

# Teachings Concerning The Final Judgment

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## General Statement

### Russell M. Nelson

Another unchanging principle, brothers and sisters, is that of your eventual judgment. Each of you will be judged according to your individual works and the desires of your hearts (see D&C 137:9). You will not be required to pay the debt of any other. Your eventual placement in the celestial, terrestrial, or telestial kingdom will not be determined by chance. The Lord has prescribed unchanging requirements for each. You can know what the scriptures teach, and pattern your lives accordingly (see John 14:2; 1 Cor. 15:40–41; D&C 76:50–119; D&C 98:18). [“Constancy amid Change,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, p. 35]

### There Are Many “Days of Judgments”

#### Bruce R. McConkie

In all ages, from Adam to this hour, the holy prophets have taught the true doctrine of the judgment. They have always set forth those concepts and verities that would encourage men to live in such a manner as to gain the glorious reward of eternal life when their day and time came to stand before the Eternal Bar. The hour of judgment is not the same for every man. Some are judged at one time and others at a different hour. There are, in fact, many days of judgment available, but always the same Judge sits at the same judgment bar, always the same laws govern the procedures, and always a just and right judgment is imposed.

Our birth into mortality is a day of judgment in that it signalizes we were found worthy while in the premortal life to undergo a mortal probation and thus to continue on the course leading to eternal life. There are those who press forward along this course during this mortal probation – with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect love of God and of all men, keeping the commandments, and doing only those things that please their Lord – until they are translated and taken up into heaven, or until their calling and election is made sure. Either of these glorious eventualities is in itself a day of judgment. Their celestial inheritance is thus assured, though they have not yet gained bodies of immortal glory. Death also is a day of judgment when the spirits of men go to either paradise or hell as their deeds warrant.

The second coming of Christ is the great day of judgment for all men, both the living and the dead. In it those who qualify come forth in the resurrection of the just and obtain their rewards in the kingdoms established for them. At that time the decree goes forth that the rest of the dead shall remain in their graves to await the resurrection of the unjust and their consequent telestial

inheritance. At that time the wicked among men are consumed as stubble, their bodies become dust again, and their spirits are consigned to an eternal hell to await the day of the resurrection of damnation. At that time those mortals who are worthy escape the burning, abide the day, and remain on the new earth with its new heavens in the presence of earth’s new King.

Then, in the final day, when all is done and accomplished according to the divine purpose – after all men, the sons of perdition included, have risen from death to life and have become immortal – all men will stand before the bar of God in a final day of judgment. The eventual destiny of all men will have been determined before that day, but then the final and irrevocable decrees will be issued as pertaining to every living soul. (*The Millennial Messiah*, p.515)

### There Shall Be a Final Judgment

#### 3 Nephi 26

4 And even unto the great and last day, when all people, and all kindreds, and all nations and tongues shall stand before God, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil--

#### D&C 19

3 Retaining all power, even to the destroying of Satan and his works at the end of the world, and the last great day of judgment, which I shall pass upon the inhabitants thereof, judging every man according to his works and the deeds which he hath done.

#### D&C 38

5 But behold, the residue of the wicked have I kept in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day, which shall come at the end of the earth;

### **Ezra Taft Benson**

I testify that not many years hence the earth will be cleansed. (See D&C 76:41.) Jesus the Christ will come again, this time in power and great glory to vanquish His foes and to rule and reign on the earth. (See D&C 43:26–33.) In due time all men will gain a resurrection and then will face the Master in a final judgment. (See 2 Ne. 9:15, 41.) God will give rewards to each according to the deeds done in the flesh. (See Alma 5:15.) [“I Testify,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, p. 87]

### **Marion G. Romney**

I know, of course, as each of you know that we shall die; that our bodies shall return to the earth whence they came; that our spirits shall return to the spirit world; that by reason of Christ’s victory over the grave all of us will be resurrected and as immortal souls stand before the judgment bar of the great Jehovah; and that there we shall be assigned that degree of glory the laws of which we have obeyed while in mortality. (“The Way of Life,” *Ensign*, May 1976, p. 81)

### **Joseph B. Wirthlin**

At some future day, you and I will each hear the voice of the Lord calling us forward to render an account of our mortal stewardship. This accounting will occur when we are called up to “stand before [the Lord] at the great and judgment day” (2 Ne. 9:22).

Each day on this earth is but a small part of eternity. The day of resurrection and final judgment will surely come for each one of us.

Then our Father in Heaven’s great and noble heart will be saddened for those of His children who, because they chose evil, will be cast out, unworthy to return to His presence. But He will welcome with loving arms and with indescribable joy those who have chosen to be “true to the truth.” Righteous living, combined with the grace of the Atonement, will qualify us to stand before Him with clean hearts and clear consciences. (“True to the Truth,” *Ensign*, May 1997, p. 16)

## **Judgment Day Will Be the Moment of Truth**

### **Neal A. Maxwell**

The judgment day is one of the things that really will be. The “future shock” of that judgment and the events to precede it will be without parallel. The dramatic day described so powerfully by Alma will be a highly compressed and collective moment of truth. This will be the day when every knee shall bow and every tongue

confess Jesus is the Christ. (Philippians 2:10-11.) No mortals will be standing that day. Those who were cruelly used by the adversary will see that awful reality. Nephi said the unrepentant guilty would “remember [their] awful guilt in perfectness, and be constrained to exclaim: Holy, holy are thy judgments, O Lord God Almighty – but I know my guilt; I transgressed thy law, and my transgressions are mine; and the devil hath obtained me, that I am a prey to his awful misery.” (2 Nephi 9:46.) Jesus, who purchased us and who owns us, will require this owning up. They who transgressed divine law will openly admit that their transgressions are their own and cannot be laid at someone else’s door.

In writing of this event that really will be, the apostle John described how “the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men. . . hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.” (Revelation 6:15-16.) This is high drama. This is a final confrontation with the ultimate reality, the living God.

On that dramatic day there can be no saving swagger – no panache. On that day there can be no grievance with God that can be advanced at all. In that scene described by John and Alma, those whose grievance with God and his gospel was that his gospel was too plain and too simple will be simply speechless.

The living scriptures will have been before us. Living prophets’ words will have previously penetrated every culture and every clime. Goethe said that “architecture is frozen music,” and the scriptures are the preserved moral music of the universe that God kept repeating for mankind over the centuries.

