

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

JOSEPH RECEIVES A MAGNIFICENT VISION OF THE GLORIES OF HEAVEN

At the conclusion of the Amherst conference on January 25, 1832, Joseph and Sidney returned to Hiram, Ohio. They immediately continued their work on the revision of the New Testament. On Thursday, February 16, 1832 they were working on the fifth chapter of John, and the Lord inspired the Prophet Joseph to rewrite verses 28 and 29 as:

“Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all who are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they who have done good, in the resurrection of the *just*; and they who have done evil, in the resurrection of the *unjust*.”¹

Both Joseph and Sidney stopped and pondered the implications of these two verses.² Since their youth they had been taught of a resurrection of the righteous, but the concept of the resurrection of the wicked was something that was entirely new. As a result they decided to ask the Lord for more enlightenment concerning the resurrection, and the meaning of these two verses.

Neither Joseph nor Sidney would have guessed the glorious and spectacular revelation the Lord had in store for them. It is one of the most marvelous revelations in the entire Doctrine and Covenants. It not only reveals the details of the three degrees of glory, but we also come to understand the three degrees of death. We learn about the ultimate destiny of Satan and the sons of perdition.

¹ JST John 5:28-29; emphasis added.

² D&C 76:18-19; *History of the Church* 1:245.

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While revising the Bible by revelation, both Joseph and Sidney were intrigued to learn of a resurrection of the wicked.

And we are taught a multitude of details concerning the whole spectrum of God's magnificent destiny for His children.

This revelation was a unique event since it was the first time, as far as we know, that another person besides Joseph was allowed to see the vision. Both Joseph and Sidney were enveloped in the revelatory experience and saw the vision that they both recorded.³

They began their account of this revelation by testifying of the magnificence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.⁴ It is only through His grace and mercy that we have received the message of the gospel. If the Lord had not revealed it, we would know nothing about the creation of the earth and the destiny of the human family. Nor would we know about the pre-mortal existence, the purpose of life, the plan of salvation and the path to genuine happiness. All of this precious knowledge has come from the Lord.

The Lord has promised that those who humbly seek the truth will be given vast treasures of heavenly knowledge by inspiration

³ *Juvenile Instructor* (May 15, 1892) 27:303-304.

⁴ D&C 76:1-4.

or revelation. They will gain insight into the secrets of the ancient past and the glorious mysteries of the prophetic future.⁵

Joseph and Sidney recorded that they were prayerfully seeking the enlightenment of the Spirit as they revised the book of John when suddenly they began to have an open vision.⁶ They saw the Father and the Son, and a host of angelic beings worshipping them.⁷ As the magnificence of this vision flowed over them, they felt compelled to leave a strong and powerful testimony of the Son of God:

“And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all which we give of him: That he lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—that by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.”⁸

THE TRAGIC ACCOUNT OF LUCIFER'S DISOBEDIENCE

Joseph and Sidney were then shown in vision the sad story of the fall of Lucifer, who became known as Satan.⁹ A long time ago during our pre-mortal existence as spirits he had been an angel of God who was in authority among the concourses of heavenly beings.¹⁰ However, Lucifer rebelled against the Father's Beloved Son, and he sought to take over the vast domain of the Father.¹¹

This all began shortly before the launching of the physical earth's creation.¹² At that time the Father called together the first great council of the organized intelligences to determine who

⁵ D&C 76:5-10; Alma 12:9-11.

⁶ D&C 76:11-19.

⁷ D&C 76:20-21.

⁸ D&C 76:22-24.

⁹ D&C 76:25-28.

¹⁰ D&C 76:25.

¹¹ D&C 76:25, 28; Revelation 12:7-9.

