



The Great Plan of Happiness  
AND  
**THE COVENANT**

THREADED THROUGH OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

KATHERINE HENDRICKS

**In summary...** The Old Testament is not just a group of individual Bible stories. It is story after story threaded through generations of God's children with whom He had a **covenant** relationship. God designed a plan for us to become like Him. He has the power to accomplish this plan! **Covenant** (binding us to Him) is the way.

Satan is involved in every generation, trying to destroy God's plan. God's children can avoid Satan's influence by staying connected to God and by entering and staying on the **covenant path**. Discerning good from evil means they must learn to grasp hold of anything that strengthens their relationship with Him and reject anything that diminishes it. They must not be deceived by Satan's clever traps!

God knew from the beginning that mortal life created the best opportunity for growth, but it also meant weakness and sin. It was never was about perfection on earth. It was about progression and staying connected to **covenant** powers. God will do the rest. Each group of **covenant** people had the opportunity to build Zion. Only two, Enoch and Melchizedek, achieved it.

Even when God's children rejected Him and the **covenant**, God remained faithful and never abandoned them. This was always the plan. God worked with them through promised **covenant** blessings as they progressed and promised **covenant** curses (the opposite) when they failed. When a nation rejected God, God continued to bless individuals who sincerely reached out for His guidance.

With each new generation, God hand-designed the details of their **covenant** relationship according to their needs, worthiness and ability to receive. Some of these details included specific methods, terms, names, signs, tokens, special clothing and rituals, etc. of their specific **covenant**. Not all practices pertain to all people. Don't be confused by these details. There is one constant that is always the same. God loves His children and will do whatever is best to bring them to, and keep them on, the **covenant path**. Worthily receiving the saving ordinances administered by the Holy Priesthood, in any generation, will bring God's children the **covenant** blessings they have in store.

It is powerful to learn and teach our children **covenant** stories from the past. These help us remember who we are and the **covenant** blessings available to us. Now is our time! We live in the Last Dispensation of the Fullness of Times! Our generation includes all others! As baptized members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we are the House of Israel! It is our **covenant** responsibility to reach out and lift our brothers and sisters across the world. Gathering Israel on both sides of the veil is our **covenant** responsibility.

For us to accomplish our **covenant** responsibilities, we have all the necessary blessings! We have individual blessings and spiritual gifts God shares with us through patriarchal blessings, priesthood blessings and personal revelation. We have access to all the promised blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! Some of these blessings can be remembered by these "6 P's":

<u>Posterity</u>	<u>Protection</u>	<u>Promised Land</u>	<u>Prosperity</u>	<u>Priesthood</u>	<u>Presence of God in Holy Places</u>
eternal	to perform all that God intends	to create and dwell in Zion	for joy and to perform all that God intends	God's power	to feel God's power and receive the blessings of the temple

