

Part I

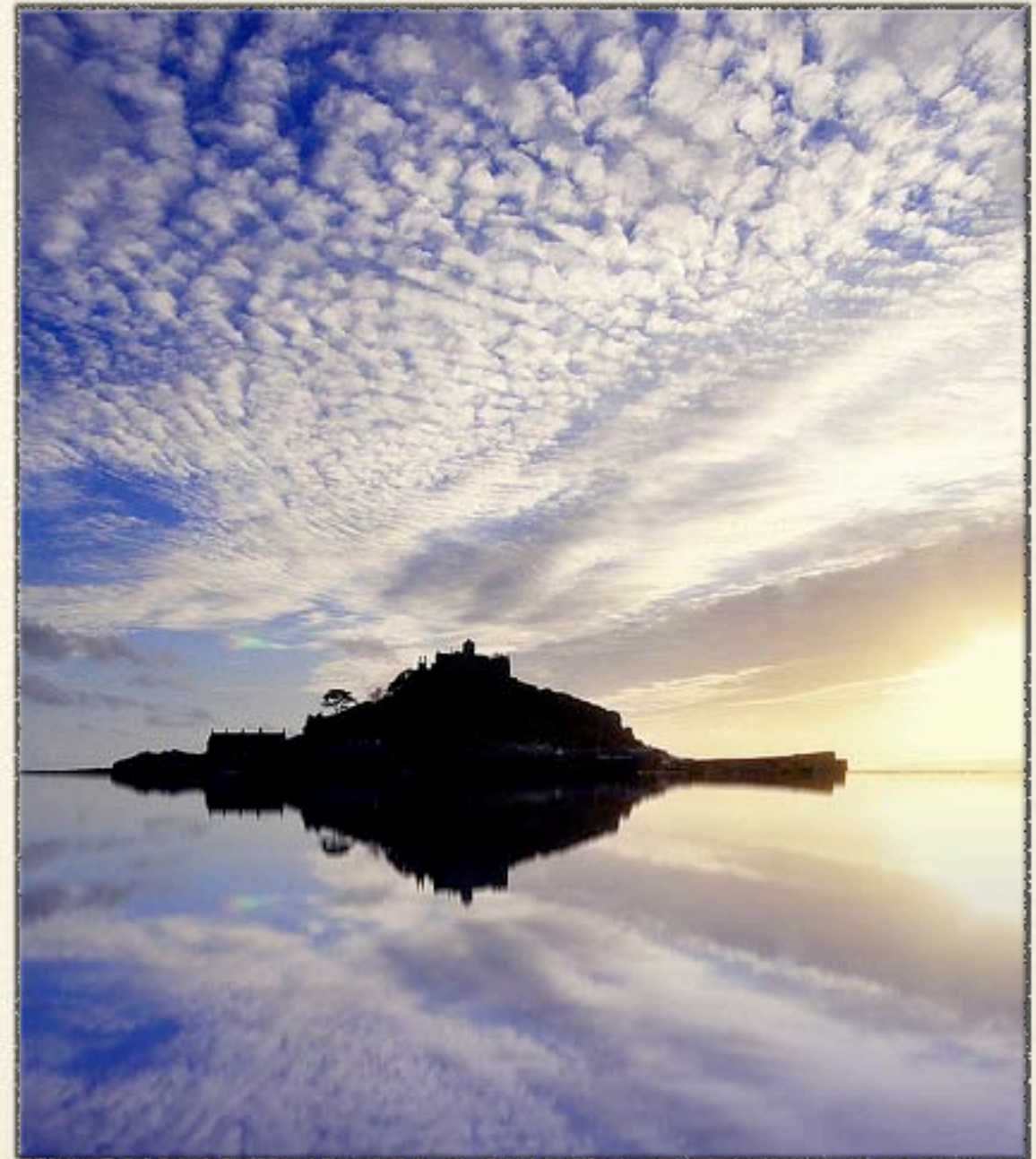
Liberty



An analysis of God's greatest gift

War in Heaven

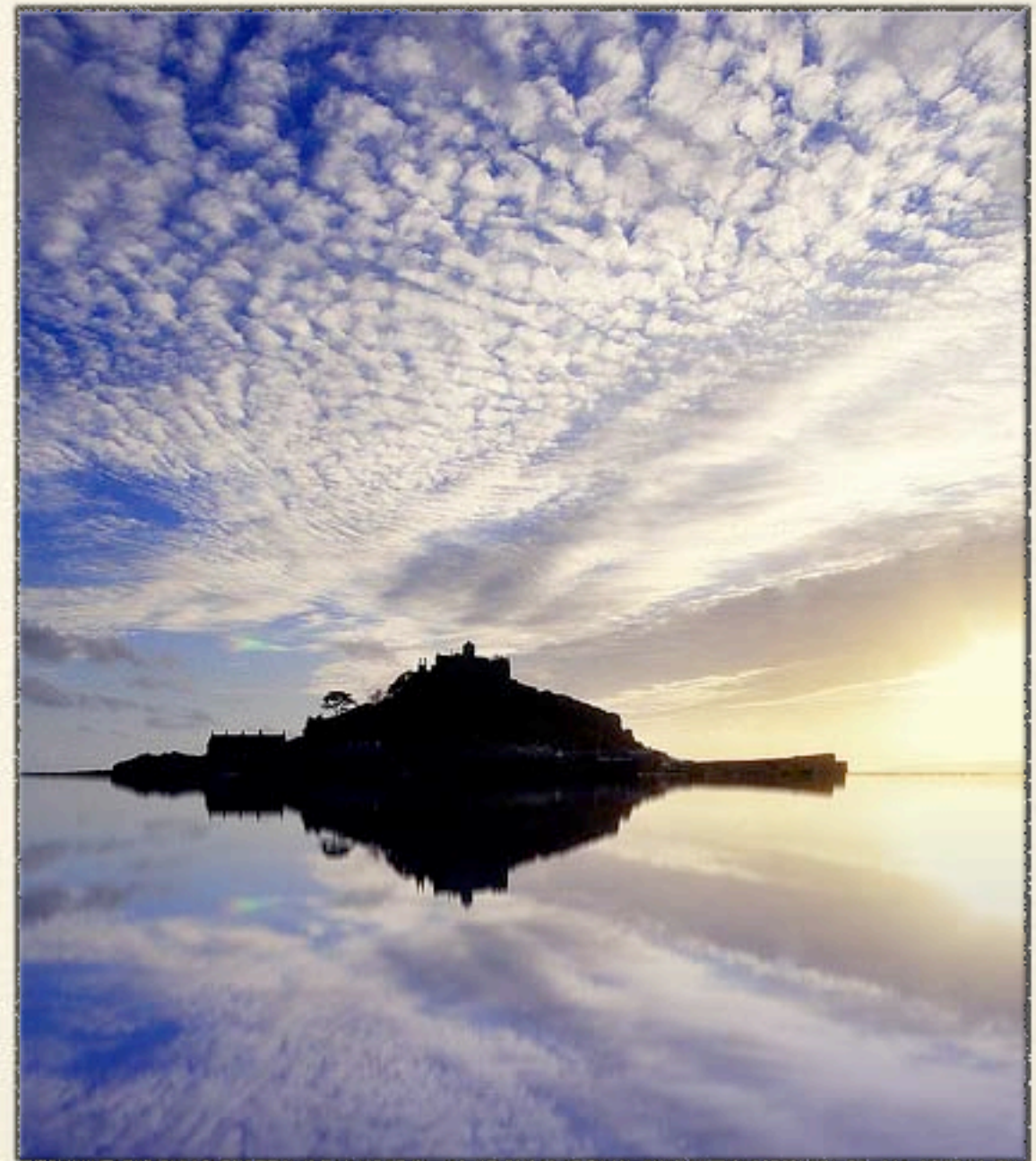
- ❖ In the pre-mortal existence, two plans were promoted
- ❖ Father's plan: agency
Satan's plan: force
- ❖ 2/3 chose the risky path of freedom
- ❖ Today we face the same choices: liberty (agency) or slavery (force)
- ❖ War in Heaven was a political war (words, laws)



War in Heaven

- ❖ Same war continues today
- ❖ “That war, so bitter, so intense, has **never** ceased. It is the war between truth and error, between **agency and compulsion**, between the followers of Christ and those who have denied Him.”

