

FRANK F. JUDD JR.

JESUS CHRIST: THE SAVIOR WHO KNOWS



Jesus knows and loves us. This is a powerful and reassuring reality of the restored gospel. The resurrected Savior declared this truth to the Nephites: “I know my sheep, and they are numbered” (3 Nephi 18:31; see also John 10:14, 27). But what does it mean that Jesus knows us? This truth extends beyond the Savior’s knowledge of our identity. Elder Richard G. Scott taught, “The Savior knows you; he loves you and is aware of your specific needs.”¹ Our Redeemer does not have just a superficial knowledge, but rather He personally understands our true identity, our innermost needs, and our eternal potential. This chapter explores what Jesus Christ knows about each one of us, how He gained that intimate knowledge, and most importantly, why it is imperative that we are aware of this glorious

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CELEBRATING EASTER

truth. I hope that a clearer understanding of these issues will foster a deeper comprehension of the life, death, and Resurrection of our Savior, and result in a greater and more joyful appreciation of the Easter celebration.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE

Two essential ways of gaining knowledge are by study and by experience.² Both means are important. The Lord commanded the Prophet Joseph Smith to learn through his own research: “Study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people” (D&C 90:15; see also 88:118; 109:7, 14). Joseph Smith was also informed concerning his suffering in Liberty Jail, “All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:7).

Some languages, such as the Greek of the New Testament, contain different words to distinguish these kinds of knowledge. While they overlap slightly in meaning, the Greek verb *oída* means “to have information about,” while the verb *ginōskō* can refer to “familiarity acquired through experience or association with a pers[on] or thing.”³ Unfortunately, however, in the King James Version of the New Testament both of these separate and distinct Greek words are translated into English as the verb “to know.” For instance, the Savior taught that we should know the information contained in the scriptures. In the Gospel of Matthew when Jesus rebuked a group of Sadducees, the Greek word for knowledge of facts is used: “Ye do err, not knowing [*oída*] the scriptures” (Matthew 22:29). On the other hand, Jesus also emphasized the need for knowledge

“JESUS CHRIST: THE SAVIOR WHO KNOWS”

by experience. In the Savior’s famous Intercessory Prayer, the Gospel of John uses the Greek word for experiential knowledge: “And this is life eternal, that they might know [*ginōskō*] thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). This example underscores how deeply we must come to know God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ to gain eternal life.⁴

Modern revelation reinforces the link between gaining knowledge and gaining salvation: “It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance” (D&C 131:6). Certainly, studying the scriptures and other good literature helps us build an essential foundation. But scriptural or literary knowledge is not the ultimate requirement for salvation. The Prophet Joseph Smith clarified: “Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to *them*, can never give *us* a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. *Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experience* through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose. Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject.”⁵ In addition to learning through participation in sacred ordinances and receiving revelation, experiential knowledge can also be gained by internalizing gospel principles. President David O. McKay taught:

Gaining knowledge is one thing and applying it, quite another. Wisdom is the right application of knowledge; and true education—the education for which the Church stands—is the application of knowledge to the development of a noble and Godlike

CELEBRATING EASTER

character. A man may possess a profound knowledge of history and of mathematics; he may be [an] authority in psychology, biology, or astronomy; he may know all the discovered truths pertaining to geology and natural science; but if he has not with his knowledge the nobility of soul which prompts him to deal justly with his fellow men, to practise virtue and holiness in personal life, he is not a truly educated man. Character is the true aim of education.⁶

How does a wise person come to “know the only true God and Jesus Christ” by experience in the way the Savior intended? John the Beloved gave the answer: “And hereby we do know that we know him, *if we keep his commandments*. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar” (1 John 2:3–4; emphasis added).⁷ The most important knowledge is gained by experience—specifically through revelation and obedience to the commandments of God. Thus, the Lord has explained, “Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life *through his diligence and obedience* than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come” (D&C 130:18–19; emphasis added).⁸

Certain knowledge can be acquired only by those who are obedient. President Gordon B. Hinckley has taught: “Those who live the Word of Wisdom know the truth of the Word of Wisdom. Those who engage in missionary service know the divine wisdom behind that service. Those who are making an effort to strengthen their families in

“JESUS CHRIST: THE SAVIOR WHO KNOWS”

obedience to the call of the Lord know that they reap the blessings of doing so. Those who engage in temple work know the truth of that work, its divine and eternal implications. Those who pay their tithing know the divine promise underlying that great law, the law of finance for the Church. Those who keep the Sabbath know the divine wisdom which provided for the Sabbath day. . . . Simply live the gospel, and everyone who does so will receive in his heart a conviction of the truth of that which he lives.”⁹ These principles of gaining knowledge through experience and obedience also apply to Jesus Christ.

