

The Last Dispensation of Time

A Collection of Messages from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

THE CHURCH OF
Jesus[®]
Christ

The Church of Jesus Christ, with headquarters in Monongahela, PA, believes the Bible and the Book of Mormon to be Holy Scriptures telling of God's relationship with the human family. These two scriptures jointly convey God's dealings and plan for mankind.

For further information on the beliefs of The Church of Jesus Christ, visit our website at: www.thechurchofjesuschrist.org This website includes a series of basic beliefs of The Church of Jesus Christ. We believe each of them to be consistent with the scriptures and in accordance with the New Testament Church as established by Jesus Christ.

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Introduction

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles is pleased to present this series of articles on “The Last Dispensation of Time”. This is a topic that is of interest to many people. The scriptures contain many insights to future events on earth as well as the plans for our souls when we leave this earth. These articles pull together many of these scriptures so the information can be easily understood. This e-book puts all of the articles under one cover so they can easily be referenced in a single place.

We hope you find these articles informative and will receive a blessing as you read about God’s plan for the Last Dispensation of Time.

In the Love of Christ,
The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

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The Last Dispensation Of Time

We live in a day and time, possibly like no other, where uncertainty and instability appear on nearly every horizon. Our heightened awareness may be directly linked to what we read, listen and see, almost in real-time, throughout the world. No land is too distant and no fact too obscure to be reported or shared. Maybe we have become desensitized to wars and rumors of wars, economic fluctuations, world government volatilities and even global weather conditions. Yet whether individuals are knowledgeable of latter day events through the Bible and Book of Mormon or not, many have begun to ask the question... “What lies in our future?”

For some, these questions are motivated out of fear, some may be seeking to prepare themselves or seek to understand God’s plan, while others may simply be curious. As the people of God, we are confident in His Word. As Jesus stated, *“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. ...Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”* Matthew 24:36-44*. (*refers to the second coming of Christ and His return, which is near the end of the latter day events highlighted below).

Looking back, we see various dispensations of time and ways by which God has made known His dealings with mankind. We can reflect on the time of Noah and the flood, of Abraham and the covenant between him and God, of salvation coming through Jesus Christ (prophesied throughout the Old Testament and much of the Book of Mormon and its fulfillment as noted in the New Testament and 3 Nephi). As time progressed, false teachings slowly entered the Church and eventually, a falling away (apostasy) of the true teachings of Christ and His church occurred (1 Timothy 4:1-3), beginning around 35 A.D. with the gospel authority completely taken away around 560 A.D. (agreed upon by many historians as the timeframe marking the beginning of the Dark Ages).

The final dispensation of time is the time of the Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (the latter days) wherein the Lord restored His Church and priesthood authority as a means to recover His covenant people (Israel) and ALL that would be drawn to Him. This is our time to search the scriptures and recognize that in this last dispensation of time, we have been provided a unique opportunity to see prophecies unfold.

Although neither the Bible nor the Book of Mormon lay out the precise timing of events, and even the exact sequence has various interpretations, the scriptures are replete with references that provide us with what we NEED to know. A comprehensive study of all the scriptures related to the last dispensation would take more space than we have here. Let's walk through some of the scriptures that The Church of Jesus Christ understands to relate to the events during this last dispensation of time (these events are not in a definite order and should not be interpreted as sequential):

- A restoration of that which had fallen away occurred, and His Church / His Gospel, His true teachings and His priesthood authority were restored and established again on the earth (Revelation 14:6).
 - » The Gospel authority was returned to the earth in 1829 A.D. along with the Book of Mormon, published in 1830 A.D.
 - » The Gospel was restored to the Gentiles and the Gentiles are to bring the Gospel to the tribe of Joseph (Native American) (3 Nephi 21:5-6) and to all the world (Mark 16: 15-16).
 - » God sent His son for the salvation of every man (1 Timothy 2:1-6).
- The sinful condition of the Gentiles is warned – rejecting the fullness of the Gospel (3 Nephi 16:7-10). Wickedness, sin, pride, lyings, murders, whoredoms, etc.

- In order for God’s kingdom to be built on earth, the land (and those who possess it) must be clean from sin. (Ether 2:9-12, 3 Nephi 20:20).
 - » If the people choose sin, they will be swept off the land – destruction is necessary to cleanse the land (3 Nephi 20:15-20), unless they choose to turn to Christ, repent and choose righteousness.
 - » No matter what, The Righteous Need Not Fear (1 Nephi 22:17), but it is critical that the people of God are spiritually prepared by purifying themselves, repenting daily, fasting and praying, learning His Word, having the pure love of Christ in our hearts, separating themselves from sin, etc. (Matthew 25: 1-13).

- The Choice Seer will come forth out of the tribe of Joseph and translate records (2 Nephi 3:8-13).

- The Gentiles and the followers of Christ from the tribe of Joseph build the New Jerusalem and establish Zion on the land of America (in the flesh) – referred to as the Peaceful Reign (3 Nephi 21:23-24).

- The Peaceful Reign (Zion) will last for a long time (possibly hundreds of years, though scripture is not clear exactly how long) and Christ will visit (3 Nephi 21:25).
 - » This is the kingdom of Christ on earth referred to by Daniel as the reign of “The Ancient of Days” (Daniel chapter 7) where the devil will have no power due to the righteousness of the saints (2 Nephi 30:18).

- “...there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil...” (1 Nephi 14:8-12).

- Believing Jews will be converted to Christ (Hosea 10:11, Isaiah 31:31, Jeremiah 31:31).

- Jerusalem (in the land of Israel) will be rebuilt unto the house of Israel (Ether 13: 5).
- All the tribes of Israel will be gathered (Ezekiel 37:21-28) and an invitation extended to all nations (Daniel 2:44) who love and follow Christ.
- At the time when evil returns, the days of the Peaceful Reign are to be shortened for the sake of the elect. The Peaceful Reign ends with the gathering and disposition of the good and the bad (Jacob 5:77; Matthew 24:21-22).
- Christ will return (Matthew 25:30-32).
- Resurrection – our body and soul will reunite (Alma chapter 40).
 - » This is the First Resurrection for the Redeemed – joining with Christ at His coming and dwelling with Him through Millennium (Revelation 20:6).
- The evil power and his followers will march against the camp of the saints. Fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours the evil (Revelation 20:9). The devil, death and hell will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10-15).
- Judgment day occurs at the Throne of God (Revelation 20:12-15):
 - » Christ is the Judge.
 - » The books are opened wide.
- All the Redeemed will spend eternity with God and Christ and inhabit a new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:10).

We encourage you to read and study the Word of God with diligence, attend church and scripture study, seek to draw nearer to the Lord and His gospel each day. Jesus reminds us that, *“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”* Matthew 5:6.

While many prophecies lie in our future during this last dispensation, we still have much to do! We ask that you remain focused on reaching out to those lost in sin, that they might find salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Gentile Laborers In The Latter Days - Part 1

The Church of Jesus Christ today has a special and unique role in the great plan of God. It is very important for all who have been blessed with the privilege of becoming a part of the restored gospel to know of the great role and responsibility placed upon The Church of Jesus Christ in this period of time.

The understanding of God's plan and our role in this plan, in our present day, has always been one of the greatest challenges for the people of God in all ages of time. Do we see where we are in the tremendous timeframe of God's creation and very importantly, what does God desire for His church? Fortunately for us today we have been blessed with wonderful insight and understanding because of The Book of Mormon and the revelation of God through the Holy Spirit which opens our understanding of the scripture.

We believe the everlasting gospel has been restored to the earth in our day and time for all people on the earth.

*“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,”
(Revelation 14:6).*

This restoration of the everlasting gospel occurred or was delivered to a land (America) and a people (Gentiles). The scripture informs us of this mysterious plan of God in the latter days.

“And the time cometh that he shall manifest himself unto all nations, both unto the Jews and also unto the Gentiles; and after he has manifested himself unto the Jews and also unto the Gentiles, then he shall manifest himself unto the Gentiles and also unto the Jews, and the last shall be first, and the first shall be last.” (1 Nephi 13:42)

Today, we are living in the sequence of this scripture where we

(Gentiles) are first and then this restored gospel will go unto the Jews (House of Israel).