¹² Eric N. Skousen, *Earth In the Beginning*, (Orem, Utah: Verity Publishing, 1997), pp. 70-71.

would be the general manager of the earth's creation. The Father asked:

“Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man. Here am I send me. And another answered and said, Here am I send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first. And the second was angry and kept not his first estate; and at that day many followed after him.”¹³

The poisonous anger and hatred which Lucifer felt continued to grow during the time of the earth's creation, and he gained followers who believed in his diabolical plan.¹⁴ When the earth's creation came to its conclusion, the Father was ready to call another great council. The purpose of this convocation was to choose a Redeemer or Mediator without whom this entire round of creation would be lost. When the Father asked who would provide the redemptive sacrifice, something unusual happened. Suddenly Lucifer leapt forward with a plan of his own.¹⁵

Lucifer hated the fact that mortality is a risky environment, and there is no promise, except for our obedience and righteous living, that we will be able to return to live with Father again. He also disliked the idea of an atoning sacrifice that required an infinite quantity of suffering by the Mediator so that He could intercede on behalf of those who had repented.

It is highly significant that the scriptures say that Lucifer had not kept his first estate,¹⁶ which means that he had spent his time during the earth's creation conjuring up a scheme that he wanted the Father to accept in place of the atoning sacrifice. Lucifer was so proud of his plan that he demanded God's honor for inventing it.¹⁷ In other words, he wanted to take the Father's place as supreme administrator of His dominions!¹⁸

¹³ Abraham 3:27-28.

¹⁴ *Earth In the Beginning*, p. 72.

¹⁵ Moses 4:1.

¹⁶ Abraham 3:28.

¹⁷ D&C 29:36; Moses 4:1.

¹⁸ D&C 29:36.

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In the council in heaven, Lucifer presented a plan that would have usurped God's honor—which is his power—and compelled everyone to be good.

LUCIFER'S DIABOLICAL PLAN

The core of Lucifer's plan was to suspend free agency during the Second Estate and force the Father's children to conform to celestial law so that none of them would be lost because of sin. He explained how his scheme would operate.¹⁹ Under his plan:

- No atoning sacrifice would be necessary.
- No sin or evil of any kind would be allowed.
- No judgment would be required.
- No punishment would be inflicted.
- No failure would occur.

¹⁹ Moses 4:1, 3.

The entire family of the Father would be automatically saved under Lucifer's plan.

Of course, Lucifer missed the most important element of the Father's plan. The whole purpose of the Second Estate was to help the Father's children distinguish between good and evil. Their exposure to evil, and learning the consequences of its influence, was needed to galvanize them against the temptation of evil throughout all eternity. Lucifer's plan would not do this. Instead, the Father's children would go through life in a satanical strait jacket and learn nothing about good and evil since all of their choices would be made for them.²⁰

Therefore, when Jesus perceived how the abominable plan of Lucifer was shrewdly designed to rob the Father of His vast kingdom, He stepped forward.²¹ He volunteered to go through the agonies of the infinite sacrifice that would not only provide redemption for the Father's human family, but also save this entire round of creation. The moment the Savior agreed to fulfill the role of the Mediator, the Father accepted it, and the bizarre plan of Lucifer was rejected.

Suddenly there was an uproar in heaven.

THE WAR IN HEAVEN

A large segment of the Father's children liked the plan proposed by Lucifer. After all, it guaranteed them salvation without any effort on their part. It took away the risk of failure. It made all the choices for them. They were so enthralled with his plan that they were willing to wage war to have it adopted.²²

The traditional plan of salvation proposed by the Father and supported by Jesus was desperately defended by the Father's loyal followers. John the Revelator said that the righteous fought with their testimonies, which is the only weapon available in the spirit

²⁰ *Earth In the Beginning*, pp. 71-72.

²¹ Moses 4:2.

²² D&C 76:29.

world.²³ This was a war of words to persuade our fellow spirit brothers and sisters that if they followed Lucifer they would never receive physical or resurrected bodies.

