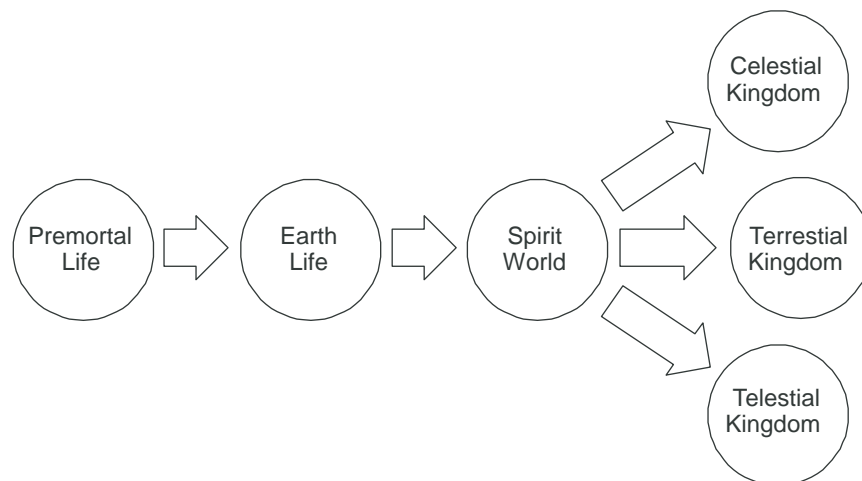


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Next Weeks Lesson: Lesson 31 "Firm in the Faith of Christ" ([Alma 43-52](#))

Today's Lesson: Lesson 30 "The Great Plan of Happiness" ([Alma 40-42](#))



We often draw diagrams like this one to teach about the plan of salvation. However, if this is all we do to explain the plan, we fail to mention Jesus Christ, who plays the central role in the plan. We also fail to mention doctrines that are central to the plan, such as the Fall, the Atonement, and agency.

Let's read the following statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell:



"The Lord has described his plan of redemption as the Plan of Happiness. ... Conversationally, we reference this great design almost too casually at times; we even sketch its rude outlines on chalkboards and paper as if it were the floor plan for an addition to one's house. However, when we really take time to ponder the Plan, it is breathtaking and overpowering!" ("Thanks Be to God," [Ensign, July 1982, 51](#)).

Today we will discuss some of Alma's counsel to his son Corianton. In teaching Corianton, Alma referred to Heavenly Father's plan as "the plan of restoration" ([Alma 41:2](#)), "the great plan of salvation" ([Alma 42:5](#)), "the great plan of happiness" ([Alma 42:8](#)), "the plan of redemption" ([Alma 42:11](#)), and "the great plan of mercy" ([Alma 42:31](#)). As Alma taught about the plan, he emphasized the centrality of the Fall, the Atonement of Jesus Christ, and individual agency.

### 1. Alma teaches Corianton about death and resurrection. ([Alma 40:1-23](#))

Chapters [Alma 40-42](#) of the book of Alma continue Alma's counsel to his wayward son, Corianton. Alma saw that Corianton's misconduct was caused in part by a lack

of testimony and a misunderstanding of some basic gospel doctrines. Alma helped Corianton understand what happens to us after death.

- A. How did Alma decide which subjects he should talk to Corianton about? (See [Alma 40:1](#); see also [Alma 41:1](#); [Alma 42:1](#).) How do you think Alma was able to “perceive” Corianton’s concerns? How can we better perceive the needs of those we teach?
- B. What happens to our spirits between death and resurrection? (See [Alma 40:11–13](#).)

PARADISE	SPIRIT PRISON
State of happiness	State of misery
State of rest and peace	State of darkness, with weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth
No troubles or sorrow	Awful, fearful waiting for the wrath of God

- C. In 1918 President Joseph F. Smith received a revelation that helps us understand more about the state of our spirits between death and resurrection ([D&C 138](#)). In this revelation, President Smith saw the Savior’s ministry in paradise and the teaching of the gospel to those in spirit prison. President Smith learned that the spirits in spirit prison will be taught the gospel and that they will have the opportunity to repent before the final judgment ([D&C 138:29–34](#), [D&C 138:57–59](#)).



