
CHOICES



We are not here on earth to find out what we have to do eternally.

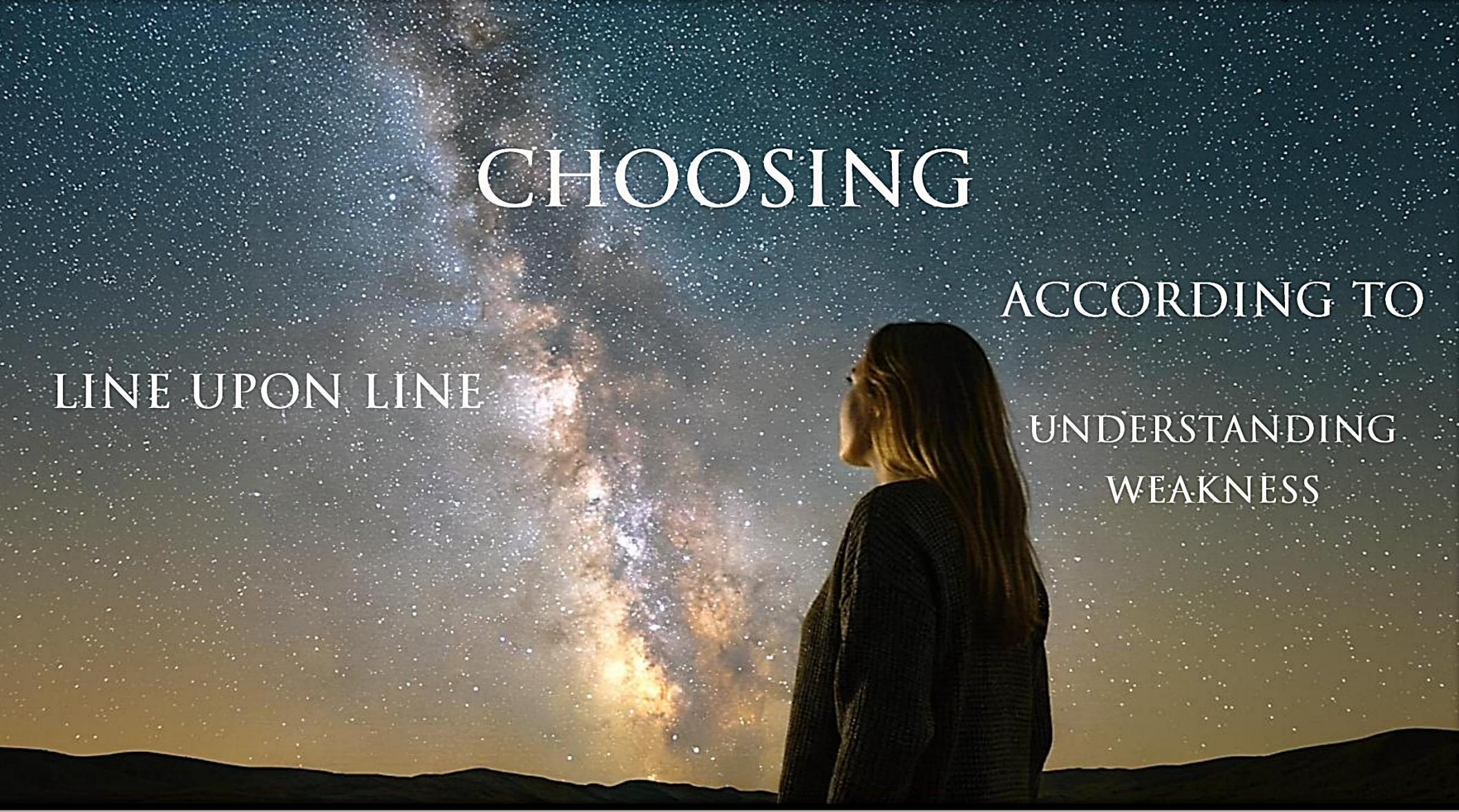
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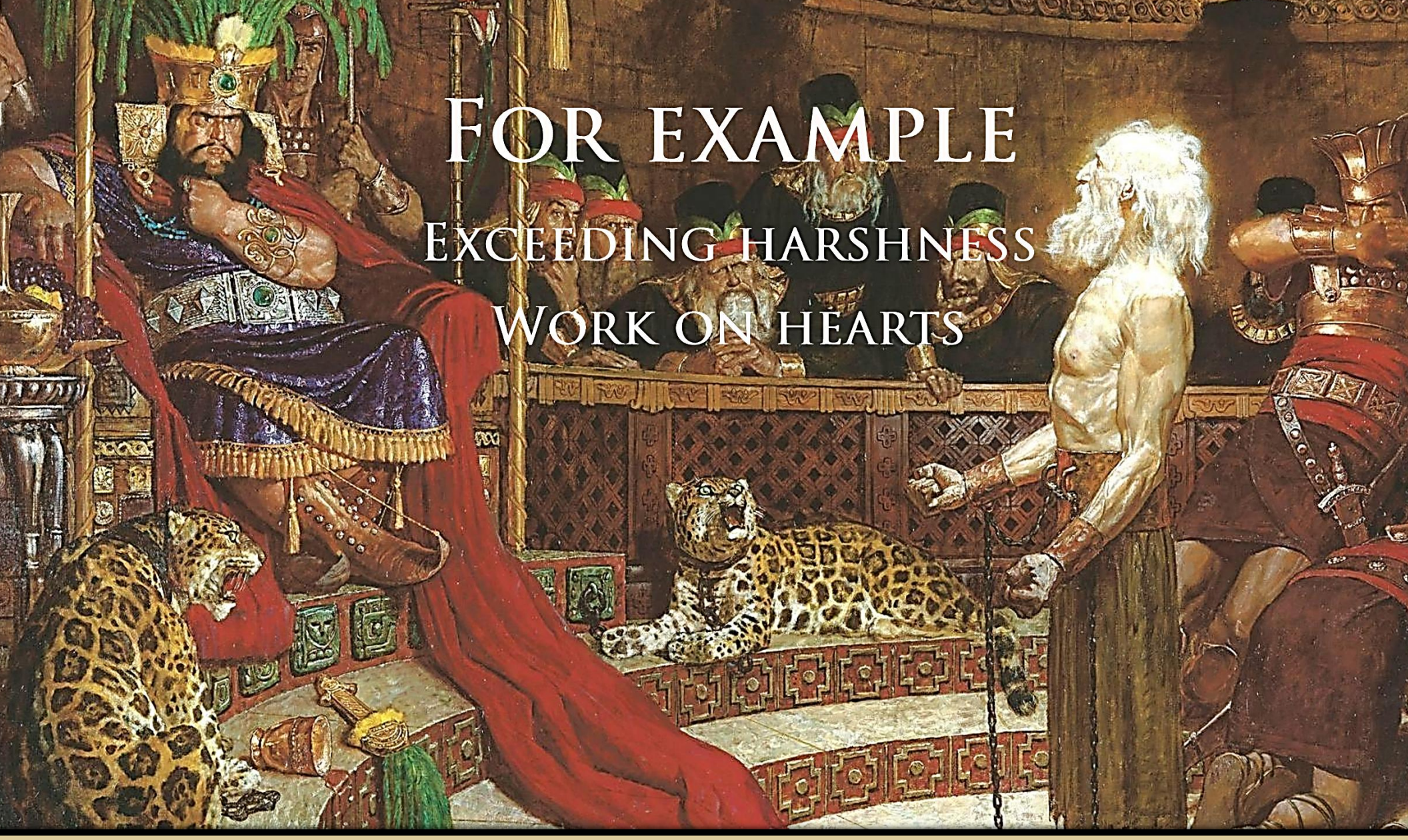
That we can make choices is a great gift. Agency is not an automatic state of being. It is a condition that is made possible through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Without Him, we could not make choices to determine who and what we desire to be eternally. We would not have the experiences necessary for us to become who we want to be.



