

(William Blake)

Amazing Grace

One Mormon's View of the Atonement

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Creation

- Where To Begin? 5
- Intelligences 6
- World of Spirits 9
- An Eternity 13
- The War In Heaven 16
- The Plan of Happiness 18
- A Spiritual Creation 22
- Christ The Creator 29
- The Physical Creation 30
- The Glory of the Earth 33
- Law 34
- Opposition and Justice 40

The Fall of Adam and Eve

- Agency 45
- The Fall 47

Atonement

- Redemption for Adam's Transgression 53

Rites and Ordinances	55
The Garden and The Cross	63
The Infinite	65
Paradise and Prison	68
Resurrection	70
Resurrection of Disgrace	78
A Telestial Resurrection	84
The Terrestrial Kingdom	95
The Celestial Kingdom	96
Consecration	98
Three Altars of Salvation	100
Holiness	107
The Temple	111
Conclusion	115

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.

Hebrews 2:8

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One Mormon's View of the Atonement

By: David Littlefield

Creation

Where To Begin?

The most difficult part of writing this book has been deciding where to begin. So much of understanding the atonement¹ is interdependent with so many interconnected concepts.

We will start at what we call the beginning.² As we continue and connect one concept to another a gestalt will hopefully begin to grow. We will circle back from time to time and connect the then current ideas with concepts we had previously considered.

There are ten states (worlds) of being for humans that we know of, they are:

- 1.) As Intelligences
- 2.) Pre-Mortality (what we used to call pre-existence)
- 3.) Mortality
- 4.) Spirit Paradise
- 5.) Spirit Prison
- 6.) Outer Darkness Resurrection
- 7.) Telestial Resurrection

¹ "The word atonement first appears in William Tyndale's 1526 English version of the Bible. He used the word at-one-ment to translate the Greek word for reconciliation (katalage-) (Romans 5:11)." M. Catherine Thomas, *Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5*, Deseret Book, Pg. 12

² In my preparation to discuss the atonement, only after my preparation, did I realize that my outline was very similar the pattern of temple itself.

- 8.) Terrestrial Resurrection
- 9.) Celestial Resurrection
- 10.) Exaltation

Intelligences

We really don't know a whole lot about our existence as "Intelligences."

We know that there never was a time that we did not exist.

"Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be." (Doctrine and Covenants 93:29)

Prior to becoming "spirits" we had some kind of being, some existence, and as the name "intelligences" denotes, we had some level of rationality.

From an endlessly deep pool God brought forward these units of rationality. Analogous to self contained computer programs all slightly different, all with individual and unique egos and wills. These units somehow have the ability to rise above being inert, only to be acted upon, or directed, but have an opinion about what is happening to them. While they come from this endless sea, they are delineated from the mass.

A scoop of dirt has no opinion regarding it's circumstance. If you divide the scoop in half it makes no difference to the dirt. You can insert it into an oven and change it's form, it does not care, it has no ego, or will. Dirt is just as happy in freezing temperature, or in molten form, with its fellows, or alone. It does what it must and obeys the laws that control it.

Dirt does not act, it is acted upon, or it reacts in a predetermined manner according to the laws that are known to us as physics. Dirt is not making decisions, it does what is must, how it reacts to forces is programmed deep into it's physicality.

Intelligences exist in a framework, but must have independent rationality to exist as Intelligences.

“All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence.” (Doctrine and Covenants 93:29)

It appears this endlessly deep pool is the source of all life and organization.

The question can be asked; if we always existed in this endless pool, and God existed there once also with us, what makes him our God, and Father?

The Prophet Joseph taught us that understanding our relationship to God is central to understanding ourselves.

“There are but a very few beings in the world who understand rightly the character of God. The great majority of mankind do not comprehend anything, either that which is past, or that which is to come, as it respects their relationship to God. They do not know, neither do they understand the nature of that relationship; and consequently they know but little above the brute beast, or more than to eat, drink and sleep. This is all man knows about God or His existence, unless it is given by the inspiration of the Almighty. ...If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves.” (Joseph Smith, The King Follett Sermon, April 1844).

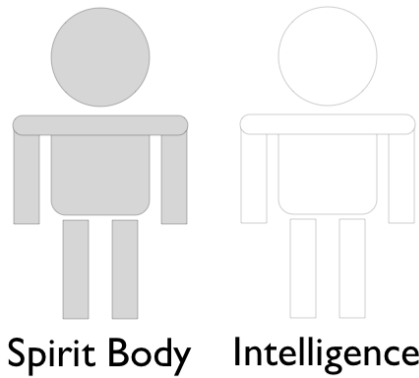
The Prophet Joseph Smith went further making it clear that like God, we always existed.

“The intelligence of spirits had no beginning, neither will it have an end. ... That which has a beginning may have an end. There never was a time when there were not spirits; for they are co-equal with our Father in heaven.” (Joseph Smith, The King Follett Sermon, April 1844).³

What made this being we call “God” our Father is that He reached back from eternity, to bring us forward.

“The first principles of man are self-existent with God. God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge. He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with Himself, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits.” (Joseph Smith, The King Follett Sermon, April 1844)

³ The term “co-equal” here means both God and man have always existed. There never was a “time” when God or man in some form did not exist.



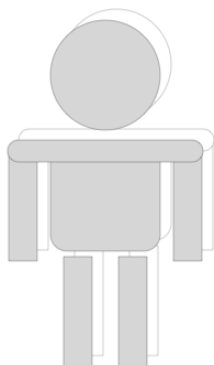
God saw that we were less intelligent and stuck in the “glory” or existence that intelligences reside in, and could not progress further, or to higher existences without His assistance. God resided in Celestial glory, and wanted us to join him. By bringing us to the next level of existence he added joy and dimensions of life to us, he became our Father.⁴

World of Spirits

I am using the term “world of spirits” here because that is the term that the prophet used in the above sermon. However, this “world of spirits” should not be confused with the place mortals go to after death. This “world of spirits” is where intelligences are advanced to (from intelligences) when God makes them his children. There is some “glory” or dimension added to them, they change from one state to another, something is joined to them.

⁴ LDS Guide To The Scriptures, Intelligences; “The scriptures also may speak of intelligence as referring to the spirit element that existed before we were begotten as spirit children.”

The “World of Spirits” is what we formally and imprecisely used to call the “Pre-Existence.” In modern Mormon parlance we call it the “Pre-Mortal Existence.”



Intelligence Spirit Body

When a person receives an inheritance, he has usually received his father’s estate. An estate has to do with a dwelling place (land), riches, and covenantal position. Another example is the “holy estate of matrimony” implies the covenantal relationship, rights, and the privileges of

marriage.⁵ The Pre-Mortal Existence is sometimes called our “First Estate.” (Abraham 3:26).⁶

The World of Spirits is the second “world” in which we lived, but it is our “first estate,” since it is here that we first became children of God. The whole Plan of Salvation has to do with family. Children receiving degrees of and finally their entire inheritance, their full estate.

We know a little more about our First Estate than we do about life before that time.

The Prophet Joseph spoke about God having “...power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with Himself.”⁷ This instruction continued into the Pre-Mortal Existence, which is a place of instruction and learning.

President Joseph F. Smith saw some that would one day work in the church, he saw that “Even before they were born, they, with many others, received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salva-

⁵ This marriage illustration is used in Matthew 25 in a macro sense where the entire Kingdom of God is likened to a bride, and Christ is the bridegroom. In a micro sense, each of us, as citizens of the Kingdom, can claim a covenantal relationship with Christ. Also see Isaiah 61:10, Matthew 9:15, Mark 2, John 3, Revelation 18:23, Doctrine and Covenants 33:17, 65:3, 88:92, 133:10, 19.

⁶ By keeping the commandments Abraham became a rightful heir, “holding the right belonging to the fathers.” He received a portion of his estate, a new covenantal relationship with God. Abraham 1:2.

⁷ Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, page 354.

tion of the souls of men.” (Doctrine and Covenants 138:56).

As God is more intelligent than men, among those in the World of Spirits, some were more intelligent than others. This level of intelligence is associated with their wills.

“I observed that they were also among the noble and great ones who were chosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church of God.” (Doctrine and Covenants 138:55)

Abraham saw the Pre-Mortal Life and saw that there were some that were more righteous and obedient than others.

“...if there be two spirits, and one shall be more intelligent than the other, yet these two spirits, notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other, have no beginning; they existed before, they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum, or eternal.”

“And the Lord said unto me: These two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intelligent than they; I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all.” (Abraham 3:18-19).

We are all the same age, but we all choose at what level of intelligence we receive. It appears that in every state of existence we attain, we largely choose what we will and will not understand or accept.

“And no man receiveth a fulness unless he keepeth his commandments. He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things.” (Doctrine & Covenants 93:27).

In the world of spirits there were spirits of varying levels of intelligence, or righteousness. Some were great and noble that God would eventually make His rulers, then gradations down to those who would eventually rebel.

An Eternity

At some point in our collective spiritual journey, this unfathomably large batch of spirit children was closed. Everyone who was to participate in the coming major events were already in the world of spirits.

This batch of spirit children is called an “eternity.”

“From eternity to eternity he is the same, and his years never fail.” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:4).

We see that not every spirit child was brought into the World of Spirits at the same time. Some were there longer than others. We know that Christ was the “First Born.” When was he the born first? He was not the first in mortality, it was in the pre-mortal world of spirits that He was born first. It is likely that the reason He was the first born is because he was the most intelligent in the existence we call “Intelligences.” He was brought forth as a leader, the First Born heir of His Father, our elder brother.

We know that there was another spirit child “born” early into the process named Lucifer. Lucifer is know as a “son of the morning.”⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 76:27 is said almost with surprise that a son of the morning, or one of the older spirits would fall.

⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 76:27, Isaiah 14:12, 2 Nephi 24:12

“And we beheld, and lo, he is fallen! is fallen, even a son of the morning!”

We know that God goes from one “eternity” to another.⁹ What we don’t know is if this “one after another,” or is there more than one at a time going on, overlapping in time?

We know that only Celestial beings can dwell in the Celestial kingdom.¹⁰ Even as we are now, in the pre-mortal existence we were a work in progress. We had not obtain a Celestial glory because we had not yet received a Celestial law.

This being said, a wide reading of scripture and ancient religious documents indicate that some had actually qualified as “Gods” in the World of Spirits, even though they had not yet obtained a physical body. Jesus was one who was a Son of God before mortality, and was also a God.

In some cases, both in this world and in the world of spirits, epithets are awarded to individuals granting certain positions, rights, responsibilities, and blessing. These individuals may not realize that position at the time the epithet is given, but it is a relationship change, and the promise of the eventual realization of those blessing.

The pre-mortal Jesus was a God in that sense before he came to earth. He was our Elder Brother, leading us in the path to exaltation with the Father.

⁹ “From eternity to eternity he is the same, and his years never fail.” Doctrine and Covenants 76:4

¹⁰ Doctrine and Covenants 88:21-22

In mortality man may receive a promise of exaltation, we call this having a “calling and election made sure.” Only a complete and utter rejection can prevent such a person from the realization of becoming a God when his election has been made sure.

The Hebrew word “EL” (אל) means God. The Hebrew “IM” (ים) is the plural suffix (and the “vav” or “O” sound connects two). In the most commonly used sense Elohim is God, our Heavenly Father. In another sense, there are others who are included into this class of beings, they are “ELs” or gods, and belong to a council collectively called “Elohim.” The rest of Christianity and Judaism constantly trip over themselves in an attempt to ignore this, while it is an elementary understanding in Mormonism. This is the true and fuller meaning of the recently popular notion of “Divine Investiture” where Christ speaks as though he is the Father, for he is one of the Gods, an Elohim.

God the Father dwells in Celestial Glory. There is no war or descent among Celestial beings or in the Celestial Kingdom. The Celestial Kingdom is for those who have proven themselves worthy of such a glory, and have been resurrected with a body made to function in that glory.¹¹

The world of spirits is not the same as the Celestial King-

¹¹ “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 fulness.” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:28&29)

dom. However, it does appear that there is some special connection to God our Father and the world of spirits. It is from the Celestial Kingdom that God directed the “world of spirits” regarding the physical creation.

We know that Christ has now been resurrected with a physical body perfected to dwell in Celestial burnings, and sits on the right hand side of God the Father.

“And we beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness;” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:30)

We also know the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit, is an Elohim, the third member of the Godhead, and yet He does not have a body as we think of it.

“Which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God, infinite and eternal, without end. Amen.” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:28)¹²

The War In Heaven

At some point in our collective spiritual journey, while in the world of spirits, there was a plan put forward that included more of those laws we discussed earlier, that allowed for our continued progression towards our Father.

This plan¹³ was approved or agreed to in a “Grand Council”

¹² “The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.” (Doctrine and Covenants 130:22)

¹³ There was only one plan, the Father’s plan. The major point of discussion was who was the Father going to send.

of the Gods.¹⁴ The plan was also brought before all of God's children. Speaking about the creation of the earth Job is asked:

“Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

“When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:6-7)¹⁵

In short, the plan consisted of laws that are designed to bring us from one plain of existence to another.

“There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—”

“And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.” (Doctrine and Covenants 130:20&21)

Laws are how things are created. Things can only exist by law. The “Plan of Salvation” is a group of laws formed to accomplish certain ends.¹⁶

¹⁴ Abraham 4:26. See Michael S. Heiser, PhD's work on the “Divine Council,” available on-line (www.thedivinecouncil.com).

¹⁵ The “Morning Stars” refers to those older (likely more powerful) spirits, the leaders in the World of Spirits. The “son's of God” refer to the rest of us.

¹⁶ See 2 Nephi 2.

Not every spirit was happy with the plan. Some were not happy with the laws, how they would be applied, and who would be in charge. Lucifer, lead this unhappy rebellion.¹⁷

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon [Lucifer]; and the dragon fought and his angels,” (Revelation 12:7)

A great hero of this war was Michael (the mortal Adam), who lead God’s army against Lucifer. Lucifer and the spirits that followed him were cast out of the Pre-Mortal world, the “World of Spirits” and forever barred from receiving a physical body. They had progressed as far as they could, they were not worthy of further progression. The level or point at which we rebel in our eternal existence is the point at which stall or permanently halt our progression, both in spiritual growth, and it’s corresponding physicality.

The Plan of Happiness

The Plan of Happiness has several names, it is also known as the “Plan of Salvation,” the “Plan of Mercy,” and the “Plan of Redemption.”

The plan encompasses all the laws necessary to achieve certain goals. These goals allow for each person who comes to earth to be exalted in our Father’s Kingdom. Not all of God’s children will choose to receive all of the laws necessary to dwell in exaltation, so the plan also provides for each person to receive all the laws, with their corresponding glory, that we are willing to receive.

¹⁷ Lucifer’s volentering to lead the plan, was a limited agreement, in which he sought to alter the plan, and it was contingent upon those alteration. The desire to alter God’s plan, and the imposition of limits, is the prototype for all unconsecrated hearts.

“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;” (Titus 1:2)

This plan included essential elements such as agency, and accountability. This plan has three parts; the creation, the fall, and the atonement (the three pillars of the Plan of Salvation).

Every person who comes into mortality choose to accept this plan before they came here.

“In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life.” (The Family: A Proclamation to the World)

We all agreed to the creation, we agreed to be subject to the effect of Adam’s fall, as he would be our father, and we agreed to live by and accept the terms of what we call the atonement. We are not unwilling victims, we are all participants in the plan. The importance of this understanding can almost not be overstated.

This plan can be called the “Covenant of Creation” but it covers not only creation, but the fall, and the redemption.

