

To Be In Christ Is to Be with Christ

The importance of this lesson cannot be overstated, especially as it concerns contrasting and clarifying the biblical and LDS gospels of salvation. If being justified (acquitted of all guilt), made righteous (credited with the righteousness of Christ), reconciled (fully accepted with no separation) and saved (delivered from ALL divine condemnation and wrath) is an absolutely free gift of God's grace ON THE BASIS OF trusting solely in Christ's work, then there must be ONLY ONE eternal destiny for those who are in Christ Jesus by faith.

The LDS gospel requires three eternal destinations for those who have professed faith in Christ and His atoning sacrifice. This is because faith alone is the door to AN LDS kingdom of glory with our works ultimately determining which of the three kingdoms we are consigned to and whether we will be separated from the Father for an eternity if deemed unworthy to dwell in the celestial kingdom (the only kingdom in which the Father lives).

Examine the below passages from biblical Scripture to understand and internalize the implications of their meaning so that you might share "the truth in love" with Latter-day Saints (**Eph. 4:15**). (Keep in mind that "eternal life" or "everlasting life" according to LDS doctrine is life in the celestial kingdom WITH the Father and the Son.)

Matthew 25:31-34 (NIV2011) Cross-reference with Matthew 25:41

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.

³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'

Matthew 25:41 (NIV2011)

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'

Luke 23:39-43 (NIV2011)

³⁹ One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the

same sentence?

⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

⁴³ Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

John 3:13-16 (NIV2011)

¹³ No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.

¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,

¹⁵ that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 14:1-3 (NIV2011)

¹ “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.

² My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10 (NIV2011)

¹ For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

² Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling,

³ because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.

⁴ For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

⁵ Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

⁶ Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.

⁷ For we live by faith, not by sight.

⁸ We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

⁹ So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Ephesians 2:1-10 (NIV2011) Cross-reference with Ephesians 1:20

¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—

⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 1:20 (NIV2011)

²⁰ he [God] exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

Philippians 1:21-24 (NIV2011)

²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!

²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;

²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

Colossians 1:19-23 (NIV2011)

¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,

²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

²¹ Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in

his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—

²³if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Revelation 20:11-15 (NIV2011) Cross-reference with Revelation 21:1-8

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.

¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done.

¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

¹⁵ Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:1-8 (NIV2011)

¹ Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

⁶ He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.

⁷ Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

⁸ But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”