**D&C Section 45**

H. Dean Garrett, Stephen E. Robinson, *Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants, Vol. 2* (Salt Lake City 2001)

**Background**

At the time Doctrine and Covenants 45 was received, Joseph Smith had been in Kirtland scarcely more than a month, and the large majority of the New York Saints were still in New York, not due to arrive in Kirtland for weeks. John Whitmer recorded: "In those days [early March 1831] the Lord blessed his disciples greatly, and he gave Revelation after Revelation [D&C 46 and 47 were received the following day], which contained doctrine, instructions, and prophecies: The word of the Lord came to the Seer as follows"1—Doctrine and Covenants 45.

The Prophet Joseph Smith briefly described the setting of section 45 in his *History of the Church:* "At this age of the Church many false reports, lies, and foolish stories, were published in the newspapers, and circulated in every direction, to prevent people from investigating the work, or embracing the faith. . . . But to the joy of the Saints who had to struggle against every thing that prejudice and wickedness could invent, I received the following"2—Doctrine and Covenants 45.

In 1831, as now, the exact circumstances and details of the second coming of Christ generated a lot of speculation among the Saints—the type of speculation that is not particularly healthy. In Kirtland during this period, counterfeit spiritual phenomena and false spirits accompanied extreme doctrinal speculations about the Second Coming and were greatly troubling to the Church. Section 45 may have been given in part to answer some of the questions of the members and to quiet down the extreme speculations and doctrinal hysteria that some were indulging in.

In Church periodicals before 1844, verses 72–75 were not printed with Doctrine and Covenants 45, even though they did appear in the 1833 Book of Commandments and in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. This oddity may have been due to an editorial decision not to reproduce a prohibition that was no longer relevant nor to suggest to the Church's enemies that the Saints might be hiding something (see v. 72).

**Commentary**

**1. Hearken.** The injunction to listen, hearken, hear, or give ear is repeated ten times in the first fifteen verses of this revelation. The Saints of the Lord are to listen to *his* voice rather than the distorting voice of the world and its fallible media of communication. The strong emphasis on hearing and receiving this information identifies Doctrine and Covenants 45 to be of major doctrinal importance to the Church both in its 1831 context and for us today.

**1. O ye people of my church.** The designation of this revelation to the whole Church at large, rather than just for the elders or for some individual, further indicates its importance.

**2. Lest death shall overtake you.** Those who will not listen to the Lord run the risk of being found unredeemed from sin and from the devil when the Lord returns. All who are unprepared on that day will be destroyed. Also, the end of the world comes every day for somebody. When *our* last day arrives we will not be spared the pains of hell if our souls are not yet saved.

**2. The summer shall be past.** Compare Jeremiah 8:20. Summer is the time to labor and to prepare a harvest with which one may survive the winter. In many times and places those who neglected to work while there was time have found themselves without provisions when winter began and often have died for their foolishness. The Lord here applies this lesson from everyday life to spiritual things. Those who refuse to prepare for his coming while there is time will perish at his coming, and those who have refused to prepare for their own personal "last day" will face a harsher fate than starving.

**3. The advocate with the Father.** If we must plead our own case to God at the Judgment Day, we will lose, and we will not be allowed into the celestial kingdom of God. There is only one advocate, or spokesman, who can plead our case successfully to the Father, and that is the Son. He has one invincible argument that cannot fail to convince the judge and win our acquittal. That argument is his own voluntary and infinite sacrifice, his incomprehensible agony, the shedding of his *innocent* blood, and his unjust death. He defends us, not by citing the merits of *our* case, not by arguing *our* righteous deeds, but by arguing *his own* merits, his own righteousness, his own perfection, and his own voluntary sacrifice. Nothing can withstand this grand, invincible argument. No other facts, logic, reasoning, or accusations overpower it. His argument cannot be resisted even by the demands of justice—for justice has been satisfied. Jesus will accept our case and plead for us with his grand, invincible argument, however, only if we have become his through sincere repentance (D&C 18:12), if we have entered into his covenant in good faith, and if we have endured in it to the end of our lives.

**4–5. Father, behold/spare.** These words, spoken by Jesus Christ on behalf of those who are his, will irresistibly and inevitably bring them into celestial glory.

**4. That thyself might be glorified.** God's glory is the exaltation and eternal life of man. Since Jesus was sent to save and to glorify us, as he accomplishes that task the Father, who sent him and whose plan of salvation it is, also successfully accomplishes *his* work and is himself glorified by our glorification.