How he lived His mortal life showed us the way to become like Him and our Heavenly Father if that is our choice. His infinite grace makes that eternal divine potential possible



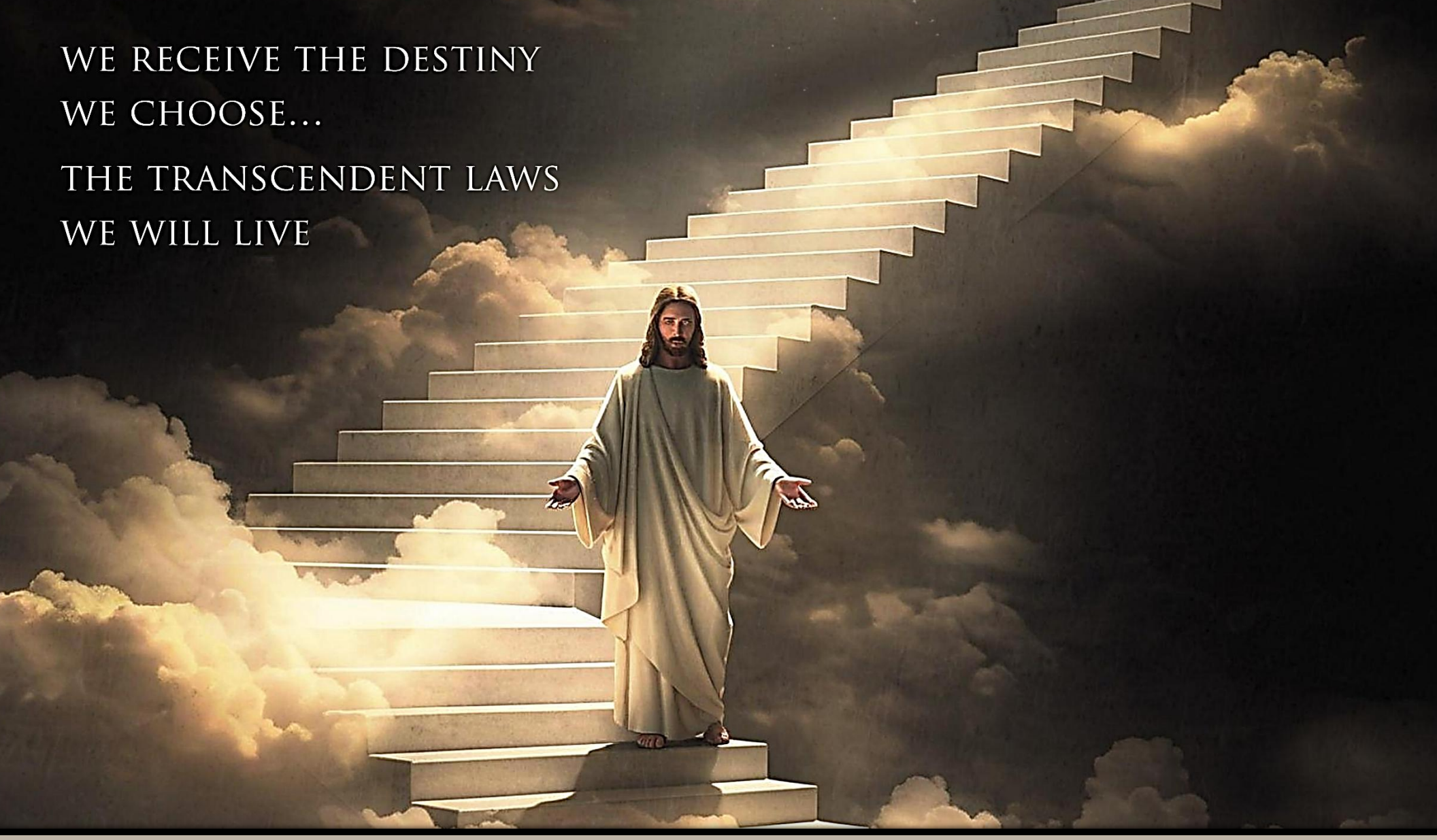
Our mortal life and our post mortal spirit life prior to our ultimate destiny is all about choosing. Choosing who and what we want to be eternally. The realization that our eternal placement is according to who we desire to be is a learned truth. The Lord gives "line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," (2 Nephi 28:30) "For he speaketh unto men according to… their understanding." (I Nephi 31:3) And according to our "weakness… that (we) might come to understanding." (Doctrine and Covenants 1:24)



For example, punitive or condemning rhetoric was sometimes used by the prophets because of the wickedness and intransigence of the people when "there was nothing save it was exceeding harshness… (that) would keep them from going down speedily to (temporal) destruction." (Ether 1:23) This austere approach by the prophets was "more express… that it might work upon their hearts." (Doctrine & Covenants 19:7)



Because of the lower level of spiritual understanding of those they were addressing, prophets would use milk rather than meat in their words to encourage obedience to the Lord's directives. (See Doctrine & Covenants 19:22; I Corinthians 3:2-3) Their emphasis would often be on a reward for us doing certain things and punishment for doing or not doing other things rather than on making choices according to who we desired to be.



