

Celestial Marriage

D&C Lesson 31

Introduction

Context	The date is August 16, 2109 – 100 years from now. We are gathered together in the Spirit World for a ward reunion. All of the Bishops of the Ridgefield Ward are present and some members have been assigned to talk about the most significant events that happened to them during their mortal lives.
?	<p>What would be some of the events we might talk about?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mission - Baptism - Receiving the Priesthood - Receiving the Endowment - Temple marriage
Class	Have one or two talk about the day they were married in the Temple and their feelings about that day

Temple Marriage is essential to our exaltation

DC 131:1-4	<p>Explain: What does Exaltation mean?</p> <p>Why can we not be exalted unless we receive the ordinance of temple marriage?</p>
Vs 2	Temple marriage is an ordinance. It is uniquely described as entering into an “order of the priesthood”. We see, therefore, that Exaltation is not only a reward, but is a higher order of the priesthood which carries with it expectations of obedience to the laws of the Celestial Kingdom, priesthood service, and living a Christlike life both during mortality and after.
Vs 3	Exaltation is not possible without it
Vs 4	<p>What does the Lord mean “he cannot have an increase”?</p> <p>See quote 6</p>
DC 132:3-6	<p>What does the Lord teach here?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is a law that we are required to obey – in the Lord’s eyes, it is not optional - “Damned’ means that we cannot progress – our eternal progress is stopped (see quote 5)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vs 5: laws instituted before the earth was formed – they are eternal - Vs 6: for the “fullness of my glory” What is “glory” here? (Moses 1:39)
132:7	Nothing is in force after mortality (until death do you part) unless it is sealed by the priesthood sealing power
Matt 16:19	keys...bind on earth shall be bound in heaven...
132:13-14	Everything in the world shall not remain after men are dead unless they are “by me (Lord)”.
Marriage, not sealed 132:15-16	<p>Example 1 – not sealed, but married.</p> <p>There are many who chose a nonmember spouse when they were young and rebellious or less active. Some joined the church after they were married but their spouse chose not to join. They are married civilly.</p> <p>Read quotes 1 & 2</p>
?	<p>What then of the person who marries early in life outside the temple and then later never has the opportunity to be sealed to a spouse in the temple?</p> <p>DC 137:9 (judged by desires of heart)</p> <p>Quote 3 (Elder R.M. Nelson)</p> <p>Quote 8 (Elder Dallin H. Oaks)</p>
Matt 22:30 Explained	<p>In the resurrection (final judgment), no marriage.</p> <p>Once we reach the close of our probation (final judgment), it is then too late. New or additional ordinances, if any are needed, can no longer be obtained. The time to enter into covenants through ordinances is BEFORE the final judgment and resurrection. There will be no marriage or sealing performed, no baptism, no ordination to the priesthood, after the resurrection.</p>
Marriage, not sealed, or unworthy 132:18	Even if they “promise” each other an eternal relationship
Nelson, Russell M., Salvation and Exaltation , CR April 2008	<i>What about those who are not able to marry in this life or those who cannot be sealed to their parents in this life? We know that the Lord will judge each of us according to the desires of our hearts, as well as our works, and that the blessings of exaltation will be given to all who are worthy.</i>
Eternal	Shall be gods

Marriage 132:19-20	Some Christians believe that our doctrine that man can become as God is, is blasphemous. Is it? Why not? Matt 5:48 (be ye therefore perfect...) DC 84:38 (oath & covenant of Priesthood) (all that my Father hath shall be given unto him) Eph 4:12-13 (stature of the fullness of Christ) Romans 8:16-17 (joint heirs with Christ)
Tad Callister, The Inevitable Apostasy, pg 149	It is of some interest that Jordan Vajda, a former Catholic priest, came to a similar conclusion while writing his master's thesis. He wrote the following: "The historic Christian doctrine of salvation – theosis, meaning, human divinization [becoming like God] – for too long has been forgotten by too many Christians, despite the fact that this teaching is a part of the common inheritance – first millennium Christianity." Vajda then cited some early Christian writers who supported this view: "St. Irenaeus of Lyons... who had known St. Polycarp, who had known the Apostles... wrote, 'the Word of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, who because of his immeasurable love became what we are in order to make us what he is.' St. Athanasius of Alexandria (AD 295-373) also explained that 'God became man, so that we might be made gods.' <i>Jordan Vajda, Parakers of the Divine Nature, 9-10 (Catholic Priest studying ancient Christian writers)</i>
?	What does it mean that they shall be gods? How does that work?