GENTILES VERSUS HOUSE OF ISRAEL

The everlasting gospel is for all people. In the latter days, the responsibility and indeed, the blessings of God to the Gentiles are very great. This responsibility and blessing continues throughout the latter days.

But behold, thus saith the Lord God: When the day cometh that they shall believe in me, that I am Christ, then have I covenanted with their fathers that they shall be restored in the flesh, upon the earth, unto the lands of their inheritance. And it shall come to pass that they shall be gathered in from their long dispersion, from the isles of the sea, and from the four parts of the earth; and the nations of the Gentiles shall be great in the eyes of me, saith God, in carrying them forth to the lands of their inheritance. Yea, the kings of the Gentiles shall be nursing fathers unto them, and their queens shall become nursing mothers; wherefore, the promises of the Lord are great unto the Gentiles, for he hath spoken it, and who can dispute? (2 Nephi 10:7 - 9)

And after our seed is scattered the Lord God will proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles, which shall be of great worth unto our seed; wherefore, it is likened unto their being nourished by the Gentiles and being carried in their arms and upon their shoulders. And it shall also be of worth unto the Gentiles; and not only unto the Gentiles but unto all the house of Israel, unto the making known of the covenants of the Father of heaven unto Abraham, saying: In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. (1 Nephi 22:8 - 9)

God has designated a special work (and special blessings) for the Gentiles in the latter days - in our day and well into the future. The great work of the Gentiles in the latter days must not be overlooked or diminished as we anticipate the future glories of God's plan. The "marvelous work" is certainly not just the Book of Mormon coming forth and the Church being established. The scriptures make it

clear that blessings and work of the Gentiles extend through the completion of the full recovery of the House of Israel back to a belief in Christ. There are tremendous events yet in the future for the Gentile people as God's "marvelous work" continues to unfold.

But if they (Gentiles) will repent and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance; And they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem. And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. (3 Nephi 21:22 - 24)

We need to understand that the latter-day work begins with the Gentile people receiving and holding the truth of God. But the plan of the latter days is not exclusive to any one group of people. God's plan and purpose in the latter days is completely inclusive. The scripture says, "...unto them that dwell on the earth..." (Revelation 14:6). That is a totally inclusive declaration. The scriptures show the blessings of God unto the Gentile people will extend until the end of creation. In God's kingdom there is only one King and He is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the one and only reason for the restoration. There is no 'us' versus 'them' (Gentile versus House of Israel) in God's kingdom. We are all one in Christ.

FULNESS OF GENTILES (FULNESS OF GOSPEL)

"And now, the thing which our father meaneth concerning the grafting in of the natural branches through the fulness of the Gentiles, is, that in the latter days, when our seed shall have dwindled in unbelief, yea, for the space of many years, and many generations after the Messiah shall be manifested in body unto the children of men, then shall the fulness of the gospel of the Messiah come unto the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles unto the remnant of our seed—" (1

Nephi 15:13)

Understanding the term - Fulness of the Gentiles - is very important for our topic and ultimately wisdom in understanding the future events spoken of in the scriptures. Jesus spoke about this subject when He was with the Nephites on the land of America.

...that these sayings which ye shall write shall be kept and shall be manifested unto the Gentiles, that through the fulness of the Gentiles, the remnant of their seed, who shall be scattered forth upon the face of the earth because of their unbelief, may be brought in, or may be brought to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer. And then will I gather them in from the four quarters of the earth; and then will I fulfil the covenant which the Father hath made unto all the people of the house of Israel. (3 Nephi 16:4 - 5)

Part of the 'Fulness of the Gentiles' is The Book of Mormon coming forth to the Gentiles.

And blessed are the Gentiles, because of their belief in me, in and of the Holy Ghost, which witnesses unto them of me and of the Father. Behold, because of their belief in me, saith the Father, and because of the unbelief of you, O house of Israel, in the latter day shall the truth come unto the Gentiles, that the fulness of these things shall be made known unto them. (3 Nephi 16:6 - 7)

A significant part of the 'Fulness of the Gentiles' is knowledge of the truth of God. It is a knowledge of the everlasting gospel restored on the earth, for the last time, to all nations. It is a knowledge of the true points of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. It is a knowledge of God's great plan and purpose to restore a remnant of the entire House of Israel back to a true worship of God. It is a knowledge that God will establish His spiritual Kingdom on earth (Zion). It is a knowledge that in God's plan, the Gentiles have a great role to play in all these events. The Apostle Paul was one who understood the impact and significance of this 'Fulness' in the latter days.

“Now if the fall of them (House of Israel) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? (Romans 11:12) “For if the casting away of them (House of Israel) be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? (Romans 11:15)

The knowledge that has been given to the Gentiles will eventually impact the entire world. The ‘Fulness of the Gentiles’ is one of – and perhaps – the greatest blessing that the Gentiles, and indeed the world, will receive. The Apostle Paul makes the statement it is as impactful as the dead coming back to life. It is understanding God and the plans of God for His creation in our time. What a special blessing and honor given by God to us today.

Because this knowledge is so precious and special to the world, there is also a great warning given to the Gentiles. Jesus said, *“...and if they shall do all those things, and shall reject the fulness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fulness of my gospel from among them.” (3 Nephi 16:10)*

Just as in all periods of time, great knowledge brings with it great responsibility. There is a work to be done. A work by God certainly, but also a great work by the Gentiles who possess this knowledge.

Gentile Laborers In The Latter Days - Part 2

FIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GENTILES

A - The Church of Jesus Christ

The Church of Jesus Christ has been established by God in these final days of God's creation. The Church today is in the hands of the Gentiles to keep and oversee the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ.

"But if they (Gentiles) will repent and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them... (3 Nephi 21:22)

"And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me; and I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me; and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me." (3 Nephi 11:32)

Even though there is still much disputation and doctrinal controversy in Christianity today. The restoration of Jesus Christ's doctrine in simplicity and purity is in our hands. Let us be diligent to keep The Church of Jesus Christ as Jesus delivered it to mankind.

B - Help and Care for House of Israel - temporal

A huge responsibility today for the Gentiles is the temporal care for the House of Israel on the land of America. The Book of Mormon clearly describes this work.

"Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders." (1 Nephi 21:22)

“Nevertheless, after they (House of Israel) shall be nursed by the Gentiles, and the Lord has lifted up his hand upon the Gentiles and set them up for a standard, and their children have been carried in their arms, and their daughters have been carried upon their shoulders, behold these things of which are spoken are temporal: for thus are the covenants of the Lord with our fathers; and it meaneth us in the days to come, and also all our brethren who are of the house of Israel.” (1 Nephi 22:6)

Once again the scripture describes the Lord establishing His Church among the Gentiles. The scripture states that the Lord sets up a standard which is The Church of Jesus Christ. Then, there is a work that is accomplished by the Gentiles which is a temporal, or natural work among the House of Israel. This temporal help is a physical assistance. We are directed to pray for Israel.

“And now behold, this I speak unto their seed, and also to the Gentiles who have care for the house of Israel, that realize and know from whence their blessings come. For I know that such will sorrow for the calamity of the house of Israel; yea, they will sorrow for the destruction of this people; they will sorrow that this people had not repented that they might have been clasped in the arms of Jesus.” (Mormon 5:10 - 11)

But even more than prayer and concern, we must labor for the welfare of the House of Israel. We must assist them with friendship, with love, and with physical assistance where possible. We as Gentiles must love them to the point that we see them as part of our own family. In our own families, we carry and hold our children dear to us. We do all we can to keep them from danger and harm. The House of Israel are as the children of the Gentiles today. We must and we will carry them to Christ.

C - Deliver the Gospel

“And now, I would prophesy somewhat more concerning the Jews and the Gentiles. For after the book of which I have spoken shall

come forth, and be written unto the Gentiles, and sealed up again unto the Lord, there shall be many which shall believe the words which are written; and they shall carry them forth unto the remnant of our seed.” (2 Nephi 30:3)

“And I would, my brethren, that ye should know that all the kindreds of the earth cannot be blessed unless he shall make bare his arm in the eyes of the nations. Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations, in bringing about his covenants and his gospel unto those who are of the house of Israel.” (1 Nephi 22:10 - 11)

“And the Lord will set his hand again the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore, he will proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men. Wherefore, he shall bring forth his words unto them, which words shall judge them at the last day, for they shall be given them for the purpose of convincing them of the true Messiah, who was rejected by them;...” (2 Nephi 25:17 - 18)

These verses are just a small sampling of the scriptures that describes the great work and responsibility of the Gentiles to take the ‘Fulness of the Gospel’ to the House of Israel. We are tasked with delivering the truth of Jesus Christ and the great plan of God, through God’s word to the House of Israel.

