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by Bishop Merrill J. Bateman

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*This address was given at the J. Reuben Clark Law School Fireside, September 25, 1994.*

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**A** short time ago I attended the funeral of a friend's 17-year-old son. Earlier in the week the young man and a number of youth had spent the night at a dance club without the knowledge

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of or permission from their parents. Just before dawn they left the club to return to their homes. My

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friend's son, with six others in a small, compact car, was traveling south on the freeway when the driver

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of a car traveling in the opposite direction fell asleep. His car crossed the median and smashed head-on

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into them. The accident occurred with such swiftness that few, if any, brake marks showed on the high-

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way, and both cars were demolished. Amazingly, six individuals lived, but three persons

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died: my friend's son, a 17-year-old young woman, and the driver of the other car.

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INFINITE  
AND  
ETERNAL

Illustrations by Doug Fryer

In reflecting on the accident, I have thought about the lessons taught by the death of a loved one. The first is that life is short whether one dies at age 17 or at age 80. To a 17-year-old, 80-odd years seems like an eternity. He or she feels invincible—life will never end. To a 70-year-old, 80 years is not a long, probationary period. An LDS hymn suggests the fleeting nature of life:

*Time flies on wings of lightning; We cannot call it back.  
It comes, then passes forward Along its onward track.  
And if we are not mindful, The chance will fade away,  
For life is quick in passing. 'Tis as a single day.*

[Robert B. Baird, "Improve the Shining Moments," *Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, 1985, no. 226.]

Second, death reminds us that there is a spirit in man. As we viewed the remains of our young friend, it was obvious that more than blood had left the body. The light of his spirit no longer animated his facial expression or twinkled in his eyes. He had given up the ghost at a tender age.

Another lesson taught by death concerns the importance of eternal families. Just as there are parents to greet a newborn on this earth, caring family members, the scriptures teach, greet the spirits in paradise and assist them in the adjustments to a new life (Genesis 25:8, 35:29, 49:33). As I stood before the bier, the thought came to me that separation was a shock not only for the parents but also for the young man himself as he suddenly found himself on the other side of the veil. I suspect it was as traumatic for him to leave family and friends as it was for his parents to be separated from him. He probably would like to tell his parents once more how much he loves them. Building enduring relationships with family and friends is a central purpose of earth life. Death reminds us that heaven exists only if families are eternal.

A fourth lesson concerns the purpose of life. To be meaningful, life must be more than the ephemeral pleasures of youth. There must be a plan. Death, even if accidental, must be part of the plan. In addition to building eternal family ties, developing faith in and coming to know one's Maker must be at the core of the plan. Having hope about one's eternal destiny and the possibility of experiencing lasting joy must also be part of life's purpose.

In that regard, death reminds us that we do not experience a fullness of joy in mortality and that we cannot achieve lasting joy without the assistance of someone greater than ourselves (D&C 93:33–34). Just as the lame man at the pool of Bethesda needed someone stronger than himself to take advantage of the stirring of the water (John 5:1–9), we are dependent on the miracles of God if we are to overcome the manifold sins and shortcomings in our own lives and achieve the destiny within us. Death is a strong teacher of one's dependence on the atonement and resurrection of the Master.

The purpose of the following is to discuss some aspects of the Atonement in order to deepen our appreciation of

the greatness of the Father and the Son. Also, the hope is that our understanding of the Atonement will increase. There is much that we do not know. How a god living on this earth could take upon him the sins of mankind and receive the power to perfect men and women in him is beyond mortal comprehension. And yet there are many aspects of the Atonement that are within the grasp of one's mind and spirit. If understood, they deepen one's gratitude and commitment to the Lord of this earth.