In the end, one-third of the Father's children were casualties in this war.²⁴ No amount of reasoning, loving persuasion, or sincere testimony could convince them. They recklessly gambled away their legacy of eternal progression and exaltation for a fraudulent promise that was nothing more than a diabolical illusion. Finally, when the quarrel had extended itself beyond all reasonable bounds, the Father felt compelled to force Lucifer and his host of mutinous rebels into exile—outside the celestial realm and into the temporal world.²⁵

THE WAR FOR MANKIND'S SOULS CONTINUES HERE ON EARTH

Here in mortality, for the next six thousand years, the war between good and evil would continue.²⁶ It is here that Satan constantly accuses the righteous, telling them that they are worthless and unworthy, and harassing them with temptations to do evil so he can capture them in the web of sin.²⁷ But at the end of the Millennium, Satan and his hosts will face their ultimate fate as they are banished forever into “that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.”²⁸

The Lord told Joseph and Sidney that those mortals who are totally overcome by Satan will share this same fate.²⁹ These reprobates are those who, during their mortal lives, had been highly favored of God, had known of His power and exercised it, but eventually were seduced by Satan into committing treason

²³ Revelation 12:11.

²⁴ Revelation 12:4; D&C 29:36.

²⁵ Moses 4:3.

²⁶ Moses 4:4.

²⁷ Revelation 12:10; Moses 4:4; *Earth In the Beginning*, p. 165.

²⁸ D&C 63:17.

²⁹ D&C 76:30.

against God.³⁰ They denied what they knew to be true and literally defied God to do anything about it. They partook of the same hateful spirit as those who crucified Jesus. They did everything they could to put Him to open shame.³¹

It seems almost inconceivable that those who have come to know God so intimately and have exercised the power of the priesthood would *ever* become God's enemies. Nevertheless, the scriptures certify that occasionally it happens. The Lord has a name for these perfidious reprobates—the “sons of perdition.”³² Their punishment is so horrible that the Lord said it would have been better if they had never been born.³³ They are not only doomed, but doomed forever.³⁴

At the end of the world they will be given resurrected bodies without any glory.³⁵ But ultimately, they will even lose these bodies.³⁶ They will be thrust into the agonizing lake of fire and brimstone along with the devil and his angels.³⁷ Eventually they will suffer the fate of the “second death.”³⁸

THE SECOND DEATH

But what is the second death? The Book of Mormon provides us with a new understanding of “death” from the Lord's point of view. We usually think of death as the separation that occurs at the end of our lives when our spirit leaves our body. However, Samuel the Lamanite prophet explained that the “first death” occurred when we were born, “for all mankind, by the fall of Adam being cut off from the presence of the Lord, are considered as dead.”³⁹ From

³⁰ D&C 76:31.

³¹ D&C 76:35.

³² D&C 76:32.

³³ D&C 76:32.

³⁴ D&C 76:34; D&C 29:29.

³⁵ D&C 88:24.

³⁶ 2 Nephi 1:22; Matthew 10:28; D&C 76:36-37.

³⁷ D&C 76:36.

³⁸ D&C 76:37.

³⁹ Helaman 14:16.

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experience, we know that this first separation or “death” had some dramatic consequences. For example:

We can no longer remember who we are.

We can no longer remember what our status was in the pre-mortal existence.

We can no longer remember what we were ordained in the pre-mortal existence to accomplish in this mortal life.⁴⁰

We have to let our lives unfold in order to learn what we are capable of accomplishing.

Samuel also warned the people that those who did not repent would be “hewn down and cast into the fire; and there cometh upon them again a spiritual death, yea, a second death.”⁴¹ The second death is the suffering of the spirit—“a spiritual death”—and its torment and agony have been compared to being placed in a lake of fire and brimstone.⁴²

During the process of the second death the Father withdraws His Spirit one more degree, and since His Spirit—His protective influence and power—supports our existence in the universe, this makes the spirit body suffer what it has never experienced before. The spirit begins to die. It goes into spasms of agony as it begins to disintegrate, like being placed in a lake of fire and brimstone.⁴³

THE FATE OF THE SONS OF PERDITION

The Prophet Brigham Young described what happens to the sons of perdition when the second death completes its course:

“They will be decomposed, both soul and body, and return to their native element. I do not say they will be annihilated; but they will be disorganized.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Alma 13:3.

