

CHAPTER TEN

The Plan of Salvation – Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going after death?

Where did we come from?

I believe that the spirit that dwells in our body and gives us life is *the offspring of God*, (Acts 17:29). The scriptures do not leave any doubt that Jesus dwelled in the presence of his Heavenly Father prior to his mortal birth: *4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* (John 17:4-5)

Even Satan and his angels lived and rebelled in that pre-mortal society: *7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.* (Revelation 12:7-9)

The following two passages tell us a lot about our relationship with God and our purpose here:

*16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that **we are the children of God**: 17 And if children, then heirs; **heirs of God**, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that **we may be also glorified together.*** (Romans 8:16 - 17)

*Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not **much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits**, and live?* (Hebrews 12:9)

Jesus reinforced his and our relationship with Heavenly Father when he met Mary Magdalene by the garden tomb the morning of the resurrection:

*Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto **my Father, and your Father**; and to my God, and your God.* (John 20:17)

Why are we here?

Gain a body -

I also believe that a fundamental purpose of this life is to gain a mortal body that will at some point be resurrected into an immortal body in some degree of glory, depending upon how well we learn and learn to live by the true gospel of Christ (See below).

Learn and follow true gospel -

I believe that “suffering with” Christ and being in “subjection unto the Father” both mean that, if we expect to be “glorified together” with and to become “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” in the next life, this life should be about learning and learning to live by their will. In other words, we are here to learn and follow the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

Where are we going after death?

When Jesus hung on the cross, he responded to the repentant malefactor who hung near him:

*Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in **paradise**. (Luke 23:43)*

It is a common theme in the scripture that the spirits of the wicked will be sent into a state of “hell” a place of darkness, “weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

13 And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil—for behold, they have no part nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold, they chose evil works rather than good; therefore the spirit of the devil did enter into them, and take possession of their house—and these shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and this because of their own iniquity, being led captive by the will of the devil. (Alma 40:13)

We are taught that the condition in the Spirit World where individuals have not yet been exposed to the true gospel of Christ is referred to as a spiritual “prison”.

Peter explained what spirit being of Jesus did when put to death and while his body was in the tomb:

*18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in **prison**; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (1 Peter 3:18 - 20)*

Paradise is a place of peace and rest where the good or righteous spirits of those who have died await the resurrection and judgment.

Hell is a state of darkness where the wicked are consigned to await the resurrection and final judgment.

Prison is the condition in the world of spirits referred that is a state of ignorance of the truths of the gospel, but from where spirits can be rescued as they hear and accept the true gospel that is taught there. We have learned by modern revelation that Christ’s visit to those in prison was primarily to organize the work of teaching the gospel to those in prison by the righteous spirits. This ongoing missionary work does open the door to receive the gospel for every last one of our Heavenly Father’s children. The requirement of baptism and other gospel ordinances for the

converts of this missionary effort in the spirit world will be discussed in another segment which will be entitled "Salvation for the Dead".

Most Christian religions of which I am aware believe this state following our mortal death to be the final reward of heaven and hell mentioned in the scriptures. The final judgment, however, comes after the resurrection which is a gift of grace for all:

19 "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:19-21)

The final judgment follows the resurrection:

111 "For they shall be judged according to their works, and every man shall receive according to his own works, his own dominion, in the mansions which are prepared;" (D & C 76:111)

15 "And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works." (3 Nephi 27:15)

13 "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." (Revelation 20:13)

The resurrection itself will be a significant and obvious part of the judgment, as we will rise with an immortal, glorified body appearing in glory depending upon the lives we lived:

40 "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:" (1 Corinthians 15:40 - 42)

These three degrees of glory were revealed in some detail to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon who was with him in Hyrum, Ohio, February 16, 1832.

It was learned that the resurrection to the **celestial glory** will qualify the individual for the **celestial kingdom**, the place where God and Christ dwell. It is **eternal life** reserved for the devoted and true followers of Jesus Christ as the scriptures teach.

The **terrestrial glory** will be the everlasting home for the good and honorable people who lived on the earth, but who did not accept and follow the fullness of the gospel.

The glory compared to the stars, it was learned is called the **telestial kingdom** reserved for the wicked, those who cannot be trusted.

There will be a few “sons of perdition” who will suffer a second death and will become subject to Satan and will go into outer darkness with them. All of the degrees of glory, even the telestial kingdom, will be a glory far beyond our fondest imagination as all are children of our Father in Heaven and there will be eternal glory for the least righteous even though it will compare to the celestial kingdom as the stars compare to the sun. The terrestrial kingdom is compared to the moon relating to the other kingdoms of glory.