“And the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; wherefore, they shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which was had among their fathers. And then shall they rejoice; for they shall know that it is a blessing unto them from the hand of God;...” (2 Nephi 30:5-6)

What gospel? The everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ that was restored to the Gentiles. What knowledge? The knowledge of Jesus Christ and His wonderful plan in the latter days. This is the work of God today. This is the work of The Church of Jesus Christ today.

D - Assist in the Recovery of the House of Israel

“And then shall the work of the Father commence at that day, even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people. Verily I say unto you, at that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people, yea, even the tribes which have been lost, which the Father hath led away out of Jerusalem. Yea, the work shall commence among all the dispersed of my people, with the Father to prepare the way whereby they may come unto me, that they may call on the Father in my name. Yea, and then shall the work commence, with the Father among all nations in preparing the way whereby his people may be gathered home to the land of their inheritance. And they shall go out from all nations; and they shall not go out in haste, nor go by flight, for I will go before them, saith the Father, and I will be their rearward. (3 Nephi 21: 26-29)

The people of God, including and especially the Gentiles who have accepted the everlasting gospel, will assist in the work of physically preaching and working to bring all of the House of Israel back to the promised lands of God.

E - Assist in the Establishment of Zion

“And they (Gentiles) shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem. And then shall they (Gentiles) assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst.” (3 Nephi 21:23-25)

“For the Lord said unto me: They shall not go forth unto the Gentiles until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord. And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the

things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are.” (Ether 4:6 - 7)

The responsibility of the Gentiles in God's great 'marvelous work' is far reaching and very extensive. It is very clear God has given great significance to the Gentile people who accept the restored gospel.

WARNING

As much as we have outlined and explored the role of the Gentiles in God's latter-day plan, it is also very important that we understand the difference between the Gentiles who accept the everlasting gospel and the scriptures which describe the Gentiles (Gentile nations) that reject the everlasting gospel. The Book of Mormon also describes in many places that there will be Gentiles (not those who embrace the Restored Gospel which we have come to know in The Church of Jesus Christ) that will reject the true doctrine of Jesus Christ and will reap the displeasure of God.

“AND now behold, my beloved brethren, I would speak unto you; for I, Nephi, would not suffer that ye should suppose that ye are more righteous than the Gentiles shall be. For behold, except ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall all likewise perish; and because of the words which have been spoken ye need not suppose that the Gentiles are utterly destroyed. For behold, I say unto you that as many of the Gentiles as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord; and as many of the Jews as will not repent shall be cast off; for the Lord covenanteth with none save it be with them that repent and believe in his Son, who is the Holy One of Israel.” (2 Nephi 30:1 - 2)

CONCLUSION

Blessings and great joy await the people of God (Gentile and House of Israel) in our day and time. As The Church of Jesus Christ today, let us be committed to the Lord and His church, and dedicated to the

work of God. There is no greater purpose in life.

“Therefore, when these works and the works which shall be wrought among you hereafter shall come forth from the Gentiles, unto your seed which shall dwindle in unbelief because of iniquity; For thus it behooveth the Father that it should come forth from the Gentiles, that he may show forth his power unto the Gentiles, for this cause that the Gentiles, if they will not harden their hearts, that they may repent and come unto me and be baptized in my name and know of the true points of my doctrine, that they may be numbered among my people, O house of Israel;” “For in that day, for my sake shall the Father work a work, which shall be a great and a marvelous work among them,…” (3 Nephi 21:5 – 6, 9)

The Peaceful Reign

Although there is no greater joy and excitement than finding salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our hearts are often stirred over the many prophecies that lie in our future during this last dispensation of time. One such prophecy is the hope of peace. The 23rd Article of the Faith and Doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ states the following:

“We believe in the fulfillment and ultimate establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth while men are still in the flesh. We refer to this period of time as the Peaceful Reign, which shall precede the Millennium, or Thousand Years with Christ.” (Isaiah 2:1-5; Isaiah 35; Isaiah 51:3; Isaiah 55; Isaiah 65:18-25; Hosea 2:18-19; Job 5:22-25; Ezekiel 34: 25-26; 1 Nephi 22: 4-28; 3 Nephi 20: 22; 3 Nephi 21: 23-29; Ether 13: 4-12)

We believe the scriptures above, along with the others below, overwhelmingly confirm that Zion, another term for the Peaceful Reign, will be an era of peace such as man has never known. In an effort to provide greater understanding and insight into the events and conditions that will exist as the Lord establishes His Kingdom, we have provided numerous references as a sampling of scriptures on this subject. (Please note that there are many other applicable references throughout the Bible and Book of Mormon.)

The Peaceful Reign or Zion

1. Conditions that precede this time:

But, behold, in the last days, or in the days of the Gentiles -- yea, behold all the nations of the Gentiles and also the Jews, both those who shall come upon this land and those who shall be upon other lands, yea, even upon all the lands of the earth, behold, they will be drunken with iniquity and all manner of abominations -- And when that day shall come they shall be visited of the Lord of Hosts, with thunder and with earthquake, and with a great noise, and with

*storm, and with tempest, and with the flame of devouring fire.
(2 Nephi 27:1-2)*

- God will unfold all of His revelations to The Church of Jesus Christ and The Gospel will be preached throughout the world. (Ether 4:7; Revelation 14:6; Isaiah 60; Matthew 28:19; 1 Nephi 14:12)
- God will destroy the enemies of Zion & deliver the righteous. (1 Nephi 22:13,16-17)
- A time of travail and destruction will occur to cleanse the land from sin. (1 Nephi 21:14; Isaiah 66:5-9; Micah 4:9-12; 3 Nephi 21:11-22)

2. Facts about this time:

And they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem. And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst. And then shall the work of the Father commence at that day, even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people. Verily I say unto you, at that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people, yea, even the tribes which have been lost, which the Father hath led away out of Jerusalem. Yea, the work shall commence among all the dispersed of my people, with the Father to prepare the way whereby they may come unto me, that they may call on the Father in my name. Yea, and then shall the work commence, with the Father among all nations in preparing the way whereby his people may be gathered home to the land of their inheritance. And they shall go out from all nations; and they shall not go out in haste, nor go by flight, for I will go before them, saith the Father, and I will be their rearward. (3 Nephi 21:23-29)

- God has a set time to favor Zion – establishing this Kingdom is part of His plan. (Psalm 102:13; 3 Nephi 20:29)
- Zion will be established quickly. (Isaiah 66:8-9)
- Zion will be established in a prominent way, on mountain tops, for all to see. (Isaiah 2:3; 2 Nephi 12:2-3; Zechariah 8:3)

- Zion will be established before the First Resurrection and Millennium, while man is in the flesh. (3 Nephi 21:24-29; 3 Nephi 20:22; Ether 13:8; 1 Nephi 22: 18, 26-27).
 - » The Millennium (which follows Zion) is when Christ will reign for 1,000 years with those who come forth (or resurrect) in the First Resurrection. (Revelation 20:4-6).
- Zion will be established in the Americas. (3 Nephi 20:22; 3 Nephi 21:22-24)
- Old Jerusalem (in the land of Israel) will be restored to the House of Israel for those that do not gather in the Americas. They will eventually come to Zion in the Americas on a highway of holiness. (Ether 13:11-12; 3 Nephi 21:26-29; Isaiah 11:16; Isaiah 35:8-9)
- Blessings promised for those who work to bring forth Zion. (1 Nephi 13:37)
- Woes promised to those who fight against Zion. (1 Nephi 22:14; Isaiah 29:7-8; 2 Nephi 10:13)
- Zion will be shortened for the sake of the righteous before sin enters in. (Matthew 24:21-22)

