

November 29 - December 5, 2021

## Doctrine and Covenants 137–138

“THE VISION OF THE REDEMPTION OF THE DEAD”

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**Summary:** *Doctrine and Covenants 137. A vision given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, in the temple at Kirtland, Ohio, January 21, 1836. The occasion was the administration of ordinances in preparation for the dedication of the temple. 1–6, The Prophet sees his brother Alvin in the celestial kingdom; 7–9, The doctrine of salvation for the dead is revealed; 10, All children are saved in the celestial kingdom.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 138. A vision given to President Joseph F. Smith in Salt Lake City, Utah, on October 3, 1918. In his opening address at the 89th Semiannual General Conference of the Church, on October 4, 1918, President Smith declared that he had received several divine communications during the previous months. One of these, concerning the Savior’s visit to the spirits of the dead while His body was in the tomb, President Smith had received the previous day. It was written immediately following the close of the conference. On October 31, 1918, it was submitted to the counselors in the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Patriarch, and it was unanimously accepted by them. 1–10, President Joseph F. Smith ponders upon the writings of Peter and our Lord’s visit to the spirit world; 11–24, President Smith sees the righteous dead assembled in paradise and Christ’s ministry among them; 25–37, He sees how the preaching of the gospel was organized among the spirits; 38–52, He sees Adam, Eve, and many of the holy prophets in the spirit world who considered their spirit state before their resurrection as a bondage; 53–60, The righteous dead of this day continue their labors in the world of spirits.*

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### Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

#### How do Jews view an after-life?

The concept of  
“Heaven and Hell” in  
most religions is

very general and often vague. Even though there is little discussion of after life among the Jews, heaven and hell appear in much Jewish commentary. “The exact nature of this afterlife is the subject of great discussion in classical Jewish sources. All agree that after death the soul continues to live. The souls of the righteous enter paradise, or *Gan Eden* [Garden of Eden] as it is generally called. In that state ‘there is no eating or drinking . . . no envy, hatred or competition but only this: that the righteous sit with crowns on their heads and delight in the splendor of God’s presence’ (**Talmud**). The souls of the wicked enter hell, or *Gehinnom*, as it is known, where they undergo purification before they too can enter paradise. The general view is that the stay in *Gehinnom* is not longer than 11 months and can only

be permanent in the case of exceedingly wicked persons. (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

#### What represents “Heaven on Earth?”

An image of heavenly living may be in the pattern of temples and of living in the “City of our Lord” with our Lord. The imagery of dwelling places such as tents with their poles (stakes) and curtains may represent the organized facilities and order of heaven. “The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” (**Isaiah 60:14**)

#### How have Jews handled the concept of “life-after-death?”

Due to the loss of knowing that God has a real body, it may seem obvious that there is a different Jewish interpretation of what resurrection means, since to most Jews, God has no body or physical attributes, it

begs the question of what kind of resurrection there is. Death is another fact that has faded in meaning over the centuries. Repeating some thoughts previously mentioned, in Judaism, physical death is simply explained as follows. "The Talmud explains that there are three partners in the creation of a human being; the father and mother who supply the physical parts, and God, who supplies the spirit. At death, God reclaims his part, and the spirit lives on even though the body has died." "The exact nature of this afterlife is the subject of great discussion in classical Jewish sources. All agree that after death the soul continues to live. The souls of the righteous enter paradise, or *Gan Eden* (Garden of Eden) as it is generally called. In that state 'there is no eating or drinking . . . no envy, hatred or competition but only this: that the righteous sit with crowns on their heads and delight in the splendor of 'God's presence.' The souls of the wicked enter hell, or Gehinnom, as it is known, where they undergo purification before they too can enter paradise." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### What Bible verses help me understand that God has a body?