This plan was more than a mere plan, it was a covenant between all of God’s Children, to each other, to and from Jehovah, and to and from our Father.

“Verily I say unto you, blessed are you for [once again] receiving mine everlasting covenant, even the fulness of my gospel, sent forth unto the children of men, that they might have life and be made partakers of the glories which are to

be revealed in the last days, as it was written by the prophets and apostles in days of old.” (Doctrine and Covenants 66:2)

An old Jewish text tells us:

“Through a covenant the world was created and established, as is written: Were it not for my covenant with day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth (Jeremiah 33:25)... So the world endures by Covenant...”¹⁸

The same Jewish text tells us that everything God does has to do with the covenant.

“Whatever the blessed Holy One does is intended to revolve revolutions to fulfill the covenant of existence”¹⁹

All ordinances and covenants essential to the gospel are designed to reconfirm, and acknowledge that we are part of that pre-mortal Covenant of Creation. Modern ordinances are pointing back and confirming anew that ancient covenant, with its corresponding laws.

In this life, Christ is the “messenger of the covenant.” (Malachi 3:1)

Even in casual modern LDS conversation we describe people as being “in the covenant.” This has one layer of meaning, as one who has been baptized. On another level it

¹⁸ The Zohar, Matt, vol. 1, page 196. The day and night referred to is likely the introduction of opposition in the pre-mortal life (the war in heaven), the light being divided from the day in the spiritual creation.

¹⁹ The Zohar, Matt, Vol 3, pg. 200, Mi-Qets.

means one who has been through the temple.²⁰ That is as far as casual thought usually takes us. However, it's really more than just that. It includes Joseph receiving the keys to the mysteries, to Jesus imparting the keys to Peter, James, and John, to Moses receiving the "covenant" on Sinai, Abraham receiving the covenant, and Adam having this pre-mortal covenant confirmed upon him.

"And even so I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people, and for the Gentiles to seek to it, and to be a messenger before my face to prepare the way before me." (Doctrine and Covenants 45:9)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie put it this way:

"The everlasting gospel was with God in the beginning; it was taught in the councils of eternity before the foundations of this world were laid; we have it now; and it will continue forever..." (The Promised Messiah, pgs. 285–86)

Crucial to this plan and covenant is leadership responsibility and accountability. This stewardship goes back from even before the plan, or the war, or even from before when we were brought forward to the world of spirits. It existed, passed from God to God, from one eternity to another. This stewardship is called "Priesthood."

"I am the Lord thy God, and will give unto thee the law of my Holy Priesthood, as was ordained by me and my Father before the world was." (Doctrine and Covenants 132:28)

The priesthood was before when days were appointed unto men, and does not expire, but continues on forever.

²⁰ Or born to those sealed in Holy Temples.

“For this Melchizedek was ordained a priest after the order of the Son of God, which order was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life. And all those who are ordained unto this priesthood are made like unto the Son of God, abiding a priest continually.” (Hebrews 7:3 JST)

While we all agreed to participate in this Covenant of Creation, some were selected as leaders, authorized and responsible to act in God’s name, to administer the covenant to men in each dispensation, and throughout eternity. To act as saviors to each generation.

The Covenant of Creation is the Gospel of Christ. It is the New and Everlasting Covenant. New because it is re-established among men from time-to-time, and everlasting because its origins predate the foundations of earth.

“The scriptures speak of the new and everlasting covenant. The new and everlasting covenant is the gospel of Jesus Christ. In other words, the doctrines and commandments of the gospel constitute the substance of an everlasting covenant between God and man that is newly restored in each dispensation. If we were to state the new and everlasting covenant in one sentence it would be this: ‘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.’” (Elder D. Todd Christofferson, May 2009 Ensign)

A Spiritual Creation

We learn from scripture that there were two creations, one spiritual, and one physical.

When man was created spiritually his intelligence was

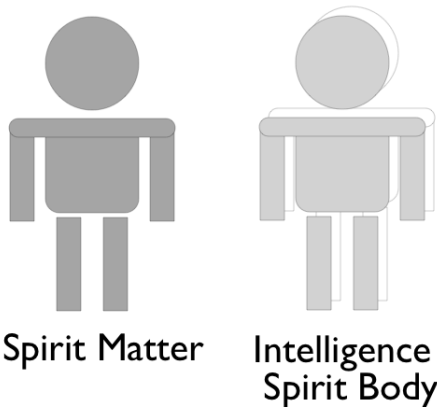
added to some new thing we call “spirit.” When this coupling occurred he was created spiritually. This spirit/intelligence combination is man’s spirit.

The intelligence portion of man’s spirit is what allows him to act within the agency he is given.

Man’s spirit is not only the blueprint for his physical creation, it is the underlying foundation of our physicality. Our spiritual blueprint is not in a drawer somewhere, and is now unassociated with our physicality, it is part of our being. Our being, spirit and physicality constitute our souls.

“And the spirit and the body are the soul of man.” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:15)

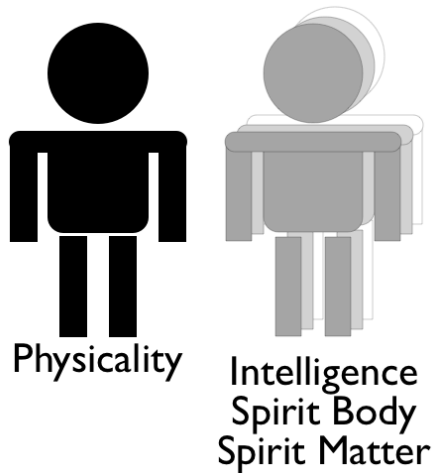
The physical creation of our bodies is just a part of the larger creation. All of physicality has a spiritual foundation created in the pre-mortal world, and now that spirit is connected to the dimensional space we experience as the physical universe.



In the Book of Moses it explains that this creation existed prior to mortality, man and “every herb of the field” was

created in the pre-mortal world, before man was upon the earth:

“And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. For I, the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth. For I, the Lord God, had not caused it to rain upon the face of the earth. And I, the Lord God, had created all the children of men; and not yet a man to till the ground; for in heaven created I them; and there was not yet flesh upon the earth, neither in the water, neither in the air...” (Moses 3:5)



There are two major divisions of physicality, things that act, and things that are acted upon. The difference is intelligence.

“...[A]nd he [God] hath created all things, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are, both things to act and things to be acted upon.”

All of physicality has a foundation of spirit, the spirit contains the laws that direct physical matter. Inanimate matter has an underlying spiritual pattern that dictates its properties. Man has an intelligence that reaches through his spirit body and directs it. His intelligence further reaches through the spiritually created matter, and the corresponding physicality attached to mortal men and directs his actions. Man's will to pierce these levels in righteousness is his glory.

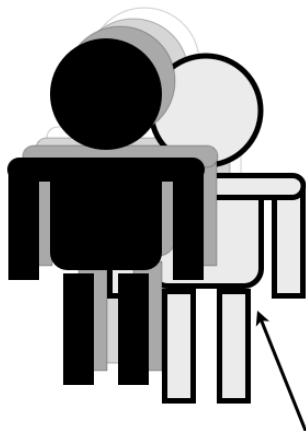
A result of the war in heaven was that the spirits that followed Lucifer were cast to the earth. So they exist here, and we cannot see them. They exist as spirits in another sphere or dimension. We can't sense them in our four dimensions of space (up & down, side to side, forward and backwards, and time) because they exist in the "spiritual creation" dimension, but not in physicality. Both are right here with us.

From the above we can deduce with confidence two things; First, that the laws of one sphere or dimension are different from another sphere or dimension (pre-mortality and mortality for example). Second, spirit is an underlying foundation of all physical creation.

To say that all of creation has spiritual dimension, is not meant to imply that every piece of matter has "a Spirit" like man, but that the dimensional space we call our universe has a foundation of spirit that organizes pre-mortal energy into space, physicality, and time.

We do see that not only are men intelligences and spirits, but attached to our souls is the additional "spirit creation" that is attached to its physical manifestation. In other words, men have two spiritual creations attached to them, their spirits, and the spiritual creation that is the underlying blueprint for their physicality

From the above we can see that even though we have a “spirit body” attached to our soul, that attachment does not preclude other attachments in that realm. Our entrance into mortality is an attachment of the spiritual foundation of physicality (spirit creation) to our “spirit body.”²¹



Personage of Spirit

When we speak of the Holy Ghost dwelling within us, what we are really speaking of is the Holy Ghost temporarily attaching Himself to our soul, in the spirit realm. We can dissect a human body with the finest of instruments and never find our spirit, the Holy Ghost dwelling within us, or demonic possessions inside of us, because they are not inside us. They are attached to us, but in a dimension we can not sense. If we viewed our bodies in two dimensional space

²¹ We also learn from Doctrine and Covenants 130:22 that in addition to our spirits being united to the spiritual creation of matter, that it can also be united to additional personages. “...but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.” Demon possession also takes place in this dimension, where a spirit entity attaches itself to the soul of an individual, influencing all of it’s manifestations.

we would appear as paper cut-outs. With the added dimension of depth, we can see that people are thick.²² If we could see more dimensions we would see that we are even thicker, with a train of dimensional manifestations all connected, moving in unison.

Everything in this world has its root in the higher world, and it's branches in the lower worlds. It's finer or purer (spiritual) existence, and it's coarse (temporal) corresponding existence.

“We have learned that when the blessed Holy One created the world, He formed the lower world on the pattern of the upper world, corresponding entirely to one another, and this is His glory above and below.”²³

It's not really that our spirit is within us, it is that it is attached to us in another dimension.

If we could see a chair in a two-dimensional space, that view of the chair does not limit what dimension the chair exists in. It exists in at least a few dimensions. It is only our view that is limited, not the chair's existence.

Something may exist in a higher dimension and not exist or manifest in this temporal existence, but, all temporal matter has it's root in a spiritual creation. This does not mean the

²² Our dimension of depth does not dwell within our two dimensional manifestation. However, it is found within our souls. Our soul is the total of our dimensional manifestations. “And the spirit and the body are the soul of man. And the resurrection from the dead is the redemption of the soul.” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:15&16).

²³ (The Zohar, Daniel C. Matt, Stanford University Press, Vol. III, Pg. 261)

chair was created in a higher dimension, it means the matter that makes up the chair was created spiritually. Man then took the matter and formed it into a chair, and in doing so the matter is modified in all of its dimensions.²⁴

The “Big-Bang” theory contains an idea that all the universe once existed in a size that could fit into a person’s hand. I contend that that hand sized universe came into existence from another dimension or sphere, the pre-mortal world, and the underlying spirit connected to that hand sized universe contains all the laws of the universe.

When God moves a mountain, he does not get out a pick and shovel, He commands the underlying spiritual foundation, and the associated matter follows.

The energy from the spirit foundation is the outside energy source that defies the law of entropy²⁵ in our universe (it defies the closed system). From this understanding we learn that the world of spirits has some extremely high voltage.

Matter is just stored energy and knotted space. In our universe matter and energy are constantly making the transition between forms.²⁶

²⁴ When the form of matter is changed, the matter is not then disconnect to the underlying spirit, the spirit and the physical matter move in unison.

²⁵ The second law of thermodynamic.

²⁶ Einstein taught that all matter and energy remain in the universe and about a special relationship between them, this is called $E=MC^2$.

Christ The Creator

The Plan of Salvation included the creation of our world and called for Christ to oversee the work. He is the one who interfaced with the Father (the Father resides in Celestial realms²⁷), He is the one who marshaled the forces to organize heaven and earth.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)

In scripture, one of Jesus’ many names was “the Word” or “the Logos.” John’s opening gospel line is a testimony that Jesus was in the beginning with the Father. However, John did not leave it there, he said Jesus was “God,” pointing once again to the established Hebrew/Christian doctrine of the council of the Gods, or the Elohim (the plural Gods).

“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” (John 1:3)

We see John’s continued testimony that anything that was made, our universe, was made by Jesus.

“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.” (Colossians 1:16 & 17)

²⁷ “ And thus we saw the glory of the celestial, which excels in all things—where God, even the Father, reigns upon his throne forever and ever;” Doctrine and Covenants 76:92.

The phrase “and by him all things consist” indicates that Christ was an essential element in the creation. It is Christ’s “Covenant of Creation” upon which the plan and the creation stands. Mosiah went as far as to call Jesus the “Father.”

“And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning...” (Mosiah 3:8)

The Father speaking of Christ said:

“And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten.” (Moses 1:33)

From the above verse we learn a few important points. First, God has created many worlds. I would say that indicates we should not think of ourselves as the center of the universe, but since Jesus was born here, this earth is the center of physicality anyway (emblematically, not literally). Second, by Jesus, the Father created them. Whether it’s this earth, or any world in our universe, Jesus created it both spiritually and physically (temporally).

“That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:24).

The Physical Creation

The Hebrew word “יצר” (Yasar - with one Yud “י”) is used in Genesis chapter one. “Yasar” is rendered “created” in our King James version of the bible.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”
(Genesis 1:1)

The letter “Yud” (י) is a symbol of creation. When man is described as being placed on the earth, the word has a spelling of “יִצַר” (with two Yuds - “יִי”).²⁸

“And the Lord God **formed** man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (emphasis added - Genesis 2:7)

This alternative spelling signals that this is a second creation (the physical). A point that is overlooked in English, but pointed to in the Hebrew. This is all discussed in the Book of Abraham. The spelling with two Yuds carries the implication of forming something from something that already exists, the use of a single Yod does not.

Following the spiritual creation, and using the spiritual creation as a pattern, God created the heavens and the earths. The spiritual creation works as a template for the physical creation in two aspects. First, it provided the underlying energy and foundational laws that exist in physicality. Second, the spiritual creation is working as an outline of the order of things.

I say “is working” because the physical creation is not yet complete. The physical creation is divided up into seven periods (or days), the physical resembling the spiritual. The period of time for each creative period is very large, likely billions of years each.

²⁸ Indicating that it was made from something that already existed. Strong’s numbers 3335 and 3336.

These creative periods should not be mixed-up in our minds with the seven thousand years of the temporal existence of the earth.²⁹

The creative periods are for heaven and earth. They are the macro plan for all the children of God, from our eternity, including many worlds that have already come in and out of existence, and I suppose many will yet come into existence.

During the fifth creative period a very large number of earths were populated with animals of all varieties, and so was our earth.³⁰

When the sixth creative period opened, worlds began to be populated with men and women. Before Adam and Eve, many worlds had been populated, their temporal existence came in and passed away.

“That by him [Christ], and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:24)

“And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten.”

“But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto

²⁹ Doctrine and Covenants 77:6

³⁰ Including the dinosaurs.

man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them.” (Moses 1:33, 35)³¹

We live in the sixth creative period, and the populating of the world is the continuation of creation.³² Whether in scripture or temple teachings, when reviewing our history, it always stops at the sixth period, because that’s where we are (Adam was in the sixth period and so are we).

Centered in an ancient Hebrew understanding of creation is the idea of an expanding universe. That the beginning of physicality was the dividing of light, and from there things continue to be divided, and it is these levels or degrees of division that create the heavens and the earth.

The Glory of the Earth

“Exactly what is our earth?” is an interesting question. This world has been compared to a Telestial Kingdom, but we know that is a limited comparison. A Telestial Kingdom is a redeemed kingdom, it is salvation, it is part of the Kingdom of God.

This earth may resemble the Telestial Kingdom and be simulare in it’s physicality, but our world is a fallen, non-redeemed temporal existence.