## The Pre-Mortal Covenant



*The Grand Council*, by Robert T. Barrett, used with permission

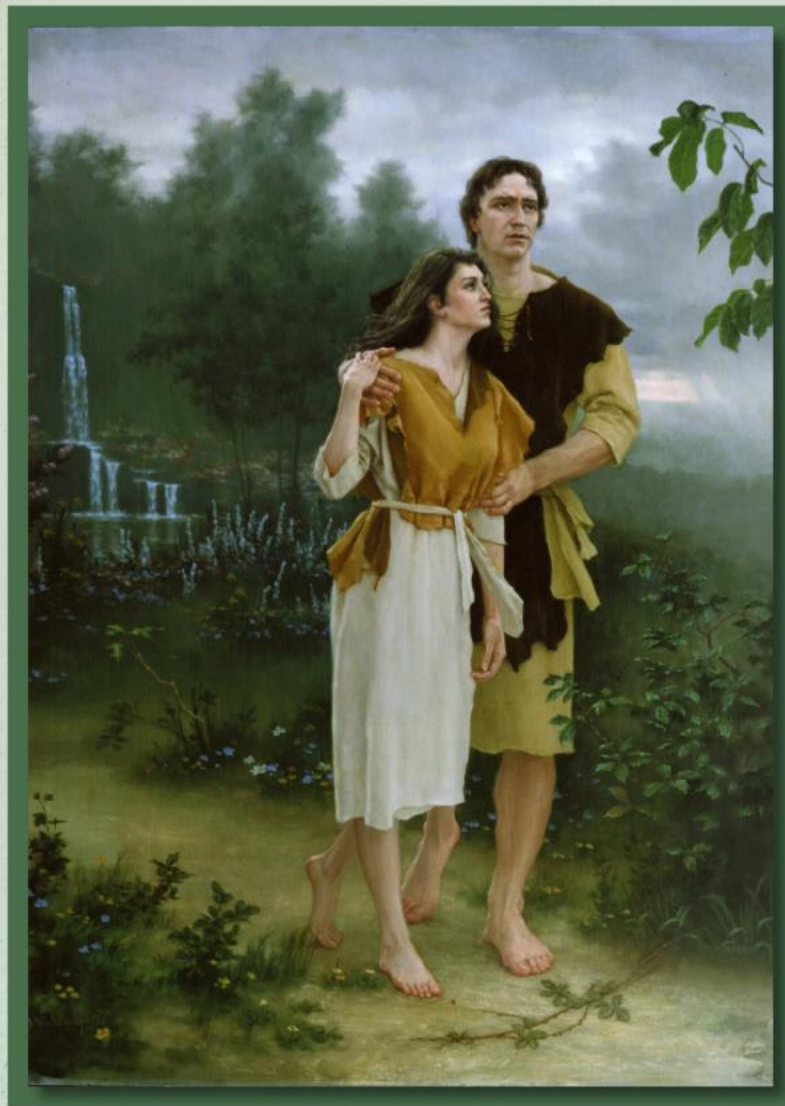
God introduced His Plan (**The Covenant**) in the pre-mortal world. It has been called *The Plan of Salvation*, *The Plan of Redemption*, *The Plan of Happiness* and many other names.

Because God sees all things, past, present and future, He created the greatest plan, taking all things into consideration. Essentially, it was a glorious sacred **covenant** between God and His children, a plan to give them the opportunity to become like Him and to inherit everything He has! God said, "*this is my work and my glory--to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.*" [Moses 1:39] Because he knows the end from the beginning, God organized the whole human family in advance, giving all of His children the best circumstance for success.<sup>16</sup>

This plan gave all of us the opportunity to come to Earth, with a veil over our memory, to grow through our own experience in a fallen world. Jesus Christ agreed to overcome the effects of this fallen world by sacrificing Himself for our sins, if we would repent. Personal agency was critical. We each had the opportunity to agree to the plan and enter into a **covenant** relationship with God.

This world was very different from the Garden of Eden. Instead of beauty, there were thorns, weeds, dangerous animals and hard work- everything needed to give them experience and growth. Was it a bad thing that Adam and Eve disobeyed? Did God abandon them after that? NO. In fact, their partaking of the fruit was part of the **covenant** plan. However, it was necessary that it be their own choice.

Before Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden, God made a **covenant** with them so that they could eventually return. They were baptized in the



name of Jesus Christ and given the gift of the Holy Ghost. This is the first step for all of us on earth to enter the **covenant path**.<sup>17</sup> Christ's atonement makes it possible for **covenant** promises to be fulfilled.

Adam was ordained to the Holy Priesthood. Adam and Eve were also sealed in the eternal marriage **covenant**.<sup>18</sup> They were commanded to multiply and replenish the earth. God made coats of skins for them as a token, or symbol, of their **covenant** with Him. Among other things, they were commanded to offer the first of their flocks for an offering unto God.