But our eternal choices are just that. Choices. President Dallin Oaks said, "God's plan gives us the teachings and the opportunity to make the choices that will assure us the destiny and the life we choose. … (He) will send all (of His children to a kingdom) of glory according to the desires manifested through their choices." (OCTOBER CONFERENCE 2023) Our eternal state is determined by the level of transcendent laws we desire to live. With full knowledge and understanding, our ultimate destiny is what we choose it to be.

A SINGULAR QUESTION

To what extent do I want to become *ONE* with Jesus Christ?



Perhaps our conclusive answer to a singular question is a defining statement as to the degree of transcendent laws we are desirous of living and, therefore, our final state of being: We are here in our mortal stay to have the experiences needed to determine how we will answer that question.

KINGDOMS OF GLORY

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 76, 88

Degrees of light and truth
Transcendent laws obeyed

The prophet Joseph Smith and his friend Sidney Rigdon were the recipients in 1832 of the visions and revelations that specifically delineate our eternal choices. They are found in Doctrine and Covenants Sections 76 and 88. There are three major kingdoms or degrees of glory that are differentiated by the degree of light and truth each contain. By the transcendent laws their inhabitants choose to obey

KINGDOMS OF GLORY

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 76, 88



Fulness of light & truth

CELESTIAL

The kingdom where God the Father and Jesus Christ dwell and where a fulness of light and truth exists is called the Celestial kingdom or glory and is symbolically represented by the sun. Subsequent revelations to Joseph Smith in 1843 (Sections 131 and 132) tell us there are three degrees within the Celestial and describes those who reside in the highest one.

KINGDOMS OF GLORY

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 76, 88



The second kingdom or glory is the Terrestrial and is depicted symbolically by the moon, indicating a lesser degree of light and truth.



The third kingdom or glory is the Telestial represented by stars that are significantly reduced in light and truth from the other two.