Again, we know there are devils, the fallen spirits that followed Lucifer influencing our existence. Death rules our world. The majority of our inhabitance are unrepentant li-

³¹ See Moses 7:30 and Hebrews 1:2, 11:3

³² It is not matter of the creation happened, and then man was put on earth. Earth being populated by man is just part of the ongoing creation process, it is not the beginning or the end of the creation.

ars, adulterers, thieves, and murderers. None of these things exist in the Telestial Kingdom, as we will see.

Our world is not “Outer Darkness.” The Holy Ghost functions here, good people are here, the church is here, and the priesthood is active here.

Our world is an encapsulated time and space, where we could come and break the rules, and not be eternally destroyed. A parenthetical probationary period where we could work out our salvation without the unrestrained justice of the cosmos. Where good and evil mix together, where we are enticed by both. This is a trial and error existence where we decide who we are, and to what enticements to which we will cling.

“Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other.” (2 Nephi 2:16)

We decide here and now if we will cling or cleave to goodness, or other things.

“For intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light; mercy hath compassion on mercy and claimeth her own...” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:40)

If we are intelligent we will seek and hold to intelligent things. If we are virtuous we will find and cling to virtuous things. Judgement is based upon these choices.

Law

All things exist by law. In understanding the atonement this

assertion cannot be overstated.

If you wish to form a government, the first thing you do is make the laws, your founding documents.

If you create a corporation, you do so by making the articles of incorporation and the bylaws.

Laws can be created on different levels. The above examples create the legal rules by which things will run. Some laws are set in motion by manipulation of crude matter, and some on a finer level.

An automotive door hing is a good example of crude laws being put in place. By forming a hing we create a rule or law that associates a car door with the rest of the body. The hing determines the pivot point and creates an endless array of mathematical calculations known as physics. An insulated wire to a taillight creates the law, or orders where an electrical current will travel. We depend on laws for things to work in an orderly manner.

Because we create a law or order, that does not negate other complementary or even opposing laws. Laws regarding friction will eventually overcome our door hing, and the hing-pin will wear-out and break. An automobile is an assembly of crude matter organized by laws, that create a certain outcome. An automobile controls mechanical fulcrums, electrical fields and currents, chemical explosions, and so on.

Physicality exists at the point where opposing laws collide.

The story is told of a man and his son flying a kite. The son asks; what holds the kite up? The father answers; the string! The son retorts that the string keeps the kite down, not up.

The father tells the son to let go of the string and see what happens, and of course the kite came to the ground.

We know that the earth moves through space pretty fast. As it revolves around the sun there is a centrifugal force (a law of physics) that unchecked would send the earth flinging through the Milky Way. The gravitational (a law of physics) attraction of the sun pulls in the opposite direction. The earth exists, or the earth's path is at the point of reconciliation of these two opposing laws.

If we put gasoline and oxygen in a closed container and introduce a spark we will get an explosion. An explosion is the working-out, or equalizing of opposing laws. If you observed that explosion frame by frame, you would see an equilibrium (as the gasses expand), then a new equilibrium, one after another as the equalizing process proceeds through the opposing laws or forces until a final reconciliation is achieved.³³

We have discussed that physical creation exists upon an underlying spiritual creation. That the underlying spiritual creation contains all the laws that cause physicality.

To take this idea a little further, we also know what physical matter really is. Matter is just energy organized by law. Albert Einstein showed matter is just stored energy, and matter and energy are moving back and forth in form all of the time. Our temporal existence is made up of differing densities of soup, all storing light from a higher world.

It is this underlying energy or light that brings about and

³³ The chemical changes of expanding gasses in a closed container, the overcoming of the tensile strength of the container, and the dissipation into the atmosphere.

maintains our material universe, the light is the law.

“The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things.” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:13)

Some would say that physicality is an illusion, but it is really just a point of view, in which we are stuck, but we are starting to understand. Let me explain.

We now know that very small subatomic elementary particles called neutrinos are flying through the universe all the time. Neutrinos fly at the earth and go completely through without ever colliding with earth's matter. They go through, not around, atom after atom, for thousands of miles, because the space within atoms is proportionally so great, the chances of hitting an electron is almost nil. Atoms are almost all space. The other material in an atom is energy. So really, what's there? Just energy and laws.

Currently, scientist theorize that “other material” in the atom are made from “strings.”³⁴ Unbelievably small strings that exist in another dimension (the spirit dimension), energy or light that acts in another dimension of space, that vibrate or oscillate to bring about matter in our three-dimensional existence.³⁵

The vibrations of these other-dimensional strings determine all the laws of the known universe. Law is the power of

³⁴ Super String Theory.

³⁵ There is a portion of the path of the oscillating string that corresponds to three dimensional space.

creation. Is this not exactly how scripture says this world was created? This world was created first spiritually, and then that spiritual creation is the mold or template for temporal creation.

This underlying spiritual energy and it's accompanying laws create not only matter, but space. When space is created, a glory or kingdom is created.

Kingdom,³⁶ glory, dimension, space, and law are all connected and interdependent.

“All kingdoms have a law given...” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:36) A kingdom does not exist without a law, or really a package of laws that create it. For example, the Telesstial Kingdom exists by the “Law of Obedience and Sacrifice” and the laws that make up a telesstial space, or dimension.³⁷

“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 a lesser kingdom.” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:37) Again we are told there is no “space” (which is dimension), without a kingdom, they are interdependent. Then we are instructed that all space (or dimension) has gradations of kingdom, greater or lesser attached. What makes one space greater or lesser? Is right and left greater than up and down? No. It is the law(s) that correspond to the space. A telesstial kingdom has the “Law of Obedience and Sacrifice” attached, while a celestial kingdom has the “Law of Consecration” attached and is greater. Not only is the behavior better in a celestial

³⁶ Telesstial, Terrestrial, Celestial, and so on,

³⁷ Three dimensional space, plus time moving in one direction.

kingdom, the very matter in that space is greater (finer and purer). Lower kindoms have more course matter.

“And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions.” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:37) The laws of a kingdom are the rules of how things will work there. The laws are what give structure and limits. We rely upon these laws. A rational mind requires order, that every action has a set reaction that we can count on.³⁸

Without law we would never know when we make a small jump if we will shoot into space, or flatten against the earth.

We attach short names and description to laws, and these stand for, or are place holder for a much fuller understanding of the law of any particular kingdom.

There are six laws that we must receive by covenant to receive all of God’s blessing, as an hier of God:

LAW	KINGDOM
Obedience	Telestial
Sacrifice	Telestial
Gospel	Terrestrial
Chastity	Terrestrial
Consecration	Celestial
Eternal Marriage	Celestial

³⁸ Otherwise our ability to exercise faith would be very limited.

Opposition and Justice

We usually consider justice in a very narrow way.

In a broad sense of the word “justice” should be thought of as “reaction.” Every action has an equal and opposite reaction,³⁹ or justice. If you hit a nail with a hammer, the energy or shock is transferred through the nail to the wood, where the wood resists the force, where the justice is played-out by its drive into the wood. This example shows; action, law, opposition, and justice.

In the prior chapter on law we used the example of creating a government by laws. Laws are silly and useless unless they have an associated punishment. If we have a law against stealing but there is no punishment, there is no point to the law, in-fact we effectively then have no law.

When we talk of laws and punishment, what we are really talking about is that one law applies (or is dominate), but when that law is broken or overcome, new laws take over. When a rocket shoots from earth into space, at first the law of gravity pulls very hard. Eventually gravity starts to loose its grip, and new laws take over (the new law is the reaction or justice). It is not that the laws no longer exist, it is the rocket's location, or relationship to where the forces are emanating from that changes. Justice is the results of actions and laws.

“...[T]here is a law given, and a punishment affixed... justice claimeth the creature and executeth the law, and the law inflicteth the punishment; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed, and God would cease to be God.”
(Alma 42:22)

³⁹ Newton's Third Law of Motion.

Now the laws of one world, kingdom, glory, or existence are not the same as another. So we have to be careful extrapolating the physics of our world to the rest of eternity.

“All truth [law] is independent in that sphere [glory] in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence.” (Doctrine and Covenants 93:30)

If laws are not “independent” or free to work, there is not existence. Laws make existence.

Scripture is rich with the interplay between opposing forces. It is my opinion that the very physicality we experience is the result of the dividing of light and darkness, which was the beginning of the “opposition in all things.” Nephi taught us this principle very clearly.

“For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, my first-born in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility.” (2 Nephi 2:11)

Our existence is a world of divided things and choices. This is true from the Garden of Eden times.

“...[I]t must needs be that there was an opposition; even the forbidden fruit in opposition to the tree of life; the one being sweet and the other bitter.”

“Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should

act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other.” (2 Nephi 2:15 & 16)

Opposition exists in the universe, in principals and powers. It exists in the macro, the physics we deal with daily. In the micro, opposition is played-out in our hearts.

Ancient Israel had many teachings illustrating the contrast between opposites. Curiously, this contrast became the central issue of gospel teachings.

Abraham is thought to have taught that creation came by opposition. He taught that at creation’s base were ten laws or principles from which sprang the rest of creation. He likened them to fingers on a hand, five on one side, and five on the other. That the interaction between the fingers symbolizes the opposition of the ten laws. Abraham taught that above the hands was “the covenant,” meaning the covenant of creation. (Sefer Yetzirah 1:3) But Abraham went even further and described the dimensions of space originating from the opposing laws.⁴⁰ (Sefer Yetzirah 1:5)

Kosher laws kept life and death ritually apart. The law of Sha'atnez prohibiting Jews from wearing linen and wool at the same time, taught the same idea.

At the entrance to the building in Solomon temple stood two pillars, one on each side of the door. These two pillars were of such significance that they had individual names, Boaz and Jachin. The literal meaning on Boaz is "in

⁴⁰ “...an abyss of good and one of evil, boundless height and depth, East and West, North and South, and the one only God and king, faithful forever seated on his throne, shall rule over all, forever and ever.” (Sefer Yetzirah 1:5)

strength" and represents severity or justice. The literal meaning of Jachin is "he establishes" and represents mercy. When an initiate walked into the temple of Solomon, he walked between the pillars of justice and mercy, the place of reconciliation, the strait and narrow path from the altar of sacrifice, to the mercy seat.

Masonry incorporated these biblical ideas into the checkerboard, contrasting light and darkness.

A common practice of ancient writers of holy writ was to embed a literary style call "chiasmus" into their work. Most often this style lined-up a list of points regarding of a topic, then presented the opposing points of the same list in reverse order, the center point between the two list being how the points were reconciled.

- a. My son, give ear to my words (1)
- b. Keep the commandments and ye shall prosper in the land (1)
- c. Do as I have done (2)
- d. Captivity of our fathers--their bondage (2)
- e. He surely did deliver them (2)
- f. Trust in God (3)
- g. Support in trials, troubles and afflictions (3)
- h. I know this not of myself but of God (4)
- i. Born of God (5)
- j. Alma seeks to harm the church (6)
- k. Limbs paralyzed (10)
- l. Fear of the presence of God (14)
- m. Pains of a damned soul (16)
 - n. Alma remembers Jesus Christ (17)
 - o. Christ will atone for the sins of the
 - n' Alma calls upon Jesus Christ (18)
 - m' Joy as exceeding as the pain (20)
 - l' Longing to be with God (22)
 - k' Use of limbs returns (23)
 - j' Alma seeks to bring souls unto God (24)
 - i' Born of God (26)
 - h' My knowledge is of God (26)
 - g' Supported under trials, troubles, and afflictions (27)
 - f' Trust in him (27)
 - e' He will deliver me (27)
 - d' Egypt--captivity (28-29)
 - c' Know as I do know (30)
- b' Keep the commandments and ye shall

As mentioned earlier, the universe seeks an equilibrium. It seeks the justice or reaction to every law, physical, or spiritual, because it is the same.

“Wherefore, verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal; neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam, your father, whom I created.” (Doctrine and Covenants 29:34)

In a spirit dimension, physicality has a spiritual underlying element that controls it, and God deals with laws on that

level. Whether or not spirit has a physical dimension attached to it, it responds to God's commands.

The Fall of Adam and Eve

Agency

In the pre-mortal world of spirits, the great Michael was chosen to come and represent all of us, and by our signing onto the plan, Michael represented each of us vicariously.

In Hebrew, Adam (אָדָם) means “man” and means “human.”⁴¹ We are all Adams, following the path of the fall and redemption of our father Adam. In Hebrew the phrase “the man” is the word “the Adam” (אָדָם הַזֶּה).

Michael's spirit was breathed into a body on earth, and his earthly name was Adam. This was with Adam with his mate Eve. They were introduced into a garden that represented a Terrestrial Glory.

Pursuant to the Covenant of Creation, Adam and Eve were given their agency, “...in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency.” (Moses 7:32) God gave this agency specifically to Adam and Eve, and that gift extended to all humanity since they represented all men and women.

Agency is not the same as free choice. The concept of free choice implies a choice without repercussions. If a person meets a beggar on the street and is asked for charity the person may choose to give or not give, but if the possible donor has made a covenant to give to the poor, he is an

⁴¹ Strongs Hebrew #120

agent of that covenant and can't withhold charity without a violation of the covenant.

God deals with man, and builds a relationship with man, by covenants, one covenant upon another, till a full reconciliation is achieved.

Adam and the rest of humanity were never given "free choice," we were given agency, and the choice to choose to keep our covenants, or turn away from them. We all entered into the Covenant of Creation, and thereby accepted Adam as our representatives before God in the garden. This was a family event, our father Adam and his children.

Adam was given commandments that defined the limits of his agency. Adam and Eve received the two commandments, one that Adam and Eve remain together,⁴² and second, that they do not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

A part of true agency is choice. Within the garden humanity was given agency and the choice to keep the agency or turn away from it. Without the choice to keep our agency or not, the purposes of the Covenant of Creation can not be met.

"And to bring about his eternal [Covenant of Creation] purposes in the end of man, after he had created our first parents, and the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and in fine, all things which are created, it must needs be that there was an opposition; even the forbidden fruit in opposition to the tree of life; the one being sweet and the other bitter."

"Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should

⁴² And replenish the earth, or have children. Genesis 1:28

act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other.” (2 Nephi 2:15 & 16)

To help accelerate this choosing process, Lucifer was allowed access to Adam and Eve.

This is a touchy subject for some, so I will navigate as carefully as I can here. It is not my intention for any readers to get stuck here, be offended, or otherwise unable to proceed.

We know that the Lord does not give conflicting commandments. Keeping one commandment does not require us to break another commandment. It is within our ability to keep the commandments, otherwise the laws of God would not be just, and neither would His punishments.

“And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.” (1 Nephi 3:7)

God does not prepare a way for us by having us break other commandments.

The Fall

The presence of the two trees in the garden provided the necessary choices for Adam and Eve to keep their agency, or break their covenants. It was given to Adam to choose, but God forbade the eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

In the pre-mortal life God instructed Man and Woman to have children:

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth...” (Genesis 1:28)⁴³

“...[F]or they [wives] are given unto him to multiply and replenish the earth, **according to my commandment, and to fulfil the promise which was given by my Father before the foundation of the world**, and for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they may bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of my Father continued, that he may be glorified.” (emphasis added Doctrine and Covenants 132:63)

This commandment and promise in the pre-mortal world are part of the Covenant of Creation. Family associations are central to the gospel plan.⁴⁴

In mortality Adam was again commanded to have Eve stay with him, to multiply, and to replenish the earth. Lucifer, also known as Satan had been cast out of the pre-mortal realm, to a spirit realm in which he could interact in earth.