*Adam and Eve Leaving the Garden*, by Joseph Brickey, used with permission

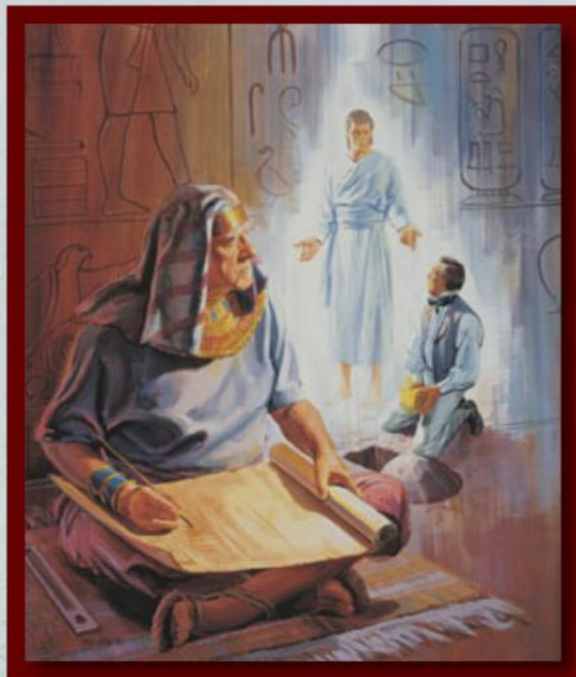
HOW DO THE DECISIONS OF ADAM AND EVE AFFECT MY LIFE TODAY?

Once back in Egypt, Joseph's ten older brothers began to worry that, now that their father was gone, Joseph might feel differently towards them. Because of his authority, Joseph held the power of life and death. They went to him, seeking forgiveness for their wrongs to him. Joseph wept. He had forgiven them long ago and did not want them to live in fear. He reminded them that God had turned their evil into a good **covenant** purpose.

The children of Israel continued to be blessed by Joseph and their **covenant** God. They multiplied and prospered exceedingly. Joseph probably continued to serve as Prime Minister for over fifty more years, until his death. During that time, we learn from modern, restored revelation, that Joseph prophesied many important things about the future of **covenant** Israel.

Joseph knew and prophesied that the children of Israel would be in bondage. He knew about Moses and his brother Aaron and knew them by name. He knew that the daughter of Pharaoh would adopt Moses and raise him as her own. He knew that Moses would deliver the **covenant** children of Israel out of bondage, have power over the Red Sea and perform many miracles.

Joseph knew that in the latter days, a prophet named Joseph would restore these prophecies. He would restore the gospel in the last dispensation of the fullness of times and be a major part of the gathering of Israel. This latter-day Joseph, like Moses, would deliver his people and bring them *"to the knowledge of the **covenants** which I have made with thy fathers..."* [JST, Genesis 50:28] Joseph also knew that, through this prophet, the scriptures of Judah and Joseph would come together to put down false doctrine in the last days. God **covenanted** with Joseph of old that he would preserve his seed forever.



*Joseph sees Joseph Smith in Vision*, by Paul Mann, used with permission

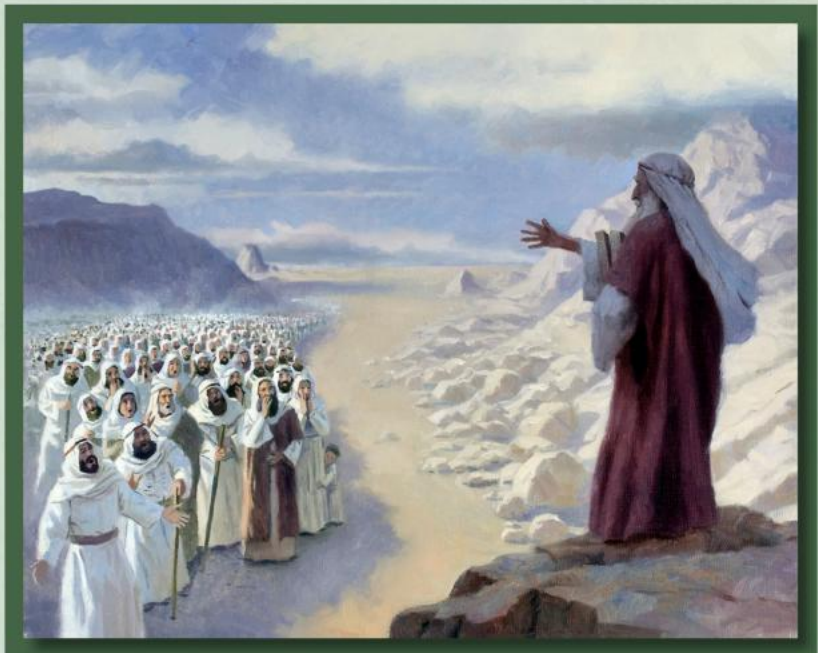
Again, the children of Israel traveled on in the wilderness. Within two months of leaving Egypt, Israel finally camped in the desert at the foot of Mount Sinai. This was a sacred place to Moses, where he first saw the burning bush and where God first spoke to him. This is where God directed him to return with the children of Israel.