**6. While it is called today.** In the language of scripture, previous ages or dispensations of the gospel are sometimes called "yesterday" (see D&C 20:11–12). "Today," or "the day of this life" in which we are to perform our labors (Alma 34:31–36), is the period of our probation in which repentance and change are possible, that is, the period between our mortal birth and our resurrection. Thus, "tomorrow" would begin at the resurrection, after which change is no longer possible, and when we enter into a "new day" of our eternal existence. "Yesterday" can also be understood, in reference to our own individual existence, as the period of our premortal life. "Today," then, would be our mortal life, including our time in the spirit world, and "tomorrow" would be our resurrected life.

The meaning of "tomorrow" is found in Doctrine and Covenants 64:24, in reference to the Second Coming and the judgment of the wicked.

**7. Alpha and Omega.** See Commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 19:1.

**8. Mine own.** This phrase refers to the children of the covenant that Jehovah, or Christ, made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or Israel—particularly those belonging to Jesus' own tribe of Judah. Since the children belong to the fathers, and the fathers belong to Christ, the children should also be Jesus' own. Jesus is referring here to the generation of Jews who rejected and crucified him. Not all, or even most, Jews of Jesus' day shared responsibility for that crime, nor does any Jew born after that time. To argue that subsequent generations of Jews are guilty of the blood of Christ is to suppose some sort of "original sin" or "inherited guilt" passed from parents to their children. This idea has always been rejected by the Saints (see Articles of Faith 1:2) and is repugnant to the Lord (see Moroni 8:8–9).

**8. Gave I power.** Those Jews in Jesus' day who received him and his teachings were given the gospel, the priesthood, the new and everlasting covenant, and the fulness of gospel ordinances.

**9. I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world.** This phrase refers to the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in these latter days.

**9. Standard.** This word is a synonym for an ensign (compare D&C 98:34; 105:39). Both terms refer to a sign, banner, flag, emblem, or other object that can be raised or held aloft to help troops, followers, disciples, or members gather or rally to the right side or the right place, or to help keep them oriented and in their proper place once they've been organized. Ultimately, Jesus Christ himself, raised up on the cross in his sacrificial role as the Lamb of God, is the ensign to the nations, who will gather the faithful to himself and keep them oriented and in their right place in Zion once they have been gathered.

Since Christ is no longer upon the cross, however, the ensign raised up to the nations in the latter days will be his restored gospel, his everlasting covenant, his Zion. To this latter-day ensign the Gentiles will gather, and in so doing they will also gather to the Christ who was crucified and raised up on the cross—the ultimate ensign. Note also that the Church publication most directly responsible for proclaiming the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to the world is appropriately called the *Ensign.*

**9. For the Gentiles.** Our dispensation begins with the times of the Gentiles (see v. 28)—that period when the gospel is taken and taught first to the Gentiles, and then later to the Jews—just as the preceding dispensation began with the gospel being taken first to the Jews, and then also to the Gentiles (see 1 Nephi 13:42). The Gentiles are the inhabitants of all the nations of the earth, from Albania to Zimbabwe—*every* nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Preaching the gospel to all the world in this manner is a work primarily reserved for our latter-day dispensation.

**9. A messenger before my face.** Just as John the Baptist was an Elias who prepared the way for Christ, so the latter-day Church prepares the way for the millennial kingdom of God that will be established at the second coming of Christ. The Restoration prepares a people to receive Christ in righteousness, knowing and practicing celestial principles lest at his coming the "earth be smitten with a curse" (see D&C 110:15; 138:48).

**10. I will reason.** See Isaiah 1:18.

**11. The God of Enoch, and his brethren.**At the time this revelation was given, the Prophet Joseph Smith had already translated what is now Moses 7 in the Pearl of Great Price. The mention of Enoch and his brethren reminds the reader of the establishment of Zion in Enoch's day by the same celestial principles the Lord revealed to the Latter-day Saints. The Lord is just as able to lead us to Zion today and will do so if members of the Church will keep his commandments.

**12. Who were separated from the earth, and were received unto myself.** According to Moses 7:21, the Zion of Enoch and its people were taken physically off the earth before the Flood, just as the future inhabitants of Zion will be taken physically off the earth before the burning (see D&C 88:96–98; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 1 Nephi 13:37). Joseph Smith explained that the people of Enoch were not taken to the direct presence of God, but were translated to a terrestrial order.3 This would be roughly the same level of glory as found in Eden before the Fall and which will exist during the Millennium after the earth receives its paradisiacal glory (see Articles of Faith 1:10, where the "paradise" of "paradisiacal" is Eden). Joseph further stated that God "appointed unto him [Enoch] a ministry unto terrestrial bodies," and that Enoch's Saints are "held in reserve to be ministering angels unto many planets."4 When this earth has been raised to a terrestrial glory during the Millennium, then the Zion of Enoch shall be physically returned to the earth (see D&C 133:24; Moses 7:63).5

**12. A city reserved until a day of righteousness.** The Zion of Enoch will stay where it is until righteousness again reigns upon the earth. This will be during the Millennium, when the earth has been raised to a terrestrial glory.