Satan told a partial truth and Eve bought into the lie, and she ate the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and

⁴³ Note that this command is during the narration of the spiritual creation, not the physical creation.

⁴⁴ “We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.” The Family: A Proclamation to the World.

Evil (she was beguiled, or tricked). She approached Adam in an attempt to have him sin along with her, and he first refused. After a discussion, he realized two things:

- He would be alone in the world, and would not be able to keep Eve with him, and not keep that commandment (which was not his fault and would not have been a sin for him). Because of Eve's sins Adam was faced with a problem, he could still keep the commandment, but some of the purposes of another commandment would not be met, he would be alone.
- Adam also understood that having children was central to God's plan, and he would be alone in the Garden of Eden, yes there would have been no fall, but there also would have been no children (because Eve would not be there).⁴⁵

Adam made a choice, ate the fruit and brought sin and death into the world. "...Because that Adam fell, we are; and by his fall came death; and we are made partakers of misery and woe." (Moses 6:48)

Adam could have kept all of God's commands, it was within his power. The dichotomies came into play after Eve disobeyed.

Just as the atonement was in effect prior to the crucifixion (applied to many worlds), the effects of the fall existed prior to Adam's arrival to earth too.

⁴⁵ "And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden [alone]. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end." 2 Nephi 2:22

“[plants and animals] ...lived and died, age after age, while the earth was yet unfit for human habitation.” (Elder James E. Talmage, *The Earth and Man*.)

The fall was a universal fall, it applied to all the world, for the time of the temporal world, forward and backward.

The justice, or reaction, for the sins in the Garden of Eden was:

- Physical death. Death came upon man and all of earthly creation. God said that man shall surely die.
- Spiritual death.⁴⁶ God can not dwell with the least amount of sin, man could no longer dwell in the Kingdom of God, in any of its degrees. Without some intervention Adam and the rest of us are all going to hell, outer darkness, and endless separation from God. (Moses 5:57)

Spiritual death is the same state of being that the Sons Of Perdition are in. LDS theology includes a “Universal Fall.”

Adam and Eve explained their reasons for the fall to God. And God explained to them the consequences (justice) of their actions. Their eyes were opened, they would die physically, they would be cast out of the Garden of Eden, they would be separated from God, they were spiritually dead, Eve would suffer in child birth, and Adam would have to work by the sweat of his brow. Thus, the state of

⁴⁶ “...from my presence, because of his transgression, wherein he became spiritually dead, which is the first death...” Doctrine and Covenants 28:41

man.⁴⁷

This spiritual death that Adam and Eve experienced brought some changes to them and to us. Man inherited a fallen nature, we became devilish, carnal, sensual, and sinful. We became subject to, and servant of the devil:

“For they [the wicked] are carnal and devilish, and the devil has power over them; yea, even that old serpent that did beguile our first parents, which was the cause of their fall; which was the cause of all mankind becoming carnal, sensual, devilish, knowing evil from good, subjecting themselves to the devil.” (Mosiah 16:3)

This is the state of mankind, unless and until a change takes place, we are sons of perdition. It is critical that we understand our fallen nature and position before God. We did not become recipients of the Terrestrial or Telestial Kingdoms because of the fall, we are justly cast out to outer darkness, separated from God forever.

“Wherefore, I, the Lord God, caused that he [Adam] should be cast out from the Garden of Eden, from my presence, because of his transgression, wherein he became spiritually dead, which is the first death, even that same death which is the last death, which is spiritual, which shall be pronounced upon the wicked when I shall say: Depart, ye cursed.” (Doctrine and Covenants 29:41)

The “first death” or the spiritual death is the “same” thing that is pronounced at the final judgement on the sons of perdition at the “second death.” And, unless there is some

⁴⁷ “For behold, if the knowledge of the goodness of God at this time has awakened you to a sense of your nothingness, and your worthless and fallen state—” Mosiah 4:5

intervention we are all sons and daughters of perdition.

“And thus we see that all mankind were fallen, and they were in the grasp of justice; yea, the justice of God, which consigned them forever to be cut off from his presence.”
(Alma 42:14)

“Wherefore, all mankind were in a lost and in a fallen state, and ever would be...” (1 Nephi 10:6)

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned...” (Romans 5:12)

“...the fall came by reason of transgression; and because man became fallen they were cut off from the presence of the Lord.” (2 Nephi 9:6)

“Wherefore, it came to pass that the devil tempted Adam, and he partook of the forbidden fruit and transgressed the commandment, wherein he became subject to the will of the devil, because he yielded unto temptation.” (Doctrine and Covenants 29:40)

“...Now we see that Adam did fall by the partaking of the forbidden fruit, according to the word of God; and thus we see, that by his fall, all mankind became a lost and fallen people.” (Alma 12:22)

“...spiritual death; for all mankind, by the fall of Adam being cut off from the presence of the Lord, are considered as dead, both as to things temporal and to things spiritual.”
(Helaman 14:16)

“For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, un-

less...” (Mosiah 3:19)

The fall that came upon Adam and Eve, and to each of us is real, and drastic. God did not spare the fallen angels in the pre-mortal life for their sins, and if we don’t find a resolution, he will not spare us.

Atonement

Redemption for Adam’s Transgression

Before Adam and Eve were banished from Eden, they were given a token of the Atonement that would be made for them, pursuant to the Covenant of Creation. God killed animals and clothed Adam and Eve in their skins. These coats of skins were to cover their nakedness with a sign of redemption.

“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” (Genesis 3:21)

This was a dramatically powerful illustration to Adam and Eve. It showed that Adam now lived where death reigned, and where transgression was resolved in violent ways. The skins were also a reminder that a way of “return” was prepared for Adam and Eve, and the skins corresponded to that “return.”

Adam’s own death was part of this working out of justice, as God promised.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Moses 4:9

The Covenant of Creation, or Plan of Salvation from the pre-mortal life included provisions to resolve the universal fall, caused by Adam's transgression. Adam first stood for man vicariously and brought death and sin into the world. Christ stood in for us vicariously, secondly, and reversed the effects of Adam's fall. Christ is the second Adam.⁴⁹

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.”

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:21 & 22)

The writer of the letter to the Corinthians goes further and compares Adam to Christ, Adam being natural (an enemy to God⁵⁰), and Christ being spiritual:

“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [Christ] was made a quickening spirit.”

“Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.”

“The first man [Adam] is of the earth, earthy: the second man [Christ] is the Lord from heaven.” (1 Corinthians

⁴⁹ Vicarious work, or standing in for each other is central to the plan.

⁵⁰ “For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.” Mosiah 3:9.

15:45-47 also see Doctrine and Covenants 128:14)

The effects of Adam's fall will eventually be resolved in Christ's atonement. Physical death will be reversed, and spiritual death will be undone.

“We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.” (Second Article of Faith)

More about this later.

Rites and Ordinances

We have discussed that we entered into a covenant before we came to this earth, and that we are agents of that covenant. Man broke that covenant and agency, and are now seeking to implement the part of the covenantal plan that contains a resolution to the current breach. The part of the plan that contains the provision to resolve the breach can be called the “Covenant of Redemption.”

To have access to the Covenant of Redemption, we have to renew the promises. While we are agents, we still have a choice to repair our broken covenant, or continue in our fallen state, breaching the covenant even further. The Covenant of Creation is restored piece-by-piece by earthly new covenants, that point back to the pre-mortal covenant.

We see in gospel teachings a purposeful evolution of certain terms. For example; the term “House of Israel” means the “Camp of Israel,” which means “Army of Israel,” which means “Army of Heaven,” which means “Army of God.” These are the ones Jesus said he would make His rulers in this world. (Abraham 3:23)

When we speak of the Melchizedek Priesthood, what are we talking about? We are talking about the authority given to “Melchizedek,” which is the authority of the “Fathers” (or the patriarchs), which is the Priesthood of Adam (HC, Vol. 3, pp. 386-387), which is the authority after the “Holy order of the Son of God.” Similarly, the Covenant of Creation, The New and Everlasting Covenant, and the Gospel Covenant all have closely related meanings, leaving room for some nuances.⁵¹

All things hang upon the covenant of creation and the promises made in the Pre-mortal world, which include the covenants of redemption or atonement. When we are circumcised, baptized, take the sacrament, or go to the temple, we are only pointing to, and recommitting, and renewing the covenants of creation and redemption, made in our pre-earth life.

In mortality these covenants are entered into and memorialized by ordinances or rites. These rites stand as a testimony for or against us. They delineate a clear start date.

Progress in repairing the covenant is made by new covenants and there corresponding ordinances, piece-by-piece.

The first saving ordinance we have record of is of Adam being baptized.

⁵¹ “And the Father teacheth him of the covenant which he has renewed and confirmed upon you, which is confirmed upon you for your sakes, and not for your sakes only, but for the sake of the whole world. And the whole world lieth in sin, and groaneth under darkness and under the bondage of sin.” Doctrine and Covenants 84:48 & 49.

“And thus he [Adam] was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man.” (Moses 6:65)

This act of baptism, for Adam, reversed the spiritual death he suffered. Baptism is the first saving ordinance of the gospel, and is the gate to the “Kingdom of God.” Everyone who comes to earth is baptized, either in mortality, or vicariously.⁵² Those who accept it receive a reversal of their spiritual death, all others retain their status as enemies of God, and sons of perdition.

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5)

From the pre-mortal world it was the plan that men would be baptized to take upon themselves Christ’s atonement to overcome Adam’s fall.

“And our father Adam spake unto the Lord, and said: Why is it that men must repent and be baptized in water? And the Lord said unto Adam: Behold I have forgiven thee thy transgression in the Garden of Eden.”

“Hence came the saying abroad among the people, that the Son of God hath atoned for original guilt, wherein the sins of the parents cannot be answered upon the heads of the children, for they are whole from the foundation of the world.” (Moses 6:53 & 54)

⁵² Assuming the LDS understanding that this is referring to those who are accountable and capable of committing sin. Moroni 8:10-12.

Baptism is associated with the overcoming of the fall (at least the spiritual part). This was the plan all along.

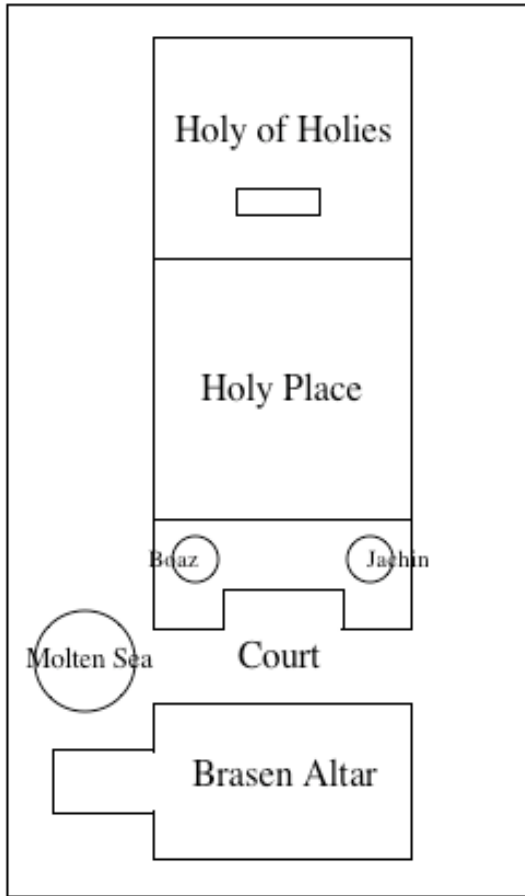
The Kingdom of God in the widest sense is salvation, it is the Telesstial Kingdom, the Terrestrial Kingdom, and the Celestial Kingdom. Baptism is the door to the Kingdom of God. The church is for those who have been baptized, and are pressing forward in further sanctification. We falsely flatter ourselves when we think because we have been baptized, we fully qualify for the Celestial Kingdom. Baptism is just the gate to the Kingdom of God.

What about the temple? Can we go to the Celestial Kingdom without the temple? Is the temple not an essential part of the gospel?

There are many good people in the world, but without baptism they are in a fallen state not able to receive the cleansing power of the atonement.

The temple is the Plan of Salvation in stone. It is a three dimensional template⁵³ of the Covenant of Creation. It is the model for the creation, and the returning to God. It's very layout carries the gospel message. Let's take Solomon's temple for example, it is very simple.

⁵³ "This scale model of the universe is the temple. Of course, the word for temple in Latin, templum, means the same thing as template: a plan marked out on the ground by the augur's staff..."
Hugh Nibley, Don E. Norton, Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present, Deseret Book, The Meaning of the Temple



Solomon's Temple Floor Plan

In LDS theology there is a well established understanding that after the resurrection we all go to one of four worlds, or kingdoms (or glories in the case of most of mankind). The highest is the Celestial Kingdom, the middle glory-the Terrestrial Kingdom, the lowest glory-the Telestial Kingdom, and lastly-Outer Darkness.

Outside the temple - Outer Darkness
The Courtyard - Telestial Kingdom
The Holy Place - Terrestrial Kingdom
The Holy of Holies - Celestial Kingdom

All ordinances correspond to a level of glory. To find what level, kingdom, or glory, an ordinance belongs to, look at the temple architecture (Where in the temple is that ordinance happening at?). The temple of Solomon is typical of the basic ideas presented in all true temples.

Outside of the temple walls is outer darkness, there is no glory there. There are no necessary ordinances required outside the temple, and outside the temple is the default of man.

Within the temple walls is where salvation starts. We see what belongs in the Courtyard. Baptism is required for salvation, and we can see the baptismal font on the backs of twelve oxen in the Courtyard. We now know that baptism is required for the Telestial Kingdom. We also see the Altar of Sacrifice within the Courtyard, and we know that the law of “Obedience and Sacrifice” belongs to the Telestial Kingdom. How sacrifice is played-out in different dispensations will be discussed further on. We also see that Baptism is the first step towards the Celestial Kingdom, but it is not the final qualifier.⁵⁴

The plan of salvation is administered to us by covenants, including; baptism, sacrament, priesthood, and of course the temple. These covenants come with blessings, and with penalties if the covenant is not kept.

Pre-messiah circumcision, the cutting, was a sign of the

⁵⁴ 2 Nephi 31:20

covenant of Abraham, and an illustration of the penalty. Modern folks don't care much to be reminded of penalties. While a reminder of the possible penalties may not be an essential part of the covenant, historically the gospel has included such reminders. In the 84th. section of the Doctrine and Covenants, known as the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood we read:

“But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come.” (D&C 84:41)

Circumcision is an outward sign of the covenant, and a sign of a possible penalty. Many Old Testament covenants were attached to or received by the killing of an animal, usually by cutting. In Old Testament times a gospel covenant may be attached to the ritual of cutting an animal in two, then walking the path between the parts. When we “cut” a deal, we have made a two way promise.

The Hebrew word for “covenant” is “brit.”

“[brit - BRYT] בְּרִית... [C]ovenant, treaty, compact, agreement, an association between two parties with serious responsibilities, benefits, and penalties; ‘to cut a covenant’ is to ‘make a covenant,’ a figure of the act of ceremonially cutting an animal into two parts, with an implication of serious consequences for not fulfilling the covenant...”⁵⁵

In Hebrew, covenant literally means the “cut-where-blood-flows.” In times past, when a covenant of blood was made, a cup, or cupping hand, sometimes by a priest, would be

⁵⁵ The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of The Bible, 21st Century Edition, page 1483.

held underneath to catch the blood. This blood in the cup would sometimes be mixed with wine and consumed by the participants. The wine and the blood are often interchanged in gospel themes (the rite of the Sacrament for example⁵⁶).