The promised day of judgment will come, and all men will be left “without excuse.” (D&C 101:93; Romans 1:20.) All individuals will receive “according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts.” (JS-V 1:9.) The justice and mercy of God will have combined so that by then all inhabitants of the earth will have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ sufficiently to be fully accountable for it. Even those who died without that opportunity will by then have heard the gospel “that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” (JFS-V 1:34, 59.) What President Joseph F. Smith saw was just what Peter saw much earlier when he wrote of the preaching of the gospel “to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” (1 Peter 4:6.)

All will have heard from living prophets (through preaching and through the scriptures), so that personal

accountability will be just as complete as Nephi indicated: “And you that will not partake of the goodness of God, and respect the words of the Jews, and also my words, and the words which shall proceed forth out of the mouth of the Lamb of God, behold, I bid you an everlasting farewell, for these words shall condemn you at the last day.” (2 Nephi 33:14.)

Each individual will have had full opportunity to forge his decision, to give his real desires full expression. We will receive what we really chose, and none can or will question the justice or mercy of God. (*Things As They Really Are*, pp.111-113)

## Every Mortal Soul Will Be Judged at the Final Judgment

### Mormon 3

20 And these things doth the Spirit manifest unto me; therefore I write unto you all. And for this cause I write unto you, that ye may know that ye must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, yea, every soul who belongs to the whole human family of Adam; and ye must stand to be judged of your works, whether they be good or evil;

## Each Will Be Judged By What They Have Become

### Ezra Taft Benson

In light of our mortal probation, our future resurrection, and our final judgment, we need to remember the question which the resurrected Lord posed to His disciples as recorded in 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon.

He asked them, “Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be?” And He answered, “Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Ne. 27:27). [“The Savior’s Visit to America,” *Ensign*, May 1987, p. 7]

### James E. Talmage

That every soul shall find his place in the hereafter, that he shall be judged and assigned according to what he is, is no less truly scriptural than reasonable. He shall inherit according to his capacity to receive, enjoy, and utilize. This is made sublimely plain by revelation given in 1832, in which we read: “For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory. And he who cannot abide the law of a terrestrial kingdom cannot abide a terrestrial glory. 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.” (*Articles of Faith*, p.408)

### Dallin H. Oaks

The Apostle Paul taught that the Lord’s teachings and teachers were given that we may all attain “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). This process requires far more than acquiring knowledge. It is not even enough for us to be *convinced* of the gospel; we must act and think so that we are *converted* by it. In contrast to the institutions of the world, which teach us to *know* something, the gospel of Jesus Christ challenges us to *become* something.

Many Bible and modern scriptures speak of a final judgment at which all persons will be rewarded according to their deeds or works or the desires of their hearts. But other scriptures enlarge upon this by referring to our being judged by the *condition* we have achieved.

The prophet Nephi describes the Final Judgment in terms of what we *have become*: “And if their works have been filthiness they must needs *be* filthy; and if they *be* filthy it must needs be that they cannot dwell in the kingdom of God” (1 Ne. 15:33; emphasis added). Moroni declares, “He that *is* filthy shall be filthy still; and he that *is* righteous shall be righteous still” (Morm. 9:14; emphasis added; see also Rev. 22:11-12; 2 Ne. 9:16; D&C 88:35). The same would be true of “selfish” or “disobedient” or any other personal attribute inconsistent with the requirements of God. Referring to the “state” of the wicked in the Final Judgment, Alma explains that if we are condemned by our words, our works, and our thoughts, “we shall not be found spotless; ... and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God” (Alma 12:14).

From such teachings we conclude that the Final Judgment is not just an evaluation of a sum total of good and evil acts – what we have *done*. It is an acknowledgment of the final effect of our acts and thoughts – what we have *become*. It is not enough for anyone just to go through the motions. The commandments, ordinances, and covenants of the gospel are not a list of deposits required to be made in some heavenly account. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a plan that shows us how to become what our Heavenly Father desires us to become.

A parable illustrates this understanding. A wealthy father knew that if he were to bestow his wealth upon a child who had not yet developed the needed wisdom and stature, the inheritance would probably be wasted. The

father said to his child:

“All that I have I desire to give you – not only my wealth, but also my position and standing among men. That which I *have* I can easily give you, but that which I *am* you must obtain for yourself. You will qualify for your inheritance by learning what I have learned and by living as I have lived. I will give you the laws and principles by which I have acquired my wisdom and stature. Follow my example, mastering as I have mastered, and you will become as I am, and all that I have will be yours.”

This parable parallels the pattern of heaven. The gospel of Jesus Christ promises the incomparable inheritance of eternal life, the fulness of the Father, and reveals the laws and principles by which it can be obtained. . . .

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the plan by which we can become what children of God are supposed to become. This spotless and perfected state will result from a steady succession of covenants, ordinances, and actions, an accumulation of right choices, and from continuing repentance. “This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God” (Alma 34:32).

Now is the time for each of us to work toward our personal conversion, toward becoming what our Heavenly Father desires us to become. As we do so, we should remember that our family relationships -- even more than our Church callings -- are the setting in which the most important part of that development can occur. The conversion we must achieve requires us to be a good husband and father or a good wife and mother. Being a successful Church leader is not enough. Exaltation is an eternal family experience, and it is our mortal family experiences that are best suited to prepare us for it. (“The Challenge to Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, p. 32)

### Every Man Is Accountable For His Own Sins at the Final Judgment

#### **D&C 101**

78 That every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment.

Judged According to Works,  
Law, and Justice

**Alma 42**

23 But God ceaseth not to be God, and mercy claimeth the penitent, and mercy cometh because of the atonement; and the atonement bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead; and the resurrection of the dead bringeth back men into the presence of God; and thus they are restored into his presence, to be judged according to their works, according to the law and justice.

### After the Resurrection is the Final Judgment According to Works

#### **Marion G. Romney**

The Church also accepts the scriptural doctrine that following the resurrection each person – then an immortal soul – will be arraigned before the bar of God’s justice and receive a final judgment based on his performance during his mortal probation, that the verdict will turn on obedience or disobedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. If these laws and ordinances have been complied with during mortal life, the candidate will be cleansed from the stain of sin by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ and be saved in the celestial kingdom of God, there to enjoy with God eternal life. Those who have not complied with the laws and ordinances of the gospel will receive a lesser reward. (“How Men Are Saved,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, p. 39)

#### **Revelation 20**

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This [is] the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy [is] he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

7 And when the thousand years are expired . . .

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

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

**Mosiah 16**

10 Even this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption, and shall be brought to stand before the bar of God, to be judged of him according to their works whether they be good or whether they be evil—

11 If they be good, to the resurrection of endless life and happiness; and if they be evil, to the resurrection of endless damnation, being delivered up to the devil, who hath subjected them, which is damnation—

#### **Alma 11**

44 Now, this restoration shall come to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, both the wicked and the righteous; and even there shall not so much as a hair of their heads be lost; but every thing shall be restored to its perfect frame, as it is now, or in the body, and shall be brought and be arraigned before the bar of Christ the Son, and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, which is one Eternal God, to be judged according to their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil.