Moses climbed up the difficult Sinai peak and presented himself before God. God told Moses that He wanted to enter into a **covenant** with Israel and make them His chosen people. He would give them great blessings if they would only obey.

*"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."* [Exodus 19:4-6]

This was the same **covenant** God offered to Enoch, the Jaredites, Melchizedek, and others before and after Moses. God wanted to sanctify them to a level of righteousness through the blessings of His priesthood power and ordinances of the temple. Then, He wanted to bring them into His presence to inherit all that He has.

Moses enthusiastically set out to accomplish this goal. He explained to the children of Israel about the **covenant** that God was willing to make with them. He asked them if they were willing to commit themselves to what God asked. *"And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do."* [Exodus 19:8]



Moses Explains the Covenant, © Lifeway Collection, GoodSalt.com

HOW CAN KEEPING MY COVENANTS BRING ME INTO GOD'S PRESENCE?

Aaron and his sons were called Priests, and those of the tribe of Levi who served were called Levites. All wore different special clothing worn only while they served in the Tabernacle. All had specific ways they served and specific sacred objects they used in their service. All these things were designed to teach obedience and draw them into a closer relationship with God.

For instance, the holy clothing of Aaron, the High Priest, provides **covenant** symbols. The ephod was woven of gold wires, cut from beaten gold, mixed with blue, purple, and scarlet linen. It was attached to two shoulder pieces, each with an onyx stone. Each onyx stone had six of the names of the tribes of Israel engraved upon it. Symbolically, the High Priest entered the Tabernacle carrying Israel on his shoulders. The breastplate of the ephod had four rows of twelve precious stones set onto it. Each of these stones was engraved with the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. This symbolized



the High Priest looking upon each tribe of Israel as precious and carrying Israel close to his heart.

God promised that He would remember His jewels. The breastplate, which held the Urim and Thummim, was attached by two rings of gold to the shoulders of the Ephod by two gold chains. The High Priest, symbolically clothed, puts Israel in his heart and upon his shoulders and carries them back to presence of God.

*High Priest*, © Phil McKay, GoodSalt.com

HOW ARE THE COVENANT SYMBOLS OF THE HIGH PRIEST'S CLOTHING MORE EVIDENCE OF GOD'S GREAT LOVE FOR ME AND ALL OF HIS CHILDREN ?

Moses took time to spell out in detail for Israel the...

## **COVENANT BLESSINGS:**

(As found in the Old Testament, especially Deuteronomy 28)

**The House of Israel would become the greatest nation on earth.**

**They would be blessed with the Holy Priesthood and all ordinances for Salvation.**

**They would be blessed with abundance (food, clothing, homes).**

**They would be blessed with great military strength and victory. Surrounding nations would fear them.**

**They would be blessed with good health.**

**They would be blessed with strong families.**

**They would be blessed with abundant rains and flourishing crops.**

**They would be blessed with abundant flocks and herds.**

**They would be blessed with great wealth. Other nations would come to borrow from them, but Israel would never have to borrow.**

**They would be blessed with freedom to worship God. He would be their God and they would be His people.**



Sometime after he had divided up the land inheritances, Joshua knew he was nearing the end of his life. He, like Moses, had one thing on his mind, the **covenant!** He called Israel together for a large conference. Joshua made it clear that they were to press forward and conquer and cleanse the whole land of promise. *"And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you."* Joshua explained that under no circumstances were they to neglect this duty. Joshua wanted them to fully understand the consequences if they did.

