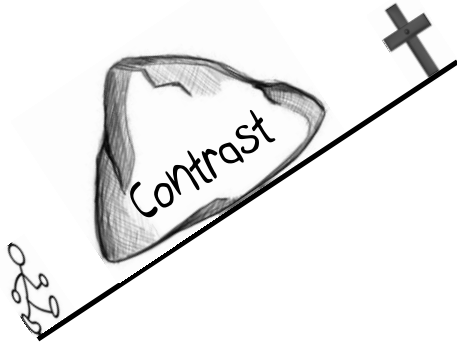


# SHARING WITH LATTER-DAY SAINTS—ROCK 3



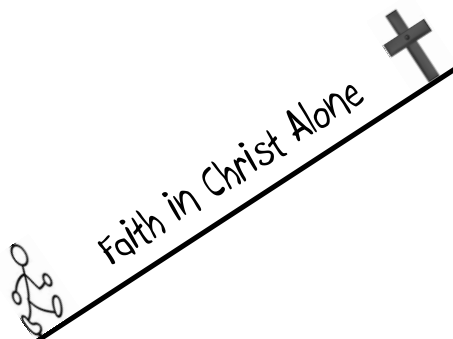
*Contrast becomes an obstacle when are unable to make quick and clear distinctions between the LDS and biblical gospels.*

## CLEARING ROCKS FROM THE ROAD TO REDEMPTION

**The above diagram** depicts one of the common obstacles or “Rocks” that Latter-day Saints (LDS) frequently encounter when discussing matters of faith with biblical Christians.

**The below diagram** represents the ideal sharing scenario—the Rock has been cleared from the road to redemption. In other words, the only thing standing between LDS and being forgiven of ALL their sins is faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ ALONE to freely secure their salvation.

Note that the road to redemption is NOT on level ground, but is an uphill climb. This is because many LDS risk incredible loss (e.g. family, friends, social status, financial security, etc.) when contemplating leaving the LDS Church for a saving relationship with the Jesus Christ of the Bible.



# I. ROCK 3 AT A GLANCE

## A. The Purpose of Rock 3

1. “Our beliefs are essentially the same” or “Our beliefs may differ, but the differences aren’t all that significant”—these are typical statements among an alarming number of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and biblical Christians. And even if significant differences ARE admitted, most of us simply lack the ability to quickly and clearly articulate them. Thus, we are in need of some user-friendly tools to tackle these problems.
2. **Question:** What are some everyday-life examples of how contrast brings clarity?
  - a. Try locating a small, non-visible damp spot on the carpet immediately after washing and drying your hands.
  - b. Why is dusk considered to be one of the most dangerous times to operate a vehicle?
  - c. What color dress socks do men often confuse for navy blue and vice versa?
3. **Question:** When might a quick and clear contrast of the LDS and biblical gospels (or “plans of salvation”) be particularly useful?
  - a. Hint: The flight between Salt Lake City and Idaho Falls is about 45 minutes.

# II. GALATIANS 1:6-9 AND PAUL’S LETHAL PROPOSITION

## A. Galatians 1:6-9 (NIV2011)

<sup>6</sup> I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—

<sup>7</sup> which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

<sup>8</sup> But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God’s curse!

<sup>9</sup> As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God’s curse!

1. **Question:** What does **Galatians 1:6-9** tell us about the importance of “the gospel of Christ”?
2. **Question:** How does the apostle Paul guard against perversion of the Gospel by an appeal to divine authority or revelation (even his own)?

- a. Note the fundamental principle for testing for truth (or exposing the fraud)—namely, modern revelation MUST NOT \_\_\_\_\_ previous revelation.
3. **Question:** How does **Galatians 5:1-4** refute the notion that **ONLY** the false preachers are “under God’s curse” and **NOT** those who are deceived by them? (See also **Matthew 23:15**.)

### III. THE LADDER ILLUSTRATION

#### A. Our Work & the LDS Gospel of Salvation

1. Joseph Fielding Smith, 10<sup>th</sup> LDS Prophet & President (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1954, 1:123).

The Savior does not save anybody from his individual sins only on condition of his repentance. So the effect of Adam’s transgression was to place all of us in the pit with him. Then the Savior comes along, not subject to that pit, and lowers the ladder. He comes down into the pit and makes it possible for us to use the ladder to escape.



