



DOCTRINE & COVENANTS

& CHURCH HISTORY GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

* GREEN MOUNTAIN 1ST WARD * LAKEWOOD, COLORADO * 7 JUNE 2009 * PAGE 1 *

Lesson 20: *The Kingdoms of Glory*, D&C 76; 131; 132:19-24; 137

Introduction



If we did not have the revelations in D&C 76, 131, and D&C 137, we would know very little about what our condition will be after we are resurrected.

President Wilford Woodruff, said this about the vision recorded in D&C 76:

"I will refer to the 'Vision' alone, as a revelation which gives more light, more truth, and more principle than any revelation contained in any other book we ever read. It makes plain to our understanding our present condition, where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. Any man may know through that revelation what his part and condition will be" (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham [1946], 47-48).

- #### Lesson Highlights
- The kingdoms of glory and "the testimony of Jesus"
 - Perdition
 - The telestial kingdom
 - The terrestrial kingdom
 - The celestial kingdom

A study of this lesson will help us carefully consider the eternal inheritances in the three kingdoms of glory and to encourage us to live in such a way that we will be able to inherit celestial glory and dwell in Heavenly Father's presence with our families.

The kingdoms of glory and the "testimony of Jesus"

D&C 76:11-19 and the heading to D&C 76 provide a look at the circumstances that led up to the reception of D&C 76 - "The Vision"—by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon.

This entire vision is a testimony of Christ and His mission and Atonement. Look specifically at **76:20-24** and **76:119** for strong testimony of the Savior. See also **D&C 76: 40-43**.

Doctrine and Covenants 76 shows that Heavenly Father has provided three kingdoms of glory in which most people will live after they are resurrected: the telestial kingdom, the terrestrial kingdom, and the celestial kingdom. Each of us will inherit a kingdom of glory based on the manner in which we have "received the testimony of Jesus" (D&C 76:51). Keep this in mind as you ponder this revelation.



John Johnson Home, Hiram, OH. While in this home working on a translation of the Bible, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon received the revelation now recorded in D&C 76, along with other

Next Week
#21 "Looking Forth for the Great Day of the Lord to Come" (D&C 29:9-29; 34:5-12; 45:16-75; 88:86-99; 101:22-34; 133)

Perdition

Perdition refers to a state of loss and destruction rather than a kingdom of glory. Those who experience this are called “*sons of perdition*” because they follow Satan, who is called Perdition (D&C 76:25–26, 31–32).

Revelation 12:7–9; D&C 29:36–37; 76:25–28; Moses 4:1–3. When Lucifer rebelled in the Council in Heaven, he was thrust down to earth.

D&C 76:29 and **Moses 4:4** indicate that after being cast out, Lucifer became Satan, “*even the devil,*” the “*father of all lies.*” made war on the saints.

D&C 10:5; 27:15–18 tell us that we will win the war with Satan and his forces if we will pray always, be faithful and believing, prepare and protect ourselves, put on the whole armor of God, and do all that we can to stand firm in the gospel. We must be righteous, truthful, devoted to the gospel of peace, shielded with faith, partakers of salvation, armed with the Spirit and the word of the Lord, and endure faithfully to the end. While we are promised that we will ultimately triumph in the war, we will not be able to avoid the associated conflict. We must still prepare for the battles and the war.

The telestial kingdom

The criteria for those who will inherit this lowest kingdom of glory are recorded in **D&C 76:81–83, 98–101, 103**. They did not receive the gospel of Christ, the testimony of Jesus, the prophets, or the everlasting covenant, but neither did they deny the Holy Spirit. These are the liars, sorcerers, adulterers, whoremongers, and those who love and make lies.

The terrestrial kingdom

The terrestrial kingdom will be the inheritance of those who are described in **D&C 76:71–75, 79**. These died without law, received the testimony of Jesus only in the spirit world, were honorable people deceived by men, and were not valiant in the testimony of Jesus.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: “*Those destined to inherit the terrestrial kingdom are: (1) those who died ‘without law’—those heathen and pagan people*

D&C 76:32–34, 36–38, and 44–49 reveal the suffering of the sons of perdition. They are condemned to experience this eternal punishment and tremendous suffering because they allowed themselves to be overcome in the war with Satan’s armies; denying the Holy Ghost and having crucified the Lord (see D&C 76:30–31, 35).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** said: “*What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? He must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against Him. After a man has sinned against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him. He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; he has got to deny Jesus Christ when the heavens have been opened unto him, and to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy*” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 385).

The limitations on those in this kingdom are found in **D&C 76:84–86, 102, 104–106, 112**. (Note: The “hell” referred to in verses 84 and 106 is defined as the temporary spirit prison.)

Telestial beings will suffer conditions including being cast into hell, waiting till the last resurrection, not receiving “*of his fullness*”, not being gathered with the saints, suffering the wrath of God on earth and eternal fire, and suffering until the fullness of times when they will become servants outside the presence of God.

who do not hear the gospel in this life, and who would not accept it with all their hearts should they hear it; (2) those who hear and reject the gospel in this life and then accept it in the spirit world; (3) those ‘who are the honorable men of the earth, who [are] blinded by the craftiness of men’; and (4) those who are lukewarm members of the true church and who have testimonies, but who are not true and faithful in all things” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 146)

“The word perdition means “lost”; when the term is used to refer to a person, it means “the lost one.” Lucifer is perdition—the lost one—and the people who follow after him are the sons of perdition. Generally the term son of perdition is used to refer to anyone who is evil or wicked. It is used by Latter-day Saints to refer to those who have committed the unpardonable sin (the sin against the Holy Ghost) and thus will not inherit any degree of glory.”