3. Spiritual conditions that will exist during this time:

And he gathereth his children from the four quarters of the earth; and he numbereth his sheep, and they know him; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd; and he shall feed his sheep, and in him they shall find pasture. And because of the righteousness of his people, Satan has no power; wherefore, he cannot be loosed for the space of many years; for he hath no power over the hearts of the people, for they dwell in righteousness, and the Holy One of Israel reigneth. And now behold, I, Nephi, say unto you that all these things must come according to the flesh. (1 Nephi 22:25-27)

- There will be righteousness with total unity and the devil will be temporarily bound and have no power over the righteous. (1 Nephi 22:26-27; 2 Nephi 30:18) This is the kingdom of Christ on earth referred to by Daniel as the reign of “The Ancient of Days”. (Daniel 7)
- Other records of Israel will be brought forth. (1 Nephi 13:39-40; 2 Nephi 29:12-13)

- All knowledge will be given to the righteous. (Ether 4:6-7; Jeremiah 31:34; 2 Nephi 12:3)
- The Choice Seer and others will preach and convert many. (2 Nephi chapter 3)
- The Songs of Zion will be sung. (Psalm 137:1-4; 2 Nephi 8:3, 11; Isaiah 35:10)

4. Temporal conditions that will exist during this time:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (Isaiah 2:2-4)

- Peace will reign – there will be no war. (2 Nephi 12:2-4; Isaiah 11:9)
- Joy will prevail – with no temporal needs, no sickness, no affliction or sadness. (Isaiah 33:16-24; Isaiah 35:10; Isaiah 65:21-23)
- The earth will be blessed as in the first dominion (garden of Eden). (Isaiah 51:3; Joel 2:3)
- There will be one pure language. (Zephaniah 3:9)
- Long life will be granted (we will be in the flesh and enjoy the peaceful condition of Zion. (Isaiah 65:20-22)
- There will be peace among the animal kingdom. (Isaiah 11:6-8; Isaiah 65:25)

5. Results from establishing this peaceful kingdom:

Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations, in bringing about his covenants and his gospel unto those who are of the house of Israel. Wherefore, he will bring them again out of captivity, and they shall be gathered together

to the lands of their inheritance; and they shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness; and they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel. (1 Nephi 22:11-12)

- The plain and precious parts of The Gospel will be returned. (1 Nephi 13:39-40)
- The Gentile church will demonstrate great faith and receive God's promises to the House of Israel. (Ether 4:4-7; 3 Nephi 21:22-29)
- The Choice Seer will appear. (Romans 11:25-26)
- There will be a condition of righteousness. (Isaiah 62:1)
- The House of Israel will be restored & gathered. (1 Nephi 22:11-12; Jeremiah 16:15)
- The New Jerusalem will be built. (Ether 13:10-12; 3 Nephi 21:23)
- Christ will make His appearance from time to time. (3 Nephi 21:25)

The Peaceful Reign or Zion will be wonderful! But when will “this time” come to pass? We do not know the exact time for certain, but we are confident that we are living in the latter days referenced in the scriptures and that the process has already begun, starting with the Restoration and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. God knows the exact time for Zion to be fully established and He will move quickly when that time comes. The priesthood of The Church has accepted many revelations over the recent years that reinforce the urgency to prepare ourselves, in righteousness. It is our responsibility, as members of *The Church of Jesus Christ*, to watch for the events noted above as we seek to draw men and women to Christ. We must diligently continue to carry out the Divine Commission, and pray for the understanding that **God wants us to live in the Spirit of Zion today**, while we are watching and waiting for the full establishment of Zion, which will surely come! The following verses in the Book of Mormon, speak of a peaceful reign that existed in the land of America many years ago, and provide even further motivation. May these words encourage us to know that such a time will come again:

And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people. And

there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God. There were no robbers, nor murderers, neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God. And how blessed were they! For the Lord did bless them in all their doings; yea, even they were blessed and prospered until an hundred and ten years had passed away; and the first generation from Christ had passed away, and there was no contention in all the land. (4 Nephi v15-18)

Hope For Israel

Hope is defined as a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen. The Church of Jesus Christ has a genuine and unique *LOVE* and *HOPE* for Israel and is fully certain great events (things) will happen on Israel's behalf. When The Church of Jesus Christ refers to Israel we are not only referencing the nation of Israel and the predominant indigenous people of that nation, the lineage of Judah, but also the entire house of Israel. The entire house of Israel is comprised of all the descendants of the twelve tribes of Jacob who was renamed Israel (Genesis 32:28).

In previous articles from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles we have identified that when the Peaceful Reign occurs one of the results from establishing this peaceful kingdom is the restoration and gathering of the House of Israel (1 Nephi 22:11-12 and Jeremiah 16:15). The Church of Jesus Christ has for over the past 150 years been blessed with an understanding of the importance of bringing the Gospel to the Indigenous peoples in the Americas (Native Americans), many of whom are descendants of Joseph of Egypt (Son of Jacob). The Church of Jesus Christ has been given understanding of the holy scriptures by the Spirit of God that the restoration of Joseph is the first step in the restoration of the entire House of Israel.

The first step toward the restoration of Israel is by the knowledge and conversion of the descendants of Joseph to the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ when the Gentiles shall sin against HIS gospel. (3 Nephi 16:10-12). God will work in a powerful manner to the convincing the descendants of Joseph of His pure and unadulterated Gospel and will employ His servant, the Choice Seer, to the convincing of the words that have gone forth (2 Nephi 3:11). We of The Church of Jesus Christ are blessed in understanding that the believing Gentiles shall assist the remnant of Jacob on the lands of the Americas to build a city which shall be called the New Jerusalem. (3 Nephi 21:23-24).

The blessings of God to the House of Israel do NOT stop at the establishment of the New Jerusalem in the Americas. The House

of Israel is part of the lineage of Abraham therefore they inherit the promises made to Abraham. The covenants made to Abraham from God were great and everlasting – including the prophesy of Christ coming into the world as his posterity. One of several references is found in Genesis 17:7 “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.” Throughout the Scriptures, God has spoken through His Holy Prophets that he would gather again the House of Israel. One such scripture is found in Jeremiah 31:10 “Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.”

Our HOPE for Israel is the express understanding that all the tribes of Israel will be gathered to not only their lands of their inheritance but also, and most importantly, they will serve God by accepting Jesus Christ as the Messiah and savior of the world. The Holy Bible and Book of Mormon are replete with references to the gathering of the House of Israel as the gathering will be one of the greatest events in the Last Dispensation of Time before Jesus Christ returns to earth and time stops and eternity begins.

A partial listing of the highlights of the restoration of the entire House of Israel are as follows (note these are not presented in sequential order):

1. As the pure and unadulterated Gospel of Jesus Christ is brought to the descendants of Joseph and the Peaceful Reign is established God commences to recover the entire House of Israel “*And then shall the work of the Father commence at that day, even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people. Verily I say unto you, at that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people, yea, even the tribes which have been lost, which the Father hath led away out of Jerusalem.* (3 Nephi 21: 26)
2. The lost tribes of Israel are NOT lost, their exact location is known to

God "But now I go unto the Father, and also to show myself unto the lost tribes of Israel, for they are not lost unto the Father, for he knoweth whither he hath taken them." (3 Nephi 17:4)

- Many of the tribe of Judah will acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, be converted to Him and He will write His law in their inward parts and He will remember their sin no more (Zechariah 13:6 and Jeremiah 31:31-34). This **fact** is also found in 2 Nephi 25:15-16 *"Wherefore, the Jews shall be scattered among all nations; yea, and also Babylon shall be destroyed; wherefore, the Jews shall be scattered by other nations. And after they have been scattered, and the Lord God hath scourged them by other nations for the space of many generations, yea, even down from generation to generation until they shall be persuaded to believe in Christ, the Son of God, and the atonement, which is infinite for all mankind - and when that day shall come that they shall believe in Christ, and worship the Father in his name, with pure hearts and clean hands, and look not forward any more for another Messiah, then, at that time, the day will come that it must needs be expedient that they should believe these things."*
3. All the tribes of Israel (who follow Christ) will be gathered together, to accept and worship Jesus Christ and dwell in peace with one another. (Isiah 11:12-13 and Ezekiel 37:21-23)
 4. Jerusalem (in the land of Israel) will be rebuilt unto the house of Israel (Ether 13: 5).
 5. All tribes of Israel will be represented in the New Jerusalem to be built while in the flesh in the Americas (with the assistance of the believing Gentiles). The House of Israel gathered in the old Jerusalem will be able to travel to the New Jerusalem in the Americas as a highway will be prepared for the remnant of God's chosen people. (Isaiah 11:16 and Isaiah 35:8-10)
 6. Israel and the believing Gentiles they inherit will be NEVER more confounded as it states in 3 Nephi 22:1-5, *"And then shall that*

which is written come to pass: Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes; For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy maker, thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel - the God of the whole earth shall he be called."

