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Easters: The Eternal Atoning Sacrifice Testifies of the Everlasting Redeeming Savior

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EASTERS: THE ETERNAL ATONING SACRIFICE TESTIFIES OF THE EVERLASTING REDEEMING SAVIOR

Alan C. Ashton

Abstract: Easters come year after year, reminding us of new life brought to the children of men by the eternal atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He grants us peace, forgiveness, grace, mercy, contentment, and joy in our hearts, and thus we gratefully testify of our everlasting redeeming Savior. All things bear witness of Jesus Christ. The Lord spoke thus face-to-face with Moses upon a high mountain: “And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me.”¹ The intent of this article is to discuss scriptures that bear testimony of the reality of the Lord’s infinite atonement, to express deep gratitude for our Savior, and to praise Him for His grace, mercy, wisdom, power, and holiness.

Easter is a special time for us to treasure gifts from on high and to express thanksgiving and gratitude to our Father in Heaven for the supreme gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, who died for us all that we might live forever. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”² Our contemplation of the Savior and His atoning sacrifice increases our humility, meekness, and gratitude. We are filled with inexpressible love for Jesus Christ and for our Father in Heaven when we think of the condescension of God, even the matchless love of the Father

1. Moses 6:63.

2. 1 Corinthians 15:22.

and of the Son. As the scriptures and modern prophets attest, They have come personally at times from the heavens to the earth to reveal to us the covenant path which will lead us back to Them, that we might dwell with Them in heaven in a state of never-ending happiness.³

At Easter we express joy in the Savior's overcoming death and hell: "O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit."⁴ The way for our escape from spiritual death is the covenant path that God has prepared for us to return safely to our heavenly home. Such a covenant path is of major importance and consideration in this article, especially because President Russell M. Nelson in his first message as president of the Church implored members to "keep on the *covenant path*."⁵ (Throughout this text emphases are added.)

This article concerns Easter, the mission of the Savior, His eternal plan of happiness, and our blessings if we keep on the covenant path.

To that end, the acrostic E-A-S-T-E-R-S will serve as an anchor to discuss the following paschal topics: Everyone, Atonement, Spirit, Temple, Everlasting, Repentance, and Savior.

Everyone

The Savior's sacrifice, which is tied inextricably to Easter, has comprehensive effects on everyone and everything; "*All things become new.*"⁶ As mentioned above, *all* shall be made alive again. The resurrection from the dead for all mankind is universal: "There is a time appointed that *all* shall rise from the dead."⁷ Alma testified to his son, Corianton, "Behold, it is requisite and just, according to the power and resurrection of Christ, that the soul of man

3. Mosiah 2:41; Alma 28:12.

4. 2 Nephi 9:10.

5. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "New First Presidency Speaks to Members Worldwide," *Church News*, January 16, 2018, <https://www.lds.org/church/news/new-first-presidency-speaks-to-members-worldwide?lang=eng>. Also, R. Scott Lloyd, "President Russell M. Nelson gives first address to members as the 17th President of the Church, selects counselors," *Deseret News*, January 16, 2018, LDS Church News, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/865695096/President-Russell-M-Nelson-gives-first-address-to-members-as-the-17th-President-of-the-Church.html>.

6. D&C 63:49; 29:24; Revelation 21:5.

7. Alma 40:5.

should be restored to its body, and that every part of the body should be restored to itself.”⁸

As I was writing this, I was by the bedside of my wife in the hospital. She had just undergone an operation on her heart, a second cardiac ablation, and I saw how subject mankind is to the pains, frailties, and sicknesses of mortality. I sensed how temporary our mortal lives are. I got up from her bedside and walked the halls of the hospital, hoping for peace and solace. There, to my surprise, I met my daughter’s mother-in-law being propelled in a wheelchair by her loving husband. This beautiful mother was struggling with a vicious, debilitating attack of cancer. Again I thought of the temporal nature of our earth life.

It brought back thoughts of my being in the hospital a number of years ago while my wife hovered between life and death when a cancerous lump was removed from her body and when she subsequently received chemotherapy and radiation that repeatedly brought her near to death. I am grateful beyond expression for the extension of life she received. Not all are so fortunate. What about those whose loved ones unexpectedly leave this mortal sphere?

Because Christ is risen, the resulting hope in the resurrection of all mankind takes the sting out of death.⁹ When my wife was young, before we were married, she attended the funeral of the father of one of her friends. This family did not have a hope in the resurrection; the members of the family were inconsolable and uncomforted in their mourning, supposing they would never see their deceased loved one again.

Such suffering can be soothed in the hope that through the atonement of Christ and the power of His resurrection, we will all be raised to immortality and that everyone has the possibility, through diligent faithfulness, to obtain life eternal. Moroni testified that such hope comes because of faith in Christ “according to the promise.”¹⁰ This promise is the promise of eternal life, as proclaimed by our Heavenly Father: “Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word

8. Alma 41:2, 4.

9. 1 Corinthians 15:55; Mosiah 16:7-8. One should not assume that “taking the sting out of death” removes all pain experienced with the passing of a loved one. Knowledge of the atonement and resurrection, and the hope that can flow from that knowledge, does not fully remove grief, nor does it eradicate mourning. It can, though, allow us to see our loss as temporary and our separation from loved ones as fleeting.