The blood of the covenant is taken upon each of us in true temples, in a symbolic way. Ancient Israel also symbolically received the covenant by being sprinkled with blood. This sprinkling conveyed the blessings, responsibilities, and the penalties associated with the covenant.

All these covenants we make are just renewing the Covenants of Creation, upon which heaven and earth rest. We need to remember our blessings, rights, privileges, responsibilities, and the associated penalties.

The promise of the Abrahamic Covenant is that our seed will continue forever (a sign of that covenant is circumcision). The penalty is a loss of eternal seed.

Ancient temple initiations contained feathers of truth, swords of judgement, and angels guarding the way. Today we have an abbreviated version of what was Adam's ascension, which is our inheritance (endowment). Traces of a longer version, a deeper teaching, and fuller laws, give us hints of the path back. This is why the endowment can only truly be understood by revelation. The profane waste their time trying to understand it, only by revelation can we “get it.”

“Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godli-

⁵⁶ Morris Jastrow Jr. and Charles J. Mendelsohn, regarding “Bassin.” JewishEncyclopedia.com

ness is manifest.”⁵⁷

“If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable thing that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal.”⁵⁸

Ordinances are the mysteries of God. It is not that they are unknowable, it is that they are hidden from the profane, and revealed to the holy.

"...but that is what Christ meant by the mysteries of the kingdom. He meant ordinances, which were necessary; and these he revealed to the apostles during his very confidential teachings of the forty days after the resurrection. The purpose of such ordinances is to bridge the space between the world in which we now live, the [non-redeemed] terrestrial world, and that to which we aspire, the celestial world."⁵⁹

The Garden and The Cross

The life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth is a worthy study, but it is not the topic of this work, and has been done very well in other places. Suffice it here to say, that Jesus understood His special place and His Special assignment, or agency. He was about doing His Father's business.

⁵⁷ Doctrine and Covenants 84:20

⁵⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 42:60

⁵⁹ Hugh Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, Deseret Book, pg. 28.

He learned obedience from the things that He suffered.⁶⁰ He went from Grace-to-Grace,⁶¹ meaning he received higher-law to higher-law, and kept each perfectly.

We will touch only briefly here about the Garden of Gethsemane, and Calvary.

At the conclusion of Jesus' earthly ministry He entered the Garden of Gethsemane to face what he knew was the burdens of the world. He had the apostles with him. He and a few select apostles went further into the garden where He asked these select apostles wait and watch with him. He then went further in alone, because alone the burden had to be borne. In LDS theology we know that much of that burden was laid upon Jesus in the garden where He sweat drops of blood in response to what we was going through.⁶²

After the pretext of a trial, Jesus was taken to the "Place of the Skull," where the Romans performed crucifixions. Jesus was nailed to a cross, and left to die between two thieves. It appears that the Father was with Jesus, and strengthened Him through much of the ordeal. But as separation from God and His spirit are one of the consequences of sin, Jesus had to stand before the gates and taste the full bitterness of hell, by himself. He had to go below all things, and see and

⁶⁰ "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered..." Hebrews 5:8

⁶¹ "And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness..." Doctrine and Covenants 93:13

⁶² Luke 22:44, Mosiah 3:7

feel it alone. ⁶³ When He had completed the work of the garden and the cross, He said “it is finished” and he died.

Jesus was a willing sacrifice. He was ordained from the foundation of this world, He was an agent of that covenant, and chose to suffer and die for mankind.

“No man taketh it [life] from me [Jesus], but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” (John 10:18)

The Infinite

The consequences of Adam’s fall, that came upon each of us, and the result of our personal sins, is separation from God.

“...[We] should not do evil, the penalty thereof being a second death, which was an **everlasting death** as to things pertaining unto righteousness... for the works of justice could not be destroyed, according to the supreme goodness of God.” (Alma 12:32, emphasis is added)

Alma said that the penalty was “everlasting death” meaning it would never end, it is an “infinite” punishment. When would the punishment be over? Never, the second death goes on forever. Outer Darkness has a one way door, there

⁶³ “It was required, indeed it was central to the significance of the Atonement, that this perfect Son who had never spoken ill nor done wrong nor touched an unclean thing had to know how the rest of humankind—us, all of us—would feel when we did commit such sins. For His Atonement to be infinite and eternal, He had to feel what it was like to die not only physically but spiritually, to sense what it was like to have the divine Spirit withdraw, leaving one feeling totally, abjectly, hopelessly alone.” Elder Jeffery R. Holland, May 2009 General Conference.

never comes a time when you have paid the debt, and are released. Nephi taught us the same thing:

“...Wherefore, the first judgment which came upon man must needs have remained to an endless duration...” (2 Nephi 9:7) Third Nephi says we can “never return” from this justice:

“And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father.” (3 Nephi 27:17)

When we sin, we are scared, stained, wounded, sick, and unworthy to be in the presence of God. “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 forever.**” (1 Nephi 10:21 emphasis added) We have only one thing in which to pay the debt for our sins; an eternity of infinite punishment. We have nothing in ourselves to offer that will ever fully satisfy judgement.

But, being cast off and lost is not where we are left, being stuck there is not part of the Covenant of Creation. In opposition to, and overcoming the “infinite punishment,” was prepared and “infinite atonement.”

“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 laid down to rot and to crumble to its mother earth, to rise no more.” (2 Nephi 9:7)

What Nephi is telling us here is that what we call the “atonement” had to be unjustly suffered by the Redeemer (He did not have it coming), there was nothing that could right that wrong (the innocent suffering), and that the suffering of Christ had to surpass the weight of any justice that man merited.

Jesus had to be sinless for this atonement to work, otherwise He would have had nothing to offer for us, or for himself.

There is no amount of sin that Christ can swallow-up in His atonement that will justify the suffering He endured. Being sinless he did not deserve that suffering. He stands unjustly injured, and as the universe seeks an equilibrium, He can infinitely apply that injustice to the justice that would otherwise be due to you and I, and pay for our sins. In this way justice is fulfilled or met, and we can obtain mercy. Truly the atonement is infinite.

Christ had to go below all things spiritually, he had to feel the full force of justice due to men, for His suffering to be sufficient to pay the price.

“He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth...” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:6⁶⁴)

He “ascended” above all things by keeping each law⁶⁵ as

⁶⁴ Also see Doctrine and Covenants 88:41, 125.

⁶⁵ In this case, laws (commandments) and blessing are synonymous: “Wherefore, the blessings [laws] which I give unto you are above all things.” Doctrine and Covenants 18:45.

He was presented with them, from “grace to grace,” He kept law after law ascending to full holiness, then debased by the sins of others “below” what any would otherwise suffer.

“(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?”⁶⁶

“He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might [ful]fill all things.)”
(Ephesians 4:9&10)

Upon Jacob’s Ladder He stands at the top as an example showing the way, and He stands at the bottom, below the ladder to catch everyone who comes into this world.

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)” (Ephesians 2:5).

Paradise and Prison

Upon Jesus’ death at the cross, His spirit went to a place called “Paradise.” There He proclaimed the “good news” that the provisions made in the pre-mortal covenant of creation to release these prisoners of the grave were near completion.

When any of us die, we either go to “Paradise” or “Prison”

⁶⁶ The “lower parts of the earth” is a play upon a Hebrew and the original church’s understanding of the degrees of glory, thought of as Jacob’s ladder, with the ladder representing salvation, and each rung as a level of sanctification. Under the earth is a fallen and non redeemed state. This is likely the origin of the idea that hell is in the center of the earth.

collectively sometimes called the “Spirit World.” In either “location,” this Spirit World existence is looked upon as a “bondage” keeping the residents from further progression or ascension of at least one type.

“For the dead had looked upon the long absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage.” (Doctrine and Covenants 138:50)

Who goes to Prison, and who goes to Paradise is not completely settled among Latter-Day Saint theologians.

One camp believes that the dividing line is baptism. That those who have been baptized and achieve a certain level of fidelity to that covenant go to Spirit Paradise. The other camp, or camps, have criterion usually revolving around a person’s responses to the light or law available to them, or if they were “just,”⁶⁷ meaning they sought honest lives and sought to deal fairly with their fellow man (not if they have been justified in Christ). Some would see a correlation between those who will eventually receive the Telestial Kingdom (and outer darkness) as those who “reside” in (at least initially) the “Spirit Prison” and, those who will eventually receive the “Terrestrial Kingdom” or the “Celestial Kingdom” as the residents of the “Paradise.”

This author subscribes to the latter of these notions. It is also suggested in scripture that those who repent in the Spirit Prison can progress to the Spirit Paradise.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Or the righteous. 2 Nephi 9:13, Alma 40:11-12, Doctrine and Covenants 138.

⁶⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 138:31

Resurrection

The business of justification and sanctification seems to actually be applied at the resurrection. Further, they are brought to bear by “the power of the resurrection.” Before then, we receive promises, insights, privileges, blessings, and responsibilities but they are fully actualized in the resurrection.

You may be a celestial person, and even had your calling and election of the Celestial Kingdom made sure, but until the resurrection, that calling and election are largely unfulfilled.

“And this death of which I have spoken, which is the spiritual death, shall deliver up its dead; which spiritual death is hell; wherefore, death and hell must deliver up their dead, and hell [spirit prison] must deliver up its captive spirits, and the grave must deliver up its captive bodies, and the bodies and the spirits of men will be restored one to the other; and **it is by the power of the resurrection** of the Holy One of Israel.” (emphasis added, 2 Nephi 9:12)

A restoration of the body and spirit, deliverance from hell (spirit prison), and spiritual renewal all come “...by the power of the resurrection.” The resurrection is not just a secondary issue, one of the benefits of living a good life, it is the power of deliverance, it is what Christ died to bring about.

At the resurrection, the final justification and judgement are given that qualifies a person for salvation into the “Kingdom of God” which is made up of three kingdoms of glory. Jesus said:

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so,

I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”
(John 14:2)

Pursuant to our individual holiness, also known as “sanctification,” we receive through the “...power of the resurrection” a judgment and an inheritance into one of the glories, kingdoms, or worlds that make up the rest of our existence.

A resurrection from the grave was promised to all in the Covenants of Creation and Redemption. It was this covenant that created an almost parenthetical point in our existence (mortality), where we could work-out a growing and sorting of our souls, where we would establish our true heart’s desires. Where we would cling to our heart’s corresponding glory or kingdom, and not be destroyed by our choices and mistakes.

The resurrection is actually a re-entry back into a real existence, a departure from the protective cocoon of mortality. The resurrection is the placing of souls into the kingdom they can survive in.

Mortality is like Las Vegas, what happens in mortality, stays in mortality, it is all healed in Christ, but in the resurrection we are home in the real world again.

There are two types of sin that effect our souls. One, is the condemnation that fell upon all men when our surrogate, Adam, stood for each of us, and fell. The other is our individual sin. Adam’s sin was resolved in Christ, Christ stood as the second Adam, or our second surrogate, and resolved Adam’s fall. The use of surrogates (proxies) in gospel themes is used over and over again. We see this usage in Adam, the Mosaic sacrificial system, Christ’s atonement, and proxy work in modern temples.

We take upon ourselves Adam's fall at birth, as we come into mortality through the waters of the womb, we accept Adam as a surrogate. When we enter the waters of baptism we accept Christ as our surrogate. This is why baptism is called being "born again."⁶⁹

"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [Christ] was made a quickening spirit." (1 Corinthians 15:45)

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

At birth, our body (blood), our spirit, and the waters⁷⁰ were present. When we are born again (baptized), our body is present, the Holy Spirit is added to us, and the waters (representing change) are again present. Technically, the Holy Ghost is given as a gift, or constant companion at confirmation, but the spirit should attend anyone who is properly baptized.

"That by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory;"

⁶⁹ John 3:3-7, 7:14, 1 Peter 1:23, Alma 5:49, Mosiah 27:25, Doctrine and Covenants 5:16.

⁷⁰ When we are born we emerge from embryonic fluid, which is largely water.

(Moses 6:59)

We see some variation between these passages. Body and blood are interchangeable. It was the blood that resolved the body part of the resurrection, and Christ's suffering in the Garden that resolved the spiritual sanctification.

The Holy Ghost was present at Jesus' baptism in the "form of a dove." I would argue that unless, and until the Holy Ghost is present at, or later associates Himself with the ordinance of a person's baptism, that baptism is of no effect. All saving ordinances must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise to be of force.⁷¹ In this way, improperly completed, or insincere ordinances are not effective. A person can be baptized over and over again, even with proper authority, and in the proper form, but unless the Holy Spirit of Promise seals that ordinance upon that person's soul, at best they are taking a bath.⁷² Before the resurrection of any person, they will be baptized, either on their own volition, or by another standing in as a proxy for that person.

The above being said, even rejection of a baptism still brings resurrection through the power of Christ, because we all agreed in the Covenants of Creation and Redemption to

⁷¹ "All covenants and performances must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise to have force after this life..." LDS Guide to the Scriptures.

⁷² "...All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, ...are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead." Doctrine and Covenants 132:7

accept the atonement during mortality (even the son's of perdition are brought forth in the resurrection by the power of Christ), and the atonement was made for the world. The atonement was made, and the baptism done, but at the judgement, those who still reject Christ must "return to their own place,"⁷³ known as "outer darkness" in LDS terminology.

"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." (Alma 11:41)

We are "baptized unto repentance."⁷⁴ Christ is added to our repentance when we are baptized, and without Christ, repentance still only brings spiritual and physical death. We can see in the pattern of temple architecture that the baptismal font is found in the telestial area of the temple, so we know that baptism is required to reside in the telestial kingdom. There must be a repentance and a forgiveness of sins to enter the telestial kingdom.

The assignment of kingdoms is based upon what level of law we are willing to live, not on lingering degrees of sin.

For those who enter the Kingdom of God, what happened in mortality, stays in mortality. They are completely forgiven of sin, and then receive an inheritance into a kingdom that has a law they can and are willing to live, they are justified in that kingdom. They are sanctified to the degree of

⁷³ Doctrine and Covenants 88:32

⁷⁴ Acts 19:4, Mosiah 26:22, Alma 6:22, 7:14, 9:27, Helaman 3:24, 5:17 & 19, 3 Nephi 7:26.

their inheritance, that's why they receive that kingdom.

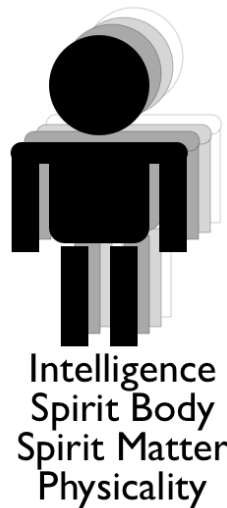
Conversely, those who do not enter a degree of glory are not cleansed, but "remain filthy" even after the resurrection:

"That [those] which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willet to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment. Therefore, they must remain filthy still." (Doctrine and Covenants 88:35)

We often think of the resurrection only as the bodies coming out of the graves, but it is much more than just that. The resurrection is the restoring of the physical body to the spirit, it is the complete forgiveness of sin, it is the restoring of the father-child relationship between us and God, it is the restoring of spiritual life, the delivering of an eternal inheritance to a kingdom of glory. It is receiving all the powers, privileges, rights, priesthoods, authorities, keys, glories, knowledge, and dimensions required to dwell in a person's respective kingdom of glory.