— Gordon B. Hinckley, “An Unending Conflict, a Victory Assured,” Ensign, Jun 2007, 4–9



Politics and Religion

- ❖ War in Heaven spills over into political realm
- ❖ Are men to be given agency, or dealt with by force?
- ❖ True religion (eternal principles) apply to political sphere
- ❖ Cannot separate the two unless government is secular and atheistic (unwilling to accept “self-evident truths”)
- ❖ If not based on truths, government is based on lies
- ❖ Absolute truth exists - relativism (i.e. “there is no right or wrong”) is Satan’s idea



Politics and Religion

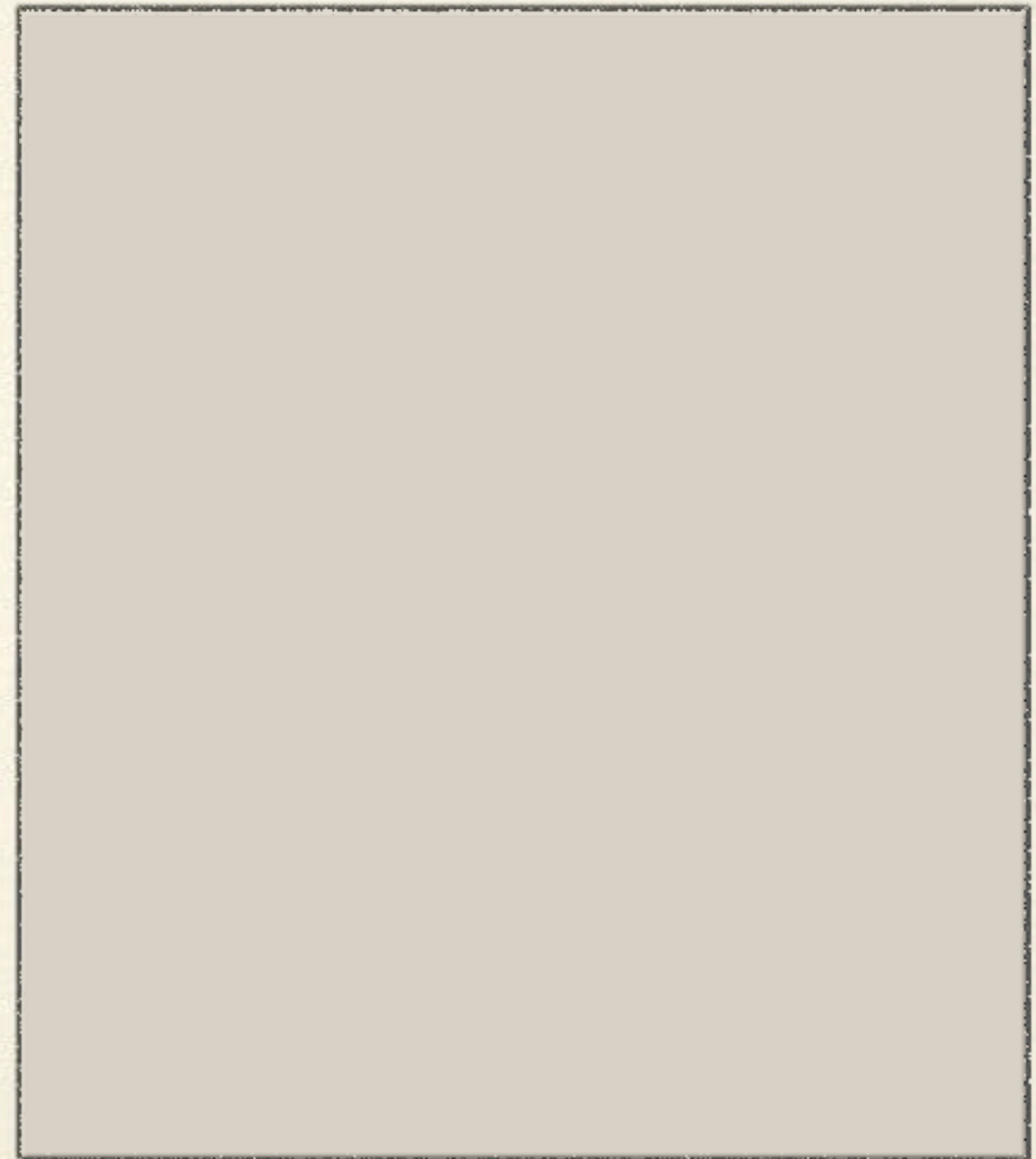
- ❖ Absolute truth covers all realms of society (politics, religion, economics, etc.)
- ❖ “Right is still right. Wrong is still wrong, no matter how cleverly cloaked in respectability or political correctness.”
— M. Russell Ballard, “Like a Flame Unquenchable,” Ensign, May 1999, 85
- ❖ **Freedom is based on truth,** and no man is completely free as long as any part of his belief is based on error.
— N. Eldon Tanner, Ensign May 1978 p. 14