**13. Strangers and pilgrims.** This phrase is a commonly recurring theme in scripture (see Hebrews 11:13–16; 1 Peter 2:11; see also Ephesians 2:19). In the Bible, the word *stranger* most often means a resident alien, someone who lives in a foreign land though his citizenship is somewhere else. A *pilgrim* is someone on a journey—just passing through. Those who look for the establishment of righteousness upon the earth and long to be citizens of Christ's kingdom when he returns must not feel too much at home in this telestial or fallen world. By virtue of the Atonement and our commitment to the new and everlasting covenant, we are already citizens of a better country than any now found upon the earth, and in the telestial realm of Babylon we are pilgrims just passing through—citizens of a better world forced to wait and dwell in Babylon until Zion is established.

**14. Obtained a promise.** God promised many ancient Saints, including Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that they and their children, if they were faithful, would inherit the millennial kingdom and that they would see it in their resurrected flesh at the second coming of Christ. All who have received the fulness of the gospel and its ordinances have received this same promise made to the patriarchs. We are the "children of the promise" made to the fathers.

**15. As unto men in days of old.** God is willing to give us the same covenant promises and the same gospel that he gave to Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and so on. If we are faithful to our covenants, we will, according to the promises of God, be like the ancient saints—patriarchs and matriarchs of an innumerable posterity in a glorious promised land, the celestial kingdom. This promise is guaranteed to us by the same gospel covenants that were given to them. God is willing, even anxious, to treat us all as Adam and Eve, or as Abraham and Sarah, or as the twelve ancient apostles and their wives (see 1 Corinthians 9:5), and to deal with us on the same terms by which he dealt with them. All that was ever available to them is available to us through the Restoration. Thus, God is the same in his dealings with human beings yesterday, today, and forever.

**16. I will show it plainly.** Beginning with verse 16, the Lord begins to tell the latter-day Church what he told his ancient disciples when they asked him about the details of his second coming. The "it" the Lord will show us is the "day of righteousness" (v. 12) that will begin with his return to the earth at his second coming.

**16. Saying.** What follows the colon in verse 16 are the words of Jesus to his disciples on the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem in the first century A.D. It is important to bear this in mind while reading these verses in order to place the information in proper historical context. The quotation extends through verse 59, excepting the editorial comment in verse 34 and the first five words of verse 35 (compare Joseph Smith–Matthew in the Pearl of Great Price).

**16. In the clouds of heaven.** This phrase is a reference to the prophecy in Daniel 7:13, where Daniel saw in a dream the end of the world and the second coming of Christ.

**16. To fulfill the promises.** All the promises of the gospel will be fulfilled for the righteous at their glorious resurrection, which takes place at the Lord's second coming.

**17. Absence of your spirits from your bodies.** Compare Doctrine and Covenants 138:50. By the end of the world, the righteous dead, including many of Jesus' ancient disciples, will look upon their time in the spirit world without their bodies as a severe limitation. While spirits in paradise are without pain, they cannot accomplish many things that can be done only with a body. A body of flesh and bones is not, as the hellenistic Greeks thought, a limitation. Rather, it is an enabling factor. It is ability, potency, and power, and we will dearly miss its use in the spirit world where we will be temporarily deprived of that means to effect, to create, and to accomplish.

**17. The day of redemption.** This phrase refers to the day when we actually return to our physical bodies and receive celestial, terrestrial, or telestial glory. Ultimately, redemption is being "bought back" from all obligations, bondage, and servitude except our obligation to Jesus Christ, who bought us with his agony and blood from death, from hell, from Satan, and from the demands of justice.6 This final redemption is linked to, simultaneous with, and brought about by the resurrection (see, for example, D&C 76:39–40, 85; 88:14, 16; Jacob 6:9), which alone puts us beyond the reach of all our enemies.

**17. Restoration of the scattered Israel.** Individual death and resurrection are symbolic of the scattering and restoration of all Israel. Just as one hair of our head shall not be lost in individual resurrection, so not a single branch or twig of the family will be lost or forgotten when the Lord gathers Israel and reconstitutes its tribes and their heritage in the latter days.

**18–24.** Jesus described to his disciples in these verses the tribulations that fell upon Jerusalem and its people in the first century A.D. These prophecies were all fulfilled with the events surrounding the first Jewish revolt against Rome in A.D. 66–73, and indeed, when Jesus first spoke these words there were many Jews alive who were still alive in A.D. 73 (see v. 21).7

**19. Desolation.** A place is made desolate by being "laid waste," made a wasteland without inhabitants. A person is made desolate by being left alone without companions or comfort. The people of "this generation," that is, the Jews of the second half of the first century, would be made desolate as individuals, and their homes and cities would become desolate places. An incredibly large number of Jews would die (Josephus said it was over a million),8 and many of the remainder would be driven out or sold as slaves into all corners of the world. Their temple would be destroyed so thoroughly that not one stone would be left standing upon another (see v. 20).