10. Moroni 7:41; Acts 24:15.

of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.”¹¹

The supreme promise of eternal life is for those who come unto Christ and follow Him by doing the things He has done, and by obeying His commands.¹² This is the covenant path. He invites us to come unto Him by entering in at the gate, which is repentance and baptism. He has shown the way by submitting His will to the Father in fulfilling all righteousness by being baptized of water Himself. He was sinless and did not need baptism for the remission of sins but showed His obedience to the Father’s will and His willingness to keep all His Father’s commandments. This brings about the companionship of the Holy Ghost, promised to all who repent and are baptized in the name of Christ. The Savior testified that the Father would give them the Holy Ghost, “like unto me.”¹³

The promise of the companionship of the Holy Ghost, even the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost, is available to everyone who obeys the commandments of God. We all are invited to travel the covenant path and to have the Holy Ghost as our constant guide, but we must make the choice to be obedient to the Lord’s gospel in order to receive this gift of the Holy Ghost.

In the scriptures there is a great or dreadful day associated with the resurrection and subsequent judgment — great for the righteous, dreadful for the disobedient. All of us will be raised from the dead, and all of us will be brought before the Lord on bended knees to be judged according our works. Jacob, the brother of Nephi, explained that by the suffering of Jesus Christ, the resurrection would be brought to pass upon *all* men, that *all* might stand before Him at the great and judgment day.¹⁴ The future prospect of our kneeling before our Lord and Maker can bring awe and wondrous anticipation into our hearts. It is a strong motivating force for us to love and serve the Lord with all our heart, might, mind, strength, and will. Easters, as they roll along year after year, are special reminders for us to remember the loving kindness of our beloved Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

11. 2 Nephi 31:20.

12. 3 Nephi 9:14; 27:21; 2 Nephi 31:10.

13. 2 Nephi 31:12.

14. 2 Nephi 9:21-23; Alma 11:41.

Atonement

Sometimes the atonement of Jesus Christ is defined as His suffering and sacrifice of His life for the sins of mankind, and that definition can be limiting. There is more, however. Isaiah proclaimed that we are healed by His stripes.¹⁵ The atonement of Jesus Christ encompasses His entire ministry and His infinite love — all that He has done, all that He does now, and all that He will yet do for the salvation of mankind. Thus, it can be understood that the atonement also includes the Lord’s planning and actions in the pre-mortal realm, His creating the heavens and the earth, His willingness to be sent as an example and sacrifice for mankind on the earth according to the will of the Father, His revealing the will of the Father as Jehovah in the scriptures, His sending prophets and apostles upon the earth, His life and example as He lived on earth, His teachings and miracles, His great and last sacrifice (even His own life, infinite and eternal),¹⁶ His ministry in the spirit world, His resurrection, His ministry to His disciples in the Holy Land, His ministry to the Nephites and other peoples (His other sheep), His appearances to latter-day prophets (beginning with Joseph Smith), His future Second Coming to usher in the Millennium, His future millennial reign, His eternal judgment of mankind, and His continuing ministering forevermore. There is no end to His works, no end to His words, and no end to His worlds.¹⁷ Indeed, there is no end to His atonement and the effects of His atonement. The apostle Paul said, “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”¹⁸

President David O. McKay’s son Lawrence, while on his mission, wrote his father asking why it was necessary for Christ to give up His life. President McKay expressed his views in a beautiful letter discussing the atonement.¹⁹ He referred to Alma 34:14-16 as a good scripture addressing this subject, where Amulek taught “And thus [the Son of God] shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance.” Without the death of the Eternal Jehovah,

15. Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24; Mosiah 14:5.

16. Alma 34:14.

17. Moses 1:38.

18. Romans 5:10.

19. David Lawrence McKay, *My Father, David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 114-17.

mercy could not overpower justice, the atonement would not be infinite, and mankind would not have the power or means to be able to have faith unto repentance.

Continuing in the letter referring to the atonement of Jesus Christ, President David O. McKay spoke of being moved more by the life of the Savior than by the payment of sins by His death. President McKay wrote:

In His life and death, therefore, Christ not only fulfilled the law of sacrifice but He fulfilled every conceivable condition necessary for man to know in order to rise or progress from earthly life to eternal life. ... In this I think I glimpse, though ever so dimly, a reason for Christ's shedding His blood — in addition to the one generally offered for the redemption of man from the Fall. I confess that the latter has moved me less than the realization that in His life He lived for his fellow men, and in his death — he triumphed over all earthly elements, over the power of *Death*, Hell, and the Evil One, and arose from the *grave* an eternal Being — our Guide, our Saviour, our God.²⁰

The Savior's example, His life and teachings, show the way to eternal life.

The work and glory of the Father and the Son are to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.²¹ The atonement, or reconciliation of mankind to God, is brought about by the unified actions of the Father and the Son and by man's obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Savior constantly reminded His listeners that all He did was what the Father commanded Him to do: "Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."²²

Book of Mormon scriptures concerning the atonement are plentiful and enlightening.²³ These passages contain light and knowledge that are among the plain and precious truths which were lost from the Bible.²⁴ Mosiah chapter 3 is an especially powerful message concerning the

20. Ibid., 116-17.

21. Moses 1:39.

22. John 8:28-29.

23. See for example, 1 Nephi 11; 2 Nephi 2, 9, 10, 11, 25, 31, 33; Jacob 4; Mosiah 3, 4, 12-16; Alma 5, 7, 11, 22, 34, 42; Helaman 5; 3 Nephi 9, 11, 27; Ether 3; Moroni 8, 10.

