶ D&C 28:1a, D&C 38:1a & D&C 39:1a with John 8:58; see also John 6:48, John 8:12, John 8:28,29, etc.

⁴⁷ D&C 17:7a-d with Mosiah 9:35-42 & Alma 5:27-29

⁴⁸ Moroni 8:29 & Romans 6:3-16 with Galatians 3:20 & II Nephi 13:7-32

covenant.⁴⁹

Romans 6:3-7 – *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead to sin is freed from sin.*

Entering into the waters of baptism to die to sin with Jesus connects us directly to His death and His life. This step of faith allows Him to be our advocate according to the new covenant that was established by the shedding of His blood.

Romans 6:8-11 – *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Hebrews 9:15-18 – *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a covenant is, there must also of necessity be the death of the victim. For a covenant is of force after the victim is dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the victim liveth.*

In joining Jesus in death to sin, we allow Him to raise us up in the newness of His eternal life to bring us to our heavenly Father.⁵⁰ It is in taking this series of steps of faith, the plan of redemption *immediately* goes into effect in our lives.⁵¹

Alma 16:226-228 – *And now, my brethren, I would that after ye have received so many witnesses, seeing that the holy scriptures testify of these things, come forth and bring fruit unto repentance; yea, I would that ye would come forth and harden not your hearts any longer; for behold, **now is the time, and the day of your salvation**; and therefore, if ye will repent and harden not your hearts, **immediately** shall the great plan of redemption be brought about unto you. **For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God**: yea, behold, **the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors.***

What if we sin and come short of the glory of God in our daily walk of faith? We must remember how Jesus ever intercedes for us as our *advocate with the Father*.⁵² At the

⁴⁹ Romans 6:3-16 with Ezekiel 18:31, Ezekiel 36:26, Jeremiah 24:7, Jeremiah 31:31-34 & Jeremiah 32:39

⁵⁰ John 14:6 with John 16:13-15 & Roman 6:3-16

⁵¹ II Nephi 13:23-32

⁵² I John 2:1,2 with D&C 45:1c-e

same time, we need to come to rejoice in the fact that our Lord chastens us in order that we might yield Him *the peaceable fruit of righteousness*.

Hebrews 12:5-6,11 – *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth ... Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

Revelation 3:19,20 – *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent.*

To focus us on the path that leads to our heavenly Father, Jesus defined His church as those who repent and come to Him.

D&C 3:16a-18 – *Behold, this is my doctrine: Whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church; whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore, he is not of my church. And now, behold, whosoever is of my church [i.e. those who repent and come to Christ], and endureth of my church to the end, him will I establish upon my Rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against him. And now, remember the words of him who is the life and light of the world, your Redeemer, your Lord, and your God. Amen.*

Note how those who continue in His doctrine of repenting and coming to Him will, in the end, be established on His Rock. We would be wise then not to judge the work of the Lord in our life or anyone's life before the day of the Lord reveals the glory to which each of us will be raised in the resurrection of the dead.⁵³

But Be Ye Doers of the Word

Peter tells us we are born of God by His *word*, which Peter calls an *incorruptible seed*.

I Peter 1:22-25 – *Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. **Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.** For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; **But the word of the Lord endureth forever.** And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*

John makes it clear that God's *word* – which endures forever – is, in fact, Jesus Christ.

John 1:14-16 – *And the same word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bear witness of him, and cried, saying, This is he of whom I spake; He who cometh after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me. For in the beginning was the Word, even the Son, who is*

⁵³ | **Corinthians 3:13** & **I Corinthians 4:5** with **I Corinthians 15:41-44**, **Romans 14:4** & **I Nephi 3:187-189**

made flesh, and sent unto us by the will of the Father. And as many as believe on his name shall receive of his fullness. And of his fullness have all we received, even immortality and eternal life, through his grace.

James therefore encourages us to receive this *engrafted word* that is able to save our souls.

James 1:18-21 – ***Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth**, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, **and receive with meekness, the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.***

As Peter explained, the fruit of this new birth is unfeigned or real love for one another. James therefore urges us to be *doers* of *the word* of God, not just hearers only. For if we fail to act on the word in truth, we deceive ourselves by forgetting what manner of person we were called to be in Christ.

