

# The Restoration of the Fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ



# God loves His children in every nation of the world

In your opinion, why would a proclamation about the Restoration begin with a statement about God's love? As you study the proclamation, look for expressions of God's love for "His children in every nation of the world."

**How has the Restoration of the gospel helped you feel His love?**

Gerrit W. Gong, "[All Nations, Kindreds, and Tongues](#)," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 38–41.





## The Restoration began with an answer to a question.

It could be said that the Savior started the Restoration of His gospel by responding to a question. What message do you feel the Restoration proclamation has for a person with questions about God, the gospel, or “the salvation of his [or her] soul”?

# The promised Restoration goes forward

- Have you ever thought of yourself as part of the Restoration of the gospel?
- Consider these words from President Dieter F. Uchtdorf:
- “Sometimes we think of the Restoration of the gospel as something that is complete, already behind us. ... In reality, the Restoration is an ongoing process; we are living in it right now” (“Are You Sleeping through the Restoration?,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 59).

# Order of Restoration

A powerful testimony to the importance of the Book of Mormon is to note where the Lord placed its coming forth in the timetable of the unfolding Restoration. The only thing that preceded it was the First Vision. In that marvelous manifestation, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned the true nature of God and that God had a work for him to do. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon was the next thing to follow. Think of that in terms of what it implies. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon preceded the restoration of the priesthood. It was published just a few days before the Church was organized. The Saints were given the Book of Mormon to read before they were given the revelations outlining such great doctrines as the three degrees of glory, celestial marriage, or work for the dead. It came before priesthood quorums and Church organization. Doesn't this tell us something about how the Lord views this sacred work?

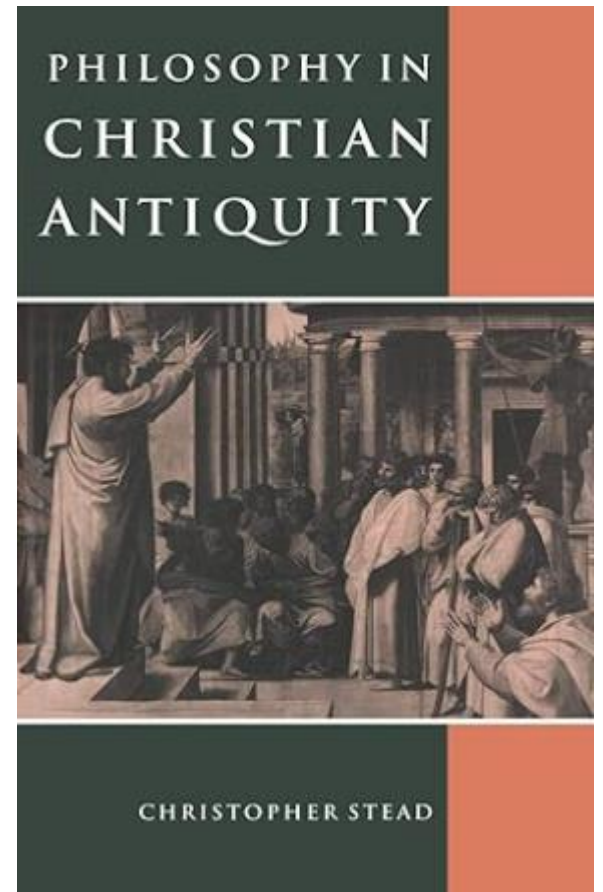
(Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 4).

# Things that were lost

## The Nature of God

"Christian writers naturally turned to the Bible for their teaching on the nature of God. But their use of it was often influenced by the philosophical thought of their own day. ***The Hebrews pictured the God whom they worshipped as having a body and mind like our own, though transcending humanity in the splendour of his appearance***, in his power, his wisdom, and the constancy of his care for his creatures."

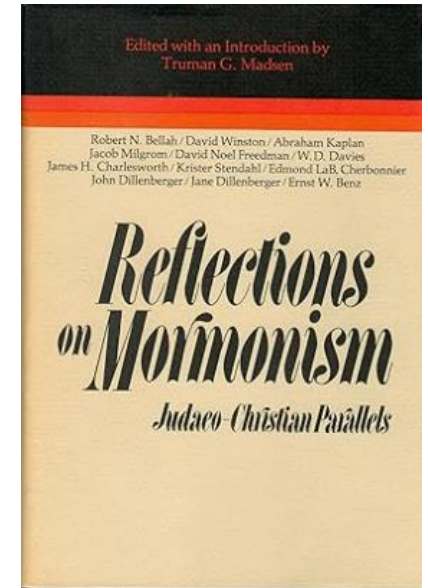
Christopher Stead, [\*Philosophy in Christian Antiquity\*](#), Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 120.