KINGDOMS OF GLORY

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 76, 88



TERRESTRIAL



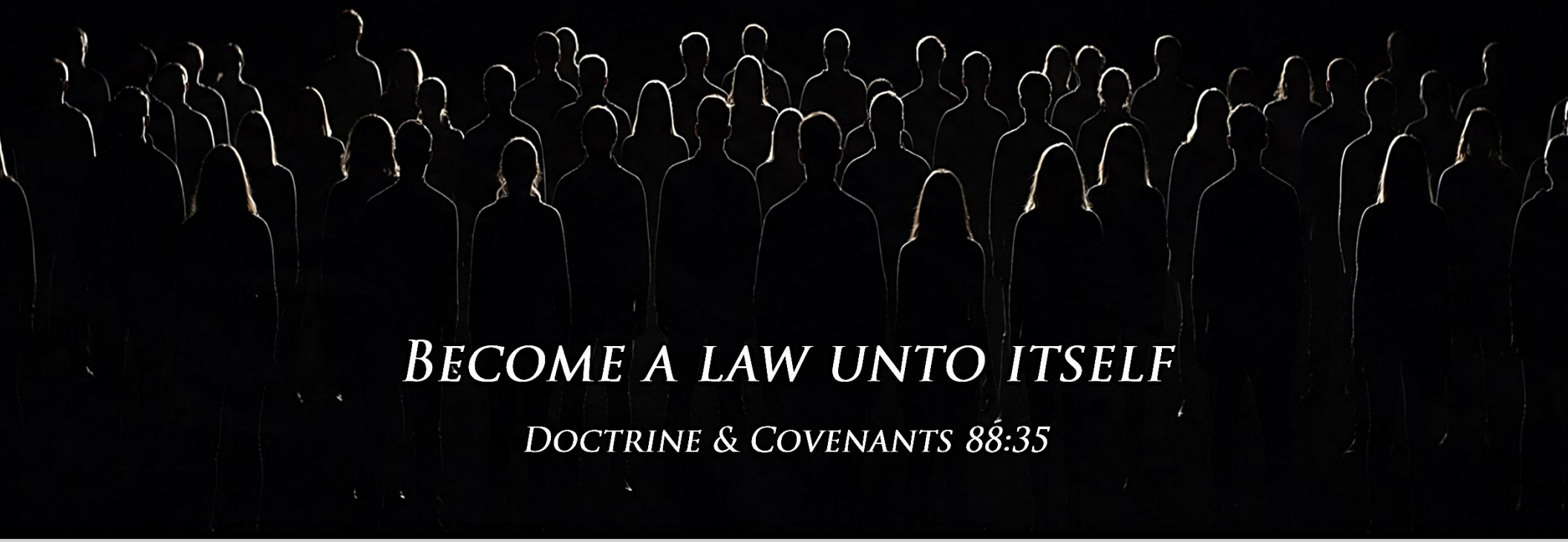
TELESTIAL

THEIR GLORY "SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING"

It is important to understand that to dwell in the Terrestrial or Telestial kingdoms is not a punishment. It is a choice. They are both designated kingdoms and glories and are ministered to by a member of the godhead. The inhabitants of those kingdoms must abide by the laws of that glory. To underscore that each of the three are divine kingdoms and glories, the Lord has revealed that the glory of even the telestial, "surpasses all understanding." (Doctrine and Covenants 76:89)

OUTER DARKNESS

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 76, 88



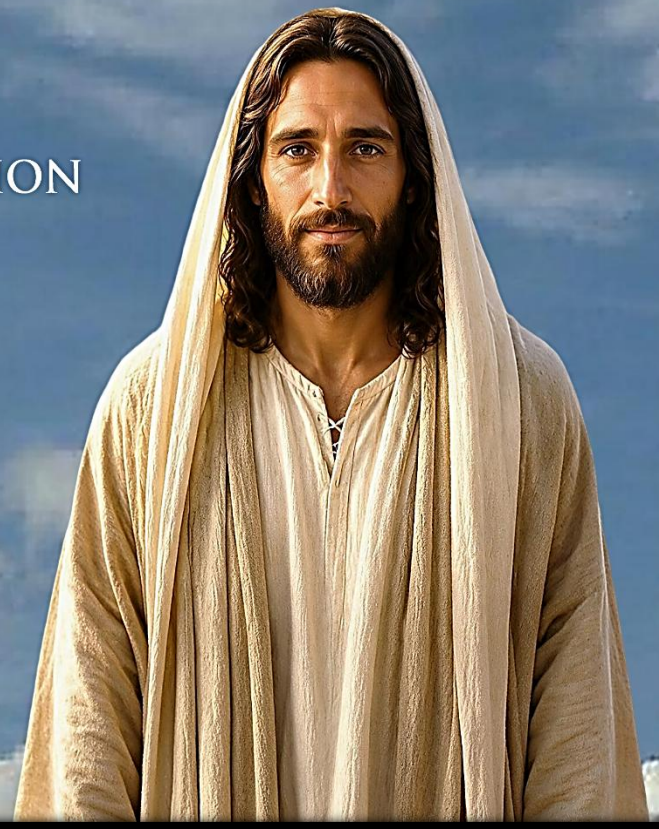
Become a law unto itself

Doctrine & Covenants 88:35

There is an eternal condition where no light and truth exist that is described as "outer darkness." Those who reside there have suffered the second death or the spiritual death. They are they who have chosen to be a law unto themselves (Doctrine & Covenants 88:35). President Joseph F. Smith describes them as those "who read by the lamp of their own conceit; who interpret by rules of their own contriving." (Gospel Doctrine, p. 381) They have rejected Jesus Christ and all light and truth. Their eternal destiny is darkness and isolation. Their hell is they are surrounded by those who are just like them. (See Doctrine & Covenants 76:25-48)

KINGDOMS OF GLORY

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 76, 88



1. WHOLEHEARTED DEVOTION
2. NOT BEING VALIANT
3. OUTRIGHT REJECTION

President D. Todd Christofferson has taught, "The distinguishing characteristic for the inhabitants of each kingdom is how they relate to 'The testimony of Jesus,' ranging from wholehearted devotion, to not being valiant, to outright rejection." In other words, the degree to which we desire to be one with Jesus Christ, to become as He is, to love Him purely, to offer our souls to Him, and to sacrifice as He has done to lift and bless others, defines our eternal state. Regardless of which degree of glory one desires to be in, ultimately "every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is the Christ." (See Doctrine and Covenants 88:104).