In A.D. 68, the Roman general Vespasian and his son Titus took a large Roman army into Israel to subdue rebellious Judah. When Titus surrounded Jerusalem, most who tried to escape were either chased back into the city or were caught and crucified. Within the walls of the Holy City, rival political factions, like Gadianton robber bands, stole the possessions of citizens and the food from the mouths of women and children. Pressed by the famine, mothers ate their babies; in their madness, the political gangs fought and killed each other for control of the city and even burned each other's food supplies, all while the common enemy, the Romans, waited outside the walls for the inevitable.9

Like the generation before the Flood, the generation of the Babylonian conquest, and the generations at the end of the Jaredite and Nephite societies, so was the generation of the first Jewish revolt. Because the people had become ripe in iniquity, the Spirit of the Lord had ceased striving with them, and Satan had full power over their hearts (compare Ether 15:19).10 Drunk with their own sins and with anger and rage, they could not be reached, would not repent, and were sealed up to destruction.

**19. Scattered among all nations.** Just as the lost ten tribes had been taken into bondage and scattered eight hundred years earlier, the Jews were dispersed among every nation on earth by the time of the Restoration, but they will be gathered again through the preaching of the gospel and by the power of the priesthood. The dispersed of Israel in many cases are not even aware of their Israelite heritage, having been absorbed ethnically and culturally by the nations they dwell among. But God will reveal them and lead them back.

**21. This generation of Jews shall not pass away.** Once the Jews of Jesus' day became totally ripe in their iniquity, their destruction and all of the signs preceding it occurred within one generation, or one lifetime. Not all the things that have been prophesied for the future are signs of the end, but in both the dispensation of the meridian of time—the time of Jesus and his apostles—and in the dispensation of the fulness of times—our own latter days—once those special signs of the end begin to appear, their conclusion and finale are no more than one generation away (see vv. 35, 38; Joseph Smith–Matthew 1:34). That generation will be the generation that sees the end of the times of the Gentiles—the period while Israel is scattered and the gospel is taken to every nation (see v. 30; Luke 21:24–25, 32 with Joseph Smith Translation parallels).

Bear in mind that a "generation" is a notoriously difficult measure of time to define. Is a generation twelve to sixteen years, the biological minimum; twenty years, an average for birth of a firstborn; thirty years, the average age difference between most parents and children; seventy years, the biblical human life span; or a hundred plus years, the length of the longest individual life within a generation? Better to repent now and avoid the consequences of bad assumptions or poor math skills.

**24. When that day shall come.** "That day" is a stock phrase in scripture, usually meaning the end of the world. In this case, however, it refers specifically to the end of the world *of the Jews* in the first century A.D.

**24. Shall a remnant be scattered.** The remaining Jews were in time driven out of their promised land and scattered throughout the earth. Their blood—the blood of Israel mainly through Judah, Benjamin, and Levi—has been mixing to a limited extent with that of the Gentile nations for nearly two thousand years.  The blood of Israel through Ephraim, the son of Joseph (see D&C 64:36), has been mingling much more widely among the Gentiles and for centuries longer. During the times of the Gentiles, those Gentiles who belong to Israel, whether by faith and biological descent or by faith and adoption, will be restored to Zion (see Isaiah 49:14, 20–22).

**25. But they shall remain.** Those Jews who were scattered, or rather their descendants, will remain where they are until *after* the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. For this reason, the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the return of many Jews to that land in the time since cannot be considered the *fulfillment* of the prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel, although these events are certainly a beginning (see 2 Nephi 30:7). This preliminary gathering prepares for a fulfillment that is yet to come, but that full gathering will take place only *after* the gospel has been taken to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people and all the Gentile nations have had an opportunity to accept or reject the gospel (see 3 Nephi 16:10–12).11

**25. The times of the Gentiles.** The destruction of Jerusalem and of the Jews marked the end of the dispensation of the gospel to the Jews. When the gospel was restored in the latter days, it began with the times of the Gentiles (see v. 28), a period unique in world history in which the gospel was to be taken not primarily  to the Jews as before but specifically to "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people"—to all the *Gentile* nations (1 Nephi 19:17; Mosiah 3:20; 15:28; 16:1; Alma 37:4). When the Gentile nations of all the world have had their fair chance to accept or reject the gospel, it will be taken from them and will go once again to the children of Judah and all of the house of Israel (compare D&C 90:9). After the "times of the Gentiles" are over, the dispersed of Israel will finally be gathered together.12

**26. In that day.** "That day" here refers to that last day, time, or generation in which the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled and the signs of the end will begin to occur (compare v. 30).