⁴¹ Helaman 14:18.

⁴² Mosiah 3:26-27; Alma 12:16-17; D&C 76:36-37; D&C 63:17; Revelation 21:8; Jacob 3:11.

⁴³ D&C 76:36.

⁴⁴ Brigham Young, June 27, 1858, *Journal of Discourses* 7:57.

“The second death will decompose all tabernacles over whom it gains the ascendancy; and this is the effect of the second death, the tabernacles go back to their native element.”⁴⁵

In other words, they are stripped of their resurrected body and spirit⁴⁶ and left as a helpless, naked intelligence.

“They will be disorganized, and [it] will be as though they never had been, while we will live and *retain our identity*, and contend against those principles which tend to death or dissolution.”⁴⁷

In this final state, the sons of perdition who have lived on the earth will have suffered three degrees of death. The first death occurred at their birth when they were separated from the Father and the Son. At the end of the world they will receive an unglorified resurrected body,⁴⁸ which they will eventually lose, suffering the second degree of death. And when they ultimately lose their spirit body, they will experience the third and final degree of death.

THOSE WHO SUFFER IN THE LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE

This is the fate of the sons of perdition,⁴⁹ and vile and unrepentant sinners will also partake of a portion of this suffering.⁵⁰ Of course, the righteous are resurrected and redeemed through the mercy of Jesus Christ as their repented sins are brought under the Atonement of the Savior, but the resurrected wicked must be redeemed by suffering for their own sins.⁵¹ The Lord has told us how this will happen.

⁴⁵ Brigham Young, September 21, 1856, *Journal of Discourses* 4:54.

⁴⁶ 2 Nephi 1:22; Matthew 10:28.

⁴⁷ Brigham Young, June 27, 1858, *Journal of Discourses* 7:57, emphasis added.

⁴⁸ D&C 88:24.

⁴⁹ D&C 76:37.

⁵⁰ D&C 63:17; Revelation 21:8.

⁵¹ Jacob 6:9-10; Mosiah 3:25-27; Alma 12:16-17.

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When the wicked die, they are given the opportunity to be taught the gospel in the spirit world.⁵² If they accept the gospel and repent, they will be redeemed after paying the penalty for their sins.⁵³ But if they reject the gospel and remain in their sins they can only be redeemed by suffering the wrath of God and feeling the effects of the second death.⁵⁴ Although this suffering is an “eternal” mode of punishment for the wicked,⁵⁵ the wicked only suffer until “their portion”⁵⁶ or “their part”⁵⁷ of the punishment has been satisfied. The Savior described it as being punished “to the uttermost farthing.”⁵⁸

This means that the unrepentant sinner, through his suffering, must gain forgiveness not only of the Father, but also of those whom the sinner has wronged and of the host of intelligences throughout the universe. Those who perpetrated the terrible Holocaust will have to suffer until their victims are satisfied and say, “Father, that’s enough!” Then the wicked will be assigned to the lowest kingdom of glory, the telestial kingdom.⁵⁹

Note that these sinners are not sons of perdition, but they are those who were not valiant in God’s kingdom or who rejected the gospel no matter how many times it was offered to them.⁶⁰ They are liars, adulterers, sorcerers, whoremongers and other vile sinners who only merit the telestial kingdom.⁶¹

THE AGONY OF THE SECOND DEATH

As a final thought, we cannot help but wonder how terrible the suffering of the second death actually turns out to be. We have two

⁵² D&C 138:30, 57.

⁵³ D&C 138:58-59.

⁵⁴ D&C 63:17; Revelation 21:8; Mosiah 3:25-27; Helaman 14:18; D&C 76:38.

⁵⁵ D&C 19:6-12.

⁵⁶ D&C 101:90.

⁵⁷ D&C 63:17.

⁵⁸ Matthew 5:26.

