

### Introduction

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God's eternal plan provides a place in the eternal worlds for each one of His children. The Prophet Joseph Smith learned this truth in the revelation known as Doctrine and Covenants 76.

### Doctrinal Outline

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#### **A. There are three kingdoms, or degrees, of glory, which are compared to the sun, the moon, and the stars.**

See 1 Corinthians 15:40–42; Doctrine and Covenants 76:96–98.

#### **B. The Lord has prescribed requirements for eternal life in the celestial kingdom.**

1. We must receive the testimony of Jesus, be baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, and keep the commandments (see D&C 76:51–52).
2. We must overcome all things by faith and be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise (see D&C 76:53, 60).
3. We must comply with the new and everlasting covenant of marriage (see D&C 131:1–3).

#### **C. Great opportunities and rewards have been promised to those who inherit the celestial kingdom.**

1. The celestial kingdom is a kingdom of resplendent glory (see D&C 137:1–4).
2. Faithful members of the Church will come forth in the morning of the First Resurrection and receive a glorified, celestial body (see D&C 76:64–65; 88:28–29).
3. Those who inherit the celestial kingdom will dwell in the presence of God and Christ forever (see D&C 76:62).
4. Those in the celestial kingdom will minister to the inhabitants of the terrestrial kingdom (see D&C 76:86–87).
5. Those who inherit exaltation, the highest degree in the celestial kingdom, will become kings and priests unto God and members of the Church of the Firstborn (see D&C 76:54–57).
6. Through the Atonement and their own faithfulness, those who obtain exaltation become gods (see D&C 76:58; 132:19–20).
7. Exalted beings receive all things that the Father has (see D&C 76:55, 59; 84:38).

#### **D. The Lord has described those who will inherit the terrestrial kingdom.**

1. Those who inherit the terrestrial kingdom are described as honorable people who, either in this

world or in the spirit world, receive the testimony of Jesus but are not valiant in that testimony (see D&C 76:71–79).

2. Among those who inherit the terrestrial kingdom will be people who died without the law, spirits kept in prison, and some members of the Church who were not sufficiently valiant (see D&C 76:72–75, 79).
3. Those who reject the prophets in this life and then accept the gospel in the spirit world will inherit the terrestrial kingdom (see D&C 76:73–74; 138:32).

#### **E. The Lord has told us some of the conditions in the terrestrial kingdom.**

1. The inhabitants of the terrestrial kingdom will enjoy the presence of the Son but not the fullness of the Father (see D&C 76:77).
2. Those in the terrestrial kingdom will minister to those in the telestial kingdom (see D&C 76:81, 86).
3. The terrestrial kingdom exceeds the glory, power, might, and dominion of the telestial kingdom (see D&C 76:91).
4. Those who inherit the terrestrial kingdom will come forth in the First Resurrection after those who inherit the celestial kingdom have been resurrected (see D&C 88:99; 45:54).

#### **F. The Lord has described those who will inherit the telestial kingdom.**

1. Those who profess to follow Christ or the prophets but willfully reject the gospel, the testimony of Jesus, the prophets, and the everlasting covenant will inherit the telestial kingdom (see D&C 76:99–101).
2. The inhabitants of the telestial kingdom will include those who were murderers, liars, sorcerers, adulterers, and whoremongers—in general, the wicked people of the earth (see D&C 76:103; Revelation 22:15). These inhabitants of the telestial kingdom will have become clean through their suffering so that they can abide telestial glory.
3. The inhabitants of the telestial kingdom will be as innumerable as the stars (see D&C 76:109).

#### **G. The Lord has outlined the conditions and limitations of the telestial kingdom.**

1. The inhabitants of the telestial kingdom will suffer the wrath of God and be cast into hell until the end of the Millennium (see D&C 76:84, 104–6; 2 Nephi 28:15).
2. Those in the telestial kingdom will receive the Holy Ghost through the ministrations of those in the terrestrial kingdom (see D&C 76:86, 88).
3. Telestial glory surpasses all human understanding (see D&C 76:89).

4. Those obedient to telestial laws will be resurrected with telestial bodies in the Second, or Last, Resurrection (see D&C 76:85; 88:31; Mosiah 15:26).
5. Those in the telestial kingdom will be servants of God, “but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end” (D&C 76:112).

**H. The scriptures explain who the sons of perdition are and what their fate will be.**

1. Satan and the one-third of the hosts of heaven who followed him became sons of perdition (see D&C 76:25–30; 29:36–38; Revelation 12:7–9; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6).
2. Those who in mortality have known the power of God, been made partakers of it, and then later denied the truth and defied God’s power will also be sons of perdition (see D&C 76:31–32).
3. Those who deny the Holy Ghost after having received it and crucify the Savior unto themselves will have no forgiveness and will be sons of perdition (see D&C 76:34–36; Matthew 12:31–32).
4. Sons of perdition will suffer the wrath of God and partake of the second death (see D&C 76:33, 37–38).
5. Those who become sons of perdition in mortality will be resurrected but will not be redeemed in a kingdom of glory (see D&C 76:38–39, 43–44; 88:24, 32).
6. Only those who become sons of perdition will be able to comprehend the magnitude of the misery of those who inherit such a state (see D&C 76:44–48).