KINGDOMS OF GLORY

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 76, 88



REJECT CHRIST

LIARS, WHOREMONGERS

CLEANSED

REDEEMED BY CHRIST



TELESTIAL

Those who choose to abide in a Telestial glory or kingdom have here in their mortal state rejected Jesus Christ and have refused to follow many if not most transcendent laws. They are "they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie." Then through apparent excruciating conditions in their temporary post mortal existence, they are cleansed and ultimately accept the redeeming gift of Jesus Christ and desire to abide the laws of the Telestial kingdom. In that degree of glory they are ministered to by angels from the Terrestrial and by the Holy Ghost. (See Doctrine and Covenants 76:82-89,98-107).

KINGDOMS OF GLORY

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 76, 88



HONORABLE

TERRESTRIAL

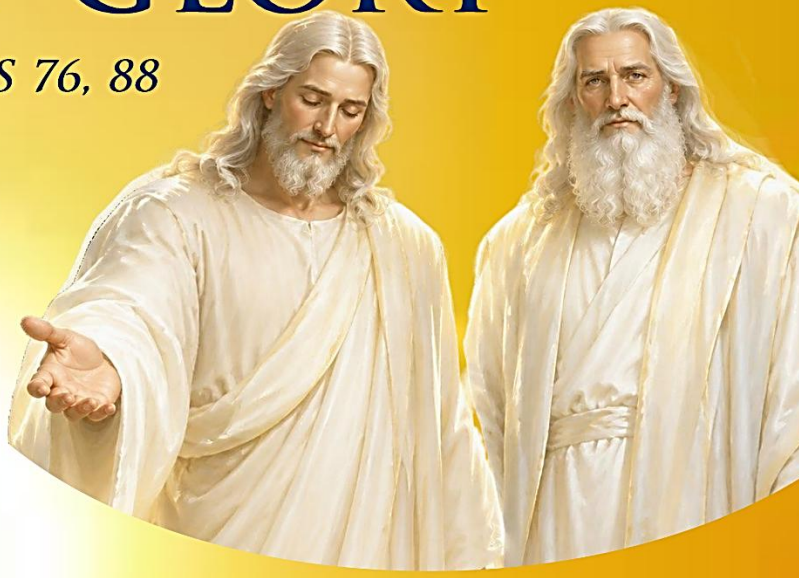


Those who are honorable men and women here on earth and choose, while not fully but at least to some degree, to follow Jesus Christ, are those who desire to live Terrestrial laws. In that kingdom, they are ministered to by Jesus Christ.

KINGDOMS OF GLORY

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 76, 88





OFFER WHOLE SOULS

POWER OF GODLINESS

CELESTIAL

They who choose to abide the laws of the Celestial glory are those who have offered their whole souls to Jesus Christ. Their lives of service with charity, His pure love, are an irrefutable testimony of Him. They have received the empowering ordinances of the Holy Priesthood that hold the "key of the knowledge of God," and "the power of godliness." (Doctrine & Covenants 84:19-20). They have followed the transcendent laws that enable them to live eternally in the presence of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