#### THE ATONEMENT —

#### INFINITE AND ETERNAL

The atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ is the most transcendent event in history. It is the central feature of the Father's plan to open the door for his children to return to him and obtain a fullness of joy. It is the foundation of the gospel plan and gives meaning and hope to mortality. The scriptures are filled with statements describing the importance of Christ's sacrifice. The Prophet Joseph Smith recorded:

*And this is the gospel, the glad tidings, which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us—*

*That he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness;*

*That through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him. [D&C 76:40–42]*

The prophet Lehi taught the same principle:

*Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth.*

*Behold he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.*

*Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise.*

*Wherefore, he is the firstfruits unto God, inasmuch as he shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved. [2 Nephi 2:6–9]*

Through the Atonement, mankind is given the opportunity to overcome both physical and spiritual death. Christ, because he is God, has the power to resurrect all mankind and to cleanse faithful men and women and make them worthy to return to their heavenly home.

Amulek commented on the nature of the Atonement as he and Alma were teaching the Zoramites.

*For it is expedient that there should be a great and last sacrifice; yea, not a sacrifice of man, neither of beast, neither of any manner of fowl; for it shall not be a human sacrifice; but it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice. . . .*

*And behold, this is the whole meaning of the law, every whit pointing to that great and last sacrifice; and that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal. [Alma 34:10, 14]*

What is meant by the great and last sacrifice being infinite and eternal? Can one differentiate between the infinite nature of the Lord's sacrifice and its eternal qualities without demeaning its wholeness? Ultimately, the infinite and eternal aspects of the Atonement come together just as faith turns into repentance and repentance into baptism. But like the first principles, an appreciation of the differences increases one's understanding of the great plan of redemption and the Lord's redeeming power in terms of the Atonement's vastness as well as its intimacy. Thus we begin with a discussion of the infinite atonement.

#### THE INFINITE ATONEMENT

The word *infinite* means "having no limit or extending indefinitely." Here it refers to the vastness of the Atonement's effects. There are many ways in which the Lord's suffering in the Garden and sacrifice on the cross is infinite. The first is that the offering was by an Infinite Being. Second, the sacrifice is infinite through time. Third, it is infinite across space. Also, the sins, pains, sicknesses, temptations, and infirmities experienced by the Lord were numberless. Finally, the Atonement overcame physical death, which is universal and covers all creation. A brief statement on each aspect of the infinite atonement follows. (An excellent statement on the infinite atonement appears in Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet's *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, pp. 246–249).

##### The Son of Man—An Infinite Being

Jesus is Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament. The name *Jehovah*, signifying "I Am" or "the Self-Existent One," connotes a being whose existence or duration has no end (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 36). Jesus is the son of an immortal Father and a mortal mother. As the Only Begotten Son of God, he inherited "life in himself" from his

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Father, who has life in himself (John 1:14; 5:26); i.e., Jesus had the seeds of immortality within him, and death was not mandatory. He had the power of an endless life. From his mother he inherited the seeds of mortality and could experience death if he so chose. As he said to the Pharisees, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:17–18).

Jesus had the power to live forever. He also had the power to lay down his life voluntarily, to experience death of the body, to live as a personage of spirit in paradise, and then to reunite the spirit with the body according to the commandment he received from his Father. The sacrifice of a bird, an animal, or even a man could not satisfy the requirement of an infinite offering, because each of these living beings carries mortal seeds through the fall of Adam, and death is inevitable for them (1 Cor. 15:22). Only an Endless Being could make the voluntary act required. When a person understands Jesus as more than a mere human, hope and faith in him are kindled in the heart, and obedience follows.

##### The Atonement—Infinite Across Time

The Savior's atonement covers the sins of God's children throughout the eternities. It is timeless. It embraces the sins of the past, the present, and the future. It reaches back before Eden and forward beyond our millennium. In the space of a few hours, Jesus offered himself as a ransom for sins for those who believe, repent, receive the ordinances, and endure to the end—not only for those who preceded him, but for all those who follow as well, for as long as the Father has children. He is the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). Through the Atonement, little children are born innocent in this life, redeemed from the Fall. At a later point in the eternities they are made whole again, resurrected from an endless sleep (D&C 93:38; Mormon 9:13). Although the timelessness of the Atonement is incomprehensible, one understands that the atoning sacrifice is beyond the capability of any mortal being; therefore, the Savior said: "I am the light which ye shall hold up" (3 Nephi 18:24). As the light of Christ quickens our understandings, our love and appreciation for the Savior deepens.

