

Building Bridges Series III

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The Heart of the Series

Have I not written to you excellent things Of counsels and knowledge, **21** That 1) I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth, That 2) you may answer words of truth To those who send to you? **Proverbs 22:20–21**

Building Bridges Series III

Heaven

LDS Doctrine

Paradise

* Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life.

And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow. (Alma 40:11-12)

* I will say something about spirits in prison. There has been much said by modern divines about the words of Jesus (when on the cross) to the thief, saying, “This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” King James translators make it out to say paradise. But what is paradise? It is a modern word... There is nothing in the original word in the Greek from which this was taken that signifies paradise; but it was – This day thou shalt be with me in the world of the spirits...” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pg 309)

Three Kingdoms of Glory

Jesus taught, “In my Father’s house are many mansions” (John 14:2). From the scriptures we learn that there are three kingdoms of glory in heaven. The Apostle Paul mentioned that he knew a man who was “caught up to the third heaven” (2 Corinthians 12:2). Paul named two of the kingdoms in heaven: the celestial and the terrestrial (1 Corinthians 15:40-42). The celestial is the highest, and the terrestrial is the second. Through latter-day revelation we learn that the third kingdom is the telestial kingdom (see D&C 76:81). We also learn that there are three heavens or degrees within the celestial kingdom (see D&C 131:1). (Gospel Principles, pg 301)

Exaltation

Exaltation is eternal life, the kind of life that God lives...

If we prove faithful to the Lord, we will live in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom of heaven. We will become exalted, just like Heavenly Father. Exaltation is the greatest gift that Heavenly Father can give his children (see D&C 14:7). (Gospel Principles, pg 302)

Blessings of Exaltation

Those who receive exaltation in the celestial kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ will receive special blessings. The Lord has promised, “All things are theirs” (D&C 76:59). These are some of the blessings given to exalted people:

1. They will live eternally in the presence of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ (D&C 76).
2. They will become gods.
3. They will have their righteous family members with them and will be able to have spirit children...

4. They will receive fullness of joy.
5. They will have everything that our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have – all power, glory... (Gospel Principles, pg 302)

Requirements for Exaltation

To be exalted, we must first place our faith in Jesus Christ and then endure in that faith to the end of our lives. Our faith in him must be such that we repent of our sins and obey his commandments.

He commands us all to receive certain ordinances:

1. We must be baptized and confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ. (of Latter-day Saints)
2. We must receive the laying on of hand for the gift of the Holy Spirit.
3. We must receive the temple endowment.
4. We must be married for time and eternity.

In addition to receiving the required ordinances, the Lord commands all of us to –

1. Love and worship God.
 2. Love our neighbor.
 3. Repent of our wrongdoings.
 4. Live the law of chastity.
 5. Pay honest tithes and offerings.
 6. Be honest in our dealings with others and with the Lord.
 7. Speak the truth always.
 8. Obey the Word of Wisdom. (D&C 89)
 9. Search out our kindred dead and perform the saving ordinances of the gospel for them.
 10. Keep the Sabbath day holy.
 11. Attend our Church meetings as regularly as possible so we can renew our baptismal covenants by partaking of the sacrament.
 12. Love our family members and strengthen them in the ways of the Lord.
 13. Have family and individual prayers every day.
 14. Honor our parents.
 15. Teach the gospel to others by word and example.
 16. Study scriptures.
 17. Listen and obey the inspired words of the prophets of the Lord.
- Finally, each of us needs to receive the Holy Ghost and learn to follow his direction in our individual lives. (Gospel Principles, pg 302-303)

Must Keep All Law & Commandments

CELESTIAL SALVATION. Those who keep the full law and obey all the commandments of God are heirs of full salvation in the celestial kingdom, the glory of which the sun is spoken of as being typical. (Doctrines of Salvation, vol 2, pg 21)

FULL OBEDIENCE LEADS TO JOINT-HEIRSHIP. Now if we want to become heirs, joint heirs with Jesus Christ, possessing the blessings of the kingdom, there is only one thing required of you and me, and this is that we keep the *whole law*, not a part of it only. (Doctrines of Salvation, vol 2, pg 37)

ENDOWMENT AND SEALING PRECEDE SONSHIP. If you would become a son or daughter of God and an heir of the kingdom, then you must go to the house of the Lord and receive blessings which there can be obtained and which cannot be obtained elsewhere; and you must keep those commandments and those covenants to the end... The ordinances of the temple, the endowment and the sealings, pertain to exaltation in the celestial kingdom, where sons and daughters are. (Doctrines of Salvation, vol 2, pg 40)

Some ordinances are essential to our exaltation. These ordinances are called saving ordinances. They include baptism, confirmation, ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood (for men), the temple endowment, and the marriage sealing. With each of these ordinances,

we enter into solemn covenants with the Lord. (<https://www.lds.org/topics/ordinances?lang=eng>)

The higher ordinances in the temple of God pertain to the 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 celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory. (Doctrines of Salvation, vol 2, pg 41-42)