THE SAVIOR’S PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE

Our Savior is omniscient, all-knowing in both senses of the word *knowledge*—by study and by experience. The prophet Jacob taught: “O the greatness of the mercy of our God, the Holy One of Israel. . . . For he knoweth all things, and there is not anything save he knows it” (2 Nephi 9:19–20).¹⁰ Further, in a modern revelation the Savior declared that He is “the same which knoweth all things, for all things are present before mine eyes” (D&C 38:2; see also John 16:30).¹¹

The Joseph Smith Translation emphasizes the fact that during His lifetime, Jesus did not depend upon earthly teachers to the same degree that others did: “Jesus grew up with his brethren, and waxed strong, and waited upon the Lord for the time of his ministry to come. And he served under his father, and he spake not as other men, neither could he be taught; for he needed not that any man should teach him” (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 3:23).¹²

CELEBRATING EASTER

Despite His divine Sonship, Jesus also gained knowledge as a mortal being, line upon line and precept upon precept. While growing up in Nazareth, “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52).¹³

Jesus gained factual knowledge by study, especially study of the scriptures. He knew the Old Testament scriptures thoroughly and often cited passages during His sermons (see Matthew 5:21–47). While fasting in the wilderness of Judea, the Savior quoted specific scriptures in order to counter Satan’s temptations (see Matthew 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13).¹⁴ At a synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus read from the scriptures and proclaimed Himself to be the fulfillment of prophecy (see Luke 4:16–21). On the road to Emmaus, the resurrected Savior walked with some disciples and “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). As Jehovah, the premortal Savior said, “I am more intelligent than they all” (Abraham 3:19).¹⁵ Concerning this, Elder Neal A. Maxwell explained: “This means that Jesus knows more about astrophysics than all the humans who have ever lived, who live now, and who will yet live. Likewise, the same may be said about any other topic or subject. Moreover, what the Lord knows is, fortunately, *vastly* more—not just *barely* more—than the combination of what all mortals know.”¹⁶

The Savior also gained knowledge by His own experience during His earthly sojourn, encountering the same types of situations that all mortals do. King Benjamin prophesied that Jesus would “suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue” (Mosiah 3:7).¹⁷

“JESUS CHRIST: THE SAVIOR WHO KNOWS”

During His mortal ministry, Jesus also knew that He was going to suffer and die for the sins of the world (see Matthew 16:21; 17:22–23; 28:18–19). The Savior’s own experience through obedience to His Father, however, perfected that knowledge. As Elder Maxwell has explained: “Jesus knew cognitively what He must do, but not experientially. He had never personally known the exquisite and exacting process of an atonement before. Thus, when the agony came in its fulness, it was so much, much worse than even He with his unique intellect had ever imagined!”¹⁸

THE SAVIOR’S VICARIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF SIN

Another dimension of the Savior’s knowledge is the fact that He knows what we go through when we sin. As stated above, Jesus understands us because His mortal life, full of temptations, was similar to that of all human beings. A key difference, however, distinguishes the Savior’s mortal experience from ours. As the Apostle Paul taught concerning us, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). But Jesus Christ “was in all points tempted like as we are, *yet without sin*” (Hebrews 4:15; emphasis added).¹⁹ How can our Savior really understand what it is like to give in to temptation, when He never committed a sin? The answer lies in the Savior’s experience of the Atonement.²⁰

Because of His mortal life, Jesus knows what it is like to be tempted, but because of His experience in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross,²¹ Jesus vicariously knows our experience with sin. The resurrected Savior declared

CELEBRATING EASTER

to the Nephites concerning His experience, “I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in *taking upon me the sins of the world*, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning” (3 Nephi 11:11; emphasis added).²² While the Savior prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane following the Last Supper, He was in such agony that “his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44).²³ What made Jesus sweat blood from His pores?

