

Glory and Exaltation

Precious little has been taught or understood in regard to these terms and their meanings since the first generation of saints. Biblical and standard English dictionaries aren't much help and in some ways add confusion to the subjects. For the purposes of this paper and an understanding of these terms in relation to the fullness of the gospel as restored by Joseph Smith Jun. the following definitions will apply herein.

Glory: Experience, knowledge, power and influence in various degrees or levels, and in reach.

Exaltation: Being lifted, advanced, or raised up to a resurrected station and glory in relation to other stations and glories.

It should be understood that these aspects of eternity are had only through the authority of the Holy, Eternal Priesthood of God by and through the power of the station or roll of the Eternal, Only Begotten, Son of God. Having established that, we are free to reason out the implications of just our subject terms.

We come to an understanding of "glory" because of how it is used in scripture. There are hundreds of instances of the word "glory" in the scriptures, which all tend to demonstrate the definition used here, but the following teaching is likely the best example of both terms.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Six 1843-44 p.347

These are the first principles of consolation. How consoling to the mourners when they are called to part with a husband, wife, father, mother, child, or dear relative, to know that, although the earthly tabernacle is laid down and dissolved, they shall rise again to dwell in everlasting burnings in

immortal glory, not to sorrow, suffer, or die any more; but they shall be heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. What is it? To inherit the same power, the same glory and the same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of a God, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before. What did Jesus do? Why; I do the things I saw my Father do when worlds come rolling into existence. My Father worked out his kingdom with fear and trembling, and I must do the same; and when I get my kingdom, I shall present it to my Father, so that he may obtain kingdom upon kingdom, and it will exalt him in glory. He will then take a higher exaltation, and I will take his place, and thereby become exalted myself. So that Jesus treads in the tracks of his Father, and inherits what God did before; and God is thus glorified and exalted in the salvation and exaltation of all his children. It is plain beyond disputation, and you thus learn some of the first principles of the Gospel, about which so much hath been said.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Six 1843-44 p.367

God Almighty Himself dwells in eternal fire; flesh and blood cannot go there, for all corruption is devoured by the fire. "Our God is a consuming fire." When our flesh is quickened by the Spirit, there will be no blood in this tabernacle. Some dwell in higher glory than others.

As demonstrated by the foregoing references, glory and exaltations exist in varying degrees and levels. One of the best examples of this notion is that we know that Christ has been resurrected, exalted and glorified to sit on the right hand of the Father in His throne and serves as a God to us now. This however is not His final exaltation, which He will receive when He presents this creation to the Father at its end. Christ will then be further exalted to take the place, or rise to the station of Father or Elohim.

Likewise, there is more than one level of exaltation that applies to men at the culmination of this estate.

There is a critical understanding, which is almost always skimmed over or ignored altogether and that is the difference between “eternal life” and “eternal lives.” There is actually a profound difference. Without trying to create an exhaustive body of references, the following will suffice.

D&C 88:4

4 This Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom;

If one searches all the references, which contain the phrase “eternal life,” it becomes clear that it refers to residence in the Celestial Kingdom. It is also known that upon entry to the Celestial Kingdom one is crowned and given mansion and a white stone with a new name written therein to enable the owner to see higher kingdoms of glory. This constitutes a level of exaltation, especially when compared to the lower kingdoms of glories. There is no indication that entry into the Celestial Kingdom has anything to do with one’s marital status.

D&C 132:24

24 This is eternal lives--to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. I am he. Receive ye, therefore, my law.

If one searches the phrase “eternal lives” there are only two unquestionable references and they are from God through Joseph Smith. These are the reference preceding and the one following. Both are from Section 132 on the “New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage.” Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants explains God’s law in this regard in two major sections. The first part deals with monogamist marriage and the second with plural marriage and its additional requirements under this law of the Priesthood. One thing to note is that in the above reference, when the Lord says; “Receive ye, therefore, my law,” He is referring to the whole thing, not just the part one likes.

