

Lesson  
8

# The Three Kingdoms of Glory

---

**Purpose** To encourage class members to strive for exaltation in the celestial kingdom by keeping the commandments and exercising faith in Jesus Christ.

---

**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study John 14:2; 1 Corinthians 15:40–42; Revelation 7:9–10; 2 Nephi 25:23; Alma 3:26; Doctrine and Covenants 58:27–28; 76:32–89, 98–106; 82:10; 131:1–4; 137:7–10; 138:29–34; Articles of Faith 1:3.
2. Make a copy for each class member of the quiz “The Truth about Heaven and Hell,” found at the end of the lesson (page 43). If it is not feasible to make copies, bring a blank piece of paper for each class member.
3. Materials needed:
  - a. A pen or pencil for each class member.
  - b. A set of scriptures and a scripture marking pencil for each class member. Continue to encourage class members to bring their own scriptures to class each week.

*Note to the teacher* *The extent of our obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel determines the glory we will receive after we are resurrected. Encourage class members to have as their goal exaltation in the highest kingdom, the celestial kingdom, where we can experience a fulness of happiness.*

---

**Suggested Lesson Development**

**The Truth about Heaven and Hell**

**Quiz** Give each class member a pen or pencil and a copy of the quiz. Have class members mark each statement as “True” or “False.” (If you have not made copies of the quiz, give each class member a blank piece of paper and have them write their answers as you read the statements.)

**Scripture discussion** After everyone has completed the quiz, discuss each answer until you are sure everyone understands it well. Following are the statements and answers with some suggestions for discussion:

1. After we have been resurrected and judged, each of us will dwell in one of three kingdoms of glory.

True. Just as there are different degrees of righteousness on the earth, there are kingdoms of differing glory in the next life: the celestial kingdom is the highest, followed by the terrestrial and the telestial. To reward many different levels of faithfulness, there will be “many mansions” (see John 14:2).

2. God has already determined which kingdom each of us will inherit, no matter what we do.

False. We are agents unto ourselves (see D&C 58:27–28). This means that we are responsible for the choices we make. We will be judged by our thoughts and actions. Have a class member read the following statement by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Each of you will be judged according to your individual works and the desires of your hearts. . . . Your eventual placement in the celestial, terrestrial, or telestial kingdom will not be determined by chance. The Lord has prescribed unchanging requirements for each. You can know what the scriptures teach and pattern your lives accordingly” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 48; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 35).

3. All you have to do to get to the celestial kingdom is say that you believe in Jesus Christ.

False. We must do more than just say we believe in Jesus Christ; we must follow him. All people, regardless of their level of righteousness, will be saved from death because of the Resurrection of Christ. However, in order to attain the highest degree of glory in the resurrection, we need to “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32). We come unto Christ by having faith in him, repenting of our sins, being baptized, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, receiving other saving priesthood ordinances, obeying the commandments, and keeping the covenants we make with our Heavenly Father. How we live *does* make a difference.

Have class members read, mark, and discuss Alma 3:26.

4. To be damned is to be stopped or held back from blessings we might have received if we had obeyed God’s commandments.

True. When we sin, we prevent our own progress. Our Heavenly Father wants to bless us. However, because he is just, he will reward us only when we obey his commandments (see D&C 82:10).

5. Hell is a place of never-ending suffering where sinners go. Most of mankind will be there forever because of their wickedness.

False. Hell, or spirit prison, is a place for people who have rejected the gospel and people who have died without a knowledge of the gospel. The gospel is preached to them there, and those who accept the gospel and repent of their sins will be released and allowed to enter paradise until the Resurrection and Judgment (see D&C 138:29–34). Most of those who do not accept the gospel there will have to suffer for their own sins but will eventually be resurrected and go to a kingdom of glory (see D&C 76:81–85, 98–106).