CELESTIAL MARRIAGE ESSENTIAL TO EXALTATION. Another thing that we must not forget in this great plan of redemption and exaltation, is that man must have a wife, and a woman a husband, to receive the fullness of exaltation. They must be sealed for time and for all eternity in the temple; then their union will last forever. (Doctrines of Salvation, vol 2, pg 43-44)

So it is necessary, not merely that we believe, but that we repent, and in faith perform good works until the end; and then shall we receive the reward of the faithful and a place in the celestial kingdom of God. (Doctrines of Salvation, vol 2, pg 311)

Family is Forever

President Brigham Young explained that our families are not yet ours. The Lord has committed them to us to see how we will treat them. Only if we are faithful will they be given to us forever. What we do here on earth determines whether or not we will be worthy to become heavenly parents...(Gospel Principles, pg 231)

Families can be together forever. To enjoy this blessing we must be married in the temple. When people are married outside the temple, the marriage ends when one of the partners dies...If we obey the commandments of the Lord, our families will be together forever as husband, wife and children. (Gospel Principles, pg 232)

Marriage & the Celestial Kingdom

“Another thing that we must not forget in this great plan of redemption and exaltation, is that a man must have a wife, and a woman a husband, to receive the fulness of exaltation. They must be sealed for time and for all eternity in a temple; then their union will last forever, and they cannot be separated because God has joined them together, as he taught the Pharisees” (Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation 2:43-44. Italics in original).

“Do you uphold your husband before God as your lord? ‘What!— my husband to be my lord?’ I ask, Can you get into the celestial kingdom without him? Have any of you been there? You will remember that you never got into the celestial kingdom without the aid of your husband. If you did, it was because your husband was away, and some one had to act proxy for him. No woman will get into the celestial kingdom, except her husband receives her, if she is worthy to have a husband; and if not, somebody will receive her as a servant” (Erastus Snow, October 4, 1857, Journal of Discourses 5:291).

“When the wife is faithful and desires to obey the divine law and the husband is rebellious, or unwilling to obey the will of the Lord, if she maintains her integrity to the best of her ability,

she will be given to another husband in eternity and will receive all the blessings of the celestial kingdom” (Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions 3:24).

“This from Elder Orson Pratt, which was delivered by appointment by and endorsed by President Brigham Young:

We cannot feel justified in closing this article on the subject of marriage without saying a few words to unmarried females in this Church... You will clearly perceive, from the revelation which God has given, that you can never obtain a fulness of glory, without being married to a righteous man for time and for all eternity. If you marry a man who receives not the gospel, you lay a foundation for sorrow in this world, besides losing the privilege of enjoying the society of a husband in eternity. You forfeit your right to an endless increase of immortal lives. And even the children which you may be favoured with in this life, will not be entrusted to your charge in eternity, but you will be left in that world without a husband, without a family, without a kingdom, without any means of enlarging yourselves, being subject to the principalities and powers who are counted worthy of families, and kingdoms, and thrones, and the increase of dominions forever. To them you will be servants and angels—that is, provided that your conduct should be such as to secure this measure of glory. Can it be possible that any females, after knowing these things, will suffer themselves to keep company with persons out of this Church?” (Joseph Fielding Smith quoting Orson Pratt, Conference Reports, October 1946, p. 36).

Only Sons of Perdition will go into the Second Death.

31 Thus saith the Lord concerning all those who know my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power—

32 They are they who are the sons of perdition, of whom I say that it had been better for them never to have been born;

33 For they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity;

34 Concerning whom I have said there is no forgiveness in this world nor in the world to come—

35 Having denied the Holy Spirit after having received it, and having denied the Only Begotten Son of the Father, having crucified him unto themselves and put him to an open shame.

36 These are they who shall go away into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels—

37 And the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power;

38 Yea, verily, the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord, after the sufferings of his wrath.

39 For all the rest shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb, who was slain, who was in the bosom of the Father before the worlds were made. (D&C 76:31-39)

No one will enter Celestial Kingdom without the consent of Joseph Smith

Joseph Smith holds the keys of this last dispensation, and is now engaged behind the veil in the great work of the last days. I can tell our beloved brother Christians who have slain the Prophets and butchered and otherwise caused the death of thousands of Latter-day Saints, the priests who have thanked God in their prayers and thanksgiving from the pulpit that we have been plundered, driven, and slain, and the deacons under the pulpit, and their brethren and sisters in their closets, who have thanked God, thinking that the Latter-day Saints were wasted away, something that no doubt will mortify them—something that, to say the least, is a matter of deep regret to them—namely, that no man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God without the consent of Joseph Smith. From the day that the Priesthood was taken from the earth to the winding-up scene of all things, every man and woman must have the certificate of Joseph Smith, junior, as a passport to their entrance into the mansion where God and Christ are—I with you and you with me. I cannot go there without his consent. He holds the keys of that kingdom for the last dispensation—the keys to rule in the spirit-world; and he rules there triumphantly, for he gained full power and a glorious victory over the power of Satan while he was yet in the flesh, and was a martyr to his religion and to the name of Christ, which gives him a most perfect victory in the spirit-world. He reigns there as supreme a being in his sphere, capacity, and calling, as God does in heaven. Many will exclaim—"Oh, that is very disagreeable! It is preposterous! We cannot bear the thought!" But it is true. (Brigham Young, 2nd President, delivered in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, October 9, 1859, Journal of Discourses, Vol. 7, pg 289)

Biblical Doctrine

Paradise (Vs. "There is nothing in the original word in the Greek from which this was taken that signifies paradise..." – Joseph Smith)

1. Luke 23:43 - And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Paradise – (Gk/*paradeisos* /par·ad·i·sos) Enhanced Strong's Lexicon

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament - This is a loanword from a Persian term meaning "enclosure" or "park." The Greeks first use it for the parks of Persian kings. In the LXX the garden of Gen. 2-3 is God's "park" and *parádeisos* becomes a technical religious term. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1995, c1985). Translation of: Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament. (777).