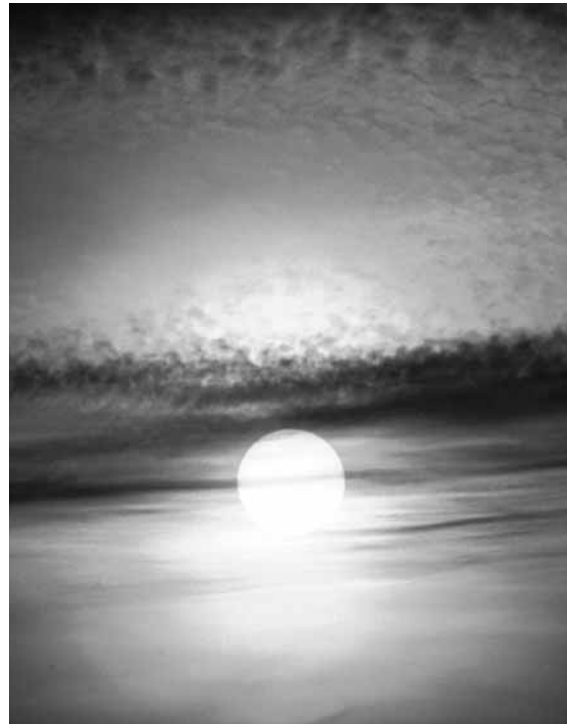
## Supporting Statements

**A. There are three kingdoms, or degrees, of glory, which are compared to the sun, the moon, and the stars.**

■ “1. *The Celestial Glory*—There are some who have striven to obey all the divine commandments, who have accepted the testimony of Christ, obeyed ‘the laws and ordinances of the Gospel,’ and received the Holy Spirit; these are they who have overcome evil by godly works and who are therefore entitled to the highest glory; . . . they possess celestial bodies, ‘whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all, whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical’; they are admitted to the glorified company, crowned with exaltation in the celestial kingdom.

“2. *The Terrestrial Glory*—We read of others who receive glory of a secondary order, differing from the highest as ‘the moon differs from the sun in the firmament.’ These are they who, though honorable, failed to comply with the requirements for exaltation, were blinded by the craftiness of men and unable to receive and obey the higher laws of God. They proved ‘not valiant in the testimony of Jesus,’ and therefore are not entitled to the fulness of glory.

“3. *The Telestial Glory*—There is another grade, differing from the higher orders as the stars differ from the brighter orbs of the firmament; this is for those who received not the testimony of Christ, but



who, nevertheless, did not deny the Holy Spirit; who have led lives exempting them from the heaviest punishment, yet whose redemption will be delayed until the last resurrection. In the telestial world there are innumerable degrees comparable to the varying light of the stars. Yet all who receive of any one of these orders of glory are at last saved, and upon them Satan will finally have no claim” (James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 91–92).

**B. The Lord has prescribed requirements for eternal life in the celestial kingdom.**

■ “Those who gain exaltation in the celestial kingdom are those who are members of the Church of the Firstborn; in other words, those who keep all the commandments of the Lord. . . .

“The higher ordinances in the temple of God pertain to exaltation in the celestial kingdom. . . . In order to receive this blessing, one must keep the full law, must abide the law by which that kingdom is governed; for, ‘He who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory’ [D&C 88:22]” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:41–42).

■ “Highest among the kingdoms of glory hereafter is the celestial kingdom. It is the kingdom of God, the glory thereof being typified by the sun in the firmament. (D. & C. 76:50–70, 92–96; 1 Cor. 15:39–42.) . . .

“. . . By entering the gate of repentance and baptism candidates find themselves on the strait and narrow path leading to the celestial kingdom. By devotion and faithfulness, by enduring to the end in righteousness and obedience, it is then possible to merit a celestial reward. (2 Ne. 31:17–21.)” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 116).

■ “I think it is of great importance to us as a people to know what we shall do. Are we content to aim for telestial glory? I never heard a prayer offered, especially in the family circle, in which the family does not beseech God to give them celestial glory. Telestial glory is not in their thoughts. Terrestrial glory may be all right for honorable Gentiles, who have not faith enough to believe the Gospel and who do right according to the best knowledge they have; but celestial glory is our aim—I perhaps should not say it is the aim, for sometimes it is not, but it is the hope. If into a family that had just offered prayer, and had asked God to lead them into the celestial kingdom, an angel should enter and should say to them that their prayers were useless and that they would never attain unto celestial glory, what a feeling would be produced in the breasts of that family! How sorrowful and afflicted they would feel! Yet, as I have said, while it is the aim of many, they do not act as if it were their true aim. They either misconceive the nature of the duties they have to perform to attain to celestial glory, or else they are very blind indeed.

“I ask again, what is your aim, or my aim? What do I desire? If I desire celestial glory, the highest law that God has revealed I will be willing to obey, and to observe every word that proceedeth from His mouth. I do not want to speak of myself, but if there is a law that God has revealed and it is necessary to be obeyed before celestial glory can be reached, I want to know it and obey it. All that I am on this earth for is to get celestial glory” (George Q. Cannon, in Conference Report, Apr. 1900, 55–56).