*"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God. Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of those nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you."*  
[Joshua 23:5, 11-13]



Joshua then called a conference of Israel's leaders. Here he gave his last sermon. He reminded them of the consequences of idolatry. He reminded them of God's goodness to Israel. He warned them against heathen wickedness. Then he cried out:

*"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

And the leaders answered, *"God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;"*  
[Joshua 24:15-16]

Joshua Encourages the People, © Steve Creitz, GoodSalt.com

King David was strengthened long enough to call together the leaders of the tribes of Israel and his generals, priests, and ministers to a large conference in Jerusalem. King David accomplished three last goals. First, he declared,

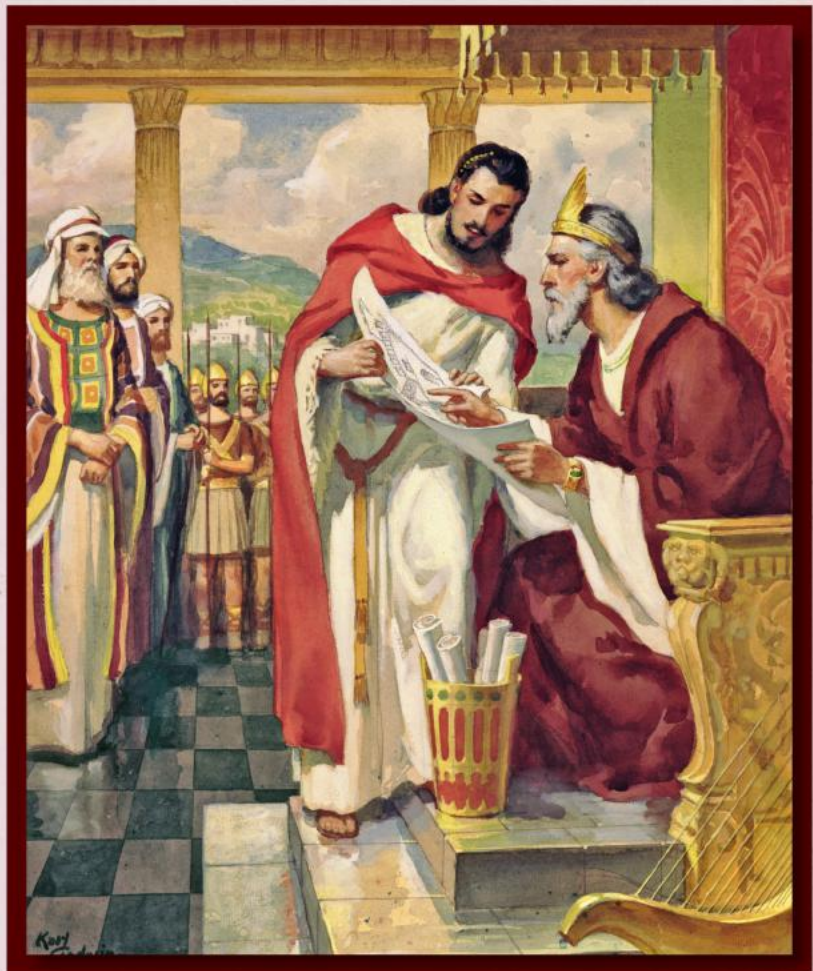
*"...Hear me, my brethren, and my people: As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood... he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. And he said unto me, Solomon, thy son, he shall build my house... Moreover I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgements, as at this day."*  
[1 Chronicles 28:2-3, 5-7]

Next, King David called Solomon forth and gave him strict counsel,

*"...Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all the hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."*  
[1 Chronicles 28:9]

Then, King David gave Solomon all the plans for the temple that God had revealed to him. King David talked to Solomon in **covenant** language,

*"...Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee; nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD."*  
[1 Chronicles 28:20]



David Giving Solomon Plans for the Temple,  
© by Karl Godwin, Providence Collection, GoodSalt.com

## Hosea



*Bride and Groom*, by Lyle Beddes © By Intellectual Reserve, Inc

Hosea was a young man when God called him to be a prophet during the height of ISRAEL's apostasy. Sometimes, God asks His prophets to learn how He feels and then teach this to the people. Abraham learned a little about how God felt about sacrificing His only son, Jesus Christ, when he was commanded to almost sacrifice his only son, Isaac. God asked Hosea to live in a marriage that was symbolic of **covenant** ISRAEL's apostasy and redemption.