- a. “The pit” may represent the pit of sin that results from breaking God’s commandments. Each rung on the ladder may represent the various commandments that LDS are required to keep (through faith in the Savior and the process of repentance) to be saved.
- b. The Savior is “not subject to that pit” because Jesus NEVER sinned by breaking any of God’s commandments.
- c. There are three levels of LDS salvation—(lowest to highest) they are the telestial, terrestrial, and celestial kingdoms. The celestial kingdom is the ONLY dwelling place of Heavenly Father and returning to Him is the goal of every faithful LDS.
- d. Climbing to the top of the ladder may represent keeping ALL of God’s commandments and so be saved in the celestial kingdom.

## B. Christ's Work & the Biblical Gospel of Salvation



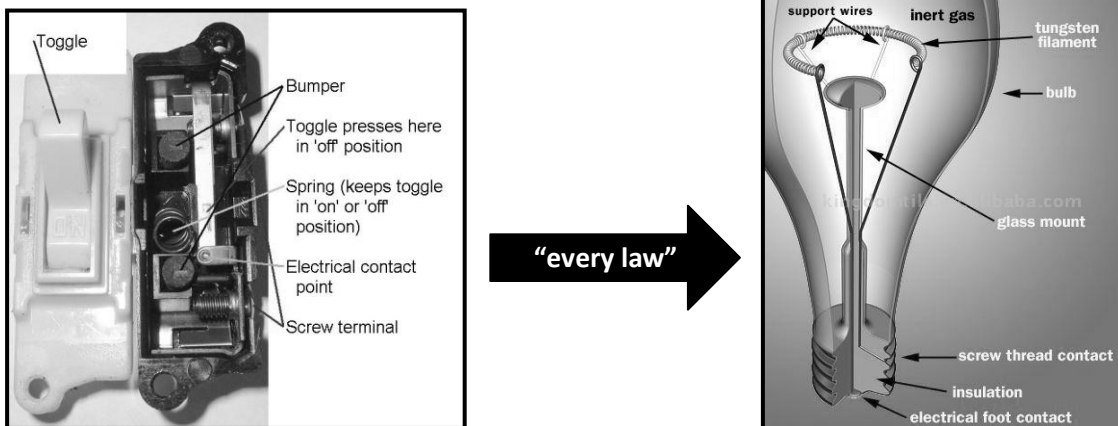
1. **Contrasting Illustration #1**—The Savior comes along, not subject to that pit, and reaches down into the pit and pulls us completely out. (Jesus does this for everyone who trusts in Him alone to save them.)
2. **Contrasting Illustration #2**—The Savior comes along, not subject to that pit, and lowers the ladder. He comes down into the pit, and puts us on His shoulders. He then “fireman-carries” us up every wrung of the ladder and completely out of the pit. (Jesus does this for everyone who trusts in Him alone to save them.)
3. Note that in the two illustrations above Jesus does 100 percent of the work to get us completely “up” and “out.” Jesus merely “makes it possible for us” in the case of the LDS gospel.
4. **Question:** What is it about Jesus NOT being “subject to that pit” that makes the biblical gospel especially encouraging in Contrasting Illustration #2?
5. **3 Key Questions:**
  - a. Are these gospels the same?
  - b. If one of these gospels is true, what **MUST** the other be?
  - c. If either gospel **COULD BE** true, which one would you prefer?

## IV. THE LIGHT BULB ILLUSTRATION

### A. Our Work & the LDS Gospel of Salvation

1. Joseph Fielding Smith, 10<sup>th</sup> LDS Prophet & President (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1979, 3:27).

We light our buildings with electric power. Suppose we have prepared all things by which light is obtained, except in one point. We have the proper connections with the source of power, the wiring is perfect, the switches are all in place, but we fail to place a light globe in the socket. Or perhaps there is a disconnected switch. Result? We get no light. In other words all of the laws pertaining to the obtaining of electric light must be observed. So in the celestial kingdom, we must be worthy in every point, or we fail to receive the blessing. The kingdom of God must exist in absolute unity. Every law must be obeyed, and no member of the Church can have a place there unless he is in full accord.