THEY SHALL BE GODS

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 132:19-20

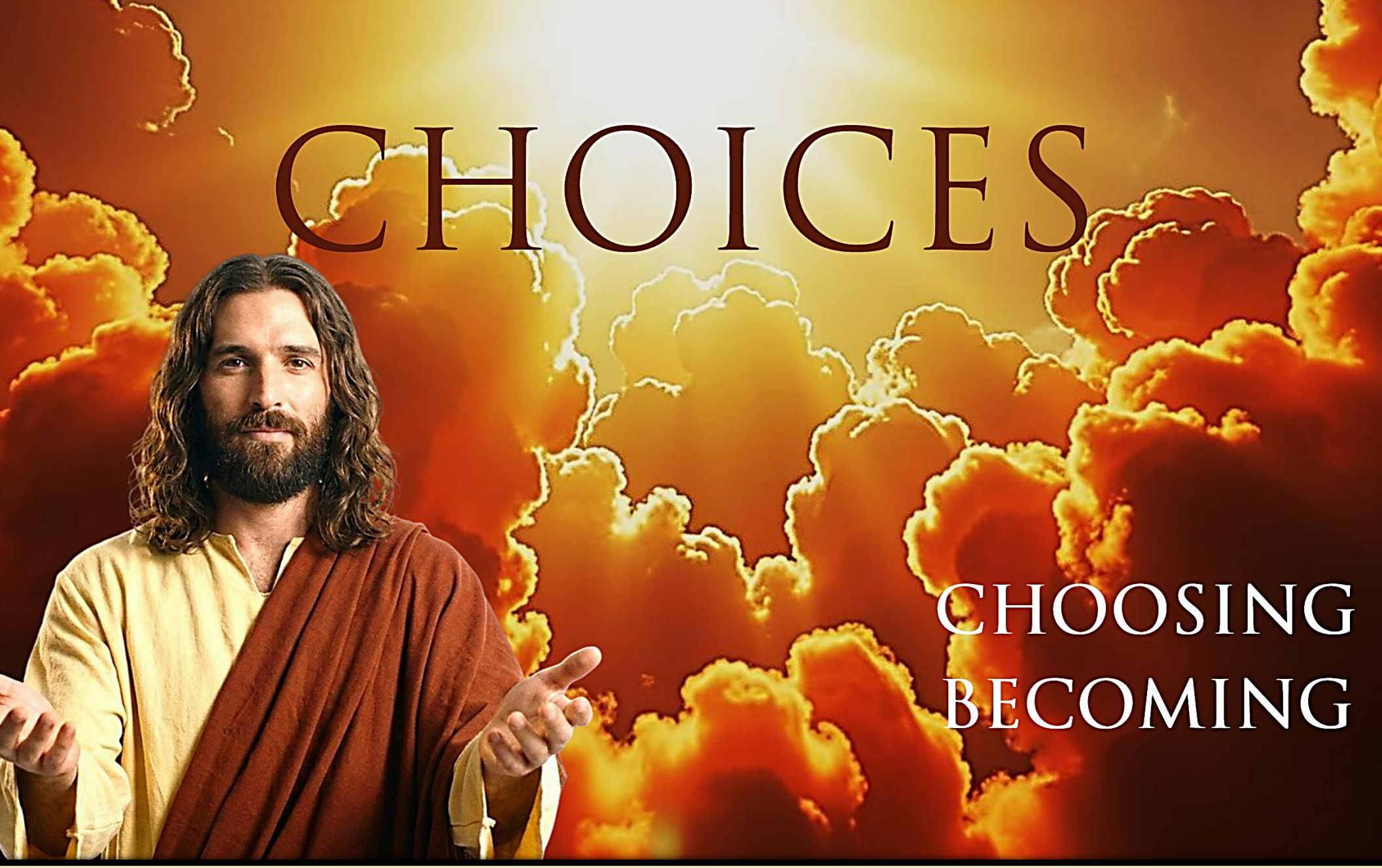


THEY HAVE NO END

BRING TO PASS THE

ETERNAL LIFE OF MAN

There are those of the celestial order who also choose to be as our Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother. Through the culminating sacred ordinance of the Holy Priesthood that is sealed upon them by the Holy Spirit of Promise, a man and woman are bound eternally together. They will have "a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. …They (shall) be gods, because they have no end. (They) shall…be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue. …They shall be gods because they have all power." (See Doctrine and Covenants 132:19-20) They shall be Heavenly Fathers and Heavenly Mothers for they have chosen for all eternity to help "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (See Moses 1:39)



Through Jesus Christ and our experiences in our mortal and post mortal spirit state, we choose for ourselves our eternal condition. We will have as much light and truth as we are desirous of living. Agency and Choice define God's great plan of Happiness. Choosing and Becoming are what our temporary mortal and post mortal lives are all about.