There is a great Hope for Israel as stated throughout the scriptures in the Holy Bible and the Book of Mormon. The Church of Jesus Christ eagerly awaits the return of the entire House of Israel to Jesus Christ as depicted in Romans 11:15 *"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"* In conclusion, The Church of Jesus Christ is certain on the Hope for Israel and that all these expectations and events will occur as our Lord Jesus Christ stated *"heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"*. (Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31 and Luke 21:33).

Is There Life After Death?

For thousands of years men and women from all walks of life have been asking, "Is there life after death?" One way to answer this question is, "It depends on who you ask," or even more importantly, "Whom do you want to believe?!" Here is a sampling of answers from several wise and learned people who have no doubt given much time and effort to understand the phenomena of life and death:

- Death is one of two things...Either it is annihilation, and the dead have no consciousness of anything: or, as we are told, it is really a change: a migration of the soul from one place to another – *Socrates*
- A man's ethical behavior should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties – no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hope of reward after death – *Albert Einstein*
- We are ignorant of the beyond because this ignorance is the condition of our own life. Just as ice cannot know fire except by melting and vanishing – *Jules Renard*
- As a well spent day brings happy sleep, so life well used brings happy death – *Leonardo DaVinci*
- You live on earth only for a few short years which you call an incarnation, and then you leave your body as an outworn dress and go for refreshment to your true home in the spirit – *White Eagle*
- Everything is changeable, everything appears and disappears: there is no blissful peace until one passes beyond the agony of life and death – *Buddha*
- I believe there are two sides to the phenomenon known as death, this side where we live, and the other side where we shall continue to live. Eternity does not start with death. We are in eternity now – *Norman Vincent Peale*

Each of these quotes reflects the wisdom of man, trying to understand life and death, in some cases confessing they do not know, and in other

cases trying to justify, rationalize or take comfort in the life beyond. They mostly acknowledge that there is life after death but do not articulate what options the after-life may offer, either good or bad. Furthermore, if there is a good place to go versus a bad place, they seem to have no idea of any requirements to get there! It seems to be a mystery to them, even though all seem optimistic that the after-life is a good place. We could examine their lives and try to understand why they spoke as they did, but in the end, we cannot be satisfied with their knowledge or authority to speak about life and death. As previously noted, “Whom do you want to believe?!” We must go to the Word of God.

The *Book of Mormon* teaches that, “For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them by the power of the Holy Ghost...” (1 *Nephi* 10:19). The Bible also teaches that ministers of Christ are “stewards of the mysteries of God.” (1 *Corinthians* 4:1). Therefore, let us not make the mistake of believing the opinions of men over the truth of the Holy Scriptures given to us to understand God’s mysteries. The Holy Scriptures contain the words of Jesus Christ, and the writings of inspired men, who have unlocked the mysteries of God. Without the scriptures to guide us we could never understand God’s promises of the *Resurrection* and *Eternal Life*.

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 - John 3:16

The Scriptures emphasize that there is life after death and that the *Resurrection* was made possible because of God’s love for mankind. Man fell from grace in the Garden of Eden and was consigned to eternal death. Only God’s divine love could release him from death to life through the Crucifixion and *Resurrection* of Christ as an *Atonement* for the sins of all mankind. Without the mercy of God the *Plan of Salvation* culminating with the *Resurrection* could not have happened – we know that belief upon Jesus Christ is the key to *Eternal Life* with the Lord:

Body and Soul

In order to understand the *Resurrection*, we must first understand this life. We must acknowledge that God created man with a body that will

die and a soul that will live forever: The scriptures summarized below make it clear that this is so:

- When God created man of the dust of the earth he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul – Genesis 2:7
- God will preserve our whole spirit and soul and body unto the coming of Jesus Christ – 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- We are not to fear them which kill the body, but to fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell – Matthew 10:28
- The dust shall return to the earth and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it – Ecclesiastes 12:7
- David wrote that Christ would resurrect from the dead, that his soul would not be left in hell – Psalms 16:7-11; Peter referenced this Psalm and wrote that the Apostles confirmed the Resurrection – Acts 2:25-32

Life After Death is Proven by the Resurrection

The *Faith and Doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ*, Article 15, embraces the concept of Life after Death through the *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*:

- We believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as recorded in the scriptures, which was a victory over the power of death and a reintroduction of the principle of continuous or eternal existence; that this principle of continuous existence was not only attained for Himself but for all Adam's race, the wicked as well as the righteous, by which the former will be accountable for their conduct during this life and receive due punishment. Also, that the latter may be duly rewarded for their righteousness or good conduct. We also believe that the righteous that lived previous to the days of Jesus Christ expected their resurrection through and as a direct result of, Christ's resurrection; also, that there was a general resurrection of the righteous that lived before the days of Christ (in the flesh) immediately following Christ's resurrection. The scriptures inform us, "and many bodies of the saints which slept arose...and appeared unto many." A few moments of reflection by a person acquainted in a reasonable degree with

the principles of God's divine justice will force him to conclude that God could not grant this great privilege of the resurrection to some (at that time) and deny it to others, who were equally worthy and expectant, and deprive them of the enjoyment of the benefits of Christ's resurrection until a period still beyond our day when Christ will come again. We believe, also, in a future resurrection of those that die after Christ, according to the scriptures.

Reference: Matthew 27:52-54; Alma 40; 2 Nephi 9:4-22;
3 Nephi 23:9-11.

The scripture summaries below provide greater understanding of the *Plan of Salvation* and Christ's *Atonement* for the sins of mankind, which were necessary to enable the *Resurrection*:

- Because of transgression against God in the Garden of Eden, when man disobeyed God and ate of the *Tree of Knowledge*, he was cut off from the presence of the Lord and consigned to everlasting death. However, God, because of His mercy, took on flesh and died for the sins of mankind that they might be redeemed through His sacrifice. Only the infinite Atonement of Jesus Christ and the power of the *Resurrection* could restore mankind back to the presence of the Lord. – *2 Nephi 9:4-7; Genesis 2*
- *The Church of Jesus Christ* believes that the *Plan of Salvation* affords all people an opportunity to repent of their sins, to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and have their names written in the *Lamb's Book of Life*. God is just, and for those who never knew the Plan of Salvation, the Atonement offers a provision for all to participate in salvation at the time of judgment. – *John 3:3-21; 2 Nephi 31:2-21; Mosiah 3:10-22*.
- Without the *Atonement*, man would have been consigned to hell for eternity. God prepared a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster, death and hell, which is the death of the body and also the death of the spirit. The grave cannot hold the body and hell cannot hold the soul as immortal bodies will be reunited with their souls at the *Resurrection*. – *2 Nephi 9:8-13; 1 Nephi 14:1-7; 2 Nephi 1:13:22*

