

D & C Lesson 28

“O GOD, WHERE ART THOU?”

Prepared by Duane S. Crowther, August 2001

“All things work together for good to them that love God, . . .” [Ro. 8:28]
“We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” [Acts 14:22]

1. **Joseph Smith’s prayer in Liberty Jail and the Lord’s response** [March 20, 1839]

A. **The prayer:** “O God, where art thou?” [D&C 121:1-6]

B. **The Lord’s answer:**

1. *Consolation:* “My Son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; and then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high.” [121:7-10]

2. *Cursing of the wicked:* “Cursed are all those who shall lift up the heel against mine anointed, saith the Lord.” [D&C 121:11-25]

3. *The promise of knowledge:* “God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, . . . that has not been revealed since the world was until now.” [D&C 121:26-33]

4. *Many are called but few are chosen:* “The rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and . . . cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.” [D&C 121:34-40]

5. *No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood:* “Only by long- suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness, and pure knowledge.” [D&C 121:41-44]

6. *The admonition and promise:* “Let your bowels also be full of charity towards all men, . . . and let virtue garnish your thoughts unceasingly; then shall:” (a) “thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God.” (b) “the doctrine of the priesthood shall distill upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.” (c) “the Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion.” (d) “thy scepter [shall be] an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth.” (e) “thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion.” (f) “without compulsory means [thy dominion] shall flow unto thee forever and ever.” [D&C 121:45-46]

2. **The purposes of adversity**

A. “Adversity is part of God’s plan for our testing and growth during mortality. We came to earth knowing we would experience pain, trials, and other difficulties.” [*Gospel Doctrine Instructor’s Manual*, 1999, p. 159]

B. “It must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, . . . righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. [2 *Ne.* 2:11]

C. “[Alma] beheld that their afflictions had truly humbled them, and that they were in a preparation to hear the word.” [*Al.* 32:5-6]

D. “Because of the exceedingly great length of the war . . . many were softened because of their afflictions, insomuch that they did humble themselves before God, even in the depth of humility.” [*Al.* 62:41]

E. “Thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, yea, except he doth visit them with death and with terror, and with famine and with all manner of pestilence, they will not remember him.” [*Hel.* 12:3 (1-5)]

F. “I will try you and prove you . . . ; I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant, even unto death, that you may be found worthy.” [D&C 98:12, 14-15]

G. “They must needs be chastened and tried, even as Abraham, who was commanded to offer up his only son. For all those who will not endure chastening, but deny me, cannot be sanctified.” [D&C 101:4-5]

H. “My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them, even the glory of Zion; and he that will not bear chastisement is not worthy of my kingdom.” [D&C 136:31]

I. “Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.” [D&C 122:7]

J. “He that is faithful in tribulation, the reward of the same is greater in the kingdom of heaven.” [D&C 58:2 (1-5)]

K. “I take pleasure in infirmities, . . . for when I am weak, then am I strong.” [2 Cor. 12:10]

L. “I, the Lord, have suffered the affliction to come upon them, wherewith they have been afflicted, because of their transgressions.” [D&C 101:2]

1. “While transgression is one source of adversity, it is not the only source. Some adversity comes because even for the righteous ‘there is an opposition in all things’ (2 Nephi 2:11). Some adversity comes as a natural consequence of the frailty and corruptibility of the mortal body. Some comes because of accidents, because of our own choices that aren’t necessarily transgressions, and because of other people’s choices—things that God can protect us from but sometimes does not because ‘the basic gospel law is free agency and eternal development’ {**Spencer W. Kimball**, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1973], p. 96). Adversity can also come ‘to accomplish the Lord’s own purposes in our life that we may receive the refinement that comes from testing’ (**Richard G. Scott**, *Ensign*, November 1995, p. 16).” [*Gospel Doctrine Instructor’s Manual*, p. 160]

2. **Harold B. Lee**: “Living the gospel of Jesus Christ is no guarantee that adversity will not come into our lives; but living the gospel does give us the strength and faith and power to rise above that adversity and look beyond the present trouble to the brighter day.” [*Improvement Era*, December 1967, p. 47]

3. The Lord’s counsel to those who experience adversity

1. “Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for, lo, I am with thee.” [D&C 24:8] See also *D&C 31:9; 54:10; 121:7; Al. 17:11; Ro. 12:12*.

2. “Rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks; waiting patiently on the Lord, for your prayers have entered into the Lord of Sabaoth [hosts], and . . . all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good, and to my name’s glory, saith the Lord.” [D&C 98:1-3]

3. “Care not for the body, neither the life of the body; but care for the soul, and for the life of the soul. And seek the face of the Lord always, that in patience ye may possess your souls, and ye shall have eternal life.” [D&C 101:36-38] See also *Lk. 9:23-25; Gal. 6:2*.

4. “They did remember how great things the Lord had done for them, that he had delivered them . . . from all manner of afflictions, . . . and they did pray unto the Lord continually.” [*Al. 62:48-51*]

5. “Whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day.” [*Al. 36:3*]

6. “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. [*Gal. 6:2*] See *Mos. 18:8-11*.

7. “I, the Lord, will feel after them, and if they harden not their hearts, and stiffen not their necks against me, they shall be converted, and I will heal them.” [D&C 112:13]

8. “Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause, and send down justice upon those who seek your destruction.” [*Jac. 3:1*] See also *Al. 24:13-16; 36:27; 2 Cor. 1:3-11*.