The physicality of the resurrection has been a stumbling block to many student of eschatology. The idea of a person who lived thousands of years ago and was eaten by animals complicates the philosophy. That person's physicality has been shared by many beasts, plants, and likely even many people. The DNA has all been broken down, and re-ordered. How the spirit is "restored" to such a widely diffused and recycled bit of matter is sometimes a little difficult to reconcile in our minds. I suggests that the above scenario uses an erroneous and backwards logic. In our earlier example of a chair we saw that the physicality existed, or was built upon a spiritual blueprint, the underlying en-

ergy from another dimension. When the crafter of the chair, formed the chair, the underlying energy moved, or organized along with the physical manifestation. When people take on mortality, they have a physical manifestation of not only the spiritual underlying energy that is the blueprint for all of the physical universe, but an associated spirit that is the abode for the intelligence (that always existed). When our physicality changes geographic location, it drags along with it, willing or not, the “spirit” that makes up the matter of all earth (the underlying other dimensional energy and organization), and the “spirit” that is the abode of our intelligence. We learn from this that physicality has some level of influence and correlation to our spirits. I would take this a little further and say that the genetic make-up of our physicality is imprinted onto the spiritual abode of our intelligence, and it is this imprint, or blueprint that is the basis of the “restoring” of physicality, not the reuse of the exact physical matter that we had when we died.



What really is our body? It is matter that only migrates through, for a relatively short period of time, in a relationship with, or correspondence to our spirit. Constantly, our cells are dying and falling off or being spewed out. So, our spirits are really only associated with the principle of physicality, not any bit of specific matter. For us, mortality is an association with the principle and organization of mortality, not really the specific matter. The body we have at one time, has different matter than the body we have ten years later. As our cells in our bodies fail to recycle we get old and die, which is a function of the principle and organization not some inherent problem with the matter.⁷⁵

Demanding that a resurrection be of the same matter as when we die, is not founded upon any definitive doctrinal basis, but upon a lack of appreciation for the complexity of the topic, and failing to properly apply what has been revealed on the subject.

Our journey through mortality joins a mortal name to our pre-mortal names. And at the resurrection we have yet another name added to us. This string of names are a description of the imprinting of our soul. Each name is a description of stages of existence and is a shorthand verbal, almost algebraic representation of our existence, with each major event represented.

I have proposed that each of our existences or states have been in different dimensions. That we existed as spirits, that we had another dimension added to us when we were be-

⁷⁵ When sin came into the world, it effected the principle and organization that we experience, because it is through this principle and organization that we perceive and interact.

gotten as spirit children. This can be thought of as being built one upon another, one dimension being connected to the other. When we came to mortality we had another dimension temporarily connected to us, this we call physicality (matter within three dimensional space). This temporary addition is a fallen, sick and dying addition. However, it allows us to interact with this world in a way we could not do prior to birth. This temporary abode allows us act within mortality, a parenthetical cocoon from real life, and work out our salvation. Without this temporary body the scares of life would be attached to us forever.

At the resurrection, our intelligence, with it's attached dimensions come forth at specific times to be united with a body built to withstand or function in differing dimensions, or glories.

At death we lay down this temporary, fallen, and scared body, and receive a new and perfected body. But not all perfected bodies are equal.

There will be a universal resurrection, meaning every person who lived on this earth will come forth by the power of the resurrection and receive a body. In this earth, the main body of resurrection will happen during the "millenium," or the "final Millenium." Many LDS theologians would contend that from the time that Adam left the Garden of Eden to the end of a worldly system, will be six thousand years, followed by a one thousand year theocracy know as "The Millennium."

Resurrection of Disgrace

Essential to the type of beings were are is the concept of choice. We are told that one third of our spirit brothers and sisters in the pre mortal life refused the Plan of Happiness,

and followed Lucifer, and became his angels, and servants.⁷⁶ Our Heavenly Father did not spare these spirit beings (2 Peter 2:4), however, they were not tricked, or fell by some accident, they choose, and received according to their choices. They made fully informed choices. Being fully informed does not mean you grasp the depth of all the consequences, but that you understand what is on the table and you choose. Without choice there is no progression, righteousness, sanctification, or deification.

The pre mortal life, and the one third separation, worked as a filter, that given all of the facts, a fully informed decision, we (those who made it to mortality) would choose Christ and His Plan. Like most filters, there is an efficiency rate, a built in rate of failure, a predictable percentage that slip through the filter that really belong on the other side of the filter.

When we think of Son's of Perdition we often think of a rare theoretical person in this life who does some deed for which they lost their chance for a resurrection of glory. Some live in fear that they may accidentally do the unpardonable sin⁷⁷ and fall into this trap.

It does appear that in this life there are some people who

⁷⁶ "And it came to pass that Adam, being tempted of the devil—for, behold, the devil was before Adam, for he rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine honor, which is my power; and also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their agency; And they were thrust down, and thus came the devil and his angels; And, behold, there is a place prepared for them from the beginning, which place is hell." (Doctrine and Covenants 29:36-38)

⁷⁷ Jacob 7:19, Alma 39:6

seal their fates as followers of Satan, but a closer look at the texts present a little different picture than the usual pedestrian view. In the verses that discuss the “unpardonable sin” sometimes called “blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,” there are two common criteria; a high level of knowledge and a willful rebellion.

The 132nd. section of the Doctrine and Covenants puts the finest point on the subject. In verse 26 it is speaking about eternal marriage (sealing), and says that if such a marriage is “sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise” that the participant will eventually “enter into their exaltation” if they avoid one thing. We will discuss the Holy Spirit of Promise more later, but for now, what that means is that that person had participated in the sealing ordinances, that the ordinance was done properly (form and authority), and that the parties live the law associated with that ordinance.⁷⁸ All saving ordinances have an associated law. If you can live a law, you are an heir of the corresponding kingdom.

Our sealed person can then regress and commit all manner of sin (verse 26) and eventually still receive their exaltation, if they avoid “...blasphemy against the Holy Ghost... in that ye commit murder wherein ye shed innocent blood...” (verse 27) sinning against what has been witnessed to them. Now the 132nd section of the Doctrine and Covenants is discussing eternal marriage, and the unpardonable sin is a secondary topic. It’s description of the unpardonable sin is in this case how it relates to those who have been sealed, so we need to be careful not to pour more into the text than what was intended. The major points are that; to commit the unpardonable sin there must be a very high level of knowledge and an utter rejection of and rebellion from it. Relatively, very few people receive the sealing

⁷⁸ These are the purposes of the Holy Spirit of Promise.

ordinances in this life, and even fewer have the Holy Spirit of Promise witness to them that the Celestial Kingdom is sealed upon them, so it appears few are even capable, in this life of even committing that sin (at least as far as this model is concerned).

Doctrine and Covenants section 76 lays this all out very well, but does not mention sealing ordinances per se, however, it says “all those who know my power” which may not be a distinction at all.

“Thus saith the Lord concerning all those who know my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power—” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:31)

Again we see the two major points; they “have been made partakers” of God’s power, they know the plan is real, and they allow themselves to be overcome to the point at which they “deny the truth” (rejection), and “defy” or rebel against God’s power. It appears to the author that a very few may qualify in this life as a Son of Perdition, and that this threshold can be more easily met in the next life.

“They are they who are the sons of perdition, of whom I say that it had been better for them never to have been born;” (verse 32)

For these select beings, it would have been better to have chosen to stay in the pre mortal world as servants. They lost not only their Second Estate, but have thrown away their First Estate too (except for receiving a body).

“For they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity;” (verse 33)

Concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come— (verse 34)

This lack of forgiveness is only mentioned in relation to the kingdom of Outer Darkness.⁷⁹ The punishment attached to sin is Outer Darkness, and since the vessel of wrath has rejected the atonement, the punishment must continue until justice has been completely filled, which never happens, not in this world, or in any world to come. All other kingdoms have forgiveness associated with them, but Outer Darkness does not.

“Having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father, having crucified him unto themselves and put him to an open shame.” (verse 35)

We see here the person must have received the Holy Spirit and denied Christ. This is shorthand for someone who knows the truth of the Plan of Salvation and utterly rejects it. They take the sacrifice made for them and cast it aside, treating it as a shameful thing, debris to be discarded. We see again the predominate pattern of a high level of knowledge and a rejection.

“These are they who shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels—” (verse 36)

⁷⁹ 2 Nephi 9:16, Doctrine and Covenants 88:35&132

This verse is making it clear this is speaking of Satan (pre mortal Lucifer) and his servants, not to be confused with those in any other kingdom of glory.

“And the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power;” (verse 36)

The first death is the failure of the physical body. The first death is healed in Christ. By the atonement, and through the “power of the resurrection” every person will be resurrected, pursuant to the Covenant of Creation and Redemption. Receiving a forever body is the reward for keeping our first estate, it’s universal. The first death has no lasting power on man, it is all healed on Christ.⁸⁰

The “second death” is a separation from God. The second death only effects those who become son’s of perdition, they are the only ones not completely forgiven of their sins. They are they only ones who do not enter the Kingdom of God.

“And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters;”

“And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.” (Mosesiah 27:25-26)

⁸⁰ “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” 1 Corinthians 15:55

A Telestial Resurrection

“Wherefore, he [Christ] saves all except them [Son’s of Perdition]—they shall go away into everlasting punishment, which is endless punishment, which is eternal punishment, to reign with the devil and his angels in eternity, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, which is their torment—” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:44)

The Telestial Kingdom is part of the Kingdom of God, it is a kingdom of salvation,⁸¹ bought and paid for by the blood of Christ and His infinite atonement.

Like all kingdoms of glory, the only way to achieve this kingdom, resurrection, and glory is through the mercy, merits, and grace of Christ.

No one can pay for their own sins and receive a kingdom of glory. The only people paying for their own sins are the son’s of perdition. No one receives mercy and grace unless they repent and willfully take upon themselves Christ.

To see what is required to inherit the Telestial Kingdom we can go to our examples of the Plan of Salvation made of stone, the temples, and observe what is happening there in that sacred space. The temple space representing the Telestial Kingdom in Solomon’s temple was known as the “court.” Seeing the temple experience as a series of increasing commitments by men, and promises by God, memorialized by ritual acts known as ordinances, we can see what laws (the commitments by men) and ordinances must be kept to enter any particular kingdom.

⁸¹ “And also the telestial... for they shall be heirs of salvation.”
Doctrine and Covenants 76:88

Obedience is the first law of heaven. When we enter the the court area we first see the altar for animal sacrifice. The entire Mosaic sacrificial system is symbolic of Christ. To enter the telestial space we must be attached to, affiliated with, or joined with Christ. We do this by covenanting to, and keeping the law of the court, the Telestial Kingdom.

The law of the Telestial Kingdom is the “Law of Obedience and Sacrifice.” Whether we ritualize our commitment to the Law of Obedience and Sacrifice with animal sacrifice in Mosaic pre Messiah temples, or post Messiah temple, it is in effect the same. This is the “gate”⁸² and rejection of this is a rejection of the kingdom, and a rejection of Christ and his atonement. Without Christ we are son’s of perdition.

In Solomon’s temple the initiate would ritualize his alliance with Christ by making sacrifice at the altar of sacrifice. He would then move on to the bath which sat upon the backs of twelve oxen, which we know is a baptismal font. The oxen represent the twelve tribes of Israel, which is a representation of the Kingdom of God. When we are baptized we become the blood of Israel, a citizen of the temple, or the kingdom. Baptism is the initiation ordinance.

There were other things going on in Solomon’s temple, in the court, that are not fully explained in scripture. These are the ordinances corresponding to the Law of Obedience and Sacrifice that must be kept to inherit a Telestial Resurrection. If these ordinances are not sealed upon us by the Holy

⁸² The gate is a reference of entering through the gate into the temple outer court, the telestial area. This is the beginning of salvation. We still need to walk the strait path through the temple, the path of reconciliation of justice and mercy. See 2 Nephi 31:17-21. Some ancient initiates understood the progression through their temples as passing a succession of gates.

Spirit of Promise before the time of our resurrection, we will not receive a Telestial Resurrection. The ordinances must be done, and we must live the law of the telestial kingdom to dwell there:

“And he who cannot 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.” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:24)⁸³

We can see that keeping the telestial law is akin to what is require to join the church at baptism. A newly baptized convert must only meet a certain minimum threshold of sanctification, but the church envisions increased commitments, ordinances, and levels of sanctification.

How do we reconcile the idea that a person must be baptized to reside in the Telestial Kingdom when we read about an innumerable⁸⁴ (appears to be a majority) amount of souls that inherit that kingdom, when they are described as “...liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie.?” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:103) On it’s face, baptism does not seem to relate to the above list of sins. The resolution comes in understanding the time-line of events.

The majority of people who come to earth can’t even reach a telestial law while residing here. Telestial laws do not include; lying, witchcraft, adultery, whoring, or any such

⁸³ “And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions. All beings who abide not in those conditions are not justified.” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:38-39)

⁸⁴ Doctrine and Covenants 76:109

things.⁸⁵ The Law of Obedience and Sacrifice exclude such things. Those who can not live the telestial law in this life, when they die, will be “...cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God...” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:106) This “hell” is the Spirit Prison where the wicked post mortals reside preparing for a resurrection. While there they are vessels of God’s wrath and vengeance.⁸⁶

It is the authors understanding that when the vessels of wrath repent, they may leave prison and join the residents of Spirit Paradise. If they refuse (rebellion) to repent after receiving a full knowledge of essential things (revelation), they will be resurrected, but remain filthy still, and join the other Son’s of Perdition. No unclean thing can enter the Kingdom of God, in any of it’s glories. No one is forced to repent, mercy comes only through Christ, only through Christ can we be cleansed of sin.

“And I say unto you again that he cannot save them in their sins; for I cannot deny his word, and he hath said that no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore, how can ye be saved, except ye inherit the kingdom of heaven? Therefore, ye cannot be saved in your sins.” (Alma 11:37)

“Wherefore, if ye have sought to do wickedly in the days of

⁸⁵ These things belong to a fallen sinful world, not a redeemed mansion in God’s Kingdom. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” Corinthians 6:9 & 10.

⁸⁶ Their suffering in “hell” is a time of reflection and repentance. Their suffering does not atone, but hopefully brings repentance.

your probation, [and] 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 forever.” (1 Nephi 10:21)

It is the law a person can and will live that determines his or her resurrection and kingdom of glory, not lingering degrees of sin. All recipients of a glorious resurrection are cleansed in the end.

“These all [telestial recipients] shall bow the knee, and every tongue shall confess to him who sits upon the throne forever and ever;” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:110)

The bowing of the knee is a symbol of allegiance and subjection. We must all be allied with Christ, we must take him upon us, and repent, or become Son’s of Perdition.

The first degree or level of the temple is associated with being cleansed, and identification with Christ,⁸⁷ an allegiance with Christ, and bowing the knee.

“They [Telestial Kingdom recipients] have no part in the first resurrection and are not redeemed from the devil and his angels until the last resurrection, because of their wicked lives and their evil deeds. Nevertheless, even these [Telestial Kingdom recipients] are heirs of salvation, but before they are redeemed and enter into their kingdom, they

⁸⁷ “Then, when you were stripped, you were anointed with exorcised [blessed, made holy] oil, from the very hairs of your head to your feet, and were made partakers of the good olive-tree, Jesus Christ. For you were cut off from the wild olive-tree, and grafted into the good one, and were made to share the fatness [blessing and goodness] of the true olive-tree. The exorcised oil therefore was a symbol of the participation of the fatness of Christ...” Cyril on the Mysteries, Lecture 2, verse 3.

must repent of their sins, and receive the gospel, and bow the knee, and acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world” (Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 2:22)

Many faithful saints fret upon the fact that loved ones leave this world in a state of rebellion, and scared with sin. While a portion of that fret may be justified, much stems from a misunderstanding of the plan. The vast majority of those who enter mortality will at one point or another reconfirm the Covenant of Creation, that they agree to take Christ upon themselves. Most will inherit the Telestial Kingdom.