- The *Resurrection* of Christ was a sign that the Plan of Salvation was a reality. Graves were opened and many bodies of the saints arose and came out of the graves and appeared unto many. The Roman soldiers guarding the tomb feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God.” Many scriptures testify of the Resurrection and how it would take place and confirm that it was known hundreds of years before it happened – *Matthew 27:52; 1 Corinthians 15; Jacob 4:4-13; Mosiah 18:7-10; Helaman 8:13-20*
- There is a time appointed, known only to God, for all to come forth from the dead. There is a space between the time of death and the time of Resurrection. All will be judged by God for their deeds. – *Alma 40:1-6; Alma 12; Alma 20:17; Alma 34:31-35; Mosiah 26:25- 28; Isaiah 38:18-19*
- As for the soul after death, the spirits of all men, as soon as they depart from their mortal body, are taken home to that God who gave them life. – *Alma 40:7-11*
- The spirits of the righteous are consigned to Paradise, which is a state of rest and peace. The spirits of the wicked, who are evil, have no part of the Spirit of the Lord and are consigned to outer darkness where there shall be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. The righteous and the wicked will remain in their respective states until the time of their resurrections. – *Alma 40:12-20*
- At the appointed time, the dead shall come forth and their bodies and souls shall be reunited. Then, they shall stand before God and be judged according to their works for permanent assignment of their immortal bodies. The righteous will shine forth in the kingdom of God but an awful death will come upon the wicked and they will be cast out to drink the dregs of a bitter cup. – *Alma 40:21-26*
- Alma and others continue to explain the judgment, mercy and justice of God. Our time on earth is a probationary time to repent and serve God. – *Alma 41 and 42; John 6:40; John 3:16; 3 Nephi 26.*
- Everyone will resurrect, the just and the unjust, and will face the judgment of God. The spirit we carry in this life (hopefully: good desires, love for man, love for God, faith, etc.) stays with us after death. The righteous will remain in their righteous state and the sinners (filthy) will remain in their filthy state. The righteous shall inherit the Kingdom of God and the filthy will go into an

everlasting lake of fire. Through the Atonement all men have an opportunity to enjoy eternity with God if they repent, are baptized in the name of Christ, have faith in the Holy One of Israel and endure to the end. For those who never knew the Plan of Salvation and have not been given the law, the Atonement offers a provision to be delivered from that awful monster, death and hell, and the devil, and the lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment, but no one should be lulled to believe that the unrighteous will be able to change to righteous. – *2 Nephi 9:14-26; John 5:24-29; Alma 34:16-17; Mosiah 3:11-22; Mosiah 15: 21-26; Moroni 8:22-26*

From Birth to Death to Life: A Summary of the Journey of Life

A quick reference is provided for clarity:

- All men are born into this life with a natural body of flesh and a soul that does not die when the body dies
- While the natural bodies return to the dust they came from, the souls are consigned according to the way they lived:
 - » The souls of the “evil” are consigned to outer darkness where there is weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth
 - » The souls of the “righteous” are consigned to Paradise – a state of rest and peace and freedom from sorrow
- In the Resurrection(s) all souls are reunited with their bodies in an immortal state
 - » The “evil” are cast out to a state of endless misery – consigned to partake of the fruits of their works
 - » The “righteous” shine forth in the Kingdom of God

Christ’s words on the Resurrection

In conclusion, it is well to remember that Christ willingly gave up His life that we might have *Eternal Life* with Him. May we cherish His words always:

- And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. – *John 6:40*

- I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world.
– *John 6:51*
- Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? – *John 11:25-26*
- Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. – *John 14:19; Matthew 24:21-31*

What Are The First And Second Resurrections?

Part one of this article clarified the following:

- When the body dies the souls of the “righteous” are consigned to Paradise and the souls of the “evil” are consigned to “outer darkness.” – *Alma 40:11-14*
- Everyone that passes away from this life is destined to resurrect with the same mind (and spirit) they possessed when they died. – *2 Nephi 9:14-16; Alma 34:32- 36; Alma 20:17; Mormon 9:13-14*
- At the judgment, God will reunite souls with bodies and permanently assign the immortal bodies to their final resting places: The righteous will shine forth in the *Kingdom of God* and the wicked are cast out to drink the dregs of a bitter cup. – *Alma 40:21-26; John 5:28-29*
- Followers of Christ will resurrect to the reward of the righteous. Because God is just, for those who never knew the *Plan of Salvation* and did not have an opportunity to repent of their sins during their lifetimes, a provision was made through Christ’s *Atonement* for the sins of mankind, enabling those among these ignorant who have righteous spirits to participate in salvation at the time of judgment. – *2 Nephi 9:14-26*

This article will focus on the following aspects of the resurrection:

- How many resurrections will there be and who will participate in each of them?
- Who will participate in the First Resurrection and the *Second Resurrection*?
- What are the prospects of those who willfully reject Christ and of those who do not know of Him or the *Plan of Salvation*?

How Many Resurrections?

Although there are multiple examples of people being raised from the dead in the scriptures, these are exceptions to the pattern of resurrection established by the resurrection of Christ. Those who

died and were restored to mortal life again were not alive for eternity and the recipients eventually died to await the resurrection made possible by the *Atonement*. Additionally, the scriptures speak of those who were translated and taken up to heaven and of those who were translated and permitted to live forever. All of these special cases illustrate the omnipotence of God who is able to do all things. We are reminded of His sovereignty and supremacy in *Isaiah 45:5-25*. Notwithstanding exceptions, it is important for us to preach and teach salvation through Christ according to God's plan: Faith in Christ, Repentance, Baptism, and Endurance to the end of life.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was truly the "first" general resurrection and included all souls up to and including the time of Christ who lived in the hope of His Salvation (or were ignorant of Christ but died in a righteous Spirit – these are those who were not "locked" in rebellion against God. See the section below, "The Resurrection of Christ," for detailed explanation of this category of souls). Those who rebelled against God and died in their sins had no part in that resurrection. (See *Mosiah 15:21-27*). However, the scriptures refer to two resurrections that will occur after Christ's resurrection: One is entitled "The First Resurrection"; a second resurrection is described as well. Both of these resurrections will be discussed below.

The Resurrection of Christ

At the time of Christ's resurrection there were souls in the following categories:

- Alive – knew of Christ; both believers and non-believers
- Alive – did not know of Christ

"Non-believers" refers to those who do not accept Christ. They will not have part in the First Resurrection.

"Did not know Christ" refers to:

- » some who would later accept Him before passing away
- » some who would never know of Him before passing
- » some who would learn of Him but would not accept Him.

Their Resurrections would not be in the same category.

- Passed away – knew of Christ; both believers and non-believers
- Passed away – did not know of Christ

Those who had passed on were destined to resurrect with the same mind and spirit as they possessed before they passed away.

– *Alma 34:32-34; Alma 20:17; Mormon 9:13-14*

At the time of their deaths their souls separated from their bodies and the souls of the righteous were consigned to Paradise while the souls of the unrighteous were consigned to outer darkness.

– *Alma 40:11-14*

Many of the righteous who were consigned to Paradise (and resurrected at the time of Christ's resurrection) were seen at the resurrection of Christ – *Matthew 27:52-53; 1 Corinthians 15:22-23; 3 Nephi 23:9-11*

The scriptures confirm that at the time of His resurrection, Christ brought forth those described by Jacob, Helaman and Mosiah, who lived in the Hope of Jesus Christ. All who died faithful in the Gospel since the days of Adam, would have been included in the resurrection at that time.

It is clear that when the body dies the souls of the righteous are consigned to a holding place consisting of Paradise, for the righteous, and outer darkness, for the evil. This holding place separates the righteous from the evil and is where all souls will remain until they resurrect at the final judgment. When Christ's soul was separated from His body, He descended to this holding place referred to as the prison, to await His resurrection. This is when He preached to the spirits there. – *Ephesians 4:9-10; John 5:25-29; 1 Peter 3:18-21; Acts 2:25-31; Psalms 16:7-11*

Peter refers to the souls in prison as being sometime disobedient in the days of Noah. It is important to understand that even if given an opportunity to repent and accept Christ as the one and only Savior,

the scriptures are clear that souls cannot change from the spirits they die with and must come forth in their resurrection with the same mind and spirit as they possessed before they passed away. From our mortal perspective, it may seem incredulous that anyone facing impending doom would not repent, but it is clear that God's judgment is perfect, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Only those whose spirits were not "locked" in rebellion against God were able to accept Christ as their Savior after meeting Him. – *2 Nephi 9:14-16; Alma 34:33-36; Hebrews 4:12; Romans 2:11-16*

We have accounted for all those who resurrected with Christ, from Adam to the time of Christ. Now we will examine the plight of the dead who did not rise with Christ (the unrighteous) and those living from the time of Christ until the end of time.