## Infinite Across Space

The scriptures imply that the Savior's atonement extends beyond this orb. The Prophet Joseph Smith records the Lord's words to Moses as follows: "And by the word of my power, have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son. . . . And worlds without number have I created; . . . and by the Son I created them" (Moses 1:32–33). Under the direction of the Father, Jesus is the Creator of worlds without number. What happens to the inhabitants of other earths? Who atones for their sins? How are they redeemed? In a revelation to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, the two men saw Christ on the right hand of God and heard a voice bear record that "he is the Only Begotten of the Father—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" (D&C 76:23–24). Through the power of Christ's atonement, the inhabitants of other worlds become "begotten sons and daughters" of God; i.e., the saving procedures are the same for them as they are for us.



One of the clearer statements on this subject was given by President Marion G. Romney in a conference address in 1969. Referring to D&C 76, he said:

*From this and other scripture we learn that, representing the Father and serving his purpose "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man," Jesus Christ, in the sense of being its Creator and Redeemer, is the Lord of the whole universe. Except for his mortal ministry accomplished on this earth, his service and relationship to other worlds and their inhabitants are the same as his service and relationship to this earth and its inhabitants. [Marion G. Romney, "Jesus Christ, Lord of the Universe," *Improvement Era* 76 (November 1969):46]*

No wonder the atoning sacrifice required an infinite being! The suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane and the sacrifice on Golgotha embraced not only the billions who have lived on this earth but also the numberless sons and daughters of God who have lived elsewhere.

## Sins, Pains, Temptations, Weaknesses of Every Kind

Alma records that the Son of God "shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind;

. . . and he will take upon him their infirmities, . . . that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:11–12). Jacob taught that Jesus would "save all men if they will hearken unto his voice; for behold, he suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children, who belong to the family of Adam" (2 Nephi 9:21). Isaiah said: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53:4). John the Baptist introduced Jesus by saying: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The magnitude and variety of sin, pain, temptation, and

afflictions that he experienced appears limitless. This is the fourth aspect of the infinite nature of the Atonement.

## The Universality of Death

As Alma indicates, Christ voluntarily suffered death in order to loose the bands of death for his people (Alma 7:12). Through the fall of Adam and Eve, death came upon all creatures and covered the landscape. Not only God's children but also plants, animals, and nature itself entered mortality through the

Fall. Even the earth became subject to death because of Adam's transgression.

Christ's atonement and resurrection made temporary the separation of body and spirit (1 Corinthians 15:19–21). As part of the plan of salvation, all creatures will be resurrected. Even the earth, which was baptized with water, will be baptized with fire and eventually die. Through the atonement and resurrection of Christ, this physical earth will be reunited with its spirit and become exalted to a celestial sphere. The reality of the resurrection for all creation is made possible by the Savior's sacrifice (D&C 29:22–25; 88:25–26; *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, pp. 72–89).

An understanding of the infinite nature of the Atonement increases one's appreciation for the Lord Jesus Christ. We stand in awe as we contemplate the magnitude and dimensions of the suffering required to pay the price of sin for all humanity. Our hearts and souls become more contrite as we contemplate that he was tempted in every way in order to understand our weaknesses and flaws so that he "giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength" (Isaiah 40:29). With these thoughts in mind, the eternal nature of the Atonement leaves one even more awestruck.