- a. **Question:** Is there more than one “electrician” in The Light Bulb Illustration? What appears to be Jesus’ role?
- b. The common LDS belief that Jesus “picks up the slack” or “makes up the difference” for LDS who fall short in either The Ladder or Light Bulb Illustrations is NOT what is taught.
  - 1) Joseph Fielding Smith explains: “After giving this counsel and teaching the members to be faithful in all things, he [the apostle James] said, ‘**For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.**’ ... Therefore the words of James are true. Unless a man can abide strictly in complete accord, he cannot enter there [“the kingdom of God”], and in the words of James, he is guilty of all.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1979, 3:26.)

## B. Christ's Work & the Biblical Gospel of Salvation



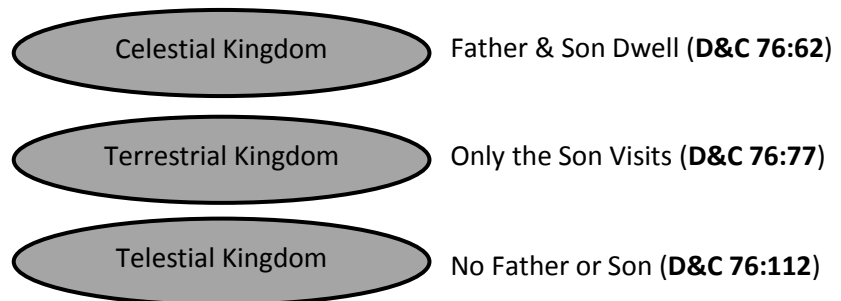
1. **Contrasting Illustration**—With Jesus as our sole Electrician we are guaranteed to “get light.” He will perfectly assemble “all things by which light is obtained” just as He perfectly kept ALL of God’s laws. (Jesus does this for those who trust in Him alone to do their electrical work— He is “the Light of the world.”)
2. **3 Key Questions:**
  - a. Are these gospels the same?
  - b. If one of these gospels is true, what **MUST** the other be?
  - c. If either gospel **COULD BE** true, which one would you prefer?

## V. THE KINGDOMS ILLUSTRATION

### A. Our Work & the LDS Gospel of Salvation

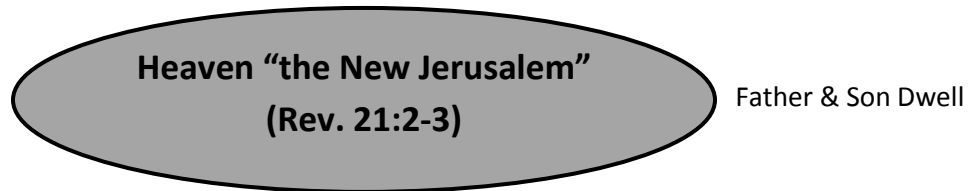
1. Joseph Fielding Smith, 10<sup>th</sup> LDS Prophet & President (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1955, 2:12).

Salvation will come to all who enter the terrestrial kingdom. They will receive a higher grade of salvation than will those in the telestial kingdom. Salvation will come to those who enter the celestial kingdom. That will be a still higher grade of salvation.



- a. Note the primary distinctions between the kingdoms of salvation and that it is a rewards system based on one's worthiness by obedience.
- b. Understand it is NOT until the resurrection that we are consigned to our respective kingdoms—once consigned we CANNOT change our kingdom residence.
- c. **Key Questions:**
  - 1) What did those in higher kingdoms DO that those in lower kingdoms DID NOT?
  - 2) Why are those in lower kingdoms eternally separated from their Heavenly Father?

**B. Christ's Work & the Biblical Gospel of Salvation**



1. **Contrasting Illustration**—There is only one kingdom of salvation (not three) and ALL believers will dwell for eternity there WITH the Father and Son. This is because the Father sent the Son to do ALL of the “work” for our salvation. (Therefore, heaven is an absolutely free gift for those who trust in Jesus Christ alone to save them.)
2. **3 Key Questions:**
  - a. Are these gospels the same?
  - b. If one of these gospels is true, what MUST the other be?
  - c. If either gospel COULD BE true, which would you prefer?