# The nature of God

"Abandon the premise that God is a Person and you undercut with a stroke everything else that is said about him, whether in the Bible or the Book of Mormon. In short, to use the forbidden word, **the biblical God is clearly anthropomorphic**—not apologetically so, but proudly, even militantly."

(Edmond La Beaume Cherbonnier, "In Defense of Anthropomorphism," in Madsen, ed. *Reflections on Mormonism: Judaeo-Christian Parallels*, p. 162.)



# Edmond La Beaume Cherbonnier

The Rev. Edmond La Beaume Cherbonnier (February 11, 1918 – March 7, 2017) was an American scholar in the field of religious studies. He served as Professor of Religion at Trinity College, Connecticut, and as a deacon in the Episcopal Church. He is known for his work on Christianity, analyzing idolatry and distinctions between mystical and biblical thought, his efforts on developing and advancing religious studies, and for founding the Religion Department at Trinity College in 1955.

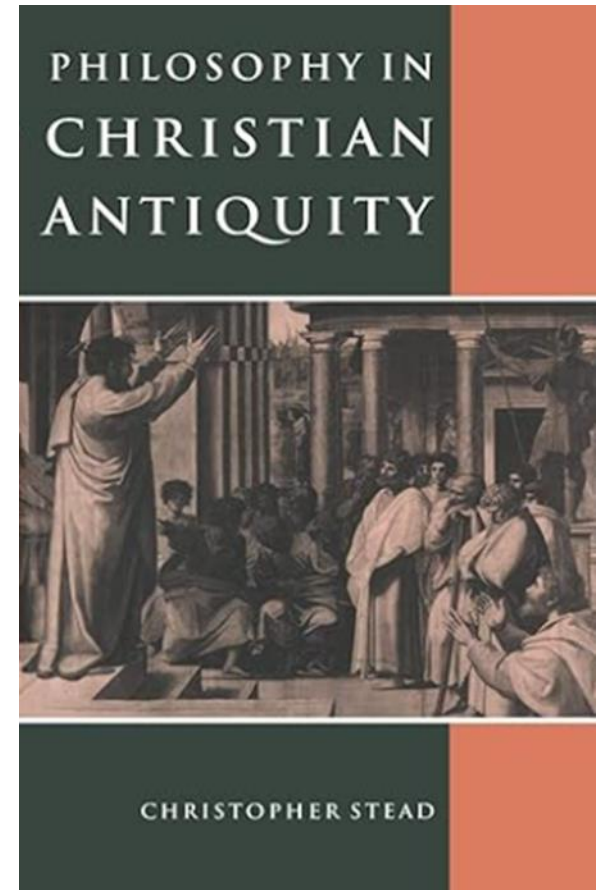




# Hellenized Christianity

In a Palestinian milieu it was still possible to picture the heavenly Father in human form and to see the contrast between heaven and earth as one of light and glory against relative darkness and indignity. But even **Jews, when hellenized, had come to treat anthropomorphic views of God as a mark of paganism** (see Philo, *Opif.* 69, *Post. Cain* 1-4, etc.), and to conceive the Almighty, and also the divine Logos, in the forms presented by Middle Platonist philosophers. **God is seen as formless, imperceptible, a changeless unity**; human beings, whatever divine aspirations they may have, are confined within a corruptible body and captivated by sensual inclinations.