While we have judges in Israel, most of us are instructed not to judge others. Not that we are restricted from understanding what sin is, and who is committing it, the restriction is meant as an enlightenment; that we don't know why a person sins. Their sin can be the result of ignorance, a reaction from injury, a call for help, or just old fashion working out of individual salvation.

The spiritually mature understand the underlying causes of sinful behavior. Behaviors are the physical acts of men, what we see on the surface, but spiritual roots go much deeper. Why does one person act one way, and another person act in an opposite way, when presented with the same circumstances? It is because their behaviors are based upon their values.

If a person values his family, he will be kind to his family and try to provide for them. Most of us have mixed and competing values. This life is where we sort out what is of value to us. If a person places value on the things of God, he respects God, and Godly things. This valuing of God causes a state of holiness, or the setting-apart of things, people, places, and time to God. One who puts little or no value in God becomes profane. If a person beats his chil-

dren, he has a values problem, no matter what excuses he may proffer.

If behaviors come from values, where do values come from? Values are based upon beliefs. Not professed beliefs, but the true beliefs down in a person's heart. If a person does not honor his parents, he has a diminished value for them. This diminished value has a source. It springs from the person's inner-most beliefs. Perhaps the person believes the parent does not care for them, or that the parent is a bad parent. Perhaps the parent mistreated the child, and the child has built a psychological structure devaluing the parent, as a protective device and a coping method. Whatever the thinking is, the person has developed a belief that diminishes the value of the parent. Whatever values we have, they are based upon our true beliefs. We all have a facade that we use to interact within society, and we have our true beliefs hidden deep. Our actions almost always eventually betray our true beliefs.

Where do beliefs come from? Beliefs come from relationships. In mortality, our first relationships become a type for the rest of our relationships, and the rest of our life. Good, early relationships with our parents can almost not be separated from a happy life. An abusive parent scars a child with wounds that may never be healed in mortality. In this life, families are our first relationships and we take what we learn in these relationships and incorporate them as beliefs.

As we interface with others, including God, we continue our good or bad relationships.

This is why it is imperative to forgive all, deserved or not. Until, at least our side of our relationships are resolved we will harbor ill feelings and resentment. These feelings will bring bad beliefs, bad values, and bad behaviors. And since

we can't be forgiven in our sins, we must forgive others to be forgiven.

In the most primal level of our being, our relationship with our parents become a most overwhelming archetype for our relationship with God.

The nature of sin is a broken relationship with God. When we sin we have broken an allegiance to God and family, and have aligned ourselves with other enticements.⁸⁸

Much of mental illness results from a person's inability to reconcile (an-one-ment) two or more, real or perceived, facts of reality. The gospel contains the tools necessary for people to see the truth and reconcile themselves to it. Forgiveness and repentance are the stuff of mental and spiritual health.

Some people, through naiveté or sin assimilate their beliefs and values from culture and society. They are unable to understand or receive real truth. They become mentally ill from their inability to reconcile the social (political) correctness to the real world, they become practitioners of "double-think," while the rest of us either pretend or rebel.

"And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell." (Alma 12:11)

This micro-personal dynamic is played out in all facets of our lives. In modern politics there are many influences and pressures that drive the landscape. Underlying them all is

⁸⁸ These improper alliances are called Idolatry. These are misplaced allegiances that should have been directed to God.

personal relationships to God and family, or the lack thereof. How people respond (behaviors) to the calls of action depend on their values (family values, liberal values, conservative values, etc.). These values are based upon individual beliefs, such as what makes right and wrong, the proper role of government, altruism versus self interest, and so on. And all these beliefs are generated from our relationships with God, family, and society. Until these relationships are healed, and people understand and accept their proper relationships, they will live with spiritual and mental sickness.

Adam found himself at a point of a broken relationship with God when he was cast out of the garden (which is a pattern for every person's life). This broken relationship brings bad beliefs, bad values, and bad behaviors. These are the wounds of mortality. The at-one-ment restores the relationship, and this is the only true healing.

Repentance must happen on several levels. A person must stop the behavior, adjust his values, and change his beliefs.⁸⁹

When he has done these, he is forgiven and his relationship with God is restored or healed. Anything less than this is not a complete healing or repentance. (see Mosiah 14:5)

The resurrection is the healing of the soul.

We have seen this world is telestial like, but fallen and littered with souls living the laws of each kingdom. So it's not technically a Telestial kingdom, but something lower than that.

⁸⁹ This tri part conversion can be analogized by a person's belly, heart, and mind.

We know that those who inherit the Telestail Kingdom have great blessing's in store, so great we can not now comprehend how great it will be. Joseph saw a vision of the Telestial Kingdom:

“And thus we saw, in the heavenly vision, the glory of the telestial, which surpasses all understanding...” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:89)

We further understand that each of us will have a resurrection to the greatest glory (with its corresponding law) that we are willing to receive.

So we are not in the hands of some demented god that seeks the discomfort of his children. We are each in the hands of a loving God and Father who has nurtured us along and will give us each and every blessing our vessels are capable of receiving. For most, it will be an incomprehensible world, the Telestial Kingdom. A kingdom where everyone has repented of their sins, where they keep the commandments, and love Christ.

Today, on earth, we live in a fallen telestial like world, yet we can see a very wide selection of how we experience this world. Some of these variation are self imposed, and some of our stations in life are imposed upon us. One person travels by jet airplanes and expensive cars, he eats the finest nutritional foods, wears clean clothing, and has no threats upon his existence. Another is born into this world living in ignorance, misery, hunger, and danger. He lives in the dirt, and struggles to survive. There are extreems in this world, yet it is all within the same glory. In the Telestial Kingdom there will be differing levels of existence. Death, hunger, sickness, and such things will not exist there, but it appears

there will be significant degrees or levels of existence within that glory or kingdom.

When we inherit a kingdom of glory, we have that entire kingdom available to us, we can soar to the heights of that kingdom, or settle-in to a more comfortable station. Our inheritance includes a fullness of the kingdom, how much of our inheritance we utilize is up to us.

“And also they who are quickened [resurrected] by a portion of the telestial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fulness.” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:31)

A glimpse of the “fullness” might be gained by contemplating what a world would look like that went on forever, where everyone was repentant, worked together, lived forever, no wars exist, where the innovations that provide comfort and joy accumulate for eon after eon. We can scarcely catch a glimpse of a lower portion.

The Telestial Kingdom is beyond what most of Christianity considers heaven to be.

The Telestial Kingdom will continue on forever. We know that a telestial resurrection is associated with the stuff of this earth. But this telestial world will not be the first to exist. World after world, for eons this plan has produced Telestial Kingdoms, and numberless to man are the inhabitants of these worlds. Our world will take its place among other such worlds. If this is the case, earth may be more of a staging area, and the previously mentioned association between our spirits and physicality, has less to do with earth specifically, and more to do with the physicality of three dimensional space.

The Terrestrial Kingdom

We see above that the Telestial Kingdom is glorious beyond what we can comprehend. But for the just, who were the honorable men of the earth⁹⁰ who lived a higher law, and will accept the “Law of Christ,” there are even more, unfathomable blessings in store.

These blessing are so great that we can not receive them in a body built for the Telestial Kingdom, it must be built from finner matter. Finner matter that can traverse not only this three dimensional glory we currently reside in, but in a glory which has at least one more added dimension. We have a very hard time envisioning what one more dimension would mean to us. We can see the dramatic difference between two and three dimensional space, and if that scale holds true in adding a fourth dimension, it’s just unimagivable what the Terristial Kingdom looks like.

An inhabitant of three dimensional space would only need to take a step back to be undetectable by a person confined to a two dimensional glory.⁹¹ Similarly, the crown over the Terrestrial Kingdom includes all the abilities, right, and privileges of a Telestial Glory, and three dimensional space, but they can reside separately by a simple step out of our perception. Telestial beings can not follow because of the coarseness of their body, their glory of resurrection confines them to three dimensional space, and the laws in that kingdom.

⁹⁰ Doctrine and Covenants 76:75 “These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men.”

⁹¹ See Flatland a Romance of Many Dimensions. Edwin Abbott.

The Celestial Kingdom

As I previously proposed, as one of the differences between the Celestial Kingdom and the Terrestrial Kingdom, a major difference between the Terrestrial and Celestial glories is one or more added dimensions. The Celestial Kingdom includes all lower kingdoms, but it also includes ways of separation, a way to step out of lower glories into more holy space. What makes one space more holy than another space? It is the law that is attached to that space or dimension. The law is what actually creates the space or dimension.

There are three components to this business:

- 1.) The spirit that determines the law that is kept.
- 2.) The resurrected body that is given.
- 3.) The glory or dimensions that we inherit.

With our intelligence, that resides in our spirits, we choose what law we will keep. The law that we keep determines what kind of body we are quickened (resurrected) with. The type of body we receive at the resurrection will limit us, or allow us to navigate different dimensions, also known as glories.

“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.” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:28)

Residents of the Terrestrial Kingdom can't follow Celestial beings into Celestial space because their bodies can't function in that space, it is too coarse or crude. It can't work upon the higher and finer laws.

The law that governs the Celestial Kingdom is the Law of Consecration.⁹² What we usually conceive of as the Law of Consecration is really just an algebraic placeholder for a fuller understanding of the law, that we are to grow into.

We receive this law by covenant and ordinances.

We are told what the recipients of the Celestial Kingdom look like while on earth. These are those who are valiant in the testimony of Christ. These are those who found truth, renewed the covenants, consecrated their lives to God, or would have done so if given the chance.⁹³

Within the Celestial Kingdom there are three divisions.⁹⁴ The highest division is reserved for those who inherit their full estate, everything The Father has. They become Gods, the sons and daughters of God.⁹⁵ They join the ranks of the other “EL’s” and become one of the Elohim, realizing the promises attached to the saving ordinances. They become

⁹² Sometimes the Law of Consecration is confused for the United Order. The United Order was one attempt to live the Law of Consecration as a community. If our hearts are consecrated, we will find appropriate ways to consecrate all that we have.

⁹³ “Thus came the voice of the Lord unto me, saying: All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; Also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom; For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts.” Doctrine and Covenants 137:7-9.

⁹⁴ “In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;” Doctrine and Covenants 131:1.

⁹⁵ “Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God—” Doctrine and Covenants 76:58.

linked into this chain of Gods, family member after family member. Family members that refuse to keep the Celestial law, and the laws of exaltation are dropped from this chain, and receive all they are willing to receive.

This linking of the chain is the purpose of this earth, and without this purpose being completed, this earth is wasted.⁹⁶

Those who go onto exaltation follow our Father, and start their own eternities, bringing spirit children forward from the deep pool of intelligences, to inherit all that they might.

Exaltation is receiving a full and complete inheritance from God our Father, all that he has. We are servants that become sons and daughters. We then become heirs, and receive all the rights, powers, privileges, and blessing.

“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” (Galatians 4:7).

This is only a stunted glimpse of the Celestial Kingdom. We know we can't comprehend even the Telestial Kingdom,⁹⁷ so we just do the best we can with what we have. We seek further light and knowledge, and occasionally a few of us see beyond the veil.

Consecration

In the pre-mortal world there was a plan put forward by God the Father that we now call the Plan of Salvation. Lucifer responded to the plan with a counter offer. His counter

⁹⁶ Malachi 4:6, Doctrine and Covenants 138:46-48.

⁹⁷ Doctrine and Covenants 76:89.

offer masqueraded as an acceptance, it contained limits and changes to the plan, and was geared to his personal benefit.

Lucifer is the archetype of a non-consecrated heart.

The Law of Consecration is the law of the Celestial Kingdom. If we wish to inherit a celestial glory we need to start demonstrating that we can live this law.

We follow Satan's example when in our lives we wish to have, or attempt to negotiate a change from the plan. Before this world was created, certain rules were set in place that we must all abide by, that we trust will bring certain results.⁹⁸ When we refuse to live by these rules we attempt to institute our own laws. As we become the instituter of new laws, we think to change the rules in opposition to God's will. This is called becoming a law unto ourselves. The Plan of Salvation is the only way to Salvation and Sanctification.

“That [whoever] which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself [themselves], and willeth to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment. Therefore, they must remain filthy still.”⁹⁹ (Doc-

⁹⁸ “There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated— And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.” Doctrine and Covenants 130:20-21.

⁹⁹ These people can't be sanctified by law because they break the laws. They can't be sanctified by mercy because they reject Christ and His mercy. Justice would condemn them. They can't be sanctified by judgment because they will be judged worthy of outer darkness, being filthy still.

trine and Covenants 88:35)

If someone in this life decides they don't want the saving ordinance of baptism (assuming it has been properly presented to them), thinking that they have some unique relationship with God, and they can have the blessing of salvation, and reject the ordinances, they seek to become a law unto themselves. Thinking they have carved out some special rules for themselves, and that God will have to take them as they come.¹⁰⁰ What they will find is that they will either repent, or be cast off to outer darkness.

A consecrated heart is born of the understanding that there is not more than one plan, and that any counter offer is a rejection of the plan. A consecrated heart doesn't resist God at some point of opposition¹⁰¹ and in effect say "this is as far as I go." as though they can stop the plan from working upon them. In the throws of opposition, a consecrated heart seeks strength, relief, healing, enlightenment, sanctification, patience, and the determination to endure to the end. A sanctified heart clings to the covenants, ordinances, and the knowledge of the plan.

Three Altars of Salvation

If we again look at the plan of salvation in stone, the temple, we can observe the underlying structure that is shared with all true temples. Central to this structure is the existence of three levels of salvation, or holiness.

¹⁰⁰ They start dictating the terms upon which God can interface with them. They set up new rules. We are all working out our salvation in this life, but if we repeatedly reject laws that we are ready to receive, we eventually prove our nature, and our nature, is what will determine our resurrection.

¹⁰¹ The trials of this world.

For simplicity, let's look at Solomon's temple. There are three basic sections; the Court representing the Telestial Kingdom, the Holy Place representing the Terrestrial Kingdom, and the Holy of Holies representing the Celestial Kingdom.

Each of these kingdoms has a prominent feature, and that is the altar for that kingdom.

In Solomon's temple, the space designed to represent the Telestial Kingdom had an altar called the "Altar of Sacrifice." It is here that the working out of the salvation of man is symbolized, and memorialized.

The gate into the telestial space is equated with membership into the church, or in other words, the Kingdom. To rightfully enter that space the initiate had to accept the principles and ordinances of that space. We are not told all of what went on in Solomon's Temple, but we do know some things.

The altar in any given holy space represents the spot where God and man come together in that degree of glory, where the symbols of the covenant for that degree are expressed, and where a portion of the Covenant of Creation is renewed.

The symbols for a kingdom are not some unrelated abstract token, they not only symbolize of the underlying saving truth. they are emblematic of that truth, and in a likeness of that truth, which is the covenant.

The Altar of Sacrifice was the first order of business in the telestial space (The Court). It symbolizes the suffering and death that Christ endured on the cross. It is meant to im-

press upon us that in a telestial world that justice is achieved in brutal and violent ways. The Altar of Sacrifice is the space where the covenant, the cross, justice, mercy, man, and God come together in what some ancients thought of as a knot, where all of these things intertwine. This has been called a “knot of faith.” This is the idea held by ancient and some modern Jews when they wear, and are eventually buried in an undergarment with four corners called a “tallit katan.” At the corners are specially tied knots called “Tzitzit.” You may recall Jesus condemned ancient Jews for enlarging the fringe of their garments. What they were doing was showing off the tokens of their covenants. Some Jews also wear a larger garment as an occasional outer garment called “Tallit Gadol” which is a prayer shawl, if large enough it can be used to cover the canopy for marriage. It also has Tzitzit or knots on the corners. These Tallits appear to be a symbol like the panther skins worn by Egyptian priests.