**26. Wars and rumors of wars.** As we approach the end of the times of the Gentiles and come closer to the second coming of Christ, social and political conditions on the earth will deteriorate and the earth will become a very dangerous place. People will become disheartened, or lose heart—"men's hearts shall fail them." This refers to the hopelessness and despair born of a world filled with crime and violence "as it was in the days of Noah" (Joseph Smith–Matthew 1:41; Matthew 24:37). These sickening conditions will lead many to conclude wrongly that the Savior is not coming until the whole earth has been destroyed.

**27. The love of men shall wax cold.** As we approach the end and Satan's influence increases over the world, natural human love and affection will decrease outside of Zion. Indications that human love is waxing cold might include the following: spouse and child abuse will increase; divorce rates will rise; many parents will no longer feel love for, or a responsibility toward, their children; and abortion will abound. Traditional families will cease to be the norm or even to be valued; the bond between men and women will diminish as traditional relations between the sexes are defined by society as adversarial, abusive, or exploitative; neighbors will victimize neighbors; families will fight over the trinkets of the world; and friends will betray friends for baubles.

**28. And when the times of the Gentiles is come in.** Verse 28 marks a chronological break from verses 25–27. The times of the Gentiles "came in" in this dispensation with Joseph Smith and the restoration of the gospel to the earth. The Book of Mormon prophets understood the latter-day Church to be established by Gentiles (see 1 Nephi 13:39–40; 15:13; 3 Nephi 26:8; Mormon 7:8; Ether 12:22; see also D&C 14:8; 109:60), who would take the Book of Mormon to other Gentiles and also to the descendants of Lehi. The times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled when the latter-day Church has completed its mission to take the gospel to every nation and when the majority of Gentiles have rejected it in favor of "the precepts of men" (see vv. 29–30). The restoration of the gospel and the times of the Gentiles are the twin events heralded in John's prophecy of the last days: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6).

**31. An overflowing scourge.** It is common to hear the present curse of AIDS discussed as a fulfillment of this prophecy. This scripture combined with verse 30, however, seems to place this scourge in the generation that sees the times of the Gentiles fulfilled—an event which cannot be said to have happened quite yet.13 Certainly the recent and sudden appearance of the Ebola virus with its staggering death rates ought to warn us of the possibility of even more horrific plagues out there, as yet unknown to us, that could desolate the world when God pours out his judgments.

Elsewhere we are told that this scourge "shall continue to be poured out from time to time, if they repent not, until the earth is empty" (D&C 5:19), and that "it shall not be stayed until the Lord come" (D&C 97:23; see also D&C 84:97). Whatever the scourge is to be, the prophecy of its arrival cannot be "fulfilled" until after the gospel has been taught in every nation, kindred, tongue, and people and the Gentiles have rejected it. Nor can this prophecy be deemed fulfilled until the sickness has covered the whole land and left it "desolated," which our contemporary diseases have not yet done.14

On the other hand, perhaps the "scourge" spoken of could include such nonbiological plagues as the wickedness, crime, war, and utter despair that will descend upon Babylon at the end (see Zechariah 14:12, 15, 18, in which the plague is said to consume the flesh of the wicked at the last day).

**32. Stand in holy places.** Places become holy not necessarily by location but rather through what is or has been done there. President Ezra Taft Benson defined "holy places" as follows: "Holy men and holy women stand in holy places, and these holy places include our temples, our chapels, our homes, and the stakes of Zion, which are, as the Lord declares, ';for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth' (D&C 115:6)."15

**33. Earthquakes . . . and many desolations.** As the end-time approaches, disasters that leave the land desolate, such as earthquakes, famines, floods, droughts, storms, and wars, will increase. The world that has rejected God's word as it comes in the scriptures or by the mouths of prophets and missionaries will hear it spoken considerably louder in the voice of disasters that leave in their wake a desolated landscape (see D&C 43:25).16 Still, as in the days of Noah, they will not listen, but will thirst all the more for violence and blood.

**35. Ye may know.** The coming of all the promised curses and plagues upon the wicked, both in the first century and in our own future, will be a testimony to the faithful that the promised blessings will also come and that the end is very near.

**37. Behold the fig-trees.** One characteristic of a fig tree is that it does not put forth its leaves until relatively late in the season, long after most of the trees are in full leaf. The Savior used this feature in a parable concerning his second coming. Although the world will not know the day nor the hour of his coming, we should observe the signs of the times, for when the fig tree puts forth its leaves, we know that summer is nigh. In other words, when the signs of the Second Coming begin to be made manifest, we know that the Second Coming is nigh or near at hand17 (see D&C 106:4–6).