#### **Alma 12**

12 And Amulek hath spoken plainly concerning death, and being raised from this mortality to a state of immortality, and being brought before the bar of God, to be judged according to our works.

13 Then if our hearts have been hardened, yea, if we have hardened our hearts against the word, insomuch that it has not been found in us, then will our state be awful, for then we shall be condemned.

14 For our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us; and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God; and we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence.

15 But this cannot be; we must come forth and stand before him in his glory, and in his power, and in his might, majesty, and dominion, and acknowledge to our everlasting shame that all his judgments are just; that he is just in all his works, and that he is merciful unto the children of men, and that he has all power to save every man that believeth on his name and bringeth forth fruit meet for repentance.

#### **Alma 33**

22 If so, wo shall come upon you; but if not so, then cast about your eyes and begin to believe in the Son of God, that he will come to redeem his people, and that he shall suffer and die to atone for their sins; and that he

shall rise again from the dead, which shall bring to pass the resurrection, that all men shall stand before him, to be judged at the last and judgment day, according to their works.

#### **Alma 40**

21 But whether it be at his resurrection or after, I do not say; but this much I say, that there is a space between death and the resurrection of the body, and a state of the soul in happiness or in misery until the time which is appointed of God that the dead shall come forth, and be reunited, both soul and body, and be brought to stand before God, and be judged according to their works.

#### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

John saw these dead as they came to the partial judgment at the coming of Christ. He saw the righteous made happy as they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, “but the rest of the dead,” after receiving a partial judgment, “lived not again until the thousand years were finished. \* \* \* Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:5-6.) Then he saw the final judgment, after “Satan shall be loosed out of prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth.” At this judgment the dead, small and great,” shall stand before God, and the books shall be opened out of which all the dead shall be judged. (*The Way to Perfection*, pp.305-306)

#### **Joseph F. Smith**

When the spirit leaves the body, it returns, says the prophet, immediately to God, to be assigned to its place, either to associate with the good and the noble ones who have lived in the paradise of God, or to be confined in the “prison-house” to await the resurrection of the body from the grave. Therefore we know that Brother Clayton has gone to God, gone to receive the partial judgment of the Almighty which pertains to the period intervening between the death of the body and the resurrection of the body, or the separation of the spirit from the body and their uniting together again. This judgment is passed upon the spirit alone. But there will come a time which will be after the resurrection, when the body and spirit shall be reunited, when the final judgment will be passed on every man. (*Gospel Doctrine*, p.449)

#### **Ezra Taft Benson**

The Resurrection is a reality. Activity to help promote our Father’s work is going forward among the

disembodied spirits who have left this life. It will continue to go forward until every one of God's children has had an opportunity to receive the gospel, to hear it and to have it explained to them. And then at the end of that millennial period we will all stand judgment. There is a partial judgment before, but the final judgment will be at the end. Then this earth will undergo a change and receive its paradisiacal glory and will be made a fit abode for the celestial beings. Those who live to inherit the celestial kingdom will live on this earth eternally. This is made very clear in the scriptures. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.38)

## Only God Can Judge

### M. Russell Ballard

Only the Lord knows all the details, and he it is who will judge our actions here on earth. When he does judge us, I feel he will take all things into consideration: our genetic and chemical makeup, our mental state, our intellectual capacity, the teachings we have received, the traditions of our fathers, our health, and so forth. ("Suicide: Some Things We Know, and Some We Do Not," *Ensign*, Oct. 1987, p. 8)

### Harold B. Lee

- There is nothing we can say on this occasion that would advance the deceased where he is now. He has written his record. The book is closed, and from out of the books (the record in the Church) and out of the Lamb's book of life (which is the more circumspect and more correct book) he will be judged, and nothing I can say will advance his station and nothing I can say will diminish his place. He now will be before the great judge of us all, who will render a righteous judgment, not only for the things we have done, but also judge us by the righteous desires of our hearts, and that's something that no human judge can determine. (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 65)
- We sometimes have a "Roman holiday" in our class discussions about this person or that person not accepting the gospel while upon the earth and therefore we sometimes conclude he has lost his chance to inherit the celestial glory. Well, who will say what kind of a teacher that person had? Maybe it was a very poor missionary, inadequately prepared, who taught him. Or suppose the individual didn't have the mentality to grasp the gospel; or suppose something else behind the scenes that we are unaware of has to be considered in order for a righteous judgment to be rendered. Who will say which degree of glory he shall

merit because of his life here? The only judge who can render a righteous judgment will be the Infinite Judge who knows all things from before the beginning of man upon the earth, even to the end of man. He will take all things into His view, and the judgment that will be rendered, you may be sure, will be a righteous judgment where mercy tempers justice, and yet justice has its part. If that were not so, it would make mockery of the laws that God prepared for us to obey if we are to inherit His glory. (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 66)

- Don't you think we spend too much time confessing the other person's sins? What about yourself? How long have you postponed the day of a repentance from your own misdeeds? The judgment we shall face will be before the Righteous Judge who will take into account our capacities and our limitations, our opportunities and our handicaps. One who sins and repents and thereafter fills his life with purposeful effort may not lose as much in that day of righteous judgment as one who, though not committing serious sin, falls down miserably by omitting to do that which he had capacity and opportunity to do but would not. Look to your own salvation, then, and leave with God the judgment. Remember what the Lord said, "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men" (D&C 64:10). [*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 67-68]

### Joseph Smith

While one portion of the human race is judging and condemning the other without mercy, the Great Parent of the universe looks upon the whole of the human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard. ... He is a wise Lawgiver, and will judge all men, not according to the narrow, contracted notions of men, but, 'according to the deeds done in the body whether they be good or evil,' or whether these deeds were done in England, America, Spain, Turkey, or India. ... We need not doubt the wisdom and intelligence of the Great Jehovah; He will award judgment or mercy to all nations according to their several deserts, their means of obtaining intelligence, the laws by which they are governed, the facilities afforded them of obtaining correct information, and His inscrutable designs in relation to the human family; and when the designs of God shall be made manifest, and the curtain of futurity be withdrawn, we shall all of us eventually have to confess that the Judge of all the earth has done right." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 218)