An old Jewish document describes Abraham clinging to his covenants when confronted with worldly situations as grasping the knots he had with God:

“So Abraham cleaved to faith when he went down to Egypt and when he went to the land of the Philistines. This can be compared to a person who was about to descend into a deep pit. He was afraid he would not be able to come back up. What did he do? He tied a length of rope above the pit, saying ‘since I have tied this knot, now I can enter.’ Similarly, when Abraham was about to go down to Egypt, he first tied a knot of faith, so he would have something to grasp; then he descended. Likewise when he entered the land of the Philistines.”¹⁰²

¹⁰² The Zohar, Matt vol. 2, pg 165, Va-Yera

It was further understood by the Jews that creation, in each of its glories was connected with an allegorical rope that spans to each kingdom. It is fastened to each kingdom, at the knot, by a nail (The Hebrew conjunctive “vav”). Where the knot and nail fasten to is the Altar of the respective kingdoms.



What happened on the cross is symbolized by what happens on the Altar of Sacrifice.

If we then enter into the space representing the Terrestrial Kingdom (in Solomon’s Temple) we find another type of altar, the Table of Shewbread. It is at this table that the covenants belonging to the Terrestrial Glory, along with the ordinances, thought of as a knot of a rope are fastened with a nail.

We know of only two places where Jesus atoned for our sins; the cross and in the Garden of Gethsemane,¹⁰³ but cer-

¹⁰³ “The Savior was born in mortal life, was tempted but never sinned, and then in Gethsemane and on Golgotha paid the price of our sins so that we could be cleansed.” Elder Henry B. Eyring, November 2008 General Conference.

tainly there are three. It is likely that the place that Jesus retired to with Peter, James, and John, that was farther into the garden than He allowed the other apostles, where He was “exceeding sorrowful unto death” (Mark 14:34) is the place that is represented by the Table of the Shewbread, and is the place of atonement in the Terrestrial World. This could rightfully be referred to that which saves someone into that kingdom, but it might be more properly be described as a level of sanctification.

The Table of the Shewbread has a strong resemblance to the modern LDS rite of Sacrament. The existence of the bread and the wine¹⁰⁴ on each table leads us to believe this connection may exist.¹⁰⁵ If this is a real link, we are forced to consider the Sacrament as a Terrestrial Ordinance. Which would also make some symbolic or mystical link between the altar of the Terrestrial Kingdom, and the Sacrament tables of LDS meetinghouses. We could view this as an extension of the temple into our more common worship. In the telestial realm our baptismal fonts clearly have a theological link to the temple sea on the backs of twelve oxen.

The priests and laymen (at least in the early years of Solomon’s Temple) killed the lamb and other victims on the north side of the Altar of Sacrifice in the Court, or the Telestial area of the temple. This was a playing-out, or theater of the Atonement upon the cross. When the participants burnt the offerings it was an invitation to deity to participate in or accept the sacrifice (like burning incense symbolizes prayers or petitions to God). The eating of the

¹⁰⁴ Substituted in modern LDS meetings with water.

¹⁰⁵ And the fact that the bread was eaten once a week on the sabbath. Leviticus 24:8-9.

remaining parts of the victim has to do with internalizing the deity, or becoming one with God.

We can eat the flesh (flesh and blood) of the Telestial sacrifice, at the Altar of Sacrifice, and become one with God there, be identified with Him at that level, with that law, with those ordinances, or we can eat from the Table of Shewbread, drink the wine, and be sanctified and one with God at that level, glory, dimension, law, and ordinances. It's our choice.

There is an additional choice. When Christ went further into the Garden of Gethsemane, there He suffered to the greatest degree. There he suffered alone. He left the area where Peter, James, and John waited, the place of "suffering unto death" and went in further. What exactly happened there we don't really know,¹⁰⁶ other than; for us He suffered to a very great extent:

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit..." (Doctrine and Covenants 19:18)

Some critics of LDS theology have considered the idea of three degrees of glory as an unnecessary addition of some non-biblical notion. Such considerations demonstrate a lack of depth in their biblical studies.

We can see each true temple of Hebrew construction employed the use of a three section model. Moses had a Tabernacle in the wilderness, made under the direction and

¹⁰⁶ To some, the inter-workings of the atonement may be revealed, but for most of us, we miss the mechanics of what happened in the Garden.

authority of God. (Exodus 26-27)¹⁰⁷

Later, we have probably the most well known of all temples, the temple that Solomon built. The same three chamber (one outside) model was incorporated. From there we go to Second Temple, closely following the same architectural sermon.

Ezekiel 47 is a mystical symbolism of the three degrees of glory. This chapter incorporates the symbols of Eden and interwinds them with others reminiscent of Lehi and Nephi's Tree of Life vision.¹⁰⁸ Ezekiel is taken to a temple and sees the water coming forth pure and undiluted. As it rolls forth, it is divided and contaminated to three depths of living waters (ankles, knees, and to the lions), and to the "marshes" where the waters did not bring healing. This is pure Hebrew mysticism at it's best, and spot-on LDS sanctification doctrine.

Of course the New Testament has it's overt three degrees teaching, and if you understand temple theology, it's inter-dispersed throughout the bible. Paul described the resurrection using the light or glory that heavenly bodies put off:

"There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another."

¹⁰⁷ Doctrine and Covenants 124:38 "For, for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, and to build a house in the land of promise, that those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before the world was."

¹⁰⁸ 1 Nephi 8, 15.

“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...” (1 Corinthians 15:40-42)

Of course there are numerous extra biblical sources that provide a preponderance of evidence of the antiquity of this doctrine among ancient Hebrew, and their chief heir, Christianity. Sorting-out these sources is a rewarding endeavor, but beyond the scope of this work.

Holiness

On the face of many latter-day temples are the words “Holiness to the Lord.”

Within the symbolism of Solomon’s Temple we see the “Court” representing a telestial glory, “The Holy Place” representing a terrestrial glory, and “The Holy of Holies.” From the above we can make the logical connection that this thing called “holiness” and the thing called “glory” are connected and interrelated.

We know that glory has to do with kingdom and space, or in other words, dimension. We know that all kingdoms (or space) have laws attached that defines that kingdom. We have learned that some kingdoms are higher, and some are lower, and that it is the law attached that makes them higher or lower. So, how is holiness related? In the LDS Bible Dictionary, the definition for Holiness reads:

“According to the O.T. things or places were holy that were set apart for a sacred purpose; the opposite of holy is therefore common or profane...”

In modern LDS parlance, people and things are “set apart” for special purposes. The reasoning behind this setting apart is that the person or thing is to perform a special function relating to God and His work, and that a profane or common approach to that function is not appropriate.

This can be illustrated in an average LDS member’s life. Certain activities are acceptable out on the street, but even then there are bounds of appropriateness. When our average member enters a ward chapel he or she should understand that a different level of behavior (law) is appropriate there. That same member may speak and act in ways that are appropriate in the chapel, but that same member will act in even different ways when attending the temple.

Some don’t get this. They resist and defy suggestion that dress and conduct should be modified in different space. The profane have no concept of the holy.

Street clothing, rough games and loud speaking may be appropriate on the lawn, but not in the chapel. Church clothing and a different mode of behavior are appropriate in the chapel, but when we attend the temple, our most special, set apart, clothing and behaviors are required. But, why?

We see that Moses approached the burning bush, and when he was in a certain proximity to the bush, the presence of God, that he was instructed to remove his shoes.

“And he [God] said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” (Exodus 3:5)

The ground was the same as before God’s presence. It was the same as the ground ten feet before the “holy ground.”

So why was Moses required to remove his shoes there?

Because God was manifesting Himself in that space, and where God is things are going to work in a predetermined, special, set apart, way. When God's face shines upon us, there will be respect for God and His laws. The profane lack respect for God and suppose that they would act casually in His presence, because they currently act with no special respect for anything on earth and can't comprehend anything above the earth. This lack of respect, or even fear, is the very thing that binds their minds, and imprisons them as beasts. The writer of Proverbs connected these ideas well.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” (Proverbs 9:10)

The Psalmist went even further connecting fear of God, Wisdom (ascension), understanding, and keeping the commandments.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.” (Psalms 111:10)

When we “do his commandments” we are keeping His laws, or acting appropriately for the holiness of space we are in. Law and Holiness are related. Being “set-apart” to God is akin to a covenant that certain, higher, laws will be respected in regards to that person, place, thing, or time.

We see in Solomon's Temple that there are three separations of holiness. The laws of each section are higher or lower, based upon if the law is closer or farther away from God and His laws (celestial law, or consecration). This closer or farther away is known as sanctification, or holi-

ness. Holiness is made of gradations of law. If you wish more knowledge or wisdom, increase your holiness, by keeping higher commandments.¹⁰⁹

In Solomon's temple, different laws and ordinances were represented in each section of holiness. So, did acting in a different way change the actual glory, or dimension in that space? No, on this earth how we act, or the law we keep does not now change the glory in which we reside, at least no completely. We know that glory is kingdom and dimension, and in this life we don't change dimensions when we act better, but in our hearts, and in our minds we can partially enter higher kingdoms, yet remain in this world. When Jesus walked in mortality he dealt with the things of this world, working, eating, drinking and such. Yet what was in His heart, in His mind, and in one sense, what surrounded Him was higher than this world. To have met Jesus may not have then moved you from one glory to another in dimension, it could have moved you in your spirit, which would have eventually manifested in your resurrection.

In this life we will have trouble if we follow higher laws, this world is not our home, and the world will hate us. But, in the resurrection we will be one with those who keep the same law that we keep.

This idea is present in the imagery of Jacob's Ladder.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ "And no man receiveth a fulness unless he keepeth his commandments. He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things." Doctrine and Covenants 93:27&28.

¹¹⁰ Genesis 28:11-24

Where the Patriarch Jacob slept and saw a vision of a ladder ascending into heaven with its rungs along the way. The Hebrews understood this imagery to mean that the way to God had stages, or rungs that we needed to traverse. These rungs represent degrees of holiness or sanctification. Hebrew mystic associated Jacob's vision with ascension initiation, or Wisdom teachings of the temple.¹¹¹ Though the imagery differs, the gospel message is consistent, we must repent and return to God through levels of holiness and glory.

The Temple

There is no eternal life outside of the temple. The temple is not an appendix to our religion, it is our religion. What we do in our chapels, homes, and elsewhere are just an extension of the temple. There is little purpose for this life without the temple.

I propose that Nephi's Plan of Salvation discussion in 2 Nephi chapter 31 is a temple discourse, following a person's path through the temple initiation:

¹¹¹ "We are taught in the Kabbalah a great deal about the three Adams. There is the celestial Adam, who was Michael before he came here; the terrestrial Adam, who was in Eden; and the celestial Adam, after he had fallen, who was down low. The Kabbalah also tells about Jacob's ladder. Joseph Smith taught that it represented the three stages of initiation in the temple, the three degrees of glory..." Hugh Nibley, Don E. Norton, Approaching Zion, Chapter 11, Deseret Book.

VERSE	TEXT	TEMPLE
17	...for this cause have they been shown unto me, that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter.	The gate is the entrance to the temple. It is the kingdom, it represents salvation.
17	For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water ; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.	The gate is equated with that which is in the court, baptism (the sea upon the oxen), and a remission of sin brought by the fire of the Altar of Sacrifice. The Holy Ghost is administered in this area.
18	And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life...	The path is the strait line in Solomon's temple, that lead through each level of initiation. This is the way of Christ, reconciliation. "eternal life" is at the Mercy Seat, the goal of temple initiation.

VERSE	TEXT	TEMPLE
18	...that if ye entered in by the way ye should receive.	This is likely a reference to the Abrahamic Covenant . (For as many of you as have been <u>baptized</u> into Christ have put on Christ. - And if ye be Christ's, then are ye <u>Abraham's seed</u> , and <u>heirs</u> according to the promise. Gal. 3 27&29)
19	And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow ^a <u>path</u> , I would ask if all is ^b <u>done</u> ?	A reminder that sanctification lies beyond salvation.
19	<u>...relying</u> wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to <u>save</u> .	A reminder that salvation and sanctification is wholly a mater of grace.
	Wherefore, ye must press forward with a <u>steadfastness</u> in Christ...	A direction to continue forward on the path, through the temple to the Holy Place (terrestrial space).

VERSE	TEXT	TEMPLE
20	...having a perfect brightness of ^b hope, and a ^c love of God and of all men.	The “perfect brightness” corresponds to the Menorah.
20	...if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ...	The “feasting” corresponds to the Table of Shewbread (Sacrament).
20	...and ^a endure to the end...	Keep going on the path.
20	...thus saith the Father: Ye shall have ^c eternal life.	Eternal Life is had at the Mercy Seat. It is full salvation and exaltation.
21	And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the ^a way; and there is ^b none other way...	Outside of the temple, with it’s ordinances and covenants, there is no way to God.
21	...none other way nor ^c name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God...	There is no other way, no paying for our own sins. Jesus and His name are the only authorized way to God.

VERSE	TEXT	TEMPLE
21	And now, behold, this is the doctrin e of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father , and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end. Amen.	The temple is the only true doctrine of Christ. Which is of the Father and the Holy Ghost too.

Conclusion

God reached into the deep and pulled our spirits forward into the spirit world where He nourished us. He structured a world there where the son's of light divided from the son's of darkness. We choose to follow the Father's plan that was created before the spiritual foundations of earth were made.

“...may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you; and may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world.” (Mosiah 18:13)

Jehovah was the administrator of this plan, and was anointed there to come into mortality to take upon himself the sins of the world, He is the Christ.

He ruled the pre-mortal world as God's chosen, to lead us then and now. He created heaven and earth under the Father's direction, and became the Father of heaven and earth.

He suffered and died for the world. He was represented by the animals God slew in the garden. He was the sacrifices made on countless altars, He was the loaf and wine on many tables, He sits upon the Mercy Seat of every temple.

He was the suffering servant of Isaiah, Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded by our transgressions, and by His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53)

He is the innate hope of millions of savages, on millions of hills, that somehow the power above them has made a provision for them.

Every priest is a lesser version of Him, in His pattern and likeness.

Like Moses, we should see our nothingness in the great cosmos, and understand that what we may consider good works win us only the horrors of justice, if not joined with Christ.

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags...” (Isaiah 64:6)

But like all those who have God’s light shine upon them, they come to understand that they are sons of God, and may receive an inheritance that includes joining the great chain of Gods (the El’s), to take their place in a chain of celestial beings, sealed together by a mighty power.

Like Nephi we should all “...talk of Christ, ...rejoice in Christ, [and] ...preach of Christ...”¹¹² Because “we know

¹¹² 2 Nephi 15:26

that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.”¹¹³
And, what is this “all we can do?” It is to repent of our sins,
keep the commandments, and to seek the unmerited favor
of Christ.

In the end, it appears to the author, that God had made
every possible provision for each of His children to receive
every possible blessing. That all we receive is an unmerited
gift, that even the law that could condemn us includes the
law of mercy which allows us to live.

Truly, I stand all amazed at the Grace Jesus offers me.

¹¹³ 2 Nephi 25:23