It was, of course, the incomprehensible experience of taking upon Himself the sins of the world. There is symbolic meaning in the name of the place where these things occurred. Significantly, the Hebrew name *Gethsemane* means “oil press.”²⁴ Elder Russell M. Nelson explained that in the place where Jesus suffered, “olives had been pressed under the weight of great stone wheels to squeeze precious oil from the olives. So the Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane was literally pressed under the weight of the sins of the world. He sweated great drops of blood—his life’s ‘oil’—which issued from every pore.”²⁵ But there seems to be a specific element that directly contributed to this horrible physical reaction.

While upon the cross Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46). It may be hard for some to imagine that God would really forsake, or leave behind, His Only Begotten Son. But that is exactly what happened. President Brigham Young taught: “At the very moment, at the hour when the crisis came for him to offer up his life, *the Father withdrew Himself, withdrew His Spirit*, and cast a vail [*sic*] over him. That is what made him

“JESUS CHRIST: THE SAVIOR WHO KNOWS”

sweat blood. If he had had the power of God upon him, he would not have sweat blood; but all was withdrawn from him, and a veil was cast over him, and he then pled with the Father not to forsake him.”²⁶ It is true that in Gethsemane “there appeared an angel unto him [Christ] from heaven, strengthening him” (Luke 22:43). But this support seems to have been temporary, for according to the Savior’s own allusion to the presses of Gethsemane, He declared: “I have trodden the wine-press alone . . . and none were with me” (D&C 133:50; see also 76:107; 88:106; Isaiah 63:3).

According to President Young, the withdrawal of the Spirit seems to be the key to understanding why the Savior sweat blood in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Spirit (and a supporting angel) had been providing Jesus with protection from the full extent of His vicarious suffering. The Lord once taught Martin Harris concerning His experience in the garden:

I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore. . . .

Wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power; and that you confess your sins, lest you suffer these punishments of which I have spoken, *of which in the smallest, yea, even in the least degree you have tasted at the time I withdrew my Spirit.* (D&C 19:16–20; emphasis added)²⁷

CELEBRATING EASTER

This revelation reaffirms that unrepented sin and the loss of the Spirit cause terrible suffering. It also confirms that when Martin Harris sinned and lost the Spirit, he experienced the same kind of suffering, though a miniscule portion that the Savior experienced in Gethsemane when He bled from every pore.²⁸ Conversely, this scripture shows that in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus Christ experienced what humans experience when they sin—suffering as a result of the loss of the Spirit of the Lord.²⁹ Because of the withdrawal of the Spirit, the Savior suffered for the sins of the world *to the fullest degree* and sweat blood from His pores.³⁰

Why would God the Father withdraw His Spirit from His Beloved Son in His hour of need? As with Martin Harris, the Holy Ghost withdraws from us when we sin. The Lord has declared in the latter days, “He that repents not, from him shall be taken even the light which he has received; for my Spirit shall not always strive with man” (D&C 1:33; see also Genesis 6:3; 1 Nephi 7:14; 2 Nephi 26:11; Ether 2:15; Moses 8:17). When Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world, He vicariously—but literally—became guilty in our behalf. The Apostle Paul taught, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, *being made a curse for us*” (Galatians 3:13; emphasis added).³¹ In another epistle, Paul further taught that God “made him [Christ] to be sin for us” (2 Corinthians 5:21).³² Somehow Jesus took upon Himself the sins of all mankind in a very real way—becoming “a curse” and “sin” in the process, and as a result the Father withdrew His Spirit from the Savior.³³

Stephen E. Robinson summarized this principle: “Christ had become guilty of the sins of the world, guilty in our

“JESUS CHRIST: THE SAVIOR WHO KNOWS”

place. . . . In Gethsemane the best among us vicariously became the worst among us and suffered the very depths of hell. And as one who was guilty, the Savior experienced for the first time in his life the loss of the Spirit of God and of communion with his Father.”³⁴ Because Jesus Christ literally took upon Himself the sins of the world, vicariously became full of sin, lost the Spirit, and experienced incomprehensible suffering, He not only knows what it is like to be tempted, but He also intimately knows what we feel like when we disobey. As a result of bearing the heavy burden of guilt and regret caused by sin, the Savior has perfect empathy for the sinful soul.