## Judgment Based on Individual Capacities, Not by Comparison

### Harold B. Lee

I sat with a youngster yesterday who is in his early twenties, and he is wondering now, worrying, he is fretting for fear he is not in the niche where he can give the best service. And I said, “Son, all you have to worry about is that you are doing your best in the place where you are today. That is all you have to be concerned about. You are not going to be judged by how you measure to someone else who has achieved a high station in the industrial or financial or religious world. The only measure by which you are going to be measured is, How will you compare with what you had the capacity to do? That is the measure the Lord’s going to measure you by, to see whether or not you have done, to the best of your ability, whatever came within your hands this day, and if you can answer the same honestly day by day. And the only day you have to worry about is today. There is nothing you can do about yesterday except repent. That means if you made mistakes yesterday, don’t be making them today. Don’t worry about tomorrow, because you may have no tomorrows. This is the masterpiece you ought to be thinking about today. And if you can always witness honestly that whatever you did, you did to the best of your ability, and next day try improvement on that, when your life’s end comes, of you it can be said in truth, his was a successful life because he lived to the best that was in him. That’s all the Lord expects of any one of His children. We are all born with different capacities, some to do one thing, some to do the other, and all He asks is that we do our best; and that’s the measure by which we’ll be judged when that time comes.” (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, pp. 64-65)

### Dallin H. Oaks

The Lord’s way of final judgment will be to apply His perfect knowledge of the law a person has received and to judge on the basis of that person’s circumstances, motives, and actions throughout his or her entire life (see Luke 12:47–48; John 15:22; 2 Ne. 9:25). [“ ‘Judge Not’ and Judging,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1999, p. 8]

## God Will Judge Men According to Their Works *and* Desires

### D&C 137

9 For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts.

### Alma 41

3 And it is requisite with the justice of God that men should be judged according to their works; and if their works were good in this life, and the desires of their hearts were good, that they should also, at the last day, be restored unto that which is good.

4 And if their works are evil they shall be restored unto them for evil. Therefore, all things shall be restored to their proper order, every thing to its natural frame – mortality raised to immortality, corruption to incorruption – raised to endless happiness to inherit the kingdom of God, or to endless misery to inherit the kingdom of the devil, the one on one hand, the other on the other–

5 The one raised to happiness according to his desires of happiness, or good according to his desires of good; and the other to evil according to his desires of evil; for as he has desired to do evil all the day long even so shall he have his reward of evil when the night cometh.

### Brigham Young

This is a subject I have reflected upon a great deal, and I have come to the conclusion that we shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body and according to the thoughts and intents of the heart. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.382)

### Neal A. Maxwell

God thus takes into merciful account not only our desires and our performance, but also the degrees of difficulty which our varied circumstances impose upon us. No wonder we will not complain at the final judgment, especially since even the telestial kingdom’s glory “surpasses all understanding” (D&C 76:89). God delights in blessing us, especially when we realize “joy in that which [we] have desired” (D&C 7:8). [“According to the Desire of [Our] Hearts,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, p. 21]

### Dallin H. Oaks

God judges us not only for our acts, but also for the desires of our hearts. He has said so again and again. This is a challenging reality, but it is not surprising. Agency and accountability are eternal principles. We exercise our free agency not only by what we do, but also by what we decide, or will, or desire. Restrictions on freedom can deprive us of the power to do, but no one can deprive us of the power to will or desire. Accountability must therefore reach and attach consequences to the desires of our hearts.

This principle applies both in a negative way –

making us guilty of sin for evil thoughts and desires – and in a positive way – promising us blessings for righteous desires. . . .

The desires of our hearts will be an important consideration in the final judgment. Alma taught that God “granteth unto men according to their desire, whether it be unto death or unto life; ... according to their wills, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction. Yea, ... he that knoweth good and evil, to him it is given according to his desires.” (Alma 29:4–5.)

That is a sobering teaching, but it is also a gratifying one. It means that when we have done all that we can, our desires will carry us the rest of the way. It also means that if our desires are right, we can be forgiven for the mistakes we will inevitably make as we try to carry those desires into effect. What a comfort for our feelings of inadequacy! As Alma said:

“It is requisite with the justice of God that ... if their works were good in this life, and the desires of their hearts were good, that they should also, at the last day, be restored unto that which is good. ...

“If he hath repented of his sins, and desired righteousness until the end of his days, even so he shall be rewarded unto righteousness.” (Alma 41:3, 5–6.)

Similarly, in this dispensation the Lord has revealed that he “will judge all men according to their works, according to the desires of their hearts.” (D&C 137:9.) I caution against two possible misunderstandings: First, we must remember that desire is a substitute only when action is truly impossible. If we attempt to use impossibility of action as a cover for our lack of true desire and therefore do not do all that we can to perform the acts that have been commanded, we may deceive ourselves, but we will not deceive the Righteous Judge.

In order to serve as a substitute for action, desire cannot be superficial, impulsive, or temporary. It must be heartfelt, through and through. To be efficacious for blessings, the desires of our hearts must be so genuine that they can be called godly.

Second, we should not assume that the desires of our hearts can serve as a substitute for an ordinance of the gospel. Consider the words of the Lord in commanding two gospel ordinances: “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.) And in respect to the three degrees in the celestial glory, modern revelation states, “In order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage].” (D&C 131:2.) No exception is implied in these commands or authorized elsewhere in the scriptures.

In the justice and mercy of God, these rigid commands pertaining to essential ordinances are tempered by divine authorization to perform those ordinances by proxy for those who did not have them performed in this life. Thus, a person in the spirit world who so desires is credited with participating in the ordinance just as if he or she had done so personally. In this manner, through the loving service of living proxies, departed spirits are also rewarded for the desires of their hearts.

In summary, under the law of God we are accountable for our feelings and desires as well as our acts. Evil thoughts and desires will be punished. Acts that seem to be good bring blessings only when they are done with real and righteous intent. On the positive side, we will be blessed for the righteous desires of our hearts even though some outside circumstance has made it impossible for us to carry those desires into action.

To paraphrase Paul’s teaching in Romans 2:29, he is a true Latter-day Saint who is one inwardly, whose conversion is that of the spirit, in the heart, whose praise is not of men for outward acts, but of God, for the inward desires of the heart. (“The Desires of Our Hearts,” *Ensign*, June 1986, pp.64-67)

#### Neal A. Maxwell

- Whether in their conception or expression, our desires profoundly affect the use of our moral agency. Desires thus become real determinants, even when, with pitiful naivete, we do not really want the consequences of our desires.