24. 1 Nephi 13:24-35; 19:3.

atonement because it is revelation directly from the bosom of the Lord as delivered by an angel of God to a prophet of God. There we learn that we must put off the natural man, who is an enemy of God, and become a saint through the atonement of Christ, by yielding to the enticings of the Holy Spirit and by becoming as a child, “submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.”²⁵

Even though the Savior’s atonement is infinite and universal, humankind’s receiving the promises of the atonement is predicated upon obedience. The Savior came to redeem His people by taking upon Himself “the transgressions of those who believe on his name; and these are they that shall have eternal life, and salvation cometh to none else.”²⁶

The Savior’s atonement is to bring about unity, reconciliation, and at-one-ment. Our Savior makes it possible for us to be one with God. The Savior declared, “if ye are not one ye are not mine.”²⁷ Easter is a celebration of the Savior, of His life, of His ascendancy over death and hell, of His infinite atonement.

Spirit

Receiving the Spirit of God and following its warm, exalting influence is necessary for us to be reconciled unto Christ, to become at-one with God. The Spirit of the Lord, the Holy Ghost, is a great gift of God because of the Son and His atonement.²⁸

All the children of God can feel the influence of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit or Light of Christ. It will lead one to the covenant path. Those who exercise faith in Jesus Christ are invited to embark upon this path by repenting and being baptized in His name.²⁹ Then comes the confirming gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.

The gift of the Holy Ghost is the constant companionship of the Spirit for those who are faithful to the will of the Lord and seek, pray for, and receive this presence. The Holy Ghost testifies of the Father and of the Son, sanctifies us, and can tell us all things we must do to remain

25. Mosiah 3:19.

26. Alma 11:40.

27. D&C 38:27.

28. 3 Nephi 28:11.

29. 2 Nephi 31:17.

true in the covenant path.³⁰ This path leads to exaltation and eternal life, the greatest gift of all the gifts of God.³¹

The following message from the deceased prophet Joseph Smith to Brigham Young in a dream at Winter Quarters in early 1847 underscores the importance of seeking, receiving, and maintaining the companionship of the Holy Ghost. Brigham Young asked what most important message Joseph would have for the Saints. Young recorded Joseph's response:

Tell the people to be humble and faithful, and sure to keep the spirit of the Lord and it will lead them right. Be careful and not turn away the small still voice; it will teach you what to do and where to go; it will yield the fruits of the Kingdom. Tell the brethren to keep their hearts open to conviction, so that when the Holy Ghost comes to them, their hearts will be ready to receive it. They can tell the spirit of the Lord from all other spirits; it will whisper peace and joy to their souls; and it will take malice, hatred, envying, strife, and all evil from their hearts; and their whole desire will be to do good, bring forth righteousness and build up the kingdom of God. Tell the brethren if they will follow the spirit of the Lord they will go right.³²

If the Spirit is not obeyed, its sacred presence wanes. As we see in the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, one of the first beliefs to be challenged and then discarded when people lose the Spirit is belief in the resurrection.

The apostle Paul, writing to the saints in Corinth, gave evidence and assurance of the resurrection because he heard that some among them said there was no resurrection of the dead.³³ He reminded them of Christ's burial and rising from the grave, that Christ was seen of Peter and other apostles, that the resurrected Christ was seen by more than five hundred brethren, most of whom were still alive, and by James and then of all the apostles. Then Paul testified that he himself beheld the resurrected Christ, proclaiming, "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen ... for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."³⁴

30. Moses 5:9; 3 Nephi 27:20; 2 Nephi 32:2-5.

31. D&C 14:7.

32. William S. Harwell, ed, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847-1850*, (Salt Lake City: Collier's, 1997), 35.

33. 1 Corinthians 15:12.

34. *Ibid.*, 15:13-14; 22.

Paul also referred to the practice of baptism for the dead to show that the resurrection is a reality. He asked, “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?”³⁵ The resurrection was a sure reality to those who met and interacted with resurrected beings, especially with the Savior Himself.³⁶ We are blessed to have their personal witnesses of the resurrection.

The baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost cleanses and brings about a remission of sins.³⁷ The Savior said, “Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be *sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost*, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.”³⁸ Sanctification and cleansing by the remission of sins comes by the Holy Ghost, even the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the seal certifying to the pure in heart that they are clean before the Father, that they are sanctified in Christ by the grace of God through the shedding of the blood of Christ, and that they can enter into His rest where no unclean thing can dwell.³⁹

We celebrate our knowledge of and our hope in the holy resurrection at Easter. The Spirit of God — freely available to all — whispers to our spirits the truth of this reality. How grateful we are for the Spirit-borne witness that our beloved Savior conquered death and became the firstfruits of them that slept.⁴⁰ The Spirit confirms that He made it possible that we all will be released from the bondage of physical death in the eternities.

Temple

The temple of the Lord is connected with Easter because of new life. Sacred ordinances of the temple promise new life, even eternal lives, and bind families together forever, according to individual faithfulness. The Savior proclaimed, “strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to life, and few there be that find it.”⁴¹ This scripture was given by the Lord to Joseph Smith in the revelation concerning marriage for time and all eternity, which is a culminating ordinance of the temple, as follows: “For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and

35. Ibid., 15:29.

36. 3 Nephi 12:2.