2. 2 Corinthians 12:2–4 - I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. **3** And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—**4** how he was caught up into **Paradise** and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

* Heaven – (Gk/*ouranos* /oo·ran·os) - **1** the vaulted expanse of the sky with all things visible in it. **2** the region above the sidereal heavens, the seat of order of things eternal and consummately perfect where God dwells and other heavenly beings.

* The biblical writers' conception of how the heavens and earth were structured by God represents a particular cosmology. The Israelites believed in a universe that was common

among the ancient civilizations of the biblical world. It encompassed three parts: a heavenly realm, an earthly realm for humans, and an underworld for the dead. (Dr. Michael S. Heiser, I Dare You Not to Bore Me with the Bible.)

The Physical Heavens

Genesis 1:1 ¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:7-8 ⁷Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. ⁸And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

Genesis 1:16-17 ¹⁶Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. ¹⁷God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth,

Genesis 1:20 ²⁰Then God said, “Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.”

The Abode of God

Psalms 11:4 ⁴The Lord is in His holy temple, The Lord’s throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.

Isaiah 66:1 ¹Thus says the Lord: “Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?”

3. Revelation 2:7 - “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” ’

Genesis 2:9 ⁹And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 3:22-23 ²²Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”— ²³therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.

Revelation 22:1-2 ¹And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Biblical Context for LDS References for “Three Kingdoms of Glory”

1. “Jesus taught, “In my Father’s house are many mansions” (John 14:2).” (Gospel Principles, pg. 301)

John 14:1-6 ¹“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And where I go you know, and the way you know.” ⁵Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we

know the way?” ⁶Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

2. “Paul named two of the kingdoms in heaven: the celestial and the terrestrial (1 Corinthians 15:40-42).” (Gospel Principles, pg. 301)

1 Corinthians 15:35-44 ³⁵But someone will say, “How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?” ³⁶Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. ³⁷And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. ³⁸But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body. ³⁹All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. ⁴⁰There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial (relating to heaven) is one, and the glory of the terrestrial (relating to earth) is another. ⁴¹There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. ⁴²So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. ⁴³It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

3. “Through latter-day revelation we learn that the third kingdom is the telestial kingdom (see D&C 76:81). (Gospel Principles, pg. 301)

* Telestial is NOT in the Bible. Telestial is NOT a word. It is a made up word.

Keeping the Whole Law for Righteousness or Justification to enter Heaven

Galatians 2:16 - knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Justified - *dikaioo* /dik·ah·yo·o/] v. **1** to render righteous or such he ought to be. **2** to show, exhibit, evince, one to be righteous, such as he is and wishes himself to be considered

Galatians 3:10-13 ¹⁰For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” ¹¹But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “the just shall live by faith.” ¹²Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.” ¹³Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”),

Romans 10:4 ⁴For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Galatians 3:24–25 - Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. **25** But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Jesus’ Commandments to Follow

Matthew 22:37-39 ³⁷Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

John 15:12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

John 15:17 - These things I command you, that you love one another.

Biblical Context for LDS D&C 76 teaching of who is cast into lake of fire.

Revelation 20:11–15 - Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. **12** And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. **13** The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. **14** Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. **15** And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Those who are written in the Book of Life are those who are made righteous by faith in Jesus Christ.

Exodus 32:32 - Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.”

Psalms 69:28 - Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous.

Luke 10:20 - Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

Revelation 3:5 - He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

1 John 5:5 - 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

What Do We (Biblical Christians) Believe Happens When we Die?

We believe that Jesus is the Only Way to Heaven & NOT Joseph Smith Jr..

John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Ephesians 2:18 - For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Hebrews 10:19–20 - Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,

We believe to be absent from the body is to be present WITH the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:6–9 - So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. **7** For we walk by faith, not by sight. **8** We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. **9** Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

We believe Jesus’ promise to come and receive us to Himself.

John 14:1–6 - “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. **2** In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. **3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. **4** And where I go you know,

and the way you know.” **5** Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” **6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 ¹³But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words.

We believe Jesus’ description of marriage in heaven.

Luke 20:28–36 - ...“Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man’s brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. **29** Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. **30** And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. **31** Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. **32** Last of all the woman died also. **33** Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife.” **34** Jesus answered and said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. **35** But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; **36** nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

We believe everyone who is saved will be in Heaven with God and Jesus Christ.

Revelation 21:22–24 - But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. **23** The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. **24** And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.