

The Kingdoms of Glory

Last time around I issued a special episode about you, the listeners. Our survey has had about 1,000 respondents, and this is what we learned:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/10REEqCdWGb0BNWqoNVsx3HeR5TM6P3ykSfq7qSExBU/viewanalytics?formkey=dEswNVITcG1PYjN2OW9keHBMa1BuZ3c6MQ>

Manual Goal: To help class members carefully consider the eternal inheritances in the three kingdoms of glory and to encourage them to live in such a way that they will be able to inherit celestial glory and dwell in Heavenly Father's presence with their families.

EGD Goal: To help class members understand how the kingdoms of glory are not only about the afterlife, but describe how we live here and now.

Outline

- I. Framing
- II. Discussion of new resources
- III. Productive Sunday Schooling
 - a. What is the nature of the Kingdoms of Glory?
 - i. Celestial Kingdom (Heavenly parents, three levels, so, spirit children, right, but also... pre-existence?) Presided by Heavenly Parents (but where are God's great grandparents, hmm?)
 - ii. Terrestrial Kingdom (millennium) Presided by Christ, so pretty much exactly like how most Christians imagine heaven. And pretty much everyone makes it here. Good stuff.
 - iii. Telestial Kingdom. HERE! Probably one of my favorite things I have ever learned. This world is the Telestial Kingdom. Makes sense... presided by the Holy Ghost. After we are baptized, we get the companionship of the holy ghost.
 - iv. Temple (ritually pass from telestial to terrestrial to celestial)
 - v. Isn't the idea of progression between kingdoms a problem?
 - b. Kingdom come
 - i. Hell now
 - ii. Heaven now

- iii. Salvation now
- c. Overview of full episode (History of the idea of salvation in the church, plus fun discussion and exploration of each step in the Plan of Salvation)
- d. Conclusion: Don't wait for eternity; eternity is already here.

Outline

Framing

The traditional view of heaven and hell never really made sense to me. If everyone "good" goes to Heaven and everyone "bad" goes to hell, then where is the line? Do people 51% good go to heaven, and people 49% good go to hell? Do you go to hell if you were good, but didn't accept the gospel? Does God know who is going to go to heaven and hell? Why not just assign us a spot beforehand? And is hell really forever? Doesn't that make God either inefficient, incompetent, or a sadist?

A gospel of transformation leading to multiple levels of heaven makes much better and satisfying theological sense to me. The temple in particular helped some final pieces fall into place.

Discussion of new resources

[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. [I appreciated this "behind the scenes" description of William Clayton's story and contributions.](#)
- ["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. Another balanced resource. Provides historical details, the catalyst for the revelation, and mentions similar ideas about the afterlife such as Universalism and Emanuel Swedenborg. Detailed transcription history.](#)

Productive Sunday Schooling

What is the nature of the Kingdoms of Glory?

Celestial Kingdom (Heavenly parents, three levels, so, spirit children, right, but also... pre-existence?) Presided by Heavenly Parents (but where are God's great grandparents, hmm?)

Terrestrial Kingdom (millennium) Presided by Christ, so pretty much exactly like how most Christians imagine heaven. And pretty much everyone makes it here. Good stuff.

Telestial Kingdom. HERE! Probably one of my favorite things I have ever learned. This world is the Telestial Kingdom. Makes sense... presided by the Holy Ghost. After we are baptized, we get the companionship of the holy ghost.

Temple (ritually pass from telestial to terrestrial to celestial)

Isn't the idea of progression between kingdoms a problem?

Kingdom come

Hell now

Heaven now

Salvation now

How are we like and unlike God, right 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)

Overview of full episode (History of the idea of salvation in the church, plus fun discussion and exploration of each step in the Plan of Salvation)

Conclusion: Don't wait for eternity; eternity is already here.