ISRAEL is compared to an adulterous wife. Hosea was asked to learn how God felt as He gave his all to His **covenant** people and they continually rebelled and worshipped other gods. Through Hosea's life and teachings, we learn exactly how the **covenant** works and how God really feels about His children.

God told Hosea to marry a girl, named Gomer. Hosea and Gomer had several children. God told Hosea to name each child a name symbolic of ISRAEL's future. It may seem strange that Hosea was told to marry a girl that was immoral, or a harlot. Hosea did as commanded and loved her with all his heart. Despite his great love, his wife still wandered and sought for worldliness and other lovers. Happiness that comes from wickedness is always temporary. When she fell on hard times, she remembered how good Hosea treated her. She returned, promised to be true to him, and Hosea took her back.

HOW AM I SOMETIMES LIKE AN UNFAITHFUL WIFE IN NOT KEEPING MY COVENANTS?



Shaphan Reads the Book of the Law to King Josiah,  
iStock image

Josiah loved and obeyed God. He tried to bring the people back to love and serve their **covenant** God. He made a special effort to cleanse the temple. His secretary, Shaphan, worked with the High Priest, Hilkiah. They hired workers to repair and rebuild the temple. While they were cleaning, the workers found an old scroll. They showed it to Hilkiah. He recognized it as the ancient **covenant** Book of the Law. He gave it to Shaphan, who read it aloud to King Josiah.

As Josiah listened, he became worried. Suddenly he became aware of how many of God's **covenant** laws his people had broken, and

he feared the **covenant** curses that must follow. He asked Shaphan and Hilkiah to inquire of God to know what to do. They asked a righteous prophetess, named Huldah, of Jerusalem for advice. She replied,

*"Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: Because they have forsaken me... But to the king of Judah... thus shall ye say to him... Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD... I also have heard thee... therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place..." [2 Kings 22:16-20]*

King Josiah was determined to do all he could to bring his people back to their **covenant** God. There was no time to waste. He called all the people to gather at the temple. He read the Book of the Law to them.

HOW DO THE SCRIPTURES BRING ME CLOSER TO MY COVENANT GOD?



Daniel Praying, © Pacific Press, GoodSalt.com

Daniel was moved to Persia in his older years. He continued to be concerned for his people in Jerusalem. Those who had returned had not been able to start rebuilding the temple. Daniel prayed that God would lift the curse from Jerusalem and bless the people to rebuild it.

Daniel was blessed with a heavenly visit from the angel Gabriel (Noah). He told Daniel that Jeremiah's prophecy would be fulfilled. Jerusalem would be redeemed and survive until the Savior's first coming. Christ would confirm the new **covenant**. Then, sadly, Jerusalem would be destroyed

again and remain in that condition until the last days.

In the same year, Daniel received other visions. He saw the succession of kings and their wars that lead up to the Second Coming of Christ. He saw that Michael (Adam) would deliver Israel from their trials. He saw the series of resurrections that would occur before, during and after the Millennium. *"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."* [Daniel 12:2] Visions came to Daniel faster than he could understand them. The angel comforted Daniel by saying,

*"...Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand... But go thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."* [Daniel 12:9-10,13]

Covenant is an incredible tool that God uses to bind us in relationship with Him so that He can bless us with all He has. Mortality would be wasted without the Covenant.

A thread of Covenant is woven from the Pre-Existence through all this Earth's history and throughout all Eternity! You can see it everywhere in the Gospel, the scriptures and the temple. It's all one Covenant.

*The Great Plan of Happiness and The Covenant* is designed for a Latter-Day Saint audience from a Restored Gospel perspective. It is created for the rising generation so they can understand who they are, what they are to do and what blessings are available to them.

With our covenant consciousness raised, may we come to know our all-knowing, all-loving, all-powerful Covenant God like never before and become Children of the Covenant.

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