ADDITIONAL SUFFERING AND KNOWLEDGE

The Savior’s knowledge of us, however, includes much more than His comprehension of temptation and sin. How much more? The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews taught concerning Christ, “*In all things* it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren” (Hebrews 2:17; emphasis added).³⁵ Alma the Younger prophesied that Christ would not only experience His own “pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind” (Alma 7:11) and “take upon him[self] the sins of his people” (v. 13) but also take upon Himself the “pains,” “sicknesses,” and “infirmities” of mankind (vv. 11–12). According to Alma, then, in Gethsemane the Savior gained a complete comprehension not only of sin but also of other negative experiences that we go through. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland concluded that this additional suffering allowed the Savior to “bear every

CELEBRATING EASTER

mortal infirmity; feel every personal heartache, sorrow, and loss.”³⁶ Thus, because of Gethsemane, Jesus Christ not only came to fully know what we go through when we sin but also what we go through when we experience grief and sorrow that has nothing to do with sinful behavior.³⁷

Why did Jesus undergo additional suffering—in particular those things that had nothing to do with sin? When Alma prophesied that Jesus would take upon himself the pains, sicknesses, and infirmities of mankind, he also explained that the Savior would do this “that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:12).³⁸ Elder Maxwell explained from these passages that Jesus suffered in this additional way “in order that He might be filled with perfect, personal mercy and empathy and thereby know how to succor us in our infirmities. *He thus fully comprehends human suffering.*”³⁹ Jesus Christ really does know what it is like to be each one of us when we experience heartache and sorrow. As a result, He has full compassion for us in our individual situations.

In this way, Jesus has become the ideal judge of our eternal destiny. Only a judge who understands completely the experiences of the defendant can determine the correct verdict beyond question. Otherwise there would always be the possibility that the judge did not know some important fact that might bring about a different verdict. Concerning this, Elder Glenn L. Pace concluded: “Part of the reason the Savior suffered in Gethsemane was so that he would have an infinite compassion for us as we experience our trials

“JESUS CHRIST: THE SAVIOR WHO KNOWS”

and tribulations. Through his suffering in Gethsemane, the Savior became qualified to be the perfect judge. Not one of us will be able to approach him on the Judgment Day and say, ‘You don’t know what it was like.’ He knows the nature of our trials better than we do, for he ‘descended below them all.’”⁴⁰

Additional scriptures shed light on the extent of our Savior’s knowledge of us. Christ’s knowledge of us is not merely collective; it is individual. While prophesying of the future Messiah, the prophet Isaiah declared, “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed” (Isaiah 53:10; see also Mosiah 14:10). After the prophet Abinadi quoted this passage to the people of King Noah, he defined those who are the “seed” of Christ: “Whosoever has heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord—I say unto you, that all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins, I say unto you, that these are his seed” (Mosiah 15:11).⁴¹ Thus, Christ’s “seed” are those who have believed the Savior and utilized His Atonement.

What did Isaiah mean that Christ would “see his seed” when He would “make his soul an offering for sin” in Gethsemane?⁴² Elder Merrill J. Bateman interpreted this passage in the following way: “In the garden and on the cross, *Jesus saw each of us*,” and therefore “the Savior’s atonement in the garden and on the cross is intimate as well

CELEBRATING EASTER

as infinite. Infinite in that it spans the eternities. Intimate in that *the Savior felt each person's pains, sufferings, and sicknesses.*"⁴³

As a result of His experience in Gethsemane, our Savior not only understands what it is like to be tempted and to give in to sin, He also has a personal knowledge of the mortal experience for each person individually. As Elder Maxwell taught, "There is no personal problem through which anyone has passed or will pass but what Jesus understands profoundly, perfectly, and personally."⁴⁴ He knows what it is like to be each one of us when we are sick, lonely, depressed, or mistreated.⁴⁵ Jesus Christ is in the ideal position to have compassion upon us, precisely because He knows us perfectly and personally, even better than we know ourselves. He therefore has become not only our perfect judge but also our perfect advocate—our perfect friend.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Once we understand that our Savior has a perfect knowledge of us, what should we do about it? The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews declared: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*" (Hebrews 4:15–16; emphasis added). The phrase "throne of grace" refers to the "mercy seat" on the top of the ark of the covenant that was placed in the Holy of Holies in the temple at Jerusalem (see Exodus 25:18–22).