Truth vs. Error

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- ❖ God is the author of all truth (Ether 4:12) and cannot lie (Ether 3:12)
- ❖ If government is based on truth (eternal principles), it is built upon the rock (3 Ne. 18:12-13)
- ❖ If based on anything else (lies, theories, half-truths, etc.) it is built upon sand.
- ❖ Truth found in *true* religion will be found in the sphere of politics (proper government)





# Religious Influence in Politics

- ❖ “Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. **Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.**”

— George Washington, Farewell Address  
September 17, 1796

- ❖ “[T]rue religion affords to government its surest support.”

— George Washington, *Writings*, Vol. XII, p. 167

- ❖ “[I]t is religion and morality **alone** which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand.”

— John Adams, *Works*, Vol. IX p. 401





# Religious Influence in Politics

- ❖ “Religion and virtue are the **only** foundations ... of republicanism and of all **free** governments.”  
— John Adams, *Works*, Vol. IX p. 636
- ❖ “[T]he great pillars of all government and of social life: I mean virtue, morality, and religion. This is the armor, my friend, and his alone, that renders us **invincible**.”  
— Patrick Henry, *Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 592
- ❖ “I believe that religion is the **only** solid base of morals and that morals are the **only possible support** of free governments.”  
— Gouverneur Morris, *Diary*, Vol. II, p. 452





# Religious Influence in Politics

- ❖ “The great vital and conservative element in our system is the belief of our people in the **pure doctrines and divine truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.**”

— U. S. House of Representatives, 1854

- ❖ “God governs in the affairs of man. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? Without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel”

— Benjamin Franklin, Constitutional Convention, 1787





# Church and State

- ❖ Many argue for separation of church and state
- ❖ Source of idea is a quote from Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptists - *not* anywhere found in founding documents
- ❖ “Earlier Courts had always viewed Jefferson’s Danbury letter for what it was: a personal, private letter to a specific group. There is probably no other instance in America’s history where words spoken by a single individual in a private letter - words clearly divorced from their context - have become the sole authorization for a national judicial policy.”

— David Barton, *Original Intent*, p. 48



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# Church and State

- ❖ First amendment guarantees freedom *of* religion, not freedom *from* religion
- ❖ Religious men (or as D&C 98:10 says, “honest men and wise men”) should be sought after for govt. positions
- ❖ Church and state (or, religion and politics) should not and cannot be separated in a free republic.
- ❖ “And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure if we have lost the only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that **these liberties are the gift of God?** That they are not to be violated but with His wrath?”

— Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XVIII, p. 237





# Church and State

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## Synonyms

- ❖ Freedom
- ❖ Independence
- ❖ Sovereignty
- ❖ Autonomy
- ❖ Choice
- ❖ Self-determination

**Agency**

## Antonyms

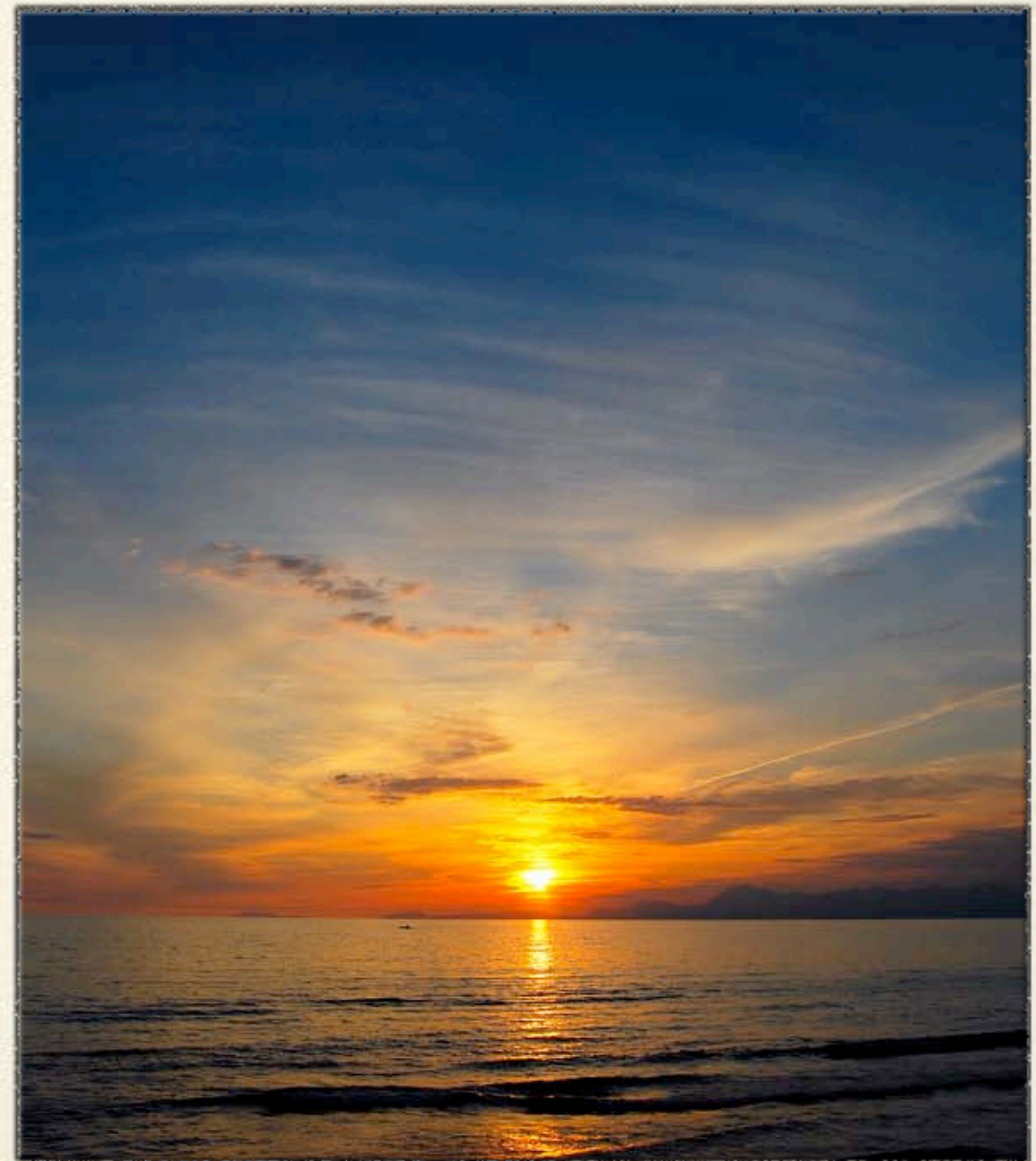
- ❖ Oppression
- ❖ Bondage
- ❖ Incarceration
- ❖ Serfdom
- ❖ Yoke
- ❖ Servitude