How are we sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise?

?	What is the Holy Spirit of Promise?
DC 76:53	Celestial reward requires being "sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise"
McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p361	Quote 3

What are the blessings and promises of Celestial Marriage?

DC 131:1-4	Exaltation
Wayward children	The Prophet Joseph Smith declared-and he never taught more comforting doctrine-that the eternal sealings of faithful

<p>saved</p> <p>Elder Robert D. Hales, With All the Feeling of a Tender Parent: A Message of Hope to Families, Ensign (CR), May 2004, p.88</p>	<p>parents and the divine promises made to them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father's heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with your faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God.</p> <p>Read also Quote 7</p>
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Quote 1 - President Gordon B. Hinckley

I recognize that there are many in this vast congregation who have not had the opportunity of temple marriage, whose husbands may not be members of the Church or may not have qualified themselves to go to the house of the Lord. To you I wish to say, be patient, be prayerful. Stifle your tendency to criticize. Live the kind of life in your home that will cause your companion to see in you that goodness, that virtue, and that strength which come of the gospel.

I remember a family I knew fifty years ago. The wife was a devoted member of the Church. The husband was not a member. He smoked and drank. She hoped and she prayed. She lived for the day when his heart might be touched by the Spirit of the Lord. Years passed one after another into more than a decade. Her example was one of goodness and gladness*s and faith. After many years he began to soften. He saw what the Church did for her and for their children. He turned around. He humbled himself. He was baptized. He has since served as a quorum president and a bishop, as a missionary, and as a worker in the temple.

You not failed until you have quit trying, and please remember that your example in your home will be a more persuasive sermon than will any other kind of preachment. ("Live Up to Your Inheritance," Ensign, November 1983, p. 82.)

Quote 2 - Dallin H. Oaks, Pure in Heart, p.61

In his famous tithing sermon in St. George in May 1899, President Lorenzo Snow also directed this promise to a group of unmarried sisters who were questioning what their condition would be in the next life:

“I desire to give a little explanation for the comfort and consolation of parties in this condition. There is no Latter-day Saint who dies after having lived a faithful life who will lose anything because of having failed to do certain things when opportunities were not furnished him or her. In other words, if a young man or a young woman has no opportunity of getting married, and they live faithful lives up to the time of their death, they will have all the blessings, exaltation and glory that any man or woman will have who had this opportunity and improved it. . . . People who have no opportunity of marrying in this life, if they die in the Lord, will have means furnished them by which they can secure all the blessings necessary for persons in the married condition.” (Millennial Star, August 31, 1899, p. 547.)

Quote 3 - DC 132:7 – Holy Spirit of Promise – McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, pg 361

The Holy Spirit of Promise is the Holy Spirit promised the saints, or in other words the Holy Ghost. This name-title is used in connection with the sealing and ratifying power of the Holy Ghost, that is, the power given him to ratify and approve the righteous acts of men so that those acts will be binding on earth and in heaven. "All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations," must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, if they are to have "efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead." (D. & C. 132:7.)

To seal is to ratify, to justify, or to approve. Thus an act which is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is one which is ratified by the Holy Ghost; it is one which is approved by the Lord; and the person who has taken the obligation upon himself is justified by the Spirit in the thing he has done. The ratifying seal of approval is put upon an act only if those entering the contract are worthy as a result of personal righteousness to receive the divine approbation. They "are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true." (D. & C. 76:53.) If they are not just and true and worthy the ratifying seal is withheld.

When any ordinance or contract is sealed by the Spirit, it is approved with a promise of reward, provided unrighteousness does not thereafter break the seal, remove the ratifying approval, and cause loss of the promised blessing. (Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 1, p. 55; vol. 2, pp. 94-99) Seals are placed on contracts through righteousness.

The operation and power of the Holy Spirit of Promise is best illustrated by the ordinance and contract of baptism. An unworthy candidate for baptism might deceive the elders and get the ordinance performed, but no one can lie to the Holy Ghost and get by undetected. Accordingly, the baptism of an unworthy and unrepentant person would not be sealed by the Spirit; it would not be ratified by the Holy Ghost; the unworthy person would not be justified by the Spirit in his actions. If thereafter he became worthy through repentance and obedience, the seal would then be put in force. Similarly, if a worthy person is baptized with the ratifying approval of the Holy Ghost attending the performance, yet the seal may be broken by subsequent sin.