37. D&C 19:31.

38. 3 Nephi 27:20.

39. Ibid., 27:19; Moroni 10:33.

40. 1 Corinthians 15:20.

41. 3 Nephi 27:33; Matthew 7:14.

continuation of the *lives*, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me.”⁴²

Thus, on the covenant path which leads to eternal life, or more explicitly, to eternal lives, there are necessary temple ordinances of the Holy Priesthood which we must make, enter into, and have sealed upon us by the Holy Spirit of promise in order for us to fully receive the Savior and the fullness of blessings in the kingdom of God.⁴³

The Lord declared to the prophet Joseph Smith, “This is eternal lives — to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. I am he. Receive ye, therefore, my law.”⁴⁴ This law is the order of the priesthood, meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, mentioned in D&C 131:1-4: “In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; And if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase.” We come to know God and His Son, Jesus Christ, as we enter into and continue faithfully within the sacred, everlasting covenant of eternal marriage. This is eternal lives, that is, God’s life. We too may have it, but we must receive and obey this holy law of God.

As President of the Provo Temple, I witnessed many who testified of new life and a softening of the heart as they attended the temple often. I saw how frequent temple attendance brought an increase of love, consideration for others, patience, and kindness for both patrons and temple workers.

For those living in the Northern Hemisphere, Easter reminds us of regenerating life, as new life springs forth from the earth at springtime. Temple ordinances draw our minds toward the reality of our eternal nature, of new life in the resurrection, and of the continuation of family lives.

Everlasting

Everlasting, Endless, Eternal, and Eternity are names of God.⁴⁵ Revealing a godly mystery, the Lord explains that Eternal punishment is God’s punishment. In a like manner, Eternal life, or Everlasting Life, is God’s life.⁴⁶ It is life like God’s life. In D&C 132 the Lord gives us a glimpse of those who have this exaltation and glory sealed upon their heads:

42. D&C 132:22.

43. D&C 132:7.

44. *Ibid.*, 132:24.

45. D&C 19:10-12; Psalms 90:2; Abraham 2:16.

46. John 3:16.

which glory shall be a *fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever* and ever. Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be *from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue*; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.⁴⁷

Our Father, by the power of His Only Begotten Son, gives His fulness to His children, and they become exalted parents able to give their fulness to their children.

At the end of the Kirtland Temple dedicatory prayer, which was given to Joseph Smith by revelation just before he gave the three-fold plea, “O hear, O hear, O hear us, O Lord!” he beseeched the Lord as follows: “O Lord God Almighty, hear us in these our petitions, and answer us from heaven, thy holy habitation, where thou sittest enthroned, with glory, honor, power, majesty, might, dominion, truth, justice, judgment, mercy, and an infinity of fulness, from everlasting to everlasting.”⁴⁸ These ten attributes of deity are worth repeating, and memorizing, along with the additional two items, “an infinity of fulness” and “from everlasting to everlasting”: “glory, honor, power, majesty, might, dominion, truth, justice, judgment, mercy.”

There is deep significance in these ten godly characteristics and in the phrase “an infinity of fulness.” God has a fulness of glory, a fulness of honor, a fulness of power, and so on. As we consider other good qualities such as kindness, holiness, godliness, and goodness, we recognize that God has a fulness of all of these and of infinitely more godly traits.

The phrase “*from everlasting to everlasting*” in this scripture has significance in relation to time and possibly to space and certainly to continuation of lives; might it not also be understood as “*from God to God*” (everlasting being a name for God)? The infinity of fulness of godly attributes constitutes everlasting life, eternal life, or more exactly, eternal lives — from God to God.

Easter is a time to be grateful to the Father and the Son for Their perfections of everlasting life. It is a time for us to praise Them and exult over Their everlasting kindness towards us, Their children.

47. D&C 132:19-21.

48. D&C 109:77-78.

Repentance

President Thomas S. Monson's insights pertaining to repentance are thrilling, humbling, and inspiring. He said, "One of God's greatest gifts to us is the joy of trying again, for no failure ever need be final."⁴⁹ Repentance is the glorious gift that gives us access to the purifying effects of Christ's atonement. It is not our repentance by itself that brings forgiveness of sins and the purifying of our hearts, but it is the Lord's grace because of the shedding of His blood.⁵⁰ We must repent, but it is His blood and the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost which sanctify us.

The Savior emphasized the importance of repentance Himself declaring,

And no unclean thing can enter into [the Father's] kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their *faith*, and the *repentance* of all their sins, and their *faithfulness unto the end*. Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.⁵¹

Thus faith, repentance, and enduring faithfully unto the end are prerequisites to having our garments washed clean in the blood of Christ. Such a washing and cleansing is clearly a sublime miracle. A white shirt dipped into a vat of blood certainly would not come out clean and spotless!

Because the Lord has granted us repentance, we can get up and try again when we stumble. If we stray from the covenant path, we can return to it where there is safety and joy. The Savior's atoning sacrifice gives us means to exercise sufficient faith unto repentance. When we confess our sins, fully forsake them, soften our hardened hearts, and change our wayward behaviors, the Lord has promised us that He will forgive us and remember our sins no more.⁵²

As mentioned above, God has declared that His work and glory are to bring about the immortality and eternal life of man. Without the gift of repentance, which is a positive blessing and not a negative burden, we could not reach our potential of everlasting life. We all make mistakes, and so we could not otherwise accept the Lord's personal invitation to us: "Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you,

49. Thomas S. Monson, "The Gift of Repentance," *Ensign* (January 2018), 4.

50. D&C 20:30-31.

51. 3 Nephi 27:19-20.