■ “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” (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 348).

**C. Great opportunities and rewards have been promised to those who inherit the celestial kingdom.**

■ “Through a continual course of progression, our Heavenly Father has received exaltation and glory, and He points us out the same path; and inasmuch as He is clothed with power, authority, and glory, He says, ‘Walk ye up and come in possession of the same glory and happiness that I possess.’

“In the gospel, those things have been made manifest unto us; and we are perfectly assured that, inasmuch as we are faithful, we shall eventually come in possession of everything that the mind of man can conceive of—everything that heart can desire” (Lorenzo Snow, *The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, 3–4).

■ “Some might suppose that it would be a great blessing to be taken and carried directly into heaven and there set down, but in reality that would be no blessing to such persons; they could not reap a full reward, could not enjoy the glory of the kingdom, and could not comprehend and abide the light thereof, but it would be to them a hell intolerable and I suppose would consume them much quicker than would hell fire. It would be no blessing to you to be carried into the celestial kingdom, and obliged to stay therein, unless you were prepared to dwell there” (Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, 95).



**D. The Lord has described those who will inherit the terrestrial kingdom.**

■ “Into the terrestrial kingdom will go all those who are honorable and who have lived clean virtuous lives, but who would not receive the Gospel, but in the spirit world repented and accepted it as far as it can be given unto them. Many of these have been blinded by tradition and the love of the world, and have not been able to see the beauties of the Gospel” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 1:287–88).

■ “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” (Bruce R. McConkie, in Conference Report, Oct. 1974, 46; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 35).

**E. The Lord has told us some of the conditions in the terrestrial kingdom.**

■ “After the Lord and the righteous who are caught up to meet him have descended upon the earth, there will come to pass another resurrection.

This may be considered as a part of the first, although it comes later. In this resurrection will come forth those of the terrestrial order, who were not worthy to be caught up to meet him, but who are worthy to come forth to enjoy the millennial reign" (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:296).

**F. The Lord has described those who will inherit the telestial kingdom.**

■ "Those who enter into the telestial kingdom, where their glories differ as do the stars of heaven in their magnitude, and who are innumerable as the sands of the seashore, are the ungodly, the filthy who suffer the wrath of God on the earth, who are thrust down to hell where they will be required to pay the uttermost farthing *before* their redemption comes. These are they who receive not the gospel of Christ and consequently could not deny the Holy Spirit while living on the earth.

"They have no part in the first resurrection and are not redeemed from the devil and his angels *until* the last resurrection, because of their wicked lives and their evil deeds. Nevertheless, even these are heirs of salvation, but before they are redeemed and enter into their kingdom, they must repent of their sins, and receive the gospel, and bow the knee, and acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world" (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:22).

**G. The Lord has outlined the conditions and limitations of the telestial kingdom.**

■ "That glory granted the inhabitants of the lowest kingdom of glory is called telestial glory. In the infinite mercy of a beneficent Father it surpasses all mortal understanding, and yet it is in no way comparable to the glory of the terrestrial and celestial worlds. Telestial glory is typified by the stars of the firmament, and 'as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory in the telestial world' (D. & C. 76:81–112; 1 Cor. 15:41), meaning that all who inherit the telestial kingdom will not receive the same glory" (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 778).

■ "Even to hell there is an exit as well as an entrance; and when sentence has been served, commuted perhaps by repentance and its attendant works, the prison doors shall open and the penitent captive be afforded opportunity to comply with the law, which he aforesaid violated. . . .

"The inhabitants of the telestial world—the lowest of the kingdoms of glory prepared for resurrected souls, shall include those 'who are thrust down to hell' and 'who shall not be redeemed from the devil until the last resurrection.' ([D&C] 76:82–85.) And though these may be delivered from hell and attain to a measure of glory with possibilities of progression, yet their lot shall be that of 'servants of the Most

High, but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end.' (v. 112.) Deliverance from hell is not admittance to heaven" (James E. Talmage, *The Vitality of Mormonism*, 255–56).

**H. The scriptures explain who the sons of perdition are and what their fate will be.**

■ "All sins shall be forgiven, except the sin against the Holy Ghost; for Jesus will save all except the sons of perdition. 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. This is the case with many apostates of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:314).

■ "And he that believes, is baptized, and receives the light and testimony of Jesus Christ, and walks well for a season, receiving the fulness of the blessings of the gospel in this world, and afterwards turns wholly unto sin, violating his covenants, he will be among those whom the gospel can never reach in the spirit world; and all such go beyond its saving power, they will taste the second death, and be banished from the presence of God eternally" (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 476–77).

■ "In the realms of perdition or the kingdom of darkness, where there is no light, Satan and the unembodied spirits of the pre-existence shall dwell together with those of mortality who retrogress to the level of perdition. These have lost the power of regeneration. They have sunk so low as to have lost the inclinations and ability to repent, consequently the gospel plan is useless to them as an agent of growth and development" (Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 125).