⁵⁹ D&C 76:105-106.

⁶⁰ D&C 76:82, 101.

⁶¹ D&C 76:103; Revelation 21:8.

vivid descriptions from the Savior Himself. During the process of the Atonement the Father withdrew His spirit from Jesus on two occasions. The first time was in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before His atoning sacrifice.

Luke told us that the Father sent an angel for the purpose of “strengthening Him”⁶² as He faced the overwhelming burden of the Atonement. It seems nothing would have fortified the Savior more than to learn from this angel that if He did not fulfill this mission, He would become a son of perdition.⁶³ We learn from the Prophet Brigham Young what happened there in the garden that made the Savior sweat great drops of blood:

“The Father withdrew Himself—withdrew His Spirit—and cast a veil over Him [Jesus]. That is what made Him sweat blood. If He had the power of God upon Him, He would not have sweat blood.”⁶⁴

As the Savior experienced this withdrawal of the Father’s Spirit, He briefly felt the debilitating effects of the second death. He later described what it felt like:

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore and to suffer *both* body and spirit and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink.”⁶⁵

But there was more to come. The next day in the ninth hour, while Jesus was on the cross, He suddenly “cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why has thou *forsaken* me?”⁶⁶ This was the second time the Father withdrew His Spirit so that the Savior could descend below all things,⁶⁷ and Jesus again experienced the agony

⁶² Luke 22:43.

⁶³ Brigham Young, July 31, 1864, *Journal of Discourses* 10:324.

⁶⁴ Brigham Young, February 17, 1856, *Journal of Discourses* 3:206.

⁶⁵ D&C 19:18; emphasis added.

⁶⁶ Mark 15:34; emphasis added.

⁶⁷ D&C 88:6; D&C 122:8.

of the second death. Of course, His suffering caused by the crucifixion was agonizing beyond our comprehension, but the withdrawal of the Father's Spirit was even worse. It caused the spirit of the Savior to writhe in sheer torment.

It is important to realize that the second death is literally life threatening. That is why the spirit is in such agony. The spirit is being subjected to a process of disintegration, just as our physical body disintegrates from disease, old age or other disabilities which eventually cause our death here on earth.

Those who suffer the second death would never have had to endure this torture if they had just repented, embraced the gospel and endured to the end.⁶⁸ The Atonement of Jesus Christ would have cleansed them of all unrighteousness. But the sons of perdition must endure the everlasting punishment of the lake of fire and brimstone where they exist endlessly with Satan and his angels as stripped, naked intelligences throughout all the dimensions of eternity.⁶⁹

It is incomprehensible what this endless, lonely, helpless existence must be like. The Lord said that He has revealed this terrible state of misery to many but immediately shut it up—which implies that it was erased from their minds—and therefore no one can really describe the horrors of this punishment except those who are consigned to it.⁷⁰

VISION OF THE REWARDS OF THE CELESTIAL KINGDOM

Joseph and Sidney recorded this first part of the vision and immediately afterwards the heavens were opened again. They were shown the glorious rewards of the righteous who will inhabit the celestial kingdom with the Father and the Son.⁷¹ The righteous are those who obey the covenants and commandments of the Lord.⁷² By

⁶⁸ D&C 76:39-43.

⁶⁹ D&C 76:36, 44.

⁷⁰ D&C 76:45-48.

⁷¹ D&C 76:49-50, 62.

