

LESSON 18

Preparing for the Final Day of Judgment

Introduction

Mortal life is the time for us to prepare to meet God. The Book of Mormon explains what happens to our spirits between death and the Resurrection. After our spirits are

restored to our immortal bodies, we will stand before the judgment seat of God, where our actions and the desires of our hearts will determine our eternal reward.

Background Reading

- Dallin H. Oaks, “Resurrection,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 14–16.
- D. Todd Christofferson, “The Resurrection of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 111–14.
- “Understanding Death and Resurrection,” chapter 37 in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 273–78.

Suggestions for Teaching

Alma 34:32–34; 40:6–7, 11–14

After death, the righteous go to paradise and the wicked go to spirit prison

Before class, write the following question on the board:

How might people who do not understand the purpose of their mortal lives and do not believe in life after death live differently from people who do understand these things?

Ask students to respond to this question. Then remind them that the Book of Mormon helps us to understand the purpose of life on earth and teaches us that life continues after death.

Invite a student to read Alma 34:32–34 aloud while the class looks for what Amulek taught the people of Ammonihah about the purpose of life.

- What important doctrines about the purpose of life on earth did Amulek teach? (Students should identify several doctrines in this passage, including the following: **This life is the time for us to prepare to meet God.**)
- In what ways does this doctrine help you understand how you should live your daily life here in mortality?

To help students better understand this doctrine, consider sharing the following statement by President Thomas S. Monson:



"We understand we have come to earth to learn, to live, to progress in our eternal journey toward perfection. Some remain on earth but for a moment, while others live long upon the land. The measure is not how long we live, but rather how well we live" ("He Is Risen," *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 18).

- Why did Amulek warn us not to procrastinate the day of our repentance?

Display the following statement from President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency and ask a student to read it aloud while the class looks for why there is danger in procrastination:



"There is a danger in the word *someday* when what it means is 'not this day.' 'Someday I will repent.' 'Someday I will forgive him.' 'Someday I will speak to my friend about the Church.' 'Someday I will start to pay tithing.' 'Someday I will return to the temple.' 'Someday ...' The scriptures make the danger of delay clear [see Alma 34:33–34]. ... This day is a precious gift of God. The thought 'Someday I will' can be a thief of the opportunities of time and the blessings of eternity" ("This Day," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 89).

Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud from Alma 40:6–7, 11–14. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what Alma taught his son Corianton about what happens to our spirits after we die. (It may be helpful to point out that when Alma used the phrase "outer darkness," he was not referring to the final state of Satan and those who are damned. Instead, he was referring to the state of the wicked between the time of their death and their resurrection. We usually refer to this state as spirit prison.)

- What is the difference between the state of the righteous and the state of the wicked after death? (Although they may use different words, students should identify the following doctrine: **Between death and resurrection, the spirits of the righteous dwell in paradise and the spirits of the wicked dwell in spirit prison.**)
- Why is it important to understand that our mortal actions will affect what we experience after death?

2 Nephi 9:12–13; Mosiah 15:21–26; 16:6–11; Alma 11:40–45; 40:4–5, 19–24

Our spirits will be restored to our bodies in the Resurrection

Remind students that when Abinadi taught King Noah and his priests, he described what will happen to us after death. The doctrines he taught describe what will happen to us after our time in the spirit world, either paradise or spirit prison. Ask a few students to take turns reading Mosiah 16:6–11 aloud while the class looks for what Abinadi taught.

- What doctrines did Abinadi teach about what will happen to us after our time in the spirit world? (Emphasize the following truths: **Because Jesus Christ has broken the bands of death, we will each be resurrected and receive an**

immortal body. The righteous will inherit endless happiness, and the wicked will be delivered to endless damnation.)

Tell students that many Book of Mormon prophets testified of the Resurrection and explained what it will be like. Write the following scripture passages on the board (without the accompanying summaries) and assign each student to read one of the passages. Make sure all passages are assigned. Ask students to read their passages silently, looking for additional details about the Resurrection.