“JESUS CHRIST: THE SAVIOR WHO KNOWS”

The mercy seat itself symbolized the presence of God (see Exodus 30:6). Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies and sprinkle the mercy seat with blood, “symbolizing the power of the Atonement to cleanse all of repentant Israel from their sins and to render them worthy to be in the presence of the Lord.”⁴⁶ Coming “boldly unto the throne of grace,” then, symbolizes confidently approaching our Heavenly Father in prayer in the name of His Son, the supernal high priest, in order that we might take advantage of the mercy and forgiveness available through the Atonement (see Hebrews 3:1, 5:5, 9:11).

We should not timidly seek these blessings, thinking that our Savior will not understand what we have done or what we are going through. He knows! He understands! Elder Maxwell taught, “Jesus knows and takes into account, personally and perfectly, the highly individualized situations of our ‘tether and pang,’ including the innermost desires and intents of our hearts.”⁴⁷ Because this is so, we should confidently seek for relief through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, which includes not only forgiveness of sins, but also daily spiritual assistance to live and endure. Elder Gene R. Cook concluded: “What a glorious thought that, in truth, Jesus Christ is capable of bearing the problems and challenges that we each face in our daily lives. He will not only help us to be saved at the Judgment Day, but he and his Father will be involved with us on a regular basis if we will find access to them.”⁴⁸

CELEBRATING EASTER

CONCLUSION

During His mortal life, Jesus learned all about temptation. In Gethsemane, Jesus learned what it is like to sin. Because of this, some may think that the Atonement relates only to repentance and forgiveness of sins. But the experience in Gethsemane also gave the Savior intimate knowledge about the mortal experience for each one of us so that He could help us. Elder Holland testified that “the Savior’s Atonement lifts from us not only the burden of our sins but also the burden of our disappointments and sorrows, our heartaches and our despair” and that this knowledge gives us “a reason and a way to improve, an incentive to lay down our burdens and take up our salvation.”⁴⁹

Understanding that our Savior has a perfect knowledge of our individual condition and our unique situation, we should join hands with Him as we face the road of life ahead. The prophet Nephi declared concerning his mortal condition and relationship with the Savior: “When I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins; nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted. My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness” (2 Nephi 4:19–20). Jesus Christ is truly the Savior who knows. And because He knows, He is uniquely qualified both to save us from sin and to carry us through the unpredictable wilderness of our lives.

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, “The Power to Make a Difference,” *Ensign*, November 1983, 70.

“JESUS CHRIST: THE SAVIOR WHO KNOWS”

2. For a more detailed discussion of the many ways to gain knowledge, see Gerald N. Lund, “An Anti-Christ in the Book of Mormon—The Face May Be Strange, but the Voice Is Familiar,” in *Selected Writings of Gerald N. Lund* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 120–22.
3. See Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 693, 199.
4. It is interesting to note that this same Greek word for “knowledge by experience” is used in the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint) to refer to the marital relationship between husband and wife (see Genesis 4:1, 17, 25). Symbolically, our covenant relationship with the Savior is often described in terms of a marriage, with Jesus as the bridegroom and Church members as the bride (see Matthew 9:14–15; 25:1–13; John 3:27–29; Revelation 19:7–9). See also Stephen E. Robinson, *Believing Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 24–25.
5. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 324; emphasis added. Note also Elder Jeffrey R. Holland’s comments: “Sometimes we seek heaven too obliquely, focusing on programs or history or the experience of others. Those are important but not as important as personal experience, true discipleship, and the strength that comes from experiencing firsthand the majesty of His touch” (“Broken Things to Mend,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 70).
6. David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals* (Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953), 440. Concerning this, Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught: “Knowledge—discovery, its preservation,

CELEBRATING EASTER

its perpetuation—is very important. Yet, being knowledgeable while leaving undeveloped the virtues of love, mercy, meekness, and patience is not enough for full discipleship. Mere intellectual assent to a truth deprives us of the relevant, personal experiences that come from applying what we profess to believe. There were probably orientation briefings in the premortal world about how this mortal life would unfold for us, but the real experience is another thing! Thus, while knowledge is clearly very important, standing alone it cannot save us” (“Becoming a Disciple,” *Ensign*, June 1996, 13–14).