⁷² D&C 76:51-52.

persistent endurance and faithfulness they are eventually sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. This special gift from the Father assures them of eternal life in the celestial kingdom.⁷³ These are just and upright individuals who have been made perfect through the grace, mercy and Atonement of Jesus Christ.⁷⁴

They will inherit the fullness of the Father's kingdom, and become priests and kings. They will enter the highest order of the eternal heavens and become gods, even the very sons of God.⁷⁵ All things are theirs and they are Christ's and Christ is God's. They will overcome all things, and dwell in the presence of God and Christ forevermore.⁷⁶

At the time of the Savior's Second Coming they will be caught up from the earth and return with Him in clouds of glory.⁷⁷ He will also bring with Him those who have already been resurrected.⁷⁸ They will all descend together to the New Jerusalem, the holy city of Zion, the city of the living God.⁷⁹ They will come forth in the first resurrection with celestial bodies, whose glory has been compared to the brilliance of the sun.⁸⁰

THE INHABITANTS OF THE TERRESTRIAL KINGDOM

Having described the magnificent glory of those who attain the celestial kingdom, the Lord then told Joseph and Sidney about the terrestrial kingdom. Its glory differs from the celestial kingdom just like the brightness of the sun can be compared to the moon.⁸¹

Those who inherit this kingdom are those who lived out their lives on earth without receiving God's law.⁸² However, when they

⁷³ D&C 76:53; 88:3-4.

⁷⁴ D&C 76:69.

⁷⁵ D&C 76:54-59.

⁷⁶ D&C 76:59-62.

⁷⁷ D&C 76:63; 88:96.

⁷⁸ D&C 76:64-66; 88:97.

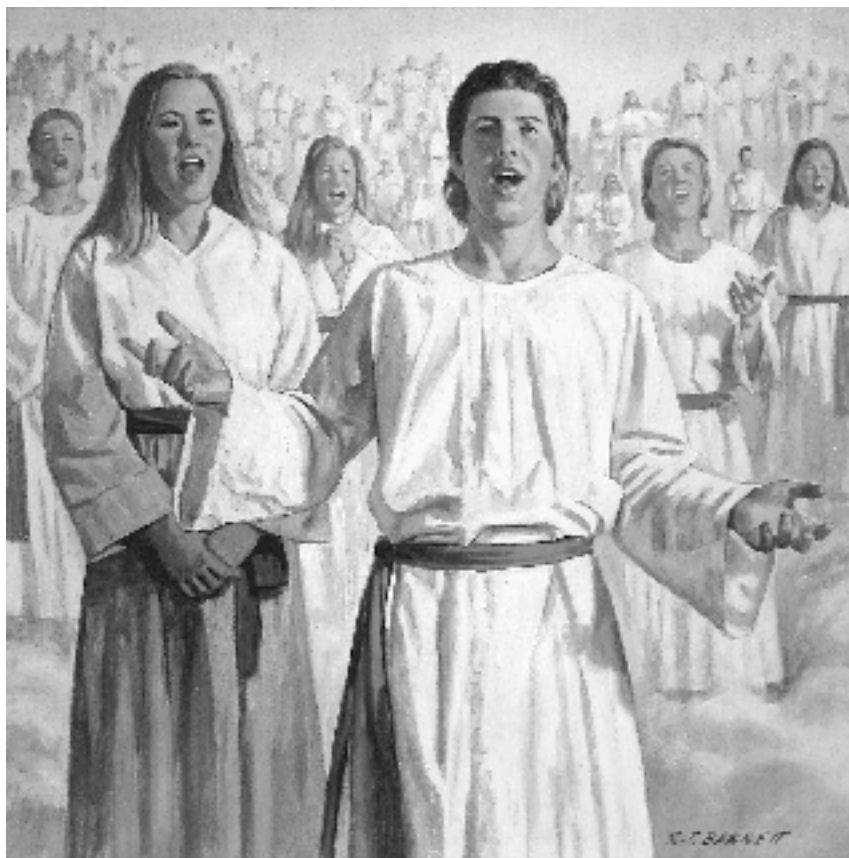
⁷⁹ D&C 76:66; 88:98.

⁸⁰ D&C 76:65, 70; 1 Corinthians 15:41.

⁸¹ D&C 76:71.

⁸² D&C 76:72.