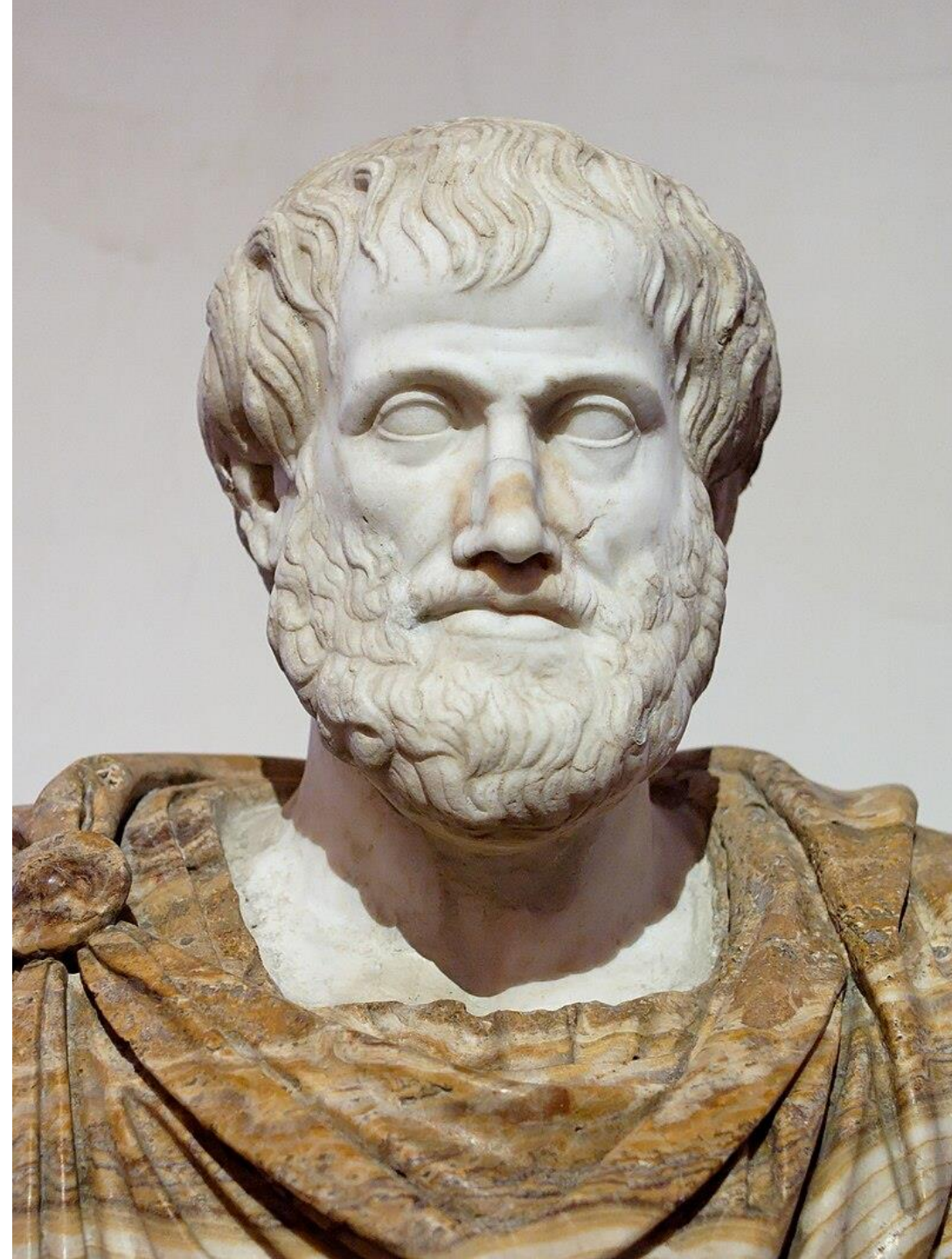
Stead, *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*, p. 188.



# Aristotle

The concept of the **Unmoved Mover** (Ἀκίνητος Κινητής, "Akinetos Kinetes") was developed by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BCE).

He introduced this idea as part of his exploration of causality, motion, and the nature of existence.



# Opponent of Early Christianity: Celsus – 178 AD

**The Christians say that God has hands, a mouth, and a voice; they are always proclaiming that “God said this” or “God spoke.”** “The heavens declare the works of his hands,” they say. I can only comment that such a God is no god at all, for God has neither hands, mouth, nor voice, nor any characteristics of which we know. And they say that God made man in his own image, failing to realize that God is not at all like a man, nor vice versa; God resembles no form known to us. **They say that God has form, namely the form of the Logos, who became flesh in Jesus Christ. But we know that God is without shape, without color.** They say that God moved above the waters he created- be ***we know that it is contrary to the nature of God to move.*** Their absurd doctrines even contain reference to God walking about in the garden he created for man; and they speak of him being angry, jealous, moved to repentance, sorry, sleepy- in short, as being in every respect more a man than a God. ***They have not read Plato, who teaches us in the Republic that God (the Good) does not even participate in being.*** (Celsus, [\*On True Doctrine: A Discourse Against the Christians\*](#), p. 103)