## VI. COMMON LDS OBJECTIONS

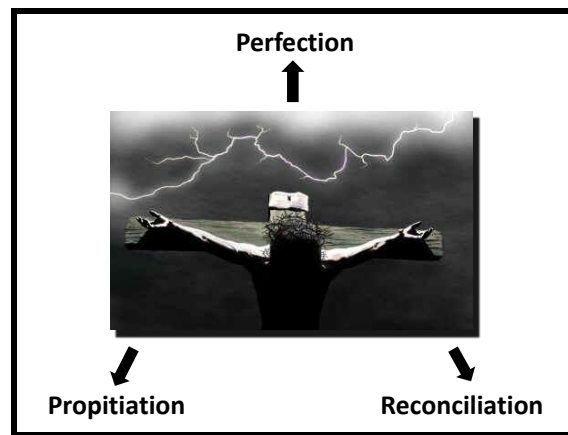
- A. **LDS Point #1:** It wouldn't be fair for God to reward the celestial kingdom or "new Jerusalem" to those who are NOT worthy of it or haven't been as faithful.

**Counterpoint:** This may have merit IF it was possible for us to work for our salvation. However, this is impossible according to the biblical gospel.

1. Refer to Jesus' parable of the workers in the vineyard in **Matthew 20:1-16**.

- B. **LDS Point #2:** It wouldn't be "just" of God to reward the celestial kingdom or "new Jerusalem" to those who are not worthy of it—"mercy cannot rob justice" (see **Alma 42:25** in the BoM).

**Counterpoint:** The Father sent the Son to meet ALL of His requirements for justice on our behalf—mercy has NOT robbed justice. There simply is no other remedy!



1. Jesus is our **PERFECTION**—He kept ALL of God's commands on our behalf, thereby satisfying the Father's requirement for righteous perfection (see **2 Cor. 5:21; Ro. 3:20-24**).
2. Jesus is our **PROPITIATION (KJV)** or atonement—He suffered the full penalty for our sins, thereby satisfying the Father's requirement for death and justice (see **Ro. 3:25-26**).
3. Jesus is our **RECONCILIATION**—He conquered sin and death on our behalf, thereby ensuring we are no longer separated from the Father (see **Ro. 5:10-11; Col. 1:21-23**).

a. **Key Questions:**

- 1) If Jesus kept ALL of God's commands for us, what need is there for more than one kingdom of heaven.
- 2) If Jesus was punished for ALL of our sins, why would separation from our Heavenly Father be at all necessary?

- C. **LDS Point #3:** A reward not earned won't be appreciated.

**Counterpoint:** This may have merit IF it was possible for us to work for our salvation. However, this is impossible according to the biblical gospel.

1. Refer to Jesus' parable of the moneylender in **Luke 7:40-43** KJV (note "they had nothing to pay").

- D. **LDS Point #4:** Leaving all of the work to Jesus is a license to sin. Any gospel that promotes sin cannot be true.

**Counterpoint:** It is true that many "professing" Christians DO use the absolutely free gift of salvation as a license to sin.

1. This commits the straw man fallacy. "Professing" Christians may use the absolutely free gift of salvation as a license to sin, but this does not NECESSARILY falsify the biblical gospel—neither does it ensure these people are saved! (See **Ro. 5:20-6:4** and **Gal. 5:13, 19-21.**)
2. Many Christians are as committed to living a Christ-honoring life as they are to the doctrine of Christ's gospel. (Refer again to Jesus' parable of the moneylender in **Luke 7:40-43.**)

- E. **LDS Point #5:** "Faith without works is dead" (**Jas. 2:17**).

**Counterpoint:** Agreed, but there is a difference between working TO BE saved (the LDS gospel) and working BECAUSE we are saved (the biblical gospel).

1. Refer again to Jesus' parable of the moneylender in **Luke 7:40-43**. The debtor's love is BECAUSE his debt was cancelled—not necessary for it TO BE cancelled.
  - a. Keeping Christ's commands authenticates our love for Him (see **Jn. 14:15**).

- F. **LDS Point #6:** If Jesus kept ALL of God's commands for us, why are we even here? What is our purpose, if not to prove ourselves worthy to live with our Heavenly Father?

**Counterpoint:** Biblical Christians are committed to winning unsaved people to Christ (see **1 Cor. 6:9-11**). And by living for Christ we can draw people to Christ (see **Jn. 13:34-35**).

1. We live for Christ because He died for us (see **1 Jn. 3:16**)—this is the expression of our Gratitude for God's Gift of salvation by Grace.