**39. Shall be looking forth.** Those who "fear" God, that is, those who hold him in reverence and awe, will be looking forward to the Second Coming—they will *want* it to come! The second coming of Christ will be to them deliverance from the wickedness of the fallen world of Babylon.

**40. They shall see.** Perhaps some of the signs of Christ's coming will be seen only by those who are really looking for them. On the other hand, perhaps only the righteous will see that the increase in visible, natural disasters and other strange phenomena are not due simply to nature but are warning signs and a last call for repentance from the Lord, who is about to come in judgment with righteous indignation.

**43. The remnant.** This verse refers to the remnant of the Jewish people who have been scattered throughout the world. By the time of the coming of the "last day," they shall have been gathered together "unto this place," that is, to the place where Jesus spoke these words to his disciples—in old Jerusalem (see 2 Nephi 30:7).

**44. They shall look for me.** The antecedent for *they* is the remnant described in verse 43 who fear God and are looking for the coming of their Messiah but do not yet know that their longed-for Messiah is Jesus Christ. The Jews have the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the last days and the coming of the Messiah. They will recognize some of the signs and will be looking for his coming. Then they will see him coming in the clouds of heaven, and the prophecy of Jesus to the Jews in Matthew 26:64 will be fulfilled (see also Mark 14:62).

**45. The arm of the Lord shall fall.** That is, fall in judgment upon the wicked. The image is of one who delivers a smiting blow. Before this mighty judgment upon the world, the archangel Michael will sound his trumpet (see D&C 29:13, 26) and the righteous, both living and dead, will be lifted up off of the earth to meet Christ in the air (see also D&C 88:96–98; 133:56; 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17).

**46. If ye have slept in peace.** Those righteous dead who enjoyed the peaceful rest of paradise between death and resurrection, as opposed to suffering for their sins in hell, will be resurrected. They will be raised up to meet Christ in the air at his coming, and their redemption will be perfected, or made complete or whole.

**47. Then shall the arm of the Lord fall.**18 Once the Saints in the new and everlasting covenant, both living and dead, have been raised up to meet the Lord, *then* his indignation and judgment will fall upon the wicked residue who are left behind upon the earth.

This passage, like most others dealing with the last day, leaves ambiguous the fate of those mortals who are worthy of terrestrial glory but not of celestial glory when the Savior comes. Since the millennial earth will possess a terrestrial glory, however, and since the terrestrial are referred to elsewhere as "Christ's at his coming" (D&C 88:99) and as being resurrected in the first resurrection (see v. 54), though not in the "morning," it is possible that the living who are worthy of a terrestrial glory will also be preserved and participate in the millennial kingdom: "Some members of the Church have an erroneous idea that when the millennium comes all of the people are going to be swept off the earth except righteous members of the Church. That is not so. There will be millions of people—Catholics, Protestants, agnostics, Mohammedans, people of all classes and of all beliefs—still permitted to remain upon the face of the earth, but they will be those who have lived clean lives, those who have been free from wickedness and corruption. All who belong, by virtue of their good lives, *to the terrestrial order,* as well as those who have kept the celestial law, will remain upon the face of the earth during the millennium."19

**48. This mount.** This word refers to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, where Jesus was when he told these things to his disciples (see Zechariah 14:4).

**49–50.**These verses describe the anguish, despair, and self-reproach of the wicked just prior to their destruction at the return of the Lord. They shall then be consumed by burning, and the earth will be purified by fire to become a fit habitation for Christ and his Saints.20 It is possible that "they that watch for iniquity" means those who keep their eyes open for the opportunity to commit sin, who watch for their chance at wickedness and take it when it comes.

**51–53.** These verses describe the long-awaited collective repentance and conversion of the Jews. This is not repentance for the death of Christ, for these Jews are not guilty of that. Rather, it is the same repentance that all who come to Christ must go through. Though a few individual Jews have joined the Church since its founding in 1830, the mass conversion described in scripture will not take place, nor will the gathering of Israel be completed, until after the coming of the Lord. When the Gentile nations have heard and rejected the gospel and the world is ripe in iniquity, then the times of the Gentiles will be over, the Savior will return, and the Jews will be converted and redeemed. But this great mass conversion will await the personal appearance of Christ to the Jews in Jerusalem at the last day.