2 Nephi 9:12–13 (Paradise will deliver up righteous spirits, and spirit prison will deliver up wicked spirits. Spirits will be restored to their bodies and become immortal souls.)

Mosiah 15:21–26 (The righteous will come forth in the First Resurrection, as well as those who died in ignorance and little children. The wicked have no part in the First Resurrection.)


Alma 11:40–45 (All people, wicked and righteous, will have their spirits and bodies reunited in their perfect form and will stand before God to be judged according to their works.)

Alma 40:4–5, 19–24 (There is a time between death and Resurrection when spirits go to the spirit world. After that, there is a time appointed for the spirits of all people to be eternally restored to their perfect bodies and stand before God to be judged.)

Give students time to explain what they learned about the Resurrection from their assigned passages. Consider writing some of their insights on the board next to the corresponding passages. If needed, ask one or more questions like the following to deepen students’ understanding of these passages:

- How do these truths strengthen your belief that the Resurrection is real and is an important part of Heavenly Father’s plan?

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Ask the class to listen for how a testimony of the Resurrection can bless us in mortality.



“The Apostle Peter referred to the fact that God the Father, in His abundant mercy, ‘hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead’ (1 Pet. 1:3; see also 1 Thes. 4:13–18).

“The ‘lively hope’ we are given by the resurrection is our conviction that death is not the conclusion of our identity but merely a necessary step in the destined transition from mortality to immortality. This hope changes the whole perspective of mortal life. ...

“The assurance of resurrection gives us the strength and perspective to endure the mortal challenges faced by each of us and by those we love, such things as the physical, mental, or

emotional deficiencies we bring with us at birth or acquire during mortal life. Because of the resurrection, we know that these mortal deficiencies are only temporary!

“The assurance of resurrection also gives us a powerful incentive to keep the commandments of God during our mortal lives. ...

“Our sure knowledge of a resurrection to immortality also gives us the courage to face our own death—even a death that we might call premature. ...

“The assurance of immortality also helps us bear the mortal separations involved in the death of our loved ones. ... We should all praise God for the assured resurrection that makes our mortal separations temporary and gives us the hope and strength to carry on” (“Resurrection,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 15–16).

- When has the assurance of the Resurrection given you strength or motivated you to live more righteously?

Share your own testimony about the reality of the Resurrection.

Alma 5:15–21; 7:21–25; 41:2–6

Preparing for the Final Judgment

Explain that Alma encouraged the Church members in Zarahemla to prepare for the Final Judgment by asking them to imagine themselves standing before God to be judged. Invite several students to take turns reading Alma 5:15–21 aloud. Ask the class to look for what Alma asked his listeners to consider.

- Which of Alma’s questions is most meaningful to you, and why?
- What principle can we learn from Alma’s testimony in verse 21 about what we must do to be saved? (Help students identify the following principle: **We cannot be saved unless we have been washed clean through the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ.**)

To help students better understand this principle, display the following statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith, and invite a student to read it aloud:



“I know of nothing that is more important or necessary at this time than to cry repentance, even among the Latter-day Saints, and I call upon them ... to heed these words of our Redeemer. Now he has stated definitely that no unclean thing can enter his presence. Only those who prove themselves faithful and have washed their garments in his blood through their faith and their repentance—none others shall find the kingdom of God” (*Teachings of*

Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith [2013], 91).

Ask students to study Alma 7:21–25 silently, and invite them to look for and mark qualities we should seek to develop so that our garments will be found spotless.

- What attributes or qualities did you identify in these passages that are vital for us to develop as we prepare to be judged by the Lord?

Encourage students to consider whether their actions and the desires of their hearts are preparing them to meet God at the Final Judgment. Encourage them to make whatever changes are necessary so that the Judgment Day may be a happy one.

Student Readings

- 2 Nephi 9:12–13; Mosiah 15:21–26; 16:6–11; Alma 5:15–21; 7:21–25; 11:40–45; 16:6–11; 34:32–34; 40:4–7, 11–14, 19–24; 41:2–6.
- Dallin H. Oaks, “Resurrection,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 14–16.