# Enter the Apologists

To combat the negative image the early church had, and to fight against some of the false philosophies of their day, the defenders of the church in the second century (oftentimes called “Apologists” = those who defend ideas) used popular philosophies of their time to defend Christianity to their critics and the rulers of the Roman world. ***The Apologists were diligently engaged at the time in combating the very apostasy into which they fell-*** as they fought false doctrines of their day, they used Greek philosophies to defend their position, and found that they were sinking into false beliefs as they fought them.

# Origen – Born 185 AD

Origen was a Hellenistic Christian philosopher born about 185 A.D. **He was among the first Christian to promote the belief in a God without a body.** The fact that he spent considerable energy to prove that God did not have a body could make the case that the general membership of the church needed to be converted to such a viewpoint. ***Origen admitted that there is no place in the Bible in which God is explicitly described as being incorporeal.***

Origen used John 4:24 as a proof text of God being a formless entity: “God is a spirit”. Origen acknowledged that the issue of God’s corporeality had not been settled in the church. **Origen admitted that when the scriptures were used as a source in understanding God, that a belief in a corporeal God was in line with scriptural texts. *The problem for Origen was that an embodied God does not jive with Platonist philosophy.*** His efforts were simply to show that the scriptures were not intended to be read literally, but that references to God were to be understood metaphorically. The scriptures, read literally, were of “little use.”

# The shift – God no longer has a physical body

Tatian the Syrian – 170

Athenagoras – 177

Irenaeus – 189

Clement of Alexandria – 200

Origen – 225

Athanasius – 350

Didymus the Blind – 362

Hilary of Poitiers – 365

Ambrose of Milan – 379

See: How God Lost His Body - <https://www.ldsscriptureteachings.org/2012/05/how-god-lost-his-body/>

# Things that were lost

## The nature of man

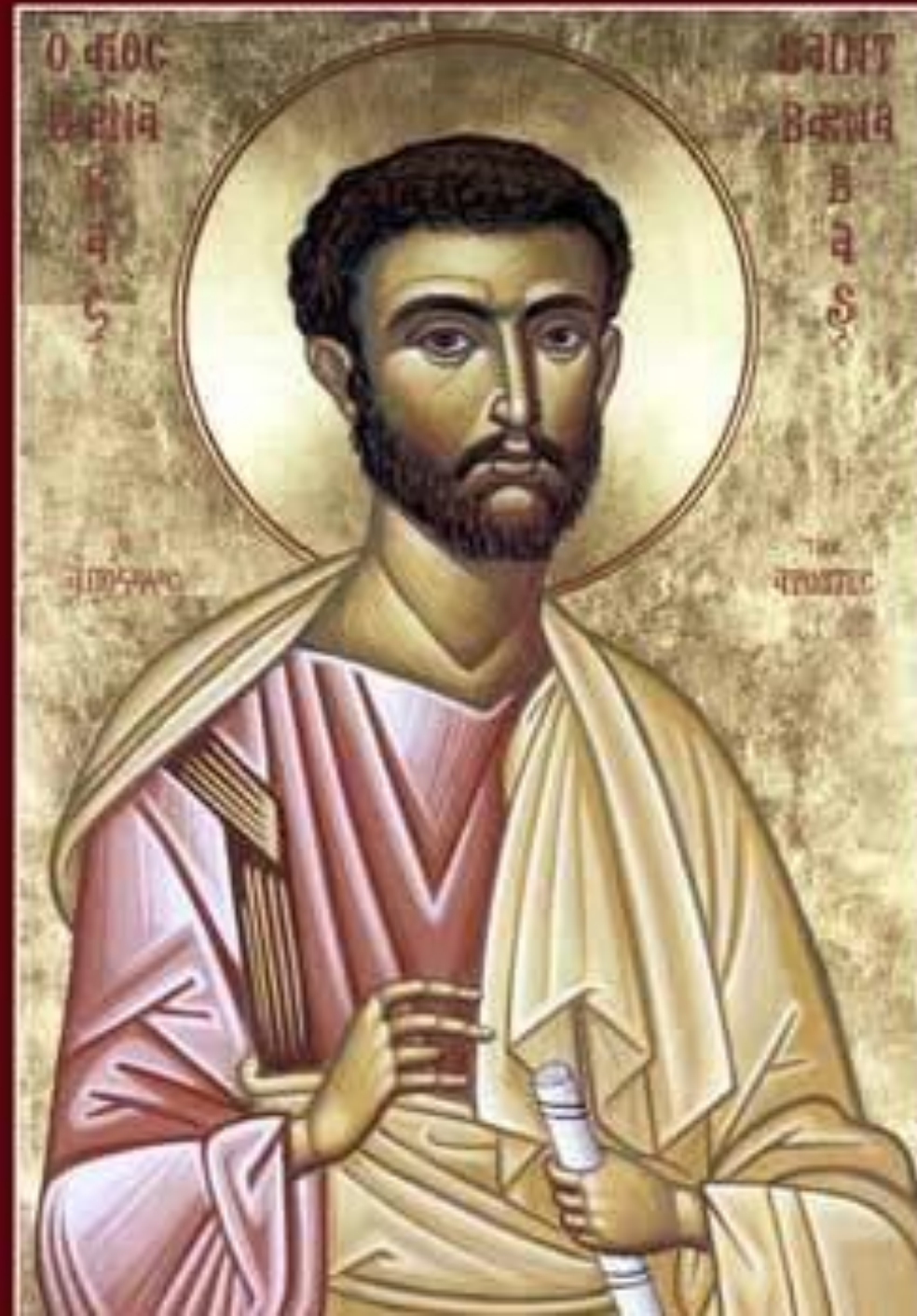
And they who believed from the twelfth mountain, which was white, are the following: they are as infant children, in whose hearts no evil originates; nor did they know what wickedness is, but always remained as children. Such accordingly, without doubt, dwell in the kingdom of God, because they defiled in nothing the commandments of God; but they remained like children all the days of their life in the same mind. All of you, then, who shall remain steadfast, and be as children (Matt. 18.3), without doing evil, will be more honoured than all who have been previously mentioned; ***for all infants are honorable before God, and are the first persons with Him.*** Blessed, then, are you who put away wickedness from yourselves, and put on innocence. As the first of all will you live unto God.