# ETERNAL ASPECTS OF THE ATONEMENT

Eternal is one of the names of Deity (Moses 7:35). Although the word *eternal* is sometimes used to mean endless, it is often used in the scriptures to describe “godlike” attributes or principles. For example, the kind of life God lives is called eternal life (exaltation). It is the type or quality of life lived by God. The punishment meted out by God to transgressors is called eternal punishment, a name having reference to the type and not the duration of the penalty imposed (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 216, 219). Whereas the term *infinite* refers to the outward dimensions of the Savior’s life and sacrifice when speaking of the Atonement, the term *eternal* refers, in part, to the inward quality of his being and the qualitative changes in mankind’s spirit and body that are the benefits of Gethsemane and Golgotha. In what ways were the Savior’s character and personality eternal and what are the eternal aspects of his atonement?

Jesus, An Eternal Being

The scriptures clearly teach that Jesus was Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament (Exodus 3:14; John 8:58, D&C 29:1, 38:1, 39:1). As the firstborn in the spirit, Jesus achieved godhood in the eternities prior to his life on earth. He was and is the Lord Omnipotent. Under the direction of the Father, he created all things, both in heaven and in earth. Prior to his birth, he had all wisdom and comprehended all things. In the words of King Benjamin:

*The Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles. . . .*

*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; and his mother shall be called Mary. [Mosiah 3:5, 8]*

Thus the Atonement was performed by an eternal being.

A Perfect, Sinless Being

Not only was Jesus an eternal being prior to birth, but he lived a perfect, sinless life on earth. This was accomplished in spite of temptations and sufferings of every kind, “which suffering

caused [him], even God, . . . to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore” (D&C 19:18). The apostle Peter indicated that mankind was redeemed not by corruptible things such as silver and gold but “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Peter 1:19–20). Christ was selected in the premortal world as the sacrificial lamb. For centuries the Israelites were told that the lamb offered in similitude of the great sacrifice must be without blemish or spot as a type for the sinless Messiah. Adam learned in the beginning that he should offer the firstlings of the flock in similitude of the Savior’s offering—



the sacrifice of God’s firstborn (Moses 5:5–7). All Mosaic sacrifices were types and shadows of the great and last sacrifice of the Only Begotten (Genesis 4:4, Exodus 12:5, Numbers 9:12, Moses 5:7). The Savior’s perfect life reflected his eternal nature and satisfied the requirement of an eternal sacrifice. As President Howard W. Hunter indicated in April 1994 general conference: “The world is full of people who are willing to tell us, ‘Do as I say.’ . . . But we have so few who are prepared to say, ‘Do as I do.’

And, of course, only One in human history could rightfully and properly make that declaration. . . . Only Christ can be our ideal, our ‘bright and morning star’” (CR, April 1994, p. 83). Only Christ, the God of the Old Testament and a perfect, sinless, eternal being in mortality, had the capacity to take upon himself the sins, pains, sufferings, and temptations of mankind satisfying the requirements for an eternal sacrifice.

The Great Plan of Redemption

The purpose of the Savior’s atonement was to help men and women achieve eternal life, to redeem mankind from the fall of Adam and from sin. The Lord told Moses, “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Prior to mortality, mankind lived as spirits in the presence of the Father of spirits. In order for God’s children to progress, to achieve immortality and eternal life, it was necessary for them to leave the Father’s presence, receive a physical body, experience mortality, be free to choose good or evil, and prove themselves obedient to his commandments. Our Father in Heaven knew that mortality required the fall of mankind—a change in man’s nature in order for the test to occur. He knew the effects of the Fall: physical and spiritual death. Physical death would

result in a separation of body and spirit, whereas spiritual death would separate mankind from his presence, and God's children would perish from that which is good. In order for mankind to experience lasting joy and happiness, both deaths would need to be overcome (Abraham 3:22–26).

God also knew the interworkings of the eternal laws of justice and mercy. The law of justice affixes rewards when laws are obeyed and penalties when laws are broken. Rewards bring happiness. Broken laws bring unhappiness and spiritual death. The eternal law of mercy allows the penalties of broken laws to be paid by the sufferings and sacrifice of a worthy Mediator, provided the offender satisfies certain conditions. The Mediator's payment also allows for the restoration or redemption of the sinner's soul on those same conditions. The requirements for each individual are a broken heart and a contrite spirit; faith in the Father, in his Son, and in the plan of redemption; repentance; and the making and keeping of gospel covenants (2 Nephi 2; Alma 41, 42; D&C 130:20–21).