7. In this verse, each instance of the English verb “to know” is a translation of the Greek word for knowledge by experience (*ginōskō*).
8. For the connection between obedience and knowledge, see John 7:17; 8:31–32; Mosiah 4:10; Alma 26:22; D&C 89:18–19.
9. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 403–4. President Hinckley also taught: “No force on earth can stop the Almighty from pouring down knowledge . . . if we will live in righteousness, obey the principles of the gospel, do what we ought to do as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and walk in obedience to the commandments of God. *We will then receive enlightenment and knowledge and understanding and faith*, and our lives will be enriched and be made more happy and more fruitful” (quoted in “News of the Church,” *Ensign*, October 1995, 75; emphasis added).
10. The Book of Mormon clearly teaches that “the Holy One of Israel” is Jesus Christ (see 2 Nephi 25:29; Omni 1:26).

“JESUS CHRIST: THE SAVIOR WHO KNOWS”

11. See also Marion G. Romney, “My Testimony of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, September 1974, 5.
12. See also Thomas A. Wayment, ed., *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 5.
13. Modern revelation teaches that the Savior “received not of the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace; and he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness. And thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fulness at first” (D&C 93:12–13).
14. See also Howard W. Hunter, “The Temptations of Christ,” *Ensign*, November 1976, 18.
15. For Jesus’s identity as Jehovah, see 3 Nephi 15:4–5 and John 8:58–59.
16. Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 22.
17. Besides the famous temptations in the wilderness of Judea (see Matthew 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13), see also Matthew 16:1; 19:3; 22:8, 35. Alma prophesied that Christ would “go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind” (Alma 7:11).
18. Neal A. Maxwell, “Willing to Submit,” *Ensign*, May 1985, 72–73.
19. Paul taught that Christ “knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21).
20. See Robinson, *Believing Christ*, 116–25.
21. Both Elder James E. Talmage and Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that the terrible type of suffering that the Savior endured in the Garden of Gethsemane “recurred” while He was upon the cross. See James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of

CELEBRATING EASTER

- Latter-day Saints, 1915), 661; Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), xiv, 289; and Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979–81), 4:224.
22. See also Alma 34:8: “Christ shall come among the children of men, to take upon him the transgressions of his people, and that he shall atone for the sins of the world.”
 23. Both the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants confirm that the language in this scripture is to be taken literally (see Mosiah 3:7; D&C 19:18).
 24. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21–28* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 395.
 25. Russell M. Nelson, “Why This Holy Land?” *Ensign*, December 1989, 17–18. See also Robinson, *Believing Christ*, 119–20.
 26. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 3:206; emphasis added. On this issue, see also Robert L. Millet, “Treading the Winepress Alone,” in *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 5: The Gospels* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 434–35.
 27. At this point in Church history, Martin Harris was having second thoughts about mortgaging part of his farm to pay for the publication of the Book of Mormon (see Stephen E. Robinson and H. Dean Garrett, *A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000–2005], 1:110–11).
 28. Concerning these verses, Robinson and Garrett conclude: “The unrepentant will, however, each suffer *for their own sins* as [Jesus] suffered *for the sins of the world*, suffering exactly the same kind of anguish, but not to the same degree” (Robinson and Garrett, *Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, 1:118; emphasis in original).

“JESUS CHRIST: THE SAVIOR WHO KNOWS”

29. Robert J. Matthews taught, “[Christ] died a physical death on the cross, and he died a ‘spiritual death’ in the Garden of Gethsemane (as well as on the cross) when he took upon himself the sins of all mankind” (*A Bible! A Bible!* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990], 260).
30. The Lord has declared in modern revelation that the Savior “descended below” everything that any mortal has experienced. See D&C 122:8; 88:6. On this issue, see also Millet, “Treading the Winepress Alone,” 436–38.
31. Paul was alluding to the reference in the law of Moses, where the Lord declared to ancient Israel: “If a man have committed a sin worthy of death. . . . Thou [shalt] hang him on a tree . . . for he that is hanged is accursed of God” (Deuteronomy 21:22–23).
32. Note the interpretation of C. K. Barrett: “Christ became *sin*; that is, he came to stand in that relation with God which normally is the result of sin, estranged from God and the object of his wrath” (*The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [London: A & C Black, 1973], 180). F. F. Bruce refers to this passage from C. K. Barrett when interpreting Galatians 3:13; see *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 166. In light of Barrett’s interpretation of Paul that Christ became sin and the object of God’s wrath, note that modern revelation calls Christ’s experience in Gethsemane “the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God” (D&C 76:107; see also 88:106).
33. Robert L. Millet interpreted Galatians 3:13 and 2 Corinthians 5:21 to mean the innocent man Jesus vicariously became “the great sinner” in Gethsemane (*The Power of*