52. Jeremiah 31:34; D&C 58:42-43; Ezekiel 18:21-22; 1 John 1:9.

even as I am.”⁵³ With repentance, sanctification by the Spirit, and the grace of Jesus Christ we can stand unspotted before the Lord at the last day.

Easter is time for us to reflect upon things we can do to become more like the Savior and, through repentance, to begin anew in our lives. It is a time to show gratitude to God for His mercy and loving kindness by humbling ourselves, repenting of those things in our lives that demand repentance, serving one another, and lifting up those around us.

Savior

Easter is a time to think deeply about and remember the Savior Jesus Christ. He commands us to come unto Him, to follow Him, and to do all that we do in His name.⁵⁴ All of the above subjects I have mentioned — Everyone, Atonement, Spirit, Temple, Everlasting, and Repentance — center upon the Savior and His work and glory. In each case Easter gives us pause to contemplate and appreciate more fully the Savior’s covenant path. This covenant path enables us to become perfect, even as Jesus Christ and the Father are perfect.⁵⁵

In the scriptures the covenant path, among other names, is referred to as the rod of iron, the word of God, the strait and narrow path, the way, the truth, the merciful plan of the great Creator, the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death, the great plan of redemption, the plan of salvation, the plan of mercy, the plan of happiness, the new and everlasting covenant, the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the laws and ordinances of the gospel, and the only and true doctrine of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.⁵⁶ (See the Appendix for additional names.) Jesus Christ is the covenant path. He is the truth, the way, the life, and the only name whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God.

Jesus Christ is the *word*⁵⁷ which the Father has given unto the children of men as mentioned in the center (verse 19) of the Savior’s own definition of His Gospel in 3 Nephi 27:13-22. The Savior is at the beginning of this explanation (verse 13, “Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is

53. 3 Nephi 27:27.

54. 3 Nephi 9:14; 2 Nephi 31:10; Moses 5:8.

55. 3 Nephi 12:48.

56. John 14:6; 1 Nephi 8:20; 11:25; 2 Nephi 9:6; 11:5; Jacob 6:8; Alma 17:16; 18:39; Jarom 1:2; Alma 42:8, 11, 15; D&C 22:1; 66:2; 76:14; 132:4; Articles of Faith 1:3-4; 2 Nephi 31:21. See also Noel B. Reynolds, “The Ancient Doctrine of the Two Ways and the Book of Mormon,” *BYU Studies Quarterly*, 56/3 (Fall 2017): 49-78 and “This is the Way,” *Religious Educator*, 14/3 (2013): 71-83.

57. Alma 38:9; John 3:16; 2 Nephi 18:1; 19:8; Moses 1:32.

the gospel which I have given unto you — that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me”), and He is again at the end (verse 21, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do”). Not only is Jesus Christ the beginning and the end of His Gospel, He is also the center.

He invites us to follow Him and assures us that we can do the works that we have seen Him do.⁵⁸ He was baptized, received the Holy Spirit, taught the truth, served liberally, demonstrated love, healed the sick physically and spiritually, raised the dead, endured suffering for the truth’s sake, and submitted to the will of the Father in all things. With His grace and the power of His infinite atonement, we can emulate Him in these works. He gives meaning, efficacy, power, and honor to our righteous, humble works of goodness. Because of Him the Father grants us the Holy Ghost, who inspires us, ennobles us, and leads us in all good things as we submit our will to His will.

Paul testified of Jesus that, “being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”⁵⁹ In my scripture studies over many years I have found over 1,000 names for the Savior plus a number of other name-like references that bring the total to more than 1,400, many of which describe His omnipotence, omniscience, and other divine attributes.⁶⁰ Easter is a wonderful time to read through a list of the Savior’s names and attributes (available in the topical guide of the LDS Scriptures) and to reflect upon all He has done for us. We will find that we become stronger in our humility, deeper in our gratitude, and firmer in our faith in Christ as we come to know Him through study and emulation.⁶¹

Certainly the Eternal Atoning Sacrifice Testifies of the Everlasting Redeeming Savior. Everyone who draws upon the power of Christ’s atonement and seeks the Spirit to guide him or her along the covenant path toward everlasting life, and who repents to keep on the covenant path, will be called up in heaven to dwell in never-ending happiness with our beloved Savior. He invites us to follow Him on His covenant path

58. 3 Nephi 27:21; 2 Nephi 31:12.

59. Hebrews 5:9.

60. Alan C. Ashton, “Oh How Surely Christ Sanctifies His Own” (lecture, The 2012 Neal A. Maxwell Institute Lecture, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, April 12, 2012), <https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1073>; Appendix “Names of Jesus Christ Found in the Scriptures.”