(Daniel H. Ludlow, *Companion to Your Study of the Doctrine and Covenants*, vol. 2, 1978 Deseret Book Company)



In **D&C 76:76-78** we find that conditions and limitations on the terrestrial inhabitants include: receive visits from the Savior but not the Father, and have less than a fulness of glory.

Guidance on how to avoid “the craftiness of men” is given in **D&C 3:7-8; 21:4-6; 52:14-20**.

The celestial kingdom

Those inheriting this highest degree of glory are described in **D&C 76:50-53, 68-69**. Note that the Holy Spirit of Promise is the Holy Ghost who functions in his capacity as the confirmer and witness of validity of the ordinances and covenants we have received and fulfilled honorably. They received the testimony of Jesus, were baptized and cleansed of sin, received the Holy Ghost, overcame the world through faith, are just and true, are known by Christ and the Father, or are “just men made perfect”.

Not quite four years after receiving D&C 76, “The Vision”, the Prophet Joseph Smith received another vision, recorded in **D&C 137**, in which he beheld Alvin, his other brother who had died a dozen years earlier—seven years before the Church was restored in this dispensation. He recognized that Alvin was in the *celestial* kingdom. From this (D&C 137:7-9), he learned of the mercy of Christ and the benefit it has for those who did not hear the gospel in this life, but who—if they had been privileged to hear it—would have accepted it with all their hearts. Next, in D&C 137:10, he saw the condition of children who die before the age of accountability. These teachings bring us comforting doctrine that is not taught by many other churches.

Blessings received in the celestial kingdom include those recorded in **D&C 76:54-67, 94-95**: Membership and fellowship in the Church of the Firstborn; the trust of their Father; ordination as priests and kings; reception of the fullness of the Father’s gospel, his glory, and his priesthood power; godhood; the ability to overcome all things; dwelling with God forever; coming forth in the first resurrection; and fellowship with prophets and holy men (and women).

Our testimony of Jesus is a determining factor in our assignment to a kingdom of glory. We must be “*valiant in the testimony of Jesus*”.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

“What does it mean to be valiant in the testimony of Jesus?”

“It is to be courageous and bold; to use all our strength, energy, and ability in the

(1) fear (respect) God more than man, (2) be faithful—relying on God in times of trouble, (3) give heed to the prophets, (4) walk in holiness (live righteously), (5) pray, (6) obey the Lord’s commandments, (7) have a contrite spirit, (8) use meek and edifying language, and (9) bring forth good fruits (works).

warfare with the world; to fight the good fight of faith. ... The great cornerstone of valiance in the cause of righteousness is obedience to the whole law of the whole gospel.

“To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to ‘come unto Christ, and be perfected in him’; it is to deny ourselves ‘of all ungodliness,’ and ‘love God’ with all our ‘might, mind and strength.’ (Moro. 10:32.)

“To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to believe in Christ and his gospel with unshakable conviction. It is to know of the verity and divinity of the Lord’s work on earth.

“But this is not all. It is more than believing and knowing. We must be doers of the word and not hearers only. It is more than lip service; it is not simply confessing with the mouth the divine Sonship of the Savior. It is obedience and conformity and personal righteousness. ...

“To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to ‘press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men.’ It is to ‘endure to the end.’ (2 Ne. 31:20) It is to live our religion, to practice what we preach, to keep the commandments. It is the manifestation of ‘pure religion’ in the lives of men; it is visiting ‘the fatherless and widows in their affliction’ and keeping ourselves ‘unspotted from the world.’ (James 1:27.)

“To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to bridle our passions, control our appetites, and rise above carnal and evil things. It is to overcome the world as did he who is our prototype and who himself was the most valiant of all our Father’s children. It is to be morally clean, to pay our tithes and offerings, to honor the Sabbath day, to pray with full purpose of heart, to lay our all upon the altar if called upon to do so.

“To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to take the Lord’s side on every issue. It is to vote as he would vote. It is to think what he thinks, to believe what he believes, to say what he would say and do what he would do in the same situation. It is to have the mind of Christ and be one with him as he is one with his Father.” (Ensign, Nov. 1974, 35)

Regarding the blessings received in the celestial kingdom the Prophet

Joseph Smith taught in 1844:

“When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave.”

(Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 348.)



Some eleven years after D&C 76 was revealed, the Prophet taught us in **D&C 131:1** that there are three degrees within the celestial kingdom. The highest degree of glory is reserved for those who are exalted... **D&C 131:1-3; 132:19**. Celestial beings inherit thrones, kingdoms, ...powers... and eternal increase.

Only those in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom will have “*eternal increase*”—spirit children in the eternities. **D&C 131:4; 132:19-20**. They will be gods because they have no end...and all power.

Conclusion

Great blessings of exaltation in the celestial kingdom are available to all people. Each of us can be made perfect through Jesus Christ and be exalted with our families in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom. The revelation in **D&C 76** should encourage us to keep the commandments and receive the ordinances of salvation so we can receive these great blessings.

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: *“Section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants...should be treasured by all members of the Church as a priceless heritage. It should strengthen their faith and be to them an incentive to seek the exaltation promised to all who are just and true”* (*Church History and Modern Revelation*, 2 vols. [1953], 1:279)

Truly there are many mansions in our Father's house (John 14:2). In his justice and mercy and love he will do all he can do for us—all we will permit him to do—for he “*granteth unto men according to their desire*” (Alma 29:4, 5; 41:3-8). D&C 76 bears eloquent testimony of this truth.

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- What can you do to win the war against Satan in your life?
- Why do you suppose the Lord speak of “abiding” a law rather than “obeying” a law (D&C 88:21-22)?