The First Resurrection

The process of the First Resurrection will follow the pattern of the resurrection of Christ and the requirements for eternal salvation are the same:

- At death souls are separated from their bodies and assigned to Paradise or outer darkness. – *Alma 40:11-14*
- To be carnally minded is death to be spiritually minded is eternal life. – *2 Nephi 9:39; Romans 8:7; James 4:4*
- All are destined to resurrect with the same mind and spirit as they had when they died. – *Alma 34:32-34; Alma 20:17; Mormon 9:13-14*
- After His death Christ descended to the lower parts and preached to the spirits in prison. This event with subsequent witnessing of those who resurrected with Christ suggests consideration of a pattern concerning souls after Christ who die without knowing Him. – *Ephesians 4:9-10; John 5:25-29; 1 Peter 3:18-21*
- To obtain salvation, the Gospel of Jesus Christ commands everyone to repent of their sins, to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and to serve God to the best of their ability, enduring to the end of life – *John 3:3-21; 2 Nephi 31:2-21; Mosiah 3:19-22; 2 Nephi 9:23-24; Alma 7:14*

- The Blood of Christ atoned for: Those fallen due to the transgression of Adam, those dying without knowledge of God's will, and those who have ignorantly sinned. – *Mosiah 3:11; 2 Nephi 9:25-26; Mosiah 15:21-26*
- We know that little children have eternal life. – *Mosiah 3:16*

At this point it should be easy for believers in the Gospel of Jesus Christ to understand that salvation is assured for those who exercise faith, repent of their sins, are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and serve God to the best of their ability enduring to the end of their lives.

But what about those who die without knowledge of God's will and never have an opportunity to be born again? What about those who ignorantly sin but are righteous to the best of their understanding and ability? Although the law of Christ has been given for all to follow, the scriptures declare that for those who died not knowing the will of God for their lives, or who have ignorantly sinned, there is *Atonement* – not punishment or condemnation. Where there is no condemnation, the mercies of the Holy One of Israel can have claim upon them, because of the *Atonement*. The scripture further states that those who died before the coming of Christ, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them during life, would have a part in the *first resurrection with Christ*, or have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord. Notwithstanding these promises, those who lived in willful ignorance, or willfully sinned persisting in their carnal spirits will be held accountable for their sins – *2 Nephi 9:25-26; Alma 42:17-20; Mosiah 3:11-22; Mosiah 15: 21-26; Alma 33:16-20; Alma 29:4; Alma 41:8; Helaman 12:20-26; Helaman 14:20-31; Mosiah 16:1-13*

The scriptures do not tell us how God will reconcile His command to be born again for those who die without knowledge of God's will, but as stated previously, God is omnipotent and supreme, He will not rob justice for mercy, and in His divine wisdom will enter names into the *Book of Life* while satisfying His own requirements. We may take a hint from the visit Jesus made to preach to the souls in prison between His death and resurrection. No doubt, He has a plan for those ignorant souls who have died since that time to know Him and to receive Him.

A few thoughts about the “ignorant” soul that will receive Christ and be saved: This is one whose spirit drove him to live righteously according to his own understanding and knowledge and who would gladly have accepted the Lord and His Gospel in life had he acquired knowledge and understanding. Accordingly, this is not one who would have turned away from Jesus in this life.

Revelation chapter 20 provides a major outline of the *First and Second Resurrections*.

- The Devil is bound, cast into the bottomless pit where he is sealed and cannot deceive the nations for a thousand years, after which he will be loosed for a little while. – *Revelation 20:1-3*
- The resurrected sit on thrones and reign as priests with Christ for one thousand years. These are the martyrs for Christ and those who have not received the mark of the beast. – *Revelation 20:4-6; 13:11-18; 14:4-10; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20*
- The rest of the dead resurrect when the thousand years ends – This is the First Resurrection. The participants in the First Resurrection cannot be affected by the second death. – *Revelation 20:5-6; 2:11; 20:14; 21:8; Jacob 3:11; Alma 12:16, 32; 13:30; Helaman 14:18-19*

Revelation 20 tells us that the First Resurrection is reserved for those who died in and for Christ. Also, that it is a great blessing to be part of the First Resurrection, most particularly because of immunity from the power of the second death.

Matthew 24 foretells the second coming of Christ. Especially note verses 21-31 where after great tribulation Christ comes to gather His elect from the four corners of the earth.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 tells us that the dead in Christ shall rise first, then those alive shall be caught up.

1 Corinthians 15:22-24; 51-52, speaking of the saints, says at the trump’s sound the dead shall rise and the living shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye.

The Second Resurrection

The *Second Resurrection* is shrouded in mystery but supporting scriptures all seem to validate the following scenario:

This final resurrection is for the souls who did not resurrect with Christ (those who did not receive Christ when he went down into the prison at that time) and for all those who did not resurrect in the First Resurrection. All will receive judgment. **At some point, everyone will have had an opportunity to accept salvation, but as noted, none who pass away will be able to change from the spirit in which they lived this life as they will have the same mind and spirit as when they died. Those who have rejected Christ and done evil will not change. This is the final resurrection and the final judgment. All of those who have resurrected in the First Resurrection, including those caught up and changed in the twinkling of an eye, are immune from the second death and the evil will be cast into the lake of fire which is the second death.** – *Revelation 20:5-15; Revelation 21:8; Mosiah 15:21-27; 1 Corinthians 15:22- 24, 51-52; John 5:25-29; 1 Peter 3:18-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17*

Some have speculated that the *Second Resurrection* is a “second chance” to accept salvation. Nothing in this article should be understood as supporting that idea. Multiple scriptures referenced are clear that those who reject the Lord in this life will carry that rejecting spirit with them when they die and will not have the ability to change. “...And while His arm of mercy is extended towards you in the light of day, harden not your hearts...for why will ye die?” *Jacob 6:5-6*. The scriptures are not explicit as to how God will handle those who are truly ignorant as to the will of God, i.e., have been righteous to the best of their ability and knowledge without having met the Gospel. We understand that these souls will have gone to Paradise immediately when they died. At the time of the *First Resurrection* when those alive in Christ are taken up and changed to immortality, there may be others alive who are still ignorant. These would not have participated in the *First Resurrection*, but, given the consistency of God, it seems reasonable to believe that their souls will be treated the same as those who lived and died before Christ without knowing Him. Aligning with that pattern, after

the *First Resurrection* and before the final judgment they come to learn of Christ, accept Him as their *Savior*, and are written into the *Book of Life*. As we have mentioned before, God is omnipotent, supreme, and able to do all things. What is mysterious to us is totally within His control! – *Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:4-6*

Conclusion

Revelation 21 sums it all up: We read of a new heaven and a new earth and no more death. God sits on His throne for eternity surrounded by those who have inherited the reward of the righteous. *The New Jerusalem*, the *Bride of the Lamb*, is described and the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple of the city. **The ultimate goal – eternal life – is achieved! Amen and amen!**

The End...And The Great Beginning

Not everyone is driven by an insatiable curiosity to understand all of the mysteries concerning the last days and the resurrection. It is wonderful and joyous just to know that Christ arose, that all mankind shall, and that the privilege of taking part in the First Resurrection (which is attainable by obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ during this life) affords immunity from the second death: eternal separation from God to dwell permanently in outer darkness. Complete understanding of these mysteries is not prerequisite for salvation. Still, many are blessed in discovering that the scriptures reveal a good deal about the end of time and the eternity that follows. We offer an overview of the most important sequence we anticipate:

- *The Peaceful Reign*
- *The First Resurrection*
- *The Second Resurrection*

We know that the battle for the souls of mankind began in the Garden of Eden where God established that Adam and Eve could dwell forever in His presence so long as they abstained from the Tree of Knowledge. Although Adam fell, God, in His wisdom, prepared the way of salvation whereby a Messiah, Jesus Christ, would come to redeem the children of men from the fall and that redemption would provide mankind with the freedom to act for themselves to choose liberty and eternal life, through the mediation of the Savior, or captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of that enemy who, from the beginning, has sought to make all men as miserable as he is. (See *2 Nephi 2:14-27*) This battle does not go on forever, it will end with triumph for the Lord and eternal reward for all who will serve Him.

Peaceful Reign (Zion)

Going back a bit in this series of articles, we wrote about the *Peaceful Reign* that occurs in this life and sets the stage for the end of mortal

life and the sudden onset of the *First Resurrection*. We established that the conditions and events associated with *The Peaceful Reign* result in the tremendous gathering of God's people - all who will obey the Gospel and inherit the ancient promises to Israel - to live under Christ in righteous unity, so great that the devil has no power.