61. Helaman 3:35.

and to become one with Him, that He might sanctify us with eternal life, endless holiness, and everlasting joy.⁶²

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Appendix

Scripture References for Other Names for the Covenant Path

Bond of the Covenant, Ezekiel 20:37	Covenant that the Lord will make with the house of Israel, His laws into their mind, Hebrews 8:10.
Calling upon God in the name of the Son, Moses 1:17; 5:8.	Covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed, Acts 3:25.
Christ's doctrine with authority, Matthew 7:28-29.	Covenant which should be fulfilled in the latter days, made to our father Abraham, 1 Nephi 15:18.
Coming unto and following the Savior, 3 Nephi 9:14, 2 Nephi 31:10.	Covenant with our God to do his will and to be obedient to his commandments, Mosiah 5:5.
Commandments, statutes, judgments of God, Alma 58:40.	Covenant with the Lord and enter into his oath, Deuteronomy 29:12.
Copractice of virtue and holiness before the Lord, D&C 46:33.	Covenant of saints with the Lord by sacrifice, Psalms 50:5.
Counsel of the Lord, D&C 78:2; 100:2.	Covenant with the Lord that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, Mosiah 18:10.
Covenant, oath and law to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Psalms 105:9-10.	Doctrine according to godliness, 1 Timothy 6:3.
Covenant of an everlasting priesthood, Numbers 25:13.	Doctrine of Christ, 2 Nephi 31:21.
Covenant of God, Psalms 78:10.	Doctrine of God, John 7:16-17.
Covenant of peace, an everlasting covenant, the Lord's sanctuary set in the midst of His people evermore, Ezekiel 37:26.	Doctrine of God our Savior, Titus 2:10.
Covenant of the Lord God, Deuteronomy 4:23.	Doctrine of repentance, D&C 68:25.
Covenant of the Lord's peace, Isaiah 54:10.	