You and I should remember that there are two things necessary to understand the scriptures **1)** the learning of the Jews and **2)** the Holy Spirit that reveals. Consider the scripturally described attributes of the Lord. One beautiful attribute is his being, his body that he gave for us. After all, Isaiah have been suggesting that everything around us, even "body language," refers to him! The Lord was called from the womb with a perfect body and attributes as eyes, ears, mouth, tongue, neck, heart, shoulder, hands, arms, belly, leg, knee, and foot. "Lift up your eyes on high," (Isaiah 40:26); "To open the blind eyes," (Isaiah 42:7); "Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears . . ." (Isaiah 43:8); Seeing

many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not." (Isaiah 42:20); ". . . thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;" (Isaiah 48:4); ". . . for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." (Isaiah 40:5); ". . . the hand of the LORD hath done this. . ." (Isaiah 41:20); "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see." (Isaiah 42:18); ". . .for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand." (Isaiah 44:18); ". . . Thou hast heard, see all this . . ." (Isaiah 48:6); "Kings shall see . . ." (Isaiah 49:7); "And they shall be made perfect notwithstanding their blindness," (JST Isaiah 42:20); ". . . formed me from the womb . . . glorious in the eyes of the LORD," (Isaiah 49:5); "Lift up thine eyes round about," (Isaiah 49:18); ". . . say again in thine ears," (Isaiah 49:20); ". . . for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." (Isaiah 40:5); ". . . the word is gone out of my mouth . . . every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." (Isaiah 45:23); "I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them . . . and they came to pass." (Isaiah 48:3); ". . . my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me," (Isaiah 49:2); ". . . their tongue faileth . . ." (Isaiah 41:17); ". . . yet he laid it not to heart." (Isaiah 42:25); ". . . considereth in his heart . . ." (Isaiah 44:19); ". . . a deceived heart . . . my right hand . . ." (Isaiah 44:20); thou didst not lay these things to thy heart," (Isaiah 47:7); "Then shalt thou say in thine heart," (Isaiah 49:21); ". . . He hath no hands . . ." (Isaiah 45:9); ". . . and concerning the work of my hands . . ." (Isaiah 45:11); ". . . my hands, have stretched out the heavens." (Isaiah 45:12); "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands . . ." (Isaiah 49:16); ". . . make bare the leg, uncover the thigh . . ." (Isaiah 47:2); ". . . the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him:" (Isaiah 40:10); ". . . he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom . . ." (Isaiah 40:11); ". . . his arm shall be on the Chaldeans . . ." (Isaiah 48:14); ". . . with the strength of his arms . . ." (Isaiah 44:12); "I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set

up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.” (Isaiah 49:22); “. . . with his feet.” (Isaiah 41:3); “And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet,” (Isaiah 49:23); “. . . called him to his foot,” (Isaiah 41:2)”

### How do Jews reflect on a physical resurrection?

Remember, there are three doctrines that disappear in the apostasy: **1)** the identity of God, **2)** the identity of Satan, **3)** the knowledge of life before and after earth-life. The very descendants of the people of the Bible have lost some precious truths. “Some rabbis believed in resurrection. That is that at a certain point in time God will bring everybody back to life and then the world will be a perfect place and physical life will go on indefinitely. This doctrine poses some obvious difficulties: the body decomposes after burial so how can it be reconstituted; furthermore, what about overpopulation of the world? Those who believe in resurrection claim that anyway the whole process will be miraculous, and the miracle will solve all the problems. Other rabbis however denied physical resurrection entirely and understood the afterlife to be a completely spiritual experience.” “The argument about resurrection lasted well into the Middle Ages, and was one of the reasons for the sharp attacks against Maimonides. Many believed that he denied the doctrine and his views started a controversy that lasted for hundreds of years. In modern times most Jewish theologians do not subscribe to the doctrine of physical resurrection and movements such as Reform Judaism do not consider it to be a necessary belief for the Jew.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### What current events are preparing those who may doubt life-after-death?

There are many life-after-death experiences, often referred to as “near death experiences,” (even though the person was dead!). One fascinating experience in Israel is called, “**ISRAELI TEEN RETURNS FROM 15 MINUTES OF CLINICAL DEATH WITH SPIRITUAL MESSAGES CONCERNING THE COMING REDEMPTION**” (by Rivkah Lambert Adler, 22 NOV 2015, Jewish World) (*Excerpts*)



15-year-old Israeli youth Natan recounting his near-death experience with Rabbi Rami Levy (right)