6. A great multitude of Heavenly Father’s children will dwell in the celestial kingdom.

True. See Revelation 7:9–10, in which John describes his vision of the exalted sons and daughters of God.

7. There are three degrees of glory in the celestial kingdom. In order to receive the highest of these degrees, a person must be sealed to his or her spouse in the temple.

True. Have class members read, mark, and discuss Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4. Then have a class member read the following statement by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles about the highest degree of the celestial kingdom:

“Those who have met the highest requirements for this kingdom, including faithfulness to covenants made in a temple of God and marriage for eternity, will be exalted to the godlike state referred to as the ‘fulness’ of the Father or eternal life (D&C 76:56, 94; see also D&C 131; 132:19–20). . . . Eternal life is family life with a loving Father in Heaven and with our progenitors [ancestors] and our posterity” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 115; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 86–87).

Be sure to emphasize that temple marriage is not a guarantee of exaltation in the celestial kingdom. Those married in the temple should strive to be exalted together in the celestial kingdom by continually growing in their love for each other and for the Lord.

8. God loves all his children and will give them the greatest reward that they have prepared for through their obedience and their faith in Jesus Christ.

True. Have class members read and mark Doctrine and Covenants 76:89, and point out that even the telestial kingdom, the lowest of the three kingdoms, is a place of indescribable glory.

*Note to the teacher*

*Class members may ask questions that you are unable to answer. If this happens, tell them that you do not know the answer to the question but will try to find an answer (see Teaching—No Greater Call, 85). Then follow up on your promise, and be sure to tell class members the answer to the question when you have found it. If in your study you find that an answer to the question has not been revealed, avoid speculation. In such a circumstance, follow up on your promise by telling class members that the answer has not been revealed.*

---

### **The Three Kingdoms of Glory**

Scripture discussion

Explain that the Apostle Paul taught about the three kingdoms of glory. Have class members read and mark 1 Corinthians 15:40–42 (note that in the Joseph Smith Translation of verse 40, Paul also mentions “bodies telestial”).

- How did Paul describe the differences in the glory of the celestial kingdom, the terrestrial kingdom, and the telestial kingdom? (See 1 Corinthians 15:41. He compared the celestial to the sun, the terrestrial to the moon, and the telestial to the stars.) What do these comparisons tell us about the differences between the kingdoms?

Scripture and chalkboard discussion

Explain that through the Prophet Joseph Smith we have received a more detailed definition of the three kingdoms of glory. He and Sidney Rigdon, who later became First Counselor in the First Presidency, were given a vision in which they saw each of the kingdoms of glory. They also received a revelation concerning the people who would go to each of the kingdoms.

Divide class members into three groups. Have the first group read about the telestial kingdom (see Doctrine and Covenants 76:81–83, 98–103). Have the

second group read about the terrestrial kingdom (see Doctrine and Covenants 76:71–80). Have the third group read about the celestial kingdom (see Doctrine and Covenants 76:50–70; 137:7–10). Ask the group members to work together to find information about the people who will dwell in each of the kingdoms of glory. Encourage them to mark words or phrases that they think are important. Give them four or five minutes to work together. Then list on the chalkboard the qualifications they have found. Your chart should look something like this (you may abbreviate the chart as necessary):