**54. And then shall the heathen nations be redeemed.** The Saints of God, those who will inherit his celestial kingdom, will be resurrected *before* Christ descends from the heavens to the earth and *before* the wicked are punished (see vv. 45–48). Then *after* the resurrection of the celestial Saints, and *after* the Savior descends to the Mount of Olives (see v. 48), and *after* his arm has fallen upon the wicked to destroy them (see v. 47), and *after* he has conversed with and converted the Jews at Jerusalem (see vv. 51–53), then the resurrection of the terrestrial, "heathen" dead will take place (see v. 54; D&C 88:99) in what might be called the "afternoon" or "evening" of the first resurrection. But it is still the *first* resurrection during which they will be raised and not the second or last resurrection (for the wicked) at the *end* of the thousand years (see Revelation 20:5–6).21

Generally the scriptures divide the world into just two categories—Jews and Gentiles, or heathens (the Bible translates the same words, *goyim* in Hebrew and *ethnikoi* in Greek, variously as either "the Gentiles," "the nations," or "the heathen"). In this last dispensation, however, it is possible to further divide the Gentile nations into "Christian nations"—those Gentile nations who have some knowledge of Jesus Christ—and "heathen nations"—those Gentile nations who have no knowledge of Christ.22 This is the distinction intended here by the use of "the heathen nations" (compare D&C 90:10). These heathen nations, who know nothing of Christ or of his commandments, are also referred to as they who "have sinned without law" (Romans 2:12), "they who died without law" (D&C 76:72), or "the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited . . . who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it" (D&C 76:73–74).

The common denominator for all these descriptions is the idea that as a general rule and because of their ignorance, these peoples may be judged more leniently for their transgressions than either Israel or the so-called Christian nations. Because they didn't have the Lord's commandments, the heathen will be less likely to be judged "wicked" than will members of the Church or other Christians who knew and rejected the commandments. Thus Doctrine and Covenants 45:54 holds out much greater hope for the unbaptized heathen than did the majority of Christian churches in 1831, most of whom taught that the unconverted "heathen" burned in hell forever and ever.

The heathen, then, did not become Christ's own—that is, his sons and daughters—during their mortal lives by entering the gospel covenant, nor were they initially his in the spirit prison—unlike the Saints who rested in paradise. But they will later gain a testimony of Jesus and be redeemed "at his coming" (D&C 88:99) and resurrected in the first resurrection.

The terrestrial glory of the heathen nations is not *prescriptive,* that is, it is not a fate that God imposes on them because they are heathens. Their equal chance for celestial glory has not been taken from them. Rather, this verse is *descriptive;* it merely describes the pattern that will, for whatever reasons, generally occur, and it is important to note that there will be many exceptions to the rule. On the one hand, for example, those heathens who accept the gospel, or who lived the intent of the gospel even without having a knowledge of it (see Romans 2:14–27), or who would have received the gospel if they had only been given a chance, will receive *celestial* glory as Saints of God (see D&C 137:7–9) and will be resurrected in the "morning" of the first resurrection with the other Saints (see D&C 45:54).

"There are millions of people, both among the Christian and heathen nations, that are still in darkness, and exclaiming, ';Oh, how glad we would be to have some knowledge of the Gospel of salvation!' By-and-by, when the Lord sends forth his servants and his angels to gather them, they will be brought home to Zion and be taught the peaceable things of the kingdom; and those that abide a celestial law will receive a celestial glory."23

On the other hand, those heathens who, regardless of their ignorance of Christ, simply loved evil, will suffer the fate of the wicked at Christ's coming and will be resurrected to telestial glory at the end of the Millennium.

**54. It shall be tolerable for them.** Though many heathens will inherit celestial glory, they will be the exception rather than the rule. On the other hand, the heathen nations will be redeemed from the devil through Christ and will be resurrected in the first resurrection, their glory being greater than that of those who are assigned to the telestial kingdom. Their terrestrial glory, neither the highest nor lowest degree, will thus be "tolerable" for them.

Once again, exceptions to the general pattern will include all those heathen who accept the gospel in the flesh, or who would have done so had they received the opportunity (see D&C 137:7; Articles of Faith 1:2). Similarly, the wicked heathen, like the wicked of all nations, will receive telestial glory.

**55. Satan shall be bound.**24 The binding of Satan shall be accomplished in two ways. First, all the wicked people, his willing instruments, will have been destroyed, and all those who remain upon the earth will be celestial or terrestrial in nature and will be committed to Christ. Consequently, there will be no one through whom Satan can act to accomplish his will (see 1 Nephi 22:26; D&C 101:28). Second, since Satan will be not only bound but "sealed" (Revelation 20:3), we may assume that the power of God will directly restrict his activities and neutralize his influence.25

**56–59. The ten virgins.** Usually we apply the parable of the ten virgins (see Matthew 25:1–13) to the Church itself to contrast the fates of valiant and negligent Saints. President Spencer W. Kimball indicated that the ten virgins represent the members of the Church, not the rank and file of the world (see *Faith Precedes the Miracle,*253). When so applied the five wise virgins are those who have received the truth, are led by the Spirit, and are not deceived (see v. 57), and the foolish virgins are the wicked who are "hewn down and cast into the fire," those who are unworthy and unprepared to abide Christ's coming or his judgments.