Quote 5: Encyclopedia of Mormonism, 1-4 vols., edited by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992),, p.353

"Damnation" is a term derived from the Latin *damnum*, meaning "injury" and "loss," and often connotes deprivation of what should have been possessed. Just as there are varying degrees and types of salvation, coupled with eternal progression in some areas (D&C 76:96-98; 131:1-4), so are there varying degrees and types of damnation. In LDS doctrine, to be damned means to be stopped, blocked, or limited in one's progress. Individuals are damned whenever they are prevented from reaching their full potential as children of God.

Damnation is falling short of what one might have enjoyed if one had received and been faithful to the whole law of the gospel. In this sense, all who do not achieve the highest degree of the Celestial Kingdom are damned, even though they are saved in some degree of glory. They are damned in the sense that they will not enjoy an eternal increase or the continuation of the family unit in eternity (D&C 132:4, 19). In this context, damnation does not necessarily refer to eternal suffering in hell with the devil, for loss of blessings is in itself a type of hell and damnation. LDS perspectives on this subject include biblical scriptures enriched and clarified by additional revelation; hence, damnation has a wider application than may seem apparent in modern usage (see Degrees of Glory; Exaltation; Heirs).

Quote 6 - Encyclopedia of Mormonism, 1-4 vols., edited by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992),, p.368

THE CELESTIAL GLORY. The Celestial Kingdom is reserved for those who receive a testimony of Jesus and fully embrace the gospel; that is, they have faith in Jesus Christ, repent of their sins, are baptized by immersion by one having authority, receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, and endure in righteousness. All who attain this kingdom "shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever" (D&C 76:62). There are, however, different privileges and powers within this kingdom. "In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood (meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage); and if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase" (D&C 131:1-4). "Increase" in this instance means the bearing of spirit children after mortal life (see *Eternal Lives*). Joseph Smith explained, "Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection" (TPJS, pp. 300-301). Latter-day Saints believe that those who attain the highest level in the Celestial Kingdom become gods, receive exaltation, and are joint heirs with Christ of all that the Father has (cf. Rom. 8:14-17; D&C 76:50-70; 84:33-39; 132:19-25).

There is no scriptural explanation of those who go to the two lower categories of the Celestial Kingdom except that they "are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever," ministering servants who "remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity" (D&C 132:16-17).

Quote 7 - Elder Boyd K. Packer, Our Moral Environment, Ensign (CR), May 1992, p.66

We cannot overemphasize the value of temple marriage, the binding ties of the sealing ordinance, and the standards of worthiness required of them. When parents keep the covenants they have made at the altar of the temple, their children will be forever bound to them. President Brigham Young said:

“Let the father and mother, who are members of this Church and Kingdom, take a righteous course, and strive with all their might never to do a wrong, but to do good all their lives; if they have one child or one hundred children, if they conduct themselves towards them as they should, binding them to the Lord by their faith and prayers, I care not where those children go, they are bound up to their parents by an everlasting tie, and no power of earth or hell can separate them from their parents in eternity; they will return again to the fountain from whence they sprang.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols., 2:90-91.)

Quote 8 – Elder Dallin H. Oaks, General Conference, April 1999

“We know that many worthy and wonderful Latter-day Saints currently lack the ideal opportunities and essential requirements for their progress. Singleness, childlessness, death, and divorce frustrate ideals and postpone the fulfillment of promised blessings. In addition, some women who desire to be full-time mothers and homemakers have been literally compelled to enter the full-time workforce. But these frustrations are only temporary. The Lord has promised that in the eternities **no blessing will be denied his sons and daughters who keep the commandments, are true to their covenants, and desire what is right.**

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, General Conference, October 1993

“**Many of the most important deprivations of mortality will be set right in the Millennium, which is the time for fulfilling all that is incomplete in the great plan of happiness for all of our Father’s worthy children.** We know that will be true of temple ordinances. I believe it will also be true of family relationships and experiences”

Elder Richard G. Scott, April, 1999, General Conference:

“If you are single and haven’t identified a solid prospect for celestial marriage, live for it. Pray for it. Expect it in the timetable of the Lord. Do not compromise your standards in any way that would rule out that blessing on this or the other side of the veil. The Lord knows the intent of your heart. His prophets have stated that you will have that blessing as you consistently live to qualify for it. **We do not know whether it will be on this or the other side of the veil.** But live for it. Pray for it” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 33; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 27).