Consequently, the great plan of redemption was instituted. The Holy One of Israel was chosen as the Mediator and Redeemer in the grand council in heaven. An earth was created as a probationary state where men and women could prove themselves, agency was given, Satan was allowed to tempt Adam and Eve, and they fell that men might be. Physical and spiritual death entered the world and mankind was cut off from the presence of God through sin as well as Adam's transgression. Adam and Eve and their children were taught the plan of redemption. A probationary period was established to allow men and women to exercise faith and to repent.

#### The Redemptive Power

John the Baptist bore record that Jesus received a fullness of power from the Father through his obedience. He received the power on a grace-for-grace basis by submitting his will to the Father in all things. Jesus received the fullness of the Father's glory and possessed all power, both in heaven and on earth (D&C 93:6–30, Matt. 28:18).

Peter, the chief apostle, states in his second epistle that Jesus' "divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). Through Christ's suffering in the garden and sacrifice on the cross, life was given to all mankind. Physical death was overcome; everyone will be resurrected. Also, Jesus received power from the Father to overcome spiritual death, i.e., to restore men and women to a state of godliness according to the laws of justice and mercy. Jesus told the Nephites after his resurrection: "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" (3 Nephi 27:14). The honorable men and women of the earth who exercise faith in Christ, repent of their sins, partake of the covenants, and continue faithful to the end are sanctified by his blood and by the Holy Spirit during mortality and in the spirit world. They receive the gifts of

the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, etc. In Peter's terms, they become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4), which opens the door into the everlasting kingdom of the Lord. In Moroni's words, those individuals who deny themselves of ungodliness, who serve God with all their might, mind, and strength find that Christ's grace (power) is sufficient for them, that by his grace they become perfect in Christ. And those who become perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, become holy, without spot (Moroni 10:32–33).

#### The Power to Heal From Within

As part of the redemptive power, Jesus can heal the troubled soul from pains and sicknesses of every kind. Jesus knows each of us personally through his premortal role as a member of the Godhead when we dwelt with him in premortality, and because of the Atonement. Alma records that Jesus experienced our pains, afflictions, temptations, sicknesses, and infirmities during his earthly sojourn so that his bowels would be filled with mercy and he would know, according to the flesh, how to succor us (Alma 7:11–12). This helps us understand, at least partially, his power to make whole, to restore, to redeem. Isaiah and the prophet Abinadi report that when Christ would "make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed" (Isaiah 53:10, Mosiah 15:10). Abinadi explains that His seed are the righteous, those who follow the prophets (Mosiah 15:11). In the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross, Jesus saw each of us and not only took upon himself our sins but also experienced our critical feelings such that he would know how to help us in mortality.

As part of his redeeming power, Jesus can restore the spiritual health of the faithful in that he knows how to succor each individual. Although the scriptures are filled with examples, a young Korean sister taught me this lesson. Sitting on the stand prior to a Sunday general session of stake conference in the Seoul North Korea Stake in early 1994, I was reviewing the program trying to identify each speaker's name with the people on the stand. I was able to do this except for one name—that of Kim Young Hee. Off in the corner I noticed a young woman sitting in a wheelchair. I then quietly asked the stake president if the young woman was the speaker whom I could not identify. He assured me that she was. She was beautiful, but it was obvious that she could not walk. When it came time for her to speak, a brother pushed her chair to the front of the stand but off to the side of the pulpit so that she could see and be seen. He then handed her a microphone. She told us the story of her conversion.