CELEBRATING EASTER

the Word: Saving Doctrines from the Book of Mormon [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994], 13, 92, 178).

34. Robinson, *Believing Christ*, 118–19. Recent studies of the experiences of the Savior in Gethsemane can be found in Andrew C. Skinner, *Gethsemane* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002) and Terry B. Ball, “Gethsemane,” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: The Savior’s Final Hours*, ed. Thomas A. Wayment and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 138–64.
35. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews also taught that Jesus “was *in all points* tempted like as we are” (Hebrews 4:15; emphasis added).
36. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Special Witnesses of Christ,” *Ensign*, April 2001, 14.
37. Elder Neal A. Maxwell explained Alma’s prophecy: “Jesus also volunteered to take upon Himself *additional agony* in order that He might experience and thus know certain things ‘according to the flesh,’ namely *human sicknesses and infirmities and human griefs*, including those *not associated with sin*” (“Becoming a Disciple,” *Ensign*, June 1996, 12; emphasis added).
38. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews similarly taught that the Savior experienced these things “that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, *he is able to succor them that are tempted*” (Hebrews 2:17–18; emphasis added). It is significant that, following the completion of His experience in Gethsemane and Golgotha, the resurrected Savior declared to the Nephites: “I have

“JESUS CHRIST: THE SAVIOR WHO KNOWS”

compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy” (3 Nephi 17:7).

39. Neal A. Maxwell, “Enduring Well,” *Ensign*, April 1997, 7; emphasis added.
40. Glenn L. Pace, “Crying with the Saints,” *Ensign*, September 1988, 71. Elder Neal A. Maxwell also taught: “He [Christ] took upon Himself our sins as well as our pains, sicknesses, and infirmities. (See Alma 7:11–12.) Thus He knew, not in abstraction but in actuality, ‘according to the flesh,’ the whole of human suffering. He bore our infirmities before we bore them. He knows perfectly well how to succor us. We can tell Him nothing of pain, temptation, or affliction” (*We Will Prove Them Herewith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982], 46–47).
41. See also Mosiah 5:7: “Because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called *the children of Christ*, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become *his sons and his daughters*” (emphasis added).
42. The Hebrew verb “to see” (*ra’ah*) can mean literally “to see” with the eyes, or figuratively “to perceive” with the mind. See Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), 906–8.
43. Merrill J. Bateman, “The Power to Heal from Within,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 14; emphasis added.
44. Neal A. Maxwell, *Plain and Precious Things* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 43. Note also Elder Maxwell’s

CELEBRATING EASTER

further teaching: “Jesus knows the sheep of His fold not only for *what they now are* but also for *what they have the power to become*” (*Even As I Am* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982], 78.)

45. Note Elder Neal A. Maxwell’s plea: “Do we understand—really comprehend—that Jesus knows and understands when we are stressed and perplexed? The complete consecration which effected the Atonement ensured Jesus’ perfect empathy; He felt our very pains and afflictions before we did and knows how to succor us” (“Swallowed Up in the Will of the Father,” *Ensign*, November 1995, 24). See also Neal A. Maxwell, *If Thou Endure It Well* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996), 52; Robinson, *Believing Christ*, 122–23.
46. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and David Rolph Seely, *My Father’s House: Temple Worship and Symbolism in the New Testament* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994), 60; see also Leviticus 16:14–15; Hebrews 9:7.
47. Neal A. Maxwell, *One More Strain of Praise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 40. In a previous book, Elder Maxwell taught: “Jesus knows and cares for each individual; He watches carefully over the seemingly smallest of things” (*That Ye May Believe* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992], 205).
48. Gene R. Cook, “The Grace of the Lord,” *New Era*, December 1988, 4.
49. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Broken Things to Mend,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 70–71.