James 1:22-25 – *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

Good works reveal those who are truthful in this regard versus those who are deceivers and liars. All of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God.⁵⁴ So, it is never news to learn that someone has sinned. The cross of Christ has declared this truth from the beginning. Problems arise when people claim to be righteous while still walking in sin and darkness. Such people are *liars* and *deceivers*.

1 John 1:5-10 – *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

1 John 3:7-9 – *Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that continueth in sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works*

⁵⁴ Isaiah 64:6 with Romans 3:22,23 & Matthew 7:22-35

of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not continue in sin; for the Spirit of God remaineth in him; and he cannot continue in sin, because he is born of God, having received that holy Spirit of promise.

To ensure that we are not deceived by ourselves or by anyone else, we must walk in paths of light and righteousness. We do this by accepting Jesus Christ's invitation to become *yoked* to Him and to learn of Him and His meek and lowly ways as our Lord and Master.

Matthew 11:29,30 – *Then spake Jesus, saying, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

Being yoked to Jesus Christ is meant to be permanent, not an occasional teaming up with Him in certain aspects or activities in our lives. Jesus made this truth clear by calling His disciples *branches*, which have been grafted into Him by the Father.⁵⁵

John 15:5-8 – *I am the vine, ye are the branches. **He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.** If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. **Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.***

Note how Jesus said that we can do nothing without Him. Only in being grafted into Jesus by the Father can we expect to bear the Father the fruit of His True Vine, which *is all goodness and righteousness and truth.*⁵⁶ Stated another way, only by being one with Jesus as a branch grafted into Him can we expect to live a righteous life (i.e. as opposed to a life of a liar and deceiver).⁵⁷ For only the fruit born of this unique *Vine* and its branches will remain on into eternity.⁵⁸

At the same time, no one grows into the full stature of Christ all at once. Bearing fruit in Christ takes time and thus patience.

Ephesians 4:11-16 – *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; **for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we, in the unity of the faith, all come to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;** that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and*

⁵⁵ John 15:4,5 with John 14:6 & John 16:13-15; see also Alma 16:152-173 with Luke 8:4-18

⁵⁶ Ephesians 5:9

⁵⁷ Philippians 4:13 with Matthew 19:26

⁵⁸ John 15:16 with Matthew 6:19-21 & III Nephi 5:110-112

carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; **but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things**, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

To make our calling and election in Jesus Christ sure, then, we need to grow up in our knowledge of Him and His meek and lowly ways.

I Peter 1:5-11 – And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence **to make your calling and election sure**; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To do so, we must press toward the *mark* God has set before us in order that our works will endure the judgment at the last day.⁵⁹

Philippians 3:13,14 – Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

All Kingdoms Have a Law Given

We read earlier in Revelation 22:11,12 how the Lord will assign each of us to one of four groups in eternity: the *unjust*, the *filthy*, the *righteous*, and the *holy*.⁶⁰ For the work of redemption and to maintain an ongoing relationship with mankind in each group, God manifests Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.⁶¹

God is also the *Lawgiver* who grants and maintains certain measures of His glory and grace for the organization and regulation of each of these groups in kingdoms:⁶²

⁵⁹ I Corinthians 3:11-15 with I Peter 1:3-9 & Hebrews 6:10

⁶⁰ cf. Luke 8:4-18, I Nephi 2:54-76 & D&C 76:3a-7w with Revelation 22:11,12 & Mormon 4:74

⁶¹ cf. I Timothy 3:16 with Luke 10:23 & John 14:9; cf. Isaiah 7:14-16 & Isaiah 9:6,7 with Isaiah 40:1-15,28-31; Isaiah 41:8-14; Isaiah 42:5-9; Isaiah 43:11-19,25-26; Isaiah 44:6-8,21-28; Isaiah 45:5-22; Isaiah 46:9-13; Isaiah 47:4; Isaiah 48:1-19; Isaiah 49:16-26; Isaiah 50:1,2; Isaiah 51:12,13; Isaiah 52:3-12; Isaiah 53:1-12; Isaiah 54:5; Isaiah 55:8-11; Isaiah 56:8; Isaiah 57:15-19; Isaiah 58:13,14; Isaiah 59:21; Isaiah 60:14-22; Isaiah 61:1-11; Isaiah 62:11,12; Isaiah 63:9-16; Isaiah 64:4-8; Isaiah 65:17-25; Isaiah 66:1,2

