TERRESTRIAL KINGDOM

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches of three DEGREES OF GLORY or kingdoms of HEAVEN in the AFTERLIFE: the CELESTIAL KINGDOM, terrestrial kingdom, and TELESTIAL KINGDOM. Paul likened these kingdoms to the relative radiance of the sun, moon, and stars (1 Cor 15:40-41; cf. D&C 76:50-98). Further evidence of a heaven with multiple kingdoms is found in Jesus’ statement, “In my Father’s house are many mansions” (John 14:2). On February 16, 1832, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw in vision the three degrees of glory, identifying the glory of the terrestrial kingdom as typical “of the moon [which] differs from the sun in the firmament” (D&C 76:71).

The terrestrial glory is for those who lived honorable lives on the earth but “were blinded by the craftiness of men” and were “not valiant in the testimony of Jesus.” Those who did not receive a TESTIMONY of Jesus while on earth, but who could have done so except for their neglect, are also heirs to the terrestrial kingdom (D&C 76:72-74, 79). They obtain not “the crown over the kingdom of our God” (D&C 76:79) and remain without EXALTATION in their saved condition (D&C 132:17). They “receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fulness of the Father,” and their kingdom differs from the celestial “as the moon differs from the sun” (D&C 76:77-78).

[See also Degrees of Glory.]

SUSAN EASTON BLACK

TESTIMONY

[TESTIMONY is a generic term among Latter-day Saints for the assurance of the reality, truth, and goodness of God, of the teachings and atonement of Jesus Christ, and of the divine calling of latter-day prophets. It is the core of LDS religious experience. It reaches beyond secondhand assent, notional conviction, or strong belief. It is knowledge buttressed by divine personal confirmation by the Holy Ghost and is interrelated with authentic faith and trust in God as demonstrated by dedication and discipleship. Fundamental in the Church is the doctrine that “no man can be a minister of Jesus Christ except he has the testimony of Jesus; and this is the spirit of prophecy. Whenevever salvation has been administered, it has been by testimony” (TPJS, p. 160).

Articles that relate to this theme and its connections with other aspects of Latter-day Saint spiritual life include Faith in Jesus Christ; Fast and Testimony Meeting; Inspiration; Knowledge; Light of Christ; Religious Experience; Revelation; Testimony Bearing; Testimony of Jesus Christ; Truth; and Witnesses, Law of.]

TESTIMONY BEARING

Testimony bearing among members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a person’s verbal expression of what he or she knows to be true concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ, the RESTORATION of the fullness of his gospel in our time, and the blessings that come from living its principles. By divine mandate, bearing testimony is to be done “in my name, in solemnity of heart, in the spirit of meekness, in all things” (D&C 100:7). Latter-day Saints often bear testimony when teaching in Church services, when explaining gospel principles to members of other faiths, and in the FAST AND TESTIMONY MEETING, held monthly in each congregation.

Bearing testimony while teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ is pervasive in the Church and is based on two central beliefs. The first is that the primary responsibility of members is to “teach one another” (D&C 88:118) rather than to depend upon one formal teacher or minister only. The second is that the power that motivates individuals to live as Christ taught is the power of the HOLY GHOST, rather than the power of logic or the elo-