Desire denotes a real longing or craving. Hence righteous desires are much more than passive preferences or fleeting feelings. Of course our genes, circumstances, and environments matter very much, and they shape us significantly. Yet there remains an inner zone in which we are sovereign, unless we abdicate. In this zone lies the essence of our individuality and our personal accountability.

Therefore, what we insistently desire, over time, is what we will eventually become and what we will receive in eternity. “For I [said the Lord] will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts” (D&C 137:9; see also Jer. 17:10). Alma said, “I know that [God] granteth unto men according to their desire, ... I know that he allotteth unto men ... according to their wills” (Alma 29:4). To reach this equitable end, God’s canopy of mercy is stretched out, including “all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of [the gospel], 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” (D&C 137:8–9).

God thus takes into merciful account not only our desires and our performance, but also the degrees of difficulty which our varied circumstances impose upon us. No wonder we will not complain at the final judgment, especially since even the celestial kingdom’s glory “surpasses all understanding” (D&C 76:89). God delights in blessing us, especially when we realize “joy in that which [we] have desired” (D&C 7:8). ( “According to the Desire of [Our] Hearts,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, p. 21)

- Actually, everything depends – initially and finally – on our desires. These shape our thought patterns. Our desires thus precede our deeds and lie at the very cores of our souls, tilting us toward or away from God (see D&C 4:3). God can “educate our desires” (see Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939, p. 297). Others seek to manipulate our desires. But it is we who form the desires, the “thoughts and intents of [our] hearts” (Mosiah 5:13).

The end rule is “according to [our] desires ... shall it be done unto [us]” (D&C 11:17), “for I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts” (D&C 137:9; see also Alma 41:5; D&C 6:20, 27). One’s individual will thus remains uniquely his. God will not override it nor overwhelm it. Hence we’d better want the consequences of what we want! (“Swallowed Up in the Will of the Father,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, p. 23)

### **Russell M. Nelson**

This question reminds us that eventually you (and I) are going to die, be resurrected, be judged, and be awarded a place in eternal realms. (See 1 Cor. 15:22; Alma 12:24; Alma 21:9; Hel. 14:16–17; D&C 138:19.) With each passing sunset, you are closer to that inevitable day of judgment. Then you will be asked to account for your faith, your hopes, and your works. The Lord said:

“Every man may act in doctrine and principle ... according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment.” (D&C 101:78; see also Mosiah 3:24.)

As all will be resurrected, your physical body will then be restored to its proper and perfect frame. (See Alma 11:43; Alma 40:23.) The day of your resurrection

will be a day of judgment that will determine the kind of life you shall have hereafter.

That judgment will consider not only your actions, but also your innermost intent and heartfelt desires. Your everyday thoughts have not been lost. Scriptures speak of the “bright recollection” (Alma 11:43) and “perfect remembrance” (Alma 5:18) that your mind will provide in times of divine judgment.

The Lord knows the desires of our hearts. At the time of judgment, surely the special yearnings of single sisters and childless couples, for example, will be given compassionate consideration by Him who said:

“I, the Lord, will judge all ... according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts.” (D&C 137:9; see also Heb. 4:12; Alma 18:32; D&C 6:16; D&C 33:1; D&C 88:109.) [“Choices,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, p. 75]

### **Marvin J. Ashton**

When the Lord measures an individual, He does not take a tape measure around the person’s head to determine his mental capacity, nor his chest to determine his manliness, but He measures the heart as an indicator of the person’s capacity and potential to bless others.

Why the heart? Because the heart is a synonym for one’s entire makeup. We often use phrases about the heart to describe the total person. Thus, we describe people as being “big-hearted” or “goodhearted” or having a “heart of gold.” Or we speak of people with faint hearts, wise hearts, pure hearts, willing hearts, deceitful hearts, conniving hearts, courageous hearts, cold hearts, hearts of stone, or selfish hearts.

The measure of our hearts is the measure of our total performance. As used by the Lord, the “heart” of a person describes his effort to better self, or others, or the conditions he confronts.

A question I suggest to you is this: How do you measure up? Ultimately you and I will be judged not only for our actions, but also for the desires of our hearts. This truth was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith at a time when he was shown in vision the celestial kingdom. The revelation is recorded in section 137 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Joseph marveled when he saw his deceased brother Alvin in the celestial kingdom, for Alvin had died before the gospel was restored. Joseph then received this great truth:

“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; ...

“For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts.”

(D&C 137:7, 9.)

If our works and the desires of our hearts are the ultimate criteria of our character, how do we measure up? What kind of heart should we seek? For what kind of heart should we pray? How should we measure the worth of other people? ("The Measure of Our Hearts," *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, p. 15)

## Impossible to Lie to God On Judgment Day

### Spencer W. Kimball

We can hide nothing from God. True, it is possible sometimes, by lying and evasion and half-truth, to conceal the truth from God's servants on earth, but to what purpose? It will be impossible to lie to God on judgment day, so the unrepented sins will certainly be revealed then. Far better to confess them and forsake them now, and be rid of their burden! (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p.95)

God's Judgment Will Be Fair,  
Just, and Merciful

### Mosiah 16

1 And now, it came to pass that after Abinadi had spoken these words he stretched forth his hand and said: The time shall come when all shall see the salvation of the Lord; when every nation, kindred, tongue, and people shall see eye to eye and shall confess before God that his judgments are just.

### Mosiah 27

31 Yea, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess before him. Yea, even at the last day, when all men shall stand to be judged of him, then shall they confess that he is God; then shall they confess, who live without God in the world, that the judgment of an everlasting punishment is just upon them; and they shall quake, and tremble, and shrink beneath the glance of his all-searching eye.

### Mosiah 29

12 Now it is better that a man should be judged of God than of man, for the judgments of God are always just, but the judgments of man are not always just.

### Alma 12

15 But this cannot be; we must come forth and stand before him in his glory, and in his power, and in his might, majesty, and dominion, and acknowledge to our

everlasting shame that all his judgments are just; that he is just in all his works, and that he is merciful unto the children of men, and that he has all power to save every man that believeth on his name and bringeth forth fruit meet for repentance.