D&C 132:55

55 But if she will not abide this commandment, then shall my servant Joseph do all things for her, even as he hath said; and I will bless him and multiply him and give unto him an hundredfold in this world, of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, wives and children, and crowns of eternal lives in the eternal worlds.

Verse 55 is part of what the Lord is saying with regard to Emma Smith and the law's application to plural marriage.

Otten & Caldwell, Sacred Truths of the Doctrine & Covenants, Vol.2, p.347
Joseph Smith, Jun.

[Tuesday, 16 May 1843]... Before returning, I gave Brother and Sister Johnson instructions on the priesthood; and putting my hand on the knee of William Clayton, I said: [Section 131:1-4 follows]...

- 1 In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;
- 2 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];
- 3 And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.
- 4 He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase.

At this point, I am going to take some liberties, and restate verse 1 slightly different than how it reads, but consistent with the bulk of Joseph's teachings. I of course, have a reason, which will become clear. Verse 1 could be stated; In the Celestial Kingdom there are three heavens or exaltations. Or verse 1 could be stated; In the Celestial glory or exaltation there are three heavens or degrees. These renderings are also consistent with the last part of Joseph's teaching in a reference previous where he said, "Some dwell in higher glory than others." The order of priesthood referred to in verse 2 is the whole law the Lord spelled out in Section 132.

(Just a note. The [bracketed] phrase was added by William Clayton and approved by Joseph Smith, not surreptitiously added by Brigham Young.)

Continuing on, Joseph restates what the Lord had told him in verse 3, but doesn't elaborate on what he is referring to in saying, "if he does not." Clearly the reference is to law on marriage, but is it to the whole law or just a portion of it? As a carry-on thought, verse 4 He says, "he may enter into the other," the other what? Well, the other exaltation, or degree, but not the highest. And the difference is just there will not be an increase in his kingdom, not that he won't have an exaltation or kingdom at all. And what is a man's kingdom in the Celestial glory? Is it not his family?

It should also be noted that Sections 131 and 132 are actually out of chronological order. Section 131 was received about May of 1843 and Section 132 was received sometime in probably 1831. So 131 becomes a later amplification of 132.

So, what does all this mean and what points are trying to be made? If it is not already surmised, it will be made plain. Eternal life is an exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom and the presence of God and the Gods. It is the exaltation of an Angel of God in the first Celestial exaltation or glory and they are those who are single because they either did not marry in mortality or their marriage was not sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise to continue after mortality but they were valiant saints in Christ.

Eternal life in the next higher exaltation or glory is the exaltation of those who complied with only part of the law and married according to the basic requirements of the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, but to only one woman. They remain sealed, crowned, glorified and administer to not only their immediate biological family but also a portion of the Lord's family under Adam down through the kingdoms of glory, but they do not participate in peopling other earths, or in other words, continued eternal lives and eternal increase.

Eternal lives and increase are the glory of the highest exaltation achievable by a member of mankind. They are those who complied with the whole law without violating its provisions unto condemnation. If righteous in this and all other aspects of the gospel, they will comprise the Holy Quorum of Gods who head family lines in the eternal family of The Ancient of Days and God the Father over unending creations.

Adopting a more general definition of exaltation, that of just being lifted up to a higher place or glory, it must be accepted that all kingdoms of glory are exaltations over those of lower or lesser glory, since all are populated by resurrected beings. So far only the Celestial Kingdom has been investigated in any depth, but in a very real sense those members of the Terrestrial Kingdom are exalted in glory and proximity to the abode of God than the Telestial Kingdom and those of the Telestial Kingdom of glory will have been exalted or raised above the conditions of the sons of perdition and even yet-to-be embodied spirits with few exceptions such as the Holy Ghost.

Taking too narrow a definition of glories and exaltations only serves to separate and alienate brothers and sisters in the family of God and to salve one's ego. God loves and desires the best for everyone in, and all parts of His creations, no matter the level of glorification they ultimately achieve. Should a true disciple of Christ be any less charitable?