**Slavery**



# Freedom

- ❖ With freedom comes personal responsibility; the two cannot be separated
- ❖ “Basic to an understanding of a right is the realization that it cannot exist without a matching duty; for what can a right consist of other than the enforcement of a duty concerning it?”  
— H. Verlan Andersen, *Moral Basis of a Free Society*, p. 21
- ❖ Freedom necessarily includes freedom to fail (law of the harvest)
- ❖ If you remove freedom to fail, there is no freedom
- ❖ What is more important: never failing or being free? This was the crucial choice in the War in Heaven





# Law of the Harvest

- ❖ Agency consists of two basic options:
  - ❖ **Action:** you can choose what course of action you will take; outcome will be dictated by law
  - ❖ **Outcome:** you can choose what outcome you desire; course of action is dictated by law
- ❖ You reap what you sow
- ❖ “...what is the real cause of [breaking the law of the harvest]? In the last analysis, in my judgment, it is personal unrighteousness. When people do not use their freedoms responsibly and righteously, they will gradually lose these freedoms.

— Howard W. Hunter, “The Law of the Harvest”, BYU, 8 March 1966



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# Agency

- ❖ Choosing Father's plan of agency necessitated the atonement
- ❖ Atonement was the *action* required by the *desired outcome* of agency and eternal life
- ❖ Agency is an eternal principle
- ❖ "...free to choose **liberty and eternal life**, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose **captivity and death**, according to the captivity and power of the devil" (2 Nephi 2:27)



