

## The Plan of Salvation

Manual Goal: To help class members understand the significance of temples and encourage them to seek the blessings of the temple in their own lives.

EGD Goal:

Framing: This lesson is about everything in the history of ever. Backward forever, forward forever, and the precious role this life plays in it all. (Also, since next lesson is on the Kingdoms of Glory, these two episodes will each focus on different aspects of the Plan of Salvation. This episode will focus on the role of this life in the Plan, and next episode will focus on Salvation.

The Plan of Salvation is really fun and exciting to think about. I used to be obsessed

### Outline

- I. Framing
- II. Discussion of new resources
- III. Productive Sunday Schooling
  - i. How does the context of the Plan of Salvation impact your life from day to day?
    1. The big picture.
    2. Thoughts/impact of each element:
      - a. Preexistence
      - b. This life
      - c. Spirit prison/paradise
      - d. Millennium
      - e. Kingdoms
  - ii. Consequences to work to avoid: Losing this life to gain eternity, neglecting important relationships, not making the most of every day
  - iii. Blessings of the Plan of Salvation perspective.
  - iv. Which part of the Plan is the most important? Why?
  - v. Salvation now (will pick up this next episode)
  - vi. Using the perspective of the Plan to make the most of this life.
- b. Overview of full episode
- c. Conclusion: Making the most of this life, every day.

## I. Framing

**Lesson 19: The Plan of Salvation** These new Church resources are a key reason I continue to issue new episodes. I am glad to report that I am pleased more often than not by what the Church is putting out in this particular instance.

- **“Man Was Also in the Beginning with God”**: This article discusses an early revelation on the premortal existence that is now found in Doctrine and Covenants 93. This article touches on some of my favorite ideas in all of Mormonism. I love the idea of a God, Gods, who progress “from grace to grace”! I love the idea that humans in good differ in degree, not kind. We are not just servants of god or children of god; we are gods in embryo. This insight shifts the entire perspective and framing on the meaning of life and how we should live it.
- **“The Vision”**: This article gives context for the vision about life after death and the three kingdoms of glory, which is now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76. I’m so glad this article discusses Universalism. Mormonism is indeed bracingly universalist, as opposed to the Calvinism so rampant in Joseph’s day, which taught that humans were predestined to either salvation or damnation, and those damned would far outnumber those saved. I don’t believe in an inefficient or incompetent God, and am grateful for these teachings I grew up with. I’m also glad the article frankly acknowledges people having a hard time with new ideas.
- **“Becoming like God”**: This Gospel Topics essay gives some historical context for Church teachings on exaltation. I always appreciate it when we get one of the Gospel Topics essays. “Latter-day Saints see all people as children of God in a full and complete sense; they consider every person divine in origin, nature, and potential. Each has an eternal core and is “a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents.”<sup>1</sup> Each possesses seeds of divinity and must choose whether to live in harmony or tension with that divinity.” LOVE that wording! So resonates with me. How can we “nurture our divinity” is such an important and productive question.

I wish this essay had incorporated the wording “Heavenly Parents”. We have a Gospel Topics essay on Heavenly Mother, for crying out loud!

- **“Accounts of the ‘King Follett Sermon’”**: This page from the Joseph Smith Papers website links to accounts of Joseph Smith’s last general conference address, which laid out some of his teachings about our divine nature and potential. The King Follett Discourse is one of my favorite works in Mormonism. I’m happy to see it featured as part of the Sunday School resources. It is also valuable that this resource not only provides historical context, but introduces readers to historical methods such as reproducing multiple accounts of an event. The idea that Heavenly Father was a Christ to his generation, in addition to the doctrine that Heavenly Father was once human, combined with the idea that the process of perfection will take many steps... thrilling stuff.

## II. Productive Sunday Schooling

- i. How does the context of the Plan of Salvation impact your life from day to day?

The big picture:

Cosmic drama and the meaning of it all (Where do I come from? Why am I here, Where am I going? How does this life fit into the big picture?) These are POWERFUL questions and answers.

You are the center of the universe, but so is everyone else.

One of my favorite C.S. Lewis quotes: “It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree helping each other to one or the other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all of our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.”

— [C.S. Lewis, The Weight of Glory](#)”

1. Thoughts/impact of each element:
  - a. Preexistence (approach to learning, “old souls”, my favorite, friendship, including thinking of who we could have known, memories, homesickness)
  - b. This life
  - c. Spirit prison/paradise (We don’t adequately appreciate how small a role “hell” plays in the Plan of Salvation)
  - d. Millennium (The world healed, need to bring Zion)
  - e. Kingdoms (an eternity of relationships, heaven is more expansive than we imagine)
- ii. Consequences to work to avoid: Losing this life to gain eternity, neglecting important relationships, not making the most of every day
- iii. Blessings of the Plan of Salvation perspective.

iv. Which part of the Plan is the most important? Why?

Guess which part of the Plan of Salvation we are most sure about?

This life.

- v. Salvation now (will pick up this next episode)
- vi. Using the perspective of the Plan to make the most of this life.
- b. Overview of full episode
- c. Conclusion: Making the most of this life, every day.

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## Lesson 20

Guess what? You've already made it! Congratulations! If we are talking about the Kingdoms of Glory, \*we are already there\*.

Explain

Hell now

Heaven now

Salvation now

What do we know about the Kingdoms of Glory (which all qualify as "heaven" since a God presides there)

Celestial: Where our Heavenly Parents live. And doctrine teaches us we lived with our Heavenly Parents, therefore Pre-Existence = Celestial Kingdom

Terrestrial: Christ rules, same as Millennium

Telestial: This world. The world therefore progresses from Telestial to Terrestrial to Celestial, and the temple suggests we do the same.

## Lesson 20: The Kingdoms of Glory

- [“The Vision”](#): This article gives context for the vision about life after death and the three kingdoms of glory, which is now recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 76. [See last lesson](#).
- [“Our Hearts Rejoiced to Hear Him Speak”](#): This article gives context for the revelations now known as Doctrine and Covenants 129, 130, and 131.
- [“Vision, 16 February 1832 \[D&C 76\]”](#): This page from the Joseph Smith Papers website gives in-depth historical background about the vision that became Doctrine and Covenants 76. [“The economy of God”](#). I like that. I don’t believe in an inefficient God.

Talk about how right now, this life, is either heaven or hell. Really focus on this life.

How are we in heaven or hell, now?

How are we like and unlike God, now?

Do an exercise where we think through how we can move forward in our progression and development (Pick one thing you can do, do it, then report how it went)