<p>WHO WILL INHERIT TELESTIAL GLORY? (D&amp;C 76:81–83, 98–103)</p> <p>Those who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reject the gospel (D&amp;C 76:82, 101).</li> <li>Reject the testimony of Jesus (D&amp;C 76:82–83, 101).</li> <li>Are liars, sorcerers, adulterers, and whoremongers (D&amp;C 76:103).</li> </ol> <p>WHO WILL INHERIT TERRESTRIAL GLORY? (D&amp;C 76:71–80)</p> <p>Those who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reject the gospel in this life but receive it in the spirit world (D&amp;C 76:71–74).</li> <li>Are honorable but are blinded by the craftiness of men (D&amp;C 76:75).</li> <li>Are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus (D&amp;C 76:79).</li> </ol> <p>HOW CAN WE INHERIT CELESTIAL GLORY? (D&amp;C 76:50–70)</p> <p>We must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive the testimony of Jesus (D&amp;C 76:51).</li> <li>Be baptized by one with priesthood authority (D&amp;C 76:51).</li> <li>Keep the commandments (D&amp;C 76:52).</li> <li>Receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (D&amp;C 76:52–53).</li> <li>Overcome the world by faith (D&amp;C 76:53).</li> <li>Be made perfect through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (D&amp;C 76:69).</li> </ol> <p>WHO ELSE WILL INHERIT CELESTIAL GLORY? (D&amp;C 137:7–10)</p> <p>Those who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Die without a knowledge of the gospel but “would have received it with all their hearts” (D&amp;C 137:7–9).</li> </ol> <p>And those who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Die before they arrive at the years of accountability” (D&amp;C 137:10).</li> </ol>
--

Have class members review Doctrine and Covenants 76:69–70. Emphasize that no one but Jesus Christ will ever live a perfect life. Since we cannot be perfect on our own, we must be “made perfect.”

- How can we be made perfect so we can dwell in the celestial kingdom? (See 2 Nephi 25:23; Articles of Faith 1:3.)

Explain that we can be made perfect only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. As we do all we can to follow the Savior, working diligently to keep the commandments and to live pure lives, we come closer to him and become more like him. When we sin, we can repent sincerely and be forgiven. Because Jesus Christ took our sins upon himself, we can be made clean, pure, and worthy to dwell in the celestial kingdom.

### Testimony

Testify that Heavenly Father has prepared great things for us. Express your gratitude for the plan of salvation and for the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Encourage class members to keep the commandments, repent of their sins, and be true to their covenants so they can be “made perfect through Jesus” and inherit a place in the celestial kingdom.

---

## Enrichment Activities

You may want to use one or more of these activities during the lesson.

1. After bearing your testimony, give class members an opportunity to express how they feel about the promised blessings of exaltation in the celestial kingdom. If time permits, invite each person to express one idea he or she has learned or felt more deeply because of this lesson.
2. With class members, sing or read the words to all four verses of “O My Father” (*Hymns*, no. 292). Have class members look for connections between the words of the hymn and the truths they have learned from this lesson. Give close attention to the fourth verse.
3. Have class members memorize 1 Corinthians 2:9. To help them memorize the verse, write the following numbers and phrases on separate strips of paper (adjust the numbers of strips to match the number of class members):

1. Eye hath not seen,

2. nor ear heard,

3. neither have entered

4. into the heart of man,

5. the things

6. which God hath prepared

7. for them

8. that love him.

Give a strip of paper to each class member and have class members read the phrases in order according to the number before each phrase. Then collect the papers and hand them out in a different order. Once again, have class members read the phrases in order according to the number before each phrase. Continue this process until class members can recite the verse without looking at the papers.

Testify to class members that the blessings of the celestial kingdom are wonderful beyond what we can imagine. Encourage class members to seek these blessings.

# The Truth about Heaven and Hell

---

Place a *T* for *True* or an *F* for *False* beside each number.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. After we have been resurrected and judged, each of us will dwell in one of three kingdoms of glory.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. God has already determined which kingdom each of us will inherit, no matter what we do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. All you have to do to get to the celestial kingdom is say that you believe in Jesus Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. To be damned is to be stopped or held back from blessings we might have received if we had obeyed God's commandments.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Hell is a place of never-ending suffering where sinners go. Most of mankind will be there forever because of their wickedness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. A great multitude of Heavenly Father's children will dwell in the celestial kingdom.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. There are three degrees of glory in the celestial kingdom. In order to receive the highest of these degrees, a person must be sealed to his or her spouse in the temple.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. God loves all his children and will give them the greatest reward that they have prepared for through their obedience and their faith in Jesus Christ.