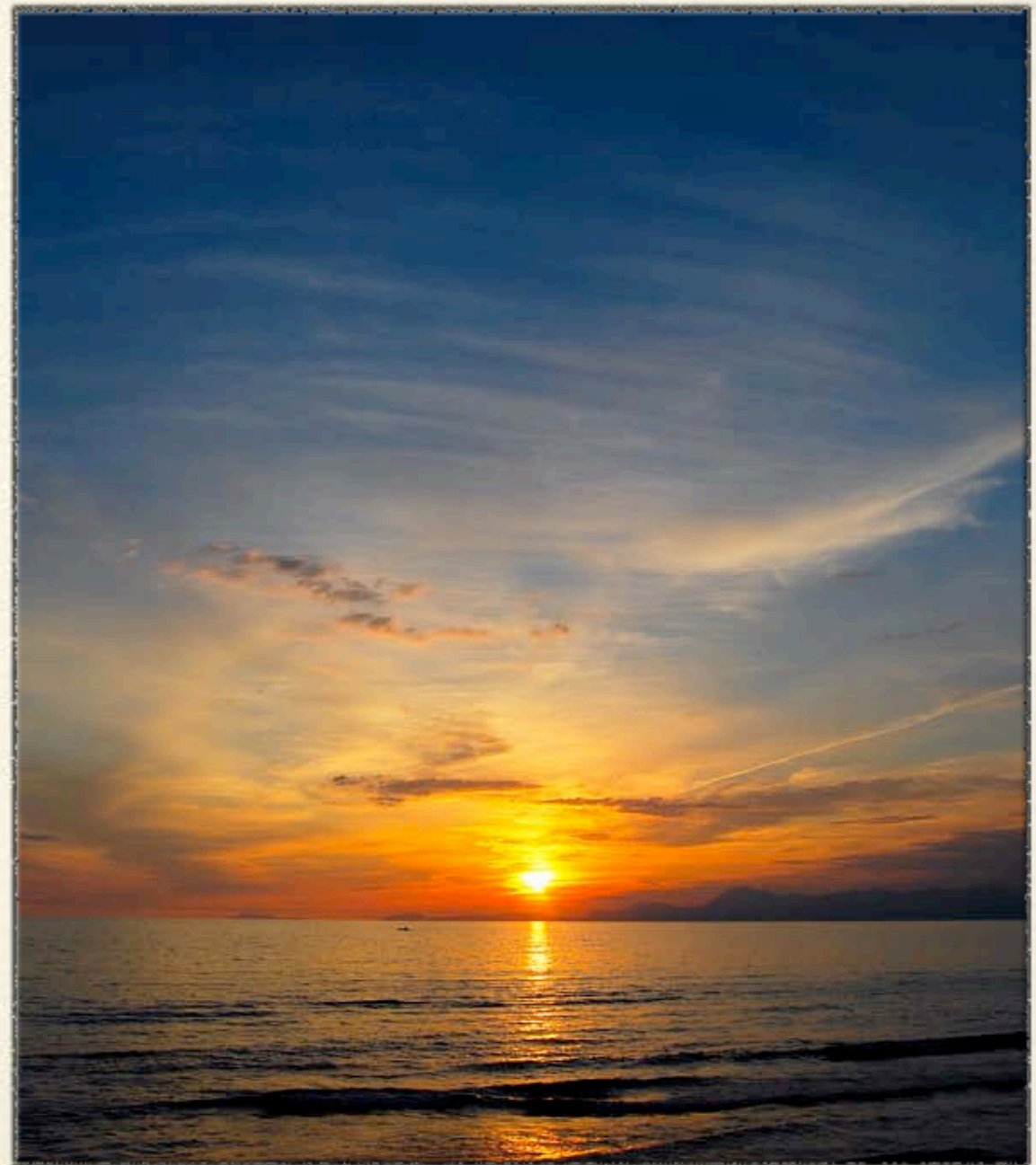


# Freedom's Importance

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- ❖ “As important as are all other principles of the gospel, it was the freedom issue which determined whether you received a body. To have been on the wrong side of the freedom issue during the War in Heaven meant **eternal damnation**. How then can Latter-day Saints expect to be on the wrong side in this life and escape the **eternal consequences?**”

— Ezra Taft Benson, April 1965, General Conference





# Summary on Liberty

- ❖ The greatest event ever, the Atonement, was a result of our desire for agency. This should indicate the importance of this God-given gift.
- ❖ Our very presence here on earth indicates what side we were on in the pre-mortal realm
- ❖ The war is not over
  - ❖ No cease fire has been called
  - ❖ No peace talks are taking place
  - ❖ The issue of agency vs. force has never been finally resolved





Part II

# America



*A land choice above all others*



# America's Promise

- ❖ “For behold, this is a land which is **choice above all other** lands; wherefore he that doth possess it **shall serve God or shall be swept off**; for it is the everlasting decree of God. And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children of the land, that they are swept off.” (Ether 2:10)
- ❖ “Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be **free from bondage**, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, **if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ.**” (Ether 2:12)





# America's Promise

- ❖ "... this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And **if** it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which he hath given, it shall be a **land of liberty** unto them." (2 Nephi 1:6–7)
- ❖ We believe that both freedom and the continuing reformation that flourished here occurred **in preparation for the restoration** from heaven of the full gospel of Jesus Christ. ... This restoration was the greatest event in the history of mankind since the birth, death, and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

— N. Eldon Tanner, "A Choice Land," Friend, July 1976, 32



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# No Church without America

- ❖ “The Constitution of the United States was ratified in 1789. The priesthood of God was restored in 1829. Between those two dates is an interval of forty years. It is my conviction that God, who knows the end from the beginning, provided that period of time so the new nation could grow in strength to protect the land of Zion.”

— Ezra Taft Benson, “A Witness and a Warning,” *Ensign*, Nov 1979, 31

- ❖ “We believe that the Constitution was brought about by God to **insure** a nation where liberty could abound, where his gospel could flourish. ... Among other things, the Constitution **guarantees** the religious freedom that allowed the Reformation to continue and **flourish**.”

— L. Tom Perry, “God’s Hand in the Founding of America,” *New Era*, Jul 1976, 45



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