62. D&C 66:2, 11.

<p>Doctrine of the Lord, Acts 13:12. Doctrine which the Father hath given unto Christ, 3 Nephi 11:32. Everlasting covenant, Genesis 17:7; D&C 45:9. Everlasting gospel, Rev 14:6; D&C 36:5. Faith hope and charity, D&C 4:5-6. Fulness of the Gospel, 1 Nephi 10:14. Fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, D&C 20:9. Fulness of the gospel of the Messiah, 1 Nephi 15:13. Fulness of the gospel of the Lord, 1 Nephi 13:24. Fulness of the Lord's everlasting gospel, D&C 27:5. Fulness of all truth, D&C 93:26. Glad tidings, D&C 76:40. Glad tidings of good things, Romans 10:15. Glad tidings of great joy, Mosiah 3:3; D&C 31:3. Glory of God, intelligence, light and truth, D&C 93:36. Godly walk and conversation, D&C 20:69. God's course: one eternal round, Alma 7:20; D&C 35:1. God's covenant for ever, Psalms 111:9. God's covenant of peace, Numbers 25:12. God's covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, Exodus 2:24. God's great and eternal purposes, prepared from the foundation of the world, Alma 42:26. God's ordinances, D&C 52:15-16. God's plan, good, Abraham 4:21. God's promise in Christ, Ephesians 3:6. Good way, 1 Kings 8:36; Jeremiah 6:16. Gospel, 3 Nephi 21:26 Gospel of Abraham, D&C 110:12 Gospel of Christ, Romans 1:16 Gospel of God, Romans 1:1. Gospel of God's son, Romans 1:9. Gospel of Jesus Christ, Mark 1:1. Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Thessalonians 1:8. Gospel of peace, Romans 10:15; D&C 27:16.</p>	<p>Gospel of repentance and of baptism, D&C 13:1. Gospel of salvation, Ephesians 1:13; D&C 90:10; 93:51. Gospel of the grace of God, Acts 20:24. Gospel of the kingdom, Matthew 9:35; D&C 84:80. Gospel of the Lamb, 1 Nephi 13:26. Gospel, or the doctrine of Christ, Jacob 7:6. Gospel, preached from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God, and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost, Moses 5:58. Gospel, rock, and salvation of the Lamb, 1 Nephi 13:36. Gospel preached unto Abraham, Galatians 3:8. Gospel which should be preached among the Jews, 1 Nephi 10:11. Great and eternal plan of deliverance from death, 2 Nephi 11:5. Great and eternal plan of redemption, Alma 34:16. Great and eternal purposes of God, Alma, 42:26. Great and marvelous work, 1 Nephi 14:7. Great knowledge, 2 Nephi 32:7. Great plan of mercy, Alma 42:31. Great plan of redemption, Alma 34:31. Great plan of salvation, Alma 42:5. Great plan of the Eternal God, Alma 34:9. Highway, Isaiah 35:8. Highway for our God, Isaiah 40:3. Highway or way of the upright, Proverbs 16:17. Inheritance of the saints in light, Col 1:12. Keep(ing) the commandments of God, Mosiah 2:4. Keys, and powers, and glories to be revealed from the days of Adam, D&C 128:18. Knowledge of the Lord's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, Col 1:9. Knowledge of the true Messiah, 1 Nephi 10:14.</p>
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<p>Law, put in their inward parts and written in their hearts by the Lord, Jeremiah 31:33.</p> <p>Law of Christ, D&C 88:21.</p> <p>Law of God, Psalms 78:10.</p> <p>Law of the Lord's gospel, D&C 104:18.</p> <p>Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, Gal 5:1.</p> <p>Light and truth, D&C 93:40.</p> <p>Light of the glorious gospel, 2 Cor 4:4.</p> <p>Light of the Lord, 2 Nephi 12:5.</p> <p>Light to the world, D&C 45:9.</p> <p>Lord God's work and glory, Moses 1:39.</p> <p>Lord's covenant and his testimonies, Psalms 25:10.</p> <p>Lord's everlasting covenant, D&C 1:15; 45:9.</p> <p>Lord's everlasting covenant, even the fulness of his gospel, D&C 66:2.</p> <p>Lord's holy covenant, Luke 1:72.</p> <p>Lord's own way, D&C 104:16.</p> <p>Lord's word, his rock, his church, and his gospel, to know of a surety his doctrine, D&C 11:16.</p> <p>Love of God and of neighbor, Matthew 22:37-40; Moroni 10:32.</p> <p>Manner of God's work, 2 Nephi 31:3.</p> <p>Manner of happiness, 2 Nephi 5:27.</p> <p>Manner of love the Father hath bestowed, 1 John 3:1.</p> <p>Manner of persons: be in all holy conversation and godliness, even as Christ is, 2 Pet 3:11; 3 Nephi 27:27.</p> <p>Manner of the workings of the Spirit, Moroni 6:9.</p> <p>Life and light of men, D&C 93:9.</p> <p>Meekness of Christ's spirit, D&C 19:23.</p> <p>Merciful plan of the great Creator, 2 Nephi 9:6</p> <p>Message from the Most High, JS — History 1, footnote by Oliver Cowdery.</p> <p>Message heard from the beginning, 1 John 3:11.</p> <p>Message of redemption, D&C 138:37.</p> <p>Messenger before the Lord's face to prepare the way before Him, D&C 45:9.</p>	<p>More excellent way, 1 Corinthians 12:31; Ether 12:11.</p> <p>Mountains (temples) a way, exalted highways, Isaiah 49:11; 1 Nephi 21:11.</p> <p>Narrow gate and strait path which leads to life, and continue in the path, 2 Nephi 33:9.</p> <p>Narrow way for man, in a straight course, 2 Nephi 9:41.</p> <p>New and an everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning, D&C 22:1.</p> <p>New and everlasting covenant, instituted for the fulness of God's glory, for those who abide the law, D&C 132:6.</p> <p>New and living way, Hebrews 10:20.</p> <p>New covenant, JST Gal 3:20; Hebrews 8:8.</p> <p>Lord's way(s), paths, truth, law and word, Psalms 25:4-5; Psalms 86:11; 2 Nephi 12:3.</p> <p>New covenant of the Lord with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, Jeremiah 31:31.</p> <p>New doctrine, Acts 17:19.</p> <p>None other way, save by the gate, the Holy One of Israel, 2 Nephi 9:41.</p> <p>Only and true doctrine of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost 2 Nephi 31:21.</p> <p>Order of the priesthood, the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, D&C 131:2.</p> <p>Ordinances of the holy Priesthood, D&C 84:19-22.</p> <p>Path of judgement, Isaiah 40:14.</p> <p>Path of life, Psalms 16:11.</p> <p>Path of righteousness leads to the kingdom of God, Alma 7:19.</p> <p>Path of the just, Proverbs 4:18; Isaiah 26:7.</p> <p>Path of the Lord's commandments, Psalms 119:35.</p> <p>Path of the low valley, 2 Nephi 4:32.</p> <p>Path of their duty, Helaman 15:5.</p> <p>Path which led to the tree of life, 1 Nephi 8:21.</p> <p>Path which leads to the kingdom of God, Alma 7:19.</p> <p>Paths of righteousness, Alma 7:19.</p>