This immense gathering may be difficult to comprehend. Scriptures describe it in physical terms, for example:

- *And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. (Isaiah 2:2)*
- *...a New Jerusalem should be built up upon this land, unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph, for which things there has been a type. (Ether 13:6; 3 Nephi 21:23)*

But it is also described in spiritual terms, for example:

- *...Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations, and she is the whore of all the earth. ...And when the day cometh that the wrath of God is poured out upon the mother of harlots, which is the great and abominable church of all the earth, whose foundation is the devil, then, at that day, the work of the Father shall commence, in preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants, which he hath made to his people who are the house of Israel. (1 Nephi 14:1-17)*
- *And he gathereth his children from the four quarters of the earth; and he numbereth his sheep, and they know him; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd; and he shall feed his sheep, and in him they shall find pasture. And because of the righteousness of his people Satan has no power over the hearts of the people, for they dwell in righteousness, and the Holy One of Israel reigneth. (1 Nephi 22:16-28)*

The extended scriptures referenced above, along with others, inform us that this gathering of the righteous believers in Christ includes a separation from other people according to the hardness of their hearts. This dividing process will be brought about with destructive forces implemented by the power of God. Considering this process, take special note of 1 Nephi 22:17, 22, which emphasizes the preservation of the righteous who “need not fear.” Jesus also verifies this preservation amidst turmoil: *But there shall not a hair of your head perish.* (Luke 21:17-18) (Again, please review the earlier article in this series for more detail regarding the *Peaceful Reign*.)

This “marvelous” and “wonderful” work was initiated with the restoration of the Gospel and the revelation of the Book of Mormon. Regardless of how soon this part of the plan of God will culminate in the restoration of Israel and the Peaceful Reign, right now it is critical that each of us understands and remains aware of personal preparedness and diligence in God’s love in order to bring about the ultimate development of unity and righteousness which will render Satan powerless. Our mutual goal - which will be realized in the Peaceful Reign - is to become fully ready for Jesus’s return by becoming like Him. (See 1 Nephi 13:32-39; Moroni 7:46-48; John 3:2)

We get hints about conditions in the Peaceful Reign by reading of other times when the Church was at its best. (See Acts 2:31-4:38; 4 Nephi) These times are characterized by phrases such as: one accord, healing the sick, meeting together, no contention, all things common, one heart and one soul. As wonderful as those periods were, both were eventually corrupted as the carnal nature of man rose up within the church and robbed them of their peace, joy, and unity. The *Peaceful Reign* will not fade away in that manner, although the evil one will desperately try to disrupt. *The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come.* As opposition and turmoil flare up and deception rises, the Lord, in His mercy, will shorten the days of tribulation for the sake of the saints. (See Matthew 24: 4-24)

Note: This article predominantly utilizes simple scriptural references and intentionally avoids interpretation of many relevant but symbolic or mysterious scriptures and prophecies which various individuals understand or speculate in different ways. As time passes, all prophecies will come to pass and interpretation will become a matter of witness.

First Resurrection

As the end of the world approaches, we see that the people of God will reach a new zenith (*Peaceful Reign*) in their righteousness and unity while the world whirls in turmoil and tribulation as the enemy seeks to pull the saints into this vortex of destruction along with all the unbelieving. But for the righteous elects' sake, God will bring about the end while they endure, prepared in faith and righteousness for Christ's return. John saw that God would seal His servants before He brings about the end of the world. (See *Revelation 7:1-3*) Jesus will return triumphantly in power and great glory to claim His own - both the dead and the living - as the earth falls to ultimate destruction. (See *Matthew 24:25-31*)

- *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened. And the moon shall not give her light. And the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:29-31; also see Revelation 6:12-17; Revelation 8)*
- *... we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)*

So the dead in Christ - those who will have come to know Jesus, believed and died faithful - will be first to resurrect at His coming. Also at this time, the living faithful will be taken up and transformed to the state of resurrected immortality. (Remember from the previous articles on the resurrections, that at the time of His resurrection, those who had died faithfully in the hope of Christ resurrected with Him.) Speaking of the saints alive at Christ's return, Paul wrote:

- *... flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:50-54)*

With the resurrection of Christ's servants and the end of the world, Satan will be cast into a bottomless pit, sealed there for a thousand years so that he will be unable to deceive the nations any more until the thousand years are complete when he will be loosed again for a little while. (See *Revelation 20:1-3*) At this point, the world has been destroyed; there is no more mortal life. John saw thrones occupied by the resurrected saints, martyred for their witness of Jesus and the word of God, and those who would not worship the enemy or take on his mark. These will live and reign with Christ for the thousand years. (See *Revelation 20:4, Revelation 13:11-18, 14:8-10, 15:2, 16:2, 19:20*) This is the *First Resurrection*. Those who resurrect at this time shall be immune from any further threat and shall reign as priests with Christ for the thousand years. (See *Revelation 20:5-6*) This 1000-year period is frequently referred to as the *Millennium* and is differentiated from the *Peaceful Reign*. We do not use the term *Rapture* in reference to the *First Resurrection* because of other understandings associated with that term.

Second Resurrection

The rest of the dead will not live again until the end of 1000 years

(See *Revelation 20:5*). After 1000 years, Satan will be loosed and will go out to deceive the nations in the four quarters of the earth – to gather them to battle, their number being as the sands of the sea. (See *Revelation 20:7-8*) Here we must ponder “the nations.”

- Everyone dead or alive in Christ has already resurrected. Those participating in the *First Resurrection* will not be subject to the second death, i.e., will not be subject to deception, destruction, or separation from God.
- With the *First Resurrection* there will be great plagues and destruction that destroy the earth and melt the elements. The saints will resurrect and reign with Christ. Who will be left? Only the souls of the dead who still await resurrection.
- This cannot be a “flesh and blood” picture. “The nations” must refer to those who will resurrect after the 1000 years. Refer again to the previous articles on the Resurrections: Souls await their resurrection in a place consisting of Paradise and outer darkness. They will be consigned to one or the other according to their respective spirits in which they lived their lives. Besides those “dead in Christ” who resurrect at the *First Resurrection*, others among the dead at the time of the *First Resurrection* will retain various “spirits” – some examples:
 - » Some will have never learned of Christ but will have been sincerely righteous according to their own understanding.
 - » Others who never learned of Christ will not have lived up to their own understanding of righteousness.
 - » Some will have learned of Christ incompletely or under erroneous teaching.
 - » Some will have hearts too hard to receive Christ.
 - » Some will have learned of Christ but, yielding to the carnal nature, procrastinated repentance.
 - » Some will have accepted Christ at a point in their lives but left Him later.
 - » Some will have been purposefully evil in this life.

Refer to the previous articles in this series about the resurrections

to recall that Jesus preached to the souls in prison before He resurrected. Without knowing details that the scriptures do not provide, we can rest assured that Jesus will also deal justly with all souls before the second resurrection according to the spirits they retain from their lives and their assignments to Paradise or outer darkness. As discussed in our previous article, truly ignorant sin has been atoned for, living in true ignorance of the will of God has been atoned for, little children carry no sin, those who live as righteously as they know how will continue in that desire. Likewise, the hard-hearted will remain so, those who do evil will retain that desire, and anyone who procrastinates repentance throughout life will find it impossible to repent after death. (See *Mosiah 3:11; Alma 34:32-35, 20:17; Mormon 9:12-14; Alma 41:2-8; 2 Nephi 9:22-39; Helaman 14:29-31*)

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. Nevertheless, God will take measures to ensure that His promises are kept and His plan preserved. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. (See Revelation 20:7-9)

At this point, the devil will be permanently cast into the lake of fire and brimstone to be tormented forever and ever. (See *Revelation 20:10*) And God will sit on His throne to judge all of the rest of the dead according to their works in life. *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (See Revelation 20:11-15; Mosiah 16:1-13; Refer also to previous two articles on the Resurrections.)*

New Heaven and New Earth

The first heaven and the first earth will have passed away and a new heaven and a new earth will be established with the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. This will be the

tabernacle of God in which resurrected men will dwell with God for eternity. This is the end of time and the new beginning. This is our great ambition, the purpose of our lives: to be with God for eternity without death, sorrow, crying, or pain as sons and daughters of God. (See *Revelation 21:1- 7*)

Now is the time to secure our place in this glorious, eternal scenario.