⁶² Isaiah 33:22, James 4:12 & Ephesians 4:6 with Colossians 1:12-18 & Romans 11:36

D&C 85:9a,9b – *All kingdoms have a law given: and there are many kingdoms; **for there is no space in the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space**, either a greater or lesser kingdom. **And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also, and conditions.***

Each of the estates of glory and the estate of no glory constitute separate and distinct kingdoms. Each one is governed by a specific law given to it, one which is according to the level of glory its citizens are willing and able to abide.⁶³

D&C 85:5b,5c – *For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom, can not abide a celestial glory; and he who can not abide the law of a terrestrial kingdom, can not abide a terrestrial glory; he who can not abide the law of a telestial kingdom, cannot abide a telestial glory: therefore, he is not meet for a kingdom of glory. Therefore, he must abide a kingdom which is not a kingdom of glory.*

This is why it is written:

Alma 16:232 – *... **that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.***⁶⁴

Individuals who are of a *celestial spirit* when they die will inherit the celestial kingdom:

D&C 85:6c,d – *... for, notwithstanding they die, they also shall rise again a spiritual body: they who are of a **celestial spirit** shall receive the same body, which was a natural body: even ye shall receive your bodies, and your glory shall be that glory by which your bodies are quickened. Ye who are quickened by a portion of the celestial glory, shall then receive of the same, even a fullness;*⁶⁴

Those who are of a terrestrial spirit and those who are of a telestial spirit will receive their inheritances in kingdoms of lesser light and glory – just as the light of the moon and the stars differ from the light of the sun, respectively.

D&C 85:6e,f – *and they who are quickened by a portion of the terrestrial glory, shall then receive of the same, even a fullness: and also they who are quickened by a portion of the telestial glory, shall then receive of the same, even a fullness:*

Those individuals who remain without glory shall return to their own place absent the gift of glory from Jesus Christ.

D&C 85:6g-7 – *and they who remain shall also be quickened; nevertheless, they shall return again to their own place,⁶⁵ to enjoy that which they are willing to receive, because they were*

⁶³ Alma 9:15-32 with Luke 8:18

⁶⁴ Matthew 12:37-39 with II Nephi 6:38-42, II Nephi 6:93, Mosiah 1:72-82, Alma 8:100-107, Alma 14:58, Alma 19:66-71, etc.

⁶⁵ Acts 1:24,25 with Jacob 4:4,5

not willing to enjoy that which they might have received. For what doth it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him, and he receive not the gift? Behold, he rejoices not in that which is given unto him, neither rejoices in him who is the giver of the gift.

To be clear, individuals who are not able to abide the celestial law – the law of Zion – must abide by a different, lesser law, e.g. that of the terrestrial or moon glory, or that of the telestial or star glory (for one star *differs from another*).⁶⁶ As such, the laws of these lesser or night glories are insufficient to build Zion, the kingdom of the pure in heart.⁶⁷ They simply cannot uphold the celestial kingdom and its principles.

*D&C 102:2a-d – 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 require 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**; and my people must needs be chastened until they learn **obedience**, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer.*

Inheritors of the kingdom that has no glory are also governed by a suitable law given them by the Lord.⁶⁸ But because they are unwilling to abide a spirit of glory, they cannot be preserved by a law of glory. Consequently, they must remain *filthy still*.