(The Shepherd of Hermas, Book 3, chap. 29. This was probably written around 140-150 AD. Early dating places it around 90 AD. See: <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02013.htm>)

# The Early Christians understood the innocence of little children

Barnabas preached that the new birth heals the spirit so that it can become as it was when it was a little child. "He has made us after another pattern, (for it is his purpose) that we should possess the soul of children, inasmuch as He has created us anew by His Spirit."

(Barnabas, *Epistle of Barnabas*, chapter 6, The New Covenant and the Cross. This text is dated to 70-100 AD, shortly after the destruction of the Second Jerusalem Temple. See: <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0124.htm> )







## Tertullian played a role in the shift (155-220 AD)

Tertullian played a role in the Early Christianity's shift in their thinking about the nature of man. To him, the souls of mankind were contained within the body of Adam when he fell, thus his children were tainted with sin. Because of this, no human being comes into the world in purity.

# Tertullian's views

Tertullian did not believe that human beings existed prior to their birth. **He rejected the concept of the preexistence of man.**

“The soul is born at the same time as the body, is formed with it, and comes into being with it. It does not precede the body in existence.”

*(De Anima)*

# At birth – unclean, according to Tertullian

**Tertullian did not use the exact term *Original Sin***, which was systematized later by Augustine, but his writings clearly reflect a belief in inherited sin. He saw Adam's fall as causing a universal human corruption, necessitating baptism and redemption through Christ. His theological framework laid important groundwork for later Christian doctrines of human depravity and salvation.

"Every soul, then, by reason of its birth, has its nature in Adam until it is born again in Christ; moreover, it is unclean all the while that it remains without this regeneration."

Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*, chap. 40. See: <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0310.htm>

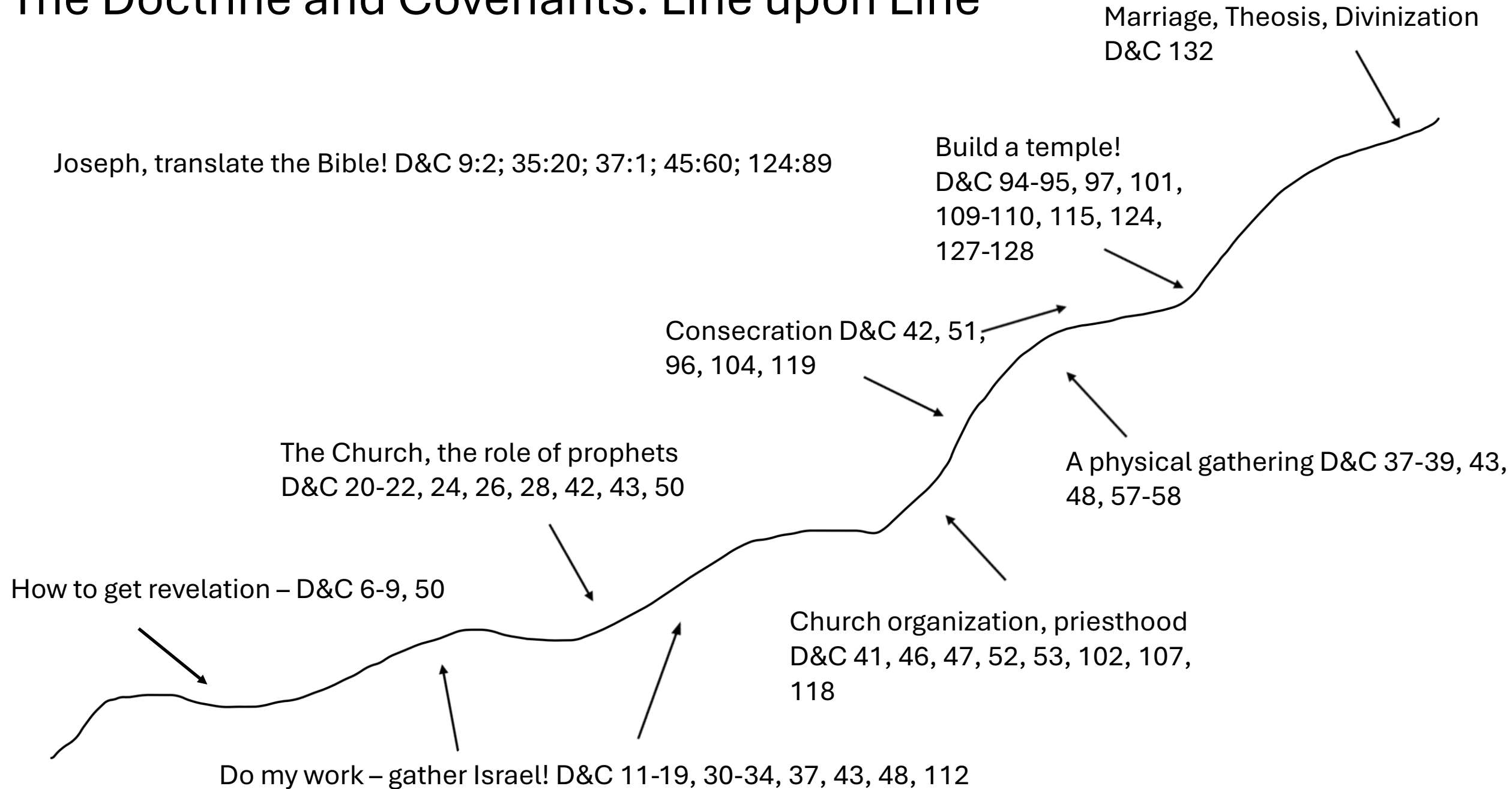
# Augustine v. Pelagius

Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) formally developed the doctrine of **Original Sin** in the early 5th century AD, though the concept itself was rooted in earlier Christian thought. His major writings on Original Sin emerged primarily during the Pelagian Controversy (circa 411-418 AD).

"Now, inasmuch as infants are not held bound by any sins of their own actual life, it is the guilt of original sin which is healed in them by the grace of Him who saves them by the laver of regeneration."

(Augustine, *A Treatise on the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins*, chap. 24. See: <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/15011.htm> )

# The Doctrine and Covenants: Line upon Line



Could we read and comprehend all that has been written from the days of Adam, on the relation of man to God, we should know very little.

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...Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject.

(Joseph Smith, *HC*, 6:50; [\*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith\*](#), 324)