### Joseph Smith

But while one portion of the human race is judging and condemning the other without mercy, the Great Parent of the universe looks upon the whole human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard; He views them as His offspring, and without any of those contracted feelings that influence the children of men, causes "His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." He holds the reins of judgment in His hands; He is a wise Lawgiver, and will judge all men, not according to the narrow, contracted notions of men, but, "according to the deeds done in the body whether they be good or evil," or whether these deeds were done in England, America, Spain, Turkey, or India. He will judge them, "not according to what they have not, but according to what they have," those who have lived without law, will be judged without law, and those who have a law, will be judged by that law. We need not doubt the wisdom and intelligence of the Great Jehovah; He will award judgment or mercy to all nations according to their several deserts, their means of obtaining intelligence, the laws by which they are governed, the facilities afforded them of obtaining correct information, and His inscrutable designs in relation to the human family; and when the designs of God shall be made manifest, and the curtain of futurity be withdrawn, we shall all of us eventually have to confess that the Judge of all the earth has done right. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.218)

### Spencer W. Kimball

- God is just. I know that every man will enjoy every blessing which he has earned and I know that every man will receive no blessing through mercy as that word is often connotated. Justice will be tempered with mercy but not replaced by it. I am positive that no man will ever be judged without opportunity, blessed beyond his deserts, nor punished for something for which he was not responsible. (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p.46)
- Righteousness brings discernment. How comforting it is to know that on judgment day we shall be treated fairly and justly and in the light of the total, true picture and the discernment of the Judge! (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p.156)

### **J. Reuben Clark**

I have a feeling, my brothers and sisters, that when the time comes for passing judgment, that great principle not to condemn the world, but to save it, will be fully operative and that for every good deed we have done, we shall receive the full reward that it is possible to bestow under the rules and laws governing, and having in mind justice. And I have the further feeling that for every ill thing we do there will be imposed upon us the least penalty that may properly be bestowed, having in mind the principles involved,— eternal justice seasoned by mercy and love. (Conference Report, April 1958, pp.48-49)

### **Neal A. Maxwell**

At judgment day it will not be possible to lodge any legitimate complaint against the justice of a God who allowed us to have the desires of our hearts, especially after His seeking to educate those desires through the teaching of His gospel truths – truths which can free us from the dark desires of selfishness. (*Not My Will, But Thine*, p.90)

## **Before Judgment All Will Have Had Full Opportunity to Choose**

### **Neal A. Maxwell**

The promised day of judgment will come, and all men will be left "without excuse." (D&C 101:93; Romans 1:20.) All individuals will receive "according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts." (JS-V 1:9.) The justice and mercy of God will have combined so that by then all inhabitants of the earth will have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ sufficiently to be fully accountable for it. Even those who died without that opportunity will by then have heard the gospel "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." (JFS-V 1:34, 59.) What President Joseph F. Smith saw was just what Peter saw much earlier when he wrote of the preaching of the gospel "to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." (1 Peter 4:6.) . . .

Each individual will have had full opportunity to forge his decision, to give his real desires full expression. We will receive what we really chose, and none can or will question the justice or mercy of God. (*Things As They Really Are*, p.113)

## **The Final Judgment Will Include Assignment to Kingdoms**

### **D&C 76**

111 For they shall be judged according to their works, and every man shall receive according to his own works, his own dominion, in the mansions which are prepared;

### **Brigham Young**

How many kingdoms there are has not been told to us; they are innumerable. The disciples of Jesus were to dwell with him. Where will the rest go? Into kingdoms prepared for them, where they will live and endure. Jesus will bring forth, by his own redemption, every son and daughter of Adam, except the sons of perdition, who will be cast into hell. Others will suffer the wrath of God -- will suffer all the Lord can demand at their hands, or justice can require of them; and when they have suffered the wrath of God till the utmost farthing is paid, they will be brought out of prison. Is this dangerous doctrine to preach? Some consider it dangerous; but it is true that every person who does not sin away the day of grace, and become an angel to the Devil, will be brought forth to inherit a kingdom of glory. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.382)

### **Spencer W. Kimball**

- Of two very important things we may be absolutely certain – that it is not vain to serve the Lord, and that the day of judgment will come to all, the righteous and the unrighteous. The time of reckoning is as sure as is the passage of time and the coming of eternity. All who live shall eventually stand before the bar of God to be judged according to their works. Their final assignments will constitute rewards and punishments according to the kinds of lives they lived on earth. (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p.45)
- Then shall all men stand before the bar of the great Jehovah to be judged according to the deeds done in the flesh. Those who have lived after the manner of the world shall go to a telestial kingdom whose glory is as the stars. Those who have been decent and upright and who have lived respectable and good lives will go to a terrestrial kingdom whose glory is as the moon. Those who have believed in Christ, who have forsaken the world, who have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide and been willing to lay their all on the altar, those who have kept the commandments of God—they shall go to a celestial kingdom whose glory is as the sun. ("An Eternal Hope in Christ," *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, p. 72)

### **Dallin H. Oaks**

I speak of the final judgment. This is that future occasion in which all of us will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to be judged according to our works (see 1 Ne. 15:33; 3 Ne. 27:15; Morm. 3:20; D&C 19:3). Some Christians look on this as the time when individuals are assigned to heaven or hell. With the increased understanding we have received from the Restoration, Latter-day Saints understand the final judgment as the time when all mankind will receive their personal dominions in the mansions prepared for them in the various kingdoms of glory (see D&C 76:111; John 14:2; 1 Cor. 15:40–44). (“‘Judge Not’ and Judging,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1999, p. 7)

### **Russell M. Nelson**

After the resurrection and judgment, you will be assigned to your everlasting home on high. The revelations liken the glory of those dwelling places to the differing lights of heavenly bodies. Paul said:

“There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars.” (1 Cor. 15:41.)

The Lord revealed more to the Prophet Joseph Smith, who wrote of the telestial glory, where those will ultimately abide “who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus” while in this life. (D&C 76:82.)

The Prophet taught of the terrestrial glory as the abode for the “honorable ... of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men,” who rejected the gospel while on the earth. (D&C 76:75.)

And then he wrote of the celestial glory, which “glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all.” (D&C 76:70.) There the faithful will dwell together with their families, enjoying exaltation with our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son. With them will be those who have been obedient to ordinances and covenants made in holy temples, where they were sealed to predecessors and posterity. (“Choices,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, p. 75)

## **Men Judged According to the Laws They Have Kept**

### **D&C 88**

20 That bodies who are of the celestial kingdom may possess it forever and ever; for, for this intent was it made and created, and for this intent are they sanctified.

21 And they who are not sanctified through the law which I have given unto you, even the law of Christ,

must inherit another kingdom, even that of a terrestrial kingdom, or that of a telestial kingdom.

22 For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory.

23 And he who cannot abide the law of a terrestrial kingdom cannot abide a terrestrial glory.

24 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.