*D&C 85:8a,b – And again, verily I say unto you, that which is governed by law, is also preserved by law, and perfected and sanctified by the same. That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willeth to abide in sin, **and altogether abideth in sin**, can not be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, or judgment; therefore, they must remain filthy still.*

These are they who are referred to as sons of perdition.⁶⁹ These are they who crucify Christ afresh to themselves.⁷⁰ When given the opportunity, they failed to repent of their sins and come to Christ to be cleansed of their filthiness.⁷¹

Remember, God created our bodies, collectively, to be the temple of the Holy Ghost.⁷² Even though God created us in His image for the purpose of inhabiting us

⁶⁶ I Corinthians 15:41-44 with D&C 76:71

⁶⁷ D&C 102:1a-2d with D&C 85:5a-c & D&C 94:5a-5g

⁶⁸ D&C 85:9a,b & Revelation 19:16 with Colossians 2:8-15

⁶⁹ D&C 76:4-e & III Nephi 13:60 with John 17:12 & Hebrews 10:39

⁷⁰ Hebrews 6:4-7 with Hebrews 10:26-21

⁷¹ II Nephi 12:23-26, Mosiah 1:79-82 & Alma 9:6-9 with Genesis 7:43 (D&C 36:7f,g) & John 8:39-47; cf. Alma 21:121,122 with Alma 14:58

⁷² I Corinthians 6:19,20 with I Corinthians 3:16,17

by His Spirit,⁷³ He simply does not or will not dwell in unholy temples.⁷⁴

Alma 5:36,37 – And he doth not dwell in unholy temples; neither can filthiness, nor anything which is unclean be received into the kingdom of God; Therefore I say unto you, The time shall come, yea, and it shall be at the last day, that he who is filthy, shall remain in his filthiness.

Those who persist in being filthy open the way for evil spirits to return and infest their souls, causing them to remain as if no redemption had been made, except, that is, for the resurrection and judgment.⁷⁵

Matthew 12:37-39 – ... When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and findeth none; but when a man speaketh against the Holy Ghost, then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth him empty, swept and garnished; for the good spirit leaveth him unto himself. Then goeth the evil spirit, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there; and the last end of that man is worse than the first ...

This is why it is of great importance to remember that while it is called **Today** each of us have been given an opportunity to turn from wickedness and return to the Lord to receive mercy. For did not the Lord say the following?

Ezekiel 18-24 – ... when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, everyone according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn ye and live.

Do not place your trust in your own works or abilities. Place your life in the hands of God who calls you to come and partake of His goodness everlastingly.

Jeremiah 29:11-13 – For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call unto me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

Remember that God's ways are not our ways. They are much higher and grander

⁷³ Ephesians 2:19-22 with Genesis 1:27-29

⁷⁴ Alma 16:235, Mosiah 1:82 & Helaman 2:59 with Matthew 12:38-39

⁷⁵ Hebrews 6:4-6 & Hebrews 10:23-31 with Mosiah 8:77,78, Alma 8:97,98, Alma 9:17-32, Alma 9:52,53 & Moroni 7:32-43

than ours. For Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost.⁷⁶

Isaiah 55:7-9 – Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Come then and receive the fullness of the gift of Jesus Christ, which is the fullness of His Father's glory. Allow Him, as your infinite Redeemer Lord, to give you the gift of everlasting life in His Father's kingdom.

Hebrews 4:15,16 – For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was on all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Closing Considerations

By taking the scriptures as our open enrollment manual, we see that our eternal estate is determined by the spirit that is in us at the time of our death.⁷⁷ When we die, we will be of one of the following spirits: 1) a celestial spirit, 2) a terrestrial spirit, 3) a telestial spirit, or 4) a spirit of no glory.⁷⁸

Hopefully, this study letter has been helpful to you in choosing wisely your care plan for eternity in this open enrollment period, i.e. in this probationary state. As you consider your four options, I trust you will remember just how short this life is compared to *the endless duration of eternity!*⁷⁹ With this in mind, I am encouraging you to choose eternal life in Jesus Christ, knowing how great the eternal rewards are for those who repent and come to Him.⁸⁰

For more on this topic, see *Why Three Glories – Part 1: Eyes to See & Ears to Hear*

- <https://hisworkmanship.net/why-three-glories-part-1/>

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20,21)

⁷⁶ Luke 19:10

⁷⁷ Alma 16:229-232

⁷⁸ D&C 85:5c-7 with Alma 16:229-232 & Ezekiel 18:20-28

⁷⁹ Enos 1:37 with Mosiah 1:124-130

⁸⁰ cf. John 1:11-18 with I John 1:5-7, I John 2:1-5, I John 3:7-11, I John 4:13-17 & I John 5:9-12