- D. Alma said that at an appointed time, we will be resurrected ([Alma 40:21](#)). What does it mean to be resurrected? (See [Alma 40:21](#), [Alma 40:23](#). The spirit and body are reunited, and the body is restored to its “perfect frame.”) Who will be resurrected? (See [Alma 40:5](#); see also [Alma 11:42–44](#).)
- E. Alma mentioned several things that he did *not* know about death and resurrection ([Alma 40:2–5](#), [Alma 40:8](#), [Alma 40:19–21](#)). What can we learn from the fact that Alma testified of the doctrine of resurrection even though he did not know all the details about it?

**2. Alma teaches that after we are resurrected, the righteous will be restored to happiness and the wicked will be restored to misery. ([Alma 40:24–26](#); [Alma 41](#))**

- A. Alma referred to resurrection as a restoration because the spirit and body are reunited and the body is restored to its “perfect frame” ([Alma 40:23](#); [Alma 41:2](#)). What further restoration will take place when we are resurrected and “judged



according to [our] works”? (See [Alma 41:3–6](#).) What does it mean to be restored unto good or evil?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated, “The resurrection is a restoration, both a restoration of body and spirit and a restoration to the individual of the same mental and spiritual acquirements and attitudes he had in this life” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 641).

**B.** In what sense are we “[our] own judges”? (See [Alma 41:7–8](#).)

**C.** Alma explained that Corianton could not be restored from sin to happiness because “wickedness never was happiness” ([Alma 41:10](#)). Why can’t wickedness bring happiness? (See [Alma 41:10–13](#); [Helaman 13:38](#).) How would you respond to the argument that some people seem to find happiness in activities that are against the commandments?

President Ezra Taft Benson said: “While [people] may take some temporary pleasure in sin, the end result is unhappiness. ... Sin creates disharmony with God and is depressing to the spirit” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, 91; or [Ensign, Nov. 1974, 65–66](#)).



**D.** What did Alma say that Corianton needed to do to have good restored to him? (See [Alma 41:14–15](#).) What experiences have shown you the truth of the statement that “that which ye do send out shall return unto you again”?

### **3. Alma teaches Corianton about justice and mercy. ([Alma 42](#))**

Corianton was troubled by his father’s teachings. He did not understand why “the sinner should be consigned to a state of misery” ([Alma 42:1](#)). In response to this concern, Alma taught about the justice of God. He also taught that Jesus Christ atoned for the sins of the world “to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice” ([Alma 42:15](#)).

Let’s read [Alma 42:6–7](#), [Alma 42:10](#), [Alma 42:18](#). Listed below are some truths we need to understand:

- (1)** Because of the Fall of Adam and Eve, we are in a fallen state. We are mortal—subject to death—and imperfect. In this fallen state, we cannot dwell in the presence of God, who is immortal and perfect. Justice demands that we be cut off from God’s presence temporally and spiritually.

**(2)** When we sin, we separate ourselves further from God because “no unclean thing can dwell with God” ([1 Nephi 10:21](#)). Justice demands that we be punished for our sins.

- B.** What would happen to us if we were subjected only to justice? (See [Alma 42:14](#).) What is required to satisfy the demands of justice so we can return to dwell in Heavenly Father’s presence? (See [Alma 42:15](#).)
- C.** How did the Atonement of Jesus Christ “appease the demands of justice”? (See [Mosiah 15:7–9](#).)
- D.** Alma testified that “mercy cometh because of the atonement” ([Alma 42:23](#)). What must we do to be able to receive the fulness of God’s mercy? (See [Alma 42:13](#), [Alma 42:23](#), [Alma 42:27](#), [Alma 42:29–30](#); see also [Alma 41:14](#); [D&C 19:15–18](#).)

After receiving this counsel from his father, Corianton repented and returned to missionary service ([Alma 43:1](#); [Alma 49:30](#)). As we follow God’s commandments and repent of our sins, we are able to partake of the mercy that is available through the Savior’s Atonement.