### **Harold B. Lee**

Recently I had a conversation with a sister who had heard a funeral sermon in which it had seemed to her the doctrine had been taught that it was possible to know what one’s place was to be in the eternal worlds, even before the day of judgment spoken of by John the Revelator when he said he saw the dead, small and great, stand before God to be judged, every man according to the deeds done in the flesh. And then she asked the question: “How is it possible for one to know what the place of an individual is to be before the resurrection takes place?”

That question suggested some important scriptures. [Alma 41:3-7; D&C 88:20-24; and Alma 34:34-35 are quoted.]

As I pondered those scriptures brought to my attention, as we discussed the question of this sister, these conclusions seemed clear to my mind. In the first place, we are our own judges of the place we shall have in the eternal world. Here and now in mortality, each one of us is having the opportunity of choosing the kind of laws we elect to obey. We are now living and obeying celestial laws that will make us candidates for celestial glory, or we are living terrestrial laws that will make us candidates for either terrestrial glory, or telestial law. The place we shall occupy in the eternal worlds will be determined by the obedience we yield to the laws of these various kingdoms during the time we have here in mortality upon the earth. (*Conference Report*, April 1947, p.45)

### **John A. Widtsoe**

In the final judgment, all the earth children of the Lord will be assigned places in one or the other of the three grand divisions or degrees of salvation, known to us from modern revelation as the three glories. Each assignment will depend upon the use the candidate has made of the opportunities placed before him on earth and elsewhere. “For they shall be judged according to their works” (D. & C. 76: 111). By his own acts each person has shown his fitness to participate in the activities of

this or that glory. It would be useless to place him higher than his capabilities would permit, and unfair to place him lower. If placed too high, he would not be competent or happy there, nor could he be content if placed too low. The degree of salvation of necessity corresponds, under the merciful justice of the Lord, with the demonstrated worthiness, capacity, and capability of each individual. The final judgment is individual. (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, p.204)

## Judged According to our Stewardships

### Joseph B. Wirthlin

Each of you has an eternal calling from which no Church officer has authority to release you. This is a calling given you by our Heavenly Father Himself. In this eternal calling, as with all other callings, you have a stewardship, and “it is required of the Lord, at the hand of every steward, to render an account of his stewardship, both in time and in eternity” (D&C 72:3). This most important stewardship is the glorious responsibility your Father in Heaven has given you to watch over and care for your own soul.

At some future day, you and I will each hear the voice of the Lord calling us forward to render an account of our mortal stewardship. This accounting will occur when we are called up to “stand before [the Lord] at the great and judgment day” (2 Ne. 9:22).

Each day on this earth is but a small part of eternity. The day of resurrection and final judgment will surely come for each one of us.

Then our Father in Heaven’s great and noble heart will be saddened for those of His children who, because they chose evil, will be cast out, unworthy to return to His presence. But He will welcome with loving arms and with indescribable joy those who have chosen to be “true to the truth.” Righteous living, combined with the grace of the Atonement, will qualify us to stand before Him with clean hearts and clear consciences.

As leaders of the Church, as servants of a compassionate Father in Heaven, we likewise want each of you to return to His presence. We love you and desire with all our hearts to see you rejoice with your Father in Heaven and with your parents, your children, and other loved ones in that great day of judgment. So we ask you, “Are you true?” And, therefore, we admonish you, as did Jacob, to “prepare your souls for that glorious day when justice shall be administered unto the righteous, even the day of judgment, that ye may not shrink with awful fear; that ye may not remember your awful guilt in perfectness” (2 Ne. 9:46). [“True to the Truth,” *Ensign*,

May 1997, p. 16]

## God Will Judged According to the Law We Have Been Given *or* Not Given

### Joseph Smith

But while one portion of the human race is judging and condemning the other without mercy, the Great Parent of the universe looks upon the whole human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard; He views them as His offspring, and without any of those contracted feelings that influence the children of men, causes “His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” He holds the reins of judgment in His hands; He is a wise Lawgiver, and will judge all men, not according to the narrow, contracted notions of men, but, “according to the deeds done in the body whether they be good or evil,” or whether these deeds were done in England, America, Spain, Turkey, or India. He will judge them, “not according to what they have not, but according to what they have,” those who have lived without law, will be judged without law, and those who have a law, will be judged by that law. We need not doubt the wisdom and intelligence of the Great Jehovah; He will award judgment or mercy to all nations according to their several deserts, their means of obtaining intelligence, the laws by which they are governed, the facilities afforded them of obtaining correct information, and His inscrutable designs in relation to the human family; and when the designs of God shall be made manifest, and the curtain of futurity be withdrawn, we shall all of us eventually have to confess that the Judge of all the earth has done right. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.218)

### Dallin H. Oaks

Thus, we must refrain from making final judgments on people because we lack the knowledge and the wisdom to do so. We would even apply the wrong standards. The world’s way is to judge competitively between winners and losers. The Lord’s way of final judgment will be to apply His perfect knowledge of the law a person has received and to judge on the basis of that person’s circumstances, motives, and actions throughout his or her entire life (see Luke 12:47–48; John 15:22; 2 Ne. 9:25). [“ ‘Judge Not’ and Judging,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1999, p. 8]

### James E. Talmage

Can it be otherwise? If a man be ignorant of the

terms on which salvation is predicated he is unable to comply therewith, and consequently fails to attain what otherwise might have been his eternal gain. The ignorance that thus condemns is responsible ignorance, involving wilful and sinful neglect. Lack of the saving knowledge that one has had no opportunity to acquire is but a temporary deficiency; for Eternal Justice provides means of education beyond the grave. Every one of us will be judged according to the measure of light and truth we have had opportunity to acquire. Even the untutored heathen who has lived up to his highest conceptions of right shall find means of progression. Part of the blessing to follow the second advent of Christ is thus stated: "And then shall the heathen nations be redeemed, and they that knew no law shall have part in the first resurrection; and it shall be tolerable for them." (D&C 45:54.) [*The Vitality of Mormonism*, p.278]

### Man Will Be Judged By Their Honest Beliefs

#### Brigham Young

- So far as mortality is concerned, millions of the inhabitants of the earth live according to the best light they have—according to the best knowledge they possess. I have told you frequently that they will receive according to their works; and all, who live according to the best principles in their possession, or that they can understand, will receive peace, glory, comfort, joy and a crown that will be far beyond what they are anticipating. They will not be lost. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.384)
- I say to every priest on the face of the earth, I do not care whether they be Christian, Pagan or Mohammedan, you should live according to the best light you have; and if you do you will receive all the glory you ever anticipated. We should not be prejudiced against you in the least; even if you are against us and declare falsehoods about us we should not retaliate. But how prone we are to rebuke if we are rebuked, or if we receive a sharp word to return one. The Latter-day Saints have to overcome this; and the world may cry out and say all manner of evil against us, but, my brethren and sisters, let us so live that it will be said falsely. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, pp.384-385)
- The very heathen we were talking about; if they have a law, no matter who made it, and do the best they know how, they will have a glory which is beyond your imagination, by any description I might give; you cannot conceive of the least portion of the glory of

God prepared for his beings, the workmanship of his hands. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.385)

### Judged According to the Book of Mormon and D&C

#### Joseph Fielding Smith

No member of this Church can stand approved in the presence of God who has not seriously and carefully read the Book of Mormon, and I think I could add to that also, as far as our brethren are concerned, the Doctrine and Covenants. (Conference Report, October 1961, p.18)

### Each Will Bring Their Own Record at the Final Judgment

#### Alma 41

7 These are they that are redeemed of the Lord; yea, these are they that are taken out, that are delivered from that endless night of darkness; and thus they stand or fall; for behold, they are their own judges, whether to do good or do evil.