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<p>Paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, Psalms 25:10.</p> <p>Paths of uprightness, Proverbs 2:13.</p> <p>Pathway of righteousness, Proverbs 12:28.</p> <p>Perpetual covenant with the Lord, Jeremiah 50:5.</p> <p>Pattern in all things, D&C 52:14-19.</p> <p>Plain path, Psalms 27:11.</p> <p>Plain road, 2 Nephi 4:32.</p> <p>Plan of happiness, Alma 42:16.</p> <p>Plan of mercy, Alma 42:15.</p> <p>Plan of our God, 2 Nephi 9:13.</p> <p>Plan of redemption, Alma 12:32; 29:2.</p> <p>Plan of redemption prepared from the foundation of the world through Christ, Alma 22:13.</p> <p>Plan of restoration, Alma 41:2.</p> <p>Plan of salvation, Jarom 1:2; Alma 24:14, Moses 6:62.</p> <p>Plenteous redemption, Psalms 130:7.</p> <p>Power of God unto salvation, Romans 1:16.</p> <p>Power of the redemption and the resurrection in Christ, Jacob 6:9.</p> <p>Promises of the Lord, Mosiah 1:7.</p> <p>Reasoning, speech, and prophecy of the Lord, D&C 45:15.</p> <p>Redemption: He sent redemption unto his people; he hath commanded his covenant for ever, Psalms 111:9.</p> <p>Redemption from everlasting woe, Alma 26:36.</p> <p>Redemption in Christ, Romans 3:24.</p> <p>Redemption of God, Mosiah 13:32.</p> <p>Redemption of/unto the world, 1 Nephi 1:19 / 3 Nephi 9:21.</p> <p>Redemption prepared from the foundation of the world, Mosiah 15:19.</p> <p>Right and proper way, D&C 101:63.</p> <p>Right paths, Proverbs 4:11.</p> <p>Right way, 2 Nephi 25:28; Morm 9:20.</p> <p>Righteous covenant, Mosiah 5:6.</p> <p>Righteous paths of the Lord, 2 Nephi 9:41.</p> <p>Rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, Helaman 5:12.</p> <p>Rod of iron, 1 Nephi 11:25; Revelation 12:5.</p> <p>Sacrifices in obedience, D&C 132:50.</p>	<p>Salvation of the Lord, Mosiah 15:28.</p> <p>Sayings in the records (scriptures) of the fathers (prophets), Mosiah 1:6.</p> <p>Service of your fellow beings, the service of your God, Mosiah 2:17.</p> <p>Shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, Proverbs 4:18.</p> <p>So great a cause, D&C 128:22.</p> <p>Song of redeeming love, Alma 5:26.</p> <p>Songs of everlasting joy, D&C 101:18.</p> <p>Sound doctrine, Titus 2:1.</p> <p>Spirit of truth, D&C 93:9.</p> <p>Standard for the Lord's people, D&C 45:9.</p> <p>Straight course to eternal bliss, Alma 37:44.</p> <p>Straight highway for the Lord, Isaiah 40:3.</p> <p>Strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life, 2 Nephi 31:18.</p> <p>Strait gate and narrow way that leads to life, 3 Nephi 14:14; 27:33; D&C 132:22.</p> <p>Strait path which leads to life, 2 Nephi 33:9.</p> <p>Sure covenant, Nehemiah 9:38.</p> <p>Sure foundation, Helaman 5:12.</p> <p>Sure mercies of David, Isaiah 55:3.</p> <p>Testimony of God's word, Alma 7:20.</p> <p>Theory, principle, doctrine, law of the gospel, all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand, D&C 88:78.</p> <p>Things and mysteries of the kingdom out of the scriptures, D&C 71:1.</p> <p>Truth, a knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come, D&C 93:24.</p> <p>Truth, light, and knowledge of all things, D&C 93:28; John 8:32</p> <p>Truth of the Lord, Psalms 117:2.</p> <p>United order, and an everlasting order, D&C 104:1.</p> <p>Voice of gladness! A voice of mercy from heaven; and a voice of truth out of the earth; glad tidings for the dead; a voice of gladness for the living and the dead; glad tidings of great joy, D&C 128:19.</p>
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<p>Voice of the Lord, D&C 35:1. Walk after the holy order of God, Alma 7:22. Walk guiltless before God, Mosiah 4:26. Walk in truth, in righteousness and uprightness before God, 1 Kings 3:6; Helaman 6:34. Walk uprightly before God, 1 Nephi 16:3; Mosiah 18:29. Walk worthy of God, 1 Thessalonians 2:12. Walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, Luke 1:6; Lev 18:4. Walking with a clear conscience before God, Mosiah 2:27. Way, Isaiah 35:8; 2 Nephi 28:11; Alma 41:8. Way before the Lord's face for the time of his coming, D&C 39:20. Way everlasting, Psalms 139:24. Way for fulfilling the Father's words and covenants, 1 Nephi 9:6; 14:17. Way into the holiest of all, Hebrews 9:8. Way of deliverance of our God, 2 Nephi 9:11. Way of eternal life, 2 Nephi 10:23. Way of God, Acts 18:26. Way of holiness, Isaiah 35:8. Way of life, Proverbs 15:24; Jeremiah 21:8. Way of peace, Romans 3:17. Way of righteousness, Proverbs 12:28; Helaman 6:31. Way of the just, Isaiah 26:7. Way(s) of the Lord, Genesis 18:19; Proverbs 10:29; Isaiah 40:3; Alma 25:14; D&C 33:10. Way of the Lord's commandments, Psalms 119:32. Way of the Lord's judgments, Isaiah 26:8. Way of the Lord's precepts, Psalms 119:27. Way of the Lord's statutes, Psalms 119:33. Way of the Lord's steps, Psalms 85:13. Way of the Lord's testimonies, Psalms 119:14. Way of the tree of life, Genesis 3:24; Alma 42:2; Moses 4:31.</p>	<p>Way of truth, Psalms 119:30; 2 Pet 2:2. Way of understanding, Proverbs 9:6; Isaiah 40:14. Way of wisdom, Proverbs 4:11. Way, prepared, that we may live forever, Alma 37:46. Way to Zion, Jeremiah 50:5. Way, the truth, and the life: Jesus Christ, John 14:6. Way where light dwelleth, Job 38:19. Way wherein I should walk, Psalms 143:8; Proverbs 22:6. Ways of truth and soberness, Mosiah 4:15. Wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Tim 6:3. Will of God, D&C 21:1; 128:5; JS — History 1, footnote by Oliver Cowdery. Wisdom of the God of Enoch, D&C 45:11. Wisdom's paths, Helaman 12:5. Witness unto all nations, Matthew 24:14. Word(s) of Christ, 1 Tim 6:3; 2 Nephi 31:20; 32:3; Alma 37:44. Word of God which leads to the fountain of living waters or to the tree of life, 1 Nephi 11:25. Word of God, quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery, Helaman 3:29. Word of the gospel, Acts 15:7. Word of the Lord, tried, 2 Samuel 22:31. Word of truth, D&C 50:17. Word of truth and righteousness, Alma 38:9. Word which the Lord commanded to a thousand generations, Psalms 105:8. Words of wisdom, D&C 78:2. Work of the Father, 1 Nephi 14:17; 3 Nephi 21:26. Works and faith agreeable to the holy scriptures, D&C 20:69. Works of the Lord, Alma 18:39. Works of the Lord's hands and his sure commandments, Psalms 111:7.</p>
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