As a young woman, she had been healthy, had an excellent job, and was content with life, although not a Christian. In 1987 she was in a terrible car accident that left her paralyzed from the waist down. Following her recovery in a hospital, she was living with her parents wondering what she could do with her life. She was despondent and felt empty. What could life possibly hold for her? One day a knock came at the door. Her mother answered, and two American women asked to share a message with the family. Though the mother tried

to send them away, the daughter could hear their voices and asked the mother to invite them in. They were missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Sister Hee accepted the invitation to receive missionary lessons. They began teaching her the gospel. Although her parents discouraged her from meeting with the missionaries, she continued taking the lessons as she enjoyed the companionship at first and then began feeling the warmth of the spirit as she read the Book of Mormon and attended church. Eventually, she received a witness and was baptized.

As she bore her testimony in stake conference, she said: "I know that Heavenly Father does not look on the outward appearance but on the heart. I also know that the greatest miracle is the healing within, the change of heart, the loss of pride. With an understanding of the gospel plan and faith in Jesus Christ, I now can face the world even if I am confined to a wheelchair."

As I listened to her, I began to understand that the greatest miracle of the Atonement was the power Jesus received to change lives if people come to the Father and the Son with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Although her physical body may not be healed in mortality, her spirit had already been healed by the power of the Holy Ghost. In the resurrection she will receive a fully restored, perfected physical body that will be inseparably connected with her beautiful, healthy spirit. As a consequence, she will experience a fullness of joy. But the great miracle that will make her ultimate destiny possible is the healing of her spirit by the Holy Ghost through the eternal atonement.

#### The Ten Lepers

Perhaps Sister Kim's discovery reveals the meaning of the Savior's parable of the ten lepers. Luke describes Jesus meeting ten lepers in a certain village where they stood afar off. They lifted up their voices and asked Jesus to have mercy on them. When the Savior saw them, he told them to show themselves to the priests. As they went their way, they were cleansed. One of them, when he realized he was healed, returned to Jesus, fell on his face at the feet of the Master and gave thanks. Jesus said to him: "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" And then the Lord said to the one who returned: "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:12-19). To become a whole person, the grateful leper was healed from within as well as on the outside. Nine lepers were healed skin-deep, but only one had the faith to be made

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whole. In the case of the nine, the healing apparently did not result in a spiritual blessing. The tenth leper and Sister Hee were changed eternally by their faith in the Savior and the healing power of the Atonement.

#### Eternal Judgment

Another aspect of the eternal atonement is the power to make the final judgment regarding the destiny of men's and women's souls. The Savior revealed to his disciples in Jerusalem: "In my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2). The scriptures teach that there are many kingdoms of glory to which one may be assigned (D&C 76, 1 Corinthians 15:40-41). Who determines our ultimate assignments? As part of the eternal atonement, Jesus received the power, the insight, and the understanding to make the judgment that determines our eternal destinies. Jacob explains that the "keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there" (2 Nephi 9:41). As explained previously, Jesus experienced our pains, sufferings, temptations, sins, sicknesses, and infirmities. He knows us personally. Jesus received a commission from the Father that gives him the right to carry out the judgment. The commission, combined with his knowledge and insights regarding our desires and character gleaned through the Atonement, coupled with his knowledge of the laws of mercy and justice, allow him to make a righteous judgment.

#### CONCLUSION

Alma and Amulek understood the gospel plan. Although they lived decades before Jesus of Nazareth was born, they knew that he would be the Son of the Father. They understood that he would have the seeds of immortality within him so that his sacrifice would be voluntary. Moreover, the sacrifice would be infinite and eternal. It would span eternities as well as space. But it would be an intimate offering as well. The Savior's eternal capacity would pay the price of sin for all of us and internalize within us the meaning of our pain, sicknesses, temptations, afflictions, and infirmities so that he could heal us, restore us to a celestial state, and help us achieve our potential.

*Bishop Merrill J. Bateman is the Presiding Bishop of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In January 1996 he will become the president of Brigham Young University and a member of the First Quorum of Seventy.*