#### John Taylor

- Man sleeps the sleep of death, but the spirit lives where the record of his deeds is kept—that does not die—man cannot kill it; there is no decay associated with it, and it still retains in all its vividness the remembrance of that which transpired before the separation by death of the body and the ever-living spirit. Man sleeps for a time in the grave, and by-and-by he rises again from the dead and goes to judgment; and then the secret thoughts of all men are revealed before Him with whom we have to do; we cannot hide them; it would be in vain for a man to say then, I did not do so-and-so; the command would be, Unravel and read the record which he has made of himself, and let it testify in relation to these things, and all could gaze upon it. If a man has acted fraudulently against his neighbor—has committed murder, or adultery, or any thing else, and wants to cover it up, that record will stare him in the face, he tells the story himself, and bears witness against himself. It is written that Jesus will judge not after the sight of the eye, or after the hearing of the ear, but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity the meek of the earth. It is not because somebody has seen things, or heard anything by which a man will be judged and condemned, but it is because that record

that is written by the man himself in the tablets of his own mind--that record that cannot lie--will in that day be unfolded before God and angels, and those who shall sit as judges. (*Journal of Discourses* 11:70)

- If I had time to enter into this subject alone, I could show you upon scientific principles that man himself is a self-registering machine, his eyes, his ears, his nose, the touch, the taste, and all the various senses of the body are so many media whereby man lays up for himself a record which perhaps nobody else is acquainted with but himself; and when the time comes for that record to be unfolded, all men that have eyes to see, and ears to hear, will be able to read all things as God himself reads them and comprehends them, and all things, we are told, are naked and open before him. (*The Gospel Kingdom*, p.36; *Journal of Discourses*, 26:31-32)

### Christ is the Ultimate Judge

#### 3 Nephi 27

14 And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil--

15 And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.

16 And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.

#### John 5

22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

#### Alma 11

44 Now, this restoration shall come to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, both the wicked and the righteous; and even there shall not so much as a hair of their heads be lost; but every

thing shall be restored to its perfect frame, as it is now, or in the body, and shall be brought and be arraigned before the bar of Christ the Son, and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, which is one Eternal God, to be judged according to their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil.

### Hierarchy of Judges

#### Bruce R. McConkie

The reality is that there will be a whole hierarchy of judges who, under Christ, shall judge the righteous. He alone shall issue the decrees of damnation for the wicked. (*The Millennial Messiah*, p.520)

### Twelve Apostles Judge Righteous Among the Tribes of Israel

#### D&C 29

12 And again, verily, verily, I say unto you, and it hath gone forth in a firm decree, by the will of the Father, that mine apostles, the Twelve which were with me in my ministry at Jerusalem, shall stand at my right hand at the day of my coming in a pillar of fire, being clothed with robes of righteousness, with crowns upon their heads, in glory even as I am, to judge the whole house of Israel, even as many as have loved me and kept my commandments, and none else.

#### Matthew 19

28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

#### 1 Nephi 12

9 And he said unto me: Thou rememberest the twelve apostles of the Lamb? Behold they are they who shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel; wherefore, the twelve ministers of thy seed shall be judged of them; for ye are of the house of Israel.

### Twelve Nephite Disciples With Judge the Seed of Nephi

#### 1 Nephi 12

10 And these twelve ministers whom thou beholdest shall judge thy seed. And, behold, they are righteous forever; for because of their faith in the Lamb of God

their garments are made white in his blood.

## There Will Be Joy For Those Who Are Perfect at the Final Judgment

### Joseph B. Wirthlin

In both His Old and New World ministries, the Savior commanded, “Be ye therefore perfect.” 10 A footnote explains that the Greek word translated as perfect means “complete, finished, fully developed.” Our Heavenly Father wants us to use this mortal probation to “fully develop” ourselves, to make the most of our talents and abilities. If we do so, when final judgment comes we will experience the joy of standing before our Father in Heaven as “complete” and “finished” sons and daughters, polished by obedience and worthy of the inheritance that He has promised to the faithful. (“The Time to Prepare,” *Ensign*, May 1998, p.14)

## Worthiness Interviews Are Rehearsals For Final Judgment

### Joseph B. Wirthlin

First, the fundamental reason why the Lord has instructed us to conduct worthiness interviews in His Church is to teach us to keep the commitments we make. In short, we are to be trained during this season of mortal probation to master ourselves, 31 to live with integrity and be true to our covenants. Worthiness interviews are conducted in a spirit of loving concern for each son and daughter of a loving God. These interviews represent the rehearsal stage for final judgment. Such interviews are a blessing, a choice opportunity to account to the Lord through His authorized servants for the sacred stewardship we all have to “watch [ourselves], and [our] thoughts, and [our] words, and [our] deeds.” (“True to the Truth,” *Ensign*, May 1997, p. 16)

## We Should Always Live With Final Judgment in Mind

### Alma 5

15 Do ye exercise faith in the redemption of him who created you? Do you look forward with an eye of faith, and view this mortal body raised in immortality, and this corruption raised in incorruption, to stand before God to be judged according to the deeds which have been done in the mortal body?

### Joseph B. Wirthlin

We know that death is a necessary transition. It will come sooner or later to each of us. Our mortal bodies will return to earth, and our spirits will return to the spirit world. By virtue of the Savior’s atoning sacrifice, we all will be resurrected. Each of us will stand before the judgment bar of the great Jehovah and be rewarded according to our deeds in mortality.

If we make every earthly decision with this judgment in mind, we will have used our mortal probation wisely and its days will give us peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come. (“The Time to Prepare,” *Ensign*, May 1998, pp. 16–17)