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Those who inherit the Celestial Kingdom will return in clouds of glory with Christ at His Second Coming.

died, they were given the opportunity to hear the gospel in the spirit world.⁸³ If they had never heard it before but then accepted it in the spirit world, they would be treated as though they had received it in the flesh, and allowed to inherit the celestial kingdom.⁸⁴ On the other hand, if they had previously rejected the gospel during earth life, accepting it in the spirit world only allows them to inherit the terrestrial kingdom.⁸⁵

⁸³ D&C 138:30-32, 57-59.

⁸⁴ D&C 137:7.

⁸⁵ D&C 76:73-74, 79.

Those who died without the law also include the heathen nations, who will come forth in the first resurrection.⁸⁶ If they accept the gospel in the spirit world, they will come forth in the first resurrection with celestial bodies, but if they reject the gospel they will receive terrestrial bodies.⁸⁷

There are many honorable men and women on the earth who are reluctant to accept the gospel in this life even though they do finally accept it in the spirit world. All of these go to the terrestrial kingdom.⁸⁸ Those members of the Church who do not remain valiant will also reside there.⁸⁹ Unfortunately, those of the terrestrial glory can never go back into the presence of the Father, but they do receive the ministrations of the Son.⁹⁰

The Lord later told the Prophet Joseph that the level of law which a person is capable of obeying determines the level of glory which that person receives.⁹¹ This means that candidates for the celestial kingdom might elect to go to the terrestrial kingdom if the celestial law is too strict for them. This would include those children who died before they had reached the age of accountability. Throughout the history of the world many children have passed away before the age of eight because of illness or poor health care. The Lord has said that they are automatically made heirs to the celestial kingdom,⁹² but they could *choose* the terrestrial or telestial kingdom if they preferred the lower level of law which prevails there.⁹³

QUALIFYING FOR THE TELESTIAL KINGDOM

The Lord paused the vision so that Joseph and Sidney could record what they had seen thus far.⁹⁴ They were then shown the

⁸⁶ D&C 45:54.

⁸⁷ D&C 137:7-8.

⁸⁸ D&C 76:74-75.

⁸⁹ D&C 76:79.

⁹⁰ D&C 76:76-78.

⁹¹ D&C 88:22.

⁹² D&C 137:10.

⁹³ D&C 88:22-24.

⁹⁴ D&C 76:80.

testial kingdom, the lowest kingdom of glory, which is equal to the brightness of the stars compared with the moon and sun.⁹⁵

Those who are sent to the testial kingdom completely rejected the gospel, whether on the earth or in the spirit world.⁹⁶ While here in mortality they clung to a whole spectrum of different denominations, including pagans and agnostics.⁹⁷ They not only rejected the gospel, but they reveled in the degenerate, immoral debaucheries of life so that they were cast down to hell when death overtook them.⁹⁸ However, they never reached a point where they could become sons of perdition.⁹⁹

One of the penalties which is imposed upon the sinners of the deepest hue is the fact that they must remain in spirit prison or hell from the time of their death until the very end of the Millennium when the last resurrection takes place.¹⁰⁰ After they are resurrected they are never visited for the rest of eternity by the Father or the Son. Only the Holy Spirit and other ministering angels sent from the terrestrial kingdom will attend them as needed.¹⁰¹

Those who dwell in the testial kingdom differ in glory from one another just like the stars in the nighttime sky differ in brightness.¹⁰²

THE BEAUTY AND GLORY OF THESE KINGDOMS

Although we may assume that the testial kingdom holds out a dismal prospect for all who go there, Joseph and Sidney beheld that its glory was so wonderful that it completely surpassed their understanding.¹⁰³ Its beauty and grandeur were completely inconceivable except as seen in vision.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁵ D&C 76:81.

⁹⁶ D&C 76:82.

⁹⁷ D&C 76:99-101.

⁹⁸ D&C 76:84, 103-106.

⁹⁹ D&C 76:83.

¹⁰⁰ D&C 76:85.

¹⁰¹ D&C 76:86-88.

¹⁰² D&C 76:98.

¹⁰³ D&C 76:89.

¹⁰⁴ D&C 76:89-90.