### How long was Natan dead?

“A 15-year-old secular Israeli boy named Natan had a near death experience on Monday, September 28, 2015, and returned to life describing Biblical prophecies about the End of Days. In a video posted on YouTube, Natan is shown speaking to an Orthodox Jewish audience in a synagogue in Israel, just days after his near-death experience. He relates his understanding of what was revealed to him in the next world during the 15 minutes that he was pronounced clinically dead. Rabbi Rami Levy, who sits beside Natan and helps the teen tell his story, claims that Natan did not study in a Jewish religious school and did not learn the things he spoke about from the Bible. Levy himself was raised in a secular, anti-religious Israeli family. In 1982, while performing reserve duty in the Israeli army, he survived the Lebanon War through a miracle of Divine intervention. Levy subsequently became religious and was eventually ordained as a rabbi. Natan’s near death experience happened on the first night of this past Sukkot, which was also the night of the final Blood Moon (total lunar eclipse). At the home of his uncle, where he went to visit for the holiday, Natan began feeling unwell. He described suddenly shivering and felt cold in his arms and legs. Natan decided to go and rest and, in those moments, felt his soul exit his body through his nose.”

### **What will the Messiah do?**

“Among the various spiritual messages experienced by Natan, which can be heard beginning at the 35 minute mark of the video, the young boy speaks about the messiah standing on the Mount of Olives and determining who is worthy to be saved. Natan describes this future scene saying that “the mountain simply opens . . . it splits in two,” though not by earthquake and not by atomic bomb. This vision matches a prophecy in Zechariah that the Mount of Olives, located just east of the Old City of Jerusalem, will split and create a valley.” And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.” **(Zechariah 14:4)**”

### **What was the Messiah like?**

“In describing the qualities of the messiah, Natan said, “The *Mashiach* (messiah) is first of all someone who can’t sin. Someone who repented. Who didn’t commit any transgressions. It can’t be that the Mashiach is someone who committed transgressions. Now it can be someone who we actually know very well. Lots and lots of people know him, according to what I understood. But everyone will be very, very surprised that he is of all people the Mashiach.” Just before the 36-minute mark, Natan claims that the messiah will kill Gog, the leader of the nation of Magog, who will be a critical player in the final war of Gog and Magog and will bury him in Israel. This claim is consistent with a prophecy in Ezekiel that Gog will be buried in Israel. ”And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: and it shall stop the *noses* of the passengers: and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude: and they shall call it The valley of Hamon-gog.” **(Ezekiel 39:11)**”

### **What will the Messiah’s judgement be?**

“Toward the end of the portion of the video, Natan describes the power of the Messiah to

discern a person’s holiness. “I also saw that the moment *Har haZeitim* (Mount of Olives) splits into two, then the Mashiach will stand at the entrance, but he won’t . . . he won’t see who is religious, who has a beard and who a person is. What he will see is – he sees according to a person’s holiness, he will smell each person, he will smell if someone has holiness, if he is pure, if he did *mitzvot* (God’s blessings / commandments), if he performed acts of kindness. To see if he really has true fear of Heaven and not just fear of punishment, and things like that.” The idea that the messiah will be able to discern the righteousness of a person based on something other than physical appearance is reflected in a prophecy from Isaiah that describes the gifts of the messiah, including the ability to judge without relying on what his eyes see or what his ears hear. “And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:” **(Isaiah 11:3)**”

### **How was Natan determined to be truthful?**

“The release of the video has caused two types of major reactions – amazement mixed with fear or incredulity and denial. Susan Constantine is a world-renowned body language expert specializing in deception detection. She has appeared as an expert on television and radio shows and in print publications in the US and abroad over 1,000 times. She reviewed the video at the request of a client. Although she is not an expert in the Jewish content of Natan’s testimony, Constantine verified the credibility of Natan’s presentation. In a statement she provided to *Breaking Israel News*, Constantine asserted, “I have reviewed the entire video and it is my professional opinion the boy Natan truthfully believes he experienced a visitation in heaven and was not being deceptive.” The Hebrew video that was first released in early October (2015), is nearly two hours long. A partial version with English subtitles was released earlier this month (2015).” **(Rivkah Lambert Adler, 22 NOV 2015, Jewish World, <https://www.israel365news.com/54425/following-near-death-experience-israeli-boy-returns-quoting-end-of-days-prophecy-video-jewish-world>)**