**57. Abide the day.** This phrase means to survive "that day," "the last day," and to continue to live, or abide, upon the earth after the coming of Christ and the destruction of the wicked.

**58. The earth shall be given unto them.** Christ is speaking of those who are alive and mortal at his second coming. If they are righteous, their mortal lives shall continue into the Millennium (see v. 57) and the earth will be given to them for a temporal inheritance (see v. 58). They will continue to have mortal children in the Millennium, and those children will grow up with their agency but without sin. The mortal population of the earth will continue to grow throughout the Millennium.

Verses 58–59 also mark the end of the quotation from the Savior's teachings to his disciples in the first century (see vv. 16–59). With verses 60–75 there is a change of setting, and these verses are given directly to Joseph Smith and to the Latter-day Saints.

**60. Until the New Testament be translated.** Until 7 March 1831, the date Doctrine and Covenants 45 was given, Joseph and Sidney worked on the Joseph Smith Translation for the book of Genesis only. Here in verses 60–61 the Lord invites them to begin work on the New Testament. The translation of Joseph Smith–Matthew began the next day, 8 March 1831, which indicates the importance the prophet Joseph Smith placed upon the work.

**60. This chapter.** This phrase probably refers to Matthew 24 in the New Testament, now found in the Pearl of Great Price as Joseph Smith–Matthew.

**60. In it all these things shall be made known.** The antecedent of *it* is the Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament, including prominently Joseph Smith's translation of Matthew 24. This particular chapter, Joseph Smith–Matthew, does indeed reveal details of Christ's prophecies to his disciples about the Second Coming, details that were lost between the first century and 1831. The information found there was intended specifically for the Saints of the latter days in order to prepare them for what was coming.

**63. Wars in your own lands.** This prophecy undoubtedly refers to the Civil War, at this time still thirty years away, and perhaps also to other wars we have not yet experienced (see D&C 38:29–32; 87:1–8).

**64. Western countries.** The safety of the Saints was in moving from their eastern homes in New York and Pennsylvania and gathering to the West—first west to Ohio, then west to Missouri if they could establish Zion there, and if they could not, yet further west to Deseret. Though they did not establish a Zion in Missouri, by following the prophet Brigham Young to the mountains of the West the Saints were still spared the desolating slaughter of the Civil War.

**65. Purchase an inheritance.** The Lord here made it clear to the Saints how they were to acquire lands in "the western countries" to establish Zion. They were to "gather up" their riches and buy the lands.

**66. The New Jerusalem.** Zion will be larger than just one city, but the center place will be in Jackson County, Missouri, and will be called New Jerusalem. This New Jerusalem and the old Jerusalem of David and Isaiah will both be world capitols in the Millenium. "In the scriptures four words seem closely related to the concept of Zion: *gathering,* *preparation,* *defense,* and *refuge.* The tribulations and judgments that will be poured out upon the world prior to the Second Coming will be so extensive and devastating that if the Lord did not prepare a means of preservation, his people too would perish. But he has prepared a means for his people to escape those terrible times; that means is Zion."26 In the terrible times that precede the coming of the Savior, there will be no safety or security anywhere upon the earth except in Zion, which will be governed by the laws of God and protected by the power of God.27

**67. Glory of the Lord . . . terror of the Lord.** For the righteous Saints, Zion will be glorious, but for its enemies Zion will be terrible. The power of the Lord will terrify all Zion's enemies so that they will fear to approach her.

**68–71.** In the period before the coming of the Savior, there will be no peace or security anywhere or with anyone outside of Zion. The rest of the world will become an armed camp, and the whole world will be full of blood and schemes "as it was in the days of Noah" (Joseph Smith–Matthew 1:41). The inhabitants of the earth will then be as Noah's neighbors were, as the Jews of Lehi's day, as the Jews of the first revolt, and as the Jaredites and Nephites on the eve of their destruction (see Ether 15:19–22; Moroni 9:2–5, 8–23). Those who will neither commit violence nor suffer it must flee to Zion, the only refuge of safety on earth.

**72. Keep these things from going abroad.**It was not yet the right time to publish or preach to the world the things found in this revelation, as they could be misunderstood or distorted and could arouse the anger of the world against the Saints more quickly as they tried to establish Zion in Missouri.

**74. He shall be terrible unto them.** There will be some time between the resurrection of the righteous and the final destruction of the wicked. Apparently, this will be ample time for the wicked to realize what is happening and to wish the mountains would fall on them instead (see also v. 75).