Of course, if the telestial kingdom is glorious beyond comprehension, we can only imagine what the glory of the terrestrial kingdom must be like.¹⁰⁵ And if a person has virtually exhausted his list of superlatives in describing the terrestrial kingdom, what can be said about the celestial kingdom which surpasses them all? It is there that the Father and the Son are seated on their thrones and have gathered before them the radiant and glorified members of the Church of the Firstborn.¹⁰⁶

The Lord said that the telestial kingdom is the largest of all the kingdoms,¹⁰⁷ and that in spite of their depravity, debauchery and rebellion against God, they will eventually bow their knees to Christ in humble submission.¹⁰⁸ However they will still be required to face up to the judgments of God for every evil thing they have done.¹⁰⁹

As Joseph and Sidney came to the end of this revelation in a state of reverence and gratitude, they tried to summarize their feelings about this beautiful and spectacular vision.¹¹⁰ They reported that some of what they saw could not be recorded, for it was simply too sacred.¹¹¹ We can sense their spirit of humble awe as they concluded:

“And to God and the Lamb be glory, and honor, and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”¹¹²

A WITNESS TO THIS GLORIOUS REVELATION

It would have been a marvelous experience to be present when this revelation was received. Elder Philo Dibble, a good friend of the Prophet, had that privilege. He reported:

¹⁰⁵ D&C 76:91.

¹⁰⁶ D&C 76:92-95.

¹⁰⁷ D&C 76:109.

¹⁰⁸ D&C 76:110.

¹⁰⁹ D&C 76:111-112.

¹¹⁰ D&C 76:113-119.

¹¹¹ D&C 76:114-116.

¹¹² D&C 76:119.

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Joseph did not record all of the beautiful and sacred details that he and Sidney were shown in the vision of the kingdoms of glory.

“The vision which is recorded in the book of Doctrine and Covenants was given at the house of Father Johnson in Hiram, Ohio, and during the time that Joseph and Sidney were in the Spirit and saw the heavens open there were other men in the room, perhaps twelve, among whom I was one during part of the time—probably two-thirds of the time. I saw the glory and felt the power, but did not see the vision.

“The events and conversations in which they were seeing what is written (and many things were seen and related that are not written), I will relate as minutely as is necessary.

“Joseph would, at intervals, say: ‘What do I see?’ as one might say while looking out the window and beholding what all in the room could not see. Then he would relate what he had seen or what he was looking at. Then Sidney replied, ‘I see the same.’

“Presently Sidney would say, ‘What do I see?’ and would repeat what he had seen or was seeing, and Joseph would reply, ‘I see the same.’

“This manner of conversation was repeated at short intervals to the end of the vision; and during the whole time not a word was spoken by any other person. Not a sound nor motion was made by anyone but Joseph and Sidney, and it seemed to me that they never moved a joint or limb during the time I was there, which I think was over an hour, and to the end of the vision.

“Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag. Observing this, Joseph remarked, smiling, ‘Sidney is not used to it as I am.’”¹¹³

Joseph in his history explained in glorious language what he thought of this amazing vision:

“The sublimity of the ideas; the purity of the language; the scope for action; the continued duration for completion, in order that the heirs of salvation may confess the Lord and bow the knee; the rewards for faithfulness, and the punishments for sins, are so much beyond the narrow-mindedness of men, that every honest man is constrained to exclaim: ‘*It came from God.*’”¹¹⁴

In stark contrast to these glorious visions of eternity, however, Joseph was about to have a terrifying experience at the hands of a mob intent on taking his life. The vitriolic hatred of some former members of the Church was building in the small minds of these men, and they were plotting revenge and murder. Within the next few weeks they would put their diabolical plan into action.

¹¹³ *Juvenile Instructor* (May 15, 1892) 27:303-304. Also quoted in Carter Grant, *Kingdom of God Restored*, pp. 156-157.

¹¹⁴ *History of the Church* 1:252-253; emphasis in original.